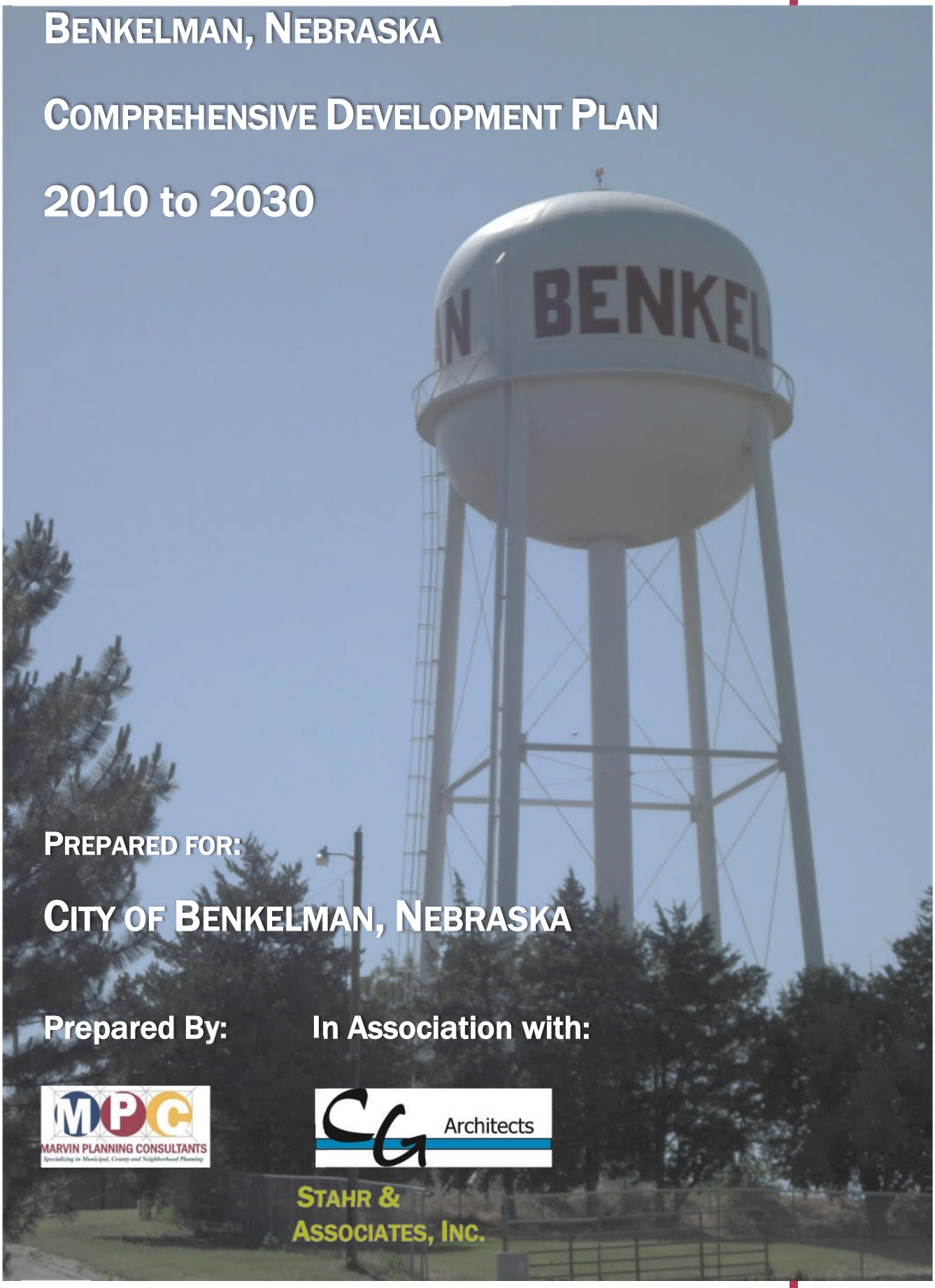

BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA

COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2010 to 2030

PREPARED FOR:

CITY OF BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA

Prepared By: MARVIN PLANNING CONSULTANTS

In Association with: CG Architects; STAHR & ASSOCIATES, INC.

BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA

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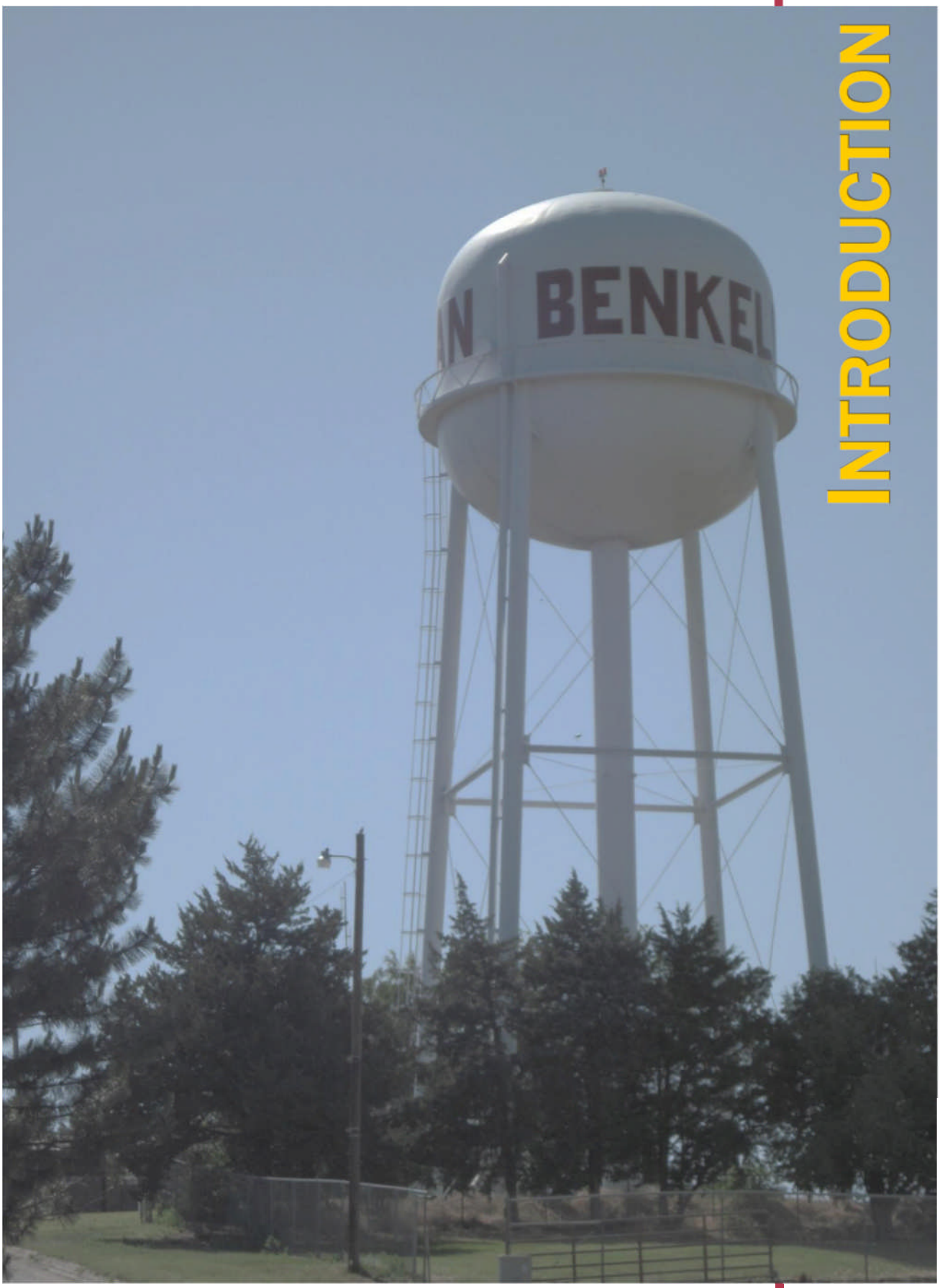


INTRODUCTION

LOCATION

Benkelman is located in the southwest corner of Nebraska. It lies at the intersection of US Highway 34 and Nebraska Highway 61 in Dundy County. The Republican River runs along the southern portion of the community. The community also lies approximately 3 ½ miles north of the Nebraska-Kansas Stateline.

