

# KEARNEY

## Comprehensive Plan



Adopted: July 26, 2016  
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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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# [INTRODUCTION]

[section 1.1]

## WELCOME

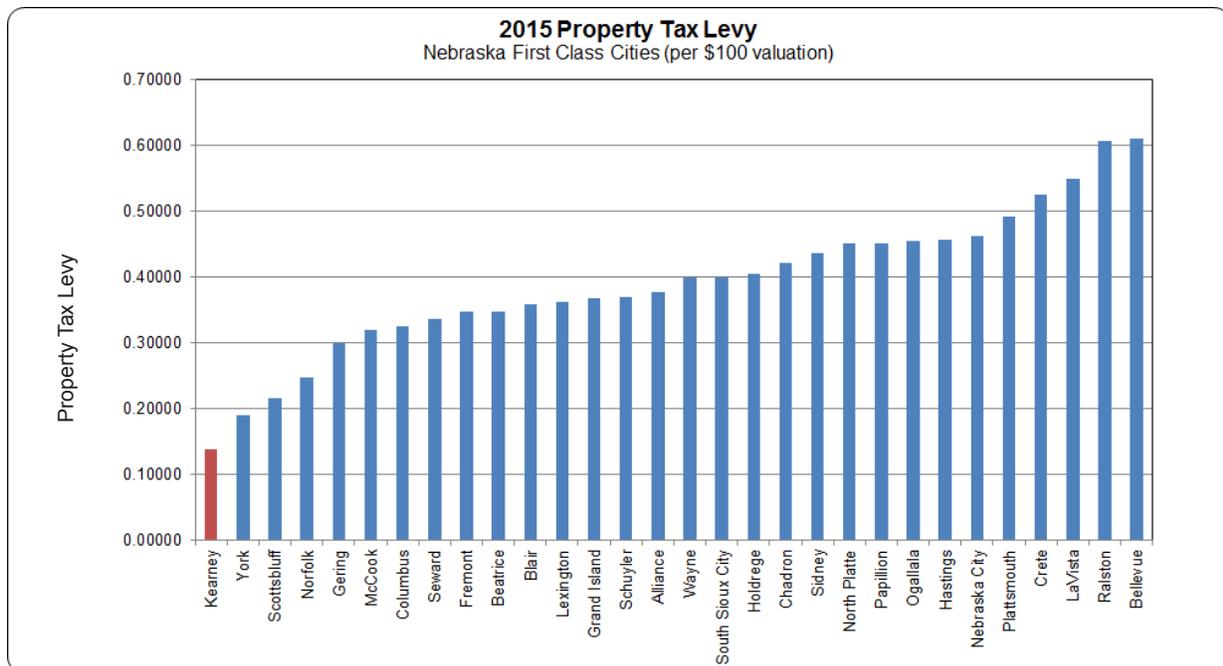
The City of Kearney would like to welcome readers to its 2016 Comprehensive Plan Update. This comprehensive plan update presents the update in a revised version, emulating the evolution and vibrancy of the community itself.

Early in the planning process it became evident that the residents and City of Kearney have a number of distinguishing attributes which set the community apart from its Nebraska neighbors. These characteristics and recurring themes were not only apparent in the data analysis portion of the plan update, but also in the conversations with residents and community stakeholders which help drive the development of this document. In such, these attributes specific to Kearney became the basis of analysis and underlying plan development throughout this document.

### Property Taxes

Kearney has the lowest property tax levy of First Class Cities in Nebraska, as is depicted in Figure 1. This low property tax levy is not only a benefit to the city’s residents, but a demonstration of the City’s commitment to fiscal responsibility for sustained growth.

Figure 1. 2015 Property Tax Levy



## **Transparency**

The City of Kearney is a large entity committed to over 30,000 residents who entrust the City to make sound decisions for future community investments and maintenance. As a demonstration of commitment to transparency, the City website hosts a large number of pertinent documents, including city department budgets and construction schedules. The monthly reporting and project status updates help to inform residents where construction is happening and how resources are being allocated.

Successful retail and the accompanying sales tax helps pay for the vast majority of City operations. With forward-thinking residents, Kearney voters passed a 0.5 percent sales tax increase dedicated to a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) fund. This approach to provide funding for needed and publicly-requested CIP projects through a sales tax, creates an obligatory relationship between the City and the public. This relationship and demonstration of transparency is evident by the monthly web postings of the current status and projects which fall under the Capital Improvement Project fund.

## **Parks and Cultural Assets**

With three destination parks which draw regional events and provide travelers with great experiences, the Kearney park system stands out among its peer communities. The community's cultural attractions such as The Archway, the Museum of Nebraska Art and University of Nebraska-Kearney continually produce opportunities for the public to engage in cultural and arts activities of national renown, all within the City limits.

The history, condition, and variety of activities provided within the parks system is an impressive service for a community of 30,000. The civic-minded Kearney residents have donated their time, money, and property to better the parks system and the community as a whole. The expansion of the parks system is in direct correlation to the generosity of its citizens.

## **A Community Committed to Kearney's Success**

At the cornerstone of Kearney's success has been the community's ability to form partnerships and come together to for the benefit of Kearney and its residents. The positive, can-do business attitude has helped fill the gaps of missing resources in order to see projects through to completion. Organizations, whether public, private, or non-profit, are vital resources in the community as Kearney's leadership has found. The people in Kearney sustain the community; the City's leadership give citizens the vision and challenge to make Kearney something more.

The services and amenities that Kearney provide are based upon the joint partnerships of public entities. Law enforcement has been saving the county tax payers money with joint funding, shared staff that leads to quicker response times and a lack of jurisdictional conflicts, as well as a central location for Kearney and Buffalo County police departments. This is a great example of more than twenty years of cost savings, while providing additional services.

The Kearney Public Library is available to anyone who applies for a library card, without residential restrictions. The library provides a great venue complete with technology and meeting rooms. There is a bookmobile program that drives to the smaller communities around Buffalo County to share their inventory with other local libraries.



[section 1.2]

## CITY OVERVIEW

The City of Kearney, located in central Nebraska, is known to many as the “Heart of Nebraska”. Kearney has experienced many social, economic, physical and cultural transitions while establishing its regional influence since its beginning over 140 years ago. Kearney is not only a driving force in Buffalo County and central Nebraska, but the City has become a model example of coordination, innovation, and teamwork for the Midwest region. The community has many reasons to be excited about its future growth due to the social, economic, and governmental cooperation.

The City of Kearney has a rich history of entrepreneurship. Each generation has pursued business opportunities and continually adjusted as nationwide transportation systems changed, and science advanced. Even before Kearney was incorporated, the area benefited from being chosen as the site of multiple modes of transportation routes, which are essential to successful commerce. The City of Kearney continues to strive toward becoming a nationally-recognized city for entrepreneurship.

The next twenty years will bring about many unforeseen changes; however, Kearney plans to be at the forefront of the information technology sector. Kearney does not feel any obstacle is too high to overcome through the coordination and teamwork of both private and public entities. With unwavering principles and available amenities, Kearney will remain the place to relocate, live, innovate, play, and retire. The community has a balanced economy, efficient government, and cooperative, civic-minded residents that will continue to meet the future demands.

[section 1.3]

## THE PURPOSE OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

Kearney, Nebraska has pro-actively positioned itself to accommodate, plan for and sustain its growth as one of the state’s fast growing communities by developing this Comprehensive Plan Update. Through the collective effort of Kearney residents, business leaders and city staff, this Comprehensive Plan Update will serve as the guiding tool for the development and growth of the City over the next decades. Moreover, the plan provides strategic and policy based guidance and information for those making development and investment decisions for the community by aligning resident and business community needs and aspirations with infrastructure and fiscal realities and responsibilities. Although comprehensive planning is required by Nebraska state statutes, the prompt to do so engages the general public as well as local and prospective businesses and services in an interactive conversation of reflection and possibility for the future of Kearney.

Using current and past experience as guideposts and to generate opportunities for re-development and new development while within the parameters of annexation policy and infrastructure service areas, this plan is developed specifically for Kearney. This plan will show some examples of potential projects. Although the plan may show specific locations, any proposed project is meant to serve only as an example of how an area can transform or serve a neighborhood or the City in a different way. The areas proposed were selected to represent development that meet the community’s wishes. As for the City and its fiscal needs, these ideas and projects are to generate excitement, further exploration of design ideas, and provide a starting point for private industries to reference. Continued analysis of Kearney’s changing social and economic demographics will determine where some of these ideas would develop.

The comprehensive plan presents realistic ideas and projects that can be achieved within a twenty year timespan. The City is not being asked to fund each of the proposed projects and the projects do not represent master plans. However, the ideas shown in the Envision Chapter are meant to promote Kearney’s image for potential redevelopment and engage the private sector investment in Kearney.

The following vision and mission statements are the City of Kearney’s established expectations that helped lead to the creation of the goals, objectives, and policies, as well as the Future Land Use Plan. These two statements are found on the City’s website.

### Vision Statement

“We see Kearney as a safe community with a family-oriented quality of life. Our community pride produces many partnerships that work together to create an environment that is both progressive, friendly and attractive.

The Kearney economy is strong, and there is an ever-expanding infrastructure in place to support the needs of a growing community. We have all the big city conveniences with the feel of small community living.”

***City of Kearney’s Vision Statement***

### Mission Statement

“We provide services, solutions, and opportunities for our community.”

***Mission Statement for the City of Kearney Employees***



[section 1.4]

## THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

The Kearney Comprehensive Plan update is designed to identify, assess, and develop actions and policies for the following areas: population, land use, transportation, housing, economic development, community facilities, public utilities, and energy.

To begin the Kearney Comprehensive Plan update, readily available information is gathered to inventory and gauge the current state of the community. Data collection begins with the 2010 Census, American Community Survey 5-year estimates, city hall documents, and on-site field surveys. Demographic and economic information reveal the underlying trends for the current community status and provide a foundation for the future projections of land use and economic development. After the initial assessment of the community, additional information is gathered through correspondence with city employees and the comprehensive plan steering committee.

The next stage of the planning process is creating the goals and objectives for the community. Meetings are held with focus groups and the public to define the identity of Kearney as well as the changes that are desired by the community. The public is heavily involved and encouraged in prioritizing its vision which are reflected in the goals and objectives. With public input, additional concerns and issues are addressed when creating the goals, objectives, or policies needed to stimulate positive change. This comprehensive plan update gives practical guidelines to maintain and improve conditions by providing community's vision through text, graphics, tables, and maps.

Implementation is the final stage of the planning process. Multiple development policies and programs are required to implement the comprehensive plan update. The Kearney Comprehensive Plan Update identifies the tools, programs, and methods necessary to fulfill the recommendations. Adoption of the plan update is needed to implement the development policies. The governing body, as well as the future leadership of Kearney, will need to continue to push forward the implementation of the Kearney Comprehensive Plan Update.

The Kearney Comprehensive Plan update was prepared under the direction of the Comprehensive Plan Advisory Committee, also known as the Kearney PAC or Steering Committee. It was comprised of the City manager, some city council members, various city staff, and a broad based group of public, non-profit, and private entities, as well as local stakeholders. Review and recommendations by the Kearney PAC were completed prior to the recommendation of the planning commission and adoption of the Comprehensive Plan update by the Kearney city council.

This planning period spans the next twenty years. However, it is recommended that the City hold annual reviews to track the progress of its goals and objectives. Another recommendation is to make a complete update to the document every five to ten years for relevance or if it is deemed necessary due to development. This will also allow for new input from Kearney's future leadership and stakeholders.

[section 1.5]

## COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPONENTS

The Profile Section explores Kearney’s history, character, and establishes the starting point to this comprehensive plan update. The Profile Chapter is based on definitive information to establish historical trends by using available demographic and economic data. The purpose of the Profile Chapter is to begin to understand fully the community of Kearney and how it evolved into what it is today.

The next component is the Envision Chapter which verifies gathered information and includes public input to begin the formation of the community’s future goals. The Envision stage relies heavily on public input to create a comprehensive plan that meets the desires of the community. Citizens typically know what they want and are very realistic about their needs. However, the Envision stage calls for bigger ideas and concepts. The design charrette process generates the most creative and extreme proposals that use an area as an example, focus on the urban design elements, and generate potential changes and reconfiguration. The Envision Chapter can generate creative ideas and possibly solve multiple issues by using one of the design charrette ideas elsewhere in Kearney.

The Achieve Section presents Kearney’s projected future. It contains the future plans and vision developed during the Envision Section. The Achieve Section filters for constraints and opportunities to build upon. This section discusses population and housing projections, the Future Land Use Plan, the Parks and Trail Plan, and Transportation Plan.

The success of a comprehensive plan is not measured by the aesthetics of the pictures or graphics, but by the usability of the planning tool to guide new development and redevelopment for the City of Kearney. The Implementation Section within the Kearney Comprehensive Plan Update is the core of this planning tool and will identify the action steps that are necessary to achieve the community’s envisioned goals. In addition, it suggests:

1. The action steps to specific “Project Champions” or groups responsible for the implementation of the task.
2. A specific timeframe for completion that directly links dependent action items and potential funding sources, if necessary.



[section 1.6]

## **GOVERNMENTAL AND JURISDICTIONAL ORGANIZATION**

The City of Kearney is under the council-manager form of government which was adopted in 1950. The City Council acts as Kearney’s legislative and policy-making body. The Kearney City Council’s five members are elected at large, for four-year terms, on a staggered basis. From within the council, one member is elected as president of the council and is recognized as Mayor. The Mayor presides over council meetings and represents the City in ceremonial functions. Under the council-manager government system, the City Council appoints the City Manager as their chief executive officer. The City Manager is the administrative official responsible for implementing council policies.

(<http://www.cityofkearney.org/index.aspx?nid=492>)

The City of Kearney enforces zoning and subdivision regulations including building, electrical, plumbing, and property maintenance codes within its jurisdiction. Kearney has extraterritorial jurisdiction which reaches two miles outside of the City’s corporate limits.

The planning and zoning jurisdiction of Kearney, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 19-901 through 19-933 (Reissue 1997), includes all of the incorporated portions of the City.



# 2

## [PROFILE KEARNEY]

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# 2

## [PROFILE KEARNEY]

[section 2.1]

### INTRODUCTION

There are many factors that affect a community, and the Profile Chapter provides the context of Kearney’s prior trends and current status. Through the lens of background information and the effort of general public education, the elements of the comprehensive plan can be understood by the public at large. Through the findings of the Profile, the statistics and analysis will lead to the Achieve Chapter where various opportunities are found and a look into the future is set forth.

The Profile helps the community understand its present condition or “where it stands.” Understanding current and past trends provides the correlation for the future opportunities outlined in subsequent chapters. Of note in the Kearney Profile Chapter are the undeniable connections between population, housing and jobs, establishing a basis for this future focused document.

Within this chapter, the Demographics Section reports upon the historic trends of population, housing and employment and how these dynamic factors shape the Kearney community. The United States Census and the American Community Survey are both utilized to create the statistical trends and provide the recent data available through composite estimates. Paired with the factors of the built environment and previous Land Use decisions which relied heavily on the natural environment and related constraints, a stronger understanding of Kearney comes forward.

The topics researched and studied for the Profile Chapter are Demographics, Housing, Economic and Employment, Public Facilities, Natural Environment and Constraints, and Existing Land Use.

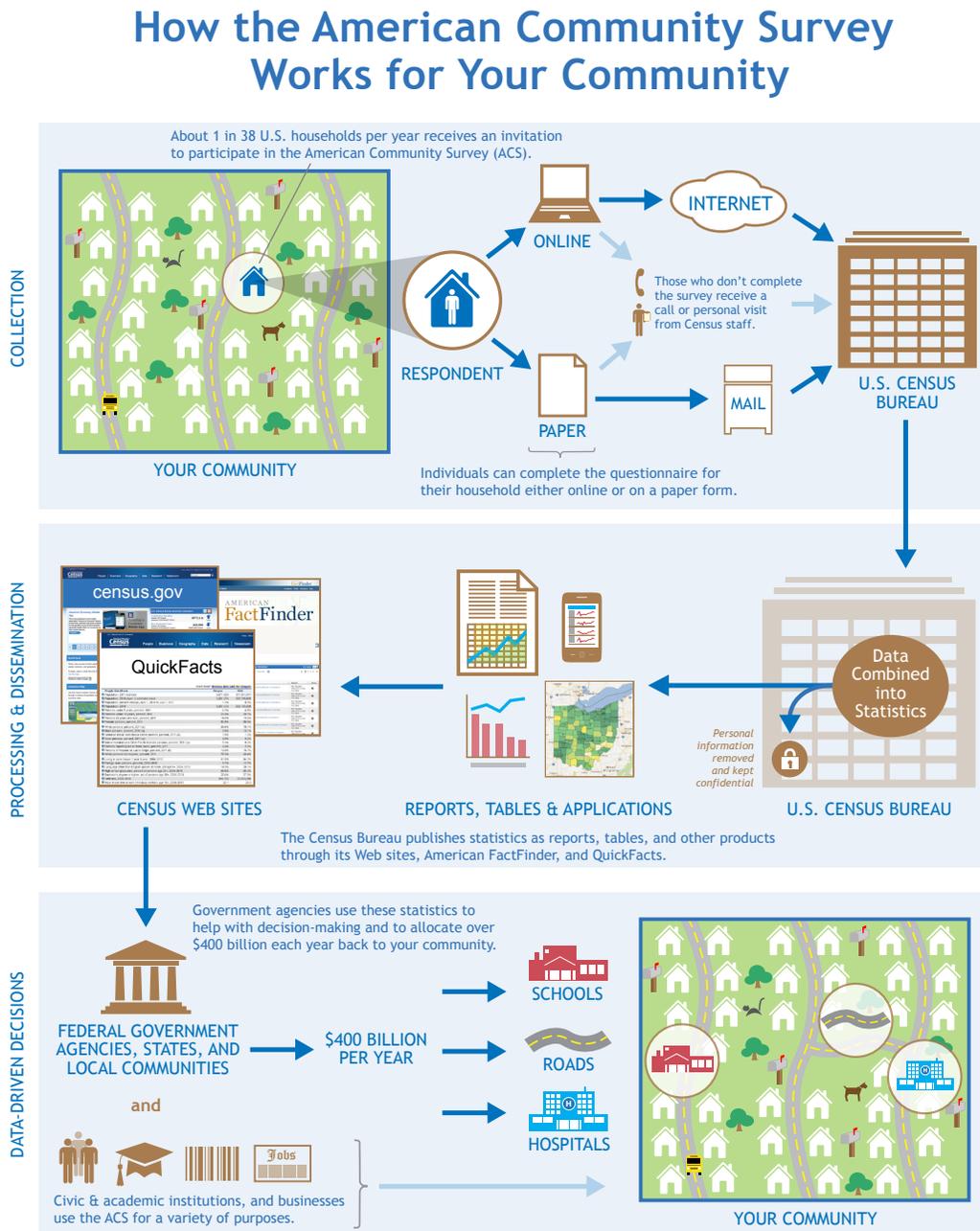


### Data Sources

The United States Census is conducted every ten years to update information through census tracts. This decennial census supplies information which shows both past trends of a community and help to prepare for its future. The United States Census Bureau created a short form Census beginning in 2010. A supplemental program, known as the American Community Survey collects the omitted data annually.

The American Community Survey (ACS) is an ongoing statistical survey that samples a small percentage of the population every year. Figure 2 depicts the process of American Community Survey process. The survey asks about age, sex, race, family and relationships, income and benefits, health insurance, education, veteran status, disabilities, place of work, mode of transportation, place of residence and costs for essentials. These surveys are combined with previous years' surveys to form a composite estimate. ACS statistics give the community relevant information they need to plan for investments and services. This annual program has 5-year estimates that give a more accurate account of local data and trends. The ACS has a margin of error but it is the most accurate and recent information available without conducting a full community survey or waiting until the next Census.

Figure 2. American Community Survey Infographic





## DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Population statistics help to form the first piece of an overall picture of who and what makes Kearney the ‘Heart of Nebraska’. Whether a community is declining or growing, understanding its composition and trends are vital to its future success. A community does not have to be the largest in order to be considered successful as long it plans for future populations. The demographics section ranges from population trends, age structure, migration, racial trends, and projections. As previously stated in the Introduction, Kearney is not a typical Nebraska community.

The University of Nebraska at Kearney infuses a youthful mindset into the community, a trend which reaches beyond four years of education. Historically, college-aged students have come to Kearney for educational pursuits, stayed for a few years, and then moved away. Recent statistics suggest that more people of this younger demographic are choosing to stay in Kearney longer which can lead to natural growth through young families. This uptick in population is further stabilized by the aging population which is either staying or being replaced by others moving to Kearney in order to take advantage of retirement or senior medical services.

### Population Trends and Analysis

#### Population Trends

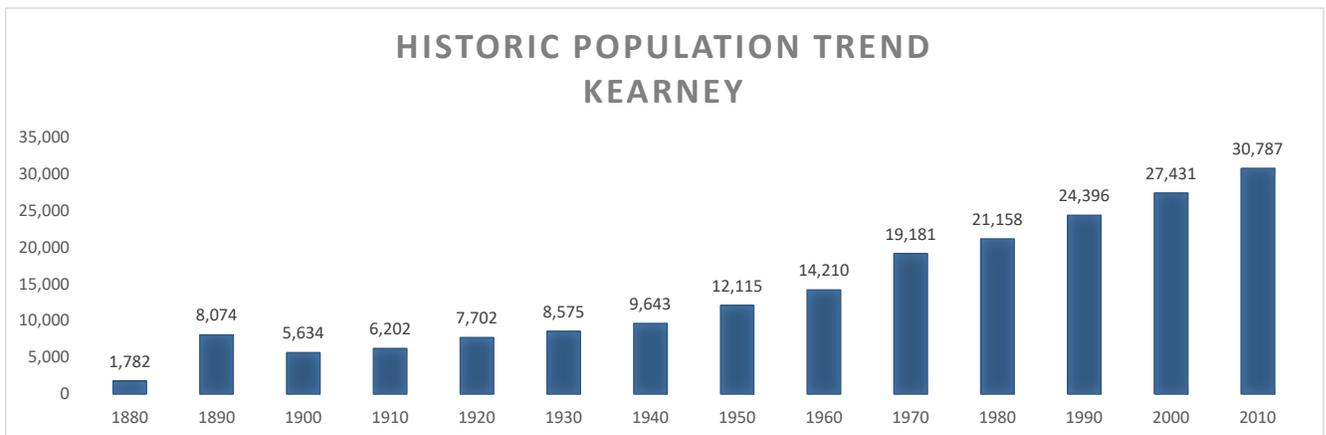
Since 1900, the City of Kearney has experienced over ten percent growth per decade with the largest peaks of growth from the 1940s through the 1960s. In recent years, Kearney has seen consistent growth in the last three decades with roughly 3,000 people per decade or a 1.18 percent annual growth (Figure 3). As Kearney continues to grow and expand, determining how and where these populations develop from become larger questions to answer.

With the University of Nebraska at Kearney within city limits, the subject of college student population is naturally questioned. The college student population is factored into the overall population and represent roughly 5,000 residents per year. Despite the fluctuation of college enrollment, Kearney has consistently grown since 1970 at a steady rate, as shown in the following graph.

#### Population Comparisons with Regional Communities

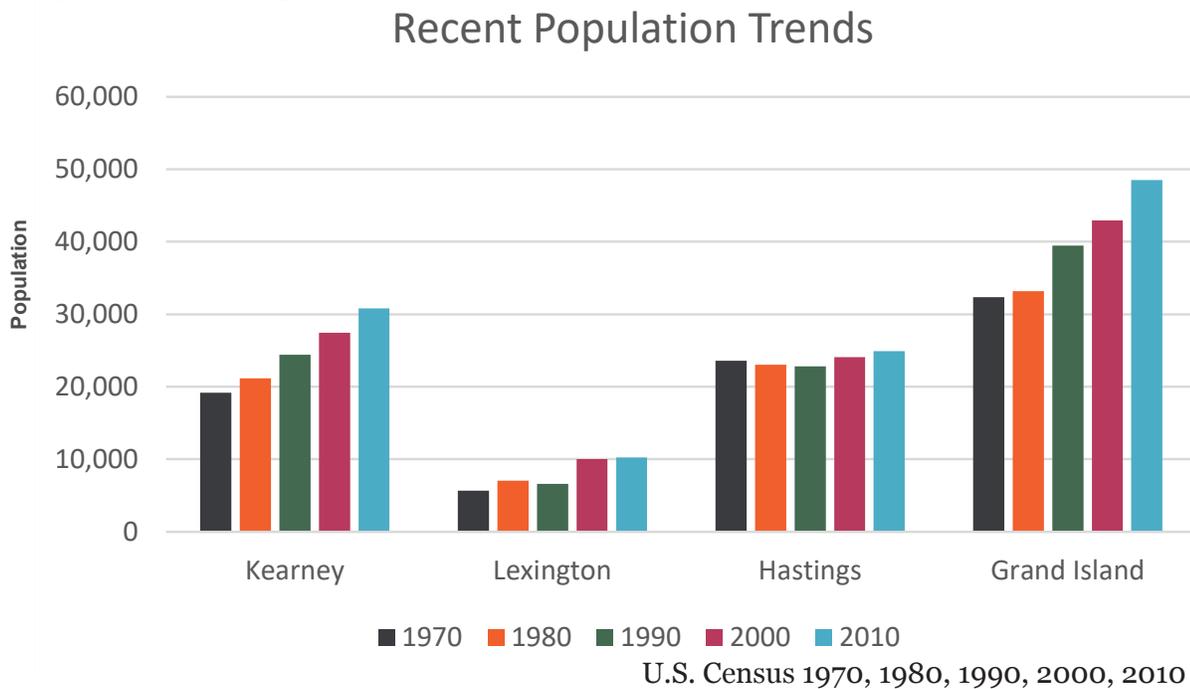
Historically, each of the regional cities in central Nebraska was developed and promoted in a similar manner, via the railroad. As railroad companies built through Nebraska, competition emerged to buy business and housing lots in one community over another. This legacy of competition remains today. Through the nature of economic development, each community naturally tries to position itself as the ideal for the development of businesses and housing stock.

Figure 3. Historic Population Trends, Kearney



For example, the City of Kearney has great amenities and boasts many luxuries that other cities of 30,000 simply cannot offer their residents. As the community progresses forward expectations are high for the City of Kearney because their residents have always received excellent services, such as law enforcement, library, and parks services. These expectations become difficult to meet when positioned against similar public services in larger Nebraska communities. For example, Grand Island had almost 20,000 more residents in 2010 (Figure 4) and its proximity to Kearney makes it a natural competitor creating the mentality of a need to match or exceed the neighboring community. Despite the precedent of other large cities in the state, the City of Kearney will continue to be fiscally responsible and will base its decisions for the addition of facilities and services on its ability to purchase materials, build, and maintain such endeavors.

Figure 4. Comparative Population Trends



## Age Structure Analysis

### Recent Age and Gender Structure

Unlike many Nebraska communities, Kearney does not endure a void in their post-secondary education population and the resulting stagnation of long-term growth. Instead, Kearney benefits from other communities' dispersion of college aged and college educated population by attracting and retaining the regional, national, and international talent attending the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) and Central Community College (CCC). In such, the community is at a significant advantage and not as dependent upon the necessity of costly economic development activities to attract and retain a population of young professionals.

With UNK and CCC to supplement the influx of population, Kearney maintains a steady 20- to 24-year-old age group. Although efforts will continue to be made with the retention of this group beyond their time in college, keeping all of the 4,650 of this cohort population is unrealistic. Yet it does present an opportunity for Kearney and its businesses to recruit talent from within.



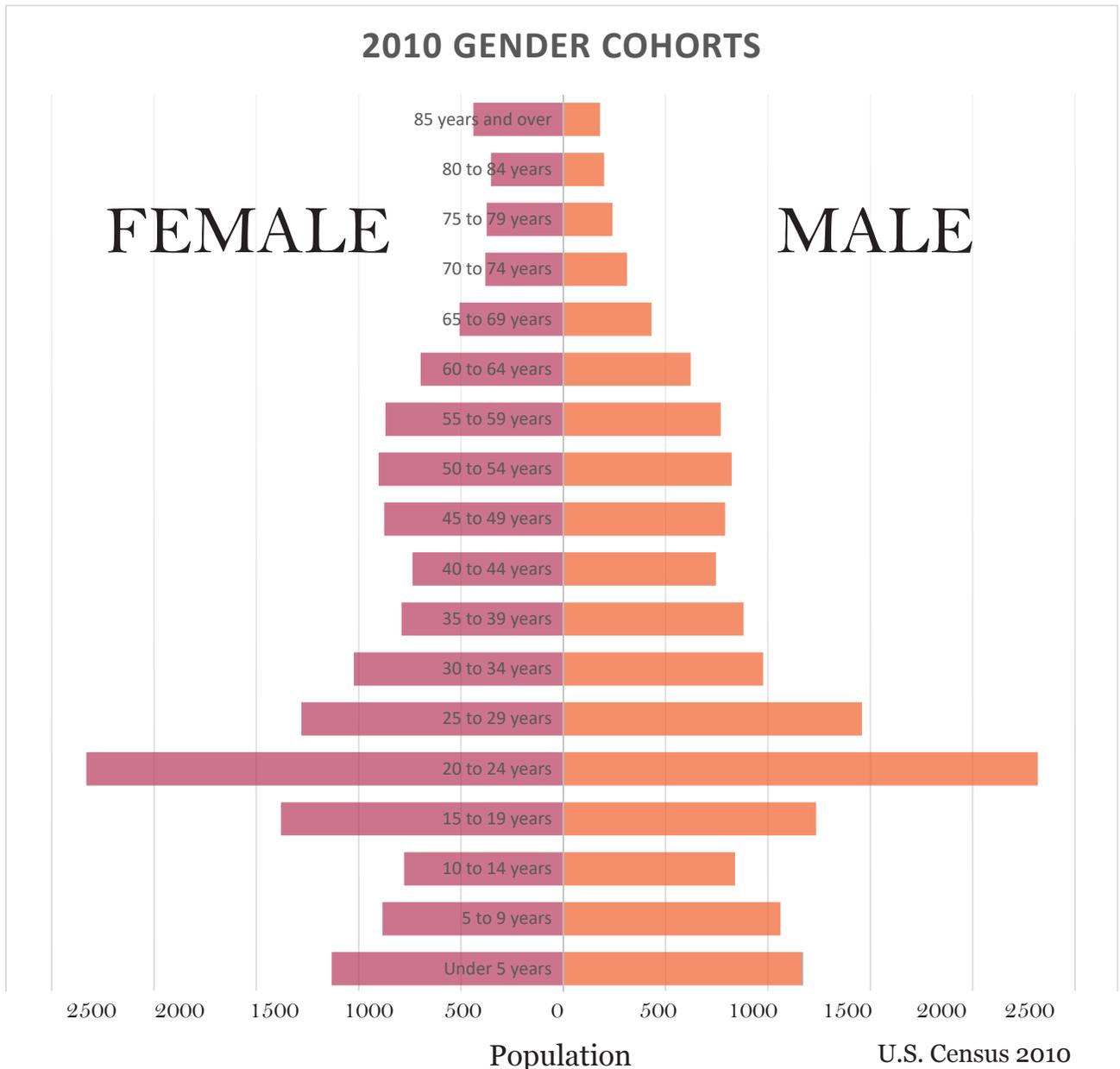
Like the previous age group, Kearney possesses more under 30-year-olds than the average Nebraska community. The volume of young professionals and emerging leaders is promising for Kearney’s future and may be a product of the national economy. The age groups between 30 and 59 populations had roughly 1,500 people or more for each five-year group and demonstrated the stability within the workforce and the established family structures that were cited throughout the planning process.

Figure 5 depicts Kearney’s 2010 population divided into age groups of five-year increments, also called age cohorts.

**Ten-Year Migration Analysis Trend**

An alternative to using the composition from 1990, 2000, and 2010 ‘snapshots’ is to track the five-year cohorts over the past ten years to determine who was previously in Kearney and which age cohorts lost or gained population. For example, to explain the process of the

Figure 5. Kearney’s 2010 5-Year Age Cohorts



following cohort migration chart, Kearney’s 2000 “under 5 years” of age cohort becomes 2010’s “10 to 14 years” age cohort and shown in Table 1.

The 10 to 14 years cohort lost over 200 children from its previous 2000 Under 5 cohort. For growing communities, typically this cohort increases in size as they are going through the elementary and middle schools. This particular loss is normally linked directly to parents that move elsewhere for various opportunities. The decline is also evident by the large population loss from 2000’s 25-34 age cohorts, typically a cohort comprised of young professionals and families. In the span from 2000 to 2010, 658 people in this age group moved elsewhere.

While there is a strong young professional population, the City of Kearney simply cannot provide enough jobs for all college graduates and thus population loss is unavoidable. Yet this imbalance of available talent and job opportunities create a steady workforce stream. Targeted industries could move to Kearney and capitalize upon this saturation of recent graduates. The majority of 2010’s 30 to 34 years cohort population loss is consistent with the movement of Kearney’s college-aged population that either came to Kearney for education and job opportunities in their late teens and early twenties.

For the most part, people aged 45 years and older remained steady which typically correlates the stability between previous generation’s jobs and Kearney’s housing market.

Table 1. Kearney’s Ten Year Migration Analysis

Kearney 2000	Population Year 2000	10 Years Later Kearney 2010	Population Year 2010	Age Group Population Change 10 Years Later
	27,431		30,787	
Under 5 years	1,836	10 to 14 years	1,617	-219
5 to 9 years	1,603	15 to 19 years	2,614	1011
10 to 14 years	1,627	20 to 24 years	4,650	3023
15 to 19 years	2,907	25 to 29 years	2,739	-168
20 to 24 years	4,667	30 to 34 years	2,000	-2667
25 to 29 years	2,174	35 to 39 years	1,671	-503
30 to 34 years	1,638	40 to 44 years	1,483	-155
35 to 39 years	1,628	45 to 49 years	1,666	38
40 to 44 years	1,754	50 to 54 years	1,725	-29
45 to 49 years	1,673	55 to 59 years	1,639	-34
50 to 54 years	1,367	60 to 64 years	1,320	-47
55 to 59 years	944	65 to 69 years	938	-6
60 to 64 years	694	70 to 74 years	692	-2
65 to 69 years	644	75 to 79 years	615	-29
70 to 74 years	632	80 to 84 years	554	-78
75 to 79 years	604	85 to 89 years	373	-231
80 to 84 years	485	90 years and over	246	-239
85 to 89 years	333			
90 years and over	221		<i>Kearney 2010</i>	<i>+1945 Under 10</i>

U.S. Census 2000, 2010

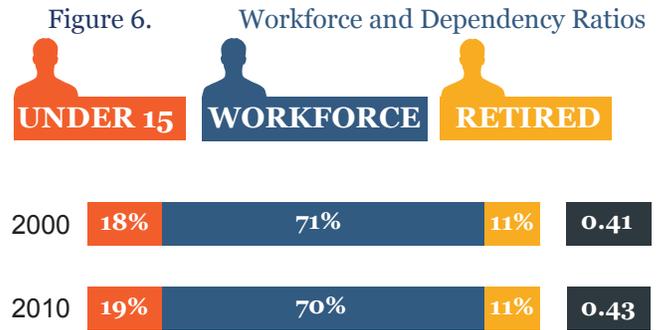


### Dependency Ratio, 2010

One way to analyze the future of Kearney’s population is to calculate the amount of dependent residents in a community. Dependency ratio is determined by the number of non-workers divided by the population of the workforce. The decisive number for this ratio is the factor of 1.0 which states that an independent resident is able to support one dependent resident.

In the past three censuses, Kearney’s highest dependency ratio was 0.44 which is well under the breakpoint of dependent to independent. The ratio of 0.5 would mean that the community could support one and a half dependents for every independent in the workforce. The University population does skew this number somewhat, but the majority of the workforce is age 35 to 55 and has remained since 1990.

In 2010, the Kearney population for non-workers, those under 15 (5,862) and over 65 years of age group (3,418) totaled of 9,280. As shown in Figure 6, the remaining population of 18- to 64-year olds represents a Kearney workforce of 21,507. In 2010, the dependency ratio was a healthy 0.43 which represents the workforce is able to support more than one person.



The young family dynamic is a key to Kearney’s future dependency ratio. If Kearney’s young professionals continue to stay in Kearney, they may continue to increase the under 14 population as was the case in the 2000s. As attractive as Kearney is for retirement-age populations, more citizens of this group could move into the city and increase its percentage of the population ultimately, raising this dependency closer to 1.0. Having too many non-working populations, whether it is children or retired people, could pose a problem when determining future public funds and where money is allocated. For the foreseeable future, these populations do not pose a real threat to public services as long as jobs continue to increase along with the aging population.

### Race Characteristics

The national trend of growing minorities can also be seen in Kearney. The statistics for 2010 are not as considerable as in other Nebraska communities but the trend does exist, and diversity is slowly shifting in the community. The largest population, White, gained over 2,000 but lost some of percentage of total population.

Of the minorities, there was a mixture of small but significant gain as well as small declines. For example, three minorities nearly doubled in size from 2000—Black, Asian and interracial. While a small minority, the Black population nearly doubled from only a decade ago. Similarly, though smaller, the Asian population too more than doubled between 2000 and 2010. Interracial populations have also continued to increase, the optional choices ‘some other race’ population more than doubled in the previous ten years and ‘Two or more races’ increased by 121 people for a total of 441 in 2010. The American Indian and Native Hawaiian populations both declined slightly.

The Hispanic or Latino population doubled in the past ten years and increased their population percentage by over 3 percent for a total of 7.3 percent. The Hispanic or Latino population from Mexico was the largest increase with 786 people. The smaller minority populations are growing and will continue to slowly gain a broader percentage of the total Kearney population. These growing populations will help to diversify Kearney and produce new opportunities for emerging population and businesses.

Table 2. Kearney's Racial Characteristics Trend, 2000 – 2010

<b>Race Characteristics</b>	<b>2000</b>			<b>2010</b>	<b>2000 - 2010</b>	
<b>Subject</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Persons</b>	<b>%</b>
<b>RACE</b>						
Total population	27,431	100	30,787	100	3,356	
One race	27,111	98.8	30,346	98.6	3,235	-0.2
White	26,109	95.2	28,416	92.3	2,307	-2.9
Black or African American	172	0.6	315	1	143	0.4
American Indian and Alaska Native	105	0.4	93	0.3	-12	-0.1
American Indian	77	0.3	60	0.2	-17	-0.1
Alaska Native	0	0	2	0	2	0
Both American Indian and Alaska Native	0	0	0	0	0	0
American Indian or Alaska Native, not specified	28	0.1	31	0.1	3	0
Asian	253	0.9	548	1.8	295	0.9
Native Hawaiian and other Pacific Islander	12	0	7	0	-5	0
Some other race	460	1.7	967	3.1	507	1.4
Two or more races	320	1.2	441	1.4	121	0.2
Two races including some other race	114	0.4	95	0.3	-19	-0.1
Two races excluding some other race, and three more races	206	0.8	325	1.1	119	0.3
Three or more races	21	0.1	9	0	-12	-0.1
<b>HISPANIC OR LATINO</b>						
Total population	27,431	100	30,787	100	3,356	0
Hispanic or Latino (of any race)	1,118	4.1	2,243	7.3	1,125	3.2
Mexican	858	3.1	1,644	5.3	786	2.2
Puerto Rican	21	0.1	32	0.1	11	0
Cuban	5	0	16	0.1	11	0.1
Other Hispanic or Latino	234	0.9	551	1.8	317	0.9
Not Hispanic or Latino	26,313	95.9	28,544	92.7	2,231	-3.2
<b>RACE AND HISPANIC OR LATINO</b>						
Total population	27,431	100	30,787	100	3,356	0
One race	27,111	98.8	30,346	98.6	3,235	-0.2
Hispanic or Latino	1,031	3.8	2,118	6.9	1,087	3.1
Not Hispanic or Latino	26,080	95.1	28,228	91.7	2,148	-3.4
Two or more races	320	1.2	441	1.4	121	0.2
Hispanic or Latino	87	0.3	125	0.4	38	0.1
Not Hispanic or Latino	233	0.8	316	1	83	0.2

Source: 2000, 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, Summary File 1

## HOUSING PROFILE

### Introduction

During an early steering committee, it was stated that the U.S. Census and American Community Surveys were not able to keep pace with Kearney's explosive housing market and does not reflect the current housing market. Although this may be true, the 2010 Census gathered 100 percent data to serve as a base from which to build upon. Kearney has been compared to its Nebraska peers as one of the larger cities in Nebraska. However, each city with a university has its own unique characteristics, a student population, and associated housing. In order to compare similar communities with universities, regional cities in the Mid-American Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA) were used to compare Kearney's characteristics to Emporia, Kansas (Emporia State University), Hays, Kansas (Fort Hays University), Pittsburg, Kansas (Pittsburg State University), Jefferson City, Missouri (Lincoln University), and Joplin, Missouri (Missouri Southern State University).

### Housing Occupancy Trends

Table 3 details how Kearney experienced extremely high occupancy rates for the past three decades, consistently between 95-96 percent as compared the state of Nebraska's 90.5 percent occupancy. The 2008-2012 American Community Survey (ACS) estimates show a slightly lower 92 percent occupied rate, with a 1 percent homeowner vacancy rate and 7 percent rental vacancy rate. However, more current local data shows that the rental vacancy rate is 2 percent, which is lower than the ACS estimates. Hays had the highest occupancy rate of 93.4 percent, but Kearney was higher than the previously stated MIAA cities average of 88.3 percent.

Table 3. Occupancy Status Trend, Kearney

Occupancy Status	1990	2000	2010
Total housing units	9,372	11,099	12,738
Occupied housing units	8,973	10,549	12,201
Vacant housing units	399	550	537
U.S. Census 1990, 2000, 2010			

### Kearney's 20-year Tenure Trend

The City of Kearney had been incredibly consistent between its mix of owner and renters in each of the previous recordings. The renter-occupied population is larger than most Nebraska communities, but Kearney is bound to see a more transient population with the University of Nebraska at Kearney. As Table 4 depicts, each decade reports building a similar number of housing units and the mix between ownership and renters has remained 56/44 split with more owners. The MIAA cities confirmed and resembled Kearney's statistics that averaged a 54/46 split in 2010.

### Owner and Renter Differences

As for household sizes and their differences, Kearney's average household size for owner-occupied residence was 2.56, whereas the average household size of renter-occupied was 2.1, and the citywide household size was 2.52 persons per household in 2010. Kearney had over 18 percent of 2010's total housing, or 2,284 units, owned 'free and clear' of mortgages. The average household sizes for the MIAA cities confirmed that Kearney was consistent with the other university cities as they averaged 2.46 per owner-occupied unit and 2.09 per renter-occupied unit.

As a whole, the City of Kearney had an average household size of 2.36, and the average family size was 2.96 per household. Seventy percent of both renter- and owner-occupied housing units were 1-person or 2-person households which is in line with the national trends of aging population of 'empty nesters' and couples who had fewer children than previous generations.

Table 4. Housing Tenure Trend, Kearney

<b>Tenure of Occupied Housing</b>						
<b>Year</b>	<b>1990</b>		<b>2000</b>		<b>2010</b>	
Additional housing units		+1,727		+1,639		
Total housing units	9,372		11,099		12,738	
Occupied housing units	<b>8,973</b>		<b>10,549</b>		<b>12,201</b>	
Owner-occupied housing units	4,971	55.4%	5,955	56.5%	6,904	56.6%
Renter-occupied housing units	4,002	44.6%	4,594	43.5%	5,297	43.4%

U.S. Census 1990, 2000, 2010

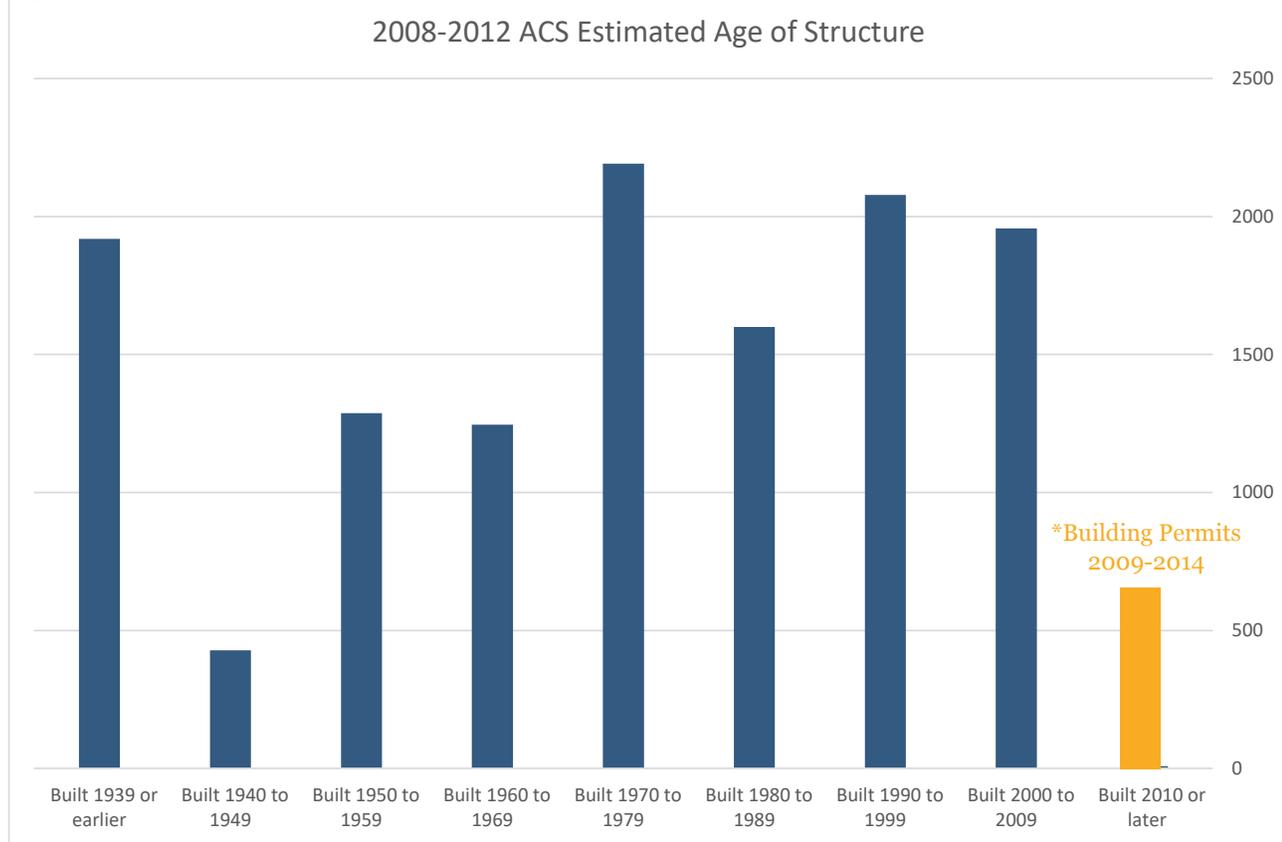
### Age of Structure

The age of developments typically dictates the style or type of housing stock a community has available. Kearney has an established downtown business district as well as the core neighborhoods to represent previous generations and numerous architectural styles. Kearney also has had consistent growth and change of housing stock. As a result of steady growth and construction, neighborhoods usually have one style or specific age of structure.

Another way to view Kearney’s age of structure chart would be the remodeling cycles and its effect on the local economy. Construction materials have a lifespan and can warrant remodeling, removal, and modifications of certain homes. For example, replacing a roof after 15-20 years can be expected and found within neighborhoods of a particular age.

Figure 7 shows the estimated number of housing units built per decade. However, the 2012 estimates were insufficient for post-2010 housing construction. The lack of data was

Figure 7. Age of Structure Estimates, Kearney



2008-2012 ACS estimates, 2009-2014 City of Kearney Building Permits



supplemented with City building permits issued between 2009 and 2014, with 151 multi-family permits and 494 single family permits for a total of 645 housing units. Kearney has more housing stock built after 1970 as a percentage of total housing than the other peer cities. More details about recent building trends and projections will be addressed in the Achieve Chapter.

### Housing Stock

In Table 5, the 2009-2013 estimates show Kearney’s housing stock consists of 59.5 percent, or 7,752 one-unit, detached housing units, the most traditional housing unit found throughout Nebraska. Townhomes, or one-unit attached, consist of roughly 6.1 percent of the housing market. Compared to other Nebraska communities, Kearney has more variety of housing stock, primarily in the form of multiple unit structures with apartment buildings that appeal to the rental sector and university students.

When compared to Mid-American Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA) cities, more diverse housing options are available for the similar reasons of rental and university student population. For example, Emporia, Kansas has more large complexes than Kearney with higher percentages in 10 to 19 units and 20 or more units. The most comparable cities to Kearney are Hays, Kansas and Jefferson City, Missouri that have percentages spread from one-unit housing to 5 to 9 units. Joplin, Missouri has the largest one-unit, detached percentage with 74.5 percent.

### Housing Value estimates

Early in the planning process, the steering committee believed the median price (as shown in Table 7) for an owner-occupied housing unit was out-of-date and did not represent the current housing market. The following information was shared with the consultants by a local realtor as supplemental information. From Table 6, it is apparent that the housing market and average prices rose substantially in conjunction with the 2012 increase of building permits and ensuing housing ‘squeeze.’ The 2006 inflation-adjusted Average Price is \$148,594, which is \$42,879 below the 2014 Average Price. Despite not having the statistics, the cost of purchasing a lot has also increased. Therefore, the following average prices should be expected with a lack of available houses for sale and a significant number of available lots that have not sold.

Table 5. Housing Units in Structure

<b>Housing Units in Structure, 2013 estimates</b>		
Kearney city, Buffalo County, Nebraska	Estimate	Percent
<b>UNITS IN STRUCTURE</b>		
<b>Total housing units</b>	<b>13,023</b>	<b>13,023</b>
1-unit, detached	7,752	59.5%
1-unit, attached	800	6.1%
2 units	772	5.9%
3 or 4 units	777	6.0%
5 to 9 units	984	7.6%
10 to 19 units	480	3.7%
20 or more units	644	4.9%
Mobile home	814	6.3%
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	0.0%
American Community Survey, 2009-2013		

Table 6. Recent Housing Prices Trend, Kearney Real Estate, 2006-2014

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
# of Houses Sold	710	650	589	411	432	430	466	434	529
Average Price	\$126,540	\$131,614	\$133,159	\$147,825	\$156,663	\$159,303	\$165,314	\$180,412	\$191,473

Source: Local Realtor

### Price Comparison among Nebraska peers

There were many discussions comparing Kearney housing to other Nebraska communities. Comparing the housing between Omaha, Lincoln, and Grand Island is difficult due to factors such as infrastructure and available amenities. A statewide, in-depth analysis would be needed to understand and adjust for each housing market. As a developer had stated, Kearney’s quality of construction materials, the City’s expectations for developments, buildings, and provided infrastructure make Kearney’s housing market more appealing to any buyer despite the higher housing prices.

Table 7. Housing Value Comparison, 2009-2013

Subject	Kearney		Grand Island		Omaha		Lincoln	
	Estimated # of units	%	Estimated # of units	%	Estimated # of units	%	Estimated # of units	%
<b>VALUE</b>								
Owner-occupied units	7,124		11,498		97,747		60,500	
Less than \$50,000	818	12%	1,087	10%	6,280	6%	2,755	5%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1,009	14%	3,997	35%	20,097	21%	8,731	14%
\$100,000 to 149,999	2,183	31%	3,349	29%	33,590	35%	21,510	36%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,485	21%	1,617	14%	16,429	17%	13,190	22%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	1,195	17%	1,130	10%	13,273	14%	9,873	16%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	348	5%	225	2%	5,601	6%	3,391	6%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	86	1%	93	1%	2,046	2%	818	1%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0.0%	0	0%	431	0%	232	0%
Median (dollars)	\$141,000		\$108,100		\$133,500		\$143,200	
2009-2013 ACS DP04								

It may be surprising to some that Kearney has higher housing prices than Omaha and similar to Lincoln. However, the steering committee and residents continued to support and repeat the statement ‘you get what you pay for.’ Despite the lagging time frame of the 2009-2013 American Community Survey, the following report shows the estimated price that the land and the housing unit had previously sold for in the past 60 months of the last survey received from 2013. Kearney’s median household estimate of \$141,000 is ten thousand dollars lower than the realtor’s report. However, the average house sales may be inflated due to high-end priced housing that sold during this period.

### Price Comparison among MIAA peers

Kearney’s Median Household Value was comparable with two of the five MIAA cities (Hays, Kansas and Jefferson City, Missouri) as shown in Table 8. Hays had a higher Median Household Value of \$148,400. The composition of housing stock between Kearney and Hays is very similar, but Hays had an evenly spread distribution with higher percentages of its high end housing price points. Kearney faired well, in the majority of the pricing brackets, when compared to the five MIAA communities. In particular, Kearney had the highest percentage of housing priced between \$200,000 and \$300,00. The Median Household Value average of the five MIAA cities was \$111,200, The other three cities (Joplin, Missouri, Emporia, Kansas, and Pittsburg, Kansas) had Median Household Values estimated below \$100,000. Each of these communities had over 37 percent of its housing stock estimated between \$50,000 and \$99,000 to affect their entire housing stock pricing.



Table 8. Housing Value Comparison, 2009-2013, Comparable MIAA Cities

Subject	Kearney, NE		Hays, KS		Jefferson City, MO		Joplin, MO	
	Estimated # of units	%						
VALUE								
Owner-occupied units	7,124		4,756		9,991		11,811	
Less than \$50,000	818	12%	317	6%	451	23%	1,453	12%
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1,009	14%	760	16%	2,057	37%	4,487	38%
\$100,000 to 149,999	2,183	31%	1,344	28%	3,559	15%	2,993	25%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	1,485	21%	1,173	25%	1,648	16%	1,461	12%
\$200,000 to \$299,999	1,195	17%	727	15%	1,450	7%	814	7%
\$300,000 to \$499,999	348	5%	384	8%	648	1%	399	3%
\$500,000 to \$999,999	86	1%	36	1%	143	0%	157	1%
\$1,000,000 or more	0	0%	15	0%	35	0%	47	0%
Median (dollars)	\$141,000		\$148,400		136,400		\$99,600	
2009-2013 ACS DP04								

### Monthly Housing Costs

#### Owners

The 2009-2013 ACS estimates show 62 percent of the housing units in Kearney are two- and three-bedroom units. Much like the housing unit values, the ACS 2009-2013 5-year estimates report that Kearney’s \$1,309 mortgage payments are similar to Omaha and Lincoln. Seventy-five percent of Kearney’s owner-occupied units pay between \$1,000 and \$1,999 per month.

After comparing Kearney’s costs to the other MIAA cities, Kearney had the most in common with Hays, Kansas. These two cities were the top two of monthly costs compared to the other four cities. Kearney (74.3%) and Hays (66.5%) had more than 60 percent of the monthly rents above \$1,000 per month. With the fewest number of mortgages under than \$700 per month, almost all (96%) of Hays’ population pay \$700 or more per month in mortgage rates. Not surprisingly, Hays Kansas had the highest percentage (15.5%) of the monthly mortgage category of \$2,000 and above.

#### Renters

It is expected that rentals would account for some of the two- and three-bedroom units. One bedroom housing units account for an estimated 11 percent or 1,433 housing units. The gross rents are estimated at a median cost of \$681 per month. As the percentages show, roughly 78 percent pay between \$500 and \$999. After comparing rents to the MIAA cities, Kearney’s gross rent (\$681 per month) was consistent with Pittsburg, Kansas (\$671) and Joplin, Missouri (\$684). Hays, Kansas was lower (\$614) while Emporia, Kansas and Jefferson City, Missouri were both below \$600 month.

To account for different wages and markets, a concerning statistic and trend among the university towns are the amount of the renters that spent a quarter or more of their household income on gross rent. In Kearney the percentage was 61.8, while 39.7 percent of renters reported to have spent 35 percent or more of their household income for rent. Similar trends were found within MIAA cities, in fact Kearney was fourth of the six communities. The highest was Pittsburg, Kansas (71.9%) and Jefferson City, Missouri was the lowest (51.7%) spending 25% or more of their household income on rent.

[section 2.4]

## ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT

As mentioned before, Kearney has benefited economically from its location. The amount of traffic along I-80 has provided Kearney with a tremendous amount of economic stimuli and growth. With the large post-secondary university and the numerous amenities, Kearney is an enticing place to raise a young family. Likewise, Kearney is also a great place to retire with the desired amenities for the retiring Baby Boomer population. Kearney’s ability to provide elder-friendly services and medical services will need to continue or expand services in order to provide for this migration of retirees.

In the next ten years, the nation will experience a massive shift in its workforce. As mentioned previously, the Baby Boomers have shaped American lives throughout their lifetime. This large population created capacity situations for school systems as they grew up, and impacted the national job market with such a large workforce. Now that the Baby Boomers have reached retirement age, the national housing market continues to shift in order to accommodate this population. As the Baby Boomers continue to retire, another a large age group, the Millennial Generation, begins to enter the workforce. It is expected that this workforce shift will result in changes in technology and how business is conducted.

Kearney’s economic sustainment is their sales tax resulting from a strong retail business presence, while their future rests with the advancement of technology and research. As the previous sections have mentioned, populations, housing, and economic development are interconnected. This economic and employment section will examine income statistics, industries and occupations, workforce commuting, and poverty.

### Employment

Kearney has a large workforce with over eighteen thousand civilian workers. There is also an additional workforce that commutes into the city as well. According to the Nebraska Department of Labor, the total civilian labor force for Kearney in December, 2015 was 18,516 of which 18,142 were employed and 374 were unemployed. The unemployment rate was 2.0% percent.

Table 9. Labor Force Table, December 2015

<b>Kearney Employment Status</b>	
Civilian labor force	18,516
Employed	18,142
Unemployed	374
Unemployment Rate	2.0%
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, Local Area Unemployment Statistics	

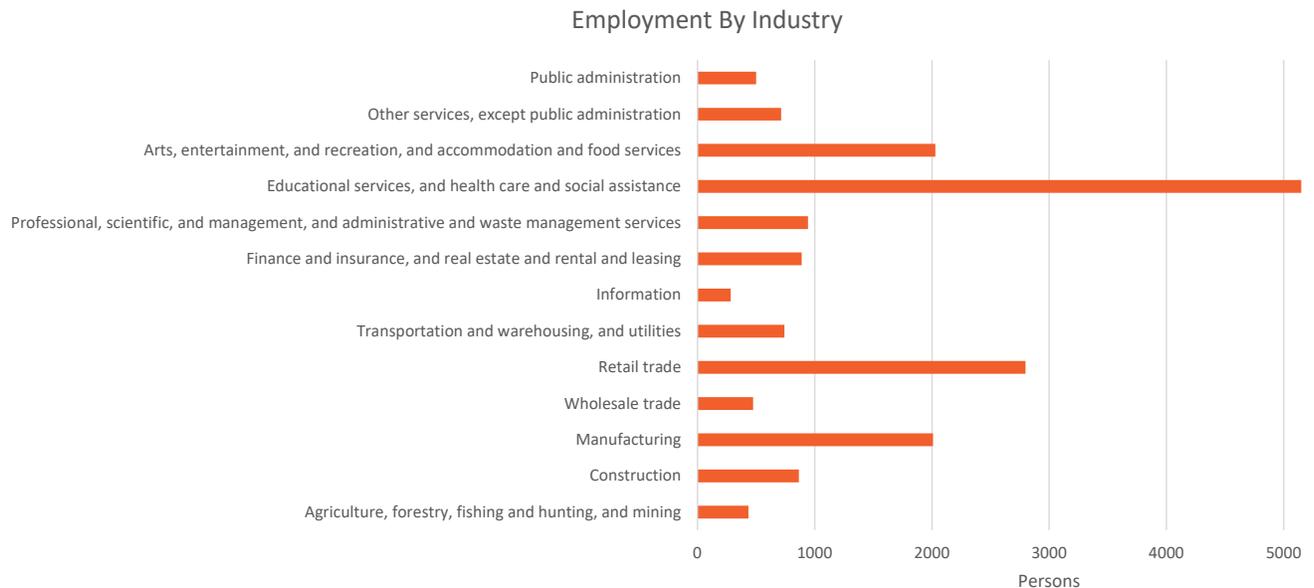


## Employment by Industry

Kearney has a large educational services, health care, and social assistance industry compared to other Nebraska communities, but is comparable to other MIAA cities.

This combined industry has multiple major employers that encompassed a quarter of Kearney's employment. The educational services include the public school system as well as the University, the health care includes two large hospitals, and social assistance includes a large retirement community. Kearney is also the Buffalo County seat employing additional county

Figure 8. Employment by Industry, Kearney



American Community Survey, 2009-2013

staff, as well as state and regional offices for the various districts and counties. Retail is also important to the City because of the sales tax. Kearney has historically done well in sales tax per capita and became a regional retail magnet. As shown in Figure 8, the arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services industry works well with the successful retail opportunities. The hotel convention centers, high-end recreational facilities, and entertainment opportunities provide employment opportunities and experiences for travel-based industries throughout the year. Manufacturing is also a large employer in Kearney.

Some of the largest employers are the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Good Samaritan Hospital, Kearney Public Schools, Kearney Regional Medical Center, West Pharmaceutical Services, Baldwin Filters, and Eaton Corporation.

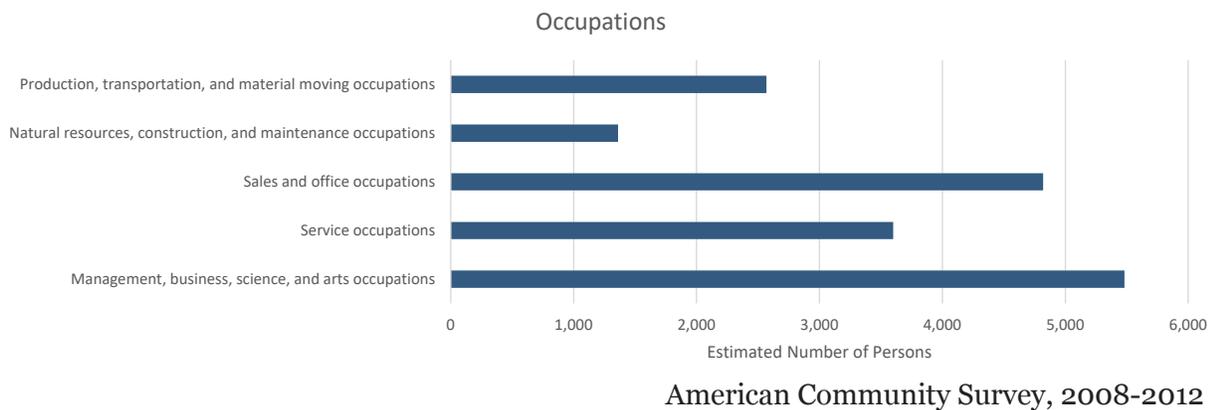
When compared to the other MIAA cities, Joplin, Missouri resembled Kearney's industries within one or two percent of all but one sector. The bigger discrepancies were Joplin had slightly higher professional industry (+2.0%) and lower educational services (-3.4%). Hays, Kansas also resembled Kearney's industries with more Manufacturing (+5.1%) but less Agriculture (-2.8%) and Educational services (-2.5%). Kearney (15%), Joplin (15.0%) and Hays (14.7%) were the top three in Retail trade.

The City partners with the Economic Development Council of Buffalo County to bring further employment opportunities to the community. The most recent success is the formation of the technology park, which was a result of this collaborative effort between these entities.

## Occupations

Kearney’s diverse regional economy includes substantial employment in management and business as well as sales and office occupations. As Figure 9 depicts, management, business, science, and arts occupations are the largest with 5,452 or 31.4 percent of the employed population. It is not surprising that sales and office occupations follow in a close second with the large amount businesses associated with retail. Service occupations, the third largest employment sector, can be associated with Kearney’s growing hospitality industry as well as businesses associated with retail. After comparing Kearney’s occupations with other university cities in the MIAA, it was determined that Joplin, Missouri heavily resembled Kearney. Hays, Kansas also was similar with slightly more service and sales occupations in their workforce.

Figure 9. 2012 Employment by Occupations, Kearney

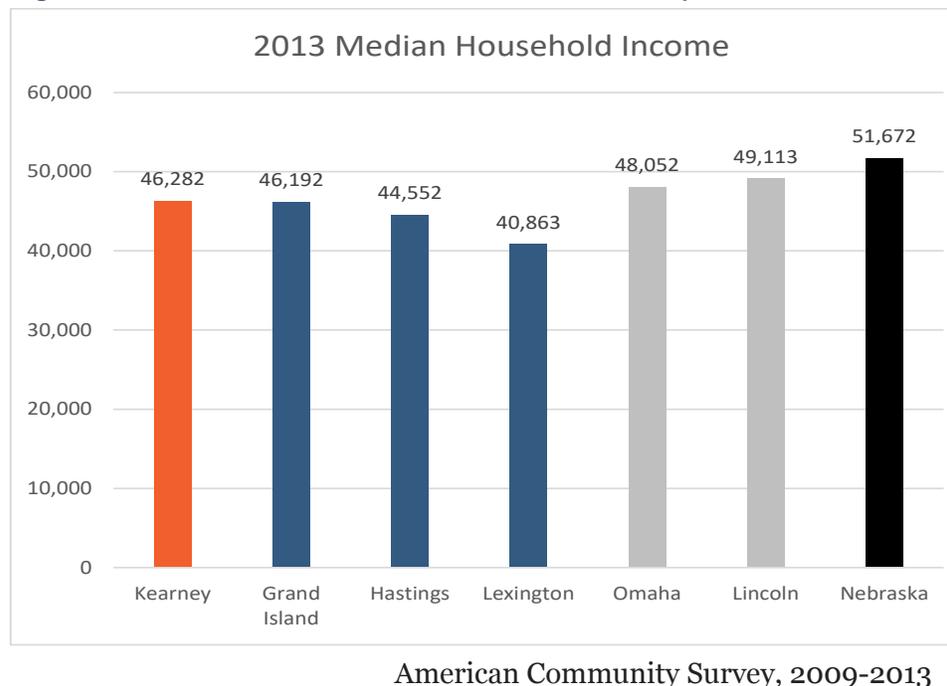


## Income Statistics

Household incomes are symbolic of the entire community. Of the estimated 12,147 households, the median household income was \$46,282 in 2013 estimates. During this same time frame 13.4 percent of the Kearney population reported making less than \$15,000 a year.

The state of Nebraska’s 2013 Median Household Income was \$51,672 while Omaha and Lincoln had over \$48,000. Kearney’s \$46,282 median household income was higher than Grand Island, Hastings, and Lexington as shown in Figure 10.

Figure 10. 2013 Median Household Income, Kearney





## University of Nebraska at Kearney

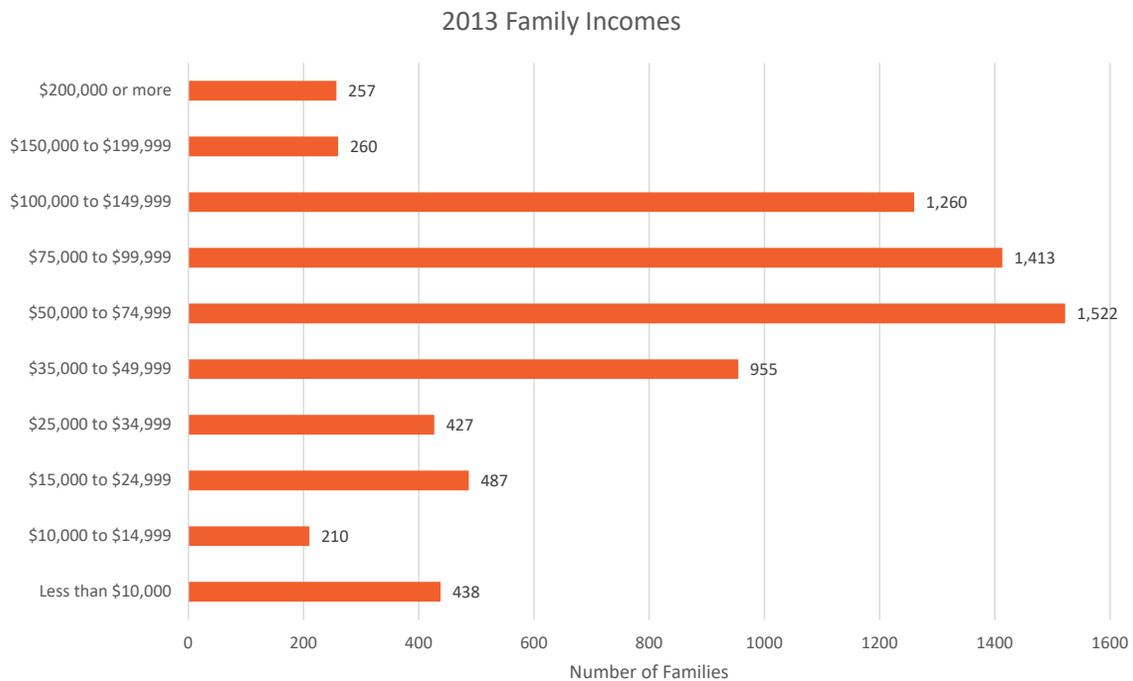
To address the concern of college students affecting the census data and income statistics, college students living in university dormitories are not factored into the median household incomes. However, students living off-campus (alone or with non-related roommates) can have an effect on the median household income. A report on this population and its effect was compiled in 2011 and determined that college students living off-campus affected each community differently. The traditional estimates that the American Community Survey produces do not report or adjust its statistics for this demographic. Therefore, it can be viewed as a perceived percentage of people living under the poverty level. In the 2011 report, the percentages went down after the individual city's college student living off-campus were removed from the equation. Each university community was affected differently which depended on the size of a university/college as well as the size of the community. Nationwide, the percentage changes were between 3.5 percent and 34.7 percent. Kearney's estimated change was 5.4 percent which brought the higher, perceived 17.3 percent living below the poverty level down to 11.9 percent of the population.

### Family Income

Although the median family income typically includes a second income and is normally higher, it may also represent a single parent with a dependent child. Even with the higher median income of \$67,015 a year, there are a considerable number of people in low-income family households. 15 percent of Kearney's 7,229 families (over a thousand families) make less than \$25,000 a year. To compare nationally, there are 13.2 percent of family households that earn less than \$25,000 a year. This comparison to national percentages do not factor cost of living into consideration. College students who chose to live in their family's home are included in family statistics, not individual incomes.

Figure 11 depicts the breakdown of Kearney's 2013 median family income. The bottom categories of this graph shows a true need to be filled. These Kearney families may need additional support from other entities, such as non-profit and charitable organizations.

