TRANSPORTATION FOR ALL

progress in motion

INDEPENDENCE

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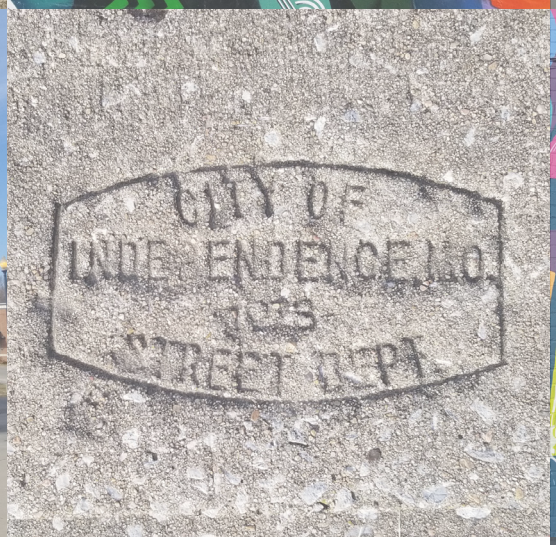

Final Report

June 2024

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Acknowledgments

City Council
Rory Rowland, Mayor
John Perkins, Mayor Pro Tem, 1st District
Brice Stewart, 2nd District
Heather Wiley, 3rd District
Jennie Vaught, 4th District
Jared Fears, At-Large
Bridget McCandless, At-Large

City Staff / Steering Committee
Darryl Fields, MARC
Rick Arroyo
Amara Oakes
Meg Lewis
Alex Lopez
Rodney Honeycutt
Doug Short
Janelle Scofield
Christina Heinen
Mike Hicks
Michelle Sumstad

Stakeholder Group Interviews
Doug Cowan
Jennifer Manuleleua
Cheryl DeHaan
Jose Torres
Gerry Winship
Dan Astleford
Tom Lesnak
Brian Forker
Jodi Krantz
Dan McGraw
Maureen Kennedy
Muriel Luedeman
John Lunn
Madalyn Osborn
Chrysta Sevic
Anthony Sommer
Daryl Houseman
Leslie Hochsprung
Greg McGee
Nicole Sequeria
Randy Maglinger

Consultant Team
Olsson
Venice Communications
BikeWalk KC

1 Context

Plan Overview

Plan Purpose

Access to transportation is a critical need for residents, workers, and visitors in Independence to be able to access basic needs such as employment, healthcare, education, and essential shopping. This access should be provided to the community regardless of age, personal mobility, or vehicle ownership. A healthy transportation system strikes a balance between modes of travel, with connections between these modes, and a focus on safety for all users.

The *Independence Transportation for All* Master Plan seeks to develop a citywide framework for improving transportation for all users. Because infrastructure for those traveling without a car—walking, biking, or using transit—are less developed than infrastructure for driving, this Plan focuses on these "active" transportation modes.

The City of Independence has numerous localized plans that have included an active transportation component. Some of these plans have proceeded into design and are in the process of being implemented. However, the city lacks a citywide framework that stitches together these plans in a cohesive way. This Plan seeks to fill this gap, and expand the reach of these localized plans by tying them together to create a connected network.

What is an Active Transportation Master Plan?

Active transportation is any self-propelled, human-powered mode of transportation, such as walking and bicycling. An active transportation plan includes:

- Review of existing bike, pedestrian, and transit facilities and conditions.
- Community engagement to understand challenges, needs, ideas, and opportunities.
- Active transportation education, incorporated into community engagement and evaluation of alternatives.
- Recommendations of ways to improve active transportation in the community.

Increasing active transportation use can have many benefits, ranging from favorable public health outcomes to a enhanced local economy, while reducing emissions from single occupancy vehicles. To enable and activate these benefits, active transportation should be planned with safety as a primary consideration. People of all ages should be able to walk or bike in a safe environment. Additionally, connectivity is a key component of active transportation planning. Facilities need to connect together and provide meaningful access to destinations people need or want to go. An active transportation master plan provides a vision for "connecting the dots" in order to maximize benefits for the community.

While *Independence Transportation for All* is focused on active transportation, it is understood that these modes exist within a full multimodal framework that includes people driving (the predominant transportation mode in the city), carpooling, or using transit. Implementable active transportation plans focus on a "complete streets" approach that intends to provide safe, accessible, and healthy travel for all users of the street, leveraging existing street networks and right-of-way into safe corridors that offer multimodal and multipurpose options. Because facilities are more developed and more plentiful for people driving, this Plan primarily focuses improving other options.

Plan Process

Independence Transportation for All is a community-driven process built on input received in public and stakeholder events in 2023-24. The project team employed a multi-faceted approach for engaging the community and obtaining feedback, with an iterative process of developing aspects of the plan and seeking comments on plan progress. The plan process included:

Community Engagement

Public and stakeholder engagement conducted during the planning process included:

- **Focus Group** interviews with key stakeholders occurred early in the project to understand issues, challenges, and opportunities for active transportation in the city. These groups included:
  - » Senior and Community Services group, including representatives from the Community Services League, Palmer Center, and social justice advocates.
  - » Business/Chamber of Commerce group, including representatives from the Independence Chamber of Commerce, Noland Road CID, Centerpoint Hospital, and Northpoint Development.
  - » The Independence Sustainability Commission, where the project team attended the commission's August 2023 to gather input and feedback from the group
  - » Independence School District, including the superintendent and staff focused on transportation, facilities, family services, and secondary education.
- **Pop-Up Public Meetings** where project team staff joined a community event to talk about the project and gather input. These events occurred in September 2023 at SantaCaliGon Days and October 2023 at Blendwell Café in West Independence.
- A community survey to gather information on the city's most significant transportation challenges and needs.
- A "Ride the Square" bicycle ride that featured a four-mile round-trip ride from Independence Square to highlight issues and challenges for active transportation in the city.
- A project website (www.independencetransportationforall.com) to house public meeting materials and provide a method of submitting ideas and comments to the project team electronically.
- A final public meeting in February 2024 at the Roger T Sermon Community Center that was focused on reviewing draft project recommendations. This event also hosted BLAST programming (Bicycle Lessons and Safety Training) in the gymnasium for anyone who wanted to learn the rules of the road or engage in some biking drills.
- A Steering Committee comprised of city staff from different departments, to help guide the development of the plan and ensure that recommendations meet community needs.

A "pop-up" public meeting held at Blendwell Cafe in October 2023.

Technical Review

Information learned through community engagement is combined with a review of data, community characteristics, and infrastructure, to develop a complete picture of transportation needs in the community. This process included the following elements:

- Compilation and review of community data on population and transportation. Census data provides a high-level view of the city's population, economic, and transportation characteristics. Local and regional data from the City and from the Mid America Regional Council (MARC) provide additional localized information.
- Review of existing conditions for people walking and biking. This includes determining locations of existing facilities, based on previously-collected data. Future improvements already programmed or planned are included in this review.
- Planning background review, understanding and summarizing past planning efforts that relate to active transportation. Specifically, how can the *Independence Transportation for All* process advance these plans and projects.
- An assessment of major barriers, including highways, wide arterial streets, railroads, natural features, or other factors that can limit active transportation connections.

Network Planning

Based on both of the above processes, the project team developed ideas for a network of active transportation infrastructure to better connect the city in all directions. This process takes a city-wide view of transportation networks, but requires localized considerations where needed to affirm direction and feasibility. Special attention is given to developing a network that can provide trips over longer distances, and that people can use for a variety of different trips. While many active transportation trips are short, such as to a school or neighborhood park, barriers often present challenges for connecting across neighborhoods or to activity centers with employment, shopping, or recreation. A network plan is presented as a vision for city-wide networks and meaningful improvements to active transportation access and safety at key locations.

City Codes Review

Finally, the Plan includes a review of city codes relating to walking and biking in the city. Local laws governing development patterns, site development procedures and requirements, traffic regulations and enforcement, parking regulations, and subdivision procedures all can have a significant impact on active transportation. Walking and biking is safest and most utilized in places where facilities are planned in coordination with land uses and where comfort is prioritized.

This Plan, and specifically the review of city codes, approaches the analysis and recommendation of improvements with a Complete Streets point of view. Complete Streets are designed for all users: pedestrians, cyclists, transit users, and motorists. Complete Streets policies help pave the way for transportation infrastructure and street design projects that ultimately develop a connected, integrated network that serves all road users.

Simply put, Complete Streets is a design approach that provides safe, convenient, and comfortable routes for walking, bicycling, public transportation, and driving together in one system. An important part of a Complete Streets process, with or without a policy, is addressing the codes and regulations that currently exist and unintentionally harm vulnerable road users, including people walking and biking in Independence. Table X details proposed code language changes to protect these users.

Complete Streets "Do's" and "Don'ts"

What Complete Streets Do:

- Emphasize non-drivers
- Work to improve built environment
- Rely on community context

What Complete Streets Don't Do:

- Mandate overnight change
- Require the same elements everywhere
- Require budget obligations

Community & Transportation Profile

Planning Area

Independence is a city of 123,011 people (2020 Census) and is the seat of Jackson County, Missouri. As shown in *Figure 1*, the City is in the eastern portion of the Kansas City metropolitan area, with Kansas City to the west and south, Raytown to the southwest, Lee's Summit to the south, Blue Brings to the southeast, and Sugar Creek to the north.

While Independence is the focus of this Plan, it is important to consider plans and infrastructure in neighboring communities. Independence is part of the larger Kansas City region where people travel across city, county, and state boundaries on a regular basis to access a variety of destinations, using all modes of transportation. Integrating investments within the city with those of nearby jurisdictions will improve access for both residents and visitors.

Figure 1: Planning Area (City of Independence)

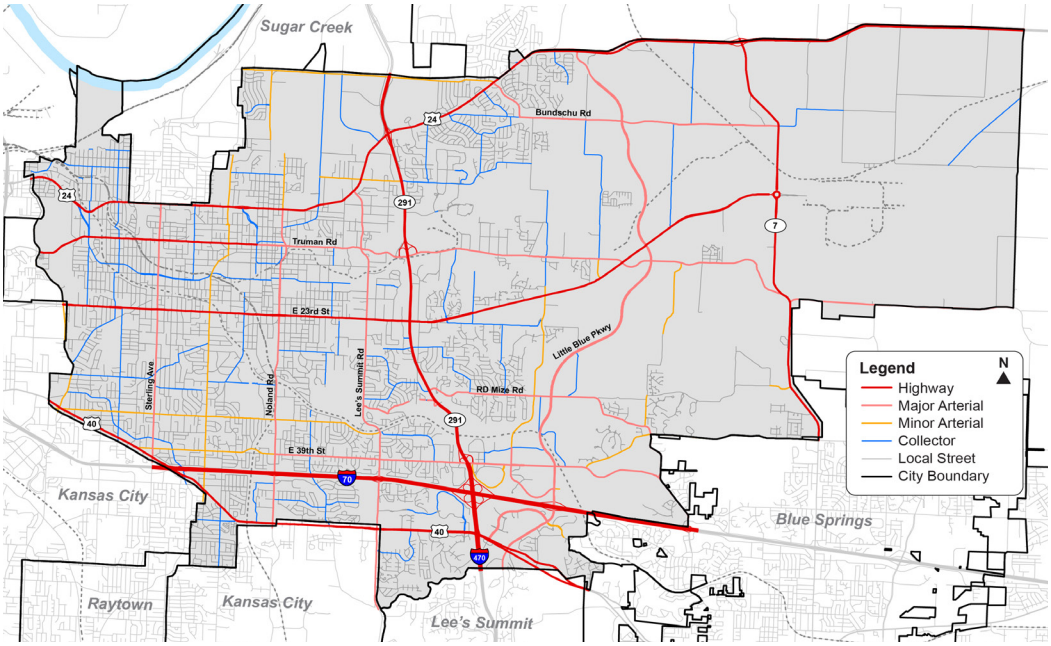
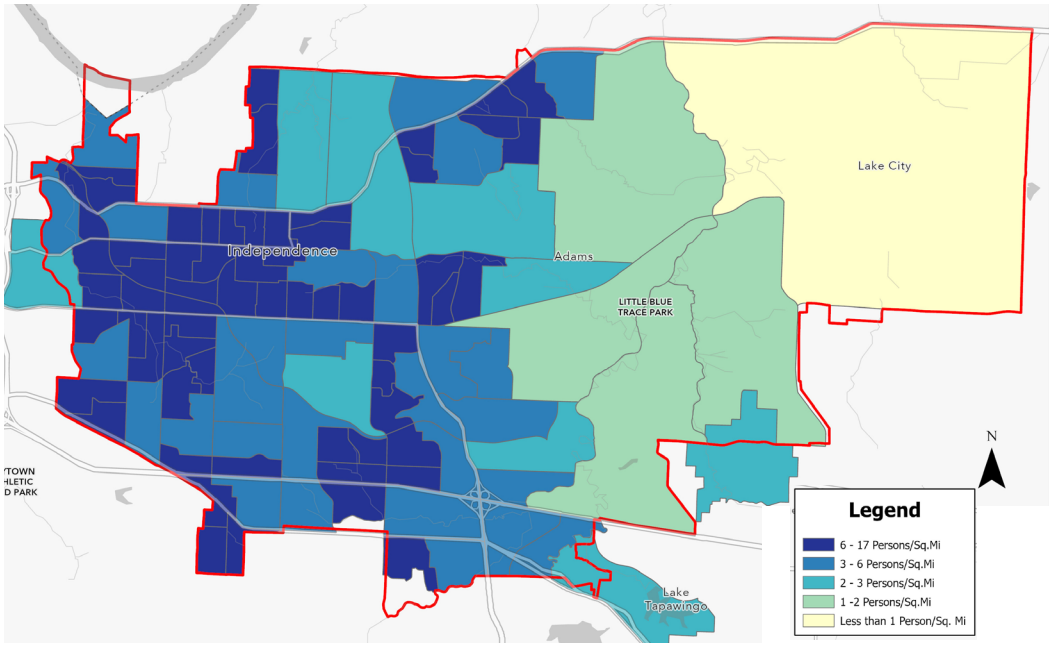


Figure 2: Population Density Map

Independence's population is not evenly-distributed across the city, as shown in *Figure 2*. In general, population densities are greater in the western half of the city (approximately west of Highway 291) than in the eastern half. West of Highway 291, the city is mostly built out, with few areas of undeveloped land. This includes the city's historic center, the Independence Square and surrounding neighborhoods. East of Highway 291, population densities are lower and much of the area, particularly east of Little Blue Parkway, is undeveloped.



Transportation Overview

Table 1 shows "commute to work" characteristics from the American Community Survey (2022). The vast majority of workers (84.9%) travel to work by driving alone, followed by carpooling (6.7%), walking (0.5%), biking (0.5%), and using transit (0.2%). An estimated 6.9% of working residents work from home. Because this information is only for trips made to work, data must be supplemented with local knowledge from residents and stakeholders for other types of transportation needs (see Section 2). Compared to the county and state, a lower percentage of people walk to work, but a larger percentage bike to work.

Additionally, provided the goal of improving transportation safety for vulnerable users, recent data for crashes involving bicyclists and pedestrians has been reviewed, as shown in *Figure 3*. Fatal and non-fatal crashes are generally clustered along arterial streets in the city, including Noland Road, Sterling Avenue, 23rd Street, and Highway 40. Each of these arterials have at least four lanes and have been citied by the community as having higher-speed traffic.

