

JANUARY, 2024

# KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN-2034.



Prepared For:  
KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA PLANNING COMMISSION.

Prepared By:  
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COMMUNITY PLANNING & RESEARCH

# KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – 2034.

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# SECTION 1



THE KEARNEY COUNTY PLANNING PROCESS.

# THE KEARNEY COUNTY PLANNING PROCESS & STATISTICAL ANALYSIS.

## THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

This **Comprehensive Plan** was prepared to replace the existing **Kearney County, Nebraska Comprehensive Plan**, completed in 2015. This new **Plan** will serve as a guide to direct future growth and development opportunities in **Kearney County, Nebraska** during the 10-year planning period, until 2034. The geographic focus of this **Plan** is the unincorporated areas of Kearney County, excluding the designated Community Planning Jurisdictions of each incorporated Community and including the Villages/Planning Jurisdictions of Heartwell and Norman, Nebraska.

The primary focus of this **Comprehensive Plan** is to assess the effectiveness of balancing the preservation and protection of agricultural production lands and natural resource conservation, with the appropriate locating of development for non-farm dwellings, rural subdivisions and commercial and industrial land uses.

The implementation of this **Comprehensive Plan** should be guided by “*Land Use Preservation & Development Initiatives*,” as determined by the evaluation and “*statistical analysis*” of local population, income, economic and agricultural figures, a “*Land Use Profile & Plan*,” “*Public Facilities & Transportation*” and an “*Energy Element*.” The **Comprehensive Plan** also serves as a foundation and guide for the implementation of **Zoning and Subdivision Regulations**, as needed, to achieve the specific **Initiatives** identified in the **Plan**.

This **Comprehensive Plan** is intended to provide policy guidance to enable the County’s elected officials to make decisions based upon the consensus of opinion by the **Kearney County Planning & Zoning Commission**. Implementation methods and activities should include incentives to stimulate private action consistent with the **Plan** and the use of Local, State and Federal programs for both economic development and land conservation activities, County-wide.

The **Comprehensive Plan** was prepared under the direction of the **Kearney County Planning & Zoning Commission** and Planning Consultants, **Hanna:Keelan Associates**, of Lincoln, Nebraska.

## PLANNING PERIOD.

The planning time period for achieving the goals, programs and economic development activities identified in this **Comprehensive Plan** for Kearney County, Nebraska, is 10 years (2024-2034).

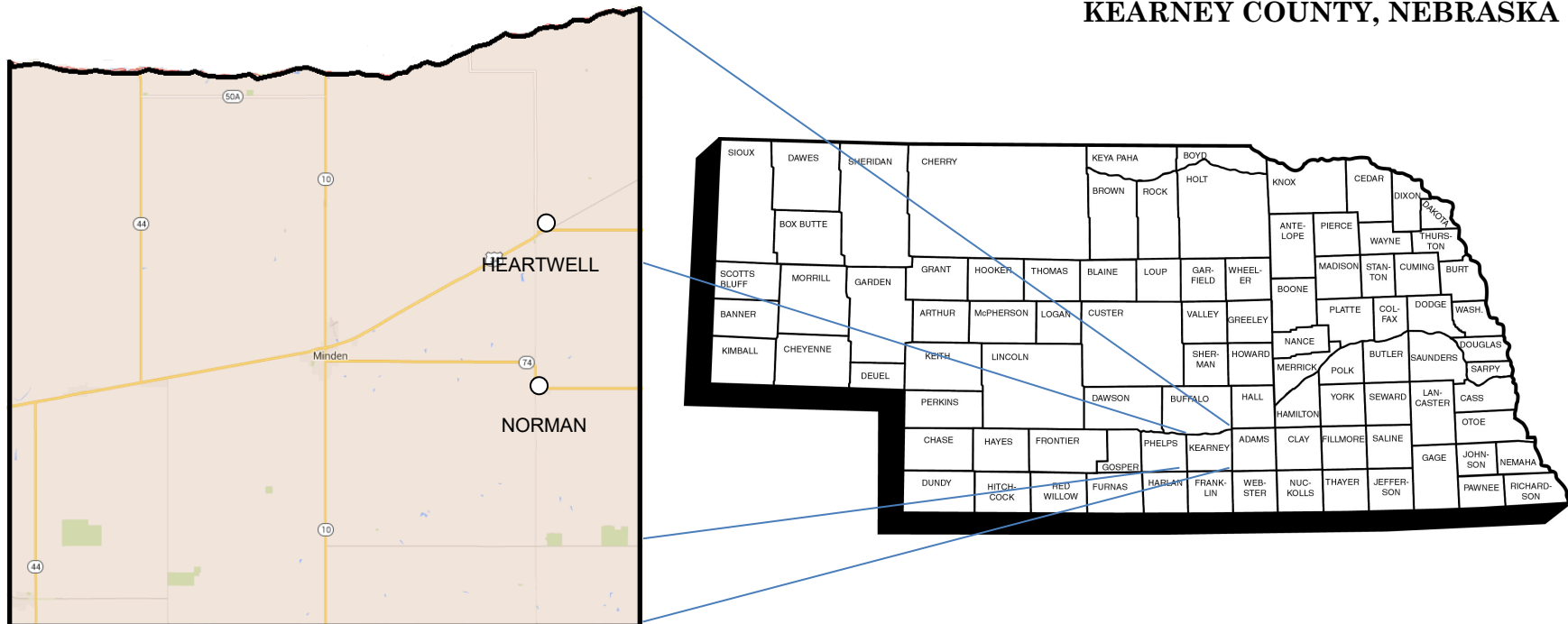
## AUTHORITY TO PLAN.

This **Comprehensive Plan** for Kearney County is prepared under the Authority of Sections 23-114 to 23-174.10, Nebraska State Statutes 1943, as Amended.

## AMENDMENT.

The **Comprehensive Plan** may be amended or updated as the need arises as provided in the Nebraska State Statutes.

**ILLUSTRATION 1.1  
LOCATION MAP  
KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**





## **STATISTICAL ANALYSIS: COUNTY PROFILE & OPINION SURVEY.**

Population, income, economic and agricultural trends in **Kearney County**, including the Communities of Heartwell and Norman, serve as valuable indicators of future development needs and patterns and provide a basis for the realistic projection of future growth or decline. The quantity and location of social and economic features play an important role in shaping the details of various development plans to meet the County's needs. **Kearney County** should continue to promote the development of new businesses, industries (especially agriculture-related) and housing for individuals and families, in areas of the County with the appropriate zoning designation.

The population trends and projections for the years 2000 through 2034 were studied and forecasted, utilizing a process of both trend analysis and U.S. Census population estimates. A complete “**Table Profile**” is included in “**Appendix II**” of this **Housing Study**.

### Population & Households.

- Total population in Kearney County, between the 2000 and 2020 Censuses, has declined by 2.8 percent, or from 6,882 to 6,688; however, the 2020 Census population of 6,688 represents an increase from the 2010 Census population of 6,489, an increase of 3 percent. Population increases in the Communities of Axtell, Heartwell and Minden, as well as the Balance of County, have been attributed to new housing construction within the Corporate Limits of the two Communities, residential subdivision development along the Platte River corridor and the proximity of the City of Kearney in neighboring Buffalo County, Nebraska.
- The current (2024) estimated population for **Kearney County** is estimated at 6,699, representing a slight increase of 0.2 percent since 2020. Additionally, the estimated 2024 populations for the Villages of Heartwell and Norman are 81 and 32, respectively.



- By 2034, the population of **Kearney County** is projected to increase by an estimated 1.8 percent, or up to 6,823 persons. The Communities of Heartwell and Norman are also projected to remain stable with the Village of heartwell increasing by three persons and the Village of Norman declining by five persons. A “**County Growth Initiative**” (CGI) scenario, including the creation of new full-time employment positions and a more aggressive housing development program by 2034 throughout the County, would result in a County-wide population increase of 113 new persons, reaching a 2034 population of 6,936.
- Each Community, Census Designated Place and the Balance of County would experience continued stable or increasing populations as a result of the CGI population scenario.
- An estimated 2,736 households reside in **Kearney County**, including 2,082 owner and 654 renter households. The total number of households is projected to increase in the County by 2034, consisting of 2,775 total households or 2,122 owner and 653 renter households. An estimated 76.5 percent of all households in the County will be owners by 2034.
- The total number of households in the Villages of Heartwell and Norman, as well as the Balance of County are projected to remain stable through 2034, with Heartwell and the Balance of County increasing in total households.
- In 2024, **Kearney County** is experiencing an estimated median age of 41 years. Median age in the County is projected to remain stable through 2034. The Villages of Heartwell and Norman currently maintain median ages of 32.8 and 45.2, respectively.
- The “19 and Under,” “20 to 34,” “55 to 64” and “65 to 74” age cohorts have experienced population increases since the 2010 Census. The “19 and Under” and “35 to 54” age cohorts have historically been the largest population cohorts in **Kearney County**, as per the 2000, 2010 and 2020 Censuses and are projected to remain the largest in the County through 2034.

- The **Kearney County** 55+ population is projected to increase by 2034, with the “65-74” age group projected to experience the largest population increase. It is important that a range of elderly services, amenities and appropriate housing be made available throughout the County to encourage senior/elderly populations to remain in their respective housing situations and, ultimately, remain a resident of Kearney County.

#### Income.

- The median income for all households in **Kearney County**, in 2024, is estimated to be \$84,275. By 2034, median income in **Kearney County** will increase an estimated 25.3 percent, to \$105,641.
- Per Capita income in Kearney County, currently estimated to be \$81,474, is projected to increase an estimated 62.4 percent by 2034 to \$132,314. This represents a faster rate of increase in the County, as compared to the State of Nebraska, projected to increase by 36.8 percent during the next 10 years, or from \$65,664 to \$89,828.
- The County’s proximity to major, high paying employers in the City of Kearney, as well as the City of Hastings, can attribute to the sharp increases projected in local income statistics through 2034.

#### Economic/Employment.

- Between 2010 and 2023, the unemployment rate in **Kearney County** ranged from a high of 3.5 percent to a low of 1.3 percent. During this period, the total number of employed persons experienced increases and declines with a total of 3,658 persons employed in the County in 2023. By 2034, employed persons of Kearney County will remain stable, with an unemployment rate maintaining 1.3 percent.
- As of 2023, The largest employment sectors in **Kearney County** include Local Government, Manufacturing and Health Care & Social Assistance.

### Housing.

- **Currently, Kearney County contains an estimated 3,000 housing units, consisting of approximately 2,255 owner and 745 rental housing units.** Of these 3,000 units, approximately 264 are vacant, resulting in an overall, estimated housing vacancy rate of 8.8 percent. The 264 vacant housing units consist of an estimated 173 owner and 91 rental units, equaling an owner housing vacancy rate of 7.7 percent and a rental housing vacancy rate of 12.2 percent.
- The **Adjusted Housing Vacancy Rate (AHVR)** includes only vacant units that are available for year-round rent or purchase, meeting current housing code and having modern amenities. A vacancy rate of 6 percent is the minimum rate recommended for **Kearney County**, to have sufficient housing available for new and existing residents. **The overall, estimated AHVR for Kearney County is 3.1 percent, which includes an AHVR for owner housing of 2.7 percent and 4.2 percent for rental housing, concluding that a deficiency of available owner and rental housing units exists in Kearney County.**

### Agricultural Statistics.

- The number of farms/ranches in the “1 to 9” and “50 to 179” acre categories experienced the largest increases. The “1 to 9” category increased by a total of eight farms/ranches, or 30.4 percent, between 2007 and 2017. The “50 to 179” acre category increased by nine farms/ranches, or 17.3 percent in the same time period. Farms larger than 180 acres experienced significant declines since 2007, declining by an estimated 74 total farms, or 16.8 percent. The total number of farms in **Kearney County** declined by 10.2 percent, or from 381 to 342 from 2007 to 2017.
- The decrease in the number of large farms and a decrease in average farm/ranch size suggests the disaggregation of some large farms and the repurposing of farmland for other uses, such as pasture or grazing lands. This may have a significant impact on the County’s economy as agriculture is the main source of income.

- The acreage of harvested cropland decreased by 7.3 percent from 2007 to 2017, and the acreage of farms/ranches with irrigated cropland decreased by 12.4 percent. Overall, acres of total crop land decreased by 10 percent. **This trend suggests that total farmland in the county is being repurposed for other non-agricultural uses.**
- Each Census of Agriculture, since 2007, identified a majority of production acres in Kearney County being dedicated to corn for grain or seed. Soybeans for beans crop is the only crop type experiencing consistent increases in production acreage since 2007. Wheat for grain production experienced the highest percentage decrease of 69.6 percent from 15,438 acres in 2007 to 4,693 acres in 2017.
- From 2007 through 2017, the total number of livestock producing farms/ranches for “Cattle/Calves” decreased by 36 farms/ranches, while the total number of cattle/calves increased by 14,050 or 17.2 percent during the same period. Similarly, the number of farms raising “Sheep and Lambs” decreased from 12 to four, but experienced a 35.1 percent increase in the total number of sheep and lamb animals being raised. All other livestock types experienced a decline in both the total number of farms and animals raised on farms in Kearney County.



## **KEARNEY COUNTY-WIDE OPINION SURVEY.**

The Kearney County, Nebraska **County-Wide Opinion Survey** was completed by 196 respondents. A total of 106 participants identified owning land in Rural Kearney County. This points at a connection between the responses and the people effected by the Kearney County zoning and subdivision regulations. A majority of participants didn't have an opinion on whether or not the current Kearney County Zoning and Subdivision Regulations were effective. This may point to a lack of knowledge about the content of these zoning and subdivision regulations. The County should focus on which areas of regulations participants are not supportive of and consider alternative solutions.

- Place of Residence (196 total respondents)
  - Axtell (11 or 5 percent)
  - Heartwell (17 or 8 percent)
  - Minden (70 or 35 percent)
  - Norman (2 or 1 percent)
  - Wilcox (Five or 2 percent)
  - Outside Kearney County (Six or 3 percent)
  - Rural Kearney County (85 or 43 percent)
  - 106 respondents or **58 percent (181 responses) own property in Rural Kearney County**
- Do you feel the current Kearney County Zoning and Subdivision Regulations are effective in managing growth and land development?
  - Total Respondents (188)
    - Yes (54 or 28 percent)
    - No (26 or 13 percent)
    - No opinion (108 or 57 percent)

In general, the respondents identified being “**supportive**” or “**very supportive**” of General or Intensive Agricultural Uses, General Residential Development and a variety of land uses being developed in Rural Kearney County. The highest number of “**not supportive**” votes was for both Commercial and Personal Alternative Energy Systems.



# SECTION 2



COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING, PRESERVATION &  
DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

# COUNTY-WIDE PLANNING, PRESERVATION & DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

## INTRODUCTION

This **Section** of the **Comprehensive Plan** provides proposed **Planning, Preservation and Development Initiatives for Rural Kearney County, Nebraska**. The **Initiatives** address a wide spectrum of land use and planning topics, ranging from the preservation of general agriculture to planned residential subdivisions to needed public facilities and economic development opportunities. The purpose of each **Initiative** is to create a “**balance**” of both **land use preservation and development practices** at all levels of planning implementation, all in an effort to address the health, safety and overall general welfare of **Rural Kearney County** residents. This, in turn, will promote the best possible planning and development practices to address the appropriate agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and public/quasi-public needs and wants of the citizenry.

The following **Planning, Preservation and Development Initiatives** are the product of both **qualitative and quantitative research activities** conducted for the **Comprehensive Plan**.

A **qualitative research** process included meetings with the Kearney County Planning & Zoning Commission, comprised of appointed rural residents of the County, representing various geographic points throughout the County. Also included was the implementation of the **Kearney County, Nebraska County-Wide Opinion Survey**. The **Survey** allowed the **Kearney County Citizenry** to provide their opinion of future land use activities in the **Rural County areas**. A total of **194 residents** of the County completed the **Survey**. The results of the **Survey**, included as “**Appendix I**” of this **Plan**, provided guidance for creating citizenry consensus and direction in the preparation of the following **Planning, Preservation and Development Initiatives**.

**Quantitative research** activities included the collection, analysis and projection of pertinent population, income, economic and agricultural data from local, State and National sources, all in an effort to understand both past and present demographic and land use development trends in **Rural Kearney County**. **Kearney County, Nebraska** has, is and will continue to grow in population during the next 10 years and the **Rural County areas** will be directly impacted by this growth. Planning for **Land Use Preservation and Development Initiatives** will be a necessity to maintain the quality life style and economic prosperity currently experienced in **Rural Kearney County, Nebraska**.



An important statistical analysis of land use in Kearney County was the preparation of a **Land Use Matrix**, presenting both the current and projected pertinent land use requirements in the County and highlighted in **Section 4** of this **Comprehensive Plan**.

In essence, **Land Use Preservation & Development Initiatives** addresses the important components of planning implementation. The following identifies **Three Primary Categories of Land Use Preservation & Development Initiatives in Rural Kearney County**.

1. **Population & Plan Participation & Implementation.**
  - **Population Stability & Growth.**
  - **Rural County Leadership.**
  - **Rural County Citizen Participation & Relationships.**
  - **Plan Review & Implementation.**
2. **Preservation of Existing Conditions in Rural Kearney County.**
  - **Agricultural Land Areas & Associated Farmsteads.**
  - **Parks/Recreation & Other Public Amenities.**
  - **Road Network & Other Transportation Systems.**
  - **Commercial & Industrial Developments.**
  - **Conservation Easements.**
3. **Future Development & Planning Practices.**
  - **Land Use Planning & Zoning.**
  - **Residential Development Practices, both Agricultural and Non-Agricultural.**
  - **Public Facilities, Utilities & Transportation.**
  - **Commercial & Industrial Development.**
  - **Alternative Energy Development Practices.**
  - **Broadband/Telecommunications.**

The **implementation of the Comprehensive Plan** should include the coordination of local **Rural County** groups and organizations to carry-out these Planning Initiatives. The **success of the Comprehensive Plan** will greatly depend upon **planned programs of citizen participation**, to allow local residents the opportunity to both monitor and provide input for preservation and development activities in **Rural Kearney County and the Villages of Heartwell and Norman**.

## 1. POPULATION & PLAN PARTICIPATION & IMPLEMENTATION.

- Kearney County, Nebraska is expected to continue a **population growth pattern** of near 0.2 percent per year, reaching an estimated population of 6,823 by 2034. **Rural Kearney County** currently has an estimated population of 2,196. This population base is expected to remain stable, decreasing, slightly, to 2,190 during the next 10 years. This represents a very stable population base, for both the County, overall, as well as the **Rural County**, requiring planned housing, public facilities and economic development activities, including agricultural activities for the future.
- A possible *County-wide Growth Initiative (CGI)*, primarily consisting of increasing the number of new full-time employment positions, would increase the Kearney County population by an additional 113, including an estimated 34 in **Rural Kearney County**, resulting in the two population bases being an estimated 3,936 and **2,224**, respectively.
- The Villages of Heartwell and Norman are also projected to remain stable in population through 2034. Heartwell's population is projected to increase by an estimated three persons (from 81 in 2024 to 84 by 2034), while the Village of Norman population is projected to decrease by five (from 30 in 2024 to 25 by 2034). The previously mentioned CGI would result in further population stability and/or increase in each Village through 2034.



- A stable population base in **Rural Kearney County**, with potential for growth during the next 10 years, will require local leadership to **foster and market the values of rural residents** to encourage the creation of organized local action to preserve and strengthen the **Rural County**.
- The **success** of the **Comprehensive Plan** will greatly depend upon **planned programs of citizen participation**, to allow local residents the opportunity to both monitor and provide input for preservation and development activities in **Rural Kearney County** and the **Villages of Heartwell and Norman**.
- A stable and/or increasing population in Kearney County, by 2034, will require local leadership to continue to **strengthen relationships** between **Rural Kearney County** and each Community, to conduct planning practices supportive of proper land usage, economic growth, housing, public facilities and services, transportation and recreation opportunities, as well as appropriate planning and zoning administration procedures to ensure the proper implementation of each component of the **Comprehensive Plan**. A majority of the population increase for Kearney County, through 2034, is projected to occur in the Community of Minden. New housing development within and in close proximity to both, the Platte River Corridor and the City of Kearney Two-Mile Planning Jurisdiction, will likely offset significant population decline in other parts of **Rural Kearney County**.
- Local Kearney County leadership will need to continue to take an active role in **marketing the development potential of Rural Kearney County** supporting the broadening of the local economic base, expanding employment opportunities. Emphasis will be placed on both **agricultural related commercial and industrial types and rural residential subdivision development**.
- Maintain and utilize the **Comprehensive Plan** as the **primary tool for decision making**, regarding the preservation and development of land areas in **Rural Kearney County**.
- The Kearney County Planning and Zoning Commission should maintain an **annual review process** of the **Comprehensive Plan and Zoning and Subdivision Regulations**, coupled with changes, modifications and/or amendments prepared upon consensus of the Commission and the general public.