Figure 11. 2013 Median Family Income, Kearney

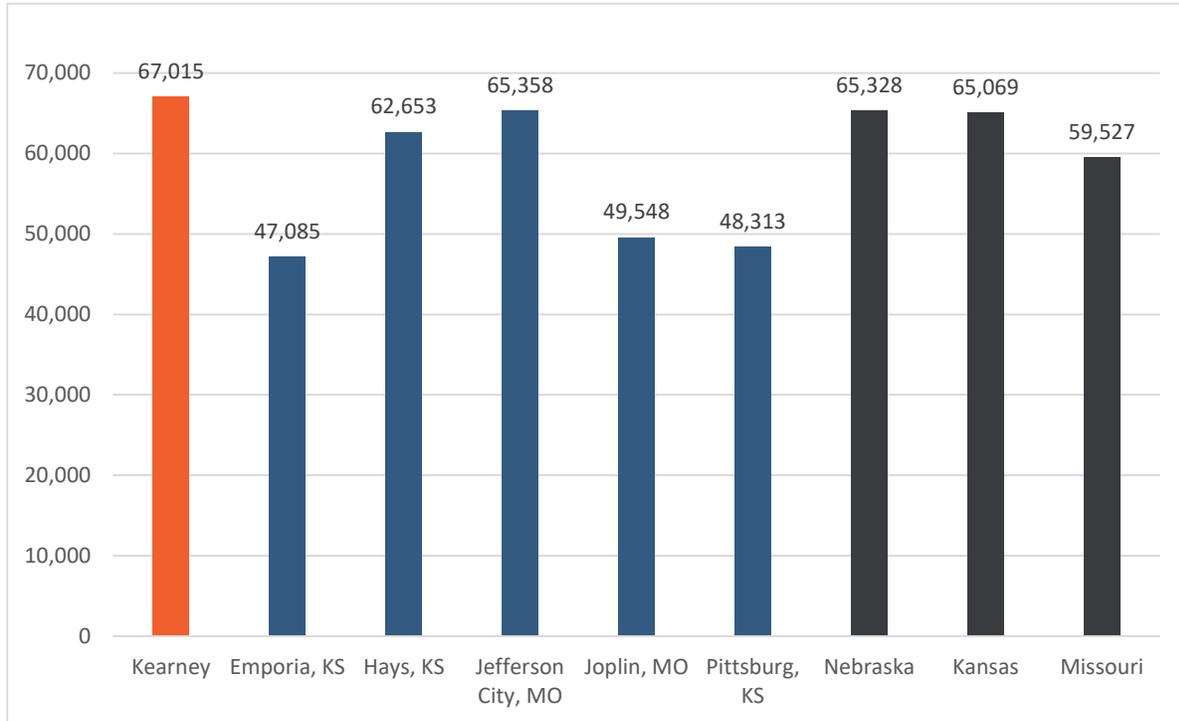


American Community Survey, 2009-2013

As depicted in Figure 12, Kearney had the highest median family income compared to other MIAA communities and neighboring states they reside. Jefferson City and Hays were comparable to Kearney but Emporia, Joplin, and Pittsburg were much lower. One reason for this could be more single-income families in those particular cities.

### Current Workforce Training

Figure 12. 2013 Median Family Income, MIAA Comparisons



American Community Survey, 2009-2013

At the time of the 2015 focus group meetings, it was mentioned and referenced that Kearney is currently experiencing a traditional skills mismatch. Lower paying jobs will continue to exist, but the approach of the employers and the necessary training opportunities can help the workforce move up into another salary category and fill the employment gap. Kearney had 400 jobs available and 400 unemployed people that did not have the required skills for employment.

A recent example of what Kearney has accomplished to remedy this mismatch is the approach of the technology park which will soon be generating its own workforce by training people with little to no experience. This endeavor is underway due to recent contracts with local businesses and the support of the local and federal government. The technology sector will train its workforce, but as stated earlier, there will remain 400 other openings that are not filled. Not all of the job vacancies are skills mismatch, but the University of Nebraska at Kearney and Central Community College may need to adapt or offer different training than their current curriculum.

### Workforce Commuter Trends

The following 2013 commuting trends compiled in Table 10 are answered by residents that live within Kearney and do not represent the entire workforce outside of Kearney's jurisdiction. According to the Census Bureau's 2006-2010 county to county worker flows, Buffalo County received an impressive 3,743 workers who reside in another Nebraska county. Of the 3,743 inbound workers, 3,201 come from adjacent counties (Adams, Custer, Dawson, Franklin, Hall, Kearney, Phelps, and Sherman) and can be considered local or expected on a daily occurrence.



Kearney County, with an estimated 1,076 workers, was the highest amount of inbound workers coming to Buffalo County. It also could be sorted to estimate where Buffalo County workers may seek employment elsewhere outside of the county. There were four counties with more than 150 Buffalo County residents (Adams, Dawson, Hall Kearney, and Phelps). It is estimated that almost 100 Buffalo County residents claim their workplace in Lancaster County. Hall County had the highest amount of Buffalo County workers with 770. The top counties that Buffalo County attracts more outside county workforce than losing them to other counties are Kearney (805), Sherman (283), Dawson (168), and Franklin (131). Likewise, the counties that Buffalo workforce loses to other counties are mainly Hall (-175) and Phelps (-96) and Lincoln (-57).

It is expected that workforce in adjacent counties will make daily commutes to work in Buffalo County and work in or near the Kearney area. The balance between the adjacent counties is 1,143 workers commuting daily to Buffalo County. Workforce in other counties, such as Franklin and Gosper, may also travel to Buffalo County on a regular basis but it is difficult determine how far commuters are willing to go on a daily basis since these counties would be generally be over 40 minutes one way and do not resemble their county's commute times.

Table 10. Commuting to Work Estimates, Kearney, 2009-2013

COMMUTING TO WORK	Persons	Percent
Workers 16 years and over	17,665	
Car, truck, or van -- drove alone	14,231	80.6%
Car, truck, or van -- carpooled	1,625	9.2%
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	72	0.4%
Walked	792	4.5%
Other means	290	1.6%
Worked at home	655	3.7%
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	13.1	
ACS 2009-2013 5-Year Estimates (DP03)		

Not all Nebraska residents can live and work in the same town. Kearney has that luxury, as can be seen with the 13 minutes of travel time to work. However, like most Nebraska cities, the overwhelming number of residents drive to work alone. It is estimated that 80.6 percent of residents, accounting for over 14,200 vehicles carry only individual to work while a promising 9.2 percent carpool. Over 4 percent walk to work and almost another 4 percent work at home. ACS 2009-2013 5-year estimates show that 5.2 percent, or 633 residents, have no vehicle available to them. Kearney is comparable to other Mid-American Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA) cities with single-occupancy drivers while Emporia (14.8%), Jefferson City, and Joplin had higher percentages of carpooling. Very few MIAA communities, less than half of a percent, used public transportation. Hays and Kearney both had the highest percentages of walked to work and worked at home. As for the mean travel time to work, Kearney had the second best time among the Mid-American Intercollegiate Athletics Association (MIAA) cities, behind Hays, Kansas who was estimated at 11.2 minutes.

## Sales and Fiscal Profile History

In 1990, the City of Kearney had a local sales tax rate of one percent. After failing the first time to increase the local sales tax by one-half percent, the City continued to gather information from the public and began to educate the general public about the limitations of their budget. People began to tell them what they wanted and when the vote came up again, the residents voted for the extra half-cent sales tax to fund Capital Improvement Projects. This additional funding has given its residents many amenities and improvements throughout the City since April 1, 2006. The sales tax is another good example of Kearney’s progressive view to the future. As stated previously, the City’s demonstrated commitment to fiscal responsibility is available to view on their website.

## City’s Fiscal Responsibility

Kearney City staff are committed to transparency and encourages citizens to visit the website frequently. The City posts budgets online to show residents how, when, and where their money is spent. There are even detailed monthly capital improvement updates for the half cent sales tax.

*The City’s property tax rate on real and personal property is \$0.13736 per \$100 of assessed value. In other words, the owner of a \$100,000 home would pay the City \$137.36 in property taxes. Buffalo County sets the assessed valuations, sends the property tax statements, and collects the taxes due.*

Table 11 compared 2015 property tax rates of first class cities, Kearney has the lowest property tax rate of \$0.13736 per \$100 of valuation, compared to Lexington (\$0.36151 per \$100 of valuation), Grand Island (\$0.36875), and Hastings (\$0.45624). Other first class cities along I-80 include as comparison are: Sidney (\$0.43579), Ogallala (\$0.45513), North Platte (\$0.45054), York (\$0.19048), and Seward (\$0.33698). Kearney and York are positioned #1 and #2 because of sales tax generated and less demand on property owners. Compared to 2014, Kearney and North Platte decreased their tax rates, York and Hastings did not change, while the rest of the first class cities increased their rates.

## Sales Tax Trend

Kearney has garnered a very successful sales tax per capita and making the community an anchor in central Nebraska. Moreover the community has gradually grown to be able to approach and land the right businesses to provide a balanced economy and a focal point between Denver and Omaha.

Table 11. 2015 Property Tax Levy Comparison

2015 PROPERTY TAX LEVY	
NEBRASKA FIRST CLASS CITIES	
CITY	PER \$100 OF VALUATION
KEARNEY	0.13736
YORK	0.19048
SCOTTSBLUFF	0.21600
NORFOLK	0.24667
GERING	0.29952
MCCOOK	0.31904
COLUMBUS	0.32519
SEWARD	0.33698
FREMONT	0.34776
BEATRICE	0.34777
BLAIR	0.35790
LEXINGTON	0.36151
GRAND ISLAND	0.36875
SCHUYLER	0.36901
ALLIANCE	0.37772
WAYNE	0.39893
SOUTH SIOUX CITY	0.39912
HOLDREGE	0.40597
CHADRON	0.42252
SIDNEY	0.43579
NORTH PLATTE	0.45054
PAPILLION	0.45192
OGALLALA	0.45513
HASTINGS	0.45624
NEBRASKA CITY	0.46181
PLATTSMOUTH	0.49186
CRETE	0.52500
LAVISTA	0.55000
RALSTON	0.60660



*Sales Tax Trend*

While shared previously, Kearney’s relatively small community provides a lot of amenities not found in other communities of 30,000. Its success in retail makes it one of the best in sales tax per capita. The Kearney Chamber and Buffalo County Economic Development Council have been successful in recruiting and retaining anchors to provide the entire region with the opportunity to spend their money in Kearney.

*Pull Factor*

Pull Factor compares the community’s success with sales tax per capita with the State standard. The pull factor is set to 1.0 and represents whether the community loses or gains the sales tax market.

- X < 1.0:** Money is lost or spent outside of the community
- X = 1.0:** Equal amount of money is spent in town as it is outside
- X > 1.0:** More money is spent in town than outside the community

In Table 12, Kearney had a pull factor of 1.82 in 2014, which means that Kearney “kept” citizen’s money spent at local businesses as well as captured or brought in a substantial amount of money from outside the community.

Table 12. Pull Factor Trends, 2008-2014, Kearney

State of Nebraska				
Year	Sales Tax Collected	Population estimates	Sales tax per capita	Pull Factor
2014	\$1,273,945,737	1,881,503	\$677	-
2013	\$1,238,620,040	1,868,969	\$663	-
2012	\$1,180,983,343	1,855,487	\$636	-
2011	\$1,149,921,488	1,842,232	\$624	-
2010	\$1,092,315,735	1,826,341	\$598	-
2009	\$1,068,021,739	1,826,341	\$585	-
2008	\$1,112,482,518	1,826,341	\$609	-
2010 Census and 2012 ACS 5 year estimates for population				
Kearney				
Year	Sales Tax Collected	Population estimates	Sales tax per capita	Pull Factor
2014	\$39,930,487	32,469	\$1,230	1.82
2013	\$38,677,743	32,239	\$1,200	1.81
2012	\$37,367,708	31,922	\$1,171	1.84
2011	\$35,490,879	31,341	\$1,132	1.81
2010	\$33,848,193	30,787	\$1,099	1.84
2009	\$32,702,809	30,787	\$1,062	1.82
2008	\$33,201,096	30,787	\$1,078	1.77
2010 Census, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014 ACS 5-year estimates, Nebraska Department of Revenue Reports				

Another part of Kearney’s success is its lodging opportunities and hospitality businesses which generate additional lodging tax for Buffalo County and the City of Kearney. Historically, Kearney’s lodging tax was 2 percent since 1981. However in 2008, the lodging tax increased to 4 percent. These additional funds are used in visitor promotional and improvement funds. With Kearney’s history and regional attractions, this additional funding will continue to help generate more visibility to attract conventions and events held throughout the year. Table 13 reveals Kearney’s success in retail sales in Buffalo County. In 2014’s statistics from the Department of Revenue, Kearney accounted for 94% of Buffalo County’s Sales Tax.

Table 13. 2014 Sales Tax by Business Classification, Buffalo County

<b>Buffalo County</b>	<b>2014</b>	<b>Net Taxable Sales</b>		<b>Nebraska Sales Tax</b>
<b>Business Classification Code</b>	<b>Number of Businesses</b>			
Buffalo County				
11 Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	35	\$933,146	0.1%	\$51,323
23 Construction	170	\$15,602,333	2.0%	\$863,991
31-33 Manufacturing	55	\$12,798,695	1.7%	\$754,487
42 Wholesale Trade	79	\$80,094,231	10.4%	\$4,405,184
44-46 Retail Trade	647	\$388,503,039	50.5%	\$21,416,452
48-49 Transportation & Warehousing	56	\$7,012,313	0.9%	\$385,646
51 Information	34	\$18,408,062	2.4%	\$1,012,444
52 Finance & Insurance	11	\$347,111	0.0%	\$19,091
53 Real Estate & Rental & Leasing	50	\$7,094,196	0.9%	\$399,705
54 Professional, Scientific & Technical Services	98	\$9,239,778	1.2%	\$508,189
56 Administrative, Support, Waste Management & Remediation Services	126	\$13,615,163	1.8%	\$742,183
61 Educational Services	17	\$317,100	0.0%	\$17,441
62 Health Care & Social Assistance	97	\$2,161,683	0.3%	\$118,893
71 Arts, Entertainment & Recreation	43	\$9,688,686	1.3%	\$537,941
72 Accommodation & Food Services	194	\$117,636,644	15.3%	\$6,472,617
81 Other Services	356	\$22,096,600	2.9%	\$1,219,418
92 Public Administration	26	\$8,637,843	1.1%	\$475,082
<b>Buffalo County Total</b>	<b>2,116</b>	<b>\$769,045,735</b>		<b>\$42,418,797</b>

Nebraska Department of Revenue Reports



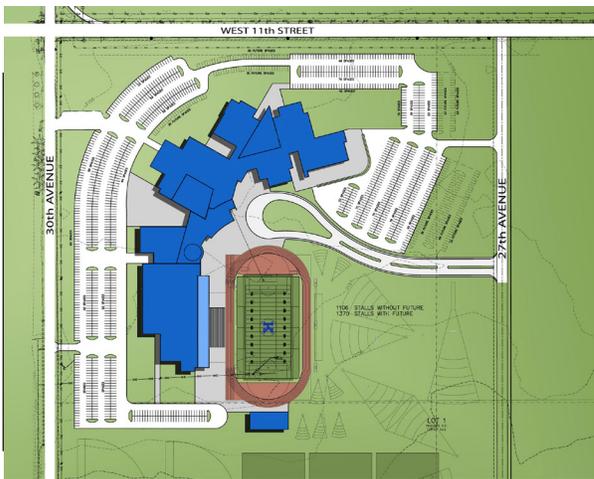
[section 2.5]

## PUBLIC FACILITIES & UTILITIES

### Educational Facilities

#### School District

Kearney Public School District serves approximately 5,300 students. Geographically, it covers the entire corporate limits of Kearney and reaches from Buffalo County, south into the northwest portions of Kearney County and northeastern portion of Phelps County. The geographic areas of the Kearney Public School District and the surrounding school districts are depicted in Map 1.

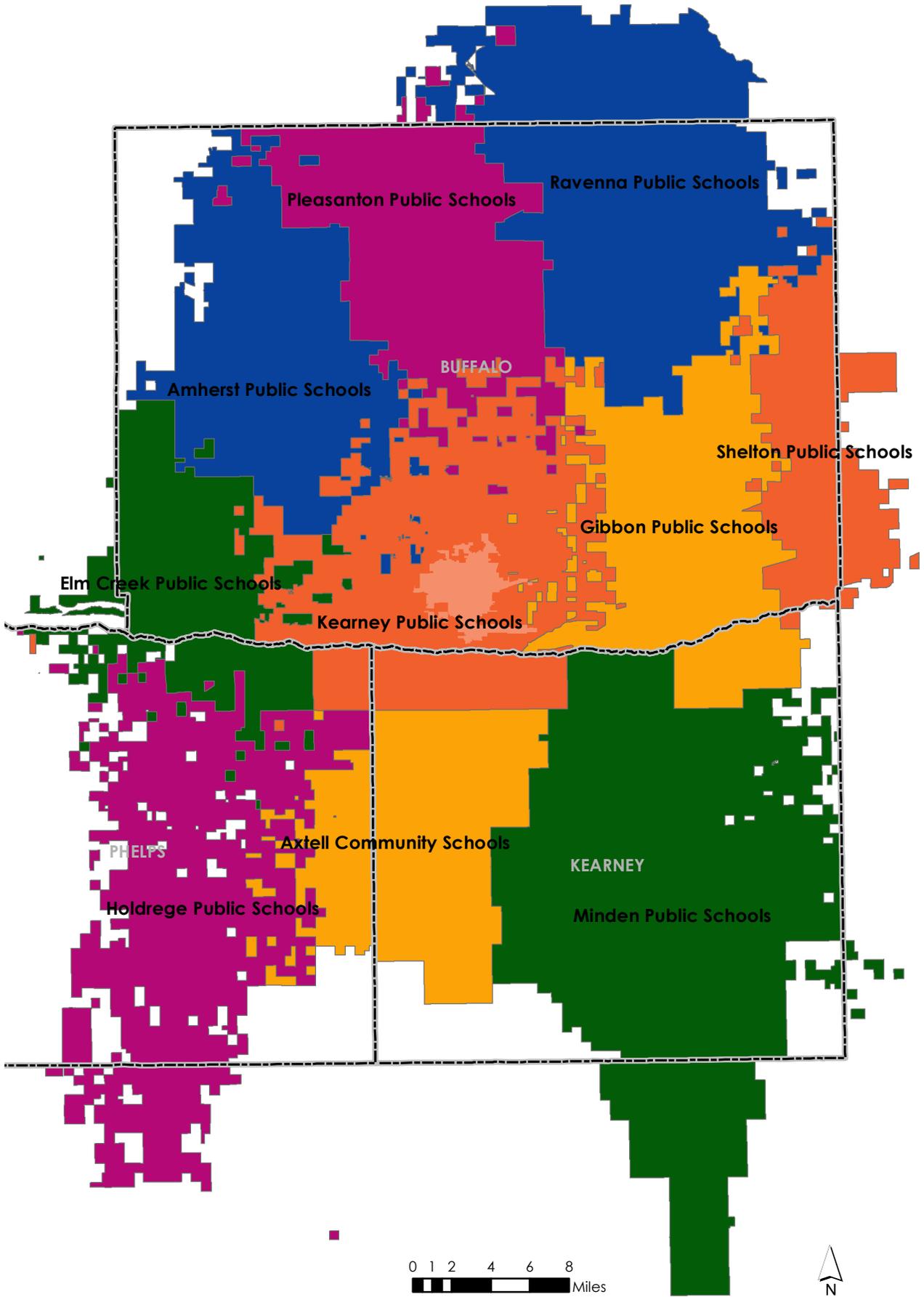


Layout of new High School site



Buffalo Hills Elementary, a recently built school in northern Kearney

Map 1... Generalized Kearney Area School Districts, KPS and Surrounding Districts Boundaries





## School Facilities

Kearney has an education system comprised of both public and private schools, as depicted on Map 2. Ten elementary schools, two middle schools, and one high school comprise the Kearney Public School System. Beyond the K-12 systems, there are many pre-kindergarten facilities, including one associated with the public school system. In 2013, the total enrollment of Kearney Public School District was 5,354 students. The school system has continually expanded its facilities to accommodate the City's growth. Some of the most recent growth includes the new Buffalo Hills Elementary School built in north Kearney and the new Kearney High School site located on the southeast corner of west 11th Street and 30th Avenue.

Kearney is also home to several private schools of religious affiliation including Kearney Catholic High School, which includes grade 6-12, Faith Christian School of Kearney, and Zion Lutheran School. The private school systems accounted for 582 students in 2013.



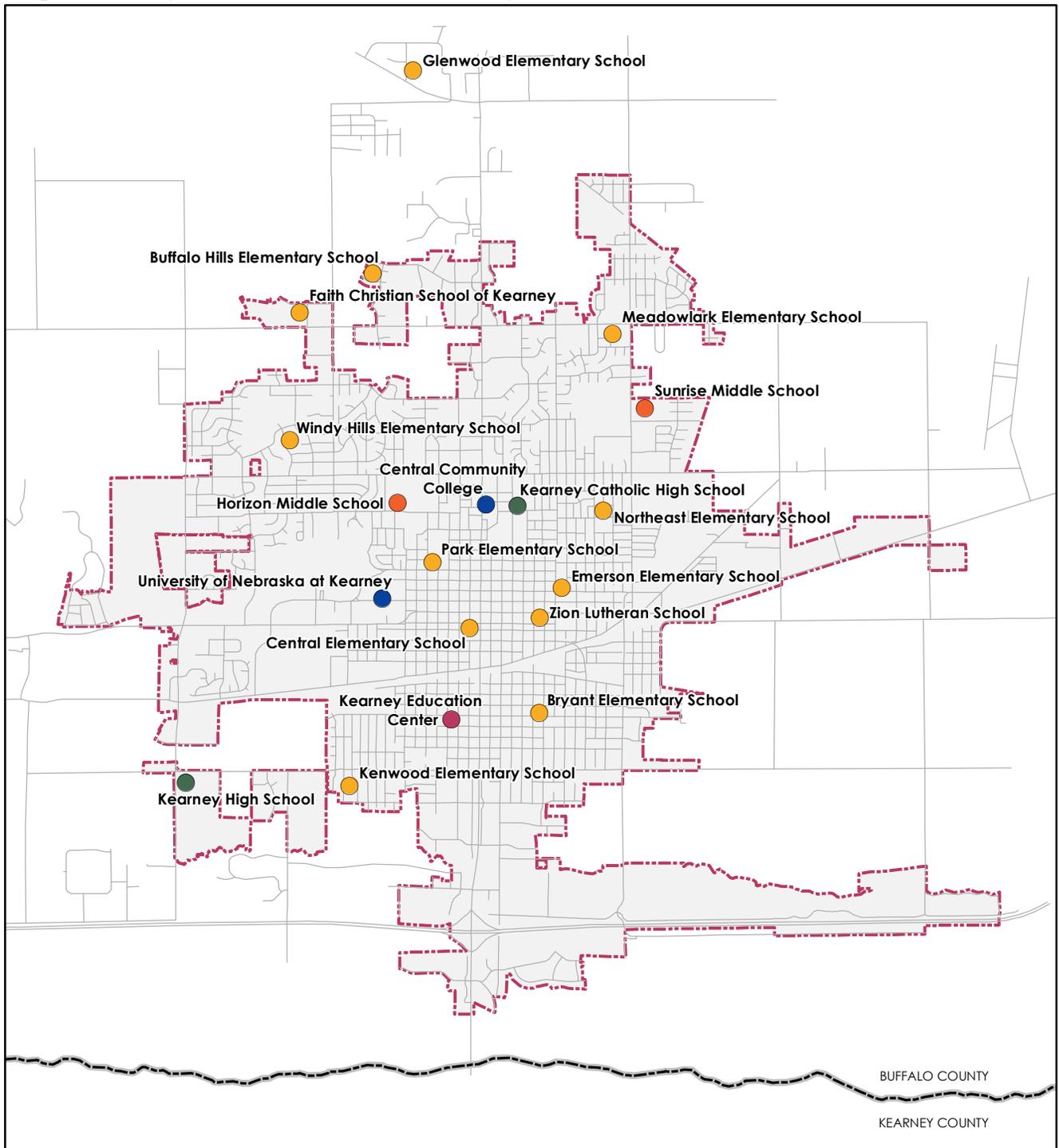
A bird's eye view rendering of the new Kearney High School (created by Wilkins Hinrichs Stober Architects)

## Kearney, the University Town

Kearney also has the benefit of having a university and community college within its city limits. The University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK), one of the four University of Nebraska institutions in the state, is located in the western half of the City along Highway 30. The enrollment at the university is approximately 6,900 students and the institution offers 120 undergraduate majors, 22 pre-professional programs, and 27 graduate programs. Central Community College (CCC), a two year public college, also has a campus in Kearney. CCC offers career and technical education programs, as well as an academic transfer program. All schools and colleges are located and labeled on Map 2.



Map 2... Kearney Public, Private, and Post-Secondary Schools



## Legend

### School Type

- Pre-Kindergarten
- Elementary School
- Middle School
- High School
- College

## Schools Kearney, Nebraska

Created by: TKC  
 Date: 9.30.15  
 Revised:  
 Software: ArcGIS 10.2  
 File: 110882.00

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## Health Care Facilities

As depicted in Map 3, Kearney is home to multiple health care and assisted living facilities, serving an array of patients. The two hospitals, CHI Health Good Samaritan Hospital and the Kearney Regional Medical Center, provide medical services not only to the residents of Kearney, but to many throughout the entire region. The hospitals are two of the largest employers in Kearney and a vital amenity for the community.

Four assisted living facilities are operated by the Good Samaritan Society in the City. These facilities include St. John's, St. Luke's, St. Luke's Countryside Villa, and Prairie View Gardens. Six other assisted living facilities are located in Kearney as well. In addition to these assisted living facilities, Kearney has been selected as the site for the new Central Nebraska Veterans' Home. This fully accessible, state of the art facility will be located at the intersection of 56th Street and Cherry Avenue. The Central Nebraska Veterans' Home will provide 225 bedrooms and many other amenities. All of these assisted living facilities offer varied levels of care for the aging population of Kearney and its surrounding area.

In addition to the assisted living facilities and hospitals, mental health care and alcohol and drug treatment is offered at the Richard H. Young Hospital. This facility is located in northwest Kearney.

Providing additional services to the elder population of Kearney and surrounding communities is the South Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging (SCNAA). This regional agency which exists to advocate and provide "supportive services and programs to older adults to allow them to live with independence, in their own homes for as long as possible," was initially created solely to serve the immediate five counties. Today, it encompasses 14 counties to include northern counties in the Loup River Valley. The office is located in Kearney along U.S. Hwy 30 and offers an array of support to the elderly population.

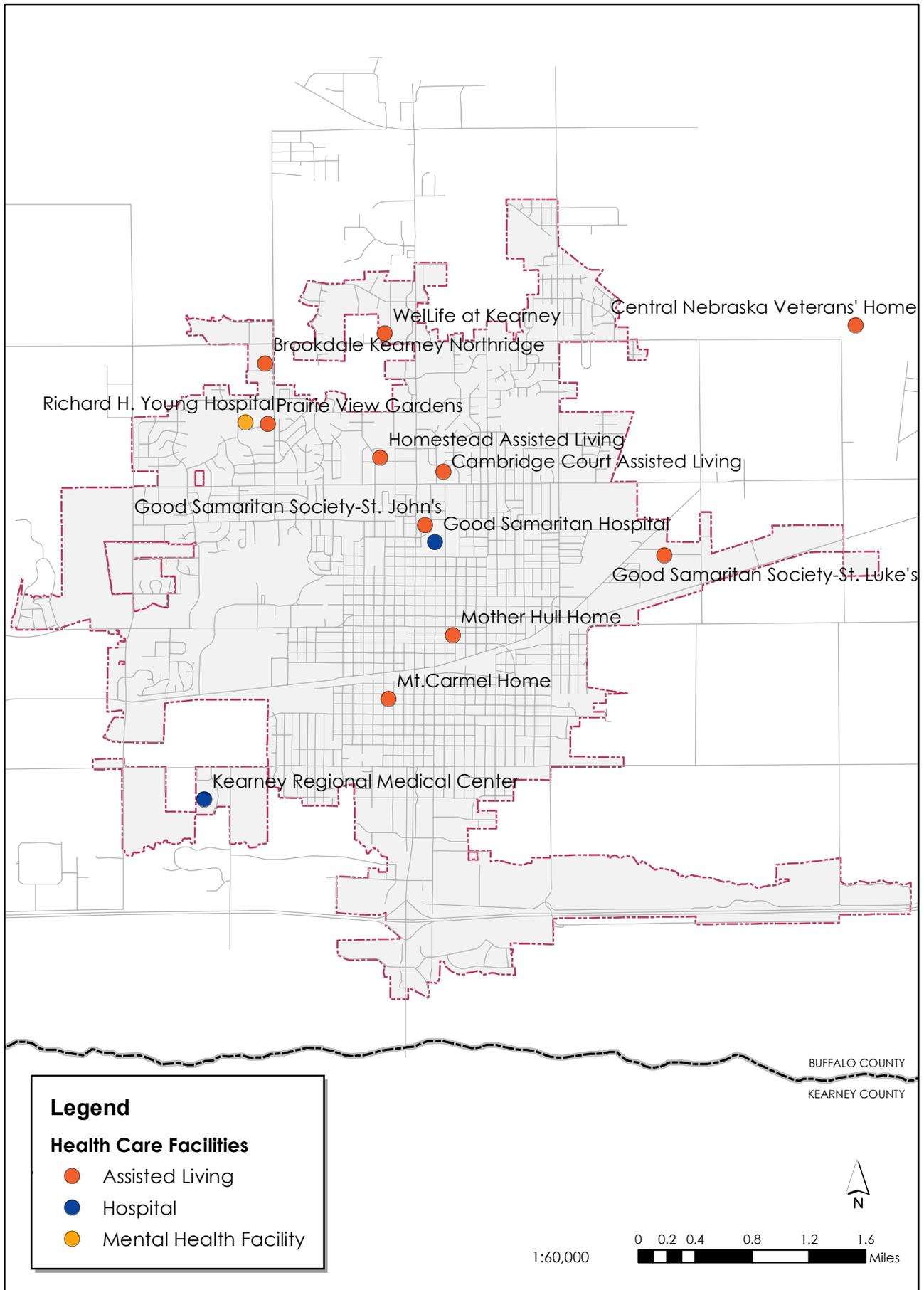


The west entrance of CHI Health Good Samaritan Hospital located at 32nd Street and 2nd Avenue

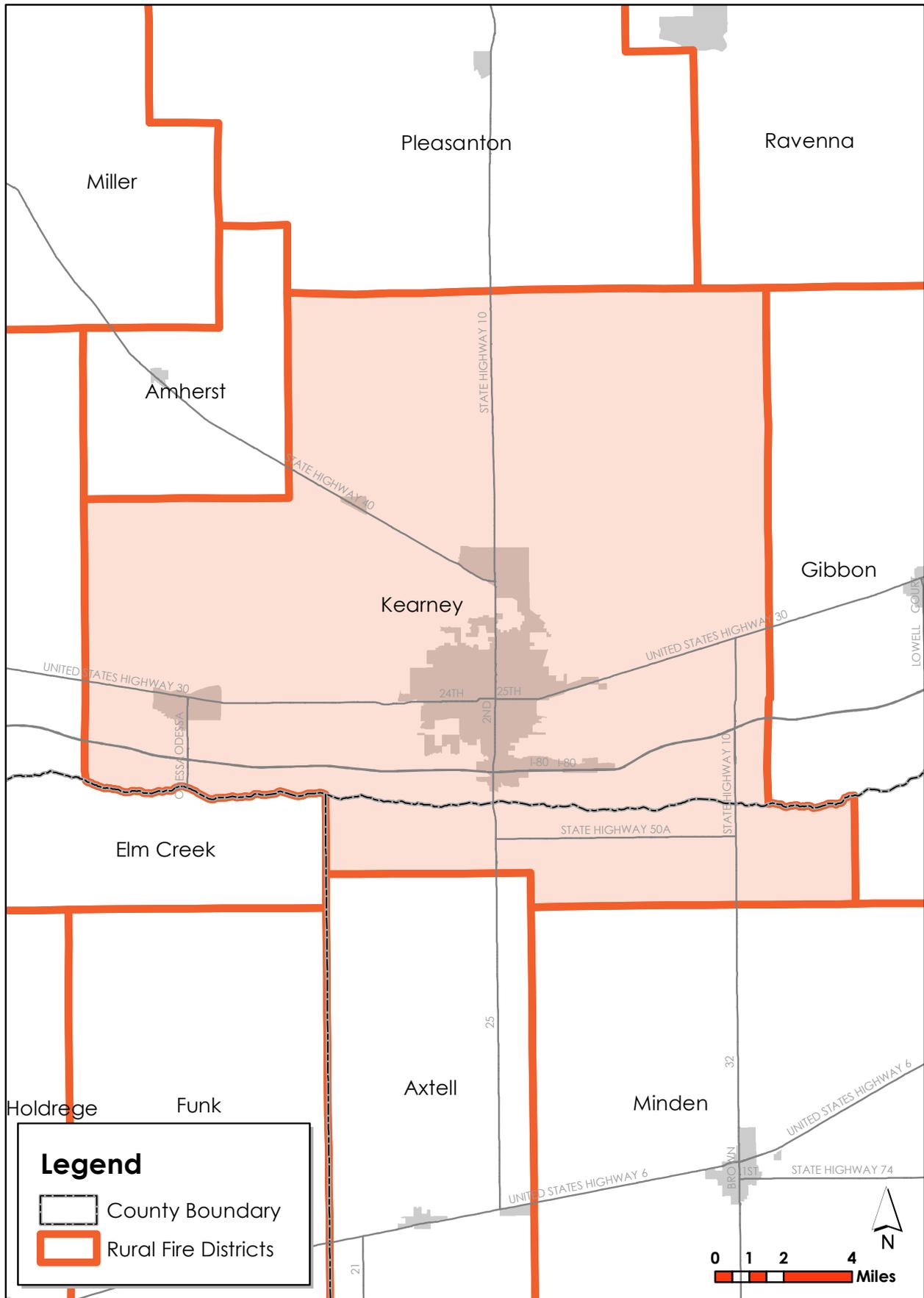


Brookdale Kearney Northridge, a senior assisted living community located in northwest Kearney

Map 3... Health Care Facility Locations, Kearney



Map 4... Rural Fire District Boundaries, Kearney and Surrounding Communities



## Fire Protection

Response time is important for fire protection. The locations of each fire station are strategically placed to help keep the response time. The Kearney Fire Department currently has an ISO Rating of 2, which is reflective of response time. The new location near the airport will further improve response times in northeast Kearney. The District covers a broad territory as the boundaries are shown in Map 4.



**Station 1 & Suburban Fire District #1**  
2211 Avenue A  
Kearney, NE 68848



**Station 2**  
3820 30th Avenue  
Kearney, NE 68845



**Station 3**  
5615 Airport Road  
Kearney, NE 68848



**Riverdale Station (Unmanned)**  
223 3rd Avenue  
Riverdale, NE 68870

## Police Protection

For the past quarter century, the City of Kearney and Buffalo County have combined their resources and consolidated into one building downtown. This has allowed the police department more flexibility with less focus on jurisdictions, overhead costs, and the avoidance of the duplication of personnel. The combined budgets offer more services, equipment, and opportunities such as participation in regional programs such as the South Central Area Law Enforcement Services (S.C.A.L.E.S.). The Police Department location is found in Map 5.



Patrol car in front of the Law Enforcement Center



## City of Kearney Facilities



### **Kearney City Hall** **18 E 22nd Street**

The City Manager and City Clerk Departments as well as the Code Enforcement Department, Development Services, and the Finance Department are all located in City Hall. The City Council Chambers is also within this building.



### **Kearney Public Library** **2020 1st Avenue**

The library's expansion and renovation, completed in April 2012, has allowed it to better serve the community with vastly increased space and resources.



### **Kearney Police Station** **2025 Avenue A**

The Kearney Police Department shares the Law Enforcement Center building with the Buffalo County Sheriff Department. As shown in Map 5, many city facilities are near downtown.



### **Kearney Volunteer Fire Department** **2211 Avenue A**

The Kearney Volunteer Fire Department has a total of four locations, two of which are outside the corporate limits, at Kearney Regional Airport and in the town of Riverdale northwest of the City. The Department's official records and primary operations center, Station 1, is located downtown.



### **Kearney Parks and Recreation Department** **2005 1st Avenue**

The Parks and Recreation Department building is located in downtown Kearney. The department manages 14 parks and offers a large variety of recreational and cultural opportunities for the community.



### **Kearney Utilities Department** **1220 E. 26th Street**

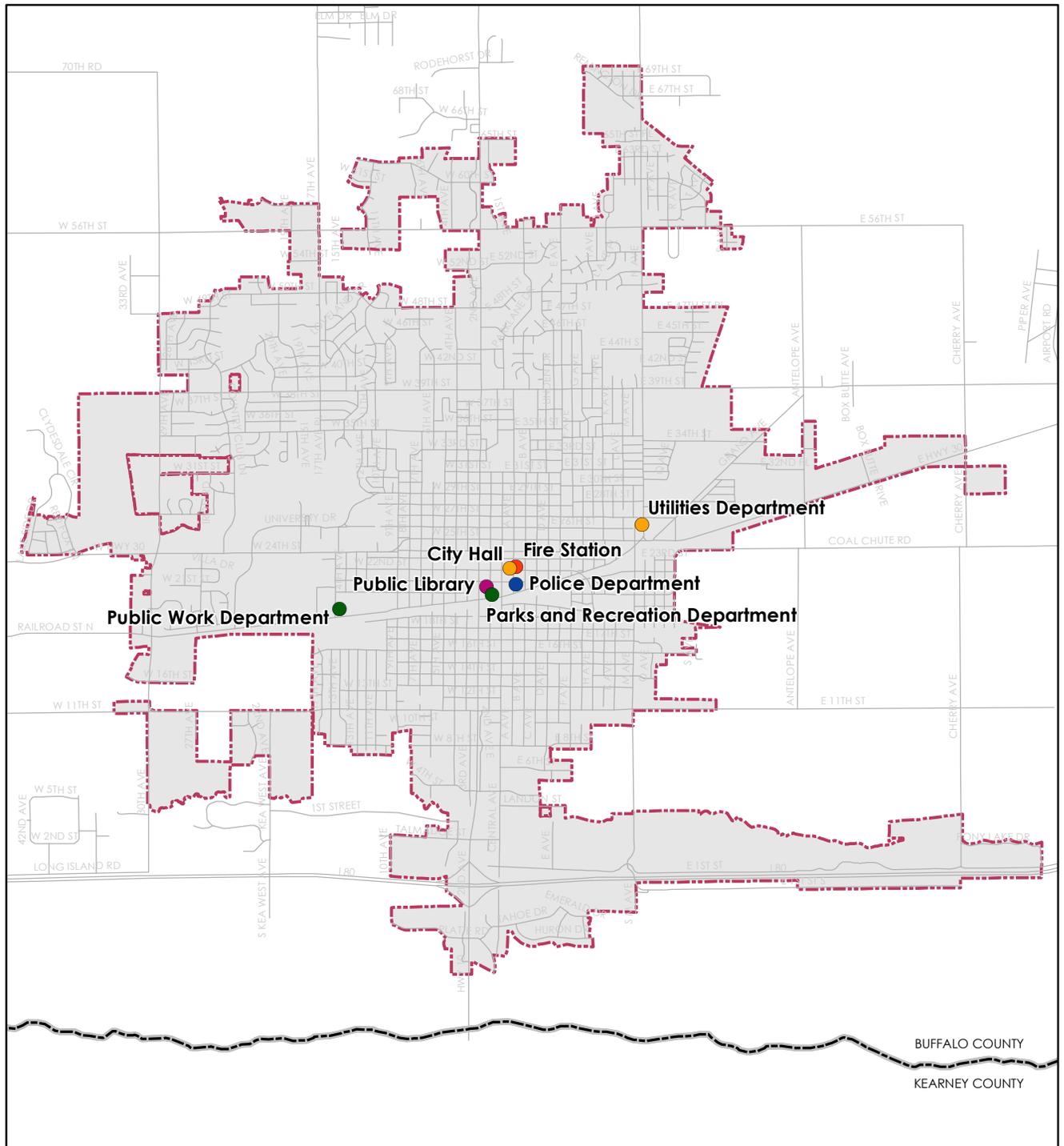
The Utilities Department provides the citizens of Kearney with water, sewer, sanitation, and landfill services. Divisions within the Utilities Department include the Recycling Center and Wastewater Treatment Plant.



### **Kearney Public Works** **1919 15th Avenue**

The Public Works Department maintains Kearney's infrastructure, streets, bridges, drainage, traffic control facilities. The Department frequently works with the NDOR, FHA, engineers, contractors, and Buffalo County on improvement projects.

Map.5... City Department Locations, Kearney



## Legend

### City Buildings

- City Hall
- Fire Station
- Parks and Recreation Department
- Police Department
- Public Library
- Public Works Department
- Utilities Department

## City Department Locations Kearney, Nebraska

Created by: TKC  
Date: 9.30.15  
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## Public Utilities

### Electric

The electric system is owned by the City of Kearney and operated by Nebraska Public Power District under a lease agreement.

### Natural Gas

The natural gas system is operated by Black Hills Energy and NorthWestern Energy and is supplied by Kansas-Nebraska Natural Gas Co.

### Water Services

The City of Kearney provides water service for the community. The water distribution system includes 145 miles of water main line and the water production system includes 24 wells, dual well fields for water source redundancy, three elevated storage towers, and six booster pumps. The City of Kearney's Water Master Plan identifies 16 inch water mains on the mile sections with 12 inch water lines at the half mile to support an 8 inch minimum grid distribution system. The budget includes many routine maintenance and improvement projects throughout the community to ensure quality of service. The City maintains a regular schedule of water sampling and testing to insure that the City's water quality meets or exceeds regulatory standards.

In 2016, total water storage in the system is 3,700,000 gallons. The water system can produce over 28 million gallons of water per day. Average consumption is 5.6 million gallons per day, or 3,888 gallons per minute, or a total of 2.04 billion gallons per year. This equates to an average use of 164 gallons per person per day. The City's website currently provides water conservation tips and the Central Platte Natural Resources District Hazard Mitigation Plan will address a number of water concerns, such as drought, dam failure, and flooding. More information about the water services can be found on the City's website under the Utilities Department. Kearney's section of the CPNRD Hazard Mitigation Plan can be found on the City's website under Public Safety Emergency Management.

### Sanitary Sewer and Wastewater System

The Kearney Wastewater system, operated by the City's Utilities Department, is responsible for collecting and treating municipal wastewater to standards established by the Environmental Protection Agency and the State of Nebraska. The plant is located southeast of the City near the Cherry Avenue Interchange on Interstate 80. The strategic placing of the treatment plant serves the current community and its potential growth.

The City maintains 163 miles of sewer lines and 17 lift stations that transport wastewater to the Kearney Wastewater Treatment Plant where an average of 3.82 million gallons of wastewater are treated each day. Once thoroughly processed to meet quality standards, the treated wastewater is released into the North Channel of the Platte River and, eventually into the main channel of the Platte River, east of Kearney.

### Future Infrastructure Development

A vital component to future growth is the ability to maintain current sanitary sewer lines. The current system has strategically placed various trunk lines to provide for more development throughout the City. Kearney has a Sanitary Sewer Master Plan to efficiently plan for future infrastructure extensions. This Master Plan calls for removal of lift stations to allow the system to operate only by gravity flow thus saving time and money on sanitary sewer maintenance. Planning sanitary sewer services is vital to the success of residential and commercial development as well as the health of the community. Substantial investments are needed for any community to install and serve development, especially for Kearney's serviceable growth areas. Unforeseen changes in development, such as the new high school, Veterans Home, or apartment complexes can dramatically shift priorities and affect timelines for installing new infrastructure. The Sanitary Sewer Master Plan is intended to reduce uncertainty, allow for

future development, and make efficient use of limited funds. The Master Plan can be found on the City’s website located on the Utilities Department’s home page.

### **Sanitation Services**

The Sanitation Division operates from fees charged and generates a self-sustaining annual budget of \$4.2 million. The City website has extensive information for city sanitation needs. The Sanitation Division is supported through various grants received from the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality, Nebraska Environmental Trust, Keep Nebraska Beautiful, and the Central Platte Natural Resources District.

The Sanitation Division includes trash, yard waste and recycling pickup services. This division also provides a household hazardous waste collection program and facility to keep harmful chemicals from landfills which also includes a “paint restore.” There are 17 trash routes that run from Monday to Friday and 16 recycling routes provide twice a month collection as part of a single stream collection which is separated at the recycling center. There are also fixed drop off sites strategically located throughout town. Other successful recycling efforts are the large-scale cardboard collection for commercial-focused services and educational institutions. Yard waste is picked up once a week during the spring, summer, and fall seasons. The annual sanitation report with statistics is posted on the City’s website under the Utilities Department.

### **Landfill Services**

Similar to sanitation services, landfill services also operates from a self-sustained budget of \$3.1 million, requiring no additional taxation of the community. The landfill is located northwest of Kearney at 6711 W. 56th Street. The landfill has an estimated 45 years of life left until it reaches capacity. Compost service is available, and various yard, and construction waste is accepted. The City website has information for the general public such as the banned items from landfills. Banned items can be subject to change, therefore, it is recommended that customers check the banned items list online before traveling to the landfill. The fees have remained unchanged at \$32.50 per ton and actually decreased for compacted loads at \$27.50 per ton. Again, the annual report with statistics are posted on the City’s website under the Utilities Department.

## **Energy Element**

### **Nebraska Energy Policy Overview**

#### **Nebraska Legislation LB997**

In 2010, the Nebraska Legislature passed LB 997 requiring all municipalities and counties, with the exception of villages, to adopt an energy element into their comprehensive plan.

Energy elements are required to have the following components:

- Energy infrastructure and energy use by sector
- Utilization of renewable energy sources
- Energy conservation measures that benefit the community

The following energy element is included within Kearney’s Comprehensive Plan fulfilling the requirement of LB 997.

#### **Nebraska Legislation LB436 - Net Metering**

The Nebraska Legislature passed LB436, which allows for net metering. Net metering is the process in which a citizen has the opportunity to generate their own energy and send excess energy onto the grid. The utility company purchases the excess energy from the customer through credits. Net metering was found to be in the public interest because it encourages customer-owned renewable energy sources. Net metering can stimulate economic growth, encourage diversification of the energy resources used, and maintain the low-cost, reliable electric service for the state of Nebraska.



Kearney’s electricity provider, Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD), has offered net metering since 2008. As of December, 31, 2014, NPPD has 40 net metering qualified facilities with a total generating capacity of 229.6 kilowatts. The total estimated amount of energy produced by these customer generators in 2013 was 299,530 kilowatt-hours (kWh), and the net received from them was 5,206 kWh.

**Energy Infrastructure**

Natural Gas Provider - NorthWestern Energy and Black Hills Energy

**Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD)**

NPPD provides electricity for the City of Kearney. NPPD is the state’s largest electric utility and serves about 80 communities at the retail level and provides electricity for about 600,000 people in Nebraska. The NPPD board committed in 2008 to generate 10 percent of their energy from renewable resources by 2020. NPPD secured 87 percent of its goal in 2014. With the completion of NPPD involved wind projects 312MWs of the 352MWs needed power generation was produced.



One of NPPD’s substations near the interstate interchange

Map 6 shows the approximate locations of the electrical infrastructure within Kearney. The City of Kearney is serviced by two loops of 115 kV, and 34.5 kV utility feeds from NPPD. NPPD has sufficient capacity to satisfy the current and future energy needs of Kearney.

**Kearney Hydro**

The Kearney hydroelectric facility has been in existence since 1886 and operational since 1921, making it the oldest hydroelectric facility in the state. The facility, an iconic facility adjacent to the University of Nebraska at Kearney campus, has one Westinghouse generator. Following the 1994 rehabilitation of its generator, water turbine, and control facility, it generates roughly 1,898 megawatt-hours (MWh) of electricity. The facility is expected to be operational for at least the next 30 years.



The hydroelectric facility adjacent to UNK campus

**House Heating Fuel**

As shown in Table 14, the vast majority of homes within Kearney are heated with either natural gas or electricity.

**Energy Consumption**

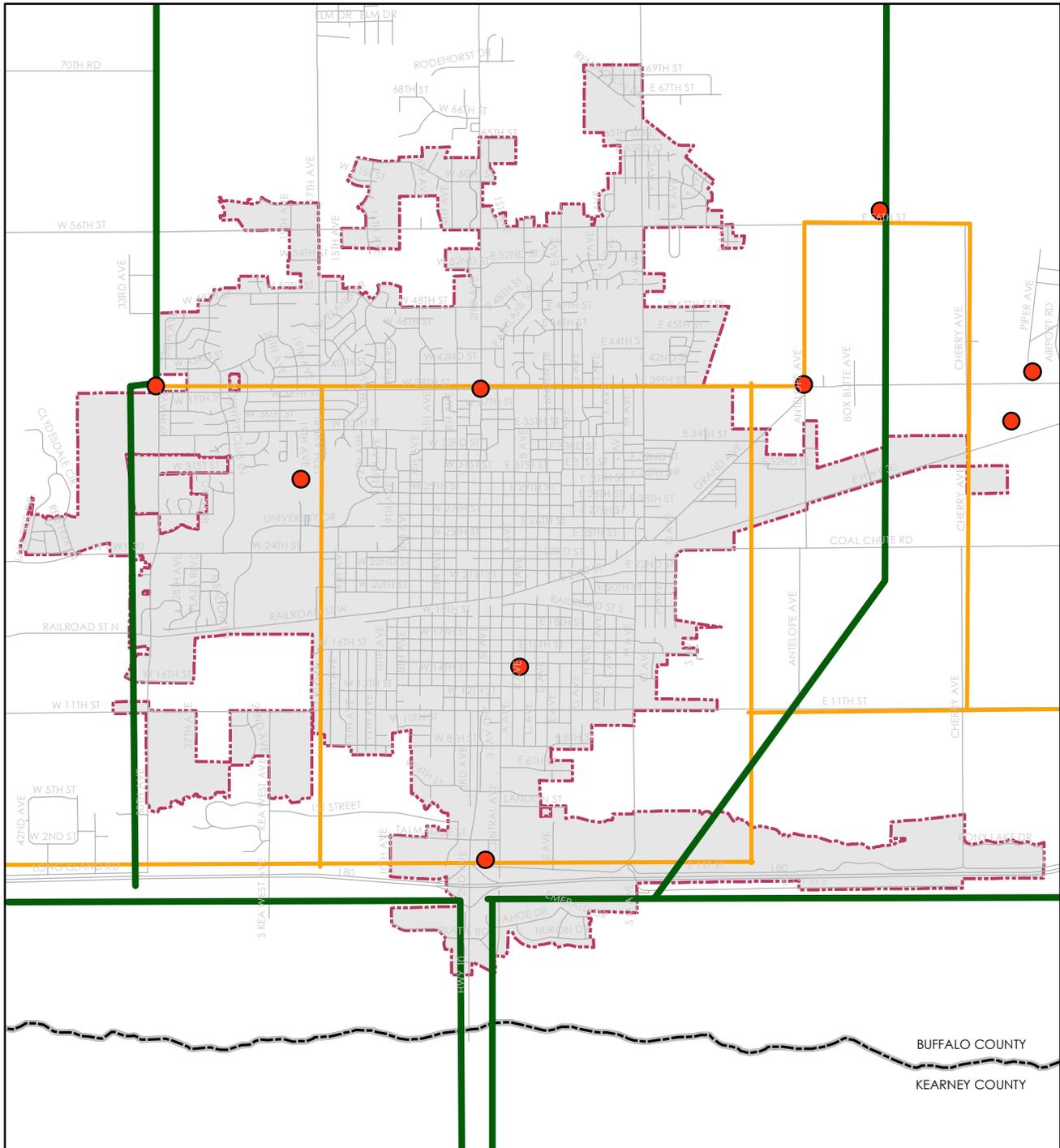
Table 15 shows Kearney’s electricity consumption in kilowatt-hours (kWh) by sector in 2003 and in 2013. The largest electricity consuming sector in Kearney is the commercial sector; followed by the residential and industrial sectors.

Table 14. House Heating Fuel, Kearney

HOUSE HEATING FUEL	Housing Units	Percent
Utility gas	8,065	68.3%
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	89	0.8%
Electricity	3,618	30.6%
Wood	23	0.2%
Other fuel	16	0.1%

American Community Survey 2009-2013 Estimates

Map 6... Generalized Power Line Locations, Kearney



## Legend

- Substations (Generalized)
- 115 kV Utility Feed (approximate)
- 34.5 kV Utility Feed (approximate)

## Generalized Power Line Locations Kearney, Nebraska

Created by: TKC  
 Date: 9.30.15  
 Revised:  
 Software: ArcGIS 10.2  
 File: 110882.00

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Consumption significantly increased in the residential, commercial, municipal, and street lighting sectors over the study period. Consumption decreased significantly in the industrial, municipal pumping, and irrigation sectors. The decommissioning of older wells may have led to the reduction in municipal pumping consumption while new residential structures can explain most of its sector increase.

Total consumption increased by 10.9 percent from 2003 to 2013. The trend of overall increasing energy consumption in Kearney is shown in Figure 13. Kearney, like the rest of the state, is steadily consuming more electricity every year. As electrical rates are based on peak use, it would be in Kearney’s best interest to increase energy efficiency and reduce peak consumption. This would reduce or delay the need for capacity and infrastructure upgrades; reducing investment costs for NPPD and decreasing rates for the residents of Kearney. The residential consumption increase can be explained by the increased number of housing units between 2003 and 2013. Each housing unit, based upon the 2013 American Community Survey, consumed an average of 10,729 kWh in 2013. Using the 2000 U.S. Census housing units for 2003 consumption rate, the consumption increased by 673 kWh per housing unit annually. With the current rate per kWh, this would increase a monthly bill by \$5. This ten-year increase is a reasonable cost since national rates are consistently higher than Nebraska Public Power District’s rates.

Figure 13. Electricity Use Trend, Kearney from 2003-2013

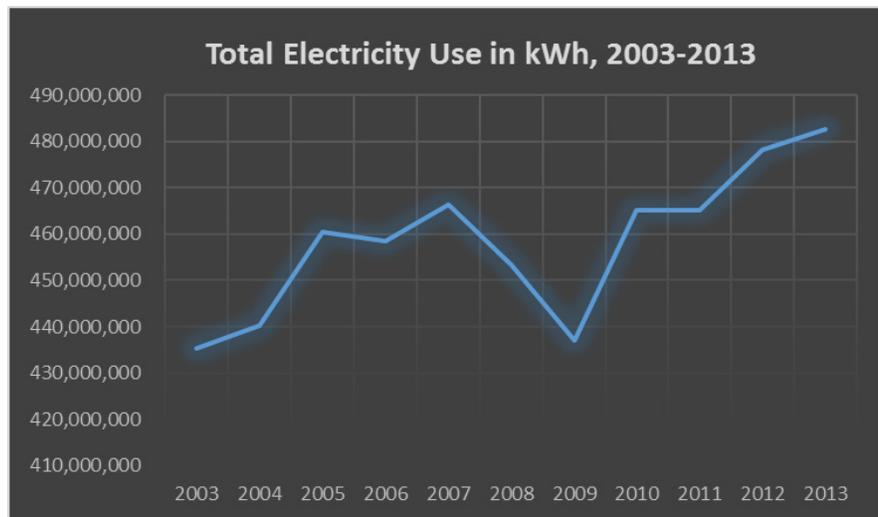


Table 15. Electrical Consumption in kWh by Year and Sector, Kearney

Sector	2003 Consumption	2013 Consumption	% Change
Commercial	185,635,760	211,430,826	13.90%
Industrial	115,842,208	108,413,253	-6.41%
Municipal Pumping	1,748,139	893,745	-48.87%
Other Municipal	16,307,311	20,960,040	28.53%
Public Street & Highway Lighting	2,568,528	3,112,545	21.18%
Rural Irrigation	1,559,505	1,264,182	-18.94%
Residential	111,611,274	136,663,316	22.45%
Total	435,272,725	482,737,907	10.90%

City of Kearney

## Opportunities for Energy Conservation

### *Benchmarking Opportunities*

Although benchmarking does not reduce energy consumption itself, it can lead to energy savings. Benchmarking a home, business, or government building allows the owner to see how their building compares to similar buildings across the U.S., track progress as energy improvements are made, and provides the opportunity to have their building certified by organizations such as the U.S. Green Building Council.

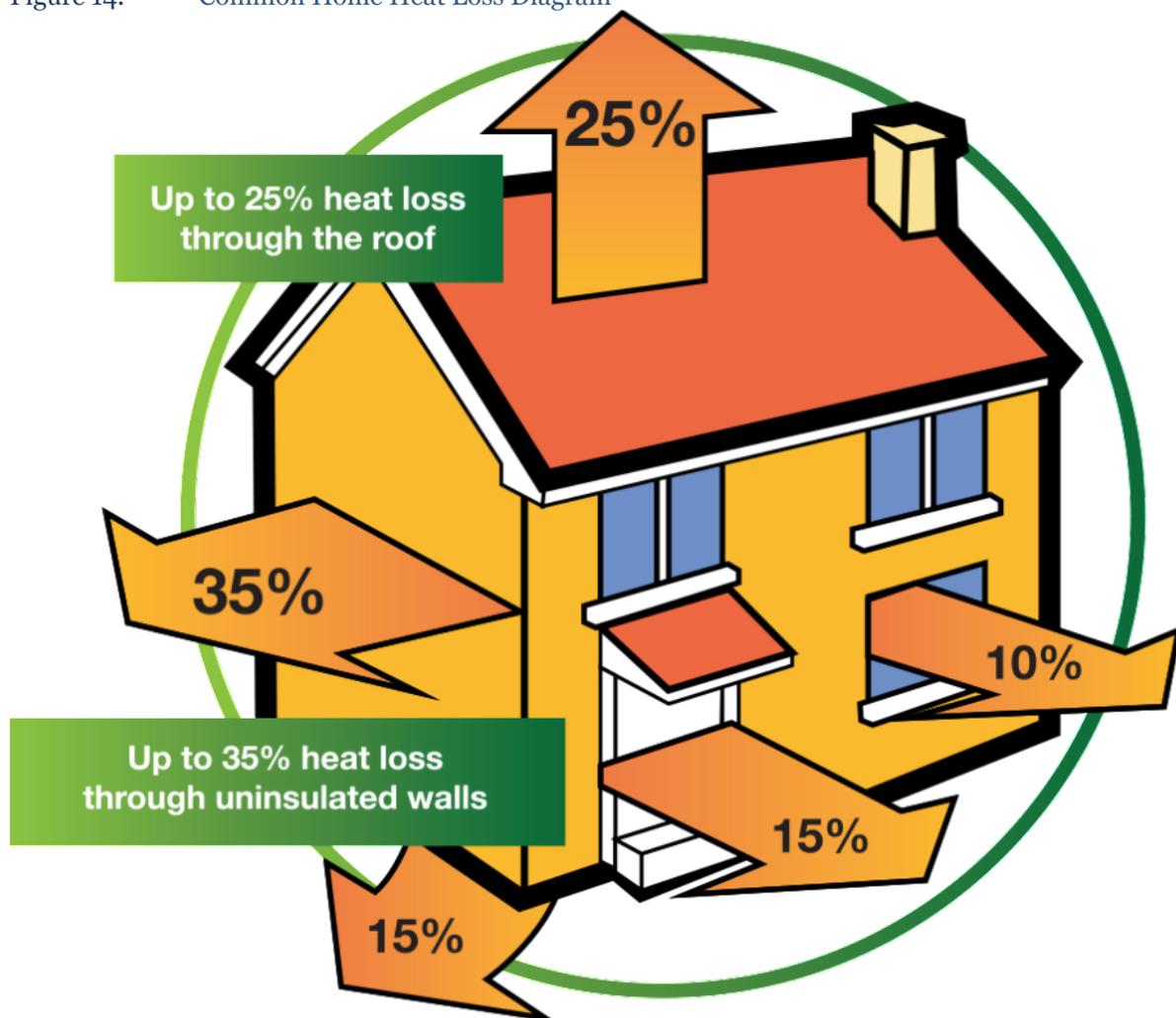


### *Building Efficiency Opportunities*

According to the American Community Survey (ACS), approximately 38 percent of the houses in Kearney were built before 1970; 15 percent before 1940. This cohort of homes presents an opportunity for Kearney to significantly reduce its energy use. In older homes, improvements in insulation, windows, appliances and lighting can cause them to be significantly more energy efficient and save the homeowner in energy costs. Figure 14 shows the common places houses lose heat. Up to 60 percent of heat loss is through the roof and uninsulated walls.

There are a number of programs and incentives available for homeowners and business that want to improve their energy efficiency. These programs and incentives are described in the education and funding sections on the following pages.

Figure 14. Common Home Heat Loss Diagram





### Transportation Opportunities

The average commute to work for the citizens of Kearney is 13 minutes (ACS 2012). Over 80 percent of commuters drive alone (ACS 2012). Transportation is a crucial emphasis to focus energy conservation efforts due to the high costs and energy consumed moving people from place to place.

As the number of alternative fuel vehicles increase, there will be a need for additional fueling stations, such as the electric charging station at Hy-Vee.

Table 16 shows how much energy Nebraska consumed in 2012 and how much money

Nebraska spent on energy in 2012. Even though transportation consumption was just under 23 percent of the total in 2012, Nebraska spent more money on transportation than residential, commercial and industrial energy uses combined. The Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards will nearly double vehicle fuel economy by 2025 to 54.5 miles per gallon. Without any action, this will lower fuel consumption per capita in Kearney.

Strategies to reduce energy use for transportation include: investment in trails, sidewalks, and multi-modal transportation infrastructure, encourage carpooling, and encourage local economic development to increase local jobs. Investing in active transportation infrastructure can also lead to a healthier community and improve the quality of life.

### Landscaping Opportunities

A well-designed landscape not only improves the aesthetics of a home or business, but it can also reduce water use and lower energy bills. According to the Nebraska Energy Office, a well-designed landscape saves enough energy to pay for itself in less than eight years. For example, when planted in the right spot, trees can provide shade from the sun in the summer and block the cold wind in the winter.

Kearney has been a Tree City USA for approximately 30 years. Tree City USA communities cut energy consumption by planting and maintaining a sustainable urban forest.

### Recycling Opportunities

Recycling preserves energy by reducing the energy needed to extract raw materials. For example, using recycled aluminum scrap to make aluminum cans uses 95 percent less energy than making aluminum cans from raw materials (EIA). Recycling also reduces the amount of solid waste dumped in the landfill, which saves the City money in tipping fees and allows landfills to stay open longer. The Kearney area saves about 180 semi-truck loads of bailed products from the landfill every year.

Table 16. State of Nebraska Energy Consumption, 2012

	 Residential	 Commercial	 Industrial	 Transportation	TOTAL
<b>ENERGY</b>					
	147.0	131.9	384.8	196.9	860.6
	17.1%	15.3%	44.7%	22.9%	100%
<b>COSTS</b>					
	1,390.3	990.5	2,289.5	5,423.0	10,093.3
	13.8%	9.8%	22.7%	53.7%	100%



Kearney has recycling drop-off sites as well as curbside collection. The Kearney Area Recycling Center collects and sorts the materials, and then sells the materials for hundreds of thousands of dollars each year. These funds help pay for the trucks, fuel, and other operating costs. The City of Kearney should continue to encourage and support recycling efforts.

### Opportunities for Renewable Energy Sources and Potential Tax Credits

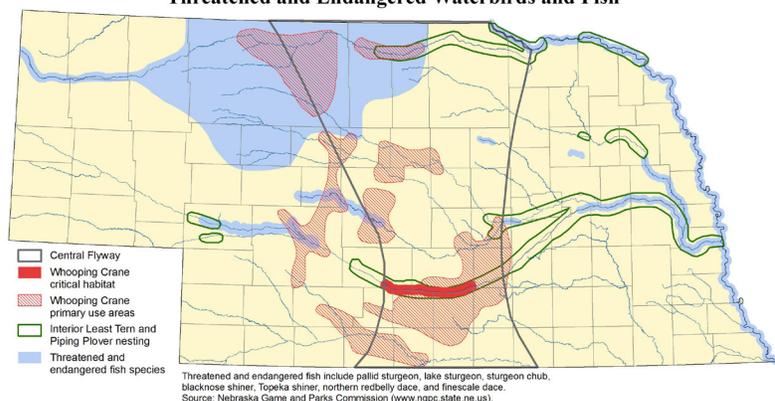
Nebraska is the only state in the U.S. that is 100 percent public power. Since they are not seeking profits, public power districts have been able to maintain some of the lowest electricity prices in the nation. The low cost of energy is one of the reasons that Nebraska has not fully taken advantage of its renewable energy potential. Unlike places such as California, where electricity prices are high, renewable energy systems have historically not been viable investment in Nebraska until recently in the past decade. Renewable energy resources, most notably capturing wind, have experienced significant development within the state.

#### Wind

As seen in Figure 15, Kearney and the rest of Buffalo County have excellent wind resources with wind power densities ranging from 400 to 600 watts per square meter. However, as Figure 16 depicts, significant wind production is unlikely in the Kearney area due to the Whooping Crane seasonal migration pattern.

The Wind Power Density map represents the gross estimated annual average wind power density for Nebraska and Buffalo County. This data indicates how much energy is available for conversion by a wind turbine at a particular location. This map (Figure 16) was created with data from EISPC and AWS Truepower.

Figure 15. Whooping Crane Migration Path, Nebraska  
Threatened and Endangered Waterbirds and Fish



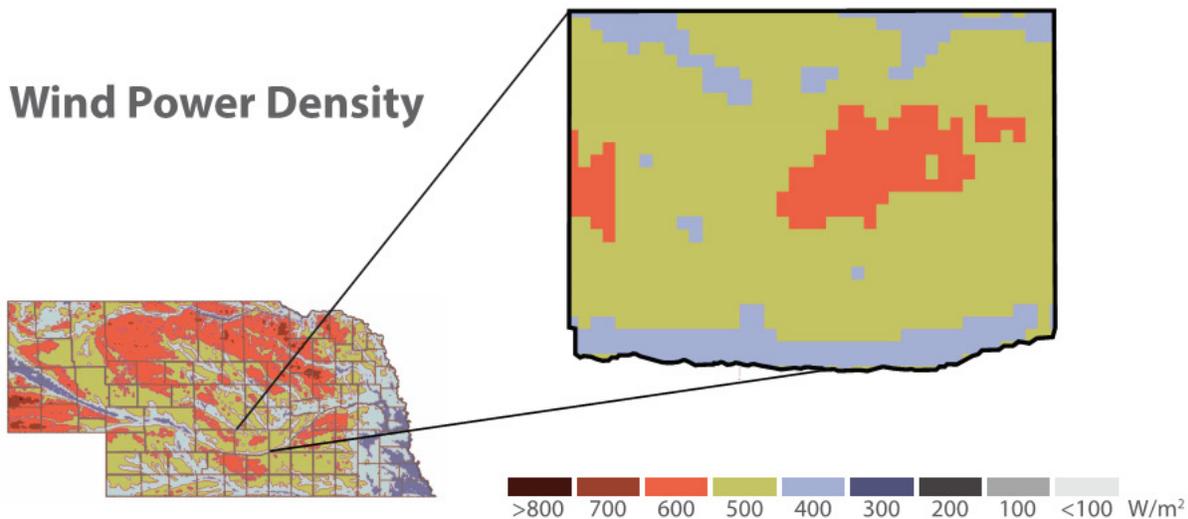
This map was produced by the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. For additional information and an interactive version of this map visit <http://water.unl.edu>

The University of Nebraska-Lincoln does not discriminate based on gender, age, disability, race, color, religion, marital status, veteran's status, national or ethnic origin, or sexual orientation.

The information presented on this map is the best available as of July 2008. To order a copy of this map go to [nebraskamaps.unl.edu](http://nebraskamaps.unl.edu). Any questions or comments can be directed to the UNL Water Center at 402-472-3305 or

Figure 16. Nebraska Wind Density Map, Buffalo County Inset

### Wind Power Density

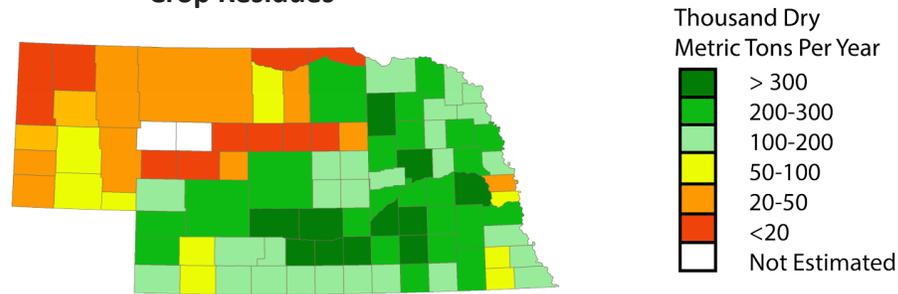




### Biomass

Kearney has a wealth of biomass resources in the surrounding area. According to NREL, Buffalo County has over three hundred thousand metric tons of crop residues per year (Figure 17).

Figure 17. Nebraska Biomass Resources  
**Crop Residues**



According to the Renewable Fuels Association, Nebraska has the second largest ethanol production capacity in the nation and the second largest current operating production in the nation. Approximately 14 percent of the nation’s ethanol capacity is in Nebraska’s 27 ethanol plants. The ethanol plant within Buffalo County is in Ravenna. Abengoa Bioenergy of Nebraska opened in 2007 and had a production capacity of 84 million gallons per year. There are more applications and opportunities that Nebraska has with biomass production.

### Solar Power

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Nebraska is ranked 13th in solar energy potential. As seen in Figure 18, Kearney and the rest of Buffalo County have an average solar radiation of 5.0 – 5.5 kilowatt hours per square meter per day. Currently, solar technologies are marginally used in Nebraska because it has historically been difficult for solar technologies to compete with the state’s low electric rates.