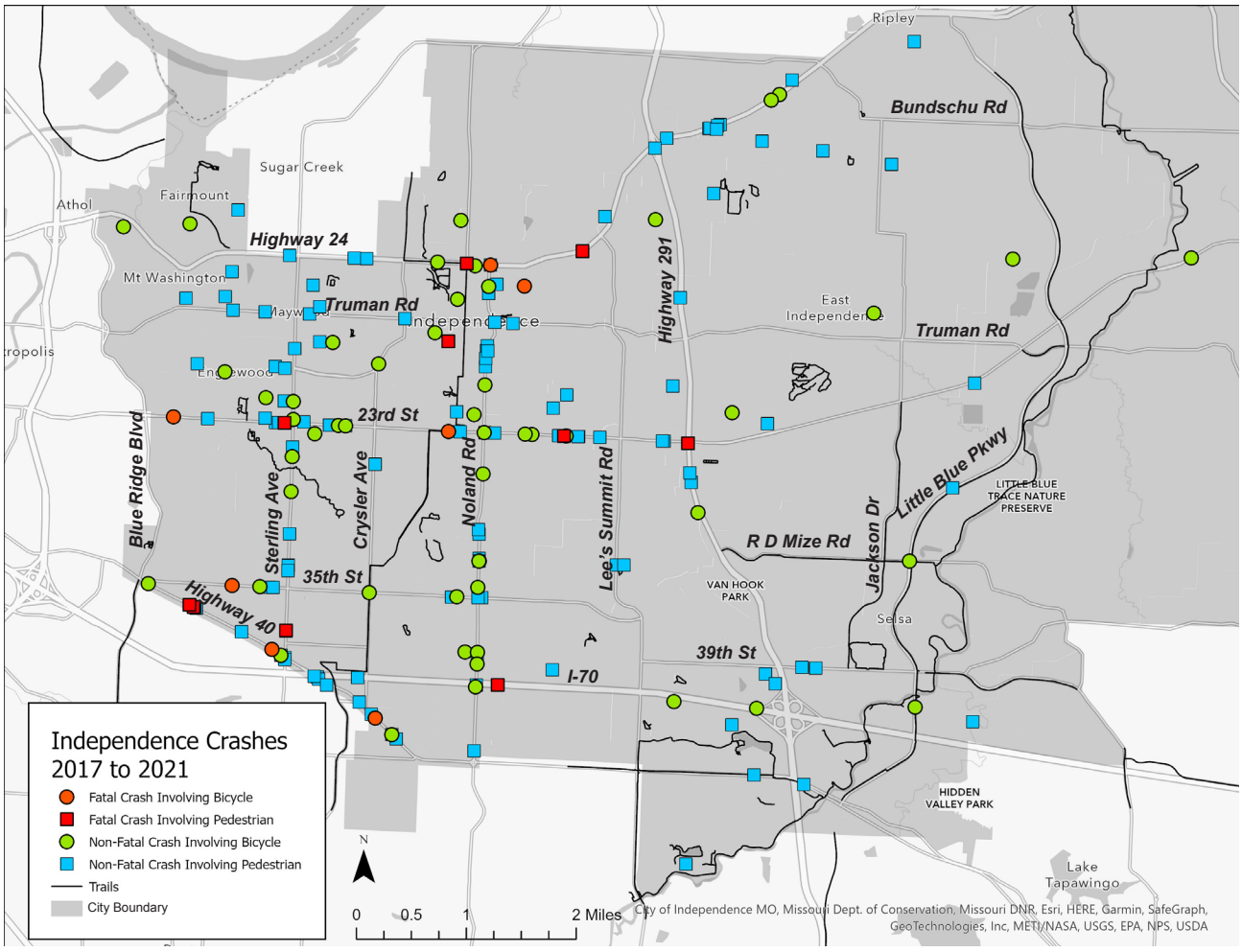
Table 1: Means of Transportation to Work

Transportation Mode	City of Independence		Jackson County	State of Missouri	United States
Private Auto	48,250	84.9%	72.7%	79.4%	73.2%
Auto Passenger	3,808	6.7%	6.5%	8.1%	8.6%
Walking	284	0.5%	1.1%	1.9%	2.5%
Biking	284	0.5%	0.2%	0.2%	0.5%
Transit	114	0.2%	1.2%	1.0%	4.2%
Work from Home	3,921	6.9%	16.9%	8.4%	9.7%
Total	**56,832**				

Data Source: American Community Survey (2022)

Figure 3: Crash Data Map (2017–2021)

Data Source: MARC



Planning Background

The *Independence Transportation for All* Plan was developed within the framework of other local and regional plans that are important to understand and integrate into the planning process. A specific aim of the Plan is to stitch together these efforts into a connected citywide framework.

Imagine Independence 2040 Community Vision

The City's comprehensive plan serves as a long-term guide for development of the community, and seeks to coordinate transportation and land use planning efforts. The plan included a focus on "traditional neighborhoods" that are mixed use and pedestrian friendly. A walkable area is generally understood to be a place that emphasizes people over cars by providing comfortable and convenient pedestrian facilities within a mix of land uses. The plan aims to facilitate the mix of uses and walkability that neighborhoods offered in the past.

This comprehensive plan also intends to link neighborhoods and activity centers with bike facilities and trails showcasing public art (Truman Library, the National Trails Museum, Englewood Arts District and the Truman Sports Complex), as well as connect the City's bike/trail system together and to regional systems such as Little Blue Trace and the Rock Island Trail. The Future Land Use Map from the plan is shown in *Figure 4* below.

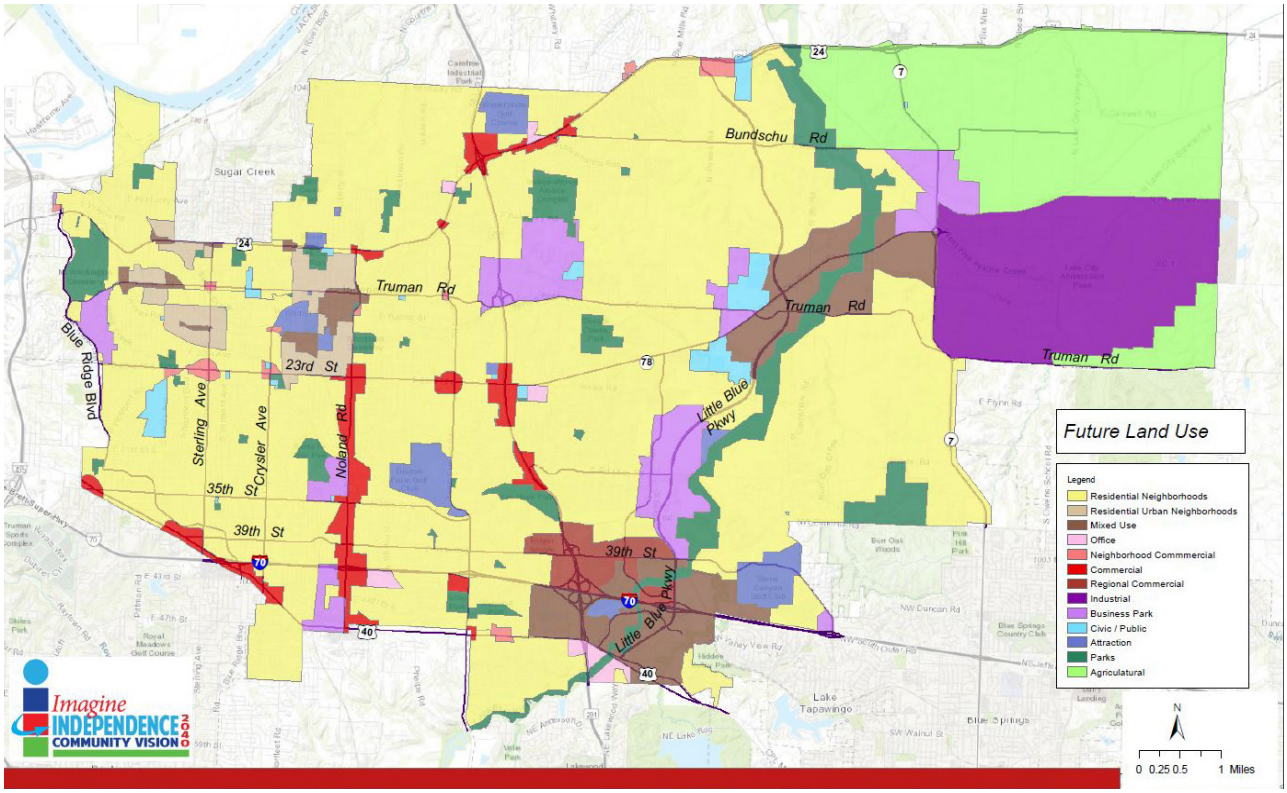
Truman Connected

The Truman Connected plan seeks to determine a way to connect activity centers in Independence with a high-quality multi-use trail, and incorporating components from past and adjacent planning efforts. The plan process discovered that while most people drive in Independence today, there is a desire to walk or bike more. The plan assessed other plans along Truman Road that contain recommendations regarding enhancements to pedestrian, bike, and transit user needs in the area; as well as an assessment and identification of logical tie-ins from plans and previously-constructed projects along or near the Truman Connected study area.

The Truman Connected plan recommended a phased approach toward developing an active transportation "spine", with the first phase from the Truman Library along on Bess Truman Parkway, through the Downtown Square, along Lexington Avenue, and along Sterling Avenue. In many areas, existing pavement reserved for cars will be re-purposed for use by bicyclists and pedestrians. Because of this, much of the facility will not significantly increase maintenance costs over what the city currently incurs. The Truman Connected corridor provides the backbone to which other future improvements can connect to, and extend the reach of.

Figure 4: Future Land Use Map

From Imagine Independence 2040 Community Vision



Englewood Station Arts District Circulation Plan

This process recommended several key active transportation improvements in the Englewood arts district, including:

1. Improvements to circulation for those who walk, ride in wheelchairs, push strollers, bicycle, ride transit and drive vehicles.
2. Improvements to the streetscape to create a micro-climate of comfort for people, including slowing people down to encourage them to frequent business.

Key design approaches (see *Figure 5*) employed to meet the goals of the district include:

- Decreasing travel lane widths to encourage drivers to slow down.
- Reducing the length of pedestrian crossing distances to create safer crossings. Increasing sidewalk width on the south side of Winner Road to provide safe travel and amenity zones for pedestrians.
- Boosting safety at intersections by limiting obstructions in sight triangles.
- Reducing impervious surfaces and replacing them with pervious surfaces that absorb rainfall.
- Adding trees and other vegetation to create a more soften the hardscape, including installing planter/ infiltration basins to treat stormwater.
- Adding bicycle accommodations like sharrows and bike parking

Figure 5: Englewood Plan Recommendations
From Englewood Station Arts District Circulation Plan

Independence Square Revitalization Plan

This plan developed several key guidelines pertaining to active transportation around Independence Square, including:

- To provide on-street parking as a buffer between the pedestrian walkway and moving vehicles, using parallel or angle parking.
- Allowing outdoor eating areas to occupy a portion of the public right-of-way.
- Providing pedestrian scale street lighting shall be provided.
- Providing street furniture, such as benches, at key intersections.
- Designing vehicular access to parking lots in a manner which places pedestrian safety and comfort as the primary design consideration.

Truman Road Green Gateway Plan

The Truman Road Green Gateway Development Plan is intended to enhance transportation choices, with all users in mind – including bicyclists, transit vehicles and riders, and pedestrians of all ages and abilities. Recommendations promote pedestrian and bike facilities, with attention paid to the impacts of future development on the traffic and future aesthetics of the corridor. Off-street multi-use trails were preferred compared to on-street bike lanes. In order to achieve the community's vision of the Truman Road corridor as a unique and distinctive place that leverages its natural assets, the following project priorities were established:

- Create a welcoming aesthetically pleasing gateway to tourists and citizens.
- Capitalize on the "Gateway Potential" and natural assets.
- Develop a signature green street in Independence.
- Enhance transportation choices along Truman Road.
- Promote sustainable land use patterns.
- Enhance pedestrian and bike connections between neighborhoods.
- Increase pedestrian connections between activity nodes.
- Infill development opportunities.
- Form a strategy for implementation of public improvements.

US 24 Highway Corridor Study

The project identified a need, among others, to create pedestrian and public transportation linkages between the Corridor and other "urban centers" such as Independence Square and Englewood District. Principles and policies developed in the plan include:

- U.S. 24 Highway and its supporting transportation system will be improved to provide a variety of safe and efficient transportation choices to increase mobility for people of all ages, income levels, and people with disabilities. This includes highway improvements that will incorporate bikeway, pedestrian, and transit networks as essential parts of the transportation system.
- Providing a comprehensive, efficient and high-quality public transit service for the U.S. 24 Highway Corridor. This includes providing pedestrian access, accommodations for bicycles, and a mix of uses at and near transit stops to allow transit to become a viable alternative to the automobile.
- The safety, security, aesthetics, and convenience of the pedestrian and cyclist will be a fundamental consideration in the design of the transportation system. Design elements should allow for bicycles to become a practical transportation choice for residents, using a combination of on and off-street trail systems. The system will be enhanced with the adoption of a new bikeway and trail plan.

Highway 40 Corridor and Focus Area Plan

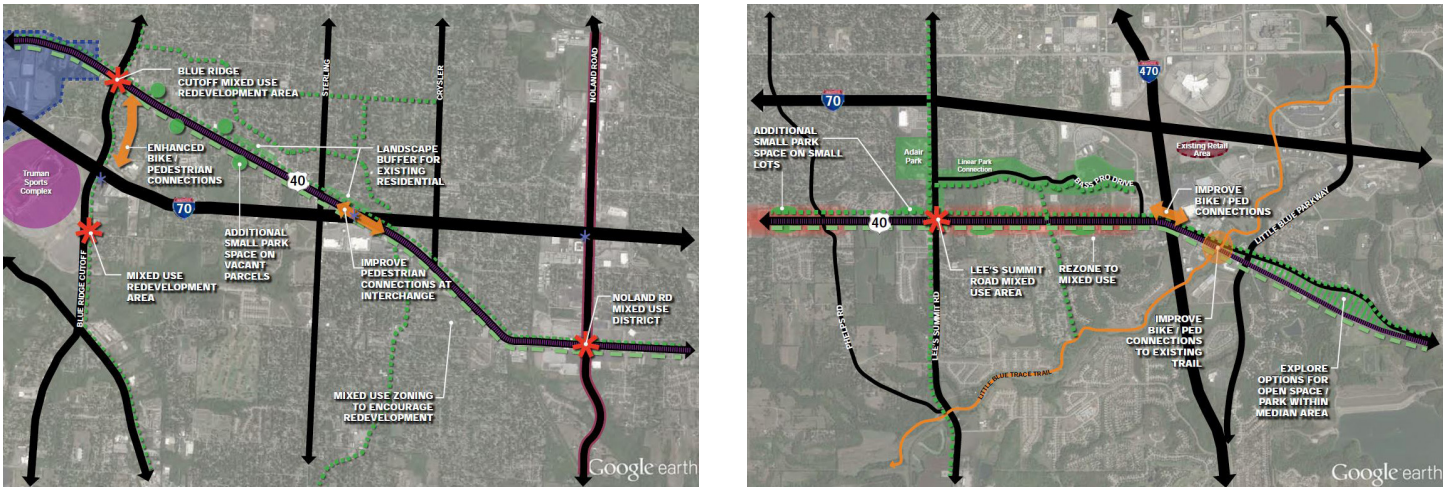
This plan seeks to advance the regional vision for a more sustainable corridor that supports a series of transit-oriented development nodes that are connected by a multi-modal corridor that supports bikes, pedestrians, and transit. The corridor should become a model for the region in which land use, transportation, and environmental considerations are integrated to create a thriving destination that can attract new growth and bolster local economies.

A Guiding Principle of the plan is to "create quality, pedestrian and bike friendly, and aesthetically pleasing environments."

The introduction of enhanced transit service along 40 Highway will require time and the demonstrated presence of increased residential or employment density at nodes along the corridor. However, in the meantime the communities along the corridor, working with MoDOT, can help to improve the aesthetic appearance and economic marketability of the corridor over time by redesigning the highway, in stretches, as a "landscaped parkway" throughout Jackson County across multiple cities.

These improvements, shown in *Figure 6* below, can strengthen overall traffic safety and the environment for people walking and biking along the corridor, whether in a local focus area or from community to community. This strategy takes advantage of the relatively wide right-of-way of the highway through the communities of eastern Kansas City, Independence, Lee's Summit, Blue Springs, and Grain Valley and uses the extra space for bike and pedestrian improvements and to provide for an attractive center landscaped median, thereby also improving access management.

Figure 6: Corridor Recommendations ***From Highway 40 Corridor Plan***



Fairmount District Plan

U.S. Highway 24 runs through the heart of the historic Fairmount Business District. Wide roads, fast traffic, a lack of sidewalks, and confusing intersections all limit the potential of this area to attract visitors, support investment, and achieve its full potential. The Fairmount District Plan evaluated the U.S. Highway 24 corridor from Sterling Ave to Cedar Ave and its influence on nearby housing, businesses, people traveling through the corridor, parks and recreation opportunities, traffic safety, and beautification. The Fairmount District Plan sought to improve the safety, comfort, and placemaking potential of this important community destination while recognizing the role of the Highway 24 corridor as an important regional transportation connection.

