City of Independence

Draft Comprehensive Plan Update 2014

A 'blueprint' for the city's future growth - through new development and redevelopment – while preserving the community's natural environment and strengthening its quality of life

12/30/2014

[Reserved for Adoption Resolution]

DRAFT

Acknowledgements

The participates would like to thank the City Council and all the volunteers who provided input and time, as well as financial means to make this Plan Update a reality. A special thanks to the citizens of Independence who participated in the process to develop this *Plan Update 2014*.

Independence City Council

- Bonita Davis, Mayor*
- Jon Holland, At-Large Council Member*
- Robert Hill, At-Large Council Member*
- Dustin Dallenbach, 4th Ward Council Member
- Don Brown, 3rd Ward Council Member
- Austin Grover, 5th Ward Council Member
- Michael Lenius, 1st Ward Council Member
- Dennis Vaughn, 2nd Ward Council Member

**Also served on Task Force Committee*

Independence City Staff & Department Heads

- Barbara Rundle, City Clerk/Treasurer
- Vickie Schultz, Deputy City Clerk
- Carmon McGraw, Secretary/Receptionist
- Carter Stevens, City Attorney
- Luke Guthrie, P/T City Attorney
- Doug Cook, Building Official & Fire Chief*
- Laura Blaker, Library Director
- Bob Beatty, Parks and Recreation Director
- Randy Miller, Police Department Chief
- Tim Donnelly, Water and Street Superintendent
- Mark Luloff, Waste Water Treatment Plant Superintendent
- Mike Walker, Waste Water Collection – Asst. Streets Superintendent

Independence Task Force Committee

- Chuck Ward, Independence Light & Power, Telecommunications General Manager
- Michelle McBride, Independence Chamber of Commerce Director
- Heather Meador, Independence School District
- John Klotzbach, Bulletin Journal
- Patty Petersen, Trees Forever
- Wendy VanDeWalle, Sustainable Independence
- Taylor King, Citizen
- Jean Peterson, Independence Community School District
- Alissa Westphal, Citizen
- Steve Slessor, CEO Buchanan County Health Center
- Rick Wulfekuhle, Buchanan County Emergency Management
- Lou Sanboeuf, Developer
- Steve Murlow, ECI-REC
- Mike McGill, Independence Federal Bank
- Steve Ohl, Developer
- Tammy Hunter, Hunter Creative Group
- Fred Smock, Dunlap Motors Trails Assoc.
- Mike Fisher, VP of Impact7G and sustainable Independence
- Nate Clayberg, Former Executive Director of Buchanan County EDC
- Chad Beatty, Buchanan County Planning & Zoning Administrator

DRAFT

- Ralph Kremer, Buchanan County Supervisor
- Steven Diers, Former City Manager
- Carl Scharff, Former Mayor

Independence Planning & Zoning Commission

- John Evers
- Don Brown
- Dorothy Smith
- Janet Buls

Iowa Northland Regional Council of Government (INRCOG)

- Kevin Blanshan, Executive Director
- Brian Schoon, AICP, Director of Development & Transit
- Jim Rodemeyer, Director of Housing
- Sheri Alldredge, Director of Administrative Services
- Colleen Simmons, AICP, Community Planner II
- Cindy Knox, Housing Planner
- Kyle Durant, Transportation Planner II
- Codie Leseman, Transportation Planner
- Ben Kvigne, Environmental Planner II
- Jeff Schlee, Safety Coordinator
- Dan Schlichtmann, Data Services Coordinator
- Ed Holm, RTC Operations Manager
- Brenda Ponto, Accountant
- Hayley Weiglein, Secretary/Receptionist

DRAFT

Document Prepared by:

INRCOG

229 E. Park Ave

Waterloo, Iowa 50703

www.inrcog.org

INRCOG
Iowa Northland
Regional Council
Of Governments

Table of Contents

Section 1: Comprehensive Plan Defined 20
Section 2: Planning in Iowa – Legal Basis 21
Section 3: Plan Organization 21
Section 4: Planning Process 9
The Planning Process 9
Public Involvement Plan 9
Public Open House 10
Community Survey 1
Task Force Meetings 1
Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting 2
Public Hearings 2
Smart Planning Guiding Principles 3
Smart Planning Elements 5
Section 1: Community Overview 6
Location 6
Community History 6
Government Structure 8
Population 8
Population by Age Groups 1
Natural Change 3
In and Out-Migration 4
Population Projections 5

DRAFT

Section 2: Agricultural & Natural Resources 7
Existing Conditions 8
Agriculture 8
Topography 8
Waterways 8
Climate 9
Vegetation 9
Soils 9
Key Issues & Opportunities 10
Reduce Floodplain Development 10
Incorporate Green Infrastructure 10
Conduct River Enhancements 10
Agricultural and Natural Resources Goals, Policies, & Strategic Actions 1
Section 3: Hazards 3
Existing Conditions 3
Flooding 3
Tornadoes 4
Key Issues & Concerns 4
Vulnerable Populations 4
Flooding Vulnerability 5
Future Development 7
Repetitive Loss Properties 7
Hazards Goals, Policies, & Strategic Actions 8

DRAFT

Section 4: Community Character 10
Existing Conditions 10
Community Betterment Projects 10
Events & Celebrations 11
Art & Culture 12
Key Issues & Opportunities 14
Maintaining Existing Character 14
Beautifying Main Street 14
Creating Healthy, Livable Community 14
Changing Community Perceptions to Emphasize “One Independence” 14
Community Character Goals, Policies, & Strategic Actions 15
Section 5: Community Facilities 17
Existing Conditions 17
City Hall 18
Police Department & Services 18
Fire Department & Rescue Services 18
Ambulance and EMS Services 19
Independence Pubic Library 19
Parks & Recreational Facilities and Services 19
Buchanan County Health Center 20
Independence Community School District 21
St. John School (Eagles) 21
Community Reponses on Existing Community Facilities 21

DRAFT

Key Issues & Opportunities 22
Enhancing and Expanding Recreational and Cultural Offerings 22
Redeveloping Old High School Building and Site 22
Maintaining Levels of Service for Public Services and Facilities 22
Community Facilities Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions 22
Section 6: Public Infrastructure & Utilities 25
Existing Conditions 25
Water Service 25
Wastewater Utility 25
Storm Sewer 26
Independence Light & Power, Telecommunications 26
East Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative 26
Communications 26
Community Response on Existing Public Infrastructure and Utilities 26
Key Issues & Opportunities 27
Maintaining Levels of Service for Public Infrastructure and Utilities 27
Promoting the Use of Green Development Technologies 27
Addressing Energy Use and Costs 27
Sustainable Independence 27
Public Infrastructure and Utilities Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions 28
Section 7: Housing 31
Existing Conditions 31
Housing Occupancy 33

DRAFT

Age of Housing Stock 33
Housing Values and Gross Rent 34
Development Trends 35
Key Issues & Opportunities 35
Affordable Housing 36
Housing Mix 37
Housing Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions 38
Section 8: Economic Development 40
Existing Conditions 40
Partnerships 41
Trends & Statistics 41
Key Issues & Opportunities 46
Creating a Visitor & Tourism Office or Department 47
Developing Downtown as the Central Community Activity Center 47
Maintaining and Expanding Independence's Economic Base 47
Encouraging Infill and Revitalization 47
Encouraging Development, Retention, and Expansion of Locally Owned Businesses 47
Enhancing Job Readiness of the Local Workforce 47
Economic Development Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions 48
Section 9: Transportation 51
Existing Conditions 51
Streets & Highways 52
Sidewalks 52

DRAFT

Airport 52
Rail 52
Water 52
Trails – Pedestrian & Bicycle 53
Public Input Results – Transportation 53
Key Issues & Opportunities 53
Providing a Multi-Modal Transportation System 53
Protecting Existing Road Capacity 54
Creating an Active Living, Connected Environment 54
Improving Safety 54
Transportation Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions 54
Section 10: Land Use 58
Existing Conditions 59
Existing Land Use Patterns 59
Key Issues & Opportunities 60
Targeting Areas for Future Growth and Development 60
Creating Sustainable Neighborhoods 60
Providing More Opportunities for Healthy Living Developments 60
Infilling and Revitalizing Downtown Area 60
Ensuring Development Compatibility 61
Protecting Valuable Environmental Resources 61
Ensuring Land Use Compatibility with Buchanan County 61
Land Use Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions 61

DRAFT

Future Land Use 62
Relationship of Zoning and Future Land Use 62
Future Land Use Map 63
Section 11: Intergovernmental Collaboration 67
Benefits of Collaboration 67
Existing Local Partnerships 68
Existing Regional Partnerships 69
Existing State Partnerships 69
Intergovernmental Agreements 69
Key Issues & Opportunities 70
Strengthening Coordination and Collaboration Efforts 70
Improving Public Engagement & Networking 72
Collaboration Goals, Policies, & Strategic Actions 72
Section 1: Action Plan 74
Priority Implementation Actions 74
Secondary Priority Implementation Actions 77
Implementation Strategies 80
Continued Participation and Leadership 80
Section 2: Plan Monitoring & Updating 81
Plan Monitoring 81
Plan Amendment 81
Federal and State Programs 1
Community Development Tools & Resources 1
Economic Development Tools & Resources 5

DRAFT

Housing Tools & Resources 8

DRAFT

Executive Summary

History of Planning in City

The City of Independence isn't a stranger to planning. Over the years, the City has conducted numerous planning efforts – either project specific or on-going. The Independence Comprehensive Plan, and its updates, is intended to be an umbrella plan for all of these documents. It should be understood that this Plan, *Plan Update 2014*, is not meant to substitute for the actual planning documents and any misrepresentation by this plan is unintentional. Specific questions regarding a particular plan or specific details of ideas, concepts, or implementation should be directed to that document. Independence's studies and plans are:

- Independence Comprehensive Plan 2020
- Iowa Living Roadways
- Regional Transportation Plan 2014
- Independence Hazard Mitigation Plan 2011
- Buchanan County Multi-Jurisdiction Hazard Mitigation Plan 2012
- Iowans Fit for Life 2013

In addition to the above past planning efforts, Independence is currently undertaking the following projects.

- Street Replacement/Capital Improvement Plan
- Owner Occupied Housing Rehab Program
- Independence Sports Complex: Added Rec Activities at "old Fareway" building
- 5th Avenue Sidewalk Connection to Falcon Civic Center

Vision

The City of Independence thrives to build and preserve the small town atmosphere citizens enjoy, while creating a high quality of life through sustainable, healthy, livable communities for future generations.

- 20th Avenue Street Lighting Project
- Airport: AGIS Airport Land Use Plan Update
- Liberty Trail Trailhead Project
- Aquatic Center Research Study
- Riverwalk Trail Extension and Portage Project

Overall Community Themes

Below are the overall themes for Independence based on task force meetings, public input, and existing and ongoing efforts by the community. The City of Independence, in partnership and communication with residents, businesses, and schools is dedicated to:

- **Providing a safe, healthy, and welcoming atmosphere where people choose to live.**
  - Promote safety, health, and security through effective communication and service delivery.
  - Facilitate successful neighborhoods through community involvement and engagement.
  - Encourage and partner in the development of quality housing choices for people of all ages and income levels.
  - Promote a walkable, pedestrian and bicycle-friendly city with complete streets, trails, and connections between neighborhoods and community focal points.
  - Provide opportunities for communities to be better prepared for emergencies.
- **Promoting economic vitality and strategically positioning the city for the future.**
  - Promote Independence as a progressive, opportunity-rich city.
  - Capitalize on opportunities through bold and creative economic development strategies.
  - Recruit and retain businesses to ensure a dynamic, diversified employment base.
  - Nurture entrepreneurship and foster successful partnerships with business and community leaders.
  - Leverage public/private resources to focus development on economic centers.
- **Supporting sustainable, planned growth and influencing decisions that impact the city.**

DRAFT

- Foster development of vibrant, sustainable neighborhoods.
- Uphold a high standard of design and property maintenance.
- Advocate interests through state and federal lobbying efforts, regional partnerships, and other organizations.
- Pursue transportation and other regional improvements and services that improve quality of life.
- Balance development with environmental protection.

➢ **Building an inclusive city with opportunities for all.**

- Improve access to city services and programs and make residents and businesses aware of opportunities to be involved with their community.
- Build connections with all communities that reflect the breadth and richness of the diversity of the city.
- Promote understanding and appreciation of our diversity through celebrations and festivals.
- Provide critical and relevant information on a timely basis and facilitate two-way dialogue between city government and the community.
- Encourage volunteerism, participation and civic engagements.

➢ **Meeting service demands through high quality customer service, innovation, a positive work environment, and a commitment to excellence.**

- Plan, develop, and maintain quality services, infrastructure, and amenities.
- Prioritize services at levels that can be sustained by revenue and resources.
- Retain a skilled workforce by making Independence the municipal employer of choice.
- Develop and maintain collaborative partnerships and investment strategies that improve services.
- Respond to growing service demands through partnerships, innovation, and outcome management.

DRAFT

Identified Goals, Policies, & Strategic Actions

Based on existing conditions, identified issues and opportunities, and community themes, the following are the 31 goals and their objectives and actions.

Independence's Goals, Policies, & Actions		
Goals	**Policies**	**Actions**
Goal 1: Protect and Reserve Natural Resources	Policy 1.1: Protect environmental sensitive areas including floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, watersheds, poor soils, areas with steep slopes, and other areas that are not conducive for development. Policy 1.2: Preserve the quality of natural resources within the city including noise, air quality, and water quality, as well as protect these resources from pollution and/or contamination Policy 1.3: Support and expand current and future recycling efforts in the community	Action 1.1: Continue to enforce Independence's Floodplain Management Ordinance. Action 1.2: Continue to work with Trees Forever and other environment and wildlife organizations to identify existing trees and develop a management/replace plan. Action 1.3: Investigate the implementation of clustered or conservation subdivisions and site developments to conserve impact on natural resources.
Goal 2: Maintain Emergency Services during Hazard Events, or if this is not possible, Return to Pre-Disaster Service Levels ASAP	The related policies and actions can be found in the *2012 Buchanan County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.*	
Goal 3: Maintain Continuity of Infrastructure	The related policies and actions can be found in the *2012 Buchanan County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.*	
Goal 4: Protect the Health and Welfare of the Entire Community by Utilizing Pre-Disaster Planning and Constructing Mitigation Projects	The related policies and actions can be found in the *2012 Buchanan County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.*	
Goal 5: Identify Possible Action Steps to be Taken to Decrease the Risk of the Communicable Diseases	The related policies and actions can be found in the *2012 Buchanan County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.*	
Goal 6: Take Steps to Mitigate or Minimize the Impact of Natural, Technological, and/or Man-Made Disasters	The related policies and actions can be found in the *2012 Buchanan County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.*	

DRAFT

Goal 7: Focus on "One Independence"	Policy 7.1: Emphasize the overall community and how the inter-relationships of each citizen, group, organization, entity, and committee are a component of the larger picture – the City of Independence. Policy 7.2: Foster meaningful community engagement among all demographic sectors of the City at all community events and government forums.	Action 7.1: Offer civic events that bring diverse groups of people together to further forge the "One Independence" goal. An example could be a "Town Hall" style event that focuses on key issues of common concern in the community. Action 7.2: Ensure all organized cultural events that display the unique character of the City and its residents.
Goal 8: Enhanced City Beautification Efforts	Policy 8.1: Further develop Independence's existing beautification efforts to improve Independence's overall appearance and quality of life.	Action 8.1: Develop and implement a common theme for the Downtown. Action 8.2: Maintain and improve the appearance of existing homes and property through enforcement of existing regulations; as well as new beautification projects and programs. Action 8.3: Identify and install beautification measures along Independence's major thoroughfares. For instance, plantings, street banners, signs, etc.
Goal 9: Healthy, Livable Community	Policy 9.1: Continue to create and promote Independence as a healthy, livable community that prioritizes health and wellness.	Action 9.1: Continue implementation of Indee Go-Healthy projects and incentives. Action 9.2: Implement Blue Zone components even though Independence was not selected to be a part of the Blue Zone Community program.

DRAFT

Goal 10: Adequate Public Safety Services	Policy 10.1: Service to newly developing areas should not result in the reduction of service to existing developing areas. Policy 10.2: The City should work with landowners and local stakeholders on identifying potential locations on the west side of town for a fire department sub-station.	Action10.1: Ensure that City departments share information regarding proposed developments that will require expansion of public safety services. Assess the ability of proposed developments to meet Plan Update 2014 goals and policies and compare it against the Future Land Use map. Ensure that existing facilities and service capacity can adequately serve new and existing demands for service. Mitigate any potential impacts that might decrease levels of service. Action 10.2: Incorporate new facility needs, such as fire station and police station, into the City's Capital Improvement Program.
Goal 11: Cultural, Entertainment, and Recreational Experiences for All Ages & Abilities	Policy 11.1: As demographics change in Independence, the City will encourage local partners to provide opportunities reflecting the diversity of Independence's residents (singles, young professionals, families, and seniors). Policy 11.2: The City supports the development of new activities and entertainment options to provide affordable, healthy, and constructive options for the City's youth. Policy 11.3: The role of community facilities as centers of community activity should be enhanced to provide further recreational, educational, and entertainment options to citizens of Independence. Policy 11.4: The City should consider engaging in a public-private partnership to bring affordable outdoor activities to public spaces – outdoor movies, concerts, etc.	Action 11.1: Working with local partners, identify ways the City can assist in attracting and recruiting new cultural, recreational, and entertainment establishments and activities to the city.
Goal 12: Redevelop Old High School Building & Site	Policy 12.1: The City will work with local partners to redevelop the old high school building and site into a multi-use campus.	Action 12.1: Working with local stakeholders, city departments, and local developers/experts, redesign and revitalize the old high school into a multi-use public campus.

DRAFT

Goal 13: Maintained Levels of Service for Public Infrastructure & Utilities	Policy 13.1: Encourage the development of land to its highest and best use where public infrastructure currently exists. Policy 13.2: Coordinate the extension of utility services and roads with the Future Land Use map by directing expansions to areas within those areas closest to existing services.	Action 13.1: Ensure that City departments share information and coordinate planning for proposed developments that will require expansion of public infrastructure. Action 13.2: Assess the potential for proposed developments to meet Plan Update 2014 goals and policies to maximize existing infrastructure and compare proposed plans against the Future Land Use map. Action 13.3: Ensure that public right-of-way for roadways have adequate space for locating all underground public utilities.
Goal 14: Reduced Energy Use and Costs	Policy 14.1: Reduce energy usage in public buildings by incorporating energy saving practices, such as commissioned building systems, solar and geothermal technologies, and high efficiency building materials, to reduce the energy consumption of the new public development. Policy 14.2: Continue to replace City-owned vehicles with energy efficient models. Policy 14.3: Create programs and incentives for energy reduction in private buildings, such as providing a streamlined development review process for projects meeting energy use reduction goals.	Action 14.1: Adopt formal energy efficiency performance standards for new public facilities and expansions of existing public facilities. Action 14.2: Work with Sustainable Independence, and other partners, to develop public outreach program to educate the public about the public and private benefits of energy conservation, including costs savings to the individual household, reducing the carbon footprint for the community, and promoting a more sustainable lifestyle. Action 14.3: Adopt measures to reduce energy consumption in City-owned and maintained properties. Action 14.4: Develop incentives, or bonuses, within the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to encourage development of projects that meet energy conservation goals.

DRAFT

Goal 15: Mitigate Built-Environments Impact on Natural Resources	Policy 15.1: New developments, and redeveloped areas, are encouraged to use best management practices to manage storm water runoff from entering Wapsipinicon's watershed and the City's sanitary sewer system. Policy 15.2: New development requiring public sanitary sewer services is encouraged to use technologies to reduce wastewater discharge. Policy 15.3: Market reclaimed water as an alternative to potable water use for the watering of plants, and other uses.	Action 15.1: Develop public outreach programs to educate the public about the need to reduce water demand and wastewater discharge to maintain a healthy water supply. Provide information about ways to reduce wastewater discharges, such as low-flow or no-flow toilets, efficient faucets, and use of non-potable water sources. Action 15.2: Adopt and implement green infrastructure measures to reduce storm water runoff and minimize flash flooding.

DRAFT

Goal 16: Improved Neighborhoods	Policy 16.1: The City will support and assist neighborhood associations and housing organizations that promote community values, polices, and actions that are consistent with this Plan. Policy 16.2: Community improvements should be designed to attract a mix of socio-economic backgrounds to locate in aging and historic neighborhoods. Policy 16.3: Renovations within existing neighborhoods should provide quality, sustainable housing in a manner that enhances and upholds the character of the neighborhood. Policy 16.4: Non-residential development within existing neighborhoods should provide neighborhood services and should not negatively impact the neighborhood with noise, traffic, or other impacts. Policy 16.5: After exhausting all renovation options, blighted, uninhabitable buildings should be replaced with new infill structure that are compatible with the neighborhood context and enhance the visual appearance of the area.	Action 16.1: Establish a neighborhood planning process that develops strategic plans for individual neighborhoods.
Goal 17: Well-Maintained Existing Structures and Lots	Policy 17.1: The conditions of housing in transitional areas (area between adjacent land uses) should be monitored on an ongoing and regular basis. Policy 17.2: The City will work with landowners, neighborhood associations, and other relevant organizations to seek strategies to address blighted, uninhabitable, and hazardous housing, ancillary structures, and lots. Policy 17.3: The City will continue to enforce the nuisance ordinance and remove unsafe and uninhabitable structures, per City ordinance.	Action 17.1: Adopt development standards to limit parking in front yard areas and front lawns. Action 17.2: Continue to coordinate and apply for rehabilitation funds from local, state, and federal sources. Action 17.3: Adopt a Minimal Housing Code.

DRAFT

Goal 18: Increased Homeownership and Rental Opportunities	Policy 18.1: Through land development standards and zoning, facilitate the development of a mix of housing types at different price points to meet the needs of households with different incomes. Policy 18.2: Continue to coordinate efforts with other governmental entities and local housing developers to seek efforts to develop affordable housing units.	Action 18.1: Continue to support and apply for housing funds from local, state, and federal sources.
Goal 19: Housing Opportunities for a Diversity of Households	Policy 19.1: New housing developments should provide a mix of housing types to meet different lifestyle needs. Policy 19.2: Senior housing developments that allow Independence's population to "age in place" are encouraged. These developments should be located to provide an incorporate infrastructure to provide access to sidewalks and other multi-modal opportunities.	Action 19.1: Update the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to allow for a mix of housing types within new developments, within mixed-use areas, and within Downtown. Provide incentives to developers that include a mix of housing types within a single development.
Goal 20: Expanded Economic Base	Policy 20.1: A variety of employment opportunities and new businesses are encouraged to develop in Independence. Policy 20.2: A diversified job market that provides employment opportunities for persons with varying educational levels and skill sets in needed and encouraged. Policy 20.3: The City of Independence supports local partnerships and efforts to capitalize on Independence's strengths and opportunities to provide new employment opportunities in Independence.	Action 20.1: Work with local economic development partners to identify future development opportunities and assist with development approvals by providing zoning and infrastructure to foster development of new employment centers, as guided by the Future Land Use Map. Action 20.2: Work with local economic development partners to identify long-term needs for airport development and industrial park needs. Action 20.3: Analyze development approvals, recruitment efforts, locations of newly established businesses and locations where businesses are not seceding to identify trends. Trends that show that recruitment efforts are inconsistent with Downtown business development initiatives should be addressed.

DRAFT

Goal 21: Enhanced Job Readiness of the Workforce	Policy 21.1: The City of Independence supports local educational institutions, such of Hawkeye Community College and Independence Community School District, in their efforts to train and educate Independence's workforce and will provide support and needed assistance to these efforts by working to improve accessibility to educational facilities and improve the quality of life in the city. Policy 21.2: The City supports the workforce development efforts of Buchanan County Economic Development and Independence Chamber of Commerce to create partnerships between businesses and schools, to develop and implement career exploration programs for students, internships, apprenticeships, and to secure commitments from local businesses to recruit employees from the local workforce pool.	Action 21.1: Work with local partner organizations to identify ways that the City can assist with reaching the goal of enhancing job readiness of the local workforce.
Goal 22: Technology-Oriented Economic Development Efforts	Policy 22.1: Leverage community investments in fiber-optic networks into more economic development opportunities	Action 22.1: Work with local partners to market Independence as a having a strong fiber-optic network in the county. Action 22.2: Work with existing businesses in Independence to develop business expansion strategies that capitalize on local technologies. Action 22.3: Work with Independence Light and Power to establish a Wi-Fi network in the Downtown area to encourage redevelopment and revitalization in the core center.

DRAFT

Goal 23: Development of Locally Owned Businesses	Policy 23.1: The City will consider economic development incentives to local residents in the promotion of locally-owned businesses. Policy 23.2: The City will support local business development by working with local economic development partners to identify funding sources for emerging local businesses. Policy 23.3: The City will support and assist small businesses in utilizing new technologies to expand their market base. Policy 23.4: The City will support and assist local economic development partners in identifying, promoting, and implementing small business education and networking opportunities.	Action 23.1: In coordination with local economic development partners, identify barriers to local business development that the City can take action to amend. Action 23.2: The City will review all procurement requests and whenever possible use locally-owned vendors. Action 23.3: Provide a clearing housing for information on locating a business in Independence and the available State and local resources available to small businesses, including funding, training, grants, and location assistance.
Goal 24: Develop a Visitor and Tourism Office & Program	Policy 24.1: The City will support the development of a visitor and tourism office and program.	Action 24.1: In coordination with local partners, such as Buchanan County, Chamber of Commerce, and Buchanan County Economic Development, a visitor and tourism office will be established with funding for all parties to market and promote the community.

DRAFT

Goal 25: A Multi-Modal Transportation System	Policy 25.1: New roads and road improvements should be designed using the 'complete streets" approach that provides access to all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, and automobile drivers. Policy 25.2: Improve visual quality and provide multi-modal capacity by applying the 'road diet" approach to certain roads. This approach takes traditional four lane undivided roads and changes the configuration to three lanes (two travel and one turning lane) and two bike lanes. Policy 25.3: To ensure that roads promote community character and are appropriately designed for their environment, context-sensitive road design principles and traffic calming measures should be considered for all roadway projects, including updates to existing roads. Policy 25.4: New transportation facilities shall be developed in a manner that avoids negative impacts on the natural environment, including air quality, water resources, biological resources, and wildlife habitat. Policy 25.5: Continue protection of the Independence Airport from encroachment by non-compatible development. Policy 25.6: Maintain the Independence Airport and improve its facilities.	Action 25.1: Continue collaboration efforts with Buchanan County and Iowa Department of Transportation to improve the transportation network. Action 25.2: Adopt a "complete streets" ordinance. Action 25.3: Complete the Airport Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

DRAFT

Goal 26: Maintained Road Capacity & Safety	Policy 26.1: Future development occurring along key transportation corridors, such as Highway 151, 20th Avenue SW and Highway 20, should be designed in a manner to efficiently use existing road capacity and should mitigate potential traffic impacts. Policy 26.2: Increase the efficiency of the existing roadway network through operational measures and targeted improvements, such as signal timing upgrades, access management, and alternative methods of intersection control. Policy 26.3: Work with private developers to minimize the impact on key corridors and require new developments to pay (for all or partial) for needed roadway improvements generated by the developments. Policy 26.4: Street access provisions, such as driveway/curb cuts and street access points along major and minor thoroughfares and collector streets should be limited to allow these roads to primarily serve as a traffic movement corridors. Access management best practices are encouraged. Policy 26.5: Residential neighborhood street design patterns are encouraged to promote inter-connectivity and minimize cul-de-sacs, accommodate sidewalks and on-street parking, and foster safe environments for pedestrian and cyclists.	Action 26.1: During the next update to the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, ensure that designations and development standards applicable to lands along major and minor thoroughfares and collector streets meet the following objectives: • Require internal circulation of commercial and employment centers and limit the number of street access points to maintain road capacity. • Land uses permitted along the roads will provide accessibility and facilities for multiple modes of transportation. • Transportation Impact Analyses should include all modes of transportation. Action 26.2: Adopt new access management standards to apply to all developments along major and minor thoroughfares.

DRAFT

Goal 27 An Interconnected System for Pedestrians and Bicyclists	Policy 27.1: In accordance with Independence's Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, the provision of bikeways and walkways and supportive facilities, such as bicycle racks, should be provided throughout Independence. Policy 27.2: Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be considerations for all road construction and maintenance projects. Policy 27.3: New developments should incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities and amenities, such as sidewalks and multi-use paths, as designated, or as necessary to serve the new development. Policy 27.4: Provide new sidewalks and sidewalk improvements in accordance with the prioritized list developed by the Independence Pedestrian Committee. Policy 27.5: Continue to implement the Safe Routes to School program to identify priority sidewalk improvements and educate students and parents about the benefits of walking and biking to school.	Action 27.1: Implement the Independence Pedestrian Committee recommendations and other enhancements plans Action 27.2: Consider providing a dedicated, annual funding source to pay for public pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

DRAFT

Goal 28: Promote Orderly Sustainable Growth	Policy 28.1: Direct growth to the degree that it offers alternative sites for development. Policy 28.2: Service existing areas of the community as well as address any additional expansion opportunities that may arise. Policy 28.3: Implement the Comprehensive Plan through its commissions, boards, and authorities (i.e. City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustment, etc.). Policy 28.4: Continue to work cooperatively with developers to encourage land for parks, natural areas, open spaces, recreational trails, and/or greenways. Policy 28.5: Direct new development to existing commercial and industrial corridors and growth areas; promote infill residential and commercial development, and revitalization of the Downtown area with mixed use development. Policy 28.6: Develop design standards for specific areas in the community; for instance, Downtown and commercial corridors.	Action 28.1: Investigate the use of overlay districts within the Zoning Ordinance. Action 28.2: Amend existing regulations and ordnances to allow converting existing vacant sites and buildings into mixed use developments. Action 28.3: Amend regulations and ordinances to allow a balanced mix of land uses and a compact development form (incorporates best management practices for storm water management).
Goal 29: Develop a Livable Downtown	Policy 29.1: Encourage mixed-use development and redevelopment of underutilized lots and buildings in downtown, including but not limited to, vacant sites and surface parking lots. Policy 29.2: Promote infill development and revitalization of the Downtown area	Action 29.1: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to create a new 'Downtown' zoning district to regulate mixed-use development and upper floor(s) residential units. Action 29.2: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the amount of required off-street surface parking.

DRAFT

Goal 30: Continue and Expand Coordination / Collaboration Efforts	Policy 30.1: The City will continue to work collaboratively with existing partners. Policy 30.2: The City will cultivate new partners and opportunities to expand collaboration and coordination to benefit the community.	Action 30.1: Work Cooperatively with Buchanan County on land use decisions within the 2-mile fringe area. Action 30.2: Work cooperatively with various Buchanan County departments or agencies that may share enforcement responsibilities with the City. Action 30.3: Work cooperatively with the other jurisdictions and entities with shared 28E agreements.
Goal 31: Continue to Engage with Community	Policy 31.1: The City, and its partners, will continue to improve communications between other government entities, local agencies, individuals, non-profits, major employers, and others in order to benefit the entire community. Policy 31.2: Explore ways to better engage and network with citizens and local stakeholders, outside of public meetings.	Action 31.1: Develop a public engagement plan to explore opportunities for expanded community engagement, education, and transparency. Action 31.2: Work to keep city website and social media accounts up-to-date.

DRAFT

Priority Implementation Actions

The following are the top priority implementation actions for Independence.

Priority 1: Amend Independence's Land Development Ordinances
This Plan reflects the desired future land use and development goals for the City of Independence. One of the main land management tools for achieving these goals is the City's ordinances, particularly the Zoning and Subdivision Ordnances. Key amendments should include these action elements:

- Action 1.3: Investigate the implementation of clustered or conservation subdivisions and site developments to conserve impact on natural resources.

- Action 13.1: Ensure that City departments share information and coordinate planning for proposed developments that will require expansion of public infrastructure.
- Action 13.2: Assess the potential for proposed developments to meet Plan Update 2014 goals and policies to maximize existing infrastructure and

compare proposed plans against the Future Land Use map.

- Action 13.3: Ensure that public right-of-way for roadways have adequate space for locating all underground public utilities.
- Action 14.4: Develop incentives, or bonuses, within the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to encourage development of projects that meet energy conservation goals.
- Action 15.2: Adopt and implement green infrastructure measures to reduce storm water runoff and minimize flash flooding.
- Action 17.1: Adopt development standards to limit parking in front yard areas and front lawns.
- Action 17.3: Adopt a Minimal Housing Code.
- Action 19.1: Update the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to allow for a mix of housing types within new developments, within mixed-use areas, and within Downtown. Provide incentives to developers that include a mix of housing types within a single development.
- Action 25.3: Complete the Airport Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.
- Action 25.2: Adopt a "complete streets" ordinance.
- Action 26.1: During the next update to the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, ensure that designations and development standards applicable to lands along major and minor thoroughfares and collector streets meet the following objectives:
    - Require internal circulation of commercial and employment centers and limit the number of street access points to maintain road capacity.
    - Land uses permitted along the roads will provide accessibility and facilities for multiple modes of transportation.
    - Transportation Impact Analyses should include all modes of transportation.
- Action 26.2: Adopt new access management standards to apply to all developments along major and minor thoroughfares.
- Action 27.1: Implement the Independence Pedestrian Committee recommendations and other enhancements plans
- Action 28.1: Investigate the use of overlay districts within the Zoning Ordinance.
- Action 28.2: Amend existing regulations and ordnances to allow converting existing vacant sites and buildings into mixed use developments.
- Action 28.3: Amend regulations and ordinances to allow a balanced mix of land uses and a compact development form (incorporates best management practices for storm water management).
- Action 29.1: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to create a new 'Downtown' zoning district to regulate mixed-use development and upper floor(s) residential units.
- Action 29.2: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the amount of required off-street surface parking.
- Action 30.1: Work Cooperatively with Buchanan County on land use decisions within the 2-mile fringe area.

This priority should be initiated within one year of approval of this Plan. Responsible parties to complete this priority are: City Council, City Staff and Planning and Zoning Commission

Priority 2: Establish a Collective Brand for Independence

This Plan identified a need to identify a central image of the community and education citizens, and potential businesses and residents, in order to stay to competitive. The following action elements were identified:

DRAFT

- Action 7.1: Offer civic events that bring diverse groups of people together to further forge the "One Independence" goal. An example could be a "Town Hall" style event that focuses on key issues of common concern in the community.
- Action 7.2: Ensure all organized cultural events that display the unique character of the City and its residents
- Action 24.1: In coordination with local partners, such as Buchanan County, Chamber of Commerce, and Buchanan County Economic Development, a visitor and tourism office will be established with funding for all parties to market and promote the community.
- Action 31.1: Develop a public engagement plan to explore opportunities for expanded community engagement, education, and transparency.
- Action 31.2: Work to keep city website and social media accounts up-to-date.

This priority should be initiated within one year of approval of this Plan. Responsible parties to complete this priority are: City Staff and Departments, Chamber of Commerce, Buchanan County Economic Development, and other local stakeholders.

Priority 3: Establish a Capital Improvement Plan

In order to maximum taxpayer dollars and provide adequate levels of services, a critical element is a Capital Improvement Plan. The following actions would be impacted by this priority.

- Action 8.3: Identify and install beautification measures along Independence's major thoroughfares. For instance, plantings, street banners, signs, etc.
- Action 9.1: Continue implementation of Indee Go-Healthy projects and incentives.
- Action 10.2: Incorporate new facility needs, such as fire station and police station, into the City's Capital Improvement Program.
- Action 14.1: Adopt formal energy efficiency performance standards for new public facilities and expansions of existing public facilities.
- Action 14.3: Adopt measures to reduce energy consumption in City-owned and maintained properties.
- Action 27.2: Consider providing a dedicated, annual funding source to pay for public pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

This priority should be initiated within one year of approval of this Plan. Responsible parties to complete this priority are: City Council, City Staff and Departments

DRAFT

Chapter 1 – Introduction

Section 1: Comprehensive Plan Defined

Comprehensive land use planning is a conscious act of a community to plan for its physical development. In addition, planning requires that the existing circumstances of a community be defined and evaluated, including existing land use patterns, population characteristics, community and area plans, public service availability, and public sentiment. In the City of Independence, Iowa, the Comprehensive Plan Update is the written result of these efforts. The Plan Update is designed to be a general guide for physical development of the community.

The Comprehensive Land Use Plan, which may also be referred to as a General Plan, Master Plan, or Comprehensive Plan, represents the principal document that organizes concepts and states goals and objectives relating to the future physical development of the city. Predictable and desirable development in the city depends upon the establishment of a vision for the future that perceives the interrelationships of governmental services, private development needs, public finances, free market dynamics, population characteristics, environmental health, and the desires of the majority of the citizenry. The Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update strives to integrate and balance those various forces so as to promote the most beneficial physical development and community welfare possible in the next 10 to 20 years.

The most beneficial future portrait of the city requires that the Comprehensive Plan Update incorporates the vital input of two major civic forces:

1. Governmental agencies which administer critical phases of building development, such as infrastructure provision and important public resources such as parks and schools; and

2. Private sector investment and enterprise which provide the capital and energy necessary to construct homes, businesses, services, and industry.

The Comprehensive Plan Update seeks to incorporate the best visions and ideals of the citizens along with realistic needs and aspirations of private development in order to capitalize upon the city's ongoing productivity and potential.

Furthermore, the *Plan Update 2014* promotes managed growth that is cost-effective and logical. The City hopes to prevent leapfrog development or urban sprawl, as well as minimize conflict between incompatible uses that locate next to each other. In addition, the Plan Update establishes a circular process of implementation, review, and amendment for itself.

DRAFT

Section 2: Planning in Iowa – Legal Basis

The Independence Comprehensive Plan, and its sequential updates, is designed to meet the statutory requirements of the State of Iowa. The ability of the city to plan and regulate land use within its borders is granted through Chapter 414 of the Code of Iowa, which may also be referred to as "state enabling legislation" for planning powers. Also, this Plan is intended to meet planning requirements for its implementation tools, chief among those being the community's zoning ordinance (Code Chapter 414), land subdivision ordinance (Code Chapter 354), urban renewal program (Code Chapter 403), and the newly adopted Iowa Smart Planning Principles (Code Chapter 18B).

Section 3: Plan Organization

Plan Update 2014 is divided into three chapters for the ease of citizens, development interests, local and regional agencies, and decision-makers who will be its primary users. These three chapters include: Introduction, Smart Planning Elements, and Plan Implementation.

Chapter 1: Introduction
This first chapter discusses what a comprehensive plan is, the legality of a plan, the components of a plan, and the public participation conducted to update the plan.

Chapter 2: Plan Elements
The heart of the Plan Update 2014 is found in this chapter. This chapter discusses in detail the two process elements and the ten background elements to a comprehensive plan.

Chapter 2 is comprised of the twelve smart growth elements. The reader who understands these sections will understand Independence's implementation plan (outlined in Chapter 3) and the extensive citizen, task force, commission, and staff effort that created it. Each element or section contains the goals, objectives, and action strategies developed by citizen, Task Force, local Commissions, and the Planning and Zoning Commission, recommended by the Planning and Zoning Commission, and adopted by Independence's City Council. Each group of goals, objectives, and action strategies is preceded by a summary of existing conditions and issues and opportunities.

The twelve sections or elements of Chapter 2 are:

- Section 1: Community Overview (location, history, population)
- Section 2: Agricultural & Natural Resources
- Section 3: Hazards

DRAFT

- Section 4: Community Character
- Section 5: Community Facilities
- Section 6: Public Infrastructure & Utilities
- Section 7: Housing
- Section 8: Economic Development
- Section 9: Transportation
- Section 10: Land Use
- Section 11: Intergovernmental Collaboration

Each section provides the information needed to understand how the *Plan Update 2014* is intended to guide growth and development in Independence, but the sections, as well as all chapters, work in connection with one another. For instance, to understand the local economy, the reader needs to know about the community history and population trends. The income levels, age and other community characteristics help determine land use needs, the location and type of housing that the market needs to provide, and so on.

As mentioned earlier, this chapter contains plan elements or sections that provide details supporting the Action Plan recommendations. Each element is generally organized as follows:

- Introduction – provides a brief overview of the specific context of the section.
- Existing Conditions – examines the current conditions specific to element in discussion.
- Issues and Opportunities – provides a summary of the identified issues and opportunities that would impact future development of the city.
- Goals, Objectives, and Action Strategies – provides formulated strategies for resolving the major issues of the city.

Chapter 3: Plan Implementation

Also known to some as the Action Plan (Implementation – Smart Growth Element), this chapter should be viewed as the user's manual to work through implementing the identified goals, objections, and action strategies in Chapter 2. This chapter also discusses the adoption and amendment processes, how to evaluate and effectively participate in continued – and in some cases – improved collaboration events with local, county, and regional agencies and organizations.

The Action Plan sets an agenda for future work to be done. To many persons involved in *Plan Update 2014*, it has become clear that the planning process is one of discovery and working together. While we know more about the community, the values and desires of the people who live here, much remains to be done over time by citizens, city officials, city staff, city commissions, and community organizations to work through this city's more difficult land use, economic, cultural, housing, and governance issues.

DRAFT

The Action Plan builds on Independence's history of successful planning and development initiatives. Experience gained from previous planning documents and ongoing efforts (financial and time) provided the groundwork to refine the goals, objectives, and action strategies found in the *Plan Update 2014*.

These main assumptions were used in developing the Action Plan.

- The plan must be concise, user-friendly, and visionary.
- The plan must be reasonably internally consistent, well integrated, financially feasible and generally capable of implementation.
- The plan must be developed on strong public insight.

DRAFT

Section 4: Planning Process

The planning process used to update the Independence Comprehensive Plan engaged a diverse group of community stakeholders, residents, and elected and appointed officials, and provided extensive opportunities for participation and involvement throughout the process.

This section summarizes the numerous phases and tasks completed in order to develop the Plan, defines the roles and responsibilities of different citizens, stakeholders, and groups involved in the planning process. It also summarizes the public involvement opportunities used to gather public input.

[SMART PLANNING ELEMENT – PUBLIC PARTICIPATION:

This is a process element that includes: Information relating to public participation during the comprehensive plan or land development regulations, including documentation of the public participation process, a compilation of objectives, policies, and goals identified in the public comment received, and identification of the groups or individuals comprising any work groups or committees that were created to assist the planning and zoning commission or other appropriate decision-making body of the municipality.]

The Planning Process

The planning process used to update the City of Independence's Comprehensive Plan engaged a diverse group of community stakeholders, concerned citizens, elected and appointed officials, city staff, and county representatives. The process allowed numerous opportunities for participation and involvement throughout the project. Throughout the project, the process balanced preserving and improving upon Independence's existing strengths, enhancing economic opportunities, preserving community character and quality of life, identifying means for redevelopment and infill, and creating a community that is livable.

Public Involvement Plan

Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG) worked closely with the City of Independence's (City) throughout the course of this project. To ensure public education and involvement throughout the comprehensive planning effort, a Public Involvement Plan (PIP) was developed. The PIP identified an approach using planning techniques that have proven successful with previous planning projects and strategies applicable to the city and its citizens.

Encouraging active public participation during plan development was the primary goal of the PIP. The PIP adhered to the Iowa's Smart Planning Principles of Collaboration, Efficiency, Transparency, and Consistency. The PIP identified task force meetings and public hearings for the Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council. The PIP also

DRAFT

identified various media methods – press releases, public notices, flyers, city website postings, and city newsletters. Below are details of the roles, responsibilities, and outcome of the PIP efforts.

Public Open House

A public open house was held on October 29, 2013 to gather input from Independence citizens. Twenty-two citizens attended the open house in October. The top strength identified by those persons was location (proximity to Highway 150 and 20). The top need in the community was identified as promoting renewable energy, followed by a need overall attitude changes between old ideas and proactive ideas. The top opportunity identified was becoming a Main Street community. The top concern was too much bickering and reluctance to take risks (Main Street, Aquatic Center, trains) and the empty storefronts and lack of diversity downtown. Below is a complete list of comments received. The number in (#) is the number of people who agreed with the response.

What are Independence's Strengths?

- Small town ethics with large town amenities
- Core groups of young, progressive minded individuals interested in volunteering in, staying in, and working for long-term improvement with the city (4)
- Community pride (3)
- Location – Hwy 150, Hwy 20, River (5)
- Downtown and its history (2)
- Positive newspaper (3)
- Quality shopping, what there is of it
- Volunteerism – mentoring (2)
- Housing – affordable (single-family)
- Safe community (2)
- Library (2)
- Commutable distance to Cedar Falls, Cedar Rapids, Dubuque
- Beautiful natural setting, a proud history, solid economic base, two strong car dealerships, new Jr/Sr High School, variety of dining establishments, county seat, community organizations, churches, movie theater.

What are Independence's Needs?

- More business and management opportunities (3)
- Promote renewable energy (7)
- Overall attitude changes within bridging the gap between old ideas with go nowhere attitudes and those attitudes and ideas more proactive in nature (5)
- A desire from the community to invest in and be interest for our future (2)
- Indee Light and Power: net meter (5)
- Indee Light and Power – improve energy audit process and follow through (2)
- Become idea friendly (3)
- Groups work together (2)
- Recreational opportunities – bike trails (5)
- New development should include sidewalks/trails (5)
- Dog park (3)
- Lower taxes (2)
- More efficient government use of new tech to lower cost – do more with less (2)
- Waste management needs to recycle metal cans (2)
- Continuous cleaning of sanitary and storm sewers (2)
- Build storm sewers where there are none - south of pizza hut (2)
- Clean ditches east of Kidsville every five years (2)
- Keep Main Street strong, positive leadership, communication and education of citizens on how their money is spent, well-maintained infrastructure, social media presence by the city – not just cable and a website.

DRAFT

What are Independence's Opportunities?

- Great school system – good start for youth = "Start here, succeed anywhere." (5)
- Opportunities for growth (3)
- Being located in a central area, allowing commuting opportunity for families while living, spending, and growing in Indee (3)
- Main Street Iowa – Green streets (5)
- Become a destination
- Market the river (3)
- Airport (3)
- Young professional moving back – virtual corp. office (2)
- National marketing of Amish quilts and solid furniture (2)
- Our town should become the first in Iowa to welcome electric vehicles – especially golf carts on city streets (lic. Insured and lighted golf carts) (2)
- Reroute Highway 150 to create downtown destination area
- Build off of our strong small manufacturing base, a chance to revitalize the downtown, green space waiting to be developed into community defining space, add to and enhance the existing trial system, economic developer-school partnerships to help create a well-educated/trained work force, KQMG radio – it could be a huge asset to our community – could the city help it become that?

What are Independence's Concerns?

- Budget and finance – getting best "bang for buck"
- Business and management profile (image of the city)
- Climate change (5)
- Figuring out how to bring people back to live in Independence and keeping residents here (4)
- Getting people interested in our community
- The focus on the economic development system for the promotion, expansion, and growth in our community. (2)
- Too much bickering and reluctance to take risks – Main Street, Aquatic Center, trains (7)
- Empty stores downtown (6)
- Communication with all demographics
- Vague goals / plans for the future (3)
- Lack of diversified retail and restaurants downtown
- Diminishing Main Street, city leadership, opportunities for young adults, entertainment for young people, starter housing for young people and lower middle income workers, lack of progressive voices on the city council, an aging population that only wants things to stay the same and taxes to be cut.

What gives Independence a sense of place? How can this be enhanced for future growth and development?

- Community support for new ideas – change
- The proximity of major cities, the proximity of major arterial infrastructure in an affordable community setting. (4)
- The Mill gives a physical sense of pace. River too. Realistic plans for long term development needed for activities for different able people – physical, mental, interest. (3)
- The Celebrate Indee and Buchanan County Fair Board give us great events/festivals for not only citizens but others to enjoy and puts us on the map. (4)
- The completion of the school opens the door for others projects and a can-do attitude. (2)
- Room for growth and expansion pending management plans.
- We're the doorway to small town Eastern Iowa, yet still have a large amount of service that sets us apart from box stores and busy, bigger citizens with businesses and small business advancement and expansion; we can continue to promote Indee as a stand-alone community, with success and vision for success.
- Ingenuity and great ideas are in our midst – time to tap them (3)

DRAFT

Community Survey

In addition to the open house, a community survey was conducted in October and November via Survey Monkey. Only 165 surveys were completed, which was less than anticipated; however, the responses were consistent with what was heard at the public house, plus the responses were very similar, so it could be stated the responses capture a good sample of feedback from the community. Everyone was asked, if they hadn't already done so, to review the results. The results were discussed at each meeting as it relates to the meeting topics (see Appendix A for survey results).

Task Force Meetings

Six structured and facilitated Task Force meetings were held during the planning process. These meetings provided discussion of existing conditions, assessment findings, and development of preliminary goals, objectives, and draft recommendations for each of the thirteen Plan Elements. Each Task Force meeting ran approximately one and one-half to two (1 ½ to 2) hours from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Throughout these meeting key stakeholders - public works, police department, fire department, ambulance service, concerned/interested citizens, chamber of commerce, county economic development alliance, county public health, agriculture, development corp., economic development staff, newspaper, park board, hospital, council members, school, civic groups/organizations – provided vital information on existing conditions, concerns and needs, and draft goals and vision.

Table 1: Task Force Meetings

Meeting Dates	Location	Number of Participates	Discussion Topics
October 17, 2013	Public Library	15	Kickoff meeting: project schedule, scope, purpose, roles and responsibilities.
December 17, 2013	Falcon Civic Center	14	Public input results (survey and open house), discussion on hazards and economic development, plus vision/goal discussion.
January 21, 2014	Public Library	17	Discussion on housing, public infrastructure/utilities, and transportation.
February 18, 2014	Public Library	13	Discussion on community facilities, agriculture, and natural resources.
March 18, 2014	Public Library	7	Discussion on existing and future land uses.
April 17, 2014	Public Library	3	Review future land use map and discussion on vision and goals.

DRAFT

Planning & Zoning Commission Meeting

INRCOG presented and facilitated a Planning and Zoning Commission meeting towards the end of the project. This meeting provided review and expansion of preliminary goals and objectives, and final draft recommendations.

Public Hearings

The final draft Comprehensive Plan was presented to the Independence's Planning and Zoning Commission by City staff, with assistance from INRCOG, in November 2014. Commission members, as well as the public, had the opportunity to comment on the Plan before the Commission recommends approval by the City Council. Upon recommendation for approved by the Planning and Zoning, the final Comprehensive Plan was presented to Independence's City Council by the City staff, with assistance from INRCOG, in December 2014 at their work session, and was approved by Council on December 2014.

DRAFT

Chapter 2 – Plan Elements

This Plan Update, *Plan Update 2014,* is an updated comprehensive plan for the City of Independence. It is derived from the original 2000 Comprehensive Plan, as part of the continuing process involved in evaluating and modifying the Plan to keep it as a current and effective means of guiding the future growth and development of the city. This Update was under the direction of the Independence City Clerk and City Council.

The City of Independence had help with the completion of the *Plan Update 2014* with the assistance of Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG). The Commission provided input and guidance to INRCOG planners to ensure the direction of the update was consistent with city citizens and current development trends.

The Plan Update 2014 was development using the Iowa Smart Planning Principles (Iowa Code 18B.1) and the identified thirteen elements of a comprehensive plan (Iowa Code 18B.2). These principles and elements assisted in shaping what and how information was discussed and compiled in this Plan.

Smart Planning Guiding Principles

The Plan Update 2014 was guided by Iowa's Smart Growth and Sustainable Principles (Iowa Code 18B.1 and 18B.2). As Iowa Code 18B.1 states "…local governments, … shall consider and may apply the following principles during deliberation of all appropriate planning, zoning, development and resource management decisions."

DRAFT

These principles include:

- ***Collaboration*** – Governmental, community, and individual stakeholders, including those outside the jurisdiction of the entity, are encouraged to be involved and provide comment during deliberation of planning, zoning, development, and resource management decisions and during implementation of such decisions. The state agency, local government, or other public entity is encouraged to develop and implement a strategy to facilitate such participation.

- ***Efficiency, Transparency, and Consistency*** – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should be undertaken to provide efficient, transparent, and consistent outcomes. Individuals, communities, regions, and governmental entities should share in the responsibility to promote the equitable distribution of development benefits and costs.

- ***Clean, Renewable, and Efficient Energy*** – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should be undertaken to promote clean and renewable energy use and increased energy efficiency.

- ***Occupational Diversity*** – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should promote increased diversity of employment and businesses opportunities, promote access to education and training, expand entrepreneurial opportunities, and promote the establishment of businesses in locations near existing housing, infrastructure, and transportation.

- ***Revitalization*** – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should facilitate the revitalization of established town centers and neighborhoods by promoting development that conserves land, protects historic resources, promotes pedestrian accessibility, and integrates different uses of property. Remediation and reuse of existing sites, structures, and infrastructure is preferred over new construction in undeveloped areas.

- ***Housing Diversity*** – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should encourage diversity in the types of available housing, support the rehabilitation of existing housing, and promote the location of housing near public transportation and employment centers.

- ***Community Character*** – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should promote activities and development that are consistent with the character and architectural style of the community and should respond to local values regarding the physical character of the community.

- ***Natural Resource and Agricultural Protection*** – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should emphasize protection, preservation, and restoration of natural resources, agricultural land, and cultural and historic landscapes, and should increase the availability of open spaces and recreational facilities.

- ***Sustainable Design*** – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should promote developments, buildings, and infrastructure that utilize sustainable design and construction standards and conserve natural resources by reducing waste and pollution through efficient use of land, energy,

DRAFT

water, air, and materials.

- ***Transportation Diversity*** – Planning, zoning, development, and resource management should promote expanded transportation options for residents of the community. Consideration should be given to transportation options that maximize mobility, reduce congestion, conserve fuel, and improve air quality.

Smart Planning Elements

Under subsection 2 of the Iowa Code (18B.2), it stated a city "shall consider the smart planning principles" and "may include" the elements listed below, if applicable, when developing or amending a comprehensive plan. The twelve smart planning elements that are discussed in this chapter are:

- Community Overview
- Agricultural & Natural Resources
- Hazards
- Community Character
- Community Facilities
- Public Infrastructure & Utilities
- Transportation
- Housing
- Economic Development
- Land Use
- Intergovernmental Collaboration
- Implementation – Action Plan

DRAFT

Section 1: Community Overview

In this section, the city and county past population trends, population characteristics, and population projections are examined. The information generated from this section will be valuable to accomplish multi-generational planning - takes into consideration the needs of all age groups throughout all stages of planning - for years to come and to understand where Independence came from.

Location

The City of Independence is located in the northeastern quadrant of the State of Iowa. More specifically, Independence is located in the middle of Buchanan County, of which it serves as the county seat.

Community History

In 1846, the cabin of Rufus B. Clark, a well-known pioneer and hunter of the time, occupied the present site of Independence. In 1847, to protect his land claim, Clark sought the assistance of his friend and advisor N. A. McClure of Milwaukee, and with S. P. Stoughton they succeeded in purchasing four 40-acre lots. In June of that same year, three commissioners appointed by the state visited the county and on the 15th of June, established the county seat and named it Independence. In the spring of 1848, several families moved into the area bringing the total number of families to eight.

As time passed, Independence became more important as a trading point and although there were many new residents, little advance was made in the permanent population for several years. By 1859, Independence had grown into a city of 1,500 inhabitants that consisted of mills and mechanic shops, churches, hotels, a courthouse, numerous stores and hundreds of private residences. The railroad came to Independence in 1859 and was instrumental in the continued growth of the community as well as the county. Interestingly, because the railroad advanced so rapidly and opened new areas for development, it may have also helped to alleviate any potential growth pressures that the community may have experienced.

In 1864, in order "…to make and enforce…rules and regulations as are necessary for the health and good order of a town," a petition for incorporation was filed and the act of incorporation was recorded on August 6, 1864, with the first election occurring in mid-December of that year.

May 1st, 1873 marked the opening of the "State Hospital for the Insane," located west of town on 300 acres of land. This facility was renamed as a "State Hospital," and subsequently renamed again as a "Mental Health Institute". Currently, the facility serves a 20-county area of northeast Iowa.

DRAFT

In the late 1880s, Independence was brought into national recognition with the development of a racetrack on the western edge of town. The developer of this facility, C. W. Williams, also owned two world-record trotting horses. Together the combination of the racetrack and the two award-winning horses provided a strong attraction for the city that lasted for many years.

Presently there are nine buildings in Independence listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Wapsipinicon Mill and the Munson Building are two of the more recognizable of these buildings.. The first, a mill, was built in 1854 in the village of New Haven (on the west bank of the Wapsipinicon) and was appropriately named "The New Haven Mills." That original structure was torn down about 15 years later and construction of the present mill began in 1867, and it was eventually completed in 1869. The building is five stories high and had an original cost of approximately $40,000. The facility was originally designed to be a woolen mill, however, the surrounding area was not suitable for that business, and therefore, the mill was fitted for a flouring operation. Unfortunately, after local wheat crops failed, the mill was forced to import its wheat from Minnesota and the Dakota Territory. In the early days water was the sole source of power, before its conversion to steam and eventually electricity. In the beginning, the mill produced electricity for the entire city. The mill finally ceased operations in 1976.