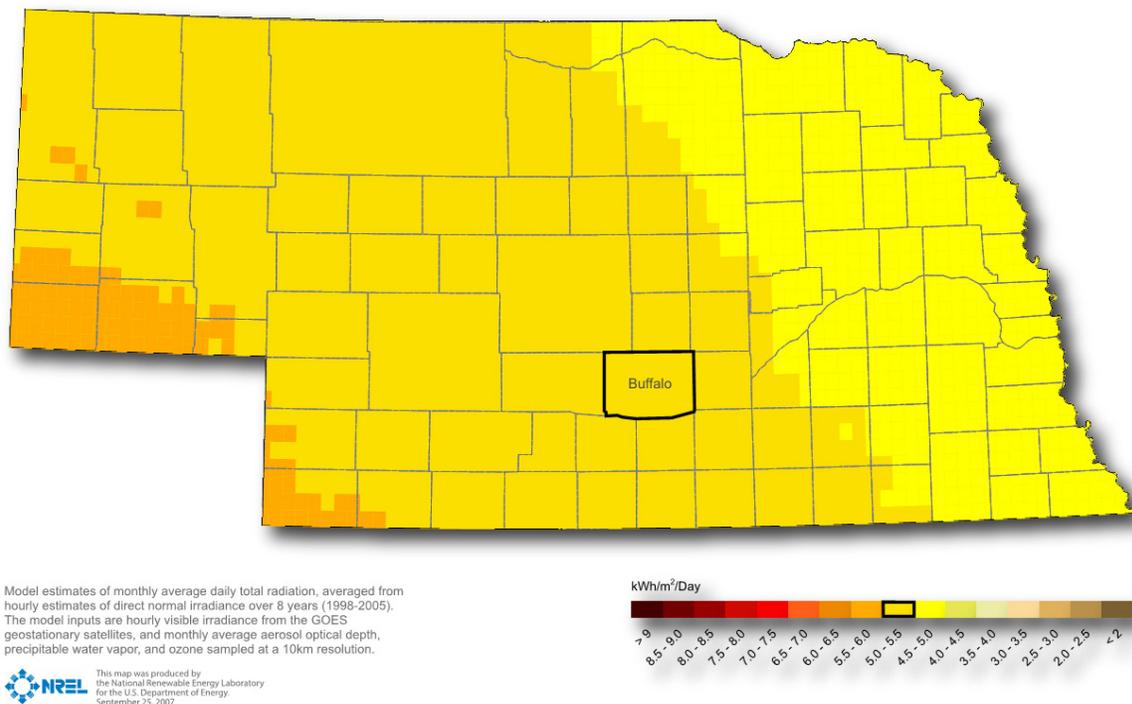
According to the International Renewable Energy Agency, the cost of solar photovoltaic (PV) panels decreased 80 percent from 2009 to 2013. As the cost of solar panels continues to decrease, solar can be utilized at an individual home or business scale to help supplement electrical needs. Federal and state agencies have incentives to help with the cost of solar, but additional steps could be taken to encourage solar energy generation in Kearney. Ultimately, economics will determine the amount of solar generated in Kearney. In addition, zoning regulations will direct the type and use of solar generation in appropriate areas of Kearney.

Passive solar design takes advantage of a building’s site, climate, and materials to minimize energy use. A well-designed passive solar home first reduces energy use for heating and cooling through energy-efficiency strategies and then meets the reduced need in whole or part with solar energy. In simple terms, a passive solar home collects heat as the sun shines through south-facing windows and retains it in materials that store heat, known as thermal mass.

The type of geothermal application that is most practical and economical for the residents of Kearney is the use of geothermal heat pumps. Closed loop systems move fluids through continuous pipeline loops that are buried underground at depths where the temperature does not fluctuate much. Heat picked up by the circulating fluid is delivered to a building through a traditional duct system. Geothermal heat pumps discharge waste heat into the ground in the summer months and extracts heat from the ground in the winter months.

Geothermal heat pumps are becoming a popular method of heating and cooling buildings, especially among large institutions such as schools and government buildings. For example,

Figure 18. Nebraska Solar Radiation  
Global Solar Radiation at Latitude Tilt - Annual



as of 2013, 82 percent of Lincoln Public Schools’ buildings have a geothermal HVAC system. Heat pumps use much less energy than traditional heating and cooling systems. This translates into energy and money savings while also reducing air pollution.

**Education**

Kearney will not be able to achieve its energy goals without the help of its citizens. Kearney should not only lead by example but should also educate the public regarding the benefits of energy efficiency and the most feasible renewable energy systems. For summaries of energy-related programs, incentives and policies in Nebraska visit the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency (DSIRE) website:

<http://programs.dsireusa.org/system/program?state=NE>

**Funding**

Although energy efficiency upgrades and some renewable energy applications will save money over time, the initial costs can be burdensome. Residents wanting help paying

their utility bills visit the following website with links to many programs in Nebraska: <http://nebraskaenergyassistance.com/assistance/>

The Weatherization Assistance Program helps lower income families save on their utility bills by making their homes more energy efficient. The Nebraska Energy Office administers the federally-funded program. The following website describes the program and how to apply:

<http://www.neo.ne.gov/wx/wxindex.htm>

**Current Achievements**

**Kearney Public Schools**

Kearney Public Schools has made a conscious effort to improve energy efficiency within their district. These efforts include expanded geothermal, HVAC improvements, occupancy sensors, lighting control systems, and the adoption of a Sustainability Master Plan.

**The University of Nebraska – Kearney**

UNK received a federal grant to improve the energy efficiency of their campus.



[section 2.6]

## NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND CONSTRAINTS

### Terrain and Elevation

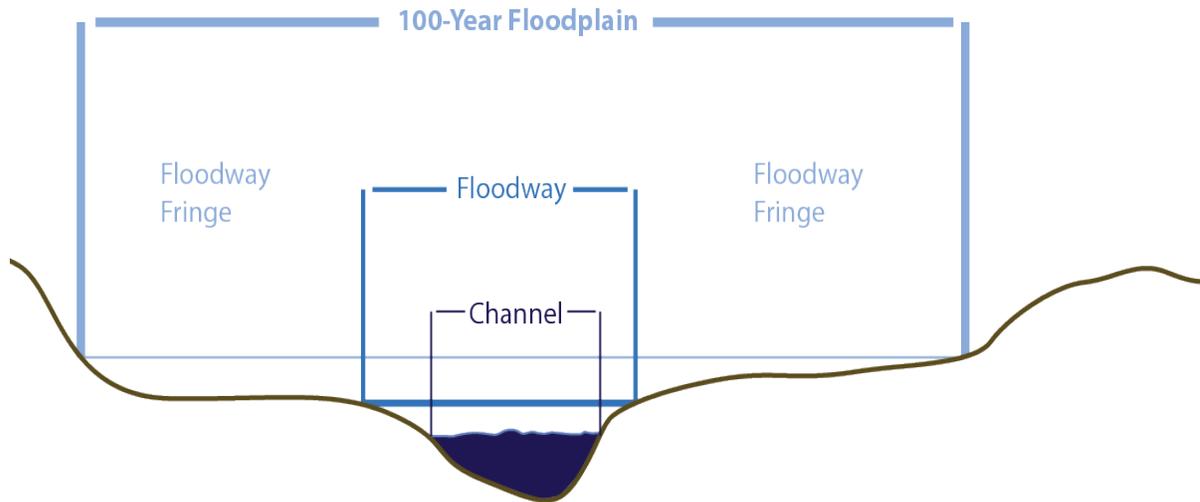
The relative relief of the Kearney area is approximately 150 feet with the Platte River marking the lowest elevation (est. 2130' MSL). The highest elevation (2280') is located in northwest Kearney (39th Street and 30th Avenue). As shown on Map 7, that portion of Kearney lying south of 39th Street is in the Platte River basin and drains south/southeast into the Platte River and adjacent secondary streams. North of 39th Street, surface drainage moves to the north/northeast towards and ultimately into the Wood River system. The topography to the north of this divide is marked by a series of elongated small valleys and rolling hills while, to the south, the land gently slopes towards the Platte.

### Floodplain

Kearney has enjoyed continued prosperity along the Platte River. This natural amenity has its benefits and downfalls. The threat of flooding is real, and the flatness of the southern portions of Kearney make it vulnerable to this threat. The one percent annual chance, or commonly known as the 100-year floodplain, is consistent each year regardless of the past trends.

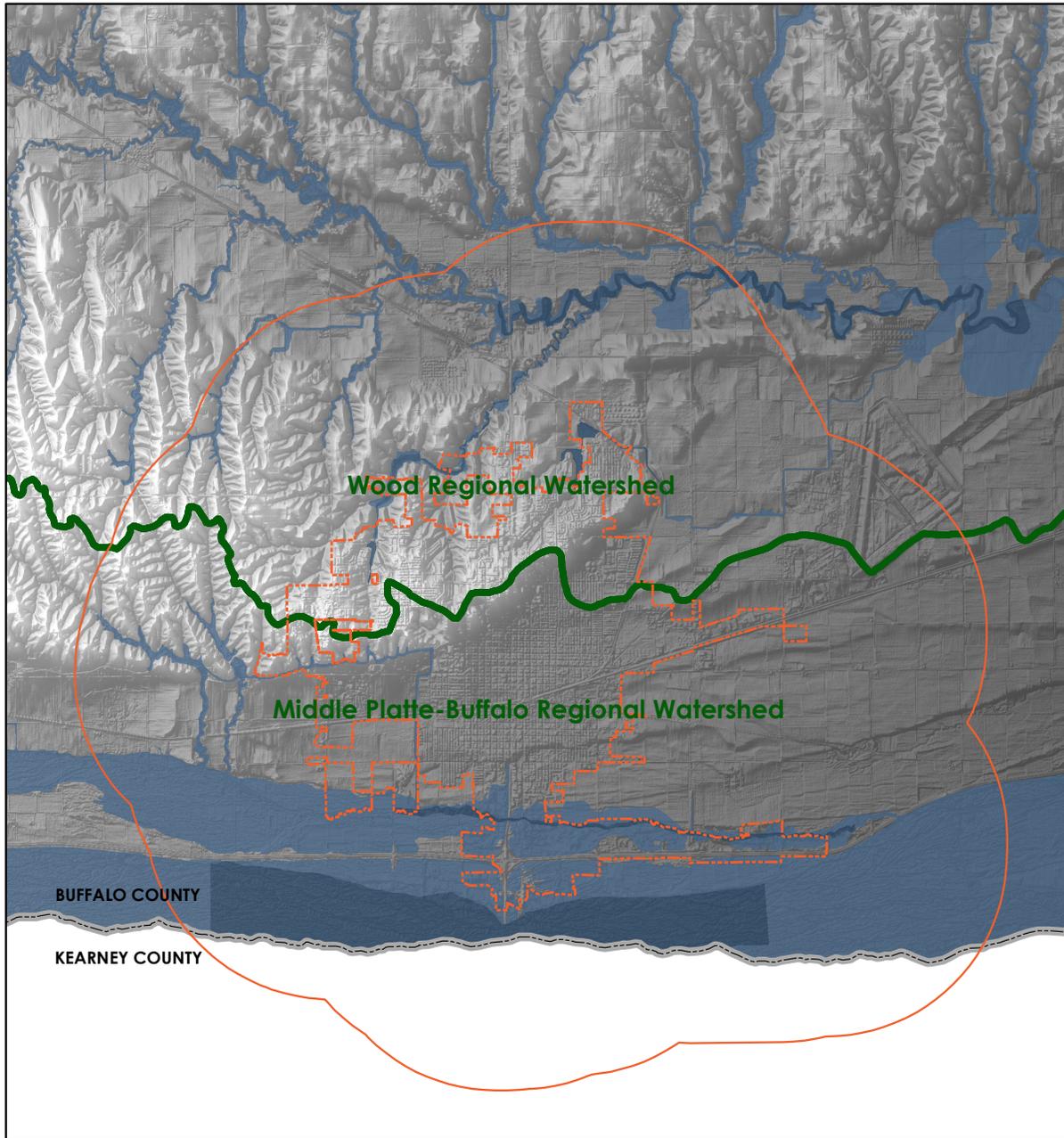
The following graphic (Figure 19) depicts a generic floodplain cutout to demonstrate the terms used when speaking of floodplain risk.

Figure 19. Floodplain Diagram



Historically, the Platte River is known as a braided river which means that it has multiple channels along a flat, wide river valley. Soils along the wide valleys are typically seen to be rich in nutrients due to changes in the channel or flooding that deposit the majority of valleys with prime soils. This is a small part of why agriculture is such a large portion of Buffalo County's economy. According to the SSURGO database, the Platte River and the soils along Interstate 80 have Platte-Gothenburg components. The entrance of 2nd Avenue north of the interchange has Wann-Leshara-Gibbon soils that continue east just north along the Platte River.

Map 7... Elevation and Watersheds, Kearney



**Legend**

**Regional Watersheds**

- Wood River
- Middle Platte-Buffalo

**Elevation**

- High : 2280'
- Low : 2130'

**Floodzones**

- Floodway
- 100-yr Floodplain

**Jurisdictional Boundaries**

- City Limits
- 2-mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

## Elevation and Local Watersheds

**Kearney, Nebraska**

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Date: Feb, 2015  
Revised: Apr, 2016  
Software: ArcGIS 10.2  
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Miles



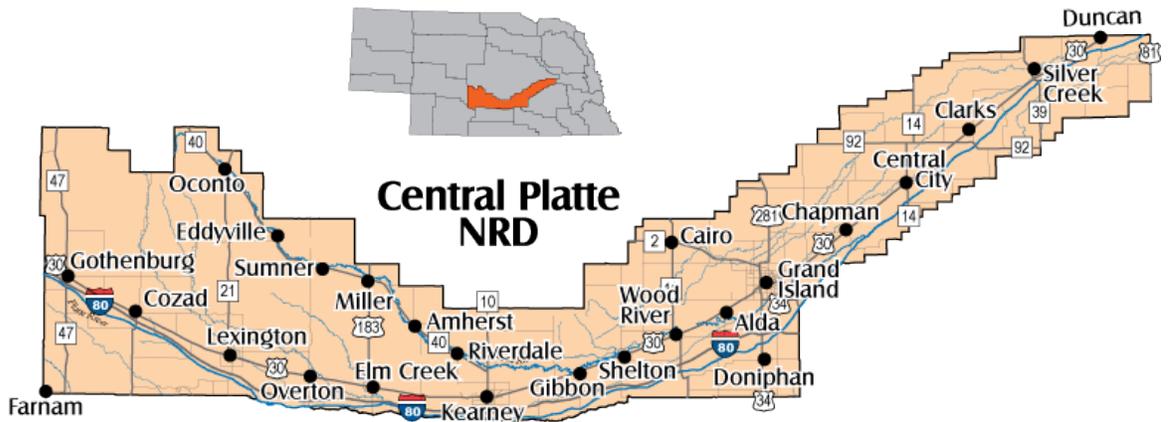
### Wellhead Protection Areas

Wellhead Protection Areas (WPAs) are in place for the general public’s safety of Kearney’s water sources. Studies were determined the boundaries over a twenty-year migration period of contaminants that may pose a threat to these wells. As shown in Map 8, there are eight WPAs identified within or near Kearney’s Extraterritorial Jurisdiction. There are two boundaries for the City of Kearney, Riverside Mobile Home Park, 1733 Estates Associates, Village of Riverdale, Clearview Utilities Corporation, Sheens Mobile Home Park, Buffalo County SID#3 – Glenwood Estates, and Wood River Valley Mobile Home Park.

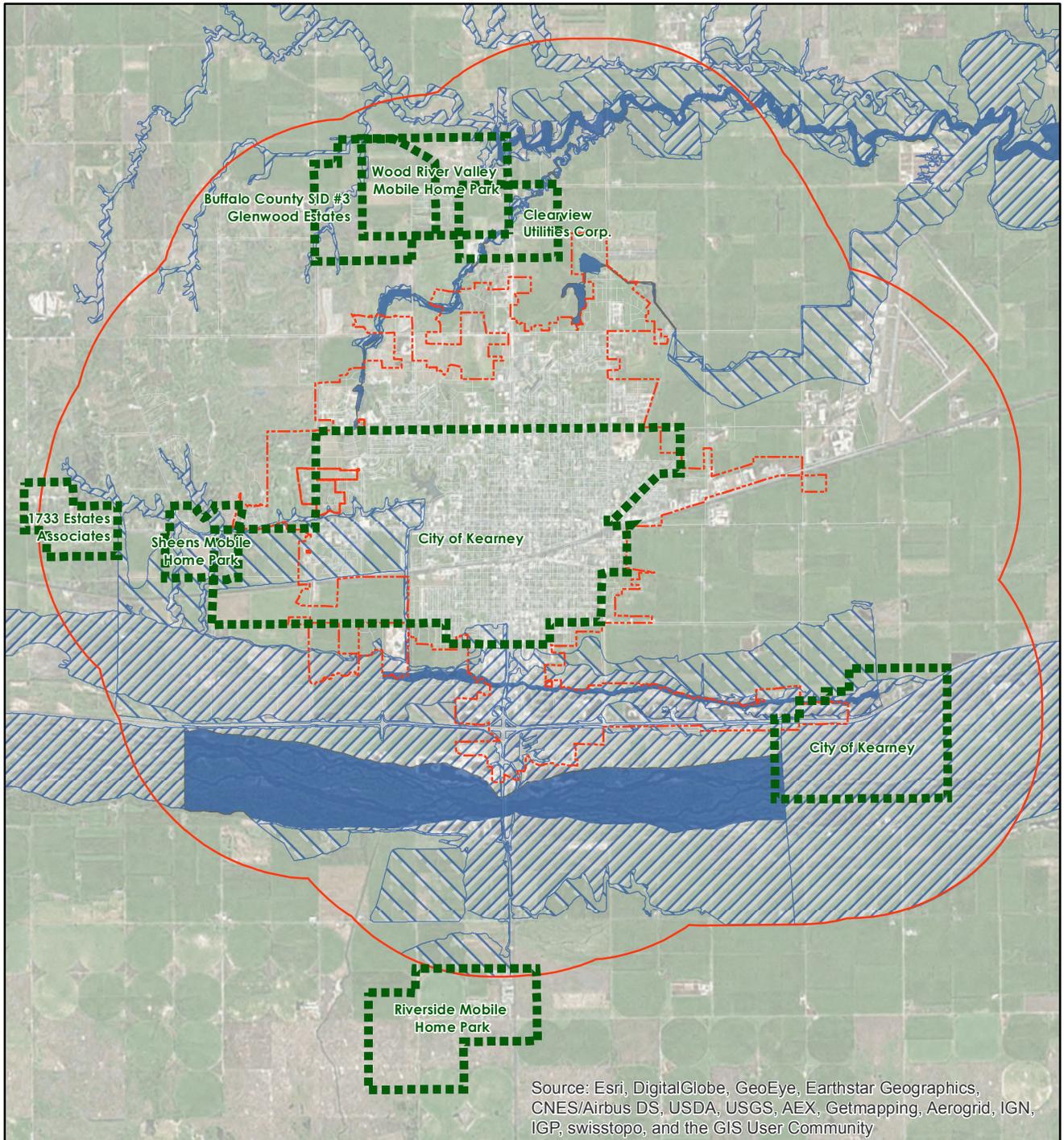
### Natural Resources Districts (NRDs)

The northern part of Buffalo County contains the South Loup River, which falls under the Lower Loup Natural Resources District jurisdiction. Remaining abreast of Buffalo County and other regional developments is important as Kearney continues to grow. Their decisions may not physically affect Kearney, but coordination and future partnerships with other regional entities in future endeavors can benefit the City greatly. Figure 20 shows the Central Platte NRD with the numerous cities along the Platte River that spans from Gothenburg to Duncan.

Figure 20. Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD)



Map.8... Floodplain and Wellhead Protection Areas



**Legend**

-  Wellhead Protection Areas
- FEMA DFIRM 2010**
-  Floodway
-  100-year Floodplain
-  500-year Floodplain

**Floodplain and Wellhead Protection Areas  
Kearney, Nebraska**

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Revised: Oct, 2015  
Software: ArcGIS 10.2  
File:110882.00

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Nina Hammer Park, located in southeast Kearney.

## PARKS AND RECREATION

The City of Kearney has an extensive parks system providing many different types of recreational amenities. Kearney's parks provide locals as well as visitors, with many opportunities for exercise, play, relaxation, sightseeing, and entertainment. An approximate 463 acres of land in the City is currently used as park land (excluding school playgrounds). Based on the 2013 Census population estimates of 31,397, the current ratio is one acre of park land for every 68 residents. Kearney has an abundance of open space compared to other Nebraska communities but as current plans there may continue to be needs for additional active park space.

Currently the City of Kearney has more parks in the planning stage, including a small neighborhood park in the northeast section of the City as well as a large softball/baseball complex east of the City, near the airport.

In addition to these proposed parks, a grassroots campaign has promoted a whitewater park within the Kearney Canal. This non profit group of volunteers is looking to rehabilitate the canal and transform it into a whitewater park which can be used by kayakers, canoers, tubers, paddleboarders, and surfers. Areas along the waterway and adjacent trail would also be designated for spectators. The group was able to obtain a recreation use agreement, developed by NPPD and was signed by the City in 2013, for the recreational use of the canal south of 11th Street. This may provide another unique recreational and tourism opportunity.

### Existing Park and Facility Conditions

The City of Kearney maintains 17 park facilities. These facilities have been categorized by size and use and are included within this section of the Profile chapter. Each park will list the condition and capacity of numerous elements within the park and will include maps and photographs as well. Table 17 lists the nationally accepted standard criteria for how the various types of parks and recreation facilities in Kearney are classified. Table 18 describes the required and optional facilities and amenities of park classifications. Map 9 depicts the current service areas of the Kearney parks.



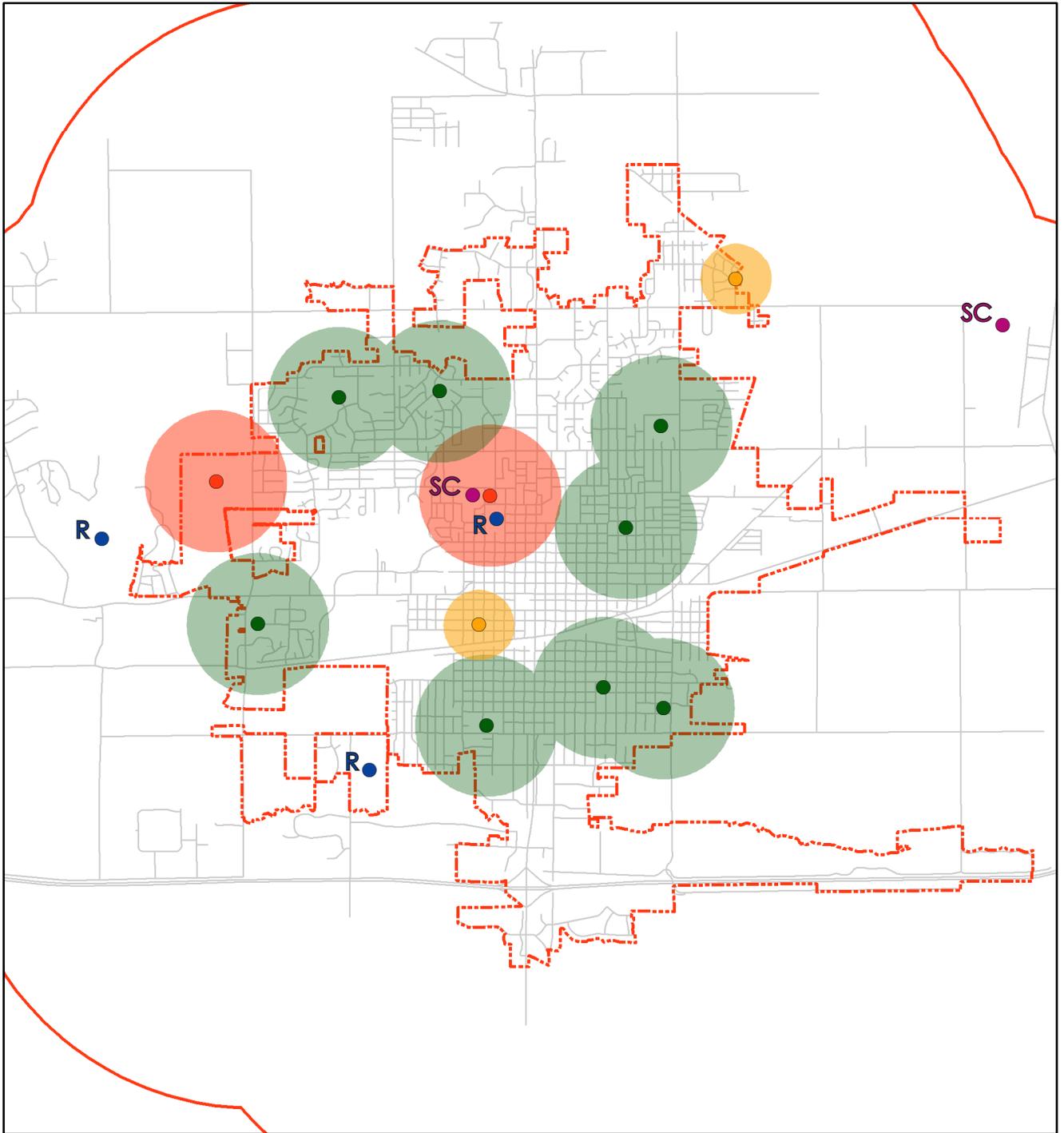


Table 17. Parks and Open Space Classifications

Classification	General Description	Location Criteria/ Service Area	Size Criteria
<b>Mini Park</b>	Used to address limited, isolated or unique recreational needs.	Less than a ¼ mile distance in residential setting.	Between 2500 sq. ft. and one acre in size.
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	Basic unit of the park system and serves as the recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Focus is on informal active and passive recreation.	¼ to ½ mile distance and uninterrupted by non-residential roads and other physical barriers.	5 acres is considered minimum size. 5 to 10 acres is optimal.
<b>School Park</b>	Depending on circumstances, combining parks with school sites can fulfill the space requirements for other classes of parks, such as neighborhood, community, sports complex, and special use.	Determined by location of school district property.	Variable – depends on function.
<b>Community Park</b>	Serves broader purpose than neighborhood park. Focus is on meeting community based recreation needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves two or more neighborhood and ½ to 3 mile distance.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually between 30 and 50 acres.
<b>Regional Park</b>	Serve a broader purpose than community parks and are used when community and neighborhood parks are not adequate to serve the needs of the community. Focus is on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces.	Determined by the quality and suitability of the site. Usually serves the entire community.	As needed to accommodate desired uses. Usually a minimum of 50 acres, with 75 or more acres being optimal.
<b>Natural Resource Areas</b>	Lands set aside for preservation of significant natural resources, remnant landscapes, open space, and visual aesthetics/buffering.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.
<b>Greenways</b>	Effectively tie park system components together to form a continuous park environment.	Resource availability and opportunity.	Variable.
<b>Sports Complex</b>	Consolidates heavily programmed athletic fields and associated facilities to larger and fewer sites strategically located throughout the community.	Strategically located community-wide facilities.	Determined by projected demand. Usually a minimum of 25 acres, with 40 to 80 acres being optimal.
<b>Special Use</b>	Covers a broad range of parks and recreation facilities oriented toward single-purpose use.	Variable – dependent on specific use.	Variable.
<b>Private Park/ Recreation Facility</b>	Parks and recreation facilities that are privately owned yet contribute to the public park and recreation system.	Variable – dependent on specific use.	Variable.

Source: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines.  
James D. Mertes, Ph.D., CLP and James R. Hall, CLP

Map.9... Existing Park Service Areas



**Legend**

- Mini Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Special Use Parks
- Sports Complexes
- Regional Parks
- 1/4 mile Service Area
- 1/2 mile Service Area
- 1/2 mile Service Area
- SC** 3-5 mile Service Area
- R** 3-5 mile Service Area

**Park Service Areas**  
Kearney, Nebraska

Created by: TKC  
Date: 9.30.15  
Revised:  
Software: ArcGIS 10.2  
File: 110882.00

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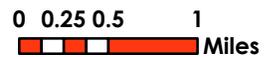




Table 18. Required and Optional Facilities, Amenities, and Services

Possible Facilities	Mini Park	Neighborhood Park	Community Park	Large Urban / Regional Park	School Park	Special Use Facility	Sports Complex	Trail / Greenway
<b>Park and Recreation Facilities</b>								
Play Equipment/Structures	R	R	R	O	R	O	O	O
Open Play Area	R	R	R	R	R	O	O	O
Soccer Fields	-	O	O	O	O	O	O	-
Softball Fields	-	O	O	O	O	O	O	-
Baseball Fields	-	O	O	O	O	O	O	-
Paved Multi-use Areas	O	R	R	O	R	O	O	-
Tennis Courts	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	-
Basketball Courts	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	-
Volleyball Courts	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	-
Multi-Purpose Trails	O	R	R	R	R	O	O	O
Picnic Facilities (shelters)	R	R	R	R	O	O	O	O
Special/Unique Features	O	R	R	R	O	O	O	O
Natural Areas	O	O	O	R	O	O	O	O
Trees/Shaded Areas	R	R	R	R	R	O	R	R
Special Use Facilities	-	O	O	O	O	R	O	O
Swimming Pool	-	O	O	O	O	O	O	-
Aquatic Center	-	-	O	O	O	O	O	-
Wading Pool	O	O	O	O	O	O	-	-
Ice Skating Park	-	O	O	O	O	O	-	-
Amphitheater/Outdoor Gathering Area	-	O	O	O	O	O	-	O
Arboretum/Botanical Gardens	-	O	O	O	-	O	O	O
Fine Arts Facility/Public Art Displays	-	-	O	O	-	O	-	O
Community Center or Indoor Rec.	-	O	O	O	O	O	O	-
Camping Facilities (RV facilities)	-	-	-	O	-	O	-	-
Dog Park	-	-	O	O	-	O	-	O
Horseshoes	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	-
Disc/Frisbee Golf	-	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Roller Hockey	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	-
Football/Rugby Field	-	-	O	O	O	O	O	-
Outdoor or Exercise Circuit	-	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Skating Facility (indoor/skateboard)	-	O	O	O	-	O	O	O
High-Risk Area	-	-	O	O	-	O	O	-
Golf Course	-	-	O	O	-	O	O	O
Youth Sports Complex	-	O	O	O	-	O	O	-
Competitive Sports Facility	-	-	O	O	-	O	O	-

R : Required Facility/Service  
 O : Optional Facility/Service  
 - (Dashes): Not Appropriate

\* : Optional for Greenway, Required for Trail

\*\* : May include, but not listed to, police patrols, private security, neighborhood watches, park design, to eliminate hidden places, structure design and lighting, and /or location markers on trail.

Note: This does not preclude the addition of the other unlisted facilities and services as optional.

Required and Optional Facilities, Amenities, and Services (Cont.)

Possible Facilities	Mini Park	Neighborhood Park	Community Park	Large Urban / Regional Park	School Park	Special Use Facility	Sports Complex	Trail / Greenway
<b>Park and Recreation Amenities</b>								
Security Lighting	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	O/R*
Activity Lighting	O	O	R	O	O	O	R	-
Public Telephone	O	O	R	R	R	R	R	O
Off Street Parking	O	R	R	R	R	R	R	O/R*
Bike Racks	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	O/R*
Restrooms	O	R	R	R	R	O	R	O/R*
Drinking Fountains	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	O/R*
Benches	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Picnic Tables	O	R	R	R	O	O	R	O
Signage	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Information Kiosks	-	-	O	O	-	O	O	O
ADA Accessibility	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
<b>Park and Recreation Services</b>								
Security**	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
Emergency Telephone Service	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Reservations for Facility Use (group picnics, sports leagues, for-profit use)	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	-
Activities/Facilities for Groups, Companies, Teams	-	O	R	R	O	O	R	O
Special Events (programs, concerts, fairs)	O	O	O	O	O	O	O	O
Facilities and Grounds Maintenance	R	R	R	R	R	R	R	R
<p>R : Required Facility/Service                      O : Optional Facility/Service                      - (Dashes): Not Appropriate</p> <p>* : Optional for Greenway, Required for Trail                      ** : May include, but not listed to, police patrols, private security, neighborhood watches, park design, to eliminate hidden places, structure design and lighting, and /or location markers on trail.</p> <p>Note: This does not preclude the addition of the other unlisted facilities and services as optional.</p>								

Source: Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Greenway Guidelines.  
 James D. Mertes, Ph.D., CLP and James R. Hall, CLP



# Apollo Park

Special Use Park (5.2 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At	Over	
Vegetation			X		X		Mature deciduous and evergreen trees throughout park
Play Areas			X		X		Available, limited open space
Sports Fields	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Sports Courts			X		X		4 lighted tennis courts, three pickleball courts, 2 lighted basketball courts, 1 wallball court. Multiple specialty sports amenities listed below in "Miscellaneous"
Walks/Trails			X	X			Two pathways located between north and south active park sports courts
Play Equipment	-	-	-		X		N/A
Structures		X			X		Small structure for storage and concessions
Picnic Facilities	-	-	-	X			N/A
Drinking Water		X			X		Centrally located at bathrooms
Restrooms		X			X		2 small restroom structures
Parking			X	X			On-street parallel parking along W 33rd Street
Lighting			X		X		Pathway lighting, active courts lighting
Benches			X		X		Four benches located in the center of the park near the sun dial and memorial
Signage		X			X		Located in the southeast corner
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	Look to provide more spectator seating and picnic facilities, lacking sidewalk along east and south roads, possibly upgrade restroom facilities with new sports available, no lighting for hockey rink.
Miscellaneous			X		X		This park has a number of unique park amenities, including a full-scale outdoor hockey rink in addition to a skate park which classifies it as a community park even though it is the general size of most neighborhood parks. A memorial with a flag pole and a sundial are located at the center of the park as well. This park is adjacent to Harmon Park as well as Memorial Field.





- |   |                   |   |                     |   |                   |
|---|-------------------|---|---------------------|---|-------------------|
|  | Tennis Courts     |  | Picnic Shelter      |  | Basketball Courts |
|  | Wallball Court    |  | Memorial            |  | Parking           |
|  | Pickleball Courts |  | Hockey/Skating Rink |  | Restrooms         |
|  | Skate Park        |  | Concessions         |   |                   |

# PROFILE



# Ted Baldwin Park

Neighborhood Park (37.2 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At	Over	
Vegetation			X		X		Natural wildlife/woodland areas, large pines surround soccer fields
Play Areas			X		X		Plenty of open space along multiple trail options
Sports Fields			X		X		Four large soccer fields with additional full size goals, full scale lights for night games, bleachers on sidelines
Sports Courts	-	-	-		X		N/A
Walks/Trails			X		X		Extensive mulch trail and mowed grass trails which lead to the larger Meadowlark Trail system
Play Equipment		X			X		Medium-sized playground, multiple spring riders
Structures			X		X		Multiple use building: restrooms, workshop/storage, concession stand, covered picnic table area
Picnic Facilities			X		X		8+ covered picnic tables
Drinking Water			X		X		Fountain on side of building
Restrooms			X		X		Centrally located at multi-use building
Parking			X		X		Gravel, parallel parking lot between fields with paved handicap accessible parking, additional gravel parking southwest of fields
Lighting			X		X		Lighting for the two south soccer fields (Field 1 and 2); east parking lots
Benches			X		X		Individual benches, bleachers facing soccer fields
Signage		X			X		Southeast intersection
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	This type of park requires: upgrade play equipment; pave the parking lot between fields, improve concession/storage in conjunction with new locker room, light the north fields (3 and 4)
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	Unique amenities within this park include its grass trails, large amount of open space, and natural habitat.





Soccer Fields



Restrooms



Parking



Trails



Picnic Shelter



Concessions



Playground Area

# PROFILE



# Centennial Park

Neighborhood Park (14.1 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At	Over	
Vegetation			X		X		Unique garden on north side, mature deciduous and evergreen trees throughout park
Play Areas	X			X			Plenty of open space for unstructured play
Sports Fields	X			X			Softball field with bleachers and dugouts, Disk golf course
Sports Courts			X	X			2 tennis courts recently resurfaced, basketball half-court, sand volleyball court
Walks/Trails			X	X			Trail borders the southern edge of the park, walkways throughout park connecting parking areas to amenities, new sidewalk along northern edge of park
Play Equipment			X	X			Very large play equipment, tire swing, four small swings, two infant swings, two horsey rides, three benches on perimeter, two picnic tables on east end, water fountain on north end
Structures			X	X			Swimming pool facility, maintenance/office building, grandstand for announcers and concessions at softball field, storage and batting cage
Picnic Facilities			X	X			15 covered/shelter picnic tables with large grill and water supply, covered picnic table with grill near sand volleyball court
Drinking Water			X	X			Human and dog fountain south of softball fields, restrooms, and another fountain north of the playground area
Restrooms			X	X			Centrally located, it's an older facility but well kept
Parking	X			X			Angled parking along 13th St and parking lot accessed from 11th St
Lighting			X	X			Active and pathway lighting, disc golf area is well lit
Benches	X			X			Adequate seating for softball spectators and multiple sitting locations throughout the park
Signage	X			X			Located at the south pathway entrance to the park
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	Maintain open space, pool facilities upgrades
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	Time capsule and Nebraska Historical Marker, Swimming pool





- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  Parking                         |  Disk Golf Course |  Tennis Courts           |
|  Picnic Shelter                  |  Sand Volleyball  |  Baseball/Softball Field |
|  Arboretum/<br>Ornamental Garden |  Restrooms        |  Concessions             |
|  Playground Area                 |  Swimming Pool    |  Historical Marker       |

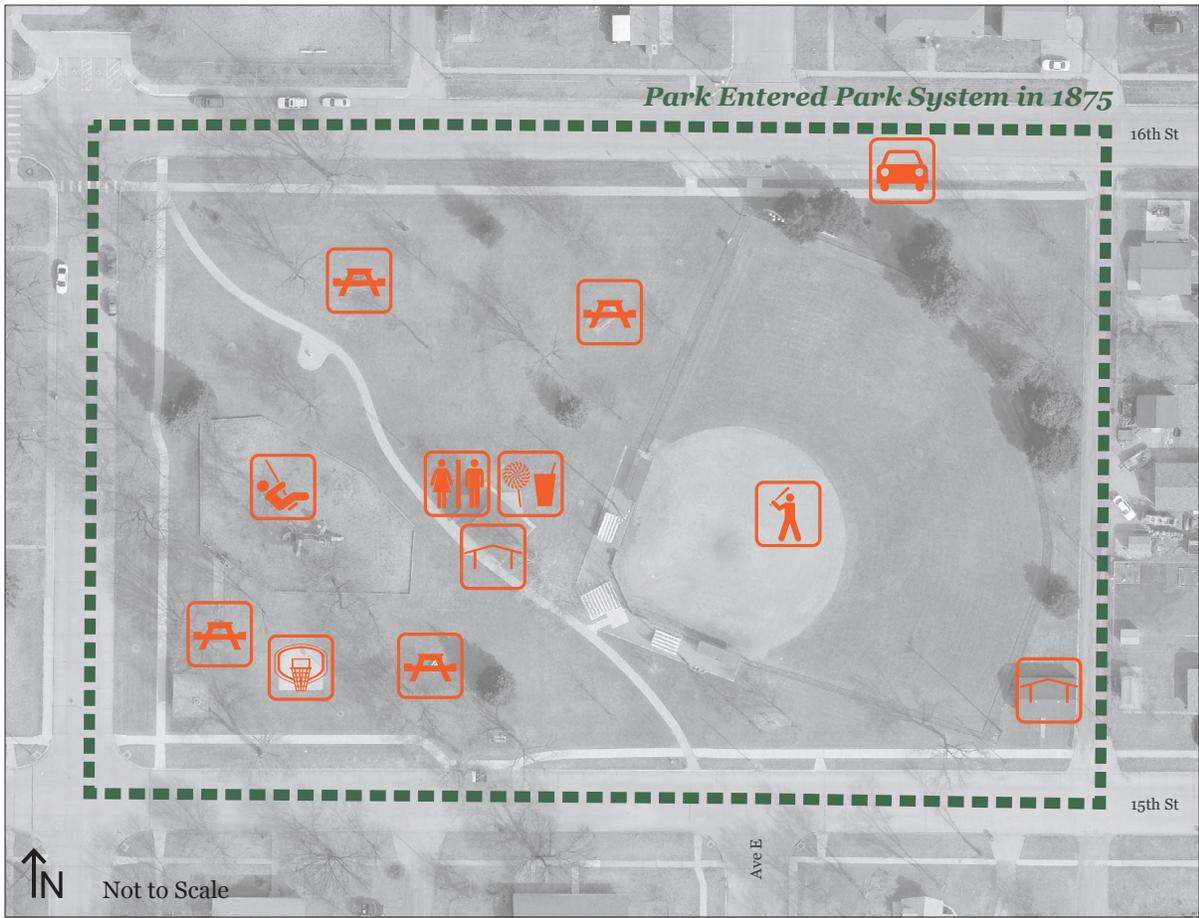


# Collins Park

Neighborhood Park (5.0 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At	Over	
Vegetation			X		X		Large, mature trees provide shade
Play Areas			X		X		Plenty of open space available for informal games
Sports Fields			X		X		Baseball field, dugouts, bleachers all in good shape
Sports Courts		X			X		One basketball half-court
Walks/Trails			X		X		Sidewalk along three sides of 'rectangle' park, diagonal walkway from 16th and D Ave to 15th St E Ave
Play Equipment			X		X		Large-scale playground equipment, 4 infant swings, 4 larger swings
Structures			X		X		Concession stand structure with restroom attached, storage building located in southeast corner
Picnic Facilities			X		X		Five picnic tables in three areas, two grills located near playground on southwest corner of the park
Drinking Water			X		X		Located on the outside of central concessions stand structure
Restrooms			X		X		Centrally located at concessions stand structure
Parking			X		X		15 angled parking stalls with 2 handicap accessible parking stalls
Lighting			X		X		2 larger lights and street lights
Benches			X		X		Plenty of seating for spectators at Collins Field, seating available at playground, three picnic tables
Signage			X		X		Collins Park sign located on northwest corner of park pathway, Collins Field sign located south of field
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	Collins Park is very functional and well maintained, no recommendations at this time
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	Great location next to elementary school (with its own play equipment not included in this analysis).





- |   |   |   |   |
|---|---|---|---|
|  Parking         |  Restrooms   |  Basketball Courts       |  Picnic Shelter & Storage Facility |
|  Playground Area |  Concessions |  Baseball/Softball Field |   |



PROFILE



# Cottonmill Lake Recreation Area

Regional Park (115.2 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At	Over	
Vegetation			X		X		Natural vegetation, prairie area
Play Areas			X		X		Large, open space throughout park
Sports Fields			X		X		18 hole disc golf course, 2 horseshoe pits
Sports Courts		X			X		Sand volleyball court
Walks/Trails			X		X		Miles of hike/bike trails within the park and connection to city trail system (The Links Trail)
Play Equipment			X		X		2 small playground areas
Structures			X		X		Rotary Nature Barn, Lodge, Marina/concession stand that rents paddle boats and canoes and other small items
Picnic Facilities			X		X		2 large and 3 small picnic shelters and multiple picnic tables & grills
Drinking Water			X			X	Several parking areas
Restrooms			X		X		5 public restrooms
Parking			X		X		Several parking areas
Lighting			X		X		Roads lit during hours of operation, some areas are dark
Benches			X			X	Numerous throughout park
Signage			X		X		Large entrance sign at west entrance as well as wayfinding signage
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	Continued improvements to road, lighting, facilities, especially ADA requirements. New features may include more picnicking/camping facilities and utilize natural resource areas
Miscellaneous		X			X		Cottonmill Park is one of the oldest parks in Kearney. Its unique features include a disc golf course, multiple picnic areas, a traditional and beloved natural prairie trail, as well as fishing and swimming activities since the park is situated around Cottonmill Lake. New open space, Lorma's Overlook, on southern edge.





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|--|--|--|--|
|  Lake                   |  Fishing      |  Picnic Shelter |  Disk Golf Course |
|  Swimming Area          |  Amphitheater |  Restrooms      |  Parking          |
|  Marina/<br>Boat Access |  Trails       |  |  |

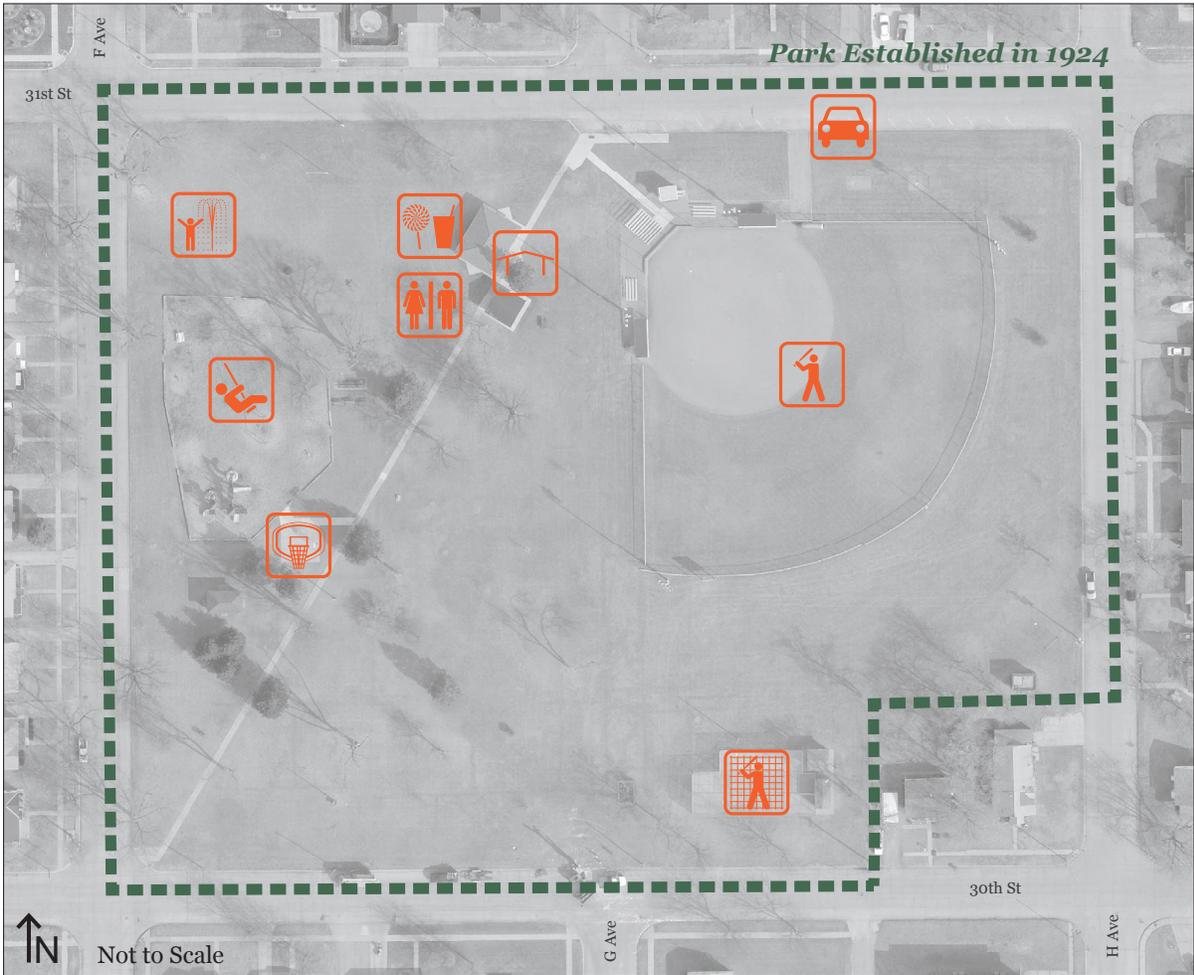


# Dryden Park

Neighborhood Park (7.6 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At	Over	
Vegetation			X		X		Mix of new, smaller trees with mature shade trees and landscaping
Play Areas			X		X		Plenty of open space in the northwest corner and southern part of Dryden Park with larger trees and shade
Sports Fields			X		X		Fast pitch softball ballfield (UNK and youth softball) with bleachers (two small, one large), batting cages located south of right field fence
Sports Courts		X			X		Basketball (Half-court)
Walks/Trails		X			X		New perimeter sidewalk, diagonal walkway from the parking going SW from ball field and restrooms, new walkway being poured toward new splash pad
Play Equipment		X			X		Large playground system, tire swing, two spring riders, new splash pad area being built
Structures			X		X		Restroom with concessions; public utilities building/structure; batting cage buildings and storage
Picnic Facilities			X		X		Three covered picnic tables (could have 4-6 tables, if needed)
Drinking Water		X			X		Two water fountains; north side of restroom structure and along pathway near basketball court
Restrooms			X		X		Restroom with concessions behind bleachers and first base line
Parking			X		X		(On E 31st St) 20 angled parking stalls with 2 ADA accessible; additional 250 feet of on-street parallel parking, on-street parallel parking along F Ave (western boundary of the park)
Lighting			X		X		Softball field and batting cage lighting; 4 'streetlights' placed N-S orientation 115-130 feet east from F Ave, other streetlights in open space for security and unstructured play
Benches		X			X		Normally, the park has more benches; UNK may want to have more spectator seating
Signage			X		X		Located at northwest corner (E. 31st and F Ave intersection)
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	More seating areas near activities. Additional lighting on north side of splash pad. Install grill near the covered picnic tables. UNK may want improvements to the field and facilities such as a new press box with more storage capacity.
Miscellaneous			X		X		This park was established in 1924, making it one of the older city amenities in Kearney. One of the newest park additions is the splash pad installed in the summer of 2015. The memorial plaque can be found on the walkway.





- |   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  Splash Pad        |  Restrooms      |  Parking                 |
|  Playground Area   |  Picnic Shelter |  Baseball/Softball Field |
|  Basketball Courts |  Concessions    |  Batting Cages           |

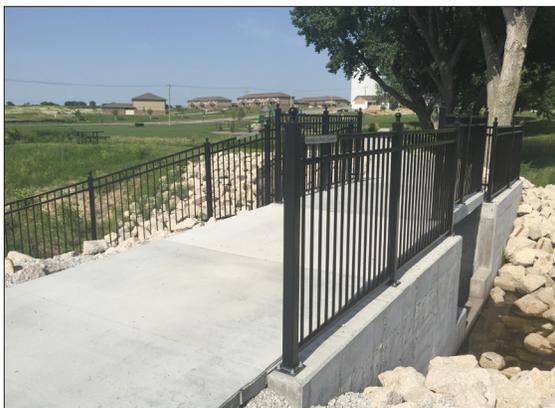
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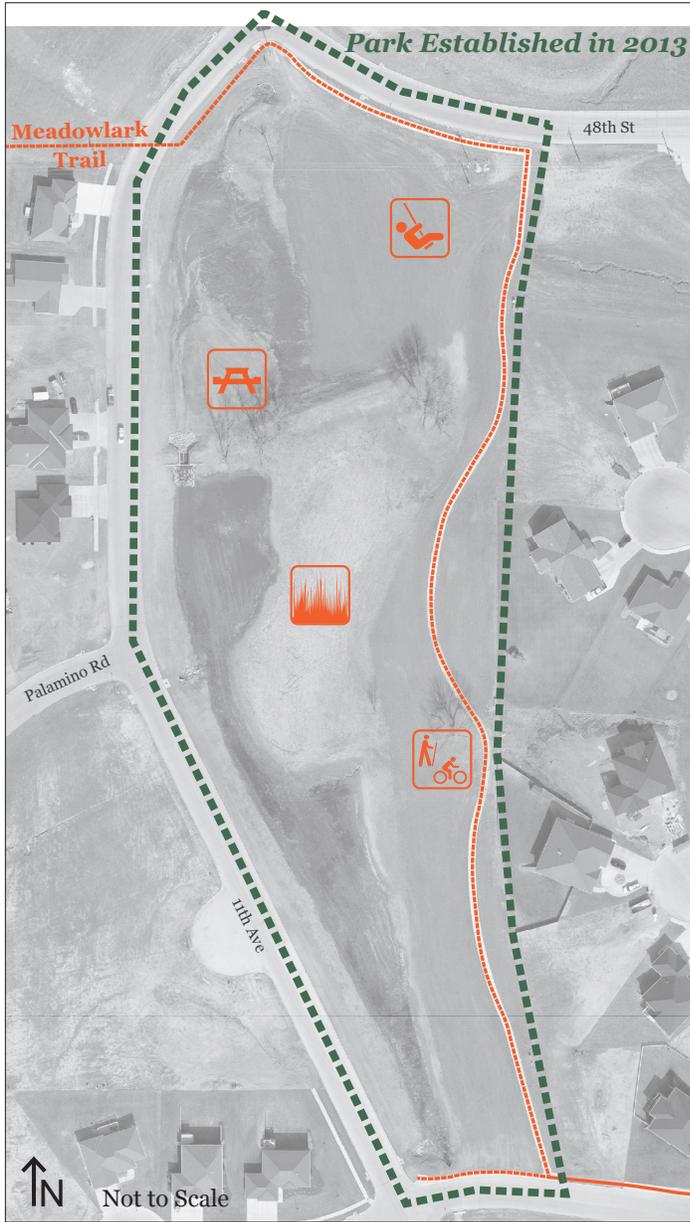


# Fountain Hills Park

Neighborhood Park (9.1 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At	Over	
Vegetation			X		X		Most of the park is wild prairie or wetland area
Play Areas			X		X		Open areas for play
Sports Fields	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Sports Courts	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Walks/Trails			X		X		Trail along east edge of park and through the middle of the park over the pedestrian bridge, connection to city trail system (Meadowlark Trail)
Play Equipment			X		X		Large equipment playground with picnic table and bench
Structures	-	-	-	X			N/A
Picnic Facilities		X			X		Picnic table (grass, not mulched or paved)
Drinking Water	-	-	-	X			N/A
Restrooms	-	-	-	X			N/A
Parking	-	-	-	X			N/A
Lighting	-	-	-	X			N/A
Benches			X		X		2 benches located along the new trail
Signage			X		X		Northeast corner
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	A covered picnic structure with a paved walkway to it, drinking water near playground, restroom, parking, security lighting
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	This linear park is unique with its wetlands. The dedicated trail along the east side and the pedestrian bridge over the drainageway connect this elongated park to its surrounding residents.





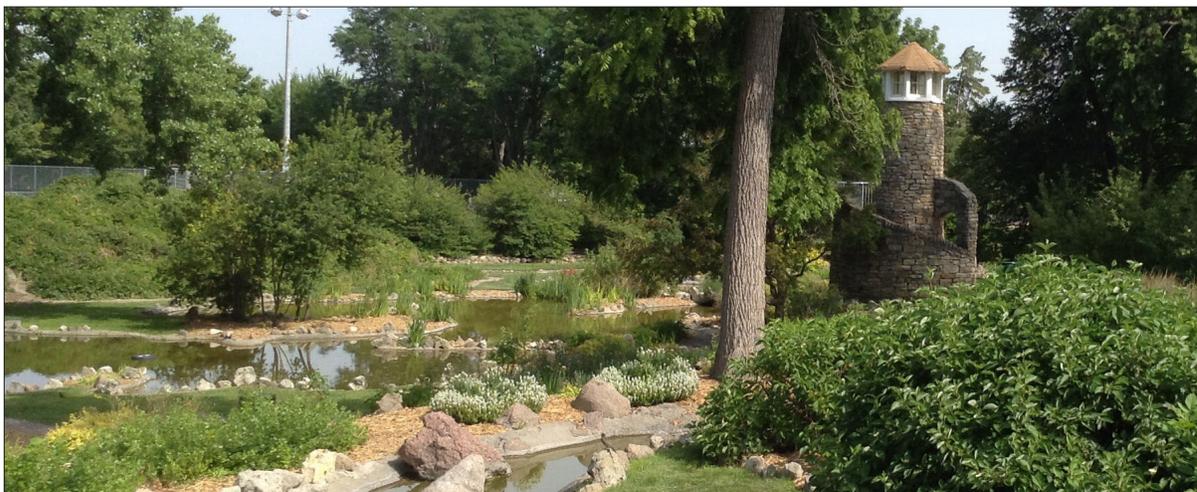
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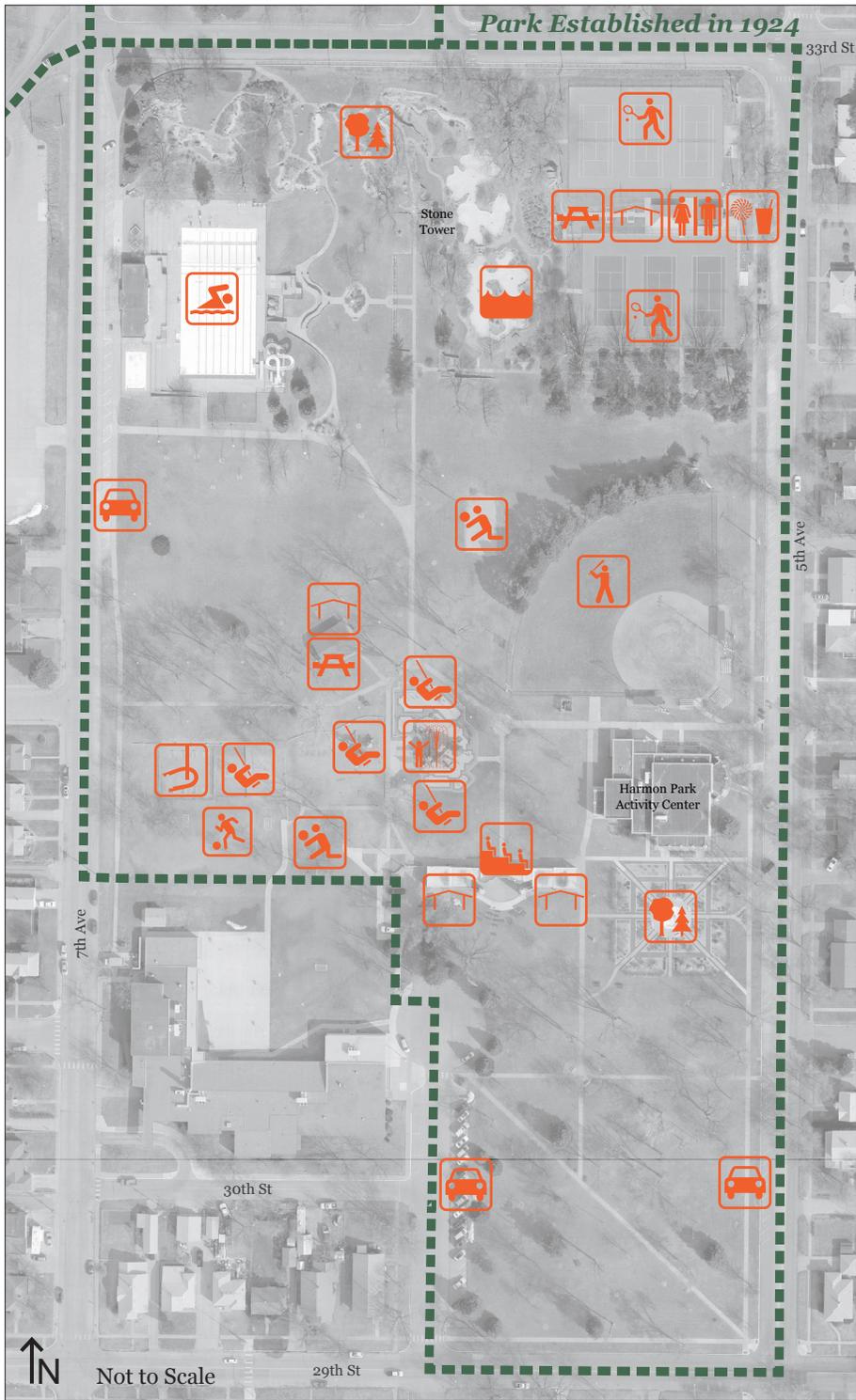


# Harmon Park

Regional Park (20.6 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At	Over	
Vegetation			X		X		Unique, garden next to the Harmon Park Activity Center, a variety of vegetation throughout the park
Play Areas			X		X		Three larger passive and open spaces south of the Activity Center, sloping hill south of the pool, and space available between tennis courts, ballfield, and sand volleyball court
Sports Fields			X		X		Harmon Field (softball) w/ bleacher and dugouts, 1 sand volleyball court, 4 horseshoe pits
Sports Courts			X		X		6 tennis courts (with lights)
Walks/Trails			X		X		Multiple direction walkways throughout the park
Play Equipment			X		X		Very large splash play system, climbing “cube,” regular swings, infant swigs, tire swings, large playground system, interactive play equipment, stepping/balancing pads, teeter totter, sandbox area with digger, spinning/rotating playground equipment
Structures			X		X		Harmon Park Pool (with shallow & deep areas, 8 lanes, large water slide, baby pool), Harmon Park Activity Center, The Harmon Sonatorium Stage, stone tower in rock garden area, Restroom and concession facility near tennis courts
Picnic Facilities		X			X		1 shelter near tennis courts, 1 shelter near playground, 2 shelters on either side of Harmon Sonatorium Stage, other picnic tables throughout the park; grill needs to be replaced
Drinking Water		X			X		1 near playground and 2 near tennis courts (1 which does not work)
Restrooms			X		X		Restrooms within pool facility, restroom near tennis courts
Parking			X		X		Angled parking along 5th Ave, 6th Ave, 7th Ave
Lighting			X		X		Lighting throughout the entire park, tennis courts and softball field are have lights as well for night play
Benches			X		X		Seating areas throughout park
Signage			X		X		“Harmon Park” signs in northeast and southeast corners, “Ellen Baldwin Playground” sign near playground
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	Harmon needs a connection to trail system, the importance of this park to the City makes it the perfect candidate for a trailhead, upgrading the lighting, tennis board, renovate Sonatorium with upgrades for performers, pool and ball field improvements
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	Harmon is a unique park in many ways. Some of the land was donated in 1876 before receiving money from the Harmon Foundation for playground and fields. It wasn't until 1924 when it was established as a park. Harmon's rock garden with the iconic stone tower, the Sonatorium, Pool, and play equipment provides a great venue for all to enjoy. Regardless of the acres, the amount of activities available in Harmon raises its status to a Region Park.





-  Unique Landscape/  
Garden
-  Water Feature
-  Swimming Pool
-  Tennis Courts
-  Picnic Shelter
-  Restrooms
-  Concessions
-  Picnic Area
-  Baseball/  
Softball Field
-  Playground Area
-  Splash Pad
-  Amphitheater
-  Sand Volleyball
-  Parking
-  Small Soccer Field
-  Horseshoe Pits



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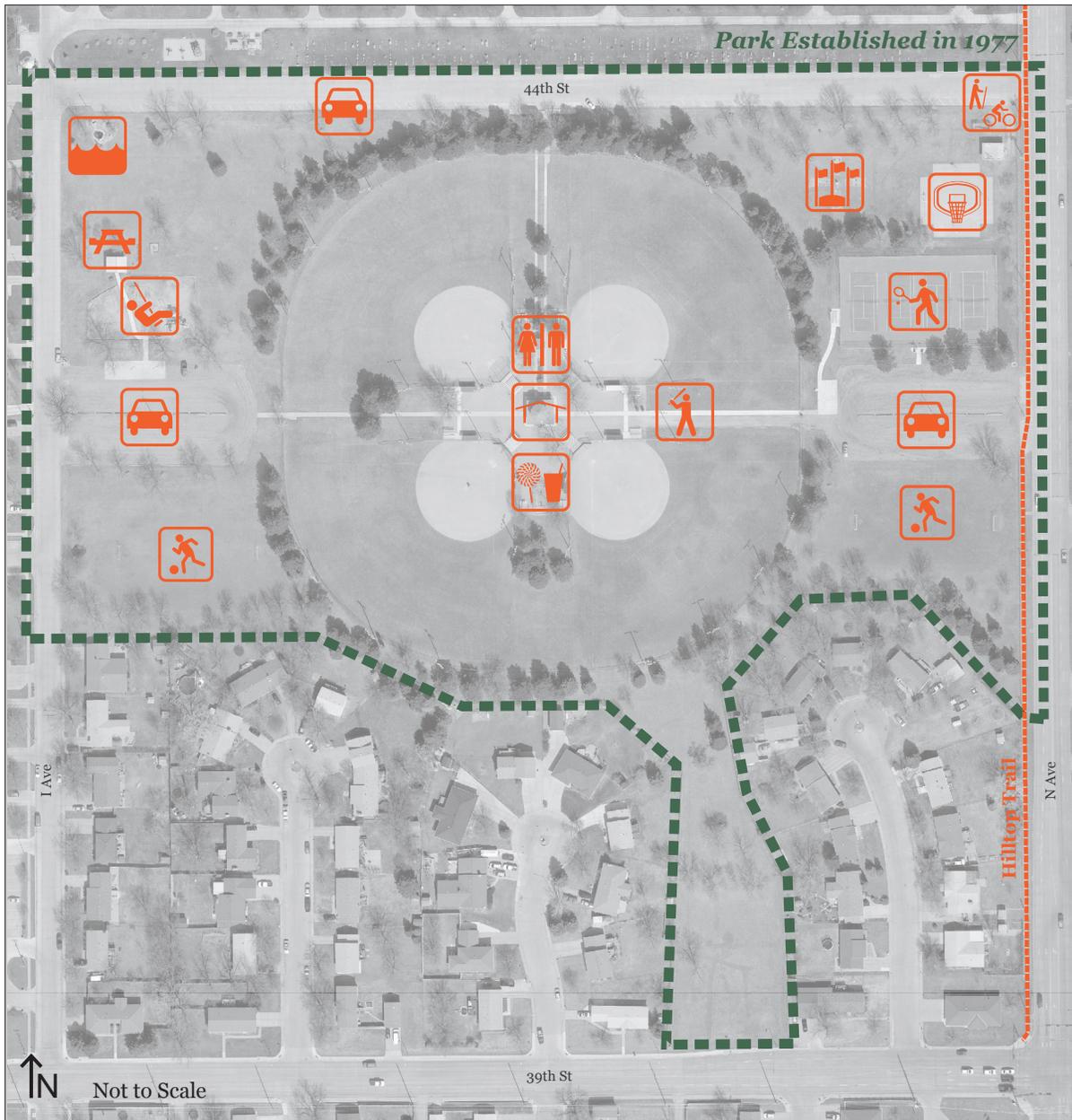


# Harvey Park

Neighborhood Park (25.2 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At	Over	
Vegetation			X		X		A variety of deciduous and evergreen trees (mostly mature)
Play Areas			X		X		Open space in the northwest and northeast
Sports Fields			X		X		Softball 4-plex, fields are in great shape, plenty of trash cans, large bleacher for each field, two small soccer fields
Sports Courts			X		X		Four tennis courts with bleachers, basketball courts (crisscross pattern)
Walks/Trails			X		X		East to west walkway links the two parking lots, Hilltop Trail runs along east side of park
Play Equipment			X		X		Four regular swings, three infant swings, one tire swing, climbing structure, two benches, one horsey to the north
Structures			X		X		Ball field complex structure including concessions, restrooms, & announcers perch, utilities structure in northeast corner
Picnic Facilities		X			X		Covered picnic shelter with 4 picnic tables and grill
Drinking Water			X			X	4 water fountains
Restrooms			X		X		Restroom within 4-plex facility
Parking			X	X			2 gravel parking lots with concrete handicap slabs, and on-street angles parking along the north edge (E 44th St); 6 handicap stalls
Lighting			X		X		Softball 4-flex is has lights for night games
Benches		X			X		Benches in play area
Signage			X		X		1 sign near west parking lot entrance
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	Replacement of benches in play area, offer different seating options with the possibly of more shade for spectators, a sand volleyball court had been suggested, upgrade/replace concession stand and restroom, upgrades to ballfields and lighting
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	Military Memorial located in the northeast section of the park, waterfall water feature in northwest corner





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|---|-----------------|---|-------------------------|---|-------------------|
|  | Parking         |  | Restrooms               |  | Memorial          |
|  | Water Feature   |  | Picnic Shelter          |  | Trails            |
|  | Picnic Area     |  | Concessions             |  | Basketball Courts |
|  | Playground Area |  | Baseball/Softball Field |  | Tennis Courts     |
|  | Soccer Fields   |   |                         |   |                   |

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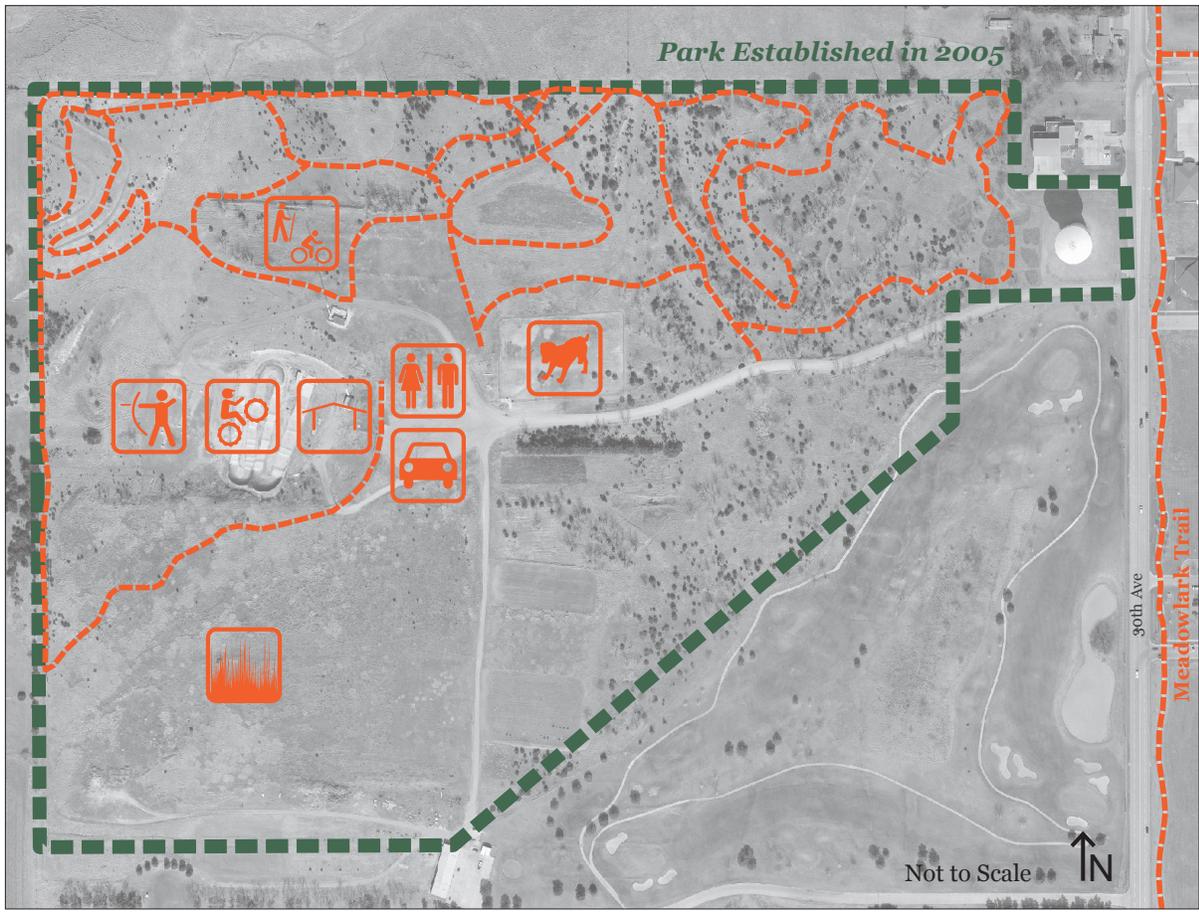


# Meadowlark Hills North Park

Special Use Park (81.7 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At	Over	
Vegetation			X		X		Naturally vegetated areas with trail system in northern section, open grassland in southern section
Play Areas			X		X		Large open space for play and dog park with two separate areas for larger and smaller dogs
Sports Fields			X		X		Specialty sports areas are listed in Miscellaneous
Sports Courts	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Walks/Trails			X		X		Extensive grass/dirt trail system throughout northern portion of park
Play Equipment			X		X		Facilities for dog
Structures			X		X		Picnic shelter and small building for storage/concessions
Picnic Facilities		X			X		Picnic shelter and tables
Drinking Water		X			X		Available near dog park, at picnic shelter
Restrooms		X			X		2 portable restrooms
Parking		X			X		Gravel parking lots
Lighting	X				X		N/A
Benches			X		X		Bleachers, benches, and picnic table
Signage			X		X		East entryway
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	Additional lighting, pave roads and parking lot, abundance of space can lead to large area for active sports or unstructured play, improvements will need to be ADA accessible
Miscellaneous			X		X		The BMX track, archery range, and dedicated dog park make Meadowlark Hills North Park very unique destination park.





- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
|  Trails         |  BMX Course     |  Restrooms |  Dog Park            |
|  Archery Course |  Picnic Shelter |  Parking   |  Grassland/Open Area |



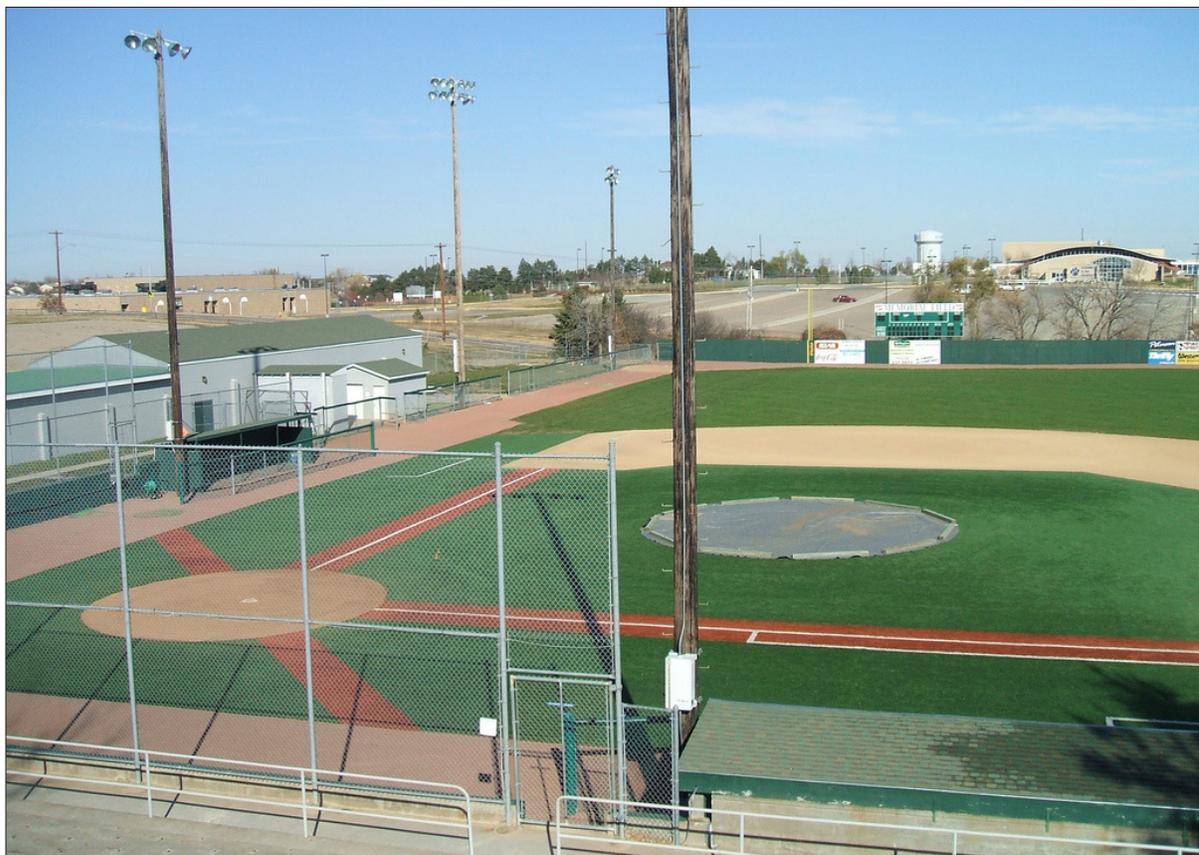
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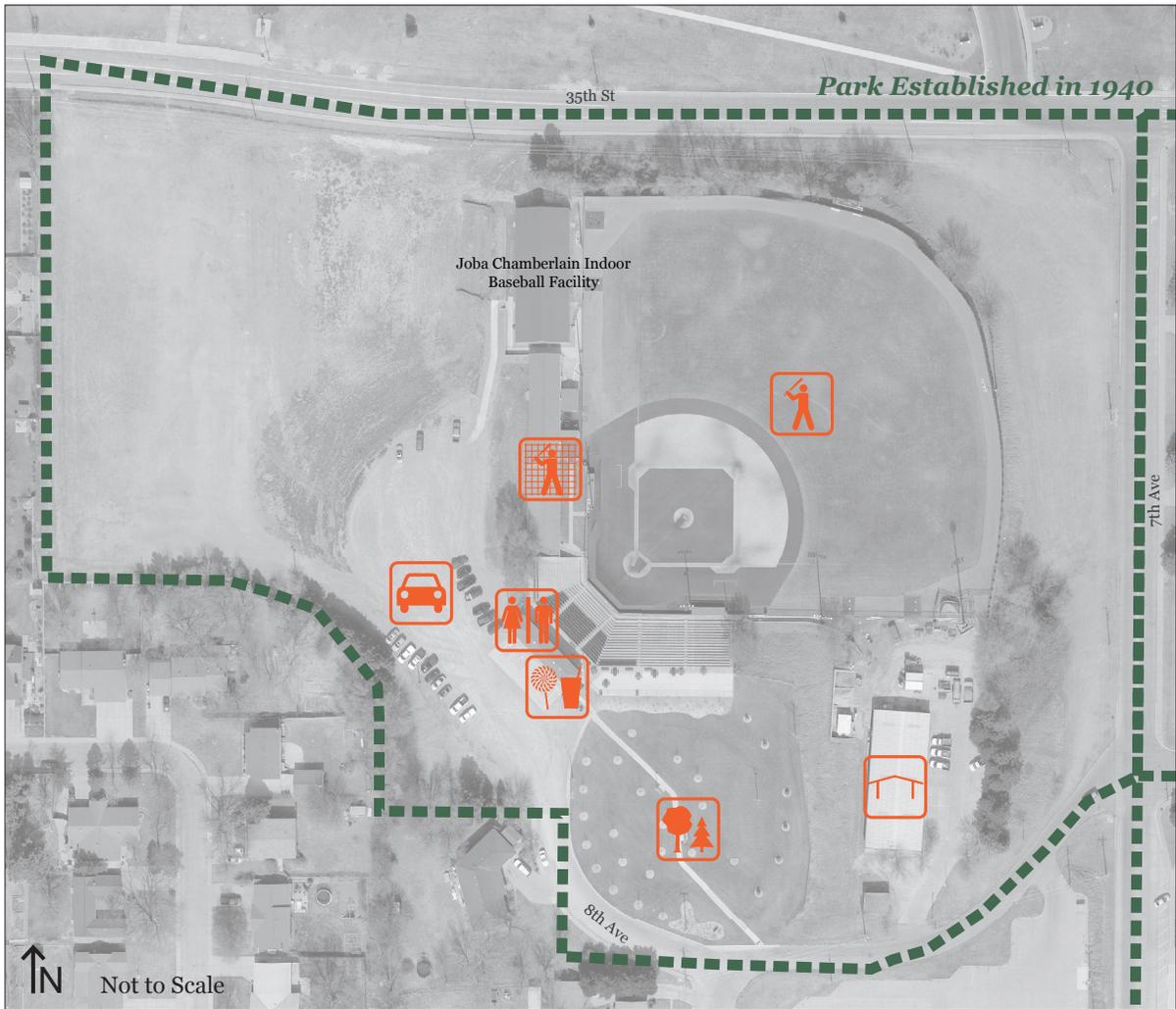


# Memorial Field

Sports Complex (14.4 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At/Over		
Vegetation			X	X			Newly planted trees at entrance
Play Areas			X	X			Open space with new trees, open field on the west side of property
Sports Fields			X	X			Baseball field shared between UNK and Legion Baseball, large bleachers, dugouts, scoreboard, batting cages, locker rooms
Sports Courts	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Walks/Trails			X	X			Paved walkway entrance and paved walk from gravel parking to indoor facility
Play Equipment	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Structures			X	X			Joba Chamberlain Indoor Baseball Facility, announcer's box, concessions, restrooms, locker rooms, maintenance/storage building
Picnic Facilities			X	X			Picnic tables above bleacher seating
Drinking Water			X	X			At the entrance of facility
Restrooms			X	X			Main facility
Parking		X		X			Gravel parking lots, paved handicap spaces
Lighting			X	X			Ballfield is well-lit for night games
Benches			X	X			Benches in the green space outside the baseball stadium
Signage			X	X			Memorial Park sign, stone with landscaping at the walkway entrance
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	UNK has plans for ballfield upgrades, continue to improve overall image and entry experience to stadium, ADA improvements
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	Memorial Field is adjacent to Apollo Park and Harmon Park





Baseball Field



Restrooms



Storage/Maintenance Building



Parking



Concessions



Green Space with Trees

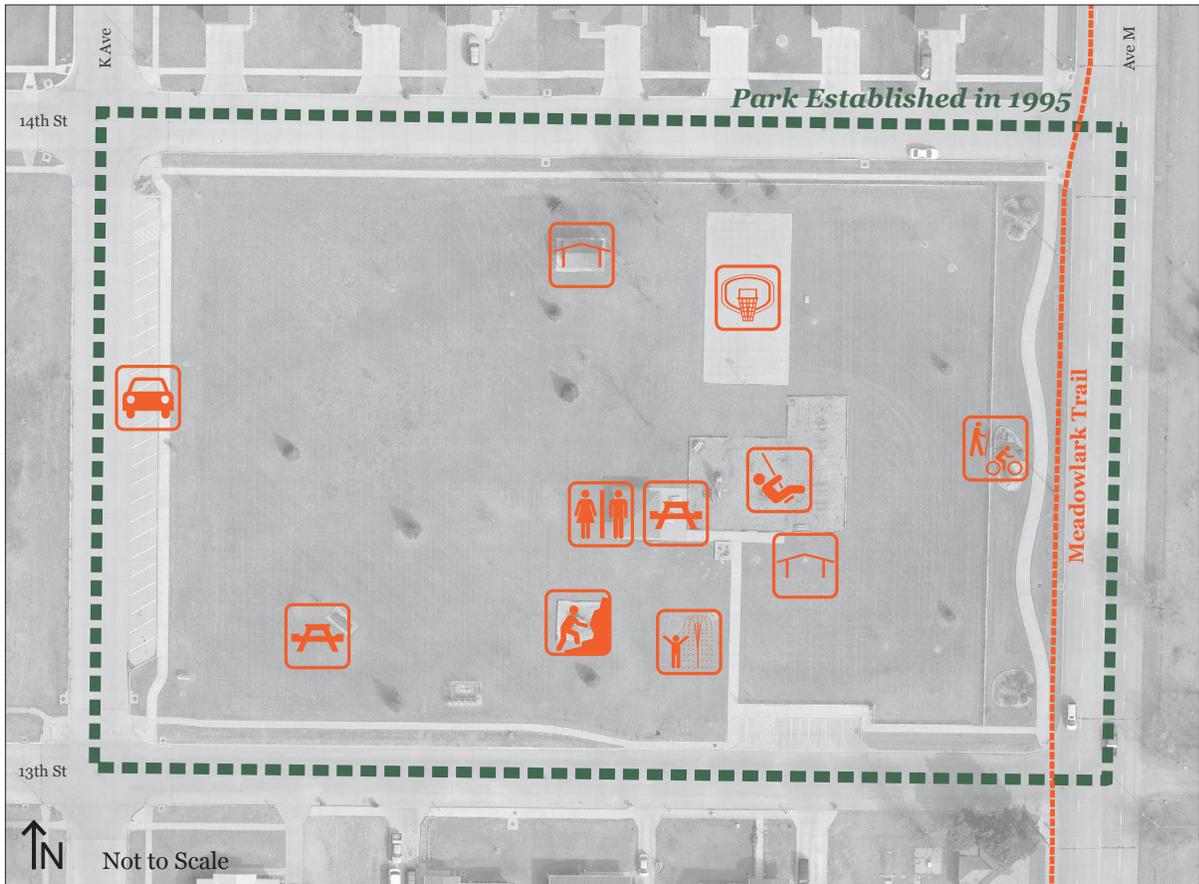


# Nina Hammer Park

Neighborhood Park (5.2 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity		Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At/Over	
Vegetation			X		X	Newer park with smaller/fewer trees, nice landscaping near the trail
Play Areas			X		X	Open space for informal gatherings/games
Sports Fields	-	-	-		X	N/A
Sports Courts			X		X	One basketball court
Walks/Trails			X		X	Wide sidewalk around the perimeter, larger trail on the east
Play Equipment			X		X	Play equipment aimed for younger children, smaller playground, tire swing, 2 infant swings, 4 medium-size swings, 4 larger swings
Structures			X		X	Restroom building, public utilities (fenced in)
Picnic Facilities			X		X	Four covered tables and grill, two covered picnic tables next to playground; two tables southwest/open space with grill
Drinking Water			X		X	Centrally located, outside restroom building
Restrooms			X		X	Clean, well lit
Parking			X		X	20 angled parking stalls on K Ave; four handicap accessible stalls
Lighting	-	-	-	X		N/A
Benches			X		X	2 benches near playground, one bench near southwest intersection
Signage			X		X	Located on southeast corner
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	The open space currently allow for many different types of uses.
Miscellaneous			X		X	Unique amenities: a climbing rock for youth and new splash pad (installed in 2014). This park allows for wide variety of uses to the general public since no specific user group is dedicated for use (like a ball field).





- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  Parking        |  Restrooms         |  Children's Rock Climbing |
|  Picnic Area    |  Basketball Courts |  Splash Pad               |
|  Picnic Shelter |  Playground Area   |  Trails                   |

PROFILE

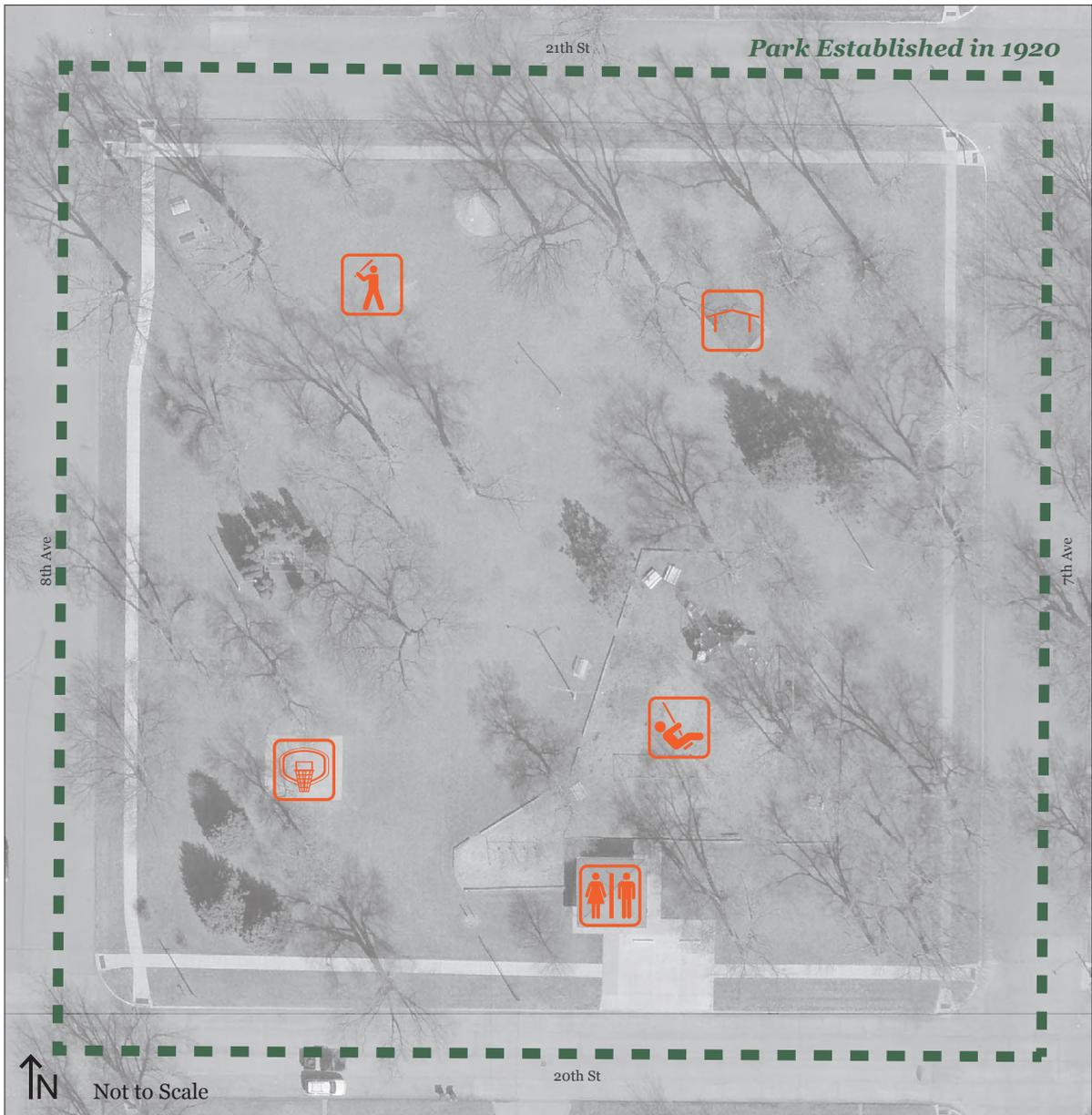


# Pioneer Park

Mini Park (3.3 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At	Over	
Vegetation			X		X		A variety of mature deciduous and evergreen trees throughout
Play Areas			X		X		Open space with large shade trees
Sports Fields		X			X		Neighborhood ball field- all grass, backstop in good condition
Sports Courts			X		X		Basketball (half-court)
Walks/Trails			X		X		Sidewalk on every side of the park
Play Equipment			X		X		Large playground equipment, tire swing, 4 large swings, 4 infant swings, one new spinning piece, 3 benches, 3 picnic tables
Structures			X		X		Restroom building on south end
Picnic Facilities		X					Covered picnic tables and grills
Drinking Water			X		X		Located on east outdoor wall of restroom facility
Restrooms			X		X		Along south side of park near handicap parking stalls
Parking		X			X		2 handicap stalls along south side, on-street parking
Lighting		X			X		1 open space street light
Benches			X		X		Around playground areas and others throughout park
Signage			X		X		Located on south side of park
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A





 Baseball/Softball Field  
 Half Basketball Court

 Picnic Shelter  
 Playground Area

 Restrooms



PROFILE

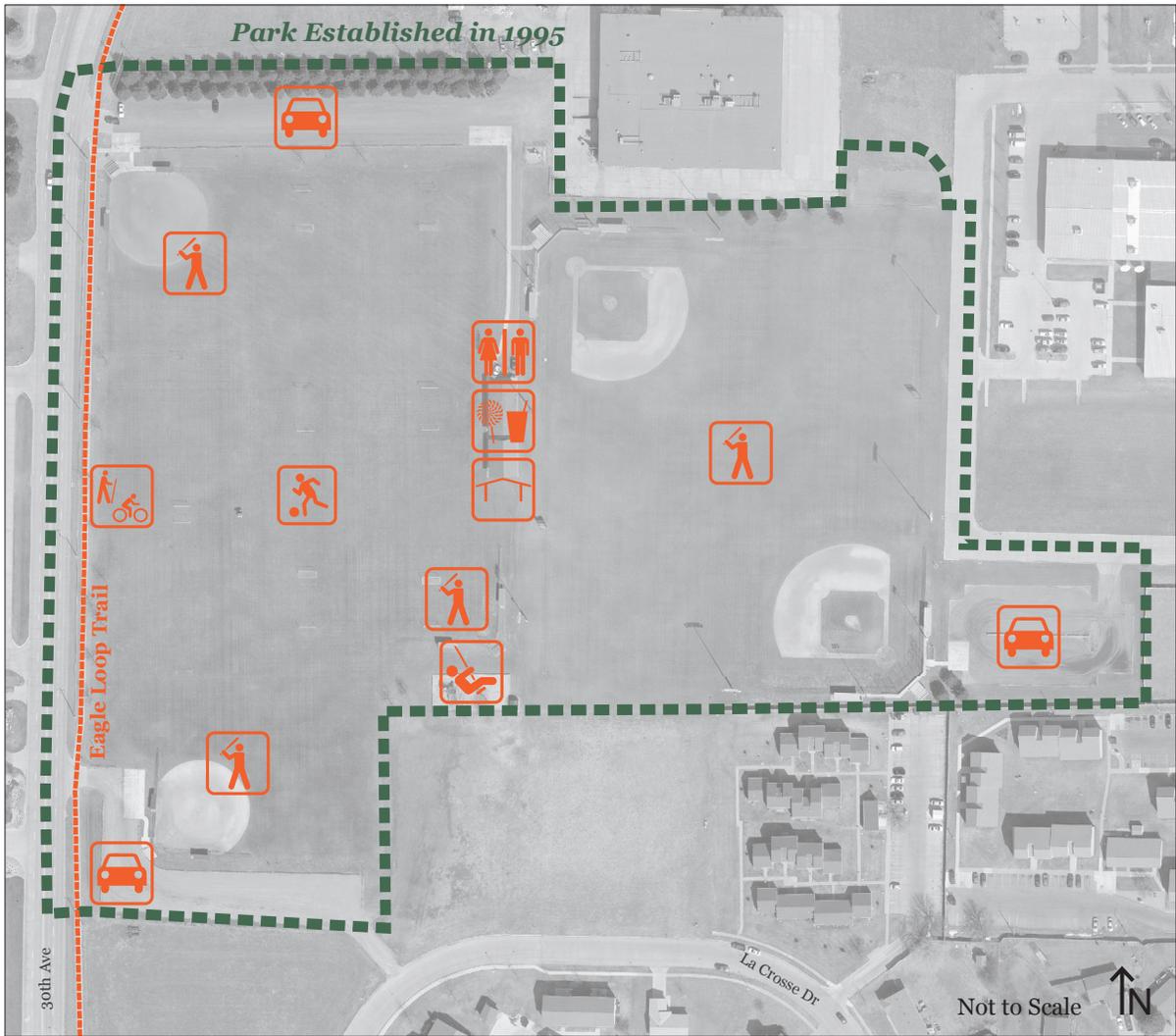


# West Lincolnway Park

Neighborhood Park (24.1 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At/Over		
Vegetation			X	X			Very few trees or shade, mostly mowed turf grass
Play Areas		X			X		Open space available where soccer goals are
Sports Fields			X		X		2 baseball fields with lights, dugouts, bleachers, 3 softball fields (one very small with all grass) with dugouts and small bleachers, multiple soccer fields within wester half of park
Sports Courts	-	-	-		X		N/A
Walks/Trails			X		X		Eagle Loop Trail runs along the east side of the park, pathway from handicap parking to park restroom/concession facility
Play Equipment			X		X		Medium-sized play equipment, one child horsey, tire swing
Structures		X			X		Storage/concessions/restrooms located in the center of the park next to picnic shelter, small storage structure near playground
Picnic Facilities			X		X		Large covered picnic shelter with 12+ tables
Drinking Water			X		X		Centrally located at large combo building
Restrooms			X		X		Restroom facility located in center of park next to picnic shelter
Parking			X		X		3 parking lots - 2 gravel and 1 dirt
Lighting			X		X		2 baseball fields on east side of park are large lights for night games
Benches			X		X		2 benches near playground area
Signage			X		X		Located on the southwest corner of the park near the ballfield
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	Maintain concessions/storage, active sports lighting, shade structure, ballfield improvements, potential splash pad, walking trail connecting fields, upgrade/larger playground, ADA improvement of a paved sidewalk to the playground
Miscellaneous	-	-	-	-	-	-	West Lincolnway Park is a large sports field park for younger leagues.





- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
|  Parking                  |  Soccer Fields   |  Concessions    |
|  Baseball/Softball Fields |  Playground Area |  Picnic Shelter |
|  Trail                    |  Restrooms       |  |



# PROFILE

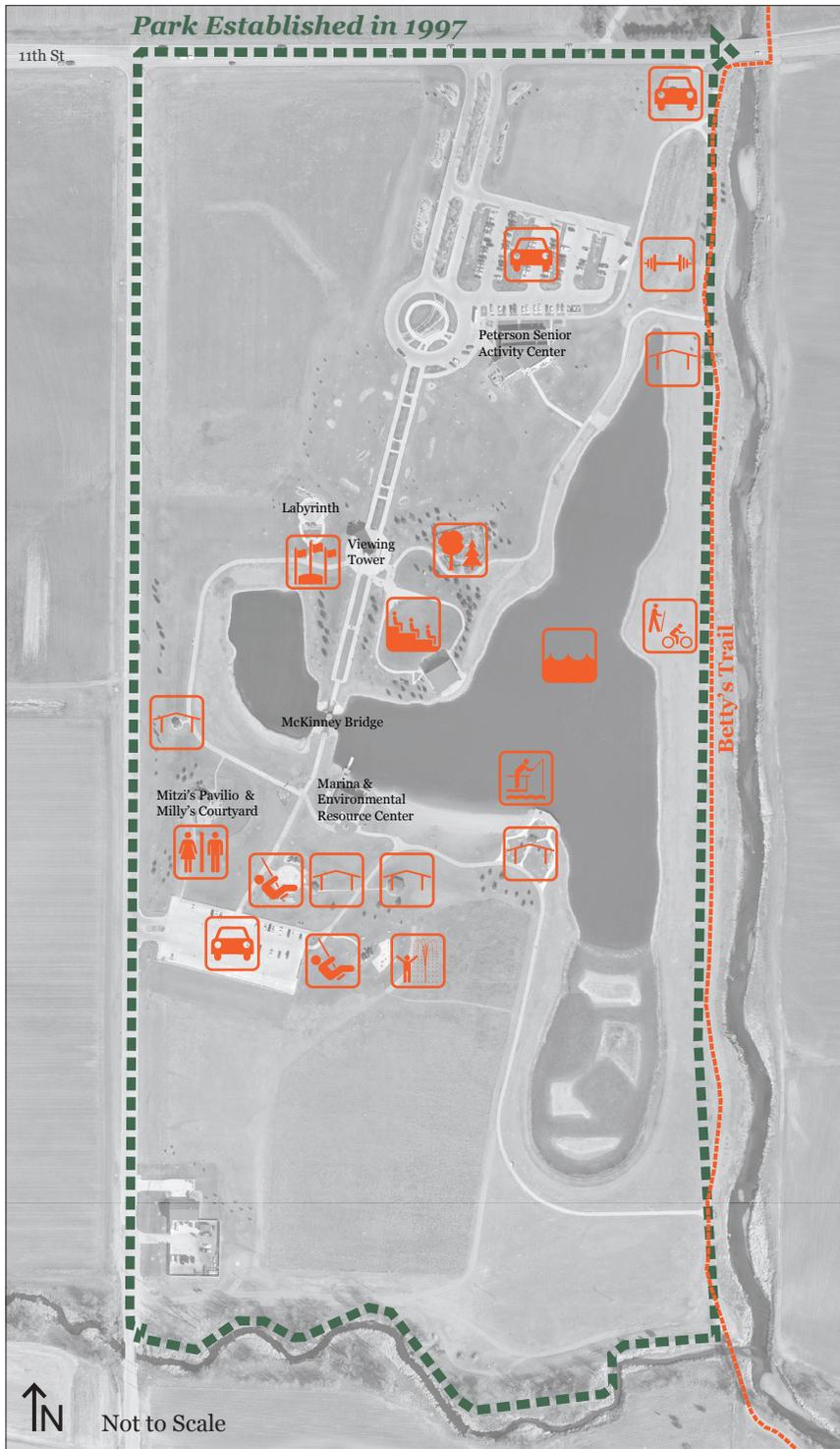


# Yanney Heritage Park

Regional Park (81.6 acres)

Park Component	Condition			Capacity			Notes
	Poor	Fair	Good	Under	At	Over	
Vegetation			X		X		Newer park has limited growth of small and medium sized trees with attractive landscaping throughout the park
Play Areas			X		X		Multiple areas for open space found throughout this passive park
Sports Fields	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Sports Courts	-	-	-	-	-	-	N/A
Walks/Trails			X		X		Trails within the park and connection to city trails
Play Equipment			X		X		3 playground areas, 2 splash pads
Structures			X		X		Peterson Senior Activity Center, 1 amphitheater, viewing tower, pavillion, and marina/ERC
Picnic Facilities			X		X		3 picnic shelters, 30+ picnic tables, 4 grills
Drinking Water			X		X		2 water fountains
Restrooms			X		X		2 restrooms, 2 concession
Parking			X		X		2 paved parking lots
Lighting			X		X		Lighting throughout the park
Benches			X		X		40+ benches
Signage			X		X		2 signs at north main entrance, small sign at west entrance
Recommended Park Component	-	-	-	-	-	-	Power needs to be easily accessible in performing areas, capacities for lighting stage, maintenance needs
Miscellaneous			X		X		80 foot viewing tower, 1 large pond/lake, marina, labyrinth, water splash grounds, bridge, and fitness pad





-  Lake
-  Fishing
-  Splash Pad
-  Outdoor Workout Area
-  Playground Area
-  Amphitheater
-  Trails
-  Picnic Shelter
-  Restrooms
-  Concessions
-  Landscape Garden
-  Parking
-  Memorial



# PROFILE



### Northeast Park 1.6 ACRES

Although there are no preliminary designs for this new park, a splash pad is scheduled to be placed within this neighborhood park. Residential development has built around this park (not shown by this aerial).



### Patriot Park 136.1 ACRES

This proposed softball and baseball complex near the airport may evolve into something more than just an active park. This preliminary layout illustrates the potential for ten new fields. As Kearney continues to grow, additional fields may be warranted and the design and layout fit well on the site.

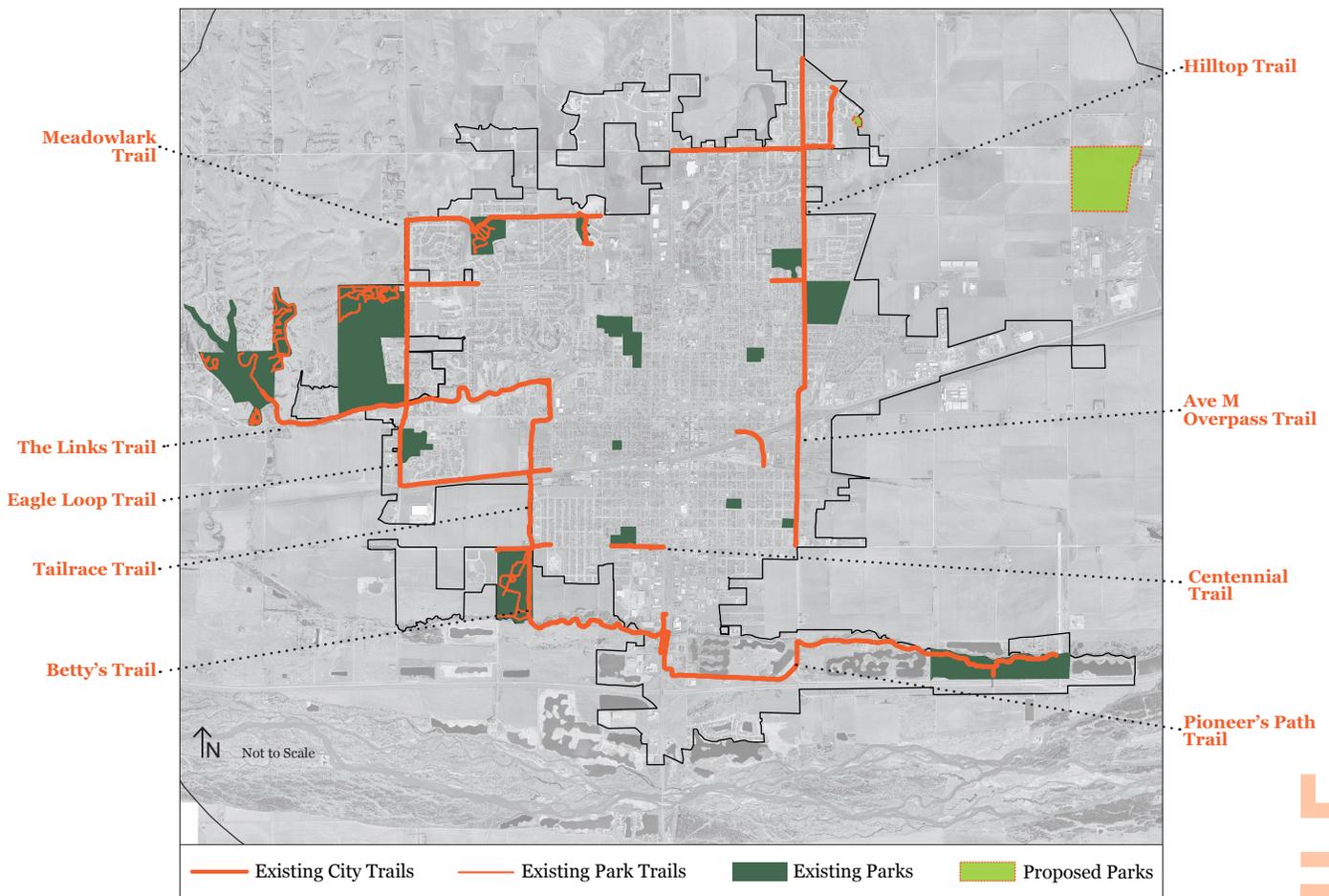


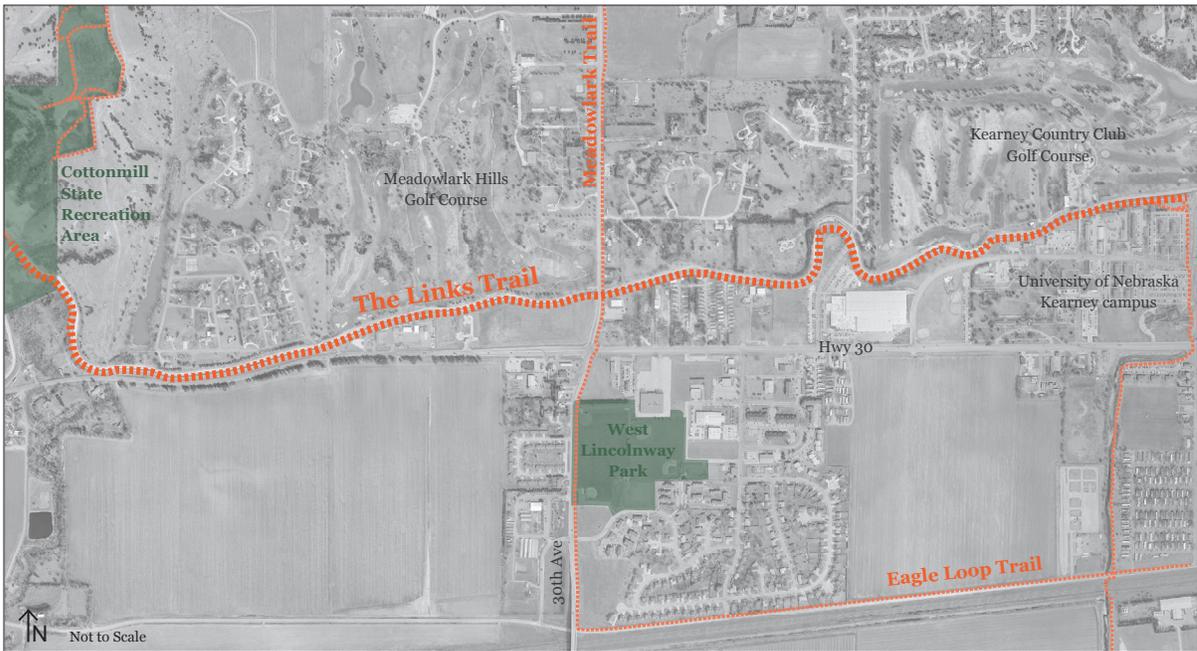
## Trails

From the Oregon and Mormon Trails of the 1800's, to the eight-foot-wide concrete recreational trails of present day, trails have always been an important part of the City of Kearney's infrastructure and culture. Currently several trails along streets and waterways, and within parks exist in Kearney, with plans for further expansion and connection.



Map.10. Existing Trails Map, Kearney

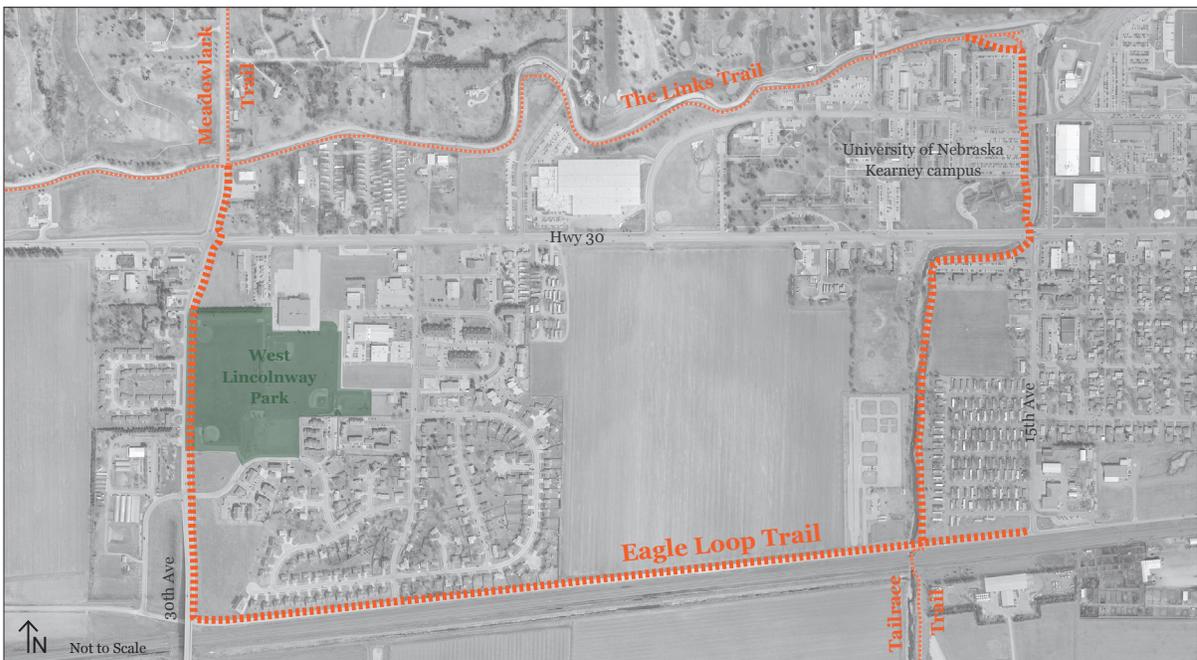




## The Links Trail

**2.77 miles**

The Links Trail is a concrete trail which is a portion of the Cottonmill to Fort Kearney Trail. The trail begins at Cottonmill Park and continues to Highway 30, linking two golf courses along the way, hence the name.



## Eagle Loop Trail

**3.07 miles**

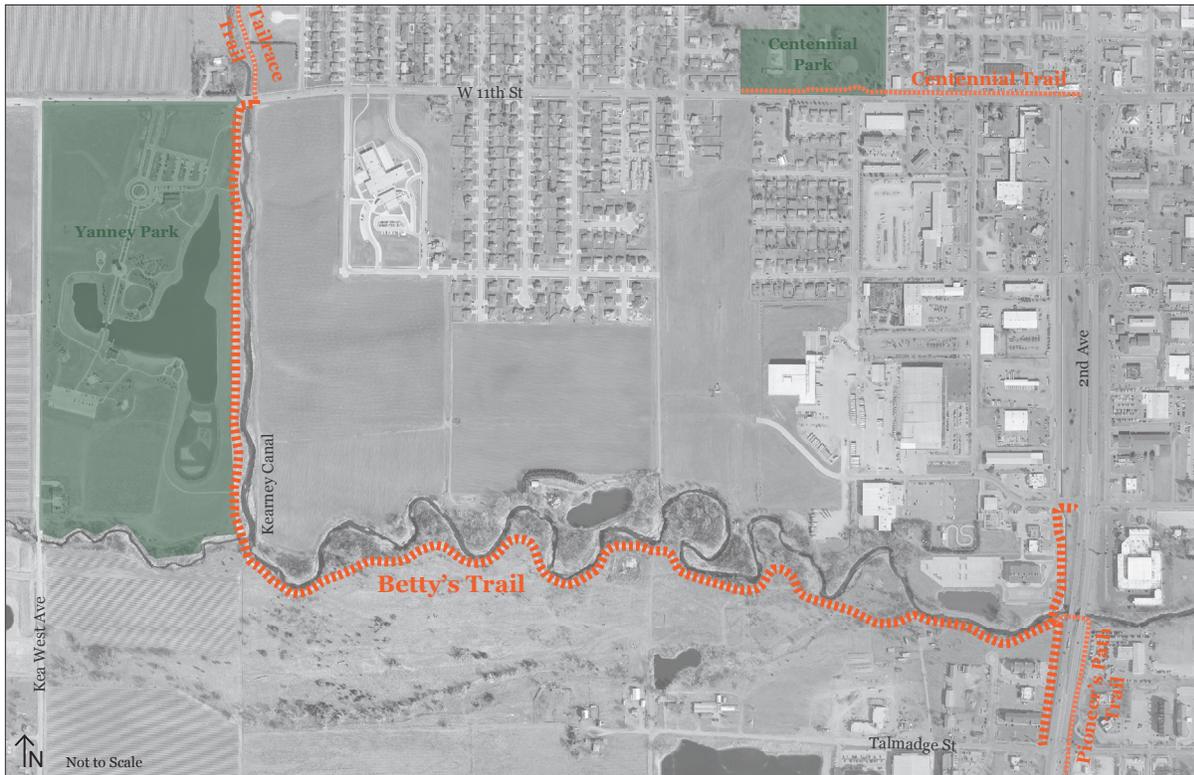
Eagle Loop Trail is a concrete trail which connects with Meadowlark Trail, Tailrace Trail, and the Links Trail in two different locations. Eagle Loop runs along 30th Avenue, Railroad Street, and the Kearney Canal. Its trail head is in the West Lincolnway Park parking lot.



## Tailrace Trail

**1.11 miles**

Tailrace Trail runs along the Kearney Canal from Highway 30 to 11th Street, north of Yanney Park. This trail includes a railroad underpass at the north end and an at-grade crossing across W 11th St into Yanney Park.



## Betty's Trail

**1.77 miles**

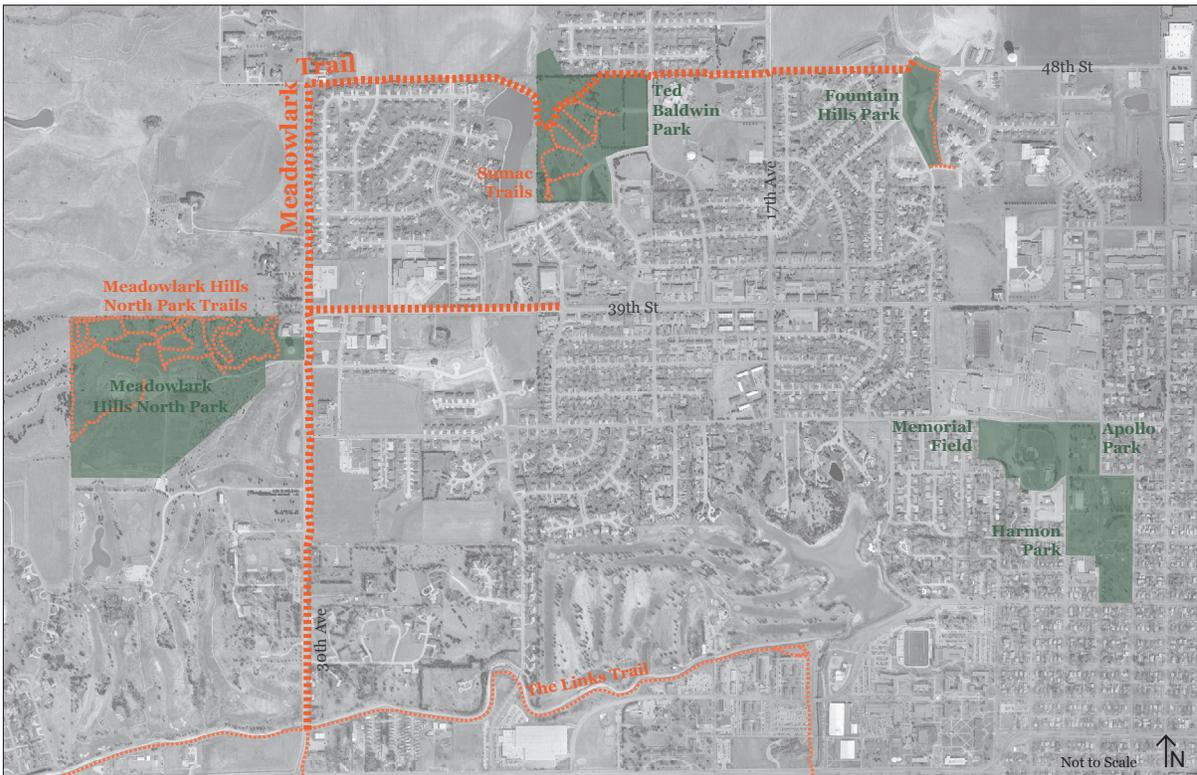
This trail is named after Betty Connell who allowed this portion of the trail system to cross her land. It runs along the Kearney Canal, from 11th Street at the northeast corner of Yanney Park, to the 2nd Street undercrossing and Talmadge Street. Its trailhead is at Yanney Park.



### Pioneer's Path Trail

3.13 miles

This concrete trail begins at the 2nd Avenue underpass (connection to Betty's Trail) and continues east between the Kearney Canal and Interstate 80. The trail ends at the Kearney Archway.



### Meadowlark Trail

1.80 miles

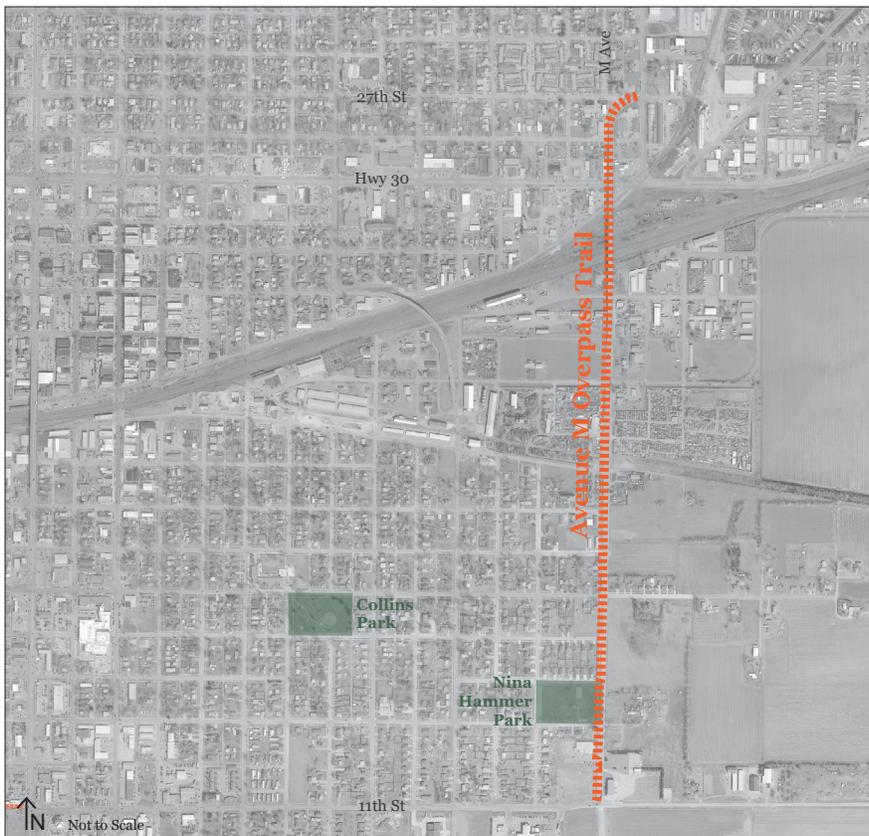
Meadowlark Trail is a concrete trail that runs along 30th Avenue, and turns east at two different points—39th Street and 48th Street. Meadowlark Trail currently connects Meadowlark Hills North Park, Ted Baldwin Park, and Fountain Hills Park, which each have internal trails and paths.



## Hilltop Trail

**2 miles**

This trail begins near Harvey Park at the corner of 39th Street and N Avenue and travels north along N Ave. The trail then splits to head both east and west along 56th Street.

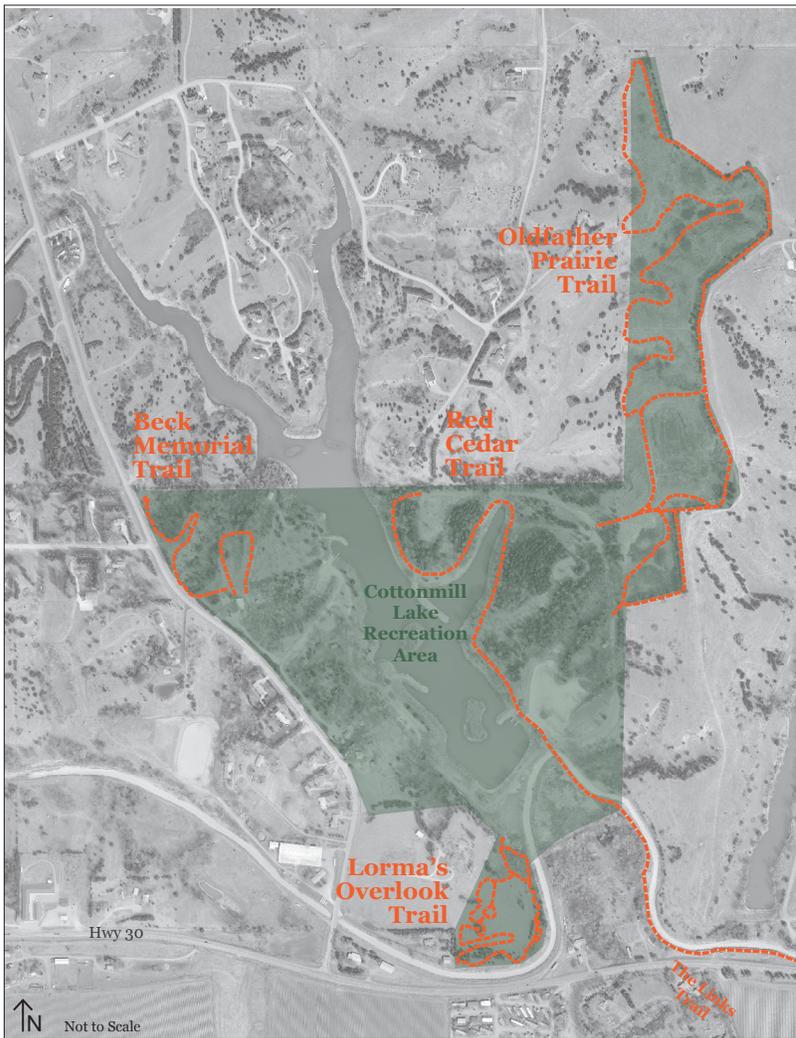


## Avenue M

### Overpass Trail

**1.2 miles**

This concrete trail begins at the corner of Avenue M and 11th Street (just south of Nina Hammer Park) and travels north along Ave M. The trail continues along Avenue M and across the overpass over the railroad lines and Highway 30. The trail ends Near 27th Street and Avenue N.



## Cottonmill Park

### Interior Dirt Trails

#### Red Cedar Trail

**1.80 miles**

This natural grass trail travels begins near the marina building and swim lake in Cottonmill Park and continues along the east side of Cottonmill Lake.

#### Beck Memorial Trail

**0.5 miles**

This short dirt/grass trail within Cottonmill Park begins just north of the Nature Barn and travels along ridges and in both wooded and open areas.

#### Oldfather Prairie Trails

**0.75 or 2-mile loops**

These series of natural grass trails in Cottonmill Park meander throughout the northeastern portion of the Park. These trails are great for hikers, mountain bikers and horseback riders.

## EXISTING LAND USE

The built environment has many consequences attached to it. If done correctly, a system can be expanded with limited disruptions. Prior decisions of land uses can make it difficult to adjust or accommodate for new, unforeseen opportunities. Existing Land Uses are considered by many as ‘the way it’s always been’ and this section defines what these uses are for further analysis in the Achieve Chapter. This section helps to identify any nonconforming land uses according to the zoning or its current future land use. In the simplest terms, Map 11 shows what the land use is currently be used for in Kearney. The following definitions are to clarify the existing land uses and what is to be expected of residential, commercial, community-based, and other land uses.

### Residential Land Uses

#### **Agricultural Residential (AGR)**

A parcel of land with a residential structure occupied by one family and some type of agricultural use, whether it be agricultural storage structures, pasture, or farmland. These parcels are usually large in nature and near the edge of the corporate limits.

#### **Low Density Residential (LDR)**

A parcel of land with a residential structure occupied by one family, such as a traditional house on its own lot, surrounded by yards on all sides.

#### **Medium Density Residential (MDR)**

A parcel of land containing a structure occupied by one family, such as a traditional house on its own lot, surrounded by smaller yards on all sides than the low density residential. This density includes structures occupied by more than one family such as duplexes, townhomes, or in older areas of the City, houses split into rental units.

#### **High Density Residential (HDR)**

A parcel of land containing a structure being utilized by three or more families within the same structure. This includes apartment buildings and retirement and assisted living facilities.

#### **Mobile Homes (MR)**

A parcel of land containing a factory-built, single-family structure. These uses are Single-Family Residential in nature but identified separately due to the density of units.

### Commercial-Based Land Uses

#### **Central Business District (CBD)**

The parcels within the Central Business District land use designation contain multiple land uses including public, quasi-public, commercial, and residential. The Central Business District land use designation was determined by the character of the structures and the character of the downtown area.

#### **General Commercial (C)**

A parcel of land which has a commercial use to sell goods or provide services. Examples include restaurants, hotels, large and small retail stores, banks, and automotive repair shops.

#### **Business Park (BP)**

A parcel of land which has a commercial use but mainly provides services, and is characterized by an individual or multiple office buildings. Examples include insurance sales, medical offices, or corporate headquarters. Business Park use typically has fewer customers and traffic than General Commercial land use.

#### **Light Industrial (LI)**

A parcel that contains commercial or industrial use involved in light manufacturing or packing, assembly of products, or storage, which does not have a major external effect on surrounding properties or uses. Examples include small storage units, warehousing facilities, and small distribution centers.



## Commercial-Based Land Uses Industrial (I)

A parcel that contains industrial use involved in manufacturing or packing, assembly of products, or storage of unsightly materials or machinery. Examples include automobile/machinery junk yards, grain elevators, and storage sites of excavated material.

### Park and Recreation (PR)

A parcel of land that contains public or private land available for recreational, educational, cultural, or aesthetic use. Examples include city parks and trails.

### Public (P)

A parcel of land owned or maintained by a federal, state, or local governmental entity and open for public use or enjoyment. Examples include hospitals, cemeteries, city/county buildings, and schools.

### Quasi-Public (QP)

A parcel of land containing a use that is generally under the control of a private, religious, or non-profit entity, that provides a social benefit to the community as a whole. Examples include churches, event/conference centers, and county fairgrounds.

## Other Land Uses

### Utility (UT)

A parcel of land containing a structure or infrastructural equipment which is necessary to providing a utility or communication service for the community. Examples include communication towers, electrical substations, and water towers.

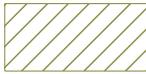
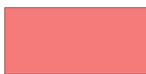
### Agriculture (AG)

A parcel of land that has not been developed and is currently being used for agricultural uses, such as pasturing, growing crops, or contains open spaces such as woodlands or floodplain.

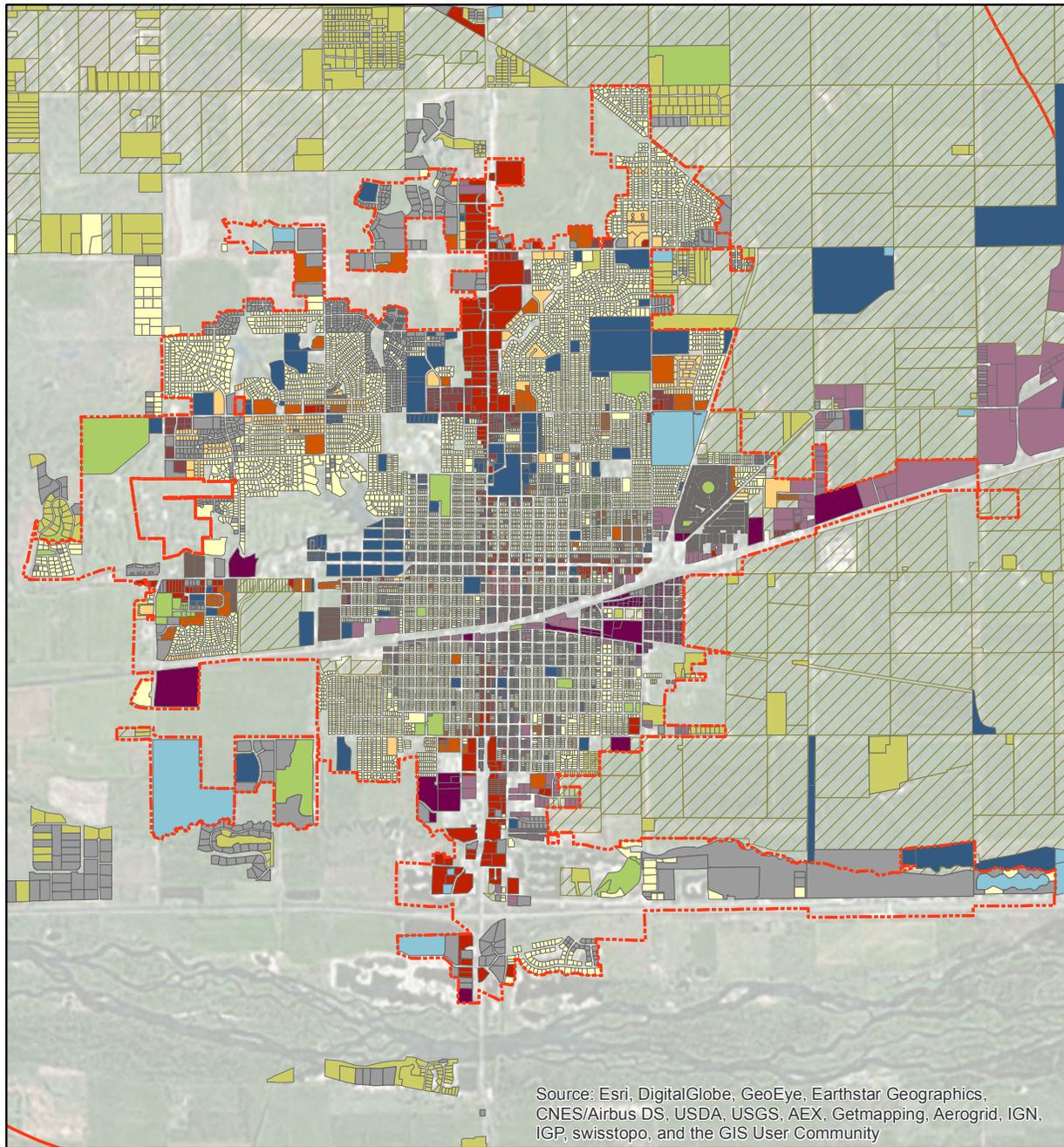
### Undeveloped/Vacant (UND/V)

A parcel of land that is currently undeveloped and not proposed for development, or may be subdivided and under preparation for future

development. Undeveloped or vacant land is often open and minimally maintained. This identification is shown on the Existing Land Use Map to provide current opportunities within the corporate limits.

	AG
	AGR
	LDR
	MDR
	HDR
	MR
	BP
	C
	CBD
	LI
	I
	P
	QP
	PR
	UT
	UND/V

Map.11.. Existing Land Use Map



**Legend**

Agriculture	Business Park	Quasi-Public
Low Density Residential	Commercial	Parks and Recreation
Agricultural Residential	Central Business District	Utilities
Medium Density Residential	Light Industrial	Undeveloped/Vacant
High Density Residential	Industrial	
Mobile Residential	Public	

Created by: MBG  
 Date: Feb, 2015  
 Revised: Oct, 2015  
 Software: ArcGIS 10.2  
 File: 110882.00

**Existing Land Use**  
 Kearney, Nebraska

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles

This map was prepared using information from record drawings supplied by JEO and/or other applicable city, county, federal, or public or private entities. JEO does not guarantee the accuracy of this map or the information used to prepare this map. This is not a scaled plot.

*\*Based on best available parcel data from the City of Kearney*



[section 2.9]

## TRANSPORTATION

The Kearney transportation system has seen several key improvements over recent years, evidenced by multiple project objectives already achieved from Kearney's previous transportation system plans. Most notably, the Kearney area has completed the following projects since the last transportation plan:

- A second interchange with Interstate 80 (I-80).
- A bypass around Kearney that connects to the new interchange (anticipated 2016 completion).
- New bridges over the Union Pacific railroad.
- Improved traffic signal operations along 2nd Avenue.
- Several miles of new shared-use trails.
- A new RYDE transit facility (built in 2013), complimented with increased ridership.
- An expanded airport terminal.

However, not every transportation goal from previous planning efforts has been achieved. New transportation goals and objectives have been added or changed as the community continues to grow and evolve.

### Existing Transportation Profile

Kearney's current transportation system includes a variety of modes and vehicular types, including passenger vehicles, commercial trucks, bicycles, pedestrians, air services, railroads, and public transit. The following sections offer a more detailed description of Kearney's existing transportation system.

### State Functional Classifications

Functional classification is the process by which streets and highways are grouped into classes according to the character of service they are intended to provide. Below is an overview of the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) functional classifications. Map 12 shows the existing roadways within the Kearney area and their state functional classifications.

- **Interstate.** (e.g. I-80) A divided, limited access facility with no direct land access and no at-grade crossings or intersections. Interstates are intended to provide the highest degree of mobility serving higher traffic volumes and longer trip lengths.
- **Major Arterial.** (e.g. 2nd Avenue) Permit traffic flow through urban areas and between major destinations. Major arterials carry a high proportion of the total urban travel since movement, and not necessarily access, is the essential function. Note East Beltway/Cherry Avenue will be classified as a major arterial upon completion of construction.
- **Other Arterial.** (e.g. 39th Street) Collect and distribute traffic from principal arterials and interstates to streets of lower classification, and in some cases, allow traffic to directly access destinations. Access to land use activities is generally permitted, but is oftentimes consolidated, shared, or limited to larger-scale users.

- **Collector.** (e.g. E Avenue north of 31st Street) Provide for land access and traffic circulation within and between residential neighborhoods and commercial and industry areas, as well as distribute traffic movements from these areas to arterial streets. Collectors do not typically accommodate long through trips and are not continuous for long distances.
- **Local Road.** (e.g. Central Avenue south of 11th Street) Offer the lowest level of mobility and highest level of local property access. Local streets typically make up the largest percentage of street mileage and provide direct access to adjacent land uses.

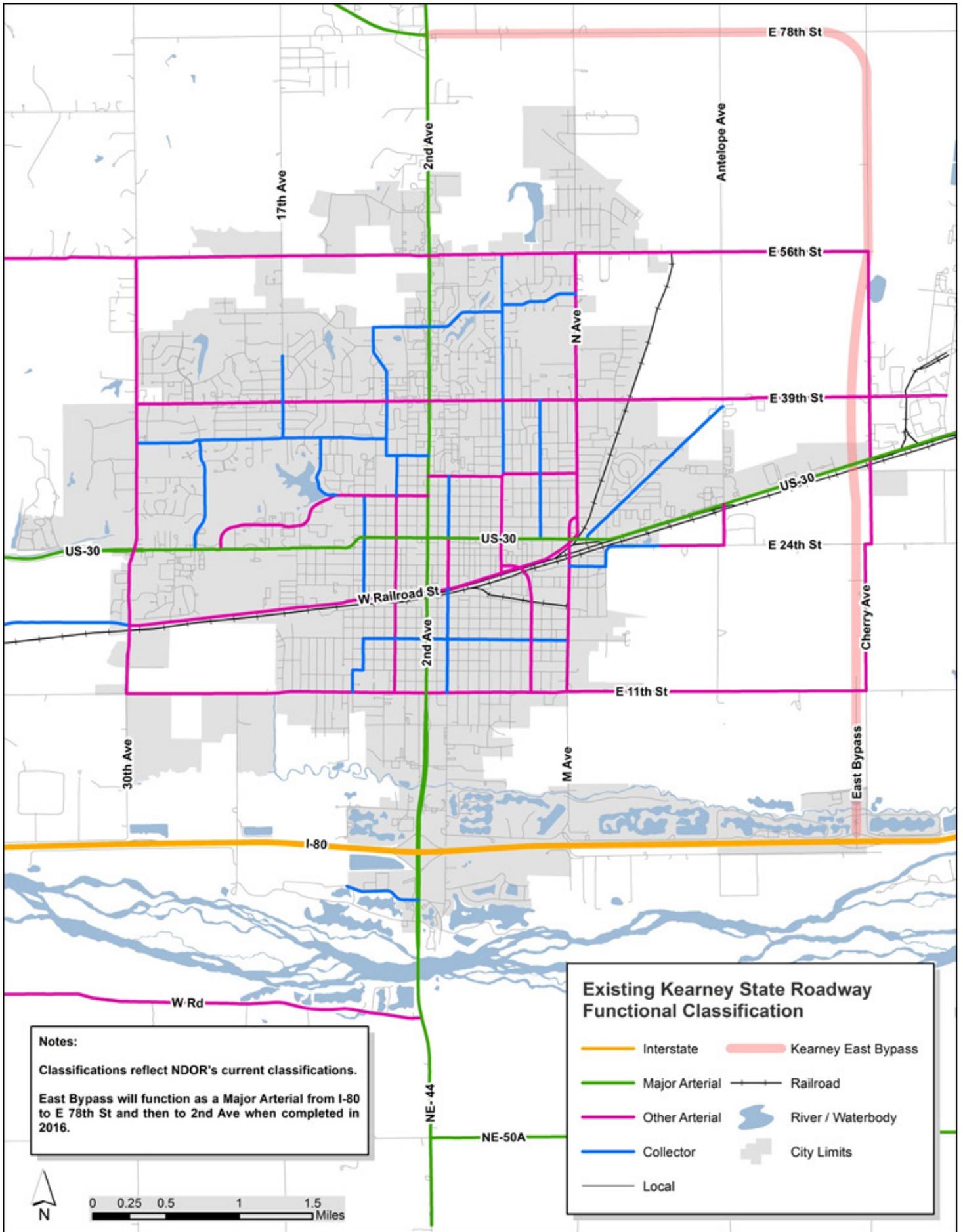
Note that the State currently classifies Cherry Avenue as an Other Arterial and that Antelope Avenue is a Local Road. After completion of the East Beltway in 2016, Cherry Avenue is expected to be reclassified as a Local Road and Antelope Avenue is expected to be reclassified as an Other Arterial. Antelope Avenue is a paved two-lane roadway from 24th Street (Coal Chute Road) to 78th Street and there is an at-grade crossing of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks.

## Primary Highways

There are currently three major highways in the study area, classified as either Interstate or Major Arterial in Map 12. A fourth highway is planned to be completed by the end of 2016. These primary highways allow for facilities designed to carry higher traffic volumes and aim to increase local and regional mobility in and around the Kearney area. The primary highways serving the Kearney area include the following:

**Interstate 80 (I-80).** I-80 is the only access-controlled freeway in the study area. It runs east-west and is located in the southern portion of the Kearney study area, just north of the Platte River and just south of 1st Street. Until recently, the interchange with 2nd Avenue (Exit 272) was the only I-80 access point for Kearney. In 2013, a second I-80 interchange (Exit 275) was constructed near Cherry Avenue, about three miles east of the 2nd Avenue access.

- Four-lane divided facility with wide, depressed grass median.
- Full access control.
- Carries approximately 18,000 vehicles per day.
- Traffic congested limited to intersection delay during standard peak-hour commute times.
- Posted speed limit of 75 mph adjacent to the Kearney area.
- Diamond interchange with signalized ramp terminal intersections at 2nd Avenue.
- Diamond interchange with stop-controlled ramp terminals at the East Bypass.
- Bridge overpasses at Kea West Avenue, 2nd Avenue, M Avenue, East Bypass and Sweetwater Avenue.
- Designated an Interstate Highway on the National Highway System (NHS).



**Notes:**  
 Classifications reflect NDOR's current classifications.  
 East Bypass will function as a Major Arterial from I-80 to E 78th St and then to 2nd Ave when completed in 2016.

**Existing Kearney State Roadway Functional Classification**

Interstate	Kearney East Bypass
Major Arterial	Railroad
Other Arterial	River / Waterbody
Collector	City Limits
Local	

**United States Highway 30** (U.S. 30). U.S. 30 is locally known as either Lincoln Highway, 25th Street (east of 9th Avenue) or 24th Street (west of 9th Avenue). U.S. 30 runs east-west through the middle of Kearney bisecting the study area into northern and southern regions. Along the industrialized east side of Kearney, east of N Avenue, the Union Pacific Railroad tracks run adjacent to the highway, which limits access to the southeast side of the Kearney area with only three at-grade crossings. West of N Avenue, through the majority of Kearney, there are several locations along U.S. 30 to access the northern and southern regions of the City. This roadway has the following features:

- Four-lane divided with raised median and left-turn lanes through most of City.
- Five-lane section with two-way left-turn lane between 30th and 15th Avenues.
- Two-lane with surfaced shoulder outside the City of Kearney.
- Poor access control through City with numerous closely spaced driveways; good access control through industrial areas east of N Avenue.
- Problematic intersection geometrics at 9th Avenue alignment change.
- Posted speed limits transition from 60 mph outside of the City to 35 mph inside the City between 19th Avenue and N Avenue.
- Dense concentration of traffic signals between 5th Avenue and G Avenue from one-block spacing to quarter-mile signal spacing.
- Nearly 18,000 vehicles per day with peak hour congestion around 2nd Avenue.
- Bridge overpasses at M Avenue and East Bypass.
- Designated a principal arterial on the NHS within the city limits of Kearney, and a minor arterial outside of the city limits.

