



INDEPENDENCE PARKS & OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN

SECTION X:
LEVEL OF SERVICE

SECTION X: STANDARDS AND LEVEL OF SERVICE APPROACH

10.1 INTRODUCTION

Since the development of the City of Independence Parks and Open Space Master Plan 1996, both geographic and demographic changes to the City have prompted the evaluation of the quality and the quantity of appropriate park service being provided to the residents of Independence. To address these changes, the City initiated a comprehensive planning process for the parks system in the summer of 2014. This collaborative and community oriented planning process will identify current park, facility, and recreation programming needs for the twenty year horizon. The Independence Park System can and should add up to more than simply the sum of its individual parts. The system will consist of a complementary set of parks and open spaces that, considered together, meet the needs of a full range of community needs and interests.

The Community Needs Assessment is a significant component of the update of the Parks System Plan. The purpose of the assessment is to establish in quantifiable terms the needs for park amenities, recreation facilities, and park land in the City of Independence. These needs are based on the resources that exist and those that are desired by residents for the future.

10.2 SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The foundation of this Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment is input from a wide variety of recreation users, key stakeholders, city leaders and the general public. This input establishes the goals and vision that guide the decision making process for recreation services and facilities. Key items identified continuously throughout the public engagement process include the following:

- Support walking, running and bicycling on trails and pathways.
- Long-term funding is crucial for upkeep and maintenance of parks. Local partnerships will be essential in these efforts.
- Utilize the Willamette River for accessible recreation with a focus on safety and sustaining the environmental importance of the river.
- More sports fields – especially soccer fields- are needed. The possibility of a sports complex designed for hosting larger, regional events should be considered.
- Develop year-round facilities, i.e., covered sports courts and gathering areas, indoor swim facilities, etc.
- Encourage or require neighborhood parks in new residential developments.

- Collaborate with Monmouth, Western Oregon University, and others to create a pedestrian/bicycle path connecting the local region. Continue to collaborate with these same organizations, the Central School District and others to cost-effectively serve people of all ages in Independence and Monmouth.
- Create more connections to and between parks, along with signs or maps to increase the knowledge of parks and local events and festivals and to increase regional interest and participation.

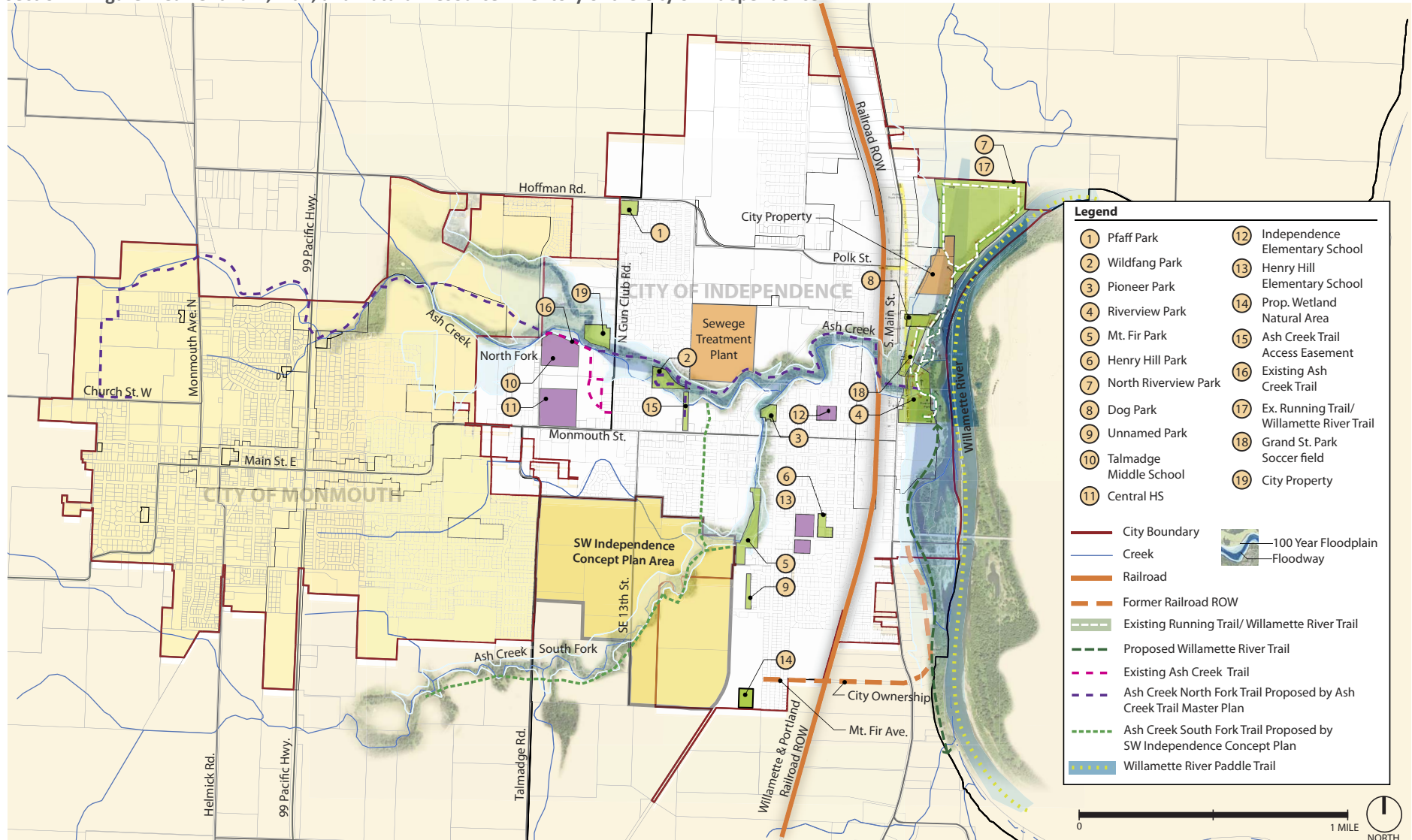
10.3 INVENTORY AND ANALYSIS

This section presents results of the planning process used to build a strong foundation for the City of Independence Parks System Plan. Key themes identified during this early phase will help identify the goals, needs and recommendations presented in subsequent chapters of this Plan. This inventory and analysis to reveal key community needs for parks, trails and natural areas. Section X presents key findings from the previous sections:

- Section I: Inventory
- Section II: Precedent Review
- Section III: Trends review: Identifies regional and national trends
- Section IV: Community Involvement Process Summary
- Section V: Park Classification
- Section VI: Asset Inventory: Presents the inventory of the current system
- Section VII: Wayfinding and Interpretation
- Section VIII: Finance
- Section IX: Population Predictions



Section X: Figure 1 Current Park, Trail, and Natural Resource Inventory of the City of Independence



10.4 PARK SYSTEM NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The City of Independence owns roughly 114 acres of land in its park system. This includes over 12.89 acres of mini-parks, .63 acres of neighborhood parks, 91.06 acres of community parks, 5.69 acres special purpose sites and 4.0 acres of natural areas.

Figure 1 illustrates the location of Independence’s existing parks, trails and natural areas. Section IV: Asset Inventory presents a detailed inventory of these individual park sites.

The planning team along with City staff visited every park and recreation facility in the Independence park system during the summer of 2014. During this site tour, general observation of facilities and program sites included:

- General state and condition
- Compatibility with neighborhoods
- Aesthetics/Design
- Safety/Security
- Public Access
- Connectivity to the surrounding neighborhoods
- Program capacity and compatibility with users
- Partnership opportunities

The following is a summary for the overall system organized by parks, trails, and natural resources. Individual parks and their associated descriptions, facilities, and maps are located in Section VI: Asset Inventory.

