

INDEPENDENCE VISION 2040

VISION PLAN

March 31, 2020

**Thank you to everybody who participated in
the Vision 2040 project.**

The Independence Community!

Vision 2040 Steering Committee

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INDEPENDENCE VISION 2040

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INDEPENDENCE VISION 2040

VISION PLAN INTRODUCTION

The following document presents the result of the Independence Vision 2040 visioning process conducted in 2019 and early 2020. It is a reflection of the community input received by the City of Independence, including broad community outreach and engagement, the deliberations of a Vision 2040 Steering Committee, and review and comment by City staff and officials.

Beginning in the early spring of 2019 and concluding in January 2020, an extensive public outreach and engagement process was conducted on behalf of Independence Vision 2040. It included the following activities:

- Spring project launch presentation at Independence High School
- Formation and meetings of the Vision 2040 Steering Committee
- Project kick-off event and ice cream social
- Two online public surveys delivered in both English and Spanish
- Input tables at summertime community events and festivals
- Community photo contest and prizes
- Ongoing project website and social media updates
- Ongoing, real-time “Hello, Independence” input self-initiated by mobile phone users
- Fall community town hall event
- Presentations by City staff to middle and high school students and the Latino community.



Enjoying ice cream sandwiches from Independent Ice Cream Shop at the May 2019 kick-off event.

This resulting draft vision plan is the culmination of all those activities. It includes:

An **Overarching Vision Statement** for the community of Independence in 2040;

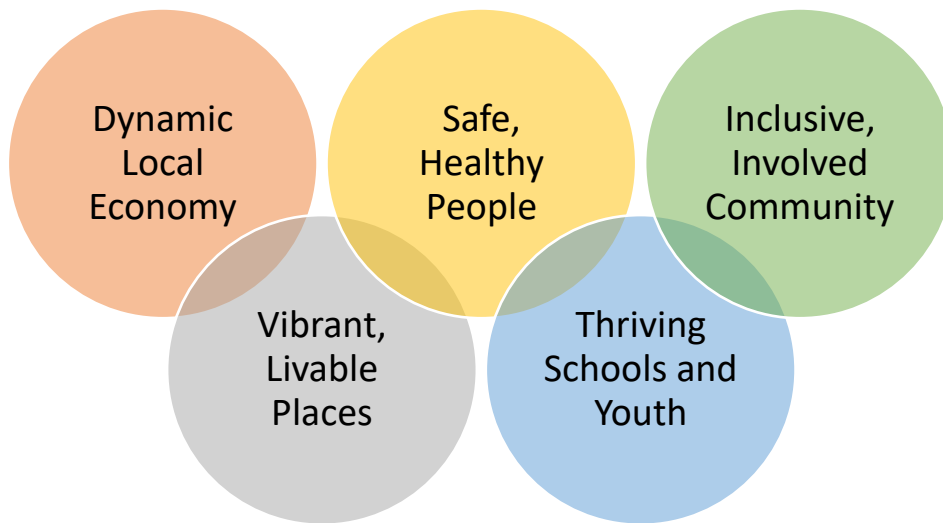
A **Statement of Core Values** reflecting those qualities of Independence most valued by its residents that they wish to retain going forward; and

“Game Changer” Projects highlighted in the plan have been singled out for implementation with the City of Independence playing a *significant* role. (These projects are seen as cutting across more than one focus area and playing a unique role in advancing the community’s vision.)

“Advocacy” Projects are highlighted in the plan. Like the Game Changer projects, these initiatives cut across more than one focus area and have been singled out for implementation with the City of Independence playing a *supporting* role.

Finally, five **Focus Area Plans** containing more detailed information for five broad themes.

Focus Areas



Each of the focus area plans includes a short **Vision Statement** and a description of **Key Focus Area Projects** specific to that area.

In the appendix are **Ongoing Focus Area Goals**, community recommendations for implementation in the coming years.