The "Munson Building", which presently houses the library, is the second Independence building on the National Register of Historic Places. In 1869, the Independence Library Association was organized with a collection consisting of 300 volumes. As the growth of the library continued through the early 1890s, Perry Munson built and donated a building to the city for use as a library. The library has steadily grown as the state passed legislation in 1972 that authorized city councils to appropriate funds by taxation for library purposes.

The seven other locations that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places in the City of Independence include the Fisher-Plane Commercial Building (119 and 121 1st Street East), Maas Commercial Building (209 1st Street East), the Purdy, Eliphalet W. and Catherine E. Jaquish House (215 3rd Avenue Southwest), the Shellito, Dr. Judd D. and Margaret S. Clarke House (310 5th Avenue Southeast), the Wapsipinicon River Bridge (Highway 150 over Wapsipinicon River), the Weins Commercial Building (129-131 2nd Avenue Northeast), and the R.R. Plane Residence (301 3rd Avenue Southeast).

More recently, like many surrounding communities, the City of Independence experienced a rather bleak financial outlook during the farm crisis of the 1980s. During the 1980s the community dealt with population loss for the first time in seven decades. Fortunately, this trend reversed itself in the 1990s.

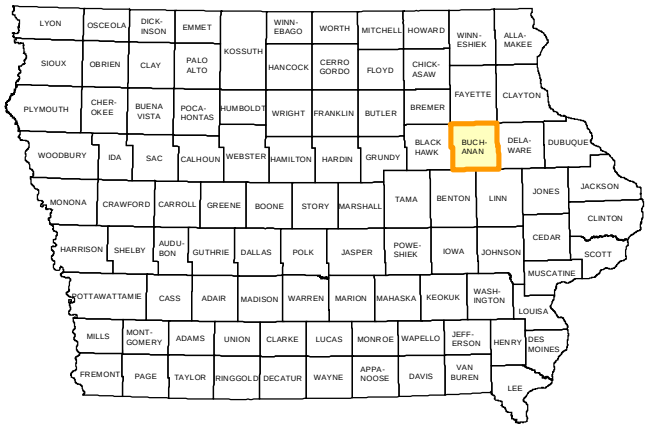
The city is constantly growing, with a variety of projects being undertaken by both private and public interests. A number of structures, following the floods of the 1990s, were identified as repetitive flood loss properties. Many of these identified properties have been purchased and removed in a cooperative effort between landowners, the City, and the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Besides population, the city has recently annexed in additional area that will eventually develop, providing jobs and security to the people of Independence and surrounding communities.

Today, Independence has over 6,000 residents and numerous amenities: Buchanan County Health Center, Buchanan County Safety Center, Independence Police and Fire, Independence Light and Power Telecommunications, East Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative, superior parks and recreational opportunities, municipal airport, public pool and library, an active railroad, and many community service organizations.

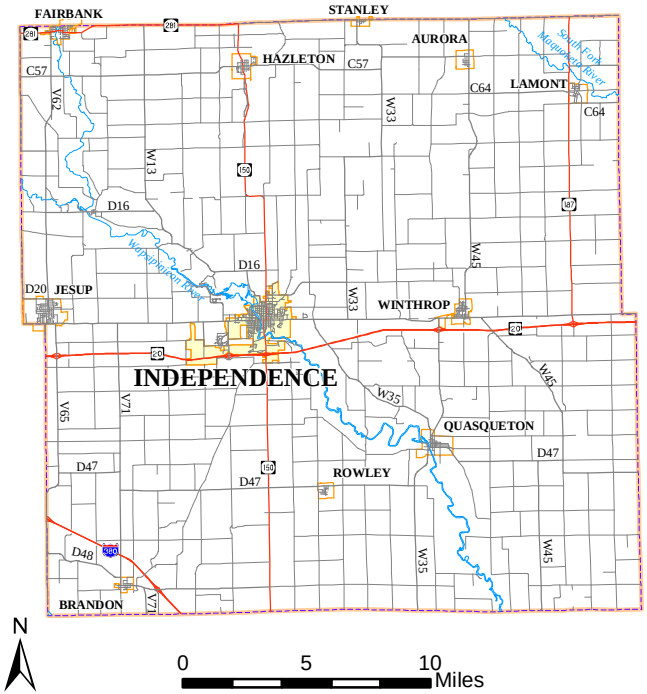
DRAFT

Map 1: Location of the City

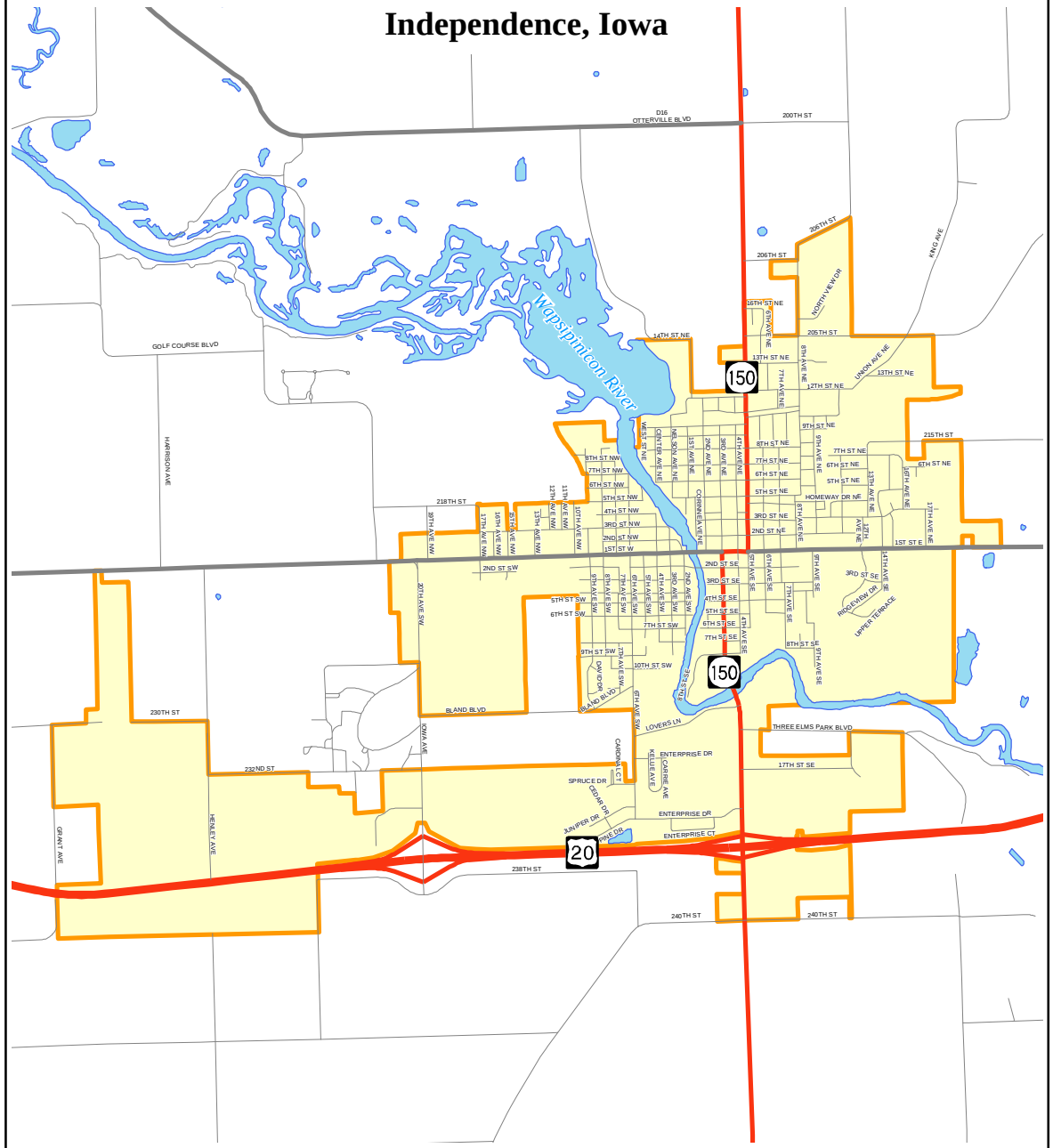
State of Iowa



Buchanan County



Independence, Iowa



The map does not represent a survey, no liability is assumed for the accuracy of the data delineated herein, either expressed or implied by INRCOG.

© (September 2014) Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments
Please call 319-235-0311 to obtain permission for use.

Government Structure

The City of Independence has a Manager- City Council form of government. The Council is made up of five representatives from five 'wards' and two 'at-large' representatives, along with a Mayor.

Population

The study of population within a comprehensive plan is important because it provides a statistical and historical profile of the community. Population demographics can also be used to make projections about the future of the community. This section of *Plan Update 2014* will provide a variety of information that describes demographic trends and projections compiled for the City of Independence.

Population trends are influenced by a number of indicators, such as:

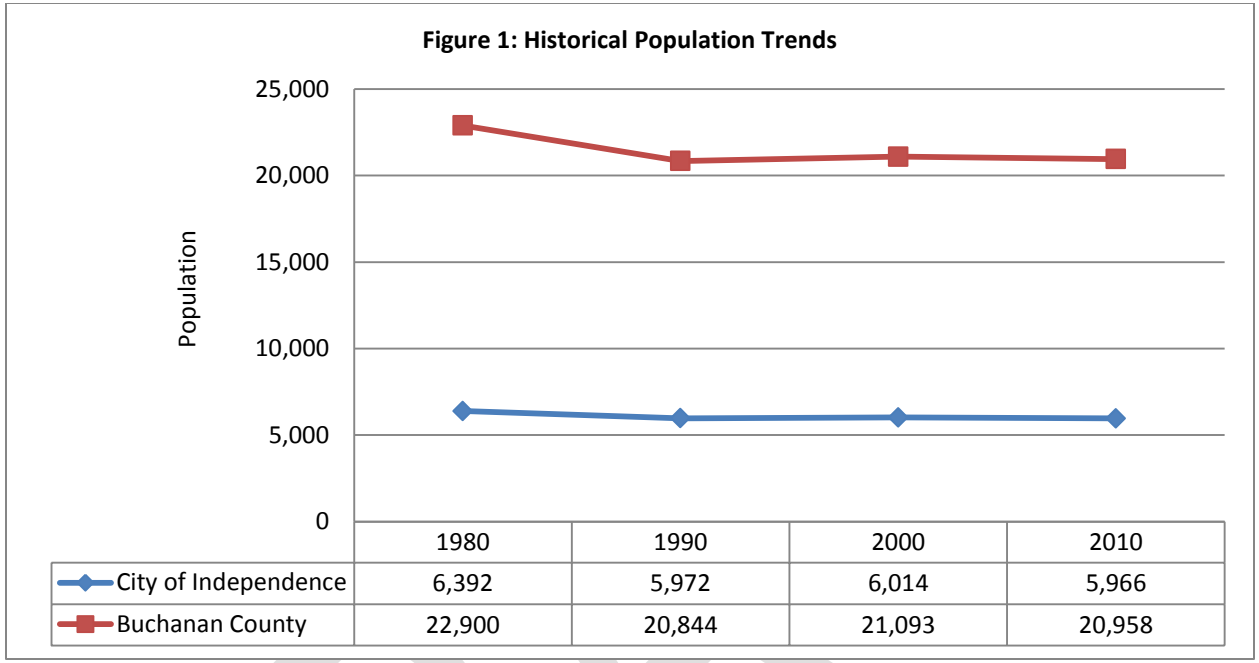
- Population Movement
- Employment (local and regional)
- Economic Factors and Activity
- Income
- Housing
- Quality of Life Issues

Throughout this *Plan Update 2014*, these factors will be discussed at length. For now, the population movement within and outside of Independence will be discussed. A community's population characteristics are the specific elements that make the community unique and diverse. This analysis examines the natural change, age, sex, and dependency ratio.

According the data obtained from the 2000 Census, the City of Independence has a population of 6,014 people. Since 1950 the City has experienced an increase in population every decade, with the notable exception of the 1980's. The reason for the decrease in population during the 1980's is due primarily to the struggling state of the local economy during that time period. Please refer to Figure 2, below, for a graphic representation of population fluctuations over the past half-century.

Figure 1 illustrates, by decade, an historical trend of the population for Independence and Buchanan County. As the figure shows, both Buchanan County and Independence have seen a fluctuation in population through the years. Each jurisdiction lost population in 1990 and 2010, but gain population in 1980 and 2000.

DRAFT

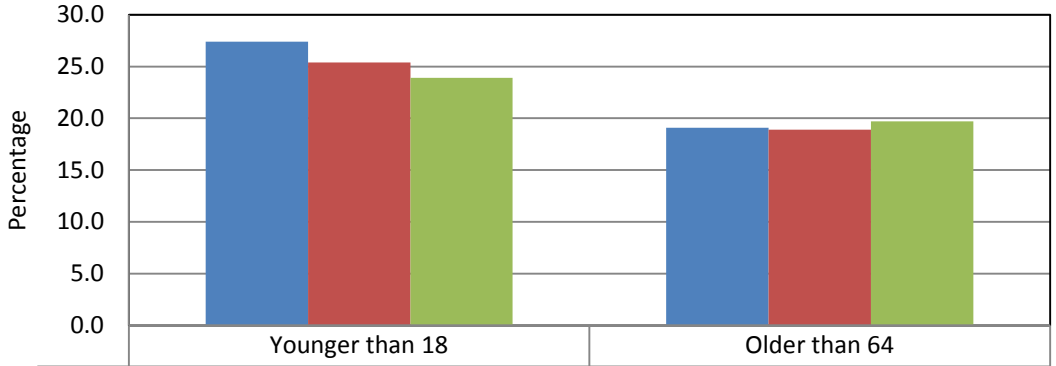


Population by Age Groups

Table 2 provides a detailed age breakdown of the city's population, as was reported by the 2000 and 2010 Censuses. First, it is important to note that only four cohorts (10-14 years, 15-10 years, 25-34 years, and 35-44 years) grew between the years shown. Second, the highest age cohorts are between 25 to 54 years. The median age in 2000 was 39.1 and it rose to 41.0 in 2010.

Figure 2 compares the percentage of persons under age 18 and those age 65 and over for Independence in 1990, 2000, and 2010. These statistics are given so that the reader can recognize possible trends in the community and compare those trends to larger statistical areas. Independence's number of young people (18 years or younger) has been declining steady since 1990; while those over age 64 has increased. This information holds some significance, as it provides a rough estimate of the aging of the population. One can assume from the table that the percentage of individual between the ages of 18 and 64 has increased, when compared to the same data collected during the 1990 Census. This is an important statistic because individuals between the ages of 18 and 64 make up the vast majority of the workforce.

Figure 2: Persons Under 18 and Over 64 Years of Age in Indepdenence
(U.S. Census Bureau)



	Younger than 18	Older than 64
1990	27.4	19.1
2000	25.4	18.9
2010	23.9	19.7

Table 2: Age Groups for Independence

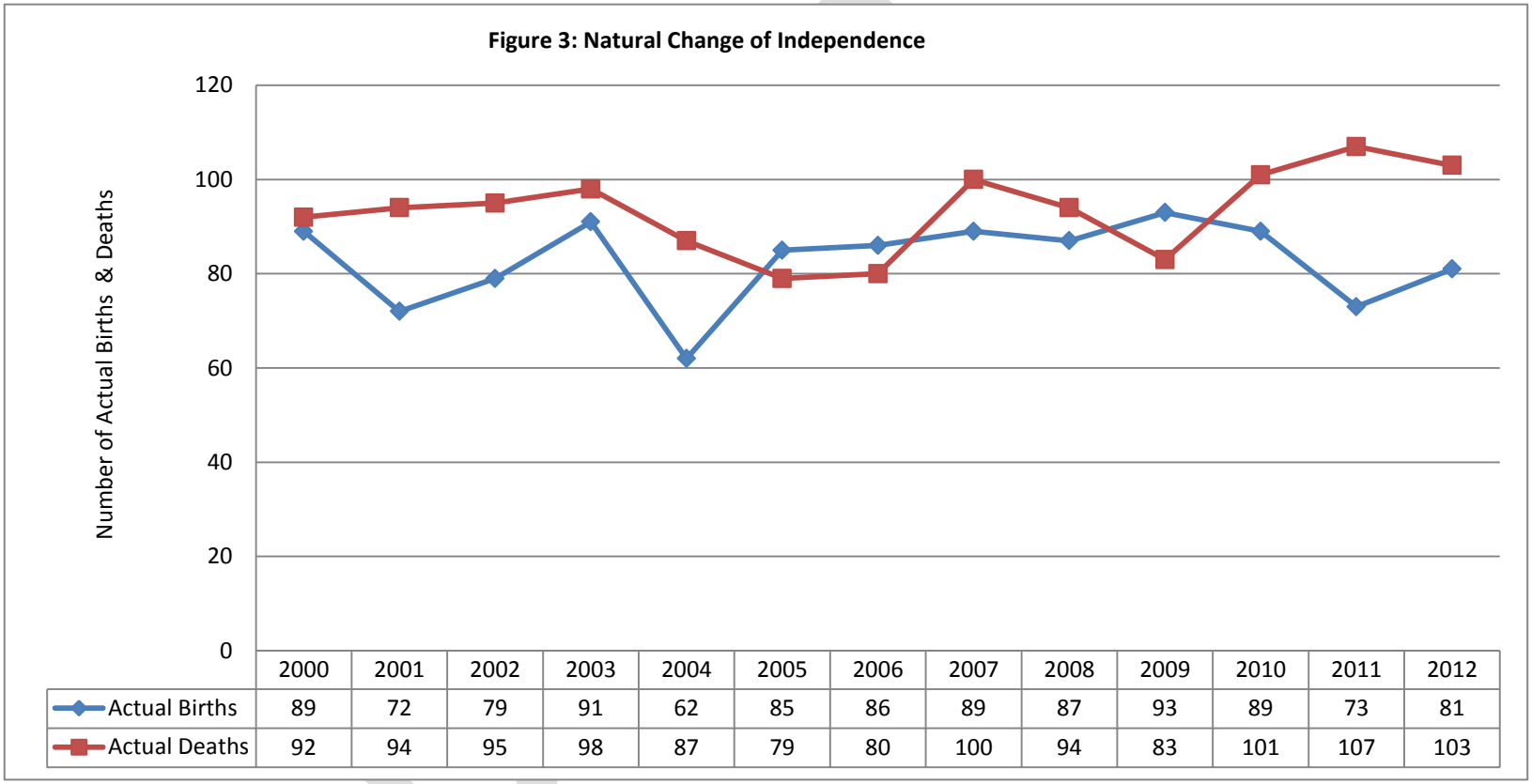
Age Group	2010		2000	
	#	%	#	%
Under 5 years	391	6.6	362	6.0
5 to 9 years	400	6.7	396	6.6
10 to 14 years	398	6.7	460	7.6
15 to 19 years	364	6.1	440	7.3
20 to 24 years	331	5.5	309	5.1
25 to 34 years	670	11.3	691	11.5
35 to 44 years	710	11.9	864	14.4
45 to 54 years	808	13.6	799	13.3
55 to 59 years	379	6.4	287	4.8
60 to 64 years	338	5.7	268	4.5
65 to 74 years	513	8.6	472	7.8
75 to 84 years	393	6.6	432	7.2
85 years and over	271	4.5	234	3.9
Total population	5,966		6,014	

Source: U.S. Census

DRAFT

Natural Change

Figures 3 illustrate the city's natural change by comparing the number of births and deaths through the years. According to data from Iowa Department of Public Health, Independence has experienced more deaths than births for the past 12 years. The only year the number of births were greater than deaths was in 2005, 2006, and 2009.



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Actual Births	89	72	79	91	62	85	86	89	87	93	89	73	81
Actual Deaths	92	94	95	98	87	79	80	100	94	83	101	107	103

Table 3 cross-tabs race by sex for Independence residents, as they were reported in the 2010 Census. Overall, the city became a more diverse community between 2000 and 2010. Also, while not recognized as a race category by the Census Bureau, persons of Hispanic origin numbered 12 persons in 2010 from 14 persons in 2000, a 17% increase.

Table 3: Race & Sex of Independence Residents							
	Total Population	White or Caucasian	Black or African American	Am. Indian, Eskimo, Aleut	Asian or Pacific Islander	Other Race	Two or More Races
Male (2010)	2,793						
Female (2010)	3,173						
Total (2010)	5,966	5,825	18	3	44	12	64
Male (2000)	2,826						
Female (2000)	3,188						
Total (2000)	6,014	5,892	17	3	46	13	43
Source: U.S. Census Bureau							

In and Out-Migration

Migration is the movement of people from one place to another. Out-migration is when people move from a jurisdiction to another; while in-migration occurs when people move into a given geographic area. According to the last American Community Survey (2007-2011), Buchanan County show 1,085 people move into the county from other Iowa counties and States. However, Buchanan County saw 1,031 people move out of the county; of which 871 of them moved to other Iowa counties – with the majority going to Black Hawk (268), Linn (148), and Fayette (110).

DRAFT

Population Projections

Projections are only estimates of future population, and many factors have an effect on the future population, such as employment, housing, and educational opportunities. While some projections use some of this data in order to estimate future population, they cannot plan for unknown events, such as drastic employment opportunities or natural disasters.

The following projections are based on the linear and geometric methods, which assume that future population will continue to change based on past trends. The linear method adds or subtracts from the population the average number from each ten-year period since 1950, while the geometric method uses an average growth or decline rate. Table 4 shows the actual number change and the growth or decline rate for each decade and their averages. Using the numbers derived in Table 4, population projections can be estimated using the two methods (Linear and Geometric) – both methods showing a steady increase in population. It is important to note that these projections are just estimates based on past trends. Many variables can affect a city's growth and/or decline in population. Nevertheless, projecting population can give some idea as to how to plan for the future.

Table 4: Population Changes & Population Projections

Year	Census Population	Number Change (Linear Method)	Growth/Decline Rate (Geometric Method)	Population Projection (Linear)	Population Projection (Geometric)
1950	4,865	--	--		
1960	5,498	+633	+13.0%		
1970	5,910	+412	+7.5%		
1980	6,392	+482	+8.2%		
1990	5,972	-420	-6.6%		
2000	6,014	+42	+0.7%		
2010	5,966	-48	-0.8%		
Average (1950-2010)		+183.5	+3.66%		
2020				**6,149**	**6,184**
2030				**6,333**	**6,410**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, INRCOG, Woods & Poole Economics, Inc.

Section 2: Agricultural & Natural Resources

[SMART PLANNING ELEMENT – AGRICULTURAL & NATURAL RESOURCES:
Objectives, policies, and programs addressing preservation and protection of agricultural and natural resources.]

The Agricultural and Natural Environment element serves two purposes. The first is to clarify the relationship between the natural environment and the built-out surroundings. The second is to secure a balanced or sustainable approach to future development. To help complete these purposes, the following guiding principles and assumptions were used, as well as the Smart Planning Principle identified in the textbox to the right:

- The cultural landscape where we work, live, and play is shaped by the natural surroundings.
- The economic base of agriculture products is dependent upon the city and county's natural setting and its' resources.
- In order to protect the long-term capacity of the environment to support growth, the community needs to understand the limits of natural systems.
- Responsible growth requires the city to work with and within their natural setting. We must work with nature rather than against it.
- Independence must recognize their limits. Humankind's problems, especially in regards to the natural setting, cannot always be solved with better science or a technological fix.
- Understanding the linkages between the natural and cultural landscapes is an important dimension of sound growth management.

The natural environment of Independence is comprised of multiple factors that combine to form the environmental setting. The importance and status of the man-made elements or the state's roads, water, sewer, businesses, and residential areas are commonly viewed, or mistaken, as being independent of the natural environment. Such misconceptions have led to the residential and commercial development of flood plains and prime agricultural land, and loss of irreplaceable natural elements such as native prairies, forests, prominent vistas, and other scenic resources.

The following section will identify the physical elements that make up the environmental setting of Independence and Buchanan County. From the identification and analysis of the individual elements, areas can be identified as sensitive, or in need of protection. The City of Independence, like all governments bodies, must learn from past mistakes and implement simple rules and regulations to ensure the protection of elements that have been destroyed in the past.

The health and stability of Independence and Buchanan County, and both the natural and man-made environments, can be measured by the diversity within the system and the ability of the city and county to develop responsively to the natural systems, which shape its ultimate path.

DRAFT

Existing Conditions

Independence's agricultural and natural resources existing conditions include agricultural lands, topography, waterways, climate, vegetation, and soils.

Agriculture

Independence has pockets of agricultural lands within its city limits; primarily between 1st Street and Highway 20.

Heartland Acres Agribition Center

Independence is home to Heartland Acres Agribition Center. The center sits on 16 acres, which showcases Iowa's agricultural heritage (past, present, and future) and is part of the Silos and Smoke Stacks National Heritage Area of Northeast Iowa.

Independence Farmers Market

An annual farmers market is provided in the community during the summer and early fall months (May-October) on Saturday mornings. The market is located at Wapsipinicon Mill in downtown Independence. There is a large selection of vegetables, local specialties, crafts, organic food and fruits from local growers.

Community Orchard

Independence's Parks and Recreation Department established a community orchard behind the softball/baseball complex. The orchard has a variety of fruit trees and bushes.

Topography

The topography of Independence is characterized as undulating. Much of the community is relatively flat, while other areas, primarily along established waterways, and has areas of extreme slope. The highest point in the community is located in the northeastern reaches of the city and has an elevation of approximately 980 feet above mean sea level. The lowest elevation, which is approximately 902.3 feet above mean sea level, is found along the Wapsipinicon River in the southeastern part of the community

Waterways

The Wapsipinicon River is the most prevalent water body to pass through the City of Independence. It is also the largest, most influential water body to pass through Buchanan County. The Wapsipinicon River's flow is generally from northwest to southeast. The drainage area at the mouth of the river is approximately 2,540 square miles. At Independence, the drainage area is estimated to be 1,048 square miles.

The headwaters of the Wapsipinicon River can be found in Mower County, Minnesota. However, the vast majority of the Wapsipinicon Watershed area is actually located in the State of Iowa, with only approximately 13 square miles is located in Minnesota. Upstream from Independence there are nearly 96 miles

DRAFT

of stream, with an average basin width of about 13 miles.

The United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) shows the City of Independence is located near the bottom of the Upper Wapsipinicon Watershed. The Upper Wapsipinicon has a drainage area of 1,569.43 square miles and contains eight rivers and streams for a total of 2177.1 river miles. There are also 120 lakes covering 1632.7 acres.

Climate

The climate of Independence is of the continental variety, which is marked by a great variation in both temperature and precipitation. The average annual precipitation for Independence is 32.5 inches with the vast majority of this falling between April and September. The yearly temperature range is quite large also, with January averaging about 17°F and July averaging about 74°F.

Vegetation

Originally the land surrounding and including Independence was covered with deciduous forest; this vegetation is now predominant only along the banks and flood plains of watercourses. The original cover has been reduced to make room for additional cropland and construction of houses and businesses in suitable areas. Today, surrounding vegetation is primarily used for agricultural purposes, with corn and soybeans being the most popular crop choices for area farmers. Within the community, while there are some areas that are still used for agricultural purposes, a variety of grasses, trees, shrubs, and flowers can be found.

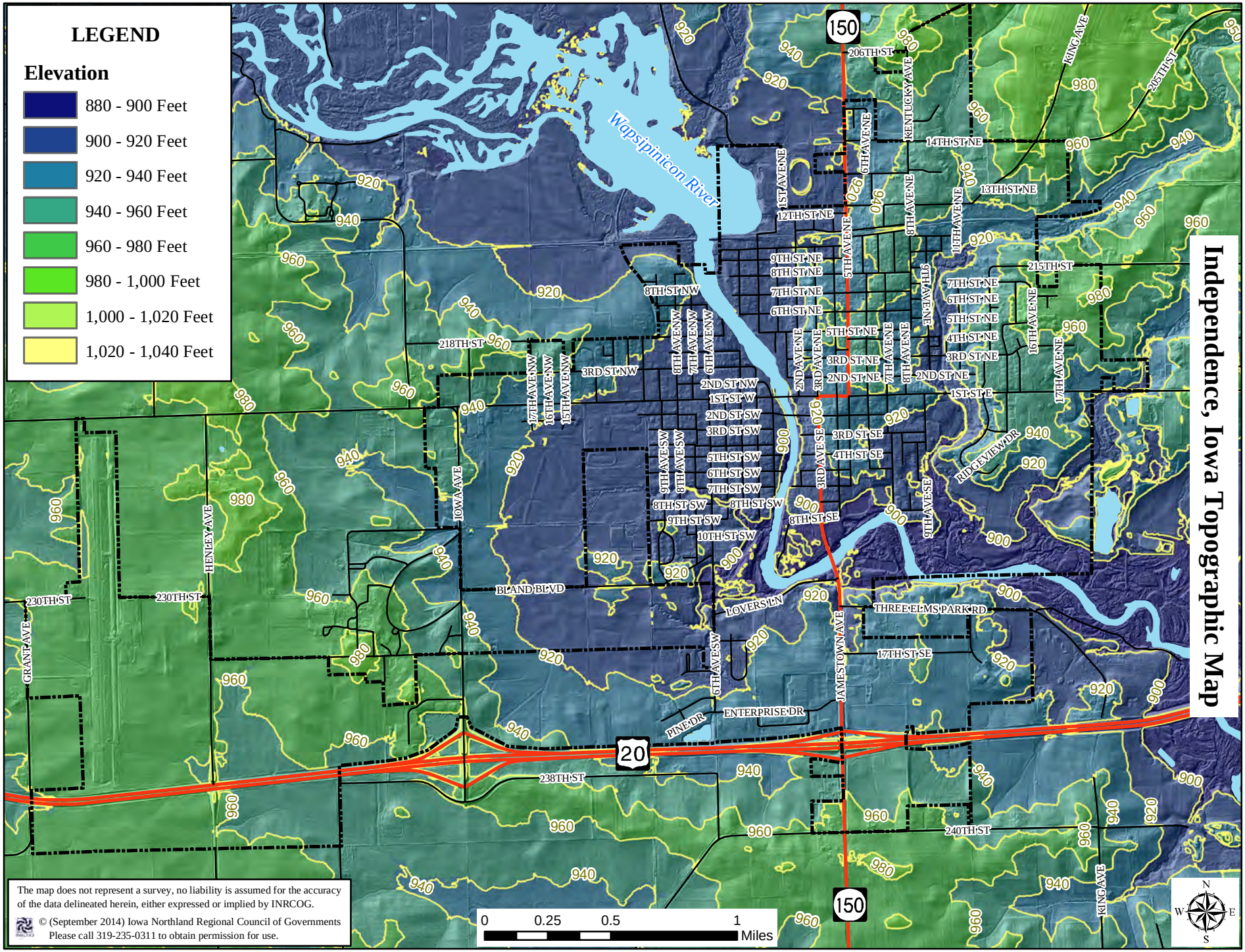
Soils

According to the Soil Survey of Buchanan County (1978), the majority of soils are listed as “prime” agricultural soils. Further, the Soil Survey Supplement indicates the Corn Suitability Ratings (CSR), which is a commonly accepted agricultural productivity measure for the soils; support the fact that the soils will be conducive to agriculture. As a general rule, soils that will easily support agriculture will accommodate urban development. Therefore, it appears as if most of the soils, excepting those that are impacted or created by the Wapsipinicon River and its floodplain, may be able to accommodate development.

Another measurement used for classifying soils is known as the Land Capability Class (LCC), which is an eight-level rating system for determining soil viability. In general, soils with an LCC rating of one through three are best for development or agriculture. Soils with LCC ratings of four through eight may require special engineering or improvements in order to make the soils conducive to development or agriculture. Independence soils are, for the most part, in the top three LCC categories. Therefore, they would be able to support most development or agricultural activities. There are some areas, generally near waterways, that for a variety of reasons are not a suitable for construction or agriculture.

DRAFT

Map 2: Topographic Map of the City



The map does not represent a survey, no liability is assumed for the accuracy of the data delineated herein, either expressed or implied by INRCOG.

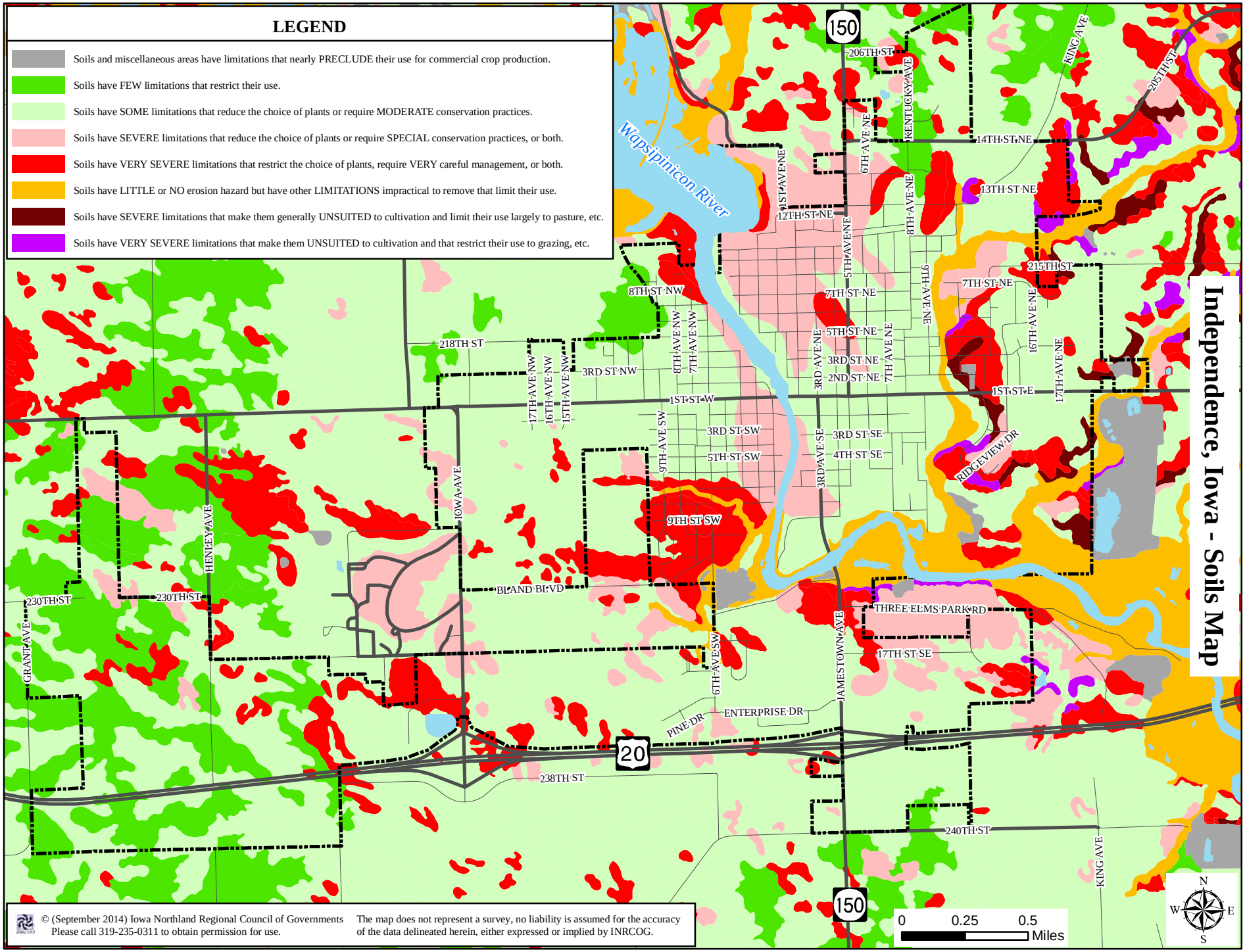
© (September 2014) Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments
Please call 319-235-0311 to obtain permission for use.

Map 3: Soils Map of the City

Independence, Iowa - Soils Map

LEGEND

- Soils and miscellaneous areas have limitations that nearly PRECLUDE their use for commercial crop production.
- Soils have FEW limitations that restrict their use.
- Soils have SOME limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require MODERATE conservation practices.
- Soils have SEVERE limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require SPECIAL conservation practices, or both.
- Soils have VERY SEVERE limitations that restrict the choice of plants, require VERY careful management, or both.
- Soils have LITTLE or NO erosion hazard but have other LIMITATIONS impractical to remove that limit their use.
- Soils have SEVERE limitations that make them generally UNSUITED to cultivation and limit their use largely to pasture, etc.
- Soils have VERY SEVERE limitations that make them UNSUITED to cultivation and that restrict their use to grazing, etc.



© (September 2014) Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments
Please call 319-235-0311 to obtain permission for use.

The map does not represent a survey, no liability is assumed for the accuracy of the data delineated herein, either expressed or implied by INRCOG.

Key Issues & Opportunities

Major natural resource and agricultural strengths for Independence is the Wapsipinicon River, along with numerous mature trees, the new orchard; however, with every community, there are opportunities are improvement. Based on input from the community survey, the public open house, and task force members, the following are key concerns and needs for agricultural and natural resources.

- Per survey respondents, 73% stated future development should be done outside of the floodplain.
- Need to inventory tree population and management guide – plus be prepared to handle Ash Bore when it arrives – possibly using Boy Scouts or natural science students to conduct inventory
- Need to develop a river walk/trail system that incorporates the downtown, educates the public on natural resources, etc.
- Strive for a clean, green, and prosperous community
- Need ownership from the community to make community sustainable
- Become a tree city
- Storm water ordinance – BMPs
- Enhance river as an amenity/destination/resource
- Need a water/river master plan – all users
- Need tourism and visitor bureau
- River group has ideas but no support

Reduce Floodplain Development

The City needs to take a closer look at how development occurs within the floodplain; whether it means raising the base flood elevation and/or implementation of additional regulations to reduce the impact of future flood events on citizens, residential units, and businesses. In addition to possible regulation changes, Independence should look at continue property acquisitions along Wapsipinicon River.

Incorporate Green Infrastructure

The natural lay of the land is very important when it comes to natural drainage and runoff. The natural elements that affect the flow of water are the terrain, soils, and vegetation. If these elements are overlooked, as many times are, the drainage of water will be deferred to other areas in the community causing problems along the way.

The community of Independence needs to address the way new development is being developed within the city, to reduce erosion of land, drainage problems, and other issues that are related to reforming the natural environment for development. Establishing Best Management Practices (BMPs) for storm water and erosion control is one way of addressing this need. There are numerous BMPs a development project could use; for instance, using bio-swales, rain gardens, filter strips or other items to catch rain and runoff instead of into a standard curb and gutter.

Conduct River Enhancements

The Wapsipinicon River is a natural, and an economic, resource worthy of its own plan – Wapsipinicon River Resource Management Plan. The plan should look at storm water discharge, water quality, riverbank stabilization and aesthetics, recreation, habitat enhancement/protection, and education.

DRAFT

Agricultural and Natural Resources Goals, Policies, & Strategic Actions

The following goals and objectives are intended to guide the community of Independence in preserving and protecting its agricultural and natural resources for generations to come.

Goal 1: Sustainable, Planned Growth to Protect/Preserve Natural Resources

Policy 1.1: Protect environmental sensitive areas including floodplains, wetlands, woodlands, watersheds, poor soils, areas with steep slopes, and other areas that are not conducive for development.

Policy 1.2: Preserve the quality of natural resources within the city including noise, air quality, and water quality, as well as protect these resources from pollution and/or contamination

Policy 1.3: Support and expand current and future recycling efforts in the community

Action 1.1: Continue to enforce Independence's Floodplain Management Ordinance.

Action 1.2: Continue to work with Trees Forever and other environment and wildlife organizations to identify existing trees and develop a management/replace plan.

Action 1.3: Investigate the implementation of clustered or conservation subdivisions and site developments to conserve impact on natural resources.

DRAFT

Section 3: Hazards

[SMART PLANNING ELEMENT – HAZARDS:
Objectives, policies, and programs that identify the natural and other hazards that have the greatest likelihood of impacting the municipality or that pose a risk of catastrophic damage as such hazards relate to land use and development decisions, as well as the steps necessary to mitigate risk after considering the local hazard mitigation plan approved by the Federal Emergency Management Agency.]

This section addresses the goals, policies, and actions to mitigate the risk of future hazards (natural or man-made) for Independence.

Given the fact that Independence is split in half by the Wapsipinicon River, with a history of flooding, this section will focus on the flood hazard potential. Additional details on other hazards can be found in the *Buchanan County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan (HMP)*.

Hazards can have a devastating impact on a community and Independence is no stranger to the power of mother nature and what enormous amounts of rain can do to a community along a river way. Independence has an opportunity to become a better and stronger community as they move forward from the lesions they have learned from their recent flooding events.

Existing Conditions

The following existing conditions were taken from the *Buchanan County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan*.

Flooding

The City of Independence has experienced flooding on the Wapsipinicon River and Malone Creek numerous times. According to available information and data, the Wapsipinicon hits flood stage at 12 feet, moderate flood stage at 13 feet, and major flood stage at 15 feet.

According to the National Climatic Data Center there have been 68 recorded flood events to impact areas within Buchanan County between 1/1/1950 and 4/30/2010. These events resulted in one fatality, one injury, $134,789 million dollars in property damage, and $23.142 million in crop damage. Independence has a river gauge located on the Wapsipinicon near downtown. Table 12 lists the top 20 historical crests for the river.

Records indicate that past flooding on the Wapsipinicon River in Independence has occurred primarily between March and June as a result of a combination of spring snowmelt and rainfall or just heavy rainfall. Until the flooding of 1999, the previous flood of record was the flood of July 1968. That flood hit an estimated 300 to 400 homes. The damage ranged from complete loss of structures along Malone Creek to water rampaging through the lower stories of houses throughout the affected area. Although the 1968 flood did not result in downtown flooding there was flash flooding in the Dry Run Creek area. Significant damage also occurred in 1991 and 1993.

DRAFT

The Flood of 1999 resulted in the destruction and damage of numerous homes and businesses in the city. It was considered to be a much "dirtier" flood than previous high water events.

Tornadoes

Buchanan County has experienced numerous tornadoes (36) between 1950 to the present. That is roughly 6.4 per decade. Everyone is vulnerable to the powerful forces that accompany a tornado. However, there are those who are more vulnerable than others. Using the average household size for the planning area (2.35) and the available data, the following individuals would be most at risk:

- People in automobiles (unable to determine):
- People in mobile homes (146 persons);
- People in group quarters (288 persons);
- People in multi-dwelling units (1290 persons)
- People living in poverty (398 persons);
- People living alone (737 persons, of which 390 are aged 65 years or older);
- People who may not understand warnings due to language barriers (229);
- The elderly, 65 years and older, (1,138 persons);
- The youth, under 18 years old, (1,526 persons); and
- People with disabilities (965 non-institutionalized persons).

In the event of a tornado the City of Independence has an extensive network of outdoor warning sirens that, given enough time, allow people to search for suitable shelter. The City has been active in upgrading these sirens, as many of them are old and unreliable. Recently the city has replaced and relocated sirens, including battery backups, so that the units can still function in the event of a power outage. A study was conducted as to what placements would bring the optimal benefits.

Key Issues & Concerns

The following are the key hazard issues and concerns for Independence.

Vulnerable Populations

The social vulnerability assessment identified how the hazards affect the population of Independence and it is assumed that the identified populations are more likely to require assistance during times of disaster; therefore, are considered, generally speaking, more "at-risk" than the remaining population. The "at-risk" population must be identified and targeted in successful mitigation efforts. For purposes of this plan this population shall include seniors age 65 and over,

DRAFT

children age 18 and under, those individuals with disabilities, those residents in multi-family dwellings, in poverty, and non-speaking households. These persons may not be able to reach safety in the event of a hazard event or a multi-hazard event that can result from a tornado or high wind event.

Table 5 presents an overview of the at-risk population in the planning area. According to the table, 19.7% of residents are 64 years or older. 47% of the "householders living alone are aged 65 years or older.

Persons under the age of 18 are also at higher risk during some disasters. This is mostly due to the fact that youth are often not aware of the proper actions to take in the event of a disaster. In addition, very young children would be more susceptible to a disaster such as a disease epidemic simply due to their age. In 2010, there was 24% of the community's total population under the age of 18.

Another population considered to be more at risk than others are those in mobile homes. According to 2000 Census data the City of Independence has 62 mobile home units within the city limits. Using the average household size as a calculation tool, we can estimate that the number of people residing in mobile homes in the City of Independence is approximately 146.

Table 5: Independence's "At-Risk" Population

Total City Population, 2010	5,966
Elderly (65 yrs and older), 2010	1,177
Youth (18 yrs and under), 2010	1,427
Householder Living Alone, 2010	813
Population Living in Poverty, 2000	398
Population in Mobile Homes, 2000, 62 Units	146
Population in Multi-Family Structures, 2000, 414 Units	1,290
Group Quarters Population, 2010	157
Total Persons with Disabilities (age 5+), 2000	965

Source: 2010 & 2000 U.S. Census and Iowa Data Center

Table 6: Floodplain Information for Independence

Population in Hazard Area*	568
1-4 Family Structures in Hazard Area*	147
Other Structures in Hazard Area*	39
Buildings in 100-Year Floodplain**	279
Buildings in 500-Year Floodplain**	99

Source: FEMA, INRCOG & Buchanan County Assessor
**Per FEMA 6/4/2009 information*
***Per INRCOG, City & County GIS Information, and FEMA Q3 flood data supplied by IDNR, 500-year floodplain includes all the 100-year floodplain*

Flooding Vulnerability

Based upon prior flood control projects and an extensive buyout program after the floods of 1999, the vulnerability of future river flooding would be limited. Based on available information, approximately 558 acres of the City of Independence are within the 100 and 500-year floodplain as determined by official Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs) for the community. That calculates to about 15.2 percent of the extent of the community. According to FEMA's Flood data, there are 186 (147 residential units and 39 other types) structures and 568 persons in the floodplain.

The City of Independence has approximately 378 parcels of community located within the identified floodplain within its city limits. A public facility vulnerable to flooding is normally low, since these structures are not often constructed within the 100-year floodplain. None

DRAFT

of the Independence Community School District facilities or buildings is within the floodplain. According to the information provided, bridges and roadways would be impacted by flooding. This disruption in the transportation infrastructure would create a longer time period to receive and provide services and supplies to an area if a road or railroad bridge was washed away due to flooding.

Table 6 lists the number of buildings and dwellings for the planning area within the 100- and 500-year floodplain. Based upon available data, there are 279 buildings and dwellings or 7.34% of the city located within the 100-year floodplain. The 500-year floodplain has 99 buildings and dwellings, or 2.6% of the community. Thus, a total of 9.94% of Independence is within a designated floodplain. According to FEMA data, 147 of the buildings in the floodplain are 1-4 family structures and 39 are other types of structures.

Flooding has the potential to put the entire population of the planning area at some level of risk, whether through the flooding of their homes, businesses, or places of employment, or the road, sewer, and water infrastructure that serve them daily. High floodwaters can devastate homeowners with property damage, property loss, and extensive, time-consuming cleanup. Secondary effects caused by flooding can add to the property damage. Power loss can leave citizens without heat or air conditioning for extended periods of time. The transportation infrastructure of the community can be impacted by flooding events, which can endanger citizens attempting to travel or evacuate the area, as well as leave those remaining without goods and services.

Valuations are an important component of hazard mitigation planning in so much as it provides measurable data that can be used to form some type of estimate as to the potential losses a community could face in the event of a disaster. The following table lists assets that would be affected in the event affected the unincorporated area of the county. This data was used in the Vulnerability discussion in each of the Hazard Profiles in Section 3.

This information was made available from the Buchanan County Assessors and Auditors offices and City Clerk. It should be noted however that these dollar amounts do not include gas and electric utility valuations. These results should be considered preliminary, as a full accounting of assets has not been completed.

DRAFT

Table 7: Asset Inventory - Estimated Potential Property Losses – Independence									
Type of Structure	Number of Structures			Value of Structures			Number of People		
	# in City	# in Hazard Area	% in Hazard Area	$ in City	$ in Hazard Area	% in Hazard Area	# in City	# in Hazard Area	% in Hazard Area
Residential	2,071	2,071	100%	$205,392,814	$205,392,814	100%	6,014	6,014	100
Commercial	513	513	100%	$52,715,799	$52,715,799	100%			
Industrial	56	56	100%	$9,038,286	$9,038,286	100%			
Agriculture	2	2	100%	$841,224	$841,224	100%			
Religious/ Non-Profit	18	18	100%	$20,000,000	$20,000,000	100%			
Government	12	12	100%	$100,000,000	$100,000,000	100%			
Education	5	5	100%	$75,000,000	$75,000,000	100%			
Utilities (all)	11	11	100%	$100,000,000	$100,000,000	100%			
Total	2,688	2,688	100%	$510,325,838	$510,325,838	100%			

Source: City of Independence, County Assessor, and Planning Committee
Notes: Residential/Commercial Value/Industrial = Assessed value; Government = City Hall, Fire Stations, Public Works Buildings, Community Building Education; Utilities = Independence Light and Power, Waste Water Treatment Facility, City Wells (2), Lift Stations(5), Water Distribution System, Storm water System, etc.

Future Development

Future development within identified hazard areas can change the threat level of an area by placing critical facilities, businesses, transportation networks, utilities, and populations within vulnerable areas. While it can be difficult to curb development in the planning area, it is the jurisdiction's advantage to be aware of development trends in order to successfully mitigation future hazards as risks increase – especially development along Highway 150 and the Wapsipinicon river basin. However, continued conformity with the State Building Codes and local land use ordinances and regulations - zoning, subdivision, floodplain management - will help to mitigate the effects hazards have on new and future development.

Repetitive Loss Properties

FEMA defines a repetitive loss property as an insurable building that has experienced two losses in a 10-year period in which each loss is $1,000 or more. According to FEMA's data, Independence participates in NFIP and has nineteen (19) repetitive loss properties. These properties totaled $ 494,878 dollars in repetitive loss payments.

This hazard mitigation plan attempts to reduce loss by identifying potential natural and manmade hazards. As a result of many natural and manmade hazards,

DRAFT

repairs and reconstruction area often completed in a way that returns the structure to pre-disaster condition yet does little to prevent a reoccurrence of damage. Replication of the pre-disaster conditions allows for the repetitive cycle of property damage, reconstruction, and re-damage. Hazard mitigation is needed to ensure that such cycles are broken, that post-disaster repairs and reconstruction are analyzed, and sound, less vulnerable conditions are produced. Additionally, other mitigation strategies may be considered, such as voluntary property buy-outs when necessary.

Hazards Goals, Policies, & Strategic Actions

The below goals were taken from the *2012 Buchanan County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan*. For a complete list of objectives and action strategies, please refer to the previously mentioned document. The hazard mitigation plan goals were reviewed by the Hazard Mitigation Planning Committee at their second committee meeting. The HMP committee set as a priority the development of broad-based goals that would address a multitude of hazards and encompass a variety of mitigation activities; as well as numerous action strategic actions; therefore only the hazard mitigation plan goals for the City of Independence are listed below. The related policies and actions can be found in the *2012 Buchanan County Multi-Jurisdictional Hazard Mitigation Plan.*

Goal 2: Maintain Emergency Services during Hazard Events, or if this is not possible, Return to Pre-Disaster Service Levels ASAP

Goal 3: Maintain Continuity of Infrastructure

Goal 4: Protect the Health and Welfare of the Entire Community by Utilizing Pre-Disaster Planning and Constructing Mitigation Projects

Goal 5: Identify Possible Action Steps to be Taken to Decrease the Risk of the Communicable Diseases

Goal 6: Take Steps to Mitigate or Minimize the Impact of Natural, Technological, and/or Man-Made Disasters

DRAFT

Map 4: Flood Plain Map of the City

Independence, Iowa Flood Plain Map

DISCLAIMER

This flood overlay shows the current floodplain designations in Buchanan County, Iowa. The digital flood layer was obtained from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. This digital data is FEMA's current Digital Flood Insurance Rate map for Buchanan County. FEMA's effective date of map publication is July 16th 2008.

For actual determination if a location is within the floodplain please contact your local floodplain administrator.

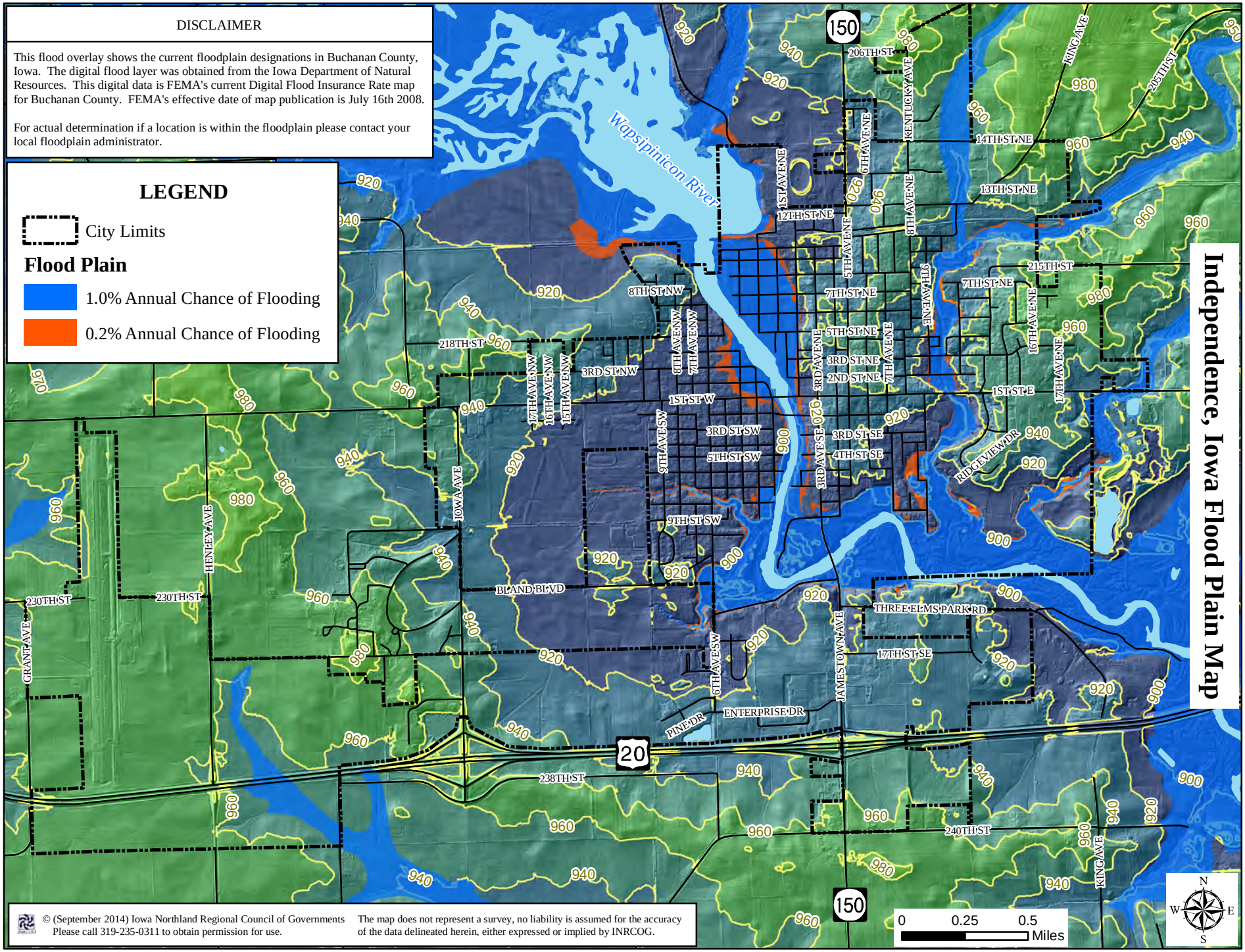
LEGEND

City Limits

Flood Plain

1.0% Annual Chance of Flooding

0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding



© (September 2014) Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments
Please call 319-235-0311 to obtain permission for use.

The map does not represent a survey, no liability is assumed for the accuracy of the data delineated herein, either expressed or implied by INRCOG.

Map 5: Flood Plain Map with Aerial Photograph of the City

Independence, Iowa Flood Plain Map Aerial Photograph

DISCLAIMER

This flood overlay shows the current floodplain designations in Buchanan County, Iowa. The digital flood layer was obtained from the Iowa Department of Natural Resources. This digital data is FEMA's current Digital Flood Insurance Rate map for Buchanan County. FEMA's effective date of map publication is July 16th 2008.