PARKS

The parks of Independence are achieving positive outcomes for the City and residents by their use, programs and access. Riverview Park is the crown jewel of the system due to its active programming, use, thoughtful design and high maintenance. However, this signature entity for the City needs to be updated in order to maintain its effectiveness as an economic tool for retail, the business aspect of downtown and for the special events held in the City in the future. The remaining parks in the system do not have the same level of design aesthetic and details to provide the same level of image that Riverview Park provides. There is a disconnect in the relationship between these smaller parks and the prominence of Riverview Park.

Maintenance on all the parks sites appears high, with weed control, little trash present, clean surfaces, and lack of graffiti. Picnic shelters have fresh paint, lawn areas are cleanly mowed, and the general sense from observation is that the parks system is

maintained and well loved by the community. All the parks visited during the site visit had members of the public actively engaged in recreation and leisure activities.

The City of Independence Public Works staff is charged with all the park, trails, and natural resource maintenance. The Community Development Director/Public Works Director and the Economic Development Director share the task of leading the parks division of the City’s Public Works Department, including acquisition, capital projects, operations, and maintenance.

In the evaluation of park sites, it appears there is a lack of consistent design standards in place for the parks. Signage varies from site to site. Site furniture, fencing and facilities do not present a consistent image of the City at each park. There is no wayfinding system or park signage to facilitate understanding of the individual park site or how the sites are possibly linked in the overall system. The strength of the parks system could lie in a strong image along street corridors that would enhance the neighborhoods, the community and create a strong advocacy in the community.

The different types of parks are not distributed equitably across the city as it applies to mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks. There are deficiencies in access based on proximity and walking distance for neighborhoods for mini-neighborhood parks and neighborhood parks. The classification of existing parks and their associated service radius is discussed further in the Level of Service Approach.

Design principles should be developed for each type of park in the system to establish a distinct outcome that is desired by neighborhoods, communities, and both passive and active users. Design standards that focus on pedestrian circulation, image, color, lighting, signage, safety, visibility, natural habitat, parking and landscape should be created. The City should re-invest in the park system to bring a strong image of livability to all parts of the City.

TRAILS

The trails in place in Independence are very much appreciated by the community. The Willamette River Trail, developed and is maintained by the Running Club, serves as a model facility showing the strength in public/private partnership. A significant effort was provided by the City and its residents in partnership with the City of Monmouth to create the Ash Creek Trail Master Plan in 2005. The City has experienced success in developing one section of the Ash Creek Trail, a half mile concrete path running along Ash Creek between 16th Street and Gun Club Road. The first phase of the Ash Creek Trail has been an asset to the community since its development. These trails, however, need to be linked to an overall system that allows people to move through the City freely without high conflicts with automobiles in order to access the waterfront and provide recreational routes to enjoy and explore the City.

RECREATIONAL FIELDS

The City currently does not have formal recreational fields for field sports in its inventory. Partnership with the Central School District for shared field use has sufficed in years past but increased use of the fields and limited use based on weather patterns has made non-school uses vague. The City of Independence actively pursued the acquisition of a large land parcel on the northeast corner of the City for recreational field development. The City has begun design and construction drawings for this site with the intent of beginning construction in the Spring/Summer of 2015.

AQUATIC FACILITY

The City of Independence actively partners with the YMCA for the operations of the City owned outdoor aquatic facility. The aquatic programs provided by the YMCA are excellent and offer a good core service to residents of all age levels. The outdoor pool has limited use and programs are limited to the summer season. The aquatic facility has outdated and inadequate facilities which are at the end of their useful life. The City has a set of construction drawings for a new aquatic facility that needs dedicated funds to set this project into motion.

The City needs to bring existing parks and facilities up to a level that all residents can be proud of. New design trends should be incorporated into parks, recreation facilities, pools and park amenities. This will take political will and community advocacy and support, but in the long run will make Independence an even better community to live, work and play in for the residents. It will also work as an economic tool for the City that will attract new businesses and tourism into the area.

10.5 STANDARDS AND LEVEL OF SERVICE APPROACH

The City of Independence Parks Plan 1996 identified standards for the classification of parks and the associated standards of the facilities. Facility Standards are guidelines that define service areas based on population that support investment decisions related to facilities and amenities. The standards were derived using a combination of National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) standards and guidance from the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The purpose of this analysis is to evaluate whether the City of Independence is meeting those standards and whether trends or community preferences require revisions to the standards.

10.6 DATA

Existing level of service is based on the 2007 population estimate of 8500. (US Census Bureau) as documented in Section IX: Population Projections of this document. Future population projections are estimated for the twenty year horizon of 2034. A total of 15,332 residents are projected for the year 2034.

10.7 METHODOLOGY

This assessment addresses the need for additional parks and facilities in the City of Independence for the next twenty years. The following terms are used in the document.

- **Level of Service (LOS):** Level of Service is a ratio of the amount of land or the number of facilities needed to provide all the park and recreation needs desired in a community. Level of service is typically expressed as a ratio of acres or facilities per population.
- **Standards:** Minimum park land standards can be adopted to guide the development of the future park system. The standards can be considered in terms of acres per 1000 residents.

A major factor in the quality of community life is the quality of the community's facilities, services and amenities. Levels of service (LOS) standards are measures of the amount and quality of the public facility which must be provided to meet a community's basic needs and expectations. Level of service measures are typically expressed as ratios of facility capacity to demand by existing and projected future users. The amount of parks currently needed in a community may be determined typically by comparing the ratio of existing park acres per 1000 population to the community's desired level of parks relative to population. The gap between the two ratios is the currently needed park acreage. As the community grows in population, the objective will be to provide enough additional acreage to maintain the community's desired ratio of park acres to projected population. The level of service serves as a benchmark standard which will be applied to the various park classifications, including mini-parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks.

10.8 LEVEL OF SERVICE CONSIDERATIONS

A level of service requirement is not applied to open space. Open space is defined by the State of Oregon as any land that is retained in a substantially natural condition, is improved for recreational uses, or is specifically required to be protected by a conservation easement. An open space system cannot and should not be equated with a numerical benchmark standard. There is no number of acres of wetland or floodplain that every community should have in order to meet a national standard or state standard.

Parks level of service standards are typically quantitative. They measure the size, amount, or capacity of the facility. A simple level of service standard for parks does not adequately address the quality of the facility or the setting which affects visitor experience. Determining the appropriate amount of park space and location for

the future growth of Independence will require the consideration of the quality of facility as defined by the park type definitions, location requirements and setting. The preferred level of service with the quantity and quality of facility capacity that it requires determines the basis for developing and justifying specific capital improvements projects, the recommended level of service standards, and financing plans for each type of capital facility.

10.9 EXPLORING A RANGE OF STANDARDS

There are several approaches to consider for crafting a level of service ratio that is appropriate for the City of Independence. For consideration of the appropriate level of service range, the park classifications defined by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) were referenced for the System Plan. These park definitions, descriptions, location criteria, size criteria, and typical facilities provide a starting point for discussion for what is appropriate to the City of Independence parks system.

Establishing and applying facility standards achieves the following:

- Guides land requirements for various kinds of recreation facilities and amenities
- Relates recreation needs to spatial analysis within a community-wide system of park facilities and amenities
- Becomes a major structuring element that can be used to guide and assist facility development

Facility Standards are applied to population factors (per 1000 persons), which are used in a gap analysis to determine if too many or too few facilities exist to serve the population. These facility standards should be viewed as a reference guide. They address goals to be achieved. The standards are to be coupled with needs of the community. Service area analysis is the application of the facility standards as applied to population. The service area analysis demonstrates gaps or surpluses in a number of facilities based on the population. We will review three different approaches for level of service applications for Independence.