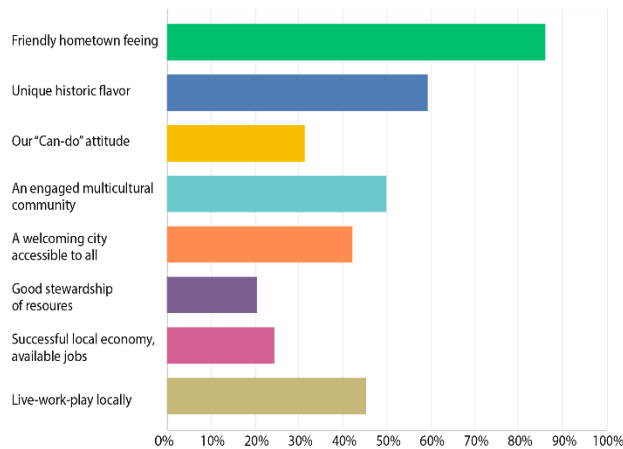
Throughout the plan, we indicate whether the City expects to take on **Lead, Partner or Supporting** roles for any given project. Any projects recommended for implementation by the City will need to be considered within the broader context of its existing operations, current plans and programs, and fiscal capacity to undertake new projects and activities they may entail.



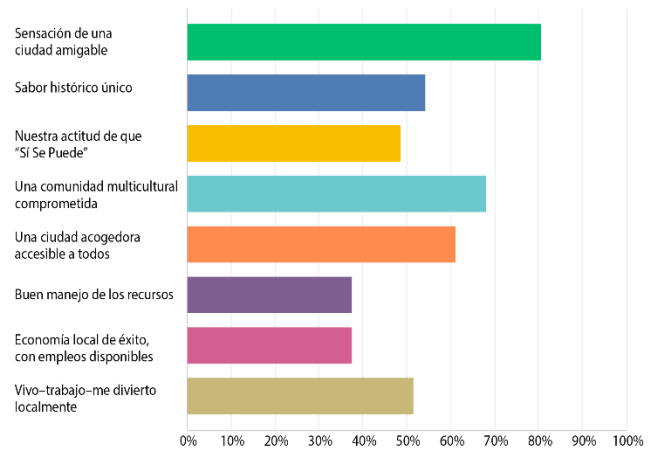
Community members discuss ideas for an inclusive, involved community at the October 2019 Town Hall.

The content of this plan has been tested through a series of stakeholder work groups, one for each of the five focus areas, reviewed and commented on by City staff, and then reviewed and prioritized by City Council at its annual goal-setting workshop in March 2020.

Independence Vision 2040 Community Survey
What do you appreciate the most about Independence, OR?
 (Check all that apply)



La Visión 2040 de Independence Encuesta Comunitaria
¿Qué es lo que más aprecia usted de Independence, OR?
 (Marque todo lo que corresponda).



Online surveys and meeting materials were translated to provide opportunities for non-English speakers to participate.



INDEPENDENCE VISION 2040

OUR OVERARCHING VISION

The following vision statement reflects our hopes and aspirations for Independence in the future. This is what we would like our community to look like in the year 2040.

Independence 2040 – Our Home in the Future

- In 2040, Independence maintains its historic, welcoming, small town atmosphere – even as it grows and changes.
- Our economy is well integrated into the community, creating business opportunities and good jobs here at home.
- Our city is well planned and livable, with a vibrant downtown, improved streets, enhanced neighborhoods, and affordable housing.
- Accessible parks, trails and the riverfront connect us to our rural heritage, the natural environment, and more sustainable lifestyles.
- Independence is a safe, healthy, caring community for all its residents, including children and families, seniors, and those who need our support.
- Well-funded schools, an expanded library and recreational facilities help ensure that our youth thrive and succeed in life.
- Our diverse population is included, engaged and involved, and gives back to the community.
- We celebrate Independence – our heritage and our future – together.

OUR CORE VALUES

The following statement of core values reflects the beliefs and ideals we share about Independence today. These are the things we seek to maintain as we move into the future.

We Value...

Our Small Town Feel – the friendly people, small-town pace of life, ability to know our neighbors and be part of a community

Our Local History – the unique agricultural and multicultural heritage, historical flavor and older buildings, and events and activities that make our history come alive

Our Involved, Can-Do Citizens – the engaged residents, businesses and organizations who pull together, volunteer, and make things happen in the community

Our Welcoming Atmosphere – an accessible, inclusive, multicultural community that works collaboratively and makes everyone feel at home

Our Quality of Life – the ability to live, work, play and thrive right here in Independence

Our Natural Environment – the surrounding forests and fields, river and waterways, parks and urban greenery that are part of a healthy, sustainable community

Our Downtown and Public Facilities – the businesses and shops, along with City Hall and Event Center, Library, Museum and other public facilities that enrich our community life

Our Riverfront – the Willamette River, Riverview Park, amphitheater and fountain, boat launch, and trails

