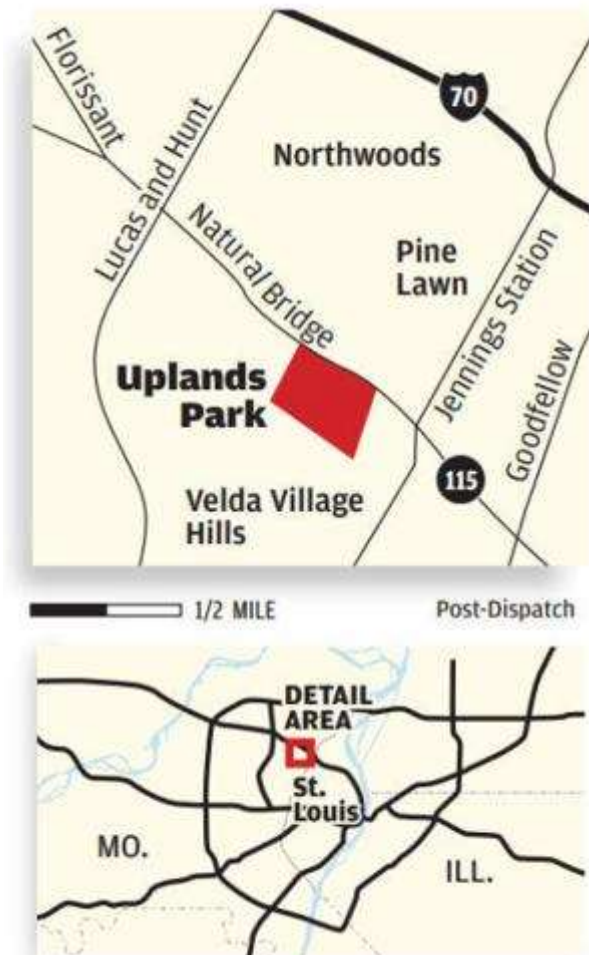


[https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/uplands-park-could-cease-to-exist-as-a-city/article\\_89dfe638-9945-5cfa-a6cc-d1ad409651b5.html](https://www.stltoday.com/news/local/metro/uplands-park-could-cease-to-exist-as-a-city/article_89dfe638-9945-5cfa-a6cc-d1ad409651b5.html)

## Uplands Park could cease to exist as a city

Steve Giegerich

Oct 26, 2013



Steve Giegerich

**UPLANDS PARK** • This four-block blip along Natural Bridge Road could soon follow the **Dodo bird**, **St. Louis Browns** and another St. Louis County community, **St. George**, into oblivion.

A decision on whether financially strapped **Uplands Park** will no longer exist as a city rests with the registered voters among the 446 men, women and children who call this tiny patch of north **St. Louis County** home.

---

## People are also reading...

- 1 **Gordo: Blues invested wisely while Golden Knights gambled wildly**
  - 2 **'I know I have massive shoes to fill': Knizner earned Cardinals' trust before getting playing time to prove it**
  - 3 **St. Louis Alderman Sarah Martin resigns, cites concern over Prop R restrictions**
  - 4 **Miles ahead: With Cardinals' 14-hit binge at his back, Mikolas cruises vs. Brew Crew, wins 10-1**
- 

And in an off-year election notable for the absence of high-profile races and issues, the Nov. 5 referendum on whether to turn governance, police protection and community services over to St. Louis County could give Uplands Park a final turn in the spotlight before the village disappears forever.

That spotlight, often harsh, has in the past pointed to mismanagement, police misconduct, political infighting and a balance sheet that has frequently left the village unable to pay the bills.

Supporters of the move to disincorporate Uplands Park are confident a majority of voters will vote to dissolve a municipality they maintain fails to serve the best interests of its residents.

“We’re tired of telling (elected village leaders) what we want and not getting anything out of it,” said resident Sharon Goodwin.

Ernestine Johnson, another proponent of liquidating the village, says Uplands Park residents are tired of getting little back in exchange for their tax dollars.

“As long as we’re incorporated, we’re paying but not getting the services,” said Johnson.

A team assembled by longtime resident Sherry Brackins collected 176 signatures, representing approximately 40 percent of the Uplands Park population.

A successful vote to disincorporate will require the approval of 60 percent of the vote. Village Chairman Henry Iwenofu places the number of registered voters at approximately 300. Of those, he adds, about 200 regularly show up at the polls.

Iwenofu stands to lose his job if the referendum passes.

He expressed optimism that Uplands Park will still be a viable municipality come the morning of Nov. 6.

“Most of the people I’ve spoken to don’t want to give up their political subdivision,” said Iwenofu, elected to the village’s top post two years ago. “They may not like the politicians, so I tell them you can vote me out. But don’t give away your political subdivision. The founding fathers wanted small government, not big government.”

The success or failure of the referendum could balance on concerns about public safety in a community with a checkered past when it comes to law enforcement.

Uplands Park has come under scrutiny for employing unlicensed officers, allegations of turning Natural Bridge Road into a speed trap and other claims of mismanagement.