HISTORY OF BENKELMAN

Years ago Dundy County was the home of the buffalo, antelope, and deer. Located in the southwest corner of the state, it borders on Kansas and Colorado. Created by act of the legislature in 1873, it was named for the circuit judge Elmer Dundy. A map published in 1880 indicates that Dundy County, still unsurveyed, was a precinct of Hitchcock County with a population of 37. A post office named "Elmer" for Elmer Miller, owner of "25 Ranch," was at the forks of what was then called the Arikaree River and Republican Rivers. This is where the town of Benkelman is now located.

Oren Edmond's Homestead 1890s.

That post office was later named "Collinville," for Moses Collins, and was an important location for meetings or directing travelers. The Burlington & Missouri River Railroad line, surveyed in 1870 and completed to Denver in 1882, made Collinville a station. The town was named county seat in 1884, with elected officers from Haigler, Parks, and Max precincts.

James Gorthy, his brother Tom and two other lads from New York, came to this area in 1886. They improved upon homesteads and worked for the cattlemen, helping herd cattle to market. By 1887 there were five large herds on the open range along the Republican River.

The biggest cattle operation was owned by the Benkelman brothers. The railroad promised to name the town for them if they shipped their cattle by rail to the Omaha market rather than to herd them to other locations. In the fall of 1885 they brought in 20 loads for the initial trip, and the station was promptly renamed "Benkelman."

In 1887 bridges were built across the river at Haigler and Benkelman. The first school was in a sod house in Collinville, with Mrs.Harrison as teacher. In 1888 this location, now Benkelman, was also the first organized public school in the county, with the teacher paid $35 a month for the three-month term.

The first sermon was preached at Parks, half way between Benkelman and Haigler, by Reverend Marion. He established a Presbyterian Church. The first members were the Logan, Hamilton, Blair, and Bratton families.

Another small settlement established in the 1880s, called Max, is located on the Republican River east of Benkelman. Max Monvoison served as post master for 20 years.

There was a great rush of new settlers from 1885 to 1887. With homesteading acres expanded, many people filed their claims on the flat open ranges in this part of the state.

The first Dundy County Fair was held in September 1911 right on the Main Street in Benkelman.

The Depression hit this area very hard. Banks closed, and giant dust storms covered the country. In 1935 a flood roared down both branches of the Republican River with little or no warning. About 168 people lost their lives in the torrent. It swept people, horses, cattle, pigs, homes, farm buildings, trees, and railroad tracks away in its current. Flood waters spread over the pastures and cropland, leaving trees uprooted, the soil eroded, and little evidence that people had once lived along its banks.

The rivers made restitution in their own way. The valley is now a beautiful scene, covered with trees, bountiful croplands, with animals grazing peacefully.

Ward Bond, native son, grew up in Benkelman, attended USC where he played football, and got a job as an extra in a movie. Best remembered for his role in "Wagon Train."

Over the years, many Dundy County boys served their country in wartime. Hermon Bond was killed in France in World War I. In World War II Jerry Biber, MIA, and Richard Bible, died in France. Again in the 1960s, war caused deep grief and resentful feelings as several more Dundy County boys gave their lives. Each year the American Legion honors the memory of these men and other who paid the supreme price to keep America free.

Benkelman takes great pride in the talents of Ward Bond who was born and raised in this community. The family of this well-known actor, the Bonds', Baney, and Ham families, still live in Benkelman. The town has honored Ward Bond with road signs identifying this as his home town, and naming the city park in his memory.

Benkelman has prospered because of improved methods of farming, good services to its citizens, modern transportation and communications that keep the town looking forward.

By Anna Gorthy Benge. Rachel Porter, Box 138, Benkelman, NE 69021.

ADDITIONAL MATERIAL:

"Teepees to Sodhouses", by Everett Sutton
Southwest Nebraska, by Everett Sutton
"Dundy County Heritage" Dundy County Extension Council
http://www.casde.unl.edu/history/counties/dundy/benkelman/index.php

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The Benkelman Comprehensive Development Plan is designed to promote orderly growth and development for the community, as well as providing policy guidelines to enable citizens and elected officials to make informed decisions about the future of the community.

The Plan is only one of several tools within the toolbox that helps guide the community into the future.

The Comprehensive Development Plan will provide a guideline for the location of future developments within the planning jurisdiction of Benkelman. The Comprehensive Development Plan is intended to encourage a strong economic base for the City so all goals can be achieved.