## 2. PRESERVATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS IN RURAL KEARNEY COUNTY.

- Local leadership should continue to promote the **preservation of the agricultural industry in Rural Kearney County**, including the diversification of crop developments. A **majority of County-Wide Opinion Survey participants identified the preservation of “General Agricultural Uses” as the most important planning initiative in the County throughout the 10-year planning period.**

Historically, agriculture has been the primary income producing activity for the **Rural County**. This is anticipated to remain as such through the 10-year planning period (2034). This will include **protecting the natural resources and living environs of Rural Kearney County** by controlling and prohibiting, in specific regions, large scale intensive livestock/confinement facilities in areas deemed inappropriate for such activities.

- The **preservation of the existing housing stock in Rural Kearney County** should be a priority initiative of the **Comprehensive Plan**, during the next 10 years, focusing, first, on ensuring that safe and decent housing types exist for both existing and future farmsteads. *Non-agricultural, both large lot and planned residential subdivisions will need to be planned and developed with little or no intent to infringe on the operation of general agricultural activities.*



- Appropriate **public services and facilities** should be maintained and planned accordingly, to service the population base in **Rural Kearney County**. This would include, but not be limited to Park/Recreation Areas, including State Recreation and Wildlife Areas, as well as built facilities associated with local public providers of goods and services. Participants of the County-Wide Opinion Survey were mostly “supportive” or “very supportive” of protecting park and recreation land uses in Kearney County throughout the 10-year planning period.
- The preservation of the **Rural Kearney County transportation system** will require proper planning and implementation of all levels of local road networks, with emphasis on the safe transport of people and goods. Both the State and County One-Year Road Plans should be “key” in directing a proper, modern road system in **Rural Kearney County**.



The northwestern portion of Kearney County, both within and in close proximity to the City of Kearney Planning Jurisdiction, has experienced an increase in a variety of residential, commercial and industrial development that has resulted in an increase in traffic along County roads and highways. Maintenance and necessary upgrades, including hard surfacing of local roads may be required as development trends and traffic volume increases continue.



- Preserve and expand **existing commercial and industrial land uses**, as needed, with emphasis on commercial and industrial types that benefit **Rural Kearney County** residents, especially the local agricultural sector.
- Continue the use of **Conservation Zoning Regulations** in environmentally sensitive areas of the County, especially those closely associated with the Platte River Corridor. Continue to implement the standards set forth in the County's "Rural Conservation" zoning district, both along the Platte River and in portions of east central Kearney County.

### 3. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING PRACTICES.

- **Maintain and follow the Land Use Plan for Rural Kearney County**, which is based upon present conditions and the sound forecast of future needs. **By 2034, additional land acreage will be needed in Rural Kearney County for non-farmstead residential dwellings, planned residential subdivisions and commercial and industrial land uses.**
- **Coordinate all land development and planning activities, including land use changes** with the input of the general public and County and State officials.
- Ensure that **all developments in Rural Kearney County** conform to **uniform planning standards**. Evaluate the concepts of **“permissive”** and **“special permitted” land uses** throughout the rural County, as it pertains to future developments. Special permitted uses should contain all land use provisions associated with permissive uses, with the addition of other development and/or operational conditions as deemed necessary by the County.
- Implement Zoning and other policies/regulations that will provide incentives for maintenance of **agricultural lands for traditional agricultural uses.**



- Utilize the **Land Use Plan** and associated **Zoning Regulations** as a means to ensure that all development efforts in **Rural Kearney County** result in the preservation and protection of the **highest concentration of irrigated and dry land crop production areas** County-wide. Emphasis on groundwater protection and preservation of agricultural land uses should be emphasized.
- **General farming practices** should continue to be the priority agricultural land use type in **Rural Kearney County**. The **development of livestock confinement facilities and operations** should only be allowed by Special or Conditional Use Permit and be avoided in **Rural Kearney County** areas containing sensitive soils conditions. Regions along the Platte River contain the highest concentration of sensitive soils conditions. Consider an “**Agricultural Protection Zone**” in the northern portion of the County that could potentially support intensive livestock confinement facilities.
- Avoid **non-agricultural developments that could result in the contamination of soils and ground water resources**. Enforce State and Local regulations protecting the environment from developments resulting in **contamination or pollutants**.
- **Encourage compatible adjacent land uses** throughout the County by implementing Zoning Regulations and other local planning policies suited to the unique characteristics and location of each use requested.
- Limit **future non-agricultural developments** in **Rural Kearney County** to locations that are relatively free of environmental constraints relating to soils, slope, flood plain, drainage, ground water, endangered species or other natural resources, or along hard-surfaced roads and highways.
- Require all developments in **Rural Kearney County** to be consistent with Zoning and other related regulations set forth for flood prone areas.
- Practice modern development measures in the **Rural County** that limit or reduce flood hazards, control water run-off and enhance the quality of surface and ground water.



- Promote the **development of housing** in **Rural Kearney County**, in locations consistent with the Land Use Plan, with appropriate Zoning rules. Encourage **future residential development** in **Rural Kearney County** to be located in close proximity to communities, or at appropriate locations along paved transportation corridors.
- Ensure that future residential development practices will not be **detrimental to the environment**.
- **Develop organizational structures** to improve housing conditions throughout **Rural Kearney County**, including involving a County-wide or Regional Housing Development Corporation.
- Encourage moderate and/or substantial housing rehabilitation of deteriorating housing structures throughout the County. **Demolish substantially dilapidated housing units** within **Rural Kearney County** that are a detriment to the health, safety and welfare of rural County residents.
- Identify and rehabilitate **historically significant housing units** in **Rural Kearney County**.
- Evaluate land use and zoning requirements of any **private/public venues** and “**Airbnb**” facilities, to ensure both the health and safety of the general public and minimize any economic and/or environmental liabilities to the County, as well as collect any and all appropriate fees and taxes from such land use.
- **Provide adequate, efficient and appropriate public utilities and services** to both new and existing agricultural and residential developments in **Rural Kearney County**.



- **Maintain and plan and develop, as needed, public facility and utility systems in Rural Kearney County.** Ongoing communication with public service providers will be pertinent to the proper location and design and development of any new facility and/or systems.
- Provide for the equitable distribution of public facilities to meet the **cultural, educational, social, recreational, safety and health needs of the Rural County.**
- **Ensure adequate open and recreational space and trail systems** are both maintained and developed in **Rural Kearney County.** Emphasize recreational opportunities associated with the Platte River Corridor channels.
- Provide facilities and services in **Rural Kearney County necessary to prevent degradation of the environment**, including modern sewage treatment, refuse collection and disposal, street cleaning and similar environmental control processes as necessary. This includes the proper disposal of animal waste.
- Ensure rules and regulations governing **safe drinking water and sewage treatment** are adhered to.
- Ensure that **adequate public health, safety and crime prevention systems** are provided and accessible throughout the **County.**
- **Promote a social and cultural environment that provides opportunities for all residents to experience, develop and share their values, abilities, ambitions and heritage.**
- Continue to support the **evolution of the public educational system** and ensure that it is capable of maintaining and elevating the **Rural County's overall educational level.**
- Expand the availability of **supportive services to youth and older adults** in **Rural Kearney County.**
- Utilize the **County's and State's One & Six Year Road Plans** to both maintain and provide new and improved transportation networks in **Rural Kearney County. Include and maintain a Transportation Plan in the Comprehensive Plan.**
- Coordinate **transportation systems with the planning and development of other elements** of the **Rural Kearney County**, including public utilities and facilities.

- Continue to develop County road systems in accordance with the standard State of Nebraska “Functional Street Classifications”.
- Support the **expansion of the agricultural businesses and industries in Rural Kearney County.** Ensure all **economic development activities** in the **Rural County** are consistent with the **Comprehensive Plan.**



- Encourage the development and redevelopment of **local businesses at strategic locations along County highway corridors** that are within or adjacent the Planning Jurisdiction of Kearney County Communities.
- Encourage **joint Community/County economic development activities** in **Rural Kearney County** that create permanent employment opportunities with competitive wages, especially for low- to moderate income persons and families.
- Ensure that all industrial and commercial developments occur within and/or adjacent the Communities of Kearney County, or in rural areas with **adequate access to transportation systems and utilities.**

- **The Comprehensive Plan will include an Energy Plan directed at both documenting and monitoring the consumption of energy and conservation policies** for all sectors in **Rural Kearney County** and promote of the implementation of alternative energy sources such as Wind, Solar, Geothermal, Biomass and Methane, to reduce the reliance on traditional fuel and energy sources.
- **Create planning and zoning guidelines for the provision of alternative, sustainable energy systems** to supplement individual residential and business, in **Rural Kearney County**, with electric consumption in accordance with Nebraska State Statue 70-1012, as amended August, 2009. The use of Solar, Methane, Wind, Biomass, Hydropower and Geothermal Energy systems on individual properties to supplement or sell excess energy produced to the local utility district, a process known as “**Net Metering.**”
- Encourage and promote the development and use of **broadband and telecommunication technologies** throughout **Rural Kearney County**, with an emphasis for provisions in the underserved areas of Kearney County.
- Support the creation of **public-private partnerships** with the Kearney County Planning & Zoning Commission, Board of Commissioners, local municipal governments, public power districts, communications providers and private investments in providing **broadband infrastructure** to underserved areas of **Rural Kearney County**.

# SECTION 3



LAND USE PROFILE & PLAN.

# LAND USE PROFILE & PLAN.

## INTRODUCTION.

The following **Land Use Profile & Plan** for the **Kearney County, Nebraska Comprehensive Plan** focuses on the analysis of existing and future land uses throughout Rural Kearney County. Detailed components include the natural environment, highlighting soils, watersheds, wetlands and ground water.

## THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

Proper land use practices can protect Rural Kearney County's natural resources and complement the built environment. The natural environment provides opportunities and constraints for existing and future developments. As humans strive to create a sustainable living environment, they must work and live in harmony with their natural surroundings. This can occur by designing with nature, conserving unique features, protecting watersheds and using sensitive development practices. An objective of the **Comprehensive Plan** is to protect agricultural lands and, where appropriate, provide for the potential development of commercial/industrial buildings, and for new dwellings and subdivisions. The challenge is to balance agricultural preservation with rural residential development in appropriate areas of the Rural County.

Kearney County contains an estimated total land area of 330,240 acres, or 516 square miles. **Rural Kearney County, including land not within a community planning jurisdiction, comprises an estimated 301,914 acres.** The major waterway includes the Platte River, which generally flows from west to east along the northern border of the County. Soils are primarily used for pasture, range land and crop production.

### SOILS.

The Soil Conservation Services has identified six soils associations in the Soil Survey of Kearney County. These include Holdrege, Kenesaw-Coly, Valentine, Alda-Wann-Boel, Simeon and Coly-Uly-Holdrege Associations. **Illustration 3.1, Page 3.5**, identifies the location of soils associations in Kearney County. The map identifies soil types that are conducive for certain types of development. The following narrative describes the general characteristics of the six soil types. For a detailed analysis, refer to the Soil Survey of Kearney County, Nebraska.

❖ **Holdrege Association.**

The Holdrege Association is located in high concentrations in the southwest and south-central portions of Kearney County. This Association is characterized as "deep, nearly level to gently sloping, well drained, silty soils formed in loess; on uplands." The Holdrege Association comprises about 72 percent of the County. Irrigated croplands are the predominate agricultural uses in this association. Ample supplies of ground water and canals support irrigation, except for the extreme southeast portion of the County where wells produce less water.

Limitations of the Holdrege Association soils are moderate to high shrink swell potential which impact the foundation of structures and moderate seepage limitations impacting septic tank absorption fields and sewage lagoons. These limitations can be reduced by strengthening the structural condition of underground footings and foundation walls.

❖ **Kenesaw-Coly Association.**

The Kenesaw-Coly Association is located in the loess uplands above the Platte River Valley and along the eastern portion of the County. The Association is described as "deep, nearly level to moderately steep, well drained and somewhat excessively drained, silty soils formed in loess; on uplands." This Association occupies approximately 23 percent of the total County area.

Kenesaw soils comprise 51 percent of the Association, while Coly soils occupy 40 percent and minor soils the remaining 9 percent. Approximately half of the cultivated areas of the Kenesaw-Coly Association are irrigated. Rolling hills comprised of Coly soils limit irrigation. Water for irrigation is obtained from both wells and canals. Water and wind erosion are hazards on gently sloping to moderately steep slopes.

Kenesaw soils have moderate to severe limitations due to sloping topography which may require the reinforcing of footings and foundations, as well as construction techniques for sewage lagoons and septic tank absorption fields.

❖ **Valentine Association.**

The Valentine Association is generally located on gently sloping uplands above the Platte River bottom lands and along the Sand Creek, to the north and southeast of the Village of Norman. Valentine soils comprise just 14 percent of Kearney County. If cultivated, moderately steep slopes of these soils are highly susceptible to erosion. Grass and rangeland comprise more than 70 percent of this Association. The soils in much of this Association are poorly suited to irrigated crops because of low fertility, low available water capacity, and a severe soil-blowing hazard. The soils are characterized as "deep, nearly level to rolling, excessively drained, sandy soils formed in eolian sand; on uplands." Irrigation in approximately 30 percent of this Association has overcome poor dryland crop production.

Moderate limitations impact this Association for construction of buildings due to slope. Severe limitations for sewer lagoons and septic tank absorption fields exist due to rapid permeability and poor filtering quality of these soils may result in ground water contamination.

❖ **Alda-Wann-Boel Association.**

The Alda-Wann-Boel Association is comprised of the river and creek bottoms, low terraces and foot slopes of the Platte River. Soils of this Association are described as "nearly level, somewhat poorly drained, loamy alluvial soils that are moderately deep or deep over sand and gravel; on bottom lands." Approximately 12 percent of the Kearney County land area is comprised of this Association. All soils of this Association are on the bottom lands of the Platte River. Soils of this Association are highly productive, easily tilled and most of their acreage is cultivated.

Major constraints of this Association is that a large portion of its area is within flood prone areas of the Platte River. Depths to the underground water table range between one to three feet. Areas impacted by these conditions are not suitable for development.

Severe conditions related to seepage, wetness and flooding make sewage lagoons and septic tank absorption fields hazardous to ground water quality. Dwellings or buildings would be impacted by high ground water levels and the need for fill material to raise ground floor levels above flood elevations.



❖ **Simeon Association.**

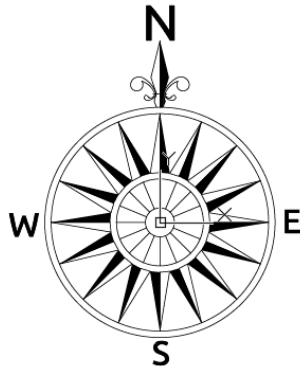
The Simeon Association is located in the limited areas on stream terraces just above the bottom lands of the Platte River. Soils of this Association are characterized as "deep, nearly level and very gently sloping, excessively drained, loamy soils formed in sandy and loamy alluvium; on stream terraces." More than half of this Association has been developed for irrigation, but Simeon soils are poorly suited to irrigated crops. Rapid permeability of these soils create severe limitations for septic tank absorption fields and sewage lagoons. Good bearing capacity however, supports the construction of buildings.

❖ **Coly-Uly-Holdrege Association.**

The **Coly-Uly-Holdrege Association** is located throughout the County. This Association is characterized by *"deep gently sloping to steep, well drained silty soils on uplands."* The Coly-Uly-Holdrege Association comprises about 47 percent of the County. Coly soils occur along drainage ways and are strongly sloping to steep. Uly soils are sloping to strongly sloping and can be found along drainage ways and rounded ridge tops. Holdrege soils can also be found along rounded ridge tops. About half of the soils are used for farming. Native grass grows in the uncultivated areas. Erosion is a hazard with this association. Major limitations of the Coly-Uly-Holdrege Association soils are moderate permeability and filtering which limit septic tank absorption fields and sewage lagoons. These limitations can be reduced by sealing or lining lagoons when conditions require improvements. **Bearing capacity for building foundations ranges from fair to good.**



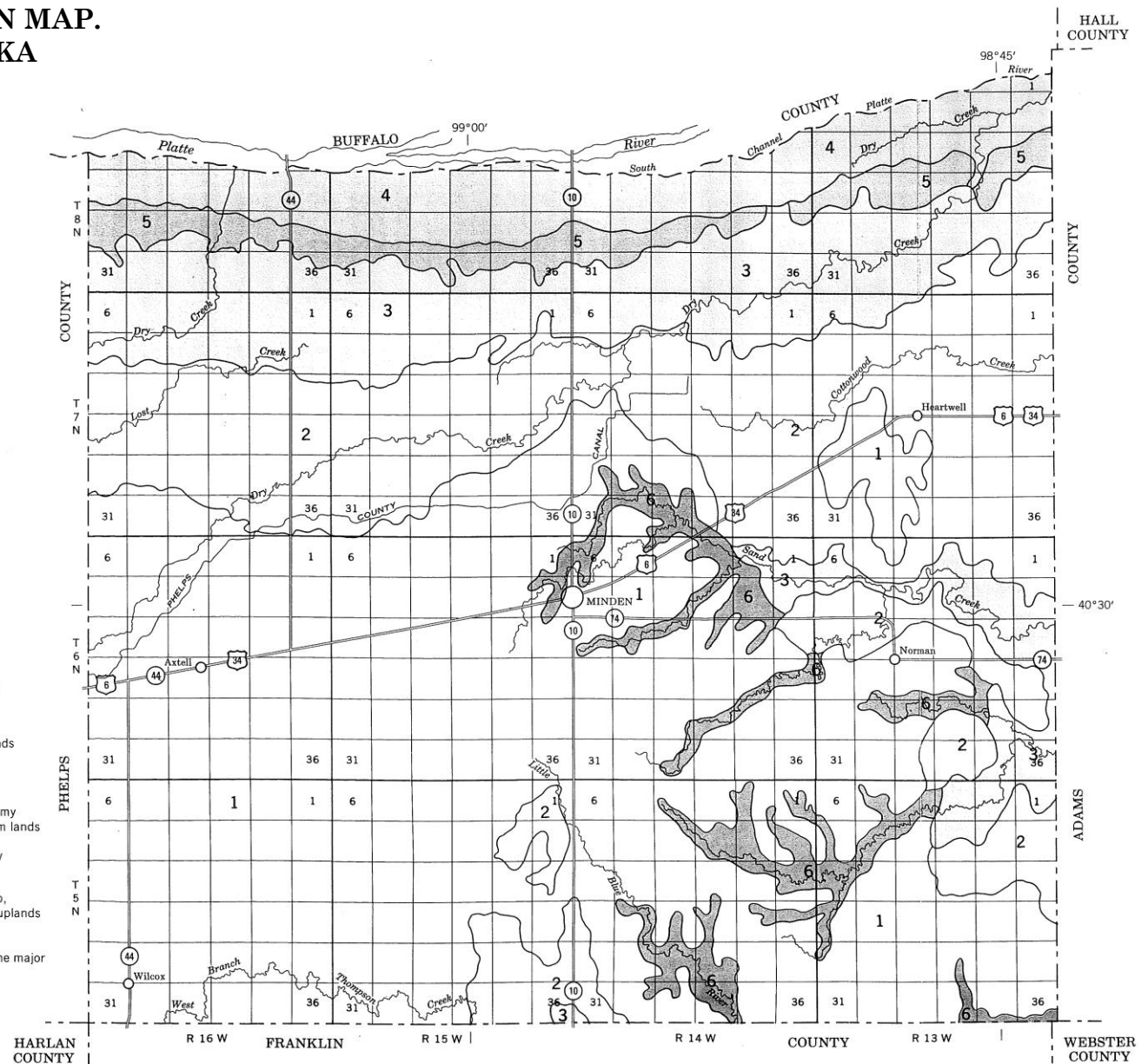
**GENERAL SOIL ASSOCIATION MAP.  
KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA  
ILLUSTRATION 3.1**



**LEGEND**

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | HOLDREGE ASSOCIATION: Deep, nearly level to gently sloping, well drained, silty soils formed in loess; on uplands  |
| 2 | KENESAW-COLY ASSOCIATION: Deep, nearly level to moderately steep, well drained and somewhat excessively drained, silty soils formed in loess; on uplands       |
| 3 | VALENTINE ASSOCIATION: Deep, nearly level to rolling, excessively drained, sandy soils formed in eolian sand; on uplands                                       |
| 4 | ALDA-WANN-BOEL ASSOCIATION: Nearly level, somewhat poorly drained, loamy alluvial soils that are moderately deep or deep over sand and gravel; on bottom lands |
| 5 | SIMEON ASSOCIATION: Deep, nearly level and very gently sloping, excessively drained, loamy soils formed in sandy and loamy alluvium; on stream terraces        |
| 6 | COLY-ULY-HOLDREGE ASSOCIATION: Deep, nearly level to moderately steep, well drained and somewhat excessively drained, silty soils formed in loess; on uplands  |

\*The texture given in the descriptive headings refers to the surface layer of the major soils in each association



### **EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS.**

**An Existing and Future Land Use Matrix for Kearney County, from 2024 to 2034, is presented in Table 3.1, Page 3.7.** Kearney County, Nebraska, consists of an estimated 330,240 acres of land in south central Nebraska. Currently, an estimated 28,325.9 acres are encompassed by the planning jurisdictions of each Community in the County. Rural Kearney County consists of an estimated 301,854.1 acres, comprised of a variety of land uses including, but not limited to agricultural, commercial, industrial, public/quasi-public and park and recreation areas.