Our Community Events – the public events, festivals and celebrations, programs and activities for our residents, families and children

Our Fiscal Responsibility – the sound financial planning backing all community initiatives, ensuring that public dollars are wisely and prudently invested

GAME CHANGER PROJECTS

The following “Game Changer” projects are strategic initiatives that cut across the plan’s five focus areas. They have been singled out for the unique role they play in advancing the community’s vision – with the City of Independence playing a significant implementation role

Southern Multi-Modal Transportation Access Strategy & Arterial

(City to Lead)

Develop a multi-modal transportation access strategy, including a new arterial roadway with the goals of connecting south Independence to Highway 99, accommodating a growing population, improving connectivity and traffic flow, and reducing congestion.



Expanded Downtown Revitalization & Beautification

(City to Lead, Partner & Support)

Expand the revitalization and beautification of Downtown Independence, incorporating new improvements that serve local residents, attract visitors and tourists, and generate jobs and economic activity both Downtown and throughout the community. Major projects to include:

- West and southward expansion of the Downtown district, including comprehensive streetscape and signage improvements to Second and “C” streets
- Upgrades to all Downtown street, crosswalk and sidewalk lighting, along with permanent seasonal lighting
- New public art throughout Downtown, including murals, street art, plaques and “functional art” such as bike racks and charging stations, along with an iconic Independence brand that is used community-wide

Downtown Parking Management Plan

(City to Lead & Partner)

Develop a parking management plan for Downtown Independence, to provide expanded parking capacity for local businesses and shoppers, visitors and special events. One outcome of the plan could be the needs assessment and design of a parking structure that is accessible and blends into the local architecture, accommodating new storefronts and start-up spaces.

Independence Housing Strategy

(City to Lead & Partner)

Develop a comprehensive housing strategy, promoting increased availability and accessibility of different housing types in Independence, while better serving the city's growing population. Key projects to focus on:

- Housing for the city's growing workforce and families
- Housing for seniors, including 55+, independent living, and continuing care
- Housing that is affordable for lower-income families through a variety of programs

Recreation for All

(City to Lead, Partner & Support)

Expand the local park system along the riverfront and in surrounding areas, creating recreational opportunities for all Independence residents. Working with a variety of organizations, provide expanded recreational programs throughout the system, including:

- A connected system of trails and pathways
- Lighting of trails on trails along the riverfront
- Accommodation of disabled access throughout the parks/trails system
- Parks programs and facilities attuned to both seniors and youth
- A new community recreation center
- Support for existing recreational programs in the community



CITY ADVOCACY PROJECTS

The following City “Advocacy” projects are strategic initiatives that have been singled out for the unique role they play in advancing the community’s vision – with the City of Independence playing a significant supporting role.

Local Medical Facility & Health Services

(City to Support)

Promote establishment of a comprehensive medical facility serving both Independence and Monmouth, including urgent and pediatric care, as well as other programs and services designed to improve and support adult and youth health, mental health, and wellness.



Workforce Training & Skills Development

(City to Partner & Support)

Advance workforce training and skills development in Independence focusing on both on youth and adults.

- *Youth:* Work with local business to communicate, advocate, define and create new internships for school students, fostering their transition to the workforce and future careers.
- *Adults:* Partner with existing state and local programs to bring workforce training to Independence community members.

Early Childhood/Pre-K Programs

(City to Partner & Support)

Encourage the establishment of a fully licensed childcare facility in Independence in an institutional (non-home) setting, providing learning, socialization and communication skills for young children before they enter the school system. Promote the affordability of this facility for families in need.

FOCUS AREA PLANS

Each of the following five focus area plans identify a short vision, key projects and ongoing goals for Independence in its respective thematic area. These plans provide a roadmap for achieving the community's overarching vision in the coming years.