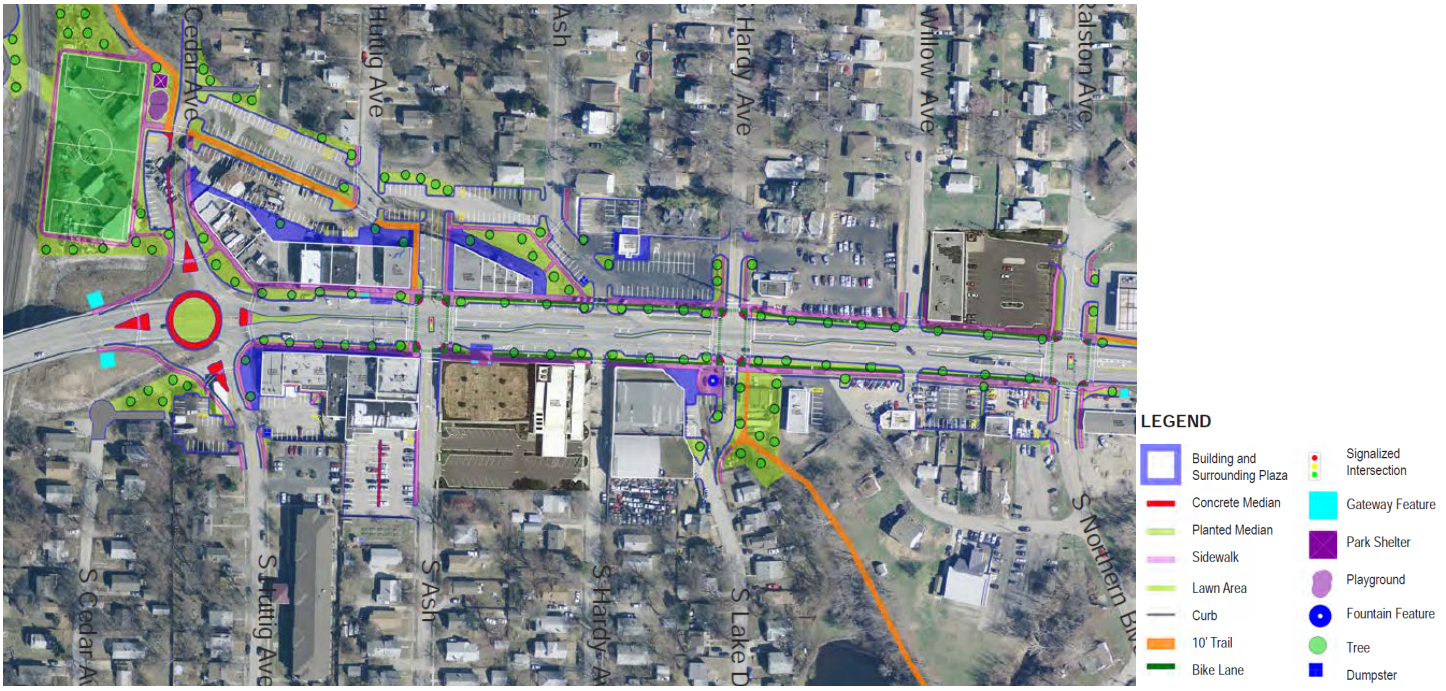
As shown in *Figure 7*, improvements include protected bicycle facilities and several fully protected intersections. The design recommends changes to intersection alignments to improve safety and efficiency. New, accessible sidewalks and public spaces support adjacent businesses, while landscaping and stormwater management features address longstanding flooding issues. Connections to surrounding neighborhoods and amenities are also considered, placing improvements in the Fairmount District in the context of a broader network of multimodal connections.

Specifically, the Fairmount District Plan recommended:

- A roundabout at the intersection of Highway 24 and Huttig Avenue, determined to be the best traffic calming tool applicable for the Fairmount District to slow trucks and vehicles to 25MPH.
- Wide sidewalks (a “pedestrian promenade” 8-10’ wide) along both sides of Highway 24 with additional sidewalk connections to east and west streets.
- Dedicated bicycle facilities protected behind curb facilities. At the proposed re-aligned S Lake Drive intersection, a new trail connection is proposed along the Crisp Lake dam headed southeast.
- Far-side transit stops are proposed at S Ash Street with a shelter.
- Landscaped medians west of S Northern Blvd and concrete medians at intersections and the proposed roundabout.
- Pocket parks, shade trees, seasonal plantings, and enhanced recreational spaces for community gathering and refuge from the elements interspersed throughout the District.

To accommodate these recommendations, additional right-of-way (ROW) is recommended to be acquired, expanding the existing ROW from 80 feet wide to 110 feet wide. Alternatively, a Joint Use Easements Agreements (JUEA) signed with property owners that would allow the City to build the proposed pedestrian infrastructure.

Figure 7: Fairmount District Plan



Existing Infrastructure

The current state of pedestrian and bicycle infrastructure in Independence reveals several challenges and safety concerns. A notable issue is the disjointed nature of the existing network, with significant gaps and discontinuities that hinder the seamless flow of pedestrian and cyclist movement. The absence of a cohesive plan has led to an incomplete and often unsafe experience for those relying on non-motorized modes of transportation. Figure 8 illustrates the existing infrastructure.

Pedestrian Infrastructure Overview

Overall, the pedestrian network is incomplete and inconsistent citywide. It has substantial gaps and varies widely in condition, quality, and accessibility. The general state of the sidewalks poses concerns. Uneven surfaces, inadequate lighting, and lack of maintenance contribute to an uncomfortable and, at times, hazardous experience for pedestrians.

The lack of universal accessibility features can hinder and endanger individuals with mobility challenges. There are a general lack of safe pedestrian crossings citywide, particularly on arterials. Fast-moving traffic and the lack of safe crossings pose substantial risks for pedestrians attempting to navigate these thoroughfares.

The long distances between signalized crossings on most city arterials mean pedestrians are more likely to cross at unmarked locations, increasing their risk of serious injury and death. This is especially true in areas characterized by high traffic volumes and with limited visibility. There are also existing political barriers regarding pedestrian improvements. None of the existing sidewalks are addressed under the city's current maintenance program and are not the city's responsibility, based on existing ordinances.

Bicycle Infrastructure Overview

Bicycle infrastructure faces similar challenges of safety, connectedness, and completeness. There are only a few bike lanes citywide, though the network is growing. The Truman Connected project, currently in design and moving into construction, will add a north-south spine of bike lanes, a shared use path, and on-shoulder bike facilities between the Truman Library, Independence Square, and Englewood. The city hosts an impressive collection of recreational trails on its east side. This trail system could serve as a foundation for a more extensive network to support biking as a true alternative, connecting homes with businesses, schools, shopping, etc.

Poorly-maintained sidewalks can create a safety hazard for pedestrians and people using a wheelchair or other mobility device. (Independence Transit Center)

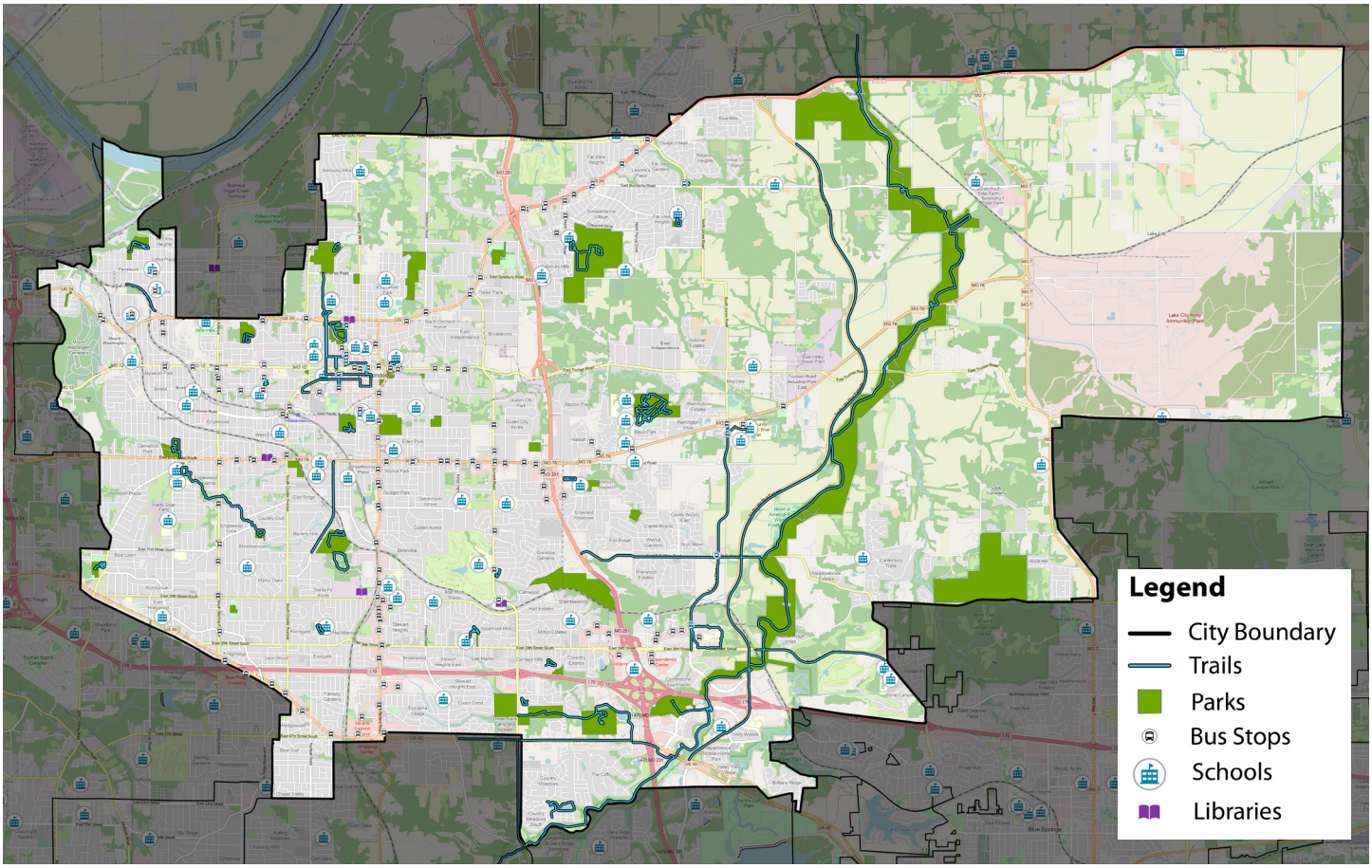
The Little Blue Trace Trail provides an important recreational and active transportation amenity for eastern Independence.

The west side of the city hosts a disconnected and limited trail network, mostly only within parks and along a few greenways. Additionally, there are no existing major east-west bike facilities to connect the western part of the city with the trails on the east side.

Overall, the city lacks a cohesive biking network and has no existing plan that would provide for one. This translates to a major barrier, deterrence, and safety hazard for individuals attempting to use bikes as a means of transportation. Especially for younger riders and those with limited experience or ability. While not all facilities are ideal candidates for bike lanes, such as multi-lane, busy arterials, there are many corridors in both West and East Independence that host lower speed, lower volume roadways that could make ideal candidates for bike lanes and/or cycle tracks. Some of these corridors, based on traffic volumes, may be good candidates for roadway modifications, alongside bike facilities, that can help to reduce speeding and aggressive driving, making the corridor safer for all hosted modes.

Since active modes are often not supported as a safe or convenient option given the existing infrastructure, many people currently walking or biking for transportation in Independence are doing so out of necessity. Based on existing conditions analysis, there is likely a need to prioritize improvements in Environmental Justice Areas, which are predominately located in the western portion of the city. In this way, the city prioritizes building safer alternatives for communities that lack access to vehicles, or have greater economic needs for affordable transportation options.

Figure 8: Existing Conditions Map



Planned Infrastructure

This section describes and reviews planned and programmed active transportation infrastructure in Independence.

Truman Connected

Truman Connected is a comprehensive initiative to develop a pedestrian and bicycle route through Independence, with a focus on connecting residents and visitors to key destinations including Independence Square, Truman Library, Englewood Arts District, Truman Sports Complex, and the Rock Island Trail. The project aims to provide safe and convenient active transportation options for residents, especially those with limited or no access to a vehicle, including low-income and elderly residents. The project will improve non-motorized access to essential services like healthcare, grocery stores, and pharmacies, advancing transportation recommendations and contributing to the sustainable development goals.

The project's final route spans several major streets in Independence, starting at US 24 Highway and Bess Truman Pkwy and concluding at Blue Ridge Cutoff and Interstate 70, connecting to the Truman Sports Complex and the Rock Island Trail. The alignment is broken into three phases. Phase 1 starts at US 24, near the Truman Presidential Library, moves south through Independence Square, and then west along Winner Rd, ending at Sterling Avenue. The plans for this section include both a separated cycle track and a shared use path and also includes improvements to the crossings and intersections. Phase 2 runs along Sterling Avenue from Winner Rd to US 40 and includes protected bike lanes on either side of the street and an improved six-foot sidewalk. A portion of the corridor improvements, along US 40, is a separate MoDOT project that includes bike on shoulder. Finally, phase 3 runs along Blue Ridge Cutoff From US 40 to the Truman Sports Complex and terminating at the trailhead for the Rock Island Trail. This portion includes a 10-foot wide shared use trail along the west side of the road. Figure 9 illustrates the Truman Connected phased approach.

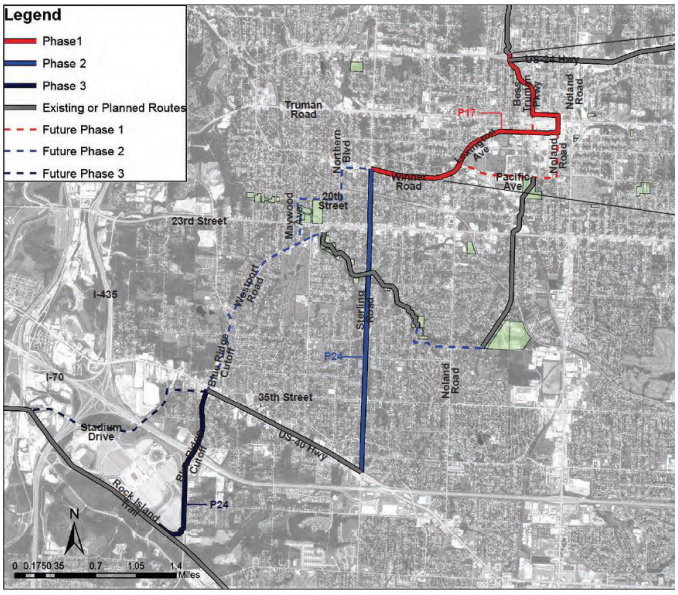
Other Investments

Other significant upcoming projects that include sidewalk, bike lane, or trail components include:

- Noland Road Complete Streets: awarded $10.10 million from the federal RAISE program for upgrading Noland Road from 24 Highway to Fair Street with dedicated bike lanes, new sidewalks, ADA features, pedestrian signals, and improved bus stops.
- Winner Road Complete Streets: adding ADA-compliant sidewalks, a multi-use trail, pedestrian signal improvements, bus stop improvements, green infrastructure, and new street lighting and traffic-calming measures.
- 24 Highway Complete Streets: New sidewalk, multi-use trail, curb & gutter, pedestrian signals, sidewalk ramps, street lighting, and other improvements on the south side of US 24 Highway.
- 40 Highway Complete Streets: New sidewalk, dedicated bike lane, curb & gutter, pedestrian signals, sidewalk ramps, street lighting, and other improvements on the north side of US 40 Highway.
- Square Streetscape Project: Streetscape and roadway improvements including sidewalks, lighting, and implementation of bicycle and pedestrian amenities.
- Truman Depot and Pacific Trail Improvements: Restoration of the Historic Truman Depot as a historic site and waiting area for Amtrak, and a multi-use trail to the National Historic Frontier Trails Museum.
- Independence Historic Trails Project: Shared-use trail along Liberty Street and Pacific Ave. to the Bingham-Waggoner Estate, 100% funded through the Federal Lands Access Program (FLAP).
- Fairmount Loop Trail: This project will include a multi-use trail on Ash Ave and on Kentucky Rd, creating a loop that ties the existing Fairmount Loop Trail on Arlington Street to the proposed improvements on US 24 Highway.

Figure 9: Truman Connected Corridor

From Truman Connected Plan (2020)



2 Engagement

Introduction & Overview

The *Independence Transportation for All* Plan is built on the input provided by community members that have engaged in the planning process. People living or otherwise traveling within the city are the experts of the existing system, needs, and opportunities. This section provides an overview of the input received during the process, what was learned from the input, and how it provides a framework for Plan recommendations and implementation steps.

Community engagement efforts included:

- **Focus Group interviews** with key stakeholders to understand issues, challenges, and opportunities for active transportation in the city. A total of four focus groups were assembled, representing a wide array of community interests, including economic development, sustainability, community services, and senior services, and school districts.
- A **community survey** to gather information on the city's most significant transportation challenges and needs, including comfort levels and desired improvements to active transportation infrastructure or policies.
- **Public events** that included two pop-up events early in the process to gather ideas and input, a group bicycle ride and workshop to highlight transportation issues and challenges, and an open house public meeting to review draft recommendations that included bicycle training exercises for kids.
- A **Steering Committee** comprised of city staff from different departments, to help guide the development of the Plan and ensure that recommendations meet community needs and represent community interests.