The **Existing Land Use Map, Illustration 3.2, Page 3.8**, serves as the basis for establishing a **Future Land Use Plan** for Rural Kearney County. The **Existing Land Use Map** highlights the impact of concentrations of rural dwellings, commercial businesses and agricultural areas throughout the County.

#### **EXISTING LAND USES.**

##### **❖ Agricultural Uses.**

Undeveloped, agricultural land for crop harvest and livestock production are the most prolific rural land uses in Rural Kearney County. An estimated 295,580.6 acres of land in the Rural County are utilized for general agricultural purposes and are not associated with any land conservation easements/ restrictions.

**TABLE 3.1**  
**EXISTING & FUTURE LAND USE MATRIX**  
**(MEDIUM POPULATION PROJECTION)**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**2024 & 2034**

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>2024</u> <u>Land Area (Acres)</u>	<u>2034</u> <u>Land Area (Acres)</u>
- Community Corporate Limits (CL) & Planning Jurisdictions (PJ)	28,325.9	28,471.7
- Village of Heartwell CL & PJ	2,731.8	2,731.8
- Village of Norman CL & PJ	3,026.4	3,026.4
- Agricultural*	295,580.6	295,267.4
- Public/Quasi-Public	124.9	133.4
- Village of Heartwell PJ	2.9	2.9
- Village of Norman PJ	2.2	2.2
- Park/Recreation/Management Area**	3,371.2	3,371.2
- Single Family Residential	1,115.0	1,198.3
- Residential Subdivisions	903.4	1,009.9
- Farmsteads***	211.6	188.4
- Village of Heartwell PJ	1.8	1.8
- Village of Norman PJ	1.6	1.6
- Commercial	9.2	9.2
- Industrial/Intensive Agricultural	1,653.2	1,728.8
- Village of Heartwell PJ	76.1	76.1
- Village of Norman PJ	0.0	0.0
<b>Total Land Area</b>	<b>330,180</b>	<b>330,180</b>
<u>Water Area</u>	<u>64</u>	<u>64</u>
<b>TOTAL ACRES</b>	<b>330,240</b>	<b>330,240</b>

\*Includes agricultural structures/outbuildings.

\*\*Includes Wildlife Management & Waterfowl Production Areas.

\*\*\*Includes Single Family Residential Land Uses in Unincorporated Communities.

Source: Hanna:Keelan Associates, 2024.

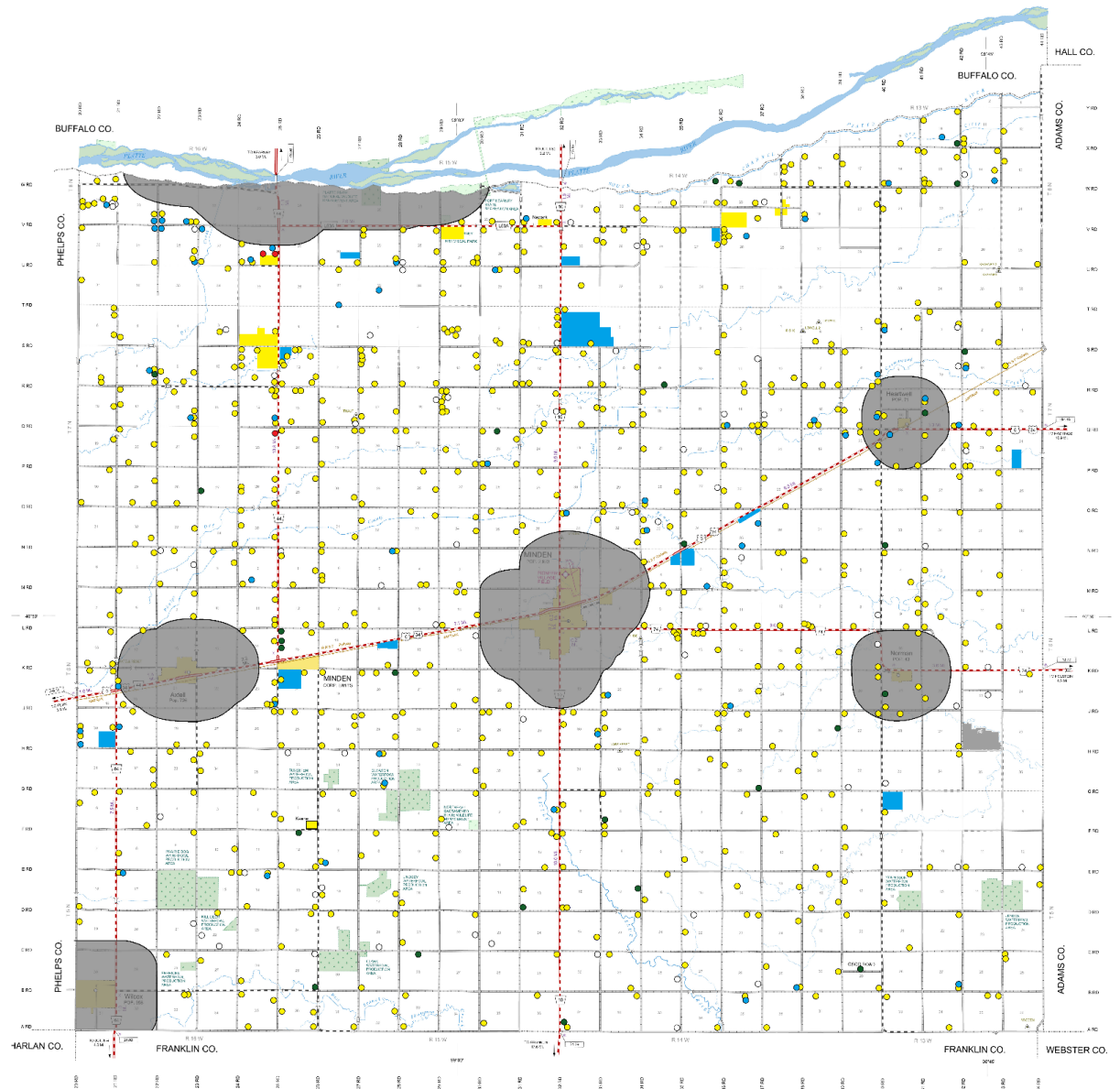
# EXISTING LAND USE MAP. KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA ILLUSTRATION 3.2



## LEGEND

- COMMUNITY PLANNING JURISDICTIONS
- PARK/RECREATION\*
- PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC
- RESIDENTIAL (SINGLE FAMILY/FARMSTEAD)
- RESIDENTIAL (SUBDIVISION/UNINCORPORATED AREA)
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL (GENERAL FARMING OPERATION)
- INTENSIVE AGRICULTURAL OPERATION
- ABANDONED/OTHER STRUCTURE

\* Includes Wildlife Management/Waterfowl Production Areas.





❖ **Rural Residential Development (Farmsteads & Residential Subdivisions).**

The **Existing Land Use Map** indicates rural dwellings exist throughout Kearney County in areas where soil conditions are permissible for development. Most rural residential dwellings are located along hard surfaced and gravel roads, with larger concentrations located in close proximity to the Highway 44 and Platte River Corridors.

The majority of non-farm dwellings are constructed on large lots of three acres or more or in residential subdivisions located in northwest and north central Kearney County. An estimated 903.4 acres of land in Kearney County is currently dedicated to non-farmstead residential developments, including single family residential subdivisions.

Kearney County Staff identified significant residential development activity has, and continues to occur along the Highway 44 in close proximity to the City of Kearney, Nebraska, and Platte River Corridor, along the northern border of the County. The McConnell Subdivision, Kearney Subdivision, Awarii Dunes Subdivision, Craneview Subdivision and Summerhaven Subdivision comprise a majority of non-farm residential housing in existence in rural Kearney County.



### ❖ Public/Quasi-Public, Park & Recreational Uses.

**Public/quasi-public land uses**, such as churches, cemeteries and rural utility substations are scattered throughout Rural Kearney County and account for an estimated 124.9 acres. Other public/quasi-public land uses associated with the functions of Rural Kearney County are located in the City of Minden.

**Park and recreation** lands in Rural Kearney County comprise an estimated 1,653 total acres.

**Wildlife management and Waterfowl Production Areas** are generally scattered across the southern 1/3 of the County. The Fort Kearny State Recreation Area is located within the City of Kearney Planning Jurisdiction.



### ❖ Land Conservation.

Land conservation efforts in Kearney County are generally conducted by State and National non-profit efforts. This includes Nebraska Crane Trust, Nebraska Audubon Society and land designated as part of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Plan. Activities in land conservation include restoration of physical, hydrological and biological habitats for migratory birds and other wildlife. The Platte River Recovery Implementation Plan focuses on similar activities along the entirety of the Platte River Basin, including Kearney County, while also analyzing and documenting river and stream flow data and adaptive management in mitigating potential hazards.

❖ **Commercial & Industrial/Intensive Agricultural Uses.**

**Commercial and Industrial uses** are generally located within the Cities and Villages and their associated planning jurisdictions in the County, as well as along National, State and County highways. Commercial and industrial land uses are functioning throughout Kearney County in areas both zoned and not zoned for a particular use.

An estimated 9.2 acres in Rural Kearney County are being utilized for commercial uses, generally in the northwest portion of the County. An estimated 1,653.2 acres of industrial and intensive agricultural land uses (including feedlots, grain elevators and large-scale agricultural production operations) exist in Rural Kearney County.

❖ **Villages of Heartwell and Norman.**

The Villages of Heartwell and Norman are the only municipalities that consolidated their planning and zoning efforts with the Kearney County Planning Commission. The Village Boards of Heartwell and Norman will have final determination of planning and zoning issues, as opposed to the County Board of Supervisors.

The **Village of Heartwell** is located on the north side of Highway 6/34 in the eastern portion of the County, three miles from the Adams County line. Heartwell has an estimated 2024 population of 81. Heartwell retains much of its original Downtown commercial area, including a Post Office and Community Center, although several storefronts are vacant and abandoned. Single family houses and mobile homes occupy the majority of the Community.

The **Village of Norman** has an estimated 2024 population of 30 persons and is located on the south side of Highway 74, six miles south of Heartwell and seven miles east of Minden. The Village is comprised of single family houses and mobile homes, and has significantly more industrial businesses than commercial. Nearly all of the original downtown commercial uses are now abandoned.

**Existing Land Use Maps** for each Village are highlighted in **Illustrations 3.3 and 3.4, Pages 3.12 and 3.13, respectively.**

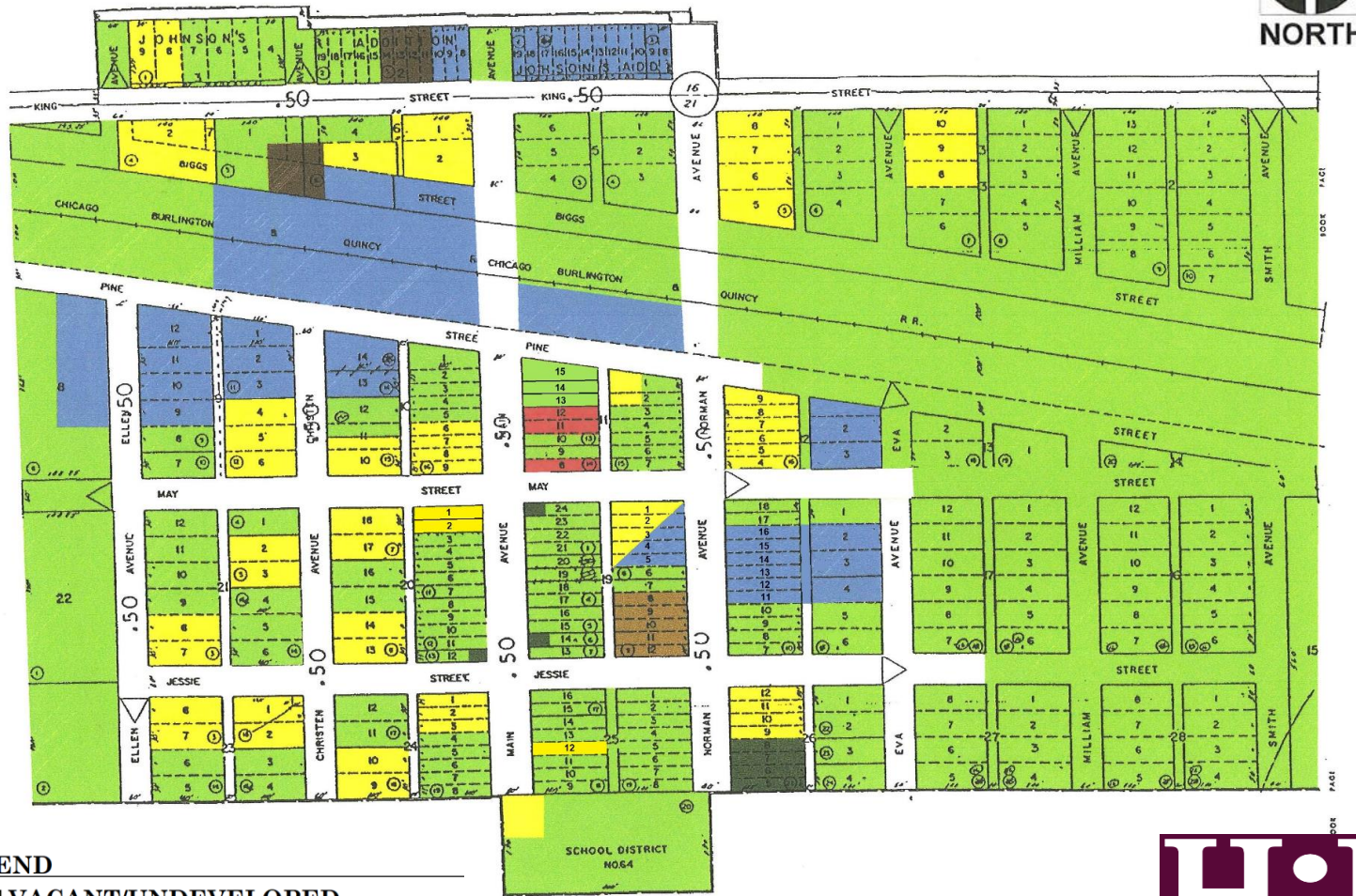


EXISTING LAND USE MAP.  
VILLAGE OF HEARTWELL, NEBRASKA  
ILLUSTRATION 3.3





EXISTING LAND USE MAP.  
VILLAGE OF NORMAN, NEBRASKA  
ILLUSTRATION 3.4



#### LEGEND

- VACANT/UNDEVELOPED
- PARKS/RECREATION
- PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC
- RESIDENTIAL (SINGLE FAMILY)
- RESIDENTIAL (MOBILE HOME)
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL



## **FUTURE LAND USE ANALYSIS.**

**Illustration 3.5, Page 3.15**, identifies the **Future Land Use** for Rural Kearney County. The primary hard-surfaced County roads and State highways were reviewed to determine the potential impact of rural development adjacent these corridors. Rural residential land uses not associated with farming or ranching are most suitable adjacent County, State and Federal Highways.

### **❖ General Agricultural Areas.**

Agricultural and ranch lands exist for a large majority of Rural Kearney County, as identified in the **Future Land Use Map**. These areas are recommended to be preserved and protected from unnecessary encroachment of undesirable residential, commercial or industrial development and allowing said developments to be permitted in their respective Zoning Districts. Non-farm/ranch rural residential dwellings are widely scattered along major highways in Kearney County, particularly in close proximity to and within the City of Kearney Planning Jurisdiction.

Irrigated cropland comprises the majority of rural areas in the west half of the County, while dryland production occurs more frequently in the east half. Irrigated crop production is also concentrated along the northern boundary of Kearney County, with a predominate region of dryland production ranging from one to six miles wide to the south of State Spur L50A. These dryland areas also have a higher concentration of pasture lands or hay fields located on moderate to steep slopes. Dryland or irrigated crop production areas tend to be located in areas having rolling or terraced hills.

### **❖ Residential Areas.**

Residential areas are primarily located within the Cities and Villages of Kearney County, as well as associated Planning Jurisdictions. Existing rural farmstead dwellings are widely spread throughout the County, but concentrations of large lot subdivisions exist along major Highway Corridors and, especially, in close proximity to and within the City of Kearney Planning Jurisdiction. The **Future Land Use Map** promotes the continued development of non-farm/ranch dwellings in areas along the Highway Corridors. By promoting non-farm/ranch residential development in the Agricultural Residential areas, the County also seeks to preserve and protect agricultural production areas from further encroachment of conflicting uses. This practice also would locate these future dwellings nearest local goods and services. The development of residential subdivisions is encouraged in close proximity to, and within, the Kearney Planning Jurisdiction.



# FUTURE LAND USE MAP. KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA ILLUSTRATION 3.5

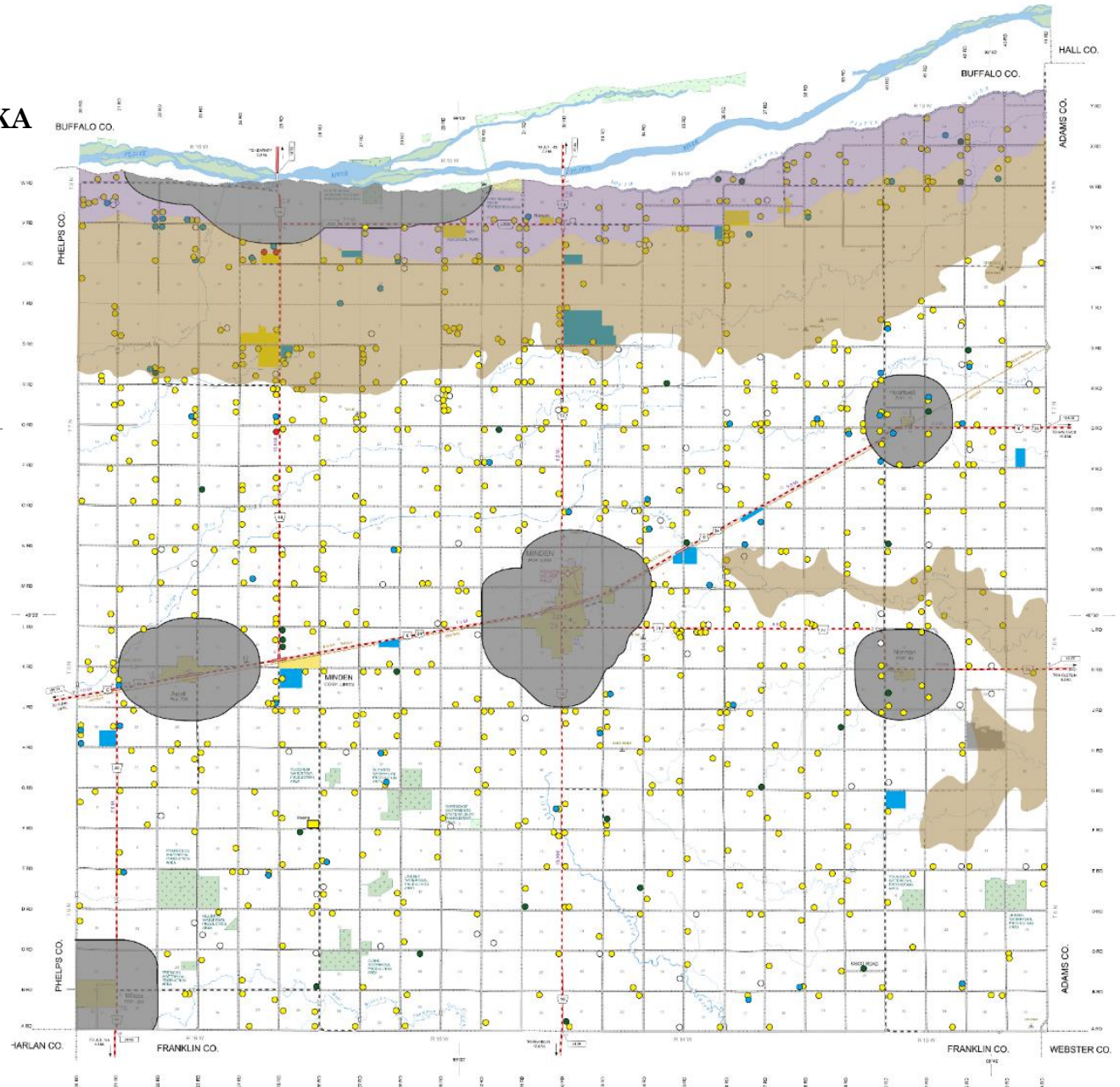


## LEGEND

- COMMUNITY PLANNING JURISDICTIONS
- PARK/RECREATION\*
- PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC
- RESIDENTIAL (SINGLE FAMILY/FARMSTEAD)
- RESIDENTIAL (SUBDIVISION/UNINCORPORATED AREA)
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL (GENERAL FARMING OPERATION)
- INTENSIVE AGRICULTURAL OPERATION
- ABANDONED/OTHER STRUCTURE

\* Includes Wildlife Management/Waterfowl Production Areas.

- ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AREA
- PLATTE RIVER BOTTOM LANDS



### ❖ Park And Recreation Areas.

State Wildlife Management and Waterfowl Production Areas associated with the southern portion of Kearney County are the largest parks/recreation land uses in Rural Kearney County. Preservation of these and other natural open space areas, such as river corridors, should be a priority during the 10-year planning period. The County should strive to maintain the existing **3,371.2 acres of park and recreation land** throughout Rural Kearney County. New park and recreation land areas could be considered and established to enhance accessibility along the Platte River Corridor to provide natural resource educational opportunities.

### ❖ Commercial & Industrial Areas.

Future commercial uses in Rural Kearney County should consist of “General Commercial” developments, including all permissible uses, as allowed via the **Kearney County Zoning Regulations**. Land zoned as “C – Commercial” should maintain their current locations and could be considered along major highway corridors. By 2034, total designated commercial land uses are projected to remain at **9.2 acres** in both commercial and non-commercial zoned districts (granted by Special Use Permit).

Industrial areas are encouraged to locate in close proximity to major transportation routes within local planning jurisdictions or specified rural areas, adjacent railroad or highway corridors. The recommended industrial uses should include “light manufacturing” and agriculture-related industries. These types of industries are often clean and efficient in operation and provide various employment opportunities.

Much of the existing industrial land areas in Rural Kearney County, generally, support intensive agricultural uses, including feedlots, gravel extraction and animal confinement operations. By 2034, total designated industrial land uses should be an estimated **1,728.8 acres** in both industrial and non-industrial zoned districts (granted by Special Use Permit). This would require an additional 75 acres, in the Rural Kearney County, from the current industrial land designation of 1,653.2 acres.

**The development of any animal and livestock confinement facilities should be carefully reviewed to ensure conformance with the land use preservation and development initiatives of the County. Animal confinement facilities should not be located within the floodplain or flood prone areas along rivers, creeks, streams and drainage ways, nor areas which have topographical or soil constraints, or in close proximity to existing residential uses.**

### ❖ Rural & Agricultural Conservation Areas.

Rural and Agricultural Conservation Areas are located along the major riparian corridors in Rural Kearney County, including the Platte River. Environmentally sensitive areas, including drainage ways, floodplains and flood prone areas, as well as a low depth to the water table, are located within the identified Rural Conservation Areas. Future development in these areas is discouraged.

**Agricultural Conservation Areas (ACAs)** are environmentally sensitive areas. In Kearney County, ACAs are associated with the Platte River in the northern portion of the County and Sand Creek in the east-central portion. These ACAs consist of floodplains and flood prone, low-lying lands with shallow depths to the groundwater table. Soil conditions in ACAs severely limit development. ACAs are depicted in the **Kearney County Official Zoning Map**.

**The consensus of the Planning Commission is that future development in ACAs should be limited to activities associated with agricultural production, while limiting intensive agricultural uses such as livestock confinement facilities.**

### ❖ Villages of Heartwell and Norman.

The **Future Land Use Map** for the Village of Heartwell, **Illustration 3.6, Page 3.18**, plans for the commercial Downtown to remain the focus of the Community. Industrial uses along the Railroad Corridor are planned to support the expansion of Cargill to the southeast of the Village. Multifamily residential uses wrap around the west and northeast portions of the Downtown, buffering the single family uses in the remaining portions of the Village.

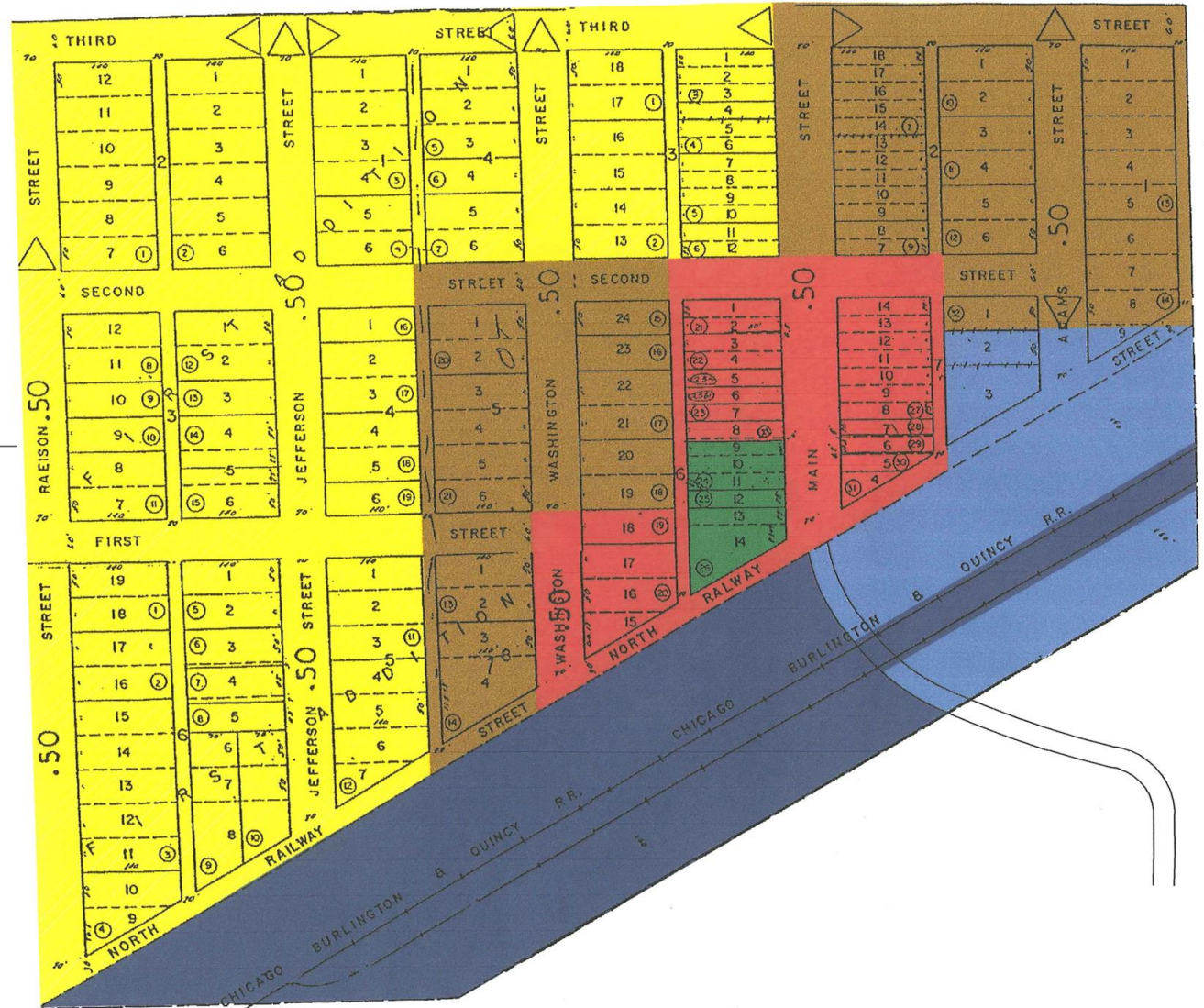
The **Future Land Use Map** for the Village of Norman, **Illustration 3.7, Page 3.19**, highlight the remaining portions of the commercial Downtown and industrial uses to the north to remain intact. The area generally along Milliam Avenue and east the Corporate Limits is proposed to remain vacant as an urban reserve area.



**FUTURE LAND USE MAP.  
VILLAGE OF HEARTWELL, NEBRASKA  
ILLUSTRATION 3.6**

**LEGEND**

- PARKS/RECREATION
- RESIDENTIAL (LOW DENSITY)
- RESIDENTIAL (MEDIUM DENSITY)
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- RAILROAD CORRIDOR





**FUTURE LAND USE MAP.  
VILLAGE OF NORMAN, NEBRASKA  
ILLUSTRATION 3.7**



**LEGEND**

- VACANT/UNDEVELOPED
- RESIDENTIAL (LOW DENSITY)
- RESIDENTIAL (MEDIUM DENSITY)
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL



# SECTION 4



PUBLIC FACILITIES, UTILITIES &  
TRANSPORTATION.

# PUBLIC FACILITIES, UTILITIES & TRANSPORTATION.

## INTRODUCTION.

**Section 4** of this **Comprehensive Plan** discusses current conditions and planned improvements to existing **public facilities and transportation systems** in Kearney County, including the **Rural County**. All improvements to these components are aimed at maintaining or improving the quality of life in the County. The intent of this **Section** is to determine the adequacy of these public facilities to meet the future estimated demand during the current planning period.

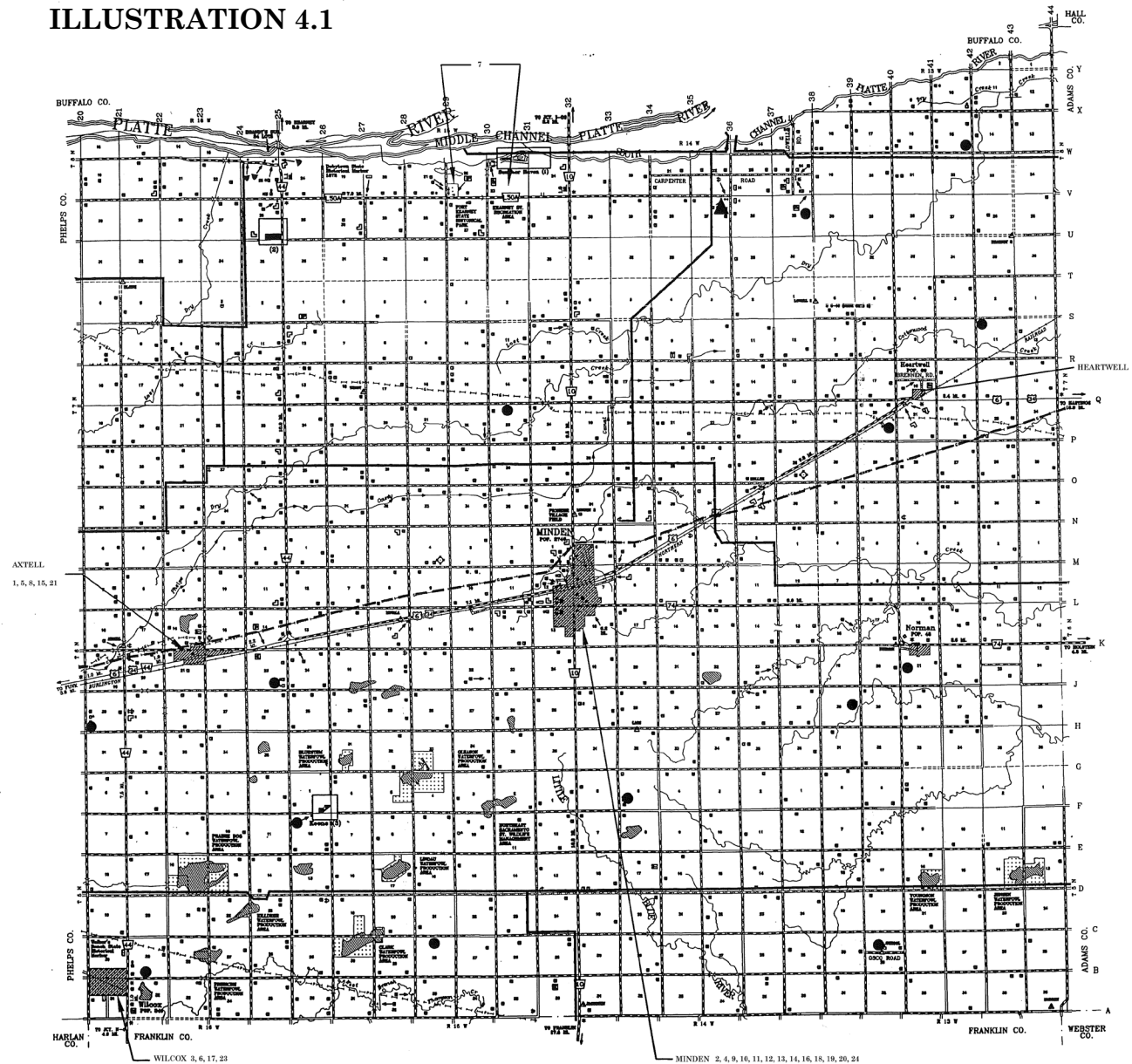
## PUBLIC FACILITIES.

**Public Facilities** identify existing public places in the County and determine future needs of and desires for pertinent public facilities during the planning period (2024-2034). Public facilities provide citizens with social, cultural and educational opportunities in Kearney County. Facilities can include, but are not limited to schools, fire protection, medical/elderly services and recreational facilities such as parks and sports fields. A majority of the listed and other public facilities are located within City or Village Corporate Limits or Planning Jurisdictions but serve the needs of the **Rural Kearney County** resident.





**PUBLIC FACILITIES MAP.  
KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA  
ILLUSTRATION 4.1**

**LEGEND**

1. AXTELL COMMUNITY SCHOOLS
2. MINDEN PUBLIC SCHOOLS
3. WILCOX-HILDRETH PUBLIC SCHOOLS
4. JENSEN MEMORIAL LIBRARY
5. AXTELL PUBLIC LIBRARY
6. WILCOX PUBLIC LIBRARY
7. FT. KEARNY STATE HISTORICAL PARK/RECREATION AREA
8. BETHPHAGE MISSION
9. KEARNEY COUNTY HOSPITAL
10. MINDEN MEDICAL CLINIC
11. MINDEN DENTAL CLINIC
12. BETHANY HOME
13. MINDEN SENIOR CENTER
14. KEARNEY COUNTY SHERIFF/MINDEN POLICE DEPT
15. AXTELL VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
16. MINDEN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
17. WILCOX VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
18. PIONEER VILLAGE FIELD AIRPORT
19. EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT
20. KEARNEY COUNTY COURTHOUSE
21. AXTELL POST OFFICE
22. HEARTWELL POST OFFICE
23. WILCOX POST OFFICE
24. MINDEN POST OFFICE

**EDUCATION.**

A broader-based education, with emphasis on technical and human relation skills has become necessary and desired in today's society. Standards developed by educators and planners can provide guidance in the creation of, and addition to, the educational facilities within each Kearney County School District. It will be important, during the 10-year planning period, that the facilities are able to support both the existing and future school-age or youth populations.

**Public schools in Kearney County should strive to meet the following general standards and guidelines:**

- Schools should be centrally located.
- Schools should not be located near high traffic or heavily concentrated areas with high noise levels.
- Land acquisition should be made with future expansion in mind.
- Adequate open space should be available to students.
- Provide safe routes to schools from all neighborhoods of Kearney County Communities, including sidewalks, pedestrian crossings and school bus access.

**❖ School Districts in Kearney County.**

**Axtell Community Schools** consists of Axtell Elementary School and Axtell High School, both located at 500 Main Street in Axtell. The district consists of approximately 313 students with a student to teacher ratio of 11.5.

**Minden Public Schools** consists of Minden East Elementary School, C L Jones Middle School and Minden High School. These schools are located in Minden at 123 North Minden Avenue, 520 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street and 622 West 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, respectively. The district consists of approximately 848 students with a student to teacher ratio of 12.

**Wilcox-Hildreth Public Schools** consists of Wilcox-Hildreth Elementary School, Wilcox-Hildreth Upper Elementary and Wilcox-Hildreth Jr/Sr High School. These schools are all located at 404 East Sapp Street in Wilcox. The district consists of approximately 236 students with a student to teacher ratio of nine.

**Educational Service Unit #11** provides supportive services in 13 public school districts including Axtell Community Schools, Minden Public Schools and Wilcox-Hildreth Public Schools.

**❖ Colleges/Universities near Kearney County.**

**Central Community College-Kearney Center** – located in Kearney, Nebraska.

**University of Nebraska-Kearney** – located in Kearney, Nebraska.

**PUBLIC LIBRARIES.**

A Public Library system is important for the educational needs of the County as well as being a social gathering space. The Public Libraries in Kearney County are part of the Central Plains Library System, which offers services to member libraries including an audiobook collection, book sets, breakout EDU kits, bulk loans of large print materials, consulting, continuing education, cooperative puppet orders, cutting machines, disc repair, equipment loan, interlibrary loan, makerspace equipment, a newsletter and an online mailing list, as well as a professional collection including books and periodicals.

**Jensen Memorial Library** is located at 443 North Kearney Avenue in Minden. The library provides books, movies, audiobooks, magazines, newspapers, computers and wifi for public use. The library is open Monday through Wednesday from 10 am to 8 pm, Thursday and Friday from 10 am to 5:30 pm and Saturday from 10 am to 4 pm.

**Axtell Public Library** is located at 305 South Main Street in Axtell. The library is open Monday through Thursday from 9:30 am to 4:30 pm.

**Wilcox Public Library** is located at 121 South Main Street in Wilcox. The library is open Monday through Friday 9 am to 12 pm.





## PARKS/RECREATION.

An integral part to the quality of life in any community or rural county is a well-maintained park system and recreational opportunities to serve its residents and visitors. Additionally, parks and recreational facilities ensure the health of families and individuals, and contribute to the economic and environmental well-being of the entire County. The following highlights Kearney County's State Parks, Wildlife Management Areas and other recreational facilities. Additional public parks are located within the Corporate Limits of Axtell, Minden and Wilcox.

### ❖ Historical Places in Kearney County.

**Fort Kearny State Historical Park** is a 38-acre park with reconstructed buildings that tell the story of the fort. Additionally, the park serves as an information center during crane migration season and contains a paved hike/bike trail to Bassway Wildlife Management Area and Cottonmill Park in Buffalo County.

**Bethphage Mission** is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is located in Axtell, Nebraska. It was constructed in 1913 in the Swedish National Romanticism Style to care for disabled individuals.

**Downtown Minden** contains three buildings listed on the National Register of Historic Places including the Kearney County Courthouse, W.T. Thorne Building and the U.S. Post Office in Minden.



- ❖ **State Wildlife Management Area in Kearney County.** A Wildlife Management Area (WMA) is a protected area set aside for the conservation of wildlife and for recreational activities involving wildlife. In Nebraska, WMAs are managed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's Wildlife Division for the enhancement of wildlife habitat and for public hunting, trapping and fishing, as well as hiking, birdwatching, nature study and primitive camping.

**Northeast Sacramento State Wildlife Management Area** is a 40-acre area which allows camping, hunting, hiking, bird watching and nature studies.

- ❖ **Federal Waterfowl Production Areas in Kearney County.** Waterfowl Production Areas (WPAs) are small natural wetlands and grasslands that provide breeding, resting and nesting habitat for millions of waterfowl, shorebirds, grassland birds and other wildlife. All of the following WPAs are part of the Rainwater Basin Wetland Management District. The **Rainwater Basin Wetland Management District** consists of critical migratory waterfowl habitat in a 21-county area in southeast Nebraska. Hunting, fishing, trapping, wildlife photography and observation is allowed with restrictions.

