

## Strategic Action Plan

*The Square will be a dynamic commercial, cultural and civic center. It will be based on unique shopping, entertainment, social, cultural, and service experiences that are distinct to that of the competition in the region. The core of this vision will be based on the Square's historic architecture, its history, its potential for vibrant street life, and its healthy business. It will instill pride and ownership for residents and workers, and a sense of admiration from visitors who come to this unique place.*





### 4.0 Vision

In creating a common vision of the future of the Square, both the private and public sectors have shown their desire to work toward achieving attainable goals.

Based on downtown key person interviews, steering committee input, market research, input from a community charrette, and public comment, there is a clearer vision of what the Square will be in the future. The vision of the Square is based upon the following goals established during the initial public review process.

1. Beautify the Square.
2. Retain and accentuate the uniqueness of the Square.
3. Make the Square a vibrant, active and bustling place.
4. Provide public amenities that provide a more enjoyable experience for shoppers and visitors so they will stay longer.
5. Improve the perception that residents, regional shoppers, and investors have of the Square.
6. Ensure that Square business and property owners are profitable.
7. Accomplish these goals in a unified approach by combining and coordinating the efforts of businesses, property owners, agencies and government into one single partnership.



### *Vision*

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### 4.1 Basic Revitalization Principles

There are no overnight successes to downtown development. However, there are incremental steps which can lead to progress in a relatively short period of time. It will be a number of years before the vision for the Square is realized. Over the next twenty years, not only will the Square change, but the City of Independence will change as the Little Blue Valley continues to develop.

The retail environment must be flexible enough to accommodate the changes over the next five to twenty years. Through a commitment to revitalizing the Square, the people of Independence will gain the complete edge necessary to attract new residents, new retail, and office uses. The community will see new businesses flourish, property values will continue to increase, property owners will reinvest, and the city will enjoy a vibrant and active Square.

To achieve this revitalized and vibrant Square there are a number of basic renovation principles which should guide revitalization efforts as the Square regains its prominence in Independence.

- **Build an enabling organization to carry out the commercial requirements to revitalize the Square**  
An effective organization is one of the key aspects of effectively implementing any revitalization strategy. The organization must create a broad-based partnership among public and private sector interests and provide leadership and resources in order to propel and maintain revitalization goals. There are a number of organizations focusing their efforts on the Square including the Independence Square Association, the Independence Square Benefit District, and Square One. A commitment should be made to consolidate the various groups into one downtown focused entity. Increased cooperation between the groups is required to ensure revitalization work is carried out in the most effective and efficient manner.

- **Ensure the basics are in place**  
The Square needs to provide an adequate range of neighborhood-serving commercial operations benefiting downtown businesses, office workers, and the local residents. Among others, these include convenience goods and personal services (banks, dentists, barber, hair salons, etc). These types of goods and services need to be reinforced to ensure their strength.
- **Start with a geographic concentration**  
Revitalization activity and investment should start by growing from existing blocks of retail strength. Building upon these existing retail clusters forms a critical mass which is necessary to deal with some of the larger issues on the Square.

At present the core retail is located along Main Street and the area facing the Historic Jackson County Courthouse. However, at present the critical mass of strong retailers is not present in either retail node. There are a number of vacant and under utilized street-level spaces. In the long-term, the “Historic Specialty Retail Area” should be preserved for retail. Professional firms should be discouraged from locating on the street level in this core area. While professional services are very critical to the Square by generating pedestrian traffic, supplying business services, and providing an invaluable source of customers – their presence at the street-level is not conducive to effective retailing practices.

In the short and medium-term, professional firms which support the business offices (ei. attorneys, insurance, accountants, etc) may continue to occupy street-level space in the “Historic Specialty Retail Area” with the understanding that these spaces should be converted to retail at a future date. This will allow for core retail areas to accommodate increased consumer spending. To accomplish this goal, buildings used as offices must

maintain physical aspects that make them conducive to retailing (i.e. large display windows, clear glass, and multiple access points). As the Visitor Orientation Center develops, street-level retail operations should be strengthened and street-level office space should be converted to retail establishments.

- **Maintain historic integrity**  
Platted in 1827, the Square contains buildings from many eras each adding its own layer of history. Changes in construction methods, engineering practices, building styles, and uses are evident in existing structures and reveal the passage of time which contributes to our understanding of this unique place. The juxtaposition of various building types and styles not only creates a lively interaction between buildings, but strengthens the authenticity of the Square.

Today we have the capability to “recreate” the appearance of almost any building. While these recreated buildings may contain some characteristics of the older structure, it is very difficult to achieve the authenticity of the original structure. This lack of authenticity is the result of many factors including change in available materials, change in construction methods, code requirements, and costs associated with recreating an earlier appearance. While supposedly creating a “sense of place,” historic misrepresentation creates a “Disneyland” appearance and diminishes the Square’s authentic character.

Retaining the Square’s authentic character is not only critical in marketing the Square as a unique destination, but makes available specific financial incentives to assist property owners in their revitalization efforts. A significant portion of the Square is in the proposed expansion of the Harry S Truman National Historic Landmark District. This designation will allow property owners of contributing buildings to qualify for federal and state historic preservation tax credits.