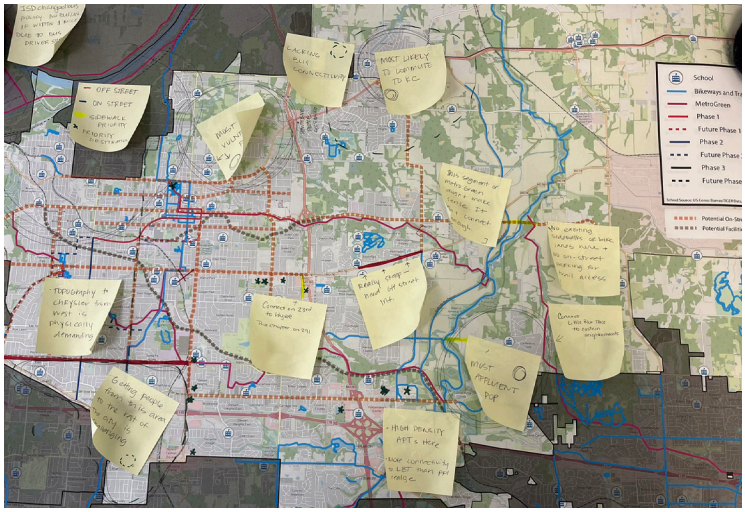
These combined efforts provided the project team with an understanding of community challenges and desires, and guidance on recommendations and materials throughout the Plan. Specific input and engagement results are summarized on the following pages.

Steering Committee

The planning process was guided by a committee of key City staff who provided ideas and input throughout the project. This committee represented a variety of city departments, including Community Development, Parks, Recreation, and Tourism, Municipal Services, Power & Light, and the Police Department. The committee's input early in the process was critical to understanding constraints and existing conditions as a baseline for the process. Late in the process, the committee helped to develop concepts and refine recommendations.

Specific input included:

- Guidance on operations and maintenance considerations of infrastructure, such as city versus homeowner responsibility for sidewalks, and sustainable funding for maintenance activities.
- Identifying community champions for active transportation, such as school staff, bicycle advocates, and others brought into the process.
- Background on the city's Complete Streets policy and needs to improve and strengthen this policy, such as requiring specific elements in new development projects.
- Assisting with planning public engagement events, including locations, timeframes, and communications.
- Input on transit needs and components of existing ridership patterns, and access to bus stop considerations.
- Identified locations (e.g. New Town at Harmony) in developing areas of the city with mixed-use plans and high-demand for active transportation integration.
- Known issues with existing city codes on priority and protection of cyclists and pedestrians.
- Information on other related processes impacting implementation of active transportation improvements, such as a Parks Master Plan in progress, and discussions of a potential upcoming general obligation bond that could include active transportation improvements along with other community needs.



With experience in a wide range of city functions, the Plan Steering Committee assisted the project team with identifying opportunities and challenges for the active transportation network.

Stakeholder Engagement

The project team convened a series of stakeholder interviews to learn about opportunities and challenges from a broad representation of the community. To gather as many voices as possible, stakeholders were grouped into four focus groups that met to discuss plan needs and goals. These discussions are summarized below.

Economic Development

(including Independence Chamber of Commerce, Noland Road CID, Northpoint Development, and Centerpoint Hospital)

- There are few places to cross safely on key corridors (e.g. 40 Highway, Truman Rd.) due to incomplete sidewalks, many driveways, and lack of crosswalks.
- Little Blue Trace Trail is an asset for nearby businesses it connects to. Need to focus on building connections out from the trail.
- "Leapfrog" development is a challenge for completing transportation networks of all modes; seek to improve development requirements and policies.
- Some employers, specifically Centerpoint, have issues filling positions due to incomplete transportation at all hours. Some employees use Uber to work due to lack of options.
- Bus transportation is limited, particularly to major employers, and isn't an option at night and on Sundays. An on-demand or rideshare type service may be appropriate to meet these needs better.
- People do walk and bike in the community despite infrastructure challenges, such as to Metropolitan Community College Blue River campus and along Highway 40.
- Bikeshare may be an option around Independence Square, Englewood, and Truman Library.

Community, Senior, & Social Services

(including Community Services League, Palmer Center, and social justice advocates)

- Some people in the community are reliant on walking, or using a wheelchair, and they have a difficult time traveling in the city.
- Kids are having to play in areas that aren't safe and close to traffic; connecting people to parks should be a priority.
- There are communication barriers that impact the Spanish-speaking community, such as City newsletters and other information that is not generally provided in Spanish.
- Active transportation west of Highway 291 is more for practical purposes; east of Highway 291 is more for recreational purposes.
- Speeding traffic is a safety issue for pedestrians at many locations. Sterling Ave, Highway 40, Highway 24, and Truman Road discussed specifically.
- Security concerns are a disincentive for people to walk or bike; many locations are not well-lit.

Sustainability Commission

(Independence Transportation for All group discussion at August 3, 2023 meeting)

- Some sidewalks along major arterial streets are not usable, including portions of Highway 24, Noland Road, 23rd Street, Crysler Avenue, and Blue Ridge Boulevard. Issues with infrequent and low-quality crossings are also an issue on these corridors.
- Most places in the city don't have bicycle parking.
- Limited transit service doesn't allow for someone to be able to get both to and from work. Many more people would ride if it were an option.
- Narrower streets would help reduce traffic speeds, and improve bike safety.
- Would like to see a change to car culture that is more accommodating of pedestrians. Some small pockets such as the Square and Englewood, but need more areas like this and fewer barriers in between.
- Land use planning and zoning considerations should not be overlooked. Lack of small businesses in neighborhoods, and have to travel further to major amenity hubs.

Independence School District

(District management and administrative staff including transportation, facilities, family services, including input from individual schools.)

- Most schools have inadequate sidewalk access, especially in the western part of the city, not just around schools but into neighborhoods also.
- Parents share that their kids would walk to school if there were sidewalks.
- With school days being longer now, lighting is an issue along walking routes as it can be dark before and after school in the winter.
- There are areas served with bus transportation where students would be able to walk if there were sidewalks and safe crossings.
- Specific schools with highest priority needs: Nowlin, Castle Park, Nolan, Benton, Three Trails, and Korte.
- All three high schools are on major high-speed streets that create safety issues and barriers for walkability.

Public Events

Pop-Up Meeting #1

The first pop-up meeting was held on Friday night of the SantaCaliGon Festival next to the Historic Truman Courthouse. Project team members provided information on the project and asked attendees to comment on the biggest challenges to walking and biking in Independence, and to note specific areas of concern on a map.

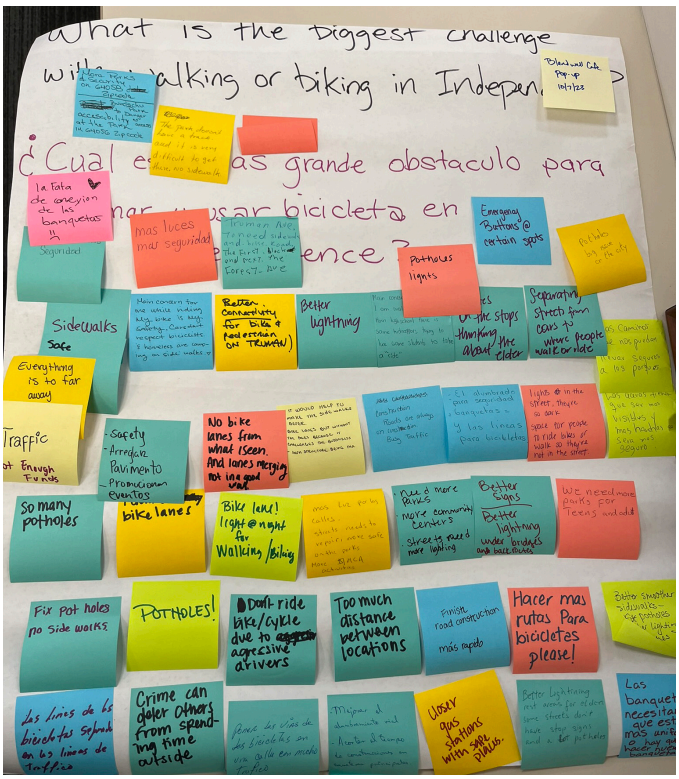
Feedback provided the project team with information on specific areas of concern, such as areas where sidewalks are in poor condition, street crossings are dangerous, or other safety issues exist. Comments primarily came from residents concerned with proving more recreational opportunities. Many participants commented on the need for more separated facilities such as trails to provide longer-distance connections. This includes a desire for new trails in the southwestern part of the city to connect to the new Rock Island Trail near the Truman Sports Complex, and new trails in eastern Independence to connect to the Little Blue Trace Trail and trails along RD Mize Road. New bicycle lanes are desired on portions of Crysler Avenue and on Lee's Summit Road, connecting to existing bike lanes south of the city.

Pop-Up Meeting #2

The second pop-up meeting was held at Blendwell Café on a Saturday in October 2023, and coordinated with a pre-existing event with primarily Spanish-speaking attendees. A translator was provided for the event. Questions and format were similar to the first pop-up meeting.

Feedback from this group tended to be more focused on the western portion of the city, where many meeting attendees reside or visit on a regular basis. Additionally, comments were more focused on walking and biking as a necessary form of transportation to meet daily needs such as accessing employment, education, and essential shopping. There is a need for improved sidewalks in most neighborhoods, and a desire to be able walk or bike with as much separation from car traffic as possible. Traffic speeds and lighting were highlighted as significant safety challenges.

Additionally, land use planning came up as an issue in this session, with attendees noting that there is too much distance between locations, and destinations are too far away. This, in addition to limited infrastructure, exacerbates the challenge of walking and biking.



Pop-up public events provide a way to engage the community in locations they are already gathering, rather than having to go out of their way to attend a public meeting. (Photos from Blendwell Cafe pop-up public meeting, October 2023.)

Bike the Square Event

In October 2023, the project team organized a bicycle ride designed to experience the challenges and opportunities for biking in the community. The route was a 4-mile round-trip from Independence Square to Mill Creek Park, with additional stops at Independence Transit Center, McCoy Park, Truman Library, Oregon Trail Trailhead, and the Historic Truman Courthouse. The ride included sections of on-street riding and off-street trails.

While this ride only included a small area of the city, it represents some of the city's most significant attractions, and provided an illustration of conditions that exist in other areas as well. Observations included:

- Bess Truman Parkway is part of the Truman Connected corridor, with an off-street trail planned. The group noted a major difference in feeling safe riding on a separated trail verses on-street alongside traffic.
- Riding at the right edge of a road can be a challenge with gravel, dirt, and debris that accumulates along the gutter of the street.
- The Mill Creek Trail was functional but has a significant number of potholes. Additionally, a lack of lighting along the trail would make using the trail at night feel unsafe.
- Independence Square is a great place to walk, but safe and convenient connections to it are lacking. Most people need to drive to get there, if they are able to do so.

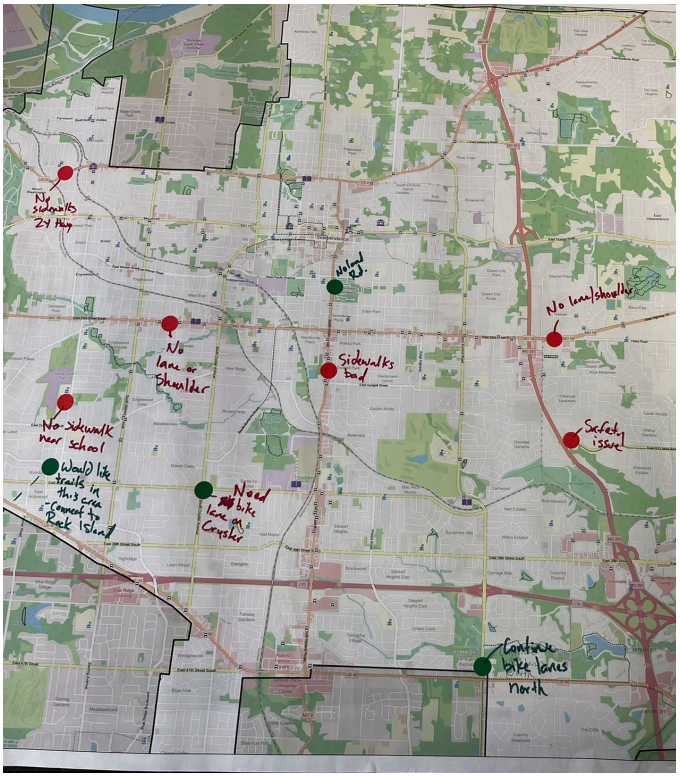
The October 2023 "Bike the Square" project featured a stop at Independence Transit Center to discuss transit service and accessibility.

Open House Meeting / Family Night Out

A final public meeting at the Roger T Sermon Community Center provided an opportunity to receive feedback on preliminary recommendations as they are in the process of being developed. This meeting was held as an open house format to display project materials and draft recommendations. BikeWalkKC provided a family bicycle skills training event in coordination with the meeting.

Attendees at the meeting expressed general agreement with preliminary recommendations. These included recommendations for citywide application as well as specific priorities for western and eastern Independence (see Section 3 for details on these recommendations). Additional detail on requests for new or extended bicycle routes were provided by some attendees.

Discussion at the meeting reiterated the need for prioritizing improvements around schools, parks, and focusing on better maintenance of existing resources, as well as targeted improvements to extend the reach and impact of these resources.

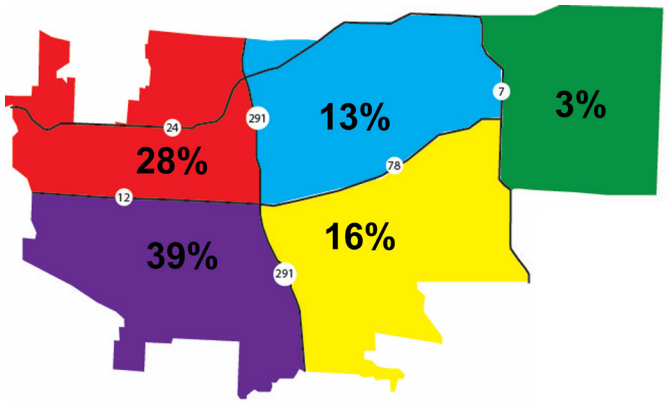


Map input from the SantiCaliGon Festival pop-up meeting in September 2023.

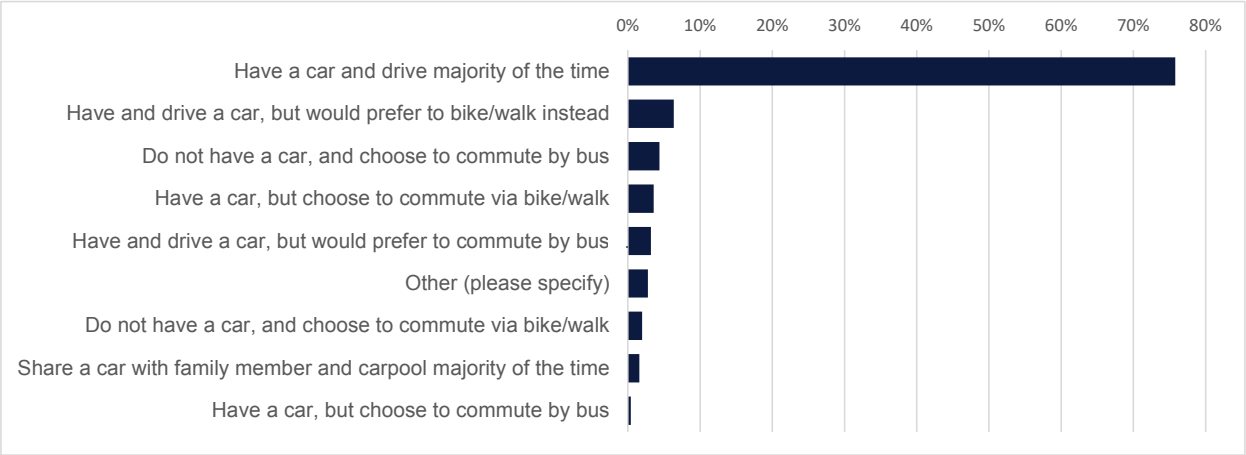
Community Survey

A community survey was conducted in the fall of 2023 in order to gather input from a larger population that may be interested in active transportation but have been unable to participate in public events described above. Surveys were available in both English and Spanish, and available online as well as on paper at public events. A total of 253 surveys were completed. This section summarizes significant findings of the survey.