- Quantitative
- Qualitative
- Combined Level of Service

10.10 QUANTITATIVE APPROACH

A quantitative approach to the level of service uses the NRPA standards as a baseline for projecting level of service ratios based explicitly on current population size and projected population for the next twenty years. Using the NRPA park level of service standards, the following tables present numerical ranges of anticipated needs for parks on the next three pages as well as a comparison of national standards applied to Independence's existing population and projected population. The current level of service provided by the City's total of 114.27 acres is 13.1 acres per 1,000 residents. This overall level of service exceeds national standards and rests in the upper range of comparable examples reviewed in the precedent review in **Section II: Table 6 - Precedent Review Comparison Chart**. However, the individual level of service classification per park definition falls short for neighborhood parks standards in a range of roughly 15 to 30 acres. See **Figures 1-3** for a breakdown of current and projected level of service standards.

Section X: Figure 1 Current Park Inventory of the City of Independence

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE-EXISTING TOTAL PARK INVENTORY			
PARK NAME	CURRENT PARK CLASSIFICATION	TOTAL ACREAGE	SUBTOTAL
Mini-Neighborhood Parks			
Pfaff Park	Mini-Neighborhood Park	2.18 acres	12.89 acres
Pioneer Park	Mini-Neighborhood Park	1.95 acres	
Mt. Fir Park	Mini-Neighborhood Park	7.24 acres	
Un-Named Park	Mini-Neighborhood Park	1.52 acres	
Neighborhood Park			
Henry Hill Park	Neighborhood Park	.63 acres	.63 acres
Community Parks			
North Riverview Park	Community Park	77.53 acres	91.06 acres
Riverview Park	Community Park	13.53 acres	
Special-Use Park			
Dog Park	Special-Use Park	5.69 acres	5.69 acres
Natural Areas			
Wildfang Park	Conservation Area / Open Space	4.00 acres	4.00 acres
Total Parks Acreage			114.27 acres

Section X: Figure 2 presents the NRPA Level of Service Standards for Current and Projected Population

NRPA LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS-1996			
CLASSIFICATION	NRPA LEVEL OF SERVICE BENCHMARK	NRPA STANDARD APPLIED TO CITY OF INDEPENDENCE CURRENT POPULATION (8,585)	NRPA STANDARD APPLIED TO CITY OF INDEPENDENCE PROPOSED POPULATION 2034 (15,332)
Parks			
Mini-Park	0.25-0.5 acres/1000	2.15-4.29 acres	3.83-7.67 acres
Neighborhood Park	1.0-2.0 acres/1000	8.6-17.17 acres	15.33-30.64 acres
Community Park	5.0-8.0 acres/1000	42.92-68.68 acres	76.66-106.66 acres
Municipal / Regional Park	no standard	not applicable	not applicable
Special Use Park	no standard	not applicable	not applicable
Linear Park / Trail	no standard	not applicable	not applicable
Natural Areas			
Conservation Area / Open Space	variable	not applicable	not applicable
Total Parks Acreage	10 acres/1000	53.67-90.14 acres	95.82-144.97 acres

LEVEL OF SERVICE

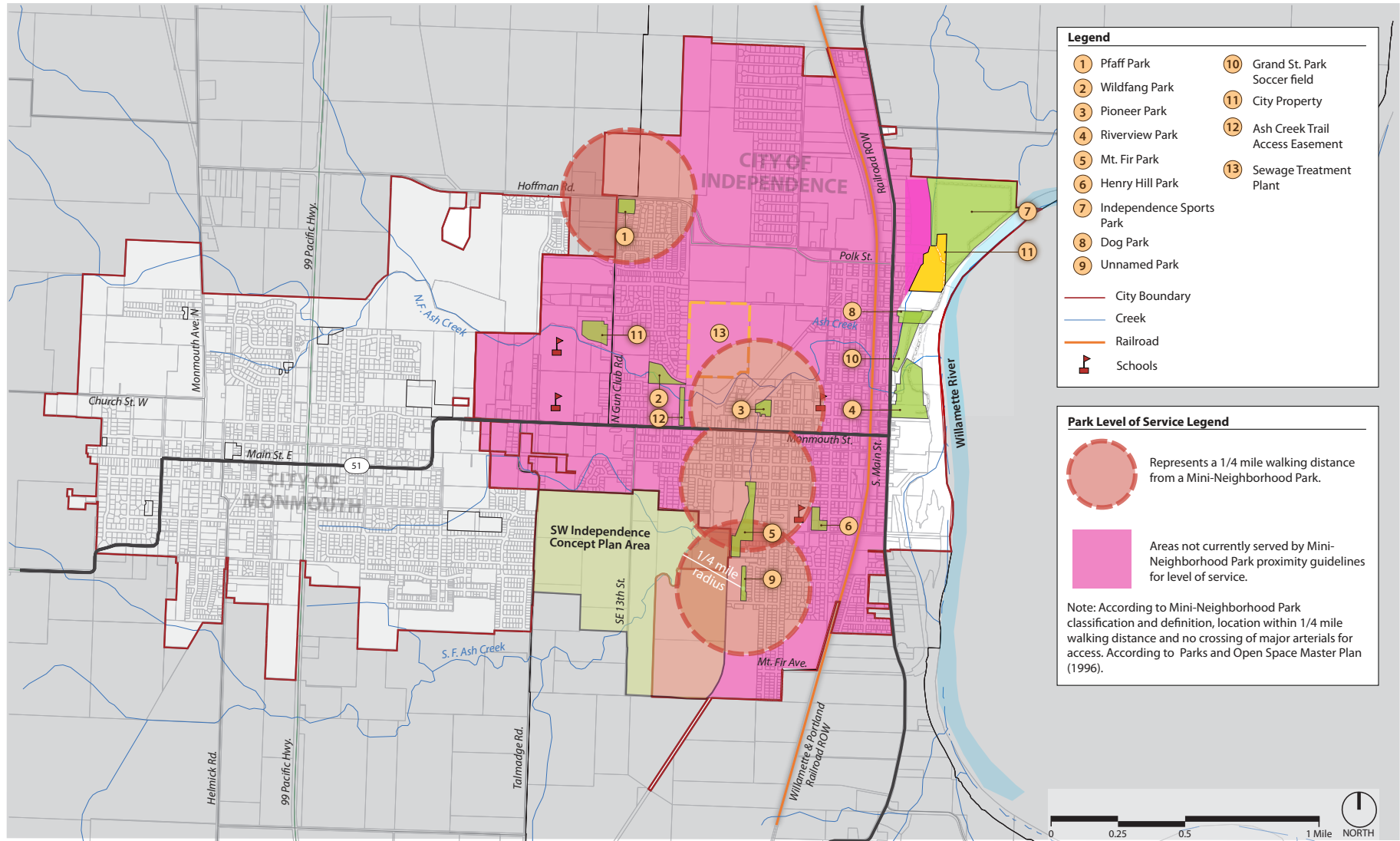
Section X: Figure 3 presents the City of Independence Parks Current and Projected surplus and deficiency

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE-CURRENT STANDINGS					
CLASSIFICATION	CITY OF INDEPENDENCE CURRENT INVENTORY	CURRENT NRPA STANDARD	DEFICIENCY (-)/ SURPLUS (+)	NRPA STANDARD APPLIED TO CITY OF INDEPENDENCE PROPOSED POPULATION 2034	PROJECTED DEFICIENCY (-)/ SURPLUS (+)
Parks					
Mini-Park	12.89 acres	2.15-4.29 acres	+10.74 / +8.6 acres	3.83-7.67 acres	+9.06 / +5.22 acres
Neighborhood Park	0.63 acres	8.6-17.17 acres	-7.97 / -16.54 acres	15.33-30.64 acres	-14.7 / -30 acres
Community Park	91.06 acres	42.92-68.68 acres	+48.14 / +22.18 acres	76.66-106.66 acres	+14.4 / -15.6 acres
Municipal / Regional Park	no standard	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable
Special Use Park	5.69 acres	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable
Linear Park / Trail	no standard	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable
Natural Areas					
Conservation Area / Open Space	4.0 acres	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable	not applicable
Total Parks Acreage	114.27 acres	53.67 / 90.14 acres	+50.91 / +14.24 acres	95.82 / 144.97 acres	+8.76 / -40.38 acres