The Comprehensive Development Plan is an information and management tool for City leaders to use in their decision-making process when considering future developments. The Comprehensive Development Plan is not a static document; it should evolve as changes in the land-use, population or local economy occur during the planning period.

Planned growth will make Benkelman more effective in serving residents, more efficient in using resources, and able to meet the standard of living and quality of life every individual desires.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan begins with the development of general goals and policies, based upon current and future issues faced by the City and its residents. These are intended to be practical guidelines for addressing existing conditions and guiding future growth.

In conjunction with the first phase, the data collection phase will being occurring. Data are collected that provide a snapshot of the past and present conditions within the community. Analysis of data provides the basis for developing forecasts for future land use demands, as well as future needs regarding housing and facilities.

The Comprehensive Development Plan is a vision presented in text, graphics and tables representing the desires of the City and its residents for the future.

The third phase of the Comprehensive Development Plan represents a blueprint....designed to identify, assess, and develop actions and policies in the areas of population, land use, transportation, housing, economic development, community facilities, and utilities. The Comprehensive Development Plan contains recommendations that when implemented will be of value to the City and its residents.

Implementation is the final phase of the process. The Comprehensive Development Plan identifies the tools, programs, and methods necessary to carry out the recommendations. Nevertheless, the implementation of the development policies contained within the Comprehensive Development Plan is dependent upon the adoption of the Plan by the governing body, and the leadership exercised by the present and future elected and appointed officials of the City.

PLAN PREPARATION

The Plan was prepared under the direction of the Benkelman Planning Commission, with the assistance and participation of the Benkelman City Council, City staff, the Plan Review Committee and citizens of Benkelman. The time period for achieving the goals, programs, and developments identified in the Benkelman Comprehensive Development Plan is 20 years. However, the City should review the Plan annually and update the document every ten years, or when a pressing need is identified. Completing updates every ten years or so will allow the City to incorporate ideas and developments that were not known at the time of the present comprehensive planning process.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPONENTS

Nebraska State Statutes require the inclusion of certain elements in a Comprehensive Plan. A "Comprehensive Development Plan," as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 19-903 (Reissue 1997), shall meet the following descriptions and requirements:

> *The regulations and restrictions authorized by sections 19-901 to 19-915 shall be in accordance with a comprehensive development plan which shall consist of both graphic and textual material and shall be designed to accommodate anticipated long-range future growth which shall be based upon documented population and economic projections. The comprehensive development plan shall, among other possible elements, include:*
>
> *(1) A land-use element which designates the proposed general distributions, general location, and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and lands, and other categories of public and private use of land;*
>
> *(2) The general location, character, and extent of existing and proposed major roads, streets, and highways, and air and other transportation routes and facilities;*
>
> *(3) The general location, type, capacity, and area served of present and projected or needed community facilities including recreation facilities, schools, libraries, other public buildings, and public utilities and services; and*
>
> *(4)(a) When next amended after January 1, 1995, an identification of sanitary and improvement districts, subdivisions, industrial tracts, commercial tracts, and other discrete developed areas which are or in the future may be appropriate subjects for annexation and (b) a general review of the standards and qualifications that should be met to enable the municipality to undertake annexation of such areas. Failure of the plan to identify subjects for annexation or to set out standards or qualifications for annexation shall not serve as the basis for any challenge to the validity of an annexation ordinance.*
>
> *Regulations shall be designed to lessen congestion in the streets; to secure safety from fire, panic, and other dangers; to promote health and the general welfare; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to secure safety from flood; to avoid undue concentration of population;*

to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements; to protect property against blight and depreciation; to protect the tax base; to secure economy in governmental expenditures; and to preserve, protect, and enhance historic buildings, places, and districts.

Such regulations shall be made with reasonable consideration, among other things, for the character of the district and its peculiar suitability for particular uses and with a view to conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout such municipality.