Where do you live?



On an average day, what is your typical mode of transportation? Choose one



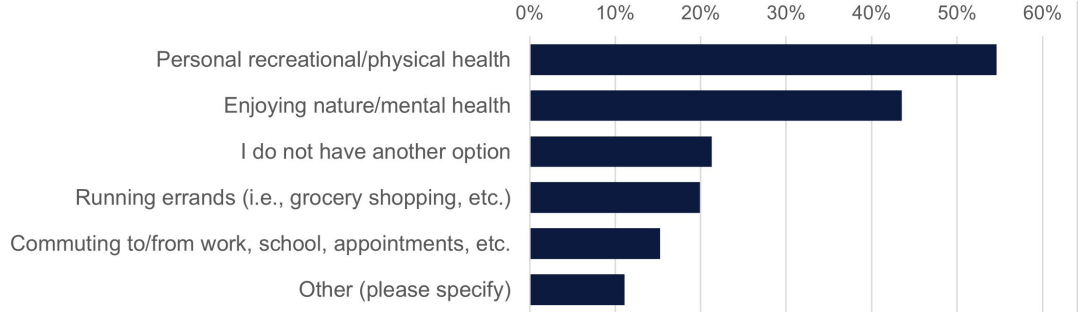
Car-Centered Mobility

- 85% of respondents primarily use personal cars for commuting and getting around.
- Nearly 10% of those respondents would prefer to walk, bike, or take transit if there were safer options and more connected options.
- Only 3% of respondents own a car, but choose to walk, bike, or take transit as their primary mode.
- This suggests alternatives to driving are primarily a mode of necessity versus a mode of choice.

Motivations for Active Transportation

- 54% of respondents claim personal recreational and physical health as their main driver for utilizing active transportation.
- 43% claim its for enjoyment of nature and/or for the betterment of their mental health.
- Respondents see a strong connection between staying active and their mental/physical well-being.
- Health-centric motivations suggest a community that values active transportation and high-quality recreation options, emphasizing the need for wellness considerations in transportation planning.

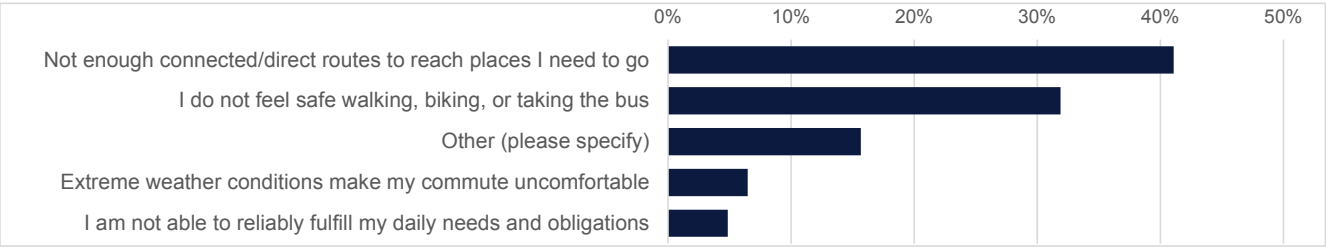
If you are not driving in a car, why are you using another mode of transportation such as walking, biking, or taking the bus? Choose all that apply



Barriers to Active Alternatives

- For those without personal vehicles, safety concerns (32%) and lack of connected routes (41%) are significant challenges.
- 50% of respondents said attempting to walk and bike in the city is not safe and not comfortable
- Only 6% claimed it was very comfortable and safe
- Infrastructure development, well-lit pathways, and improved route connectivity are crucial for fostering safer and more convenient transportation options

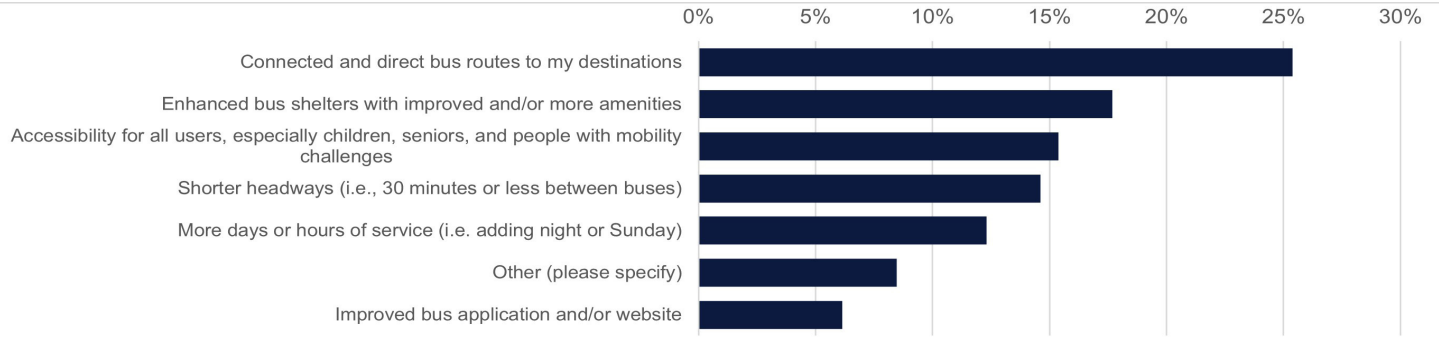
If you do not drive or have access to a vehicle, what are the challenges you face on a typical day as you walk, bike, or take the bus? Choose one



Transit Improvements

- 67% of respondents do not use the bus in Independence.
- Out of those who both use the bus and don't find the existing system safe or convenient:
  - » 75% want to see more direct connections.
  - » 54% would like improved shelters and stops.
  - » 47% would like to see more frequent buses.
  - » 40% would like more days and hours of service.
  - » The most popular routes included the 24 (23% of riders), the 301, 302, and 303 (35% combined).

Question: What is your comfort level with taking the bus in Independence? If you answered "Not comfortable or safe at all" or "Not very comfortable or safe" what would make you feel safer?

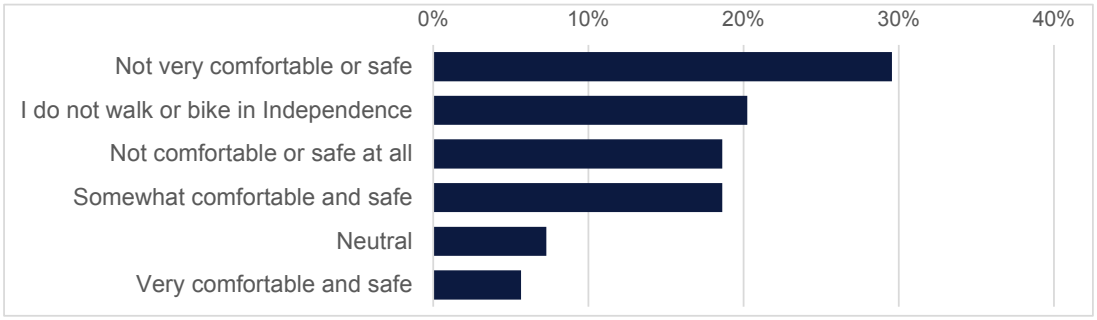


Potential Improvements

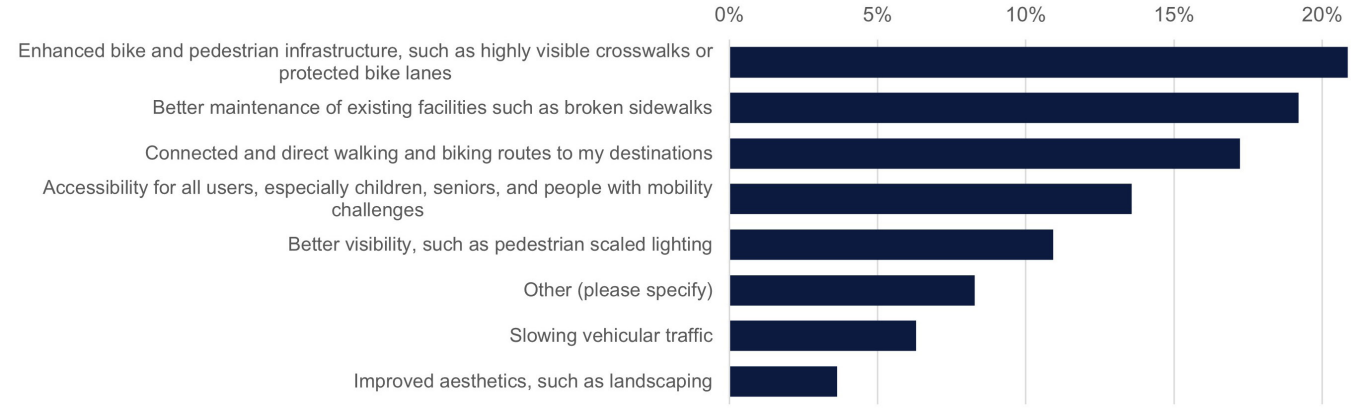
There are things we can do to make walking and biking safer, more comfortable, and more connected to the places people want to go, such as:

- Identify roads for bike/pedestrian improvements and new trail alignments – delivering a more complete bike/pedestrian network for the city
- Focus on ways to physically separate car, bicycle, and pedestrian traffic to the extent possible, to maximize the comfort and safety for all users.
- Align active transportation improvements with public health goals, capitalizing on the primary existing and desired use of active transportation in the city.

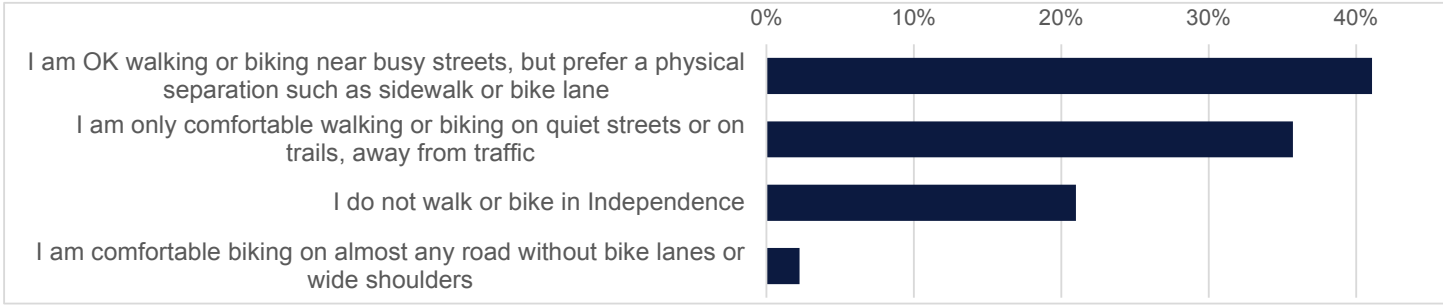
What is your comfort level with walking or biking in Independence for trips that exceed short distances (i.e., distance from personal parked vehicle to storefront)?



If you answered "Not comfortable or safe at all" or "Not very comfortable or safe" what would make you feel safer? Choose top three.



What type of biking or walking infrastructure makes you feel the most safe? Choose one.



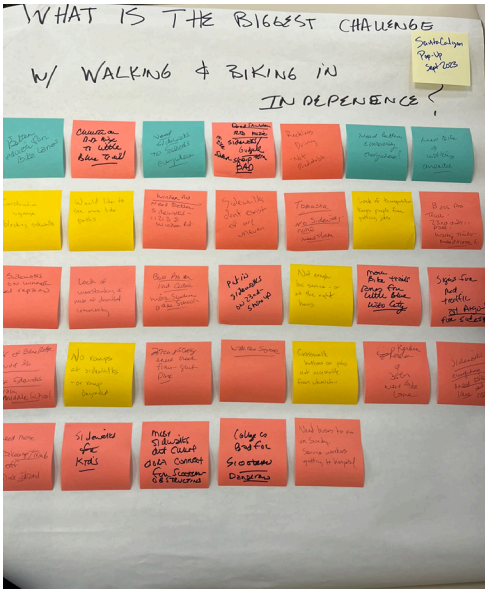
Ongoing Engagement

Because *Independence Transportation for All* is a citywide process, it encompasses a variety of needs and opinions that may vary at a neighborhood level, or based on how different groups of people use or are impacted by existing transportation systems. Corridor or smaller-area plans will still be an important planning task moving forward to ensure that planned and programmed infrastructure is locally-supportive and sensitive to each unique context.

These future efforts must incorporate community engagement as a key task that is integral to each process. As the community grows, the population changes, travel patterns shift, and new destinations emerge, it is important to keep the pulse of local residents and other stakeholders that will accrue the benefits and impacts of plans and projects.

While this planning and engagement is critical, "planning fatigue" can be a real challenge. Accordingly, it is important that residents see their ideas and efforts converted into funded projects that are implemented as well. This means pursuing available grants for projects eligible for certain federal or state funding programs, such as USDOT RAISE funding awarded for the Noland Road corridor. Demonstrating "wins" through successful project implementation builds additional support for public improvements to enhance quality of life in the city.

Ongoing public engagement efforts should include experiencing active transportation infrastructure first-hand, on bikes and by walking, as well as gathering ideas and experiences from community members at public events and meetings.



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3 Network Plan

Network Priorities

Information obtained from technical review (Section 1) and community input (Section 2) provide the basis for the creation of a network plan for future active transportation infrastructure and policies.

Active transportation infrastructure serves a wide variety of community needs by providing a means to connect people, regardless of personal mobility or vehicle ownership, to goods and services locally and regionally. In the case of Independence, several key components stand out as high priorities.

The overarching priority is the establishment and growth a city-wide bicycle and pedestrian network to provide residents active transportation alternatives. Truman Connected will serve as the starting point and the spine for the network expansion. This will involve enhancing corridors, creating east-west connections between Englewood, Downtown, and East Independence, and integrating existing trails on the city's east side into an expanded citywide trail network. The goal is to foster cohesive and accessible pathways for residents and visitors, promoting sustainable and healthy transportation options.

Additionally, the Plan emphasizes the integration of localized, neighborhood-level pedestrian connections. Focus areas include equitable access and prioritization of disadvantaged neighborhoods, ensuring that the benefits of the network reach all residents. Safety and convenience considerations are paramount, addressing the unique needs of diverse communities within Independence. The overall vision extends beyond the physical pathways, aiming to build a network that fosters connectivity, community engagement, and inclusivity for all residents.

The implementation plan follows a phased approach. Immediate actions focus on addressing strategic improvements in disadvantaged areas and surrounding schools. Intermediate phases prioritize expanding routes from Truman Connected and other priority segments of the citywide network. In the long term, the plan envisions completing network connections citywide and continuously assessing supportive projects and policies based on community feedback.

Ultimately, the network priorities are guided by a commitment to community welfare, sustainability, and inclusivity. The goal is to create a resilient and interconnected city, where the bicycle and pedestrian network contributes to overall mobility and community well-being.

Challenges and Opportunities

This section provides a recap of what the project team learned through these engagement efforts, and how these led to the Network Plan development and recommendations on the following pages.

Existing infrastructure in the city is largely insufficient to provide for safe and connected non-motorized transportation for residents. Several key challenges are detailed and categorized to the right, as major items that the Network Plan should seek to address. Similarly, key opportunities to enhance active transportation are detailed, based on community conversations and input throughout the engagement process.