FOCUS AREA 1 – DYNAMIC LOCAL ECONOMY

OUR VISION. *In 2040, Independence has a diversified economy, including new industry, small businesses, start-up companies, and state-of-the-art information technology, creating business opportunities and good jobs here at home. New downtown businesses, revitalization and beautification downtown, and festivals and events attract both residents and visitors, supporting local commerce and jobs.*



KEY FOCUS AREA 1 PROJECTS

- ✓ **Year-Round Community Events.** Partner with the City of Monmouth and local organizations, including the Independence Downtown Association, Ash Creek Art Center and Historical Museum, to sponsor and coordinate local festivals, events and other attractions. Promote year-round activities, including monthly events like art walks and exhibits, regular annual events, and unique one-time special activities. *(City to Partner)*
- ✓ **Center for Entrepreneurship.** Establish a business development center to promote and support new small businesses and start-up enterprises in the community, partnering with Willamette Workforce Partnership, Technology Association of Oregon, Chemeketa Community College and others. SBDC would be a partner. *(City to Partner)*

FOCUS AREA 2 – VIBRANT, LIVABLE PLACES

OUR VISION. *In 2040, Independence is well planned and livable, with a vibrant downtown, improved streets and parking, safe walking and biking, more shopping options, enhanced neighborhoods and affordable housing. Accessible parks, trails and the riverfront connect us to our rural heritage, the natural environment, and more sustainable lifestyles.*



KEY FOCUS AREA 2 PROJECTS

- ✓ **Monmouth Street Revitalization.** *(City to Lead & Partner)*
Revitalize Monmouth Street (Highway 51) from Main Street to Monmouth, providing an appealing corridor with attractive streetscapes, improving traffic flow and safety, and better connecting the cities of Independence and Monmouth.
- ✓ **Central Plaza Redevelopment.** *(City to Lead & Partner)*
Redevelop the Central Plaza shopping area, offering a more dynamic commercial, retail and services hub in the heart of the town, better serving the entire community.
- ✓ **Small Neighborhood Centers.** *(City to Lead)*
Establish a program to promote and enhance ‘complete’ neighborhoods citywide, fostering development of small neighborhood centers where residents can walk, bike or ride short distances for light shopping and other daily business or service needs.
- ✓ **Riverview Park Extension (City Hall to Independence Bridge & Beyond).** *(City to Lead)*
Extend Riverview Park along the Willamette River from City Hall south to the Independence Bridge and beyond, increasing recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.
- ✓ **Independence Sustainability Plan.** *(City to Lead)*
Develop a City of Independence Sustainability Plan, guiding all City operations and procurements, promoting better environmental choices by other local organizations and businesses, and establishing Independence as a leader in recycling, resource and energy conservation, and climate action.

FOCUS AREA 3 – SAFE, HEALTHY PEOPLE

OUR VISION. *In 2040, Independence is a safe, healthy, caring community for all its residents, including children and families, seniors and those at risk, with excellent medical and mental health care, accessible, affordable, age- and ability-friendly housing and transportation, and improved social programs and services.*



KEY FOCUS AREA 3 PROJECTS

- ✓ **Mental Health Services.** *(City to Support)*
Provide support, including advocacy, education and awareness, for mental health services currently available to Independence residents, including the School District, SRO School Resource Program, Community Services Consortium, Polk County Behavioral Health, OSU College of Public Health and Human Sciences, and related programs.

- ✓ **Homelessness Prevention & Services Coordination.** *(City to Partner & Support)*
Coordinate and improve local programs to help prevent homelessness and provide emergency and transitional housing, medical and mental health services, and other resources for the community's homeless population, coordinating with local law enforcement, health, education, churches and other organizations.

FOCUS AREA 4 – THRIVING SCHOOLS & YOUTH

OUR VISION. *In 2040, Independence has excellent schools, an expanded library system, all-ability recreational facilities, and other programs, services and activities that help ensure our preschoolers, youth and teens get a healthy start, thrive in school, and succeed in work and life.*

KEY FOCUS AREA 4 PROJECTS

- ✓ **Alignment with School District Goals.** *(City to Support)* Provide awareness and support for the Central School District’s strategic plans, programs, and partnerships already in the works. Support and partner with the schools regarding community outreach and education on these topics and initiatives.
- ✓ **Technical High School Feasibility.** *(City to Support)* Assist with studies regarding the viability of a technical high school in the area, including appropriate sites and structures for such a facility.
- ✓ **Safety & Security of Students.** *(City to Lead & Partner)* Explore options to improve and enhance safe and security of students *outside* school facilities and after hours, including increased police officers and patrols, safer routes to schools and crosswalks, improved lighting, and related improvements.