For actual determination if a location is within the floodplain please contact your local floodplain administrator.

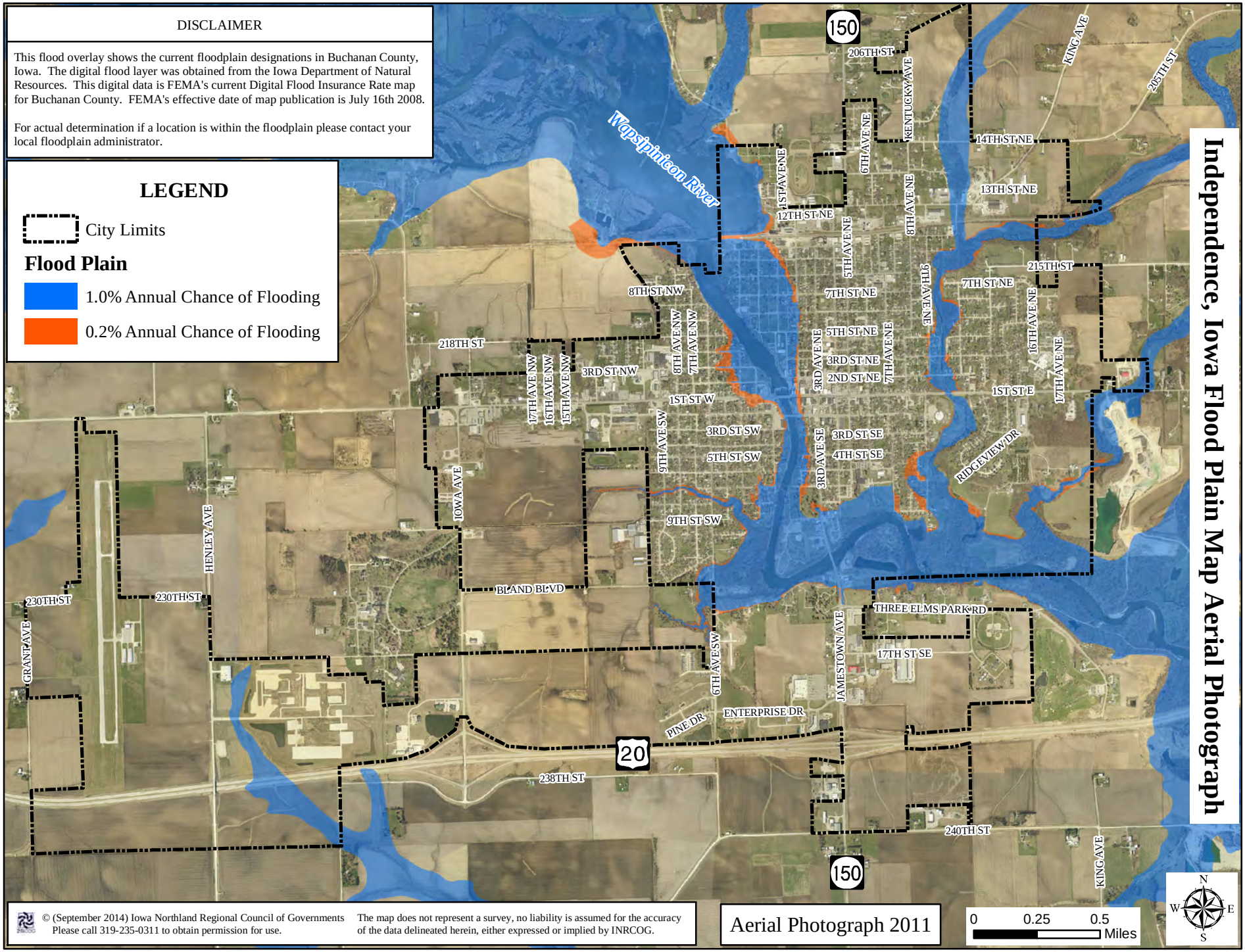
LEGEND

City Limits

Flood Plain

1.0% Annual Chance of Flooding

0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding



Aerial Photograph 2011

© (September 2014) Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments
Please call 319-235-0311 to obtain permission for use.

The map does not represent a survey, no liability is assumed for the accuracy of the data delineated herein, either expressed or implied by INRCOG.

Section 4: Community Character

[SMART PLANNING ELEMENT – COMMUNITY CHARACTER:
Objectives, policies, and programs to identify characteristics and qualities that make the municipality unique and that area important to the municipality's heritage and quality of life.]

An attractive, well-designed city will attract quality development, instill civic pride, improve the visual character of the community, and create a strong, positive image for the City of Independence.

The Community Character Element contains the community design goals and their action strategies that encourage innovation and imagination in building design and site planning, while ensuring that certain universal principles of good community design are upheld.

Existing Conditions

Community survey respondents listed small town qualities, friendliness and neighborly atmosphere, and closeness to family and friends as the top reasons why they chose to live in Independence. When citizens were asked what makes Independence unique, they identified the following:

- Location to larger urban areas (Highway 20);
- Schools;
- Trusting community (less crime than other communities);
- Recreational opportunities;
- Community services; and
- Wapsipinicon River and green space.

Community Betterment Projects

The Independence Parks and Recreation Department offers four community betterment projects – Adopt-A-Park, "Branching Out" Program, Community Re-Leaf Program, and Community Orchard project.

Adopt-A-Park

Launched in 2011, this program gives citizens, businesses, and groups an opportunity to help keep Independence beautiful. The program recognizes their efforts and provides almost 50 flower beds throughout the City to be adopted.

"Branching Out"

In an effort to make Independence a greener city to live, play, and grow, the "Branching Out" program was started in 2008. The original goal was to replenish the aging tree population within city parks; however the City is striving to become a Tree City. Since the program started 1,200 trees, of various species, have been

DRAFT

planted and 359 shrubs and bushes have been planted. The program has been made possible with funding from Mid-American Energy, George Hood Estate, and Community Re-Leaf; along with local volunteers and city staff.

Community Re-Leaf Program
This program was launched as a way to get community members, organizations, and businesses involved in tree planting within the Independence park s system. Through donations, the program is able to plant trees to help make Independence a greener community. For each $5.00 donation, a tree is planted in that person's name and mulched with a tree protector. There have been 27 trees sponsored and planted within the park system since inception. These trees will help lower the community's carbon footprint.

Community Orchard Project
A barren park land located south and west of Lion's Softball/Baseball Field along the Wapsipinicon River has been slowly transformed it into a "Community Orchard Project". After more than three years in the planning and clean-up phases, the planting phase began in 2010; thus far planting more than 120 fruit bearing trees and 250 fruit bearing bushes. In 2014 rentable community gardens have been developed with official use beginning in 2015. This project has been possible with funding, in part, by a grant from Mid-American Energy Trees Please! Program, the George Hood Estate, and the Parks & Recreation Department. The varieties of species planted have included Black Chokeberry, Blackberry, Raspberry, Apple (Honey Crisp, Jonathan, McIntosh, Sweet 16), Cherry, Pear (Summer Crisp, Luscious, Peach, Plum, and Apricot.

Events & Celebrations

The community of Independence has a variety of events and celebrations for all ages.

4th of July Independence Day Celebration
Celebrating the 4th of July with a packed parade, an array of musical entertainment, activities for all ages, great food, drink, and inspiring fireworks over the Wapsipinicon River.

Brew BQ
Held in August, this is the only event in the world that celebrates the love of two wonderful institutions: Refreshing World-Class Beer and Mouth-Watering Barbecue.

Buchanan County Fair
As the county seat for Buchanan County, citizens and visitors can enjoy music, shows, entertainment, contests, wildlife encounters, games, races, truck and tractor pulls, so much more during this event in mid-July.

DRAFT

Farmer's Market
Buying fresh and local is easy when area farmers and growers showcase and sell their grown goods from late Spring to Fall. Located in front of the historic Wapsipinicon Feed Mill, the Farmer's Market is buzzing with business as residents and visitors alike pick out fresh produce that is grown locally.

Friday Night Live
What better way to wind down after a long work week than to stroll down to Riverwalk Parks for a nice refreshing beverage and live music. Three Fridays during the summer, the Chamber of Commerce hosts this FREE event. Bring a lawn chair and relax with us!

Indee Cruisemeisters
Held every first Saturday in June, the Indee Cruisemeisters raise money for the Make-A-Wish Foundation. Participates and spectators can enjoy classic cars and motorcycles as they begin and end their cruise through Buchanan County at the Independence River Walk Park along the Wapsipinicon River.

R.A.S.H. Ride
An annual non-profit bicycle ride that helps raise money for the Buchanan County Four Seasons Trail Association. TheTrail Association works to develop a recreational trail system within Buchanan County, which can become a component in the statewide trails of Iowa.

Riverside Cinema
Once a month during the summer, the Library has a FREE movie to watch at the Riverwalk Band Pavilion and Friends of the Library are on-hand with soda and popcorn to complete the cinema experience.

Underground Independence: Our "Hidden" City Tours
Started in 2012, people can tour Independence's 'Underground' city and see the 'hidden remains' of the 1873-1874 era of our old 'Main Street' (now it's called 1st Street East) located beneath The Wapsipinicon Mill.

Art & Culture

The Wapsipinicon Feed Mill and Dam
The Wapsipinicon Feed Mill and Dam became operational in 1854. The five story structure is 122 feet long by 62 feet wide and was used at first as a flouring mill. As wheat production slowed down, it became more economical to produce "Wapsi" brand poultry and stock feed. Today the Mill is the foremost cornerstone of our community. It still resides in its original location but has since received several cosmetic reconstructions. Surrounded by several eateries and just over the bridge from our historic downtown, the Wapsipinicon Mill serves as a substantial tourist attraction and is listed on the National Registry of Historical Places. The Mill is operated by the Buchanan County Historical Society and is open for tours and special events during the summer months.

DRAFT

Buchanan County Tourism Visitors Center – Train Depot
On December 12, 1859, the first steam engine came chugging into Independence. It was a great day for early settlers and farmers in Buchanan County when the first shipment of wheat and pork left Independence for the eastern markets.

In 1892, the Illinois Central Station began to serve a dual role as both a freight and passenger service. With this in mind, the railroad line built a new passenger depot in 1891 that was a necessity to help take care of the crowds convening for the races at the kite shaped race track.

Today, the Chicago Rock Island Depot and the Illinois Central Depot have been restored and relocated along highway 150 in Independence and serves as the home for Buchanan County Tourism. To accompany the relocation, Illinois Central railways donated a locomotive, cargo car and caboose that are on display next to the train depot.

Healthy Community: Indee Go-Healthy
After not being selected a Blue Zone community, Independence received an Iowans Fit for Life (IFFL) grant from the Iowa Department of Public Health (IDPH) and its partners to promote increased opportunities for physical activity and healthy eating for all ages. The project is funded through the Center of Disease Control and Prevention. As such, Independence must implement at least one nutrition and one physical activity strategy identified and defined by the Recommended Community Strategies and Measures to Prevent Obesity in the United States. The City will receive a $10,000 grant to use towards implementing the below action plan, upon review and approval of the Iowa Department of Public Health.

Independence's action plan was developed based on an asset mapping exercised held on January 9th, 2013 from 7pm to 9:15pm. Twenty-eight local stakeholders attended and participated in identifying and discussing local physical activity and nutrition assets, as well as areas for improvements. These stakeholders included representatives from the school district, medical center, city, county public health, food pantry, farmers market, agency on ageing, trails, park and recreation, tourism, library, churches, newspaper, extension, citizens, and local health businesses.

After the asset mapping exercise, the Indee-Go Healthy Committee met twice to identify key goals, objectives, and strategies to improve opportunities for physical activity and access to nutritious foods. The committee has been able to distribute bicycle helmets, bicycle and pedestrian safety materials, hold a bike rodeo, purchase and install bicycle racks, increase awareness of healthy food consumption and preparation, and continues to promote a healthy community.

DRAFT

Key Issues & Opportunities

Throughout the planning process for *Plan Update 2014*, citizens and Task Force members repeatedly mentioned the "small town feeling/environment" that is Independence. Through task force meetings and public outreach, the community envisions Independence to grow steadily as a residential and economic community, without loss of the small town quality and the sense of community. The first thing people often notice about a community is the overall design, care, and planning given to the details of the community. Even though some design elements may be time consuming and costly, the costs are worth the results. The leaders of Independence should take into consideration these thoughts and concerns when addressing the community design of Independence in the future.

Maintaining Existing Character

Any future development should not compromise Independence's character. To enhance the existing character, developers should be sensitive to the surrounding uses as well as the natural features and provide access to pedestrians and bicyclists. Provisions to protect or provide open spaces will need to be implemented. Development will need to be encouraged in a manner that minimizes the necessity for singular use of the automobile.

Beautifying Main Street

Independence should conduct small-scale aesthetic projects (i.e., a uniform bench style, similar hanging flower pots, façade improvements) in the downtown area, as well as along the Riverwalk. Continuing this trend of consistent signage, vegetation, and standardized site furnishings (benches, light fixtures, trash receptacles, etc.) throughout the community unified the various neighborhoods and continues the sense of pride and community. Furthermore, improving Independence's gateways or entry points into the community needs to be done. They are the first thing a potential citizen, business owner, and tourist sees as they travel into the community. Their first impression of community can be summed up by how you handle your gateways.

Creating Healthy, Livable Community

Independence has started to make changes to make the community healthier and more livable through efforts by the Indee Go-Healthy Committee and Safe Routes to School Committee. However, more can be done to improve access to healthy foods and physical activity for community residents.

Changing Community Perceptions to Emphasize "One Independence"

All members of the Independence community are interlinked through a web of relationships, whether through educational, business, neighborhood, civic, or other ties. The City should emphasize the importance of inter-relationships between all households, neighborhoods, and interest groups to highlight the fact that everyone is part of a larger community – the City of Independence.

DRAFT

Community Character Goals, Policies, & Strategic Actions

The following are goals and objectives to further cultivate and promote Independence's cultural richness and unique community character.

Goal 7: Focus on "One Independence"

Policy 7.1: Emphasize the overall community and how the inter-relationships of each citizen, group, organization, entity, and committee are a component of the larger picture – the City of Independence.

Policy 7.2: Foster meaningful community engagement among all demographic sectors of the City at all community events and government forums.

Action 7.1: Offer civic events that bring diverse groups of people together to further forge the "One Independence" goal. An example could be a "Town Hall" style event that focuses on key issues of common concern in the community.

Action 7.2: Ensure all organized cultural events that display the unique character of the City and its residents.

Goal 8: Enhanced City Beautification Efforts

Policy 8.1: Further develop Independence's existing beautification efforts to improve Independence's overall appearance and quality of life.

Action 8.1: Develop and implement a common theme for the Downtown.

Action 8.2: Maintain and improve the appearance of existing homes and property through enforcement of existing regulations; as well as new beautification projects and programs.

Action 8.3: Identify and install beautification measures along Independence's major thoroughfares. For instance, plantings, street banners, signs, etc.

DRAFT

Goal 9: Healthy, Livable Community

Policy 9.1: Continue to create and promote Independence as a healthy, livable community that prioritizes health and wellness.

Action 9.1: Continue implementation of Indee Go-Healthy projects and incentives.

Action 9.2: Implement Blue Zone components even though Independence was not selected to be a part of the Blue Zone Community program.

DRAFT

Section 5: Community Facilities

[SMART PLANNING ELEMENT – COMMUNITY FACILITIES:

Objectives, policies, and programs to assist future development of educational facilities, cemeteries, health care facilities, child care facilities, law enforcement and fire protection facilities, libraries, and other governmental facilities that are necessary or desirable to meet the projected needs of the municipality.]

Community facilities and services are commonly used to measure the quality of life in a community. These facilities and services are often what potential citizens and businesses consider when determining if they should relocate to a community – in addition to a well-connected and diverse transportation network, the economic diversity, and so forth. In regard to community facilities and services, potential citizens and businesses look for a community that provides a responsive and competent public safety system, a variety of parks and recreational opportunities, an exceptional and supported school system, and cultural events and opportunities. Existing citizens and businesses also consider these features when deciding whether or not to remain in the community or move elsewhere. To some degree, community facilities can be used to enhance a community's quality of life, they can be used to help guide the rate of growth.

The ultimate vision of this section is to provide high quality, affordable community facilities to all residents and visitors of Independence by maintaining and building upon existing facilities and services, existing intergovernmental and public-private facilities relationships, and being open for new relationships and opportunities.

Existing Conditions

Independence has a variety of community facilities and services available to its citizens and rural neighbors. Below is a compiled summary of the existing offerings.

- The school is in the process of selling old property, building a new sports complex and field at new high school, and building a new bus barn.
- Hospital is going through an expansion/renovation/reassessment plan (5 yr) that will probably require additional land – priority of projects is needed to be determined.
- Library building is adequate
- City Hall recently had entire HVAC system updated
- The old mill is historic and is undergoing a repairs to the roof – offers underground tours in the warmer months
- Have a great park and recreation department and private vendors offering opportunities

DRAFT

City Hall

City Hall is located at 331 First Street East, which is in the Central Business District of the community. The Mayor's office, City Council Chambers, and City Clerk's office are located in City Hall. City Hall also houses the Fire Department and Fire Station. The City Administrator, City Clerk, and Planning and Zoning Commission and Building Administration are all based in City Hall.

Police Department & Services

The Independence Police Department, Buchanan County Law Enforcement, and the Iowa State Patrol provide police protection to the City of Independence. The Independence Police Department currently has approximately 12 employees, ranging from administration to patrol officers. The department is located at 210 5th Avenue Northeast.

Fire Department & Rescue Services

The City of Independence currently employs three (3) full time firefighters; in addition, to twenty-three (23) volunteer firefighters. Equipment owned and operated by the local fire department includes three engines (includes a 1,105 ft. aerial), one tanker, one rescue truck, one grass rig, one generator, two water pumps, a field operations trailer, and two boats. The fire department has in place 28E agreements with surrounding communities to provide and receive assistance as needed on a mutual aid basis. The communities that the Independence Fire Department maintains 28E agreements include: Aurora, Brandon, Fairbank, Jesup, Hazelton, Mental Health Institute (MHI), Rowley, Stanley, Lamont, Quasqueton, Winthrop, and the Linn County Hazmat Team. The department provides a variety of services to the community including the following:

- Fire Suppression
- Confined Space Rescue
- Ice and Water Rescue
- Storm Watch Spotters
- Hazardous Material Response
- Multi-Hazard Response
- Fire Safety Education Training
- 28E Mutual Aid Agreements
- Air Bottle Refilling
- Fire Extinguish Service Pickup Station
- Extrication Rescue
- Carbon Monoxide Calls
- Limited Inspection Duties
- River Readings

The fire department ensures communication through several methods. Those methods include E-911 Service, radio communication, hotline communication, pagers, alarm systems, sirens, and cellular phones. To date the fire department is not GPS equipped. The current fire insurance rating for the City of Independence is five (5). The only fire station is located at 113 4th Avenue Southeast.

DRAFT

Ambulance and EMS Services

Emergency rescue and ambulance service is provided by the hospital throughout and beyond the city limits. There are currently 14 personnel that provide service to the EMS department. The primary means of communication is by way of cell phones and two-way radios. The EMS Department maintains mutual aid agreements with all of the communities within Buchanan County, the Independence Police Department, County Sheriff's Department, and the Independence Fire Department.

Independence Pubic Library

Located at 805 1st Street East, the Independence Public Library consists of 14,200 square feet. The library was rebuilt in 2007/2008 to accommodate the demands of users and the advancement in technology. The facility offers a community room; two 1-2 person study rooms; one 34 person study room; and a conference room (6-10 people).

Parks & Recreational Facilities and Services

Citizens can enjoy numerous parks and recreational opportunities in Independence. Citizens, of all ages, can choose from numerous programs throughout the year. The following table lists the parks and their amenities, which the Independence Parks and Recreation Department manages.

Table 8 : Parks & Recreational Opportunities

Park	Amenities
Bathing Beach Park	Ball diamonds, boat access, fishing access, benches, picnic tables, playground, restrooms, shelter with electricity, trail/sidewalk
Brimmer Park	Benches, restrooms, trail/sidewalk
Teachers Park	Basketball courts, band shell, benches, picnic tables, sand volleyball courts, shelter, trail/sidewalk
1st Ward Park	Backstop, playground, shelter, grills, restrooms, band shell, benches, trail/sidewalk
Freeman Park	Open space
4th Ward Park	Backstop, basketball and tennis courts, playground, shelter, grills, restrooms, ball diamonds, band shell, benches, trail/sidewalk
Veterans Park	Gazebo, fountain, memorials, picnic tables, fishing access, trail/sidewalk
3rd Ward Park	Basketball and tennis courts, playground, shelter, grills, picnic tables, restrooms, trail/sidewalk
5th Ward Park	Basketball and volleyball courts, playground, shelter, grills, picnic tables, restrooms, band shell, benches, trail/sidewalk
Lions Park	Backstop, athletic field
Liberty Park	Park benches, trail/sidewalk
Bridgeview Park	Playground, fishing access

DRAFT

Jaycee Park	Playground, tennis courts, shelter, grills, fishing access, band shell, picnic tables, trail/sidewalk
Orchard Park	Ball diamonds, orchard, fishing access, restrooms, batting cages
Malone Creek Park	Backstop, grills, band shell
Knott's Landing	Boat access, fishing access, picnic tables
Riverwalk Parks (connects Brimmer Park, Teachers Park, Bathing Beach Park)	Concrete trail along the Wapsipinicon River, river access, boat deck, memorial benches, river views, lighting, picnic shelters, community band shell, playground, open green spaces, sand volleyball courts, horseshow courts, and basketball court.
Skate Park	Bowls, grid boxes, rails, skate stairs, and ramps
Baseball / Softball Complex	Four batting cages, varsity baseball diamond, varsity softball diamond, two recreational diamonds, concession stand, restrooms, open air shelters, off-street parking
Triangle Park	Stocked pond open to public fishing, an asphalt walking trail around perimeter, and park benches, trail/sidewalk
Source: City of Independence	

Falcon Center
The Falcon Center a recreational and community center located on Highway 150 north. The center, which is managed by the City, has a gymnasium with six basketball hoops; a weight room; cardiovascular training equipment; two racquetball courts; a game room; two large meeting rooms; and video arcade games.

Swimming Pool
The community has a heated pool with two diving boards, a zero depth entry baby pool with a water feature, a water slide, and concessions. The City is currently in the planning stages of a new aquatic center.

RV Park & Campground
Citizens and visitors can enjoy camping at the RV Park and Campground located on Highway 150 along the Wapsipinicon River. The campground includes: men and women restrooms and shower facilities; open air picnic shelter with electricity; concrete walking trail; and forty-two (42) camp sites with water, sewer, electricity, cable, a picnic table, and fire ring.

Buchanan County Health Center

Independence is served by one local hospital, Buchanan County Health Center, located at 1600 1st Street East. Buchanan County Health Center has eighteen (18) clinical specialties, fifteen (15) medical specialties, a wellness center, a long-term care facility, and a retirement community (Oak View Retirement). The facility has more than 225 full- and part-time employees.

The wellness center (The Therapy and Wellness Connection) is a medical-based fitness facility, consisting of 20,000 square feet, open to the public for a minimal fee. The facility offers a wide range of fitness classes, a lap pool, a soft-surface walking track, cardiovascular equipment, strength-training equipment, and locker rooms.

DRAFT

Oak View Retirement Community is situated on 1.85 acres on the Buchanan County Health Center's campus. It is a two-story, 24-unit building that offers numerous amenities and activities for persons 60 years or older.

Independence Community School District

Independence Community School District (ICSD) provides education to approximately 1,345 students. The District includes the communities of Independence, Rowley, and Brandon. The District has four facilities: new Junior/Senior High School, located at 700 20th Ave. SW; West Elementary (3-6) located at 1301 1st Street West; East Elementary (K-2) located at 1103 1st Street West; and an Early Childhood Center (PK4) located at 1011 1st Street West. Independence Community School District has one of the leading Farm to School program in the United States.

St. John School (Eagles)

St. John is a Catholic school providing academic excellence with a balanced curriculum (including art, music, and technology) to students in the Independence community from preschool through 8th grade. Enrollment has steadily increased over the years, with approximately 190 students this school year. The school is located at 314 Third Street.

Community Reponses on Existing Community Facilities

Citizens and stakeholders provided feedback on the existing conditions of Independence's community facilities. Below are their summarized comments.

- Very satisfied with schools, public library, and accessibility of parks
- Very satisfied to somewhat satisfied with quality of parks
- Somewhat satisfied with city hall and somewhat satisfied to somewhat dissatisfied with communication with citizens
- Same amount of money should go towards public library improvements and park and recreation facilities
- Library parking is a problem (need approx. 50 more spaces—without taking out historic trees in front
- Intersection of library is terrible – poor alignment with adjacent streets
- City Hall is not ADA accessible – need restructuring
- Need a long-term home for police department (current placement isn't working anymore)
- Fire department's response area is split by river

DRAFT

Key Issues & Opportunities

Based on community input, the top key issues and opportunities Independence needs to address are below.

Enhancing and Expanding Recreational and Cultural Offerings

In order to compete with surrounding communities and satisfy demand of changing demographics, Independence needs to build on its existing offerings for all ages and abilities; for instance, developing a water trail plan, possibly extending the current River Walk Park and Trail to connect additional neighborhoods to the river and its resources, and constructing an aquatic center and dog park. The City should explore ways to partner with other organizations to extend offerings to singles, young professionals, and seniors.

Redeveloping Old High School Building and Site

The old high school building and site was identified as a potential location for a mixed public use campus consisting of: an aquatic center, a dog park, and police department. Reusing these facility, and others as they become available, makes use of established infrastructure, provides a multi-use space, and creates a destination for residents.

Maintaining Levels of Service for Public Services and Facilities

The City should continue to provide adequate parks, police and fire service as new growth occurs. As Independence continues to grow south and west of the Wapsipinicon River, the ability to continue to provide the level of public safety services is critical. Therefore, the City must look at either constructing a public safety sub-station on that side of town, partnering with MHI or another entity to house the necessary equipment to respond to incidences in case bridges are closed due to flooding or in another situation.

Community Facilities Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

The following goals and objectives are intended to guide the community of Independence in providing high quality community facilities to all residents of the City by maintaining the existing intergovernmental and public-private facilities relationships, and looking for areas to establish new relationships.

Goal 10: Adequate Public Safety Services

Policy 10.1: Service to newly developing areas should not result in the reduction of service to existing developing areas.

Policy 10.2: The City should work with landowners and local stakeholders on identifying potential locations on the west side of town for a fire department sub-station.

DRAFT

Action10.1: Ensure that City departments share information regarding proposed developments that will require expansion of public safety services. Assess the ability of proposed developments to meet *Plan Update 2014* goals and policies and compare it against the Future Land Use map. Ensure that existing facilities and service capacity can adequately serve new and existing demands for service. Mitigate any potential impacts that might decrease levels of service.

Action 10.2: Incorporate new facility needs, such as fire station and police station, into the City's Capital Improvement Program.

Goal 11: Cultural, Entertainment, and Recreational Experiences for All Ages & Abilities

Policy 11.1: As demographics change in Independence, the City will encourage local partners to provide opportunities reflecting the diversity of Independence's residents (singles, young professionals, families, and seniors).

Policy 11.2: The City supports the development of new activities and entertainment options to provide affordable, healthy, and constructive options for the City's youth.

Policy 11.3: The role of community facilities as centers of community activity should be enhanced to provide further recreational, educational, and entertainment options to citizens of Independence.

Policy 11.4: The City should consider engaging in a public-private partnership to bring affordable outdoor activities to public spaces – outdoor movies, concerts, etc.

Action 11.1: Working with local partners, identify ways the City can assist in attracting and recruiting new cultural, recreational, and entertainment establishments and activities to the city.

Goal 12: Redevelop Old High School Building & Site

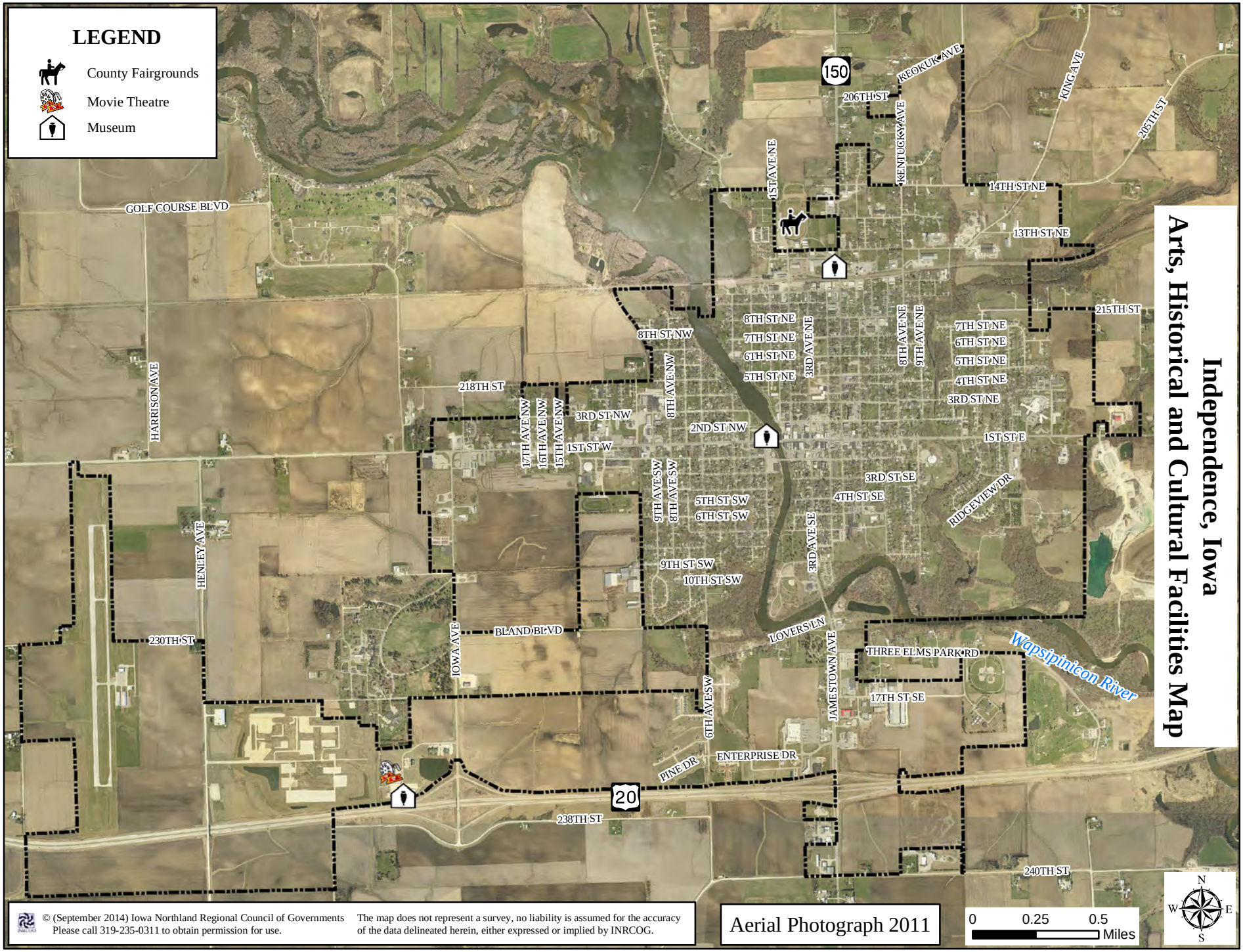
Policy 12.1: The City will work with local partners to redevelop the old high school building and site into a multi-use campus.

Action 12.1: Working with local stakeholders, city departments, and local developers/experts, redesign and revitalize the old high school into a multi-use public campus.

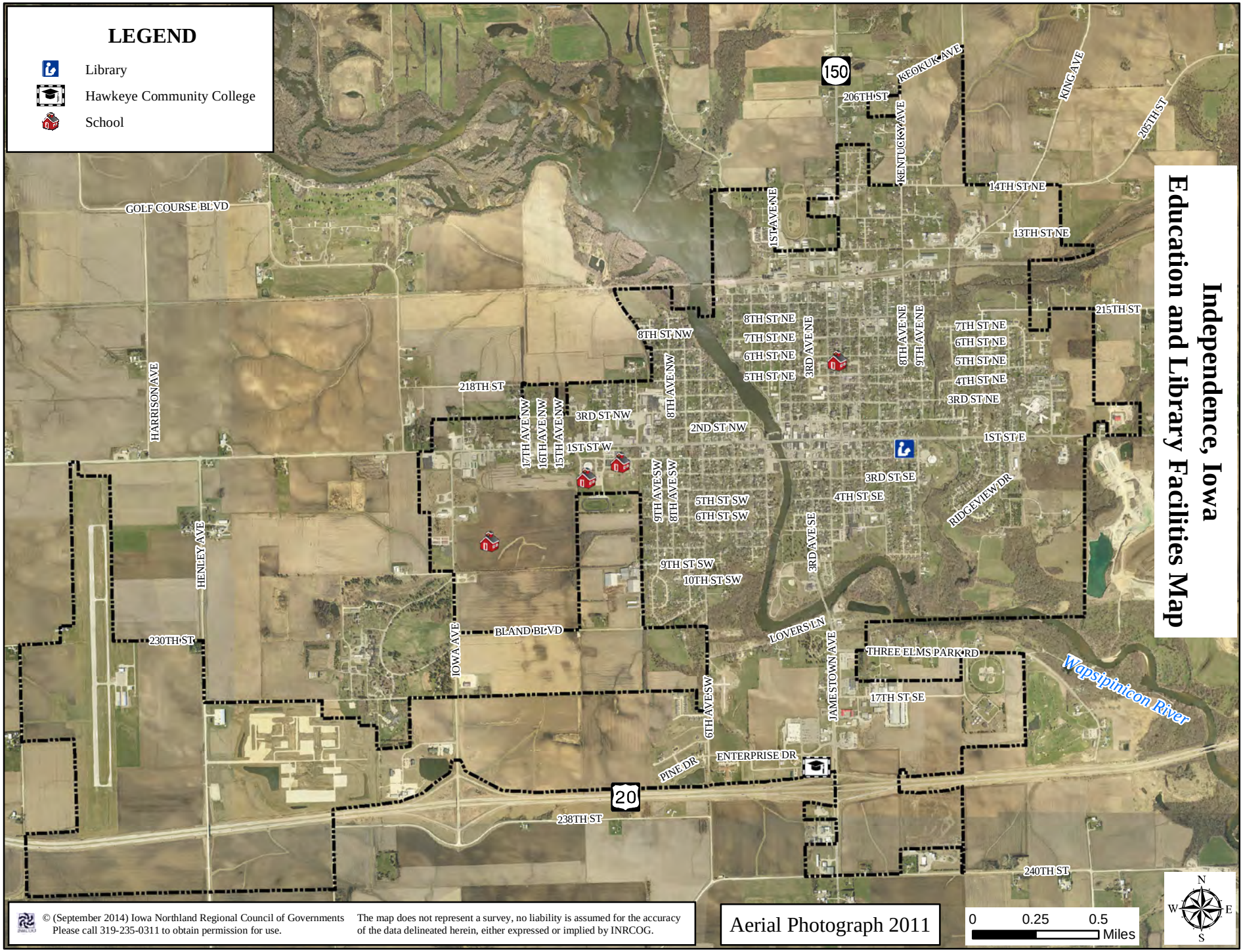
DRAFT

Map 6: City Hall and Public Facilities Map of the City

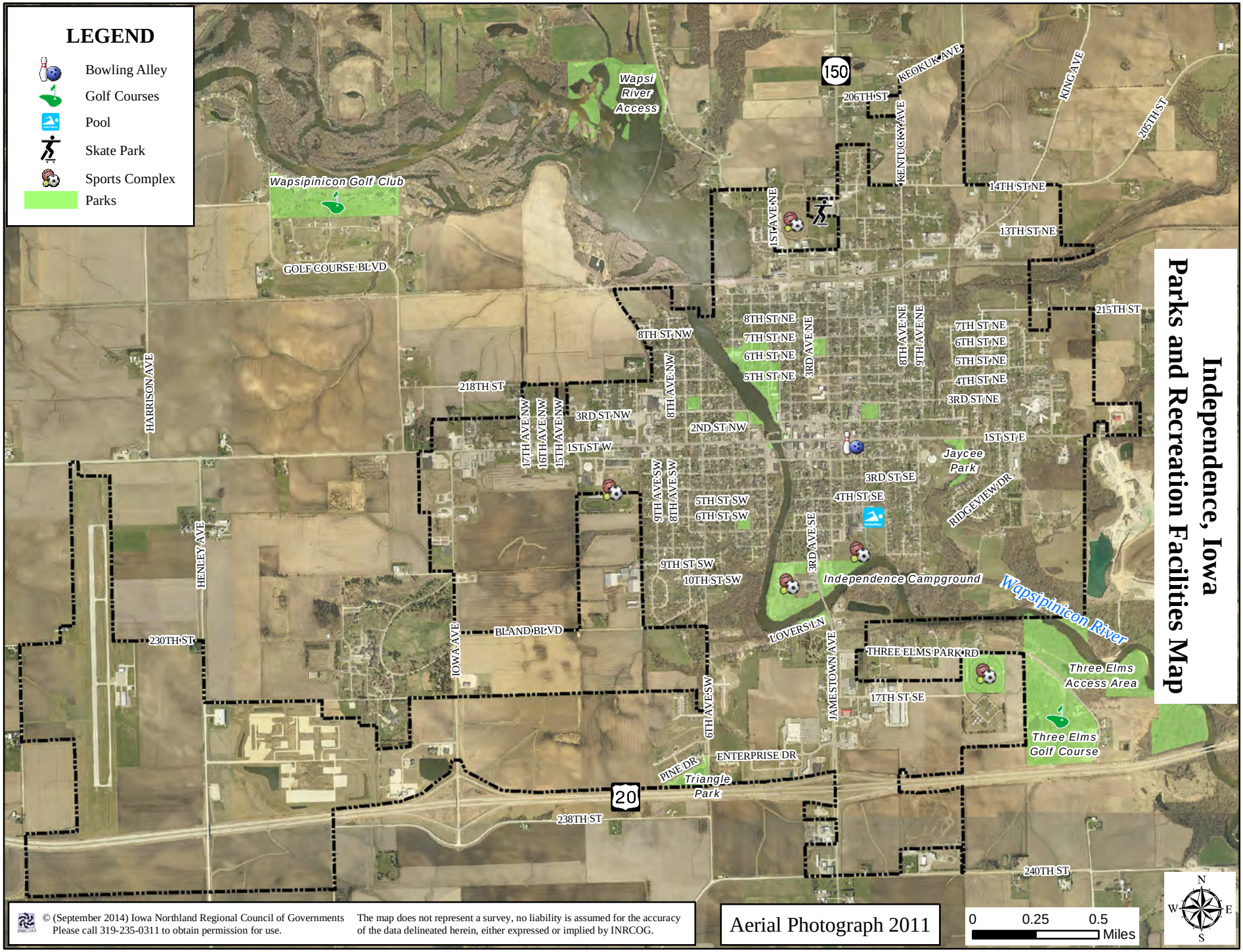
Map 7: Arts, Historical and Cultural Facilities in the City



Map 8: Education and Library Facilities in the City



Map 9: Parks and Recreation Facilities Map of the City



Section 6: Public Infrastructure & Utilities

The infrastructure and utilities of the community are the backbone of a city. Without a proper, up-to-date infrastructure, the quality of life in the city is reduced. In order to reduce the migration to more urban areas, Independence needs to determine the quality of the services, facilities, and systems throughout the community and bring them up-to-date to the best of their ability.

[SMART PLANNING ELEMENT – PUBLIC INFRASTRUCTURE & UTILITIES:

Objectives, policies, and programs to guide future development of sanitary sewer service, storm water management, water supply, solid waste disposal, wastewater treatment technologies, recycling facilities, and telecommunications facilities. The comprehensive plan or land development regulations may include estimates regarding future demand for such utility services]

Existing Conditions

A brief summary of public infrastructure and utilities offered to residents and businesses is below. The task force discussed public infrastructure and utilities in Independence. Below are the main discussion points.

- Citizens polled were very satisfied with water, sewer, fire protection, police protection, emergency services
- Citizens polled were very to somewhat satisfied with gas/electric, communication, and trash/recycling services

Water Service

The City of Independence has a municipal water supply with over 2,800 connections. The water is taken from five locally located wells. The city has three water towers with a total capacity of 1,050,000 gallons. Typical daily usage is about 600,000 to 700,000 gallons per day and over 250 million gallons are used annually in the city. The water is treated with fluoride and chlorine at each well. One recent major upgrade to the water system was the addition of a third water tower and no major improvements are projected for the near future.

As a result of expanding development into areas along the south side of town, water service infrastructure was put in place to provide service to an additional 1,200 acres of property. Within the past year, water mains have been extended to four subdivisions. Further extensions are planned in the near future. To date, heavy flooding has not impacted the water supply system.

Wastewater Utility

The current Waste Water Treatment Facility consist of a waste management mechanical treatment facility (two-stage trickling filter), located southeast of the city limits that can be reached via Three Elms Park Road SE. The facility is situated to the south of the ball complex. The wastewater is transported to the ponds with the assistance of two wastewater lift stations. The primary wastewater lift station is located along Lovers Lane on the south central edge of the city. There

DRAFT

has been substantial improvement recently made to this lift station including the replacement of a pump, which allowed for additional pumping capacity. The secondary wastewater lift station is to be found on the extreme east fringe of the city limits, just north of County Highway D22.

Storm Sewer

The city follows a comprehensive plan to improve storm water planning and storm water infrastructure installation. The city looks at curb, gutter and drainage ditches to remove heavy rainfall from streets

Independence Light & Power, Telecommunications

Chartered in the late 1890's, Independence Light and Power, Telecommunication, provides citizens of Independence with quality, dependable utility service. In 2000, the utility provided added telecommunications (including a locally owned cable television system and high-speed data network) to their services to meet the demands of its customers. Independence Light and Power offers budget billing, low-income assistance, net metering (solar and wind).

East Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative

East Central Iowa Rural Electric Cooperative distributes electricity to eleven counties – including Buchanan County and parts of Independence. The Cooperative's offices are located in Urbana, south of Independence along I-380. One of the Cooperative's operations centers is located in Independence. ECI REC offers efficiency programs (62% carbon free, 35% renewable).

Communications

Independence keeps the community involved through various communication methods.

- **Websites**
  The City of Independence provides a city website to convey information to the public. Independence School District also provides a website to provide information to citizens of Independence.

- **Media**
  The Bulletin Journal is Independence's official newspaper; however, The News also provides newspaper coverage for the planning area. Social media has become another media source for residents and visitors to receive information.

Community Response on Existing Public Infrastructure and Utilities

Based on input from survey, the public open house, and task force members, the following are key concerns and needs for public infrastructure and utilities.

- Fire department is impacted by the river. The building and equipment is on the east side and have. Need to look at alternative sites on the west side for equipment storage – possibly the bus barn, airport, etc.
- Fire department changed to work membership to allow workers in the community to volunteer.

DRAFT

- MHI has their own fire department/equipment, but City has mutual aid with them.
- Fire district is in two townships – mutual aid agreements with surrounding fire departments
- Airport has their own fire response
- Citizens polled stated same amount of money should go towards new streets, sewer improvements, water improvements, storm water improvements, sidewalk repairs
- Need partnerships and intergovernmental plan of action – big picture visioning is needed
- Building code in county isn't as strong as City's – monitored by County and State

Key Issues & Opportunities

The following key issue regarding public infrastructure and facilities were identified as important topics for Independence to address.

Maintaining Levels of Service for Public Infrastructure and Utilities

The City should continue to provide adequate water, sanitary sewer, road capacity, parks, police and fire service as new growth occurs.

Promoting the Use of Green Development Technologies

Independence should encourage the use of green construction techniques for new developments, including new public facilities, and green retrofits for renovated structures.

Addressing Energy Use and Costs

The City should identify opportunities to increase energy conservation measures and thereby decrease energy costs for citizens and businesses.

Sustainable Independence

There is a continuous need to provide the best, up-to-date telecommunication service and alternative energy sources. The local power entities have taken an active role in encouraging alternative energy; however, more can be done. The Sustainable Independence group conducted research and developed the following:

- Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions through usage of alternative resources.
- Net Zero Storm Water Runoff for all new development including residential, commercial, industrial, and municipal.
- Incorporation of Sustainable Sites Initiative (SITES) concepts into municipal parks and landscaping.

DRAFT

Public Infrastructure and Utilities Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

Goal 13: Maintained Levels of Service for Public Infrastructure & Utilities

Policy 13.1: Encourage the development of land to its highest and best use where public infrastructure currently exists.

Policy 13.2: Coordinate the extension of utility services and roads with the Future Land Use map by directing expansions to areas within those areas closest to existing services.

Action 13.1: Ensure that City departments share information and coordinate planning for proposed developments that will require expansion of public infrastructure.

Action 13.2: Assess the potential for proposed developments to meet *Plan Update 2014* goals and policies to maximize existing infrastructure and compare proposed plans against the Future Land Use map.

Action 13.3: Ensure that public right-of-way for roadways have adequate space for locating all underground public utilities.

Goal 14: Reduced Energy Use and Costs

Policy 14.1: Reduce energy usage in public buildings by incorporating energy saving practices, such as commissioned building systems, solar and geothermal technologies, and high efficiency building materials, to reduce the energy consumption of the new public development.

Policy 14.2: Continue to replace City-owned vehicles with energy efficient models.

Policy 14.3: Create programs and incentives for energy reduction in private buildings, such as providing a streamlined development review process for projects meeting energy use reduction goals.

Action 14.1: Adopt formal energy efficiency performance standards for new public facilities and expansions of existing public facilities.

Action 14.2: Work with Sustainable Independence, and other partners, to develop public outreach program to educate the public about the public and private benefits of energy conservation, including costs savings to the individual household, reducing the carbon footprint for the community, and promoting a

DRAFT

more sustainable lifestyle.

Action 14.3: Adopt measures to reduce energy consumption in City-owned and maintained properties.

Action 14.4: Develop incentives, or bonuses, within the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to encourage development of projects that meet energy conservation goals.

Goal 15: Mitigate Built-Environments Impact on Natural Resources

Policy 15.1: New developments, and redeveloped areas, are encouraged to use best management practices to manage storm water runoff from entering Wapsipinicon's watershed and the City's sanitary sewer system.

Policy 15.2: New development requiring public sanitary sewer services is encouraged to use technologies to reduce wastewater discharge.

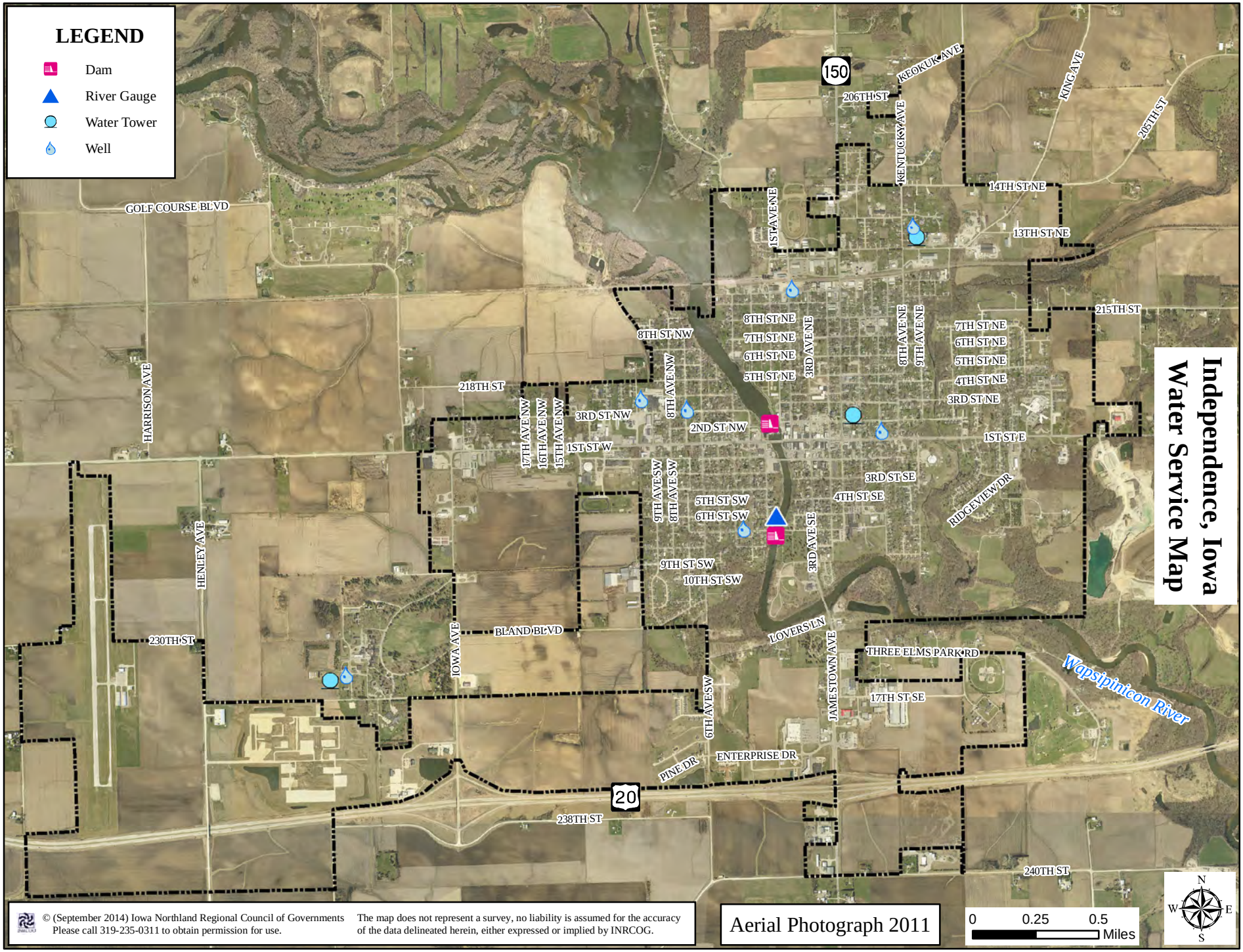
Policy 15.3: Market reclaimed water as an alternative to potable water use for the watering of plants, and other uses.

Action 15.1: Develop public outreach programs to educate the public about the need to reduce water demand and wastewater discharge to maintain a healthy water supply. Provide information about ways to reduce wastewater discharges, such as low-flow or no-flow toilets, efficient faucets, and use of non-potable water sources.

Action 15.2: Adopt and implement green infrastructure measures to reduce storm water runoff and minimize flash flooding.

DRAFT

Map 10: Water Service Map of the City

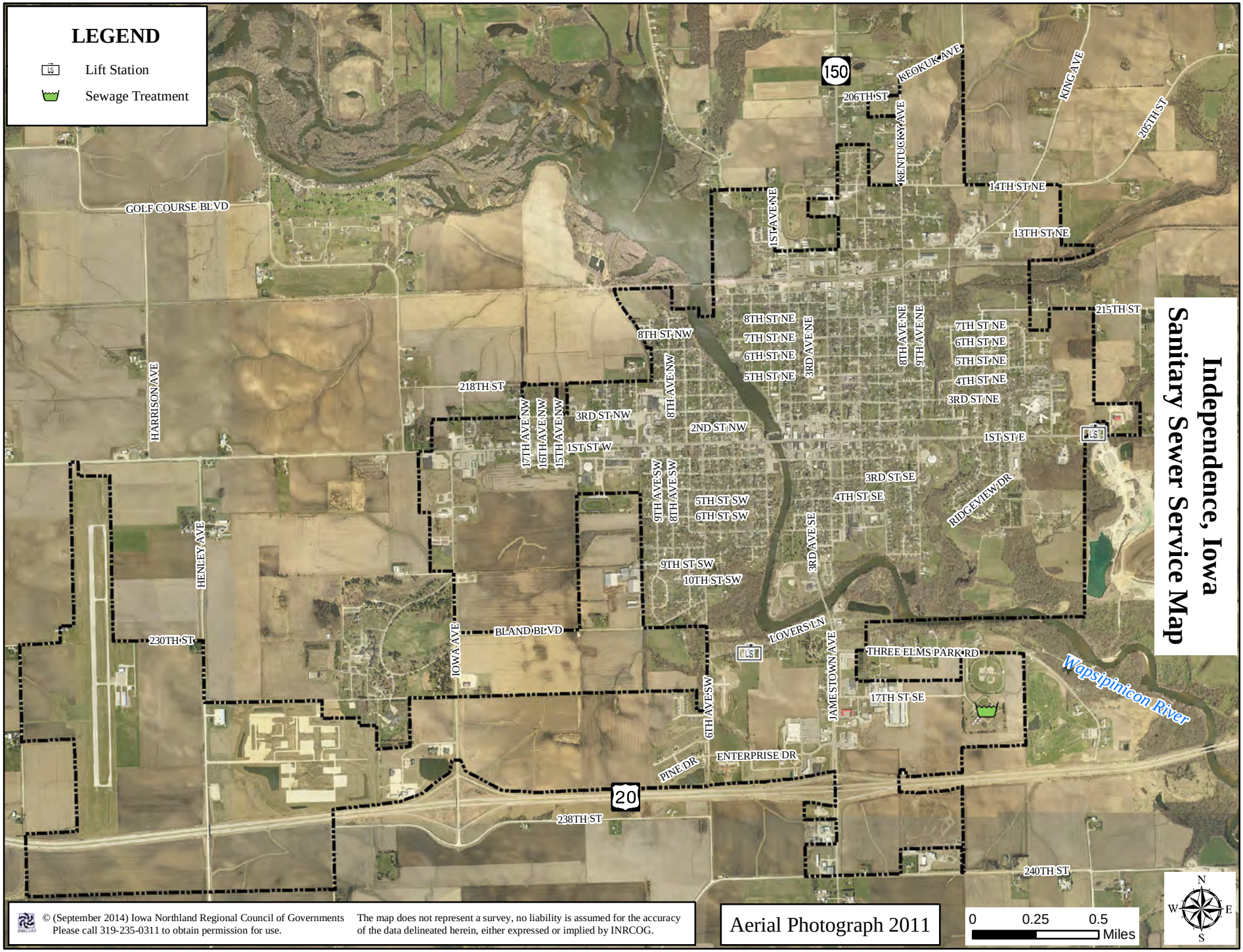


© (September 2014) Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments
Please call 319-235-0311 to obtain permission for use.

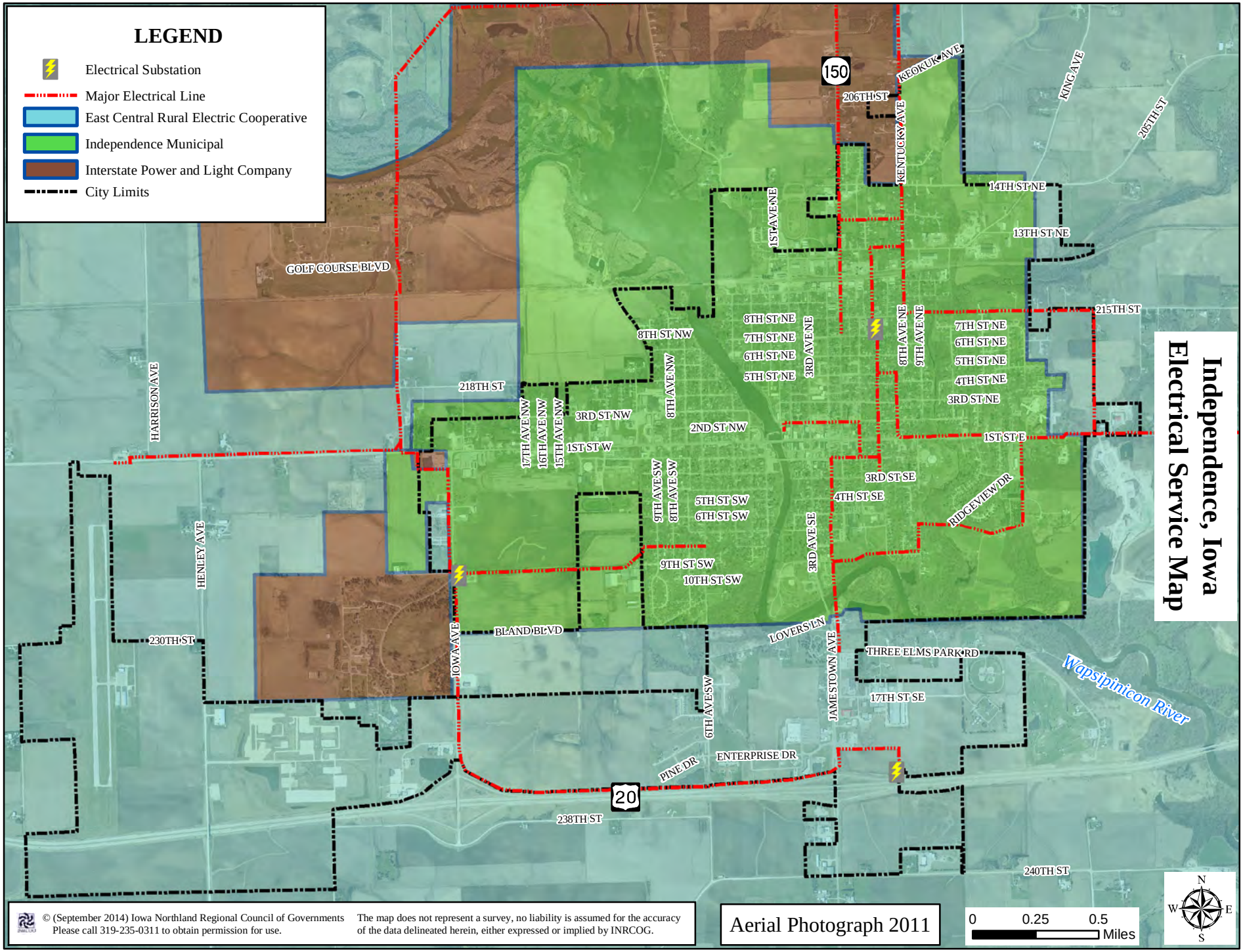
The map does not represent a survey, no liability is assumed for the accuracy of the data delineated herein, either expressed or implied by INRCOG.