Mis-aligned ramp and crosswalk near McCoy Park

Independence Transit Center

Key Challenges

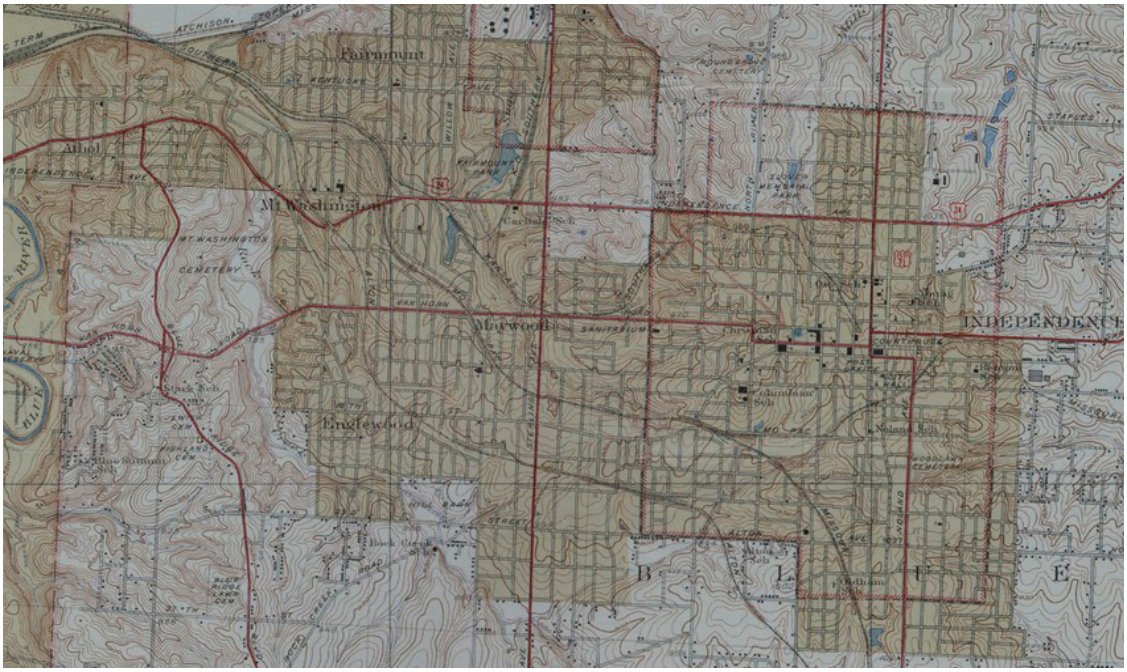
1. **Most areas of city have no dedicated bicycle infrastructure.** Cyclists in the city generally have to ride in mixed traffic. Only a small segment of the population, the most confident riders, is comfortable riding in this environment. (In the community survey, only two percent of respondents answered that they are "comfortable biking on almost any road without bike lanes or wide shoulders.")
2. **Bicycle infrastructure that does exist are not close to existing populated areas** and not accessible from most of city. This includes the Blue River Trace Trail and shared use paths alongside Little Blue Parkway, Jackson Drive, and E 39th Street.
3. **Some neighborhoods in Independence were built without sidewalks**, and are still lacking sidewalks. As is typical for lower-density neighborhoods developed as suburbanization grew rapidly starting in the 1950s, many streets in the city lack sidewalks, as well as curb and gutters for drainage. Newer neighborhoods typically have sidewalks on one side of the street. Sidewalks around schools are a notable shortcoming in many areas.
4. **Sidewalk infrastructure is a challenge to maintain across the city.** Public comments noted many areas in need of sidewalk repairs. Sidewalk maintenance in Independence is the responsibility of the property owner. However, many owners are unable to pay for costly sidewalk repairs or replacements.
5. **City codes and policies are in need of updating to improve active transportation safety.** These are detailed in the next section, and include items such as parking requirements for cars and bicycles, sidewalk requirements, street design, and traffic policies.
6. **Bus Service in Independence is inadequate to meet many transportation needs.** A robust transit service supplements walking and biking and allows more people to meet their needs without a car. In particular, current routes do not run often enough and have no service on evenings and Sundays.

Key Opportunities

1. Independence has a **strong historic core with a connected grid** street network and quality walking environment. Much of this historic core was developed prior to 1940 (see *Figure 10* below). This includes activity centers such as Independence Square and Englewood Arts District, as well as traditional neighborhoods that are part of the city's "Rediscovering Independence" initiative (Benton, Englewood/Proctor, Golden Acres, Manor Oaks, Mount Washington/Fairmount, North Main, South Main, Truman, and Winner).
2. **Blue River Trace Trail is major recreation amenity/destination** that crosses multiple jurisdictions and provides a high-quality recreational environment, with the potential to be a strong transportation asset.
3. **Planned and funded active transportation infrastructure is on the way.** This includes Truman Connected, Noland Road improvements, and several other corridor and neighborhood sidewalk and trail connections.
4. **A variety of parks are provided throughout the city,** as active transportation destinations and community gathering points. Many of these parks can serve as nodes for a future connected walking and biking network.
5. **Significant corridor and neighborhood-level planning background** have engaged the community in localized needs and built support for improvements. This includes prior and current "Safe Routes to School" work focused on identifying needs and prioritizing infrastructure and program development around schools.
6. Independence is **home to many regional amenities and destinations** that attract tourists and other visitors to the city. Examples include the Truman Library, Independence Square and Historic Truman Courthouse, Truman Historic District, MCC Blue River campus, Independence Center Mall, Cable Dahmer Arena, Community of Christ Temple, and various major retailers.
7. The city has planned for future growth with the **inclusion of shared-use paths along several arterial streets in eastern Independence.** This includes Little Blue Parkway, Jackson Drive, and E. 39th Street. These facilities can serve as a spine for a larger active transportation network as development occurs along these arterials.
8. While currently limited in size and service hours, **Independence has an established bus network.** Its more feasible to improve and expand an existing bus service than to start a new system from scratch. Existing infrastructure such as the Independence Transit Center and several improved bus stops with shelters in the city can provide quality access points to growing service in the future.

Figure 10: 1940 Map of Independence, Missouri

Credit: United States Department of the Interior, United States Geological Survey. State of Missouri, Geological Survey and Water Resources. Courtesy Harry S. Truman Library & Museum, Independence, Missouri. Map "M103."



Recommended Network Plan

As detailed above, transportation needs in Independence are diverse and require multiple methods to address challenges and opportunities identified. Information obtained from the community, and data reviewed from multiple sources, led to the development of a Network Plan, as shown in *Figure 11*, that provides a framework for active transportation in Independence.

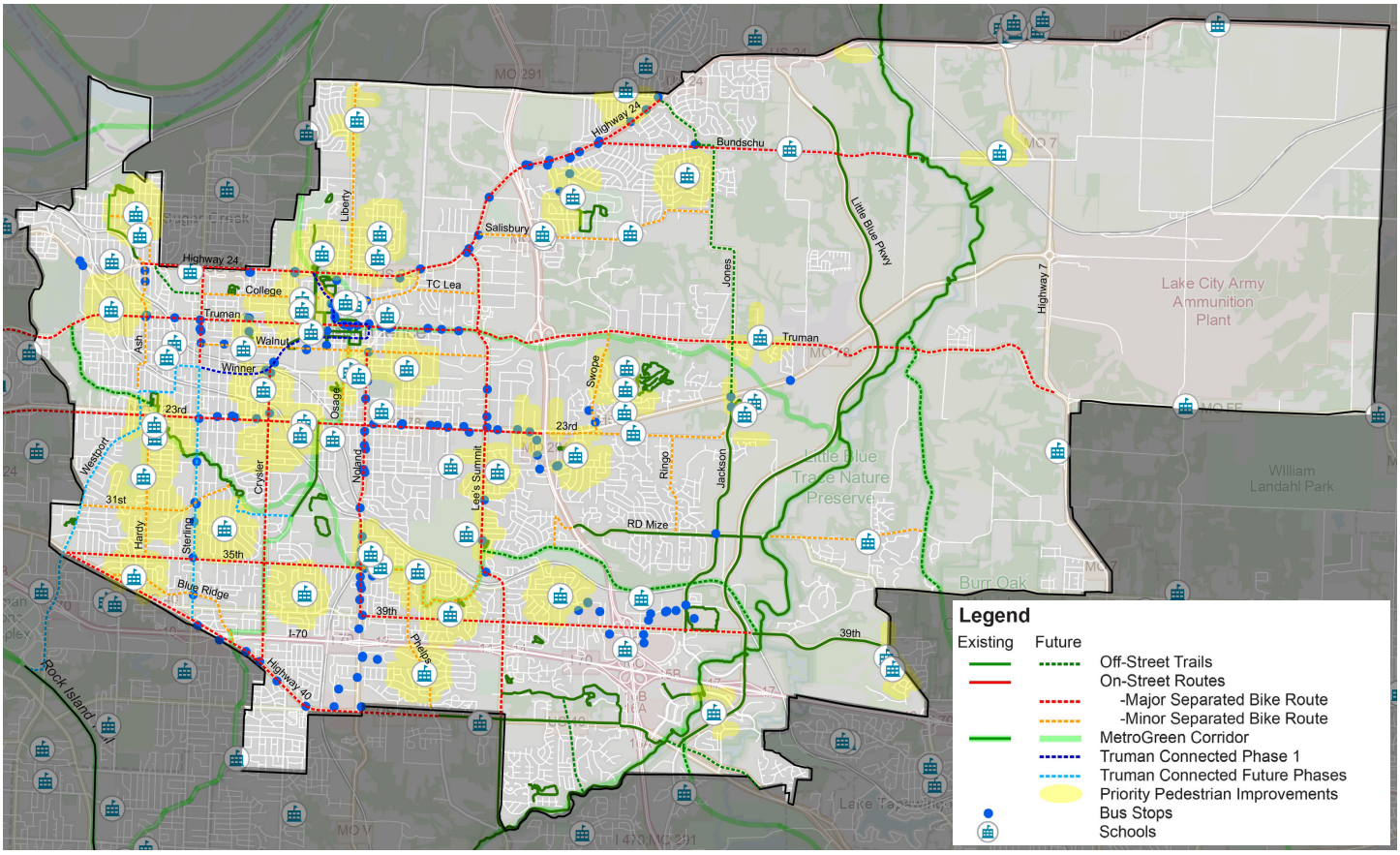
While the goal of this plan is to help facilitate citywide networks, localized needs vary throughout the city. In particular, needs vary between the historic and mostly developed western part of the city and the suburban and undeveloped eastern part of the city. This section organizes plan recommendations by citywide considerations, West Independence, and East Independence.

Citywide Network Priorities

1. **Gap-Filling and Maintenance in Environmental Justice Areas:** Targeting improvements in disadvantaged communities that allow residents to more easily meet their basic transportation needs. This includes prioritization of both local sidewalk needs at specific nodes as well as larger network-focused improvements. With safety as the top priority, completing gaps in sidewalk networks and safer crossings across major roads within a quarter-mile (an approximately five-minute walk) of major destinations including schools, parks, and commercial districts.
2. **Pedestrian Safety Improvements Near Schools:** Working with Independence School District, as well as other districts serving Independence (Raytown, Fort Osage, and Blue Springs) to implement targeted "Safe Routes to School" (SRTS) investments including new sidewalks, sidewalk repairs, crosswalks, traffic signal improvements, traffic calming features, and lighting. Several schools have already conducted planning processes to determine needs; others are in need of a SRTS process to prioritize needs.
3. **Access to Parks and Commercial Districts:** Residents, and especially kids, should be able to access parks safely by walking. Mill Creek Trail as a connection to Mill Creek Park is an example of a well used multimodal connection to a park, with a connection to the area's "Three Trails" history. Independence's many parks should be considered as key nodes that are connected by active transportation corridors, as shown in *Figure 11*.

Figure 11: Recommended Network Plan – Citywide

Note: This Network Plan has been developed using the City's existing roadway network and corridor studies. Proposed routes may need adjustment as the city continues to develop in the future.



4. **Bus Stop Improvements:** Many Independence bus stops are lacking in accessibility, such as concrete landing pads connected to sidewalks, as well as additional features such as benches and shelters. Prioritize improvements at the city's highest ridership stops, such as along the 24 Independence route, and align further improvements with future planning efforts for intra-city bus service.
5. **Strengthen & Clarify City Policies and Codes:** A review of city codes has identified opportunities to improve accessibility and safety for non-motorized modes of transportation. These are detailed in *Table 2* below.

Network Plan Facility Descriptions

Existing bicycle infrastructure in the city consists of off-street trails, primarily in the eastern portion of the city and within parks, and a few segments with on-street bike routes, generally in the form of unprotected bike lanes.

The *Independence Transportation for All* Network Plan identifies segments for new and improved infrastructure for both off-street and on-street applications. It also includes planned improvements that have been adopted from other corridor or area-specific processes, including Truman Connected as well as regional MetroGreen corridors. The three types of future bike infrastructure include:

Off-Street Trails

Future trails are recommended to extend the reach of existing trails, as well as to connect trails together that are currently separated by significant gaps. Recommended segments labeled as off-street trails are generally expected to have a similar form as the existing Little Blue Trace Trail, following streamways or other natural areas and not necessarily alongside a street. However, in some cases, further planning and design work may determine a street-adjacent facility to be most appropriate or feasible for these facilities.

On Street: Major Separated Bike Routes

Bike routes on or alongside streets requiring a high level of separation from traffic are designated as Major Separated Bike Routes. These are generally shown on streets designated as major arterial or minor arterial by the City. Because of higher traffic speeds, volumes, turning movements, and other factors, unprotected bicycle lanes or shared-lane markings are not appropriate, and will not attract significant use other than from the most confident cyclists. Potential treatments for these facilities include:

- Street-adjacent shared-use path, similar to off-street trails but situated alongside a street, buffered by curb, gutter, and grass or planter strip.

- Protected bicycle lane, with parked cars, bollards, or other barriers protecting and separating the bike lane from traffic.

On Street: Minor Separated Bike Routes

This category of recommended bike routes apply to streets generally designated as Collector or Local streets by the City. Due to lower traffic speeds, volumes, and generally narrower street and right-of-way widths, separation treatments may not need to be as extensive or permanent as with major separated routes. Potential typologies include:

- Bike lanes with a painted line separating bicycle traffic from car traffic

- Buffered bike lanes, which are similar to bike lanes but with additional space (at least two feet) between the bike lane and the adjacent car lane.

- Shared lane markings, or “sharrows” are pavement markings and signage marking the street as a bike route, but with no physical separation from traffic. This typology should only apply to streets with very low traffic volumes and speeds.

Additionally, **Priority Pedestrian Improvements** refer to areas of highest-priority in need of new, modified, or repaired sidewalks, crosswalks, and ADA ramps to facilitate safer and more comfortable walking and wheelchair use. Because walking to school has been identified as the highest-priority active transportation need my many community members, these priority areas are generally adjacent and near schools that are known to be lacking in sidewalk infrastructure. In addition to sidewalks, crosswalks, and ramps, these areas should be prioritized for pedestrian-scale lighting, pedestrian signals, and shade trees to improve visibility and comfort for people walking.

City Codes and Policy Specific Recommendations

In addition to the policies, plans, and projects recommended, making specific updates to the Independence Code of Ordinances ("code") is advised. *Table 2* outlines these proposed changes to enhance protections for vulnerable road users (VRUs), which includes pedestrians, people on a wheeled device (e.g., bike, scooter, roller skates, skateboard, etc.) and people using mobility assisted devices (e.g., wheelchair, cane, walker, etc.).