- **Linkages are critical**

Just as cooperation between existing organizations is important, linkages will be critical in creating a cohesive environment on the Square whereby businesses, visitor attractions, and area residents work together to realize the synergy created by one another and mutually support one another. Improved signage, streetscape improvements, banners, and special events should work to effectively link the character districts and the surrounding residential neighborhoods.

There are several initiatives that will work toward building stronger ties and physical connections. These include:

- Renovation of the Historic Jackson County Courthouse for use as a Visitor Orientation Center
- Gateway signage and wayfinding features that will direct individuals to the Square
- Enhancement of physical connections with surrounding residential neighborhoods through infill development and streetscape improvements

- **Partnership is critical**

Revitalization of the Square will not happen solely with the public sector. Public/private partnerships are required to ensure the shared vision for the Square becomes a reality. Individuals will need to broaden the traditional concepts of partnerships from sharing in the cost of improvements to include coordinating marketing campaigns, linking specific businesses, and maintaining streetscape improvements.

- **Build off strengths**

Like any marketed consumer product or brand, the Square has several important commercial attributes, including:

- High concentration of historically significant structures
- Sizeable, stable workforce
- Established festivals and events
- Current revitalization effort
- Nearby regionally significant landmarks and visitor attractions
- Adjacent residential neighborhoods

It will be important for the Square to capitalize on these strengths. The Square must build-off of its key strengths of the office/worker market and the visitor market to expand its offerings of specialty retail, restaurants/eating establishments, convenience goods and services. The establishment of the Historic Jackson Courthouse as the Visitors Orientation Center will have a strong spin-off effect toward building stronger specialty retail and restaurant/eating establishments.



**4.2 Target Market Strategy**

In analyzing the retail, housing, and office target markets for the Square, it appears that the housing and office markets are primarily driven by local residents and businesses desiring to move to higher quality facilities or locations within the city. Currently, these two sectors do not appear to be driven by a large influx of new residents or new office uses to the area.

Nonetheless, the local economy has seen on-going development in all three market segments as can be seen in new subdivision development, the mainstream retail developments, and limited office development in the Little Blue Valley area of the city.

Based on these factors, opportunities in the market place for improved housing and retail options have been identified.

**Retail**

The Square historically served as the area’s retail, financial, and government center. However, the development of the city’s regional retail in the eastern portion of the city and the combination of the Square’s physical placement within the city has resulted in the reliance on workers and residents in the surrounding area to be the primary target markets. As the demographics of the surrounding area have changed the area resident target market has decreased. There are over 2,500 workers who are employed on the Square.

The retail market has not adequately captured the existing office/support service workers market and should focus on recapturing this target market by increasing the number of convenience goods and services, local specialty retailers and possibly smaller regional chains such as drug stores.

Independence has approximately one million annual visitors who spend almost \$100 million in direct expenditures. While 23% of these visitors come to the Square, a relatively low percentage (18%) actually make purchases or eat on the

Square (*City of Independence Tourism Department –Intercept Study*). To revitalize the Square, the area will need to continue building upon the existing day tripper/visitor/tourist target market and increase the spending patterns of this target market. The establishment of the Visitor Orientation Center in the Historic Jackson County Courthouse is one of the keys to securing a greater visitor target market.

**Short Term (1-5 years)**

Target Market	Demographics	Types of Stores
Local Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Professionals</li> <li>• Smaller Households</li> <li>• More Ethnically Diverse</li> <li>• Low to Mid-Level Household Income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convenience Goods and Services</li> <li>• Restaurants, Cafes</li> <li>• Food Stores</li> <li>• Home Accessory</li> </ul>
Office Workers Jury Duty Respondents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governmental</li> <li>• Ethnically Diverse</li> <li>• Wide Range of Economic Levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lunch and After Work Eating/Drinking</li> <li>• Convenience Goods and Services</li> <li>• Food Stores</li> <li>• Entertainment Uses</li> </ul>
Visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seniors</li> <li>• Day-trippers</li> <li>• Mid to High-Level of Disposable Income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restaurants</li> <li>• Entertainment</li> <li>• Local Specialty Retailers</li> <li>• Leisure Activities</li> </ul>

**Long-Term (5-10+ years)**

Target Market	Demographics	Types of Stores/Location
Increase Primary Trade Area Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Professionals</li> <li>• Smaller Households</li> <li>• More Ethnically Diverse</li> <li>• Low to Mid-Level Household Income</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Convenience Goods and Services</li> <li>• Restaurants, Cafes</li> <li>• Food Stores</li> <li>• Home Accessory</li> </ul>
Office Workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Governmental</li> <li>• Financial</li> <li>• Entertainment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lunch and After Work Eating/Drinking</li> <li>• Convenience Goods and Services</li> <li>• Leisure</li> </ul>



**Housing**

Housing is a critical component of any downtown revitalization strategy. Currently, less than 1,000 (less than 1% of the city’s total population) reside within one-quarter mile of the Square. As the Square Revitalization Plan is implemented and the image of the Square begins to improve, housing on and around the Square should become more desirable to area residents.

The City of Independence understands the importance of housing in and around the Square as evidenced by the adoption of the Midtown Truman Road Corridor 353 Plan. Housing surrounding the Square offers many long-term benefits as it will encourage other forms of economic development. For instance, increased residential population around the Square will increase the demand for a variety of retail, restaurant, and home product related services, providing for the opportunity for new or relocated businesses to open on the Square.

The adjacent tables outline the immediate and long-term opportunities for housing in and around the Square.