Independence Vision 2040 Community Survey STUDENT DATA RESULTS 5 Most important Initiatives: Dynamic, Local Economy

- 1 Revitalization of Underutilized Buildings, Storefronts and Building Sites
- 2 Information Technology Infrastructure for the Knowledge/Innovation Economy
- 3 Downtown Business Development, New Restaurants and Coffee Shops
- 4 City Branding and Downtown Beautification
- 5 More Riverview Attractions, Docks and Boating Festival

Independence Vision 2040 Community Survey ADULT DATA RESULTS 5 Most important Initiatives: Dynamic, Local Economy

- 1 Revitalization of Underutilized Buildings, Storefronts and Building Sites
- 2 New Industrial Development and Local Jobs
- 3 Downtown Business Development, New Restaurants and Coffee Shops
- 4 Year-round Arts, Cultural and Historical Programs, Festivals and Events
- 5 New Visitor and Tourist Attractions

We actively engaged students to understand their unique vision for the future.

FOCUS AREA 5 – INCLUSIVE, INVOLVED COMMUNITY

OUR VISION. *In 2040, Independence has a diverse population that is included, engaged and involved in local government and civic life, with public/private partnerships that connect and strengthen our community. Abundant arts, cultural, historical, and recreational programs, events and activities further enrich our daily lives and draw our community closer together.*



KEY FOCUS AREA 5 PROJECTS

- ✓ **Partnership with Monmouth, Western Oregon University and Other Local Agencies.** *(City to Partner)* Strengthen and expand Independence’s partnership with Monmouth and Western Oregon University, building on each community’s unique assets and qualities. Pool resources for community programs and events and share community calendars. Collaborate to serve the collective community.
- ✓ **Communication & Outreach Channel.** *(City to Lead)* Improve and expand communication and outreach channels in the community, sharing and network community news, upcoming activities and events, and announcements across multiple platforms, building two-way communication and greater trust. Include all relevant information on the community’s vision plan, projects, education, tourism, and more.
- ✓ **Diversity in Leadership.** *(City to Lead, Partner & Support)* Establish and pursue a goal of greater diversity, equity and inclusion in leadership in Independence, including recruitment for community boards, programs and commissions, leadership mentoring and training programs, and a communication network focused on supporting diversity, equity and inclusion.
- ✓ **Bilingual Wayfinding Signage.** *(City to Lead & Partner)* Develop bilingual wayfinding signage in English and Spanish throughout the community, providing directional information, points of interest, historical markers, and other relevant information that helps residents and visitors alike navigate around town and better know the community.

APPENDIX: ONGOING FOCUS AREA GOALS

ONGOING FOCUS AREA 1 GOALS

1 – Downtown Revitalization & Beautification.

Promote revitalization and beautification of Downtown Independence, including use of underutilized buildings, storefronts and building sites, improvements to streetscapes, sidewalks and signage, and renovation of historic buildings.

2 – Downtown Retail Businesses. Recruit and retain new retail businesses for Downtown Independence, including unique and family-friendly restaurants, breweries and entertainment venues, shops and other services. Expand parking to support increased downtown activity.

3 – Year-Round Arts & Cultural Opportunities. Promote year-round arts and cultural opportunities in Independence for residents and visitors, including galleries and exhibits, performances, historical programs, family-friendly events, festivals and parades.

4 – New Riverfront & Visitor Attractions. Develop new attractions that bring visitors to Independence, expanding on the city’s riverfront and inviting residents and visitors to recreate, enjoy the city’s many offerings, and frequent local businesses.

5 – New Industry, Business Development & Jobs. Incentivize and support business and economic development that creates new jobs and economic activity in Independence, including new industry and start-up companies, small and Latino-owned businesses, and workforce development.

6 – Information Technology Infrastructure. Improve and expand information technology infrastructure in Independence, promoting fast Internet service and supporting development of new businesses and start-up companies.



ONGOING FOCUS AREA 2 GOALS

1 – Transportation & Connectivity Improvements. Promote better transportation and street connectivity improvements in Independence, including traffic flow, roadways, major corridors and intersections, streets and sidewalks, pedestrian crosswalks and bike lanes, and transit options – including better connections with Monmouth.

2 – Diverse Housing Types. Expand the range of housing choice in Independence to support a diversity of incomes, ages and lifestyles, including innovative new housing types and residential development, and revitalization of the city’s existing, older stock of housing.

3 – Interconnected Bike Trails & Walking Paths. Develop a comprehensive, interconnected system of improved biking trails and walking paths in Independence, fixing existing gaps and establishing a citywide network linked to Monmouth and the wider region.

4 – Environmental Restoration, Parks & Greenspaces. Promote conservation and restoration of natural areas in and around Independence, expanding parks and greenspaces and better connecting the community to the Willamette River and Ash Creek.