10.11 QUALITATIVE APPROACH

The qualitative approach considers more than a numerical standard for the amount of park land to best serve the Independence community. The qualitative approach considers the proximity of parks to the resident users and the size of the parks to best serve the adjacent communities. The following standards can be considered for acquisition, design, and development of parks, open space areas, specialized facilities, and trail systems. The Qualitative approach considers the parks types as integral units to community development. The park types are offered in the hierarchy of scales extending from Mini-Park to Neighborhood Park and finally Community Park. The hierarchy of parks is applied city wide based on the distance requirements and access requirements outlined in the proposed park type definitions. Levels of Service diagrams (represented in **Figures 4-9**) were generated for each of the park classification types in order to project the amount of parks required to meet the proposed distance and access requirements. Service area analysis was performed first in order to demonstrate gaps or surpluses in number of facilities based on park location.

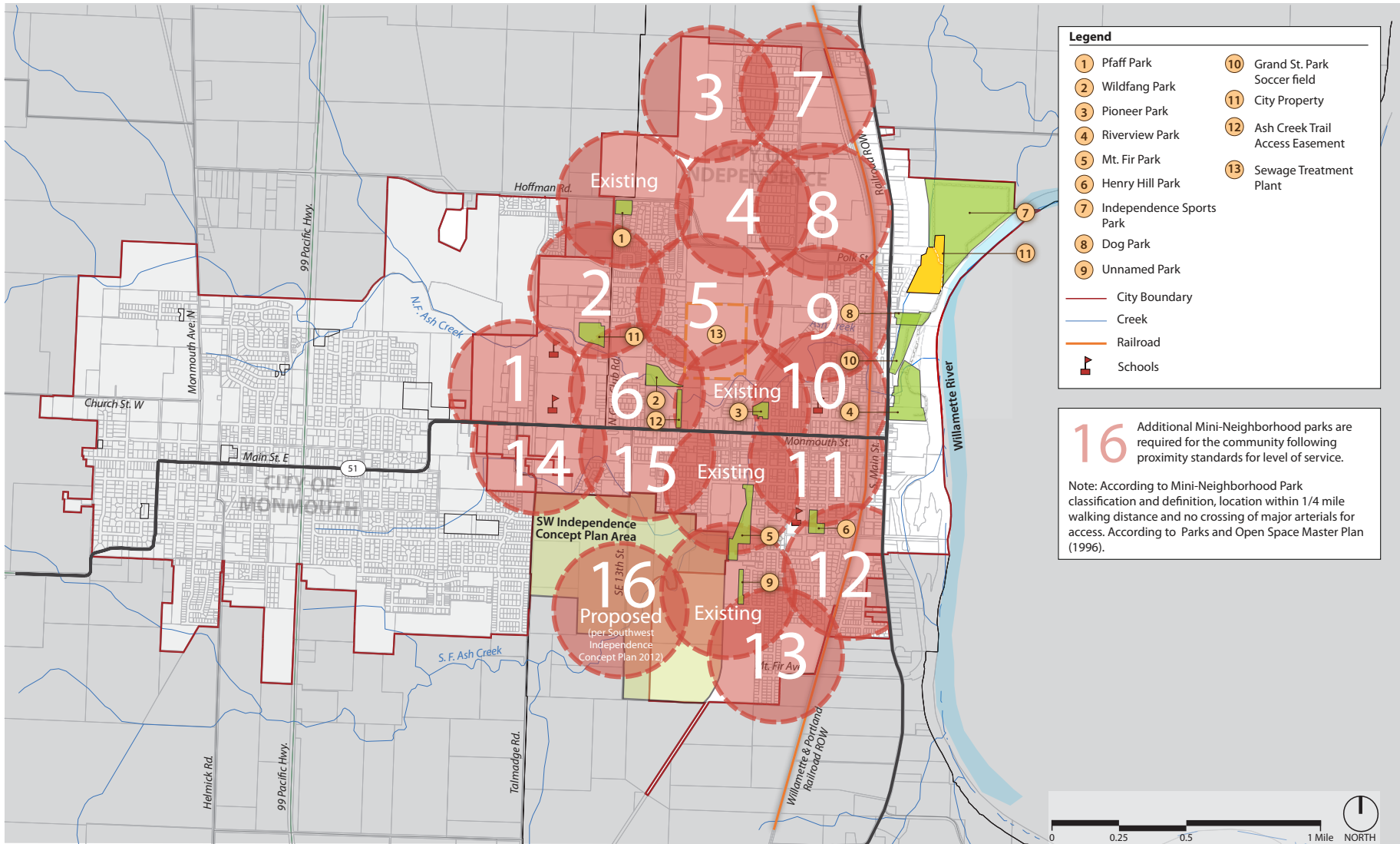
Section X: Figure 4 Qualitative Level of Service – Mini-Neighborhood Parks Diagram: Illustrates the service radii for the Mini Parks based on a service range of a ¼ mile service radius using all existing Mini-Neighborhood Parks in the system. Areas highlighted in pink represent areas not currently served by Mini-Neighborhood Park definition.



Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Master Plan: Existing Service Mini-Neighborhood Park

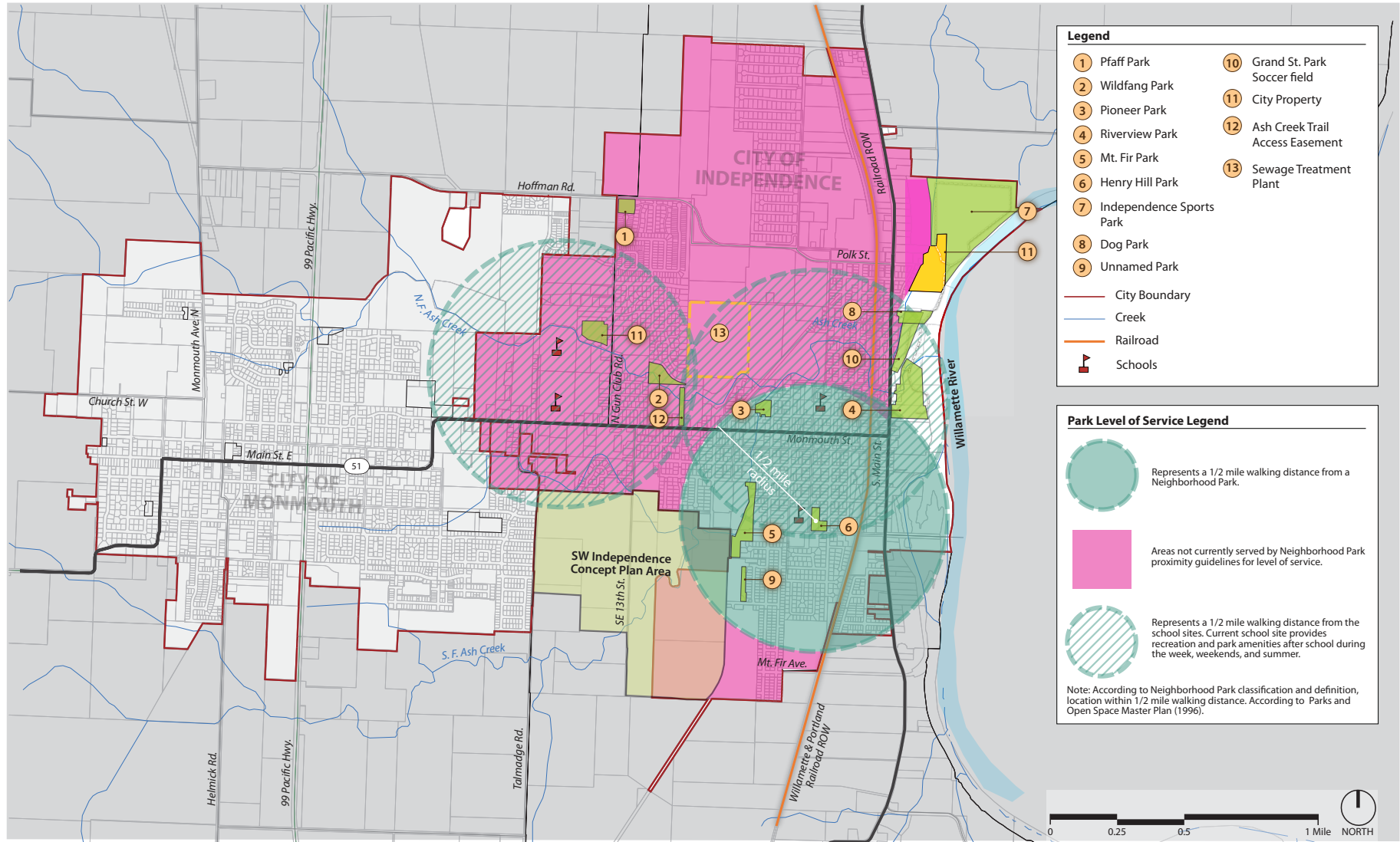
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, OREGON