The Comprehensive Plan is comprised of the following chapters and sections:

- Envision Benkelman
  - Conduct Town Hall meetings
  - Conduct Focus Group meetings
  - Develop Goals and policies
- Profile Benkelman
  - City Assessment – Conditions and Trend Analysis
  - City Facilities
- Benkelman Tomorrow
  - Existing Land Use
  - Existing Transportation Systems
  - Future Land Use Plan
  - Transportation Plan
- Benkelman Implementation Plan

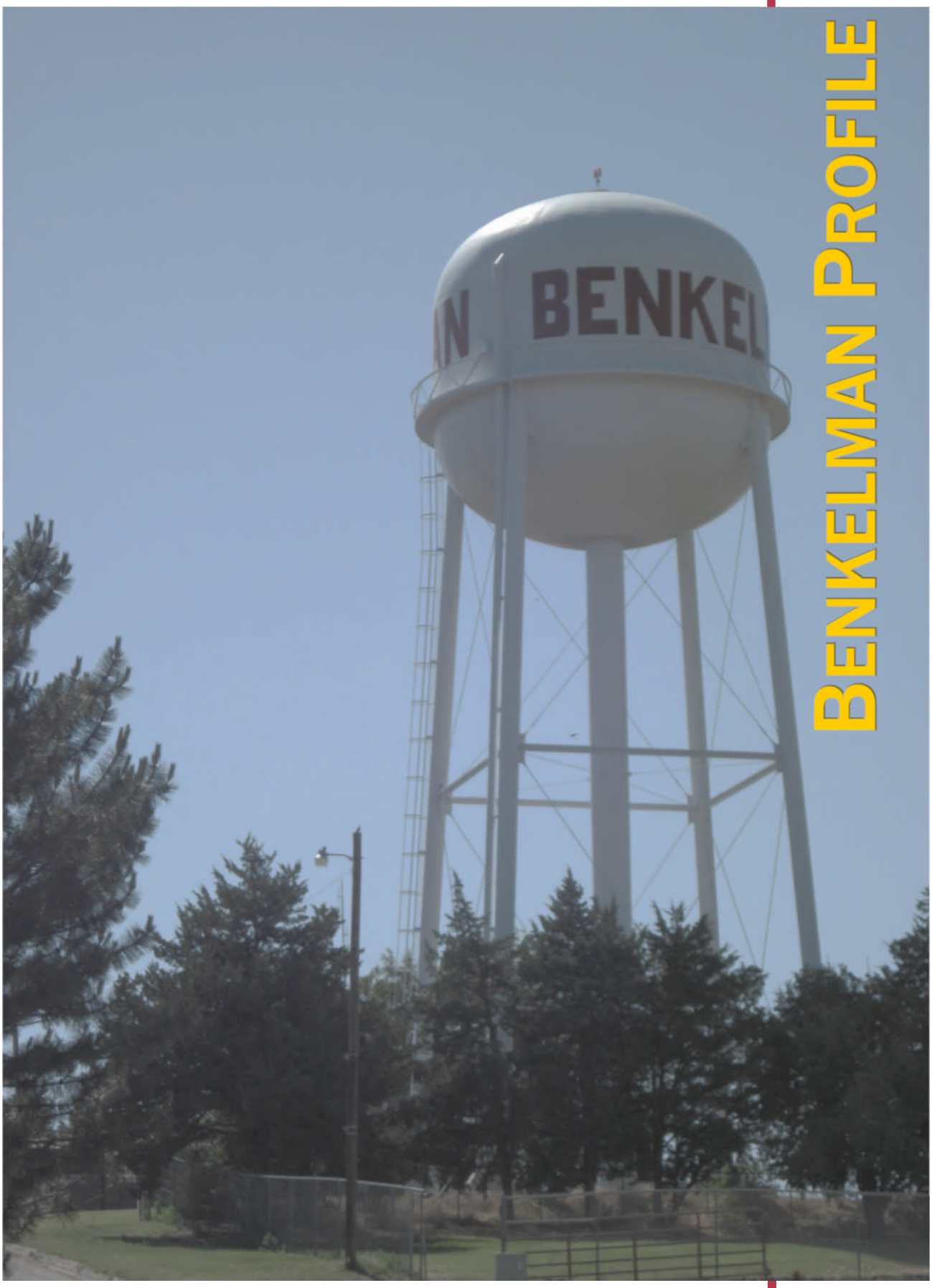
Analyzing past and existing demographic, housing, economic and social trends allows for the projection of likely conditions in the future. Projections and forecasts are useful tools in planning for the future; however, these tools are not always accurate and may change due to unforeseen factors. In addition, past trends may be skewed or the data may be inaccurate, creating a distorted picture of past conditions.