Aerial Photograph 2011

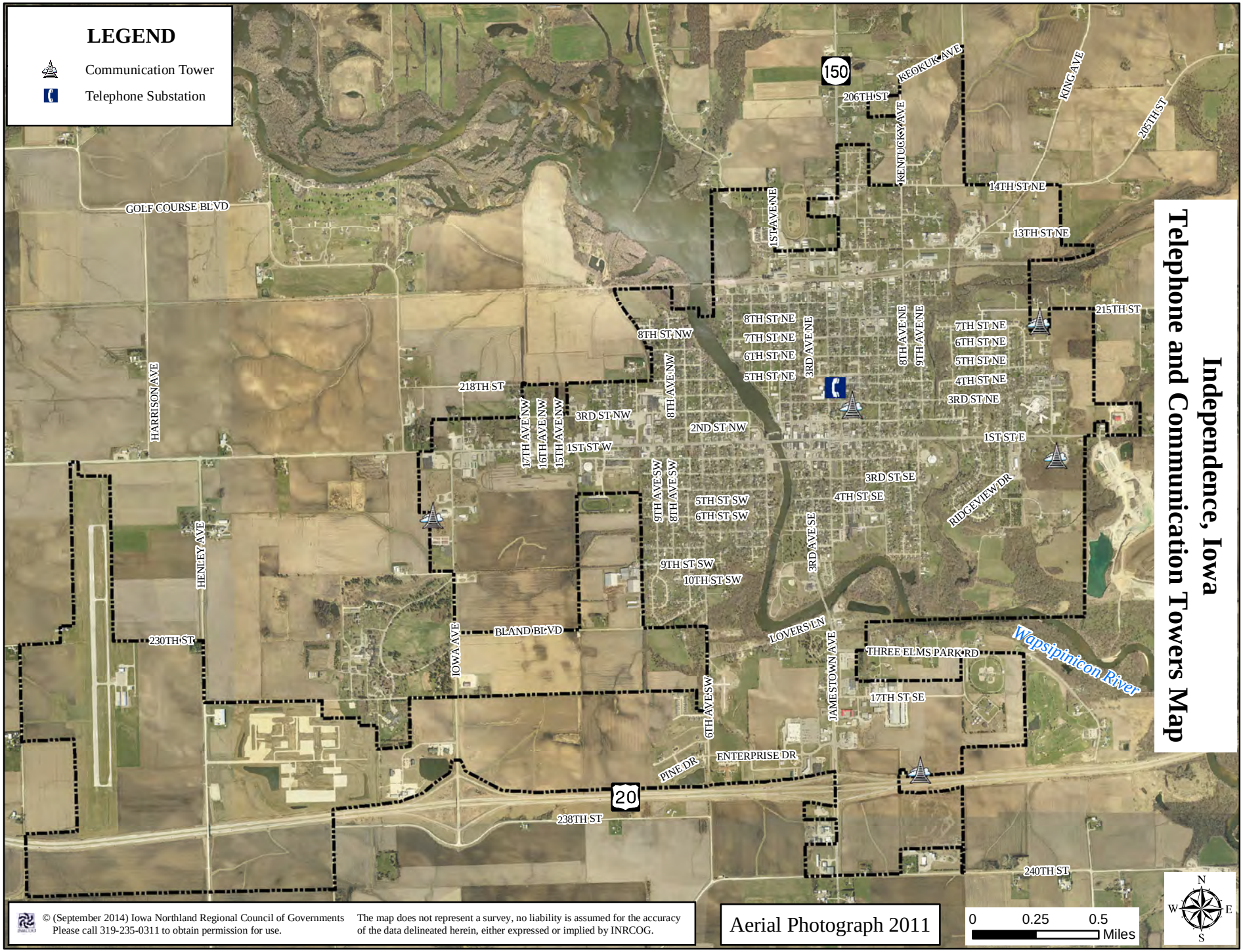
Map 11: Sanitary Sewer Service in the City



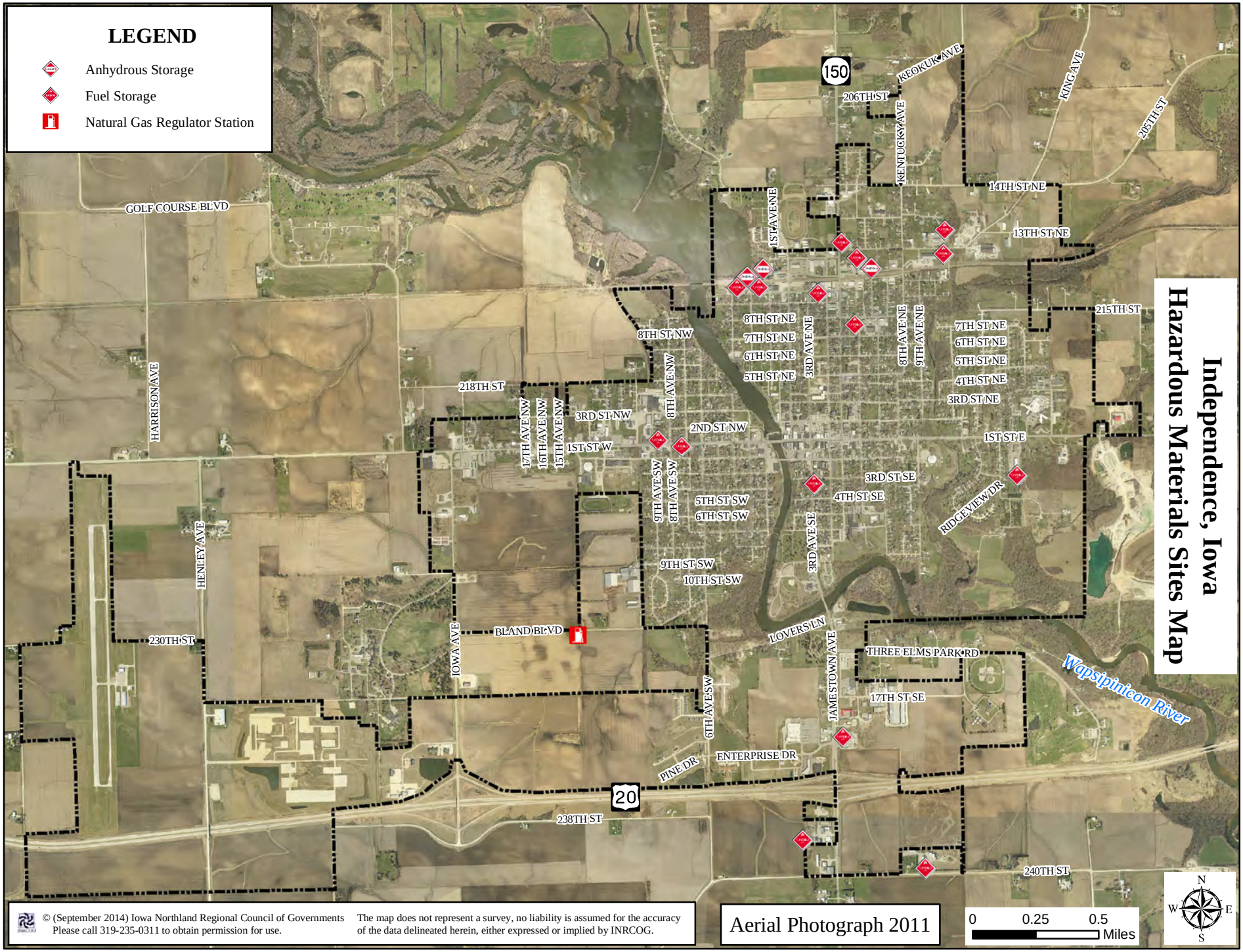
Map 12: Electrical Service in the City



Map 13: Telephone and Communication Towers in the City



Map 14: Hazardous Materials Sites in the City



Section 7: Housing

This section addresses the goals, policies, and actions to promote housing diversity and opportunities in for housing in Independence. This section also discusses the existing housing trends, including new subdivisions, areas in need, and forecasts for residential demand and development.

The goals and policies to address Independence's housing also help the City achieve its goal to maintain and improve the quality of life or sense of place that the residents of the community value and enjoy.

Existing Conditions

Housing is the foundation of a community and its economy because it serves one of the most basic needs of residents: shelter. Housing is the biggest part of the US economy and the dominant land use in most cities.

According to the 2010 Census there are 2,745 housing units in the City of Independence. Of those housing units, 2,521 are occupied, which leaves 224housing units listed as vacant. The average population per housing unit was reported to be 2.30 people. If a housing unit is occupied it is considered a household, therefore there are also 2,521 households in the city. Of these households 1,566 are considered to be families.

[SMART PLANNING ELEMENT – HOUSING:

Objectives, policies, and programs to further the vitality and character of established residential neighborhoods and new residential neighborhoods and plan to ensure an adequate housing supply that meets both the existing and forecasted housing demand. The comprehensive plan or land development regulations may include an inventory and analysis of the local housing stock and may include specific information such as age, condition, type, market value, occupancy, and historical characteristics of all the housing within the municipality. The comprehensive plan or land development regulations may identify specific policies and programs that promote the development of new housing and maintenance or rehabilitation of existing housing and that provide a range of housing choices that meet the needs of the residents of the municipality.]

Of special note when considering these and future census numbers regarding the number of housing units in relation to hazard mitigation planning is the fact that the City of Independence has been actively engaged in the process of identifying, purchasing, and removing houses from identified flood hazard areas. This process will undoubtedly have some influence on current housing estimates and future census data.

Independence has been identified by its residents and leaders as a "great place to live and raise a family." Given its small-town values and citizens of all ages intermingling in a secure environment (clean, safe, pride of self and community), the community has been able to grow, yet remains a place where everyone knows your name.

DRAFT

"What is the current housing environment in Independence in regard to ordinances, regulations, policies, programs (if any), etc. for homeowners/renters/developers?"

- Gap in availability
- Inconsistency in rentals – quality and price
- 50 property rentals – new with a waiting list ($675+)
- Currently in second round of CDBG funds for housing (INRCOG) – LIM $150-180K
- Majority of newer residential developments is going on by two developers – one inside the city limits and the other in within the 2-mile fringe.
- In the county the minimum lot size is dependent on water and sewer systems – 2 acres w septic
- There are 6 condo units with 4 more coming

"How is the environment for developers? Is it favorable for non-traditional development? Is there a desire for more flexibility – setbacks, lot sizes, density, etc."

- The City process is smooth – sidewalks were previously waived, but will be harder now
- Zero lot line unit could be well received
- Zoning for residential include three zones – R1 (SF), R2 (SF and duplex), R3 (3 units+)

"What do you think could or should be done to foster additional housing choices in Independence?"

- City needs to be proactive – tax abatement &/or other financing tool
- City needs to be a partner with developers
- Move base than more taxes
- Previous city leaders' attitudes resulted in no partnerships – developers took all the risk
- There were previous talks on tax abatement, but nothing came of it
- Possibility look at a 2-mile agreement for development – identifying either county/city to review and approve development based on likelihood of it being annexed in the future

DRAFT

Housing Occupancy

According to available Census data, in 2010 there were 2,745 housing units in Independence; 91.8 percent of which are occupied. Of those occupied units, only 224 where rental units.

Table 9: Housing Occupancy in Independence

	1980	1990	2000	2010
Total Persons	6,392	5,972	6,014	5,966
Total Housing Units	2,463	2,480	2,610	2,745
Owner-Occupied Units	n/a	n/a	1,769	2,521
Renter-Occupied Units	n/a	n/a	663	722
Vacant Housing Units	n/a	124	178	224
Rental Vacancy Rate %	n/a	n/a	6.2	6.7%
Persons per Housing Unit	2.60	2.41	2.30	2.30
Number of Households	2,354	2,381	2,432	2,521
Number of Families	1,685	1,635	1,588	1,566

Source: U.S. Census and State Data Center of Iowa

The majority of Independence's housing units are single-family dwellings. This is consistent with Buchanan County and surrounding communities.

Table 10: Units in Structure

	Independence Estimate	Buchanan County Estimate
Total Housing Units	2,689	8,965
1-Unit, detached	2,022	7,498
1-Unit, Attached	80	134
2 Units	89	148
3 or 4 Units	166	352
5 to 9 Units	23	54
10 to 19 Units	73	112
20 or More Units	72	80
Mobile Home	164	587
Boat, RV, Van, etc.	0	0

Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012

Age of Housing Stock

Like many communities in the region, the City of Independence has a large percentage (42%) of its housing stock that was constructed prior to 1940. The median year of construction for all houses in the community is reported to be 1950, or 53 years of age. However, the fact that approximately ten percent of the housing stock in the City of Independence was constructed in the decade of the 1990s is an excellent sign of growth, and is well above what is generally observed in most northeast Iowa communities.

DRAFT

Table 11: Year Housing Units Were Built		
	Independence Estimate	**Buchanan County Estimate**
Total Housing Units	2,689	8,965
Built 2010 or later	0	21
Built 2000 to 2009	156	843
Built 1990 to 1999	330	891
Built 1980 to 1989	145	714
Built 1970 to 1979	419	1,294
Built 1960 to 1969	348	1,007
Built 1950 to 1959	274	792
Built 1940 to 1949	152	495
Built 1939 or earlier	865	2,908
Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012		

Table 12: Value of Owner-Occupied Units		
	Independence Estimate	**Buchanan County Estimate**
Owner-Occupied Units	1,771	6,280
Less than $50,000	227	816
$50,000 to $99,999	483	1,691
$100,000 to $149,999	526	1,499
$150,000 to $199,999	288	1,149
$200,000 to $299,999	154	681
$300,000 to $499,999	85	345
$500,000 to $999,999	8	90
$1,000,000 or more	0	9
Median (dollars)	$115,200	$117,800
Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012		

Housing Values and Gross Rent

According to information obtained, there were 1,771 specified owner-occupied housing units in the City of Independence. The median value of an owner occupied single-family housing unit was reported to be $115,200 for Independence – approximately $2,600 less than the median value for Buchanan County ($117,800). However, the gross rent for Independence residents is forty-three dollars more than for Buchanan County residents.

DRAFT

Development Trends

Table 14 lists the number of building permits the City of Independence issued between 2004 and 2009. According to the data, a total of 96 permits were issued for single-family residential units and 13 permits for multi-family residential units for a total of over $18 Million in residential value. Recent residential development has been occurring outside the city limits on the fringe.

Table 14: Building Permits Issued in Independence (2004-2013)

Year	Single-Family Buildings	Multi-Family Buildings	Residential Total Improvements $
2004	13	10	$ 4,117,049
2005	8	0	$ 1,100,000
2006	9	1	$ 1,983,000
2007	9	0	$ 1,458,636
2008	11	0	$ 1,956,000
2009	7	0	$ 931,000
2010	9	1	$1,424,958
2011	11	0	$1,979,950
2012	8	1	$1,566,500
2013	11	0	$1,845,000
Totals	**96**	**13**	**$18,362,093**

Source: City of Independence and U.S. Census Building Permit Data

Table 13 : Gross Rent Estimates

	Independence	Buchanan County
Less than $200	16	55
$200 to $299	21	46
$300 to $499	168	421
$500 to $749	178	479
$750 to $999	174	363
$1,000 to $1,499	40	113
$1,500 or more	32	41
Median	$657	$614
Occupied Units Paying Rent	629	1,518

Source: American Community Survey, 2008-2012

Key Issues & Opportunities

Based on input from survey, the public open house, and task force members, the following are key concerns and needs for housing:

- Owner-occupied home rehabilitation
- Homebuyer / down-payment assistance
- Multi-family or rental rehabilitation
- Too many dilapidated/abandoned housing units
- Lack of housing for elderly

DRAFT

- Quality apartment rentals for young and old residents
- Affordable housing – 150k-175k range (more realistic is 80K-125K-150K)
- Home prices are too high for a city this size and for the job market
- More entry level housing
- Developer/ contractor incentives to build
- Housing near schools
- Variety of housing types – apartments, duplexes, townhouses, single-family, etc.
- 2nd floor living quarters – would need meet building code (which is stricter for mixed use buildings)
- City needs to look into some sort of housing financing tool
- Who builds the sidewalks in developments with vacant lots - typically built once a home is complete---results in gaps
- Commercial rollback will impact multi-family units and tax base
- There is a market for snowbirds – if there a was a good viable option available (modern with parking, garage, privacy – patio/townhomes
- Quality rental units and/or small homes for teachers, etc. – ask employers with commuters what they need/want for housing to get them to live here and not commute

Affordable Housing

Housing has become less affordable to more Independence residents and potential residents. This problem is particularly severe among the working class, special needs, and Hispanic populations. The federal government and most lenders consider affordable owner-occupied housing as housing that can be obtained for approximately 30% of monthly gross income. The definition of affordable rental units is similar, although the percentage varies in part because of the tax benefits enjoyed by homeowners.

Independence's estimated median household income in 2012 was $51,094 compared to $36,554 in 2000. The mean prices for all housing units were $145,131 in 2011. However, there is still a great demand on the housing industry to provide low to moderate-income housing. Many residents, unable to afford decent housing, have moved out of the community to either the unincorporated areas or to other smaller communities. Or they may move to existing residential neighborhoods at densities the existing housing stock cannot accommodate.

Also special needs residents such as the mentally and physically challenged, the homeless, the elderly, and persons with certain health problems require special consideration to meet their housing needs. Because these populations have needs that the fair market housing industry cannot adequately address, their housing is often provided through a partnership of public/private/nonprofit organizations. Little other support is available to serve these residents.

A critical shortage of available, decent and affordable living units makes it difficult for these persons and their families to maintain an acceptable living standard. Limited incentives for private market construction, a limited supply of affordable land and high construction costs make it difficult for the private market to provide affordable housing.

DRAFT

Independence should encourage affordable housing through its zoning and development regulations; establish a process for distributing fair share housing throughout the community; work with nonprofit housing organizations; support and apply for programs that rehabilitates and preserve existing housing; and support and provide first-time homebuyers with assistance and incentives; and constructing new housing units.

Housing Mix

The housing trend is moving towards diversity in housing stock, where citizens can stay within a community but move to different housing types continued growth of low-income households has placed a great demand on the housing industry to provide diversity in housing throughout the community. This can be seen when duplexes are sold before construction is completed. Likewise, the City of Independence is faced with meeting the housing needs of its special populations such as the developmentally and physically challenged, and elderly.

These demands call for housing action strategies that support choice and flexibility in housing types, density and location. This in turn will allow the real estate and development communities to be responsive to changing housing needs. The action strategies should encourage financial and regulatory flexibility that allow creative housing options and siting of institutions. Furthermore, action strategies should support codes, ordinances, and site plans that encourage development of special needs housing, and public/private investment of these projects.

A variety of housing types, materials (green and non-green), neighborhood settings, price ranges, amenities, natural settings, and proximity to transportation, employment, shopping, and other daily activities, which meet the needs of non-traditional households, such as empty-nesters, seniors, college students, young professionals without children, and single professionals should be available in Independence.

Some examples of different types of housing include accessory unit construction, granny flats, single room occupancy, clustering, and manufactured housing and siting residential facilities in areas where they were previously prohibited. Providing for people with special needs does not necessarily mean more social services or infrastructure. It means greater regulatory flexibility and offering incentives to provide affordable, accessible housing

Improved Neighborhoods

Improve the visual appearance, economic vitality, and general quality of life in aging and historic neighborhoods. Independence's residential neighborhoods vary in size, housing type, and amenities. The character of a neighborhood is closely associated with its design, the people who live there, and the services provided. Residents want to feel comfortable, safe, and that they "belong." Over the next 20 years, preservation and rehabilitation must acknowledge the nature of the residents, visual character and services. *2014 Plan Update* housing action strategies encourage new development in previously undeveloped areas that fulfill visual and service character. Infill development should reflect a visual and service character compatible with existing development.

Since a neighborhood character is an important quality-of-life issue to residents. Its intent is to discourage business or industry that might erode the urban character and promote designs to encourage neighborhood development, while improving public safety and well-being.

DRAFT

Housing Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

Goal 16: Improved Neighborhoods

Policy 16.1: The City will support and assist neighborhood associations and housing organizations that promote community values, polices, and actions that are consistent with this Plan.

Policy 16.2: Community improvements should be designed to attract a mix of socio-economic backgrounds to locate in aging and historic neighborhoods.

Policy 16.3: Renovations within existing neighborhoods should provide quality, sustainable housing in a manner that enhances and upholds the character of the neighborhood.

Policy 16.4: Non-residential development within existing neighborhoods should provide neighborhood services and should not negatively impact the neighborhood with noise, traffic, or other impacts.

Policy 16.5: After exhausting all renovation options, blighted, uninhabitable buildings should be replaced with new infill structure that are compatible with the neighborhood context and enhance the visual appearance of the area.

Action 16.1: Establish a neighborhood planning process that develops strategic plans for individual neighborhoods.

Goal 17: Well-Maintained Existing Structures and Lots

Policy 17.1: The conditions of housing in transitional areas (area between adjacent land uses) should be monitored on an ongoing and regular basis.

Policy 17.2: The City will work with landowners, neighborhood associations, and other relevant organizations to seek strategies to address blighted, uninhabitable, and hazardous housing, ancillary structures, and lots.

Policy 17.3: The City will continue to enforce the nuisance ordinance and remove unsafe and uninhabitable structures, per City ordinance.

Action 17.1: Adopt development standards to limit parking in front yard areas and front lawns.

DRAFT

Action 17.2: Continue to coordinate and apply for rehabilitation funds from local, state, and federal sources.

Action 17.3: Adopt a Minimal Housing Code.

Goal 18: Increased Homeownership and Rental Opportunities

Policy 18.1: Through land development standards and zoning, facilitate the development of a mix of housing types at different price points to meet the needs of households with different incomes.

Policy 18.2: Continue to coordinate efforts with other governmental entities and local housing developers to seek efforts to develop affordable housing units.

Action 18.1: Continue to support and apply for housing funds from local, state, and federal sources.

Goal 19: Housing Opportunities for a Diversity of Households

Policy 19.1: New housing developments should provide a mix of housing types to meet different lifestyle needs.

Policy 19.2: Senior housing developments that allow Independence's population to "age in place" are encouraged. These developments should be located to provide an incorporate infrastructure to provide access to sidewalks and other multi-modal opportunities.

Action 19.1: Update the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to allow for a mix of housing types within new developments, within mixed-use areas, and within Downtown. Provide incentives to developers that include a mix of housing types within a single development.

DRAFT

Section 8: Economic Development

This section discusses the current economic trends such as employment, the supply of retail, office, and industrial space, and also considers market forecasts and marketable areas for future development. This section provides guidance only on the types of economic development the city should foster through the next 10-20 years, as well as actions the city can take, in partnership with local economic development organizations, to encourage these efforts.

[SMART PLANNING ELEMENT – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT:

Objectives, policies, and programs to promote the stabilization, retention, or expansion of economic development and employment opportunities. The comprehensive plan or land development regulations may include an analysis of current industries and economic activity and identify economic growth goals for the municipality. The comprehensive plan or land development regulations may also identify locations for future brownfield or grayfield development.]

Existing Conditions

Independence has a strong, growing economy with a variety of businesses offering a variety of services and goods for residents and visitors.

The Task Force identified the following existing conditions:

- No formal strategy / objective for the community in regard to economic development
- Existing businesses are given priority (retainage/expand)
- Chamber just completed their second Jingle on Main during the holiday season (expanded it from 1 day in 2012 to 3 days in 2013 due to response)
- Proximity to highway and larger communities
- Airport
- Applied to be a Main Street Community
- Workforce program with Hawkeye Community College
- Half of workforce leaves community for work
- Aging population with a workforce gap
- Attract diversity in economic development and population
- Need to do a better job at shop locally campaign – importance of and its effect on the community
- Easy permitting process
- Part of a large regional economic development group – Greater Cedar Valley Alliance
- Five TIF districts which have help fund many infrastructure projects

DRAFT

Partnerships

There are several local and regional partnerships to enhance Independence's economy. Below are these partnerships.

- **Chamber of Commerce**
  Located at 112 1st Street NE in downtown Independence, the Independence Area Chamber of Commerce is dedicated to business and community betterment. With assist from Buchanan County Economic Development, the Chamber supports business expansion, entrepreneurship, and economic sustainability. The Chamber host many events throughout the year – Chamber Showcase, Easter Egg Hunt, Downtown Trick-or-Treat, Friday Night Live at5 Summer Concert series, historic 4th of July Parade, business training seminars for local business and Chamber members, and Chamber Bucks .

- **Buchanan County Economic Development**
  The Buchanan County Economic Development group was created to foster a strong economic environment that supports business, nurtures growth and new investment while attracting sustainable businesses and a quality work force in Buchanan County.

- **Cedar Valley Regional Partnership (Marketing Region)**
  This Partnership was formed in 2007 with funding partially provided by the Iowa Department of Economic Development, now known as the Iowa Economic Development Authority. The purpose of this group was to assist the six counties in the INRCOG region (Buchanan County being one of those counties) to develop an organizational structure and work plain to extensively market the region. The Buchanan County Economic Development is a voting member of the group. Recently the Partnership has begun researching opportunities to address workforce issues in the region.

Trends & Statistics

In a 2011 Laborshed (the area or regional from which an employment center draws its commuting workers) study for Buchanan County, it was revealed the total potential labor force is 180,615, of which 14,000 are employed (9.7% working multiple jobs). The average age of employed persons is 47 years old and working an average of 39 hours per week. There are 31.4% of employed persons working within the professional, paraprofessional, and technical occupational categories followed by 21.4% within the clerical and production, construction, and material handling occupational categories.

DRAFT

Table 15: Industrial Classifications of Employed Persons in Buchanan County Laborshed		
Industrial Category	**% of Laborshed**	**# of Employed**
Education	16.5%	22,441
Wholesale & Retail Trade	15.3%	20,808
Health Care & Social Services	15.0%	20,400
Manufacturing	13.0%	17,680
Public Administration & Government	7.9%	10,744
Professional Services	7.5%	10,200
Construction	6.3%	8,568
Transportation, Communication, & Utilities	5.9%	8,024
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	5.5%	7,480
Personal Services	4.3%	5,848
Agricultural, Forestry, & Mining	2.0%	2,720
Entertainment & Recreation	0.4%	544
Active Military Duty	0.4%	544
Source: 2011 Laborshed Study for Buchanan County		

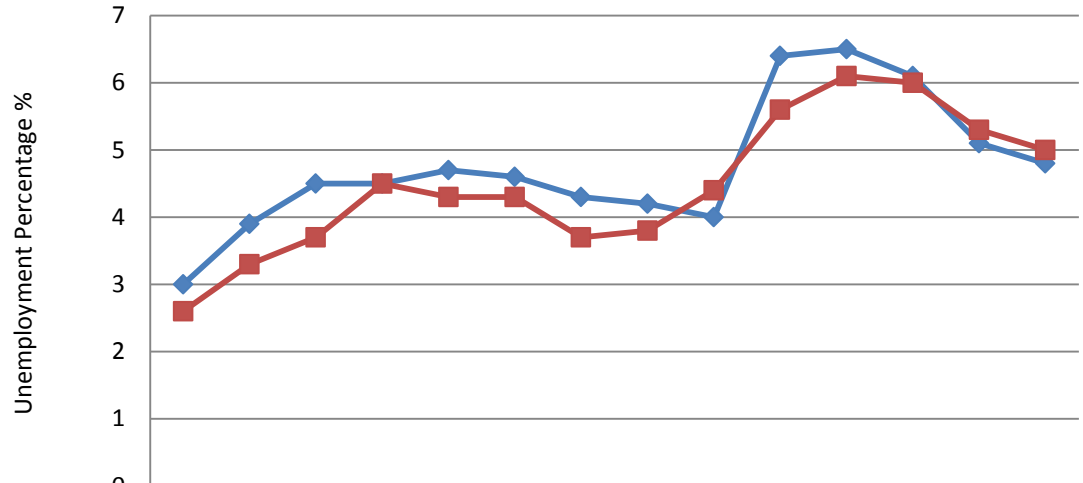
Table 16: Underemployed Reasons in Independence Laborshed	
2.2%	Inadequate hours (308 people)
2.5%	Mismatch of skills (350 people)
2.2%	Low income (308 people)
5.7%	Total estimated underemployment (798 people)
Source: 2011 Laborshed Study for Buchanan County	

According to the *Buchanan County 2001 Laborshed Study*, persons surveyed stated they would be willing to commute an average of 24 miles one way for employment opportunities.

DRAFT

Unemployment rates are shown in Figure 5. Iowa Workforce Development does not report individual statistics for Independence; however, it is important to note that Buchanan County, as a whole, has started to report lower unemployment rates than the State since 2009.

Figure 5: Unemployment Rates



	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013
Buchanan County	3	3.9	4.5	4.5	4.7	4.6	4.3	4.2	4	6.4	6.5	6.1	5.1	4.8
State of Iowa	2.6	3.3	3.7	4.5	4.3	4.3	3.7	3.8	4.4	5.6	6.1	6	5.3	5

Development Trends

Recent development trends have seen commercial and residential along the Highway 20 corridor. The east northeast part of town has seen quite a bit of recent single family home construction. Major financial centers are the downtown corridor along First Street and along the in the south edge of town with new strip mall, Veridian Credit Union, Super Wal-Mart and other small businesses in the area.

Table 17: Commercial / Industrial Building Permits Issued in Independence (2004-2013)		
Year	**Commercial / Industrial**	**Commercial / Industrial Total Improvements $**
2004	7	$ 293,875.00
2005	12	$ 10,595,000.00
2006	19	$ 8,154,584.00
2007	6	$ 4,068,533.00
2008	3	$4,766,000.00
2009	1	$ 1,455,740.00
2010	n/a	n/a
2011	n/a	n/a
2012	n/a	n/a
2013	n/a	n/a
Totals	48	$ 29,333,733.00
Source: City of Independence		

Major Employers

Major employers in the planning area include: Geater Manufacturing, Bachman Tool & Die, Tyson Foods, Buchanan County Health Center, State Mental Health Institute, Buchanan County, City of Independence, Independence Light, Power & Telecommunications, Independence School District, Wapsi Valley Creamery, Larson Construction, Pries Manufacturing, Wal-Mart and Monsanto.

DRAFT

Income

As Table 18 reveals, Buchanan County's per capita personal income is less than neighboring Delaware County; however, Buchanan's median housing income is more than Delaware's.

Table 18: Per Capita Personal Income (Dollars per Person) & Median Household Income

Year	Per Capita Personal Income			Median Household Income		
	Buchanan County	Delaware County	State of Iowa	Buchanan County	Delaware County	State of Iowa
2006	$28,769	$28,969	$33,719	$43,976	$44,339	$48,126
2007	$30,803	$31,668	$35,843	$47,329	$43,529	$48,908
2008	$32,877	$34,275	$38,313	$50,220	$49,636	$50,142
2009	$32,606	$32,642	$37,074	$51,052	$48,574	$50,721
2010	$33,878	$35,337	$38,084	$50,026	$45,910	$49,016
2011	$39,192	$41,861	NA	$52,930	$50,231	$50,219

Source: Iowa Workforce Development

One factor that also influences income and employment is education. The following table compares the levels of education for and the median wages by industry for the Buchanan County Laborshed. As expected, the industries of Education, Finance/Insurance/Real Estate, Professional Services, and Public Administration/Government have the highest percentage of degrees beyond high school; while Construction and Wholesale/Retail industries have the lowest percentage of degrees beyond high school. Though, an interesting observation is Construction has the highest salary wages, while Personal Services has the highest non-salary wages.

Table 15: Education and Median Wage Characteristics by Industry

	Education			Median Wages	
Industry	Some Level Beyond High School	Associate Degree	Undergraduate Degree of Higher	Salary Wages (per year)	Non-Salary Wages (per hour)
Agriculture	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Construction	44.4%	5.6%	22.2%	$59,000	$18.50
Manufacturing	58.0%	20.0%	14.0%	$50,000	$16.00
Transportation, Communication, & Utilities	54.5%	13.6%	13.6%	$52,000	$19.10
Wholesale & Retail	49.1%	10.9%	14.5%	$42,500	$9.50
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	87.5%	12.5%	25.0%	$46,000	$13.65

DRAFT

Health Care & Social Services	78.3%	19.6%	36.9%	$55,000	$15.75
Personal Services	64.3%	14.3%	21.4%	$32,500	$23.00
Entertainment & Recreation	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Professional Services	83.3%	12.5%	41.6%	$51,000	$8.75
Public Administration & Government	80.8%	15.4%	46.1%	$48,000	$20.00
Education	81.2%	6.3%	70.9%	$50,000	$10.50
Source: 2011 Buchanan County Laborshed Study (n/a = insufficient survey data/refused)					

Key Issues & Opportunities

Many elements contribute to attracting economic development in the community, including transportation, affordable and diverse housing; in addition to availability of labor and quality of life components. All of these elements are important ingredients in attracting targeted industries and basic businesses. However, Task Force members identified the following as key concerns and needs for the community.

- Improve friendly environment – Absolute Indee (branding and marketing) – too many parties trying to do the same thing ---- be a team
- Public relations and communication strategies – promote what is being done, blow your honk
- Change mindset
- Need to look at shovel ready sites (city-owned with infrastructure) – south side near new high school and Highway 20 interchange
- Aquatic center
- Businesses and activity center for all age groups
- Positive, progressive image – be a team
- Tourism opportunities – Amish traffic, athletic events, recreational, etc. ---need a person
- Succession planning – businesses and community
- Education on what is available for businesses – UNI Business Center, technical assistance, grants, etc.
- Friendly banking environment for businesses
- Partnerships
- Need to determine existing business's needs (workforce, infrastructure, etc.)
- Need basic and essential stores

DRAFT

Creating a Visitor & Tourism Office or Department

With all the different groups, committees, entities, and organizations with different promoting their own interest causing multiple brands and images of Independence. In the past this approach was fine; however, there is now a need to be one brand or image to portray a cohesive, inclusive, strong community presence; which will help with promoting and marketing the community. Once this new image is identified, there needs to be a central vehicle, for instance a visitor and tourism office/department, to spread the word and provide information to potential citizens, business, and visitors.

Developing Downtown as the Central Community Activity Center

The City and partnering organizations (Independence's Chamber and Commerce and Main Street) should continue to devote staff and resources to foster revitalization and redevelopment of Independence's Main Street District in order to make Downtown function as a livable, walkable, core commercial activity center.

Maintaining and Expanding Independence's Economic Base

Independence must continue to maintain and expand its diverse economic base in order to support a healthy economy. Based on input received businesses needs include family style/full-serve restaurants, variety of clothing stores, lodging (includes bed and breakfasts), and technology stores.

Encouraging Infill and Revitalization

The City should continue to support and encourage development within Independence's Downtown area and where infill and revitalizations opportunities existing, such as along 1st Street West and 20th Avenue SW.

Encouraging Development, Retention, and Expansion of Locally Owned Businesses

Many commercial businesses in Independence are owned by corporations or franchise type enterprises. In the future, Independence should focus on retaining its unique community character by encouraging and supporting the development of new locally owned businesses and helping existing local businesses expand and grow.

Enhancing Job Readiness of the Local Workforce

Working to educate and improve the job skills of the local workforce will help to decrease unemployment rates and the outsourcing of jobs to workers living outside of Independence.

DRAFT

Economic Development Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

The City's vision to have a healthy and robust local economy that is competitive within the larger region includes the following goals.

Goal 20: Expanded Economic Base

Policy 20.1: A variety of employment opportunities and new businesses are encouraged to develop in Independence.

Policy 20.2: A diversified job market that provides employment opportunities for persons with varying educational levels and skill sets in needed and encouraged.

Policy 20.3: The City of Independence supports local partnerships and efforts to capitalize on Independence's strengths and opportunities to provide new employment opportunities in Independence.

Action 20.1: Work with local economic development partners to identify future development opportunities and assist with development approvals by providing zoning and infrastructure to foster development of new employment centers, as guided by the Future Land Use Map.

Action 20.2: Work with local economic development partners to identify long-term needs for airport development and industrial park needs.

Action 20.3: Analyze development approvals, recruitment efforts, locations of newly established businesses and locations where businesses are not seceding to identify trends. Trends that show that recruitment efforts are inconsistent with Downtown business development initiatives should be addressed.

Goal 21: Enhanced Job Readiness of the Workforce

Policy 21.1: The City of Independence supports local educational institutions, such of Hawkeye Community College and Independence Community School District, in their efforts to train and educate Independence's workforce and will provide support and needed assistance to these efforts by working to improve accessibility to educational facilities and improve the quality of life in the city.

Policy 21.2: The City supports the workforce development efforts of Buchanan County Economic Development and Independence Chamber of Commerce to create partnerships between businesses and schools, to develop and implement career exploration programs for students, internships, apprenticeships, and to secure commitments from local businesses to recruit employees from the local workforce pool.

DRAFT

Action 21.1: Work with local partner organizations to identify ways that the City can assist with reaching the goal of enhancing job readiness of the local workforce.

Goal 22: Technology-Oriented Economic Development Efforts

Policy 22.1: Leverage community investments in fiber-optic networks into more economic development opportunities

Action 22.1: Work with local partners to market Independence as a having a strong fiber-optic network in the county.

Action 22.2: Work with existing businesses in Independence to develop business expansion strategies that capitalize on local technologies.

Action 22.3: Work with Independence Light and Power to establish a Wi-Fi network in the Downtown area to encourage redevelopment and revitalization in the core center.

Goal 23: Development of Locally Owned Businesses

Policy 23.1: The City will consider economic development incentives to local residents in the promotion of locally-owned businesses.

Policy 23.2: The City will support local business development by working with local economic development partners to identify funding sources for emerging local businesses.

Policy 23.3: The City will support and assist small businesses in utilizing new technologies to expand their market base.

Policy 23.4: The City will support and assist local economic development partners in identifying, promoting, and implementing small business education and networking opportunities.

Action 23.1: In coordination with local economic development partners, identify barriers to local business development that the City can take action to amend.

Action 23.2: The City will review all procurement requests and whenever possible use locally-owned vendors.

Action 23.3: Provide a clearing housing for information on locating a business in Independence and the available State and local resources available to small

DRAFT

businesses, including funding, training, grants, and location assistance.

Goal 24: Develop a Visitor and Tourism Office & Program

Policy 24.1: The City will support the development of a visitor and tourism office and program.

Action 24.1: In coordination with local partners, such as Buchanan County, Chamber of Commerce, and Buchanan County Economic Development, a visitor and tourism office will be established with funding for all parties to market and promote the community.

DRAFT

Section 9: Transportation

Transportation facilities are a part of the infrastructure needed to support and maintain the existing economic development efforts including the importing and exporting of goods, commuter traffic and recreation. To accurately plan for the future transportation needs of Independence, an inventory of existing facilities has been prepared and analyzed.

Transportation facilities connecting the residents of Independence to other areas in Buchanan County, are very important, but just as these areas are important to the residents of Independence, the connection of Buchanan County to other regional service centers are important to business and industry. For this reason, the transportation inventories will examine the transportation facilities for vehicular, freight, air, rail, public, and recreation.

In developing this section it was necessary to study the relationship between service centers and their users. Following is a brief discussion of specific elements, their users, and their importance.

[SMART PLANNING ELEMENT – TRANSPORTATION:

Objectives, policies, and programs to guide the future development of a safe, convenient, efficient, and economical transportation system. Plans for such a transportation system may be coordinated with state and regional transportation plans and take into consideration the need for diverse modes of transportation, accessibility, improved air quality, and interconnectivity of the various modes of transportation.]

Existing Conditions

Independence has within its boundaries a variety of transportation systems. These systems include highways, gravel roads, blacktop roads, and transit. Access to bike and pedestrian trails for transportation is becoming more prevalent in the planning area.

Transportation planning in the City of Independence is performed by two separate, but interrelated entities. Together, the city staff and the staff of the Iowa Northland Regional Transportation Authority (RTA) conduct and implement transportation plans and programs in the city. Examples of the planning documents that are produced include the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Transportation Improvements Program, and the Transportation Planning Work Program. The RTA, which includes the Policy Board and Technical Committees, is a regional planning body that is staffed by the Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCOG).

The Policy Board of the RTA is made up of elected officials and the Technical Committees are made up of planning, engineering, and other city and county staff who have knowledge or expertise regarding various modes of transportation. The following information has been provided by staff, the Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT), or excerpted and/or paraphrased from the current Long Range Transportation Plan of the RTA.

DRAFT

The task force discussed Independence's transportation. Below are the main discussion points.

- Citizens polled stated very little satisfaction with condition of streets and availability of sidewalks in town
- The City is doing a 3 year street improvement project (identifying and prioritize streets, repairs/replacements, sidewalks) – will need GO Bonds-- $6-10M to initial look – repair/replace 5-10 yr progress starting in FY'13)
- City is developing a wish list of trails
- Developing a safe route to the school – it will be marked, have signals, sharrows – will have either a bike path or bike lane where needed, getting some money from Indee Go Healthy for education on use (flyers, etc.)
- The compressive plan for the airport (20-acre site, half in city limits) is on hold until a new consulting firm can be hired – looking at taking it from recreational use to commercial use (economic development around it – need more hangers). New manager in place. Water line and fiber line are in place.

Streets & Highways

Two major highways that intersect in the center of the town serve Independence; these are U.S. Highway 20 and State Highway 150. Highway 20 provides a direct east-west route to Waterloo and Dubuque, while Highway 150 in a north-south route from Decorah to Cedar Rapids. Independence is also served by County Highway D22.

Sidewalks

The older sections of town have sidewalks on both sides; however, the newer section have sidewalk on one side or none at all. This trend is common in all communities where development regulations changed to not require sidewalks.

Airport

The City of Independence has and maintains a local airport that is open to the public. The airport itself does not offer any regular commercial service. Located approximately three miles southwest of downtown Independence, the airport lays just north of Highway 20.

The elevation of the runway is reported to be 978 feet above mean sea level. The runway is concrete and measures 4,000 feet in length and 75 feet in width. The airport maintains one white/green beacon and medium intensity runway edge lighting. There are 28 aircraft based at the airfield; 22 are single engine airplanes, two multi-engine aircraft, and four ultra-lights. The airport is reported to average 27 operations per day.

Rail

The Canadian National Railway Company also maintains a rail line that passes through the north end of the community. This rail line is part of a line that runs from Dubuque to Sioux City and beyond.

Water

North of the Mill Dam, the Wapsipinicon River is commonly used by small watercraft (i.e. fishing boats, pontoons, jet-skis, etc.) for recreational purposes. The

DRAFT

river is not of sufficient size to support any large commercial traffic. Different areas of the water in and around the community are also occasionally used for swimming.

Trails – Pedestrian & Bicycle

Citizens and visitors of Independence can various trails in the community. These trails include:

- Liberty Trail (1.5 miles) on the former Rock Island Railroad tracks. This all-natural trail includes two historic bridges. It starts at 1st Street West, travels towards West Elementary School to the Mental Health Institute, ending on 20th Avenue Southwest.
- Riverwalk Parks Trail encompasses The Mill, Brimmer Park, Veteran's Park, Teacher's Park and Bathing Beach Parks, plus thirty-five additional aces of green space.
- Three Elms Park Trail runs from Highway 150 through Three Elms Park to the Independence Baseball / Softball Complex.
- D-22 East Trail runs from the east side of town to the old East Elementary school building along County Road D-22.

Public Input Results – Transportation

Public concerns for transportation issues and needs were identified though a community survey and open house that were conducted in the fall of 2012. Some of the key findings of the survey include:

- The quality of transportation system in Independence is fair (49%)
- Taxis service is needed
- Recreational trail construction, repair, and maintenance is a concern
- Sidewalk construction and maintenance - especially along major thoroughfares (even a side path would be better than walking in the street) are needed
- Safer and better paths of travel to major destinations for students/children – to/from school, parks, etc.
- Better traffic management around industrial park and Highway 150
- Abide by current laws and regulations versus waiving them for developers
- Improving road conditions
- On-road bicycle accommodations
- Traffic speed and flow through town needs to be evaluated and adjusted if needed
- More money is needed for existing street resurfacing, bicycle accommodations, and pedestrian accommodations

Key Issues & Opportunities

The following key issues and opportunities reflect community feedback regarding the City's transportation system.

Providing a Multi-Modal Transportation System

Many residents in Independence have limited access to vehicles and need alternative modes to move from destination to destination. Enhancements to the

DRAFT

City's transportation network are necessary. All new street construction should be designed and constructed as Complete Streets.

Protecting Existing Road Capacity

To ensure that Independence maintains reasonable commute times to surrounding areas, road capacity along key corridors, such as Highway 151, Highway 20, should be maximized. Future development occurring along these corridors should be designed to efficiently use the existing roads and should mitigate potential traffic impacts.

Creating an Active Living, Connected Environment

Independence's neighborhoods, schools, shopping centers, downtown, and places of employment could be better connected with pedestrian and bicycle network improvements to reduce the dependency on automobiles, especially for short errand trips. Independence should continue to plan for and invest in infrastructure improvements to provide safe and convenient amenities that help residents lead a more active and healthy lives, such as sidewalks, crosswalks, multi-use trails, greenway paths, bicycle accommodations, and other amenities (pedestrian-level street lights, signage, bike racks, etc.). The Future Land Use Map illustrates the efforts towards creating a community with an active transportation system.

Improving Safety

While providing additional accommodations for all transportation modes, the importance on the safety should be at the forefront of all transportation decisions. Accidents are not only traumatic on a personal level, but are also costly for society. Maintaining and improving the safety of the community's transportation system by reducing or preventing accidents should be a top priority. Widening roads were needed, providing or improving pedestrian facilities, providing streetlights, correcting high accident locations, and providing road signs are some of the ways safety of the transportation system can be enhanced.

Transportation Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

Goal 25: A Multi-Modal Transportation System

Policy 25.1: New roads and road improvements should be designed using the 'complete streets" approach that provides access to all users, including pedestrians, bicyclists, public transit users, and automobile drivers.

Policy 25.2: Improve visual quality and provide multi-modal capacity by applying the 'road diet" approach to certain roads. This approach takes traditional four lane undivided roads and changes the configuration to three lanes (two travel and one turning lane) and two bike lanes.

DRAFT

Policy 25.3: To ensure that roads promote community character and are appropriately designed for their environment, context-sensitive road design principles and traffic calming measures should be considered for all roadway projects, including updates to existing roads.

Policy 25.4: New transportation facilities shall be developed in a manner that avoids negative impacts on the natural environment, including air quality, water resources, biological resources, and wildlife habitat.

Policy 25.5: Continue protection of the Independence Airport from encroachment by non-compatible development.

Policy 25.6: Maintain the Independence Airport and improve its facilities.

Action 25.1: Continue collaboration efforts with Buchanan County and Iowa Department of Transportation to improve the transportation network.

Action 25.2: Adopt a "complete streets" ordinance.

Action 25.3: Complete the Airport Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.

Goal 26: Maintained Road Capacity & Safety

Policy 26.1: Future development occurring along key transportation corridors, such as Highway 151, 20th Avenue SW and Highway 20, should be designed in a manner to efficiently use existing road capacity and should mitigate potential traffic impacts.

Policy 26.2: Increase the efficiency of the existing roadway network through operational measures and targeted improvements, such as signal timing upgrades, access management, and alternative methods of intersection control.

Policy 26.3: Work with private developers to minimize the impact on key corridors and require new developments to pay (for all or partial) for needed roadway improvements generated by the developments.

Policy 26.4: Street access provisions, such as driveway/curb cuts and street access points along major and minor thoroughfares and collector streets should be limited to allow these roads to primarily serve as a traffic movement corridors. Access management best practices are encouraged.

Policy 26.5: Residential neighborhood street design patterns are encouraged to promote inter-connectivity and minimize cul-de-sacs, accommodate sidewalks and on-street parking, and foster safe environments for pedestrian and cyclists.

DRAFT

Action 26.1: During the next update to the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, ensure that designations and development standards applicable to lands along major and minor thoroughfares and collector streets meet the following objectives:

- Require internal circulation of commercial and employment centers and limit the number of street access points to maintain road capacity.
- Land uses permitted along the roads will provide accessibility and facilities for multiple modes of transportation.
- Transportation Impact Analyses should include all modes of transportation.

Action 26.2: Adopt new access management standards to apply to all developments along major and minor thoroughfares.

Goal 27 An Interconnected System for Pedestrians and Bicyclists

Policy 27.1: In accordance with Independence's Pedestrian and Bicycle Plan, the provision of bikeways and walkways and supportive facilities, such as bicycle racks, should be provided throughout Independence.

Policy 27.2: Pedestrian and bicycle facilities should be considerations for all road construction and maintenance projects.

Policy 27.3: New developments should incorporate pedestrian and bicycle facilities and amenities, such as sidewalks and multi-use paths, as designated, or as necessary to serve the new development.

Policy 27.4: Provide new sidewalks and sidewalk improvements in accordance with the prioritized list developed by the Independence Pedestrian Committee.

Policy 27.5: Continue to implement the Safe Routes to School program to identify priority sidewalk improvements and educate students and parents about the benefits of walking and biking to school.

Action 27.1: Implement the Independence Pedestrian Committee recommendations and other enhancements plans

Action 27.2: Consider providing a dedicated, annual funding source to pay for public pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

DRAFT

Map 15: Transportation Infrastructure in the City

Section 10: Land Use

[SMART PLANNING ELMENT – LAND USE:

Objectives, policies, and programs that identify current land uses within the municipality and that guide the future development and redevelopment of property, consistent with the municipality's characteristics identified under the Issues and Opportunities Element. The comprehensive plan or land development regulations may include information on the amount, type, intensity, and density of existing land use, trends in the market price of land used for specific purposes, and plans for future land use throughout the municipality. The comprehensive plan or land development regulations may identify and include information on property that has the possibility for redevelopment, a map of existing and potential land use and land use conflicts, information and maps relating to the current and future provision of utilities within the municipality, information and maps that identify the current and future boundaries for areas reserved for soil conservation, water supply conservation, flood control, and surface water drainage and removal. Information provided under this paragraph may also include an analysis of the current and potential impacts on local watersheds and air quality.]

Even in an area as rural as Independence and Buchanan County, land is a finite resource. Only so much usable ground is available and, unlike glass or cars or televisions, we can't simply make more of it.

Most people realize that land drives our economy. Some lands need to remain open for natural, aesthetic and recreational uses; conversely, some open lands need to be in filled and used more productively.

How land is used is a chief ingredient of a community's character. But what goes largely unnoticed is that growth and land development carry with them some significant costs; costs not only to a developer or builder, but to surrounding land users and the broader community. And what's even more misunderstood is that once land is developed, an on-going financial responsibility results for the entire taxpaying public. Roads, water and sewer operations, police and fire protection, and other services all have costs, which must be considered when designating land for development.

Since fiscal resources, both public and private, are limited, it only makes sense to think carefully about the long-term effects of our land use. Careful planning better secures and protects the substantial investment needed to develop or conserve land.

By defining the extent to which our various lands can and should be used, we provide more predictability for individuals and businesses making long-term decisions. More importantly, the public costs associated with serving these lands can be minimized and the qualities that make many of them unique are preserved.

Just as land use drives our economy, the Land Use element of *Plan Update 2014* can be described as the driver of the comprehensive plan. The goals and polices of this section are intended to weigh the adverse environmental impacts of growth against the benefits of growth.

This section describes the existing conditions regarding land and its use in Independence by cataloging the activities currently taking place on land under city

DRAFT

jurisdiction. It then relates the existing use and character of these lands to the possible major land use categories identified by the city.

Existing Conditions

One of the first steps in projecting future land use of a community is to review the existing land use. This section will attempt to describe the existing land uses of Independence.

Existing Land Use Patterns

In order to simplify the process, Independence was quartered using Iowa Highway 150 running north to south and Iowa Highway 939, or First Street, running east to west through the community to describe the existing land uses. These quadrants are shown on Map 16. The prominent land uses, by quadrant, are listed below.

Northwest Independence

- Wapsipinicon River and its floodplain
- Mill and dam
- Residential uses
- Falcon Center
- Tyson – pet treats
- Commercial uses along 1Street and Highway 150
- Industrial uses and rail rile
- Grain elevator
- Fairgrounds

Northeast Independence

- Residential uses
- Courthouse and Jail
- Senior Center
- ABCM Nursing Home
- Limited commercial uses along 1 Street and Highway 150
- Industrial Park and rail line
- Independence Light and Power
- Buchanan County Health Center
- Concrete plant

Southeast Independence

- Wapsipinicon River and its floodplain
- Residential uses
- City Hall
- Library
- Fire Department/Station
- Medical Clinic
- Swimming pool
- RV park
- Golf course
- Commercial uses along 1st Street and south along Highway 150 (interchange with Highway 20)
- Camp ground
- Faraway
- Industrial uses adjacent of Highway 150 south
- Three Elms Park
- Sewage treatment facility

Southwest Independence

- Wapsipinicon River and its floodplain
- Residential uses
- West and East Elementary Schools

DRAFT

- Jr./Sr. High School
- Kidsville
- Commercial and Industrial uses along 1st Street south to western interchange, and 25th Avenue
- Oak View Cemetery
- Heartland Acres
- Hotel
- Pine Addition
- Walmart
- Rec center
- River Edge
- Light Industrial Park
- Prairie Hills
- Monsanto
- Airport

Key Issues & Opportunities

Through input from various planning meetings and the community survey the following land uses, development issues, and opportunities were identified. These issues and opportunities pertain to existing land use and development trends in the city, and where future growth should occur.

Targeting Areas for Future Growth and Development

The location and way in which development occurs will undoubtedly impact the community, and the targeted areas for future development need to be prioritized and highlighted.

Creating Sustainable Neighborhoods

Sustainable neighborhoods are where a person can walk to destinations - grocery store, parks, school, and possibly to work. The benefits of sustainable neighborhoods or numerous – from economic (lower transportation costs, improved personal health and fitness), environmental (better air and water quality), and social (sense of pride in neighborhood, interaction with neighbors).

Providing More Opportunities for Healthy Living Developments

Independence should strive to provide mixed use developments that provide a variety of uses (residential, commercial, open space, and institutional) and amenities such as sidewalks, multi-use trails or paths, and parks. These developments provide opportunity and convenience, and accommodate many household types and needs. A mixed use development allows a citizen to walk to a business from their home or to the park. It can also be used to create a buffer or transition between two discretely different land uses – single family neighborhood and a highway business corridor.

Infilling and Revitalizing Downtown Area

Development and redevelopment should be encouraged within Independence's Downtown area, including mixed-use developments that provide residential opportunities.

DRAFT

Ensuring Development Compatibility

New developments should be compatible with adjacent, existing uses and should be organized to create clusters or nodes of like developments.

Protecting Valuable Environmental Resources

Future development should be designed to protect critical environmental resources, such as floodplain areas. Opportunities for public use of these areas, such as greenways, parks, and recreational areas, should be identified. These uses should not negatively impact natural resources and should provide opportunities for residents to experience and learn about the natural environment.

Ensuring Land Use Compatibility with Buchanan County

Buchanan County in its *2006 Comprehensive Land Use Plan Update* expressed their desire to preserve prime agricultural land, which includes a majority of land area in the county, for continued agricultural production. To future this desire, the Plan attempts to steer proposed urban uses to areas within or adjacent to incorporated communities as a means of protecting the county's valuable agricultural soils.

Land Use Goals, Policies, and Strategic Actions

Goal 28: Promote Orderly Sustainable Growth

Policy 28.1: Direct growth to the degree that it offers alternative sites for development.