**2nd Avenue.** 2nd Avenue is the principal north-south route through the middle of Kearney, bisecting the study area into east and west regions. It is the only continuous north-south route through the City. The interchange with I-80 serves as the primary entry point into Kearney from the Interstate. It is a substantially commercialized corridor that also provides accessibility to both the east and west regions of the surrounding Kearney area. 2nd Avenue currently serves as two separate Nebraska highway designations through Kearney: Nebraska Highway 44 (NE-44) south of U.S. 30 and Nebraska Highway 10 (NE-10) north of U.S. 30. However, after completion of the East Bypass in 2016, the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) plans to relinquish both state highway portions of 2nd Avenue to the City of Kearney. This roadway has the following features:

- Four-lane divided with raised median and left-turn lanes south of 60th Street.
- Five-lane section with two-way left-turn lane north of 60th Street.
- Bridge over Union Pacific Railroad.
- Direct access to Interstate 80.
- Frequent driveway access points between 11th Street and 44th Street.
- Speed limits: 45 mph south of rail bridge; 35 mph through center of Kearney; 40 mph between 39th Street and 56th Street; 50 mph north of 56th Street.



- Dense concentration of signalized intersections through Kearney with two-block spacing through center of City and generally quarter-mile signal spacing elsewhere.
- Highest-traffic corridor in City (nearly 27,000 vehicles per day north of U.S. 30) with localized congestion during weekday and weekend peak hours.
- Designated a principal arterial on the NHS within the city limits of Kearney, and a minor arterial outside of the city limits.

**East Bypass.** The East Bypass is the relocation of NE-10 around the City of Kearney. It is planned for completion by the end of 2016. The East Bypass begins at I-80 from the new interchange near Cherry Avenue and proceeds north about five miles to 78th Street, then turns west for about three miles ending at the current junction of NE-10 and NE-40 at 2nd Avenue on the north side of Kearney. The East Bypass will provide an alternate route to 2nd Avenue and should ease some of the traffic congestion and truck traffic experienced through the middle of the City. It provides a regional linkage of N-40, N-10, and U.S. 30 with Interstate 80. The East Bypass also provides additional access to the Kearney Regional Airport and to new planned growth areas in the northeast area of Kearney. This roadway will have the following features:

- Four-lane divided with raised median and left-turn lanes south of 56th Street.
- Two-lane with surfaced shoulder north of 56th Street (future four-lane divided).
- Bridge over Union Pacific Railroad and U.S. 30.
- Connecting link to U.S. 30 north of the railroad overpass.
- Direct access to Interstate 80.

### Other Arterials

There are several additional arterial routes that facilitate traffic flow throughout Kearney by distributing traffic between local and collector roads and the primary highways. There are five significant, continuous north-south routes in the Kearney area that transport significant volumes of traffic between local/connector roads and the primary highways:

**30th Avenue.** 30th Avenue is a minor arterial that runs along the west side of Kearney's city limits. It is a four-lane undivided roadway between 11th Street and 39th Street, except across the bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad tracks where it is only two lanes. There is a posted 35 mph speed limit from the bridge to just north of U.S. 30; elsewhere in the City the speed limit is 45 mph. The intersection with U.S. 30 is signalized and has turn lanes. The route carries about 6,400 vehicles per day north of U.S. 30. The portion of 30th Avenue south of 11th Street to Interstate 80 has a gravel surface. The portion of 30th Avenue north of 39th Street to the NE-40 intersection outside the city limits has two paved lanes with a soft shoulder and posted speed limits of 50 to 55 mph. 30th Avenue provides access to a mix of residential, commercial and industrial developments, including the new Kearney High School (anticipated opening in 2016) at the southeast corner of the 11th Street intersection with 30th Avenue.

**5th Avenue.** 5th Avenue is a minor arterial that runs from 11th Street to 35th Street with full cross-street grid connectivity. There is an at-grade rail crossing at the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. The 16th Street and U.S. 30 intersections are signalized. The majority of the other intersections have stop-control on the side streets and not on 5th Avenue. South of U.S. 30, the route carries about 5,200 vehicles per day. The roadway cross-section is wide enough to include two through lanes and parking along the majority of both sides of the corridor. The only turn lanes provided along this route are at U.S. 30. The land use along the corridor is almost entirely residential with several access drives and alleyway connections. The speed limit along 5th Avenue is 25 mph.

**Central Avenue.** Central Avenue is a collector street that runs between southern Kearney and CHI Health Good Samaritan Hospital (or from 1st Street to 31st Street, respectively) with full cross-street grid connectivity. A short section of Central Avenue is a minor arterial between U.S. 30 and Railroad Street. There is an at-grade rail crossing at the Union Pacific Railroad tracks which separates Kearney's Downtown and Old Town business districts. There are traffic signals spaced every block from 21st Street to U.S. 30 through "The Bricks" retail section of downtown that carries nearly 3,700 vehicles per day. Outside of the Downtown and Old Town business districts the non-signalized intersections have stop-control on the side streets but not on Central Avenue. The only other signalized intersection along the Central Avenue corridor is at 11th Street. The southern portion of the route carries around 5,000 vehicles per day. North of 12th Street the roadway cross-section is wide enough to accommodate two lanes and parking along the majority of both sides of the corridor. Turn lanes are marked at the U.S. 30 and Railroad Street intersections. South of 12th Street the roadway cross-section has three lanes with a center turn lane and no parking. The land uses along the full corridor are generally industrial, commercial and residential, respectively. The speed limit along Central Avenue is 25 mph and 35 mph south of 14th Street.

**E Avenue/22nd Street/H Avenue.** The two-lane bridge over the Union Pacific Railroad tracks at 22nd Street connects the E Avenue and H Avenue corridors such that a continuous north-south route from 11th Street to 56th Street is provided. The corridor is a minor arterial south of 31st Street, and a collector north of 31st Street. The E Avenue portion of the route runs north of the 22nd Street bridge and has a 25 mph posted speed limit. The H Avenue portion south of the 22nd Street bridge has a 30 mph posted speed limit. The entire route provides full cross-street grid connectivity through residential areas. Both the E Avenue and H Avenue portions are two-lanes wide with on-street parking on both sides. Traveling southbound along the route there are stop signs at 46th Street, 31st Street and 22nd Street on E Avenue and at 11th Street on H Avenue. Traveling northbound the only stop signs on the route are at 31st Street, 46th Street and 56th Street. The E Avenue intersections with U.S. 30 and 39th Street are signalized. The only turn lanes along the entire route are at U.S. 30 where about 5,400 vehicles per day are carried. The E Avenue intersection with 31st Street is four-way stop-controlled and has problematic intersection geometrics due to the offset alignment of 31st Street through the intersection.

**N Avenue/M Avenue.** The N Avenue and M Avenue corridors on the east side of Kearney are minor arterials connected by a signalized intersection at 27th Street. This connection provides for a north-south route from just south of Interstate 80 all the way to 78th Street on the north side of Kearney. The M Avenue two-lane bridge carries traffic over the Union Pacific Railroad tracks and over U.S. 30. South of the bridge to 11th Street M Avenue is four lanes undivided with a 40 mph speed limit. South of



11th Street, M Avenue is classified as a local, two-lane roadway with a gravel surface; however, it is paved at 1st Street and across the bridge over Interstate 80. The only stop controlled approaches on M Avenue are at 11th Street and 1st Street. The land use on M Avenue is industrial south of the bridge to 18th Street. South of 18th Street adjacent land use is mostly residential.

N Avenue is four-lanes undivided from 27th Street to 66th Street and is reduced to two-lanes north of 66th Street. The speed limit on N Avenue is 35 mph from 27th Street to 39th Street, 40 mph from 39th Street to 66th Street, and 50 mph north of 66th Street. The N Avenue intersections with 39th Street and 56th Street are signalized. There are turn lanes at 39th Street. Just to the north of 27th Street the route carries nearly 9,900 vehicles per day. The adjacent land use along N Avenue is mostly residential. Note that N Avenue turns into Railroad Street south of the signalized intersection with U.S. 30.

In addition to the major north-south arterial routes, there are six significant, continuous east-west routes which also transport high volumes of traffic between local/connector roads and the primary highways:

**56th Street.** 56th Street is a minor arterial that runs along the entire north side of Kearney's city limits. West of 2nd Avenue it is two-lanes with a soft shoulder and a 50 mph speed limit. Turns lanes have been provided at new development intersections. The intersections with 17th Avenue and 30th Avenue operate with all-way stop control. The signalized intersection with 2nd Avenue widens to four lanes with raised medians and turn lanes carrying nearly 10,500 vehicles per day on the east leg. East of 2nd Avenue to N Avenue the roadway is generally four lanes undivided with a 40 mph speed limit. Turn lanes are provided at E Avenue and at commercial driveways within a quarter-mile east of 2nd Avenue. The intersection with N Avenue is signalized without any turn lanes. East of N Avenue for a half mile the roadway is four-lanes undivided with a 45 mph speed limit before reducing down to a two-lane section with a soft shoulder and a 50 mph speed limit. The two-lane section extends east to the Kearney Regional Airport Terminal at the intersection with Airport Road. The approaches at Antelope Avenue, East Beltway (in 2016) and Airport Road are controlled by stop signs. The corridor currently provides direct access to a mix of residential and commercial land uses.

**39th Street.** 39th Street is a minor arterial that runs continuously from 30th Avenue to Airport Road. The route is mostly a four-lane undivided road from 30th Avenue to R Avenue with occasional turn lanes at major intersections. Just to the west of 2nd Avenue the route carries about 14,400 vehicles per day. The posted speed limits are 45 mph from 30th Avenue to 22nd Avenue, 35 mph from 22nd Avenue to N Avenue and 40 mph from N Avenue to R Avenue. At R Avenue the route becomes a two-lane roadway with soft shoulder and a posted 55 mph speed limit all the way to Airport Road. The intersections at 17th Avenue, 11th Avenue, 6th Avenue, 2nd Avenue, A Avenue, E Avenue, and N Avenue are signalized. The only stop-controlled approaches are at the ends of the route at 30th Avenue and Airport Road. The corridor provides access to a mix of residential and commercial land uses west of R Avenue and to industrial land uses east of R Avenue.

**31st Street.** 31st Street runs continuously between 5th Avenue and N Avenue providing grid connectivity to local residential streets and to some major intercity routes. West of 2nd Avenue and east of E Avenue the route is a two-lane local roadway with parking on both sides and a 25 mph speed limit. East of 2nd Avenue, 31st Street is classified as a minor arterial. The posted speed limit between 2nd Avenue and E Avenue is 30

mph. In the section between 2nd Avenue and A Avenue, adjacent to Good Samaritan Hospital, the route is a three-lane roadway with turn lanes and carries nearly 4,800 vehicles per day. The intersections with 2nd Avenue and A Avenue are signalized. The intersection with E Avenue is all-way stop-controlled and has problematic geometrics due to the offset alignment of 31st Street through this intersection. The approaches at the ends of the route at 5th Avenue and N Avenue are stop controlled.

**University Drive/29th Street.** University Drive is a minor arterial that runs through the University of Nebraska-Kearney (UNK) campus starting from U.S. 30 on the west side of Campus to 9th Avenue where the route continues along 29th Street to E Avenue. 9th Avenue is a minor arterial west of 2nd Avenue. University Drive is a four-lane undivided roadway with a 30 mph speed limit that provides access to UNK facilities and carries about 5,600 vehicles per day. The only stop-controlled approach along University Drive is at U.S. 30. East of 9th Avenue along 29th Street, the route is a two-lane roadway with parking on both sides that provides grid connectivity to local residential streets and some major intercity routes. The speed limit on 29th Street is 25 mph. Turn lanes are provided at the signalized intersections with 9th Avenue and 2nd Avenue. The intersection with 5th Avenue is four-way stop controlled and the approaches at Central Avenue and E Avenue are controlled by stop signs. Traffic on 29th Street just west of 5th Avenue is nearly 6,500 vehicles per day.

**Railroad Street** Railroad Street is a two-lane minor arterial roadway that runs along the north side of the Union Pacific Railroad tracks from 30th Avenue to N Avenue/ U.S. 30 providing access to a mix of residential, commercial and industrial land uses. To the north there are numerous connections with local streets and other intercity roadways. The at-grade railroad track crossings at 5th Avenue and Central Avenue provide the only direct connections from Railroad Street to the south. Four major north-south routes (30th Avenue, 2nd Avenue, E Avenue/22nd Street/H Avenue, and N Avenue/M Avenue) pass over Railroad Street. The approaches to 5th Avenue and Central Avenue (at-grade crossing locations) are controlled by stop signs and the traffic carried between these two locations is nearly 3,600 vehicles per day. Turn lanes are provided at the Central Avenue intersection. The speed limit between 9th Avenue and C Avenue is 25 mph; elsewhere the speed limit is 35 mph. Railroad Street turns into N Avenue north of the signalized intersection with U.S. 30.

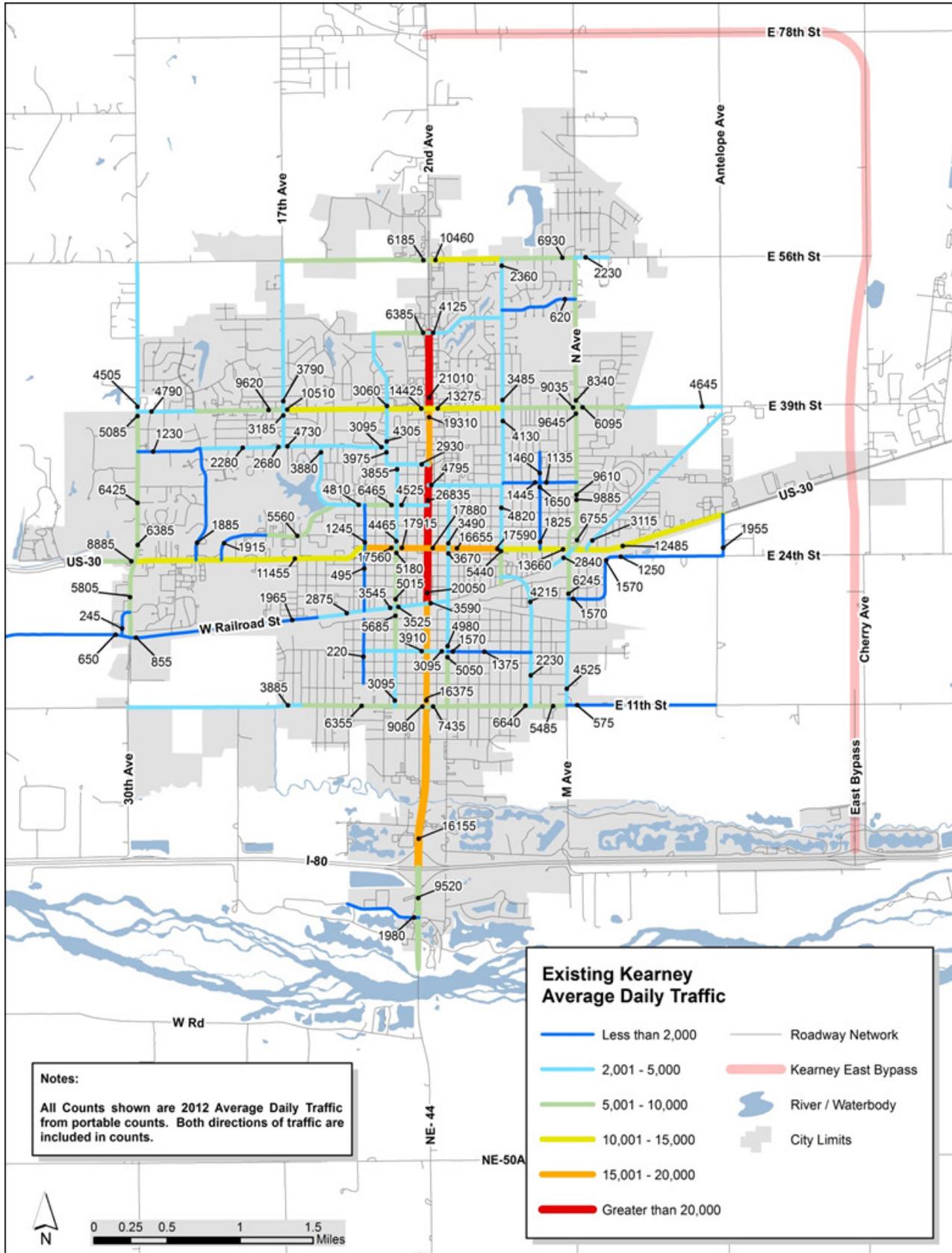
**11th Street** 11th Street is a minor arterial that runs across the entire southern portion of the Kearney area from west of 30th Avenue to east of the East Bypass. The route is gravel outside the City west of 30th Avenue and east of Cherry Avenue. Between 30th Avenue and M Avenue the route is four-lanes undivided with turn lanes at 22nd Avenue, 2nd Avenue and at Central Avenue. Between M Avenue and Cherry Avenue the route is two-lanes with turn lanes at the Cherry Avenue. The intersections with 2nd Avenue and Central Avenue are signalized. The intersection with 30th Avenue is all-way stop controlled and the approaches to the East Bypass are currently stop-controlled. Just to the west of 2nd Avenue this route carries nearly 9,100 vehicles per day. Around the 2nd Avenue corridor the land use adjacent to 11th Street is a mix of commercial and some industrial development. Outside of this area current development along 11th Street is mostly residential. At the southeast corner of 30th Avenue the new Kearney High School will open in 2016. To the east toward the East Bypass this route is mostly undeveloped.



# Traffic Volumes

Average daily traffic (ADT) volumes in the Kearney area collected by Nebraska Department of Roads for existing conditions in 2012 are shown in Map 13.

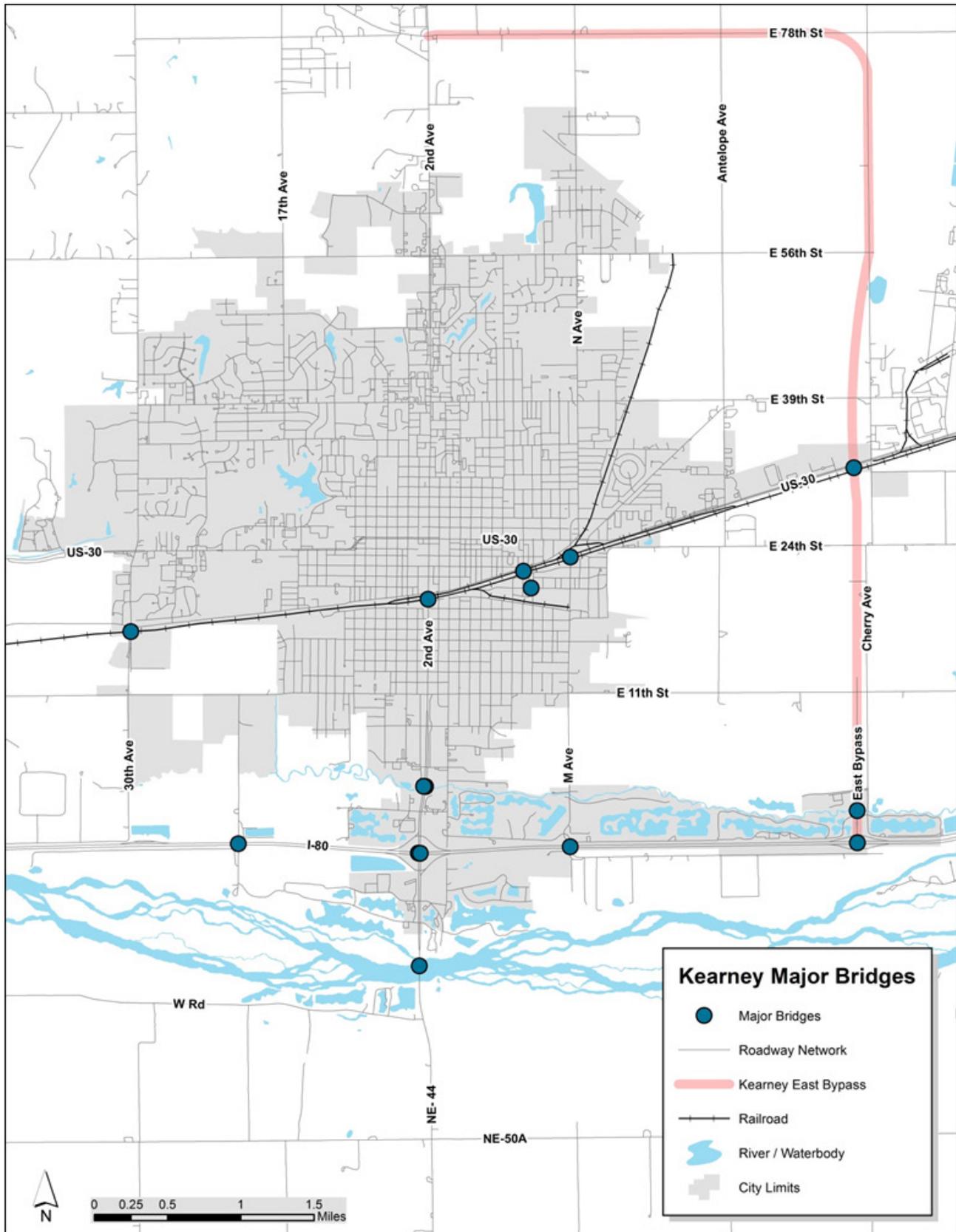
Map.13.. Average Daily Traffic Volumes, Kearney



## Major Bridges

Major bridges were identified as those bridges located on arterial roadways or the Interstate. There are fifteen major bridges in the Kearney area as shown in Map 14, all of which are used to either cross over I-80, the Union Pacific Railroad tracks, or rivers/streams.

Map 14. Major Bridges Map, Kearney





## **Bicycle and Pedestrian Facilities**

The Kearney area currently provides bicycle and pedestrian mobility through a network of sidewalks and shared-use off-street trails across the community. Off-street facilities are classified as shared use paths if they are at least 8 feet wide, otherwise they are considered sidewalks. The majority of the Kearney sidewalk system is less than 8 feet wide. There are no designated on-street bicycle routes in the community, but there are several low-speed, low-traffic volume corridors that provide opportunities for on-street bicycle connections across the community.

The Parks and Recreation section in the Profile Chapter exhibit the existing and programmed off-street trail facilities in the Kearney area. Trail projects that are “programmed” are those that have identified funding sources and are anticipated to be constructed / implemented in the next 1 to 6 years. Some of the off-street trails are “Sidewalk Connections”; these are key off-street connections that link adjacent trail segments, but are not wide enough to be considered trails. Currently there are approximately 17 miles of off-street shared-use paths in the area, most of which run along arterial roads or streams. The longest continuous path of just over nine miles starts at Cottonmill Lake and connects Lake Kearney (The Links Trail), Yanney Park (Tailrace Trail), 2nd Avenue (Betty’s Trail), the Great Platte River Archway, and Cherry Avenue (Pioneer’s Path Trail). The remaining eight miles of shared-use paths run along arterial roads or in parks and neighborhoods. The arterial roads with adjacent shared-use paths are 30th Avenue, N Avenue, 56th Street, 39th Street, and Railroad Street.

Two programmed bicycle and pedestrian projects are currently under construction:

- New trail bridges over the Platte River. When complete, this will provide 1.7 miles of shared-use path from I-80 near Imperial Road to the Fort Kearney State Recreation Area (Fort Kearney Hike-Bike Trail).
- A trail connection of the Fort Kearney Hike-Bike Trail to the Cherry Avenue terminus of the Pioneer’s Path Trail. This connection will complete the more than twelve mile continuous path from Cottonmill Lake to Fort Kearney.

*For the existing Trails Map and individual trail details, please reference the Parks and Recreation section of Profile Chapter (beginning on page 101).*

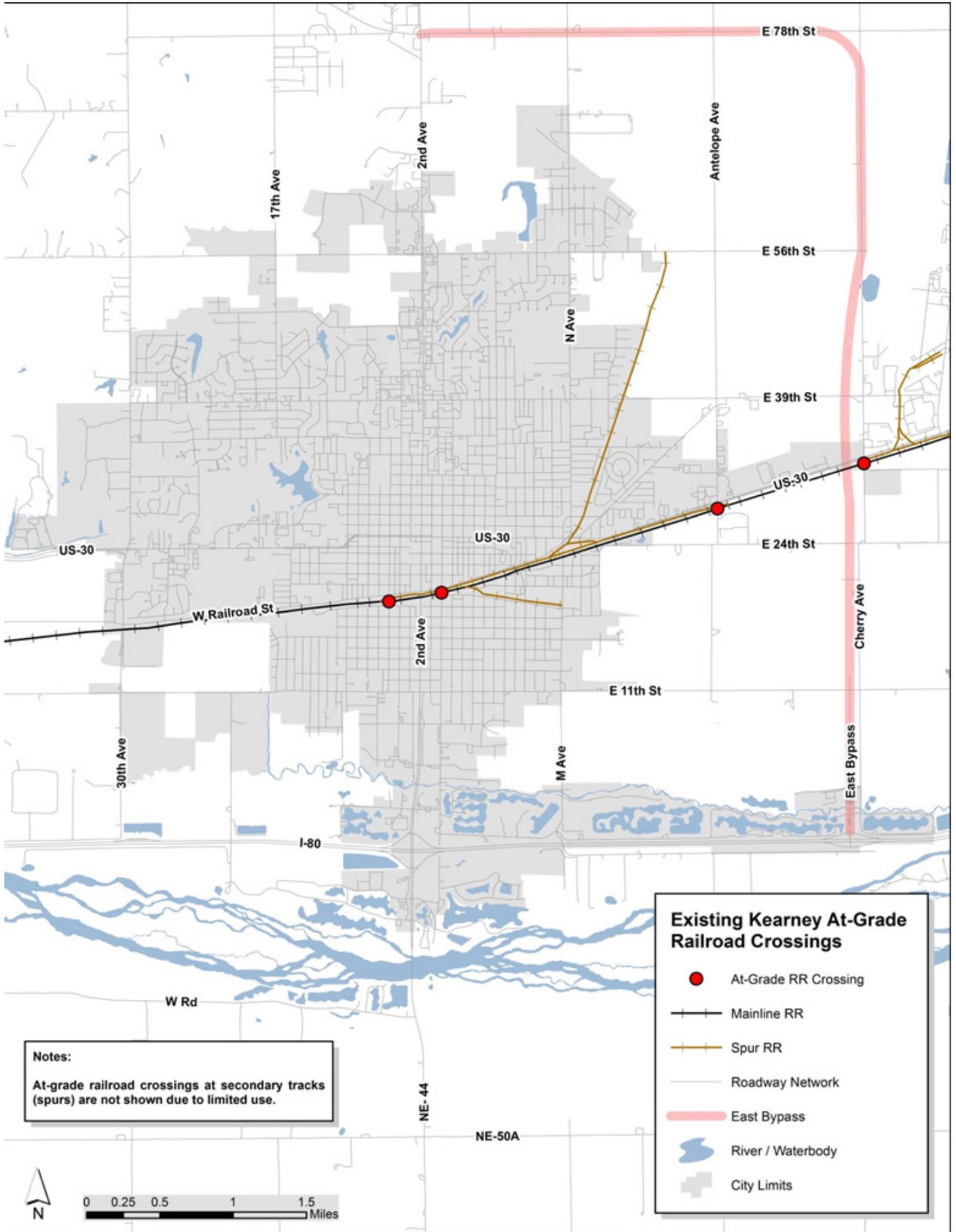
## **Railroad**

The Kearney area is served by Union Pacific (UP) railroad. The UP mainline tracks run east-west, adjacent to U.S. 30 (east of N Avenue) and Railroad Street (west of N Avenue). The triple track mainline through Kearney is one of the busiest freight rail sections in North America carrying approximately 100 trains per day. In addition, there are three secondary tracks (spurs) that branch off of the mainline and handle very limited rail traffic:

- One spur line branches off near Avenue B and runs east-west ending before Avenue M.
- Another branches off from the mainline to the north near K Avenue and runs north-south ending before 56th Street.
- A third branches off the mainline to the north near Kearney Regional Airport and runs north-south just past 39th Street.

There are four at-grade crossings across the mainline tracks in the Kearney area as shown in Map 15. These crossings occur at 5th Avenue, Central Avenue, Antelope Avenue, and Cherry Ave. Each crossing allows north-south vehicle access across the UP triple track mainline tracks.

Map.15.. At-Grade Railroad Crossings, Kearney





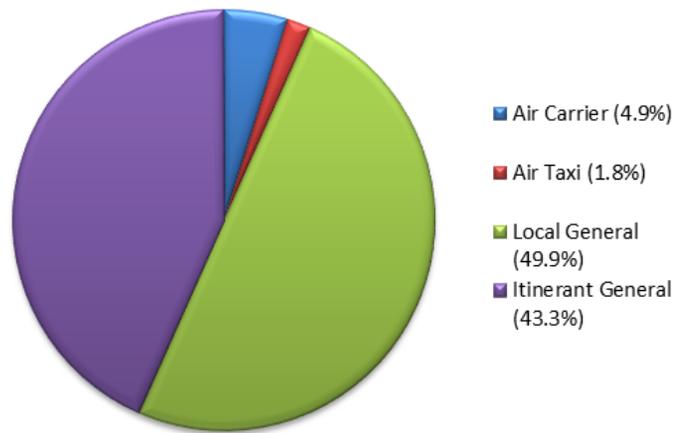
### Air Service

The Kearney area is directly served by the Kearney Regional Airport. The Kearney Regional Airport is overseen by the City of Kearney and is located on Airport Road north of U.S. 30 on the east side of the City.

Currently there are two runways, six taxiways and two parking aprons at the Kearney Regional Airport. Runway 18/36 is the longest runway with a length of 7,094 feet and a width of 150 feet. It is paved with asphalt and is currently in good condition. The 13/31 runway is 4,498 feet long and 75 feet wide, paved with concrete, and is currently in excellent condition. The airside infrastructure can support aircraft equivalent in size to a DC-9 or B-737. Three air navigation systems and multiple lighting systems guide aircraft to the airport. Recent improvements at the airport include expansion of the passenger terminal and a new fire station. In 2011, the Kearney Regional Airport was upgraded from a Class Three airport to a Class Two airport.

The Kearney Regional Airport experiences an average of 82 aircraft operations per day or 30,000 operations per year. Figure 21 shows the different types of aircraft operations at the airport and the amounts of each.

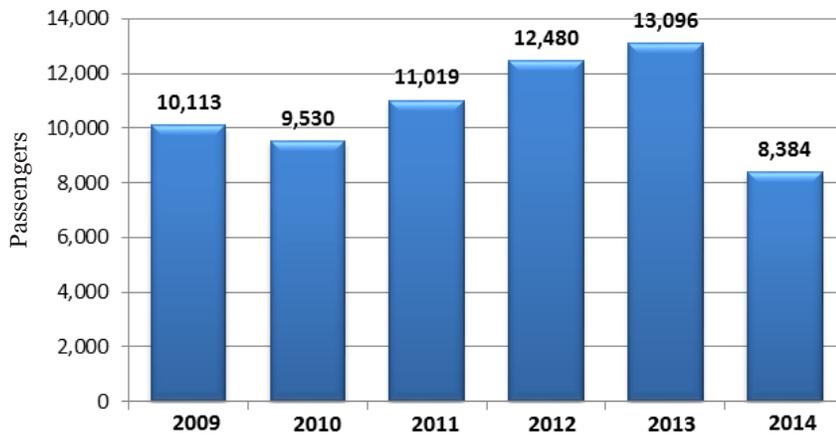
Figure 21. Kearney Regional Airport Operations



Commercial service to Denver is offered by Great Lakes Airlines which will continue through October of 2016 when PenAir will replace the current provider. Currently, Great Lakes has two flights a day arriving and departing at the Kearney Regional Airport. The airport had 13,096 passenger enplanements (boardings) in 2013, ranking 381st among all commercial service airports in the United States. For comparison, in that same year Omaha, Lincoln, Grand Island and North Platte were ranked 60th, 206th, 265th, and 407th, respectively. Figure 22 shows the annual revenue passenger enplanements at the airport from 2009 to 2014. Note the relative incline through 2013 followed by the sharp decline below 10,000 passengers in 2014. City estimates for 2015 are below 8,000 annual revenue passenger enplanements. Note that in order to continue receiving \$1 million in Federal subsidy for airport improvements the average annual number of passengers must be over 10,000.

In the spring of 2016, bids were solicited for commercial air service. The City Council recommended essential air service (EAS) carrier PenAir. The selection was made because of PenAir’s willingness to establish a maintenance facility, hire employees, provide an extra plane, and most importantly they are an established carrier with an excellent track record of reliable service and marketing. The U.S. Department of Transportation approved PenAir’s bid for Kearney’s two-year Essential Air Service (EAS) contract on May 25, 2016, and the contract begins on November 1, 2016. The airline will fly a 33-passenger Saab 340 aircraft from Kearney to Denver 14 times a week.

Figure 22. Kearney Regional Airport Enplanements



### Public Transportation

While there are currently no fixed-route transit bus route services in Kearney, there are public transportation services for residents without access to private vehicles, or for those residents who prefer public transportation. The Kearney area is served by three public transportation companies:

- **Reach Your Destination Easily (RYDE) Transit.** RYDE Transit in Kearney is a public transit system that provides scheduled bus services for the general public to medical appointments, shopping areas, congregate dinners, or to social activities. Riders need to call at least 24 hours ahead of time to schedule their trip, and service is offered in Buffalo County on weekdays from 6:00 AM to 6:00 PM. There is no weekend service. One-way scheduled fares are \$2 for in town trips, \$5 for out of town trips in Buffalo County, and \$8 for trips outside Buffalo County to participating counties in the Mid-Nebraska area. RYDE Transit provides approximately 400 to 450 rides per day. Kearney's new transit facility opened in 2013 near the 11th Street and H Avenue intersection. It houses all RYDE Transit offices and vehicles (24 total vehicle bays available).
- **Kearney Cab Company.** RYDE also partners with the Kearney Cab Company when transportation services are unavailable. The Kearney Cab Company serves the community with cabs 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- **Navigator Airport Express.** Navigator Airport Express, formerly Eppley Express, serves the Kearney area as an affordable airport shuttle service providing six shuttle trips per week between Kearney, Grand Island-Hastings, York, and Omaha.



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# 3 [ENVISION KEARNEY]

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# 3 [ENVISION KEARNEY]

[section 3.1]

## **INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the envision portion of the comprehensive planning process is to gain input from the community. Community involvement is a large and important part of the comprehensive planning process and is conducted to document and understand the participant's desires for the community and, therefore, represented within the Kearney Comprehensive Plan.

[section 3.2]

## **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

In order to gain the public input of the Kearney community, the consulting team conducted eight different focus group meetings, two town hall meetings, and a three-day design charrette. After excluding staff members, there were 57 participants in the different focus group meetings and 21 residents attended the town hall meetings presentations. Seventeen residents plus additional staff were present when the design charrette team conducted a formal presentation.

### **Focus Group Meetings**

The eight focus group meetings held on March 25, 2015 and April 2, 2015 focused on eight different topics:

1. Public Safety
2. Housing Providers
3. Faith Leaders
4. City Services
5. Builders and Developers
6. Parks and Recreation Facilities and Trails
7. Parks and Recreation User Groups
8. Transportation.

The participants in each of the focus group meetings were identified by city staff as local stakeholders with knowledge of and interest in the specific focus group meeting topics.

## **1. Public Safety Focus Group**

**March 25, 2015 1:00 PM**

The purpose of the Public Safety Focus Group meeting was to learn about the state of public safety and services and understand the current and future issues to address. Seven members of the public and two staff members attended this meeting.

For the past 22 years, the City of Kearney and Buffalo County have shared the same facility and have a close partnership, which has been very successful. The integration has helped in every facet of public safety and is a model example of how joint law enforcement (between a city and county) should work. This joint effort has saved the tax payers money and allowed for the provision of additional services and equipment, which could not be provided in comparable communities. One example is to have an investigation team and forensic team located onsite. However, it was expressed that the downside of past and current success is the expectation of maintaining this level of service without additional funding and manpower.

The City of Kearney also has a regional presence with due to healthcare facilities. Good Samaritan Hospital is a Level II Trauma Center, which is unusual for a community of Kearney's size. The ambulance service, also through Good Samaritan Hospital, has strong working relationship with the City and County.

The University of Kearney has campus police and parking enforcement. As the campus continues to grow, the University is hoping that the City's law enforcement (who has always been helpful) will continue to have a presence on campus.

Most of the meeting attendees reported that they were having difficulty hiring for various reasons. The high expectations of residents and finding the right person for the job is key to the law enforcement's public image. An attendee acknowledged that unfortunately, there are not a lot of people entering the law enforcement profession, even with Kearney Police Department's good wages. The Kearney Volunteer Fire Department added that they also had problems keeping firefighters because of the necessary time commitment. Good Samaritan Hospital Ambulatory Services has had trouble hiring in the past because they are a hospital-based EMS. They offer good salaries but have a hard time competing against the department-based EMS, such as Omaha and Lincoln, which can provide more incentives.

When the focus group was asked about problems and hindrances to responding to emergencies and calls, they discussed several problems. Each representative acknowledged that the northeast quadrant of Kearney was the most difficult location for response due to circulation and street layout. The fire department's new east location will most likely cut response times to the north by approaching from the Cherry Avenue Bypass or 56th Street. The existing central location for the law enforcement center has worked well over the years, "the law enforcement officer has everything they need in their vehicle" and typically there are squad cars in the neighborhood when response is needed.

In this group's opinion, the four large barriers were identified that create problems for public safety concerns were the railroad, Kearney Canal, Platte River, and I-80. These transportation and natural features pose pedestrian crossing issues and choke points for emergency response. Responding to calls is difficult on 2nd Avenue, Kearney's main north-south arterial, because vehicles do not have much room to move out of the way. The fire department also sometimes has problems accessing UNK's campus because of circulation problems. It was also explained that the fire department sometimes has difficulty finding addresses in the new developments that are not on the traditional grid system.



As for limitations of facilities, it was stated that the law enforcement center, although only a couple decades old and still in good condition, ‘storage space is getting tight.’ Given the past success and budgetary savings, both agencies prefer to stay in one large location due to the consolidation of all evidence, equipment, and vehicles. The sheriff’s and police departments have a good working relationships with the fire department and EMS and could use temporary rooms as offices. There may be additional long term costs of maintaining multiple sites which could lead to cuts in services currently available that make the City/County partnership such a model to follow. It was conceded that there may be a need for a satellite office, especially as the City expands further from downtown.

## **2. Housing Providers Focus Group**

### **March 25, 2015 2:30 PM**

The housing providers focus group hosted six attendees and two staff members. The group participants explained that one of the largest housing problems in Kearney is that the low-income workforce is greatly affected by all the costs of housing (rent, mortgage, taxes, and insurance). By the time an average worker making \$12-\$15 an hour pays his or her bills, it is nearly impossible to generate enough savings to purchase a house. It was stated that the group felt that landlords have continued to raise rent because of the high demand and lack of supply. Combined with the vacancy rate of less than 2 percent, college students continue to have unrealistic expectations of housing and expect their rentals to be “cream of the crop” in Kearney. This housing shortage can in turn have ramifications upon employers as new employees are have limited housing options, making the move to Kearney for work restrictive.

Further stretching housing needs in Kearney is the retention and growth of the retirement age and senior demographic. As this group seeks to call Kearney home, housing stock must be built to accommodate their needs. Many are looking for one level homes, without having to maintain a yard. The group cited condominiums as a possibility for the aging population.

The focus group also mentioned that young couples moving into Kearney are often staying in rentals longer than desired because the housing market is so hard to get into, and the houses are sold so quickly. It is also far too expensive for most families to build with the extremely high lot prices and construction costs. Another shortcoming also highlighted during the public involvement process was the lack of housing diversity. There is a market, especially among young professionals, for downtown, second level lofts, condominiums, townhomes, and cottage housing, but it was indicated that Kearney only has two types of housing, apartment-style, and traditional single family homes. The group participants would also like to see the coupling of residences and businesses in mixed-use developments, as a future possibility in Kearney.

## **3. Faith Leaders Focus Group**

### **March 25, 2015 4:00 PM**

Three attendees and one staff member participated in the faith leaders focus group. When asked what Kearney’s greatest asset was, the group spoke of Kearney as a giving, service oriented, collaborative community with a great sense of pride for their city. However, the meeting participants also discussed that there was a lack of involvement which could be due to complacency and the mindset to just maintenance of the City as is. Yet the group agreed that people must be involved to continue to make positive changes. The faith leaders spoke of a network or system that could offer support, guidance, and help to community members with various afflictions (mental illnesses, financial problems, chemical dependencies, single parenthood, etc.). They also thought a central informational resource with a guide to

community services, businesses, programs, and a schedule of events would be beneficial to Kearney residents and visitors alike. They talked about many Kearney residents may not be aware of the multitude of programs, fundraising, and special events that happen each day in Kearney. A social resource of this type might generate more community interaction for the generations who may not be socially connected to Kearney.

#### **4. City Services Focus Group** **April 2, 2015, 9:30 AM**

Participating in the City services focus group were city employees, representing various city departments. These participants provided great insight into the community as they conveyed their everyday experience providing services for the City of Kearney. The City services focus group described Kearney as a vibrant and progressive community with diverse amenities and industries as well as a great central location near I-80 and the Platte River. Kearney was labeled as being not too big and not too small in regards to its population while providing a safe family oriented place to raise kids.

The City employees were also able to contribute much information about the quality of services in the City. Kearney has many activities and opportunities available to community members, but very often residents are not informed about them. To remedy this, it was suggested by a participant to improve their marketing and public relations. Being a regional center, many people come to Kearney to work, play, eat, shop, and worship. A participant talked about a possibility to provide a better regional transportation system for the surrounding small communities.

Several development barriers were discussed during the meeting as well. The Public Works Department has had to bypass projects as bids are not being submitted for construction projects. Related to this topic is the lack of skilled labors for housing construction as well. It was suggested that building and renovating in Kearney is very expensive because of the high demand for contractors. The cost of building is also on top of extremely high residential lot prices. Currently, there were about 300-400 lots for sale, but not many current or prospective residents are able to afford the lot to be able to build.

When asked about future growth in the community the focus group was able to supply several opinions and desires. To supply future growth east of Kearney, a 30 inch sanitary sewer main going north along Cherry Avenue would be desirable. The participants would also like to bring an industry with high quality jobs to Kearney. The participants also feel that Kearney has established a favorable future annexation plan with agreements to extend infrastructure into the subdivisions when it is in the City's best interest to annex. The one sentiment that was mentioned by participants on several occasions throughout the meeting was that Kearney wants to grow at a manageable rate, allowing the current level of services to be maintained of expanded upon in order to preserve and advance the quality of life of Kearney residents.

#### **5. Builders and Developers Focus Group** **April 2, 2015, 9:30 AM**

The purpose of the builders and developers focus group meeting was to gain input and information about the state of housing in Kearney from locals who were knowledgeable on the subject. Local builders, a realtor, and an architect were among the meeting participants.

The most prominent theme during this meeting was that finding housing in Kearney is difficult for newcomers and those wishing to relocate within the City. Several reasons are creating this



housing shortage. First, Kearney lacks housing diversity. The current housing stock is not able to accommodate all varied lifestyles, living preferences and needs. High housing costs pose another limitation to prospective home owners.

The focus group suggested that redevelopment of certain areas within Kearney should be a goal because the City has many homes that are in need of remodeling. Although this type of development would be ideal, there is a lack of skilled labor able to take on the work, in addition to the fact that remodeling is expensive. The group also conceded that as long as Kearney can grow outward there is no real incentive to fix up older homes within Kearney.

## **6. Parks and Recreation Facilities and Trails Focus Group**

**April 2, 2015 11:00 AM**

This focus group had a large turnout, 12 ,which showed a great level of investment the community has in Kearney’s parks and recreation. As far as assets to the community, the participants agreed that Yanney Park, Harmon Park, and Cottonmill Lake Recreation Area are the cornerstones of Kearney’s parks and recreational system. It was mentioned that the Platte River is another great recreational amenity to the City but is extremely underutilized. The White Water Association is currently working towards utilizing the Kearney Canal as a water trail and possibly a white water park which would be a unique amenity and beneficial to the community.

When asked about the trails system in Kearney, the focus group participants had several suggestions. They would like the trail system to expand regionally, have trail underpasses for safer street crossing incorporated, include the trails planning within the City Street Plan, designate bike lanes on appropriate streets, and plan ahead for trail easements before development occurs.

The group wanted to make sure that parks and recreational activities continued to develop in creative ways to provide a wide range of services and keep up with the growth of the City. A large city-wide Parks Master Plan was suggested as the next logical move for Kearney, as Park and Trails Master Plan would generate knowledge and support for future projects and recreational expansion.

## **7. Parks and Recreation Users Focus Group**

**April 2, 2015 1:00 PM**

The purpose of this meeting was to hear from the leaders of different recreational organizations about the state of Kearney’s recreation facilities. Although the group was small with only four attendees, many goals were generated as a result of the meeting.

Articulated and evident within the interactions of the group is the high level of cooperation between recreational organizations. Whether through fundraising efforts or volunteer hours, these organizations work together to in support of Kearney’s youth programs and broader scope of recreational activities.

Overall, the group spoke highly of Kearney’s parks and recreational facilities, but noted opportunities for growth. The soccer program has just begun to outgrow their facilities because of increasing participation. Crane River Theater, is making use of the three existing stages within Kearney parks which were previously underutilized. These three amphitheaters/stages are lacking amenities such as lights, power, backstage, bathrooms and changing areas. The participants expressed the need for an indoor community field house/community center and mentioned that the old high school as a potential site. The group also recognized the need

for a family-oriented pool with amenities for all ages. One of the main points of emphasis on the group's "wish list" were more facilities for disabled individuals beyond ADA accessibility but promoting involvement and participation. The underlying theme of the users groups was that Kearney had great facilities, organizations, and participation, but there are needs for expanded programming and continued parks and trails improvements as the community grows over the next two decades.

## **8. Transportation Focus Group**

**April 2, 2015 1:00 PM**

The transportation focus group had eight attendees, primarily city staff members. When the group was asked to identify Kearney's greatest transportation assets, the group first listed its proximity to Interstate 80 (I-80), the Union Pacific rail line through the City, and then Kearney Regional Airport. Also mentioned, was the transit bus system (RYDE) which is a demand response service and is used by approximately 400 people per day. The participants also named Kearney's bike trail system as a great asset, with plans in place for future growth. The privately owned taxi service was also noted as for the level of service provided, given the community's size.

Highlighted as the primary barrier in the development of transportation efforts in and surrounding Kearney is funding and match requirements. Another barrier to the diversification of transportation options was the acknowledgment that the major arterials are not bike friendly, however the community is not ready to implement bike lanes.

Moving beyond the limitations, the meeting participants would like to establish a public transit route system that could serve larger numbers, have access to more reliable airport service, create safer pedestrian crossings (especially across 2nd Avenue near the hotels and across Highway 30), implement better wayfinding signage, and control the number of driveway access points.

## **Town Hall Meetings**

**April 2, 2015 3:00 PM & 6:00 PM**

In order to gain maximum community input, following a short introduction by the consulting team, both town hall meetings proceeded in an open house format. The meeting participants were asked to write their concerns or suggestions on note cards at each of the four stations (Transportation, Housing, Economic Development, and Parks and Recreation). Attendees were then able to visit the different "stations" around the room and share opinions with or ask questions of the consultants. The following lists include the comments from the general public written on notecards, spoken to the consultant team, or recommendations set forth by the public during the two town hall meetings.

### ***Transportation***

- Prepare for new high school traffic with special consideration for truck traffic on 30th Avenue
- Extend 56th Street west
- Add 4-way stop signs in residential intersections
- Develop pedestrian connectivity to area south of the interstate
- Install more safe crossings for pedestrians
- Offer public transportation for commuters
- Coordinate RYDE transportation to individual schools
- Expand, organize, improve efficiency of RYDE program to accommodate more riders



## *Transportation (con't)*

- Introduce bike lanes on wide streets, like 5th Avenue
- Implement a bike share program
- Educate community (drivers) about safety around pedestrians and bicycles
- Consolidate regional airports (Grand Island and Kearney)

## ***Housing***

- Address need for affordable housing for:
  - College students
  - Impoverished
  - Low income
  - Moderate income
  - Rental units
  - Lot rental in mobile homes
- Increase stock of available apartments
- Offer more pet-friendly rental units
- Expand amenities provided at apartment complexes (pools, club houses)
- Encourage adaptive reuse of downtown buildings – apartments in upper levels
- Preserve old historical houses from being transformed into multi-dwelling units
- Develop housing options for empty nesters (independent living)
- Increase overall stock of housing
- Address the high costs of new construction
- Move Sale Barn from Southwest Neighborhood

## ***Economic Development***

- Offer support services for unemployed
- Increase job opportunities for those with advanced degrees
- Expand zoning flexibility in historic residential districts
- Look downtown for infill development/redevelopment opportunities
- Create incubator space in old Central Community College building
- Explore business and employment opportunities in technology and manufacturing
- Address need for a tech school or expand technical training programs at Central Community College

## ***Parks and Recreation***

- Consider addition of Water Park
- Expand children's activities and park
- Provide consideration of low-to-moderate income family concentrations when determining locations of future parks—ability to safely walk/bike to recreational facilities
- Possibility of indoor field-house for soccer
- Explore bike share program with University and hospitals
- \* Provide public recreational opportunities at Kearney Lake [*Reservoir*] (connect trail, fishing, canoeing, ice skating, etc.)
- \* Maintenance of Kearney Lake (suggesting dredging, rip-rap, and keep full year-round )
- \* Restore vegetation and canopy cover along Kearney Canal

*\*The reservoir and canal are not owned by the City, these suggestions would need to be coordinated with NPPD*

## Design Charrette

April 14-16, 2015

As part of the update to the City of Kearney Comprehensive Plan, eight (8) improvement projects or community elements were selected by a stakeholder committee of City staff and business and community leaders for redevelopment design concepts. These projects/elements represent important civic spaces, public features, or opportunity areas that have the potential to be redeveloped into major assets for the City. Each provides the opportunity to become a key focal point for the community. The eight projects or elements selected were as follows:

1. Wayfinding Graphics
2. 2nd Avenue Corridor: I-80 Entrance
3. 2nd Avenue Corridor: Landscape & Monument Signage
4. 2nd Avenue Corridor: 11th Street to Overpass
5. U.S. Highway 30 East Entrance
6. 23rd Street Improvements
7. Northeast Passive Park
8. North Central Kearney Green Spine

A three-day Design Charrette was held on April 14-16, 2015. During the Charrette, the participants joined City staff on a tour of the project sites. The designers then took inventories of existing conditions, studied various concepts, and collected reference imagery to show precedence for their recommendations. The concepts were presented to the stakeholders on the second day of the Charrette for comment and feedback. A public meeting was held on the final night and provided Kearney residents another opportunity to view the concepts and offer comments. The following section summarizes the framework, intent, and conclusions reached for each of the eight projects/elements.

### Wayfinding Graphics

An important piece of any community's long-term planning is the image, brand, and aesthetic that it chooses to present to its residents and visitors. Ideally, all of these elements would be similar and tie to important characteristics of the community, like its history, the heritage of its people, important civic features, or its natural environment. Within the public realm, no other opportunities exist more prominent than entrance and wayfinding signage. Entrance signs and features at key points along the major routes into a city are typically the grandest and most memorable. Kearney's current entrance signs were identified by participants as dated, too conventional, and/or do not project the sense of innovation or sophistication characteristic of the City at-large. The signs' graphics also do not reflect the City's new logo. Concepts for two new entrance signs and adjacent landscaping are examined later in this section.

More subtle, yet more numerous and generally more vital to a community's day-to-day activity are wayfinding signs, banners, and focal structures or art pieces. This collective wayfinding package helps guide residents and visitors to the major points-of-interest and civic spaces and buildings spread throughout a city.

Variety and/or a "family" of sign options is important. Hierarchy in graphics can help attribute more importance to some items than others while consistency in colors, shapes, graphics can tie the collection of elements together. Scale is another important design consideration. Knowing how an individual will see or interact with a wayfinding element, on foot, riding a



bicycle, or sitting in a motor vehicle, should determine the size of the sign and its components, like text, directional symbols, and imagery. The top figure on the following page illustrates the differences in scale within a wayfinding package.

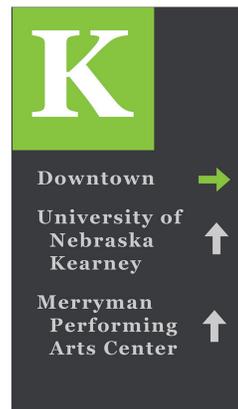
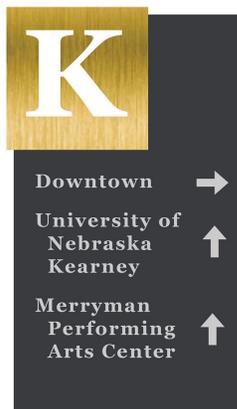
The City of Kearney updated its logo in early 2015. The new graphic incorporated a silhouette of a Sandhill crane, the native bird that has become an iconic symbol for the region. In its concepts, the Design Team abstracted this image, then incorporated the colors found on another Kearney Icon, the Great Platte River Road Archway, into studies for a typical set of wayfinding elements. The colors, reminiscent of a setting sun and the Platte River, could reinforce the City's connection to its native landscape by applying the same effect in its wayfinding features. The graphics on the next page illustrate a conceptual wayfinding package that could be utilized by Kearney.

2nd Avenue, due to its location, function, and volume of traffic, warrants the most intensive wayfinding treatment in the City. The north-south street is the central artery that bisects the City. The corridor, despite its prominence, lacks wayfinding elements and other streetscape amenities and employs limited landscaping. Visual quality is at a minimum along long swaths of the route, most prominently south of downtown and the railroad overpass. The charrette participants identified the need for a concentrated overhaul of the 2nd Avenue corridor, beginning with its introduction to motorists at the Interstate 80 exit.





Scale Diagram of Wayfinding Features



ENVISION

Conceptual Wayfinding Package



## 2nd Avenue: I-80 Entrance



Existing View Looking North Along 2nd Avenue from the I-80 Interchange

The 2nd Avenue exit off Interstate 80 is the most visible entrance into Kearney. Motorists exiting the interstate and turning north onto 2nd Avenue, though, are greeted with a rather harsh landscape of street lights, pole signs, power lines, an electrical substation, and concrete. The opportunity to really celebrate arrival into the City has been left to chance. The area's existing entrance sign is undersized and ill-placed within the corridor as a series of evergreen trees blocks its visibility. The Pioneer's Path Trail, extending to the Archway and sand lakes to the east, runs up and along the east side of 2nd Avenue after crossing a large, open turf-grass area. Several rows of power transmission poles and high-voltage lines encumber the turf area. The large electrical substation located on the southeast corner of the 2nd Avenue and Talmadge Street intersection dominates the approach when viewed from the raised interchange. Little about the area is overly welcoming or characteristic of the rich and dynamic core of the City further north. The reality is that travelers would be hard-pressed to differentiate this opening view of Kearney from the many other towns located along I-80. Kearney deserves a better main entrance.

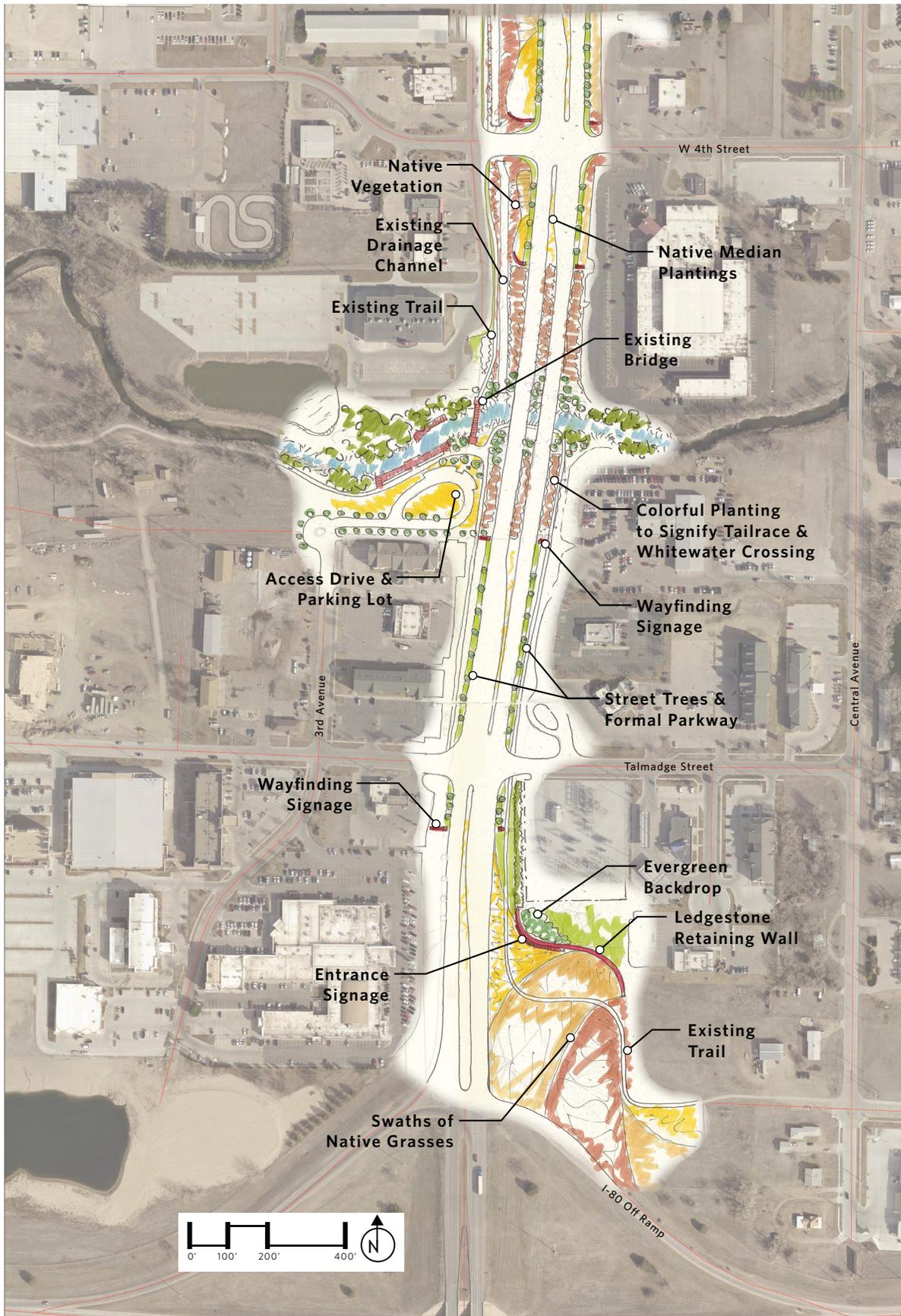
The proposed concept for a new main entrance includes a large-scale monument entrance sign and landscape composition to be located in front of the substation. The image above shows the existing condition, while the figure on the following page below shows the proposed concept. The new entrance sign would incorporate an abstracted sculptural piece from the Sandhill crane logo aligned with identification text mounted to a large retaining wall. The wall would be made of stacked ledgerstone native to the area. The wall would follow the existing topography south along the east side of 2nd Avenue and the existing trail and then turn back east, creating a raised terrace on which the signage could be placed. A massing of native shrubs and evergreen trees would provide a backdrop to the mounted graphics as well as increase screening of the substation. Emanating out from the wall would be sweeping bands of native grasses. Beds of lower grasses would be positioned in front of the sign, with bands of taller grasses framing the view corridor to the wall and signage. The area would be free of large trees due to visibility concerns as well as constraints caused by the overhead power lines.



Proposed 2nd Avenue Entrance Design

The landscape aesthetic around the entrance feature should be pulled north and evolve into a dynamic, cohesive native composition along the 2nd Avenue corridor. The concept plan on the following page shows the proposed corridor enhancements. Low screen wall features can be placed intermittently along the corridor, beginning on the south side of the Talmadge Street intersection, in order to call attention to important cross streets. Street trees should line both sides of 2nd Avenue beginning at Talmadge and be located within a band of turf-grass which would give the street edges a manicured look that would contrast the sweeping bands of native grasses further off the roadway. The median along the divided portion of 2nd Avenue should be planted with a combination of native and turf grasses.

Another element near the 2nd Avenue community entrance is NPPD's canal. A grassroots movement, to create a water trail using NPPD's canal, is gaining momentum and has been brought to the attention of community leaders and city staff. If the private group is able to gain steam and receive proper permissions with NPPD and those with private property access along the canal, the 2nd Avenue bridge over the Tailrace would provide an ideal location for a raised viewing platform over the water trail (as noted by Parks' Director as a potential trail in the future trails plan). The Design Team identified the relatively flat area on the south side of the Tailrace west of 2nd Avenue as an elevated perch that could accommodate a viewing space and small surface parking lot which would cause little impact to the natural wooded creek bank and surrounding land uses. 3rd Avenue would allow for easy access to the site. The viewing area itself could either be constructed on top of the existing bank with a paved plaza, or built out over a portion of waterway below via a platform of hardy wood or composite deck planks. Interpretive signage and native accent plantings should also be incorporated to add visual interest to the usable space. These more colorful plant massings could be continued up 2nd Avenue to beautify the entryway to Kearney and taking advantage of the existing pedestrian bridge.



Concept Plan for the I-80 Entrance and Whitewater Course Viewing Area

## 2nd Avenue: Corridor Landscape and Monument Signage

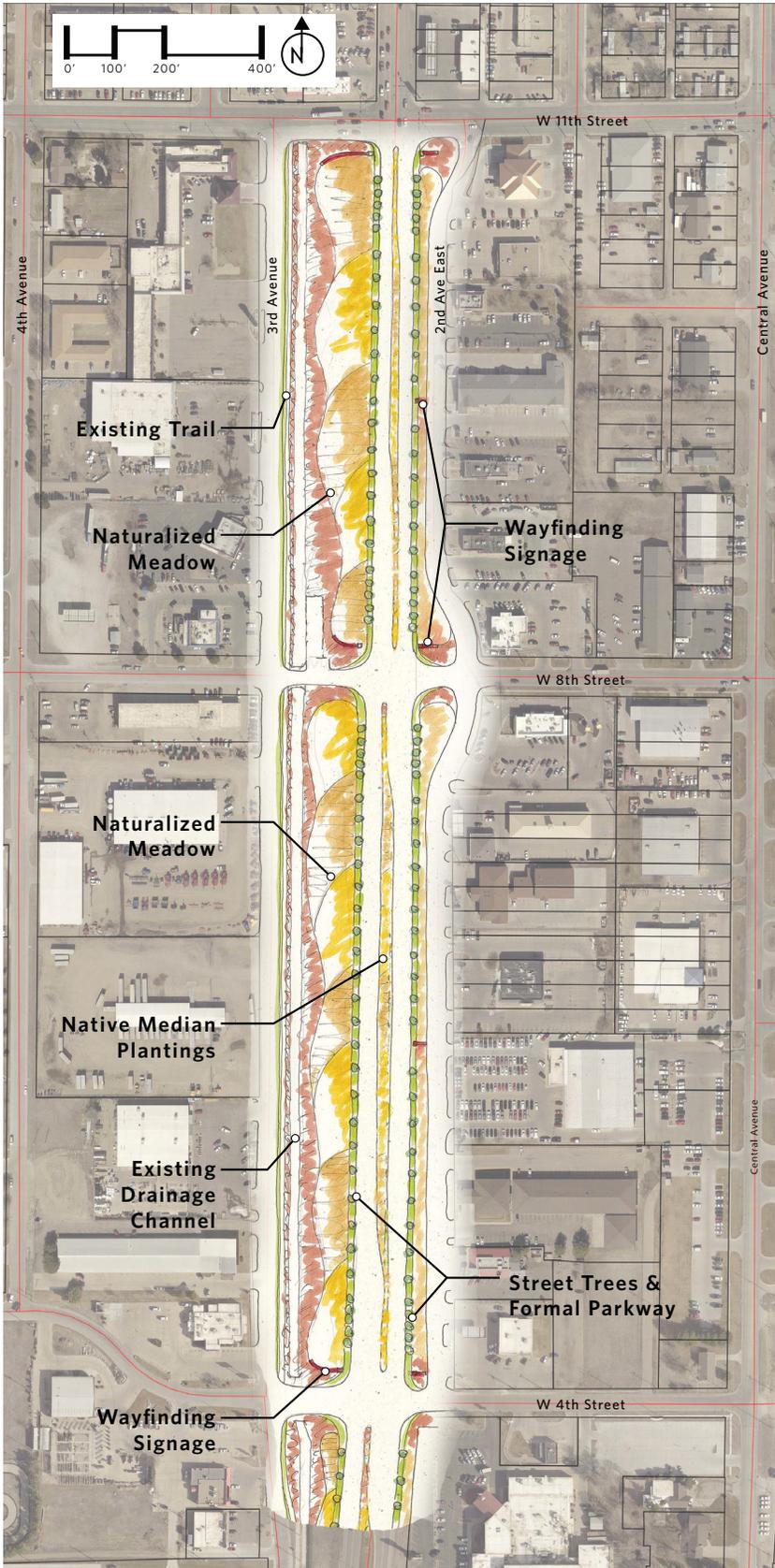
As motorists and trail users continue to travel north along the 2nd Avenue corridor between the Tailrace and 11th Street, the current vista is lined with tall pole signs and has a nice, but understated landscape palette. The image below shows a typical scene along the existing corridor. Few accent or focal plantings exist to break up the rather sparse landscape or to emphasize the cross street intersections. The large open grass area between 3rd and 2nd Avenues presents an opportunity for a dynamic landscape installation in this highly visible space. The top image below shows what the corridor looks like today, while the bottom image shows an illustrative view of the design concept.



Photo of Existing View Looking North on 2nd Avenue from the I-80 Interchange.



Conceptual View Looking North on 2nd Avenue of the Proposed Corridor Signage and Landscape Improvements.



Concept Plan for the 2nd Avenue Corridor between 4th Street & 11th Street

The continuation of the I-80 exit corridor and the public property along 2nd Avenue, this concept recommends additional landscaping and improvements to create a more aesthetically pleasing view of the 2nd Avenue’s public right-of-way. Any additional design overlays would need to be adopted at the jurisdictional level with the hope that business along 2nd Avenue would buy into design guidelines and phasing out traditional pole signs for lower monument signage and incorporate natural elements such as the suggested landscaping of city’s right-of-way along 2nd Avenue.

Enhanced wayfinding features could be installed along the frontage streets. These new signs would incorporate the various business identification placards with the natural materials.

Wayfinding signage could be located along 2nd Avenue in order to celebrate the community importance of the street to Kearney. The street trees, native grass bands, and low screen walls that span the roadways and median further south along 2nd Avenue near the Tailrace crossing should continue and extend along the entire stretch to 11th Street.

In particular for public right-of-way and a potential trail opportunity, the open grass area to the west of 2nd Avenue presents itself to become a vibrant naturalized meadow of grasses and wildflowers which again could emphasize the community’s native environment while pulling natural elements into the City’s core. The concept plan to the left illustrates how this section of the corridor could be transformed.

## 2nd Avenue: 11th to Overpass

Further north, the 2nd Avenue corridor narrows as the two frontage roads terminate at 11th Street and the roadway itself transitions from a divided highway to a more urban cross section. While appropriate here, the streetscape also narrows to a point where very little space remains between the curb line and adjacent properties. As a result, sidewalks are extended to the back of curb, and many of the lots along 2nd Avenue have surface parking running all the way up to their property lines. No landscape exists to soften the streetscape and no screen walls or wayfinding features are utilized to add interest to the corridor.



Existing condition along 2nd Avenue.

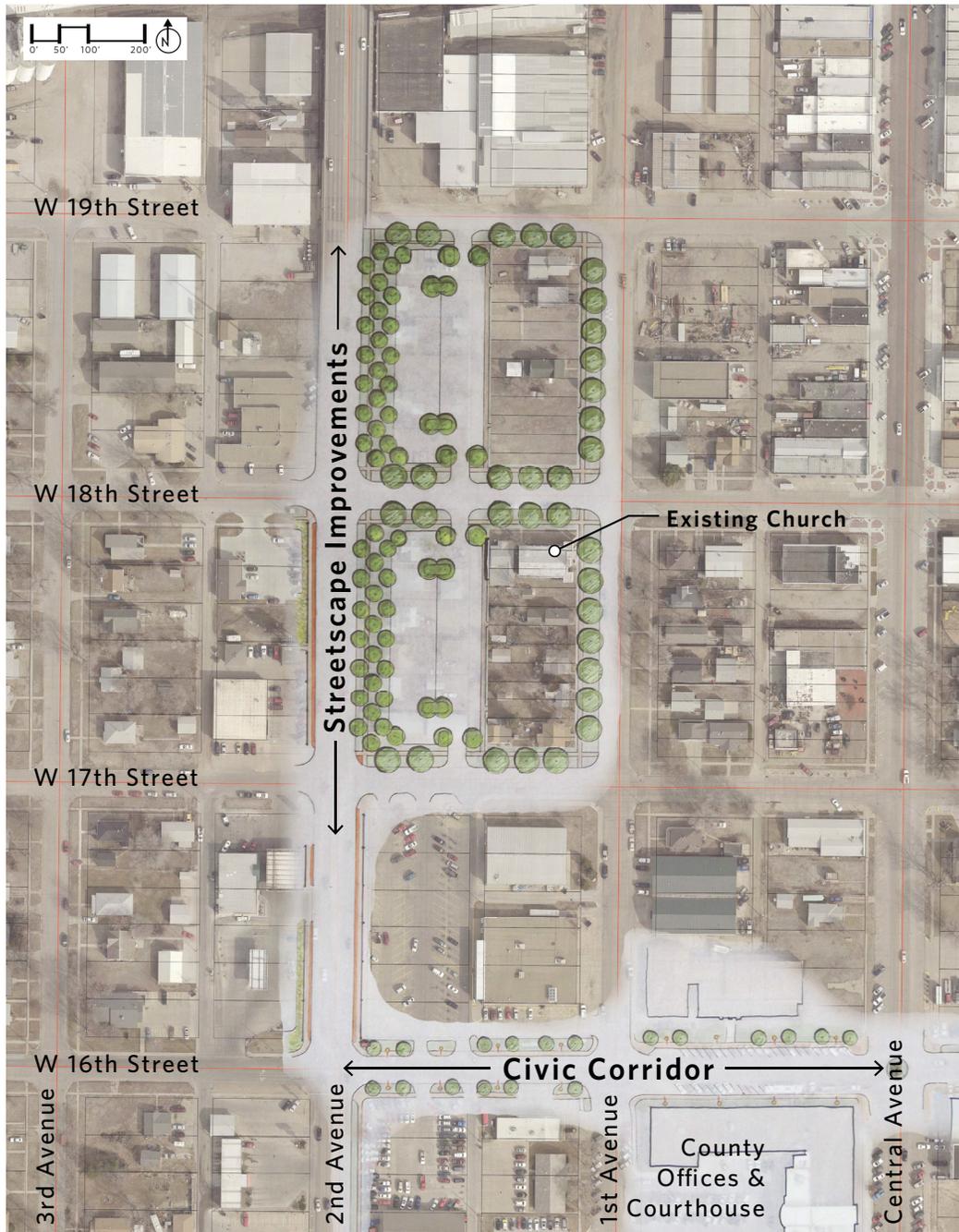
A concept for a two-block section on the east side of 2nd Avenue between 17th and 19th Streets was developed. The properties that front onto 2nd Avenue pose a potential reinvestment opportunity to invite visitors to Kearney. The structures on the north block are hindered because they front directly onto the superstructure of the 2nd Avenue overpass. The 1st Avenue side of the two blocks have properties of similar nature. However, the church that sits on the southwest corner of 1st Avenue and 18th Street is in good condition and should be preserved.