The Comprehensive Development Plan records where Benkelman has been, where it is now, and where it likely will be in the future.

Therefore, it is important for Benkelman to closely monitor population, housing and economic conditions that may impact the City. Through periodic monitoring, the City can adapt and adjust to changes at the local level. Having the ability to adapt to socio-economic change allows the City to maintain an effective Comprehensive Development Plan for the future, to enhance the quality of life, and to raise the standard of living for all residents.

GOVERNMENTAL AND JURISDICTIONAL ORGANIZATION

The Benkelman City Council performs the governmental functions for the City. Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 17-1002 (Reissue 1997), the planning and zoning jurisdiction for the City of Benkelman includes the corporate area as well as the area within one mile of their corporate limits.



BENKELMAN PROFILE

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Population statistics aid decision-makers by developing a broad picture of Benkelman. It is important for Benkelman to understand where it has been, where it is and where it appears to be going.

Population is the driving force behind housing, local employment, economic, and fiscal stability of the community. Historic population conditions assist in developing demographic projections, which in turn assist in determining future housing, retail, medical, employment and educational needs within Benkelman. Projections provide an estimate for the community to base future land-use and development decisions. However, population projections are only estimates and unforeseen factors may affect projections significantly.

Population Trends and Analysis

Table 1 indicates the population for Benkelman, the other incorporated community in Dundy County (Haigler), the unincorporated areas, and Dundy County as a whole, between 1980 and 2007. This information provides the residents of Benkelman with a better understanding of their past and present population trends and changes. In addition, this comparison allows the community to see how they compare to the other communities and the county. The Benkelman population in 2000 was 1,006 people, which was a decrease of 187 people or -15.7% from 1990. The 2007 population estimate has continued to decrease, falling to an estimated 871; a decrease of 135 or -13.4%. More importantly Benkelman has seen an overall decline in population from 1,235 people in 1980 or a change of -29.5% (nearly 1/3 of the population from 1980. Using Table 1 for a comparison with the rest of Dundy County, Benkelman between 1980 and 2007 had the worst population change in the county.

Table 1 also indicates that Benkelman and Dundy County saw very similar changes overall. However, the County saw a more dramatic change between 1980 and 1990; which was consistent with their decade to decade changes for the period. Benkelman saw a minor change between 1980 and 1990 and major dramatic one in 2000 and 2007. Overall, both Benkelman and Dundy County saw an overall population change between 1980 and 2007 of more than -29%.

TABLE 1:
POPULATION TRENDS, BENKELMAN & DUNDY COUNTY COMMUNITIES
1980 TO 2007

Community	1980	1990	% Change 1980 to 1990	2000	% Change 1990 to 2000	2007	% Change 2000 to 2007	% Change 1980 to 2007
Benkelman	**1,235**	**1,193**	**-3.4%**	**1,006**	**-15.7%**	**871**	**-13.4%**	**-29.5%**
Haigler	225	225	0.0%	211	-6.2%	189	-10.4%	-16.0%
Incorporated Areas	1,460	1,418	-2.9%	1,217	-14.2%	1,060	-12.9%	-27.4%
Unincorporated Areas	1,401	1,164	-16.9%	1,075	-7.6%	963	-10.4%	-31.3%
Dundy County	**2,861**	**2,582**	**-9.8%**	**2,292**	**-11.2%**	**2,023**	**-11.7%**	**-29.3%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980 - 1990, 2000, 2007

Migration Analysis

Migration Analysis allows a community to understand a specific dynamic that is influencing population change. Migration indicates the population size that has migrated in or out of the community over a given period of time. Determining actual migration numbers for Benkelman is difficult due to the limited availability of certain data.

For purposes of examining population movement, there is only one readily available data source from the US Census and that is identifying where people lived in 1995, prior to the most current Census data from 2000.

TABLE 2:
RESIDENCE IN 1995

Total Population 5 years and older	978
Same House in 1995	649
Different House in the U.S. in 1995	327
Same County	152
Different County	175
Same State	78
Different State	97
Elsewhere in 1995	2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Based upon the data in Table 2, there were 175 people that lived outside of Dundy County in 1995. By April 1, 2000 these 175 people had moved to Benkelman to live. Based upon these sources of data, Benkelman saw an in-migration of 175 people between 1995 and 2000. However, the community overall lost 187 people between 1990 and 2000. This is indicating that there were a number of people either leaving the community (permanently moving away or moving away for school) and/or dying off. Without the more specific data it is difficult to pinpoint all of the dynamics at work. However, the fact that 175 people moved into the community between 1995 and 2000 is a positive indication that Benkelman and its quality of life is attracting people from outside the county and the state.