Policy 28.2: Service existing areas of the community as well as address any additional expansion opportunities that may arise.

Policy 28.3: Implement the Comprehensive Plan through its commissions, boards, and authorities (i.e. City Council, Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustment, etc.).

Policy 28.4: Continue to work cooperatively with developers to encourage land for parks, natural areas, open spaces, recreational trails, and/or greenways.

Policy 28.5: Direct new development to existing commercial and industrial corridors and growth areas; promote infill residential and commercial development, and revitalization of the Downtown area with mixed use development.

Policy 28.6: Develop design standards for specific areas in the community; for instance, Downtown and commercial corridors.

DRAFT

Action 28.1: Investigate the use of overlay districts within the Zoning Ordinance.

Action 28.2: Amend existing regulations and ordnances to allow converting existing vacant sites and buildings into mixed use developments.

Action 28.3: Amend regulations and ordinances to allow a balanced mix of land uses and a compact development form (incorporates best management practices for storm water management).

Goal 29: Develop a Livable Downtown

Policy 29.1: Encourage mixed-use development and redevelopment of underutilized lots and buildings in downtown, including but not limited to, vacant sites and surface parking lots.

Policy 29.2: Promote infill development and revitalization of the Downtown area

Action 29.1: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to create a new 'Downtown' zoning district to regulate mixed-use development and upper floor(s) residential units.

Action 29.2: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the amount of required off-street surface parking.

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use Map is designed to establish a compact growth pattern that focuses development within the existing corporate limits of Independence with a few extended areas. It suggests a focus on development and redevelopment along Highway 151, 20th Avenue SW, 1st Street West, and potential industrial growth south of State Highway 20.

Relationship of Zoning and Future Land Use

City zoning consists of both a zoning map and a written ordinance that divides the jurisdiction into zoning districts, including various residential, commercial, mixed-use, and industrial districts. The zoning regulations describe what type of land use and specific activities are permitted in each district, and also regulate how buildings, signs, parking, and other construction may be placed on a lot. The zoning regulations also provide procedures for rezoning and other planning applications.

DRAFT

The zoning map and zoning regulations provide properties in Independence's planning and zoning jurisdiction with certain rights to development, while the Comprehensive Plan serves as a guide for future development of the property. The Future Land Use Map and related policies contained in this Plan should be used as a guide for future rezoning decisions undertaken by the City.

Future Land Use Map

Through a Task Force meeting, the Independence's Future Land Use Map was created. This map shows a vision of how Independence will look 15-20 years in the future. The map also shows future roadway and multi-use trail segments based on development trends and need. Table 18 provides a breakdown on the anticipated acres for each future land use classification.

Table Future Land Use Summary Information

Land Use Classification	Future Acres in City Limits	Percent Including ROW	Percent Excluding ROW
Agriculture / Parks / Green Space	692	17.9	17.4
Low Density Residential	1,264	32.6	26.1
Medium to High Density Residential	135	3.5	2.9
Commercial	568	14.6	12.2
Industrial	772	19.9	17.7
Mixed Use	287	7.4	6.7
Schools	136	3.5	3.4
Rail/Trail Right-of-Way	22	0.6	0.0
Total Incorporated Area	3,876	100.0	86.4
Mental Health Institute	273		

Future Land Use Classifications

General description of the land use classifications shown on the Future Land Use Map follows.

- **Low Density Residential**
  For the purpose of this Plan, this category is defined as residential uses that exist, planned, or could occur at a density of less than, or equal to, six housing units per acre. Typically, this will include one and two family residential units. Residential density, for the purposes of this Plan, shall be calculated using street and pubic uses for vacant or newly developing areas. For situations of infill development, street and public use area shall be excluded.

DRAFT

- **Medium to High Density Residential**
  Medium to high density residential uses are defined as residential uses that exist, are planned, or could occur at a density greater than six housing units per acre.

- **Commercial**
  This category involves a magnitude of uses that involve the retail or wholesale of goods and/or services to the public for purpose of a profit. Commercial uses may include those that require large tracts of land, as well as those that are very small in size.

- **Industrial**
  Industrial uses are generally intensive uses classified by the fact that they produce, manufacture, or assemble product. Industrial uses, which may also be referred to as "manufacturing uses", usually generate significant traffic, noise, dust, and/or excessive light; therefore, because of the potential impacts these types of uses may have on their neighbors, cities typically separate them from residential uses either by distance or through use of buffers or barriers.

- **Agriculture / Parks / Green Space**
  This category includes agricultural land, local parks, and green/open spaces where future development would not occur.

- **Mixed Use (Residential / Commercial)**
  Mixed use areas were identified on the Future Land Use Map to provide opportunities for a mixture of multi-family residential and low-impact commercial developments to co-exist in the same neighborhood. These mixed use areas can be seen as transition areas – areas between single-family neighborhoods and commercial developments.

- **Schools**
  This category includes public and private schools within the community.

- **Mental Health Institute**
  This category is to distinguish the State of Iowa land that is located immediately west of Independence.

- **Water**
  This category is distinguishing the Wapsipinicon River from the adjacent land uses.

- **1.0% and 0.2% Annual Chance of Flooding**
  Although not typically considered a "land use classification or category", the Wapsipinicon River has a profound impact on development in

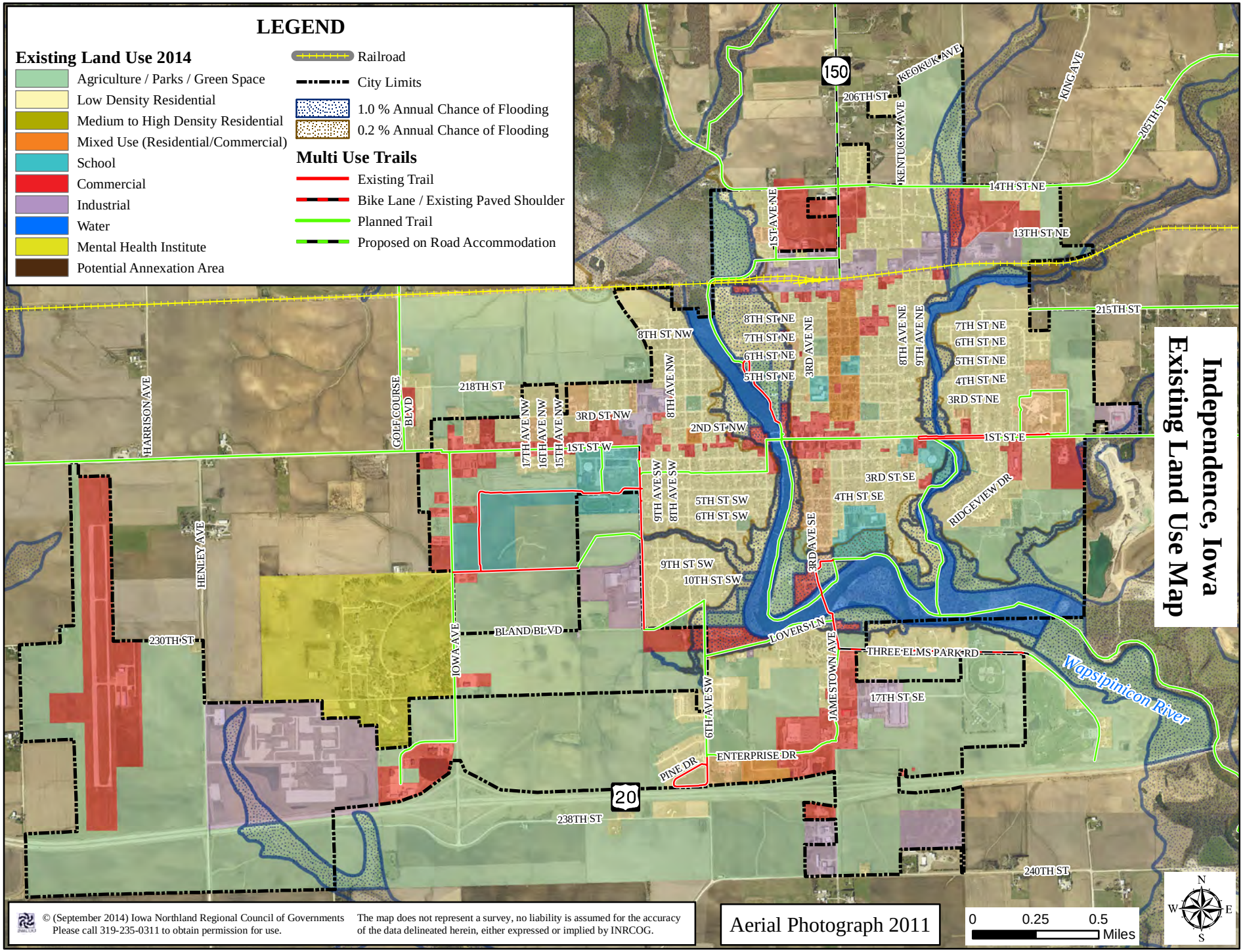
DRAFT

Independence, as experienced with the 2008 Flood. Specifically, development in the floodways of each of these waterways, as designated by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), is prohibited – thus essence creating a greenway. Current land uses may continue in the floodway, but any further development or redevelopment in this area is unlikely. Thus, we have shown the floodway on the Future Land Use Map so that residents and city staff may be aware of it and understand its impact on potential development.

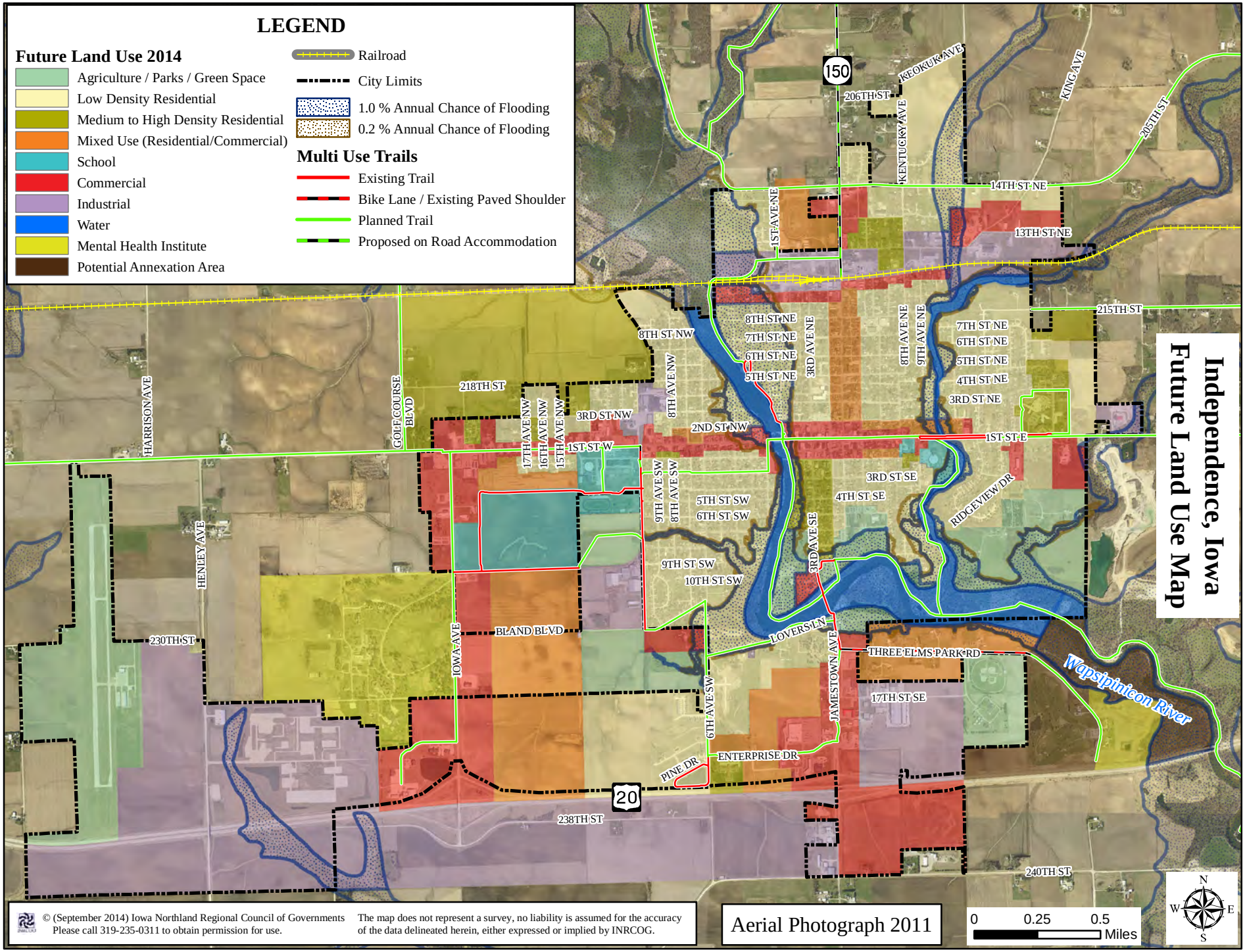
- **Potential Annexation Area**
  This is not a typical land use classification; however, the Task Force determined it would be advantageous of the community to identify potential areas immediately adjacent to the city that may be annexed during the life of this Plan.

DRAFT

Map 16: Existing Land Use Map of the City



Map 17: Future Land Use Map of the City



Section 11: Intergovernmental Collaboration

Success of any type of planning relies on the ability of a community to come together as a whole to achieve a common goal. Historically, Independence has a good work relationship with internal parities. Individual agencies, groups, boards, committees, and the like have been able to cooperate to complete projects of mutual interest. These entities also work together to share information, resources, and are active in several regional organizations. However, communities could also be taking advantage of many opportunities for collaboration in economic development, environmental and agricultural protection, and resource sharing. This section will outline current collaboration efforts within the city, county, and profile several regional organizations that facilitate collaboration. The section will also discuss past conflicts and identify opportunities to further collaboration. Recommendations included in this section will allow Independence to prevent and resolve conflicts and help everyone continue to work together to achieve their goals for the future.

[SMART PLANNING ELEMENT – INTERGOVERMENTAL COLLABORATION

Objectives, policies, and programs for joint planning and joint decision-making with other municipalities or governmental entities, including school districts and drainage districts, for siting and constructing public facilities and sharing public services. The comprehensive plan or land development regulations may identify existing or potential conflicts between the municipality and other governments related to future development of the municipality and may include recommendations for resolving such conflicts. The comprehensive plan or land development regulations may also identify opportunities to collaborate and partner with neighboring jurisdictions and other entities in the region for projects of mutual interests.]

Benefits of Collaboration

Some of the benefits of intergovernmental collaboration include:

Cost Savings - Cooperation can save money by increasing efficiency and avoiding unnecessary duplication. Cooperation can enable some communities to provide their residents with services that would otherwise be too costly. Examples include shared services, police and fire protection, recycling of household hazardous waste, and shared government buildings (such as shared community center).

Address Regional Issues - By communicating and coordinating their actions, and working with local, regional and state agencies, local communities are able to address and resolve issues which are regional in nature. Examples include the construction and maintenance of highways, provision of transit service, and planning and construction of facilities for storm water management and water supply.

Early Identification of Issues - Cooperation enables jurisdictions to identify and resolve potential conflicts at an early stage, before affected interests have established rigid positions, before substantial funds have been expended, before the political stakes have been raised, and before issues have become conflicts or crises.

DRAFT

Consistency - Cooperation can lead to consistency of the goals, objectives, plans, policies, and actions of internal groups, neighboring communities and other jurisdictions.

Predictability - Jurisdictions that cooperate provide greater predictability to residents, developers, businesses, and others. Lack of predictability can result in lost time, money, and opportunity.

Understanding - As jurisdictions communicate and collaborate on issues of mutual interest, they become more aware of one another's needs and priorities. They can better anticipate problems and work to avoid them.

Trust - Cooperation can lead to positive experiences and results that build trust and good working relationships.

History of Success - When jurisdictions cooperate successfully in one area, the success creates positive feelings and an expectation that other intergovernmental issues can be resolved as well.

Service to Citizens - The biggest beneficiaries of intergovernmental cooperation is citizens for whom government was created in the first place. They may not understand, or even care about, the intricacies of a particular intergovernmental issue, but all residents can appreciate their benefits, such as cost savings, provision of needed services, and a strong economy.

Existing Local Partnerships

Several organizations, agencies, and committees work with the city to provide the highest level of service to their citizens and visitors. These partnerships work towards meeting many of the goals within the city's comprehensive plan.

- Sustainable Independence
- Independence Community School District
- Newspaper
- Buchanan County Departments
- City Departments
- Buchanan County Fair Board
- Celebrations Committee
- Farmers-rural
- ITEA (25-30 entities sharing information)
- Indee Go Healthy
- Buchanan County Health Center
- Independence Enhancement Team
- Chamber of Commerce
- Buchanan County Economic Development
- Various community groups and committees

DRAFT

Existing Regional Partnerships

Regional partnerships can also benefit the city and some have been identified throughout this document. Key regional agencies that can help implement strategies in this plan include:

- **Iowa Northland Regional Council of Governments (INRCO)** provides services in community planning, government grant writing (community facilities, sewer/water, downtown revitalization and housing), workforce, housing rehab and rental assistance programs and transportation projects.

- **Northeast Iowa Resource Conservation and Development (RC&D)** provides services and programs that support natural resource conservation and enjoyment. Water quality, forestry and trail development are among the areas of focus for RC&D.

- **Cedar Valley Regional Partnership (Marketing Region)** assists the six counties in the INRCOG region (Buchanan County being one of those counties) to develop an organizational structure and work plain to extensively market the region. The Buchanan County Economic Development is a voting member of the group. Recently the Partnership has begun researching opportunities to address workforce issues in the region.

Existing State Partnerships

The following is a list of state agencies whose departments and areas of expertise could assist the city as it moves forward with the implementation of this plan.

- Iowa Economic Development Authority (IEDA)
- Iowa Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship (IDALS)
- Iowa Department of Cultural Affairs
- Iowa Department of Natural Resources (IDNR)
- Iowa Department of Transportation (IDOT)

Intergovernmental Agreements

Formal municipal agreements are generally referred to as 28E agreements as they are permitted under chapter 28E of the Iowa Code. The chapter permits "state and local governments in Iowa to make efficient use of their powers by enabling them to provide joint services and facilities with other agencies and to co-operate in other ways of mutual advantage." Examples of 28E agreements include:

Mutual Aid Agreements – Mutual aid agreements provide the procedures for sharing of resources between communities. Independence has entered into agreements for sharing fire response, ambulance services, law enforcement, and criminal investigations. The Buchanan County Emergency Management Agency

is responsible for establishing local mutual aid arrangements, and coordinates with Iowa Homeland Security and Emergency Management to ensure emergency management and response for communities is adequately planned and is well-equipped, trained, and exercised. Independence Light and Power also has mutual aid agreements for maintaining transportation and other public works facilities. These 28E agreements define responsibilities for road maintenance, public transportation, landfill operation and maintenance, and building and facilities maintenance, among others.

Key Issues & Opportunities

The following are key issues and opportunities identified by the Task Force when they were asked three questions.

How can these partnerships/collaborations be strengthened?

- Networking
- Gathering minds together
- Saying "no" – giving referrals instead of volunteering yourself
- Tapping into young professionals and other community population groups

What groups are missing?

- Business community – commercial and industrial
- Roster of school of volunteers (assisted with getting school built)

What can be done to improve efficiency, transparency, and consistency in Independence?

- Continue having a Chamber liaison on Fair Board.
- Continue to find opportunities to bring different groups together and strengthen the community – for example, the zombie run helped tie Fair Board with community.
- Continue to improve upon and expand city website – done better than before (updated 3 years ago)
- Continue use of social and traditional media to reach all citizens and potential visitors/citizens.
- Public health and environmental health has been and will continue sharing info (separate website than county).
- Continue Police, Fire and Sheriff's office working relationship through training, etc.
- Need to continue having the Chamber coordinating and managing the community events calendar and sending out reports every week.

.

Strengthening Coordination and Collaboration Efforts

Both intergovernmental cooperation and public engagement share the core requirement of effective communication. Together collaboration and public engagement are important ways to make the most efficient use of the city's limited resources and ensure fair and equitable decision-making processes. The city is fortunate to have strong partners throughout the county, region and state that serve as resources for a variety of projects and initiatives; however, there is

DRAFT

still opportunities for growth and improvement.

Improving Public Engagement & Networking

In addition to important intergovernmental collaborations, promoting more public engagement and networking opportunities in city / community activities will be beneficial in the implementation of this plan. Informing and involving the public is an essential part of providing transparency in governance. Independence understands that getting good results in community development depends upon the support of its residents and will continue to look for ways to promote its activities and decision-making process to build more productive resident engagement

Based on community survey results, there is a board spectrum of methods Independence citizens identified as effective means to keep them updated on city information. The responses included: 17% identifying mailings or billing inserts, 20% identifying the City website, 28% identifying email, 10% identifying broadcast media (tv, radio), 13% identifying newspaper ads, 8% identifying brochures, flyers, and posters, and 4% identifying flyers coming home from schools. There some additional suggestions made for the use of more social media tools – RSS feeds, message board, public forums, and text messages. Due to these wide responses, Independence will need to develop a public engagement plan for relaying information to its citizens

Collaboration Goals, Policies, & Strategic Actions

Goal 30: Continue and Expand Coordination / Collaboration Efforts

Policy 30.1: The City will continue to work collaboratively with existing partners.

Policy 30.2: The City will cultivate new partners and opportunities to expand collaboration and coordination to benefit the community.

Action 30.1: Work Cooperatively with Buchanan County on land use decisions within the 2-mile fringe area.

Action 30.2: Work cooperatively with various Buchanan County departments or agencies that may share enforcement responsibilities with the City.

Action 30.3: Work cooperatively with the other jurisdictions and entities with shared 28E agreements.

DRAFT

Goal 31: Continue to Engage with Community

Policy 31.1: The City, and its partners, will continue to improve communications between other government entities, local agencies, individuals, non-profits, major employers, and others in order to benefit the entire community.

Policy 31.2: Explore ways to better engage and network with citizens and local stakeholders, outside of public meetings.

Action 31.1: Develop a public engagement plan to explore opportunities for expanded community engagement, education, and transparency.

Action 31.2: Work to keep city website and social media accounts up-to-date.

DRAFT

Chapter 3 – Plan Implementation

[SMART PLANNING ELMENT – IMPLEMENTATION:
A compilation of programs and specific actions necessary to implement any provision of the comprehensive plan, including changes to any applicable land development regulations, official maps or subdivision ordinances.]

Section 1: Action Plan

Plan Update 2014 includes 31 goals for the City of Independence to become the community it envisions for itself.

While each goal is important to achieve the Independence's vision, it is critical to set priorities among the strategies. These priorities will lay the foundation for developing future capital improvement plans and annual departmental work plans for the City, and will help with organizing and prioritizing future implementation efforts. The Action Plan provides a means for working through a variety of immediate, short- and long-range issues with other agencies, jurisdictions, and stakeholders by articulating a concept, premise or position to start constructive discussion and completion.

The section explains how this plan will be implemented to achieve the desired goals as set forth by the City of Independence. *Plan Update 2014* addresses many important components critical to sustaining a healthy community while preserving the area's natural resources and history. As change is inevitable, the plan may need to be amended to appropriately reflect those changes.

The action plan is laid out in table form for easy reference by city leaders and stakeholders. Each strategy identified within this plan is assigned a potential time frame, an agency or agencies responsible for ensuring that the strategy is carried out, and the general resources required for implementing each strategy.

Priority Implementation Actions

The following are the top priority implementation actions for Independence.

Priority 1: Amend Independence's Land Development Ordinances

This Plan reflects the desired future land use and development goals for the City of Independence. One of the main land management tools for achieving these goals is the City's ordinances, particularly the Zoning and Subdivision Ordnances. Key amendments should include these action elements:

- Action 1.3: Investigate the implementation of clustered or conservation subdivisions and site developments to conserve impact on natural resources.

- Action 13.1: Ensure that City departments share information and coordinate planning for proposed developments that will require expansion of public infrastructure.
- Action 13.2: Assess the potential for proposed developments to meet *Plan Update 2014* goals and policies to maximize existing infrastructure and compare proposed plans against the Future Land Use map.
- Action 13.3: Ensure that public right-of-way for roadways have adequate space for locating all underground public utilities.
- Action 14.4: Develop incentives, or bonuses, within the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to encourage development of projects that meet energy conservation goals.
- Action 15.2: Adopt and implement green infrastructure measures to reduce storm water runoff and minimize flash flooding.
- Action 17.1: Adopt development standards to limit parking in front yard areas and front lawns.
- Action 17.3: Adopt a Minimal Housing Code.
- Action 19.1: Update the zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to allow for a mix of housing types within new developments, within mixed-use areas, and within Downtown. Provide incentives to developers that include a mix of housing types within a single development.
- Action 25.3: Complete the Airport Comprehensive Plan and Zoning Ordinance.
- Action 25.2: Adopt a "complete streets" ordinance.
- Action 26.1: During the next update to the City's zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations, ensure that designations and development standards applicable to lands along major and minor thoroughfares and collector streets meet the following objectives:
    - Require internal circulation of commercial and employment centers and limit the number of street access points to maintain road capacity.
    - Land uses permitted along the roads will provide accessibility and facilities for multiple modes of transportation.
    - Transportation Impact Analyses should include all modes of transportation.
- Action 26.2: Adopt new access management standards to apply to all developments along major and minor thoroughfares.
- Action 27.1: Implement the Independence Pedestrian Committee recommendations and other enhancements plans
- Action 28.1: Investigate the use of overlay districts within the Zoning Ordinance.
- Action 28.2: Amend existing regulations and ordnances to allow converting existing vacant sites and buildings into mixed use developments.
- Action 28.3: Amend regulations and ordinances to allow a balanced mix of land uses and a compact development form (incorporates best management practices for storm water management).
- Action 29.1: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to create a new 'Downtown' zoning district to regulate mixed-use development and upper floor(s) residential units.
- Action 29.2: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to reduce the amount of required off-street surface parking.
- Action 30.1: Work Cooperatively with Buchanan County on land use decisions within the 2-mile fringe area.

This priority should be initiated within one year of approval of this Plan. Responsible parties to complete this priority are: City Council, City Staff and Planning and Zoning Commission

DRAFT

Priority 2: Establish a Collective Brand for Independence

This Plan identified a need to identify a central image of the community and education citizens, and potential businesses and residents, in order to stay to competitive. The following action elements were identified:

- Action 7.1: Offer civic events that bring diverse groups of people together to further forge the "One Independence" goal. An example could be a "Town Hall" style event that focuses on key issues of common concern in the community.
- Action 7.2: Ensure all organized cultural events that display the unique character of the City and its residents
- Action 24.1: In coordination with local partners, such as Buchanan County, Chamber of Commerce, and Buchanan County Economic Development, a visitor and tourism office will be established with funding for all parties to market and promote the community.
- Action 31.1: Develop a public engagement plan to explore opportunities for expanded community engagement, education, and transparency.
- Action 31.2: Work to keep city website and social media accounts up-to-date.

This priority should be initiated within one year of approval of this Plan. Responsible parties to complete this priority are: City Staff and Departments, Chamber of Commerce, Buchanan County Economic Development, and other local stakeholders.

Priority 3: Establish a Capital Improvement Plan

In order to maximum taxpayer dollars and provide adequate levels of services, a critical element is a Capital Improvement Plan. The following actions would be impacted by this priority.

- Action 8.3: Identify and install beautification measures along Independence's major thoroughfares. For instance, plantings, street banners, signs, etc.
- Action 9.1: Continue implementation of Indee Go-Healthy projects and incentives.
- Action 10.2: Incorporate new facility needs, such as fire station and police station, into the City's Capital Improvement Program.
- Action 14.1: Adopt formal energy efficiency performance standards for new public facilities and expansions of existing public facilities.
- Action 14.3: Adopt measures to reduce energy consumption in City-owned and maintained properties.
- Action 27.2: Consider providing a dedicated, annual funding source to pay for public pedestrian and bicycle improvements.

This priority should be initiated within one year of approval of this Plan. Responsible parties to complete this priority are: City Council, City Staff and Departments

DRAFT

Secondary Priority Implementation Actions

A separate action table has been developed to t assist with implementation of the remaining action strategies identified in this Plan. Time frames, as well as entity responsibility, were identified to assist with implementation.

- Ongoing actions are those that can be started upon adoption and should continue for the life of the plan.
- Short-Term actions are those that should be initiated within three years of plan adoption.
- Mid-Term actions should be initiated within five years of plan adoption.
- Long-Term actions should be initiated within seven years of plan adoption.

Table : Secondary Priority Implementation Plan

Implementation Action	Timeline	Entity Responsible
Action 1.1: Continue to enforce Independence's Floodplain Management Ordinance.	Ongoing	City Staff, Planning and Zoning Commission, City Council
Action 1.2: Continue to work with Trees Forever and other environment and wildlife organizations to identify existing trees and develop a management/replacement plan.	Short-Term	City Council, City Staff, Trees Forever
Action 8.2: Maintain and improve the appearance of existing homes and property through enforcement of existing regulations; as well as new beautification projects and programs.	Ongoing	City Staff, Property Owners
Action 8.1: Develop and implement a common theme for the Downtown.	Short-Term	City Council, Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Business Owners
Action 9.2: Implement Blue Zone components even though Independence was not selected to be a part of the Blue Zone Community program.	Ongoin	City Council, City Staff, Indee Go-Healthy
Action10.1: Ensure that City departments share information regarding proposed developments that will require expansion of public safety services. Assess the ability of proposed developments to meet Plan Update 2014 goals and policies and compare it against the Future Land Use map. Ensure that existing facilities and service capacity can adequately serve new and existing demands for service. Mitigate any potential impacts that might decrease levels of service.	Ongoing	City Council, City Staff
Action 11.1: Working with local partners, identify ways the City can assist in attracting and recruiting new cultural, recreational, and entertainment establishments and activities to the city.	Ongoing	City Council, Chamber of Commerce, Buchanan County Economic Development

Action 12.1: Working with local stakeholders, city departments, and local developers/experts, redesign and revitalize the old high school into a multi-use public campus.	Short-Term	City Council, City Staff
Action 14.2: Work with Sustainable Independence, and other partners, to develop public outreach program to educate the public about the public and private benefits of energy conservation, including costs savings to the individual household, reducing the carbon footprint for the community, and promoting a more sustainable lifestyle.	Short-Term	City Council, City Staff, Independence Light & Power, Sustainable Independence
Action 15.1: Develop public outreach programs to educate the public about the need to reduce water demand and wastewater discharge to maintain a healthy water supply. Provide information about ways to reduce wastewater discharges, such as low-flow or no-flow toilets, efficient faucets, and use of non-potable water sources.	Short-Term	City Council, City Staff
Action 16.1: Establish a neighborhood planning process that develops strategic plans for individual neighborhoods.	Mid-Term	City Council, City Staff
Action 17.2: Continue to coordinate and apply for rehabilitation funds from local, state, and federal sources.	Ongoing	City Council, City Staff, Developers, Property Owners
Action 18.1: Continue to support and apply for housing funds from local, state, and federal sources.	Ongoing	City Council, City Staff, Developers, Property Owners
Action 20.1: Work with local economic development partners to identify future development opportunities and assist with development approvals by providing zoning and infrastructure to foster development of new employment centers, as guided by the Future Land Use Map.	Short-Term	City Council, City Staff, Chamber of Commerce, Buchanan County Economic Development, Business Owners/Developers
Action 20.2: Work with local economic development partners to identify long-term needs for airport development and industrial park needs.	Short-Term	City Council, Buchanan County Economic Development, Airport
Action 20.3: Analyze development approvals, recruitment efforts, locations of newly established businesses and locations where businesses are not seceding to identify trends. Trends that show that recruitment efforts are inconsistent with Downtown business development initiatives should be addressed.	Short-Term	City Council, Chamber of Commerce, Buchanan County Economic Development
Action 21.1: Work with local partner organizations to identify ways that the City can assist with reaching the goal of enhancing job readiness of the local workforce.	Short-Term	City Council, Chamber of Commerce, Buchanan County Economic Development

Action 22.1: Work with local partners to market Independence as a having a strong fiber-optic network in the county.	Mid-Term	Independence Light & Power
Action 22.2: Work with existing businesses in Independence to develop business expansion strategies that capitalize on local technologies.	Short-Term	Chamber of Commerce, Buchanan County Economic Development
Action 22.3: Work with Independence Light and Power to establish a Wi-Fi network in the Downtown area to encourage redevelopment and revitalization in the core center.	Short to Mid-Term	Independence Light & Power, City Council
Action 23.1: In coordination with local economic development partners, identify barriers to local business development that the City can take action to amend.	Short-Term	City Council, Chamber of Commerce, Buchanan County Economic Development
Action 23.2: The City will review all procurement requests and whenever possible use locally-owned vendors.	Ongoing	City Council, City Staff
Action 23.3: Provide a clearing housing for information on locating a business in Independence and the available State and local resources available to small businesses, including funding, training, grants, and location assistance.	Short-Term	City staff, Chamber of Commerce, Buchanan County Economic Development
Action 25.1: Continue collaboration efforts with Buchanan County and Iowa Department of Transportation to improve the transportation network.	Ongoing	City Council, City Staff, Buchanan County, IDOT
Action 30.2: Work cooperatively with various Buchanan County departments or agencies that may share enforcement responsibilities with the City.	Ongoing	City Staff, City Council, Buchanan County
Action 30.3: Work cooperatively with the other jurisdictions and entities with shared 28E agreements.	Ongoing	City Council, City Staff

DRAFT

Implementation Strategies

Many of the identified goals, objectives, and action strategies will only be met through the expenditure of public funds. Achieving the components of the Action Plan should lead to more efficient use of both public and private resources. Each project should be viewed with the full range of funding alternatives and technical assistance available to it before action is taken. These sources must not only provide sufficient funds to accomplish the goals and action strategies intended, but they should be tapped in ways that are as equitable as possible in balancing costs against benefits received.

Another method for implementing the elements of the *Plan Update 2014* could be developed through a system of incentives and compensation. The benefits and costs involved in the achievement of public objectives should be considered; which are equitable to the individual and to the general public. Specific steps should be taken to enable progress to be made in each area of the plan.

Continued Participation and Leadership

Broad public support and involvement are required as a prerequisite to the development and use of virtually any implementation policy or program. If adequate support is to be developed, a vigorous and continuing program of discussion, education, and participation must be carried on. Moreover, people who are in a position to understand the needs of the city and ways of meeting those must take the initiative to stimulate the interest and the understanding that must be involved to assure that support and action is developed.

To produce the levels of consensus required, vigorous and continuing public involvement will be required in such areas as:

1. Detailing of plans and proposals to clarify their impact on specific areas, groups, and individuals;
2. Developing of specified implementation activities and organization arrangements; and
3. Continuing monitoring and interpretation of the Plan.

DRAFT

Section 2: Plan Monitoring & Updating

Plan Update 2014 is designed to be a working document. Its adoption by the City Council is not the end of the community's long-range planning effort, but rather the means by which the city will see growth occur. City staff, citizens, and the private sector will use *Plan Update 2014* as a dynamic tool to manage growth over the next ten to fifteen years to protect the high quality of life and foster a healthy economy for Independence.

A relevant, up-to-date plan is a critical element to ongoing planning success. To maintain public and private sector confidence, evaluation and modifications based on sound judgments should be made to the planning document as necessary. Therefore, this section addresses both plan monitoring and updating to ensure the Plan has the ability to evolve and grow with the community over time.

Plan Monitoring

The City will monitor the implementation of *Plan Update 2014* over time to measure the progress in achieving goals, policies, and actions. This information will provide crucial feedback to the City's decision-makers regarding the approach to plan implementation on an ongoing basis.

A formal process should be developed to institutionalize plan monitoring. It is recommended that the Planning and Zoning Commission, with the assistance from City staff, prepare a comprehensive annual report to the City Manager and City Council on the status of plan implementation. This will require staff to coordinate with other departments, agencies, and organizations to develop complete and accurate reporting on plan implementation efforts.

In addition to plan monitoring, the City will use *Plan Update 2014* during development of the City's annual budget and updates to the Capital Improvement Program to ensure consistency with the Plan. Like plan monitoring, the Planning and Zoning Commission and City staff will take the lead on evaluating consistency among future City budgets, Capital Improvement Programs, and the Comprehensive Plan.

Plan Amendment

In order to consider an amendment or update to this Plan, first the Planning and Zoning Commission shall consider the proposed amendment and conduct a properly noticed hearing, notice of which shall be published once, not less than seven (7) nor more than twenty (20) days before the date of the hearing, in a newspaper with local circulation. The Commission shall make a recommendation on the proposed amendment or update, after the public hearing. Said recommendation of the Commission shall be carried by an affirmative vote of a simple majority of its members. The Commission shall send its recommendation, either for approval or denial of the proposed amendment or update, to the City Council for consideration.

DRAFT

After receiving the recommendation from the Planning and Zoning Commission, the City Council shall also hold a properly noticed public hearing on the proposed amendment. The notice shall follow the same publication guidelines as those prescribed for the Commission above. The City Council is authorized to make the final decision, including alterations to the amendment or update prior to adoption. Adoption shall require an affirmative vote of a simple majority of the membership of the Council.

DRAFT

Appendix A: Potential Funding Sources

This list of potential sources is subject to change.

Federal and State Programs

Community Development Tools & Resources

IEDA Public Facilities Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - Water/sewer funds are available annually on a competitive basis to communities for projects that include sanitary sewer system improvements, water system improvements, water and wastewater treatment facilities, storm sewer projects related to sanitary sewer system improvements and rural water connections.

IEDA Community Facilities and Services Fund (CDBG) – Communities can apply for facilities and services grant funding for a variety of projects and activities primarily benefiting low- and moderate-income persons, including day care facilities, senior centers, vocational workshops and other community services such as storm water projects.

IEDA Contingency Fund, Imminent Threat (CDBG) – Communities can apply for emergency funding for projects that correct an imminent threat to public health, safety or welfare. This program has also been used to fund projects that demonstrate sustainable community activities.

IEDA Downtown Revitalization Fund (CDBG) – Communities may apply for funds for downtown revitalization projects.

Vision Iowa: Community Attraction & Tourism (CAT) — Communities can apply for these grant funds for projects that promote recreational, cultural and educational or entertainment attractions that are available to the general public.

Vision Iowa: River Enhancement Community Attraction & Tourism (RECAT) — Communities can apply for RECAT funds to support projects that promote and enhance recreational opportunities on and near rivers or lakes.

Endow Iowa Tax Credits - Endow Iowa was created to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of this state through increased philanthropic activity by encouraging investments in existing community foundations. The major component of the Endow Iowa Program is a state tax credit of some annually fixed percentage of the gift given to a qualified community foundation. Communities and nonprofit organizations can set up funds within their community foundations to support local projects, and donors can take advantage of the tax credit.

DRAFT

Community-Based Seed Capital Funds — Tax credit program is designed to encourage groups of local investors to engage in venture capital investment to help attract and retain fast growing companies to their communities. Investors can receive tax credits equal to 20% of the amount of an equity investment in a Community-Based Seed Capital Fund.

EPA Brownfields Program - Communities can apply for funds to inventory, characterize, assess and conduct cleanup planning for properties that may have hazardous substances, pollutants or contaminants present. Additional funding may be available for clean-up.

IDOT Revitalize Iowa's Sound Economy (RISE) - This state program was established to promote economic development in Iowa through construction or improvement of roads and streets. Communities can apply for grants or loans to fund "immediate opportunity" projects or "local development" projects. Immediate opportunity projects are an immediate, non-speculative opportunity for permanent job creation or retention. Jobs created are to be value-adding in nature (e.g. manufacturing, industrial, non-retail) and the relocation of jobs within the state does not qualify. Local development projects support local economic development but do not require an immediate commitment of funds such as industrial parks or tourist attractions. Projects must involve construction or improvement of a public roadway.

IDOT Traffic Safety Improvement Program – This transportation program can provide funding for traffic safety improvements or studies on any public roads. Eligible projects fall into one of three categories: construction or improvement of traffic safety and operations at a specific site with an accident history; purchase of materials for installation of new traffic control devices such as signs or signals, or replacement of obsolete signs or signals; or transportation safety research, studies or public information initiatives such as sign inventory, work zone safety and accident data.

IDOT Pedestrian Curb Ramp Construction – This program can provide funding to assist communities in complying with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) on primary roads. The community must engineer and administer the project and improvements must involve a municipal extension of a primary road.

IDOT/IDNR Fund – Communities can apply for funds to cover the cost of materials and installation of seed or live plants for roadside beautification for any primary system corridors. The area to be planted must be on primary highway right-of-way, including primary highway extensions.

Iowa Living Roadway Trust Fund - Implement Integrated Roadside Vegetation Management programs (IRVM) – These funds are available for various projects on city, county or state rights-of-way or publicly owned areas adjacent to traveled roadways. Categories of eligible projects are as follows: roadside inventories; gateways; education/training; research/demonstration; roadside enhancement; seed propagation; and special equipment.

IDOT Recreational Trails Program – This program was established to fund public recreational trails. Communities may apply for proposed projects that are part of a local, area-wide, regional or statewide trail plan. Trails resulting from successful applications must be maintained as a public facility for a minimum of 20 years.

DRAFT

USDA Community Facilities Grants/Loans – Available to fund the development of essential community facilities for public use in rural areas and may include hospitals, fire protection, safety, child care centers and many other community-based initiatives
USDA Rural Community Development Initiative - Provides technical assistance and training funds to develop the capacity and ability of private, nonprofit community-based housing and community development organizations and low income rural communities to improve housing, community facilities, community and economic development projects in rural areas.

USDA Broadband Loan Program - This program is available to local nonprofit and for-profit entities and provides loans for funding the costs of construction, improvement and acquisition of facilities and equipment to provide broadband service to rural communities.

USDA Distance Learning And Telemedicine Grant/Loan Program (DLT) – This program can provide grant funding for the technology and technical assistance needed to support distance learning and telemedicine projects in rural communities.

USDA Water and Waste Disposal Direct Loans and Grants – These funds can be used to develop water and waste disposal systems in rural areas and towns.

USDA Emergency Community Water Assistance Grants (ECWAG) – These funds are available to assist rural communities that have experienced a significant decline in quantity or quality of drinking water due to an emergency, to obtain or maintain adequate quantities of safe drinking water.

USDA Water and Waste Disposal Guaranteed Loans – This program provides loan guarantee support to local lenders for the construction or improvement of water and waste disposal projects in rural communities.

IDNR Solid Waste Alternatives Program (SWAP) - SWAP provides financial and technical assistance to businesses, government agencies, public and private groups and individuals to assist with the implementation of waste reduction, recycling, market development, public education and other solid waste management projects that improve their environmental performance as well as their bottom line.

IDNR Derelict Building Program – This program provides small Iowa communities and rural counties financial assistance to address neglected structures in order to improve the appearance of their streets and revitalize local economies. Derelict buildings must be located in a town or unincorporated county area of 5,000 residents or less and the building must be owned or in the process of being owned by the community or county. The program can provide funds to assist with certified ACM inspections, removal and disposal of ACM, structural engineering analysis to determine ability to renovate the building, Phase I & II Environmental Assessments and building deconstruction or renovation.

IDNR Clean Water Loan Program - Iowa's Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) is an option for financing publicly owned wastewater treatment, sewer rehabilitation, replacement, and construction and storm water quality improvements.

DRAFT

IDNR Drinking Water State Revolving Fund (DWSRF) – This is a loan fund that can finance the design and construction of drinking water systems to help ensure public health and provide safe drinking water.

IDNR General Non-Point Source – This loan fund offers landowners affordable financing for a variety of water quality projects. Projects include but are not limited to: Landfill closure, remediation of storage tanks, restoration of wildlife habitat, stream bank stabilization and wetland flood prevention areas.

IDNR Planning & Design Loans – Zero interest loans to cover costs incurred in the planning and design phase of a water infrastructure project. The funds can be used by communities to cover engineering fees, archaeological surveys, environmental or geological studies and costs related to project plan preparation. The loans may be rolled into a State Revolving Fund (SRF) construction loan or can be repaid when permanent financing is committed. The project planning and design costs must be directly related to proposed eligible projects such as the construction of treatment plants or improvements to existing facilities, water line extensions to existing unserved properties, water storage facilities and wells.

IDNR Rivers Programs – Provides assistance to communities for developing comprehensive water trail plans to make rivers into state-designated water trails.

IDNR River Programs: Water Trails Site Planning and Word Crew Assistance – Provides technical, crew, and funds to conduct low-tch projects in Iowa on Designated or In-Progress Water Trails that adhere to naturalistic river and surface trail design principles, or on a site with low-head dam mitigation project.

IDNR River Programs: Dam Mitigation Grants – Provides funds and technical assistance for dam mitigation through cost share grants.

IDNR Resource Enhancement and Protection (REAP) - REAP funds are available to communities through competitive grants for city parks and open space improvements. Typical projects include park land expansion and multi-purpose recreation projects.

SHPO Certified Local Government Program (CLG) - The CLG program supports local governments' historic preservation programs. Direct benefits include free historic preservation training and technical assistance from the State's historic preservation staff, a start-up preservation reference library for use in developing and administering the program, qualification for REAP Historic Resource Development Program (HRDP) grants for rehabilitating community-owned properties that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places and qualification for a small, competitive, matching CLG grant program that is open only CLG program participants. These grants can be used to underwrite all historic preservation activities except rehabilitation.

Cultural District - A cultural district is a well-recognized, labeled, mixed-use, compact area of a community in which a high concentration of cultural facilities serves as the anchor. Cultural districts are established to encourage local governments to partner with a local community nonprofit or for profit organization, businesses and individuals to enhance the quality of life for citizens of the community.

Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning Program – This program provides professional landscape planning and design services to rural Iowa communities.

DRAFT

The Iowa DOT, ISU and Trees Forever collaborate to engage communities in participatory decision-making processes and implementation strategies, and each community receives a conceptual design plan that can be used to implement landscape and transportation enhancements. Possible projects include transportation corridor enhancements, community signage, downtown streetscape improvements and recreational trail development.

Trees Forever - This statewide nonprofit organization was formed to protect Iowa's natural resources. Trees Forever works with communities to improve water quality, preserve and enhance forest areas and beautify roadsides. Trees Forever provides facilitation for a wide range of activities including community tree planting, GreenForce™ youth engagement programs, Iowa's Living Roadways Community Visioning, trails visioning, watershed protection and many more programs.

HSEMD Hazard Mitigation Grant Program (HMGP) – This program provides grants to communities for long term hazard mitigation projects after a major disaster declaration. The purpose of the program is to reduce the loss of life and property in future disasters by funding mitigation measures during the recovery phase of a natural disaster. Projects include planning, safe rooms, acquisitions, elevations and relocations.

Economic Development Tools & Resources

IEDA Grow Iowa Values Financial Assistance Program (GIVFAP) - Formerly the Direct Financial Assistance Program, this state fund offers direct financial assistance to companies that create new employment opportunities and/or retain existing jobs and make new capital investment in Iowa. The funds, in the form of loans or forgivable loans can help finance projects that are focused on job creation or retention, value-added agriculture and entrepreneurial efforts and can help a wide variety of business operations including biosciences, advanced manufacturing, information technology and financial services. Funds can be used for building construction or remodeling, land or building acquisition, site preparation, machinery and equipment purchases, computer hardware purchases, furniture and fixtures.

IEDA Enterprise Zones - Enterprise Zones are designed to stimulate development by targeting economically distressed areas in Iowa. Businesses and developers can qualify for state and local tax incentives by making new investments and creating or retaining jobs in these areas.

IEDA Iowa New Jobs Training Program – This program assists businesses that are creating new positions or new jobs through expansion or location in the state by providing flexible funding to train and develop new employees. The assistance available ranges from highly specialized educational programs to basic skill training for new positions. Businesses that have entered into an agreement are also eligible for the New Jobs corporate income tax credit if they expand their Iowa employment base by 10% or more.

IEDA Iowa Jobs Training Program - Like the new jobs training program, this program also invests in customized training, but for existing employers. Iowa's community colleges provide businesses with funding and support for this program.

DRAFT

IEDA High Quality Jobs Program — This program is designed to promote the creation or retention of quality jobs by assisting businesses locating, expanding or modernizing their facilities in Iowa through a package of tax credits, exemptions and/or refunds to approved businesses.

IEDA Targeted Small Business (TSB) Program – This program assists women, minorities and the disabled in starting or growing a small business. TSB-certified businesses receive technical assistance and are eligible to apply for financial assistance through grants and loans.

IEDA Job Creation, Retention and Enhancement Fund - EDSA, PFSA and Career Link (CDBG) - These three programs within the fund are the Economic Development Set-Aside (EDSA), the Public Facilities Set-Aside (PFSA) and Career Link. Communities can apply to these programs at any time. EDSA and PFSA are designed to assist businesses either through a direct or forgivable loan or through infrastructure projects. Career Link is an industry-driven training program designed to help the underemployed and working poor obtain the training and skills they need to move into available higher-skill, better-paying jobs.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF) – This tool is a public financing mechanism that is used to subsidize development, infrastructure and other community-improvement projects in targeted districts. Eligible projects result in an increase in site value which generates an increase in tax revenues. These future new revenues can be used to repay the debt issued by the community for the project, or to reimburse private investment in the project.

IEDA Demonstration Fund - The Demonstration Fund is available to small and medium-sized Iowa-based companies in the industries of advanced manufacturing, bioscience or information technology. The fund provides financial and technical assistance to support high technology prototype and concept development activities that have a clear potential to lead to commercially viable products or services within a reasonable period of time. The primary purpose of the fund is to help businesses with a high-growth potential reach a position where they are able to attract later stage private sector funding.

IEDA Iowa Small Business Loan Support Program (ISB) - This loan program assists Iowa entrepreneurs and small businesses in their efforts to access capital for business purposes including startup costs, working capital, business procurement, franchise fees, equipment, inventory, as well as the renovation or tenant improvements of an eligible place of business that is not for passive real estate investment purposes. Iowa small businesses that are located in Iowa, are owned, operated and actively managed by an Iowa resident, and have 750 or fewer full-time equivalent employees are eligible to apply.

IEDA Assistive Device Tax Credit — Reduces taxes for small businesses that incur costs through making physical changes to the workplace to help employees with disabilities to get or keep their job.

IEDA Brownfield/Grayfield Tax Credit Program — Projects can receive tax credits for qualifying costs of a Brownfield project and if the project meets green building requirements. Grayfield projects can get tax credits for qualifying costs and projects that meet green building requirements.

Research Activities Tax Credit — A refundable tax credit created to incent a company's research activities. Companies must meet the qualifications of the Federal Research Activities Credit in order to be eligible for the credit in Iowa.

DRAFT

Iowa Innovation Acceleration Fund - The Iowa Innovation Acceleration Fund promotes the formation and growth of businesses that engage in the transfer of technology into competitive, profitable companies that create high paying jobs. The fund provides financing to eligible businesses through three program components that correspond to three different stages of growth:

- **Iowa LAUNCH** —pre-seed capital stage financing through low-interest loans for intellectual property development and evaluation, including in-depth analysis of market potential, conducting competitive analysis, establishing proof of concept of a scientific discovery, prototype design and development and related activities.
- **Iowa PROPEL**— seed capital stage financing through low-interest loans or royalty agreements for advanced intellectual property development and evaluation, including in-depth analysis of market potential, conducting competitive analysis, advanced proof of concept work for ascientific discovery, advanced prototype design and development, research and development needed to attract venture capital financing, hiring key personnel and related activities.
- **INNOVATION EXPANSION**— expansion-stage financing through secured, low-interest loans to fund investments that can be used to hire key personnel and services and the purchase of equipment and facilitate construction costs.

USDA Business and Industry Guaranteed Loan (B&I) Program – Loan guarantees available to support local financing agencies with loans to rural businesses that improve, develop, or finance business, industry and employment as well as improve the economic and environmental climate in rural communities.

USDA Intermediary Relending Program (IRP) - Provides loans to local organizations to establish revolving loan funds to assist with financing business and economic development activity that create or retain jobs in disadvantaged and remote communities.

USDA Rural Energy for America Program Guaranteed Loan Program (REAP Loans) - This guaranteed loan program supports local commercial financing of renewable energy and energy efficiency projects for businesses.

USDA Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant (REDLG) - This program provides funding to rural projects through local nonprofit utility organizations. Under the program, USDA provides zero interest loans to local utilities which they then relend to local businesses for projects that create and retain employment in rural areas.

UDSA Rural Business Enterprise Grant Program (RBEG) – This grant program provides funds to communities or nonprofit organizations to be used for rural projects that help finance and facilitate the development of small and emerging rural businesses.

USDA Rural Energy for America Program Grants (REAP) – This grant program is available to small rural businesses and can provide funds for energy audits, feasibility studies or renewable energy development assistance. It may also be used to help rural small businesses purchase and install renewable energy systems and make energy efficiency improvements.

DRAFT

USDA Value-Added Producer Grants (VAPG) - Grants funds are available to local producers and cooperatives for planning activities or working capital for marketing value-added agricultural products and for farm-based renewable energy.

USDA Rural Business Opportunity Grants (RBOG) – Communities and nonprofit agencies can apply for funds to promote sustainable economic development in rural communities by providing training and technical assistance for business development, entrepreneurs and economic development officials and to assist with economic development planning.

SHPO State Historic Preservation and Cultural & Entertainment District Tax Credit – This program provides a state income tax credit for the sensitive rehabilitation of historic buildings. It ensures character-defining features and spaces of buildings are retained and helps revitalize surrounding neighborhoods. The program provides an income tax credit of some percentage of qualified rehabilitation costs.

IowaMicroLoan – Provides loans and technical assistance for start-up, expansion or refinancing of small businesses.
Iowa Small Business Development Centers (SBDC) - The Iowa SBDC conducts research, counsels and trains business people in management, financing and operating small businesses, and provides comprehensive information services and access to experts in a variety of fields. The SBDC is the only nationally accredited entrepreneurial development program in Iowa.

UNI MyEntre.Net - This website is an online business resource site and blog for entrepreneurs. Among its activities are weekly business webinars, regionally hosted EntreBash! networking events and an annual EntreFest! business conference for entrepreneurs. MyEntre.Net also sponsors the "Dream Big, Grow Here" contest.

Housing Tools & Resources

IEDA Housing Fund (CDBG) – Communities can apply for funding that supports owner-occupied rehabilitation projects for low to moderate income, single-family, owner-occupied housing households.

IEDA Housing Enterprise Zones - Developers and contractors building or rehabilitating housing in an established Enterprise Zone may apply to receive state tax incentives such as a refund of state sales, service or use taxes paid during construction and an investment tax credit of up to a maximum of 10% of the investment directly related to the construction or rehabilitation of the housing.

Housing Tax Increment Financing (TIF) – When TIF is used for housing development, a percentage of the future tax increment revenues from the project must be used to provide housing assistance to low- and moderate-income families.

DRAFT

USDA Rural Repair and Rehabilitation Loans and Grants – This program provides direct loans or grants to very low-income homeowners to repair, improve or modernize their dwellings or to remove health and safety hazards.

USDA Rural Housing Direct Loan – This program provides direct loans to help low-income individuals or households purchase, build, repair, renovate or relocate homes in rural areas.

USDA Rural Housing Guaranteed Loan – This program supports local participating lenders in financing home purchases for rural families with incomes up to 115% of the area's median income.

USDA Rural Housing Site Loans - These loans are made to nonprofit agencies to provide financing for the purchase and development of housing sites for low- and moderate-income families.

USDA Rural Rental Housing - This program provides loans to a variety of owners to provide affordable multifamily rental housing for families, the elderly or persons with disabilities.

USDA Guaranteed Rental Housing – This program guarantees loans to support local participating lenders in financing the development of multi-family housing facilities in rural areas.

USDA Housing Preservation Grants – This program provides grants to local nonprofit organizations to fund the repair or rehabilitation of low- and very low-income housing.