**Short Term (1-5 years)**

Target Market	Demographics	Types of Housing
Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Professionals</li> <li>• Office Workers</li> <li>• Empty Nesters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second Story Lofts/Apartments</li> </ul>

**Long-Term (5-10+ years)**

Target Market	Demographics	Types of Housing
Residents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Families</li> <li>• Office Workers</li> <li>• Empty Nesters</li> <li>• Seniors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Infill Apartments</li> <li>• New Infill Single-family Housing in the Residential Character District</li> </ul>



**Office/Service**

The Square has the advantage of containing the Jackson County and Municipal Court facilities, City of Independence and Jackson County government offices, and the associated legal services. Thus, the office market on the Square continues to be focused on governmental services and services related to the operation of the Courts. However, this ready supply of office tenants is beginning to have a negative impact on the Square’s availability of retail space in the *Historic Specialty Retail Area*.

A recent trend has been the conversion of ground level retail spaces into office space. These ground level spaces are extremely important in retaining a viable retail environment. Office uses do not typically generate enough street-level-pedestrian activity to create the critical mass necessary to sustain a viable retail/entertainment component. Without a viable retail/entertainment component the Square will not be able to achieve its full potential.

The Square’s collection of multi-story historic buildings should be considered a unique asset in developing new office space not easily found in other portions of Independence. The Independence Council for Economic Development (ICED) should investigate ways to market existing second story building stock and encourage the development of new in-fill buildings in areas surrounding the “Historic Specialty Retail Area.”

The following are the immediate and long-term opportunities for office in and around the Square.

**Short Term (1-5 years)**

Target Market	Demographics	Types of Office/Location
Professional Firms High Tech Business Incubator High Pedestrian-Active Services Such as Dry Cleaners/Shoe Repair/Video Rental or Sales	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Professionals</li> <li>• Square Workers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conversion of Second Story Storage Areas to Office Uses.</li> <li>• Provide Pedestrian-Active Services at the Street-Level in the Brick Office District, Courthouse Square District, Truman Road Corridor, and Walnut Street District</li> </ul>

**Long-Term (5-10+ years)**

Target Market	Demographics	Types of Office/Location
Professional Firms High Tech Business Incubator Expanded or New Government Offices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Young Professionals</li> <li>• Jackson County</li> <li>• State of Missouri</li> <li>• City of Independence</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Infill Construction in the Truman Road Corridor, City Government District, Walnut Street District, and the Brick Office District</li> </ul>



### 4.3 Organizational Strategy

A commitment should be made to consolidate the various groups into one focused entity. As the Independence Square Association, the Independence Square Benefit District, and Square One come together to champion the Square revitalization efforts, a consolidated Square coalition will be formulated to bring community-wide leadership to the forefront and establish new goals and expectations for the Square.

This new consolidated Square Coalition will draw its constituency from all of Independence and will include members from the following organizations, as well as others not known at this time:

Square Association, Independence Square Benefit District, Square Merchants, Square Property Owners, Banks, Preservation Community, Neighborhood Representatives, ICED, Chamber of Commerce, Pillars Council, Design Community, City of Independence, Jackson County Government, Farmers Market, Tourism Department.

### Organization Characteristics, Structure and Resources

- The Square Coalition must have support that is both broad and deep. Support must be secured from both the public and private community. It is imperative that the coalition gain participation from private sector including businesses, property owners, residents, corporations, and institutions that have not felt compelled to be involved in the activities of the Square.

- The Square Coalition must continue to develop and articulate the vision for the Square that is both compelling and realistic. The vision must be sufficiently compelling to generate and maintain the strong commitment and excitement necessary to achieve revitalization. The vision must be easily recognizable and understood. In addition, the elements must be achievable in a reasonable amount of time with resources that can be obtained.
- The Square Coalition must increase the credibility of existing organizations by attracting new members in the community. Credibility, particularly in the early stages of the Coalition, is essential. The Coalition will be seeking to make changes in the Square that have not been accomplished to date. Commitment and persistence are necessary because revitalization efforts will not be accomplished overnight. Strong leadership and competency are essential; the Coalition's leadership must have, and must be perceived as having, the required skills and ability to attract others to revitalization efforts.
- The Square Coalition must have competent, energetic, and creative staff to provide support and management of the vision. Leading the revitalization efforts of the Square is not a nine-to-five effort. Furthermore, in a small organization, staff must possess both the general organization skills and a certain level of technical skills and knowledge. Staff must be a consensus builder.
- The Square Coalition must have the capacity to accomplish specific tasks. Acting as an advocate is important, but not sufficient to accomplish the necessary tasks. At the same time, it should be understood the Square Coalition will not have sufficient resources to accomplish everything. It will have to establish partnerships and alliance with other

public and private entities in order to leverage its resources.

- The Square Coalition must practice collaborative partnerships including:
  - **Coalition building, compromise, judgmental/political skills**
  - **Networking**  
Building linkages beyond traditional relationships, whatever it takes to get the job done
  - **Consensus building**  
Focusing on achieving a particular task and not a specific manner in which to accomplish the task
  - **Exercising non-jurisdictional power**  
The power of ideas, power of understanding, how different systems can work, and the power of media, and public perception
  - **Institution building**  
Constructing new systems, increasing problem solving capacity, and recruiting talent to operate
  - **Flexibility**  
The ability to react as circumstances change and opportunities arise
  - **Dialogue**  
Identifying new areas of agreement and opportunities for conversation and listing – revitalization efforts will require more understanding and cooperation than in the past



### 4.4 Commercial Strategy

The Square Coalition will be responsible for implementing the recommendations of the commercial strategy with assistance from the City, ICED and the Chamber of Commerce. The commercial strategy will begin with short-term elements and gradually shift to long-term elements. The shift will center on increasing retail customer traffic and then recruiting new businesses that can benefit from the expanded traffic as accomplishments are completed.