**Bluestem Waterfowl Production Area** – 76 acres.

**Clark Waterfowl Production Area** – 451 acres.

**Frerichs Waterfowl Production Area** – 47 acres.

**Gleason Waterfowl Production Area** – 570 acres.

**Jensen Waterfowl Production Area** – 465 acres.

**Killdeer Waterfowl Production Area** – 38 acres.

**Lindau Waterfowl Production Area** – 159 acres.

**Prairie Dog Waterfowl Production Area** – 892 acres.

**Youngson Waterfowl Production Area** – 183 acres.



## MEDICAL FACILITIES.

Medical facilities for **Rural Kearney County** residents are primarily located in the City of Minden. A variety of specialized clinics, as well as a hospital are located in Minden. Nursing homes and senior centers exist in Minden. Additional healthcare facilities are located in the nearby City of Kearney.

### ❖ Medical Facilities.

**Kearney County Hospital** is located at 727 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street in Minden. The Kearney County Hospital is a 10-bed critical access hospital and provides emergency care as well as various specialized services including cardiology, various types of surgery and psychiatric/mental health care.

**Minden Medical Clinic** is located at 727 East 1<sup>st</sup> Street in Minden. The Minden Medical Clinic provides preventative healthcare services and education.

**Minden Dental Clinic** is located at 110 East Hawthorne Street in Minden. The Minden Dental Clinic provides various procedures and services including routine checkups and oral surgery.

### ❖ Nursing Homes.

**Bethany Home** is located at 515 West 1<sup>st</sup> Street in Minden. Bethany Home provides skilled nursing, assisted living, memory care, rehabilitation therapy, adult daycare, respite care, activities, senior transportation and a Meals on Wheels program in Minden.

### ❖ Senior Centers.

**Minden Senior Center** is located at 403 North Colorado Avenue in Minden. The Minden Senior Center provides meals, educational programs, blood pressure clinics and entertainment opportunities. Entertainment opportunities include TV, music events, cards, pool, quilting, puzzles and special events.

**PUBLIC SAFETY.**

Public administration facilities serve the citizens of Kearney County and conduct the business of government and associated operations.

- ❖ **Law Enforcement – Law Enforcement** in Rural Kearney County is provided by the **Kearney County Sheriff's Office**, located at 246 north Colorado Avenue in Minden, Nebraska. The **Minden Police Department** is located in the same facility and employs six total officers.
- ❖ **Fire Protection** – To assist in serving **Rural Kearney County**, fire departments are located in the Communities of Axtell, Minden and Wilcox.

**Axtell Volunteer Fire Department** is located at 202 East 6<sup>th</sup> Street in Axtell, Nebraska.

**Minden Volunteer Fire Department** is located at 325 North Colorado Avenue in Minden, Nebraska.

**Wilcox Volunteer Fire Department** is located at 112 South Main Street in Wilcox, Nebraska.

- ❖ **Airport – Pioneer Village Field Airport** is located north of the City of Minden, Nebraska. The Airport has a 3,900 foot lighted concrete runway and a 2,175 foot turf runway. Facilities at the airport include beacon, fuel pumps, hangars, maintenance facility and tie downs.
- ❖ **Emergency Management** – The present Emergency Management services in Kearney County are managed by the County Emergency Manager, local volunteer fire departments, the County Sheriff's Department and other County officials.

### GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.

- ❖ **County Courthouse** – The **Kearney County District/County Court** is located at 424 North Colorado Street in Minden, Nebraska. Kearney County Planning & Zoning Commission and Board of Commissioner meetings are conducted at the Courthouse. The **Kearney County District/County Court** includes the Kearney County Jail, Child Support, County Assessor, County Attorney, County Clerk, County Clerk of District Court, County Election Commissioner, County Register of Deeds, County Treasurer, Health and Human Services and Veteran Services.



- ❖ **Transportation** – The **Kearney County Highway Department** is located at 1124 East 9<sup>th</sup> Street in Minden, Nebraska. This location also supports the Kearney County Planning and Zoning and Weed Superintendent offices.
- ❖ **Central Platte Natural Resources District** – The Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD) serves all or part of Dawson, Custer, Kearney, Hall, Howard, Nance, Merrick, Hamilton, Platte, Polk and Frontier Counties with the main office located in Grand Island and field offices located in various locations including Kearney.

- ❖ **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** – The USDA Services Center is located at 1005 South Brown Avenue in Minden, Nebraska. The USDA utilizes various local, State and National land and natural resource conservation programs include the following:
- Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
  - Well Head Identification and Protection.
  - Wetlands Reserve Program.
  - Conservation Reserve Program.
  - Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Program.

The USDA utilizes these programs to address concerns and formulate solutions for the Central Platte Natural Resource District.

- ❖ **Postal Services** – There are Post Offices located in Minden, Axtell, Heartwell and Wilcox, Nebraska. These Post Offices offer services including general delivery, domestic money orders and pickup of hold mail among other services.

**Minden Post Office** is located at 410 North Minden Avenue in Minden. The Minden Post Office was built in 1936 in the Modernistic Style and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The post office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 11:30 am and 12:30 pm to 4 pm as well as Saturday from 8:30 am to 10 am.

**Axtell Post Office** is located at 405 Main Street in Axtell. The post office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 am to 12 pm and 1 pm to 3:30 pm.

**Heartwell Post Office** is located at 209 Main Street in Heartwell. The post office is open Monday through Friday from 9 am to 1 pm and Saturday from 9 am to 10 am.

**Wilcox Post Office** is located at 108 South Main Street in Wilcox. The post office is open Monday through Friday from 7:30 am to 11:30 am and Saturday from 8:15 am to 9 am.



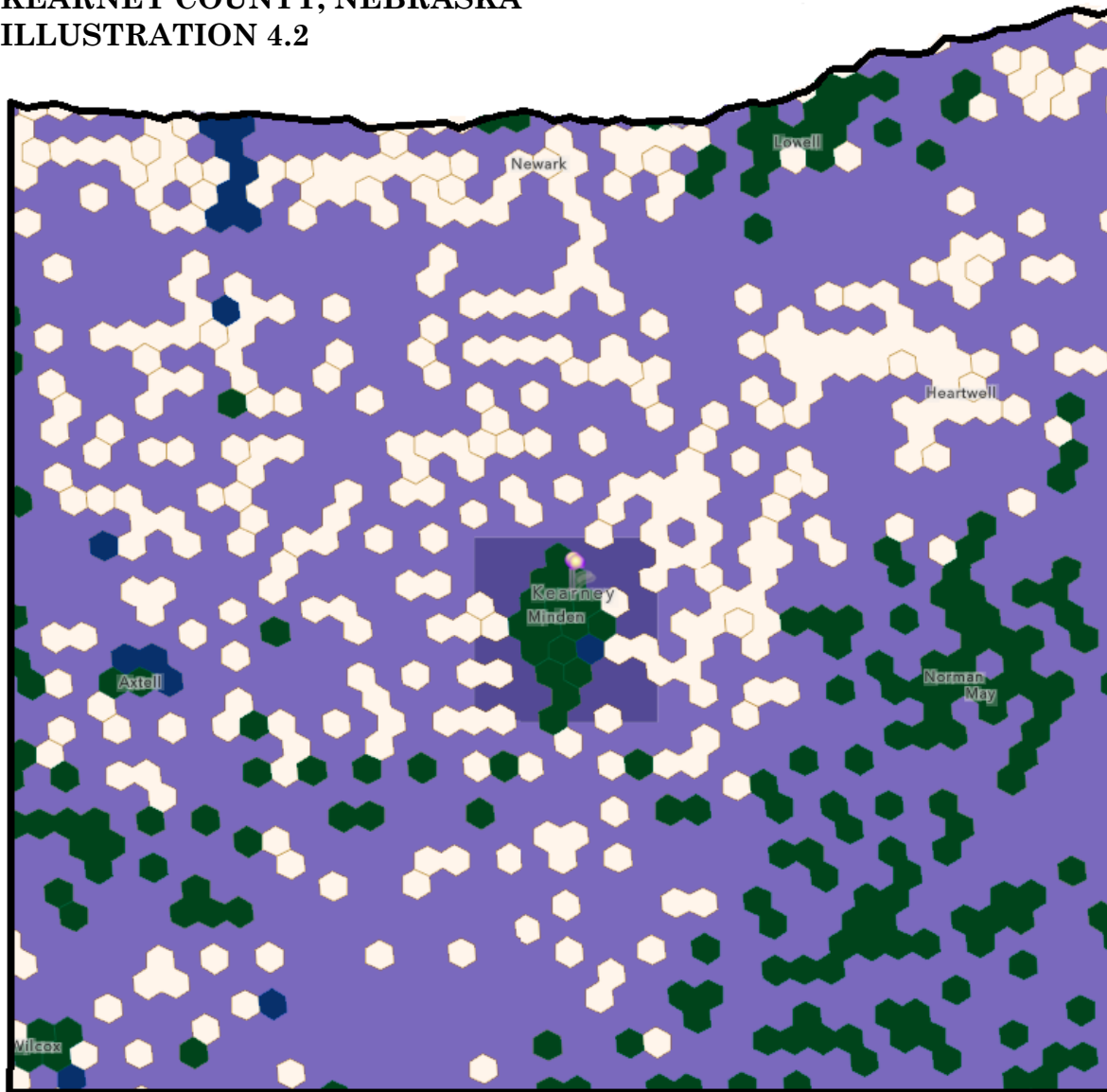
## BROADBAND & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Broadband infrastructure and technology is a critical component for information accessibility in the United States, the State of Nebraska and **Rural Kearney County**. Fiber optic, wireless, Digital Subscriber Line and Cable/Satellite are the most common methods of modern broadband delivery. According to “Fixed Broadband Deployment” statistics from the Federal Communications Commission, **an estimated 63.1 percent of Rural Kearney County residents have broadband available through fiber and cable accessibility**. The Nebraska Broadband Mapping Project highlights broadband coverage areas, as well as underserved and unserved households in the **Rural County**. See **Illustration 4.2, Page 4.12**. **In Census Tract 9666, which covers nearly all of Rural Kearney County, an estimated 149 households, 10.4 percent of all households are unserved with high-speed broadband technology.**

Currently, four broadband carriers provide service in Kearney County, including Nebraska Central Telephone Company, Glenwood Communications and Charter Communications. Several service providers in the process of expanding broadband coverage in northern and southwestern Kearney County with grant funding from the Nebraska Universal Service Fund, Connect American Fund and Alternative Connect America Cost Model funding to administer quality accessibility to telecommunications and information services in Nebraska.

**Illustration 4.3, Page 4.13**, highlights **broadband speed** throughout Kearney County, Nebraska. The highest broadband speed in Kearney County, 100 Megabits Per Second (MBPS) for download and 20 MBPS for upload are provided in the southern portions of the County and in close proximity to the Cities of Kearney, Minden, Axtell, Wilcox and Norman. A large portion of **Rural Kearney County** has broadband speeds of less than 100 MBPS for download and 20 MBPS for upload and, according to NBBP, are considered to be “underserved.” Concerns with underserved broadband areas in the County include delayed data, information and communication transfers and limited internet, mobile and cellular accessibility.

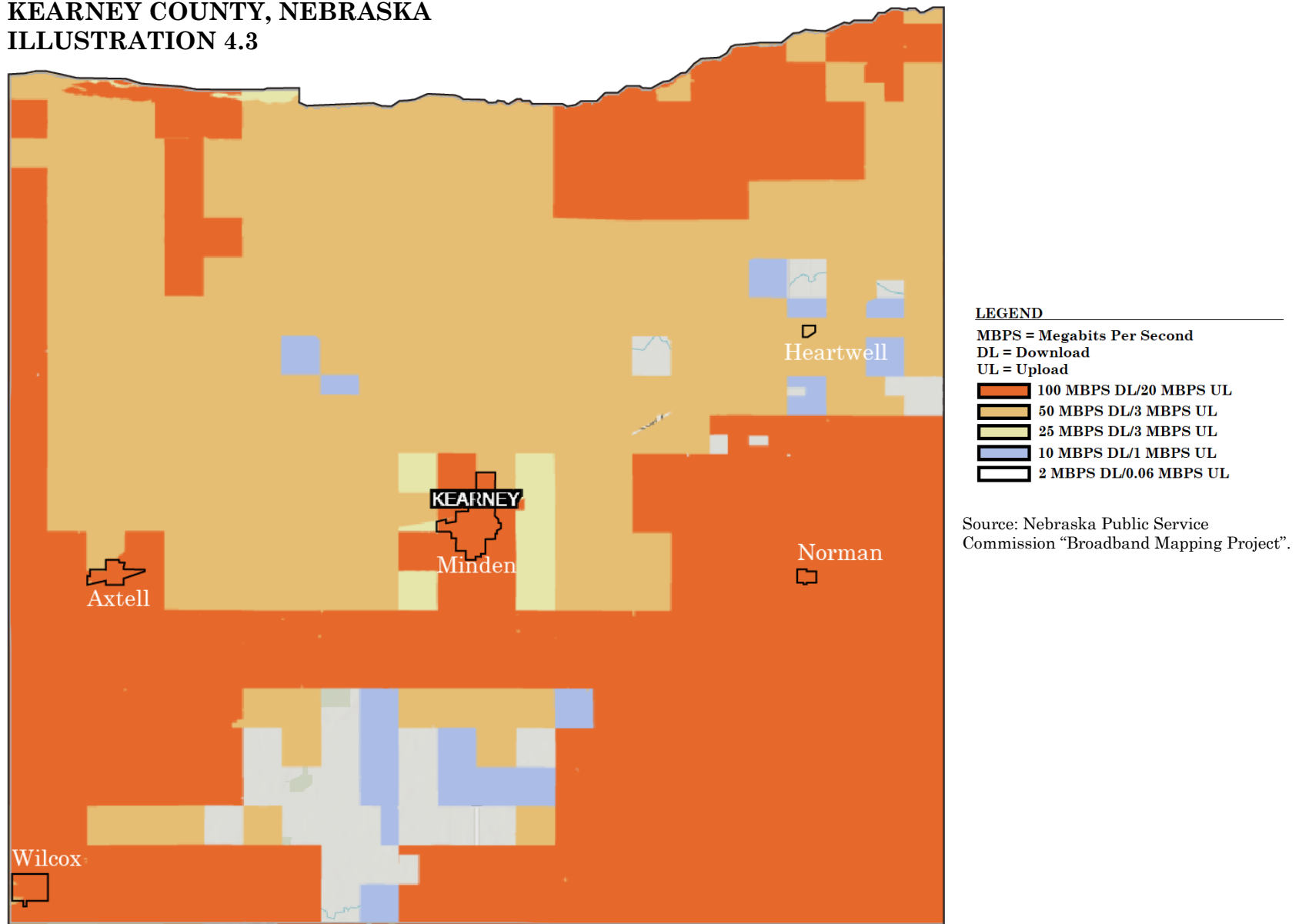
**BROADBAND PROVIDER COVERAGE MAP  
KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA  
ILLUSTRATION 4.2**

**LEGEND**

-  LICENSED FIXED WIRELESS FOOTPRINT
-  CABLE FOOTPRINT
-  FIBER FOOTPRINT
-  UNDERSERVED OR UNSERVED

Source: Nebraska Public Service Commission  
"Broadband Mapping Project".

**BROADBAND SPEED MAP  
KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA  
ILLUSTRATION 4.3**



## **PUBLIC UTILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE.**

It is the responsibility of any community to provide a sound public utility or infrastructure for its citizens. It is important that the expansion of these systems be coordinated with any growth within the Villages of Heartwell and Norman. Currently, neither the Village of Heartwell nor the Village of Norman have a community **water system**, relying on individual underground wells for water supply. In terms of **sanitary sewer**, a wastewater lagoon serves the Village of Heartwell, while septic systems are the standard for the Village of Norman. The **electrical system** for both Villages is provided by the Southern Public Power District.

## **TRANSPORTATION.**

The availability of a convenient and efficient transportation system is essential to the continued economic and physical development of the entire Kearney County area. An adequate transportation system is required to transport goods and services to and from major travel routes and market centers within and outside the County. The overall purpose of this transportation analysis is to provide the necessary guidelines for the safe movement of people and vehicles throughout the County.

The primary sources of information utilized to develop the transportation analysis were the (1) Kearney County “One- and Six-Year Road Improvement Program” and (2) State of Nebraska Department of Transportation “Nebraska Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)” (Fiscal Years 2024-2029).

### **EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.**

The **State Functional Classification Map** as identified by the Nebraska Department of Transportation in **Illustration 4.4, Page 4.16**, depicts the transportation system in Kearney County. The transportation network in the County comprises one U.S. Highway (6/34), two U.S. Highways (30 and 183), three Nebraska State Highways (10, 44 and 74) and local access County roads. Nebraska Highway 10 serves as the main north-south highway through Kearney County, while U.S. Highway 6/34 serves as the east-west access through the county.

## ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS.

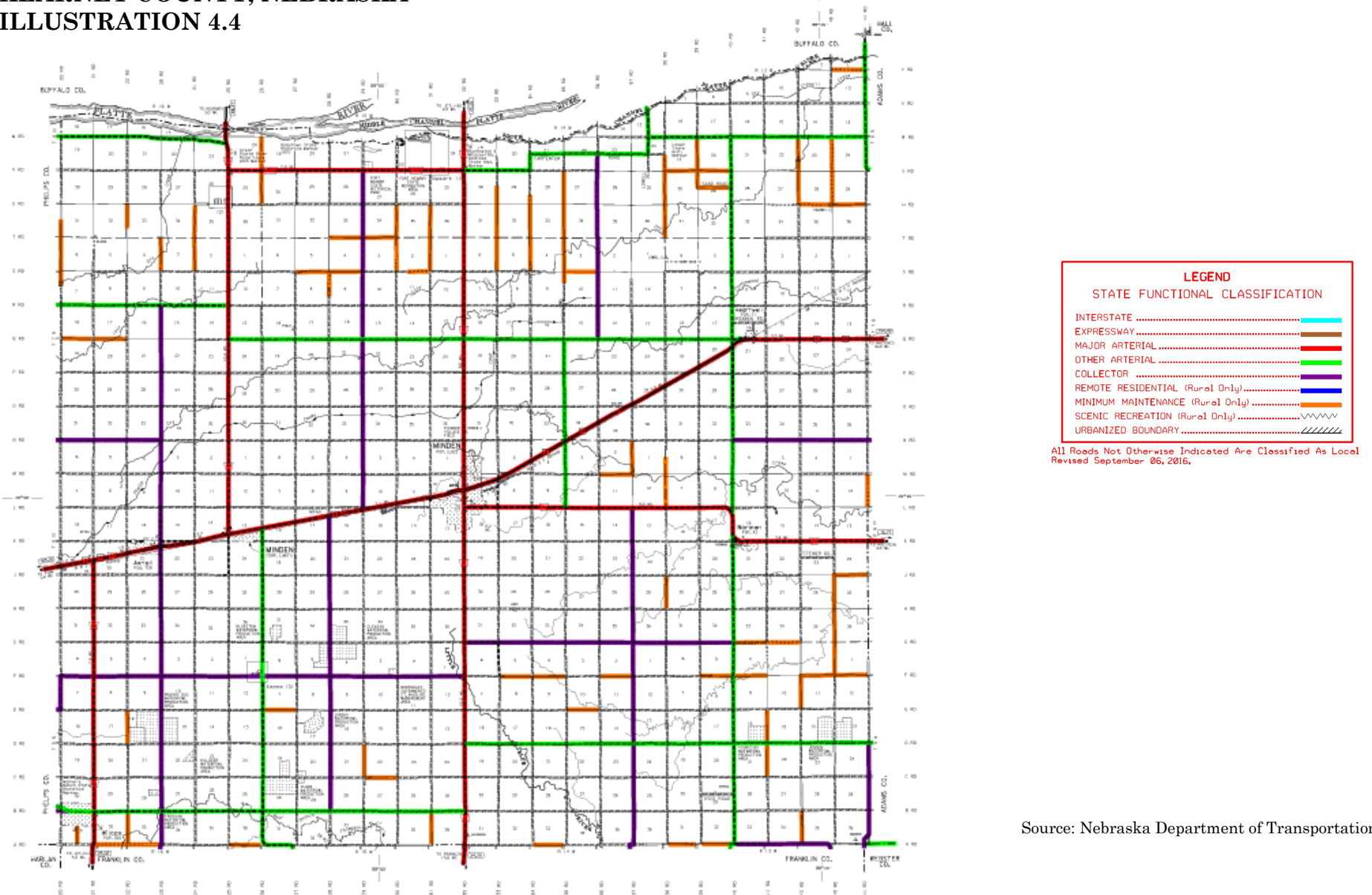
Nebraska Highway Law identifies the nine functional classifications of rural highways as follows:

- (1) **Interstate:** Which shall consist of the federally designated National System of Interstate and Defense Highways;
- (2) **Expressway (Other Freeways & Expressways):** Second in importance to Interstate. Shall consist of a group of highways following major traffic desires in Nebraska and ultimately should be developed to multilane divided highway standards;
- (3) **Major Arterial (Other Principal Arterials):** Consists of the balance of routes which serve major statewide interests for highway transportation in Nebraska. Characterized by high speed, relatively long distances, and travel patterns;
- (4) **Scenic-Recreation:** Consists of highways or roads located within or which provide access to or through state parks, recreation or wilderness areas, other areas of geological, historical, recreational, biological, or archaeological significance, or areas of scenic beauty;
- (5) **Other Arterial (Minor Arterials):** Which shall consist of a group of highways of less importance as through-travel routes which would serve places of smaller population and smaller recreation areas not served by the higher systems;
- (6) **Collector (Major and Minor Collectors):** Which shall consist of a group of highways which pick up traffic from many local or land-service roads and carry it to community centers or to the arterial systems. They are the main school bus routes, mail routes, and farm-to-market routes;
- (7) **Local:** Which shall consist of all remaining rural roads, except minimum maintenance roads,
- (8) **Minimum Maintenance:** Which shall consist of (a) roads used occasionally by a limited number of people as alternative access roads for area served primarily by local, collector, or arterial roads, or (b) roads which are the principal access roads to agricultural lands for farm machinery and which are not primarily used by passenger or commercial vehicles; and
- (9) **Remote Residential:** Consists of roads or segments of roads in remote areas of counties with (a) a population density of no more than five people per square mile or (b) an area of at least one thousand square miles, and which roads or segments of roads serve as primary access to no more than seven residences.