Section X: Figure 5 Qualitative Level of Service – Proposed Mini-Neighborhood Parks: Diagram projects the locations of the an additional 16 Mini Parks considering that access to the Mini Park would prohibit the crossing of an arterial or collector roadway to reach the park to meet all residents of the City. Using the park definition size guidelines, the total amount of Mini-Parks acreage for 16 park sites would result in a range of 16 to 80 acres additional acres for Mini-Neighborhood Parks.



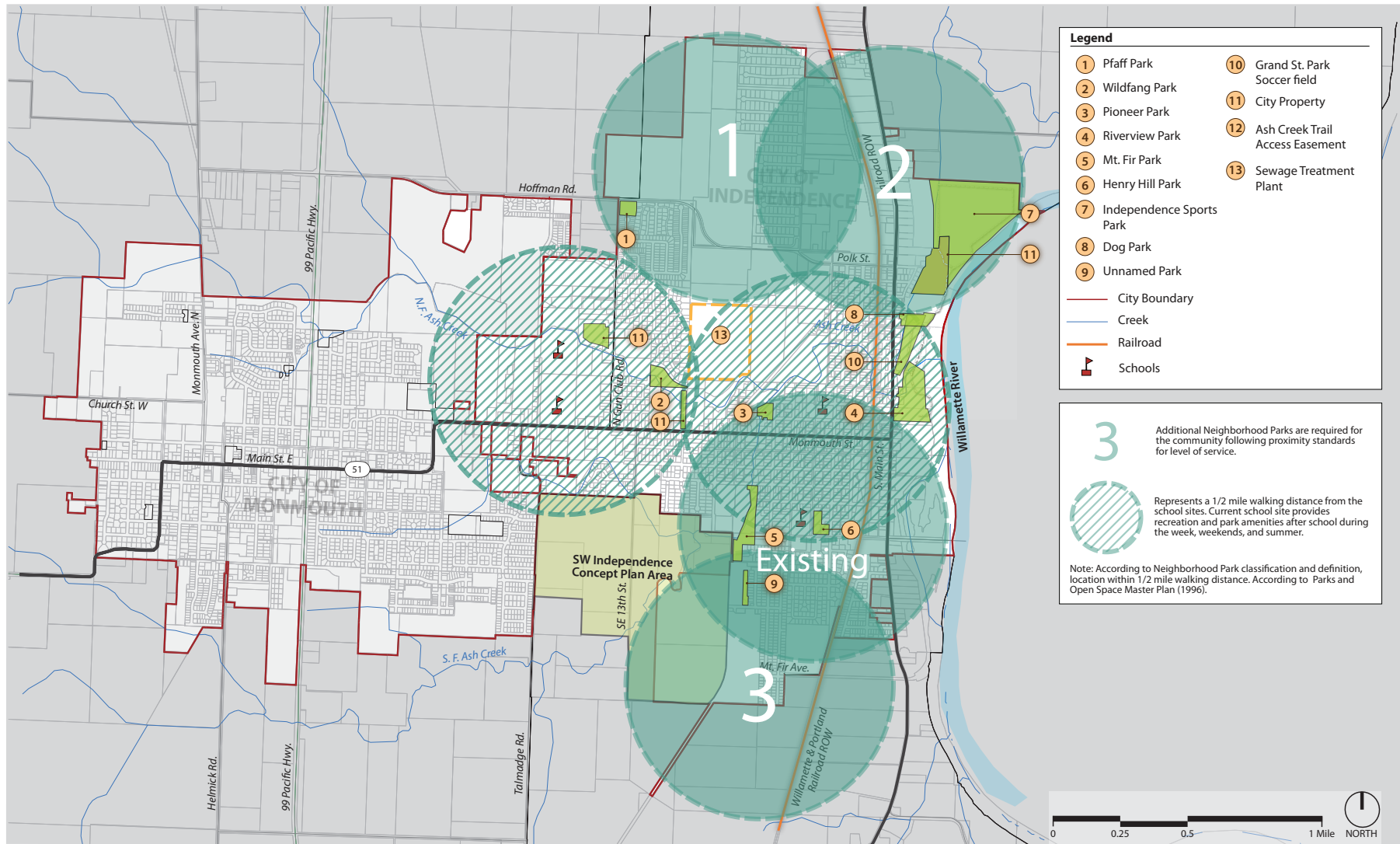
Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Master Plan: Proposed Mini-Neighborhood Parks
 CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, OREGON

Section X: Figure 6: Qualitative Level of Service – Neighborhood Parks: Diagram projects the service radii for the Neighborhood Parks based on a service range of a 1/2 mile service radius using existing Neighborhood Parks in the System. Areas highlighted in pink represent areas not currently served by the Neighborhood Park definition.