The design concept shown proposes an area of public interest and potential investment along this corridor. The concept image is not meant to replace buildings but show how any area along 2nd Avenue could be created to develop a tourist-pleasing corridor as people enter town and experience Kearney along 2nd Avenue. The City itself is limited as to what it can do but the streetscape improvements are an example of what could be done in terms of public investment and potential screening to create a more inviting corridor. The private sector would hopefully incorporate city investments and extend pleasing views, such as more landscaping than currently seen on 2nd Avenue. The concept, or example of what a private investment could look like, is shown in a conceptual drawing that the design team created. This concept is to generate ideas for private investment, not public projects. Ideas to incorporate would be buffering and the potential to add more density within Kearney. Although a triple row of street trees would beautify the corridor, it would be up a private investor to install more trees in the



private right-of-way to create a visual and sound buffer for their individual properties. With that said, a landscaped parkway strip could provide a comfortable setback for a six-foot-wide public sidewalk.

In this concept, specialty paving, light poles, and landscape amenities would also be included along both sides of 2nd Avenue and extend south to the intersection with 16th Street. These streetscape improvements would continue along 16th Street east past the Buffalo County Courthouse and Office Building to Central Avenue. The intent is to create a civic corridor, signified by a unique streetscape connecting the courthouse with 2nd Avenue. The streetscape improvements would not only enhance the aesthetics of this portion of the corridor, they could supplement wayfinding needs while supplying a unique corridor aesthetic at the south end of the overpass, and provide an opportunity to extend across the bridge or tie into any future streetscape improvements in downtown.



Concept Plan focused on Streetscape Improvements and along 2nd Avenue and 16th Street

## U.S. Highway 30 East Entrance

The entrance on U.S. Highway 30 from the east, into Kearney, is second only to the 2nd Avenue entrance in terms of prominence and number of vehicles it sees. As is the case on 2nd Avenue, the entrance signage currently in place, located between two rail spurs on the north side of the road just east of Cherry Avenue, is undersized and lacks the refined design and accompanying landscape composition to make the necessary statement of arrival. The image below shows the existing signage and its immediate surroundings.



Photo of Existing View Looking West on U.S. Highway 30



Illustrative View of Proposed Entrance Concept

The illustration above shows the proposed concept for the entrance feature. The new feature would be located on the site of the existing sign, just to the west of the existing rail spur. This entrance, like that on 2nd Avenue, should feature a ledgestone retaining wall with mounted steel signage, a backdrop of evergreen trees, and swaths of native grasses emanating out from the wall. As the City begins to implement the new entrances and prominent civic features, it will be important to utilize the same types of hardscape materials and vegetation in the installations. This consistency will not only further promote the community's connection to its natural context, but it will reinforce the image and the message it portrays through its public open spaces. The family of entrance signs should also employ the same scale, placement, and orientation standards relative to adjacent streets and properties.

## Pioneer's Park Neighborhood: 23rd Street Corridor Example

The Pioneer's Park neighborhood is one of Kearney's most significant and visually pleasant districts. The historic homes and tree-lined streets make it one of the City's most quintessential, livable areas. The neighborhood's proximity to both downtown and the UNK makes it an important node within the City's framework. However, past renovation projects that have converted historic single-family homes into apartments, along with the conversion of ownership properties into rental properties, have created development conditions not suitable to the area's historical neighborhood context. Stakeholders desired guidance on ideas that would inhibit further erosion of the area's structure and character. The result is a design concept for an area of the neighborhood.

The public investment on the 23rd Street corridor is a good example of corridor redevelopment. The properties on the north side of street, which front onto Highway 30, consist of one restaurant and 14 formerly single-family houses now converted primarily into apartments. Many of these properties are rented to UNK students. The increased population in a traditionally single family neighborhood has led to congestion for parking and encroached onto private property. These disjointed parking areas are accessed from 23rd Street, creating a nearly continuous curb cut condition and leaving little room for service areas. As a result, several large commercial dumpsters have been placed on-street, as shown in the photograph below. Analysis shows that the aesthetic and functional problems currently plaguing the corridor could be solved with a simple reconfiguration of the street. The concept plan on the next page illustrates the potential solution.

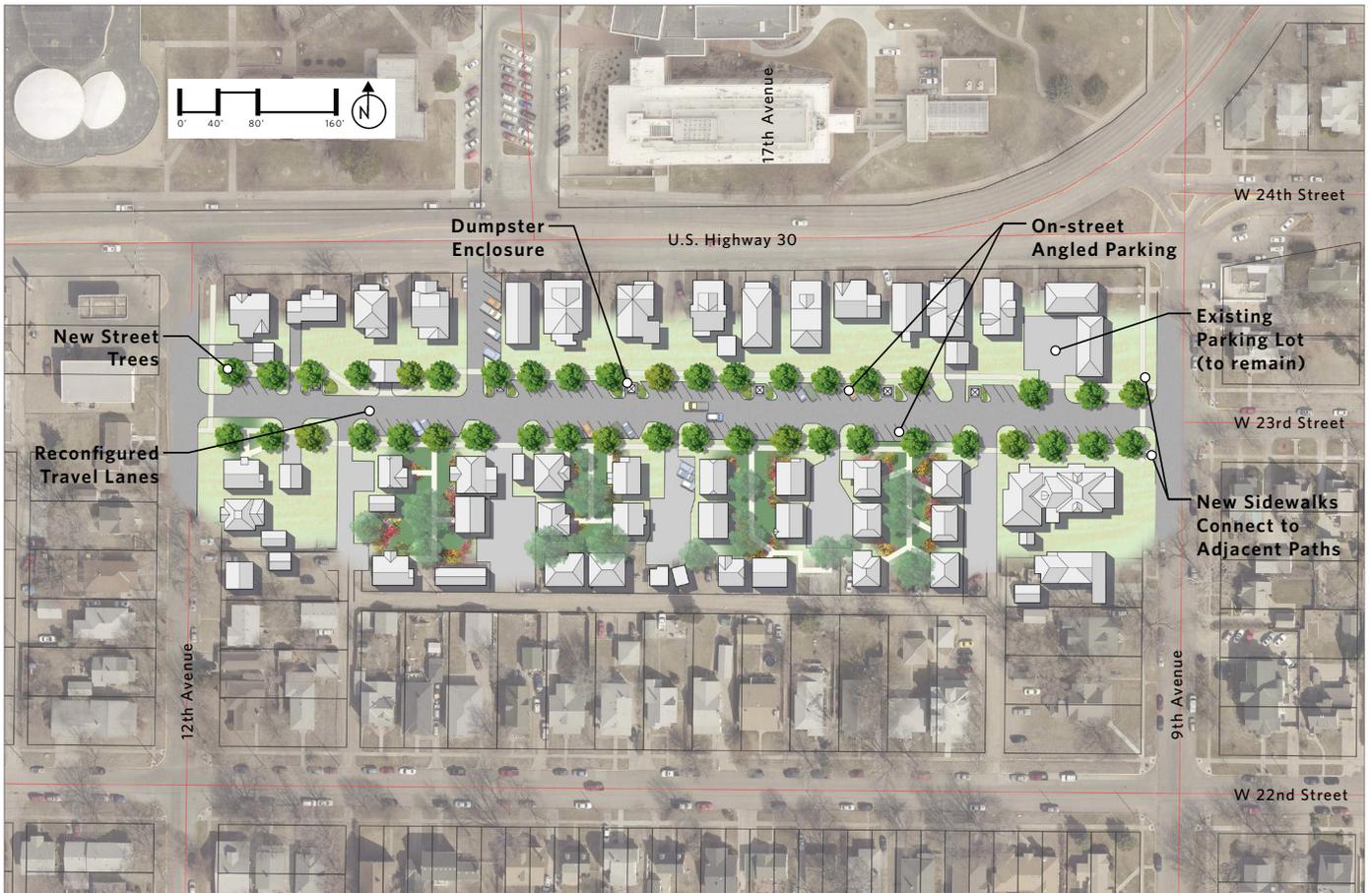
The reconfiguration would involve several small, yet critically important, changes that would not extend beyond 23rd Street's right-of-way. The existing travel lanes would be widened to 12 feet. The existing run of parallel parking stalls could be reconstructed into angled parking bays



Existing Conditions of 23rd Street, an example of other potential neighborhoods and Kearney streets with higher density housing with congested parking and garage

separated by “bulb-outs” along the curb line. Several of these “bulb-outs” would be utilized as new locations for the commercial dumpsters. These sites would require screen fencing appropriate to the neighborhood. The change to angled parking, which the existing right-of-way could accommodate without the need for property acquisition, would allow all parking spaces currently located in the rear “yards” of the northern properties to be moved to the streets. A row of trees should line both sides of the street to visually tie the entire corridor together. The street should also be heavily planted with under-story plantings, including native shrubs, grasses, and perennials to soften the streetscape and to encourage pedestrian travel through the corridor.

The City should encourage proper redevelopment of high-density areas with properly planned development. This street example was created with incremental changes over time to produce the existing condition. The City encourages any redevelopment projects to protect the neighborhood character.



Conceptual Plan for the 23rd Street Corridor in Pioneer's Park

## Northeast Passive Park

Driven by the success of Yanney Park, the public input drove the this concept. The public desired to explore the feasibility of another large public park project to serve the north side of the City. Yanney Park has drawn heavy use from surrounding residential neighborhoods and attracted newer developments in the southwest part of Kearney. A similar installation in the City's northeast section could produce similar results. Program-wise, the City would prefer passive park uses in this location. Kearney's existing park system has a large number of active-use amenities, including amphitheaters, athletic fields and courts, swimming pools, and splash pads. The new passive park should incorporate a substantial trail system that ties into the City's larger network and incorporate more of a native aesthetic in its plantings, built structures, and sign or interpretive features.

An undeveloped parcel of land, located adjacent to a number of developing residential subdivisions, and accessed directly from two major streets, was selected. The 90-acre parcel of land is located a half-mile east of 2nd Avenue and north of 56th Street. The site is bounded by a lake front residential subdivision to the south, a linear drainage channel to the east and north, and undeveloped land adjacent to a new commercial development to the west.

As the concept plan to the right shows, the park itself would reconfigure two existing on-site overflow drainage basins to become focal amenities of native wetland plant species. The terrain would then slope up to the west through the rest of the site and would be planted with native grasses, perennials, and wildflowers. Stands of trees would be planted along the local street

and the park's west edge to provide intermittent viewing corridors into the park as well as a backdrop for the native habitat and activity areas within, including small picnic structures and a natural playscape. Trails would run across the native plant swaths and through the tree stands to give park users the opportunity to see a broad range of native ecosystems, including an interpretive boardwalk near the park's center.



Conceptual Plan for New Passive Park in Northeast Kearney

## North Kearney's Green Spine

During the tour of Kearney, it was noted that the northern portions of the City, with newer residential subdivisions and commercial center developments, lacked a strong connection to the older, more established central part of the community. The north section of the City has built up around the typical suburban model, with emphasis toward less dense, auto-oriented development. The only means of connection to central Kearney, downtown, the UNK campus, or the Harmon Park area from these areas is by means of arterial streets. Any public activity amenities, like parks, schools, churches, or community centers, located in north Kearney typically operate as stand-alone facilities with little connection to other similar sites. While these assets, like those found elsewhere in the City, should draw use from a wide swath of the City, they are seemingly only accessible to the disjointed residential subdivisions immediately surrounding their locations.

The development concept attempts to find a possible means of turning this tide of isolated public space. It did not take long to recognize that framework currently exists in the north central portion of the City of a network of open spaces and green amenities. The network would be comprised of existing parks, trails, and schools. Adjacent residential developments have the potential to house smaller, more natural features that could align with the set of larger open spaces. With some extensions of city trails and well-placed wayfinding features, the series of amenities could be linked together to form a unified chain. This “green spine” could serve as a major conduit for residents in the northern sections of the City to travel along by foot or bicycle into the activity center of Kearney.

The envisioned chain would begin at Buffalo Hills Elementary School north of 56th Street. The school lies at the heart of a large planned residential subdivision with a good pedestrian circulation system and would be a strong civic node for the spine. A wide path could lead from the school south to 56th Street, where the intersection with 11th Avenue would be designed as a pedestrian-oriented intersection, with specialty paving, landscaping, and crossing signal to distinguish it to motorists. A gateway monument would be located on the south side of the intersection to mark the entrance to a trail that could run along a natural drainage way located between planned subdivisions. The drainage way would be designed with native wetland vegetation and a more meandering course to create a small creek that could serve both as a natural collection system for the future subdivisions and provide trail users with a pleasant environment through which to travel. The trail would emerge at 48th Street, where a widened sidewalk could run along the east side of the street to another pedestrian-oriented intersection at the north end of Fountain Hills Park.

The existing trail through the park would then lead users to a marker on its south end and the entrance to a trail corridor running along the back lot lines of an existing and a planned subdivision to the east. Another wayfinding feature would be located on the south end of the corridor and help direct trail users across 39th Street, where a proposed side path would run along the street's south curb line and lead east to the future residential development on the current high school site. The proposed development calls for a stormwater chain along which a trail or boardwalk would run, continuing travel along the spine. The stormwater chain would follow the steep terrain of the existing “sledding hill,” which would be preserved and enhanced with the high school site redevelopment. The hillside lies directly across 35th Street from Apollo Park, which in turn lies adjacent to Harmon Park, the City's iconic public open space. Existing sidewalks connect the track and field complex, Horizon Middle School, and Memorial Field to this series of parks, expanding the breadth of the spine's reach. Another pedestrian-oriented intersection and gateway feature could be designed at the intersection of 5th Avenue and 29th Street, marking the south entrance to the spine. The current alignment of 5th Avenue's right-of-way would allow for an off-street side path to be constructed along its west side to connect the spine to Highway 30 and its adjacent neighborhoods, the UNK campus, and downtown Kearney.



Illustrative Diagram of Potential Green Spine



Buffalo Hills Elementary School



Existing Drainage Way (Potential Creek Install)



Fountain Hills Park



"Sledding Hill"



Harmon Park

## MindMixer

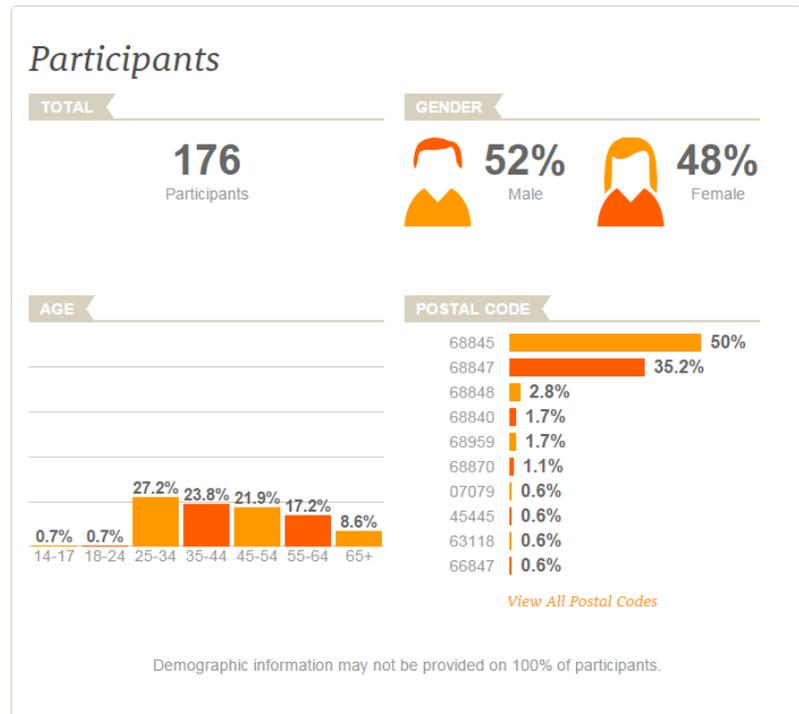
### Comprehensive Plan Process

The City of Kearney established a MindMixer website, Cultivate Kearney, prior to the comprehensive plan process and providing residents another platform for public input. Residents were able to go online, sign up for an account to MindMixer, and answer questions posted on the website. To ensure that residents' voices are heard, the City of Kearney and local community leaders have continued to host 'listening sessions' to answer questions in a face-to-face format.

On Cultivate Kearney, participants and residents also know that the mayor and city council members are attentive and listening to their virtual answers and online comments. For example, to coincide with the previous questionnaire, the City continued to ask why the residents chose Kearney as their home. The top three answers were:

- Family friendly
- The atmosphere and character
- A friendly, diverse community

The online MindMixer responses validated previous presumptions about the community with answers such as "small-town feel" and a safe, "low crime" community.



Cultivate Kearney generated 48 topics, 2,268 interactions, 249 comments and 64 shares through social media.

[section 3.3]

## VISIONING

### February – October 2015

Before, during, and after the public input meetings, the consultants worked with the Kearney Comprehensive Plan Steering Committee on several occasions to determine priorities and feasibility among all of the ideas given by the community. These ideas, needs, and desires were integrated into the following Achieve and Implementation Chapters. The Achieve Chapter is influenced by decisions and conversations during each focus group, town hall, and steering committee meeting. In particular, the steering committee helped immensely during the Envision stage and Achieve stage of the planning process to further develop or define the goals, objectives, and policies found within the Implementation Chapter of the Kearney Comprehensive Plan.



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# 4 [ACHIEVE KEARNEY]

[section 4.1]

## INTRODUCTION

The proposed direction of Kearney's future development is outlined in the Achieve Chapter. This Chapter is a result of the data analyzed in the Profile Chapter, ideas generated during the Envision Chapter and honed by the steering committee and city department heads. The resulting Chapter focuses on maintaining Kearney's quality of life, safe living, and making sure that the decisions support the public's best interest.

This Chapter focuses on the opportunities for Kearney's growth outside of its existing corporate limits. Redevelopment projects within the corporate limits should include increased density if possible with the exception of matching traditional neighborhood character. As for growth, it is important for Kearney to receive quality in return for public investments. As the City extends its infrastructure, more density should be concentrated near the main lines of infrastructure and major roadway investments. As Kearney continues to grow, the future parks and trails will need to increase as well. The park and trails plan will give recommendations for new service areas as well as connecting trails throughout town and on unbuilt adjacent farmland when development occurs.

Showing that a park or trail will be needed in an undeveloped area helps to allow developers to incorporate one into their designs. Mixed use developments have become more prevalent in recent years and as a result, more park plans are incorporated into designs with higher densities. Likewise, trail developments become increasingly important when connecting populations to destinations.

[section 4.2]

## POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Although the historic trend has not presented a large influx of retirement aged population to date, with the Baby Boom generation entering into retirement there will likely be a shift in the upcoming American Community Surveys estimates and 2020 U.S. Census. In such, there is a potential trend of Baby Boomers moving from rural Buffalo County into the city because Kearney is one of the most desirable places to retire in Nebraska with the city's medical facilities and cultural amenities. During this planning period, the Baby Boomers of surrounding communities within Buffalo County and neighboring counties may continue to select to relocate near or within Kearney.

### City Services' Point of View

As Kearney continues to grow in size and service needs are increased, there becomes a need for residents to understand capacity limits on existing systems. Depending on the location, the City may be able to extend a water or sanitary sewer line within their serviceable area, generally speaking, the northwest and southwest quadrants. However, the needs and stress to the current system may warrant upgrades, new equipment, or new facilities in order to service additional populations.

## Historic Population Trends Projection

The Historic Population Trends projections display a community’s growth as if it were to repeat past events of long-term growth. Longer growth periods create projections that ignore the peaks and valleys of recurring building cycles and population growth. Table 19 shows Kearney’s annual growth from 1970 to 2010 as the low projection set at .94 percent that represents the baseline of the past forty years. It is unlikely that the community’s annual growth will drop lower than 0.94 percent due to Kearney’s attractive amenities, businesses, and fiscal stability. The 20- and 30-year growth trends (rates from 1980 and 1990) present slightly higher growth and represents the middle ground for growth projections (1.04%) and a high growth projection of 1.09%; therefore to simplify the graph the middle growth rate was removed to represent the low and high projections. Over the next twenty years, the “low” projection expects 6,630 more people moving to Kearney. The “high” projection calculated for 7,859 new residents by 2035.

Table 19. Historic Population Trend Projections

Kearney	Low		High	
	<b>0.94%</b>		<b>1.09%</b>	
	40-year Trend	Average annual population increase	10-Year Trend	Average annual population increase
<b>2015</b>	<b>32,261</b>		<b>32,502</b>	
<b>2020</b>	<b>33,807</b>	309	<b>34,312</b>	362
<b>2025</b>	<b>35,426</b>	324	<b>36,223</b>	382
<b>2030</b>	<b>37,122</b>	339	<b>38,241</b>	404
<b>2035</b>	<b>38,900</b>	356	<b>40,371</b>	426

The low and high population projections can help inform costly infrastructure considerations to accommodate this population increase. At present the City is able to adequately serve the current population and has budgeted accordingly in each department’s long range plans to sustain this level of service. These proactive measures of the City often shield the general public from the consideration and realization of the magnitude of investment needed to strategically plan and pay for improvements and the location of such.

The current system will allow a large addition of households in the northwest quadrant of Kearney. In later sections of this Achieve Chapter, discussions of urban reserve and preserving areas for long term growth will help to give the public a better idea of how and where growth will occur.

## Modified Trend Projections: Modified Historic Trend

Taking in account the recent construction boom Kearney experienced between 2012 and 2014, an additional projection was created to represent recent construction growth, historical population growth, and the creation of a middle growth projection to give Kearney realistic growth expectations. In the following, Table 20, 1.1 percent annual growth is the low series projection consistent with Kearney’s higher historical population trends. The high series represents Kearney’s most recent population increase reported during the 2012 construction season with a high estimate. The medium annual growth rate was chosen between the two extremes to represent a realistic growth trend based on growth since 2000.



Kearney has seen historic population booms before, but it is hard to believe that the housing boom would keep pace with the high annual projections. In order to continue at 2012's growth rate, there needs to be multiple factors to help sustain the economy. Currently, Kearney has a lack of available housing stock and moreover a lack of a skilled construction labor force, further exacerbating the high lot and building costs. As history has shown in Kearney's cyclical growth pattern, markets correct themselves and people will either move near Kearney if they cannot afford to live within the city, or housing stock will become available. Although 1.80 percent annual growth is unlikely, the following table shows how much Kearney will grow if the construction rate of the last three years were to continue.

Table 20. Modified Population Trend Projections

Kearney	Low		Medium		High	
	<b>1.10%</b>	Average annual population increase	<b>1.50%</b>	Average annual population increase	<b>1.80%</b>	Average annual population increase
<b>2015</b>	<b>32,518</b>		<b>33,166</b>		<b>33,659</b>	
<b>2020</b>	<b>34,346</b>	366	<b>35,730</b>	513	<b>36,800</b>	628
<b>2025</b>	<b>36,277</b>	386	<b>38,491</b>	552	<b>40,233</b>	687
<b>2030</b>	<b>38,317</b>	408	<b>41,466</b>	595	<b>43,987</b>	751
<b>2035</b>	<b>40,471</b>	431	<b>44,670</b>	641	<b>48,091</b>	821

### Modified Cohort Survival Rates

Cohort survival projections are used to project an existing population's growth potential. A cohort survival projection uses birth and death rates associated to each five-year cohort. Formulas are used to comprise population cohort's growth or decline with five-year spans. For the childbearing age cohort, there are various birth rates associated to the 15-44 female cohorts to determine how many children would be born if the city is able to retain their young population. With such a high population of 18-24 year olds, the following progression shows the results if Kearney could keep its college-aged demographic.

This modified cohort survival model used a statewide migration rate of people moving in or out of town. Therefore, the statewide formula does not take into account Kearney's large annual college student population moving into town. In short, this formula shows (see Table 21) what would happen to Kearney's population if most of 2010's population, including students, stayed in Kearney to raise families.

Although maintenance of the entire 2010 population is unlikely, the projections provide a reasonable outlook for the City's population. With 7,500 women within Kearney's 2010 child bearing cohort (ages 15-44) and the various birth rates, it can be expected to have 600 births per year. This high fertility compared to other communities, over 1,500 births and children moving in were projected for each five-year increment. The peak five-year growth period would be from 2025 to 2030 with 6,309 new residents. The births per year initially jumps to over 600 births annually the first five years with the most college-aged females. The births are consistently over 500 and peak with over 700 births annually by 2035. The 2015's under 4 cohorts are represented as the 20-24 cohort in 2035. Kearney has consistently grown at 10 percent each decade since 1970 and this modified cohort survival formula illustrates that Kearney would double that growth each decade. Although this model does not give an accurate projection for Kearney, it helps to put population, natural growth, and retention of talent into a framework with other realistic projections.

Table 21. Cohort Survival Projection

Population Projection Cohort Survival			
Kearney, Nebraska			
2000-2030			
Year	Population	Change	Percentage
2000	27,431		
2010	30,787	3,356	11%
2020	39,744	8,957	22.5%
2030	52,196	12,452	23.9%

Source: US Census, JEO Consulting Group, Inc.

[section 4.3]

## HOUSING PROJECTIONS

The future is hard to predict, and each market fluctuates and reacts differently. Kearney may not be able to control external forces like the nationwide economic downturn in 2008, but it can continue to adapt and change to housing needs. The following table depicts the expected housing units through the previously modified population projections. The Modified Historic Trend projection was used as a reasonable range of growth expected in Kearney over the next twenty years. This formula used 2.4 as the average population per housing unit by rounding up from 2.36 as reported in the 2010 Census.

### Kearney’s Recent Housing Trends

To better understand the following figures, the recent housing construction statistics from 2009 to 2014 are used as a reference to these projections. The City of Kearney issued 151 Multi-Family permits during this period with 96 permits between 2013 and 2014. The City also issued 494 Single-Family permits from 2009 to 2014, with 60 percent of those permits during the last three years. Therefore, multi-family units have outpaced the single-family units in recent years.

As for demolition, there has been an average of ten dwellings demolished per year over this six-year period. As of July 2015, there were opportunities to build on 330 vacant lots representing slightly over two years of construction according to the 1.1 percent annual growth table. The following projections use both the traditional long-term projections and represent the recent increase in building permits.

In the 1.1 percent annual growth projections (Table 22), housing unit projections range from 147 to 216 annually. The following table shows the growth of Kearney as well to gauge the size of Kearney at that time. Relying upon the low 1.1 percent growth projection, there will be roughly 7,000 housing units built by 2050. As previous population and housing statistics show, Kearney is consistent with its growth for at least the past twenty years. Therefore, the breakdown of owner-occupied units and renter-occupied units are also represented.

The 1.5 percent Annual Growth Table, Table 23, resembles a larger population and increase in the amount of housing units expected to serve the growing population. The annual construction of housing units calls for more than 200 units per year. If the owner-occupied and renter-occupied keep the same percentages as it’s done the past twenty years, Kearney can expect to have more than 5,800 owner-occupied and 4,500 renter-occupied units by 2050.



Table 22. Housing Projections, 1.1% Annual Population Growth

1.1% Annual Growth							
Kearney	Population	Housing Units		Housing Unit Breakdown			
		2.4 Average HH increase		Owner-occupied units		Renter-occupied units	
	5-Year Total	Annual Increase	5-Year Total	Annual Increase	5-Year Total	Annual Increase	5-Year Total
<b>2015 (32,518)</b>	1,731	144	<b>721</b>	81	<b>404</b>	63	<b>317</b>
<b>2020 (34,346)</b>	1,828	152	<b>762</b>	85	<b>427</b>	67	<b>335</b>
<b>2025 (36,277)</b>	1,931	161	<b>805</b>	90	<b>451</b>	71	<b>354</b>
<b>2030 (38,317)</b>	2,040	170	<b>850</b>	95	<b>476</b>	75	<b>374</b>
<b>2035 (40,471)</b>	2,154	180	<b>898</b>	101	<b>503</b>	79	<b>395</b>
<b>2040 (42,747)</b>	2,275	190	<b>948</b>	106	<b>531</b>	83	<b>417</b>
<b>2045 (45,150)</b>	2,404	200	<b>1,001</b>	112	<b>561</b>	88	<b>440</b>
<b>2050 (47,688)</b>	2,538	212	<b>1,058</b>	118	<b>592</b>	93	<b>466</b>
	16,900		<b>7,043</b>		<b>3,945</b>		<b>3,098</b>

JEO Consulting Group, Inc.

Table 23. Housing Projections, 1.5% Annual Population Growth

1.5% Annual Growth							
Kearney	Population	Housing Units		Housing Unit Breakdown			
		2.4 Average HH increase		Owner-occupied units		Renter-occupied units	
	5-Year Total	Annual Increase	5-Year Total	Annual Increase	5-Year Total	Annual Increase	5-Year Total
<b>2015 (33,166)</b>	2,379	198	<b>991</b>	111	<b>555</b>	87	<b>436</b>
<b>2020 (35,730)</b>	2,564	214	<b>1,068</b>	120	<b>598</b>	94	<b>470</b>
<b>2025 (38,491)</b>	2,761	230	<b>1,150</b>	129	<b>644</b>	101	<b>506</b>
<b>2030 (41,466)</b>	2,975	248	<b>1,240</b>	139	<b>694</b>	109	<b>546</b>
<b>2035 (44,670)</b>	3,204	267	<b>1,335</b>	150	<b>748</b>	117	<b>587</b>
<b>2040 (48,123)</b>	3,453	288	<b>1,439</b>	161	<b>806</b>	127	<b>633</b>
<b>2045 (51,842)</b>	3,719	310	<b>1,550</b>	174	<b>868</b>	136	<b>682</b>
<b>2050 (55,848)</b>	4,006	334	<b>1,669</b>	187	<b>935</b>	147	<b>734</b>
	25,061		<b>10,442</b>		<b>5,848</b>		<b>4,594</b>

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To represent the most recent building permits and the 2012 population growth estimate, the 1.8% Annual Growth Table, Table 24, depicts the substantial needs with a larger population and housing construction. The previous tables showed housing unit increases of roughly 150 and 200 units per year in 2015. In this scenario, the population growth would estimate almost 250 housing units built in 2015. This 1.8 percent growth was chosen because of a spike in

population growth in 2012; however, this unplanned result of mimicking previous trends and characteristics of the city shows similar of how Kearney is today. The 2013 American Community Survey estimates show Kearney with 31,397 total population and 13,023 housing units. If Kearney grows at a 1.8 percent annual growth, the increased population in 2050 would be 32,017 people and 13,341 housing units. Although 1.1 percent and 1.5 percent annual growth is more likely, it may be easier to acknowledge the importance to plan ahead for infrastructure, transportation, and determining land uses to accommodate for a city twice the size of the current population.

Table 24. Housing Projections, 1.8% Annual Population Growth

1.8% Annual Growth							
Kearney	Population	Housing Unit		Housing Unit Breakdown			
		2.4 Average HH increase		Owner-occupied units		Renter-occupied units	
	5-Year Total	Annual Increase	5-Year Total	Annual Increase	5-Year Total	Annual Increase	5-Year Total
<b>2015 (33,659)</b>	2,872	239	<b>1,197</b>	134	<b>670</b>	105	<b>527</b>
<b>2020 (36,780)</b>	3,140	262	<b>1,308</b>	146	<b>732</b>	115	<b>576</b>
<b>2025 (40,233)</b>	3,433	286	<b>1,430</b>	160	<b>800</b>	126	<b>630</b>
<b>2030 (43,987)</b>	3,754	313	<b>1,564</b>	175	<b>875</b>	138	<b>689</b>
<b>2035 (48,091)</b>	4,104	342	<b>1,710</b>	191	<b>957</b>	151	<b>753</b>
<b>2040 (52,578)</b>	4,487	374	<b>1,870</b>	209	<b>1,047</b>	164	<b>823</b>
<b>2045 (57,483)</b>	4,905	409	<b>2,044</b>	229	<b>1,144</b>	180	<b>900</b>
<b>2050 (62,846)</b>	5,363	447	<b>2,235</b>	250	<b>1,251</b>	197	<b>984</b>
	32,058		<b>13,358</b>		<b>7,476</b>		<b>5,882</b>

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### Opportunities for Existing Housing

#### *Mortgage free inventory*

Kearney’s current housing stock had over 2,200 housing units owned ‘free and clear’ of mortgages. This represents a significant potential of infill housing units that can realistically change ownership over the next ten to twenty years. If this particular housing stock can support families, Kearney may have a resurgence of young families in these housing units and see an increase of population without the need to build additional single-family housing.

#### *Senior population*

Identify existing housing stock or neighborhoods that are favorable for modifications in order to meet the needs of senior living. Multiple obstacles, such as limited stock of single-level or ranch-style housing, currently hinder the elderly from purchasing housing. It is not only single-level living that is desirable, but having a smaller yard, or no yard, is preferred. The assumption during the comprehensive plan period is that the private housing market will shift to provide this type of housing stock. This demographic provides new job opportunities for additional skilled labor to modify existing housing to be more elder-friendly. If it is not feasible with the existing housing stock, new construction with the specific modifications will be required.



## **Opportunities for New Housing**

### *Plan for elder housing*

With the burgeoning retirement population and the lack of suitable housing stock suggests, there will be a demand for elder housing. The question becomes how much demand will the senior living market have and where it will be located in Kearney. The previous stigma of an “old people’s home” does not resonate today. Elderly housing comes in many forms and housing styles that can be implemented in Kearney whether it is in-home healthcare, townhomes, cottage style developments, or a long-term healthcare facility.

### *Encourage redevelopment and develop available lots*

The existing 330 vacant lots could expect to hold 2010’s 2.36 Average Household size, which equals 779 in additional population. With the conservative projections of less than 1 percent annual growth, the 330 vacant lots represents over two years of population growth. On the other extreme, if Kearney continues its building pace similar to 2012, these vacant lots represent less than two year’s worth of the needed increase in housing stock.

### *Encouraging new developments within serviceable areas*

City leadership prefers to redevelop within existing areas or at least within current serviceable areas. Redevelopment is fiscally responsible for the City to maintain its existing infrastructure. An example of infill development could be the utilization and execution of capitalizing on the highest density possible near existing infrastructure and locations of larger investments. The City of Kearney should continue to promote its tradition of building multi-family housing near existing infrastructure and providing an efficient transportation network. A focus on higher density and specific locations for developments will help push the City’s fiscal obligations or responsibility by building on fewer acres and having less infrastructure to maintain. As stated before, the City can do well without building homes because the benefits of new housing may not outweigh the costs of building and maintaining new infrastructure. The City wants to maintain its low property tax rates, therefore, the unnecessary financial risk of supplying infrastructure to a new housing subdivision may be more of a liability than benefit to the overall population.

### *Rural estates*

Oftentimes, large lots are developed to provide a sense of seclusion with the security and convenience of a nearby larger community. Outside of Kearney and within its extraterritorial jurisdiction, there are plenty of large lots platted. The most impending threat for building rural estates would be if locations were within long term city-serviceable growth areas. This type of housing stock should be permitted in designated areas that have limited or no city services provided. This type of housing may appeal to the retiring Buffalo County population who want to be in proximity to medical services and amenities but not live in the City.

### *Housing Trends*

Housing trends across the nation are shifting for various reasons. These changes are due to environmental and energy conservation purposes, as well as changes in the demographics of the population. As the Baby Boomers, who encompass a large part of the population, are leaving the workforce, the types of housing qualities they need and desire are changing. The housing preferences of the younger generations that are just entering the market is also affecting housing trends. Some of these housing trends include:

- smaller lot size
- compact development
- mixed-use buildings and neighborhoods
- walkable neighborhoods
- more attached housing and rentals
- retirement housing
- ADA accessible housing
- infill and/or building reuse development

## ECONOMIC FORECAST

### Wages as They Relate to Quality of Life

The phrase or saying “(Kearney) has plenty of \$10/hour jobs available,” was heard multiple times during focus group and steering committee meetings. Although many of these entry-level positions are normally temporary, there were conversations in focus groups about Kearney’s college-educated workforce’s inability to move up within a company due to lack of positions available. There are available jobs in Kearney with different industries but focus group attendees explained that applicants looking for a job may not have learned the proper skills or do not possess appropriate qualifications. The resulting stalemate may financially pressure single-income families, recent graduates, and a workforce looking to change careers. Living on an entry-level wages may damper some views on the quality of life in Kearney because it may not cover basic costs and expenses. Supplementing entry-level income with another job may limit them from gaining the right kind of work experience or skills needed.

Kearney has the luxury of having the University of Nebraska at Kearney and Central Community College. There are quality paying entry-level jobs in Kearney and high school and college students take advantage of those early learning opportunities. However, as stated in focus group meetings, many of the college-educated labor force struggle to advance into available jobs because they lack the skills or particular education needed to fill open positions creating a gap between education and the skills required for employment. Multiple steering committee members echoed this difficulty in the community.

When examining the 2013 American Community Survey estimates, many of the renter-occupied households may be struggling with their finances because the median rent is \$681 a month. As for a typical entry-level household earning, one \$12/hour job will bring in roughly \$1,920 per month before taxes. Kearney’s median rent is \$681, and that equals to 35.4 percent of the gross earnings. At this hourly rate, a one-salary household is already paying more than 35 percent of their salary. Even jobs in the \$12/hour range will only allow a person to get by month by month, but does not allow someone to get ahead, save money, or hope to enter into the housing market.

The estimates show employees making a minimum of \$16 an hour were spending between 20 to 29 percent of that salary on rent. While this rent level is more manageable it may still lead to tight budgets and potentially living paycheck to paycheck in single-income households. According to the 2013 estimate, the emerging salary of \$50,000 a year, or roughly \$25/hour, would result in monthly rent costs that are less than 20 percent of their salary. This could allow the household budget more easily, pay other debts, and continue to save money. Because households are able to meet their needs with more ease by having more than one income, more job opportunities available to provide a second income for households would be ideal.

When attracting new industry and companies, \$25 per hour may be the ‘baseline’ salary for a typical long-term employment that the City and residents will want. Of course, every community would like this, but the analysis shows that Kearney is in a position to expect this from incoming businesses. At the very least, the industries looking to locate in Kearney should consider the statistics of their workforce. Any new companies moving to town should have the best interest of the City of Kearney, its residents, and future employers in mind.



## **Workforce**

The shifting workforce nationwide over the next ten to fifteen years will affect each market. The void left by the Baby Boomers, a large workforce, may need to be temporarily addressed through larger workloads for existing workforce or the use of alternative means through technology. The Millennial Generation is large and rivals the size of Baby Boomers, but their view on the workplace and approach to conducting business is different. The workplace and its workforce will be changing and the organization of work will need to adjust to the current system or change entirely.

### *Young professionals and retaining talent*

In the Profile Chapter, the age cohort between 30 and 34 continually lost population. From an economic standpoint, this population may have initially stayed in Kearney after college to gain work experience. This is a great accomplishment to keep a younger demographic; however, this population felt the need to move out of Kearney. Housing and Economics are crucial in decisions of moving in or out of a city.

The young professionals leaving Kearney can be tied a number of factors including:

- current housing prices
- housing stock or availability
- job opportunities
- career advancement

The City cannot mandate lower rents or land prices when it comes to housing because prices are determined by demand and unfortunately Kearney's demand is very high. However, the City can encourage developers to build various housing styles that have smaller lots and units with a lower initial entry point to create opportunities for a those entering the market as young first time homebuyers.

As for retaining Kearney's young professionals and young families, the City's businesses groom workers for advancement but often there are too few opportunities. Companies may have limited middle to upper management positions available in the foreseeable future. Young professionals may be gaining experience but perceive a career ceiling and may not wish to move only laterally. Also, the industries business environment or industries may not be in Kearney, based upon employee skills. With recent events and developments, the technology park and the associated businesses and industries connected to this venture may help to retain this younger professional group by providing a missing industry.

The information and technology sector can also attract more outside talent to Kearney. In previous economic discussions, it was stated in a steering committee meeting that Kearney businesses do not want to take talent from each other because it does not help the overall business environment. The businesses in Kearney would rather fill their positions with bright young minds from the University of Nebraska at Kearney or have the ability to bring talent into the City.

There is a need to continually survey the young workforce in Kearney. The City can help to promote and guide such an effort with their continued listening sessions and possibly having specific topics or additional sessions geared to the specific age groups in order to gain more accuracy in information, concerns, and ideas from the young workforce that Kearney wants to keep. The City will maintain ongoing partnership with the Buffalo County Economic Development Council and Nebraska Entrepreneurship.

### **Hospitality Industry**

The Kearney hotel industry has helped generate lodging and sales tax and this specific demographic may be studied to find out what they would like to see or discover on their stop through town or a multi-night stay during a convention. The benefit for the City is to determine who to target, how far they are willing to travel, and what means they have to get there.

### **Enhance Recreation and, therefore, Tourism Industry**

The transient population of Kearney's hotel industry is a demographic Kearney has become accustomed to and could approach this opportunity differently by providing additional amenities. Items like wayfinding and a bike sharing program can help enhance their traveling experience. For example, a traveler may be looking for local cuisine, a familiar restaurant chain, or simply a tourist spot or something to do during their convention. The visitor's one-time experience may lead to multiple trips with the proper promotion, wayfinding, and information to illustrate where visitors can go and how far or how long it will take to explore the various opportunities in Kearney. Providing multiple transportation options to this traveling population may help their experience and create a new approach for Kearney tourism.



[section 4.5]

## FUTURE LAND USE

The future land use plan represents the guidance and protection of existing land uses and maintaining coordination for future growth. Adherence to the future land use plan will help avoid conflicts between incompatible land uses. The following future land use categories and map represent the intentions and infrastructure investment for future development of Kearney.

Future land use categories are generalized descriptions of future development and intended uses. Future land uses are not intended to match the underlying zoning districts but they share similar qualities. Future land use maps show the interaction between various land uses and how they work together as the City's growth plan. The goal of a future land use map is to establish a land use pattern with compatible uses as to avoid unwanted adjacent uses such as residential next to industrial.

Zoning districts also avoid incompatible uses but focus on specific dimensions allowed within the district and its boundaries. For example, R-1 may have a different setback and side yard distance than R-4 zoning. When applying for a building permit, zoning regulations are used with the designated districts that may have additional requirements.

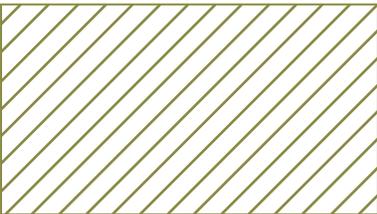
The future land uses should represent what the community wants and when circumstances change, so should the future land use map (Map 16). The following future land use descriptions were updated from the previous comprehensive plan and grouped in four categories:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Mixed Use
- Community-Based

### *Amendments*

- *Resolution No. 2020-134 on 9/8/2020. Amendments were made to the Future Land Use section text and map.*
- *Resolution No. 2024-23 on 3/12/2024. Amendments were made to the Future Land Use section text.*

# Residential Land Uses



## Rural Estates and Agriculture (RE) – Green Stripes

**RE** land uses represent residential uses without city services. If the residential unit is on its own individual well, it must be at least three acres to compensate for an alternative well location. This land use is a typical lot large lot development or agricultural homestead. These developments are frequently served by individual wastewater systems. Residential estates areas include existing areas west of 30th Avenue and north of Cottonmill Park.

Conservation residential developments are a variation of residential estates, clustering development in portions of an environmentally sensitive site that are least sensitive to environmental impact. The balance of the site is reserved as common open space.

### Rural Estates and Agriculture

*Compatible Zoning: RR-1, RR-2, AG*  
*Intended Land Use: Land Use to remain rural in nature with no particular timetable for providing urban services.*



## Urban Reserve (UR) – Light Yellow

**UR** land uses represent the future long-term growth areas of Kearney. Urban Reserve refers to residential, commercial, industrial, and mixed uses. These areas will remain in agricultural use until a time when the City is able to fiscally service the area with water, sewer, and supporting transportation. In order for the City to grow in an orderly

fashion while waiting for urban services, build-through plats can be utilized to ensure a smooth transition for Kearney’s growth and the properly supply the needs of its growing community with a variety of possible land uses.

### Urban Reserve

*Compatible Zoning: RR-1, RR-2, AG*  
*Intended Land Use: Continue rural land use until a time when the City can produce a feasible timetable for providing urban services with new land uses and associated zoning.*



## Residential Land Uses (cont.)



### **Low Density Residential (LDR) – Pale Yellow**

**LDR** are residential land uses that receive city services with overall land use remaining low density. Low Density Residential neighborhoods consist of housing styles from single-family detached (typically larger lots), duplexes, and occasionally townhouses with less than 4-units.

#### **Low Density Residential**

*Compatible Zoning: R-1, R-1D, R-2*

*Intended Land Use: Primary uses are low density residential with options to provide housing types that complement the standards and character of existing neighborhoods. LDR can be paired with Neighborhood Mixed Use (MU1) with limited commercial businesses and business locations near collector transportation corridors.*



### **Medium Density Residential (MDR) - Gold**

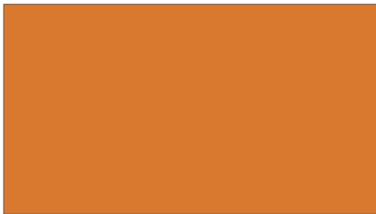
**MDR** are residential land uses that receive city services with variations in densities but the overall land use is medium density. Medium Density Residential neighborhood housing styles range from single-family detached housing, duplexes, and townhomes, to multi-family housing such as apartment buildings. MDR is recommended to be located near higher

volume transportation corridors and infrastructure.

#### **Medium Density Residential**

*Compatible Zoning: R-1D, R-2, R-3*

*The intentions for MDR: Neighborhoods that have a variety of housing options served by city service areas providing a transition to higher density residential, mixed uses, and commercial land uses. Pairs with Neighborhood Mixed Use (MU1) and Office/Commercial Mixed Use (MU2).*



### **High Density Residential (HDR) - Orange**

**HDR** are residential land uses that receive city services and are neighborhoods that have the most variety of housing style options ranging from smaller lot single-family residential up to apartment complexes. Also, includes manufactured homes (mobile homes). The location of this land use is best served along arterial transportation corridors or high volume streets.

#### **High Density Residential**

*Compatible Zoning: R-4, R-M*

*The intentions for HDR: High density residential neighborhoods that provide the most variety of housing style options transitioning from medium density neighborhoods into mixed uses and high intensity commercial uses. HDR is paired with Office/Commercial Retail Mixed Use (MU2) and Commercial Mixed Use (MU3).*

## Commercial Land Uses



### **General Commercial (COM) - Red**

**COM** encompasses land uses that sell goods and services. The hospitality and medical services are located within this land use to provide to city residents and visitors. The commercial uses and high visibility place high design standards on major transportation corridors of 2nd Avenue, Highway 30, and the new medical facility on 11th Ave. This land use has high-

density, transient populations with high traffic volumes and access, but does not address the City's residential land use needs.

#### **General Commercial**

*Compatible Zoning: UC, C-O, C-1, C-2, C-3*

*The intentions for COM: COM is a variety of commercial and retail land uses within urban service areas. This land use is found near high volume transportation corridors and near higher density residential land uses as well as office/commercial mixed uses (MU2).*



### **Business Park (BP) – Mauve**

**BP** is similar to a commercial land use but is concentrated on services provided in office buildings. This land use can contain a variety of services such as company headquarters, but in recent years, there is a shift toward data centers with the technology and research sectors. This land use is found near commercial, industrial, and mixed uses but does not include

residential land uses within its boundaries. Adjacent residential land uses are permitted with the proper noise and visual buffering, if necessary.

#### **Business Park**

*Compatible Zoning: C-O, C-1, C-2, C-3, BP*

*The intentions for BP: BP is a limited use office/commercial setting with access along transportation corridors. This land use may contain a mix of commercial and light industrial uses and may potentially be near higher density residential land uses with the proper distances and mitigation measures.*



## Industrial Land Uses

The future land use categories have compatible zoning categories which are listed below. It is not recommended for general industrial uses to be placed adjacent to residential uses. In the future, if residential land use develops near a proposed General Industrial, the future land use map and the GI land use may need to be amended.



### **Light Industrial (LI) - Light Purple**

**LI** is the majority of Kearney's Industrial Land Use. As Kearney continues to grow, focus will remain on Light Industrial for any industrial purposes. High Design standards apply to Light Industrial, especially in conjunction to Business Park. Light Industrial does not allow residential land uses; however, HDR and MDR may be located adjacent to Light Industrial as

a transition with the proper amount visual and noise buffering if required.

### **Light Industrial**

*Compatible Zoning: BP, M-1*

*The intentions for LI: LI is a restricted land use with heavy vehicle traffic along transportation corridors and not conducive for residential settings.*



### **General Industrial (GI) – Dark Purple**

**GI** is limited within Kearney and can be view as 'Heavy' Industrial land use. Due to Kearney's current industries and workforce, General Industrial is not expected to increase. If it were to occur, land adjacent to Highway 30, the airport, and the railroad would be the most likely candidate. This intense land use needs major transportation facilities and larger

distances from the surrounding land uses, especially residential land uses.

### **General Industrial**

*Compatible Zoning: M-1, M-2*

*The intentions for GI: GI is a extremely restricted land use with heavy machinery and vehicle uses with transportation corridors and not conducive with any residential settings nearby.*

## Mixed Uses

The Mixed Uses combine a variety of land use districts to create larger boundaries instead of individual parcels or single use commercial and office districts. In the uncertainty and flexibility of future land uses, growth patterns can change as well as market trends. Therefore, mixed-use districts provide the needed flexibility with ranges of land uses to help determine the needs for future parking, transportation, scale, and pedestrian access.



### **Neighborhood Mixed Use (MU1) – Yellow**

**MU1** is focused on commercial land uses that serve the immediate area within Low and Medium Density Residential developments. Major intersections throughout town can be utilized for this purpose. Kearney has a majority of single-family, low density residential and placing a MU1 mixed use gives the neighborhood a different housing stock and incorporate commercial services. This land use may include small-scale office development. MU1 is located at intersections and along minor arterials and collectors.

#### **Neighborhood Mixed Use (MU1)**

*Compatible Zoning: R-1, R-1D, R-2, R-3, UC, C-O, C-1, C-2*

*The intentions of MU1: Mixed Use 1 allows for limited commercial uses that serve the immediate area, especially the residential neighborhoods.*



### **Office/Commercial Retail Mixed Use (MU2) – Red**

**MU2** is focused on retail opportunities, high design standards, and accommodates medium to high-density housing. It can be found among the shopping centers and restaurants along 2nd Avenue between Highway 30 and 78th Street. Proposed MU2 land use are found on major roads such as the intersection of East 39th St and Antelope Ave, areas on the east and west portions along Highway 30, more found in northwest Kearney on 56th Ave and southwest near the new school site. This land use can create buffers between residential and more intense land uses such as Mixed Use 3.

#### **Office/Commercial Retail Mixed Use (MU2)**

*Compatible Zoning: R-3, R-4, C-O, UC, C-1, C-2, CBD, C-3, BP*

*The intentions for MU2: Mixed Use 2 provides both office and retail space within urban service areas. This land use allows for different types of zoning and compatible with higher density residential land uses.*



## Mixed Uses (con't.)



### **Commercial Mixed Use (MU3) – Purple**

**MU3** acts as a buffer between the lighter use (office) and industrial uses. The district shall accommodate a variety of commercial to intense commercial uses. This land use can be found on the east side of Kearney near Highway 30 and the railroad, as well as the airport and 2nd Ave Interstate entrance to Kearney.

### **Commercial Mixed Use (MU3)**

*Compatible Zoning: C-O, UC, C-1, C-2, C-3, BP, M-1*

*The intentions for MU3: Mixed Use 3 provides more intensive commercial and general commercial land use needs within urban service areas. This land use allows for different types of zoning but does not include residential or recommend adjacent residential land uses.*



### **Central Business District (CBD) – Pink**

**CBD** is Kearney's original Downtown Business District on the north side of the railroad tracks. This land use includes traditional downtown with regional interests and opportunities. The central location within the City and original downtown flanked by residential on the east and west with industrial uses near the CBD along the railroad. The commercial uses found within the Central Business District's boundaries are civic, commercial retail, restaurants, and office space. Future land uses may include a mixture of residential uses if it is feasible to build vertical mixed use residential units above commercial fronts.

### **Central Business District (CBD)**

*Compatible Zoning: CBD, CV, PROS*

*The intentions for Central Business District is to provide office, commercial, retail space within urban service areas. This land use allows for different types of land uses and zoning, but under the umbrella of CBD and its district regulations.*

## Community-Based Land Uses



**Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS) – Green**  
**PROS** encompasses a variety of land uses and can be private or public use. The parks and trails are serviced by the Kearney Parks and Recreation department with both active and passive park land uses. Traditional sports complexes and active parks are spread throughout Kearney. Open Space refers to natural areas and passive land use that have limited development

potential or opportunities to create new recreation possibilities. A drainageway presents an opportunity for connecting populations, destinations, parks, and trails.

### **Parks, Recreation, and Open Space (PROS)**

*Compatible Zoning: All zoning with restrictions for C-3, M-2, BP*

*The intentions for PROS is providing public access to open space, active sports fields, and playgrounds. With the exception of industrial land uses that are not conducive to residential settings, PROS is appropriate for most areas of Kearney.*



### **Civic (CV) - Blue**

**CV** encompasses public, semi-public, and non-profit land uses that serve the community. These land uses can be found throughout the City and are typically compatible with residential land uses. Depending on the particular use, traffic needs to be able to accommodate for services and facilities. Public Facilities with equipment and facilities needs may be

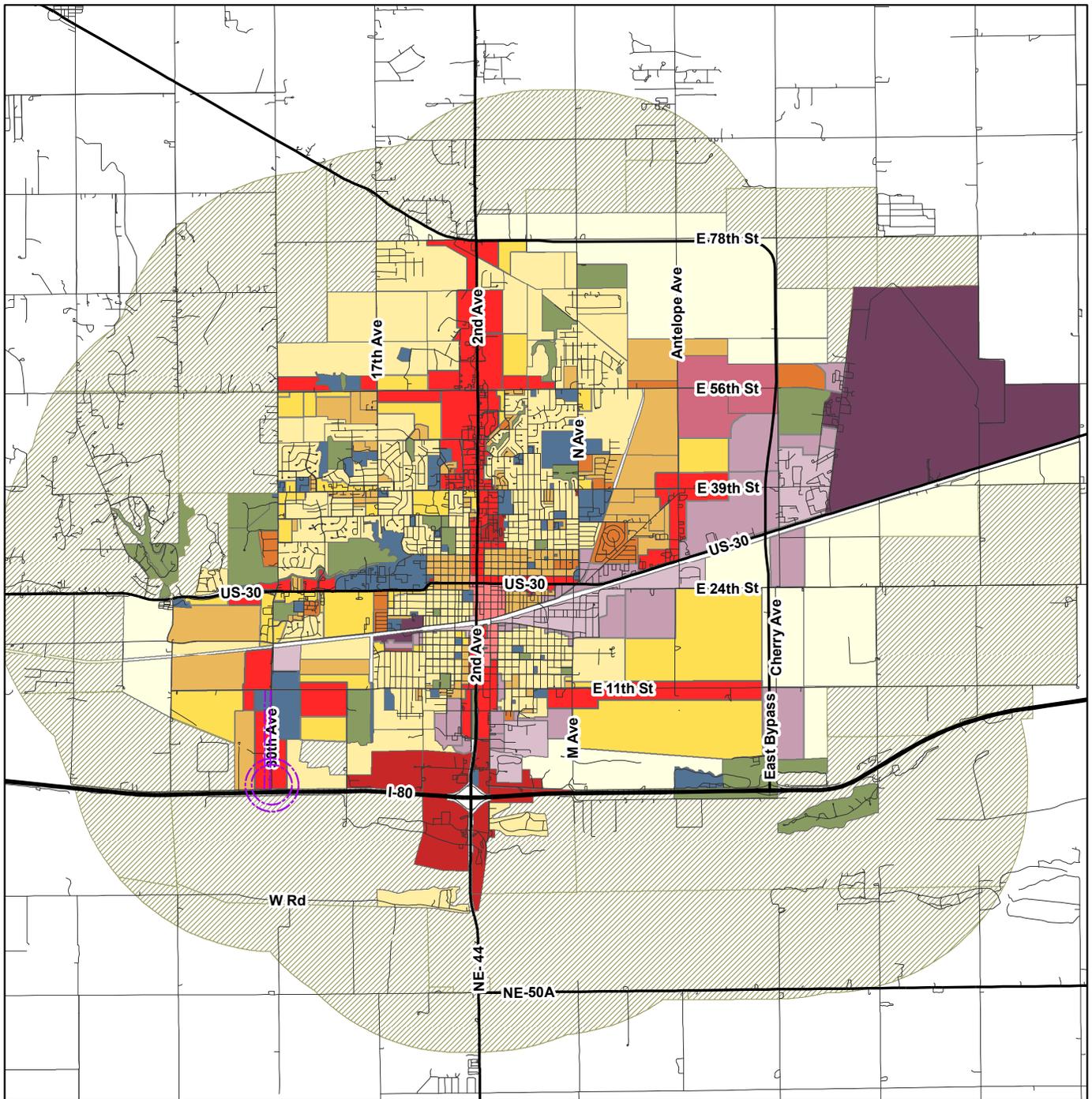
required to locate in industrial land uses. Locations for new schools and parks will be dictated by growth patterns and need.

### **Civic (CV) - Blue**

*Compatible Zoning: All zoning*

*The intentions for CV is providing public departments access to facilities to serve the community. CV can be found in a variety of land uses throughout Kearney. With the exception of heavy machinery and vehicle storage to be in an industrial area, CV land uses are compatible with all of Kearney's adjacent land uses.*

Map.16.. Future Land Use Map



Legend	
<b>Transportation</b>	
	Major Roads
	Potential Interchange
	Roadway Network
<b>Future Land Uses</b>	
	RE - Rural Estates and Agriculture
	UR - Urban Reserve
	LDR - Low Density Residential
	MDR - Medium Density Residential
	HDR - High Density Residential
	COM - General Commercial
	BP - Business Park
	LI - Light Industrial
	GI - General Industrial
	MU1 - Neighborhood Mixed Use
	MU2 - Office/Comm. Retail Mixed Uses
	MU3 - Commercial Mixed Use
	CBD - Central Business District
	PROS - Parks, Recreation and Open Space
	CV - Civic

## Future Land Use

Created By: MBG  
 Date: 12/15/2014  
 Revised: 3/23/2016  
 Software: ArcGIS 10.2  
 File: 110882.00

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[section 4.6]

## **PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN**

The Kearney Recreation Department plays a large role in the community and has continually increased the quality of life for residents. The quality of parks and the ongoing tradition found within Cottonmill Park and Harmon Park have elevated the Kearney resident's view of what parks should be. Few communities could claim the value of these two long standing parks and the recent success of Yanney Heritage Park and its size, quality, and multiple uses set this amenity apart as a model of resident's expectations for new parks.

As stated at the beginning of the comprehensive plan, the City of Kearney benefits from the amount of interstate traffic that bring visitors to its attractions to produce its sales tax base. Tourism is Nebraska's third largest revenue source and any new tourism opportunities, combined with the Kearney's reputable regional retail success, will result in additional sales tax. Recreational opportunities are in abundance for the current population. As Kearney grows, not only will the demand for open space and additional sports fields increase, but the City could capitalize on continued open space development and partnering with private industries to promote tourism-focused recreational developments. The City should continue to take advantage of the natural amenities surrounding Kearney and provide residents and visitors a chance to appreciate them while continuing to create revenue.

The maintenance of each park was evident during the analysis. Parks department workers made it seem like they were everywhere doing their tasks to ensure the high quality expected of residents. It was impressive that each park and facility were in very good shape and few items were found in need of major repairs. The City and Parks Department keep an ongoing list of items on each park and what has been requested, recommended by the parks committee, or observations of the staff. Other than adding wish list items or programming, the City of Kearney is in a great position for maintaining and improving the parks system. The 2015-2016 Annual Budget reports a substantial donation toward the Park and Recreation Department. This large donation is intended to enhance the Hike/Bike trail amenities.

The amount of work the parks department has been able to accomplish in the past two years is impressive. Completing a playground in a newly founded park, adding two splash pads to existing parks and a skate park in another is quite the feat to accomplish. After completing the summer inventory, there were additional items to be updated and recommendations that were no longer needed by the fall. The dedication of the City and the ongoing financial support shows the commitment that recreation will be in the forefront of resident's lives and continue to awe visitors.



## Parks Analysis

The network of amenities has been created with a variety of types, developed at different times, and distributed throughout the City. Kearney has the luxury of both active and passive parks. Historically, parks were viewed as a gathering place and more viewed in the terms of today's passive park with open space focused on natural beauty. Therefore, Kearney has the unique distinction of a park system considered more as tourist attractions and destinations.

Today, communities tend to focus more on structured programs and youth sports. With this philosophy, the more a community grows, additional money is allocated to sports-related parks or complexes with growing enrollments and participation. It is great to serve youth sports because they promote healthy lifestyles and youth programs teach teamwork. However, these structured programs can become expensive investments with maintenance costs that will increase as well. It is easy to ignore providing the necessary open space and passive parks because it can be viewed as a non-factor when deciding on an annual budget. It is important to view passive parks and open space with equal benefit because they serve the entire community as well as promoting the surrounding nature and wilderness.

Passive parks allow for unstructured play but also add value to the Kearney parks system as nodes between trails. There is a differentiating value in admiring nature and open space as opposed to active, structured play and facilities. Kearney's opportunities include nature trails within Cottonmill, Meadowlark North Park, Ted Baldwin Park and the vast openness of Yanney Park and the tranquil environment created with rock garden and lighthouse as Harmon Park's signature piece. Few cities have such a park system to build upon or the ability to continue expansion. The existing natural amenities surrounding Kearney intermingle with the Wood River to the north and the Platte River along the south. The high visibility of the Platte River wildlife will continue to set Kearney apart from the rest with its tradition of passive parks.

### Regional Trails

As mentioned before, Kearney has a regional presence and strengthening its trail system to the expected standards in Parks can only help promote the City and generate more tourism. Public transportation options and alternative transportation could be a countywide goal for connecting populations. On a larger scale, Kearney should try to partner with Buffalo County, neighboring counties, Natural Resources Districts, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, and the Nebraska Game and Parks to help promote, coordinate, and fund the regional trails that would connect populations, tourism attractions, and other destinations. Nebraska has multiple types of trails and byways that can be promoted for development. For example, the Lincoln Highway is an opportunity for automobile tourism and to learn more about Nebraska's rich history.

## Proposed Parks

Over the next twenty years, Kearney's future park system includes three new parks in three general areas as depicted in Map 17:

### Mini Park

#### M-1 and M-2

Two mini parks located in the southwest corner of Kearney would be placed with future residential developments and identified in conjunction with trail development. The strategy for these mini parks would be based on distances from the nearby regional and neighborhood parks. The future locations of these two mini parks will most likely be altered by the proposed developments. The ideal locations can help buffer development along floodplains with potential open spaces, passive park amenities if the soils permit, and connect to the trail system.

### East Lawn Park

This park or open space exists in the center of the private property but is not included in the map. The 383 mobile home units within this property are served by this open space. This private property will not become a public park but it was suggested as a possibility to help upgrade as a joint collaboration with others, such as a non-profit entity, to serve this population. At the very least, this open space is identified as a potential area to service the immediate population because the nearby public parks are not easily accessible from this location. As Kearney grows and their serviceable areas expand, this population may have other opportunities and accessibility to other future parks as the Parks Department is already considering alternatives in this area.

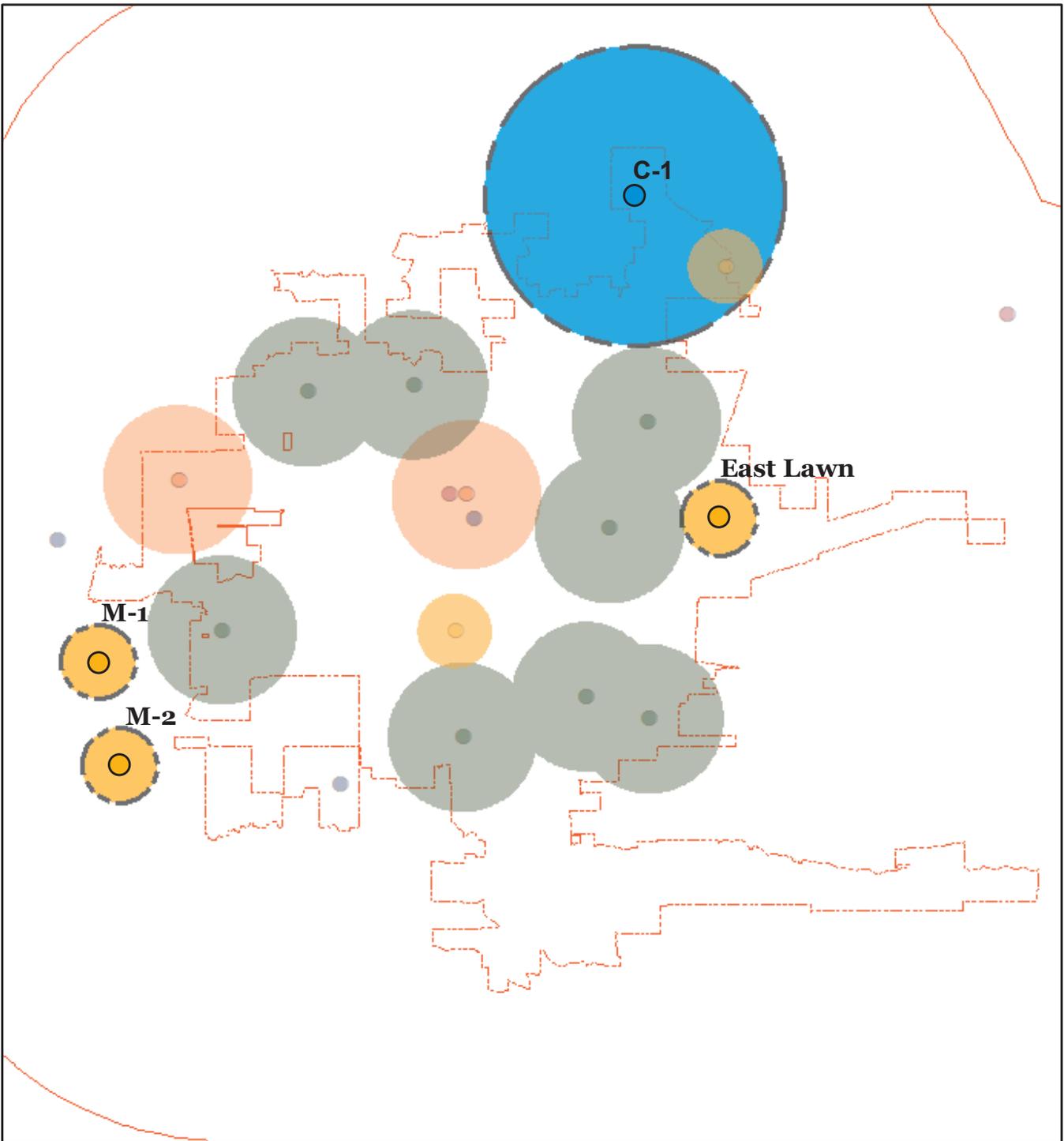
### Community Park

#### C-1

One community park was suggested in the northeast quadrant of Kearney. This was prompted by public interest, overall distribution of parks, lack of connectivity, a city-owned property, and the ability to develop open space to provide northeast residents with a passive park. Although smaller in size, it would provide similar benefits that Yanney Heritage Park has created in Kearney. However, pedestrian access to the park is a potential safety concern. The traffic on 2nd Avenue and 56th Street can create barriers for pedestrians.

The existing trail along 56th Street and the north-side Hilltop Trail along N Avenue could provide connections to the proposed park. The addition of connectivity to this open space will depend on the development to the west, the expected single-family residential, and other opportunities. An additional east-west connection could complete a loop under 2nd Avenue at Clearview Subdivision. This future park site designation could open up possibilities of how the property and connectivity develop in the area.

Map 17.. Future Park Service Areas



**Legend**

**Future Park Locations**

- Mini Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Special Use Parks
- Sports Complexes
- Regional Parks

**Future Park Service Areas**  
**Kearney, Nebraska**

- 1/4 mile Service Area
- 1/2 mile Service Area
- 1/2 mile Service Area



Created by: TKC  
Date: 9.30.15  
Revised: 12.30.15  
Software: ArcGIS 10.2  
File: 110882.00



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## **Kearney and Where Its Trails Lead**

Kearney has experienced the correlation between park amenities and community engagement. Harmon Park, as it is known today, started in 1924 through a grant from the Harmon Foundation to purchase land adjacent to existing parkland. Once the land was bought, many organizations came together to support and provided various gifts and facilities. The park has continually added amenities for new generations to enjoy.

Carrying forward the precedent set by Harmon Park, the City of Kearney has furthered the reach of the parks system through the City's trail network. While the value has been established, in order to develop and sustain trail facilities efforts will need to be supplemented by charitable entities, user groups, and more tourists as this trail system to accommodate this expansion. However, with the value established and prospective locations identified, the trails network will be a part of implementation of this plan.

### **Trails from the City's Perspective:**

When new developments are platted, the resulting drainage outlots have potential to provide an off-street connection from one street to another without having to purchase additional right-of-way from private properties.

Future neighborhoods and destinations need to be identified or adjusted in the trails plan throughout the planning period. As new development continues, future independent eight foot trails can also be incorporated into street plans by providing the additional R.O.W. It would be helpful to identify future trail corridors in land use as developments will change the future land use map and transportation network opportunities. If projected trail paths are adjusted and accurate, decision-making bodies are better able to negotiate, and plan accordingly to safeguard the City's connectivity.

Working in cooperation with developers, the City will be able to further its reputation as a trail community. Developers can embrace and incorporate trails to adjust development plans and help the City achieve the task of alternative connections with little disruption or costly payments of purchasing right-of-way after a development is built and platted. By including trails or space for trails in future housing developments, Kearney will further solidify its status as a place to live, work and play. These future trails should be included in the future land use and transportation plan to reiterate its presence and importance to the community but also the need for improvements, extensions, and overall connectivity.