The **Rural Kearney County** highways classified under subdivisions (1) through (3) of this Section should, combined, serve every incorporated municipality having a minimum population of 100 inhabitants or sufficient commerce, a part of which will be served by stubs or spurs, and along with rural highways classified under subsection (4) of this section, should serve the major recreational areas of the State. Sufficient commerce shall mean a minimum of \$200,000 of gross receipts under the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967.



**STATE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION MAP  
KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA  
ILLUSTRATION 4.4**



Source: Nebraska Department of Transportation.

**TRAFFIC VOLUME.**

The Nebraska Department of Transportation monitors traffic volume in **Rural Kearney County**, for local roads and State and Federal highways. This tabulation process is done to identify appropriate existing road classification and engineering standards.

**Table 4.1, Page 4.18**, identifies the average daily traffic counts for State and Federal transportation routes throughout Kearney County. Each of the road segments are identified as “*Major Arterial*” roads. All other roads within the County jurisdiction are classified as “*Other Arterial*,” “*Collector*” or minimum maintenance roads.

The analysis of average 24-hour traffic volumes at the identified locations indicates that in the three- to four-year period between 2018 and 2021/2022, traffic volumes increased throughout the County. As depicted in **Table 4.1**, counts on the N-44, near Wilcox decreased slightly between 2018 and 2021/2022. Counts also decreased slightly on the N-74, as well as along portions of the US 6/34. All other segments increased in traffic.



**TABLE 4.1**  
**TRAFFIC VOLUME - AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS**  
**STATE AND FEDERAL ROADS**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**2018/2021/2022**

	<b><u>2018</u></b>	<b><u>2021/2022</u></b>
N-10, north of L50A	3,365	N/A
N-10, south of L50A	3,605	3,865
N-10, south of Minden	2,030	2,035
N-44, north of L50A	7,450	6,515
N-44, south of L50A	4,390	5,785
N-44, north of US 6	4,390	4,530
N-44, south of US 6	610	670
N-44, north of Wilcox	610	535
N-44, south of Wilcox	610	515
L50A, east of N-44	1,205	1,260
L50A, west of N-10	1,205	1,160
N-74, east of Minden	755	740
N-74, east of Norman	525	490
US 6/34, west of N-44	4,350	4,240
US 6/34, west of Axtell	4,370	4,740
US 6/34, east of Axtell	4,155	5,355
US 6/34, east of N-44	3,305	3,025
US 6/34, west of Minden	3,305	2,730
US 6/34, east of Minden	2,825	2,930
US 6/34, west of Heartwell	2,825	2,405
US 6/34, east of Heartwell	2,440	2,455

Source: Nebraska Department of Transportation, 2023.

## **FUTURE KEARNEY COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.**

### **COUNTY AND STATE ONE- AND SIX-YEAR ROAD IMPROVEMENT PLAN.**

The future transportation system is outlined in the **Kearney County One- and Six- Year Road Improvement Plan**. The County's One-Year Plan identifies projects to be undertaken in Fiscal Year 2021, while the Six-Year Plan includes projects to be undertaken through 2026, or earlier if funding becomes available. **Road Improvement Plans are available in the office of the County Clerk.**

The Kearney County Highway Superintendent annually prepares the One and Six-Year Road Plan and reports directly to the Board of Commissioners. The County Board of Commissioners approves the Plan and files it with the Nebraska Department of Transportation.

The Nebraska "State Surface Transportation Program 2024-2029" is an annual publication that includes a list of one-year short-term and six-year long-range improvement projects for State and Federal Highways. Improvement projects located in Kearney County include the following projects:

#### **One Year (July 2023-June 2024)**

- STP-44-1(105): On N-44, from 0.5 miles north of Wilcox to the West Junction of US-6/34; Resurfacing of 7 miles of roadway; Estimated Cost: \$4,893,000.

#### **Six Year (2025-2029)**

- NH-6-3(134): On US-6, from 0.7 miles northeast of Funk to approximately 0.2 miles southwest of the East Junction N-44; Resurfacing of 7.2 miles of roadway; Estimated Cost: \$7,884,000.
- NH-6-4(131): On US-6, from approximately 0.2 miles southwest of the East Junction N-44 to 0.3 miles east of Minden; Resurfacing of 8.2 miles of roadway; Estimated Cost: \$8,146,000.
- STP-44-1(107): On N-44, from US-6/N-44 Junction to the Platte River; Resurfacing of 11.8 miles; Estimated Cost: \$5,601,000.

- ITS-STP-D7(102): On US-6, throughout District 7; Deploy CCTV Camera Towers; Estimated Cost: \$165,000.
- STP-HSIP-L50A(103): On L-50A, the L50A Link; Resurfacing 7 miles of roadway; Estimated Cost: \$ 2,654,000.
- NH-6-4(135): On US-6, east of Heartwell; Resurfacing of 3.7 miles of roadway; Estimated Cost: \$2,027,000.
- STP-74-4(1010): On N-74, in Minden; Urban improvements to 0.6 miles of roadway; Estimated Cost: \$1,665,000.
- STP-74-4(112): On N-74, east of Minden; Resurfacing of 12.2 miles of roadway; Estimated Cost: \$4,303,000.



# SECTION 5



ENERGY ELEMENT.

# ENERGY ELEMENT.

## INTRODUCTION.

This **Section** of the **Kearney County, Nebraska, Comprehensive Plan** complies with a **July, 2010, amendment to Nebraska State Statutes 23-114.02**, requiring updates to a County Comprehensive Plan to include an “**Energy Element.**” This component of the **Plan** profiles the energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, in the County, including residential, commercial and industrial. This Section also discusses the utilization of renewable energy sources and the promotion of energy conservation measures.

## PUBLIC POWER DISTRIBUTION.

Energy usage and consumption throughout Kearney County has followed the trends prevalent in the State of Nebraska. Electrical power is distributed throughout Kearney County by the **Southern Public Power District (SPPD)**. The SPPD is supplied electricity by the **Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD)**. The SPPD Utility District does not generate electricity; 100 percent of the electricity they distribute originates from NPPD.

## **NEBRASKA PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT (NPPD).**

As the largest electric generating utility in the State of Nebraska, NPPD provides electricity to all or parts of 86 of the State's 93 Counties, including 46 individual municipalities and 25 public power districts, cooperatives and their member communities. The fuel sources of NPPD's generating facilities includes coal, oil, natural gas and nuclear energy. Additionally, NPPD also purchases electricity from the **Western Area Power Administration (WAPA)**, which markets and transmits electricity for federally owned hydropower facilities.

- ❖ NPPD was formed in 1970 through the merger of two public power districts and the assets of the former Nebraska Public Power System.
- ❖ More than 5,200 miles of overhead and underground power lines make up NPPD's electric system.

- ❖ NPPD revenue is derived from wholesale power supply agreements with 46 municipalities and 25 public power districts and cooperatives. NPPD also serves 80 Nebraska communities at retail, consisting of more than 89,000 customers.

## **GENERATING RESOURCES.**

The source of NPPD's generating facilities includes Fossil fuels – coal, oil or natural gas, Nuclear, Hydroelectric, Wind and Methane. Additionally, NPPD purchases electricity from the **Western Area Power Administration (WAPA)**, which markets and transmits electricity for federally owned hydropower facilities.

### **2020 data regarding NPPD's energy generation for Nebraska customers was comprised of:**

- ❖ 19.9 percent of NPPD's energy generation was from coal.
- ❖ 48.6 percent was from nuclear.
- ❖ 5.2 percent generation from oil & natural gas.
- ❖ 8.3 percent from renewable wind generation.
- ❖ 8.0 percent from renewable hydroelectric generation.
- ❖ 0.1 percent from renewable solar generation.
- ❖ The remaining 9.9 percent of NPPD's energy was supplied through wholesale purchases.

### **MORE THAN 62% OF NPPD'S GENERATION SOURCES ARE CARBON-FREE.**

## **NPPD RENEWABLE ENERGY CAPABILITIES.**

### **1.) Hydroelectric Facilities**

NPPD operates two hydroelectric generating facilities, at North Platte and Kearney on the Platte River and purchases 100 percent of the energy output from two facilities owned by Loup Public Power District and one facility owned by Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District. Combined, these facilities produce 107 megawatts of power.

## 2.) Wind Turbine Generators

NPPD owns 32 MW of the Ainsworth Wind Energy Facility, while Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) owns 10 MWs of the facility, the Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska purchases seven MWs, and the City of Grand Island purchases one MW.

NPPD has power purchase agreements with seven additional wind generating facilities in Nebraska. NPPD purchases a total of 435 MWs, of which NPPD utilizes 281 MWs and has purchase agreements for the remaining 154 MWs to other utility districts.

## 3.) Solar Energy

Under NPPD's wholesale power contract, customers have the ability to invest in their own, local renewable energy sources by installing qualifying local generation, including solar, and offset its purchases of demand and energy from NPPD by up to two megawatts or 10 percent of their demand, whichever is greater.

Central City installed a 200-kilowatt (KW) facility and became Nebraska's first "Community Solar Garden." This 100-panel system was installed in an industrial park and is owned by the City. Additionally, 600 KW and 25 KW solar projects were developed in 2016 near Callaway, Nebraska, in Custer County. The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy reports 2,325 KW (or 2.325 megawatts) of solar generation within Custer County.

NPPD also developed a "Community Solar Program" that is now in effect in pilot programs in Kearney, Scottsbluff and Venango. The Program allows community members to purchase solar energy without having to install solar panels on individual rooftops. Solar subscribers can purchase different amounts of solar energy based on their annual electricity usage.

## **NPPD TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION FACILITIES.**

### **Coal-Fired Generators**

NPPD owns the Gerald Gentleman and Sheldon Stations, which are both coal-fired generating stations. Together, these facilities produce 1,590 MWs. The Gerald Gentleman Station produces enough power to supply electricity to 600,000 Nebraskans. Additionally, NPPD has a coal power purchase agreement with the Nebraska City #2 facility, owned by Omaha Public Power District, for 162 MWs.

### **Natural Gas & Oil-Fired Generators**

Gas and oil-fired generators are utilized primarily during peak loads or as replacement power if another facility is down. NPPD owns two natural gas-fired generation facilities, the Beatrice Power Station and the Canaday Station that produce a combined total of 350 MW.

Three oil-fired generation facilities located in Hallam, McCook and Hebron, Nebraska produce 162 MW. NPPD also have capacity purchases agreements with 12 municipal systems in Nebraska for an additional 93 MWs.

## **NPPD EMISSION FREE ELECTRICITY.**

### **Nuclear Facilities**

**Cooper Nuclear Station** operates as the largest single unit electrical generator in Nebraska, by generating 810 MW of electricity. This facility is capable of supplying power to more than 310,000 customers during peak summer usage. In November of 2010, NPPD received an additional 20 years beyond its initial 40-year license to provide power through at least January, 2034.

### **“NET METERING”.**

In 2009, the State of Nebraska Legislature approved and signed into law, LB 439 (**Nebraska State Statute §70-2001 to 2005**), which is also referred to as “**Net Metering**.” This law allows individual residences and businesses to supplement their standard electric service with one, or combinations of, five alternate energy systems, including Solar, Methane, Wind, Biomass, Hydropower and Geothermal.

By implementing these types of alternative energy systems, individuals will reduce their reliance on public utility systems, potentially generating more electricity than they use and profit by the public utility districts purchasing their excess energy. The Kearney County Planning Commission can choose to allow usage control of Net Metering by allowing residential and businesses property owners to seek a **Special Use Permit**, if the applicant can document a project in conformance with allowable provisions included in the **Kearney County Zoning Regulations**.



### KEARNEY COUNTY ENERGY CONSUMPTION.

Residential and rural energy consumption in Kearney County has consistently generated the most revenue for Dawson Public Power. Another third of revenue comes from irrigation services.

According to the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy, the only available energy consumption statistics by Sector is the State totals. As of 2020, the Industrial Sector consumed more than a third of the Total Energy Consumption of the State of Nebraska. The other three Sectors comprised nearly equal portions, at 19 percent in the Commercial Sector, 16 percent for the Residential Sector and 22 percent in the Transportation Sector. The Total Energy Consumption, in 2020, was 863.7 trillion British Thermal Units (BTU).

### STATEWIDE TRENDS IN ENERGY CONSUMPTION.

During the last 40+ years, the State of Nebraska, as a whole, has vastly increased energy consumption. Trends in the Total Energy Consumption for the State of Nebraska, published in the *“2021 Annual State Energy Report”* of the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy, is mirrored in each of the individual energy categories, coal, natural gas, gasoline and distillate fuel oil (primarily diesel fuel), nuclear power and hydroelectric production. Each energy type is detailed between 1960 and 2019, as follows:

- ❖ **Coal** consumption has increased from 20 trillion British Thermal Units (BTUs) in 1960 to 240.4 trillion BTUs in 2019. Peak use of coal was reached in 2013, surpassing the previous high set in 2011. The increase through 2013 was attributable to coal energy used to generate electricity.
- ❖ **Natural Gas** consumption has risen and fallen during the 58-year period between 1960 and 2019, beginning at 140.4 trillion BTUs, peaking in 1973 at 230.8 trillion BTUs and, by 2019, declining to 198.8 trillion BTUs.
- ❖ **Diesel Fuel** consumption nearly doubled in Nebraska between 1960 and 2019. Gasoline consumption increased by nearly 29 percent, from 78.8 to 102.4 trillion BTUs, as of 2019, and peaked in 1978 at 116 trillion BTUs.
- ❖ **Nuclear** power generation began in Nebraska in 1973 at 6.5 trillion BTUs. Usage has since increased to 72.6 trillion BTUs as of 2019. The peak use of nuclear power was in 2007 at 115.8 trillion BTUs.

- ❖ **Renewable energy** consumption has grown, beginning in 1960 at 13.4, and peaking in 2019 at 199.3 trillion BTUs. Hydropower was the primary renewable energy source from 1960 to 1994. Biofuels, or ethanol production, began equaling hydropower in 1995. As of 2019, 58.2 percent of all renewable energy produced came from biofuels, 6 percent from hydroelectric, 32.2 percent from wind and 2.8 percent from wood products. Minor amounts came from geothermal and solar energy.

### NEBRASKA ENERGY CONSUMPTION BY SECTOR.

- ❖ **Commercial Sector:** The commercial sector includes non-manufacturing business establishments, including energy use by local, state and federal governments. Energy use in the commercial sector closely parallels consumer energy use and economic activity in the State of Nebraska. More than 90 percent of all fuel used in the commercial sector was supplied by natural gas and electricity. Although natural gas has historically been the dominant fuel type, recent trends suggest a period of near parity between the two fuel types is likely into the near future. In 2018, a total of 148.3 trillion BTUs were consumed in the commercial sector.
- ❖ **Residential Sector:** The residential sector consumed 169.2 trillion BTUs in 2019. Natural gas and electricity accounted for 87.3 percent of the total energy use in the residential sector.
- ❖ **Industrial Sector:** The industrial sector includes manufacturing, construction, mining, forestry and agricultural operations. Energy use in the industrial is more diverse, with natural gas, renewable energy, electricity, coal and a variety of petroleum products all being utilized. The industrial sector consumes more energy than any other sector in the State. In 2019, it accounted for 42 percent, or 376.1 trillion BTUs, of the State's total energy consumption.
- ❖ **Transportation Sector:** Public and private vehicles, railroads, aircraft and boats are all included in the transportation sector. Motor gasoline and diesel fuel products accounted for 93 percent of the energy use in the transportation sector in 2019. Approximately 206.9 trillion BTUs were used in the transportation sector in 2019.
- ❖ **Agricultural Sector:** As per the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, there were 47,400 farms and ranches on 45.2 million acres in Nebraska in 2017, encompassing 91 percent of the State's total land area. Energy demand information in this sector is not available on a consistent or annual basis. However, energy needs in the agricultural sector is mainly due to irrigation demand. In Nebraska, 3.1 million acres were irrigated in 1966 and has increased to 9.4 million acres in 2020.

### **Agricultural Energy Demand & Conservation.**

A comparison of “**Total Energy Expenditures Per Capita**” between the United States and the State of Nebraska indicated that between 1970 and 1994, Nebraska and the Nation’s per capita energy consumption were very close to one another. But, after 1994, Nebraska’s consumption began to be drastically higher than that of the Nation. The agricultural sector was surging in energy consumption in Nebraska.

In 2018, 7.7 million acres in Nebraska were irrigated. As 3.1 million acres were irrigated in 1966, irrigated lands have increased by at least 4.6 million acres over the last five decades. In addition to transportation of agricultural products and inputs, irrigation makes up a growing share of the energy demand for Nebraska’s agricultural sector. According to the USDA Irrigation and Water Management Survey, irrigation pumps were powered by electricity (58.7%), diesel (24.3%), natural gas (11.4%), propane (5.4%) and gasoline/ethanol (0.2%). The increasing use of irrigation helps to boost yields and helps minimize losses during drought, but it creates an increased dependence on energy use in Nebraska’s agricultural sector. The increase in irrigated acres results in a significantly higher electrical demand during periods of drought. For example, in 2012, record droughts put strain on the Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) transmission system due to increased irrigation use. Mobile diesel generators were used to meet this additional demand, though NPPD has since made transmission system additions and upgrades to meet additional demand.

As Nebraska’s agricultural energy demand and costs have increased, conservation practices are also gaining popularity in the agricultural sector. The U.S. Department of Agriculture issued a report in 2008 which concluded that farmers have increased conservation practices. Technological innovations have increased the ability for farmers to monitor for soil moisture, leading to more efficient irrigation practices. Additionally, switching from fossil fuels to electrically powered irrigation systems has improved energy efficiency. Conservation tillage (and no-till agriculture) has reduced the use of heavy equipment.

The agricultural sector is also an energy producer. Nebraska biofuels, especially ethanol, helps decrease the transportation’s sector consumption of gasoline. Ethanol production in Nebraska in 1994 was 78.9 million gallons, by 2020 production had increased to an estimated 2.3 billion gallons. Considering ethanol production uses high volumes of both electricity and natural gas, the State’s energy expenditures per capita increased as well. In 2020, approximately 44 percent of the State’s total corn harvested, or 790 million of the total 1.81 billion bushels of corn, was consumed by ethanol production.

Untapped renewable energy sources present additional opportunities for energy production in the agricultural sector. Waste from livestock generates methane, which is usually not captured, acts as a harmful greenhouse gas. The University of Nebraska, NPPD, the former Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Nebraska Organic Waste Energy, Nebraska Cattlemen and the Nebraska Department of Agriculture estimated that livestock operations could capture enough methane to generate 95.4 MW of electricity.