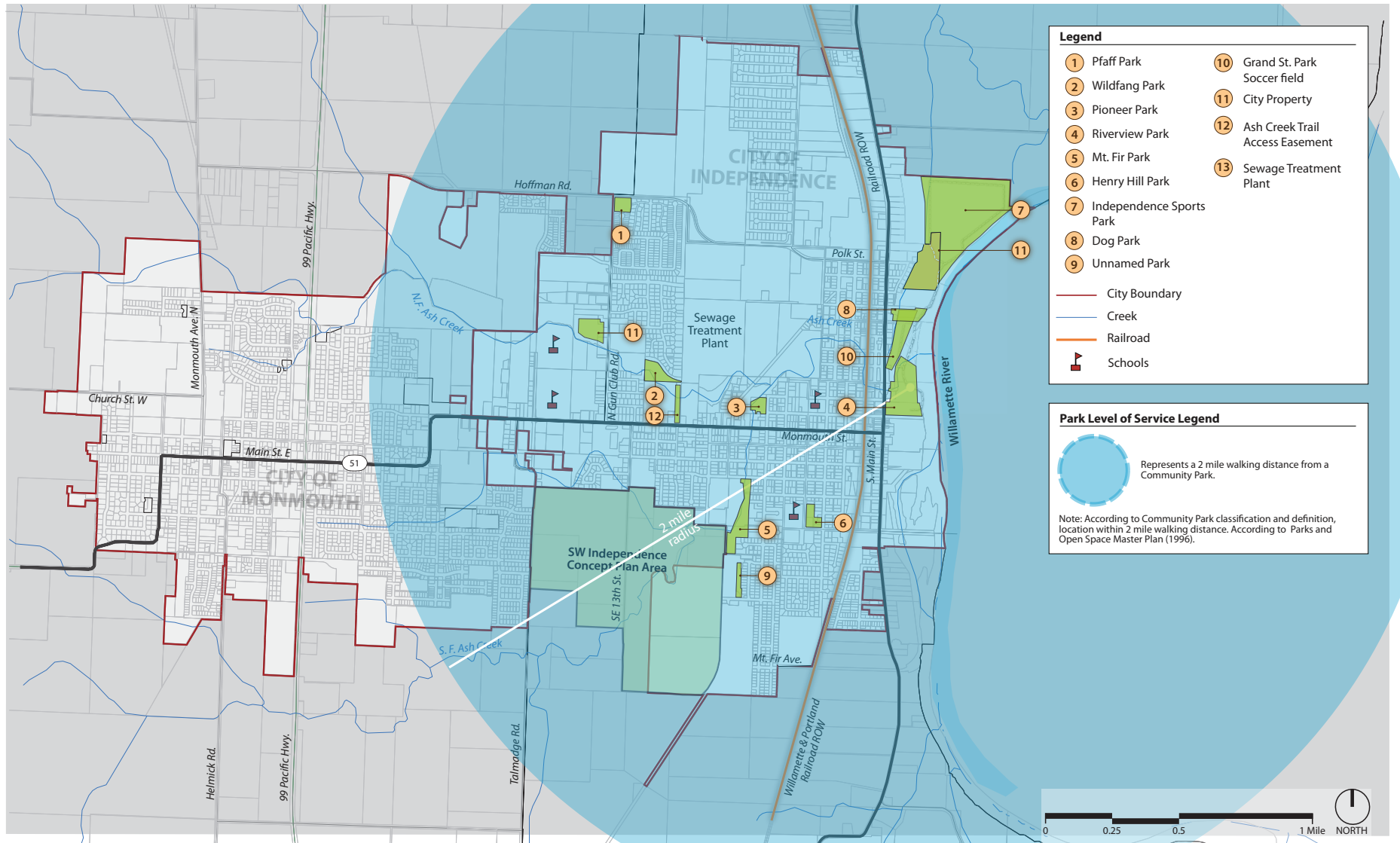
Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Master Plan: Existing Neighborhood Parks
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, OREGON

Section X: Figure 7: Qualitative Level of Service – Neighborhood Parks: Diagram projects the locations of the proposed Neighborhood Parks considering access to the park would not require crossing of an arterial or collector roadway. Using the park definition size guidelines, the total amount of Neighborhood Parks acreage for an additional 5 park sites would result in a range of 15 to 50 acres for Neighborhood Parks.

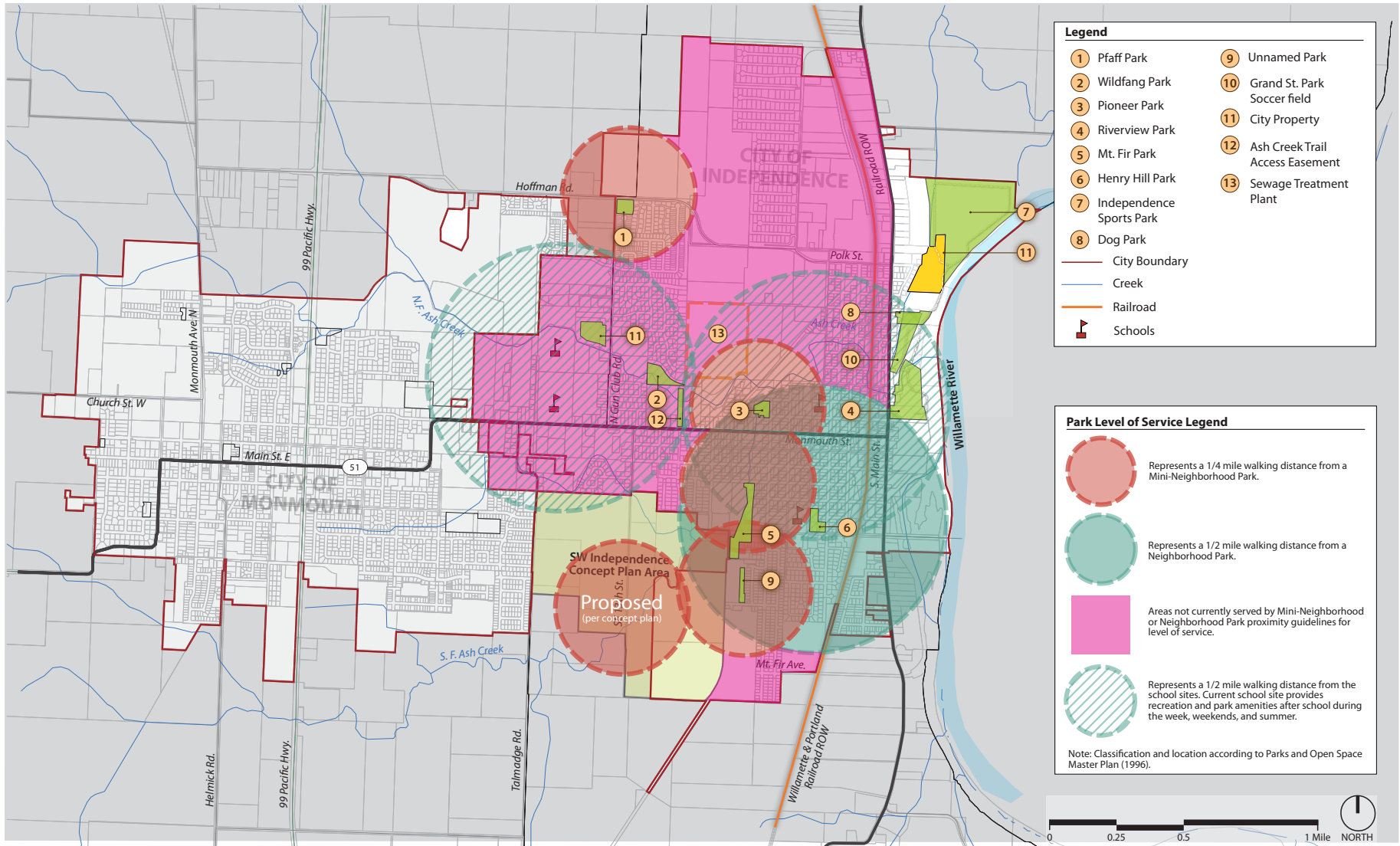


Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Master Plan: Proposed Neighborhood Parks
CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, OREGON

Section X: Figure 8: Qualitative Level of Service – Community Parks: Diagram projects the service radii for the Community Parks based on a service range of 2 mile service radius. Based on proximity service standard for community parks, the community is being served completely at the current city boundary location.



Section X: Figure 9: Qualitative Level of Service - Mini-Neighborhood & Neighborhood Parks Compilation: Diagram shows the compilation of level of service proximity standard for both Mini-Neighborhood and Neighborhood parks, the graphic exhibits lack of service geographically to the areas highlighted in pink. City priorities should include acquisition and development of parks in these locations as the opportunity arises.



Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Master Plan: All Existing Parks (Mini-Neighborhood and Neighborhood)

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, OREGON

JANUARY, 2015



10.12 COMBINATION LEVEL OF SERVICE APPROACH

A third approach for level of service application to the City of Independence would consider combining the quantitative and qualitative approaches with an understanding of the land use zoning of the city in order to best allocate parks and open space areas to the areas of highest density of its residents. Understanding housing projections for each of the city land use zoning areas and projected population increase would be a starting point for creating a level of service standard tailored to the individual zoning areas with consideration for location, access, and size. In this manner, the population of residents with the highest density would benefit from a greater, intentional acquisition and development of parks in these denser areas. In this instance, the community park definition meets and exceeds requirements for level of service according to **Figure 8: Qualitative Level of Service – Community Parks** and is not illustrated for the combination level of service approach. Diagrams representing combination levels of service for Independence are shown in **Figures 10-12**.

RECREATIONAL FIELDS

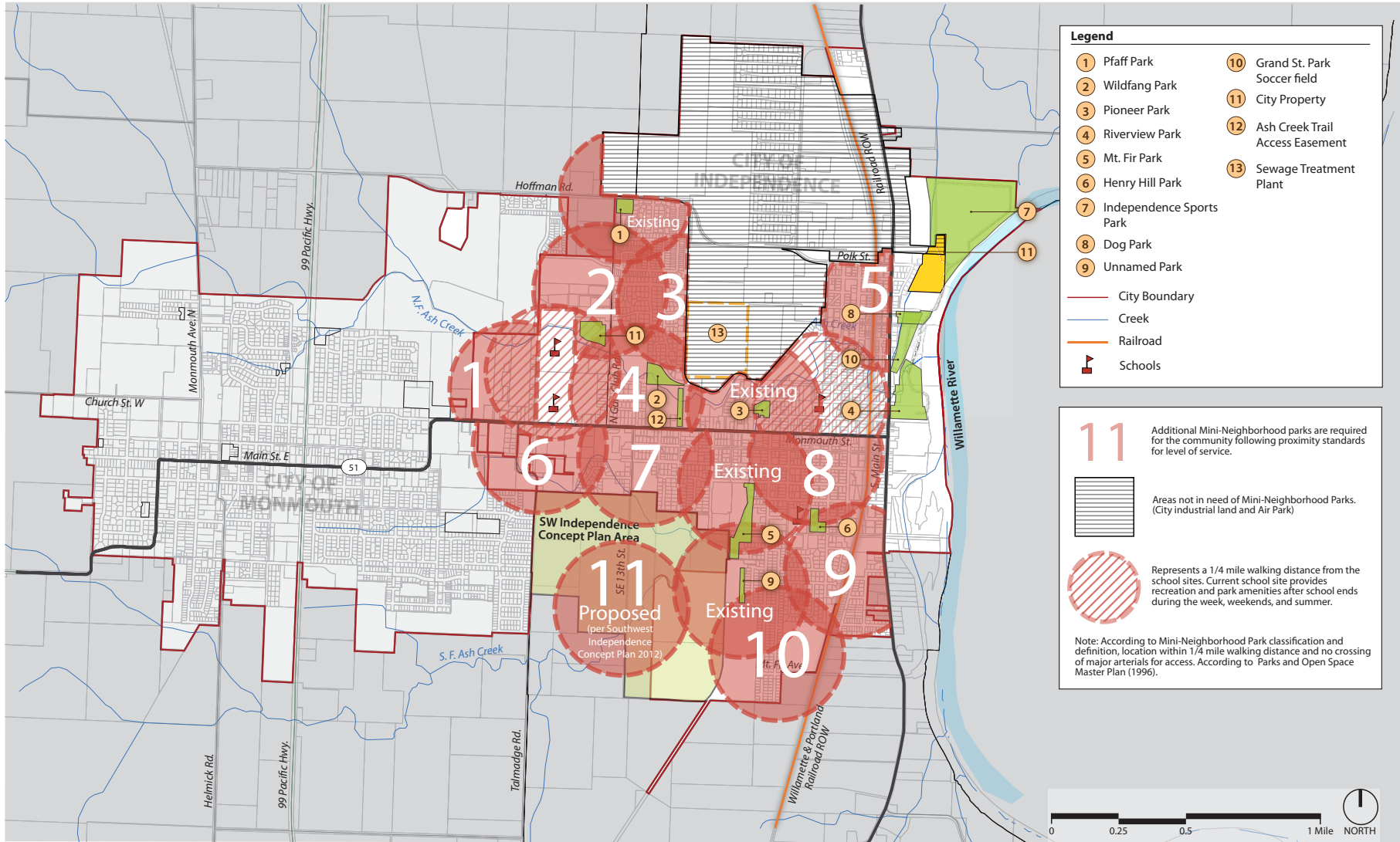
The northern limits of the City of Independence were removed from consideration in this approach based on the industrial land inventory located primarily in this area, the unique Airpark neighborhood located in this area, and City infrastructure (Sewage Treatment Plant) located centrally in the city. The Airpark residents were provided several different scenarios that would introduce a small park within the neighborhood to different locations typically adjacent to Stryker Road. Ultimately, continued coordination and outreach to the Airpark residents concluded that a park site was not preferable within the Airpark neighborhood limits based on the following issues:

- Safety risks having non-Airpark users (adults, children and pets) on, or near taxiways. Airpark lots have individual taxiway access to individual residents.
- Safety Liabilities of visitors wandering into hangars to look at planes and possibly coming into
- Contact with hazardous chemicals or propeller planes in operation.
- Fencing in Airpark requires 20 foot setback from property line, reducing park size
- Parking concerns of visitors parking on side streets in front of residential housing.
- The 'City' becomes an 'owner' of a lot in the Airpark, will be required to pay annual taxiway improvement and ingress/egress fees to Oregon Department of Aviation.

- Questions regarding the Oregon Department of Aviation and the FAA allowing a public park within an Airpark.