The short-term efforts will focus on fulfilling the needs of the office workers and visitors. As visitation numbers increase and projects such as the Visitor Orientation Center are completed, long-term efforts will concentrate on developing an identifiable retail role based on a lifestyle district with a variety of specialty retail, drinking/eating establishments, and leisure retailers.

### Marketing

The Square Coalition should continue the Independence Square Association's efforts to organize promotional programs to attract shoppers, workers, residents, and outside visitors. This should be accomplished through the following initiatives.

- Building positive images – Marketing should have a broad mandate to build positive programs and images – convenience, historic setting, well-managed stores, easy access, enjoyable shopping, etc. Local and regional residents visit the Square for work, jury duty, and services, but the area needs to convert single-purpose visitors into multi-purpose visitors (e.g. go to the Courthouse and have lunch or shop). While marketing should have a broad mandate, the marketing communications must begin to focus on specific target markets (e.g.; Jury duty respondents, workers, residents, visitors)

- Begin with both umbrella communications and targeted facts to selected groups
- Continue good news to the public regarding new developments, changes, and successes through Examiner and other regional publications
- Consolidate the existing Square websites and continually update the web site to highlight special events, historical resources, commercial buildings, and homes in the area. There should be quicker links for special events, downtown demographics, and potential commercial sites. The Square Coalition should work with ICED to develop a section of the web site devoted to investment in the Square area.

Events and attractions should be retailer-focused – events should be planned on merchandising and entertainment basis. They should focus on specific, high-priority shopping segments and merchandise buying seasons, with the emphasis on building shopping traffic for the various retail & eating establishments. Special events that do not tie into the retail & eating establishments may be successful for the event, but the retailers will not experience any spin-off which is the primary goal. In addition, major events at historical attractions should be linked (physically, carriage rides, etc. or event-wise) with the Square businesses as much as possible.

For the events already held on the Square, and new events which are developed, it will be important to evaluate and prioritize them. In evaluating events the key issue is to remember that they should be linked to promotions already held on the Square and include a merchandising component.

### Building Retail Assets

Using the retail mix identified in the Retail Target Market section of this chapter, the Square Coalition and the ICED should develop a committee of interested businesses, individuals, organizations, institutions, real estate

professionals, investors, City staff and officials to work towards achieving the following programs:

### Existing Business Retention:

- Commercial retention activities- Before developing new businesses, the Square needs to protect and enhance the existing retailers. These businesses generate traffic and attract individuals from outside the trade area. The committee will be able to supply retention services through the following means:
  - Making education tools (including, slides, videos, guidelines, and books) available to Square businesses
  - Offering seminars on topics such as merchandising, effective use of window displays, how to offer good customer service, how to develop a mail order business, etc.
  - Making demographic information available to allow businesses to target specific demographic targets with promotions materials
  - Continue to provide businesses with networking opportunities by holding meetings. These meetings could be enhanced by allowing merchants to take turns holding a meeting in their stores, which gives other retailers the opportunity to learn about each others' businesses
  - Supporting cross-promotional efforts such as the Café Verona's Passport marketing piece
  - Encouraging retailers to stay open longer on weekdays and on weekends
- Sharing and communicating retail vision – Holding regular brief meetings with property/business owners and city officials on the state of the retail and commercial real estate market. This will encourage dialogue regarding the retail vision for the Square and encourage pursuing municipal, state, and federal support programs as well as private business support.



- Retail operators need to set higher standards in their execution in order to appeal to customers.

New Business Recruitment:

- Develop an information package to target new local and regional businesses. The information package should include:
  - Demographics on the Square and Independence region
  - The size and nature of the downtown retail potential
  - Good news about the Square
  - Targeted communications to these retailers
  - Testimonials from other successful retailers
  - Development of a brochure on how-to-key points for new businesses to follow when starting a new business.
- Maintain good contacts with property owners and leasing agents/real estate professionals in order to facilitate the referral of potential business prospects.
- The Square should focus on attracting strong local and regional retailers to the area.
- Look for business development nearby. These businesses will primarily be specialty retailers and regional changes. Examples of target retailers are provided in the adjacent table.

<b>EXAMPLES OF TARGET RETAILERS</b>		
<b>Commodity</b>	<b>Examples</b>	
	<i>Historic Specialty Retail Area</i>	<i>Transition/Historic and Mixed Use Areas</i>
Retail, Eating & Drinking	Coffee shops, cafes, traditional restaurants with Midwest appeal, brew pub, sandwich, shops, entertainment facilities, furniture stores, jewelry shops, etc.	Sandwich shops, entertainment uses, card shop/coffee shops, etc.
Convenience	Dry cleaners, hair and beauty salons, card stores, clock or watch repair, florist shops, etc.	Convenience store, small grocery store, household good, dentists, etc.
Office Support	Computer supply stores, copy centers, graphic design services, etc.	Attorneys, accountants, office supply stores, etc.