### **Serving a College Population**

'College towns' typically adjust to accommodate for its unique population. College students are more likely to use public transportation or walking/biking paths to move throughout campus and beyond. A traditional university can be found established near a downtown or commercial district that helps to serve this college population. In Kearney, the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK) was established as a teaching college and located the University on the north side of Highway 30 and separated from Kearney's traditional downtown/commercial district by residential neighborhoods. Over the years, the adjacent residential neighborhoods have slowly increased its rental properties with transient populations that may or may not help maintain the single-family residential nature of these traditional neighborhoods.

UNK has plans to build a new South Campus and launch a mixed use commercial district adjacent to and combined with its original campus. This walkable campus may help to alleviate some of the residential needs that the adjacent neighborhoods experience. This south campus development will be linked to the existing trails system to help promote a bike-friendly campus that can spread to a citywide bike-friendly community.



In October 2105, the University of Kearney established a bike sharing program with 40 bicycles. The program started with six locations on campus. The \$20 annual membership fee allows the students to ride for free if their bike is returned within three hours. Smart phones with the Zapster application make the experience even easier for students, faculty, and staff to unlock a bike and begin their journey. This exciting program can be expanded by the City. The existing trails can lead to new discoveries from tourists if stations are strategically located and promoted.

### **Building a Bike-Friendly Community Through the Trails Plan**

Kearney provides a safe transportation network and two private businesses near the downtown serve the cycling community. The Parks and Trails Plan will identify those ‘missing’ connections of the current trails system including potential long-term internal connections. The majority of the trail system will have off-road trails, ideally 8 feet wide, but not always feasible throughout the internal connections.

There are right-of-way restrictions and concern for creating on-street bike lanes of the current transportation network. After further review, Kearney has a limited number of streets with the proper elements. In a perfect world, one ideal location for bike lanes would be in, around, and connecting college student cycling traffic in all directions of the University of Nebraska at Kearney campus. However, when creating bike lanes, it is ideal to locate on low-volume/low-speed streets and, if possible, avoid major intersections. Most internal trail connections are hindered with major intersection, especially with 2nd Avenue and Highway 30. Without a large-scale budgeting plan, it is extremely difficult to lay out a feasible network at this time. As time moves on and opportunities present themselves, there may be a possibility to gain access of right-of-way and hold onto these parts for long term considerations.

The identified internal connections will be highly unlikely without private industries, donations, and the necessary time to support such an effort. There are specific streets that may technically be wide enough, but not necessarily low traffic or low speed. Even the few streets with most components would only allow a bike lane for a short distance. It is in everyone’s best interest not to create disjointed, short runs of bike lanes without developing a true network in place. The fragmented bike lanes would not help cyclists or motorists to feel safe while riding or driving because the intersections and multiple access points (e.g. driveways). The Kearney community has come together before to solve problems and fund multiple types of projects and it will need to be such an effort to legitimately plan a bike lane network because there are currently street width restrictions, controlled access points, and major intersections to overcome.

Constructing all internal sidewalk trails to be 8 feet wide will also not be feasible or cost-effective for Kearney to pursue. Therefore, if cycling demands increased, it may warrant additional long term considerations for the City to investigate. In this comprehensive plan update, it is acknowledged that Kearney has a passionate and vocal advocacy group which the City will need moving forward. The City of Kearney will benefit from such a group by providing additional safety education and code of behavior in traffic. Public announcements through television and radio commercial, aimed toward the automobile-oriented population, can educate and help people understand bike procedures and know what to expect if they encounter a cyclist on an unmarked, low volume/low traffic street. The cyclist and pedestrians populations can approach the advocacy group and Recreation Department to determine their priorities while keeping the City informed of potential conflicts.

In order to take full advantage of Kearney’s ‘destination’ or Regional Parks, there needs to be a more definitive trails network. Most of Kearney’s established parks are situated on the west half of 2nd Avenue. Combine this with newer parks and trails within northwest residential growth and the east side residents feel “left out.” As the existing Parks Service Area map indicates, the vast majority of the City has a neighborhood park nearby. The three regional parks serve the entire Kearney community but the ease of access, especially from the northeast and southeast neighborhoods, is more difficult for people and lacks an internal connection through Kearney.

### **Health Benefits**

The City of Kearney can promote healthy living by continuing to build upon the walking and biking trail network. By offering a safe network and providing more neighborhoods access to the network and destinations, Kearney provides its residents with an alternative mode of transportation. This alternative not only reduces vehicles on streets but promotes a community health. Beyond the physical health benefits offered by the walking and biking trails, the system also promotes social interaction between neighbors and allows residents safe routes to explore other neighborhoods and nodes within Kearney.

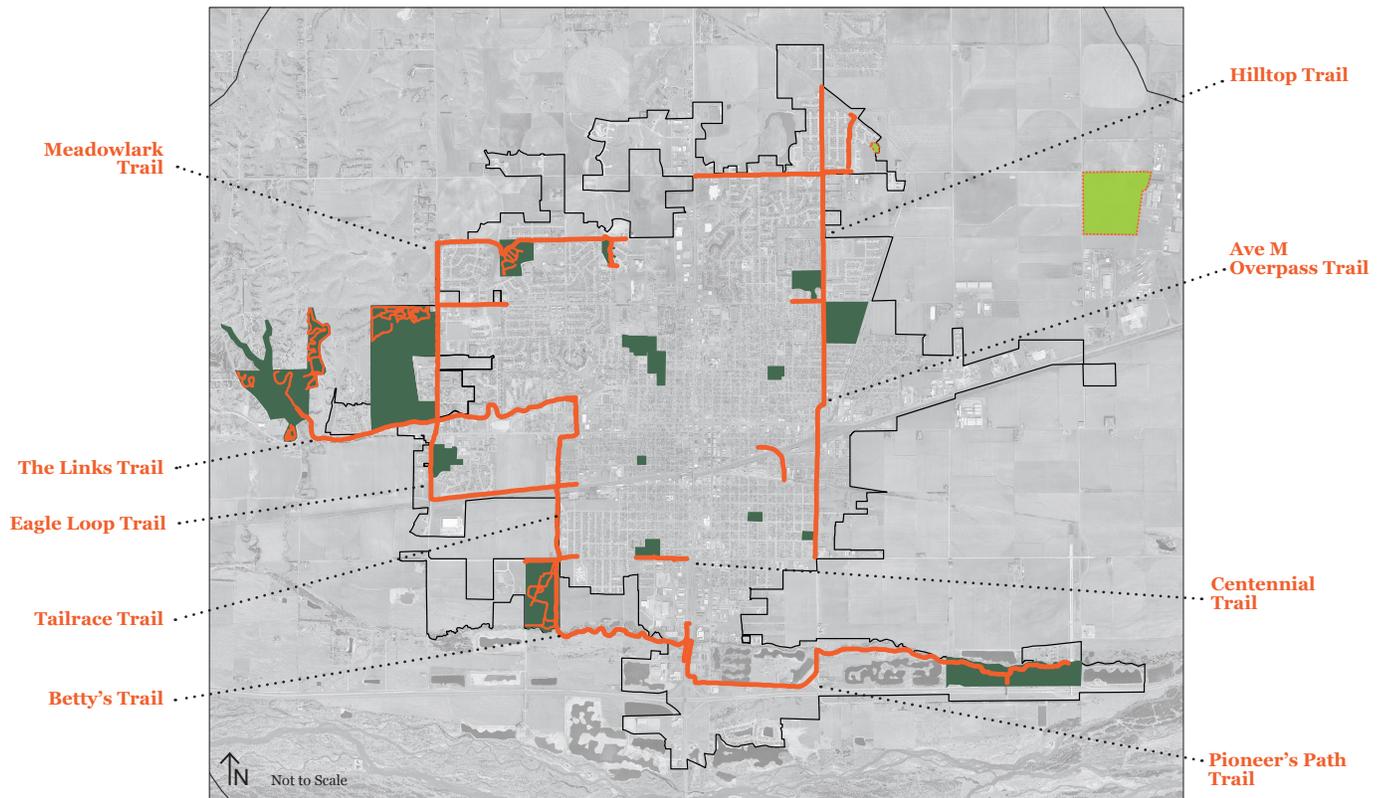
### **Trails Analysis**

The trails system, in its current state, has a contiguous spine that runs from Cottonmill Lake to UNK, Yanney Heritage Park, Archway, and to Fort Kearney State Recreation Area. This backbone is the ideal trail to branch from and develop additional loops for connections.

In conjunction with the extensive park system, Kearney’s trail development has a fantastic foundation. However, there are accessibility barriers such as waterways, railroad, and NDOR-controlled highway access. This is why it is very impressive of Kearney’s connection from Cottonmill Park pass the Archway Monument to Cherry Avenue. This involves four trails and multiple obstacles to overcome and has become the noticeable example of what can be accomplished. This trail has been developed over years, multiple partnerships were needed, and it will anchor the rest of the trails system. It accounts for half of the 18.5 miles (excluding natural trails) of existing trails.



Existing Trails Map, Kearney (Map 10, previously shown on page 101)



The remaining existing trails surround the community on the periphery, 30th Avenue, West 48th, East 56th, and segments on M and N Avenues. The existing Kearney trails are good but lack connectivity with the rest of the community and residential developments. The connections of future trails will need to be done incrementally and in fiscally-responsible ways in order to connect the trails and community. This may include temporary measures for connections that may be upgraded in the long term. The following proposed trails (Map 18) are suggestions from the consultant team as the priorities for the City to implement. The most difficult area for connections are north of railroad and across 2nd Avenue. Other potential internal connections are identified in the transportation section as “illustrative trail connections” and could be considered by the parks and transportation departments if opportunities become available as redevelopments occur. The Future Trails Map (Map 18) shows as a full build-out by 2035. The following quadrant maps (Maps 19-22) detail the areas and describe the potential trails in each quadrant. The railroad streets became the best internal connection to move people west to east and into Kearney’s traditional downtown. In particular, crossing U.S. Highway 30 will continue to exist as a restricted barrier that needs to identify how to go over or under this NDOR roadway. The Trails phasing is found in the Implementation Chapter.





## Southwest

The southwest quadrant is the most developed with the Links Trail, Eagle Loop, Tailrace, and Betty's Run. The trail possibilities and population growth in this area will require additional trails to be considered.

### PROPOSED:

#### Independent Eight Foot Trails

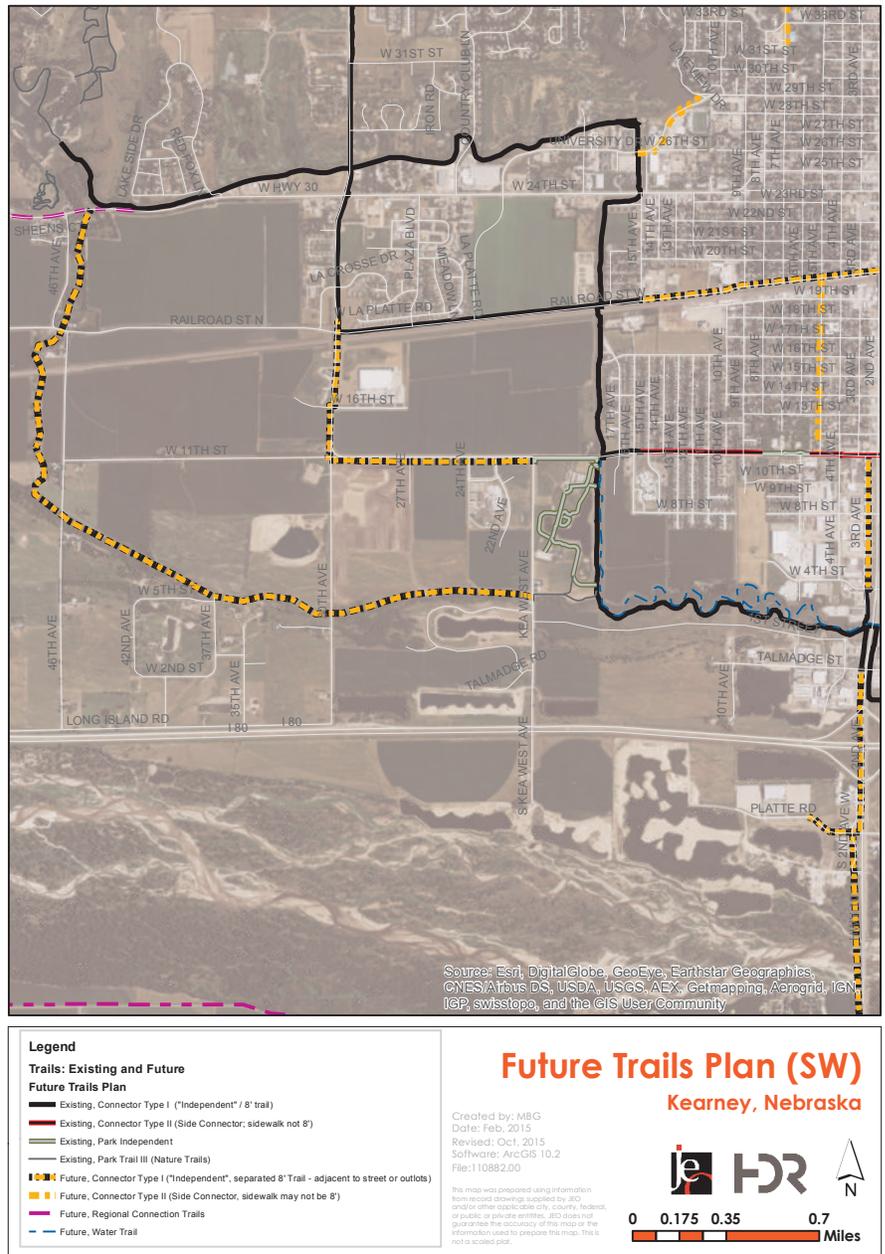
A loop trail along West 11th Street and 30th Avenue would benefit the new high school area and create an extension from Eagle Loop Trail. There is also another larger trail branching off the Links trail near Cottonmill that would take advantage of natural area and having this connecting loop on the southwest corner of Yanney. Railroad Street West Side Connector Trail will carry pedestrian and bike traffic from the Eagle Loop to Downtown and underneath 2nd Avenue. There are two at-grade railroad crossing opportunities at Central Avenue and 5th Avenue to connect destinations and trails.

Another connection is utilizing the greenspace between 2nd Avenue and 3rd Avenue to connect Betty's Trail at 4th Street north to W. 11th trail. To extend this 2nd Avenue trail farther south, an independent trail is proposed over the I-80 interchange to connect not only the hospitality and event center, but also extending south on Highway 44 to State Highway 50A and the regional American Discovery Trail.

#### Side Connector Trails

The West 11th Avenue Side Connector trail would utilize the available sidewalk width from Yanney Park and Tailrace Trail to 2nd Avenue. This Side Connector would also tie into the independent trail between 2nd and 3rd Avenues. Further research and partnership will be needed to identify and implement an internal connection from Yanney Park west to 30th Avenue, then north to Railroad Street.

Map.19..... Future Trail Map, Southwest



## Southeast

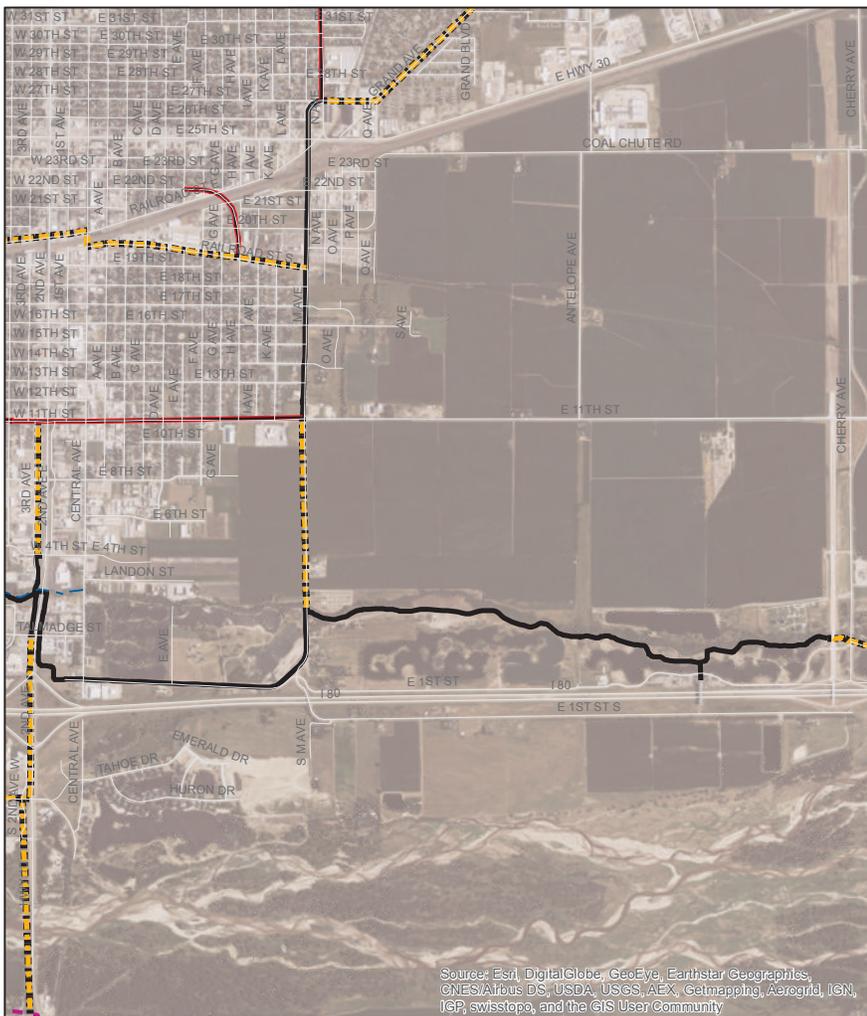
The southeast quadrant has an important role to play for future connectivity in trail development. The existing trails consist of the M Avenue Overpass trail in a north-south orientation from the railroad overpass to E. 11th Street and the Pioneer's Path that runs east to west from Cherry Ave to 2nd Avenue. The Pioneer's Path continues east and crosses underneath I-80 near E. 11th Street and Imperial. From this point, the trail follows the old railroad line southeast by crossing the Platte River on multiple bridges and connecting to Fort Kearney State Recreation Area, Fort Kearney Historical Park, and the American Discovery Trail on State Highway 50A.

### PROPOSED:

#### Independent Eight Foot Trails

Railroad Street South would have an Independent Trail to connect the Overpass Trail into the downtown area from two directions (East 22nd Avenue Bridge).

Map 20. .... Future Trail Map, Southeast



A connecting trail on Avenue M between the Overpass Trail and Pioneer's Path would be a short but important trail for connectivity. It would benefit the residents in the southeast quadrant and give visitors more options and potentially to downtown.

#### Side Connector Trails

East 11th Avenue Side Connector trail would utilize the available sidewalk width to continue from 2nd Avenue and connect to the Overpass Trail at M Avenue. The East 22nd Avenue Bridge has a walkway but not eight feet wide and an at-grade railroad crossing is located on Central Avenue.

<p><b>Legend</b></p> <p><b>Trails: Existing and Future</b></p> <p><b>Future Trails Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>— Existing, Connector Type I ("Independent" / 8' trail)</li> <li>— Existing, Connector Type II (Side Connector; sidewalk not 8')</li> <li>— Existing, Park Independent</li> <li>— Existing, Park Trail III (Nature Trails)</li> <li>— Future, Connector Type I ("Independent", separated 8' Trail - adjacent to street or outlots)</li> <li>— Future, Connector Type II (Side Connector; sidewalk may not be 8')</li> <li>— Future, Regional Connection Trails</li> <li>— Future, Water Trail</li> </ul>	<p><b>Future Trails Plan (SE)</b> Kearney, Nebraska</p>	<p>Created by: MBG Date: Feb, 2015 Revised: Oct, 2015 Software: ArcGIS 10.2 File: 110882.00</p>	
<p><small>This map was prepared using information from several drawings supplied by BGC and/or other applicable city, county, federal, or public or private entities. BGC does not guarantee the accuracy of this map or the information used to prepare this map. This is not a scaled plan.</small></p>			
<p>0 0.175 0.35 0.7 Miles</p>			



## Northwest

The northwest trails have connections between residential and park destinations along 30th Avenue and West 39th and West 48th Streets. However, it is desired to connect with other trails to northeast, especially along 56th Street.

### PROPOSED:

#### Independent Eight Foot Trails

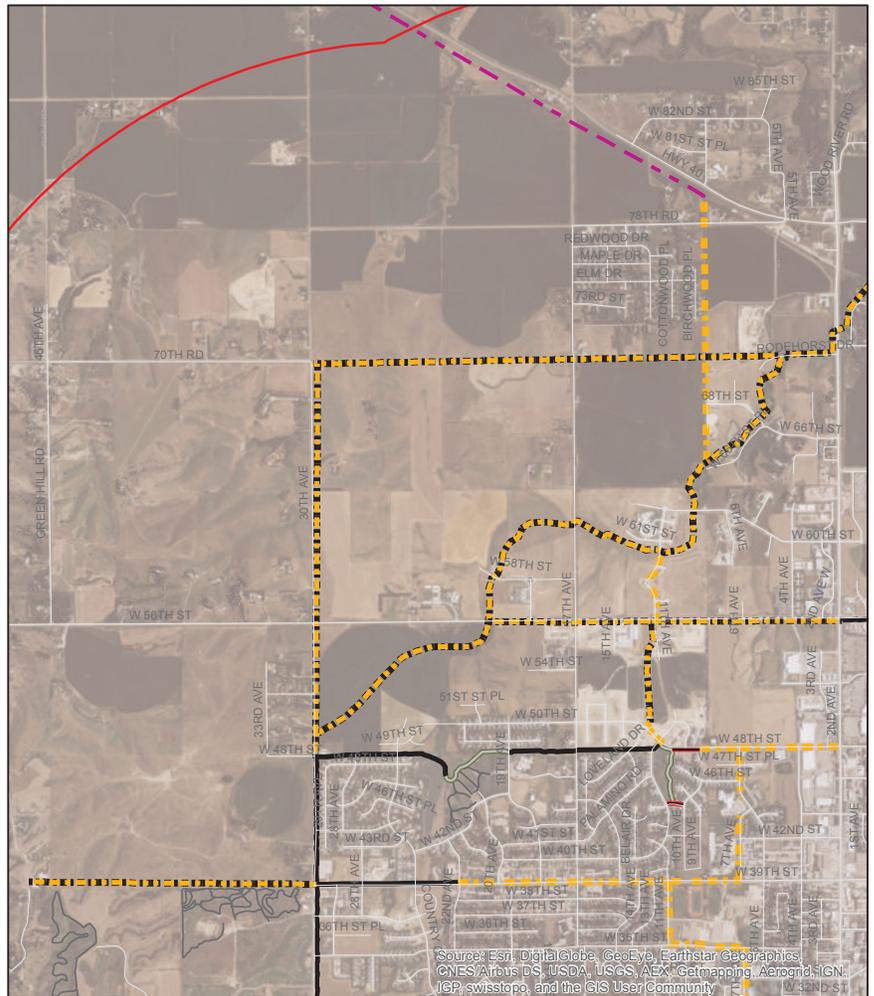
The independent trails in the northwest quadrant consist of extensions and connections. One extension is west along West 39th Street to connect Meadowlark North Park to Cottonmill Park. Another extension is north along 30th Avenue to 70th Street and east along 70th Street to 2nd Avenue. The Spruce Hollow Trail would be utilizing the outlots to provide an off-street connection diagonally from 30th Avenue and 48th Street interaction to 4th Avenue and 70th Street intersection. Another outlot trail may be possible north of Fountain Hills to 56th Street and 11th Avenue.

#### Side Connector Trails

There are a number of side connector trails that will utilize the available width in the R.O.W. as the 39th Street extension from 22nd Ave to 7th Avenue where it will connect to the YMCA. Likewise, another trail connects the YMCA to Fountain Hills Park to complete the loop. A Side Connector is proposed to start from Harmon Park on 7th Avenue north to W. 35th Street, west to 11th Avenue, and north to W. 39th Side Connector Trail.

The intersection of 11th Avenue and West 56th Street may be a vital connection point for the northwest quadrant as well as connecting the entire trail system. West 56th Street has a proposed side collector from 11th Avenue to 2nd Avenue to connect to the Hilltop Trail. From 11th Avenue and W. 56th Street, another side collector is proposed to connect to the "Spruce Hollow Trail."

Map 21..... Future Trail Map, Northwest



**Legend**

**Trails: Existing and Future**

**Future Trails Plan**

- Existing, Connector Type I ("Independent" / 8' trail)
- Existing, Connector Type II (Side Connector; sidewalk not 8')
- Existing, Park Independent
- Existing, Park Trail III (Nature Trails)
- Future, Connector Type I ("Independent", separated 8' Trail - adjacent to street or outlots)
- Future, Connector Type II (Side Connector, sidewalk may not be 8')
- Future, Regional Connection Trails
- Future, Water Trail

**Future Trails Plan (NW)**  
Kearney, Nebraska

Created by: M8G  
Date: Feb. 2015  
Revised: Oct. 2015  
Software: ArcGIS 10.2  
File: 110882.00

This map was prepared using information from records drawings supplied by KCP and/or other applicable city, county, federal, or public or private entities. KCP does not guarantee the accuracy of this map or the information used to prepare this map. This is not a scaled plan.

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## Northeast

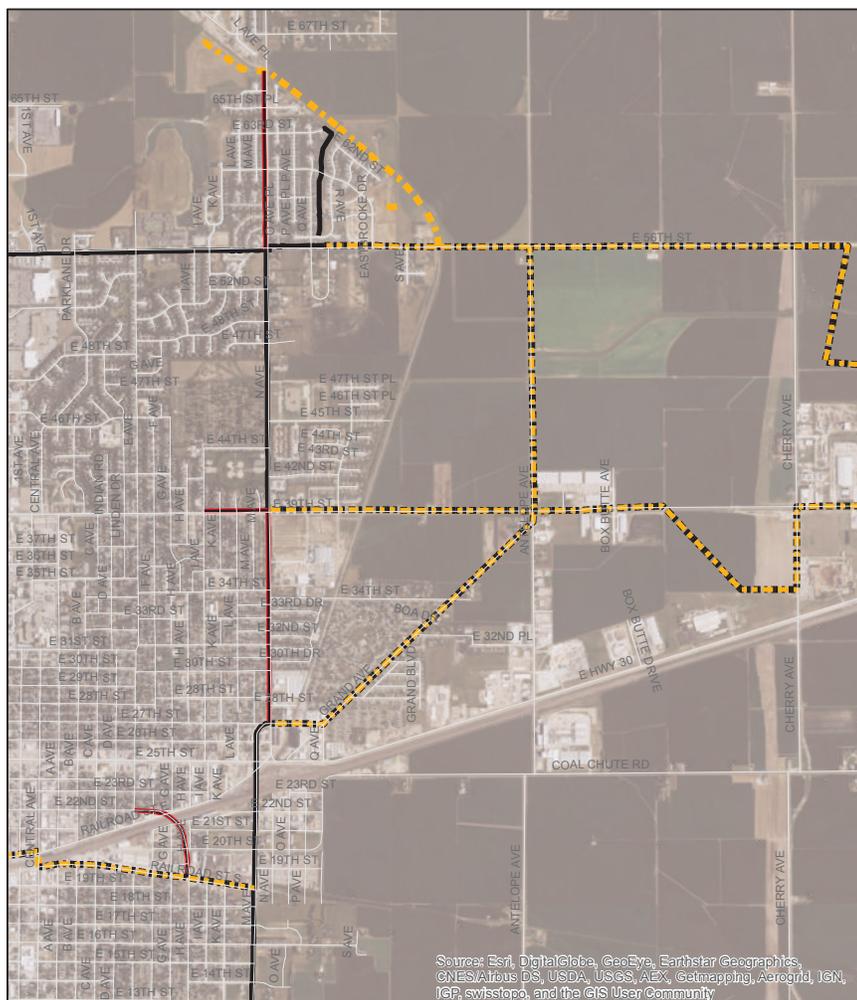
The northeast trails connect populations north and south along the perimeter, and despite the lack of preferred eight foot width to be officially marked as an independent trail, N Avenue connects Hilltop Trail to the Overpass Trail. An additional sidewalk that is not eight foot is East 39th Street between I Ave and N Ave. From the Hilltop trail at 56th Street, there are multiple directions to take and city completed independent trails on East 56th Street between 2nd Avenue and past Q Avenue. Two private trails are found north and northeast of N Avenue and East 56th Street.

### PROPOSED:

#### Independent Eight Foot Trails

The northeast quadrant will be the “easiest” to accomplish because the City can plan for the proper right-of-way to guarantee independent eight foot trails. East 39th and 56th Streets will have independent trails to move people east to west. The 39th Street Trail will need to dip south in order to go underneath the overpass and make its way to Highway 30. The East 56th Street trail will connect the existing trail on Q Ave to Patriot Park.

Map 22..... Future Trail Map, Northeast



Source: Esri, DigitalGlobe, GeoEye, Earthstar Geographics, CNES/Airbus DS, USDA, USGS, AEX, Getmapping, Aerogrid, IGN, IGP, swisstopo, and the GIS User Community

Adding an eight foot trail on Antelope Avenue between 56th and 39th Street would help with connectivity and create a loop, especially tied into the smaller loop on Grand Avenue moving southwest to East 27th Street which connects to Hilltop and Overpass Trails.

#### Side Connector Trails

Airport Road would connect a regional Highway 30 trail to East 39th Street Trail and the southeast corner of Patriot Park. Additional side connector trails can be found near the City property and N Avenue for connectivity purposes. This trail will most likely change and follow the canal, but if the railroad becomes available, it could add to Northeast’s connectivity. The internal residential connections of the northeast quadrant will be difficult to identify. The City, neighborhoods, and businesses could benefit by connecting trails to West 39th and 48th. At this time, connecting West and East 56th Streets is a priority.

**Legend**

**Trails: Existing and Future**

**Future Trails Plan**

- Existing, Connector Type I (“Independent” / 8’ trail)
- Existing, Connector Type II (Side Connector, sidewalk not 8’)
- Existing, Park Independent
- Existing, Park Trail III (Nature Trails)
- Future, Connector Type I (“Independent”, separated 8’ Trail - adjacent to street or outlots)
- Future, Connector Type II (Side Connector, sidewalk may not be 8’)
- Future, Regional Connection Trails
- Future, Water Trail

### Future Trails Plan (NE)

Kearney, Nebraska

Created by: MBG  
Date: Feb, 2015  
Revised: Oct, 2015  
Software: ArcGIS 10.2  
File: 110882.D00

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## FUTURE TRANSPORTATION PLAN

### Kearney Street Improvement Plan

The City of Kearney maintains a One & Six Year Street Improvement Plan that is updated on an annual basis. The Street Improvement Plan represents the programmed street projects that have identified, funding sources and are anticipated to be constructed / implemented; the project list is broken down into a 1-year list and a 6-year list. The 2015-2021 Kearney Street Improvement Plan includes several projects that maintain, reconstruct, or add new infrastructure to the street and roadway system.

The projects programmed in this one-year plan are currently under construction and will be completed during the 2015 or 2016 construction seasons. The **one-year plan** projects are considered part of the existing transportation infrastructure and include:

#### **Reconstructed existing street segments:**

- Central Avenue from 26th Street to 31st Street.
- 8th Street from 2nd Avenue to 3rd Avenue.
- Talmadge Street from 2nd Avenue to 150 feet west of 3rd Avenue.
- 29th Street from 6th Avenue to 8th Avenue.
- Avenue N from 25th Street to 28th Street.
- 4th Street from 3rd Avenue to 6th Avenue and from 2nd Avenue to Central Avenue.
- 19th Street from D Avenue to E Avenue.

#### **New or extended local street segments:**

- West of N Avenue near 69th Street; Remington Drive, 69th Street, K Avenue, I Avenue.
- 36th Street Place from 29th Avenue to 767 feet east.
- 11th Avenue from 56th Street to 640 feet south.
- 55th Street Place from 11th Avenue to 422 feet east.
- 49th Street, 50th Street and Country Club Lane between 22nd Avenue and 26th Avenue.
- 1st Avenue from 60th Street to 975 feet south.
- 27th Avenue from 11th Street to 850 feet south.
- 17th Street from M Avenue to 518 feet east.

#### **New, extended or widened arterial street segments:**

- East Beltway from 11th Street to 56th Street, includes bridge over UP tracks and U.S. 30, and link to U.S. 30.
- East Beltway from 56th Street to 78th Street, then 78th Street to NE-40/2nd Avenue.
- 30th Avenue from 11th Street to 1,200 feet south.

The proposed projects programmed in the **six-year plan** include:

#### **Reconstructed existing street segments:**

- Central Avenue from 12th Street to 18th Street.
- 18th Street from Central Avenue to 1st Avenue.
- 1st Avenue from 18th Street to South Railroad Street.
- 31st Street from Avenue E to Avenue I.
- E Avenue from 25th Street to 27th Street.
- A Avenue from 25th Street to 27th Street.

### **New or extended local street segments:**

- Country Club Lane, 37th Street and 38th Street; west of 22nd Avenue, south of 39th Street.
- 46th Street Place from R Avenue to 310 feet west.

### **New, extended or widened arterial street segments:**

- 30th Avenue from 39th Street to 2,640 feet north.
- U.S. 30 and 9th Avenue intersection.
- 39th Street from 30th Avenue to 5,700 feet west.
- 31st Street and A Avenue intersection.
- 30th Avenue bridge expansion over UP tracks.
- 56th Street from 6th Avenue to 5,600 feet west.
- 17th Avenue 56th Street to 1,800 feet south.

### **Future Travel**

Demands on the future transportation system are forecasted based on anticipated future development patterns identified in the Comprehensive Plan's land use planning elements. Transportation systems not only move people and goods, but they also shape the character of the built environment and guide how communities develop, effect the natural environment, and influence the regional economy and ultimately the community's quality of life.

The planning process recognizes the strong link between transportation and land use development. The type, location and intensity of land development influence the community's travel patterns. Conversely, the location, type, and capacity of transportation services impacts land development patterns. Thus, the transportation element of this plan is intrinsically connected to the land development portions of the Kearney Comprehensive Plan.

### **The Kearney Travel Demand Model**

As a part of the Kearney Comprehensive Plan and Transportation Plan, the Kearney **travel demand model** has been updated. The travel demand model is a computer application that is used to evaluate how people travel based on two main sets of input data:

- 1) Kearney area land development, specifically where people live, work, go to school and shop.
- 2) Kearney transportation infrastructure, specifically the street system.

The travel model is a set of parameters and equations that are adjusted to capture the relationships between these two input data sets in Kearney. When applied, the travel model evaluates the interaction of the provided land use and street system information. The model can be used to answer these questions:

- **How does travel change under different land use scenarios?** The future Kearney Comprehensive Plan land development scenario (for year 2040) has been tested to forecast and assess how traffic volumes change across the community with this scenario.
- **How does travel change when different improvements or adjustments are made to the roadway network?** An example would be evaluating how traffic volumes change if a new street is added or if an existing, congested street is widened.

Automobile travel is the primary mode of travel in Kearney, and as such the travel demand model was set up to estimate vehicular travel on the roadway network. The model does not estimate bicycle, pedestrian or transit usage.



The Kearney travel model represents travel that occurs over the course of a typical weekday. As such, the key output from the travel model is average daily traffic (ADT) on roadway segments.

Applying the model to estimate future travel first requires that the model is validated to current, observed travel conditions. Model validation was completed by adjusting the model parameters so that it provided travel estimates that reasonably reflected observed traffic levels/patterns.

### Changes in Future Travel

The Kearney area Travel Demand Model was applied using the 2040 land development scenario from the Comprehensive Plan, in combination with the “existing-plus-committed” (E+C) Kearney roadway network. The 2040 E+C roadway network assumes that future street system is not improved beyond those projects programmed in the current One & Six Year Street Improvement Plan, which includes the East Beltway.

Table 25. Travel Model Variable, Kearney Area

Kearney Area Travel Model Variable	2010	2040	Change
Total Households	13,842	19,718	+42%
Total Employment	18,441	30,339	+65%
JEO Consulting Group, Inc. and HDR, Inc.			

Table 25 provides a summary of the total numbers of households and jobs assumed for 2010 (the model base year) and 2040.

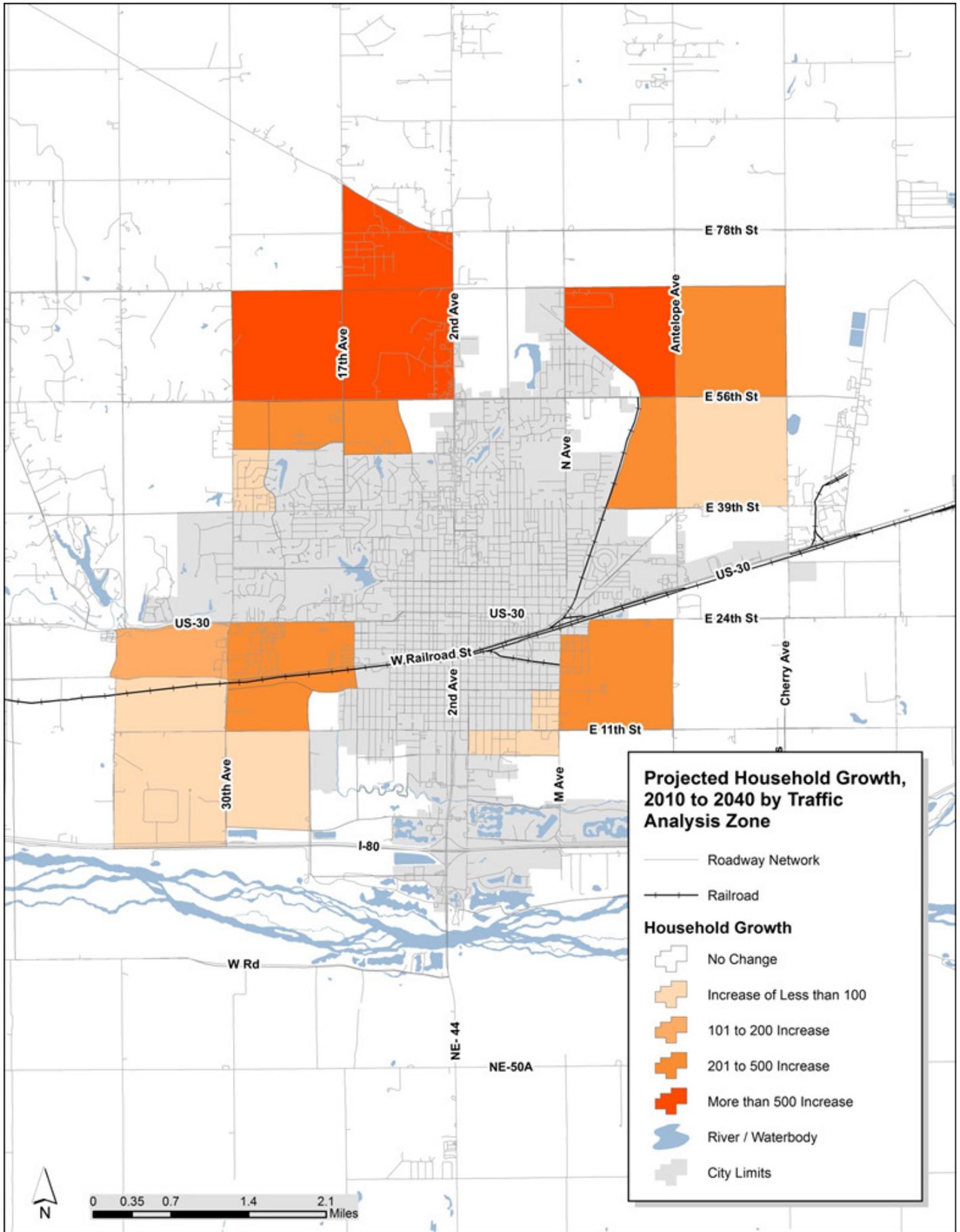
The anticipated changes in households and employment between 2010 and 2040 are shown in Maps 23 and 24. The new housing and employment growth is illustrated by traffic analysis zone (TAZ) boundaries, the basic geography unit of the travel demand model.

Map 25 documents the existing and forecasted 2040 E+C network traffic volumes for Kearney. The 2040 traffic forecasts were developed by applying the travel model, based on the 2040 household and employment levels documented above and the E+C roadway network. Anticipated Kearney area travel changes between 2010 and 2040 include the following:

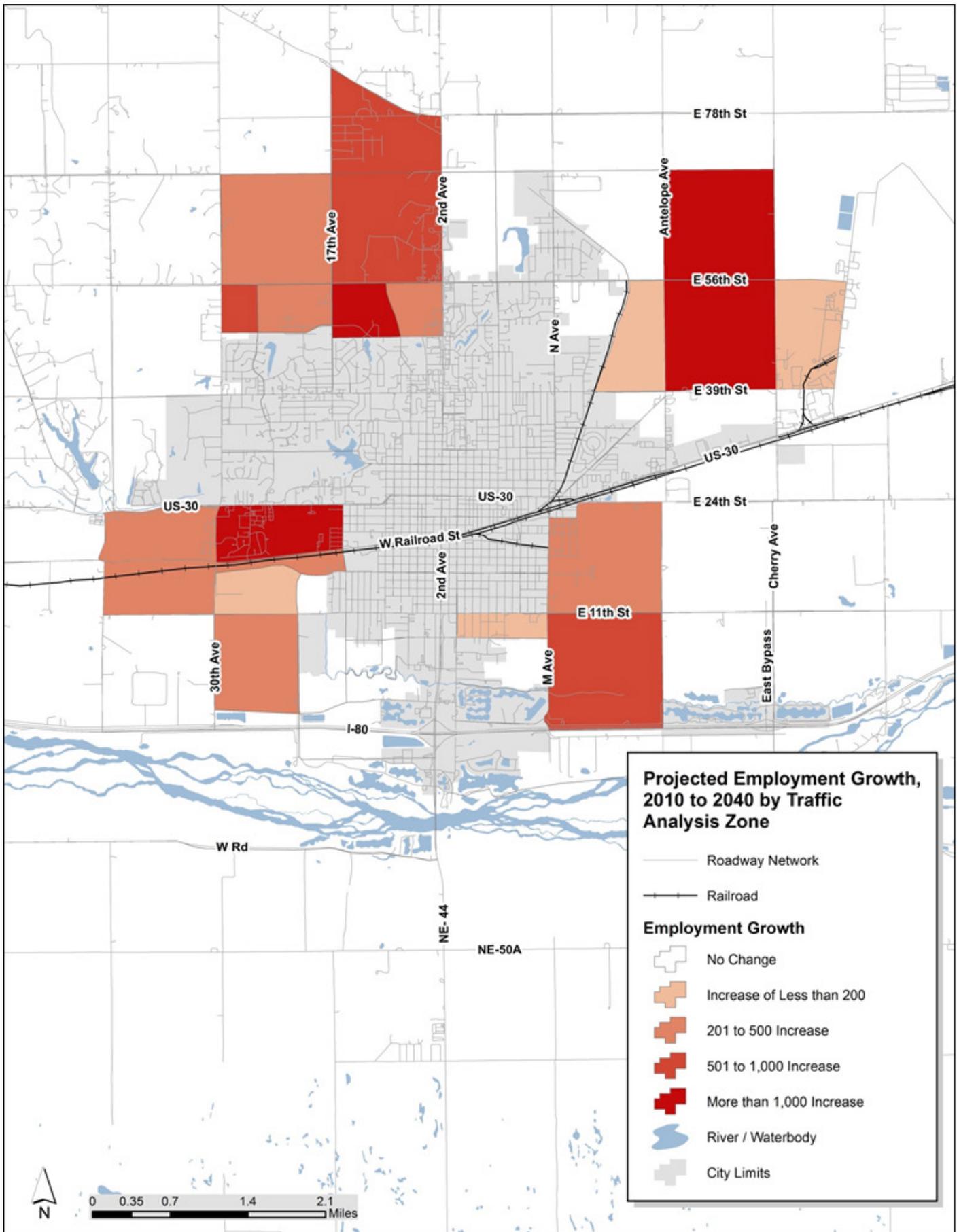
- **Trip Growth:** The daily number of trips that are made across the Kearney area is projected to increase by 43% between 2010 and 2040.
- **Vehicle-Miles Traveled (VMT) Growth:** VMT is the total length of all trips made in Kearney, and is calculated as the number of daily trips multiplied by their trip length in distance (miles). VMT is projected to increase by 63% between 2010 and 2040. The higher increase in VMT (63%) compared to the number of new trips (43%) is related to an expected increase in the average trip length (in terms of distance) in the future. Longer future trips are the result of new developments on the fringes of Kearney.
- **Vehicle-Hours Traveled (VHT) Growth:** VHT is the total amount of time spent traveling for all trips in the Kearney area, and is calculated as the number of daily trips multiplied by individual trip length in time (hours). VHT is projected to increase by 64% between 2010 and 2040. Comparing the VHT increase to the trip growth indicates that the average trip length (in terms of time) in time will increase in the future.

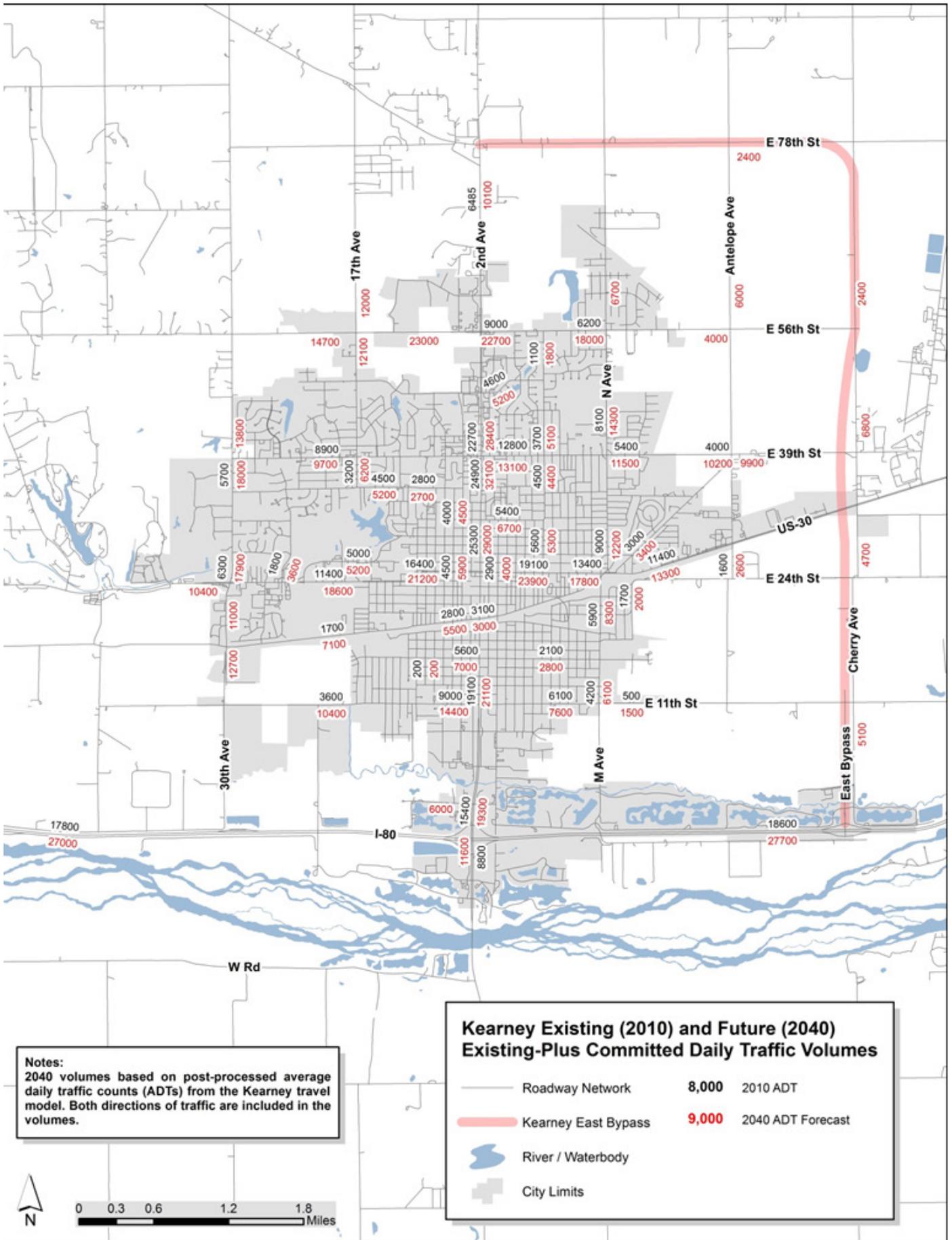
Comparing the VMT increase (64%) to the VHT increase (63%) indicates that average travel speeds are anticipated to decrease slightly between 2010 and 2040.

Map 23..... Projected Housing Growth, Kearney 2010-2040



Map 24..... Projected Employment Growth, Kearney 2010-2040







## Identified Transportation System Issues

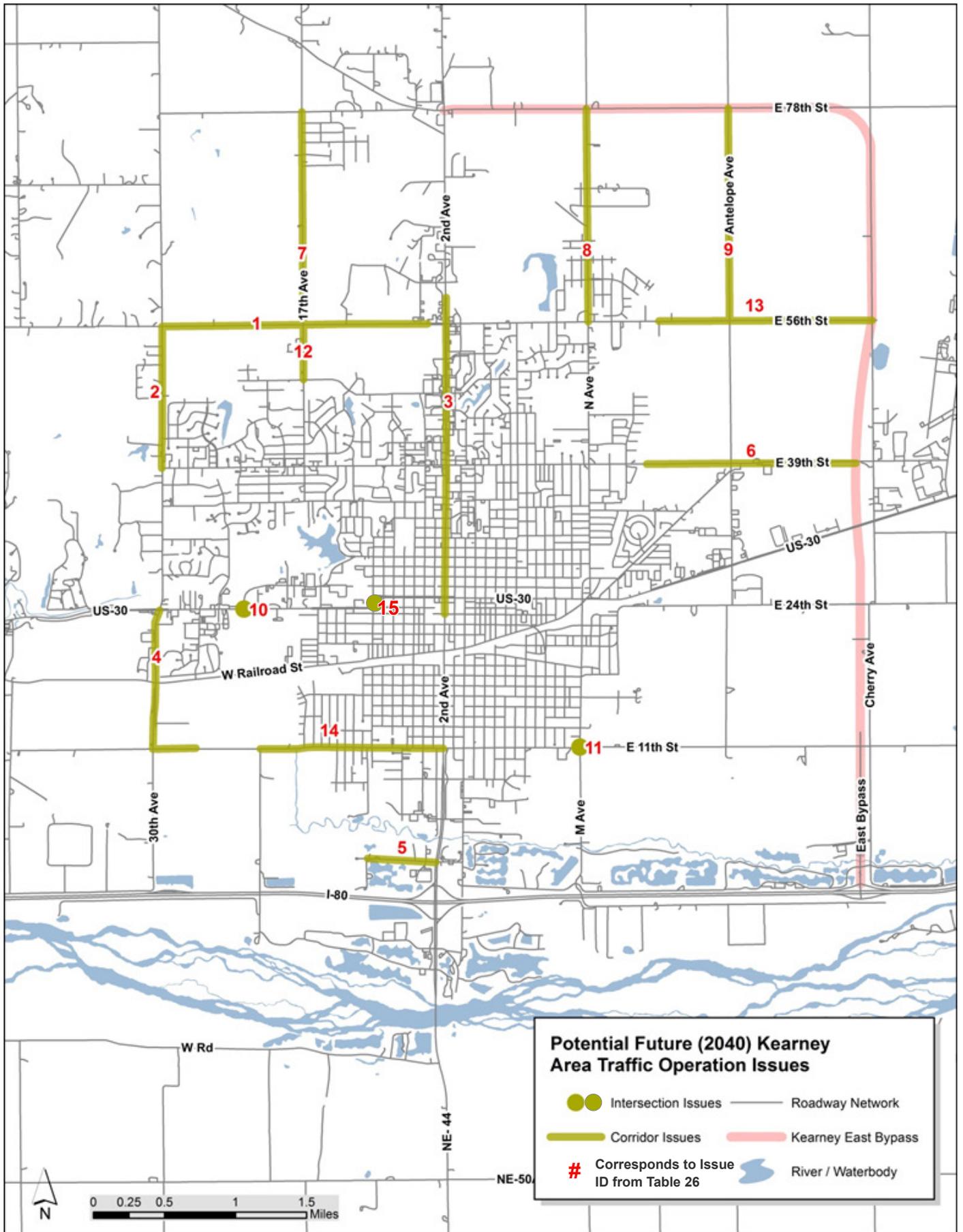
The transportation system issues identified during plan development are the basis for the programs and improvements being considered for inclusion in the plan. The issues were identified through a combination of public input and technical analysis. The current Kearney area roadway system, including those transportation projects constructed throughout the Kearney area since the last transportation plan, has limited traffic operational issues or congestion.

It is anticipated that some corridors will have enough traffic growth to experience traffic operational issues by 2040 with the E+C roadway network. Those corridors are shown in Map 26. Each issue is numbered and corresponds to the issue identified in Table 26 below.

Table 26. Potential Traffic Issues, Kearney 2040

Issue ID	Location Description	Issue Description
1	56th Street, 30th Ave to 2nd Ave	Congestion and safety due to traffic growth - 15,000 to 23,000 ADT by 2040 on 2-lane roadway.
2	30th Avenue, 39th St to 56th St	Congestion and safety due to traffic growth – 13,800 ADT by 2040 on 2-lane roadway.
3	2nd Avenue, US 30 to 56th St	Congestion and safety due to traffic growth and high levels of access and cross-street traffic. 28,400 to 32,100 ADT on 4- lane roadway.
4	30th Avenue, 11th St to Railroad St overpass, including 11th St adjacent to new High School	Congestion and safety due to traffic growth – 11,000 to 12,700 ADT by 2040 on current 2-lane roadway (current project is widening to 4-lanes).
5	Talmadge Road west of 2nd Ave	Congestion and safety due to traffic growth and high levels of access – 6,000 ADT by 2040 on 2-lane roadway.
6	39th St along 2-lane section east of railroad tracks	Congestion and safety due to traffic growth – approximately 10,000 ADT by 2040 on 2-lane roadway.
7	17th Avenue north of 56th St	Congestion and safety due to traffic growth – 12,000 ADT by 2040 on 2-lane roadway.
8	N Avenue north of 56th St	Congestion and safety due to traffic growth – 6,700 ADT by 2040 on 2-lane roadway.
9	Antelope Avenue north of 56th St	Congestion and safety due to traffic growth – 6,000 ADT by 2040 on 2-lane roadway.
10	Intersection of University Dr and US 30 near UNK Campus	Future UNK development south of US 30 increases traffic demand crossing US 30.
11	Intersection of M Ave and 11th St	Increased traffic levels degrade intersection traffic operations at current 2-way stop.
12	17th Avenue, 50th St to 56th St	Congestion and safety due to traffic growth – 12,000 ADT by 2040 on 2-lane roadway.
13	56th Street, East City Limits to Future East Beltway	Safety issues due to traffic growth on 2-lane rural roadway – 4,000 ADT by 2040 with high growth adjacent to corridor.
14	11th Street, Kea West Rd to 2nd Avenue	Issues with side street traffic getting access onto 11th Street, particularly with neighborhood streets north of 11th.
15	Intersections of 8th/9th and US 30	Traffic operation and safety concerns at “college curve”

HDR, Inc.





In addition to the traffic operational issues identified above, there are opportunities to improve connectivity, safety, and street maintenance by addressing stakeholder-identified transportation deficiencies through the transportation plan. Those issues raised by stakeholders for the transportation system include:

### **Improving the Roadway System**

The Kearney community wants to provide a roadway system that moves people, goods and services efficiently and safely. It is also desired to have a roadway system that fits within the context of the natural and built environment, and which is designed to function based on the identified roadway classifications.

### **Managing Truck Routes In and Around Kearney**

The new East Beltway is expected to reduce much of the truck traffic through town. To make this a reality the truck traffic should be monitored and controlled to utilize the new East Bypass route and other alternative routes to improve traffic flow along Kearney's busy commercial corridors.

### **Focusing on Infrastructure Maintenance**

Efficient maintenance of the existing road system will minimize the funding necessary to provide the desired transportation system for the Kearney community. Stakeholders want to maintain the transportation system in a state-of-good-repair and wish to adopt a coordinated plan for maintenance that also considers opportunities to reduce infrastructure costs without a negative impact to system operations (e.g. traffic signal removal at unwarranted locations).

### **Manage Access Points on Arterials**

Some arterial corridors in the Kearney area have higher levels of access, which tends to correspond with more operational and safety issues. More recently-developed arterial corridors in the Kearney area have limited access points, eliminating many conflicts between through traffic and turning traffic. This tends to improve safety and operations through arterial corridors, compared to older corridors with higher levels of access points.

### **Focusing on Safety and Operations.**

Safety and operational improvements benefit all members of the Kearney community across every mode of transportation. It is desired to minimize pedestrian and bicycle conflicts with motorized vehicles. It is also desired to reduce the number of access driveways on major arterials. Lastly, intersections with confusing geometrics and offset alignments should be improved (e.g. 31st Street/E Avenue and U.S. 30/ 9th Avenue).

### **Improving Wayfinding and Entryway Opportunities**

There is interest from stakeholders in providing a coordinated wayfinding system. They desire signage for the major civic uses and visitor attractions in the Kearney area. Also it is desirable to have aesthetically pleasing entryways into Kearney, particularly from Interstate 80. There is also concern that the two rest-areas on Interstate 80 west of 2nd Avenue poorly represent the Kearney community.

### **Developing a Complete Bicycle and Pedestrian Network.**

Kearney currently has an expansive system of shared-use bicycle and pedestrian trails. A complete network would connect existing and future shared-use paths through the transportation grid system.

### **Linking Rail Freight with Other Modes of Transportation**

It is desired to provide transloading facilities in the Kearney area to transfer freight from the railroads to land and air transportation modes.

### Maintaining Kearney Regional Airport’s ‘Primary’ Classification

In order to continue receiving federal money for airport facility improvements, the number of passenger enplanements must exceed 10,000 per year. The city’s selection of PenAir was determined because of their reliability and marketing services. The city will need to assist and augment PenAir’s marketing endeavors to assure maximum outreach of the serviceable area, to attract new customers as well as the customers lost during the past two years.

### Providing a Commuter-Based Component to the Transit System

Stakeholders identified that the current public transportation options did not fully address the access-to-jobs needs in the Kearney area. It was believed that there might be further opportunities to improve Kearney’s transit system by increasing the access to Kearney area employment for both Kearney area residents, and to residents outside of the Kearney area. This concept might include a regional commuter transportation program connecting Kearney with surrounding communities, and potentially with the establishment of fixed bus routes around the City.

### Roadway Improvement Alternatives Evaluation

Several roadway improvement alternatives were identified for the Kearney area based on projected travel demand model results and stakeholder input. The goals of the evaluated roadway alternatives were to improve operational capacity, provide compliance with desired functional classifications, and/or connect roadways for improved area-wide traffic circulation.

The roadway improvement projects identified to address the 2040 traffic forecast operational issues are shown in Map 27. Each alternative improvement project is numbered and corresponds to the issue identified in Table 27 below.

Table 27. Potential Traffic Recommendations, Kearney 2040

Issue ID	Location Description	Alternative Description
1	56th Street, 30th Ave to 2nd Ave	Widen to 4-lane divided facility with traffic signals at intersections where warranted. Addresses Issue 1 from Table 26.
2	30th Avenue, 39th St to 56th St	Widen to urban 3-lane roadway (acquire right-of-way for ultimate 4-lane divided facility beyond 2040). Add traffic signals at intersections where warranted. Addresses Issue 2 from Table 26.
3	2nd Avenue, US 30 to 56th St	Identify “system management” improvements to improve efficiency and safety of existing 4-lane divided facility, including improved signal system for traffic flow efficiency and access management to reduce conflicts and improve safety.
4	30th Avenue, 11th St to US 30 (including 11th adjacent to new High School)	Current project will widen to 4-lanes. This long term project will enhance that current project by adding turn lanes to key intersections along 30th Avenue and 11th Street. Addresses issue 4 from Table 26.
5	Talmadge Road west of 2nd Ave	Widen to urban 3-lane roadway west of 2nd Avenue. Addresses issue 5 from Table 26.
6	39th St along 2-lane section east of railroad tracks	As the corridor develops, add turn lanes to key intersections along 39th Street. Addresses issue 6 from Table 26.
7	17th Avenue north of 56th St	As the corridor develops, add turn lanes to key intersections along 17th Avenue. Addresses issue 7 from Table 26.
8	N Avenue north of 56th St	As the corridor develops, add turn lanes to key intersections along N Avenue. Addresses issue 8 from Table 26.

Potential Traffic Recommendations, Kearney 2040 (Cont.)

Issue ID	Location Description	Alternative Description
9	Antelope Avenue north of 56th St	As the corridor develops, add turn lanes to key intersections along Antelope Avenue. When traffic levels warrant, add traffic signal and turn lanes to the intersection of Antelope / 56th. Addresses issue 9 from Table 26.
10	Intersection of University Dr and US 30 near UNK Campus	As University Village is developed south of campus, improve intersection of University Drive / US 30. Options include a roundabout, or a traffic signal with added turn lanes. Improvements need to include treatments that safely accommodate pedestrian and bicycle users. Addresses issue 10 from Table 26.
11	Intersection of M Ave and 11th St	When traffic levels warrant, consider added traffic signal and turn lanes with an improvement to M Avenue to the south. Roundabout is another option for improving this intersection. Addresses issue 11 from Table 26.
12	17th Avenue, 50th St to 56th St	Widen to urban 3-lane roadway, and signalize intersection of 17th / 56th. Addresses issue 12 from Table 26.
13	Intersection of 30th Ave and 39th St	When traffic levels warrant, consider added traffic signal and turn lanes. Addresses issue 2 from Table 26.
14	Talmadge Road, Kea West Road to 10th Ave	Construct urban 3-lane roadway to connect existing commercial areas along 2nd Avenue with future employment and housing growth areas west of Kea West Road. Closes a 1.3 mile “gap” in east-west roadway connectivity between 11th Street and Platte Road south of I-80. In long term, consider extending Talmadge connection to 30th Ave., depending on timing of development and traffic demands.
15	Country Club Ln, Current north terminus (approximately 48th St) to 56th St	As development continues in this section, reserve right-of-way and construct the extension of Country Club Lane to 56th Street. Design street to same low speed, neighborhood collector standards as current segments of Country Club Lane.
16	56th Street, East City Limits to Future East Beltway	As the corridor develops, add turn lanes to key 56th Street intersections. Addresses issue 13 from Table 26.
17	11th Street, Kea West Rd to 2nd Avenue	Study corridor to identify options to improve access from side streets to 11th Street. Options might include signalization to improve access to 11th Street and access consolidation. Addresses issue 14 from Table 26.
18	Intersection of N Ave and 56th St	When traffic levels warrant, add left turn lanes on all approaches. Addresses issue 8 from Table 26.
19	Intersection of Antelope Ave and 56th St	When traffic levels warrant, add traffic signal and turn lanes. Addresses issue 9 from Table 26. (currently under county jurisdiction)
20	Identify, Preserve and Construct 67th St Corridor as Development Occurs	Short-term: identify and preserve a corridor between 56th Street and 78th Street (potentially 67th Street) for long-term north area mobility. As development occurs, construct 67th Street as a minor arterial / major collector to serve access to new development areas and connect with major arterial roadways.
21	Intersection of Country Club Ln / US 30	When traffic levels warrant, add traffic signal to intersection. Coordinate with Project 10, signal and turn lanes at University / US 30.
22	Intersections of 8th/9th and US 30	Manage access and limit turning traffic through curve area. Improve pedestrian crossing opportunities.

HDR, Inc.

Map.27. Potential Traffic Recommendations, Kearney 2040

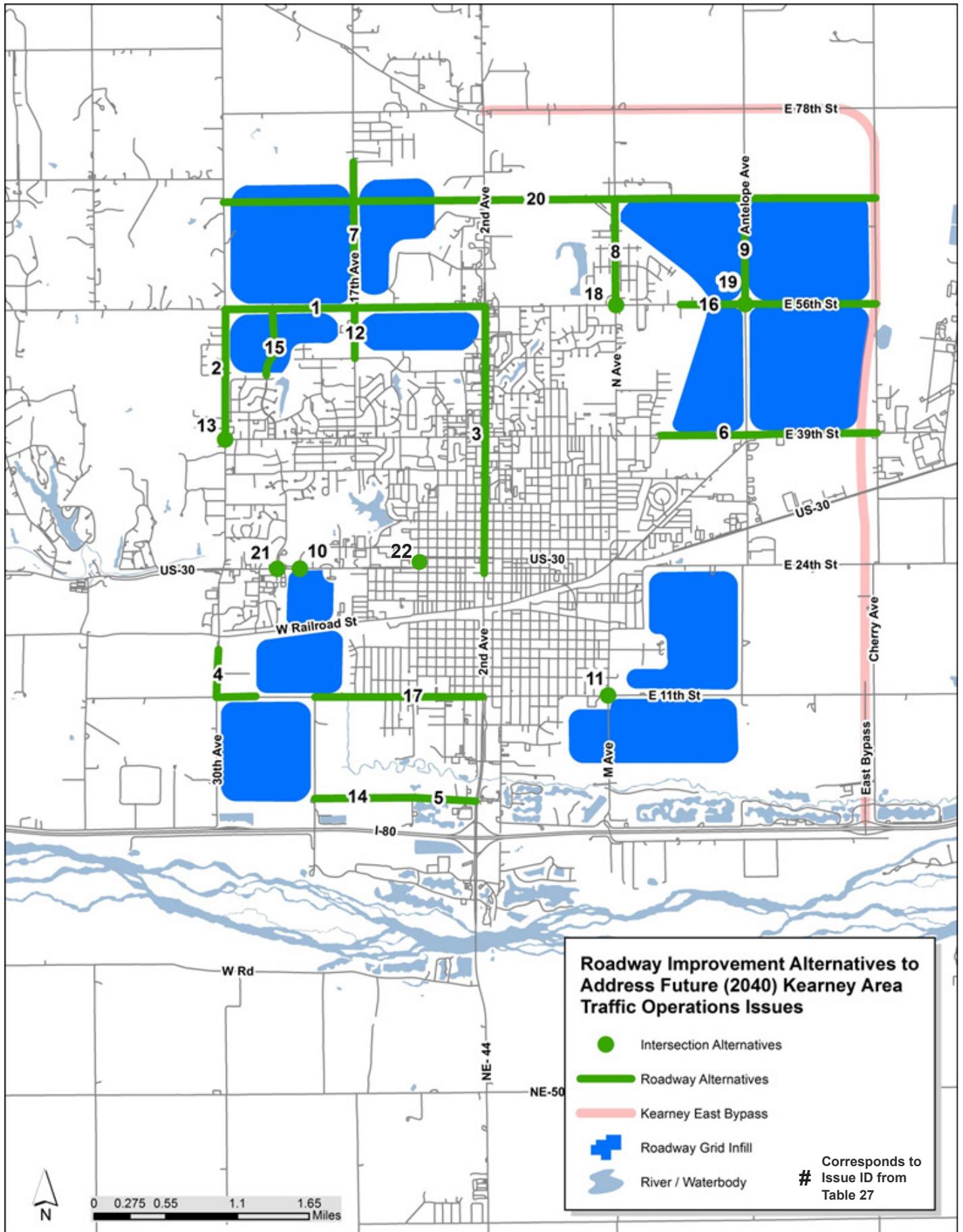




Table 27 identified several land development growth areas where it is recommended a collector and local street “Roadway Grid Infill” be planned and constructed as development occurs. Good practice includes development of collector streets within these roadway grid infill areas that connects directly to collectors in adjacent, currently-developed areas.

### **Future Projects Suggested by Other Studies**

Several projects were identified as necessary to support the proposed Spruce Hollow multi-use development, located north of 56th Street, between 30th Avenue and 2nd Avenue. These identified improvements are consistent with Roadway Alternatives 1, 2, and 12 in Table 27. When the Spruce Hollow development is fully built-out, the following improvement needs are identified:

- 56th St widened to 4 lanes with turn lanes between 2nd and 30th Ave.
- 17th and 30th Ave 4-lane extensions from the south, or at a minimum add turn lanes and traffic control at intersections.
- Traffic signals installed at the 56th St intersections with:
  - ◊ 4th Avenue
  - ◊ 11th Avenue
  - ◊ 17th Avenue
  - ◊ 21st Avenue
  - ◊ Country Club Drive
  - ◊ 30th Avenue
- Eastbound left-turn lane at 56th/Church Drive intersections.
- Capacity improvements at 56th Street/17th Ave and 56th Street/30th Avenue intersections.
- In the long-term, add a future connection to Country Club Lane.
- The frontage road entrance 56th Street/2nd Avenue west will likely need to be restricted to right-in/right-out only access due to eventual driveway spacing and turning conflicts.

Several projects were suggested to support access to the new Kearney High School on southeast quadrant of the 30th Avenue/11th Street intersection. These projects included the elements of Roadway Alternative 4 in Table 27. The roadway improvement recommendations from the Kearney High School project include:

At the 27th Avenue/ 11th Street intersection, add stop control for the northbound approach and add a westbound exclusive left-turn lane. The study noted that if posted the speed limit on 11th Street remains 45mph or higher, then this intersection would warrant a traffic signal.

- Widen 30th Ave to a 48 foot wide paved section (4-lanes) from the intersection of 30th Avenue /11th Street to 400 foot past “drive 2”.
- Widen 11th Street to a 5-lane roadway from 30th Avenue past 27th Avenue.
- Pave 27th Avenue from the 27th Avenue / 11th Street past “Drive 4”.
- Lower the speed limit on 11th Street
- Signalize the intersection of 30th Avenue/11th Street, and construct exclusive left-turn lanes on the westbound, southbound, and eastbound approaches. It was recommended that:
  - ◊ The westbound approach be modified to an exclusive left-turn lane, a through lane, and a right-turn lane that lane drops or is a channelized right.
  - ◊ The southbound approach be modified to an exclusive left-turn lane, a through lane, and right-turn lane drop.

Finally, the College Curves project assessed a potential roundabout at the intersection of 9th Avenue / US 30 on the east side of the UNK campus. An aesthetically pleasing intersection improvement for all modes at this location would support the other roadway improvements identified in this Long Range Transportation Plan.

### **Access Control Along Arterials**

In the functional classification hierarchy, arterial streets' role is intended to favor vehicle mobility over land access. As such, managing access along arterial roads is an important transportation function in promoting overall regional mobility and traffic safety. In recent years, the City of Kearney has managed arterial access levels such that:

- Full access (all turning movements in and out) is provided every quarter mile.
- Partial access (only right-in, right-out turns with no left turn access provided) is allowed every eighth mile.

It is recommended that the access levels described above be applied to new arterials or existing arterials as they are developed, and to the extent possible, applied when arterials with existing development when they are reconstructed.