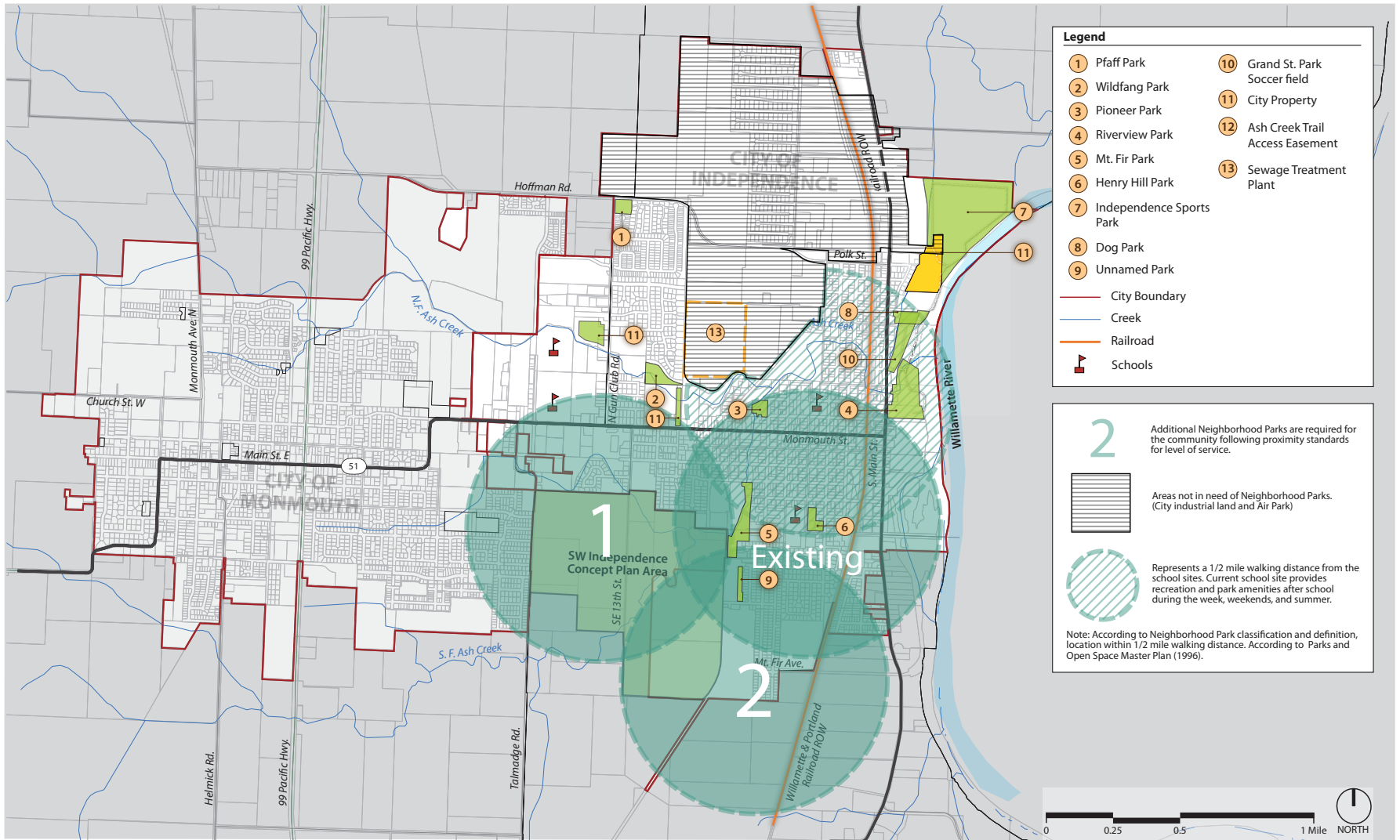
Although residents were clear in their disapproval of a neighborhood park within their neighborhood limits, they overall supported a possible neighborhood park location on the current City property at Polk Street between Walnut Street and Ash Street.

Section X: Figure 10: Combination Level of Service Mini-Neighborhood Park: Diagram shows the proposed level of service for Mini-Neighborhood park with Land Use considerations. Using the park definition size guidelines, the total amount of Mini-Parks acreage for 11 new park sites would result in a range of 33 to 55 acres additional acres for Mini-Neighborhood Parks.



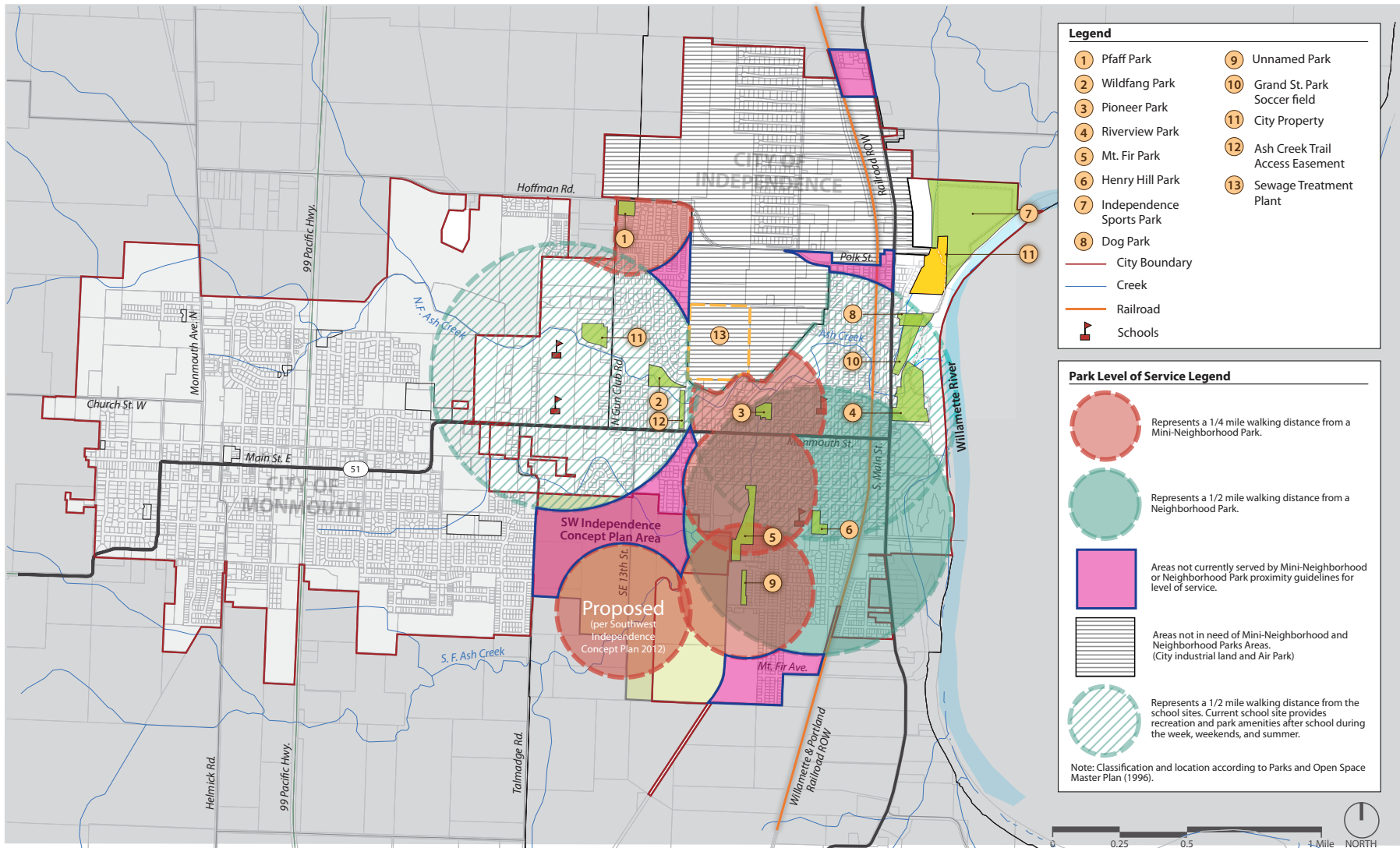
Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Master Plan: Proposed Mini-Neighborhood Parks Modified
 CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, OREGON

Section X: Figure 11: Combination Level of Service Neighborhood Park: Diagram shows the proposed level of service for Neighborhood park with Land Use considerations. Using the park definition size guidelines, the total amount of Neighborhood Parks acreage for 3 new park sites would result in a range of 15 to 30 additional acres for Neighborhood Parks.



Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Master Plan: **Proposed Neighborhood Modified**
 CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, OREGON

Section X: Figure 12: Combination Level of Service Mini-Neighborhood Park and Neighborhood Park: Diagram shows the proposed level of service for a compilation of Mini-Neighborhood and Neighborhood park requirements with Land Use considerations. The graphic exhibits lack of service geographically to the areas highlighted in pink. City priorities should include acquisition and development of parks in these locations as the opportunity arises.



Parks, Trails, and Open Space System Master Plan: All Existing Parks (Mini-Neighborhood and Neighborhood) Modified

CITY OF INDEPENDENCE, OREGON

JANUARY, 2015



10.13 LEVEL OF SERVICE APPROACH SUMMARY

To serve the needs of a diverse population, it is important that a parks system contain parks of different sizes and types throughout the city. Currently, there are a number of areas that are underserved by the City's parks system. Through a review of all three approaches, the areas to the north and northeast of the City, areas to the South, and the Western central limits of the City continue to be underserved by neighborhood parks. The category of community parks far exceeds the needs of community residents; however, neighborhood parks are not available to meet the needs of community members within a half mile walking distance.