## Independence Square Revitalization Plan



## 4.5 Development & Business Incentives

### 4.5 Development & Business Incentives

As the community begins to implement specific elements of the revitalization strategies funding will undoubtedly become an issue. Private enterprises will be cautiously excited about the prospects of investing in the Square. Consequently, it will be important to work closely with the city, county and state to identify potential economic incentive packages to help with revitalization efforts. Similarly, potential new retailers may be cautiously optimistic as they consider opening a business on the Square. Programs such as the Façade Rehabilitation Program and state and federal historic preservation tax credits can assist property owners and tenants with their revitalization efforts.

#### Tools Currently in Place

##### Special Business Benefit District

The Independence Square Special Benefit Business District was established in 1987. In 2004, the District assessed \$0.40 per \$100 of assessed valuation to fund a variety of efforts related to the enhancement of the Square. The District's boundaries extend from Memorial Drive on the east, Spring Street on the west, Walnut on the south and White Oak on the north.

The District generates approximately \$18,000 annually. Traditionally, approximately half of the funds went to the Square's Annual Christmas light display, with the balance to help fund advertising, brochure development, and a portion for staff support of the Independence Square Association.

As new development occurs on the Square it is anticipated that additional funds will be available. However, given the current assessed rates it is unlikely that in the short-term this increase will be significant. There have been discussions in the past of increasing the assessment to \$0.80 per \$100 of assessed valuation. This change in assessment would require a majority vote of property owners within the District.

##### Commercial Façade Improvement Program (CFIP)

The Commercial Façade Improvement Program (CFIP) offers financial assistance to property owners or tenants seeking to rehabilitate commercial building facades in older commercial districts of Independence such as the Square. Using Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funds, the City makes grants available of \$10,000 per eligible facade, up to \$25,000 per building (or contiguous building facades), for well-designed exterior facade improvements to eligible commercial and mixed use structures. The types of improvements that can be funded include restoration of architectural details, window and door treatments, installation of awnings, and lighting. Grants are awarded in the form of a 5-year declining balance reimbursement loan/grant for eligible expenses. Loan balance declines at a rate of 20% per year provided the improved building is maintained in compliance with the program guidelines. Project applications are reviewed and funded on a first-come first-served basis until program funds are depleted. To be eligible, project applicants must either provide a sealed licensed engineers or architects report verifying that the building's structural, mechanical, plumbing and electrical systems meet the requirements of the current City Code or provide approved construction permits that verify that such systems will be brought to code. Project plans must also comply with the Design Guidelines for Independence Historic Commercial Districts, as adopted by the City. Projects must also meet other City and federal requirements, including the requirement to pay prevailing (Davis-Bacon) wages for projects that receive more than a \$2,000 grant.

##### Historic and Non-Historic Building Renovation Tax Credits

Historic tax credits are received after making eligible expenses for the rehabilitation of a historic property. The credits can be used to pay income taxes. The rehabilitation must be considered substantial and eligible activities may include work on the building itself, architectural fees, legal expenses and development fees.

There are actually three different programs available:

<b>State 25% Tax Credit Historic</b>	The State of Missouri 25% Historic Tax Credit Program provides tax credits for 25% of eligible costs and expenses of the rehabilitation of approved historic structures. The tax credits may be used to offset Missouri income tax liability for up to three previous years or up to 10 years forward. Any person, firm, partnership, trust, estate, or corporation is eligible to participate in this program, with the exception of not-for-profit entities and/or government entities. The tax credits are also sellable and transferable. However, the only eligible properties must be either (a) listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places, or (b) certified by the MO Department of Natural Resources as contributing to the historical significance of a certified historic district listed on the National Register, or (c) of a local historic district that has been certified by the US Department of the Interior. Also, the costs and expenses associated with the rehabilitation must exceed 50% of the "total adjusted basis of the property" (acquisition cost minus depreciation).
<b>Federal 20% Tax Credit Historic</b>	The Federal 20% Tax Credit is much like the state historic tax credit but an individual receives tax credits which may be used to offset Federal income tax liability for up to 20 tax periods (none of which may be in the past). There are also other differences. For one thing, the property must be income-producing (meaning owner-occupied homes would not be eligible). Also, federal credits cannot be sold like the credits received from the state (there are ways to structure partnerships so that federal tax credits can be used by equity partners).
<b>Federal 10% Tax Credit Non- Historic</b>	The federal 10% tax credit is far easier to qualify for than the other tax credits. With this program, a tax payer receives tax credits worth 10% of the costs of rehabilitation of a building that was placed in service before 1936 and is NOT on the National Register or determined eligible for the National Register. The property rehabilitation does not need to meet the same rehabilitation guidelines of the 20% historic tax credit. The tax credits may be used toward the payment of one's own federal tax bill. To claim the credit, a tax payer simply fills out a certain schedule and attaches it to their income tax return to the Internal Revenue Service. This credit is only available for income-producing commercial or industrial buildings.



Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority (LCRA)

Chapter 353

Chapter 99, Land Clearance for Redevelopment Authority (LCRA), commonly called "urban renewal" and Chapter 353, the "Urban Redevelopment Corporation Law" are two other tools currently adopted for use on the Square which have the potential to assist property owners with their revitalization efforts. However, the existing plans will need to be significantly revised to meet the desired goals outlined in the Square Revitalization Plan.