The village last year agreed to allow police from neighboring Velda City to patrol Uplands Park streets – an agreement that fell apart after Uplands Park failed to pay Velda City for its services.

Served by a police chief who heads a department with no officers, Uplands Park has relied on the **St. Louis County Police Department** to respond to emergency calls since July. The bill for those services, \$2,600, remains unpaid.

**St. Louis County Prosecutor Robert McCulloch** has advised Uplands Park that it is failing to comply with state law by not providing residents with law enforcement around-the-clock.

Iwenofu and a group of Uplands Park residents met with McCulloch last week to discuss county police protection.

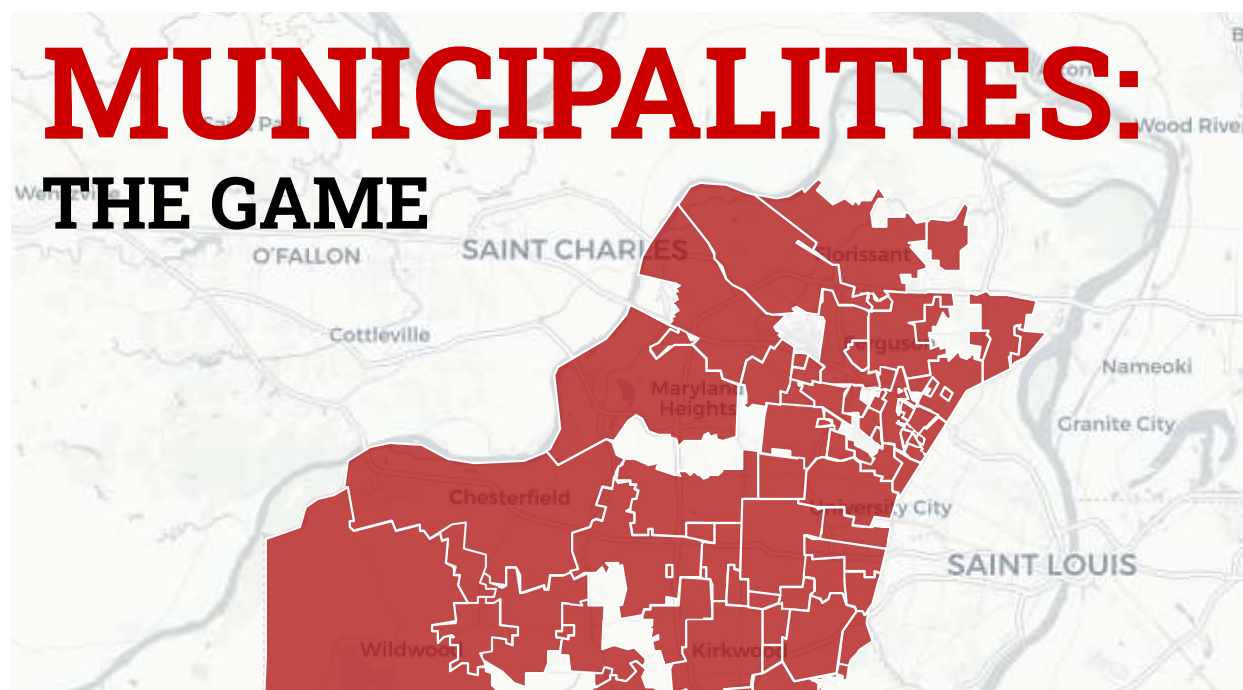
Those discussions, Iwenofu said, will become a “moot issue” if the Uplands Park residents decide to hand control of the village over to the county.

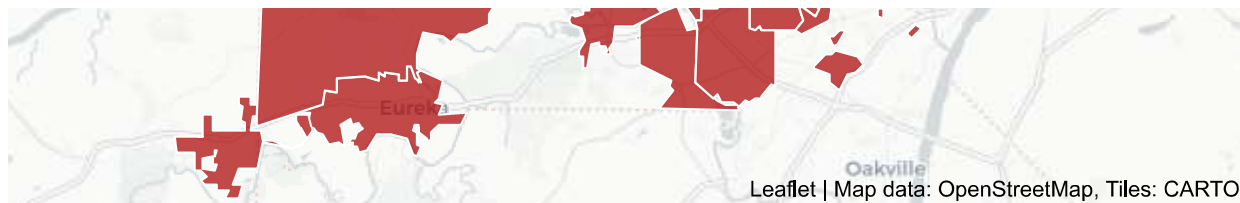
A vote to dissolve would make Uplands Park the second St. Louis County municipality in recent years to vote itself out of existence. The residents of St. George, in South County, disbanded that city in 2011.

To Iwenofu, the election comes down to allowing “people who don’t live here to make decisions” on Uplands Park’s behalf.

Brackins, unsentimental about doing away with the community where she has resided for 40 years, also views the referendum in stark, yet simple terms.

“We just want quality services and government,” she said.





## A couple hints

- **Don't hit [enter] or [return]** between cities. Just keep typing.
- Type **municipalities**, not neighborhoods or school districts.

**START!**

By Steve Giegerich

Steve Giegerich is a reporter for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.

---