Table 2: Recommended City Codes Updates

Code location/ title	Current requirements	Proposed changes
Chapter 14 - Unified Development Ordinance		
14.501-08: Parking and Loading	Bike parking is required and takes a "one size fits all" approach that does not necessarily reflect how land uses interact with biking activity. The current language requires a certain number of bike parking based on the number of required car parking spaces. For instance, some businesses require large volumes of car parking (e.g., Home Depot, Walmart, Costco, etc.) that do not typically have high bike parking demand. This results in unused bike parking.	Require bike parking that is appropriate for the given land use to ensure that what is needed is available, but not required in excess, avoiding property or business owner resentment. Offer a deferral of bike parking or provide other bike/ pedestrian amenities when the number of bike parking spaces is not practical to the current land use. Resource: DERO Bike Parking Guide
14.509-04: Street Widths	Current language requires a minimum street width of 24 feet, and if a street is less than that, it must be widened.	There are many situations where a narrower street, like on a neighborhood greenway, routes to school, one-way service alleys, among others. This requirements imposes a design condition that can be hostile to urban design and bike/ped friendly design. Allow for more flexibility on street width that's sensitive to the land use context and built environment. Requiring a minimum is restrictive and paves the way for overbuilt streets. (Note: this also would need to be changed in the Public Works Manual).
14-603-09: Crosswalks	Currently, crosswalks only may be required when blocks exceed 600' and whenever deemed necessary to provide safe pedestrian circulation or near certain facilities, such as schools, playgrounds, shopping areas, transportation, and other community facilities.	Change the word "and" to "or" whenever deemed necessary to allow for more opportunities to place a crosswalk since sometimes a crosswalk is warranted even if the block is less than 600'.
Chapter 17 - Public Works Regulations		
Parklets, Outdoor Dining, Etc.	There is no specific problematic language within this chapter; however, currently certain activities supportive of walking and biking are either not allowable or not expressly stated in the code. For example, it is not legal to install a bike rack, put a parklet in a parking space, have outdoor terrace dining in ROW, and so on, resulting in no clear path forward for entities wanting to install these treatments.	There needs to be a process to install these treatments that states the rights of the user as it relates to encroachments and easements. Expand upon the allowable uses in the public ROW to include activities supportive of an active walking/biking area.
Chapter 18 - Traffic		

18.01.001: Definitions	The definitions in this chapter do not account for e-bikes, scooters, bike infrastructure, and more related to the bike/ped experience. The only terms defined are human powered bicycles and motorcycles but nothing in between. Terms such as “motor scooter” are included, which in today’s environment with app-based scooter rentals, require more clarification on definitions and allowable uses. Section 5300, adopted outright into the Design & Construction manual, does not address these definitions either.	Expand upon the definitions to include more roadway users. This is increasingly important in the diversity of modes available and the use must be defined in order to regulate the use itself. Manually powered bicycles, electric bikes, and motorbikes have varying speed capabilities and are powered differently. Some electric bikes require the cyclist to pedal, and limit maximum speeds. These vehicles can generally be treated like a regular bicycle. Other electric bicycles are faster and self-propelled. These higher-powered bicycles can overwhelm other riders and move more quickly than many bike facilities can safely accommodate. Defining scooters and electric scooters and adding it to the code is important so everyone understands how to responsibly operate, park, and store them. People on bikes are more susceptible to harassment and intimidation. Harassment regulations serve as education that people on bikes are legitimate road users and provide a recourse for persons who are threatened. This could be included in the Definitions section or somewhere else.
18.03.005 and .008: Enforcement and Obedience to Traffic Regulations	For the most part, people on wheels are not allowed on sidewalks in business districts (including: Englewood Business District, Fairmount Business District, Maywood Business District, Noland Road Business District, Central Traffic District, or any other private/public property where noted). This is a common area for people to be on wheels. Additionally, persons over the age of 13 are prohibited from riding a bike on any sidewalk.	Many “interested but concerned” cyclists may be uncomfortable riding in mixed traffic and are inclined to use the sidewalk to reach desired destinations. If bike facilities are implemented in the future, bikers may still use the sidewalk as a space to pull off and engage with local businesses. Many cities permit riding on the sidewalk alongside requirements for prioritizing and yielding to pedestrians.
18.07.009-.011: Right of Way for Vehicles and Pedestrians	The only place a pedestrian can lawfully cross is in a marked crosswalk. If the city's infrastructure does not reflect pedestrian usage patterns and direct, comfortable, and convenient paths are not available for bikers or pedestrians, then people on foot or bike are regularly required to break the law. The code states vehicles are not required to yield to pedestrians in certain situations. Pedestrians must use a sidewalk when present. When no sidewalk is present, they must walk along the left side of the street or shoulder only to face oncoming traffic.	Expanding and clarifying the right of way for pedestrians at crosswalks and intersections is a way to further protect VRUs from unsafe driver behavior. The code needs to significantly strengthen the protections for bikes/ pedestrians crossing the roadway, including allowing crossing anywhere so people can cross where they need to without fear of legal repercussions. VRU protections consider that not all road users are subject to the same risks in the event of a crash. VRU code language acknowledges that drivers have responsibilities when encountering vulnerable road users on the roadway, and identifies specific provisions for passing, turning, and safely interacting with all types of people using the road who are not in automobiles.
18.11.001: One Way Streets and Alleys	This states bicycles must operate in the movement of traffic on one-way streets.	Update to say all traffic must operate one way, except bicycles. Pedestrians walk counter to traffic regularly and there are many instances (narrower roadways such as alleys and one-way streets) when it’s appropriate and safe for bikes to navigate contraflow. Oftentimes, the path to a destination will be more direct and more comfortable if a person on a bike can ride the same way someone would use a sidewalk to walk to their destination.
18.13.013: Miscellaneous Rules	Driving on a sidewalk is not allowed; however, the code does not make any mention of not driving on bike lanes.	As the City develops a network of bike infrastructure it will be necessary to clearly prohibit this unsafe use.

18.15.006: Stopping, Standing, and Parking - Where Prohibited	The code defines parking as being in a spot longer than 15 minutes, which means bike/pedestrian infrastructure could be legally blocked as long as it's for less than 15 minutes. In theory, it could be continuously blocked by multiple different vehicles occupying the space in 15 minute intervals.	Add bike lanes and other bike/pedestrian infrastructure to the prohibited parking area and consider lessening or dropping entirely the 15 minute grace period to ensure safe and continuous passage for people walking or biking.
Article 18. Regulations for Bicycles and Motorized Bicycles	Behavior on a bike is restricted in ways other modes are not, including laws on how you must sit on a bicycle.	Lessen the legislation on a bicycle. While progressive, the code could allow for Idaho stops, rolling stops, yield on stop and stop on red, etc., to broaden the legal allowances for people on bikes.
18.18.003: Riding on Roadways and Bicycle Paths	The code requires a biker to ride as near to the right hand as practicable AND the biker is responsible for exercising care when passing a vehicle. If there's a bike path present, bikers must use the bike path and not the road.	Riding as far to the right is generally recommended for bikers, but there are many cases where the biker taking the full lane is a safer method of riding: • When overtaking and passing another vehicle • When traveling at or near the same speed as other traffic • When preparing for a left turn • Where a lane is too narrow to share safely with another vehicle • To avoid any condition that makes it unsafe to continue along the right-hand curb or edge Even when dedicated bicycle facilities are provided, experienced and confident bikers will be comfortable with, and prefer, riding in traffic. Allowing riders to choose between using bike lanes or riding in the road removes barriers to biking for the greatest number of persons. A passing rule for bikes keeps all mode users safer, similarly to how vehicles have rules for passing other vehicles. Passing should take place to the left of a bicycle and with an appropriate amount of space for the given road conditions. A minimum standard is that cars should give at least 3 feet or space when passing a bicyclist.
Design and Construction Manual		
Sec. 5203.1: Design Criteria	The smallest ROW is 50' but vibrant urban designs and areas inclusive to bike/ped movements may want to be more narrow. The minimum width of travel lanes is 12' except for residential collectors with an option to reduce to 11' minimum when approved by the City Engineer. For major arterials, the sidewalk requirement says: "1 sidewalk and 1 shared use path" and for all others lists the number "2".	Be more flexible on ROW requirements depending on the land use context. Allow for a minimum width of 10' for roadways with interrupting flow operating at less than 45 mph. AASHTO recommends a minimum lane width of 12 feet for high-speed and high-volume roadways and a minimum of 10 to 11 feet for urban areas with heavy pedestrian activity. Provide clarity on required sidewalk and shared use path widths. Add "shared use path" to the definitions.
Use of Public Rights of Way	There's no language or mention of demonstrations, better blocks, temporary parklets, pilot projects, etc.	Make these uses allowable and assign permitting procedures associated with closures and modifications of streets. Often, the best place for bike parking is in the public ROW. This can make the installation of bike racks lengthy and cumbersome process for businesses and property owners. Other uses of the ROW, including parklets that provide public space amenities face similar challenges. A process to permit and streamline ROW encroachments for bike corrals, parklets, and other uses can encourage private citizens and businesses to support the city's goals for walkability and bikeability.

Section 5300 - Incidental Construction & Local Bicycle Facility Design Guidance	This guidance is from 2022.	This requires a detailed review as guidance for bicycle facility design has evolved significantly over the last 20 years. For instance, the only bicycle types defined are those powered by humans (an issue previously noted in the code) and facilities like "two-way bike lanes", commonly referred to as cycle tracks, are a design treatment not recommended.
Traffic Calming Policy	The "disadvantages of traffic calming" present opinions versus facts. This section states "traffic calming treatments are typically the most expensive means of mitigation and have the most significant impact to residents." The qualifications to be eligible for traffic calming are highly prohibitive, both physically and from a community support perspective.	Remove the "disadvantages of traffic calming". If there are concerns related to traffic calming, use high quality research to provide information on why. Traffic calming treatments can be as simple as using paint to stripe a bike lane in an appropriate context, costing very few resources to a city. It is recommended to remove this statement or provide high quality research to demonstrate why traffic calming treatments are "the most expensive". Reduce the number of qualifications for a street to be eligible for traffic calming. This section remains highly problematic and needs an extensive rewrite.

West Independence Network Priorities

The portion of Independence west of Highway 291 has unique challenges for those traveling without a car. Public and stakeholder feedback emphasize a need for improved active transportation infrastructure for a wide range of trips, including to employment, education, grocery shopping, recreational, and social purposes. Facilities should be planned with an emphasis on safety, both in terms of proximity to traffic as well as features such as lighting and visibility. Specific priorities are summarized below and shown in *Figure 12*.

1. **Safe Routes to School** infrastructure improvements, policy, and programming to make it safer and easier for students to walk or bike to and from school. Several schools have been noted by school district employees and parents as having specific concerns relating to active transportation safety. New sidewalks are needed to fill gaps in neighborhoods adjacent to schools, many existing sidewalks are in need of repair or replacement. Crosswalks are needed in more locations, and need improved visibility. Lighting is needed to improve safety while walking in the winter before and after school when it is dark.

2. **Evaluation of Major Streets for Bicycle Facilities** to provide safe bicycle routes along selected arterial or collector streets providing direct connections through the city. West Independence features a grid of arterial and collector streets that could be utilized for bicycle routes. Due to a community preference for separated infrastructure, street-adjacent shared-use trail facilities or protected bike lanes are desired.

   Priority east-west corridors include Highway 24, E 9th/College Street, Truman Road, E 15th/Walnut Street, E 23rd Street, E 35th Street, and E 39th Street. Priority north-south corridors include Blue Ridge Cutoff/Westport Rd, Crysler Avenue, Noland Road, and Lee's Summit Road.

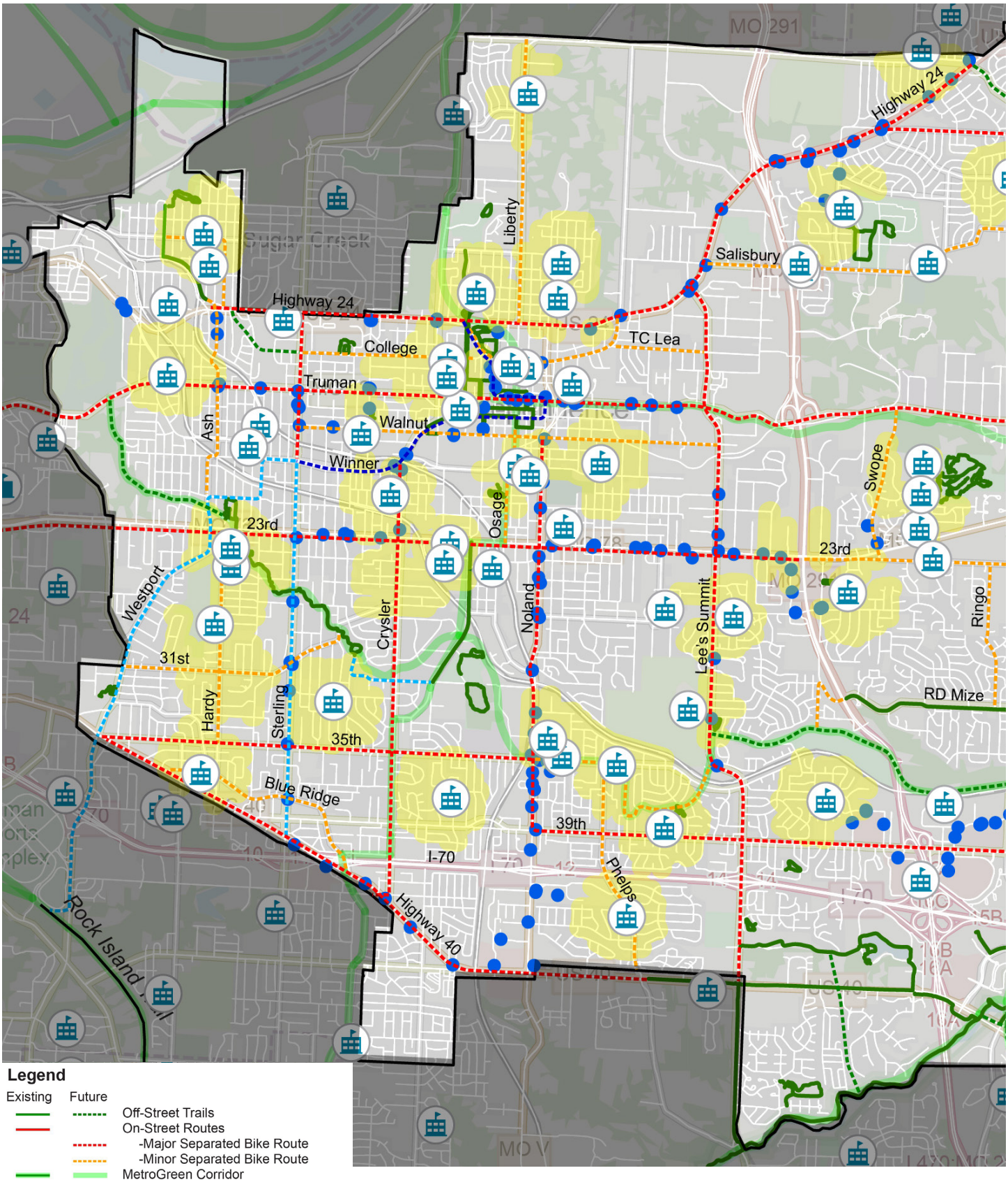
   A more detailed assessment of each street will be needed to affirm feasible and appropriate facilities, based on right-of-way widths, lane widths, traffic counts, and other factors.

3. **Capitalize on Planned Upcoming Investments** by adding neighborhood connectors/access points to these corridors. The City is already investing in multiple projects to improve active transportation connectivity. This includes new sections of sidewalks and/or trails along Noland Road, Highway 24, Highway 40, Winner Road, and Pacific Avenue, among others.

   One investment in particular can serve as a bicycle and pedestrian spine for the area. The "Truman Connected" Phase 1 corridor is under design and will feature shared-use paths, cycle tracks, and sidewalks along segments of Bess Truman Parkway, Lexington Avenue, and Winner Road. Establishing a series of "neighborhood connectors" to extend access to this corridor will allow for a more extensive network to capitalize on this investment. Several of these include "alternate routes" that provide additional connectivity to neighborhood parks and schools and should be prioritized as components that will expand the reach and impact of the Truman Connected corridor.

4. **Sidewalk maintenance activities** including ADA ramps, crosswalks, and signals at key intersections and commercial nodes. Sidewalk and ADA ramp assessments have been done for areas near schools. Sidewalk condition assessments should be prioritized near other popular destinations such as parks, libraries, community centers, and commercial districts. Key intersections and corridors near commercial centers known to be in need of safety upgrades include much of Highway 24 and Highway 40 where sidewalks are missing, as well as some key intersections such as Crysler & W 23rd Street.