## **ENERGY CONSERVATION POLICIES.**

The most effective means for Kearney County to reduce its total energy consumption in each of the Energy Sectors (and by selected energy type) is through conservation practices and by continuing to promote the conversion to alternative energy systems when appropriate.

The following is a list of policies to guide energy practices throughout the County:

- ❖ **Promote the use of “Net Metering” or the use of one or more combinations of selected alternative energy sources to reduce public/quasi-public, residential, commercial and industrial facilities consumption of energy.**
  - Utilize the Kearney County Zoning Regulations to control the placement and operation of alternative energy systems.
  - Require compliance with a Conditional Use Permit process so that established conditions are met by the applicant.
  - Utilize the net metering services of Southern Public Power District to assist Kearney County in complying with Nebraska’s Net Metering Law.
  - Promote the development of vocational education opportunities in the Public School Districts of Kearney County, as well as regional State and Community Colleges as well as the University of Kearney, to educate the current and future workforce in alternative energy design, fabrication of equipment and maintenance.
- ❖ **As other sources of Alternative Energy Systems are developed, or become cost-effective for use in Nebraska, the planning documents of the County are recommended to be revised to guide their locations and monitor their operation.**
- ❖ **Increase Building Efficiency.**
  - Lighting – consider converting street lighting to a Light Emitting Diode (LED) system.
  - Retrofit Residential Buildings – provide incentives and construction advice to the public to expand the restoration of homes including windows, doors, attic ventilation, insulation, and alternative energy systems such as solar panels.

- Retrofit Old Public and Commercial Buildings – provide incentives and construction advice to the public for Restoration Best Management Practices for windows, doors, attic ventilation, insulation, solar panels and lighting.
  - New Construction Codes Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to city codes and educate homeowners and realtors.
  - Encourage residents to plant new trees and replace damaged trees to maintain and expand the urban tree canopy. Shade from trees reduces peak electric demands during the summer and provides wind breaks during the winter.
- ❖ **Promote the use of conservation methods to reduce the consumption of energy usage in each of the individual sectors including commercial and industrial (which includes agricultural and public uses).**
- Promote the expanded use of solar, methane, biomass, hydropower and geothermal exchange energy systems, or other sources of alternative energy systems, for applications throughout Kearney County. The use of an alternate energy source or combinations of these energy sources should be considered by farming and ranching operations to lower energy consumption and to make energy more affordable.
  - Promote the use of conservation programs supported by Southern Public Power District, and in its association with Nebraska Public Power District, for its member Communities and public power districts. For example, the Prescriptive Lighting or Custom Lighting Programs provide cash incentives to businesses that replace old lighting fixtures with high-efficient light fixtures such as LED to reduce energy costs.
  - The Kearney County residents and farming/ranching operations could also access grant and loan programs to replace light fixtures with LED fixtures that reduce consumption and are more energy efficient.
  - Support and provide incentives for the expanded use of agricultural practices to reduce energy consumption. Techniques such as conservation tillage, high efficiency irrigation equipment and cost-effective fuel sources to power irrigation systems.
  - Support State and Federal incentive programs to continue to provide low-cost financing to purchase modern agricultural equipment such as low-pressure pivots and no-till equipment. Programs such as the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) that finances irrigation efficiency improvements switching diesel, propane and natural gas pumps to electric operated.



- Promote the availability of incentives provided by public power districts to develop alternative energy sources for, and from, agricultural practices. Modern methods such as producing methane gas from livestock confinement facilities to power agricultural equipment, is one example.
- Promote the use of solar and geothermal exchange energy systems for agricultural applications that power equipment and heat/cool farm and ranch buildings.

❖ **Support Low Impact Development (LID) and Green Infrastructure Programs.**

- Specify LID design option in engineering services contracts for subdivision development, stormwater and parking lot improvements.
- Provide continuous education to Kearney County and Municipalities, Public Works Staff in the new LID designs and BMPs (Best Management Practices) for operation and maintenance of LID projects.
- Calculate and track the public and private construction and life cycle cost savings for LID projects.
- Promote Water Conservation through use of low impact lawn care, rain barrels, alternative to paved driveways, gray water & potable water systems and xeriscaping.
- Require LID and Green Infrastructure Storm Water Detention and urban forestry practices in Subdivision Agreements.
- Provide incentives to the public and developers to expand energy efficiency, LID and Green Infrastructure, within the annual City Budget.

❖ **Plant Urban Forests.**

- Trees / Urban Forest – provide incentives for city rebate programs to replant new trees.
- Compost brush and trimmings – utilize the Best Management Practices utilized by other communities to provide a public deposit site to compost brush and trimmings.
- Create a waste wood recycling/composting/energy generation program.

**❖ Create “Zero Waste” Communities.**

- Reduce waste disposal with a 10-year Zero Waste strategy in support of achieving 90% resource recovery (recycling, reuse, repair, composting, redesign).
- Provide universal access to curbside recycling services for all residential dwellings and businesses.
- Establish financial incentive to increase recycling by charging for trash service based on volume.
- Gather annual data on waste disposal and resource recovery by volume.
- Provide access to recycling in public areas and major Community events.
- Establish designated public drop-off sites and promote the benefits of recycling facilities and develop the most efficient collection and transport of recycled materials possible.
- Investigate “regional hub and spoke system” promoting efficient transportation of recycled materials.
- Support creation of publicly owned Zero Waste facilities, including contracting approaches for private operations, or explore public-private partnership opportunities for Zero Waste infrastructure and services.
- Upcycle goods for other uses.
- Provide Community Gardens & Composting – divert organic compost to a local compost operation.
- Establish education and awareness campaigns promoting the benefits of Zero Waste for the local economy, the environment, and public health.

# APPENDIX I



KEARNEY COUNTY TABLE PROFILE.

**TABLE 1**  
**POPULATION TRENDS & PROJECTIONS**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA & COMMUNITIES**  
**2000-2034**

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2034</u>	<b># Change</b> <u>2024-2034</u>	<b>2034</b> <u>CGI*</u>
<b>Kearney County</b>	<b>6,882</b>	<b>6,489</b>	<b>6,688</b>	<b>6,699</b>	<b>6,823</b>	<b>+124</b>	<b>6,936</b>
Axtell	696	726	732	738	751	+13	<b>763</b>
Heartwell	80	71	81	81	84	+3	<b>85</b>
Minden	2,964	2,923	3,118	3,143	3,259	+116	<b>3,310</b>
Norman	49	43	32	30	25	-5	<b>25</b>
Wilcox	360	358	330	326	319	-7	<b>324</b>
<b>Community</b>							
<b>Planning</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>180</b>	<b>182</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>195</b>	<b>+10</b>	<b>205</b>
<b>Jurisdictions</b>							
<b>Rural Kearney</b>							
<b>County</b>	<b>2,525</b>	<b>2,188</b>	<b>2,213</b>	<b>2,196</b>	<b>2,190</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>2,224</b>

\*Includes potential estimated population increase associated with a planned “County Growth Initiative” (CGI). This could include increases in Full-Time Employment (FTE) positions and/or Housing Development activities associated with workforce/population recruitment during the next 10 years. This would create an estimated Kearney County population increase of 113.

Source: 2000, 2010 & 2020 Census.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2024.

**TABLE 2**  
**SPECIFIC HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA & COMMUNITIES**  
**2000-2034**

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Group Quarters</u>	<u>Persons in Households</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Persons Per Household</u>
<u><b>Kearney County</b></u>	2000	6,882	262	6,620	2,643	2.50
	2010	6,489	84	6,405	2,681	2.39
	2020	6,688	67	6,621	2,727	2.43
	<b>2024</b>	<b>6,699</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>6,636</b>	<b>2,736</b>	<b>2.43</b>
	<b>2034</b>	<b>6,823</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>6,773</b>	<b>2,775</b>	<b>2.44</b>
<u><b>Heartwell</b></u>	2000	80	0	80	31	2.58
	2010	71	0	71	28	2.54
	2020	81	0	81	32	2.53
	<b>2024</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>2.45</b>
	<b>2034</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>2.40</b>
<u><b>Norman</b></u>	2000	49	0	49	23	2.13
	2010	43	0	43	22	1.95
	2020	32	0	32	17	1.88
	<b>2024</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>1.88</b>
	<b>2034</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>1.92</b>
<u><b>Rural Kearney County/CPJs</b></u>	2000	2,733	112	2,621	999	2.62
	2010	2,368	0	2,368	956	2.48
	2020	2,395	0	2,395	961	2.49
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2,381</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,381</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>2.49</b>
	<b>2034</b>	<b>2,385</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2,385</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>2.51</b>

Source: 2000, 2010 & 2020 Census.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2024.



**TABLE 3**  
**HOUSEHOLD TYPE BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA & COMMUNITIES**  
**2021 ESTIMATE\***

<u>Community</u>	<u>1 Person</u>	<u>2 Persons</u>	<u>3 Persons</u>	<u>4 Persons</u>	<u>5 Persons</u>	<u>6 Persons</u>	<u>7+ Persons</u>
<b>Kearney County</b>	<b>799</b>	<b>1,001</b>	<b>337</b>	<b>319</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Heartwell</b>	9	15	13	0	5	2	0
<b>Norman</b>	7	10	6	0	0	0	0
<b>Rural Kearney County/CPJs</b>	<b>224</b>	<b>391</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>128</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>7</b>

\*Subject to margin of error.

Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2024.

**TABLE 4  
TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD  
KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA & COMMUNITIES  
2000-2034**

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Owner</u>		<u>Renter</u>	
			<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<b><u>Kearney County</u></b>	2000	2,643	1,963	74.3%	680	25.7%
	2010	2,681	2,016	75.2%	665	24.8%
	2020	2,727	2,064	75.7%	663	24.3%
	<b>2024</b>	<b>2,736</b>	<b>2,082</b>	<b>76.1%</b>	<b>654</b>	<b>23.9%</b>
	<b>2034</b>	<b>2,775</b>	<b>2,122</b>	<b>76.5%</b>	<b>653</b>	<b>23.5%</b>
<b><u>Heartwell</u></b>	2000	31	24	77.4%	7	22.6%
	2010	28	22	78.6%	6	21.4%
	2020	32	23	71.9%	9	28.1%
	<b>2024</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>69.7%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30.3%</b>
	<b>2034</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>68.6%</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>31.4%</b>
<b><u>Norman</u></b>	2000	23	21	91.3%	2	8.7%
	2010	22	22	100.0%	0	0.0%
	2020	17	15	88.2%	2	11.8%
	<b>2024</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>87.5%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>12.5%</b>
	<b>2034</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>84.6%</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>15.4%</b>
<b><u>Rural Kearney County/CPJs</u></b>	2000	999	715	71.6%	284	28.4%
	2010	956	741	77.5%	215	22.5%
	2020	961	752	78.3%	209	21.7%
	<b>2024</b>	<b>957</b>	<b>752</b>	<b>78.6%</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>21.4%</b>
	<b>2034</b>	<b>950</b>	<b>756</b>	<b>79.6%</b>	<b>194</b>	<b>20.4%</b>

Source: 2000, 2010 & 2020 Census.  
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2024.

**TABLE 5  
POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION  
TRENDS & PROJECTIONS  
KEARNEY COUNTY & COMMUNITIES, NEBRASKA  
2010-2034**

<b>Kearney County</b>			<b>2010-2020</b>			<b>2024-2034</b>	<b>2034</b>
<b><u>Age Group</u></b>	<b><u>2010</u></b>	<b><u>2020</u></b>	<b><u>Change</u></b>	<b><u>2024</u></b>	<b><u>2034</u></b>	<b><u>Change</u></b>	<b><u>CGI</u></b>
19 and Under	1,714	1,799	+85	1,808	1,843	+35	1,874
20-34	925	1,065	+140	1,078	1,123	+45	1,142
35-54	1,782	1,498	-284	1,456	1,414	-42	1,437
55-64	881	986	+105	993	1,030	+37	1,047
65-74	565	756	+191	784	840	+56	854
75-84	412	409	-3	409	407	-2	414
85+	210	175	-35	171	166	-5	168
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6,489</b>	<b>6,688</b>	<b>+199</b>	<b>6,699</b>	<b>6,823</b>	<b>+124</b>	<b>6,936</b>
Median Age	43.3	41.0	-2.3	41.0	41.0	+0.0	41.0
<b>Heartwell</b>							
19 and Under	23	25	+2	25	26	+1	26
20-34	10	16	+6	17	19	+2	19
35-54	19	13	-6	11	8	-3	9
55-64	9	18	+9	19	23	+4	23
65-74	9	8	-1	8	7	-1	7
75-84	1	1	+0	1	1	+0	1
85+	0	0	+0	0	0	+0	0
<b>Totals</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>+10</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>+3</b>	<b>85</b>
Median Age	37.8	31.8	-6.0	32.8	31.8	-1.0	32.2

**CONTINUED:**

**TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)**  
**POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION**  
**TRENDS & PROJECTIONS**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY & COMMUNITIES, NEBRASKA**  
**2010-2034**

<b>Norman</b>			<b>2010-2020</b>			<b>2024-2034</b>	<b>2034</b>
<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>2024</b>	<b>2034</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>CGI</b>
19 and Under	11	8	-3	7	6	-1	6
20-34	2	1	-1	1	1	+0	1
35-54	17	14	-3	13	10	-3	10
55-64	4	4	+0	4	5	+1	5
65-74	3	3	+0	3	3	+0	3
75-84	4	1	-3	1	0	-1	0
85+	<u>2</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>-1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>-1</u>	<u>0</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>-11</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>25</b>
Median Age	48.3	46.0	-2.3	45.2	45.5	+0.3	45.5
<b>Rural Kearney</b>							
<b>County/CPJs</b>							
19 and Under	620	633	+13	633	640	+7	652
20-34	267	311	+44	314	325	+11	331
35-54	714	543	-171	515	472	-43	481
55-64	405	384	-21	373	356	-17	363
65-74	224	332	+108	348	377	+29	384
75-84	107	153	+46	157	170	+13	173
85+	<u>31</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>+8</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>+4</u>	<u>45</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>2,368</b>	<b>2,395</b>	<b>+27</b>	<b>2,381</b>	<b>2,385</b>	<b>+4</b>	<b>2,429</b>
Median Age	42.9	43.9	+1.0	44.0	44.2	+0.2	44.1

Source: 2010 & 2020 Census.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2024.

**TABLE 6**  
**RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**2000, 2010 & 2020**

<b><u>Race</u></b>	<b><u>2000</u></b>		<b><u>2010</u></b>		<b><u>2020</u></b>	
	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>% of Total</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>% of Total</u></b>	<b><u>Number</u></b>	<b><u>% of Total</u></b>
White	6,732	97.8%	6,284	96.8%	6,159	92.1%
Black	11	0.2%	12	0.2%	3	0.0%
Native American	15	0.2%	19	0.3%	28	0.4%
Asian	16	0.2%	11	0.2%	12	0.2%
Other	<u>108</u>	<u>1.6%</u>	<u>163</u>	<u>2.5%</u>	<u>486</u>	<u>7.3%</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>6,882</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,489</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>6,688</b>	<b>100.0%</b>
<b>Hispanic Origin</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>2.3%</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>3.8%</b>	<b>385</b>	<b>5.8%</b>

\*Specified Data.

Source: 2000, 2010 & 2020 Census.



**TABLE 7**  
**ESTIMATED MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME TRENDS & PROJECTIONS**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA & COMMUNITIES**  
**2010-2034**

	<u>2010 Est.*</u>	<u>2021 Est.*</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>2034</u>
<b>Kearney County</b>	<b>\$62,718</b>	<b>\$80,208</b>	<b>\$84,275</b>	<b>\$105,641</b>
<b>Heartwell</b>	\$31,042	\$57,500	\$66,411	\$113,983
<b>Norman</b>	\$48,542	\$80,000	\$85,426	\$109,109
<b>Rural Kearney County/CPJs</b>	<b>\$64,372</b>	<b>\$85,798</b>	<b>\$90,990</b>	<b>\$118,521</b>

\*Specified data used, subject to margin of error.

\*\*Not available due to disclosure suppression.

Source: 2006-2010 American Community Survey, 2017-2021 American Community Survey.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2024.

**TABLE 8**  
**PER CAPITA INCOME**  
**TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY / STATE OF NEBRASKA**  
**2010-2034**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Kearney County</u>		<u>State of Nebraska</u>	
	<u>Income</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>% Change</u>
<b>2010</b>	\$44,633	--	\$41,248	--
<b>2011</b>	\$56,836	+27.3%	\$45,674	+10.7%
<b>2012</b>	\$56,795	-0.1%	\$46,670	+2.2%
<b>2013</b>	\$70,566	+24.2%	\$46,653	-0.0%
<b>2014</b>	\$84,956	+20.4%	\$48,957	+4.9%
<b>2015</b>	\$97,280	+14.5%	\$50,556	+3.3%
<b>2016</b>	\$62,663	-35.6%	\$49,360	-2.4%
<b>2017</b>	\$52,526	-16.2%	\$50,144	+1.6%
<b>2018</b>	\$51,641	-1.7%	\$51,916	+3.5%
<b>2019</b>	\$57,267	+10.9%	\$54,182	+4.4%
<b>2020</b>	\$63,956	+11.7%	\$57,387	+5.9%
<b>2021</b>	\$72,421	+13.2%	\$61,210	+6.7%
<b>2022</b>	N/A	--	\$63,321	+3.4%
<b>2024</b>	<b>\$81,474</b>	<b>+12.5%</b>	<b>\$65,664</b>	<b>+3.7%</b>
<b>2010-2024</b>	<b>\$44,633-\$81,474</b>	<b>+82.5%</b>	<b>\$41,248-\$65,664</b>	<b>+59.2%</b>
<b>2024-2034</b>	<b>\$81,474-\$132,314</b>	<b>+62.4%</b>	<b>\$65,664-\$89,828</b>	<b>+36.8%</b>

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2024.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2024.

<b>TABLE 9</b>	
<b>PERSONS RECEIVING SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME</b>	
<b>KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA</b>	
<b>2021 ESTIMATE</b>	
<b><u>Social Security Income-2021</u></b>	<b><u>Number of Beneficiaries</u></b>
<u>Retirement Benefits</u>	
Retired Workers	995
Wives & Husbands	40
Children	20
<u>Survivor Benefits</u>	
Widows & Widowers	75
Children	15
<u>Disability Benefits</u>	
Disabled Persons	115
Wives & Husbands	0
<u>Children</u>	<u>20</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,280</b>
<u>Aged 65 &amp; Older</u>	
Men	485
<u>Women</u>	<u>595</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,080</b>
<b><u>Supplemental Security Income-2021</u></b>	<b><u>Number of Beneficiaries</u></b>
Aged	(X)
<u>Blind and Disabled</u>	<u>(X)</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>78</b>

(X) = Data suppressed to avoid disclosing information about particular individuals.

Source: Department of Health and Human Services,  
Social Security Administration, 2024.

**TABLE 10**  
**EMPLOYMENT DATA TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**2010-2034**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Employed Persons</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent Unemployment</u>
2010	3,663	--	3.5%
2011	3,778	+115	3.2%
2012	3,821	+43	2.9%
2013	3,748	-73	2.4%
2014	3,749	+1	2.4%
2015	3,789	+40	2.2%
2016	3,648	-141	2.4%
2017	3,667	+19	2.2%
2018	3,675	+8	2.1%
2019	3,705	+30	2.3%
2020	3,728	+23	3.3%
2021	3,766	+38	1.9%
2022	3,696	-70	1.9%
2024*	3,658	-38	1.3%
<b>2034</b>	<b>3,654</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>1.3%</b>
<b>2010-2024</b>	<b>3,663-3,658</b>	<b>-5</b>	<b>3.5%-1.3%</b>
<b>2024-2034</b>	<b>3,658-3,654</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>1.3%-1.3%</b>
<b>2034 Boost*</b>	<b>3,685</b>	<b>+27</b>	<b>1.3%</b>

\*Estimate as of March 2024.

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, 2024.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2024.

**TABLE 11**  
**TRAVEL TIME TO WORK**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**2021 ESTIMATE\***

<b>9 Minutes or Less</b>	<b>10-19 Minutes</b>	<b>20-29 Minutes</b>	<b>30-39 Minutes</b>	<b>40 Minutes or More</b>
972	558	440	222	147

\*Subject to margin of error.

Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey.