DRAFT

Appendix B: Community Survey Results

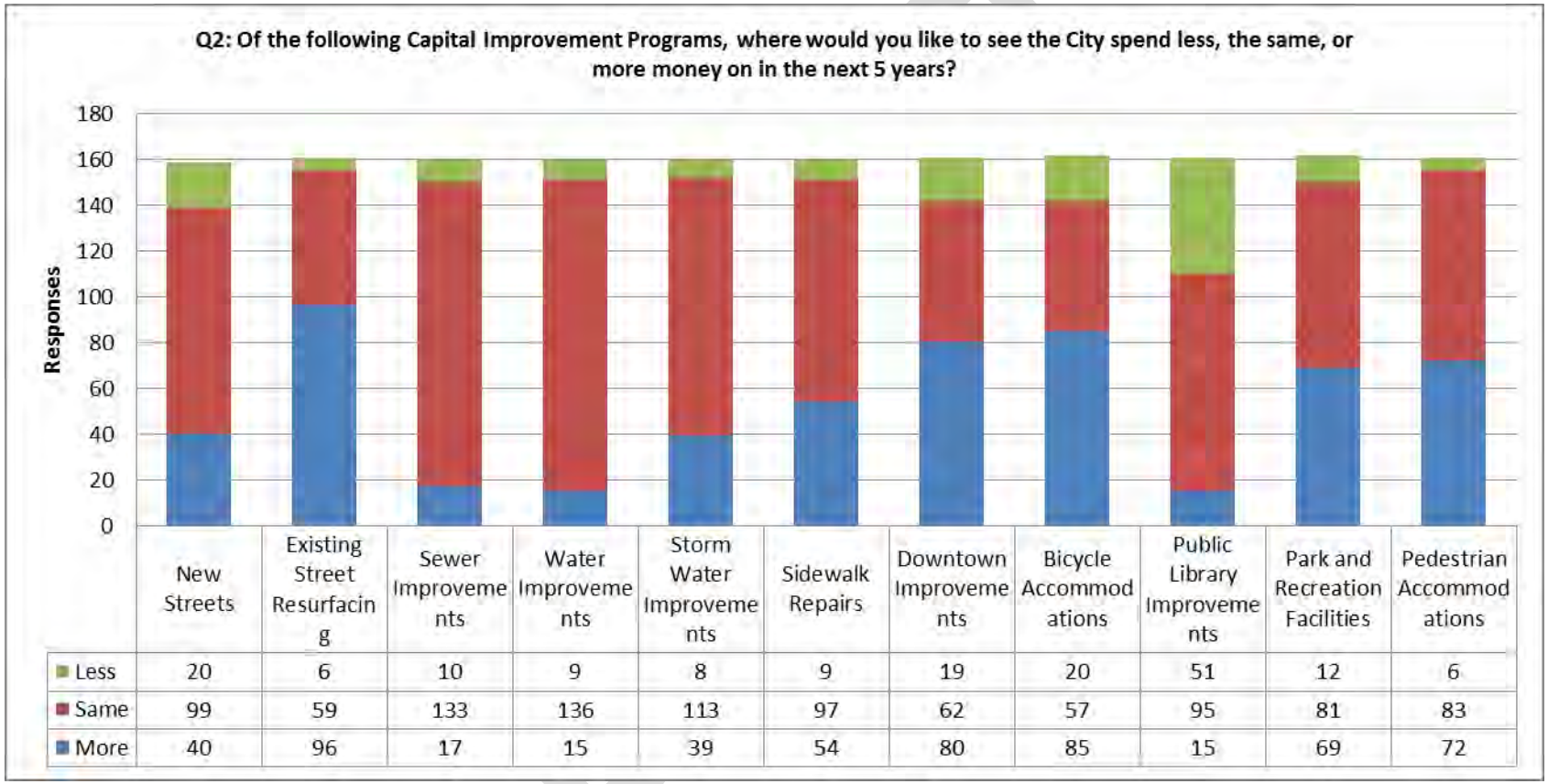
Between October 2, 2013 and November 15, 2013, 165 Independence Comprehensive Plan Update surveys were completed. Below are the responses. If duplicate comments were given for open-ended questions or under "other" those comments were combined and a (#) was provided next to the comment to represent the number of survey respondents who stated it.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES & SERVICES – *These questions are to receive your input on your satisfaction with current facilities and services and how these can be improved upon.*

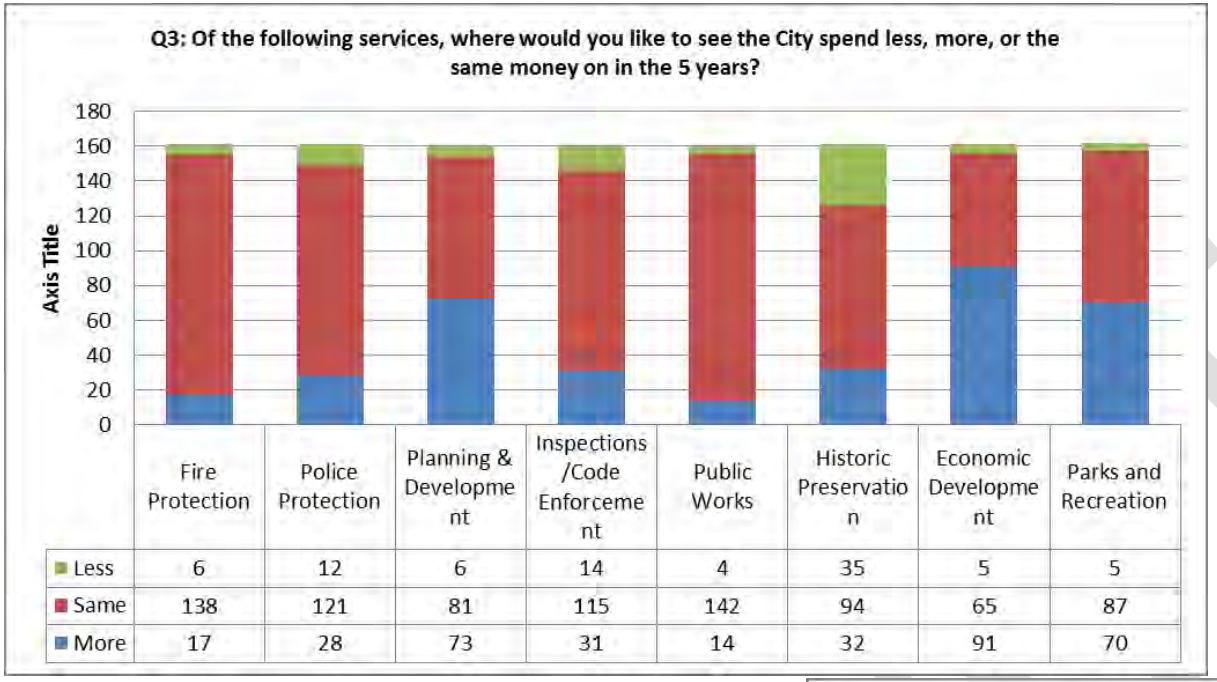
Q1: How would you rank your level of satisfaction concerning community services in Independence?					
	Very Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	No Opinion
Condition of Streets	10	63	60	31	0
Availability of Sidewalks	26	69	49	19	1
Quality of Parks	64	72	23	3	1
Accessibility of Parks	84	68	5	1	4
Water	85	54	8	5	10
Sewer	80	54	6	8	13
Gas and Electric	72	51	16	13	10
Communication (phone, internet, TV)	66	62	19	9	7
Trash and Recycling	66	73	12	6	4
Fire Protection	122	30	1	0	8
Police Protection	90	55	10	4	4
Emergency Services	103	45	6	3	6
Elementary Schools	77	63	6	1	15
Middle School	81	57	4	0	21
High School	117	32	2	2	10

DRAFT

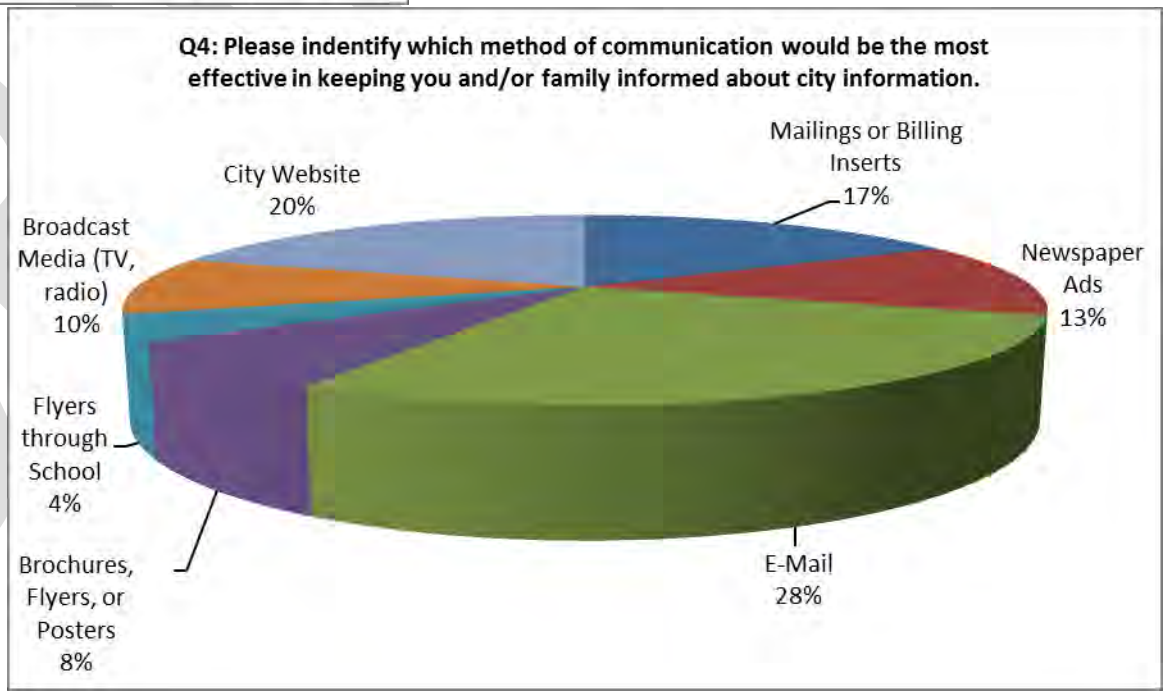
Public Library	133	18	5	2	5
City Hall	25	71	28	24	15
City's Communication Efforts with Citizens	15	60	58	26	4



	New Streets	Existing Street Resurfacing	Sewer Improvements	Water Improvements	Storm Water Improvements	Sidewalk Repairs	Downtown Improvements	Bicycle Accommodations	Public Library Improvements	Park and Recreation Facilities	Pedestrian Accommodations
Less	20	6	10	9	8	9	19	20	51	12	6
Same	99	59	133	136	113	97	62	57	95	81	83
More	40	96	17	15	39	54	80	85	15	69	72

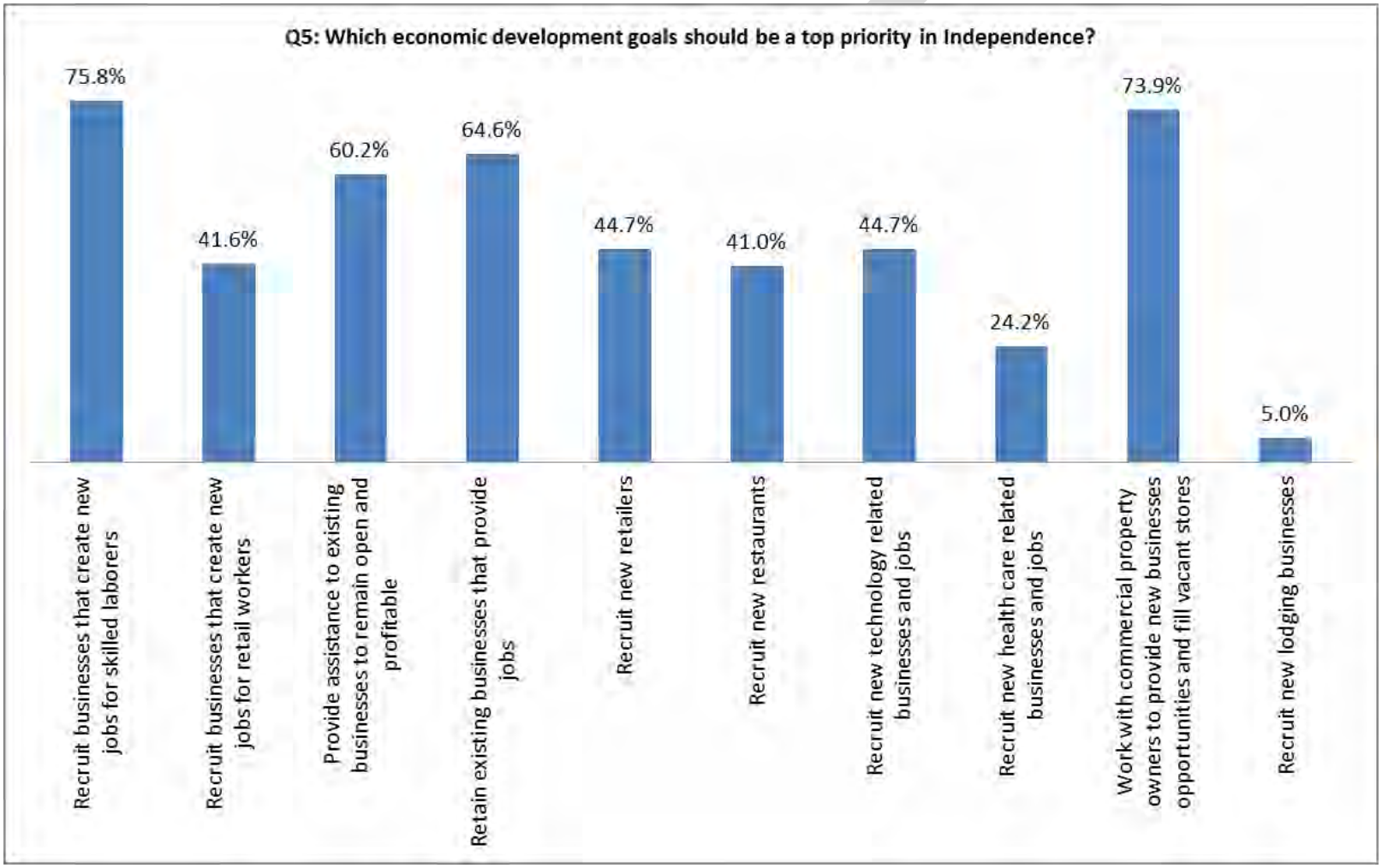


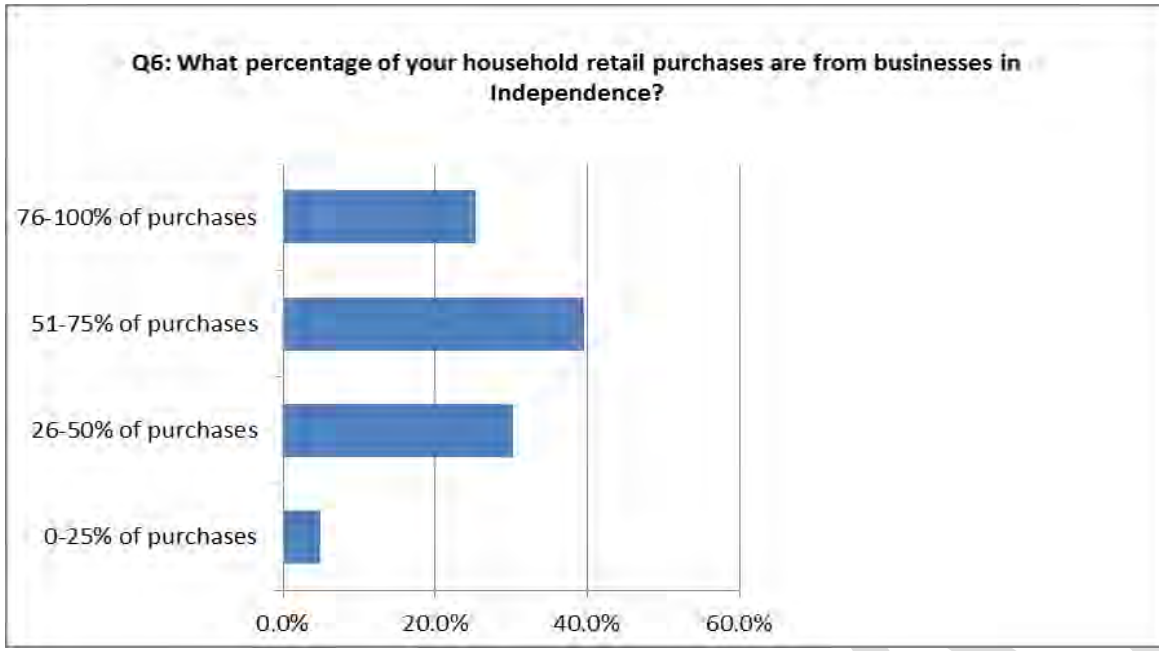
	Fire Protection	Police Protection	Planning & Development	Inspections /Code Enforcement	Public Works	Historic Preservation	Economic Development	Parks and Recreation
Less	6	12	6	14	4	35	5	5
Same	138	121	81	115	142	94	65	87
More	17	28	73	31	14	32	91	70

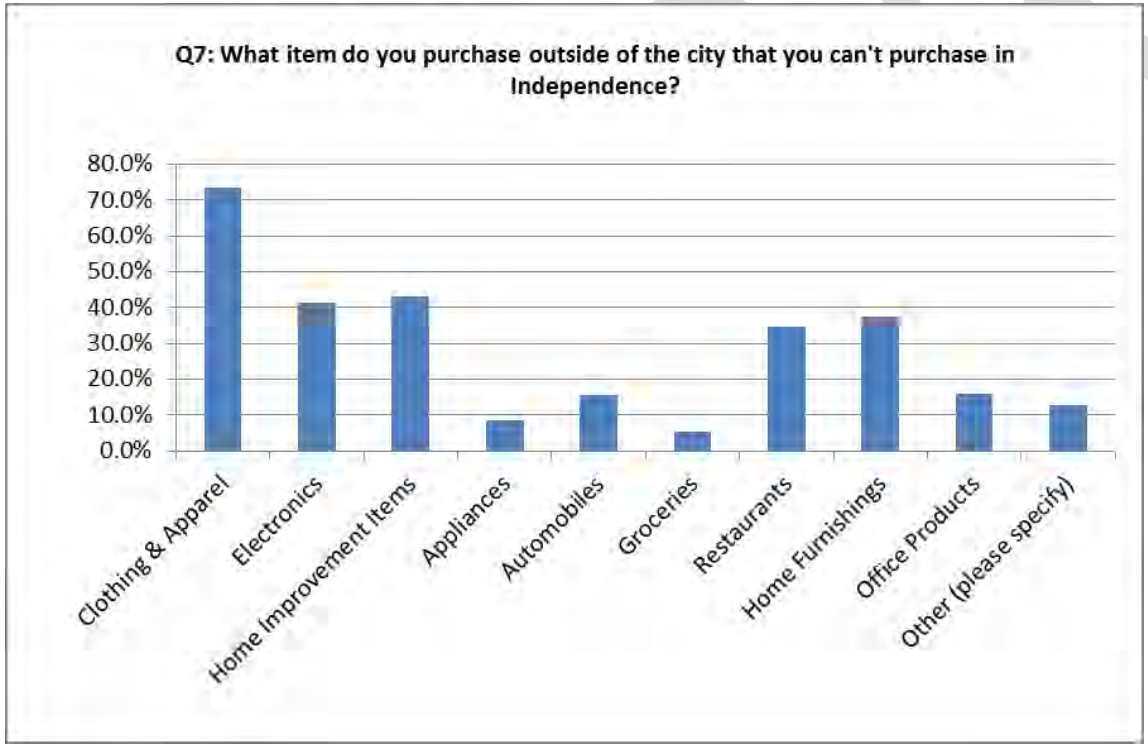


DRAFT

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT – *These questions are to receive your input on the existing economic development environment in the community and how it can be improved.*







Q7 Other:
Higher end electronics
Motorcycle parts and accessories
Video
Plants/Trees
Clothing / Apparel
Craft
Businesses to assist Veterans
Pet supplies
Big and tall
Things to do with family
Musical Items
Larger Name Brand Shoes (2)
Hunting and fishing items
A few grocery items
Recreation and outdoor gear, sporting goods (2)
Bulk items(sams)....more variety of restaurants....like a Perkins , Denny's, Good sandwiches, inexpensive...not in a bar though
Christian books
Try to shop local but hard to pass up "box store" sales and variety of items/food in larger areas.
Camping supplies and RV
There are limited items at the current stores ... or the store hours are closed when I can shop

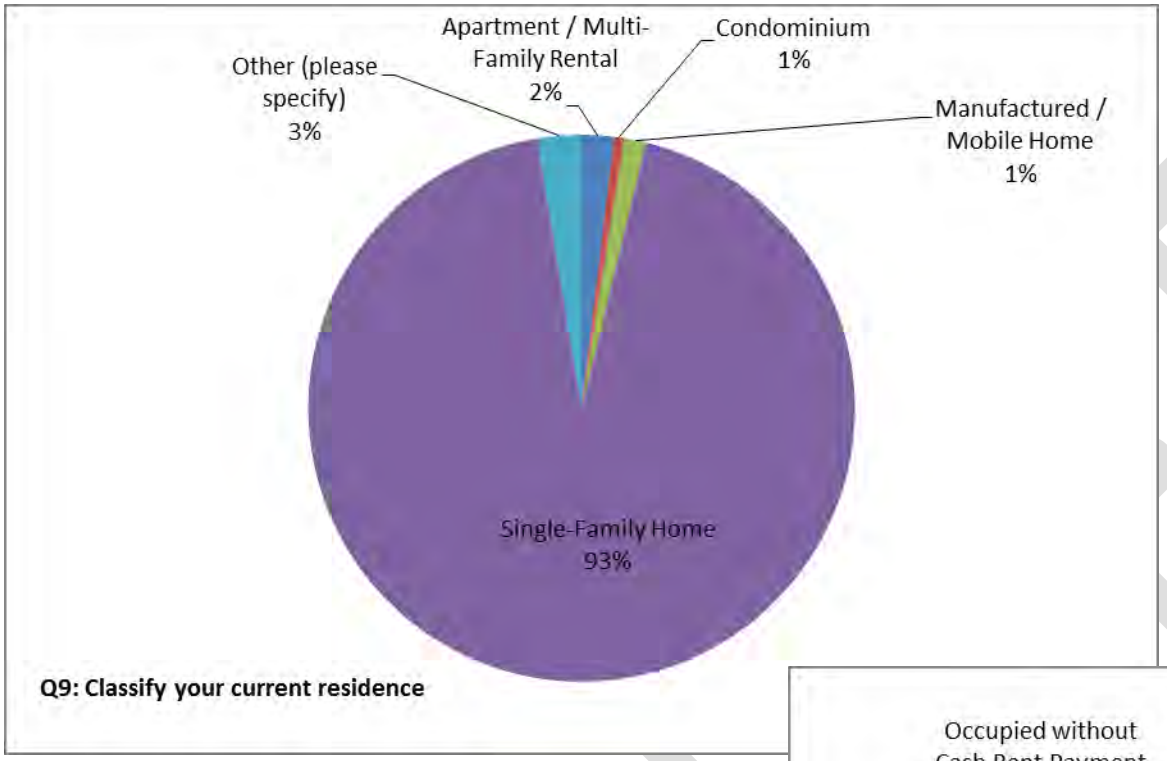
Q8: What types of businesses are needed in Independence?
Any that pay a living wage - meaning that a full-time employee does not qualify for government assistance.
Bakery & coffee shop (7)
jewelry store (6)
Shops on the main street that can bring people to the downtown
Shoe store (30) – men, women, children, high quality, brand name, dress and athletic
Clothing store (19) – men, women, children, average and plus size, big and tall, nicer quality
Skating Rink
If you bring in manufacturing jobs, the service industry will follow.
Skilled labor businesses
more business period
Restaurants (32) - Wendy's, taco bell, like Panera , More retailers as well as higher paying jobs in the tech field and skilled laborer. New restaurants/vendors that provide healthier/natural/organic products and foods. Restaurants that serve breakfast on Sundays- nice sit down restaurant. Frozen yogurt store. Restaurants down by the Walmart area. Place to go late after games for coffee, hot chocolate, pie etc. Small family type home style restaurant. Tteas smoothies juices health food drinks soup sandwiches special donuts rolls coffee. We need more GOOD restaurants. 1st St Deli, Chuong Garden, and the Mexican place are awesome. But a good burger and steak place would be nice. And maybe a Taco Johns type fast food place. Jimmy Johns. There's no place with a wide variety of sandwiches(a good burger, not burnt and expensive) misc items....not in a bar or lounge. food options besides the basics. Would be nice to see a Hardees again, or an Arbys/Culver setup. A variety of food places. Finer(er) Dining. More restaurants downtown. Restaurants that serve breakfast, lunch and p.m. meal. Brewery/ micro brew
Sporting/Recreation Store (13) - Quality sportswear, sports equipment, nicer outdoor equipment store, bike/boat shops. hunting/fishing. fitness
Manufacturing (9) - Small manufacturing, production, More factories and/or labor jobs, technology, Technology-Based Industries, More tech and manufacturing would be good.
Driving range,
Furniture store / Home goods store (4) - Upholstery shop, furniture repair. home furnishing (antiques
More white collar jobs.
Retail & Specialty stores/shops (20) – book store, wine shop, bridal gift shop, art store, healthy food store, specialty stores that draw people down town. Antique shops, Hallmark. Electronic store / computer repairs and sales. Alterations and repair. Music store. UPS/FedEx store. , winery/wine store featuring Iowa wines.), gift shops (closing of Connies), Connie's Hallmark needs to be replaced. We could also use more retail shops on Main St,
We need more businesses that can employ larger numbers of people.
More places to take children for entertainment. An indoor pool, skating rink, place with blow-ups, etc.
Tai chi/Yoga fitness facility, alternative therapy for mindfulness, vitamin/health food store, technology companies where the headquarters may or not be here but they recruit work from home candidates or have a second location here.
place for youth to go play video games, pool, ping pong, miniature golf popcorn candy shop card shop
Start up businesses
Businesses that give kids something to do
bargain stores, roller-skating other specific sports entertainment

DRAFT

Businesses to help Veterans with their needs
Facility that teaches a trade specifically. Welding, auto repair, skills that can increase someone's pay without a college degree.
Larger industry along HWY 20...take a look at Peosta, IA
affordable small business/conference space
Skilled work employers that can provide additional job opportunities that aren't lower paying retail jobs. This would bring more tax revenues from both employer and employees if they'd live in town.
I like the newer businesses that have opened up recently. I just hate to see the empty buildings all over downtown. Would love to see the Malek open and become a concert venue/community play house and maybe show older movies for cheap.
Bigger movie theater and/or areas for families to do together
Those that employ large numbers of individuals: manufacturing, larger retail or distribution, & industry.
We would just love to see downtown cleaned up. It is so old and dirty and the store fronts look terrible. We would love to shop more in Independence, but we rarely visit downtown due to the above reasons.
A SHOE STORE. MANCHESTER IS THE CLOSEST SHOE STORE. WALMART DOES NOT HAVE GOOD SHOES. DON'T KNOW IF A MEDICAL CLINIC COULD BE CLASSIFIED AS A "BUSINESS", BUT LARGER THAN MEDICAL ASSOCIATES IS NOW AND HIRE MORE DOCTORS!
We are definitely in need of new restaurants and grocery store that supports more local fair food, like a Co-Op. It would be amazing if the new restaurants actually made food from scratch and not pulled from a freezer or a can.
Mini shopping mall that would include a variety of stores including fashion and home décor retailers.
any business that would locate downtown
pay decent wage with at least average benefits
Businesses that attract skilled laborers & not just typical factory jobs
commercial businesses that can bring jobs to the city
Depends what capital improvements are made. If you continue development of trails/wide sidewalks, you could recruit specialty stores downtown to cater to tourists. Same with other recreation, boating, canoeing/kayaking, hunting, etc.
entertainment
Retailers with variety appliances, sporting goods,. Would also be nice to see a truck stop at the MHI exit near the school to help spur development and traffic on the SW side of town.
Any business that creates jobs or excitement around Independence. The retail and food stores will follow jobs and population. "If you build (jobs) they will come"
RV's.- building supply
Need more Chain stores I believe. We only have Walmart and I would like to see more along with more restaurants
Any type that has an environmental conscience
a store with the 'extra' stuff ... not just the basics (which is what all the current stores have)

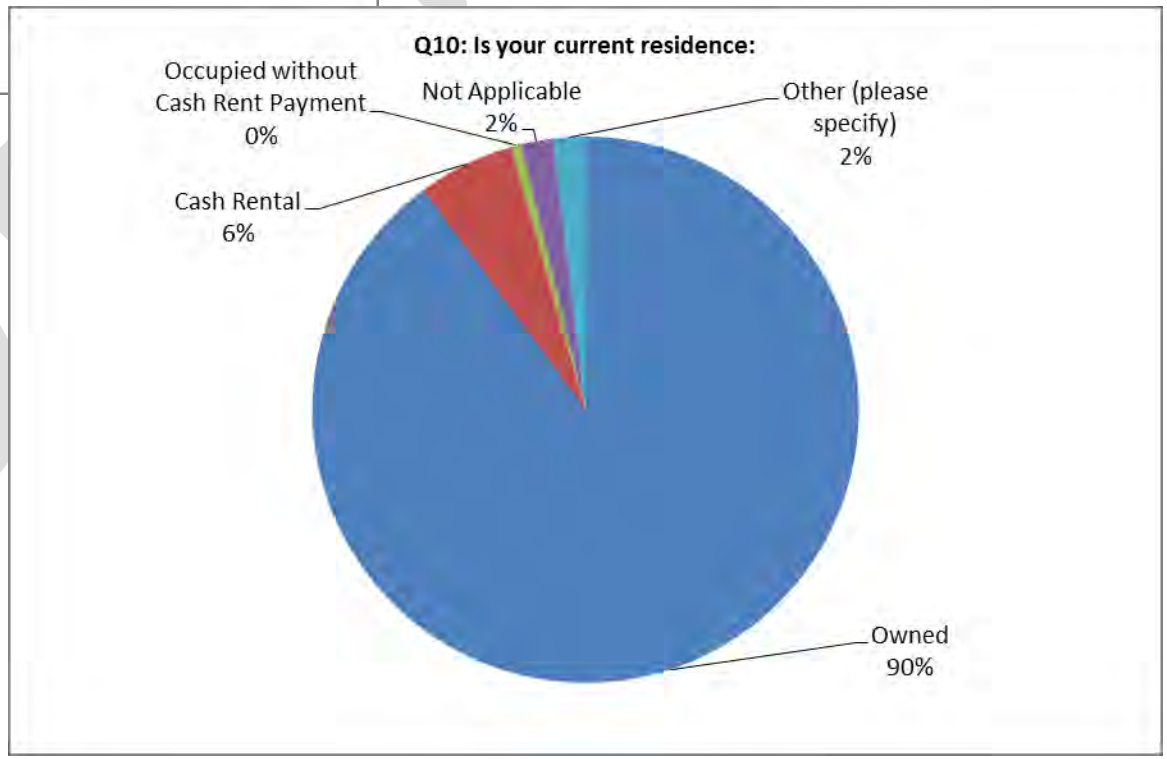
HOUSING – *The following questions are regarding the existing housing environment in the community and how it can be improved.*

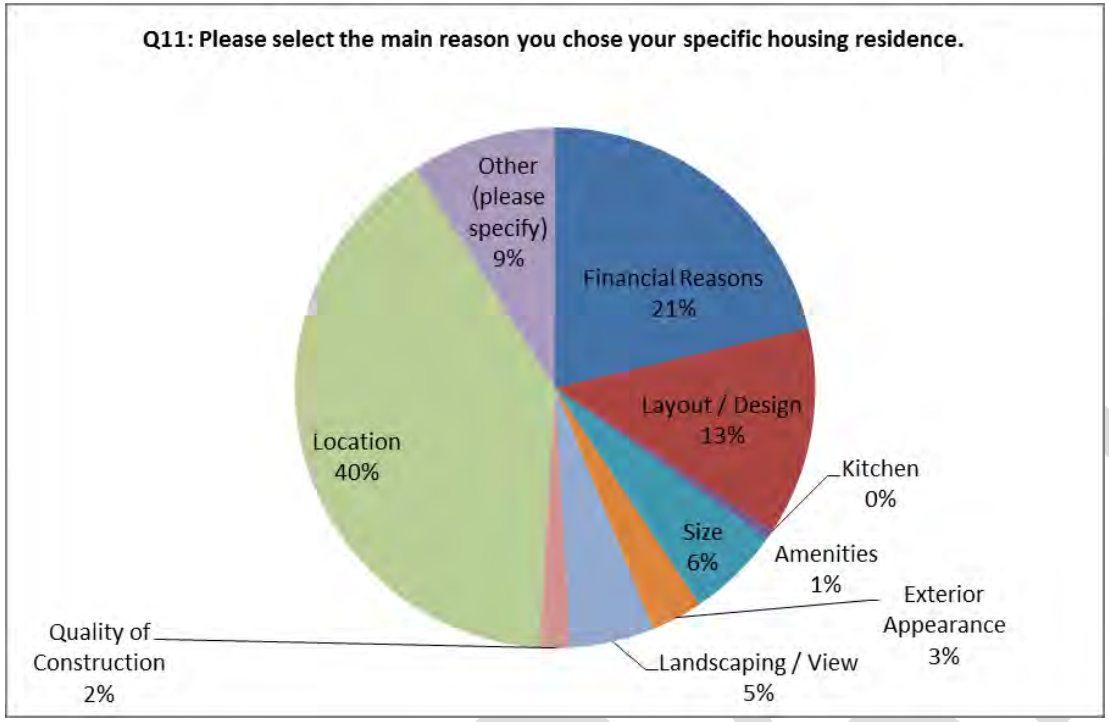
DRAFT

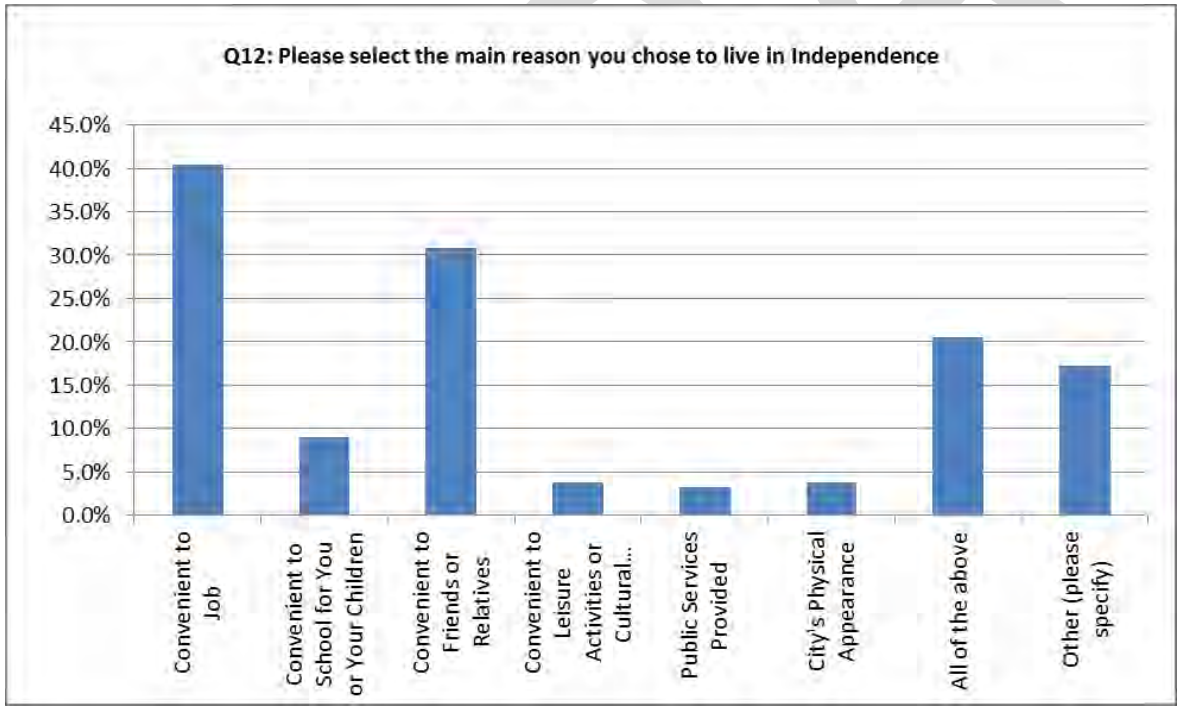


Q9 Other:
RV in the RV Park
I work here but do not live here
income based 2 bedroom apartments
Currently in apartment while building a house

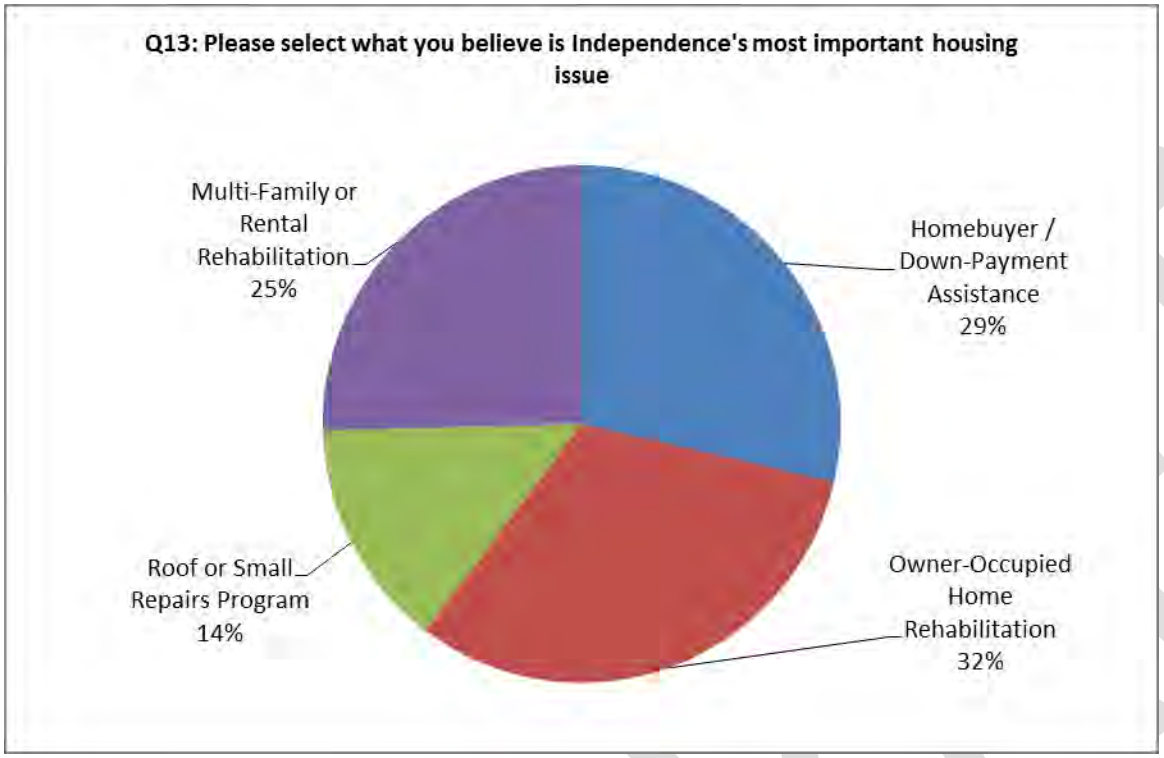
Q10 Other:
Rental home
I work here but do not live here
Low income based 1 bedroom apartment







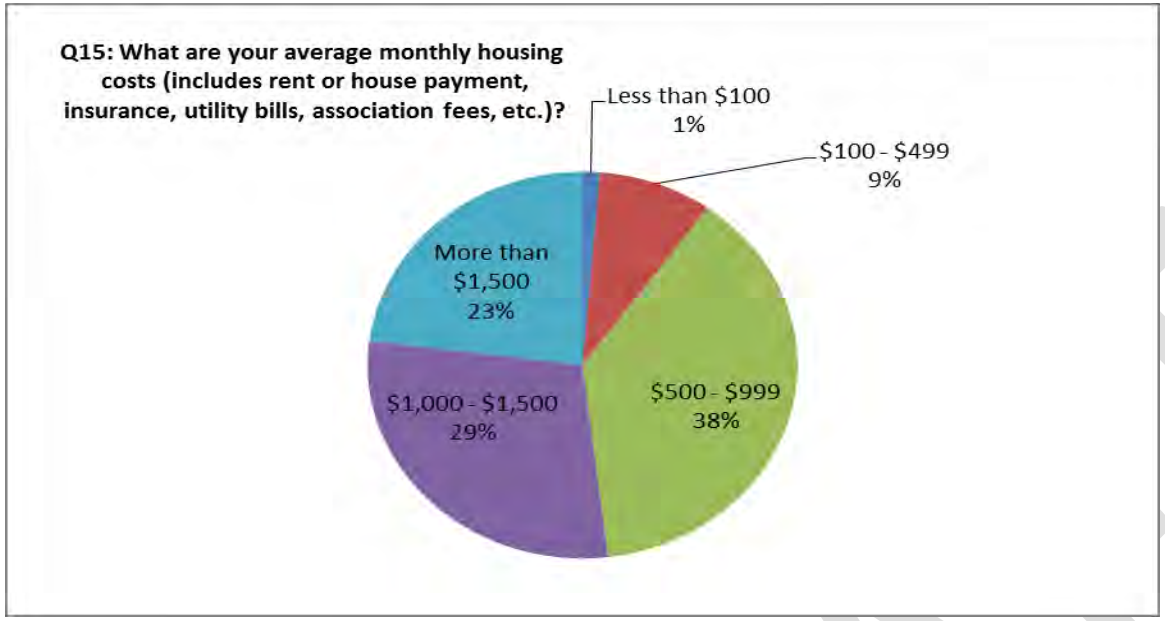
Q11 Other:
inherited, family property
Purchased family home
Full Time RVer
close to family member for care
it was cheaper, but the potential for what we wanted was there
rental property that allows pets
Family
in mobile home park
Short term solution after selling previous location
I work here but do not live here
Lived here for 50 plus years, like all above
We are building in the next few months. In a rental for the time being.
A combination of quality (clean), size, price, neighborhood quality
Moved back to town
Q12 Other:
Attend church here.
inherited, family property
small town living (3)
employment
I grew up here, great place to raise your family
Prefer to raise my child in a small town
City size and availability of goods and services. Friendly hometown atmosphere.
Born here / grew up here (6) - always lived here
moved for smaller schools
Family (4) - My adult children live here, adult children and their families locations
didn't want to be in a big city, but close to one
friendliness of town good souse of church
The value and quality of the home.
comfortable community with many opportunities
this is where i found employment
Distance to Waterloo / Cedar Rapids
The City's potential and proximity to larger cities.
I work here but do not live here (2)
Lower property taxes but not any more
Less crime

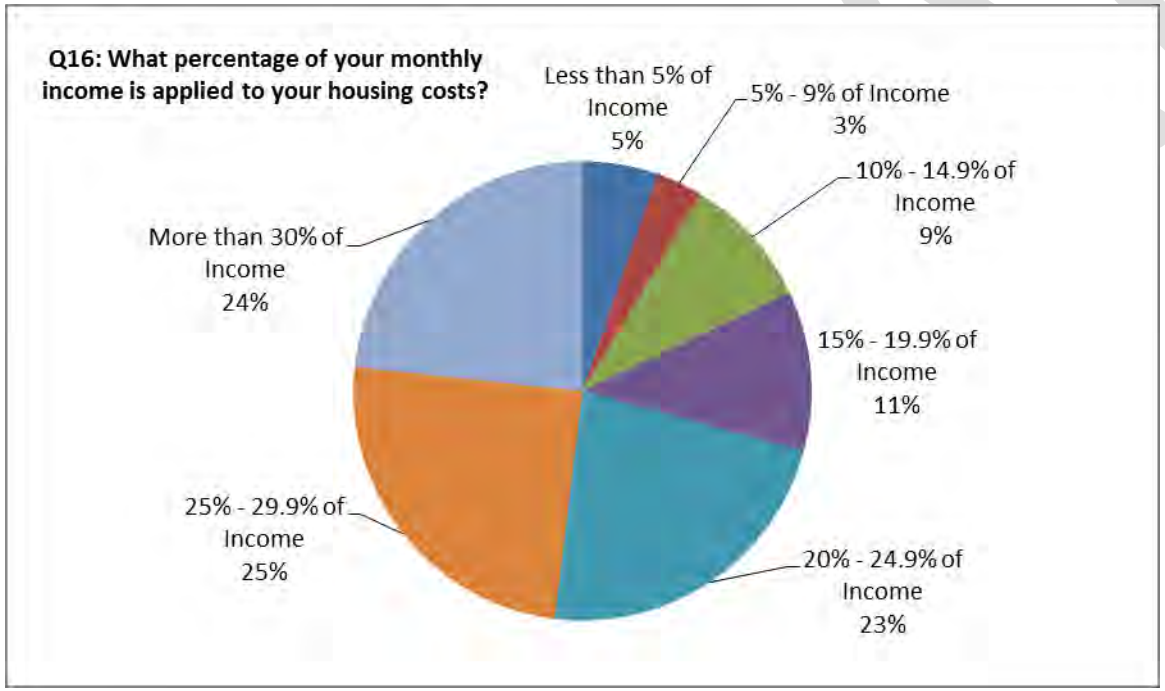


Q13 Other:
General condition of this community and appearance is poor. Too many dilapidated/abandoned housing.
lack of housing for elderly, dilapidated/abandoned housing
The city needs apartment rentals for business to attract and retain young workforce. Also affordable housing for those that wish to purchase...in the 150k-175k range
Mid-priced houses. Too many low end and high end--not enough affordable ones in the middle
Housing for older persons
More pressure on property owners to maintain and improve the appearance and safety of their property. Clean up dumpy looking residences.
All housing needs are being met.
lack of affordable housing
Affordable, quality rental properties
Need more rental single family rental housing
energy efficient tax subsidies
We need more rental property and possibly trailer court.
availability and quality of $150k plus homes
Taxes are OUTRAGEOUS
lack of mid-price housing (100-150k) and rental property
Home prices are too high for a city of this size and job market
Need for more entry level housing, any type
I work here but do not live here
taxes are too high
Developer / contractor incentives to build
clutter around the homes, homes in need of repair
Also possible tax breaks to buyers or people new to area
unoccupied houses
Last I looked, home prices were outrageously high for what a buyer would get
Lack of affordable rental housing

Q14: If you took out a mortgage on your home, how much was borrowed?

	Response Percent
Less than $50,000	13.0%
$50,000 - $99,999	31.9%
$100,000 - $149,999	23.2%
$150,000 - $199,999	10.9%
$200,000 - $249,999	8.7%
$250,000 - $299,999	0.7%
$300,000 - $349,999	0.7%
$350,000 - $399,999	0.7%
More than $400,000	0.0%
Other (please specify): none (13)	10.1%


Q15: What are your average monthly housing costs (includes rent or house payment, insurance, utility bills, association fees, etc.)?
Less than $100
1%
$100 - $499
9%
$500 - $999
38%
$1,000 - $1,500
29%
More than
$1,500
23%


Q16: What percentage of your monthly income is applied to your housing costs?
Less than 5% of
Income
5%
5% - 9% of Income
3%
10% - 14.9% of
Income
9%
15% - 19.9% of
Income
11%
20% - 24.9% of
Income
23%
25% - 29.9% of
Income
25%
More than 30% of
Income
24%

Q17: The following questions address additional housing costs:				
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable
Do you have homeowners or renter insurance?	150	3	1	2
Have you re-financed within the last two years?	45	99	0	12
Do you have a second mortgage?	15	131	0	10
Did you get a mortgage through a government program that provides lower mortgage costs?	9	125	2	17
Did you receive a real estate property tax rebate, lower tax rate, tax credit, or exemption from your last year's real estate taxes?	14	121	5	15
Have you received any housing vouchers or rental assistance within the last year?	1	148	0	6

Q18: How would you describe affordable housing?
Any housing that will increase in value if maintained - at least at the rate of inflation.
In a financial position to buy or rent a home and live in it comfortably.
Apartments to rent 2 bdrm--$750/month...3-4 bedroom house $1000/month
When the services you would like are reasonable and fair, unlike our Independence Light and Power who robs the town....
Having a safe place to live that is would only take about 40% of your income for housing costs
Housing that is in good repair.
less than what is asked
Housing cost that are not too painful
fair
Housing that when the principle, interest and taxes are totaled, the total is < 38% of income.
a clean, safe place to live that is within your budget....there are many rental and owner-occupied houses in Independence that need cleaned up
A house someone can afford. I feel that we have a good selection of housing available in Independence currently. Not all renters need to be homeowners. I am a Realtor here in Independence.
rentals are in VERY short supply in town
Something in the $500-$1000 per month range
Lazy people stealing from hard working taxpayers to live rent free
necessary
Housing that single parent, families with low-income, etc. can afford to rent or own while being able to afford the rest of the bills and grocery costs their family needs.
Evaluate the median income and determine a housing range that fits into around 30-40% of a family budget.

DRAFT

Per the person, each qualifies different
having a decent home that you can afford
Payments of $500 to $750
Homes middle class can afford on their income.
A house that meets your needs, but is safe for your family
low payments affordable rent utilities
Within a person's income so they can pay the monthly expense
Single Family one Story Homes with Attached garages
within budget
hard to find
Adequate home with reasonable utility rates. Not an oversized house and outlandish utility costs. That's insane. Our electrical rates are to high.
I think affordable would be in the $70,000 - $100,000 range.
One that doesn't exceed 35% of your income
energy efficient units at a cost of less than $500 per month
Median average home prices of $100,000 for existing homes.
Not subsidized but affordable for a young couple starting out can afford.
Depends on family size/needs. Be able to pay rent/mortgage each month, yet be able to pay all other moderate bills. Not live in drafty squealer.
safe, adequate and comfortable
cheaper housing alternative - typically multiple unit style
Nice place to live, doesn't look cheap
would be nice to keep it under 20 percent of monthly income.
A quality house at a price that the lower middle income and lower income families can afford. There are too many homes in this town that are of poor quality and are too expensive for middle class families.
Housing priced in correlation to the area's median income. Median income times (x) 15% +/-. Both single family & rental units.
non existent
something with a sliding scale that is between 20-25% of monthly income
A home where the property taxes are lower. On my taxes, I pay exactly $1,000 for just the schools. Much higher since the new junior/senior high school. I only have social security to live on. If I am taxed any more, I may have to sell the house, get a rental apartment, or move to another city. Everytime something is voted on that raises property taxes, it is said “it is only such and such a percentage” … but when you add together all those “onlys” it really adds up. Our present president doesn’t allow for senior citizens to have any increase in their social security in his attempt to have everyone dependent upon the government and a socialist government. I note this section is about “affordable housing” so I am not certain that I should speak of what I did here. As I own my home. By the term “affordable” I am thinking you mean something than I can afford. I’m probably wrong about this, but wanted to state what I have said.
Modest, efficient, sustainable.
Housing that is for people who are in need of a nice home but are not quite able to make that large of a payment.
We do need housing from 150,000 down
improving

DRAFT

Housing that gives people that normally couldn't buy a home a chance to own.
One that fits my budget
homes that cost less than 150k , rental homes in the $500-700/month range
a decent place to live at a decent price
low monthly payment, energy efficient for reasonable utilities
Housing that is made available for those in need.
Housing that a family working 1 minimum wage and one middle-class wage can live.
Less than $100,000
housing for low to mid income families
not having to spend over 25% of your income on housing
Housing that is affordable to the median income of the community.
A range of rental homes in the area that accommodate all budgets.
$150k-$180k.
manageable rent or mortgage payments and reasonable property taxes
we need more affordable housing for seniors
Limited; need housing development for young families by the schools.
Housing that can be affordable to most families in the city
We'll kept, inexpensive(lower than 500) houses, duplexes, townhouses
Adequate housing for all income levels
Housing that can be afforded by more than one sector of society.
Where apartment owners and/or renters can get some type of assistance to help single parents w children having access to 2-3 bedroom apartments available.
Really...Are you that dumb?
Something that I can comfortably afford??
Homes that cost 120k worth 120k, not 150k. Most homes that are single family 2 car garage layout tend to be over inflated by relators while the neighborhoods they exist in tend to reflect lower values because of so many poorly maintained properties. The town looks like it has been let to age with no regular maintenance. People don't want to pay 600+ for monthly rent on homes that are shacks, but they don't want to buy a mansion of a home either that will cost them 200k + There's a large absence of affordable middle income homes in the city. There seems to be some suggestion of improvement in this category near the city tree dump along 6th Ave Southeast in the Ohl development. Many new families and homes have gone up. These sectors look great because of the new age. Verses the core of the town, it's existing residential facilities reflect an old and worn out city, especially near the heart of what we claim is important - our down town district. To me it sets a poor perception to those visiting Independence, if one looks bad, the other probably does too, if you won't fix one, why would you fix the other...
Not being a slave to paying your mortgage or rent.
Very good for the people who don't abuse the systems.
Interest rates, cost of building new home.
For Low Income Families
I only know what is affordable for Me. I have no way to determine overall what affordable housing is.

DRAFT

Affordable enough for a single mom with 1 - 3 children to afford.
Affordable enough for 1 person with children - and no child support payments being made
Many single parents who don't qualify for assistance can't afford housing...renting is too costly and they can't come up with a down payment to purchase.
Affordable housing is median income

Q19: The following questions are regarding the housing amenities for your current residence.

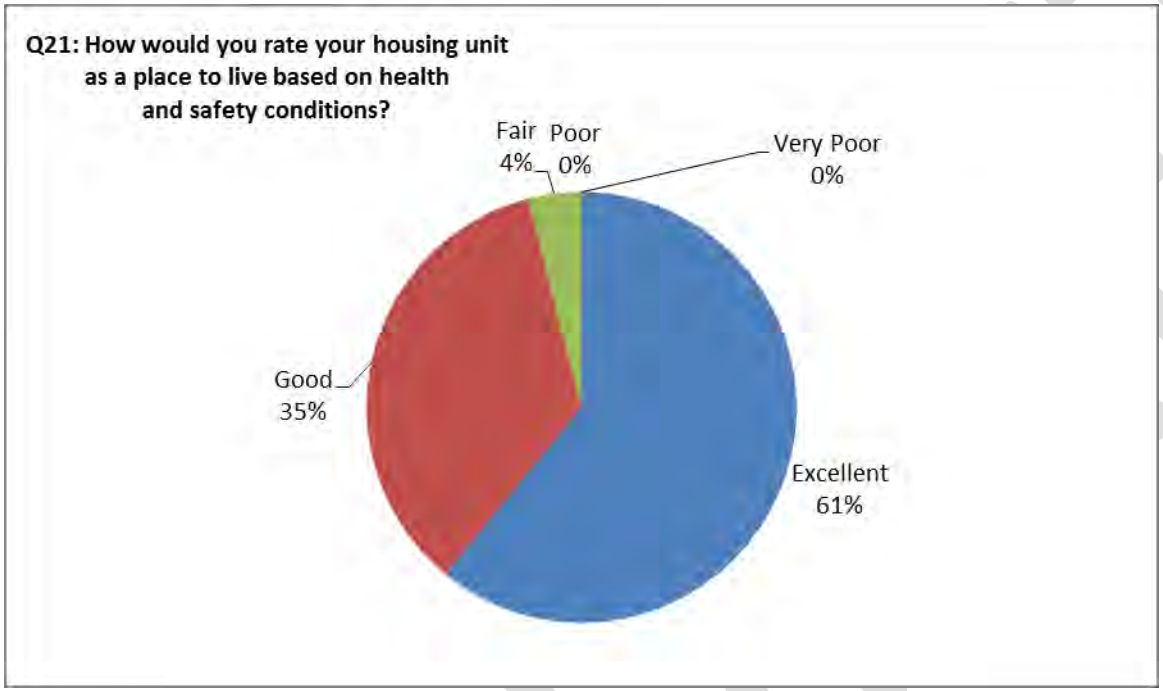
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable
Does your housing unit also provide personal care assistance such as meals, transportation, housekeeping, financial management, aid with telephone, or shopping?	3	**110**	1	38
Do you have an air conditioner (either central air or room unit)?	**143**	2	0	7
Do you have a fully-equipped and working kitchen?	**144**	1	0	7
Does your unit have both hot and cold running water?	**144**	2	0	7
Is a garage or carport included with your unit?	**134**	10	0	8
Is a driveway, a parting lot / parking area, or off-street parking provided?	**140**	6	0	7
Is there a laundry facility on-site?	**140**	2	0	11

Q20: The following questions are about the health and safety of your current residence.