Figure 12: Recommended Network Plan – West Independence



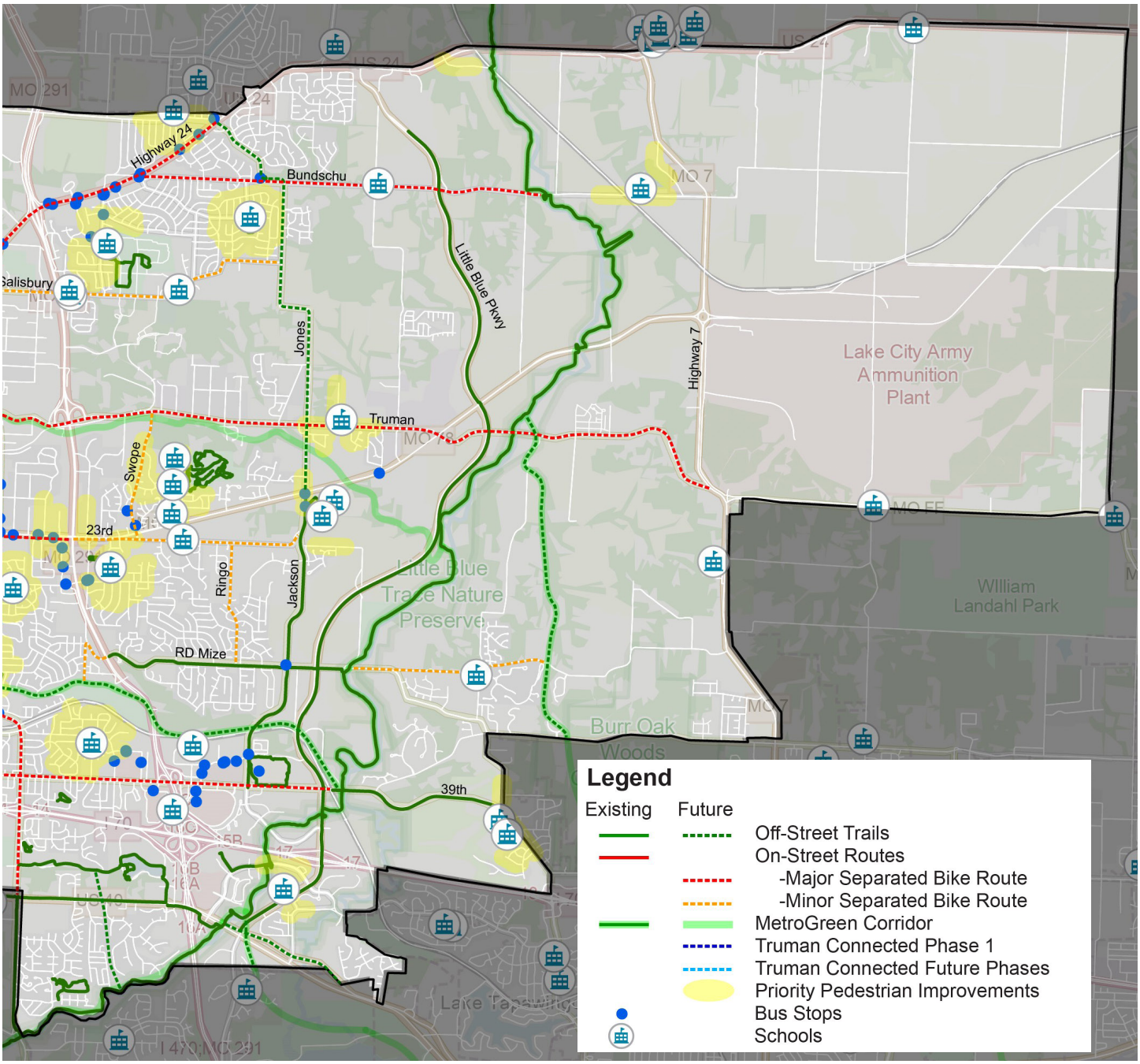
East Independence Network Priorities

The portion of Independence east of Highway 291 is more suburban and rural in nature than the western side of the city. Public and stakeholder input indicated a priority for recreational amenities, including a more extensive trail network, and easier access to this network. However, non-motorized transportation needs for other purposes should not be ignored. Residents still should have the ability to connect to local destinations without needing to drive. Eastern Independence includes opportunities for retrofitting active transportation facilities on existing corridors—similar to the western part of the city—as well as integrating facilities with new public streets and private developments. Specific priorities are noted below.

1. **Connections to Little Blue Trace Trail.** The Little Blue Trace Trail is an important local and regional transportation and recreation amenity, but is difficult to access without a car. East-West access is needed to connect residents to the trail from the rest of the city, such as along Truman Road and Bundschu Road. Future developments alongside the trail should include connector trails that provide access to the trail from activity centers and residential neighborhoods.
2. **Implement MetroGreen.** The Little Blue Trace Trail is part of MARC's regional MetroGreen network of planned trails. Additional streamway trails are also recommended in the plan, including along Burr Oak Creek connecting eastern Independence to Blue Springs and the Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area. These are shown in *Figure 13* and would greatly expand the inter-jurisdictional connectivity and recreational opportunities.
3. **Development Integration.** Require and/or develop guidelines to include active transportation infrastructure, such as off-street trails and bicycle parking, with new development projects. This may include easements for future facilities, as appropriate. This process should include city code revisions to better align zoning and subdivision regulations to multimodal transportation needs.
4. **Complete Streets Projects.** Standardize the inclusion of separated bicycle facilities such as protected lanes, shared-use paths, or off-street trails as part of new major street projects. Sidewalks at least five feet in width, and ADA ramps at intersections, should be included on both sides of all future streets. Projects to improve or expand rural roads into urban collector or arterial streets should include these components that improves safety for all users.

The Blue River Trace Trail is a recreational amenity, with improved connections needed to nearby corridors and neighborhoods.

Figure 13: Recommended Network Plan – East Independence



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4 Implementation

Implementation

An actionable plan needs specific steps and strategies to guide implementation, with anticipated timelines and responsible parties. This section defines implementation steps for improving multimodal transportation connectivity in the city based on public input and technical review in the *Independence Transportation for All* process. Some steps involve additional planning work to better define improvements on specific corridors, some involve facility design tasks, and others involve policy or procedural items. Implementation tables below organize action steps into three categories:

- Policy, Process, and Administration: Develop and narrow concepts for the plan document based on community engagement process findings.
- Additional Planning Work: Gain adoption approval for the refined plan document, as well as other planning processes needed to advance projects.
- Priority Projects: Set forth critical first steps for to achieve plan recommendations.

Time Frame

Implementation of recommended improvements will take time. This is due to funding constraints and the time it will take to access grant opportunities and identifying local funds.

Additionally, some items require additional planning work, as well as engineering and design tasks. Generally, low-cost strategies with simple implementation steps are planned for the immediate future. The time frames are detailed as follows:

- **Continuous (Ongoing):** Varying costs, but necessary tasks to sustain the Plan and community goals.
- **Short-Term (0-2 years):** Low cost, ease of implementation, directly advances other strategies, or addresses critical issues.
- **Medium-Term (3-5 years):** Fairly significant cost, but with planning can be implemented within time frame.
- **Long-Term (5+ years):** Significant cost, requires implementation of other strategies first.

An important consideration for project time frame, as well as cost, is the potential to complete low-cost temporary improvements to test or “pilot” projects while the city determines the financing or scope for more permanent solutions. Such projects often only include paint, temporary planters, or other easily-movable items to simulate permanent infrastructure. These projects allow testing and data collection to assist with decision-making and budgeting of future permanent improvements.

Cost Impact

While the Plan process does not include design or engineering activities to determine project costs, a high-level cost impact estimate is provided to guide budgeting and planning for improvements. These categories include:

- **Low:** Strategies that require policy changes or partnerships with limited outside funding requirements.
- **Medium:** Strategies that require relatively affordable consulting services and/or infrastructure improvements.
- **High:** Strategies that require high levels of planning, engineering, and/or design and infrastructure improvements.

Project Priorities

Table 3: Project Priority List – Policy, Process, & Administration

Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Impact
City Codes Update	Short	Low
Update City Codes to provide more protections, options and incentives for walking and biking in the city. This includes sections of Chapter 14 – Unified Development Ordinance, Chapter 17 – Public Works Regulations, and Chapter 18 – Traffic, and Chapter 20 – Public Works Manual.		
Public Works Manual Update	Short	Low
In coordination with the update to city codes sections 14, 17, and 18, update the Public Works Manual (Chapter 20) to reflect changes needed to provide improved infrastructure for those traveling without cars.		
Complete Sidewalk Inventory	Continuous	Low
Sidewalk inventories have been completed in areas around schools, but are lacking elsewhere in the city. This process is needed throughout the city to ensure conditions are known and so repairs and additions to infrastructure can be budgeted and implemented.		
Walking and Biking to School Programs	Continuous	Low
Independence Transportation for All has identified a primary need for improved safety for kids walking or biking to school. Much of this relates to infrastructure needs, but establishing programs where adult volunteers can facilitate groups of students walking or biking to school (a “walking school bus,” for example) can enable kids to use active transportation safely and develop these healthy commuting habits.		
Bikeshare Pilot	Short	Medium
Develop a partnership with RideKC Bike to provide bicycles and/or electric bicycles in the City at key locations, such as Independence Square, Truman Library, and various parks around the city.		
Update Complete Streets Policy	Short	Low
The City’s current Complete Streets policy dates back to 2011. This policy should be reviewed and updated to account for specific active transportation needs identified in this Plan as well as other recent area and corridor plans.		

Table 4: Project Priority List – Additional Planning Work

Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Impact
Arterial Street Bike Routes - Advanced Planning & Preliminary Design	Short	Medium
Independence Transportation for All has identified a need for separated bicycle facilities on several major and minor collector streets in the City, including Truman, Crysler, 23rd Street, and others. Additional planning and preliminary design work is needed to evaluate specific facility options on these streets, including right-of-way availability, utility constraints, traffic and parking impacts, and other factors.		
Safe Routes to School	Short	Low
Past Safe Routes to School (SRTS) work has occurred at several Independence School District in the past. Partnering with ISD for additional schools can help to better define detailed infrastructure needs as well as educational programs to facilitate safer walking and biking for students.		
Transit Strategic Plan	Short	Low
The expansion of transit service has been identified as a significant need to allow people to better travel without a car. A plan is needed to evaluate current services, and how short- and long-term needs could be better met, including through alternative service models such as on-demand services.		
Little Blue Trace Connector Trails	Short	Medium
The Little Blue Trace is a high-quality recreational amenity, but is difficult to access except by car. As developments occur in eastern Independence, and as street projects are needed to support these developments, planning and design work is needed to develop “connector” trails to the main Little Blue Trace trail.		

Table 5: Project Priority List – Priority Projects

Project Description	Time Frame	Cost Impact
Safe Routes to School - Priority Projects	Short	Medium
Construct new sidewalks, install new crosswalks, and fill other walkability gaps in the vicinity of priority schools with the least-extensive sidewalk networks, or as identified by Independence School District as high-priority needs. These are predominantly in the western portion of the city, including Fairmount, Cassell Park, Three Trails, Pitcher, Korte, and Van Horn High School.		
Safe Routes to School - Additional Projects	Medium	Medium
Most schools in Independence have identified sidewalk gaps, sections of sidewalk in need of improvements, and ADA compliance needs. This project would construct this infrastructure within 1/4-mile of schools not otherwise covered in the above “Priority Projects.”		
Truman Connected - Phase 2 and Phase 3 Projects	Medium	High
An additional phase of the Truman Connected corridor has been identified to extend the Phase 1 trail currently under design. Identified Phase 2 corridors (Sterling Avenue and potentially portions of Westport Road and 31st or 32nd Streets).		
Trail Network - Parks Connections (West Independence)	Short	Low
Several parks in Independence include internal trail networks. Connectivity between these trails is limited. This work would extend segments of Waterfall Park Trail and Rock Creek Trail to better connect Little Blue Trace Trail, Waterfall Park, Adair Park, Santa Fe Park, Country Club Park, Rotary Park, Hill Park, and Davis Park.		
Trail Network - Parks Connections (East Independence)	Medium	Medium
This project would seek to connect parks in the central and eastern portions of the City, primarily focused on implementing trails on designated MetroGreen corridors. This includes connecting the Little Blue Trace trail to Burr Oak Woods Conservation Area and to future bicycle facilities on Lee’s Summit Road.		
Highway 40 Separated Bicycle Path	Medium	Medium
In coordination with MoDOT, pursue separated bicycle paths on Highway 40. While engineering and design activities will be needed to affirm the most feasible and appropriate infrastructure, sufficient right-of-way exists to provide a high-quality trail bicycle facility that is separated from the roadway, and fulfilling recommendations of the Highway 40 Corridor and Focus Area Plan.		
Bus Stop Improvements	Medium	Low
Many bus stops in Independence are lacking accessibility features or comfort amenities for riders. Several prominent stops with higher ridership or transfer activity are in need of improvement. Examples include HyVee at Highway 40 & Noland Road, 23rd & Noland Road, Independence Center Mall, and stops serving the 24 Independence route along Winner Road and Highway 24.		

Funding Options

Funding tools potentially available for implementing Independence Transportation for All come in several different forms: regulatory, taxing, districts, bonds, and grants. It is important to note the objective of securing funding is to pay for improvements that otherwise would not have a source of funding, and to provide seed monies for the encouragement of private investment to occur. The investment and leverage of private dollars is crucial to the success of the Plan, particularly for localized connections to private developments and for access within a property that serves as a community destination. Major impacts can be realized when tools are used in combination with each other.

The responsible entities should collaboratively analyze the appropriateness, cost benefits and best application of these tools as necessary to implement the Plan's recommendations.

Regulatory

- **Impact Fees:** The development applicant pays a fee as a condition of the City's approval of the development, to help pay for off-site public improvements that benefit the development.

Taxes

- **Excise Tax:** Excise taxes can be levied on a particular activity, measured by the amount of business done or income received.
- **Capital Improvements Tax:** Capital improvement taxes can be levied on all retail sales for the purpose of funding capital improvements.
- **Transportation Development District (TDD) Sales Tax:** Sales tax can be levied on all retail sales to generate revenues for transportation purposes.

Districts

- **Special Improvement District (SID) / Local Improvement District (LID):** SIDs or LIDs, which are not separate political subdivisions, permit the collection of special assessments applied to individual properties in the amount of "special benefit" conferred on such property by the improvements. Allowed improvements include any type of public improvement a municipality can provide (e.g., roads, sidewalks, water lines, and sewer lines).
- **General Improvement District (GID) / Public Improvement District (PID):** GIDs or PIDs are separate political subdivisions that are permitted to levy a property tax, special assessments on benefited property within the district, or impose fees, tolls, or charges for revenue-producing services or facilities.
- **Business Improvement District (BID) / Community Improvement District (CID):** BIDs or CIDs, which are separate political subdivisions, are designed for public improvements, economic development, and business-related services, such as marketing. District boundaries may only include commercial property but may have a service area broader than its boundaries. BIDs/CIDs may levy ad valorem taxes, issue general obligation bonds, levy special assessments on benefited property, issue special assessment bonds, or impose rates, fees, and charges and issue revenue bonds. Allowed improvements include a broad base of public improvements.

Bonds

- **General Obligation Bonds:** General obligation bonds are issued with the city's full faith and credit that are paid by a dedicated amount of property tax.
- **Revenue Bonds:** Revenue bonds are issued to finance facilities with a definable user or revenue base. Revenue bonds differ from general obligation bonds as they are backed by a specific revenue stream.

Federal Grant Opportunities

- **Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality (CMAQ) Program:** The CMAQ is a federally-funded program for transportation projects designed to reduce traffic congestion and improve air quality (and thus contribute to the attainment of maintenance of a national ambient air quality standard). Examples of eligible projects include transit amenity improvements, bicycle and pedestrian facilities and improvements, intersection improvements, and more.
- **Surface Transportation Block Grant (STBG) Program:** The STBG is a flexible funding program, intended to fund a wide variety of projects that address multiple modes of transportation. Examples of eligible projects include the construction of highways, bridges, tunnels, recreational trails, and more.
- **Transportation Alternatives (TA) Program:** The TA program is intended to create safe, accessible, and environmentally-sensitive communities by providing funding for a variety of active transportation projects, including pedestrian and bicycle transportation improvements, historic/scenic transportation activities, and environmental mitigation. Examples of eligible projects include the construction of pedestrian and bicyclist transportation facilities, construction of viewing areas, vegetation management practices, and more.

- **Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) Discretionary Grant Program:** This competitive program can be used for capital projects or planning activities for surface transportation infrastructure projects that will have a significant local or regional impact. This discretionary grant program has supported projects that improve safety, economic strength and global competitiveness, equity, and climate and sustainability consistent with USDOT's strategic goals.
- **Safe Streets and Roads for All (SS4A):** This discretionary grant program created by the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act (also known as the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law), provides planning, design, development, and implementation activities for projects that prevent roadway deaths and serious injuries. The development and establishment of a Comprehensive Safety Action Plan is a key component of this program.
- The Federal Transit Administration provides formula and discretionary grant opportunities to transit providers for capital and operating needs. In particular, the **Buses and Bus Facilities Program** can fund transit center and bus stop improvements, and the **Areas of Persistent Poverty Program** provides for planning, engineering, and development of plans to improve transit services or infrastructure within USDOT-designated "Areas of Persistent Poverty" and "Historically Disadvantaged Communities." Additionally, FTA's Pilot Program for Transit-Oriented Development Planning awards grants for planning development around major transit investments.
- The Mid-America Regional Council's (MARC) **Planning Sustainable Places program**, funded through a regional set-aside of federal Surface Transportation Block Grant funding, provides opportunities for additional planning work for specific areas or corridors. This program has a history of advancing plans that ultimately lead to implementation. A "call for projects" generally occurs once every two years on a recurring basis.

Leveraging Public Dollars

The role of the private sector in the development and revitalization of multimodal transportation infrastructure in Independence is critical. Public improvements including streets, signals, crosswalks, sidewalks, and trails can provide the spine of the city's active transportation network. Such public investment can express to the private sector that investment in the area of interest is welcomed and supported. Local access—such as to the front door of a business or within an apartment complex—often relies on sidewalks and ADA-compliant accessible paths on private property for someone to complete their trip. Both the public and private investment working together can greatly expand the network and make a greater variety of trips feasible without a car.

Additionally, quality active transportation infrastructure such as off-street trails can have significant economic development value. These amenities are quality-of-life benefits and attract residents and businesses who value these features for transportation and for recreation. Accordingly, the private sector must be invited into and engaged in the planning process, aware of the vision for the city , and attentive to incentives and requirements for infrastructure development.