**TABLE 12**

**WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE  
KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA  
MARCH, 2023**

**Workforce**

<b>Non-Farm Employment (Wage and Salary)</b>	<b>2,005</b>
Agriculture Forestry, Fishing & Hunting.	0
Mining, Quarrying and Oil/Gas Extraction.	*
Utilities.	*
Construction.	75
Manufacturing.	356
Wholesale Trade.	140
Retail Trade.	123
Transportation & Warehousing.	59
Information.	*
Finance & Insurance.	98
Real Estate & Rental/Leasing.	*
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services.	33
Management of Companies & Enterprises.	0
Administrative/Support/Waste.	14
Educational Services.	*
Health Care & Social Assistance.	277
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation.	19
Accommodation & Food Service.	65
Other Services (except Public Administration).	110
Federal Government.	17
State Government.	11
Local Government.	451

\*Data not available because of disclosure suppression.

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, 2024.

**TABLE 13**  
**HOUSING STOCK PROFILE/UNITS IN STRUCTURE**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA & COMMUNITIES**  
**2010 & 2021 ESTIMATE\***

	<u>Year</u>	<u>1 unit</u>	<u>2-9 units</u>	<u>10+ units</u>	<u>Other**</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Kearney County</u>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2,430</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>276</b>	<b>2,888</b>
	<b>2021</b>	<b>2,657</b>	<b>77</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>2,965</b>
<u>Heartwell</u>	2010	37	3	0	0	40
	2021	44	0	0	0	44
<u>Norman</u>	2010	19	0	0	12	31
	2021	18	0	0	5	23
<u>Rural Kearney</u>	<b>2010</b>	<b>946</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>177</b>	<b>1,123</b>
<u>County/CPJs</u>	<b>2021</b>	<b>1,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>1,080</b>

\*Specified Data Used. Estimate subject to margin of error.

\*\*Includes mobile homes and trailers.

Source: 2006-2010, 2017-2021 American Community Survey.

**TABLE 14**  
**HOUSING STOCK PROFILE**  
**SUBSTANDARD HOUSING – HUD**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA & COMMUNITIES**  
**2021 ESTIMATE\***

<u>Community</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Complete Plumbing</u>		<u>Lack of Complete Plumbing</u>		<u>Units with 1.01+ Persons per Room</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
<b>Kearney County</b>	<b>2,721</b>	<b>2,711</b>	<b>99.6%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>2.7%</b>
<b>Heartwell</b>	44	44	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Norman</b>	23	23	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
<b>Rural Kearney County/CPJs</b>	<b>954</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>99.0%</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>2.0%</b>

\*Specified Data Used. 2021 Estimate subject to margin of error.  
Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey Estimate.

**TABLE 15**  
**ESTIMATED HOUSING UNITS**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY & COMMUNITIES, NEBRASKA**  
**2024**

	<u>Housing Units</u>		<u>Housing Units</u>
<b>Kearney County</b>		<b>Norman</b>	
Housing Units (2020 Census)	2,966	Housing Units (2020 Census)	17
Units Built (April, 2020 to Present)	34	Units Built (April, 2020 to Present)	0
<u>Units Demolished (April, 2020 to Present)</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>Units Demolished (April, 2020 to Present)</u>	<u>N/A</u>
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	<b>3,000</b>	<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	<b>17</b>
 <b>Heartwell</b>		 <b>Rural Kearney County</b>	
Housing Units (2020 Census)	36	Housing Units (2020 Census)	1,077
Units Built (April, 2020 to Present)	0	Units Built (April, 2020 to Present)	34
<u>Units Demolished (April, 2020 to Present)</u>	<u>N/A</u>	<u>Units Demolished (April, 2020 to Present)</u>	<u>N/A</u>
<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>TOTAL UNITS</b>	<b>1,111</b>

Source: 2020 Census.  
 Kearney County Communities, 2024.  
 Hanna Keelan Associates, P.C., 2024.

**TABLE 16**  
**YEAR UNITS BUILT**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY & COMMUNITIES, NEBRASKA**  
**2021 ESTIMATE\***

<u>Year</u>	<u>Kearney County</u>	<u>Heartwell</u>	<u>Norman</u>	<u>Rural Kearney County/CPJs</u>
2010 to 2019	<b>106</b>	0	0	47
2000 to 2009	<b>112</b>	0	0	34
1990 to 1999	<b>245</b>	0	2	120
1980 to 1989	<b>134</b>	0	0	51
1970 to 1979	<b>785</b>	8	5	223
1960 to 1969	<b>302</b>	2	1	135
1950 to 1959	<b>298</b>	0	3	104
1940 to 1949	<b>97</b>	6	0	31
<u>1939 or Before</u>	<u><b>886</b></u>	<u>28</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>335</u>
<b>TOTAL EST. UNITS – 2021</b>	<b>2,965</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>1,080</b>
% 1939 or Before	<b>29.9%</b>	63.6%	52.2%	31.0%
% 1959 or Before	<b>43.2%</b>	77.3%	65.2%	43.5%

\*2017-2021 American Community Survey Data used.

Source: 2017-2021 American Community Survey.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2024.

**TABLE 17**  
**HOUSING CONDITIONS**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY & SELECTED COMMUNITIES, NEBRASKA**  
**2024**

	<u>Kearney County</u>	<u>Heartwell</u>	<u>Norman</u>	<u>Rural Kearney County</u>
Excellent	2	0	0	2
Very Good	17	0	0	17
Good	322	1	0	321
Average	624	20	14	590
Fair	149	11	6	132
Low	30	1	0	29
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,144</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>1,091</b>

Source: Kearney County Assessor's Office, 2024.



**TABLE 18**  
**HOUSING STOCK OCCUPANCY/VACANCY STATUS**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA & COMMUNITIES**  
**2024**

	<u>Kearney</u> <u>County</u> 3,000 (O=2,255, R=745)	<u>Heartwell</u> 36 (O=30, R=6)	<u>Norman</u> 17 (O=17, R=0)	<u>Rural Kearney</u> <u>County/CPJs</u> 1,111 (O=810, R=301)
a) Housing Stock				
b) Vacant Housing Stock	264	3	1	154
c) Occupied Housing Stock	2,736	33	16	957
*Owner Occupied	2,082	27	16	728
*Renter Occupied	654	6	0	229
d) Housing Vacancy Rate*	8.8% (264)	8.3% (3)	5.9% (1)	13.9% (154)
*Owner Vacancy	7.7% (173)	10.0% (3)	5.9% (1)	10.1% (82)
*Renter Vacancy	12.2% (91)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	23.9% (72)
e) Adjusted Vacancy Rate**	3.1% (92)	2.8% (1)	0.0% (0)	4.9% (54)
**Owner Vacancy	2.7% (61)	3.3% (1)	0.0% (0)	3.6% (29)
**Renter Vacancy	4.2% (31)	0.0% (0)	0.0% (0)	8.3% (25)

\* Includes all housing stock, including seasonal and substandard housing.

\*\* Includes only year-round vacant units available for rent or purchase, meeting current housing code and modern amenities.  
 Does not include vacant units either not for sale or rent, seasonal units, or units not meeting current housing code.

Source: Kearney County Communities, 2024.  
 Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2024.

**TABLE 19**  
**ESTIMATED MEDIAN GROSS RENT &**  
**MEDIAN OWNER-OCCUPIED HOUSING VALUE**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA & COMMUNITIES**  
**2010-2034**

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Median Rent</u>	<u>Median Value Owner Housing</u>
<u>Kearney County</u>	2010	\$548	\$101,100
	2021	\$753	\$180,300
	2024	\$804	\$205,981
	2034	\$1,076	\$252,675
<u>Heartwell</u>	2010	\$631	\$24,000
	2021	\$775	\$56,700
	2024	\$807	\$70,746
	2034	\$974	\$158,374
<u>Norman</u>	2010	N/A	\$52,500
	2021	N/A	\$48,600
	2024	N/A	\$49,309
	2034	N/A	\$53,906
<u>Rural Kearney County/CPJs</u>	2010	\$363	\$175,100
	2021	\$423	\$225,700
	2024	\$436	\$237,559
	2034	\$503	\$299,970

\*Specified Data Used. Estimate subject to margin of error.

\*\*Data not available due to disclosure suppression.

Source: 2006-2010, 2017-2021 American Community Survey.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2024.

**TABLE 20**  
**TRAFFIC VOLUME – ANNUAL AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS**  
**STATE AND FEDERAL ROADS**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**2022**

<u>Location</u>	<u>2022</u>
US-6, West of Axtell	4,240
US-6, East of Axtell	5,355
US-6, East of N-44	3,025
US-6, West of Minden	2,730
US-6, East of Minden	2,335
US-6, West of Heartwell	2,405
N-10, North of Minden	3,560
N-10, South of Minden	1,505
N-44, South of Kearney	7,190
N-44, North of Wilcox	545
N-74, East of Minden	740
N-74, East of Norman	505

Source: Nebraska Department of Transportation, 2024.

**TABLE 21  
FARMS BY SIZE  
KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA  
2007 – 2017**

<u>Size</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>% Change 2007 - 2012</u>	<u>% Change 2007 - 2017</u>
1 to 9 Acres	23	25	30	+8.7%	+30.4%
10 to 49 Acres	27	27	19	+0.0%	-29.6%
50 to 179 Acres	52	47	61	-9.6%	+17.3%
180 to 499 Acres	65	52	44	-20.0%	-32.3%
500 to 999 Acres	84	79	69	-6.0%	-17.9%
<u>1,000 to Acres or More</u>	<u>130</u>	<u>114</u>	<u>119</u>	<u>-12.3%</u>	<u>-8.5%</u>
<b>Total Farms</b>	<b>381</b>	<b>344</b>	<b>342</b>	<b>-9.7%</b>	<b>-10.2%</b>
<b>Total Crop Land</b>	<b>272,177</b>	<b>242,767</b>	<b>244,933</b>	<b>-10.8%</b>	<b>-10.0%</b>
<b>Land in Farms</b>	<b>324,218</b>	<b>293,608</b>	<b>291,307</b>	<b>-9.4%</b>	<b>-10.2%</b>
<b>Average Farm Size</b>	<b>851</b>	<b>854</b>	<b>852</b>	<b>+0.4%</b>	<b>+0.1%</b>

Source: Nebraska Census of Agriculture, 2007, 2012 & 2017.

**TABLE 22**  
**STATUS OF CROP PRODUCTION**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**2007 – 2017**

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>% Change 2007 - 2012</u>	<u>% Change 2007 - 2017</u>
<b>IRRIGATED LAND</b>					
Farms	283	255	238	-9.9%	-15.9%
Acres	<u>216,336</u>	<u>194,547</u>	<u>189,498</u>	<u>-10.1%</u>	<u>-12.4%</u>
<b>HARVESTED CROP LAND</b>					
Farms	319	293	290	-8.2%	-9.1%
Acres	<u>258,853</u>	<u>238,034</u>	<u>240,041</u>	<u>-8.0%</u>	<u>-7.3%</u>
<b>TOTAL CROP LAND</b>					
Farms	337	304	299	-9.8%	-11.3%
Acres	<u>272,177</u>	<u>242,767</u>	<u>244,933</u>	<u>-10.8%</u>	<u>-10.0%</u>

Source: Nebraska Census of Agriculture, 2007, 2012 & 2017.

**TABLE 23**  
**HARVESTED CROPS BY TYPE**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**2007-2017**

<b>CROP BY TYPE</b>	<b><u>Production in Acres</u></b>			<b><u>% Change</u></b>	<b><u>% Change</u></b>
	<b><u>2007</u></b>	<b><u>2012</u></b>	<b><u>2017</u></b>	<b><u>2007-2012</u></b>	<b><u>2007-2017</u></b>
Corn for Grain or Seed	168,243	144,664	139,951	-14.0%	-16.8%
Corn for Silage or Green Chop	3,697	3,951	2,188	+6.9%	-40.8%
Sorghum for Grain or Seed	606	452	638	-25.4%	+5.3%
Wheat for Grain	15,438	6,533	4,693	-57.7%	-69.6%
Oats for Grain	0	0	0	+0.0%	+0.0%
Soybeans for Beans	66,117	75,195	75,697	+13.7%	+14.5%
Forage - Hay-alfalfa, Silage	6,834	4,898	13,914	-28.3%	+103.6%

Source: Nebraska Census of Agriculture, 2007, 2012 & 2017.



**TABLE 24**  
**LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION TRENDS**  
**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**2007 – 2017**

<u>Type</u>	<u>Total Farms / Total Animals</u>			<u>% Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
	<u>2007</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2007 – 2012</u>	<u>2007 – 2017</u>
Cattle/Calves	155 / 81,255	137 / 81,374	119 / 95,305	-11.6% / +0.1%	-23.2% / +17.3%
Beef Cows	124 / (D)	106 / (D)	98 / (D)	-14.5% / (D)	-21.0% / (D)
Milk Cows	4 / (D)	1 / (D)	1 / (D)	-75.0% / (D)	-75.0% / (D)
Hogs and Pigs	14 / 5,458	8 / 3,625	5 / 51	-42.9% / -33.6%	-64.3% / -99.1%
Sheep and Lambs	12 / 586	7 / 424	4 / 792	-41.7% / -27.6%	-66.7% / +35.2%

\*(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.  
 Source: Nebraska Census of Agriculture, 2007, 2012 & 2017.

# APPENDIX II



KEARNEY COUNTY SURVEY RESULTS.

# KEARNEY COUNTY SURVEY RESULTS.

## KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA COUNTY-WIDE OPINION SURVEY RESULTS.

### Where do you live?

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
Rural Kearney County	85	43%
Axtell	11	5%
Heartwell	17	8%
Minden	70	35%
Norman	2	1%
Wilcox	5	2%
Outside Kearney County	6	3%
<b>Total</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>100%</b>

### 2. If you live in Rural Kearney County, do you live within one mile of a City/Village?

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
Yes	32	25%
No	95	74%
Total Responses	127	

### 3. Do you own property in Rural Kearney County?

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
Yes	106	58%
No	75	41%
Total Responses	181	

**4. Do you feel the current Kearney County Zoning & Subdivision Regulations are effective in managing growth and land development?**

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
Yes	54	28%
No	26	13%
No Opinion	108	57%
Total Responses	188	

**5. Which of the following Land Use items do you support for the future of Rural Kearney County, Norman or Heartwell?**

General Agricultural Uses

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	20	10%
2	8	4%
3	50	25%
4	116	59%
Mean	3.35	
Median	4	
Total Responses	194	

Land Conservation Easements

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	32	16%
2	37	19%
3	63	33%
4	58	30%
Mean	2.77	
Median	3	
Total Responses	190	

## Intensive Agricultural Uses

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	30	15%
2	34	18%
3	60	31%
4	64	34%
Mean	2.84	
Median	3	
Total Responses	188	

## Residential Development (General)

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	35	18%
2	48	25%
3	68	35%
4	41	21%
Mean	2.6	
Median	3	
Total Responses	192	

## Planned Rural Residential Subdivisions

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	38	19%
2	58	30%
3	60	31%
4	37	19%
Mean	2.5	
Median	3	
Total Responses	193	

## Parks/Recreation

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	19	9%
2	36	18%
3	67	34%
4	73	37%
Mean	2.99	
Median	3	
Total Responses	195	

## Public Infrastructure/Facilities/Utilities

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	26	13%
2	30	15%
3	79	40%
4	59	30%
Mean	2.88	
Median	3	
Total Responses	194	

## Commercial Development

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	28	14%
2	60	31%
3	68	35%
4	37	19%
Mean	2.59	
Median	3	
Total Responses	193	



## Industrial Development

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	35	18%
2	63	32%
3	58	30%
4	37	19%
Mean	2.5	
Median	2	
Total Responses	193	

## Schools/Educational Facilities.

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	22	11%
2	49	25%
3	66	34%
4	57	29%
Mean	2.81	
Median	3	
Total Responses	194	

## Zoning/Subdivision Ordinances/Regulations

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	38	20%
2	53	28%
3	59	31%
4	39	20%
Mean	2.52	
Median	3	
Total Responses	189	

## Transportation Systems (Roads, Rail, Air, etc.)

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	20	10%
2	34	17%
3	82	42%
4	55	28%
Mean	2.9	
Median	3	
Total Responses	191	

## Personal Alternative Energy Systems (Solar, Wind, etc.)

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	45	23%
2	50	25%
3	54	27%
4	44	22%
Mean	2.5	
Median	3	
Total Responses	193	

## Commercial Alternative Energy Systems (Solar Farms, Wind Farms, etc.)

Answer Choice	Response Count	Response Percentage
1	55	29%
2	75	39%
3	35	18%
4	24	12%
Mean	2.15	
Median	2	
Total Responses	189	

**KEARNEY COUNTY, NEBRASKA COUNTY-WIDE OPINION SURVEY COMMENTS.**

Comments have been edited for clarity.

**Do you feel the current Kearney County Zoning & Subdivision Regulations are effective in managing growth and land development? Why or why not?**

- Limiting the sale of not less than 5 acres tends to limit home development in our county.
- You need to keep foreign entities, government and large corporations from obtaining land and taking away from the farmer. The farmer knows how to take care of the land and provide for the country and these others are just going to destroy it and misuse it and keep the farmer from growing food.
- They need to be more restrictive. I moved out here to be free of close neighbors as in no less of a mile away. There is currently 5 acres up for sale less than a half mile away, wasting valuable farm ground which will make my property taxes go up even more.
- I don't feel we are affected by zoning and subdivision regulations at this time
- New development is starting up around the Village
- No issues here.
- I don't feel that we need rural subdivision. Subdivisions should be kept within the outskirts of a town. Wind turbines provided no benefit to the community and are extremely wasteful.
- Need to stay current with the changes in land use such as solar and wind. Agriculture needs to be protected as well as the surface and groundwater uses
- All the settlers want to live in the country but don't want the farm smell or the dusty or muddy roads and soon want the county to improve the roads.

- I feel that so far county subdivisions are effective, but I do not want to see rural subdivisions being encouraged as this will invite lawsuits against animal agriculture and other legitimate agricultural endeavors. However I think we do not need to encourage more cattle feed yard capacity, if I am not mistaken the county is feeding out approximately 280,000 head of cattle a year and I think the acres needed for manure management, water pollution, and air quality are maxed out.
- Kearney county is not over-regulated like many counties are. That's fine for counties with larger populations but in a small population county, if you over-regulate, it's a deterrent to moving or developing here.
- The housing development i live in is planned, prepared, and executed by people who do not know what they are doing. My ditches are full of water, the roads are destroyed, new roads and sidewalks were built very poor and will need to be re worked.
- The 4 house per quarter limit restricts development.
- Like how things are now
- I've been very pleased where I live.
- I honestly don't know all of the regulations.
- Not managing rural subdivisions like Dornoff acres. It is it even built and looking like a junk yard.
- I think the oversight is just fine.

- I am not aware of the current zoning and subdivision regulations.
- The only reason I answered no to this question is because I believe the county is a little too strict on feedlot development. Beef is a big part of our state and community, more importantly local family and community raised beef. There are very few places in Kearney County that don't have at least one house within 1/2 mile. 500 head of a LCF is a great start, but not enough income to raise a family on. I hope to expand my feeding operation past 500 head in the intermediate future. Thanks.
- Kearney County could better promote economic growth by becoming designated as Livestock Friendly by the State of Nebraska. Kearney County needs to have and keep zoning regulations that attract new businesses and industries, promote more livestock production, and protect the rights of home owners.
- The minimum requirement for an acreage is too high and limits Economic growth that is important to retaining young families and the tax base growing. (Also, the method of sending a QR code for the average rural resident to know how to use, is not accessible to most. So many heads of households that are older adults would not even know how to use that. An alternative method for taking this survey, including a phone number and simplified website would have ensured a significant survey sample.)
- Having 5 acres outside of Minden and have to ask them every time I want to change a fence or put some concrete I'm I have to jump hoops with the City.
- More regulations need to be set on wind farms.
- Not sure. New to living in Minden.
- We need to continue building housing options.
- We are not sure as we will be moving there in October.
- Les commercial development is always preferable.

- This may not be what the question was intended for, but I'm concerned about Minden's water, both in quality (water is often brownish and I do not drink it or cook with it), as well as support for the new housing going in and if the water will be able to maintain proper pressure. Thank you.
- Not sure what the regulations are. Feel free to send them out to residents.
- Do not like subdivision. City people move into to them and they don't like Agricultural and livestock.
- I support absolutely NO subdivisions.
- Too controlling.
- Have had no reason to question current regulations living in town.
- I'm woefully ignorant of the regulations. Being ag-centric, I hope they are supportive of the farmer/rancher, and not a developer.
- It just makes sense to have someone to overlook a project so residents don't just go hog wild on something that they want to do. Regulations are good.
- Well, my subdivision isn't maintained well at. On my street, Sandy Lane, it had never seen snow plow and or has zero maintenance from the County.
- I am not familiar enough with regulations to answer this question.