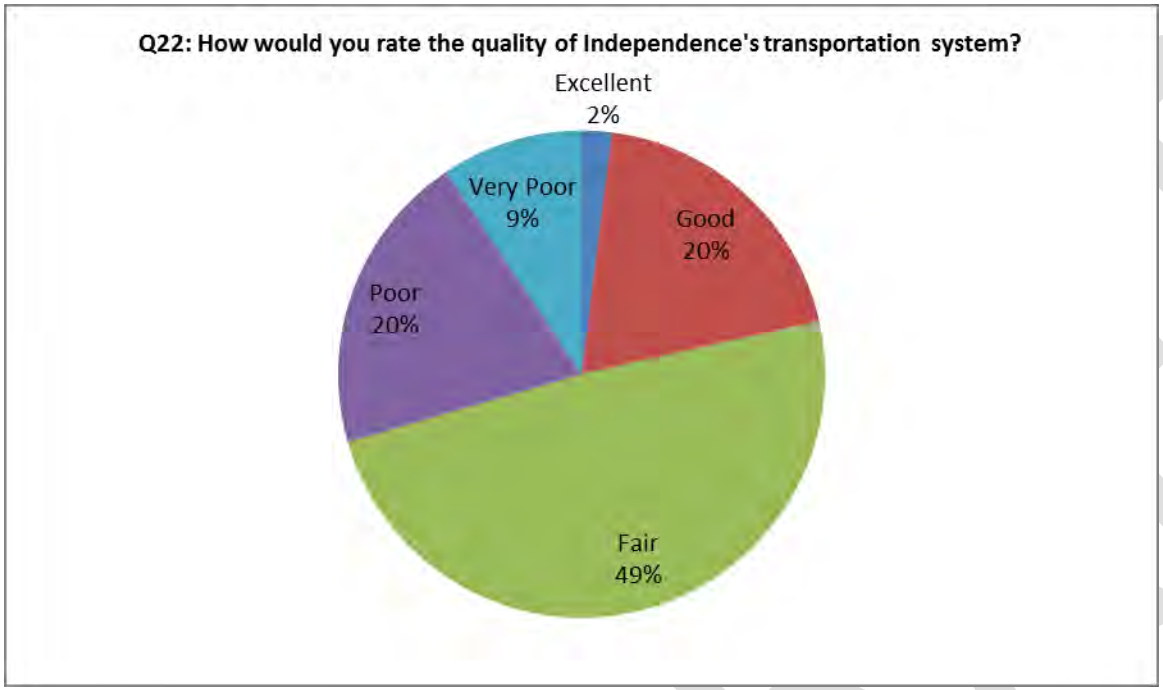
	Yes	No	Don't Know	Not Applicable
Has a working smoke detector?	**151**	0	0	2
Have the smoke detector batteries been replaced in the past six months?	**125**	19	4	5
Has a working carbon monoxide detector?	**104**	45	2	2
Has a fire extinguisher?	**113**	35	3	2
Ever damaged by a natural disaster (e.g., hail, flood, tornado, etc.)?	42	**98**	10	2
Any structural problems that could lead to physical	7	**138**	6	2

DRAFT

harm?				
Any surface have peeling paint or broken plaster?	21	**126**	1	3
Ever been tested for lead-based paint?	26	**90**	24	13



TRANSPORTATION – *The following questions are to receive your input on the existing and future transportation needs of Independence.*



Q23: During the past year, how often have you done the following?

	Never	1-2 Times/Year	3-12 Times/Year	1-2 Times/Month	1-2 Times/Week	More Than 1-2 Times/Week
Used Regional Transit	150	0	0	0	0	0
Used an In-Town Recreational Trail	55	20	30	24	8	12
Rode your Bike on a City Street	57	17	29	17	17	14

Q24: What is your awareness level of the Regional Transit Commission (RTC)?	
	Response Percent
I have used RTC for transportation	0.7%
I am aware of what RTC is, but have not utilized it	61.3%
I do not know what RTC is	38.0%

Q25: What types of public transportation improvements would you like to see in Independence?
Taxi Service (18) - Taxi service, but there probably isn't enough of a need. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to support a taxi service? I remember a time when we had a taxi in town ... I'm sure some people would use this, at some point or another.
Bike trails (7) - More biking and walking trails that ARE NOT part of the road/at the side of the road, SIDEWALKS & BIKE TRAILS! I thought this city was trying to go healthy, yet I fear to walk along 150 to get groceries because of the lack of sidewalks and shoulders. More bike trails within city limits. I hope that 929 east will not have rumble strips on the shoulders. more connecting trails for walking/biking. bike and walking trails would be great, especially given the very poor condition of streets and sidewalks. More bike paths through town and paving the Liberty Trail as a way to promote health and fitness. More comprehensive trail system with identifiable maps
With the aging population, and with many young people without transportation, a bus service with an advertised rout or availability would be good something that not only gets older people to the doctor or shopping but something that other people could use to get to work. Bicycle Trails that can eventually be connected to existing trails in NE Iowa
Something cheaper for the elderly, RTC is way too expensive for my Mom who is on SSI to afford to use
local transportation available to stores, theater, schools; transportation available to Cedar Rapids, Waterloo, Dubuque, Twin Cities
Affordable transportation that is available when needed not according to their schedule. Not having to call Missouri to get a ride on transit
rtc is probably a fair idea, but there should be a scheduled rtc route in the city with regular pickup times and locations. now that would be a super great idea. this really isn't rocket science, thank you.....
Bus Service (5) - for all residents not just elderly. More Transit Buses. Bus Route, Buses from here to other cities. Bus transportation for out of town & state !!!! Crosstown buses withe terminals at Heartland Acres, Walmart, BCHC, Civic Center. Scheduled bus route.
NONE (9) - None. Private enterprise can handle if necessary--not necessary for city to incur expense.
Offer public transportation (taxi or bus) for those who do not have cars or could use the services when purchasing groceries, etc
would be nice for people without cars to be able to get out to Walmart
I think Indee does a good job.
Continue to make trails that are safe and easily accessible
NA for us now, but taxi service might be useful or airport shuttle
The flow of traffic is terrible. The stop lights need to be adjusted. People are always pushing the limit to turn at the light when the opposing traffic has the right of way.
Improve or resurface the main street as well as 1st St. West. Bumpy!!!

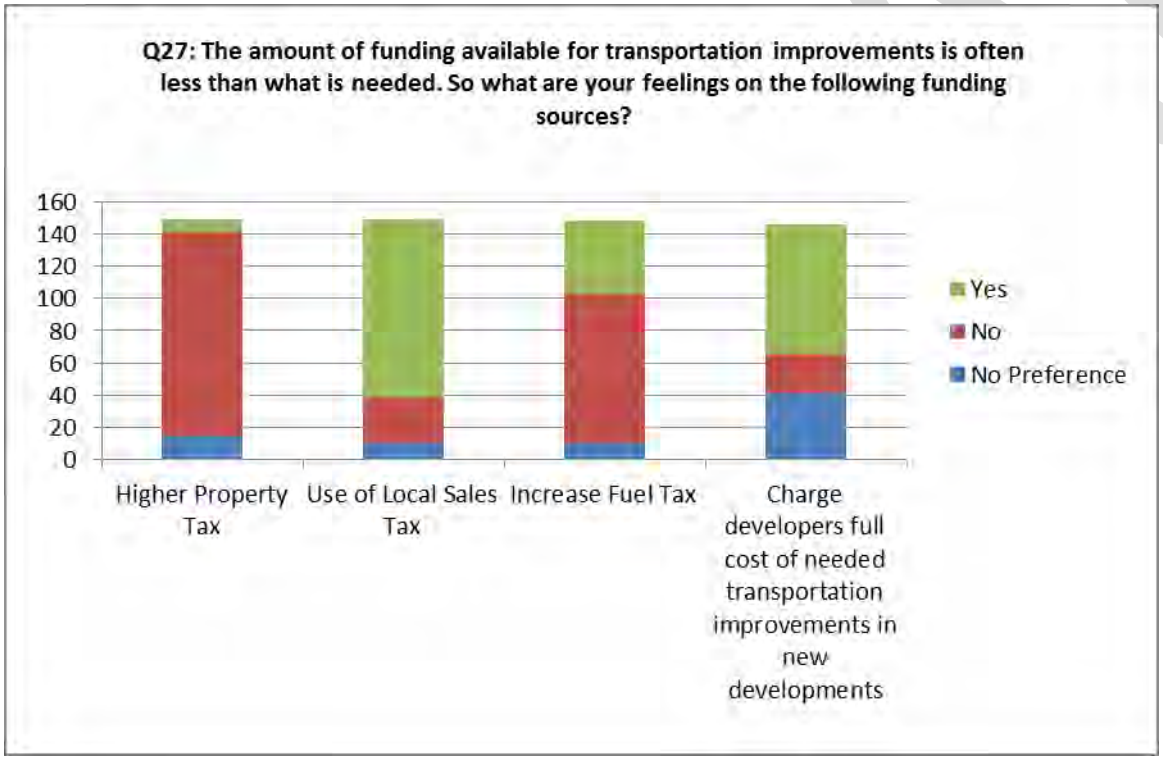
DRAFT

To have better/safer paths of travel for students going to & from school, both the Jr/Sr High School and the East and West Campuses (including St Johns).
Street rehab
I know I am and other people are too, afraid to ride their bikes to run errands due to high rate of bike theft. I know several kids who get them stolen from their yards. So more bike racks and sidewalks that lead to and from schools and library. I don't think drivers are very pedestrian and biker friendly when crossing streets or sharing the road and that is scary.
Train
Improve traffic flow during school arrival and dismissal times.
Better streets and roads that are much less rough. Main street and 150 are in horrible condition and are an embarrassment to this community.
More sidewalks. Make it mandatory in all new subdivisions commercial and residential. All four parts of the city connected by sidewalks, North, South, East, West. Offer a cab service or entice one to offer services here.
Better traffic management around the industrial park and HWY 150
WE SHOULD HAVE A TAXI SERVICE THAT IS REASONABLE IN COST. ALSO, TRAINS ARE UNDER UTILIZED. WE HAVE A RAIL LINE GOING RIGHT THOUGHT THIS TOWN. IT'S A ROTTEN SHAME IT CANNOT BE USED.
necessary road repairs (potholes)
More trails and better sidewalks
I do not know what the options are
Not sure (4) - not sure it's feasible for this size of community. I am not sure because I do not need the program.
Increase the capabilities of pedestrian traffic to decrease the need for public transportation. Shuttle bus from one side of town to another with drop off points.
Relocate Hwy. 150
bike lanes
We NEED to get a sidewalk down 6th street SW to Walmart BEFORE someone get hit or killed!!!!
Do we have one? If so, it certainly isn't common knowledge
I don't feel there is any need for public transportation in Independence
Add additional sidewalks regardless of the stubborn and selfish citizens on the west end of town, there is no reason for the city to allow children to walk, ride bikes, jog etc as well as adults in the same regard to do these activities in the city main street or 20th ave. yes it changes drainage - there are solutions, work together to find a common solution, do they really lose property, yes and no, yes because they think it's there's and they've been using it as their own, no because the city has the right of way from the center of the road just as any other property owner with a current side walk knows. Driving the west end of town frequently for work and family activities I've seen the school cross country team dodging in and out of traffic along parts of 29th Ave SW like Deer trying not to be hit, I've seen kids under 14 riding bikes along and even more busy main street west because they have no safer alternative. For a town claiming to value the health and well-being of its residence, it's purely stupid not to push this issue, that's the #1 issue.
Different School Bus Routes for downtown/main street morning and after school transportation.

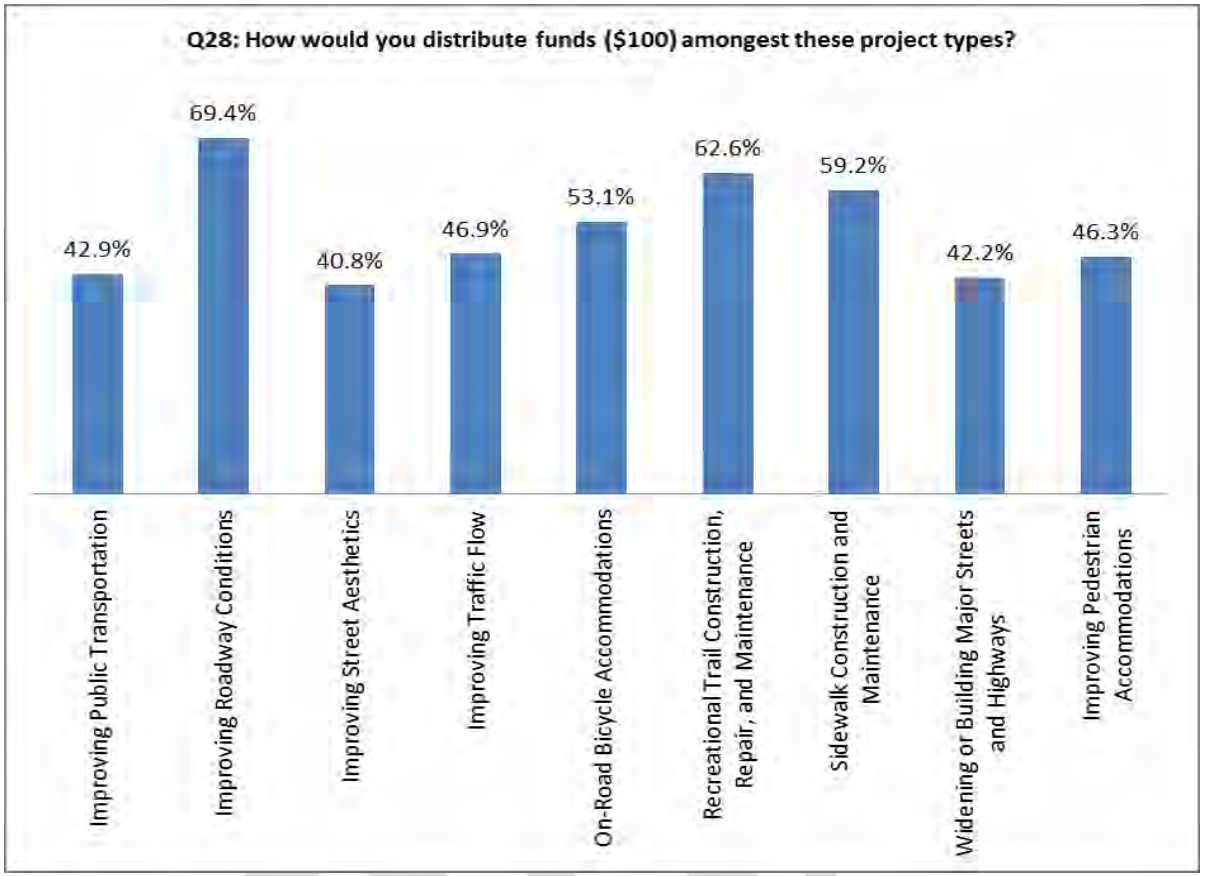
DRAFT

Q26: How would you rate the quality of these types of bicycle and pedestrian accommodations in Independence?

	Excellent	Good	Fair	Poor	Very Poor
Recreational Trail System	11	**44**	**54**	26	15
On-Road Bicycle Accommodations	9	25	**44**	**48**	21
Sidewalks	11	**47**	**64**	20	8
Crosswalks	16	**61**	**54**	10	7
Bicycle Parking Accommodations	9	25	**51**	**51**	14
Pedestrian Accommodations	14	**46**	**54**	25	9



Q27: Other Suggestions:
Re-prioritize where our money is being spent. Transportation improvements have been left on the back burner for too long. It's sad when you see a little 2nd grader walking on the street because there is no sidewalk available.
Grants (2)
Roads & Sidewalks are already at the expense of the developer. Unless that has changed?
Abide by current laws and regulations versus waiving.
STOP LETTING DEVELOPERS BYPASS THE LAWS
Where does our local sales tax go?
Fundraising/donation for recreational trails.
They will get the funding from the taxpayer one way or another
In the past previous administrations have granted special waivers to developers who argued against putting in trails at their cost, thus some neighborhoods don't have sidewalks. This city administration should lay the law down, either help us build an accommodating Independence or don't build, someone else surely will see the value



Q29: What should be done to improve Independence's transportation system? *(i.e., are there locations where pedestrian accommodations are needed - crosswalks, stops signs or signalized signs, etc.)? are there specific roads where surface condition is poor or more lanes should be added? are there places where too many traffic crashes occur and safety improvements should be considered?)*
Road faces poor - Lover's Lane, Bland Blvd
In a town like Independence I think the transportation system is fine. More recreational trails for walking, biking with young family is much needed.
Something done to highlight the yield sign for people traveling west and turning south from 1st street west on to 20th avenue sw. Quite often people coming from town don't bother to look at signs and assume people coming from the west should yield. I've been almost hit and honked at multiple times even before the school moved to it's new location. Flashing lights around the sign might help some of the idiots who don't bother to read the road signs.
The new high school has created quite the mess for traffic going all the way through town to the end of town, so anything that can improve this flubberbuster.
We need the school light on 9th avenue to work later to help control traffic, 6th Ave. should have been widwened when it was redone a couple of years ago, we knew the new school was going in and with Walmart moving to ware it is that was going to become more traveled, poor planing on that and it wasted allot of money, allot of the residential streets need to be repaved, you can loose a small car in them.

The library entrance needs some attention.
I am not sure WHAT needs to be done, but the school area is horrible before and especially after school. With the new high school, there are times where traffic is backed up for blocks. I've seen a few fender benders in this area as well. Picking up kids from school is a mess from start to finish, and something should be done to make the process smoother, safer, and less congested.
scheduled bus routes/times
Highway 150 at Faraway, Norbys Farm Fleet, Cy & Charley all of that area
scheduled rtc, or something similar, routes between obvious locations and times.
9th Ave NE for one, I'm sure there are other streets like it
Address the traffic and walking situation in the new high school area, consider stoplight at the Fareway corner, put more effort into walking and biking trails and lanes
pedestrian overpass on 1st Street W by schools, sidewalks all the way to the schools
4 way stop should be put at the corner by Anderson Realty and down the street. People are always blowing through those stop signs and yield signs.
adding sidewalks to empty areas around town
Creating a shoulder on both sides of 150 so people have the option to walk to get groceries, sidewalks along both sides of main street at least until it reaches West Elementary, side roads for truckers now that high school is no longer on the east side of town, crosswalk on industrial road of Pries & Norby's, pedestrian bridges over the river if can't afford to add more road bridges, etc.
Highway between main street and Walmart- add more lanes or middle turning lane
schools need to be very accessible by side walk and trail systems
First Street West is a major roadway and has no sidewalks. Why? First Street east has wide sidewalks on both sides that are maintained by the city but have no retail shops like First Street West. Some residential areas have every other house with a sidewalk. Every property should have one. (Or none should) Downtown needs crosswalks that are well marked and USED! Instead of pedestrians wandering into the roadway and almost getting hit by traffic daily. I also think downtown speed limit should be 20 instead of 25.
No right turn on red at intersection of 1st street East and 5 Ave NE (Kwik Star), No right turn on red at 1st Street East and 3rd Ave. NE (Bank Corner). It would be nice to develop a "truck route" to reduce the number or semis traveling through the downtown area,
first street is bumpy
There are many places in Independence where I think accommodations need to be made. Prime example is not allowing bicycles downtown and not allowing them to ride on the sidewalks across the bridge. I personally do not feel comfortable taking my child across the bridge on the road without clearly marked bicycle routes OR, allowing use of the sidewalks for crossing. Bicycle lanes are necessary.
Side streets are in bad need of help. Slow down traffic on 17th Ave. N.E.!!!!
Many heavily traveled sidestreets are in horrible condition as in 12th Ave. NE
out by new school
Find a safe way to get foot and bike traffic across Hwy 150. Either a tunnel or a bridge. Put a traffic light at 1st St W and 6th Ave Create a safe route in town for bikes.
More sidewalks need to be added to achieve connectivity through the city. Road surface needs to be improved. Potholes and broken concrete is common throughout the city.
Please no more stop signs

DRAFT

Something done by Fareway Stoplight?
Trails...connect them
surface improvement crosswalks
Increased traffic flow at time of school starts and closes on West side of town
uneven cross streets
stop light by the library
Traffic lights need monitored. Traffic flow is terrible.
The sidewalks need to be widened and improved along 1st St, mainly West of the Wapsipinicon. The sidewalk access there is very limited. The necessary crosswalks and traffic signals should be added according to the sidewalk layout to get through the area, at least, just West of the school.
We have a number of streets that need repaired.
Support your police department and get more officers
Keep large truck traffic off of city streets, in particular semi trucks on 3rd Ave NE. It is ruining the streets and is a danger to children in the neighborhood. Improve the condition of the road surface on Hwy. 150 north from 1st St.
We need more lights on the main road through town and the school light should keep working later during the school year.
bank corners
main arterial highways be upgraded and maintained better for traffic ease and safety
While we really need walking and bike trails, the condition of our streets and sidewalks is pathetic compared to neighboring "developed" towns such as waterloo / cedar falls and cedar rapids. I feel the city should first get the streets and sidewalks in better condition and have a consistant quality. People could use the sidewalks for walking, serving a dual purpose. Further, the past two years storm sewers have been taken out and cemented over, what's the deal? The drainage system for rainwater / storm sewer is becoming non-existent. I'd like to see the city work on a long-term plan to address this issue for flooding purposes.
by the library needs to be more kid traffic friendly. with all the new drivers heading towards the high school, there needs to be a light out there somewhere to regulate the traffic needing to get in main street during those times. I live on 8th ave NE and I hate the corner of 8th and 5th would like to see a more controlled intersection there. the bank corner is annoying that people heading on 150 treat that corner like a turning lane and squeeze in there to turn right I have been almost hit several times and when they turn like that they cant see pedestrians.
More pedestrian sidewalks for walking and biking.
Main street and 150 are an embarrassment. Most city streets have significant cracks.
Main Street and West Part of Town. S & R Lumber to the West. 150 South from Puffet to Dairy Queen for sidestreet entrance. Connect the city with sidewalks or trails.
Road surfaces could be improved in residential areas. Traffic flow could be improved on HWY 15, especially at the industrial park on the south side of town.
crossing 150 where turns in town to go south---badly needed change...someone is going to get hit crossing the street---maybe an island
more bicycle lanes
12TH AVE. NE IS BADLY IN NEED OF RESURFACING. ALSO, WHEN YOU TURN OFF OF 12TH AVE. NE ONTO FIRST STREET EAST, THERE IS TOO MUCH VEGETATION, (TREE BRANCHES, BUSHES, ETC) THAT EXTEND IN THE LINE OF VISION WHEN LOOKING TO YOUR LEFT FOR THE TRAFFIC COMING FROM THE EAST. YOU CANNOT SEE WHAT'S APPROACHING UNTIL YOU ARE HALF WAY OUT ONTO FIRST STREET EAST. THIS WOULD BE THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF MRS. OLIVER GREENLEY'S RESIDENCE.
150 south--turn lane downtown by the banks is usually so backed up. I usually cut over by the Baptist church and Casey’s to use that light.
add signage to unmarked 4 way intersections in town

DRAFT

There needs to be a better pedestrian/bicycle path or sidewalk to get from the East side of the city to the West side. I do not feel putting a bike path on the main drag is a smart idea. That road is already tight and congested the way it is. No way would I let my children ride their bikes on it even if I was with them. People do no pay attention, I was rear ended on 150 and my car was totaled, imagine if I would have been on a bike.
First Street definitely needs improvements including widening, traffic signal close to public library, fix dips in the road i.e. driveways, etc. so your car doesn't bottom out! I absolutely hate the Hwy. 150 turning lanes both south and north. They are constantly in disrepair and very few drivers, especially large trucks, obey those traffic lights. I was recently rear-ended by an individual who didn't stop for the light.
More stop lights on 1st st. West
pedestrian stop light activators add more city walking and biking trails
all the above
trails and wider roads
Pave more trails
Pave/Add on to the Liberty Trail Improve access to the Baseball Complexes
slower speeds on 3rd ave se out to Walmart access
Probably on more turning lanes
we are not pedestrian friendly in so many ways with the 150 turns being the most glaring examples. More signage related to yielding to pedestrians and enforcement of laws. I NEVER see a police presence downtown enforcing traffic laws. I would not dream of allowing my kids to ride bikes or near 150 or downtown
More yield signs in uncontrolled intersections in residential areas. Library needs a stoplight to help pedestrians (esp. children) cross safely.
reroute 150 with a bypass, improve parking for downtown businesses
Need to address new traffic issues associated with new school location
Hwy 150 needs to bypass Independence. With only two crossings over the river, it cannot be moved west and cross on 1st street, it needs to be routed East of town with another hwy 20 exit and crossing 1st street east of the hospital somewhere. Many streets are in poor condition. Traffic on 1st street moves too slowly before and after school. There is too much traffic on that road with no real alternative route. Traffic on 1st St West after school is awful.
Increasing the safety of bikers and walkers. Moving Hwy 150 out of the main street area. Sidewalk to schools and Wal-mart area. Slow speed on Hwy 150 south from bridge to overpass. Slow traffic on 1st St W during hours of school. Place signs in the middle of 1st St reminding drivers pedestrians have the right of way. Take off right on red at bank corners. Consider slowing speed limit from 1st. St. bridge to corner of 1st St Deli to 20 mph. Place grass median on 1st St from 2nd Ave. NE to City Hall corner. Sidewalk replacement program with widening to include the ability for 2 people to walk side-by-side. Re-evaluate traffic flow on 1st. St W with new school opening.
"bank corner" is dangerous to cross; Now that the school has moved to the west side of town, traffic is very congested from 8:00 to 8:30 on First street west, children do not have sidewalks to walk on from Pizza Ranch to Elementary schools and are walking along the shoulder of first street - they are darting between cars trying to cross the street. This is a MAJOR safety issue. Also, those driving do not pay attention or look for the children.
Downtown Independence is NOT pedestrian friendly
main street needs to be resurfaced downtown
The left turn signal at 1st St & Hwy 150 to go south on 150 needs attention -- traffic is backed up on a regular basis. Also, the light system by Spahn & Rose needs attention to timing due to the new Jr/Sr High traffic on 1st ST W.

DRAFT

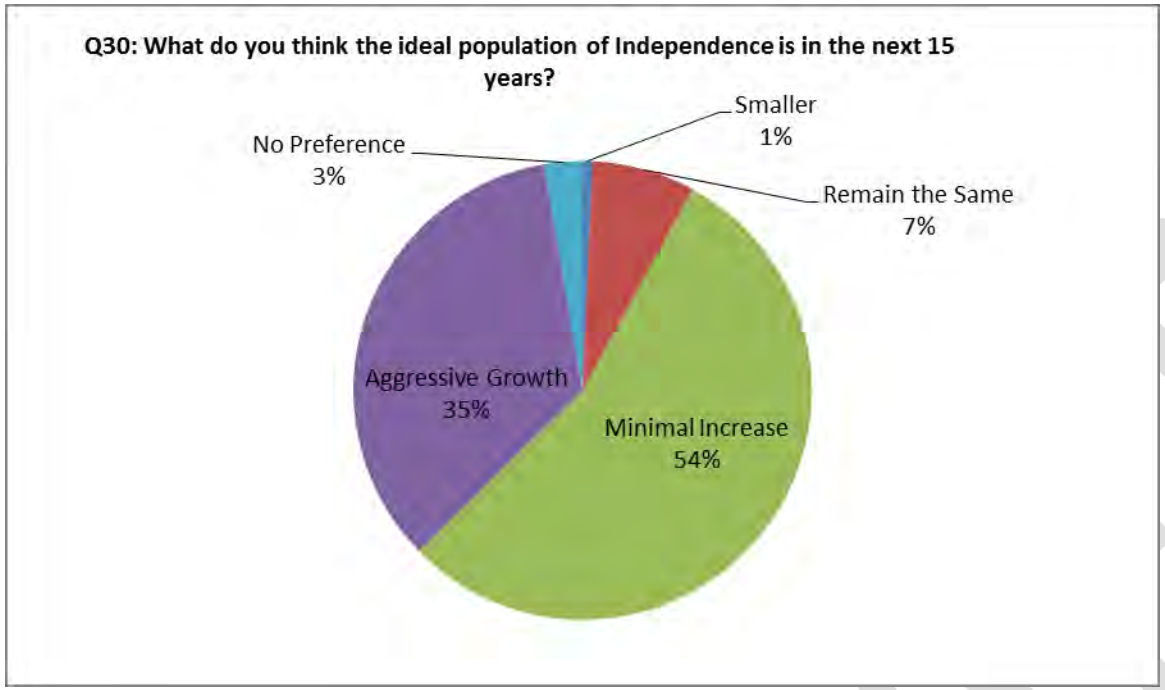
2nd Ave SW poor street surface, 9th Ave SW - near Bland Blvd
Fix old sidewalks that strollers can't ride over smoothly and get a sidewalk down 6th street, to Walmart and connect to Fareway.
take down stop signs in residential areas
Main street in general does not have very good crosswalks, etc. Crossing 1st st east from 3rd ave SE is almost impossible. The corner of 1st & 3rd where 150 turns is a dangerous intersection for the fact that many people try to use the crosswalk area as a turn lane when in fact it is not.
Repair pot holes and cracks in streets Add recreational trails
Intersections at Kwik Star and Security State Bank need more lanes to alleviate traffic congestion. More sidewalks need to be put in on the west side of town because of the new school. Bland Blvd needs to be redone. Southwest quadrant of town near old Fareway there are very rough intersections.
Move 150
need more trails leading to the schools and along 1st Street West. I see people walking along or on 1st Street West and it's dangerous. Need trail to Wal-Mart. Need cross-walk by school.
Fix the 150/Main St intersection at the "bank corners", especially the big dip on the north side of 3rd Ave
Road From Walmart to main street is terrible, keeping big trucks off side streets, the corner of 4th ave and 2nd se (by city hall), 2nd st se from 5th ave to 3rd ave se is used by everyone to avoid the Main Street traffic situation....it's ruining the roads, (bypass?)
Library cross walk is very dangerous. Trails to major areas of commerce and activity - South of Norby's to Wal-Mart, Bland Blvd to school, MHI, Heartland Acres.
We need a better system for our elderly populations
In the housing addition north of the hospital, including 3rd street n.e., 16th ave n.e. does not have sidewalks available
Need a bike trail from the 3 Elms Park Rd bike trail out to the new high school. And in doing that- Lovers Lane and Bland Blvd need to be redone for the safety of the kids that would be riding bike that direction.
taxi
150 south needs better traffic control. Sand and rock on bike path south. Need to extend bike path to areas south to access businesses.
Signal Lights: Along 20th Ave at the school in the turn lane areas, along main street west near the Presbyterian church and near pinicon ford as scvhool traffic at around 8am, 1pm on early out school days or 3pm tend to back traffic up to a standstill and traffic jam for roughly 4-5 blocks in both west and east bound lanes. Near the turn off to Farm Fleet and the industrial park from Hwy 150. Main street from Kwik Star to McDonalds has numerous blow ups and expansion joint issues beneath the asphalt paving, thus quit wasting money on cheap band aids like patch fill (especially near white funeral home and bills pizza or the 2nd street bridge) these cheap fixes last no longer than 6-10 days before being washed out by rain or melting snow, or beaten out by heavy traffic or snow plows. It would seem likely with good roads, maintenance would be less over the longer time frame with newer, better designed roadways.
Intersection at 1st street East and 3rd Ave is very hectic. either need to have an actual turning lane, or somehow better tell motorists that there is NOT a turning lane there so they watching for pedestrians.
Traffic Lights should be utilized/added closer to the main cross walk/light located on Main Street and 9th Ave. NW, Casey's, Spahn & Rose and Checkered Flag Corner.
Better sidewalks, more bike trails, improve the roads we have, traffic lights downtown don't allow adequate traffic flow.
Need walk ways along road toward 20th ave west and south on 20 ave past school .Need walking and bike trails around the city. not supposed to ride on walks and you your life is at risk on streets.

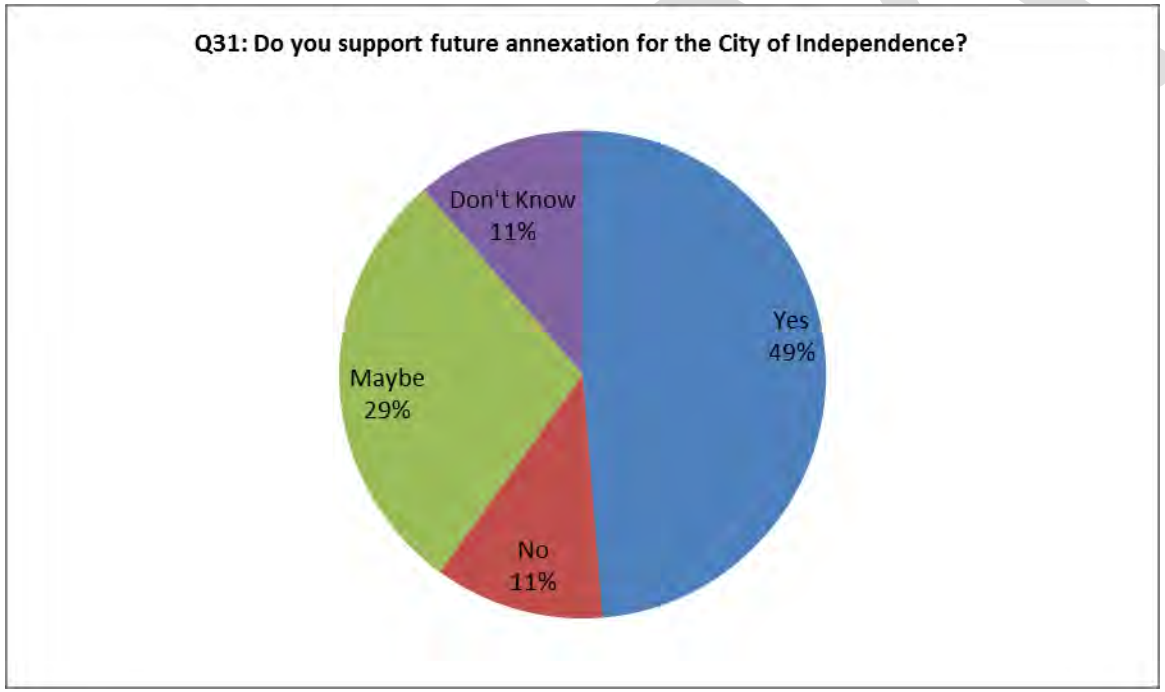
DRAFT

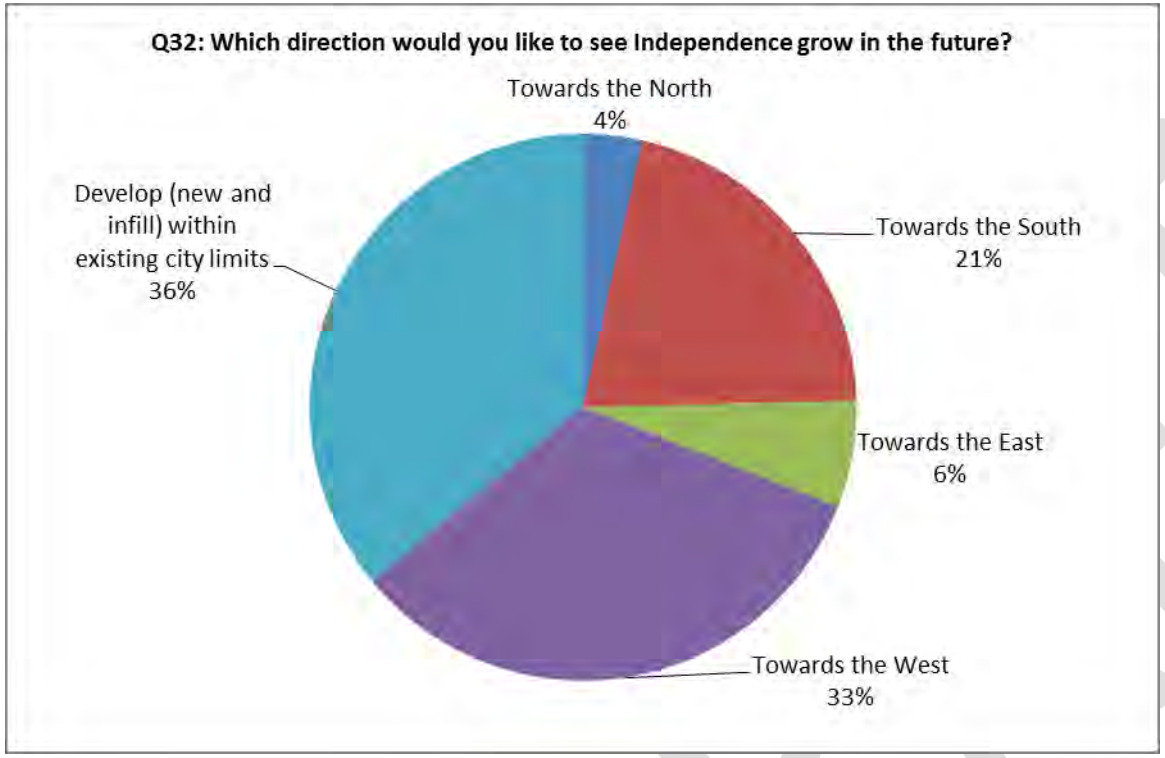
Think we should be looking into a sidewalk going south towards Go America / Walmart. It would be nice to look into making HWY 150 a 3 lane from Fareway South toward Go America. Also put a turning lane at 17th St SE. Semis can't get out and people are stuck waiting for extended periods of time. I think the city should be proactive and make Iowa Ave a 3 lane to Hwy 20 with street lights along the whole thing. Doing it now would save the headache later.
Hwy 150 through town needs rerouted
Am unsure at this time.
It might be nice to have a bus route to/from Waterloo/Cedar Rapids for workers who work out of town ... probably not going to happen but that could help to save some gas and lower costs for everyone. This would, also, lower traffic flow and street improvement costs.
In general the entire town must be considered when applying dollars to roads, bicycling, pedestrian, and sidewalk/trail construction and maintenance.

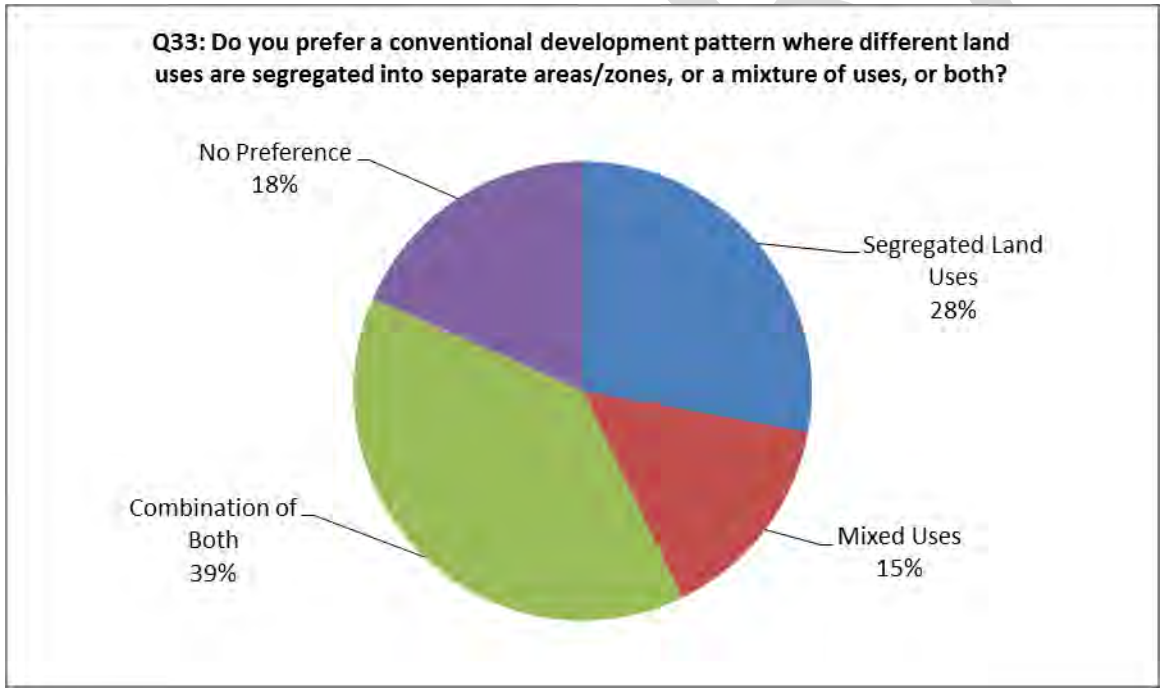
LAND USE AND GROWTH – *The following questions are to receive your thoughts regarding Independence's existing land uses and how the community should grow in the future.*

DRAFT

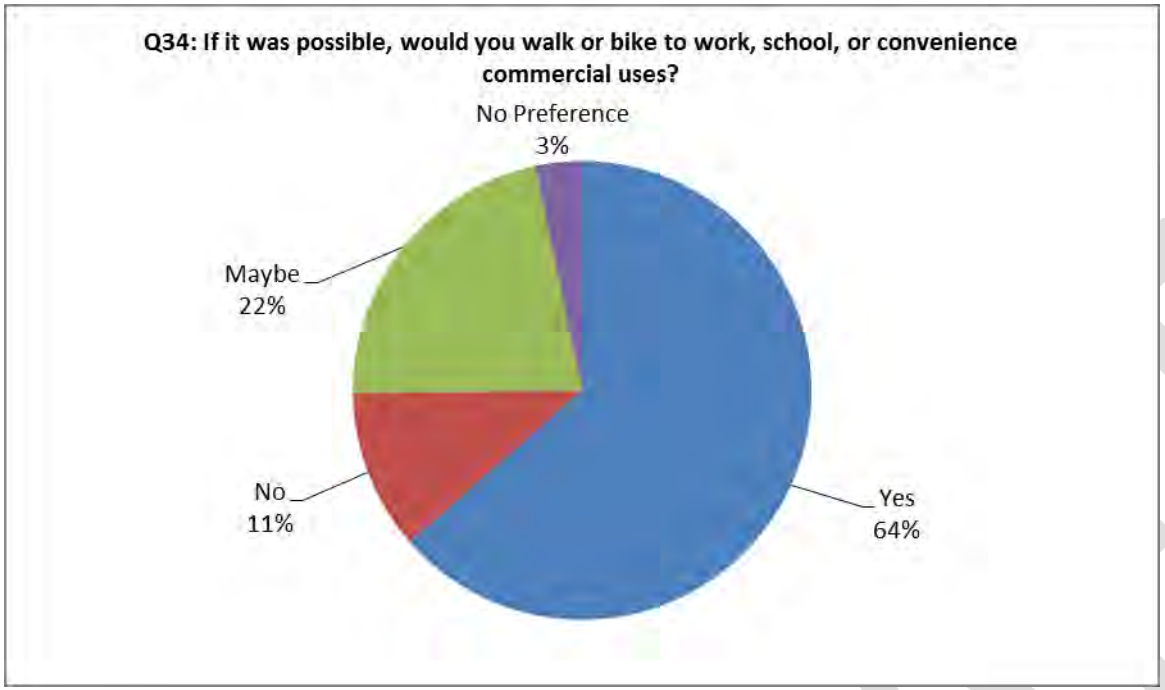

Q30: What do you think the ideal population of Independence is in the next 15 years?
Smaller
1%
No Preference
3%
Remain the Same
7%
Aggressive Growth
35%
Minimal Increase
54%

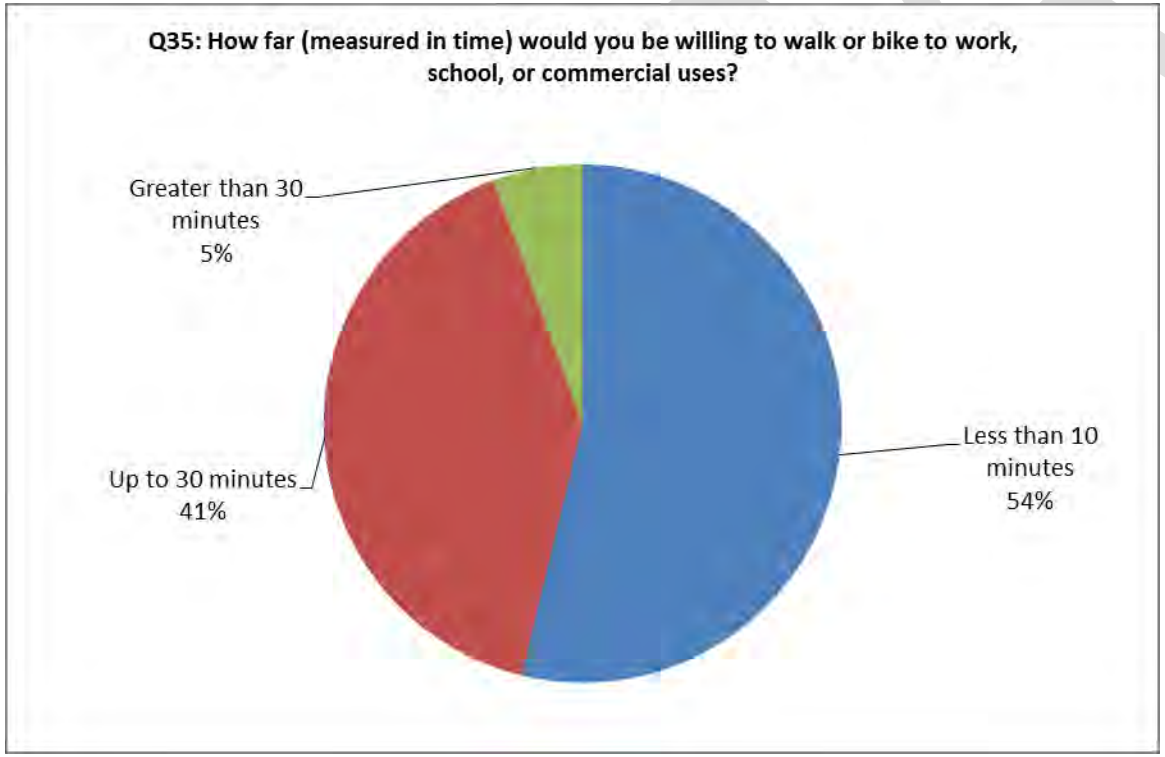

Q31: Do you support future annexation for the City of Independence?
Don't Know
11%
Yes
49%
Maybe
29%
No
11%





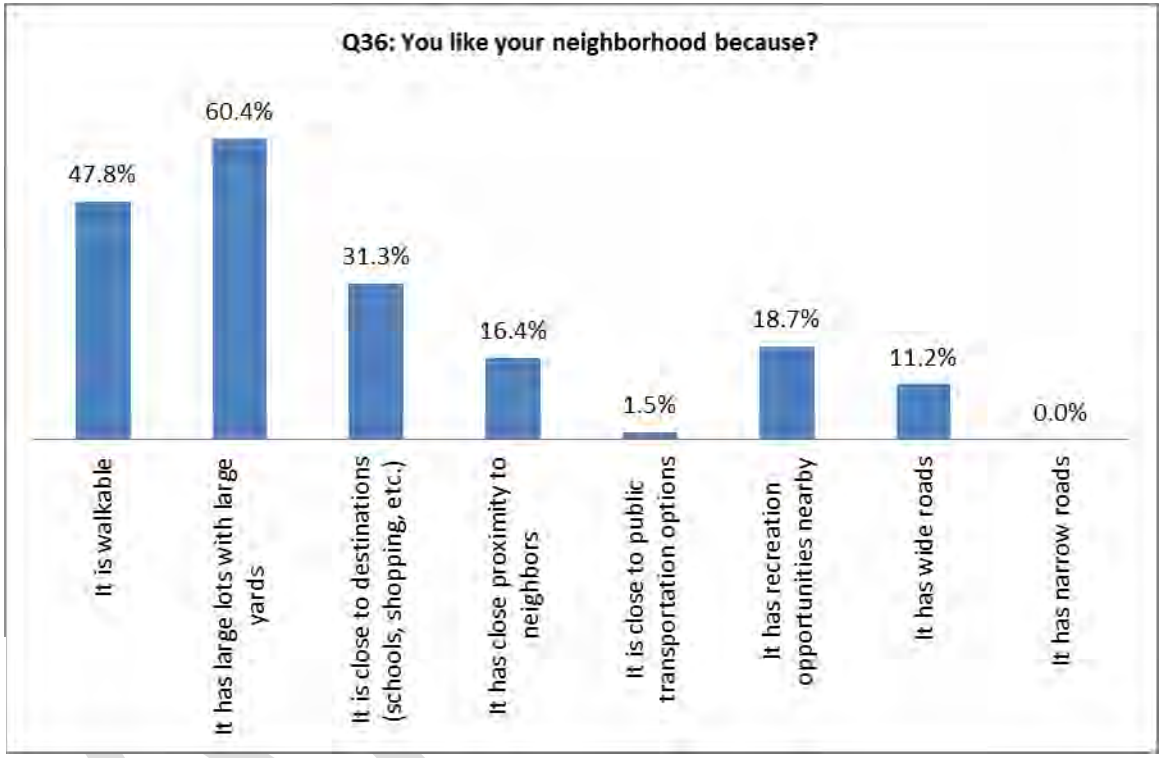
Q32: Other:
expand if necessary
because of utilities
south for obvious reasons
Revitalize the downtown
balanced - new and infill
please infill whenever possible
Open it up and let the people who want to develop decide.
The growth would be toward something i.e. new school. There are physical and legal limits as to growth in certain directions.
In all directions except off of 13th Ave NE. We only have one bridge and have to drive several blocks south before we are able to head north on 150 to work in Oelwein. Traffic on 13th ave is fast with so many trying to take the Third Street bridge.
Out by the movie theatre in particular. And the strip mall by Walmart.
North and west....
Any growth is good growth
Need to make use of down town stores. clothing, shoes, every day needs
And anywhere that will be adequately supported



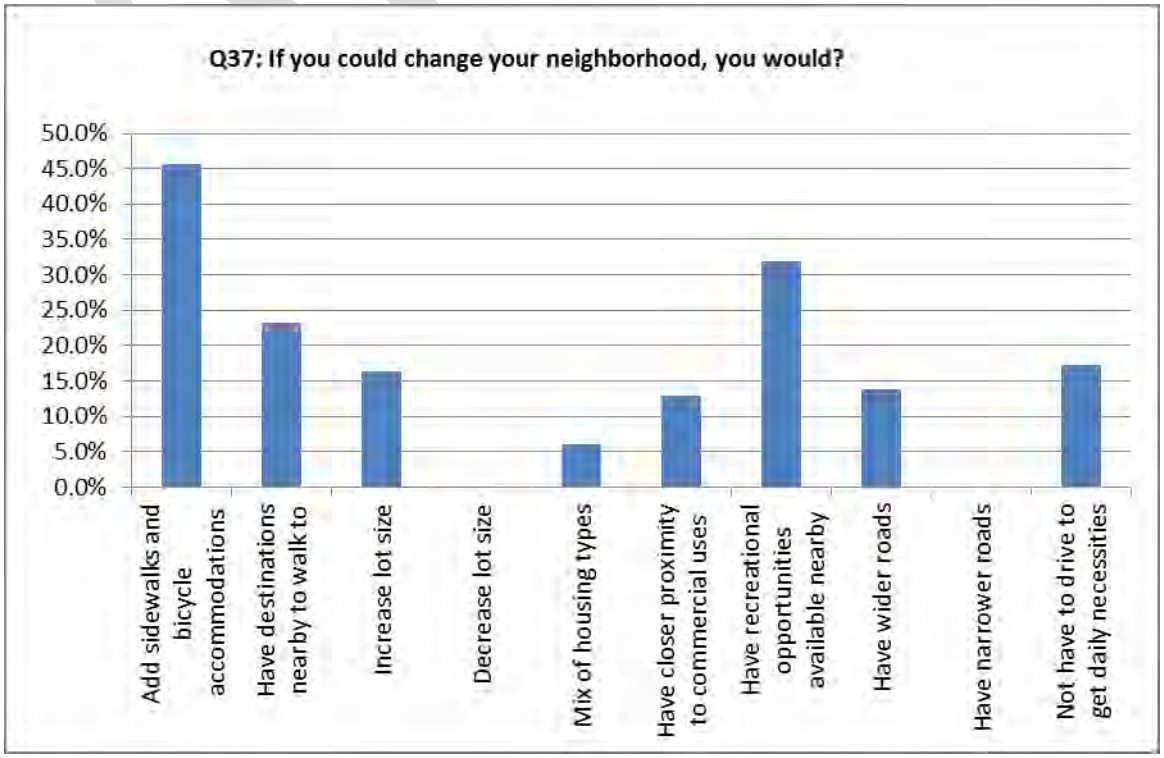


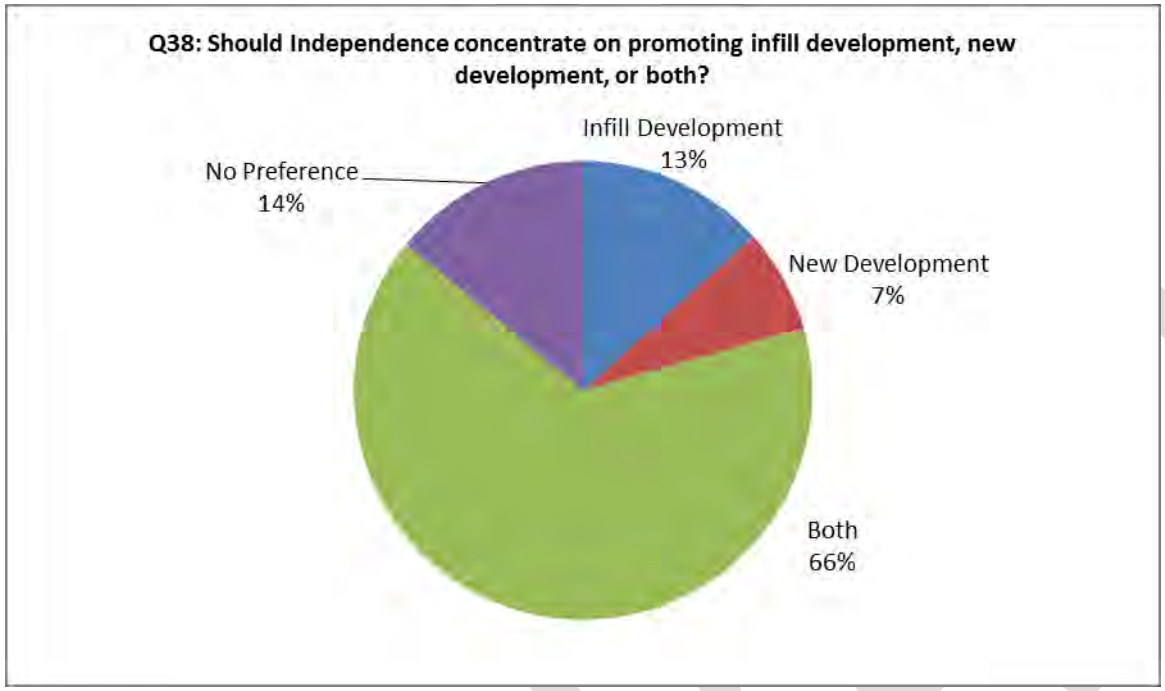
Q35 Other:
we are too old to walk any distance
15 minutes (2)
walk - 40 min, bike 20 min
Unable to walk for long as I have bad knees, copd, diabetes, so walking is a challenge. Only walking I do is basically to Fareway and little bit at Walmart.
We are able to walk to wherever we want.
not more than 20 minutes
retired . use for walking or biking hour or more .