5 – Citywide Sustainability. Promote greater sustainability in Independence, advancing citywide residential and commercial recycling, coordinated action on climate change, resource conservation, and increased reliance on renewable sources of energy.

6 – Water, Sewer & Stormwater Infrastructure Improvements. Improve and upgrade the water, sewer and stormwater infrastructure in Independence to serve a growing population, meet or exceed environmental standards, and promote increased resource conservation and sustainability.



ONGOING FOCUS AREA 3 GOALS

1 – Accessible, Affordable Housing. Expand the supply of accessible, affordable, and subsidized housing in Independence to better accommodate the needs of disabled, limited income, and elderly populations, including family-friendly housing for farm workers.

2 – Local Medical & Health Services.

Support the development of comprehensive medical and health programs and services in Independence and Monmouth to improve overall community health and wellness, including urgent care, pediatric care, and mental health.



3 – Mental Health & Drug Addiction Services. Improve and expand mental health and drug addiction programs and services in Independence, promoting enhanced coordination between the City, County and Schools.

4 – Community Gardens & Healthy Food Options. Promote healthier food options in Independence, including an expanded Farmers Market, food co-op and community supported agriculture options, more community gardens, and promotion of supplemental food assistance programs.

5 – Lighting of Streets & Public Places. Develop a comprehensive lighting plan for streets, sidewalks, crosswalks and public places in Independence, including Riverview Park and the Amphitheatre.

6 – Law Enforcement & First Responder Programs & Services. Improve funding and support for local law enforcement and first responder programs and services in Independence, including training and mental health services, additional personnel, community engagement, and police involvement in schools.

7 – Disaster Preparedness & Management. Develop and implement a Citywide disaster preparedness and management plan for Independence, including improvements to the resiliency of key infrastructure, including water, sewer, energy, and traffic management.

ONGOING FOCUS AREA 4 GOALS

1 – Workforce Training & Skills Development. Continue to support workforce training and skills development in Independence schools, including enhanced career and technical education programs and classes, internships with local companies and businesses, and supportive skills such as digital technologies.

2 – School Funding & Educational Programs. Support funding for local schools in Independence, including upgraded and expanded facilities, operations, classes, libraries and extracurricular programs. Expand financial support programs for college scholarships, enhanced technical training, multi-lingual education, and related needs.

3 – Early Childhood Development. Support and enhance early childhood development programs in Independence, with more accessible and affordable childcare, pre-K programs that give every Independence child a healthy start in life.

4 – Youth Recreational Opportunities & Activity Center. Improve and expand playgrounds and play parks, athletic fields, and all-ability recreational opportunities to promote the healthy physical development of all Independence children. Explore the development of a facility that functions as a center for youth activities.

5 – Bilingual Awareness & Instruction in Schools. Support expanded bilingual (English-Spanish) language awareness and instruction in local schools, including second-language classes, programs and activities that are accessible to all students.



ONGOING FOCUS AREA 5 GOALS

1 – Stronger Connections with Monmouth. Strengthen relations between the communities of Independence and Monmouth, including joint community calendars and events, coordination between local government plans and programs, and regional economic development and tourism initiatives. *(City to Partner)*

2 – Diversity in Governance & Community Organizations. Foster increased diversity in governance and community participation in Independence, including Independence City Council and its committees, local boards, commissions and other community organizations, reflecting the growing diversity and multi-culturalism of the community as a whole. *(City to Partner)*

3 – Family-Friendly Events, Activities & Facilities. Promote events, activities and facilities that are affordable, supportive and welcoming to Independence families and their children, including a new community center, expanded library programs and services, and all public meetings. *(City to Partner & Support)*

4 – Recreational Opportunities for All Enhance recreation opportunities and amenities for all ages and abilities, including recreational facilities, playgrounds, parks and trails in Independence, making them welcoming, safe and accessible to all people, including those with physical disabilities. *(City to Lead & Partner)*

5 – An “All-Ages, All-Abilities” Community. Establish and promote Independence as an All-Ages, All-Abilities Community, promoting access to amenities, services and the daily activities of community life for all residents and visitors, regardless of their age or ability. *(City to Lead, Partner & Support)*

6 – Bi-lingual Community. Expand bi-lingual awareness, development and support programs in Independence, including second-language classes for adults in both English and Spanish, bilingual community events, and bilingual signage. *(City to Partner)*