In particular, the adopted LCRA Plan (Jackson Square Urban Renewal Project) and the adopted Chapter 353 Plan (Independence Square 353 Plan) have land use plans which are in direct conflict with the proposed Square Revitalization Land Use Plan and the City's existing Comprehensive Land Use Plan.

To gain a better understanding of the potential and applicability for each tool a comparison table has been provided.

As can be seen by the table, there are distinct advantages to each of the tools. While the City may choose to focus on providing incentives under either the LCRA or Chapter 353, there is nothing which would prohibit the use of both tools in Square revitalization efforts. However, the City must determine how it wants to use each of these tools and then begin efforts to terminate, revise, or in the case of Chapter 353, establish a new Chapter 353 Corporation. *Appendix A* and *Appendix B*, respectively contain a discussion of the issues and steps necessary to revise the *Jackson Square Urban Renewal Project Plan* and the *Independence Square Chapter 353 Plan* should the City determine they are appropriate tools to use in Square revitalization efforts.

Topic	LCRA	353 Corporation
<b>Creation of Body</b>	Public Vote	Private Decision
<b>Membership of Body</b>	Political Appointment	Private Body Membership can be established at the time of plan adoption.
<b>Taxing Status</b>	The LCRA is a tax exempt entity.  The LCRA does not pay tax on property or capital equipment. This allows the LCRA to lease back property or capital equipment to a for profit entity, thereby reducing the tax liability of the for-profit corporation.	353 Corporations are tax pay entities. Tax abatement on property covered by the plan is for a maximum of 25 years and begins once the corporation takes ownership  The corporation pays taxes on capital equipment.  Payments in lieu of taxes ("PILOTs") may be imposed on the urban redevelopment corporation by contract with the city.
<b>Active In</b>	Blighted Area	Blighted Area
<b>Determination of Blight</b>	By City Council	By City Council
<b>Redevelopment Plan</b>	Initial plan approved by City Council  Minor modification can be approved by LCRA  Significant modifications approved by redevelopers and City Council	Approved by City Council  Modifications approved by City Council
<b>Condemnation Authority</b>	Yes. City Council cannot restrict this authority.	City Council may choose to grant or not grant condemnation authority to the corporation.
<b>Property Tax Abatement</b>	Ten (10) years only on the proposed improvements. Must be in compliance with the approved plan. The tax abatement is granted by passing the title through the LCRA.	100% (minus land value) for ten (10) years, 50% for fifteen (15) years. Must be in compliance with the approved plan. The tax abatement is granted by passing the title through the corporation.
<b>Eligible Property</b>	Private Ownership and LCRA Ownership	Corporation Ownership
<b>Plan Length</b>	Initially established for twenty (20) years with automatic renewals every five (5) years	Determined at time of Adoption



**Other Potential Tools**

There are also a number of other significant tools which might be useful in Square revitalization efforts. A brief description of each of the tools is provided in the adjacent table. Each of these tools will require additional action by the City Council, property owners, etc. to be enacted.

While the tools referenced deal mainly with funding sources which are provided through taxes or assessments, there are other tools which might provide incentives through other mechanisms. A more exhaustive listing of the various tools that could be used to foster redevelopment on the Square are contained in *Appendix C*.

<p><b>Community Improvement District (CID)</b></p>	<p>67.1400 of the Revised Statutes of Missouri allows for the creation of a Community Improvement District (CID) in which revenue can be raised and then used to complete projects or perform services for the residents and/or owners of property within the district boundaries. A CID’s revenue can come through several different methods: sales tax, special assessments, real property taxes or fees. The special assessments can be structured in many different ways, depending on the improvement or service to be funded by the assessment. For instance, an assessment can be levied based on a certain dollar amount per linear foot of street frontage, or it could be per square foot of property, or per square foot of building floor area. Different types of property can have different rates. For instance, the assessment could be more per square foot for restaurants than it is per square foot for residences or offices. Such a difference may be justified if, for instance, the service to be provided was trash disposal. On the other hand, for new curb and gutter it may be more appropriate to have a uniform assessment per linear foot of street frontage. The duration of an assessment or tax is also flexible. An assessment could be an annual amount that lasts every year for two years or for 20 years. The revenues raised by a CID can also be combined with other funding sources to pay for projects or services.</p>
<p><b>Missouri Downtown Economic Stimulus Act (MODESA )</b></p>	<p>The Missouri Downtown Economic Stimulus Act ("MODESA") is basically a modified and enhanced version of tax increment financing. MODESA provides for new state revenue associated with a “major initiative” to be redirected to help fund a portion of the costs of public infrastructure related to the major initiative. A major initiative is one that promotes tourism, cultural activities, arts, entertainment, education, research, multi-purpose facilities, libraries, mass transit, museums and conventions, or business locations or expansions creating new jobs within three years. For Independence, the major initiative must also be in excess of \$5,000,000 or create 50 new jobs. The state statute provisions require the establishment of Downtown Economic Stimulus Authority which is considered a public body corporate and politic, exercising public and essential governmental functions as outlined in the statute.</p>
<p><b>Neighborhood Improvement District (NID)</b></p>	<p>Similar to CID in that its purpose is to assess those within a proposed district for the cost of improvements in district. However, the NID is limited to a one-time project that is specified in a petition. (Although the petition may also provide for an annual assessment of maintenance costs of the improvement in each year after the bonds issued for the original improvement are paid in full.)</p>
<p><b>Transportation Development Districts</b></p>	<p>A Transportation Development District may be created by petition presented to a circuit court by property owners or by a public vote of the registered voters within the proposed district. Once the district is created it may impose:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. a sales tax,</li> <li>b. an ad valorem property tax,</li> <li>c. a special assessment,</li> <li>d. or perhaps even a business license tax.</li> </ol> <p>Revenue is used in order to pay for road improvements which will be turned over to the Missouri Department of Transportation or city after completion and payment of any bonds. The boundaries of the Transportation Development District may include several properties or a single parcel of property. TDDs are independent political subdivisions. Debt incurred by such districts is totally independent of the financial statements of the state Department of Transportation or the city or county which will own and maintain a project once it is completed.</p>
<p><b>Tax Increment Financing (TIF)</b></p>	<p>Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is a mechanism that allows cities in Missouri to fund downtown public infrastructure and streetscape improvements by designating project redevelopment areas and capturing the increased retail sales (EATS) and property taxes (PILOTS) that result from revitalization. The King Hershey law firm describes Missouri TIF as financing that “allows future real property taxes and other taxes generated by new development to pay for the costs of construction of public infrastructure and other improvements required to make the project possible. The purpose of tax increment financing is to encourage development of blighted, substandard and economically under-utilized areas which would not be developed without public assistance.”</p>