Q36 Other:
In street walkable - low traffic count, street condition is good and generally wide enough
Nice neighbors
It's quiet (5)
is close to family caretaker
also has nice size yard for my daughter to play
Good neighbors make any neighborhood good.
quality / cleanliness of housing & neighbors
River view on hard surface road
I like that is it nice and quiet. Everyone, including myself, minds their own business. I have lived here 13 years now. When I first moved in an elderly gentlemen two houses down came over and introduced him and we visited. Unfortunately, he has passed. Then the neighbors next to me visited some, but the new owns have lived their past 5 years, not a peek out of them nor a boo out of anyone else in this area.
Really don't like my neighborhood
Close to liberty trail
far enough out of town, but close
Pleasant neighborhood, SW side
I work here but do not live here
Very family safe....
It is clean, safe, good mix of young families and mature adults
i live in low income based apartments within a complex
View and the neighbors.
It is a quiet neighborhood, not much traffic
It is aesthetically pleasing with low traffic volume
It is adequate



Q37 Other:
my neighborhood to me is perfect (2)
Have neighbors improve their street view and pride of ownership
Clean up houses that are decaying and look bad
Make neighbors clean up their property
Put in storm sewers
fix sewer issues with the city
have more recreational trails, such as along the Wapsi
Roads repaved and storm sewers updated.
Clean up existing properties which are in such poor repair they de-valuing other properties.
Focus on maintaining the river
repair street
a bridge
Get rid of some creepy neighbors.
fix the road
Road is narrow and curves, so parking on one side only.
trails and / or sidewalks to Fareway and Walmart
repair the roads - bad condition, patched in area, rough
I work here but do not live here
Remove Dam to eliminate flooding above it
NA / None (4)
Wouldn't change anything (4)
Have a city park located in the neighborhood




Q38: Should Independence concentrate on promoting infill development, new development, or both?
Infill Development
13%
New Development
7%
Both
66%
No Preference
14%

DRAFT

Q39: Where would you see opportunities for infill?
New recreational opportunities. We need to be able to keep people interested in staying and participating in recreational activities in town.
Downtown (20) - Downtown could be updated and improved. The goal should be to have every store front full. Our many second floor areas in the primary downtown area. Apartments/condos downtown (on top of stores),
East school area and Enterprise Drive
Some of the old houses that need to be torn down or refurbished.
Near Walmart area (2) - Strip mall by Walmart.
City RV Park Such as WFI improve electric improve lot size
In downtown areas where some older homes need to be updated and or replaced. Also, a few more flood properties need to be bought out and turned into green space, public use- this has been a great asset to the city
Enterprise Drive and Swan Lake Blvd
near the schools that are no longer schools, some of the older neighborhoods with infrastructure (sidewalks, streets)
blighted areas
some of the businesses downtown are vacant; perhaps infill there, also more infill out near the new high school, use the building where Greene used to be (Old Heilig Meyes), and use the lot where Hardees was.
West 1st/ Main street (5) - Western edge of town along 1st street. by McDonalds, old A&W. fix up main street
SW
empty stories or lots
south of new high school (2) – near the new high school
Southeast
Empty lots for housing, downtown empty buildings and improvements on commercial and housing properties.
On Hwy 150 North, there has been a decline in commercial property use/value. I'd like to see some fill in to maintain the integrity of that well traveled path through Independence. It passes by the Depot, has access to gas and quick stops, and is a main artery to get people in & out of Independence. The housing and business quality along that route is becoming very dilapidated.
West Side (2) – west side of town
Sewer system upgrades throughout all wards
run down or vacant homes
bland blvd
old school property
Between Wal-Mart and Heartland Acres
Sand Bur Hill Park to affordable Residential Housing. Old High School to Aquatic Center. Promote & Entice the fill or Enterprise Drive with Grants & Tax Rebates.
Old Fareway site could be used /developed.
Rental properties in poor condition, take down and build new accessible housing.
We have many houses that need to be remodeled within the city. If we continue to let these be run down houses, certain types of people will by these houses. And it will continue to be an eyesore within our community.

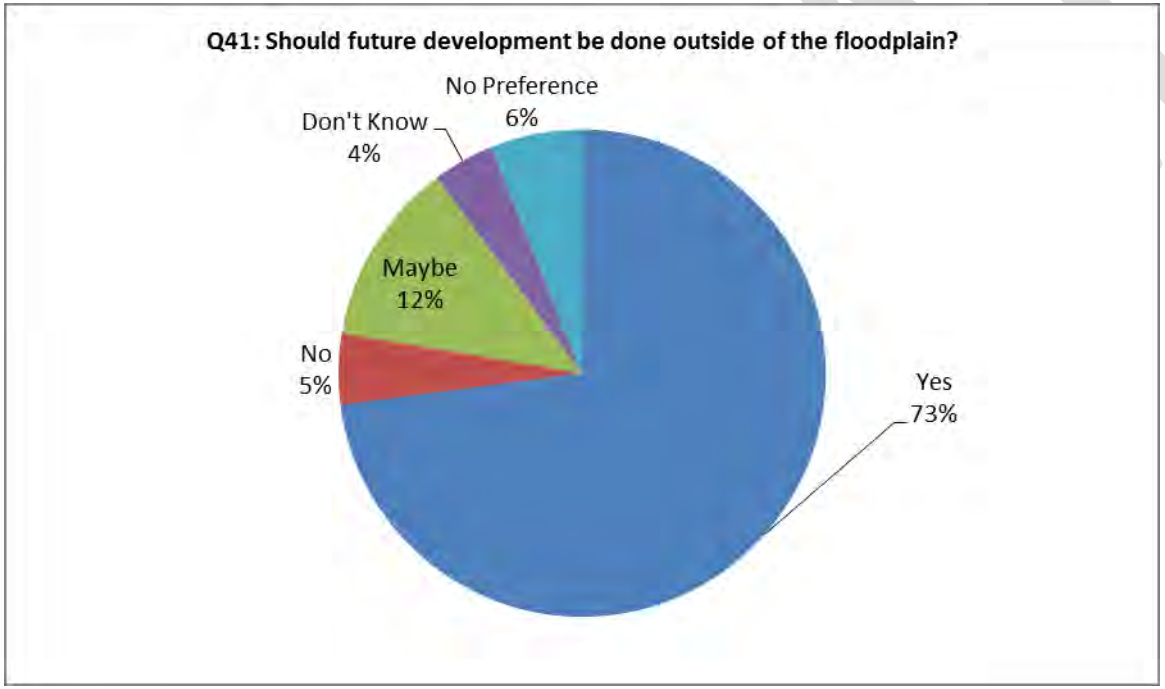
DRAFT

north and south
north and west
vacant lots or lots with dilapidated houses
In existing homes and available retail space. The west side of town also has room for expansion.
Older neighborhoods with dilapidated property
what does INFILL mean?
Use all the buildings left empty(schools)....
Retail Downtown, Commercial Southwest and Southeast, Residential Northwest, Southwest
south
Any of the older homes that stand empty because everyone is building in the new developments.
Apartment complexes close to downtown or shopping areas
DOWNTOWN (if it wasn't to dilapidated) Along 20th Ave, Along Mainstreet West, Along Hwy 150 South and North Near the falcon center, the fairgronds, farm fleet and fairway, cy and charlies, along enterprise, why not try to fill in the empty properties that have been vacant and were once rumored to be used by chain restaurants. Plenty of opportunities, not a lot of takers....yet (hopefully)
Old school property for residential, businesses downtown, commercial lots/spaces filled.
For the city to make use of old high school .For police dept. new swimming pool. updating camp ground and enlarging area and sites .
Teachers Park area, Veterans Park Area

Q40: What type of infill development does Independence need more of?
I think it would be a good to have more duplex or quad-plex's on some of the infill lots, with manufacturing jobs you need affordable housing for the workers, I don't know if it's true but I was told a large portion of the new workers at Tyson live in Oelwein because it is so much cheaper to rent.
Recreation & Parks (6) - Recreational facility for kids and another for adults. Musical or cultural entertainment for adults. recreational destinations. green space/parks. kids recreation that adult can do as well (skating). More recreational programming and facilities, a new swimming pool, new and technologically advanced recreation center.
More retail & commercial (10) - Retail businesses providing services or products of real important need, not nic-nac stores that only cater to the 55+ crowd. This town doesn't have the commerce to reflect a younger emerging Independence. Retail, not just restaurants. We need more clothing stores, shoe stores, so people don't have to keep going out of town to purchase those things! Filling empty commercial areas. Nicer downtown and outer area businesses. Specialty stores. More downtown stores.
Food places (4) - Restaurants for dinning. No more pizza places!!!!
Make more housing in some of the downtown buildings - with parking - Hopefully the main street program could help with housing above store fronts. Off street parking will be necessary. Some of the downtown building are so beautiful and have great views of the river. The river is also a great asset to our city. Too bad there is no boat house, or real boating business (rental, jet ski, pontoon) Maybe not possible with the river level, but would be nice to offer.
White collar businesses
fixing up old homes, better up-keep filling vacant businesses and better use of old buildings
Residential / Housing (33) – affordable housing. Housing for older persons as they age. Small homes for new families (starters) Small duplexes or apt buildings, triplex. Affordable single family. Single story, modern housing for families and adults. Residential lots for building new homes. housing in the $250k - $300 range. Affordable housing and rental - utilize downtown space. Rental housing. Apartment complexes close to downtown or shopping areas. More condos for retirees

DRAFT

who want to downsize. Apts . Condo's . Housing Renovation. Nice residential homes
small production sites
Industrial
All kinds of different types of jobs. Skilled workers without having a 4 yr. degree.
I would say commercial/industry could be better utilized in our area.
Build a town center on the West Side of River
Sewer
Affordable residential to prepare for growth of the school district and also industry and retail jobs to match the investment the ICSD made an investment towards.
tax incentive
make all new development have bike/walk trails that connect
More well-kept older buildings....not charging a large amounts for rental space so new small businesses could survive
The empty lots by the parks could be made into a Dog park or something that a flood wouldn't damage it but give the community a place to go and give the spot a meaning



Q42: Please list two reasons why you like living in Independence:
The new leadership for City Hall. The election of 2013.
Location (14) - Close to larger towns. Proximity to larger shopping urban areas, Close to Waterloo/Cedar Falls & Cedar Rapids. Great location in the state. Close not only to services in town but to services in larger cities with many options.
Small town (26) – atmosphere, with needed amenities. Comfortable living in a nice size town. The perfect size. Small town but has many accommodations including parks, restaurants, library, and schools for the kids. Small town living close to metro areas. small town feel. Small town atmosphere while providing needed services and personal needs. I like the small town atmosphere and the events that are planned in the summer at River Walk Park. Everything we need is here with the feeling of small town living. small town atmosphere, large town amenities. Small town like feel...great and inexpensive city services(phone, internet, cable, garbage). Small town living but big enough to have needed services. small enough to know about what is going on in town, and able to get to all areas easily. Size of community and blend of retail and services
Friendly / Neighborly (21) – people, merchants/businesses, nice people, respectable neighbors. I like personally knowing the business people I deal with in town. Lots of nice, decent people.
Job (8) – close to our jobs, I work here, proximity to work
has most everything I need
Family (36) - Close to family caretaker, nearby, close to some family. The proximity to my extended family, great place to raise a family. Good place to raise children. still have family in town. I grew up here, want my children to grow up in a safe community. I like raising a family in a smaller town.
Friends (12) – close by. Live here.
Safe town (14) - to live in, less crime. Trusting environment. feel safe in my home and neighborhood. The safety it provides for my family.
Support of the arts
I don't like heavy traffic
Schools (10) - School system with plenty of things for the kids to do, my kids are out of school now but it is why we moved here, size of schools. good schools smaller
awesome volunteers
indee is a beautiful community with nice people, love the new Fareway store.
Born / Grew up in Independence (10) - raised my family here, Lived here my whole life., It's always been home for me. It has been home for almost 40 years
I believe Independence is on a good path toward growth.
Downtown appearance
Everything I need to purchase on a weekly basis is here.
We can get most of what we want here. We don't really need much else
I like the small town environment and that my daughter will know her classmates when she graduates. I also like the 5 minute drive I have to work!
Access to things I enjoy.
Easy to get around.
Quiet Streets and Central to Work and Needs
variety of things to offer
Nice community
the farmer's market

DRAFT

public services
River / Nature / Recreation (10) - Good recreational opportunities with river and county parks. Youth Recreation opportunities. Park amenities. Parks and Rec Opportunities. Youth Sports
Lovely library and churches
Everything you really need is right here
It basically provides for our household/family needs
cost of housing
Beautiful town on the river with many opportunities for growth
many things to do
Things are getting done.
Great library
very involved community, groups trying to make positive changes
We can purchase almost anything we need here
Good community
Convenience
cost of living
Well-kept community
Progressive minded citizens.
It is where I was born and raised
If you are a city official (e.g. mayor) and you are in a public business, you are able to get drunk & in a fight, taken to jail & rant on a video recording device making threatening remarks about a specific law officer, that city official is allowed to keep his job & the officer lost his job.
active town
Cost of living
Know and trust the people here.
The ability to get things done.

Q43: Please list two things you would like to change about Independence:
The general appearance of the community needs to be cleaned up. Mayor and Council need to do more than fight and do things that are often talked about - but no action.
Control of Independence by certain members of the community.
Needs affordable housing for purchase and rental.
Recreational opportunities, programs, leagues, and facilities for all age groups that are affordable.
Pro-business, and more open to attracting new residents
the powerful
1) When I moved here I was told this was a closed town, I was told; "you are not from here and you will always be an outsider" after living here for over thirteen years, he was right. It would be nice to change that.

DRAFT

2) Jobs for older people (45 to 65) my wife and I would like to get jobs in town, but can't get anyone to hire us.
the ability to shop and buy without driving a vehicle; the ability to leave town without driving a vehicle
less drug availability (so more police action needed)
Not a lot to do, shopping for necessities like clothing and shoes must be done out of town.
Need to clean up areas to allow for better esthetics such as downtown, parks, use of river, trails, aquatics center. Make Indee a destination place.
discontinue the current police department
More pedestrian friendly, a "no right turn on red" sign at corner of 3rd Ave turning onto First Street East
Rules and regulations for RV Park No junkie looking units and kids toys and junkie looking sites which you can see from Highway 150 like do I really want to stay at that RV park What kind of people are staying there
Close down the dysfunctional police department, and contract with some other dept. does anyone know what's going on here???? why waste all this money????
Downtown sidewalks - like the red accent, but make larger, SMOOTH squares
Electric costs should be lowered. More communication from City government to the citizens.
more cooperation amongst the businesses and city and civic organization
Would love to add more trails for biking and walking and a newer/improved swimming pool. I believe both of these would help bring people to the town, especially families with children.
more retail public transportation
Sidewalks & Bike Trails
Lower taxes Add businesses
It needs to be little more progressive and willing to work as a "regional" center- pulling together more of a Buchanan county event center
A more pro-active police department. Less unnecessary spending on library, parks, paid fire department, or a new city hall, police dept, or fire dept. Fiscal responsibility. Do not bond for anything if you cannot pay for it out of the collected taxes.
Small minds where people know each other's business! :) I'd like free wi-fi in the whole city, it could be slow for free and people could upgrade for a fee.
Need a new aquatic center Involve youth in projects
people who get into your private business; people who think they are in charge of everything
I would like to see more local shopping going on- the library has already met the needs of entertainment/ programs for folks to attend free of charge, now we need to build on the retail aspect of the community. It would be ideal if the downtown shops didn't close shortly after I was done with work.
Slow down the traffic on side streets!
Put street lights on the west exit road. Make the river more useable.
More community pride Sense of urgency from City employees and Council. They need to realize they work for the taxpayers.
improve the reputation of the school system

DRAFT

we need a new aquatic center more restaurants
Hwy 150 dividing the city. Downtown appearance - it looks run down.
I would like to see an Aquatic Center and more trails.
Swimming pool, more things for kids to do(centralized civic center instead of way out North of town)
New Pool, New Pool, New Pool, new gym attached to fcc
more community small group gatherings more activities for senior citizens
Fix broken down homes that detract from neighborhood; take down ugly signs that detract from our scenery.
More Businesses
people to become more friendly to new people
better swimming pool setup nicer looking downtown
Like to see more work and less play. This town seems to always have the greatest concern about events that sell liquor. Fun is good, but so is work when it is needed.
I would like to change the Downtown corridor to improve, develop, and maintain the businesses available. I would also like to change the perception that you need to go outside the city to access retail items. We have many things here that you need, we just need to entice people to stay local, shop local.
Add storm sewers to 2nd St SW (west end). Fix some of the streets
Need renewable energy net metering policy
City Council and Mayor
The feeling among some citizens that nothing needs to change. Much lower electrical rates.
1) I wish the local people who are from here were more welcoming to the ones of us who moved here, I have had a business here for over ten years and I am still considered an outsider. 2) Wider side walk on the main roads through town to make it easier to ride our bicycles at rush hour.
Redirect semi traffic from downtown, more tree/green space.
administration thoughts - better management more business progress
Current local government spending exceeds means.
work on making the Wapsi more accessible to boats., It seems shallow. More police who actually leave the office. They all seem to be close to retirement and do not want to patrol
We moved here 8 yrs ago. Over time, we've learned that the town is very divided upon most issues. It's too bad that there can't be more openness and collaboration on issues. I've witnessed how the rules / processes don't seem consistent and I feel having a more structured approach and open communications would help in this regards.
social gatherings-only place for people my age (20s-30s) to get together is all the bars.
Have more retail businesses downtown and recreation on our river.
Improve the river usage and lower all tax asking by increasing the tax base.
I would like to see a strong city government that has the best interests of the people at heart; and, focus on what the city needs to attract and keep young families

DRAFT

like mine.
River knowledge
Overall Attitude Add a college inst.
Downtown businesses and store fronts cleaned up. Reliable and sustainable businesses (too much change and turnover, especially downtown.)
lighting co-op be managed locally diversity in city council
more concerns about conditions of streets and DO something...local gov. More cohesiveness
More opportunities for employment more bike trails
Locate that awful post office building somewhere on ground level. I think it is a disgrace that we residents have to put up with what we have with all those steps to get into the place. As I cannot do the steps in front anymore. I am granted access via the backdoor. There are only three steps there, but still it should be on ground level and handicap accessible. Just look at the small community of Hazleton, they have a lovely post office all ground level. I have driven there many times to mail packages and do our postal business. I guess when whoever designed our post office people never had any disability. Oh, same thing goes for the city hall.
A bridge for the entire new house north of Third Street and keep property taxes steady.
Improved use and access to the Wapsi river. It could be a treasure for recreation. Install the boards and keep water levels high enough for safe boating. Main street Iowa program to improve our downtown appeal, fill the empty stores and save the charm of our beautiful buildings.
1. I wish more people were proud of their city and homes and would take better care of them, so we could be a nicer looking community. 2. People being close-minded or jumping to conclusions all the time.
We need sidewalks. We would benefit from a new aquatic center.
I would like to see the city council adopt rules to force homeowners/occupants to keep personal property neat and clean. There is no reason for multiple vehicles to be parked on every square inch of the lawn. Lawns need to be mowed or fines ensued. This is especially true of our main street (1st St. East and West). It is disgraceful to our community to see the lack of pride in the facades of several homes and businesses especially on 1st St. Wonder what visitors to Independence think? Our neighboring communities can do it - why can't Independence?
More walking/recreation/bike trails (15)
baker/coffee shop destination
main street down town
New Aquatic Center (Pool Renovation) (2)
a downtown bypass, stricter ordinance enforcement
Taxes, Roads and Sidewalk maint.
Need a new aquatic center as the current pool is outdated. More open city council that listens to needs of citizens and not their own agendas.
Again more restaurants More employment
a more progressive council a vibrant downtown with more stores and services
more/new restaurants

DRAFT

more downtown businesses, don't like seeing empty storefronts on main street
Need an aquatic center. Local people need to accept people from "outside" if growth is desired.
Embrace change by moving forward and leaving old ideas behind while preserving the historical charm of the past.
The subversive attitudes and actions do some
Electric rates are WAY too high. How can a municipal have the highest rates in the State of Iowa?? Traffic sucks
The feeling of community in the downtown area; I would like to see the downtown area as a place where the public walks to obtain services and mill around to increase activity and socialization. Leadership with vision and which is not punitive and with understanding changes need to be made to keep and / or bring young families to the area.
The fact that if you were not raised here - that community members are slow to welcome you to community events. They seem to think you should just "know" what is going on - or how an event is ran. Details should be provided so that "outsiders" can join in on the fun! Our utility rates, we have one of the highest rates for a municipality. When we moved to town, one of the reasons we chose Indee was because of the lower electric rates... they have tripled in the last 10 years - Alliant Energy is lower.
Relocate Highway 150
city govt spending without community input
Revitalize downtown
more shopping
Need a more forward thinking approach in promoting new business/industry & retaining existing businesses. Need a more detailed look at how tax dollars are spent to make most efficient use of them.
more people in the community to be open to new ideas and changes that would improve our downtown and recreational aspects
Add a dog park and revitalized downtown
More sidewalks and bike friendly.
Don't have a dog but would like to see a dog park.
the city council, and less cops
Local government make up Better roads
I would like to see more things to do for the younger population. The lack of restaurants & social establishments drives me to leave Independence on the weekends
Repair side streets, build aquatic center
Cost of living improve neighborhood roads
Pool Recreation
Less band-aid road work. More recreational activities, specifically paths, trails, and frisbee golf.
increase of awareness of the river problems get a better working relationship between city and residents
Run down houses and vacant commercial property.

DRAFT

1. Encourage unity and cooperation 2.Eliminate the "good ole boy network" that has kept real progress from coming to this town for years
Different variety of inexpensive restaurants
Current elected city leaders - Mayor, 1st Ward, 2nd Ward 3rd Ward are narrow minded. Mayor is a poor representative for the community. Focus on recreation - river, aquatic center, walking/biking trails.
Would love to have more places to eat!
I would like to see more bike trails- riding down 150 (939 isn't any better) is taking your life in your hands- and riding on the sidewalk is frowned upon. Safer biking areas for kids that live South of town. Jackson Ave. is almost as bad as 150.
women and the dogs
Lower property taxes street repairs
Improve infrastructure, and void city government of all old farts who only run for life because they have a vendeta against the previous administration, one should be willing to run for reasons of wanting to help, not over turn or get back at someone. We have a nasty habit of looking bad in the public eye, especially within the past two to five years with negative tv , radio, and newspaper coverage.
I wish the whole town had sidewalks. I wish the city pool was upgraded or at least the heater worked the whole time it was open.
Better marketing/promotion of the amenities the community has to offer. Aggressive economic development.
Growth is needed to give the town a prosperous feel. Downtown revitalization would also be great.
Main street clean up - Not just businesses but also homes located on the main street. Maintain clean yards.
Street lights . NOT bright enough .the new lights hide people and objects making it hard to see. Main street needs to be repaved form east main to west end of town
Would like to see more business and retail stores, would like to see more done to bring people to this town. Bike paths, Camping, Kayaking, Events
Cleanup and quiet down Best Cob
Better job opportunities The community being a community.
More businesses Better employees (example: getting correct food at fast food place) - while I know this can't probably be helped except at the restaurant, it does make me decide to eat outside of Independence quite a bit instead of eating in town.
More recreation opportunities for kids/families (like a new pool...Manchester & Oelwein have outstanding facilities.) More affordable rec opportunities. Especially city funded ones. Pool passes are high and discounts should be given to low income families. Discount should be based on 185% of the poverty level...not the poverty level itself. Many families are above the poverty level but struggle because the poverty level isn't realistic with today's costs.

Q44: Please share any additional comments/concerns
The community looks cluttered and poorly managed. We supposedly have ordinances that address problem property's, junk cars etc., but fail to enforce them. If we need enforcement officers hire them. In 2010 the US Census clearly shows the aging and migration from rural communities and counties, yet the data seems to be ignored by community, county and school officials. The Census is a perfect source of data for a long range community plan.
Right now we are driving out of town for my kids to participate in other opportunities. Recreation not only helps keep our kids active, but also influences

DRAFT

community engagement, getting to know our neighbors, improving quality of life. If we want to develop the community we also need to consider recreational opportunities that were not included on the survey. It is apart of the local government, I don't understand why it wasn't included. This survey could be invalid if it didn't include all infrastructures of the local government.
thank you
Over all a very nice town, that's why we live here.
I would like to see growth of the city in terms of population and business development. We need to make Indee attractive.
Mayor scharf had the right idea in contracting police needs for the city. He was headed in the right direction anyway, but lost his steam. Again, contact moulder & associates, des moines, 515-287-2804. hire bill and replace the current dept with something like a hybrid dept. most of the dept officers only do routine patrol, which requires very little thought. a private company could be hired for that type of work. The balance could be certified officers or bcso. also the recent police dept photo in the paper, come on, don't do that. a rookie officer giving an appreciation award to the 2nd rookie's wife for doing what is expected of her, huh! does his mean the current status quo is just medicore and when someone does their job, it's a shock. thank you and have a great day
Do not use the RV Park as babysitting everyday
We need to continue to build towards the future, if we are to succeed as a community, and save our identity as a town, not just a bedroom community.
It would be nice to eventually connect bike trails from Winthrop, Quasky, and Jesup. Very disappointed with this when I moved here a couple years ago.
City/county need to look at converting vehicles to run on natural gas. they could coordinate services with city, county and school where ever possible-consolidate sites for services that can be shared
We need to focus on what we do well. Our green space along the river is a wonderful asset. We cannot promote that enough, I think the future trend will be to consolidate services for cities, counties, schools, We need to be ahead of the curve on those issues. Any consolidation of services and amenities will put us on top, and help our city to grow.
Very glad to have the opportunity to give my input.
City light bills are too high. Highest in the state. Businesses will not come here.
I would like to see more availability for the children to SAFELY walk or bike to school. I walked to school when I was a child, now I would never trust my daughter to do the same (perhaps develop walking groups with background checked volunteers that set out from different locations in the city).
Get rid of the 'clicks' on city council.
I have enjoyed living and working in Independence and choose to remain here because of the people and size.
less strictness curfew if working
Have a plan that makes community look updated and coordinated buildings and signs, etc.
Need more Police oversight
It would be nice to have knowledgeable leadership in place who understands the different departments they are leading. Being a leader and trying to be a leader are two different things.
I am a transplant and a commuter to Cedar Falls. The city is not going to grow organically and must attract families from the metro areas by offering them a better quality of life. A new aquatic center would help along with the library and school. The city also needs to address electric rates with Indytel. If they can't decrease electric rates, then maybe they should turn electrical distribution over to MidAmerican or Cedar Falls Utilities. They should also consider Utility Net Metering has it promotes renewable energy such as solar ready homes which in turn helps reduce greenhouse emissions.
Love the town and my neighborhood, we need some physical improvements, but the people are perfect.
I have seen more sheriff department patrolling our streets than city police all year.
Great Idea to offer survey and collect responses, thanks for the opportunity.
To properly grow communication from all departments need to happen and the City needs a full time engineer to properly plan for the growth of drainage, sewer,

DRAFT

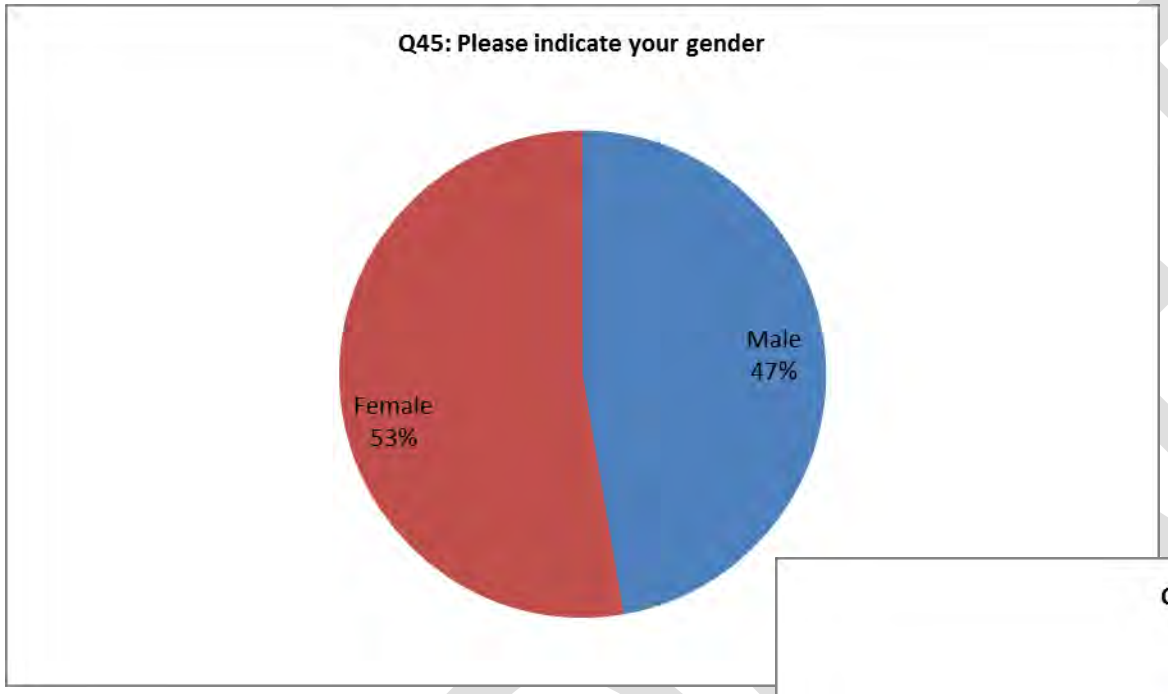
water and other infrastructure needs and concerns. Don't expect one person to regulate, be the fire chief, flood plain manager, listen to all your complaints and Properly Plan as well. If you want it done right, invest correctly to get it done right the first time.
need local government that is community oriented... and very professional...not being arrested bars for various things, etc.
I used to live directly across the street from the independence motor speed track. The noise from the races on Saturday nights is just awful. Now that I have moved, I don't hear it so much, but do if the wind is right. Those races go too far into the evening and something should be done to control the noise level of the cars. I wouldn't walk across the street to see the races.
My husband (from Waterloo) and I (from Oelwein) bought a home here for retirement. It's the perfect sized community with many excellent services but a low crime rate.
Increased focus on Industrial parks and increasing the # of good labor and tech jobs in our community.
Main Street would look so much better with the Main Street Iowa program. I really hope that gets implemented.
The City is on the right track increasing leisure opportunities in the community for family and youth!
More trails
Would like to see something similar to Galena's Country Fair in the fall with vendors lining the River Walk Park sidewalk.
Establish a clear vision, set goals that are communicated to the community and quit bickering/dragging feet on projects
History is great, but it isn't going to bring many people to live in this community. There is way too much emphasis on historical sites in marketing and publicity for the town...stressing historic sites will not influence families to move to our city. If you are going to market the city, use some decent pictures with good resolution and make sure they are actually from Independence. The goal setting that is being done should prioritize projects. A list of 15 goals with no prioritization, budget, or timeline is not very beneficial.
Taxes are high for quality of services/amenities offered. Too many ratty looking houses right next door to a nicer house. City seems dirty.
Independence has great potential. We must use our dollars wisely but not so wisely they sit in the bank and the City begins looking unkempt. Our forefathers created an environment that was pleasing and without upkeep we will have nothing but what used to be a nice town. It's time for a new pool, time to create a downtown environment that entices pedestrians and shoppers to come to, and time to put Independence back on the map as one of the pleasantest towns to visit. We need to find our niche and create an environment that only Independence can brag about.
The young people getting involved need to be taken seriously with their new ideas for this community - we can't keep with the notion of "we've ALWAYS done it THIS WAY" - because that isn't working.
Start spending money that will draw people to this community. This community is in need of a new pool.
More responsible city spending, specifically in educational development.
Need to improve the pool or build an aquatic center; improve recreational center; need positive city council members (some are good, but some are really negative and unprofessional - Yes, I will be voting in November).
Remove the boards from the dam like the Army Corps of Engineers told the city to do 30 years ago.
I think independence is great, but there are a few choice people that think that the city should be ran because of there beliefs, it needs to come into the 21st century....I also see a huge problem with teenagers not having anything to do but hang out in public parks, street corners, empty parking lots, and cause a nuisance to some parts of town
I believe current residents do not know how great this community is on the verge of being. Too much is taken for granted. Our river, downtown, and school can be major centers for commerce if utilized and promoted properly. Thank you for giving citizens an opportunity to present structured comments.
We are trying to become a healthier community but I find it difficult to ride a bike around the county as most roads are 2 lanes and don't allow extra space for a bike trail- gravel shoulders aren't safe. And every time I go out for a bike ride I have at least 1 close encounter with a car.
1) Need to finish house projects 2) Clean clutter/junk from around people's homes 3) More/better bike/ pedestrian paths to south business areas

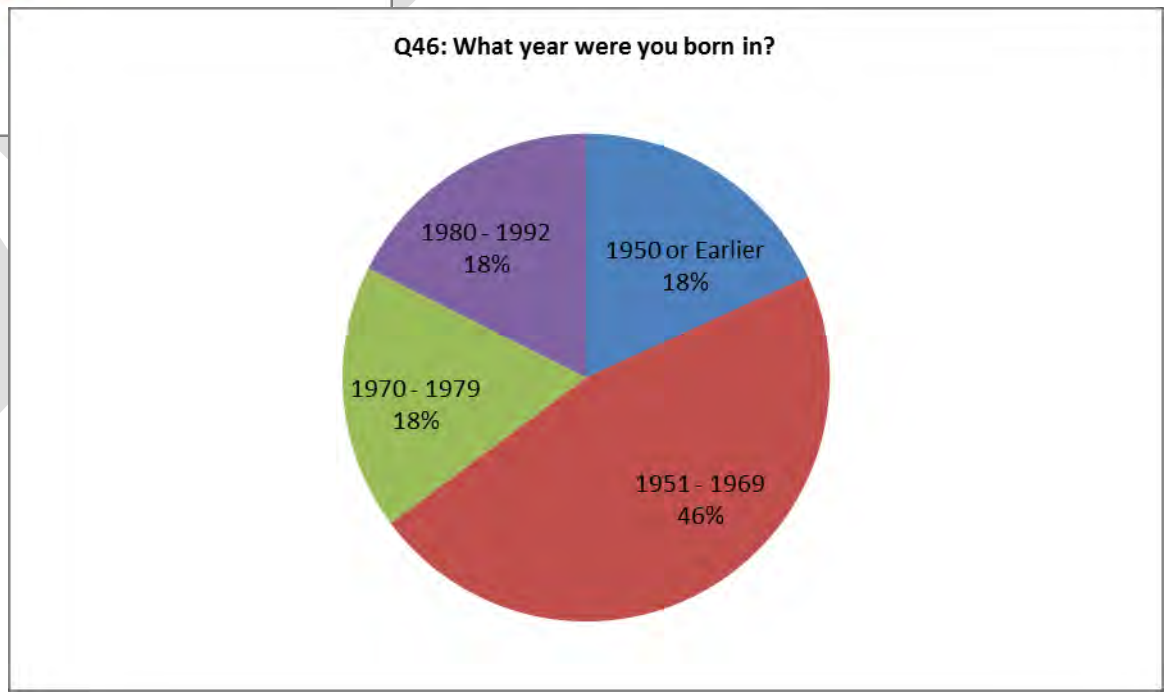
DRAFT

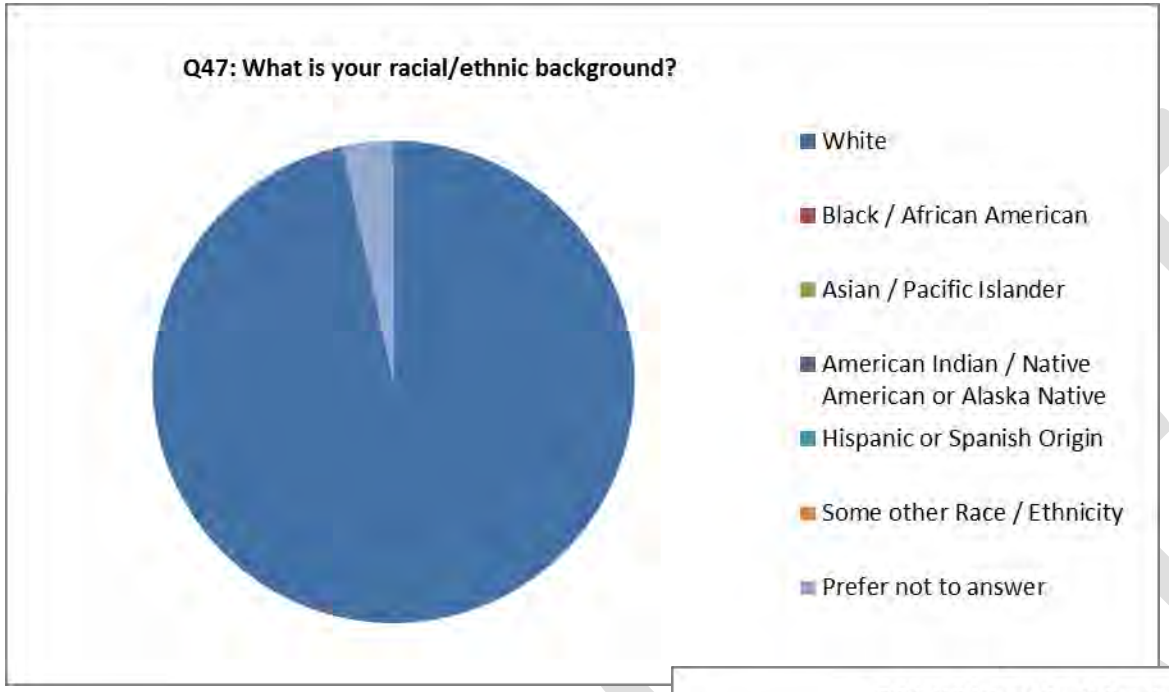
Best of luck Jon, I represent and under 30 age demographic and you're about the only one over 30 I'm willing to vote for, no one else works as hard as you to embrace events, social media, online presence to disseminate information and content to my demographic. It's too bad my peers don't see the efforts more publicly, many give up because they feel the city doesn't know who the future becomes or where there future lies, keep up the good work.
A housing tax incentive program to attract young couples/professionals to buy/build within the city and extend the tax base.
There is a great core group of volunteers that help at most of the events in town but more young. motivated people are needed to help and bring ideas. The same is true with city council and future planning decisions.
We need to make more use of are river and update dam area so we can control water level.
I know the City Hall failed to get a new building but I would like to see them add on and spend money and make a City Hall / Fire Station / Police Station. If they were able to add on and grow it would be great.
City employees should be familiar with city policies and follow them. They should also be held accountable for the quality of their work.

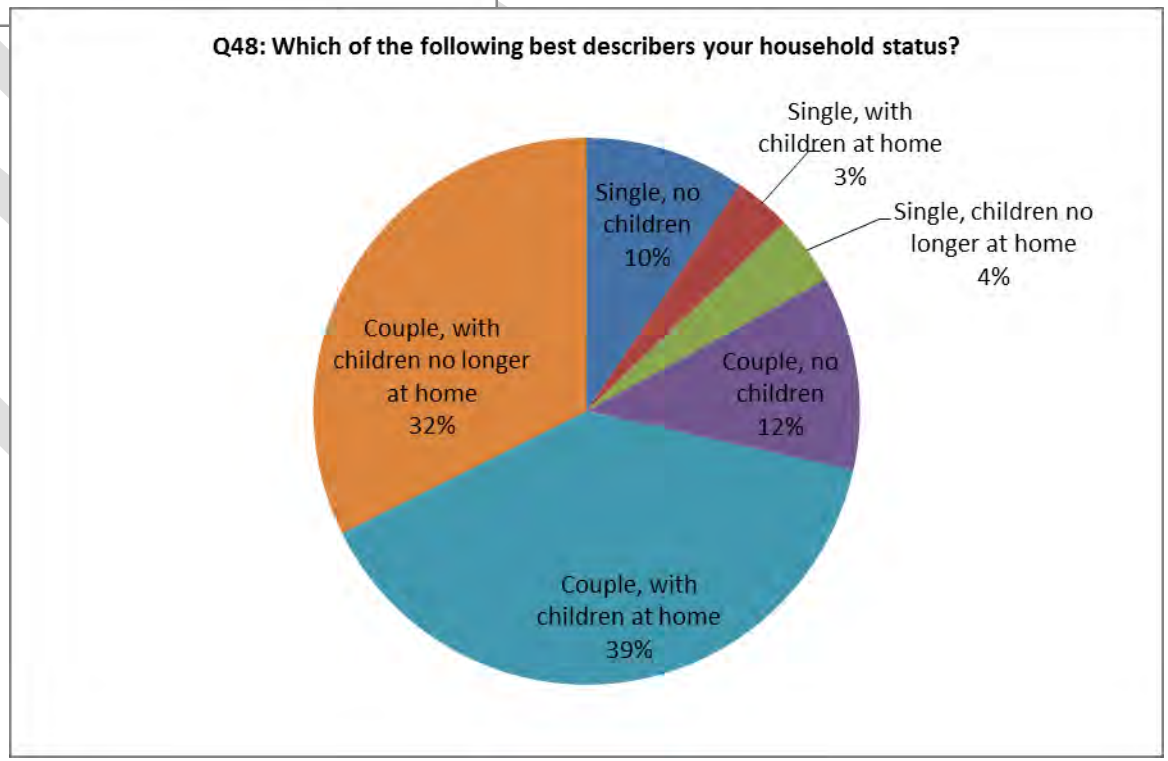
DRAFT

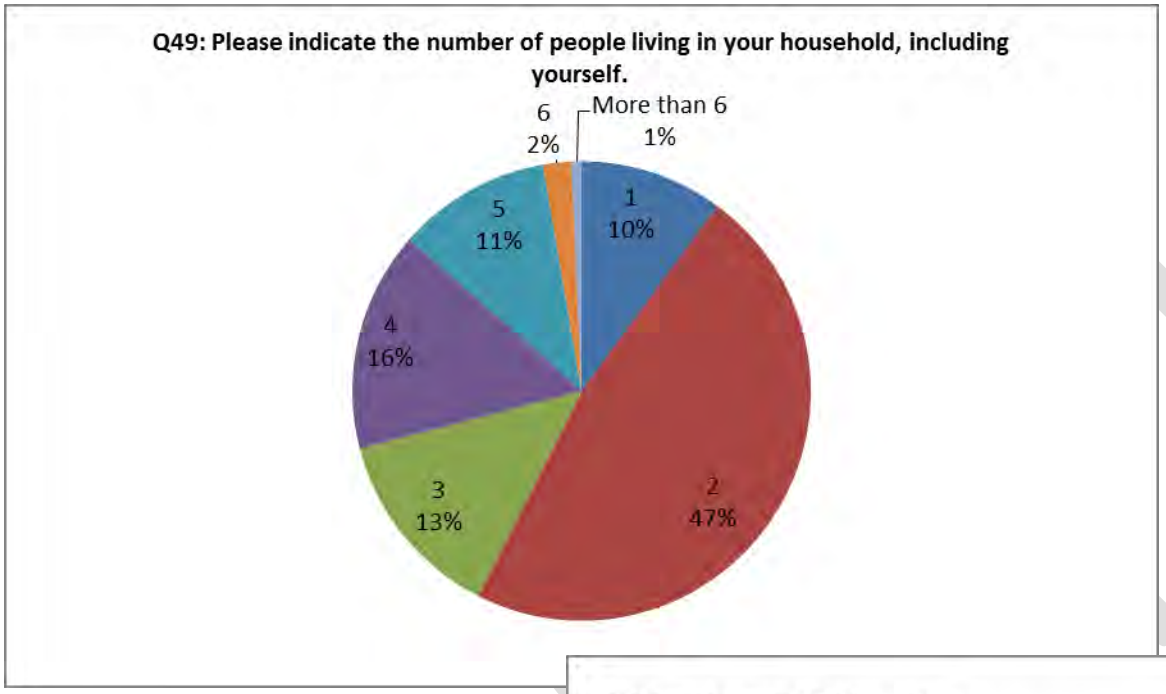
DEMOGRAPHICS – *The following questions are to better understand your responses and to ensure we have received responses that are reflective of the entire population of Independence.*

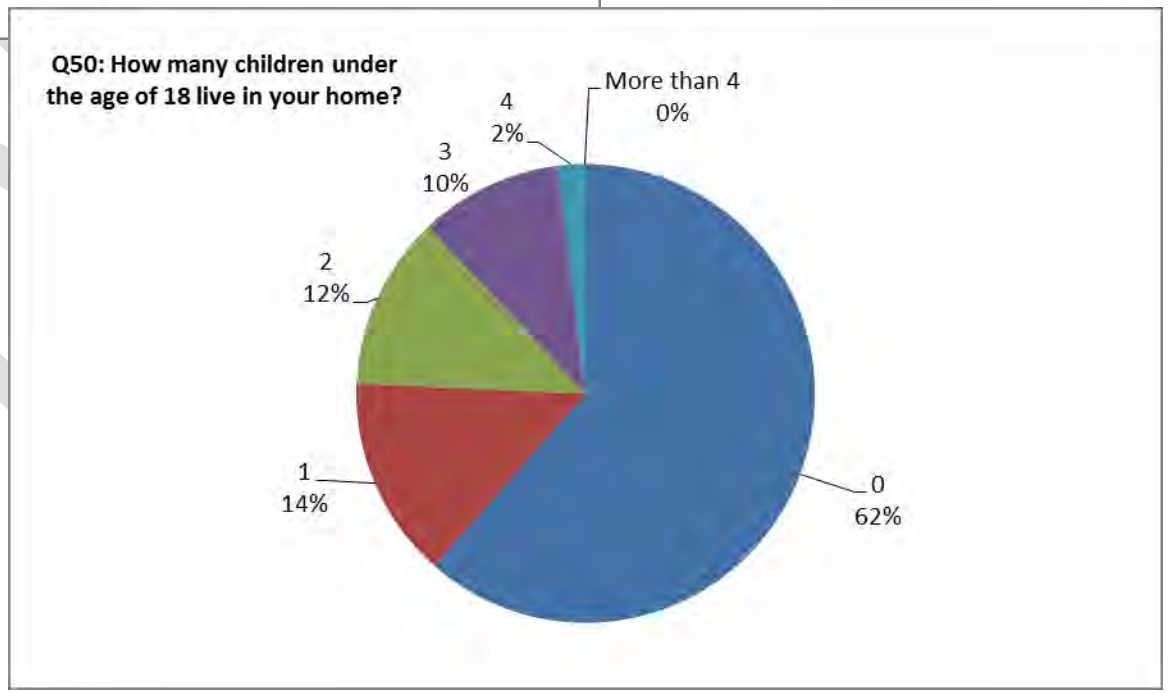


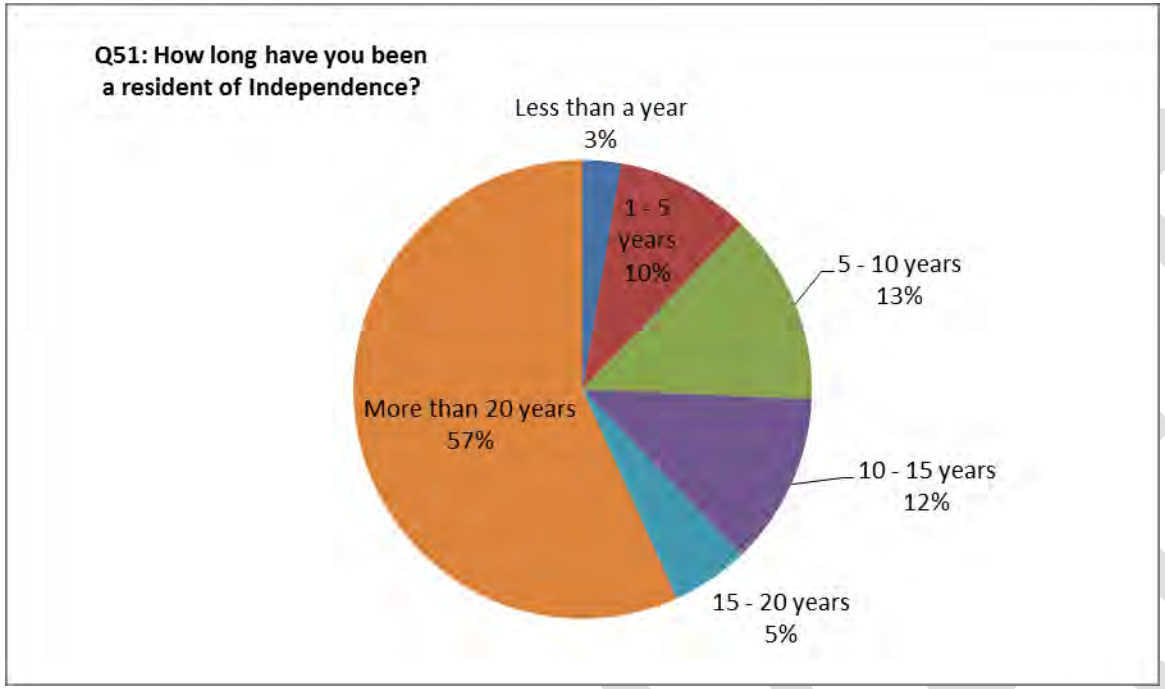


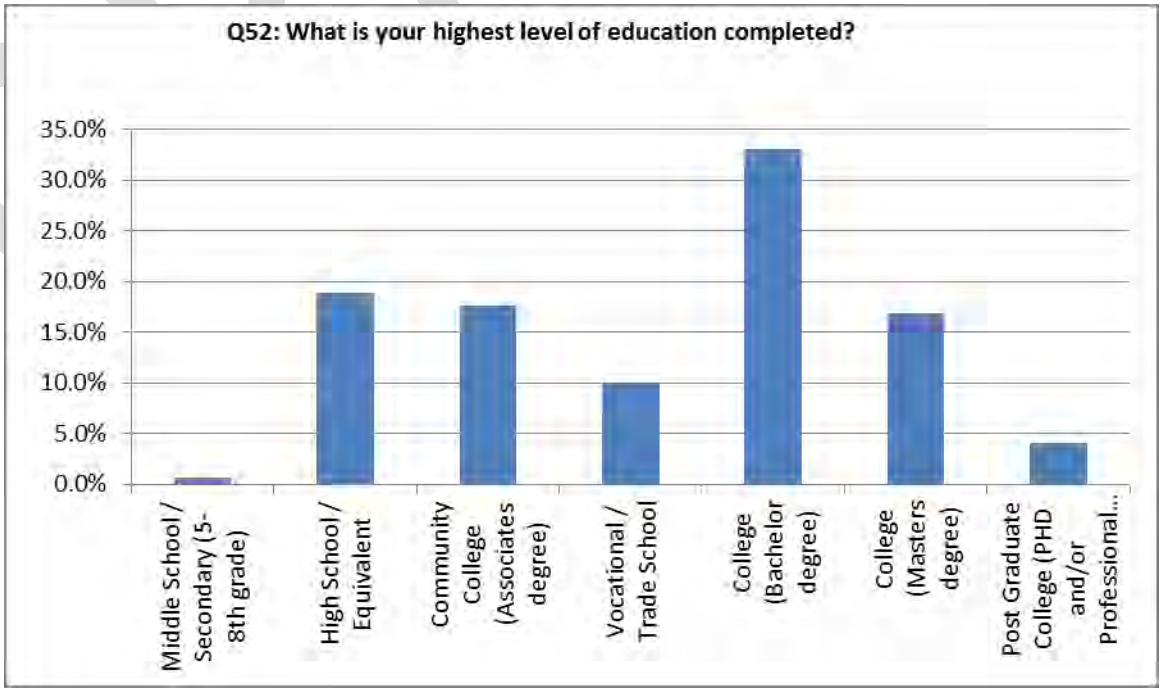

Q47: What is your racial/ethnic background?
White
Black / African American
Asian / Pacific Islander
American Indian / Native American or Alaska Native
Hispanic or Spanish Origin
Some other Race / Ethnicity
Prefer not to answer

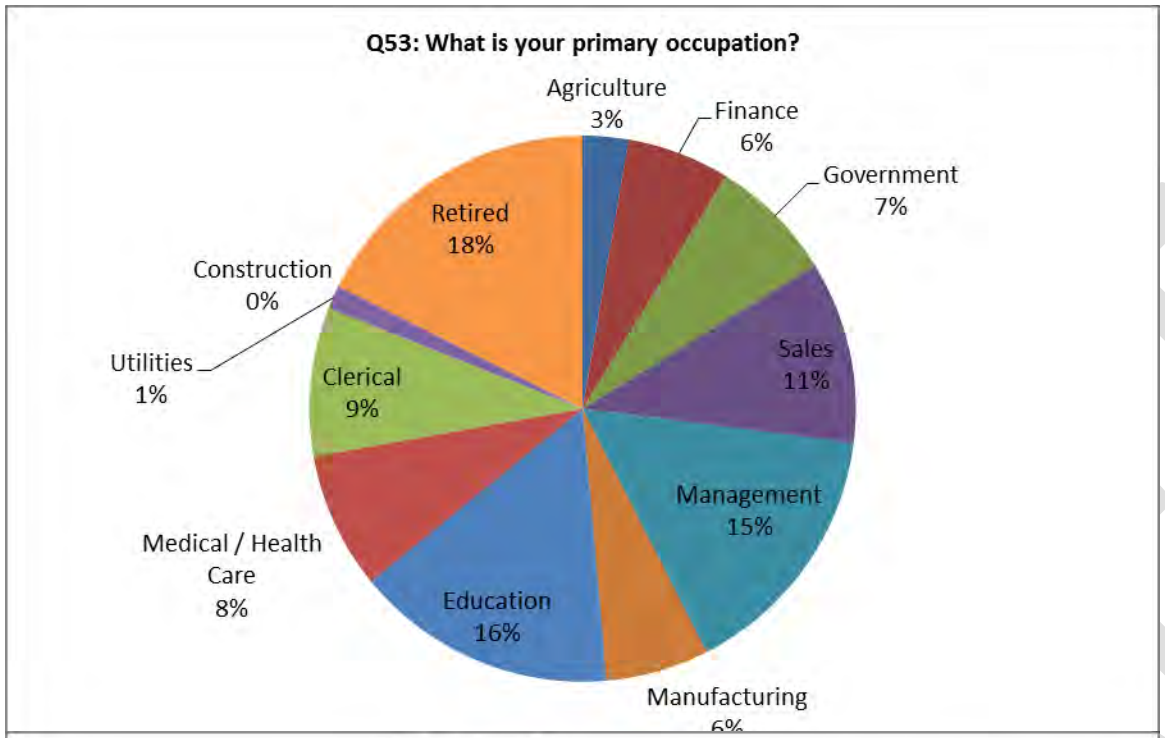

Q48: Which of the following best describers your household status?
Single, no children 10%
Single, with children at home 3%
Single, children no longer at home 4%
Couple, no children 12%
Couple, with children at home 39%
Couple, with children no longer at home 32%

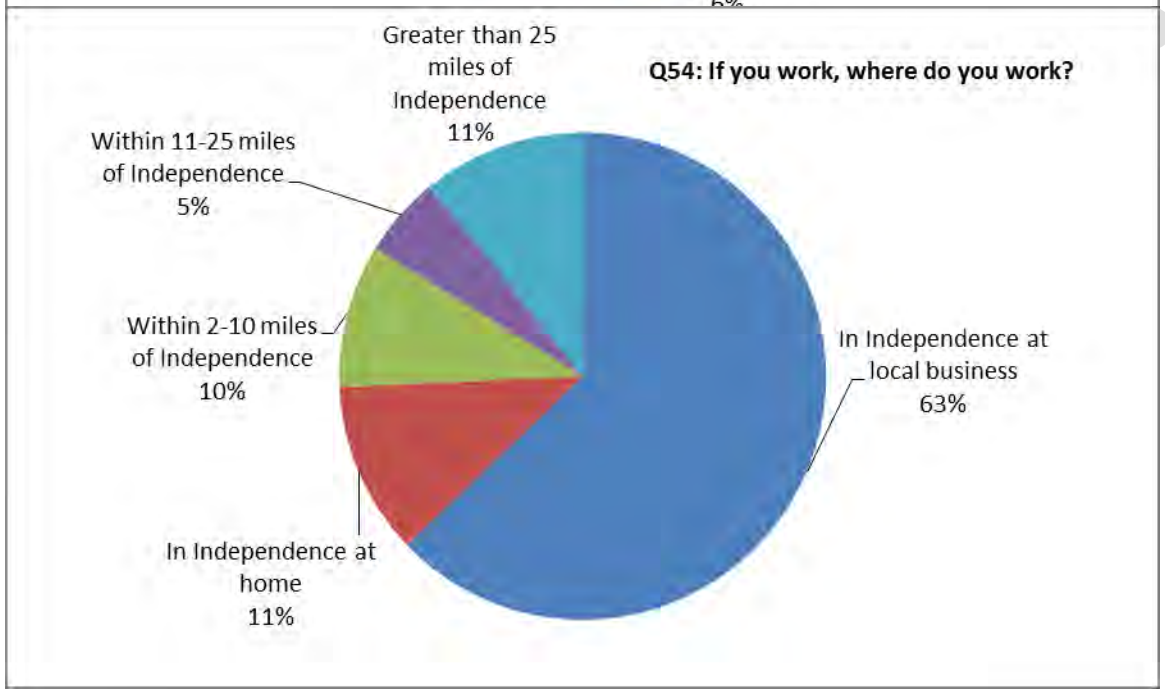

Q49: Please indicate the number of people living in your household, including yourself.
6
2%
More than 6
1%
1
10%
5
11%
4
16%
3
13%
2
47%


Q50: How many children under the age of 18 live in your home?
4
2%
More than 4
0%
3
10%
2
12%
1
14%
0
62%


Q51: How long have you been a resident of Independence?
Less than a year 3%
1 - 5 years 10%
5 - 10 years 13%
10 - 15 years 12%
15 - 20 years 5%
More than 20 years 57%


Q52: What is your highest level of education completed?
35.0%
30.0%
25.0%
20.0%
15.0%
10.0%
5.0%
0.0%
Middle School / Secondary (5-8th grade)
High School / Equivalent
Community College (Associates degree)
Vocational / Trade School
College (Bachelor degree)
College (Masters degree)
Post Graduate College (PHD and/or Professional...





Q53 Other:
Stay at home parent
human services
ISU Extension and Outreach
disabled housewife
Substitute associate at schools
Truck Driving
Insurance Agent
business owner
Professional Services
Nonprofit Professional
science
Business
Human Services
sub in Oelwein
Mother
semi retired / part time - seasonal employment
Marketing
Web Development
professional
Food service
Insurance
Marketing
Human Services
Professional Volunteer