### **Preservation of “Inner Beltway”**

A term used locally to describe high-mobility roads within the City of Kearney, the “inner beltway”, applies to:

- 56th Street on the north
- M Avenue / N Avenue on the east
- 11th Street on the south
- 30th Avenue on the west

These corridors function to provide high mobility across the study area, providing traffic relief to corridors through the heart of Kearney such as 2nd Avenue and US 30. It is recommended that the City preserve high mobility levels on these key inner beltway corridors and limit the amount of new access points along these roadways.

### **Heavy Truck Travel Patterns**

Industrial and manufacturing facilities in the Kearney area rely on heavy commercial trucks for the movement of goods. Heavy commercial trucks also deliver goods to Kearney businesses. Trucking plays the largest role in the movement of goods in, out and across the state, demonstrated by the fact that 75 percent of freight (by value) and 82 percent of freight (by weight) shipped from Nebraska was via heavy truck. In terms of value, the top commodities being shipped from Nebraska in 2007 included meat products, other prepared foodstuffs / fats / oils, cereal grains, and machinery. The top state markets for products being shipped from Nebraska include: in-state (Nebraska), Texas, Iowa, California, Illinois, and Kansas.

One of the key functions of the East Bypass currently under construction will be to serve truck movements through the Kearney area. It will provide a convenient route with few conflict points for through traffic, including trucks traveling from I-80 to destinations on the north side of Kearney, and to the communities that lie to the north of Kearney. It will also tie into US 30 and provide direct access to many industrial developments on the east side of Kearney. The NDOR 2014 traffic flow map for the state identifies the following heavy truck flows on state routes :

#### **I-80**

- 7,365 trucks daily east of Kearney
- 7,212 trucks daily west of Kearney



### Highway 44/2nd Avenue

- 495 trucks daily south of I-80
- 870 trucks daily north of I-80
- 320 trucks daily north of US 30

### US 30

- 440 trucks daily east of Kearney
- Between 292 and 435 trucks daily through Kearney
- 415 trucks daily west of Kearney

### Transportation Maintenance / Downtown Traffic Signals

The City of Kearney Public Works department includes a transportation division, responsible for maintaining 557 lane miles of streets in Kearney. One of the main activities of the for the transportation division and its budget of over \$3,100,000 is maintaining the City's streets, signs, storm sewers, traffic signals, and adjacent sidewalks.

One opportunity to manage local maintenance costs is to evaluate the need for traffic signals in the downtown area. Currently there are eight traffic signals located in the downtown area; four on 1st Avenue and four on Central Avenue. These downtown signals are characterized by:

- Simple two phase, pre-timed operations.
- No vehicle or pedestrian detection.
- Side-mounted signal heads, meaning that signals are located on vertical poles on the street corner, not hung over the travel lanes.
- Relatively low vehicle demand.
- Relatively high pedestrian demand



Example Traffic Signal Removal Study (Plattsmouth)

Signalization is not always the most efficient type of traffic control for these downtown intersections, especially if signalization is no longer warranted. These intersections should be further studied to determine the best type of traffic control for efficient operations and safety. Generally the process to remove a traffic signal includes analysis of traffic count data to evaluate industry standard signal warrants and analysis to determine a more efficient type of traffic control. Then the new traffic control is implemented and studied in the field for a period of time while public input is gathered. It would be recommended in a central business setting to approach the downtown businesses prior to the study to gather concerns or suggestions. Also, as a safety improvement the construction of bulb-outs at the corners of the intersections should be considered to reduce the crossing width for pedestrians and reduce the offset placement of traffic control signs for greater visibility.

### Safety and Operations Strategies

There are several strategies that can improve traffic safety on the roadway system. These strategies include:

- **Limiting the number of access points** (including public streets and private driveways) in an arterial corridor through an access management project. For corridors with a high number of access points, an access management project can consolidate private driveways and adjust access patterns to reduce the number of traffic conflict

points, maintain sufficient private business and residential access, and improve overall corridor safety and operations.

- **Improving roadway geometrics** to eliminate offset alignment intersections and providing consistent lane and geometric applications that meet driver expectance.
- **Conversion of intersections to a modern roundabout** The Federal Highway Administration describes three primary characteristics of roundabouts: they offer a low-speed operating environment, clear operational rules where entering traffic yields to vehicles in the circulatory roadway, and channelization at the approach to reduce vehicle conflicts. These operational characteristics provide demonstrated safety benefits; it is estimated that converting stop-controlled or traffic signalized intersections can reduce severe injury or fatal crashes at an intersection by approximately 80%. In many cases, roundabouts offer improved traffic operations compared to stop-controlled and signalized intersections.
- **Traffic speed reductions**, which tend to lower the incidence and severity of traffic crashes. Speed reduction can often be more effective in corridors with narrower lane widths.
- **Implementation of “road diets”**, or roadway lane reconfiguration to incorporate center left-turn lanes. This often involves converting an existing four-lane, undivided roadway segment to a three-lane segment consisting of two through lanes and a center, two-way left-turn lane. The Federal Highway Administration notes safety benefits of significant crash reduction (between 19% and 47%) and reduced speed differential. There are potentially additional benefits in terms of the reuse of the vacated traffic lane for on-street parking or bike and pedestrian facilities.

Potential strategies to consider for pedestrian safety improvements in the Kearney area include:

**Enhanced Intersection Crossings** include several different treatment options, including:

- Improved crosswalk markings.
- Curb extensions or “bulb outs”, which reduce the pedestrian crossing distance and position pedestrians in a location with higher visibility (for both the motorists and pedestrian).
- Intersection medians/ pedestrian refuge islands, for wider streets.
- Leading pedestrian interval at traffic signals, which provides a white walk indication for the pedestrian signal before the vehicle signal turns green. This three to six second head start for pedestrians provides increased visibility to pedestrians.
- Raised intersection crossings / speed tables are traffic calming elements that also incorporate a pedestrian crossing.





**Enhanced Mid-Block Pedestrian Crossings** are treatments that serve pedestrian and bike crossings at locations away from an intersection in the street network. Mid-block crossings should be located where significant pedestrian demand exists away from traffic-controlled street intersections (such as bus stops, adjacent to shopping centers, college campus, cultural attractions, etc.). Mid-block crossing treatments can include:



- Higher-visibility pavement markings
- Advanced stop bars, which are pavement marking lines placed at least 20 feet prior to the crosswalk at unsignalized midblock crossings. The line provides stop guidance to drivers so that pedestrians can see if a second motor vehicle is not stopping and, if necessary, be able to take evasive action.
- Pedestrian refuges / safety islands in the median
- Parking restrictions adjacent to the cross-walk for improved driver and pedestrian visibility
- Raised pedestrian crossings
- Actuated pedestrian signals such as HAWK-Hybrid Pedestrian Signal and Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons.



### **Improved Wayfinding and Entryway Opportunities**

A key issue that many stakeholders identified was implementing a wayfinding system that represented Kearney's character while providing direction to important civic and tourist destinations. While the Transportation Plan is too broad in scope to provide a detailed Wayfinding Plan for Kearney, a conceptual wayfinding package was developed for the Comprehensive Plan. That wayfinding package identifies a category of sign options that provide a hierarchy of signs for the importance and function of various attractions. Figure 23 illustrates the conceptual wayfinding package for Kearney.

### **Future Complete Bicycle and Pedestrian Network and Strategies**

A review of the current trail system, as shown previously in Map 10, indicates several gaps throughout the City. Sidewalks and trails are an essential component of the Kearney transportation system. Nearly every trip made, regardless of primary mode, involves a pedestrian component – whether it be walking between a store and your parked automobile, work and the bus, parking a bike and walking into a building, or simply walking between your home and a neighborhood park or a friend's house. This crucial element of mobility is supported by the extensive sidewalk and trail system that connects most neighborhood across Kearney.

Figure 23. Conceptual Wayfinding Package, Kearney



There are multiple bicycle treatments available to enhance the existing bike trail and sidewalk network in Kearney. This section describes the various tools and strategies available in Kearney to consider for addressing the bicycle and pedestrian connectivity needs of the community. Strategies that can be used to improve the bicycle and pedestrian network in Kearney can be placed into one of two categories:

- **Off-street strategies**, such as shared-use paths (trails).
- **On-street strategies**, such as including bicycles as part of a shared lane, dedicated bicycle lanes with markings dedicating part of the streets to bikes, or wide paved shoulders. Stakeholders in Kearney did not identify on-street bike routes as a priority during the plan development process.

Off-street strategies focus implementing shared-use paths, or trails or sidepaths as they are often called. Shared-use paths are pedestrian and bikeways that are physically separated from motorized vehicle traffic by an open space, boulevard, or a barrier. Shared use paths provide a dedicated segment for recreation and travel for walkers, runners, bicyclists, skaters and other non-motorized users, and vehicular traffic cannot travel on them.

In an urban setting, shared-use paths are provided adjacent to existing roadways within the public right-of-way, or within their own exclusive right-of-way where available along greenways, waterways, abandoned rail lines, or utility easements. There are some limitations to implementing off-street paths adjacent to roadways in an urban setting.





- **Right-of-way limitations** Shared-use paths are at least 8 feet wide. When the separation buffer between the shared-use path and roadway is added, and this often exceeds the available public right-of-way adjacent to streets.
- **Bicyclist safety** Shared-use paths adjacent to roadways with high levels of cross-street and driveway access points can have high levels of bicycle-vehicle conflicts, which can lead to increased safety concerns. Vehicles turning from / to cross-streets often do not notice or expect bicycle traffic on the sidepath, as they are often looking at the street for vehicular conflicts not looking at the sidepath. These safety issues can increase the typical crash rates for bicycle travel on sidepaths compared to on-street bicycle travel.

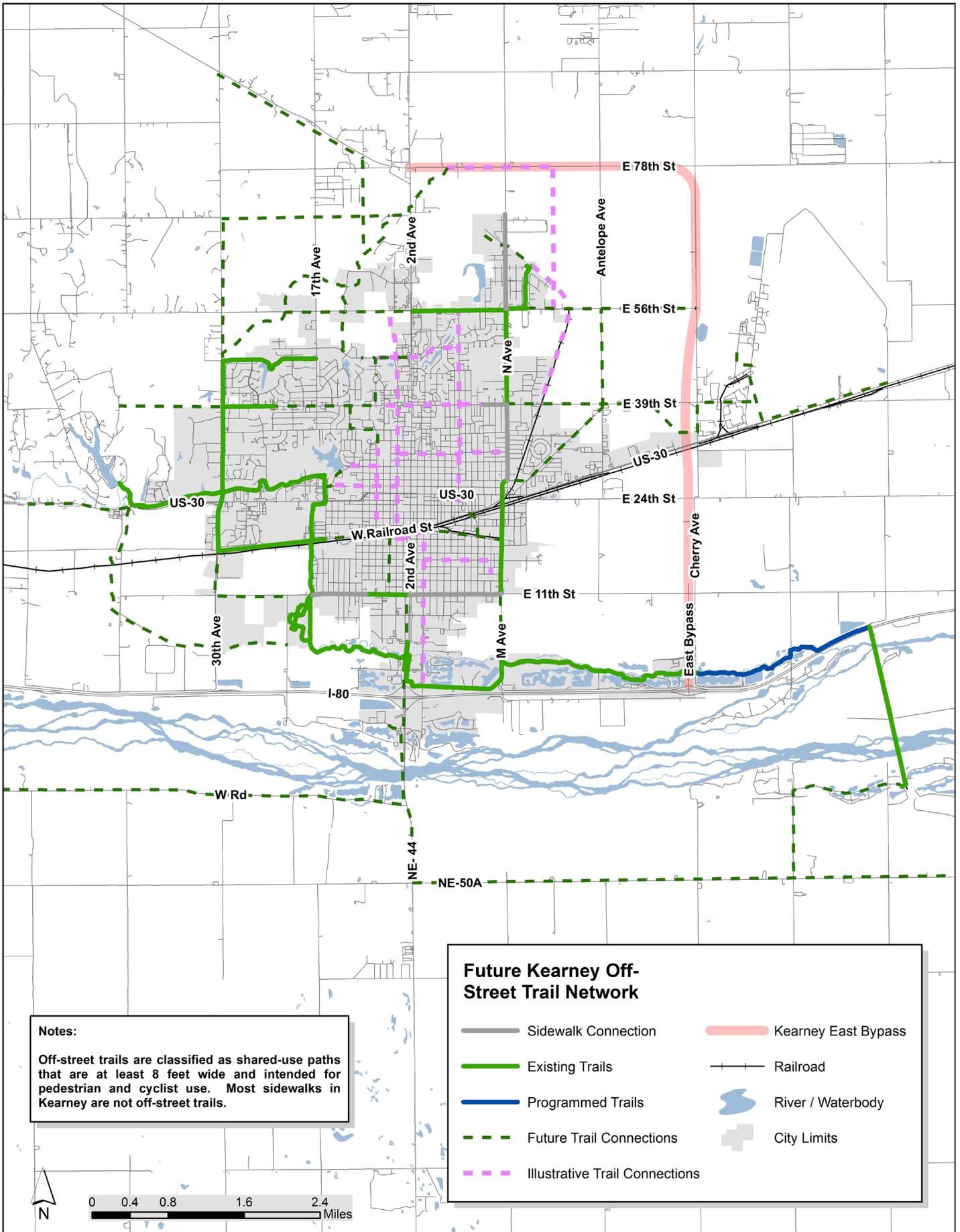
Due to these limitations, it would be nearly impossible to provide a comprehensive and connected travel network across the City entirely with shared use paths. The recommended future trail system to support bicycle travel is shown in Map 25. Future trails are shown in two categories:

- **Future Trail Connections** These are off-street paths that ideally are a minimum eight feet wide, but given the right-of-way constraints in some corridors, might need to be in the five to eight foot wide range. These “Future Trail Connections” are considered both high priorities and implementable projects.
- **Illustrative Trail Connections** These are off-street paths that have some barriers to implementation. While these “Illustrative Trail Connections” have higher hurdles to implementation, they are projects that would provide key transportation connectivity within the community, and should be considered for implementation as opportunities arise.

There are several factors that affect beyond the presence of bike trails / bike routes that impact its feasibility. Those considerations include:

- **Bicycle Storage and Parking** As with automobiles, the presence of bike parking at the destination is a critical factor in the feasibility of a bike trip. Many communities have policies on bike parking, which ensure reasonable levels of parking availability, in a manner that is usable and maintainable, and that bike parking does not conflict with pedestrian, vehicular and emergency access needs at a site. Bicycle parking comes in a variety of forms and options, including the traditional bike racks, covered bike parking, and bike lockers. A process for identifying an appropriate Kearney bicycle parking system would focus on key bicycle trip attractors, work with property owners to identify parking needs balanced with property needs, and develop a prioritized implementation plan for bicycle parking.
- **Weather** Climate limits year-round attractiveness of bicycle and pedestrian travel for some commuters; rain, snow, and ice-covered streets and trails will dissuade many residents from walking or biking to work.
- **Showers** As simple as it sounds, showers and places to change in the work place are a key factor for many commuters when deciding if bicycling is a feasible commute means. Many employers offer on-site shower facilities that can accommodate bicycle commuters.

Map 28..... Future Off-Street Trail Network, Kearney





A **bike sharing program** provides a point-to-point bicycle “borrowing” between designated, self-service bike stations. Bikes can be checked out at one designated station, and checked in at a different station. Bike sharing is becoming more widespread in the U.S. as a cost-effective way to increase resident mobility to supplement other modes of travel.

Bike sharing programs are often organized at the local level by a non-profit organization, or are set up and run by private companies. Many bike-sharing programs are University-led, or University-focused programs, which might be an effective approach in Kearney. Most bike sharing programs include a fleet of bicycles and a network of bike-borrow stations, where the stations are set up at locations with higher demand for bicycle usage. The benefit of the system is that it allows residents and visitors access to bicycle trips in areas where those trips make sense. Bike share users do not need to buy, store, and maintain a bicycle; the bike share program does that for them. As Kearney expands its bicycle network, it should evaluate how much bike demand exists and where the highest demands for bike usage are, and determine if a bike sharing program makes sense.



Example Bike Sharing Station at Aksarben Village in Omaha, NE

Offering a wide range of non-motorized travel options provides Kearney one means to enhance the quality of life and travel options for its citizens. A “complete streets” approach to the Kearney multimodal network provides an integrated, connected network with access to all modes of travel for all users. A balanced approach to complete streets acknowledges that corridors provide bicycle, pedestrian and transit accessibility to different levels; some roadways will continue to emphasize vehicular travel while others will provide on-street bicycle facilities, and accommodate safe pedestrian travel and crossings. The key is to provide a safe and connected network for all modes of travel.

### **Future Rideshare and Transit Considerations**

Two transit strategies have been discussed to potentially address the future mobility and access needs of the Kearney area: rideshare programs and fixed-route transit programs. This section provides some case studies of similar communities and the rideshare and transit programs they have implemented.

In terms of public transportation options for serving commuters, a community coordinated-**rideshare (carpool / vanpool) program** is one option that might be considered. One way to address this need is through a public-private partnership that communities of all sizes have implemented called transportation management associations (TMAs). TMAs are a formal organization of businesses and local governments dedicated to solving local transportation concerns, by leveraging the following benefits:

- Pool resources of many employers, thereby increasing their overall impact
- Provide “economies of scale” in matching potential rideshares amongst a larger pool of commuters than just one employer.
- Low-cost transportation solutions tailored to the needs of local employers, but in coordination with public agencies.

An example of a TMA program in a similar city is **Burlington, Vermont**. Burlington has a population of 42,417, and about 15,000 students between the University of Vermont and Champlain College. The Campus Area TMA (CATMA as it is called) focuses on the member businesses in the “Campus District”, serving a neighborhood area of around 10,000 people, founded by the core members of Champlain College, Fletcher Allen Health Care, and University of Vermont and later added other core businesses in the area like the American Red Cross. CATMA provides the following services:

- Unlimited Access-Free Ride Program: All company employees and students in CATMA can ride any bus route for free with their employee/student I.D.
- Off-site parking at lots where CATMA-specific shuttles pick up employees and bring them to the Campus District.
- Carpool and vanpool matching services.
- Bike/Walk Rewards, such as a program that allows participants to select a prize (e.g. a gift card to a local business) if they walk or bicycle to work 3 times per week for an 8 week period.
- Bicycle Benefits, such as a program that gives bicyclists with special helmet stickers discounts at local businesses.
- Emergency rides home if transit or rideshare participants need to get home in an emergency.
- Campus area walking route maps.

Future implementation of a **fixed-route transit system** in Kearney was also discussed by stakeholders as a potential future alternative. There are similar communities that have transit fixed route transit systems in place. Several examples are provided in the remainder of this section.

**Winona, Minnesota** is a community with a population of 27,546 (total surrounding area population of approximately 50,000), and a college population of around 14,000 between Winona State University, Saint Mary’s University, and Minnesota State College-Southeast Technical. Winona State University’s transportation services to students include:

- The free WSU shuttle service operates daily between the three campuses with scheduled stop and times.
- Safe Ride, a free fixed-route service provided on Friday and Saturdays between 7:00 PM and 2:00 AM during the school year.
- Discounted City Bus Service for students.
- Zipcar service provides 24/7 access to shared-use cars located on campus, with a membership discount for students.
- Free daily bike rentals and low cost long term rentals for students. They also have a bike repair station. Over 40 percent of students have a bike.

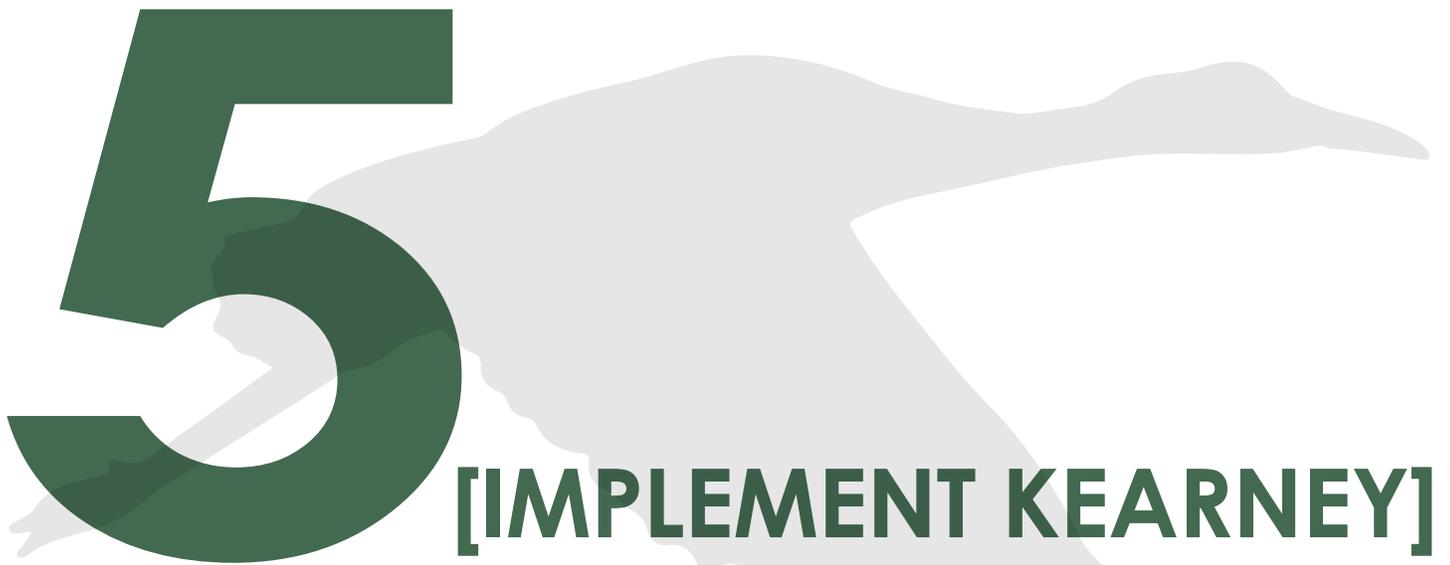
Winona’s transit service has four bus routes that all start at one location and then stretch out to the rest of the City connecting the various campuses, retail nodes, and housing areas. Between 2010 and 2012 Transit ridership grew from 238,370 to 255,132 (7.03%) Rolling Hills Transit provides a dial-a-ride service for the Winona area and surrounding Counties, much like R.Y.D.E. does in the Kearney area.

However, since Winona already has public transit system for inside city limits, the system is only used for Rural Winona County.



**Charleston, Illinois** has a population of 21,838 and is the home of Eastern Illinois University (with approximately 8,000 students). This community has an “EIU Panther Shuttle”, that is provided for students only that connects stops on campus with major retail and downtown area attractions. The public transit agency in Charleston offers a dial-a-ride system with a service similar to R.Y.D.E., and a fixed route and schedule “ZIP LINE” route circulator route that connects major attractors including the Eastern Illinois Campus.

**Pittsburg, Kansas** has a population of 20,360 and is the home of Pittsburg State University (with approximately 7,500 students). An organization called Southeast Kansas Community Action Program (SEK-CAP) runs the transit operations in Pittsburg, with support from Pittsburg State University. SEK-CAP operates a dial-a-ride service similar to R.Y.D.E., but with more limited hours. A fixed route service called PACT is also offered that runs every 30 minutes connecting Pittsburg State and Commercial and residential attractors . The University also offers a fixed route service for students on Thursday through Saturday nights 11:00 PM and 3:00 AM .



# 5 [IMPLEMENT KEARNEY]

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# 5 [IMPLEMENT KEARNEY]

[section 5.1]

## INTRODUCTION

Implementation refers to the objectives, policies and actions that have been identified to carry out the comprehensive plan. This portion of the comprehensive plan includes actions designed to improve the long-range planning process, strengthen links between the plan and capital improvement budgeting, establish a process reporting system to monitor the progress of the comprehensive plan, and a schedule for updating and amending the plan in the future.

Successful comprehensive plans are ones that are implemented. While the role of the Planning Commission is to ensure the orderly growth of the community by adherence to the comprehensive plan, it is up to the citizenry to champion the projects envisioned to implement the plan. Developing a plan is relatively easy compared to the implementation of it. What happens with the plan, how it is used in day-to-day decision-making, and the extent to which it is followed over time will all influence its overall success. The comprehensive plan is a living, breathing document. It is not the end of a planning process but the beginning of a coordinated effort to direct growth and development in ways that are important to the citizens of Kearney.

Rarely will a single tool or category of tools be sufficient to achieve the goals in a comprehensive plan. Most policies, and most of the preferred mix of land uses shown on the future land use map, require the use of several tools from different categories in order to be realized, obtained, and sustained. The City of Kearney must develop its own set of implementation tools and strategies, recognizing that each has unique strengths and weaknesses.

[section 5.2]

## IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

The City of Kearney has a number of tools at its disposal to shape development patterns, protect natural resources and human infrastructure, and protect the quality of life for its residents. Implementation strategies can be separated into several distinct tool categories and programs, each with its distinct characteristics that make it suitable for specific goals and circumstances.

### Support Programs

Four programs will play a vital role in the success of the comprehensive plan. These programs are:

1. **Capital Improvements Financing**--an annual predictable investment plan that uses a one to six-year planning horizon to schedule and fund projects integral to the plan's implementation.
2. **Zoning Regulations**--updated land use districts and regulations, including design guidelines, can allow the City to provide direction for future growth.

3. **Subdivision Regulations**--establish criteria for erosion control and runoff and dividing land into building areas, parks, trails, utility easements, and streets. Implementing the Transportation Plan is a primary function of subdivision regulations.
4. **Plan Maintenance**--an annual and five-year review program will allow the City flexibility in responding to growth and a continuous program of maintaining the plan's viability.

### **Public Education**

In addition to the identified programs, broad public support and involvement is necessary in the development and use of any implementation policy or program. If adequate support is to be developed, a program educating residents is necessary. People who understand the needs and ways of meeting those needs of the community must take the initiative to stimulate the interest and the understanding required to ensure action is taken. The City Council or Planning Commission of Kearney should annually strive to implement an active public participation process by creating an educational process on land use issues. The City should continue to use its website and make the comprehensive plan and development regulations available online. Ongoing education and promotion will be an important factor in sustaining interest and motivation from community members.

Some of the objectives of the comprehensive plan cannot be achieved unless the actions of two or more public agencies or private organizations can be coordinated. Frequently, constraints prevent organizations from working with one another (i.e. financial resources, legal authority, restriction of joint uses of facilities, etc). Efforts should be made to bridge this gap with open communication, cooperation and the realization that the issue at hand could benefit the health, safety, and general welfare of the residents in Kearney.

### **Managing Public Processes and Resources**

Public investments also include the time and effort that go into management decisions for infrastructure, public services, public lands, and public processes. Such investment or decisions can include:

- Coordinating capital improvements planning throughout all departments to meet the comprehensive plan goals and remain consistent with plan policies.
- Investments and improvements in water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure made by the City.
- The acquisition, sale, or exchange of land for the purpose of preservation or development.
- Decisions on expenditures for public resources such as streets, parks, and trails, property management and the provision of public services.

### **Special Studies**

Additional studies and plans can be helpful to further explore and define a vision of a certain area, corridor, or development site. Conducting studies and making decisions area by area can enhance the comprehensive plan. Areas of potential study include:

- Downtown Revitalization Update
- Community Redevelopment



[section 5.3]

## LAND USE SUITABILITY

How will the comprehensive plan be implemented? The major assumption of this comprehensive plan is that specific development criteria will be adopted by the City to help guide builders, investors, and community leaders in making good decisions concerning the future of Kearney.

These criteria will be specific statements that:

- Describe the relationship between/among land uses.
- Establish criteria or design standards that new development or redevelopment must meet.
- Minimize land use conflicts between neighboring parcels.
- Create consistent characteristics within each land use district.

### Land Use Transitions

New development should provide, if needed, screening, buffers, or additional setback requirements when located next to existing uses that may be negatively impacted. Screening or buffers may be plant material, low earthen berms, solid fences, or any combination of the above. Boundaries between different land uses are done along streets, alleys, or natural features (streams, railroads, etc.) whenever possible.

### City and Neighborhood Entrances

First impressions of the community are made at the entrances. These impressions are critical to a community's overall image. New development should have higher landscaping standards when located at any of the present or future entrances to the neighborhood. This, in turn with appropriate sign regulations along the major transportation corridors into and from the City, will promote a better community image and improve the quality of life in the City of Kearney.

[section 5.4]

## ACHIEVING KEARNEY'S FUTURE PLAN

In order to solve community problems or concerns, successful city comprehensive plans have the key ingredients of consensus, ideas, hard work, and the application of each of these. This section of the plan contains the inspiration of the many city officials, public institutions, school district, chamber, economic development corporation, private businesses, and concerned citizens who have participated in the planning process. Nevertheless, the ultimate success of the comprehensive plan remains in the dedication offered by each and every resident.

There are numerous goals and objectives in this plan and it is recommended to review the relevant goals and objectives during the city planning and budget sessions. However, it is also recommended that the City select elements of the plan for immediate action; the goals of highest priority which will ultimately lead to the success of other goals and objectives. It will be critical to earmark the specific funds to be used and the individuals primarily responsible for implementing the goals, objectives and policies in Kearney.

### Community Growth

Infill development should be pursued where possible, and redevelopment should be encouraged to create better use of infrastructure, investment, and existing neighborhoods. New development should, to the greatest extent possible, be contiguous to existing development or services. This would allow for the logical and cost effective extension of streets and utility services.

The Future Land Use Plan is one of the statutory requirements of a Comprehensive Development Plan, as stated in the Nebraska State Statutes. The Land Use Plan, along with the Transportation Plan, provides the necessary tools to direct future development in and around Kearney. The City's Land Use Plan is based on existing conditions and projected conditions for the community.

The need for residential uses will be driven by the future population, the ratio of owner-occupied to renter-occupied housing units, and the projected number of future dwelling units needed. New residential development can drive the need for additional commercial development, additional streets, public and park facilities, and industrial development. Therefore, decisions regarding future residential development will have a direct impact on other uses throughout the entire community. Conversely, commercial and industrial development in a community will lead to further economic development and the need for more residential units. Although Kearney continues to grow in population which is contributing to commercial growth, it has the possibility of industrial and business technology park developments along major transportation corridors including the east truck by-pass in the southeast quadrant of the community which may lead to additional opportunities and population growth.

### **Future Trail Plan**

The trails plan (Map 18 of the Achieve Chapter, p.179) will be established incrementally. Future developments must acknowledge these trail locations. A goal of alternative transportation should be to avoid conflicts between vehicular and pedestrian traffic. Phase I recommendations are determined by the location, connectivity, and necessity of establishing a trail for long-term benefit. Phase II focuses on long-term solutions or opportunities as they present themselves. The City of Kearney and its developers should join together to promote the trails because trails provide alternative transportation and connections among neighborhoods throughout the city. By planning these trails, the process provides safer environments for pedestrians, cyclists, and automotive drivers. When possible, trails should be placed away from the road right-of-way and used to connect neighborhoods, parks, green spaces, and other public destinations. Trail design should be integrated into each development to preserve and protect the unique natural features of the community. There may be ideal locations for connection but have an unknown development timeline due to lack of short-term services. In such a case, creating a semi-permanent trail is in the best interest of the City and the trail system connections. The location and development pressures will determine how the trails are prioritized. There are cost-saving alternatives to help start or “establish” a trail in the hopes of improving it at a later date through private development or long-term budgeting.

#### *Construction options*

Constructing trails can be an expensive endeavor because the process is not simply paving an extra-wide sidewalk. There are construction costs and varying degrees of maintenance tied to these connecting trails. First of all, time required for acquisition of the appropriate right-of-way required may slow the start of trail construction. Secondly, the terrain and material may require building additional structures to preserve the trail and maintenance involved (e.g. retaining wall). Lastly, the materials used in trail construction will determine the lifespan and degree of maintenance for the trail. As a potential future option, the City would like to explore the reuse of concrete from transportation projects as a base layer for trails.



The material options and characteristics for trail construction are:

**Grass (mowing wide path)**

- Lowest cost to establish
- Long-term, intensive maintenance costs
- Does not meet ADA requirements
- Limited access in inclement weather

**Woodchips (establish the trail as a Nature trail first)**

- Lower cost to establish
- Possible long-term trail, maintenance can be labor-intensive, but less than mowing
- Does not meet ADA requirements
- Limited access in inclement weather

**Crushed concrete/rock**

- City can construct an established crushed rock/concrete trail (minimum of 8 foot wide)
- More construction cost but a semi-permanent trail
- Less maintenance costs and manual labor than woodchips and mowing
- Better for flat areas due to potential material runoff
- It does not meet ADA surface standards
- This can serve as the foundation for a future paved asphalt trail with the appropriate depth

**Paved asphalt**

- Expected 10-year lifespan
- More permanent solution
- Higher construction costs than grass, woodchips, crushed rock/concrete
- Varying degrees for maintenance costs (must fill cracks periodically)
- Impervious surface
- Does meet ADA requirements

**Paved concrete**

- Expected lifespan over 15+ years
- Most permanent solution
- Most construction cost
- Least maintenance costs and ideal for high traffic areas and frequent washout areas
- No need for foundation base
- Impervious surface and high quality surface for wheeled activities and ADA requirements (e.g. strollers, wheelchairs)

**Trail Phasing**

**Southwest Quadrant of the Future Trails Plan (Map 18 p.179 and Map 22 P.180)  
Phase I**

The Railroad Street (West and South) Trail should be a priority to connect established trails from the west (Eagle Loop and Tailrace) to the east (M Avenue) trails. This trail should be a paved 8 foot wide trail, where possible.

The School loop (30th Avenue and West 11th Avenue) could be developed as a smaller crushed rock trail with the expectations that land developers will improve the trail and pave a eight-foot trail.

Connecting Betty's Trail to West 11th Street is contingent upon the City gaining control of 2nd Avenue. This connection can have a positive impact on the trail system's visibility and establish an alternative connection to the hospitality industry. This should be a paved trail but if it is hampered for budgetary reasons, establishing this connection means more than having it paved.

### **Phase II**

The greenway connection south of Cottonmill Park is a long-term trail as a direct and alternative connection to Yanney Park. Establishing easements would be the first of many steps. A natural trail along a waterway can take time to develop but it is important to identify this trail if future plans change (e.g. 30th Avenue is widen). There is also a railroad underpass involved.

When completed, 5th Avenue will become an important connection to the Railroad Street trail when. If Kearney creates new wayfinding and signage, it will help to identify this sidewalk trail utilizing the at-grade crossing opportunity and providing a safe, alternative connection between the southwest neighborhoods and downtown or University of Nebraska at Kearney.

A long-term trail was recommended on 2nd Avenue to go south over I-80 to the Arena and eventually further south to the regional American Discovery Trail.

### **Southeast Quadrant of the Future Trails Plan (Map 18 p.179 and Map 22 P.181)**

#### **Phase I**

As stated previously, the Railroad Street South should be a priority with eight foot paved trail that helps create internal connections to the downtown and Overpass Trail.

Extending Overpass Trail with eight foot crushed rock from East 11th to Pioneer's Path will establish the framework for private improvements (improvement of paving) as development occurs along M Avenue. This particular area may not develop in the near future which is why establishing a full-width trail is proposed.

Establishing the E.11th Street Trails as a connector trail without the eight foot wide sidewalks is expected and helps connect these neighborhoods to the overall trail system.

#### **Phase II**

The Southeast quadrant will see the least amount of residential pressure over the planning period. Therefore, trails further east along Coal Chute Road, East 11th Street, Antelope Avenue, and Cherry Avenue are not recommended at this time.

### **Northwest Quadrant of the Future Trails Plan (Map 18 p.179 and Map 22 P.182):**

#### **Phase I**

Establish the side collectors where available to create connectivity. Extending West 39th Street as east-west corridor to develop side connector trail, which are not all eight foot wide sidewalk trails. Adding a connector trail north from either Fountain Hills Park and/or Lighthouse Point to 56th Street, and then east to 2nd Avenue to connect to the existing trail is recommended. Where possible, crushed rock on West 48th and encourage the completion of the trail as an amenity when the development occurs.

The outlots created in subdivision designs can be utilized for natural trails, potentially woodchips to begin with, as the establishment of a trail connection. Negotiations with the developer and neighborhood associations may lead to a trail upgrade or otherwise budgeted by the City over time.



## **Phase II**

A logical connection is to extend West 39th Street trail west of 30th Avenue, however easements from landowners would need to be established first. The trail could follow the northern edge of Meadowlark North Park that not only connect the nature trails of Cottonmill and Meadowlark North but to also tie the rest of the trail network from 30th Ave trail and W. 39th Street trails.

Extend the major corridors north on 30th Avenue and 70th Street as development occurs.

The interior Kearney sidewalk connections are the most difficult to accomplish with limited right-of-way. The major corridors may be easier to connect but the side street connections may be more difficult with restrictions of property lines and avoiding the additional costs of items like a retaining wall.

### **Northeast Quadrant of the Future Trails Plan (Map 18 p.179 and Map 22 P.183): Phase I**

The major roadways in this quadrant can be predetermined with the necessary right-of-way and account for independent eight foot trails. N Avenue is the north-south backbone of and extending East 56th Street farther to the east to Patriot Park.

The Grand Ave trail and East 39th Street could also be established as a loop with crushed rock to be upgraded later with other trails or development.

## **PHASE II**

### **Northeast Quadrant:**

East 39th east of Antelope Avenue and utilizing an underpass of the new Cherry Avenue may be a long-term development but is identified for connectivity to Patriot Park and the Airport connection.

Connecting the East 56 Street and East 39th Street trails along Antelope Avenue is a long-term trail/loop that may actually be a safer route as an alternative to Patriot Park via Grand Avenue or East 39th Street.

If the rail line that is in use now becomes available for rails-to-trails, the proposed connection could be utilized as greenway or natural trail connecting to the Northeast Park as well as N Avenue and city-owned property that may become open space in the future.

[section 5.5]

## **ANNEXATION PLAN**

As the City grows in size it must evaluate opportunities to extend its borders to continue to provide a high quality of life for its residents. To do this, the City of Kearney has established a process to expand its municipal boundary into areas that are contiguous to the community, provided such actions are justified. The following annexation policy was adopted by the Kearney City Council on June 9, 2009:

*POLICY FOR ANNEXATION OF PROPERTY INTO THE CORPORATE  
LIMITS OF THE CITY OF KEARNEY AND EXTENSION OF THE TWO MILE  
EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION LINE -*

## *PART 1. PURPOSE*

*Annexation allows the City more opportunity to guide growth and development at its urbanized fringe.*

- To extend sound planning principles including transportation planning, acquisition of right-of-way and easements, environmental preservation, code enforcement and urban zoning with stricter development standards into surrounding areas.*
- To provide better control regarding how and where new development that relies on municipal services takes place.*
- To provide a chance to incorporate areas of strategic importance to the City.*
- To provide a more logical city boundary as well as the potential for a reduction of urban sprawl around the City.*
- To provide the opportunity for sensible growth management.*
- To realize an increased property tax base that spreads the cost of services over a larger number of taxpayers thereby offering some relief to the existing city residents and business owners resulting in a more appropriate sharing of this responsibility and tax equity situation.*
- To provide fringe residents a voice and responsibility in the City in which they live/call home.*
- To preserve quality of life for city residents by extending community identity and values to the new area.*
- To allow for provision of superior services (municipal sewer and water, police, fire, refuse collection) to residents in fringe areas.*
- To provide additional opportunities for many State and Federal grant and matching fund programs since these programs are often population based.*
- Likewise, through extension of the Two-Mile Extraterritorial Zoning Jurisdiction concurrent with annexation of land on the fringe, the City can control land use that was previously in the jurisdiction of Buffalo or Kearney County. It is important for the future growth of the community to regulate these areas consistent with city policies and regulations as urban growth extends out and into these areas.*

## *PART 2. BACKGROUND*

- Annexation has occurred on a regular basis in Kearney*
- In accordance with Section 59-105 of the Unified Land Development Ordinance, a part of the Code of the City of Kearney, the City has routinely expanded the Two-Mile Extraterritorial Zoning Jurisdiction and rezoned the land concurrently with annexation of property on the fringe of the community.*
- The City has, for several years, required “future consent to annexation” when subdivisions are created outside city service areas or when city services are extending into unincorporated areas.*
- Prior to December 13, 1994 water and sewer user rates outside the city limits were doubled.*
- Annexation can be accomplished according to State Law.*



[section 5.6]

## GOALS, POLICIES, AND STRATEGIES

The vision statement can be further delineated and translated into broad-based goals and objectives that will be used to guide, direct, and base future decisions on growth and development in Kearney and its two mile extraterritorial jurisdiction. The goals will help show the broader view for the decision makers to evaluate and consider its decision based upon the growth of the entire city and not just one small land transaction of Kearney. The objectives in this update will create consistency in decision making to help make smooth transitions as Kearney grows and redevelops. Goals, objectives, and policies also reiterate the residents of Kearney and their input of how they prefer to see the City grow.

The goals and objectives will also be further developed into policies with action plans, which aim to provide the kind of “day-to-day” direction and monitoring that will be useful in implementing this comprehensive plan and realizing its vision. Consensus on “what is good land use?” and “how to manage change in order to provide the greatest benefit to the City and its residents?” is formed.

### *“A broad-stroke comment or aspiration”*

Goals are the desires and projected state of affairs which the community intends to achieve. Goals are the most general statement of future preferences and outcomes, and set a broad framework for objectives and policies. Goals should be established in a manner that is clearly understood and allows them to be accomplished. It is noted that the goals may need to be modified or changed from time to time to continue to reflect community preferences.

### *“What the desired outcome”*

Policies provide the intermediate steps that guide the community in its future decisions. Policies provide direction and benchmarks that can be used to monitor progress by city staff, the Planning Commission, City Council and the citizens of Kearney. Policies also help maintain support and interest in Plan implementation by providing a framework for tangible actions that provide perceptible results. By actually observing and participating in the activities and their results, community residents are allowed to involve themselves in the evolution of their community, which enhances their support for the comprehensive plan and instills excitement for continued involvement.

### *“How to make it happen or what needs to be done”*

Strategies give more detail and describe the actions needed to achieve the desired goal of the community. Strategies are part of the value system linking goals with action. Strategies represent plans of action that guide decisions in order to achieve rational outcomes, and are concerned with defining and implementing the goals of the comprehensive plan. The adopted policies synthesize the information from the existing growth condition and responses from the public input process in order to develop solutions or actions that will achieve the various goals. Strategies are a means to achieving the goals via the City’s policies established by the community and they imply a clear commitment to the City’s future development.

## COMMUNITY GOALS

The first step in developing goals, policies and action strategies for this plan was the creation of general community goals. Then, the policies and action strategies were crafted to support specific elements of the plan and the broader community goals. These eight elements include Population, Community Image, Land Use, Housing, Infrastructure and Public Facilities, Transportation and Circulation, Commercial/Industrial Development and Plan Maintenance.

The following represents the General Community Goals:

1. Strive to create a multi-generational community with a high quality of life where people feel safe and come to be educated, raise a family, build a career and retire.
2. Foster the values of the Kearney community, where teamwork, problem-solving and unselfish leadership preserves and strengthens the City.
3. Provide effective city services and flexible solution-based development regulations that will allow for stable, high quality housing and business growth.
4. Provide the tax and regulatory environment which allows for the creation of a variety of safe, decent, sanitary housing types, including elderly and persons with disabilities while maintaining a low property tax rate.
5. Continue support for a diverse economic base, with an increasing focus on technology businesses and fostering entrepreneurship, in order to create and expand employment opportunities for all age categories.
6. By preserving and improving the physical appearance and character of the community, particularly on major corridors and city entryways, present the vibrant, progressive and community-oriented image that truly reflects the character of the City.
7. Maximize the opportunities to provide for the housing, recreational, and cultural needs, desires and activities of all segments of the population and maintain and improve those qualities which make Kearney a desirable place in which to live, work and pursue leisure time activities.
8. Develop land use and infrastructure plans that embody the identified goals and policies and adopt zoning ordinance and subdivision regulations to support the comprehensive plan.
9. Encourage the efficient use of energy and natural resources by the City of Kearney, and educate citizens on the importance of making decisions that sustain and protect those valuable resources.
10. Have a vision for that which we cannot predict by creating flexible, forward-looking policies that welcome technological and entrepreneurial innovation and creativity.



## **POPULATION**

**Continue to anticipate Kearney's consistent 1.1% annual growth.**

### **Population Policies:**

- P 1 Encourage the efficient use of existing infrastructure by promoting redevelopment and infill.
- P 2 Support for the market to develop housing and economic opportunities at a sustainable rate, coupled with appropriately planned annexation practices to support Kearney's population growth.
- P 3 Emphasize modern services and foster a culture that attracts innovative businesses so as to create new, higher-paying job opportunities.
- P 4 Create an aesthetically pleasing and quality built environment in which to live and entertain visitors.

### **Population Action Strategies:**

- P AS 1 Promote social and economic opportunities during the planning period to increase the population.
- P AS 2 Create tax and regulatory policies that allow for incentives to promote value added housing development and additional job creation.
- P AS 3 Promote Kearney as a great place to grow commerce, be educated, raise a family, build a career and retire by emphasizing its safety, cultural opportunities, prosperity, community spirit and high quality educational opportunities.
- P AS 4 Continue cooperation with the University of Nebraska-Kearney and other public institutions to support the existing population and attract new residents.

## **COMMUNITY IMAGE**

**Improve the City's image through a variety of opportunities including quality developments, wayfinding, promotional materials, and continued communication with the public.**

### **Community Image Policies:**

- CI 1 Publicly promote the image of Kearney in an effort to attract workers in surrounding communities to be employed in Kearney.
- CI 2 Enhance the gateways and major corridors with signage, landscaping, and quality development.
- CI 3 Encourage an ongoing forum for citizen participation to maintain and improve the economic and social quality of life in the community.
- CI 4 Support the community efforts to promote the community as a conference and tourism destination.

### **Community Image Action Strategies**

- CI AS 1 Preserve historic character of the Central Business District and residential neighborhood areas.
- CI AS 2 Continue to implement the downtown revitalization plan, including greenery, landscape, and façade improvements.
- CI AS 3 Establish an on-going program of community beautification including development of the community gateways.
- CI AS 4 Develop and implement a community wayfinding system.
- CI AS 5 Collaborate with programs to encourage youth retention and recruitment
- CI AS 6 Continue partnerships with public entities, non-profits, and businesses that provide educational services to citizens.

- CI AS 7 Work closely with private citizens to encourage development and redevelopment of residential and commercial/industrial areas of Kearney.
- CI AS 8 Maintain a program or process of actively pursuing the federal, state and local funds to preserve and improve the community.
- CI AS 9 Systematically remove dilapidated structures and excessive debris within Kearney.

## LAND USE

**Kearney should provide areas to accommodate future residential, commercial, business park development, and recreational park system that enhances Kearney’s overall quality, minimizing natural environment impacts, and provide efficient public services extensions for all the above.**

### Land Use Policies

- LU 1 Provide opportunities for community development in an orderly and efficient manner so that entrepreneurs can build businesses that respond to consumer demand.
- LU 2 Establish and maintain land-use development patterns and densities in the community, that best conform with the desires and needs of the residents and emphasize improved quality of development and livability for the residents of the community.
- LU 3 Continue to encourage compatible adjacent land uses during the planning and implementation of development activities.
- LU 4 Encourage land use patterns which preserve and protect the unique natural features and resources of the community while developing the parks and trails system.
- LU 5 Promote land uses which maintain and provide a safe and sanitary environment, free of air, water and noise pollution.
- LU 6 Future development should be encouraged to locate in areas which are relatively free of environmental problems related to ground water, soil, slope and the 100-year floodplain and floodway zones.
- LU 7 Coordination with the Central Platte Natural Resources District Hazard Mitigation Plan to ensure new development mitigates the loss of life and property from natural and man-made hazards.

### Land Use Action Strategies

- LU AS 1 Maintain fair and efficient regulations that allow the redevelopment and improvement of older areas and vacant parcels in the community.
- LU AS 2 Maintain fair and flexible zoning and land use regulations so that residential development can occur where it is most logical.
- LU AS 3 Maintain fair and flexible zoning and land use regulations so that future commercial development activities can continue in the Central Business District, 2nd Avenue, Highway 30 corridor, and Cherry Avenue corridor.
- LU AS 4 Maintain fair and flexible zoning and land use regulations so that industrial developments in Kearney can continue along east Highway 30 and the Tech Park.
- LU AS 5 Combination of highway commercial and industrial land uses should be limited to the east Highway 30 area and east of N. Cherry Avenue.
- LU AS 6 Future land uses in the northeast and western portions of Kearney, should remain residential in character in order to be compatible with existing residential neighborhoods and include public parks and amenities to support the neighborhood.



- LU AS 7 Kearney should maintain zoning regulations which are compatible to current development trends, community attitudes, and which respect the rights of private property owners.
- LU AS 8 Maintain subdivision regulations which complement the Zoning Ordinance and Municipal Codes.
- LU AS 9 Establish a comprehensive program of eliminating substandard or dilapidated housing and commercial structures which pose eminent threats to the health, safety and welfare of the community.
- LU AS 10 New developments should incorporate the desired parks and trails.
- LU AS 11 Maintain an Annexation Policy to balance community needs and fiscal responsibility of the City.
- LU AS 12 Continue to utilize the process of blight and substandard determination and redevelopment planning, as per the Nebraska Community Development Law.
- LU AS 13 Utilize the enabling powers of the Kearney Community Redevelopment Authority to improve or secure lands for future development.
- LU AS 14 Preserve, conserve and protect natural resources. (ref. LU 4)

## **HOUSING**

**Continue the promotion of quality development of new and redeveloped housing units and strategically provide necessary services to new housing units to support a growing population that adds value today and in the future.**

### **Housing Policies**

- H 1 Ensure all residents have access to a variety of safe, decent, sanitary housing types.
- H 2 Promote development of residential options for residents of all income levels.
- H 3 Encourage housing programs and projects to deplete the current housing vacancy deficiency in Kearney.
- H 4 Protect and preserve existing residential areas and housing units, through continued planned rehabilitation programs.
- H 5 Encourage future residential development which is compatible and complements existing neighborhoods.
- H 6 Encourage the development of new types of housing to provide more choice for the residents of Kearney to include townhomes, condominiums, downtown upper level housing, senior housing, and cottage housing.
- H 7 Participate in Housing Rehabilitation Programs.

### **Housing Action Strategies**

- H AS 1 With a 1.1% annual growth and 2.4 average household size, the City will encourage private industry to provide rental housing units and owner housing units in Kearney over the next ten years to meet market demand.
- H AS 2 The City will encourage private industry and utilize its authority to incentivize property owners to rehabilitate housing units in need of repair. Incentive examples include, Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Historic House Credits, and Tax Increment Financing (TIF).
- H AS 3 Participate in public/private coalitions that coordinate the development of workforce housing needs of Kearney with related educational, health, and social services programs, both public and private.
- H AS 4 Maintain fair and flexible zoning regulations that allow for housing opportunities in and around the Central Business District.

- H AS 5 Encourage the development of additional owner and renter occupied housing types, including single family, multiple family for low-to moderate-income families, persons with disabilities, and the elderly, to meet existing and future needs of all Kearney residents.
- H AS 6 Continue to secure grants/financial assistance to develop both owner and renter housing rehabilitation/repair programs for low and moderate income households to upgrade their homes to minimum housing quality standards.
- H AS 7 Coordinate community housing needs with local economic development activities.
- H AS 8 Promote maximum energy efficient housing standards.
- H AS 9 Designate areas for high density residential development which have access to adequate infrastructure, public services and proximity to jobs.
- H AS 10 All new residential development within city limits should be served by adequate city utilities and services assuming value added.
- H AS 11 Develop a program for systematic removal of dilapidated structures.
- H AS 12 Encourage infill housing and reuse of existing lots.

## **INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES**

**Kearney should focus on current infrastructure and look for opportunities within the built environment, maintain its high-quality services, and strategically build for the future.**

### **Infrastructure and Public Facilities Policies**

- I/PF 1 Provide adequate, efficient and appropriate utilities and services throughout the community of Kearney to existing and future residential, recreational, commercial and industrial areas.
- I/PF 2 Maintain an adequate supply of potable water and expanded distribution system suitable for present and future consumption and fire protection within Kearney.
- I/PF 3 Maintain the provision of facilities and services necessary to prevent pollution of the environment. Provide sewage treatment, refuse collection and disposal, street cleaning, flood control and similar environmental control processes.
- I/PF 4 Maintain and improve the existing public facilities and services in Kearney and develop, as needed, new facilities and services to reflect resident’s needs and demands.
- I/PF 5 Educate developers and the general public on solid waste management and recycling of materials.
- I/PF 6 Educate the general public on the importance of water conservation, and protecting waterways and water supply from harmful chemicals.
- I/PF 7 Implement the trail and parks and recreation master plan.

### **Infrastructure and Public Facilities Action Strategies**

- I/PF AS 1 Provide the current standard of law enforcement, emergency medical and fire protection services, including facilities necessary to support such services throughout the community and promote the coordination of these services among the various governmental and quasi-governmental entities.
- I/PF AS 2 Coordinate with Buffalo County Emergency Manager and the Central Platte Natural Resource District to maintain and implement the community’s Hazard Mitigation Plan.
- I/PF AS 3 Monitor the use of water within the community and educate the general public on water conservation practices



- I/PF AS 4 Use and promote Best Management Practices (BMP) in homes, businesses, and industries, to promote water conservation and reduce water pollution.
- I/PF AS 5 Develop new parks and recreational amenities dispersed throughout the community that keep pace with the development of new neighborhoods.
- I/PF AS 6 Ensure public services be expanded to keep pace with proper growth.
- I/PF AS 7 Provide public services in an efficient and economic manner in order to protect and enhance the safety and welfare of the residents of Kearney.
- I/PF AS 8 Improve public transportation services, especially for those with limited access to individual transportation.
- I/PF AS 9 Continue to provide and improve recreation programs for the youth, elderly, persons with disabilities and families.
- I/PF AS 10 Develop and improve recreational, educational cultural facilities.
- I/PF AS 11 The City shall be a steward of clean water by protecting the City's drinking water resources and ensuring a sustainable supply.
- I/PF AS 12 If necessary, enact enforceable city ordinances defining limitations on water use in event of drought, threats to water quality and quantity, and natural or man-made hazard.
- I/PF AS 13 Develop and disseminate educational materials encouraging sustainable resource utilization
- I/PF AS 14 Encourage land and building developments that minimize fossil fuel energy consumption and encourage renewable energy technology and practices;
- I/PF AS 15 Encourage sustainable design practices in the planning, construction and operation of new development, large development and building renovation
- I/PF AS 16 Continue to improve community programs via education and incentives that encourage reduction, recycling, and reuse of material.

## **TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION**

**Kearney's transportation program should maintain reasonable mobility around the City while enhancing a quality urban environment for all transportation modes.**

### **Transportation and Circulation Policies:**

- T1 Provide a transportation system throughout Kearney for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services.
- T2 Concentrate efforts to alleviate conflicts between pedestrians and motorized vehicles, particularly along major arterials.
- T3 Maintain design standards and policies for various classes of streets, roads, highways and bridges to enhance the function and safety of the roadway and street system in Kearney.
- T4 Provide a transportation system that fits within the context of the natural and built environment.
- T5 New roads shall be developed and coordinated with the future land uses and public amenities.
- T6 Continue a transportation system maintained in a state-of-good-repair.

### **Transportation and Circulation Action Strategies**

- T AS 1 Maintain and adopt a coordinated plan for maintenance, improvement and future locations of all streets, roads, highways and bridges in the community, including paving, curbs, gutters, street lighting, curb cuts, replacements, etc.
- T AS 2 Monitor and control traffic through town.

- T AS 3 Implement measures to protect pedestrians. Types of potential programs to be considered are: longer intervals for “walk” signals, coordinate traffic lights to slow the flow of traffic, and encourage some traffic to by-pass city streets and route around the perimeter of Kearney.
- T AS 4 Develop and maintain a community-wide sidewalks program to provide a safe and efficient system for pedestrian movement including handicap accessibility within the community.
- T AS 5 Implement the trails master plan to connect key populations, areas of commerce, points of interest, green space, educational units, and neighborhoods.
- T AS 6 Continue and maintain the One and Six Year Road Program.
- T AS 7 Implement the trail and parks and recreation master plan.

## **COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Kearney’s diverse regional economy includes substantial employment in health care, education, manufacturing, and retail sectors but will need to continue evolving as the regional innovation hub.**

### **Commercial/Industrial Development Policies:**

- C/I D 1 Utilize the Kearney Comprehensive Plan as a community and economic development resource guide for future commercial developments.
- C/I D 2 Utilize the Kearney land use plan, zoning and subdivision regulations as a guide for both business and industrial developments.
- C/I D 3 Utilize the potential of the Kearney Chamber of Commerce, Kearney’s industries, the University of Nebraska–Kearney, State and City Government, local public power companies and other existing and potential organizations or special committees for technical and financial assistance for securing new economic development activities.
- C/I D 4 Seek economic opportunities for all residents by fostering increased employment and investment.
- C/I D 5 Utilize tax increment financing, as well as state and federal funding sources to strengthen existing and assist in the creation of new business/industry.
- C/I D 6 Expand economic opportunities of the local agricultural community.

### **Commercial/Industrial Development Action Strategies**

- C/I D AS 1 Encourage local reinvestment in the community.
- C/I D AS 2 Encourage the revitalization of vacant and substantially deteriorated commercial/industrial buildings in Kearney.
- C/I D AS 3 Promote the implementation of “historic designation” to the Register of Historic Places for all commercial, industrial, residential and public buildings having significant historic value.
- C/I D AS 4 Develop an efficient parking plan within commercial areas, for both on- and off-street vehicular parking.
- C/I D AS 5 Continue to maintain the current aesthetic standards of the business and industrial areas of Kearney through revitalization and beautification efforts.
- C/I D AS 6 Promote the existence and development of commercial/business types that will maximize the opportunity for job creation and future job quantity and quality.
- C/I D AS 7 Continue and improve current special events and conferences.
- C/I D AS 8 Encourage street-scape improvements in Kearney’s Central Business District, i.e., lighting to enhance architectural features, landscaping, signage and public seating areas.

**IMPLEMENT**



- C/I D AS 9 Implement zoning regulations that are compatible to the characteristics of commercial and industrial areas.
- C/I D AS 10 Allow housing opportunities in appropriate commercial areas.
- C/I D AS 11 Utilize local technical and financial resources to assist existing and future businesses and industries to exist and grow.
- C/I D AS 12 Promote the existence and development of industrial type businesses that are “light manufacturing” in nature, and/or do not produce products and pollutants detrimental to the health, safety and welfare of the community.
- C/I D AS 13 Encourage the development of innovative industries that will utilize local industrial and agricultural resources.
- C/I D AS 14 Promote economic growth and development activities on a county and regional basis with adjacent communities.
- C/I D AS 15 Continue and improve working relationships with regional and state offices to promote economic development.
- C/I D AS 16 Use local organizations to promote and facilitate residential and commercial projects.
- C/I D AS 17 Provide infrastructure and needed amenities to support future growth of commercial, industrial and residential tracts.
- C/I D AS 18 Utilize federal, state and local incentives in a fiscally responsible manner to recruit and retain job opportunities.

## **PLAN MAINTENANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION**

**The comprehensive plan is most effective when it’s a living document that is continually reflective of the community and its vision. The Planning Commission’s role is the oversight and implementation of the Comprehensive Plan. The Commission should ensure the document’s currency and relevancy through regular review.**

### **Plan Maintenance and Implementation Policy**

- P 1 Maintain and utilize the comprehensive plan as the primary tool for making community decisions regarding the physical and social development of the City of Kearney and its respective planning jurisdiction.

### **Plan Maintenance and Implementation Action Strategies**

- P AS 1 Establish an annual staff review process of the comprehensive plan and associated zoning and subdivision regulations.
- P AS 2 Integrate other community policies into annual review process. (e.g. Buffalo County Comprehensive Plan, Central Platte Hazard Mitigation Plan)
- P AS 3 Identify and reference the comprehensive plan for the Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) in order to coordinate CIP budgets.

## PLAN MAINTENANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION

### Plan Maintenance

The comprehensive plan is the community's collective vision, yet change is inevitable. Major technologies and new community needs will arise during the planning period which were not foreseen during the plan's development. Jobs, housing, transportation, goods and services will shift over time. The comprehensive plan amendment process must accommodate and help manage the inevitable change in a way that best promotes, and does not compromise, the community's core values, health and well being. The plan amendment process must be an open and fair process, utilizing sound planning, economic, social and ecological principles.

If major, new, innovative development opportunities arise which impact several elements of the plan, and are determined to be of importance, a plan amendment may be proposed and considered separately from the annual review and other proposed plan amendments. The City Council or Planning Commission shall compile a list of proposed amendments received during a year in preparation for a report to provide pertinent information on each proposal, and recommend action on the proposed amendments. The comprehensive plan amendment process should adhere to the adoption process specified by the Nebraska State Statutes and should provide for organized participation and involvement of interested citizens.

Since this plan is a living, breathing document, it needs to be monitored for continued relevancy. Although the comprehensive plan uses a 20-year planning time period, intervening time points should be utilized to measure progress toward long term goals, to make adjustments based on changed conditions or preferences, and to provide short-and mid-term guidance for land use decisions. In doing so, the ultimate planning time period will move as well, constantly advancing into the future as the currency and relevancy of the plan is maintained by a cycle of periodic updates and amendments.

The comprehensive plan should undergo a major update once every five to eight years. Based on experience in other communities, this time period is recommended as the appropriate time interval for major updates for several reasons:

- More frequent updates are too much of a burden on staff
- Less frequent updates lead to plans that are out-of-date
- Federal census data is available every decade: a five to eight-year review schedule that falls at the mid-point between census years is both reasonable and logical
- Five to eight-year reviews give the City of Kearney the opportunity to maintain touch with the community's vision

The common elements of a five-year update include reviewing and extending growth projections, reviewing community goals, and analyzing amendments.

### Annual Review of the Plan

A relevant, up-to-date plan is critical to the on-going planning success. To maintain the confidence of both public and private sectors, evaluate the effectiveness of planning activities and, most importantly, to make mid-plan corrections on the use of city resources, the plan must be current.

After adoption of the comprehensive plan, opportunities should be provided to identify any changes in conditions that would impact elements or policies of the plan. The annual review process needs to involve regularly monitoring trends and changes in the local, regional, state and federal landscape. Such trends and changes may include changes in development activity



and use, trends in development regulation amendments, and changes in planning and zoning law. A report should be prepared as needed by Kearney staff and/or the Planning Commission that provides information and recommendations on whether the plan is current in respect to population and economic changes and if the recommended policies are still valid for the City and its long-term growth.

The Planning Commission should hold a public hearing on this report to:

1. Provide citizens or developers with an opportunity to comment and/or present possible changes to the plan
2. Identify any changes in the status of projects or action items called for in the plan
3. Bring forth any issues, or identify any changes in conditions, which may impact the validity of the plan

If the Planning Commission finds major policy issues or major changes in basic assumptions or conditions have arisen that could necessitate revisions to the plan, the Commission should recommend changes or further study of those changes. This process may lead to identification of amendments to the comprehensive plan that would be processed by staff, recommended by the Planning Commission and considered by the Kearney City Council.

### **Conditions for Plan Amendment**

Comprehensive plan amendment procedures are necessary to determine what constitutes conformity or non-conformity with the plan. It is impossible to set hard and fast rules for such decisions but consistent criteria should be used when making this determination. The following criteria are recommended:

- A request for increases in residential density or non-residential floor area in excess of the guidelines established in the plan, depending upon the degree of increase, may require a plan amendment.
- Land use request involving minor differences in boundaries from those shown in the plan should be considered in conformity with the plan unless precedent would be set for more extensive and non-conforming changes in adjacent areas.
- Requests for variations or changes in the alignment of designated roadways should be considered in conformity if the continuity of the roadway is maintained, the alignment does not result in traffic safety problems or reductions in needed capacity, does not constrain the proper development of contiguous properties, and does not conflict with or preempt other planned uses or facilities.
- Requests to deviate from plan-specified requirements such as open space and traffic reduction measures generally should not be permitted in order to ensure equitable treatment of all property owners and to avoid arbitrary decisions which would undermine the legal foundations of the plan. If changes are to be made, they should be done through a plan amendment process.
- The final criteria must always be whether the request, whatever its nature, will set a precedent for cumulative changes which are not consistent with the plan. Therefore, in those instances where the implications of the request are not easily observed or detected, a request for a plan amendment should be required.

[section 5.8]

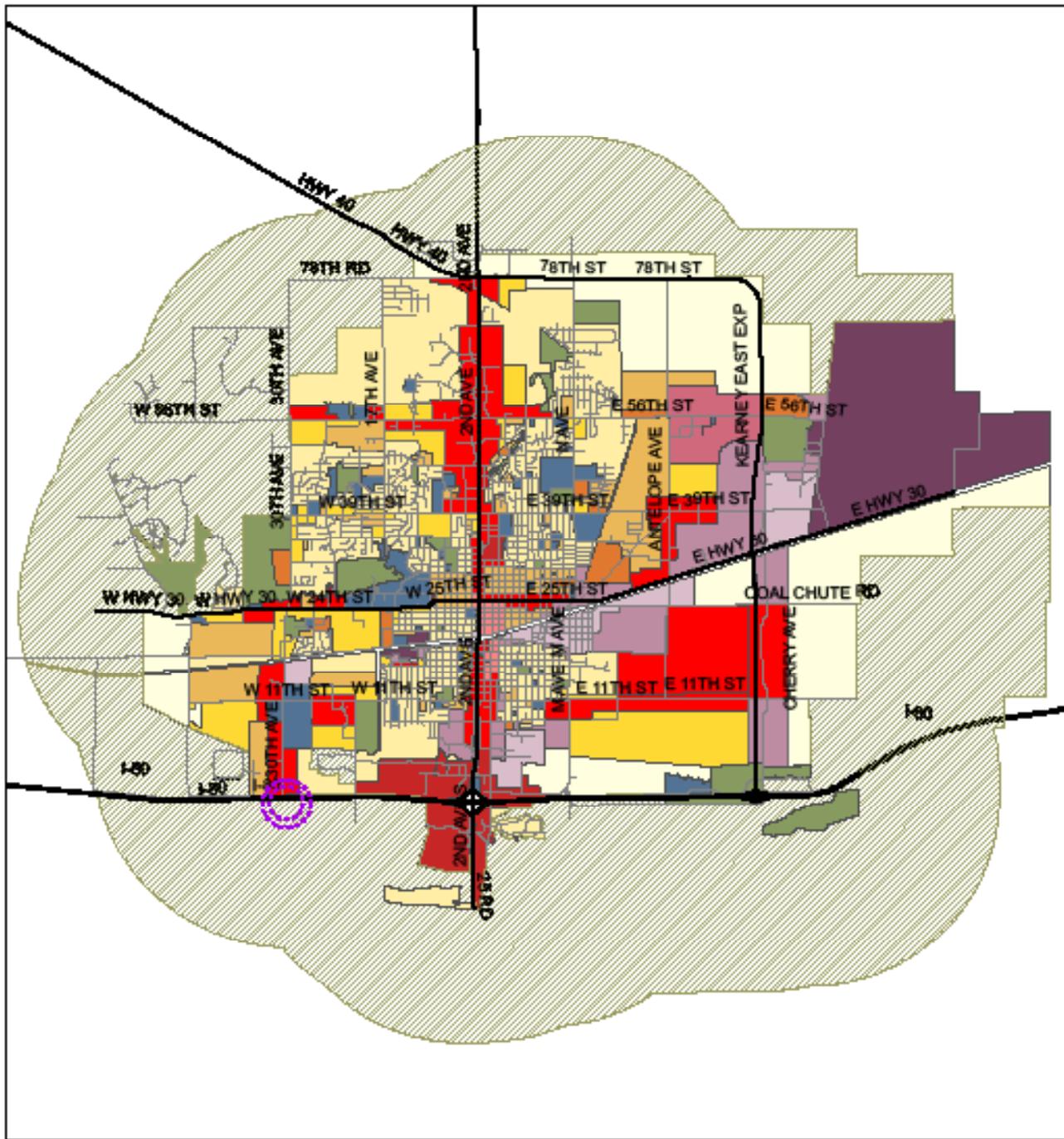
## METHODS FOR EVALUATING LAND DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The interpretation of the plan should be comprised of a continuous and related series of analyses, with references to the goals and objectives/policies, the overall land use plan, and specific land use policies. Moreover, when considering specific proposed developments, interpretation of the plan should include a thorough review of all sections of the plan.

If a development proposal is not consistently supported by the comprehensive plan, serious consideration should be given to making modifications to the proposal, or the following criteria should be used to determine if a comprehensive plan amendment would be justified:

- The character of the adjacent neighborhood
- The zoning and uses of nearby properties
- The suitability of the property for the uses allowed under the current zoning designation
- The type and extent of positive or negative impact that may affect adjacent properties, or the City at large, if the request is approved
- The impact of the proposal on public utilities and facilities
- The length of time that the subject and adjacent properties have been utilized for their current uses
- The benefits of the proposal to the public health, safety, and welfare compared to the hardship imposed on the applicant if the request is not approved
- Comparison between the existing land use plan and the proposed change regarding the relative conformance to the goals and objectives/policies
- Consideration of professional staff recommendations

Map.16A. Future Land Use Map - Amended 9/8/2020



<b>Transportation</b>		<b>FUTURE LAND USE</b>	
— Major Roads	— Potential Interchange	— Roadway Network	  
<b>Future Land Uses</b>			Revised 09/08/2020 Adopted by Resolution no. 2020-134 on 09/08/2020
RE - Rural Estate and Agriculture	UR - Urban Reserve	EP - Business Park	LI - Light Industrial
LDR - Low Density Residential	MOR - Medium Density Residential	MUR - Commercial Mixed Use	CBDD - Central Business District
HDR - High Density Residential	COB - General Commercial	PROR - Parks, Recreation and Open Space	CF - City
UR - Urban Reserve	LDR - Low Density Residential	MOR - Medium Density Residential	HDR - High Density Residential
MOR - Medium Density Residential	HDR - High Density Residential	COB - General Commercial	EP - Business Park
HDR - High Density Residential	COB - General Commercial	EP - Business Park	LI - Light Industrial
COB - General Commercial	EP - Business Park	LI - Light Industrial	GI - General Industrial
EP - Business Park	LI - Light Industrial	GI - General Industrial	MU1 - Neighborhood Mixed Use
LI - Light Industrial	GI - General Industrial	MU2 - Office/Comm. Retail Mixed Use	MU3 - Commercial Mixed Use
GI - General Industrial	MU1 - Neighborhood Mixed Use	MU3 - Commercial Mixed Use	PROR - Parks, Recreation and Open Space
MU2 - Office/Comm. Retail Mixed Use	MU3 - Commercial Mixed Use	PROR - Parks, Recreation and Open Space	CF - City
MU3 - Commercial Mixed Use	PROR - Parks, Recreation and Open Space	CF - City	