### **4.6 Public Policy & Guidance**

The review of current regulatory mechanisms such as zoning, building code compliance, and design review has been taking place during the development of this revitalization strategy. A cursory review of these regulatory elements suggests that a special overlay zoning district should be developed and implemented for the Square. The special overlay district would allow for a more flexible approach to off-street parking requirements, setback issues, and landscaping requirements. Site planning standards should be adopted that will eliminate building setback requirements in commercial areas that tend to break the integrity of the street-plane and introduce an ill-advised suburban design condition. A draft ordinance provision for the establishment of a Square overlay zone is provided in the General Plan Recommendations section of this document.

Infill structures should be designed to blend with the historic character of the street without replicating historic architecture or though the all too often disappointing historical theme approach. Infill structures should be compatible in terms of overall composition including massing, scale, and window and door patterns. Buildings should reflect current design trends while paying careful attention to neighboring structures and should not disrupt the urban rhythm of the street, but complement the authentic historic integrity.

A draft set of design guidelines has been developed as a starting point for community discussion about the various design issues. The City should begin a community dialog to fine-tune these guidelines into a set of community standards which can be incorporated into the proposed Square overlay district. A copy of the draft design guidelines can be found in the General Plan Recommendations section of this document.

### **4.7 Sustainable Design**

As the future development issues and opportunities were discussed consideration was given to the importance and long-range benefits of sustainable design practices for the Square.

Sustainable design practice encompasses an expanded sense of responsibility shared by a community for the affects that creating a built environment has on future generations. This is not limited to pure natural conservation resources such as forests, but includes safe building materials, historic preservation, energy conservation practices, alternative transportation systems, other factors which enhance and maintain both the sustainable natural and manmade environment.

Independence has invested a great deal of resources and capital establishing the Square. This not only includes the buildings and infrastructure, but the social resources & capital which go into the creation of a truly civic center. To protect existing resources, social and capital investment, the community should adopt community design principles and encourage infill construction to consider “green” practices, and construct buildings of permanent materials which will stand for future generations to enjoy. In addition, the community should place a strong emphasis on retaining existing structures which embody the community’s social and capital investment.

### **4.8. Implementation**

Achieving the vision of the Square will take not only investments in funding, but a strong commitment by community leaders. In addition, a variety of city departments and commissions should consult the plan when preparing work programs for the Square, as well as when reviewing development proposals for the Square. This includes Tourism, Public Works, Parks and Recreation, Power and Light, Planning Commission, Heritage Commission, and Community Development.

A key concept is that the community should use a bilateral approach for implementing the recommendations contained in the Plan: It should be both proactive and responsive. The community should use the priorities presented in this section as a scheduling guide but at the same time be poised to modify strategies to respond to projects that may be proposed by private developers. The City should also coordinate its planned actions with the work of other governmental entities and be ready to refine its schedule to be responsive to the activities of others. For example, if Power and Light is scheduled to underground utilities along Truman Road, then sidewalk and streetscape improvements should occur at the same time.

### ***Coordination of Efforts***

The Plan calls for the consolidation of the Independence Square Association, the Independence Square Benefit District, and Square One into a Square Coalition to help facilitate revitalization efforts. This may take the form of a formal non-profit organization or an organization that is based on a strong executive board consisting of members from each of these groups and other members of the community.

In addition, while many individual staff and commission members of the City will have opportunities to implement individual elements of the plan, it is important that a specific department/office be responsible for monitoring overall implementation and for coordinating various work efforts.

As the Square begins to see new development, there may be a need to identify an individual who will assist others in developing projects that fit with the concepts presented in the Plan. A development facilitator, or ombudsman, should be designated for this role. They would work with property owners to help guide appropriate projects through the review and permitting process of the City. This could be a representative from the Independence Chamber of Commerce, the Independence Council for Economic Development, the newly formed Square Coalition, or the City.



**4.9 Strategic Goals**

The General Plan Recommendations section of this document identifies specific recommendations for each of the eight character districts identified in the Plan. Given that resources are limited, not all of the recommendations will be implemented over time. In addition, priorities within each character district and with the overall plan area will also shift over time. For this reason only a select number of *Strategic Goals* have been prioritized. The remaining recommendations for each character district have not been prioritized. Instead a set of criteria has been outlined to assist in the prioritization of these recommendations as opportunities present themselves (See *Appendix D*).

The *Strategic Goals* identified in this section are considered to be catalyst projects to help jump-start revitalization efforts or recommendations which will facilitate future revitalization efforts.

SHORT-TERM STRATEGIC GOALS		
Goal	General Steps Toward Accomplishing Goal	Key Participants
Consolidation of key square groups into a Square Coalition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gather key participants to discuss structure options</li> <li>▪ Determine structure of Square Coalition</li> <li>▪ Establish Square Coalition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Independence Square Association</li> <li>▪ Independence Square Special Benefit District</li> <li>▪ Square One</li> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> </ul>
Complete Harry S Truman National Historic Landmark Listing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Complete nomination materials</li> <li>▪ Provide written and in person support during the NPS review process</li> <li>▪ Work with federally elected offices to ensure listing</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Parks Service</li> <li>▪ Pillars Council</li> <li>▪ Heritage Commission</li> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> </ul>
Finalize design guidelines for the Square to be implemented under a zoning overlay district	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Appoint a structured taskforce comprised of vested parties</li> <li>▪ Hold a series of public outreach meetings discussing design guidelines and overlay district concept</li> <li>▪ Revise proposed design guidelines based on public feedback</li> <li>▪ Taskforce recommends design guidelines to Planning Commission and City Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ National Parks Service</li> <li>▪ Property owners</li> <li>▪ Square Coalition</li> <li>▪ Square retailers</li> <li>▪ Area residents</li> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> </ul>
Enact enabling ordinance to create a special zoning overlay district for the Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Hold required public hearings</li> <li>▪ Adoption by City Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> <li>▪ Planning Commission</li> <li>▪ Heritage Commission</li> <li>▪ City Council</li> </ul>
Establish Historic Jackson County Courthouse as the Visitor Orientation Center	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify community leader(s) to spearhead effort</li> <li>▪ Identify and secure funding sources</li> <li>▪ Develop agreement for usage of building</li> <li>▪ Complete renovation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> <li>▪ Jackson County Government</li> <li>▪ Pillars Council</li> <li>▪ Tourism</li> <li>▪ National Parks Service</li> <li>▪ Square Coalition</li> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> <li>▪ Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
Determine uses for the Land Clearance Redevelopment Authority and Chapter 353 redevelopment tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Make decisions regarding the approach to each redevelopment tool</li> <li>▪ Revise/create new plans as necessary</li> <li>▪ Review of plans by required public bodies</li> <li>▪ Adoption of revised new plans by City Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City Council</li> <li>▪ Independence Square 353 Corporation</li> <li>▪ Property owners</li> <li>▪ Square Coalition</li> <li>▪ Planning Commission</li> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> </ul>
Conduct traffic and parking study and make recommendations on reestablishing on-street parking and streetscape improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determine if the City is going to conduct study internally or secure consulting services</li> <li>▪ Complete study</li> <li>▪ Adopt recommendations</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> </ul>



MID-TERM STRATEGIC GOALS		
Goal	General Steps Toward Accomplishing Goal	Key Participants
Implement on-street parking and less expensive streetscape improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify specific recommendations to be implemented</li> <li>▪ Identify and secure funding sources</li> <li>▪ Complete projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Square Coalition</li> <li>▪ Property owners</li> <li>▪ Square tenants</li> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> </ul>
Develop comprehensive marketing campaign for Square	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update <i>1998 Historic Independence Square Development Strategy</i></li> <li>▪ Develop marketing strategy</li> <li>▪ Determine funding sources</li> <li>▪ Implement marketing campaign</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Square Coalition</li> <li>▪ Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>▪ Tourism</li> <li>▪ ICED</li> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> </ul>
Construct mixed use building on the City owned development site on the NE corner of Main and Truman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resolve Brownfield site issues</li> <li>▪ Develop Request for Development Proposals</li> <li>▪ Solicit development proposals</li> <li>▪ Complete section process</li> <li>▪ Enter into agreement with selected developer</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> <li>▪ Square Coalition</li> <li>▪ ICED</li> <li>▪ Chamber of Commerce</li> </ul>
Develop and implement existing business retention and new business recruitment strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify appropriate strategies for each area</li> <li>▪ Identify groups/individuals to implement strategies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Square Coalition</li> <li>▪ Property owners</li> <li>▪ Square tenants</li> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> </ul>

LONG-TERM STRATEGIC GOALS		
Goal	General Steps Toward Accomplishing Goal	Key Participants
Pilot new-infill-housing or mixed use project	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Determine appropriate sites</li> <li>▪ Identify developer</li> <li>▪ Construct project</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Square Coalition</li> <li>▪ ICED</li> <li>▪ Chamber of Commerce</li> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> </ul>
Implement additional streetscape improvements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify specific recommendations to be implemented</li> <li>▪ Identify and secure funding sources</li> <li>▪ Complete projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Square Coalition</li> <li>▪ Property owners</li> <li>▪ Square tenants</li> <li>▪ City of Independence</li> </ul>