Age Structure Analysis

Age structure is an important component of population analysis. By analyzing age structure, one can determine which age groups (cohorts) within Benkelman are being affected by population shifts and changes. Each age cohort affects the population in a number of different ways. For example, the existence of larger young cohorts (20-44 years) means that there is a greater ability to sustain future population growth than does larger older cohorts. On the other hand, if the large, young cohorts maintain their relative size, but do not increase the population as expected, they will, as a group, tend to strain the resources of an area as they age. Understanding what is happening within the age groups of the County's population is necessary to effectively plan for the future.

TABLE 3:
AGE-SEX CHARACTERISTICS, BENKELMAN
1990 TO 2000

Age	1990		2000		1990-2000		1990-2000	
	Male and Female	% of Total	Male and Female	% of Total	Net Change	% Change	Cohort Change	% Change
0-4	50	4.2%	45	4.5%	-5	-10.0%	45	-
5-9	83	7.0%	53	5.3%	-30	-36.1%	53	-
10-14	78	6.5%	52	5.2%	-26	-33.3%	2	4.0%
15-19	74	6.2%	76	7.6%	2	2.7%	-7	-8.4%
20-24	46	3.9%	34	3.4%	-12	-26.1%	-44	-56.4%
25-29	59	4.9%	38	3.8%	-21	-35.6%	-36	-48.6%
30-34	79	6.6%	45	4.5%	-34	-43.0%	-1	-2.2%
35-44	150	12.6%	129	12.8%	-21	-14.0%	-9	-6.5%
45-54	88	7.4%	156	15.5%	68	77.3%	6	4.0%
55-64	129	10.8%	79	7.9%	-50	-38.8%	-9	-10.2%
65-74	170	14.2%	108	10.7%	-62	-36.5%	-21	-16.3%
75 & older	188	15.7%	191	19.0%	3	1.6%	-167	-46.6%
Total	**1,194**	**100.0%**	**1,006**	**100.0%**	**-188**	**-15.7%**	**-188**	**-15.7%**

1990		2000		Total Change	
Under 18 years of age	259	Under 18 years of age	201	18 and under	**-58**
% of total population	21.7%	% of total population	20.0%	% change	**-22.4%**
Total 65 yrs and older	358	Total 65 yrs and older	299	65 and older	**-59**
% of total population	30.0%	% of total population	29.7%	% change	**-16.5%**
Median Age	43.4	Median Age	47.2	Median Age	**3.8**
Total Females	673	Total Females	561	Total Females	**-112**
Total Males	520	Total Males	445	Total Males	**-75**
Dependency Ratio	1.07	Dependency Ratio	0.99		
Total Population	**1,194**	**Total Population**	**1,006**	**Total Change**	**-188**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000

Younger age cohorts are the key to future growth and population stability

Table 3 exhibits the age cohort structure for Benkelman in 1990 and 2000. Examining population age structure may indicate significant changes affecting the different population segments within the community. Realizing how many persons are in each age cohort, and at what rate the age cohorts are changing in size, will allow for informed decision-making in order to maximize the future use of resources. As shown in Table 3, changes between 1990 and 2000 occurred within a number of different age group cohorts.

One method of analyzing cohort movement in a population involves comparing the number of persons aged between 0 and 4 years in 1990 with the number of persons in the same age cohort 10 years later, or aged between 10 and 14 years in 2000. For example, in Benkelman, there were 50 children between the ages of 0 and 4 in 1990, and in 2000 there were 52 children between the ages of 10 and 14, an increase of two children. A review of population by this method permits one to undertake a detailed analysis of which specific cohorts are moving in and out of the community. The positive change in this cohort indicates in-migration into the community.

TABLE 4:
POSITIVE COHORTS
1990 TO 2000

1990 Age Cohort	Number	2000 Age Cohort	Number	Change
NA	NA	0 - 4 years	45 persons	+ 45 persons
NA	NA	5 - 9 years	53 persons	+ 53 persons
0 - 4 years	50 persons	10 - 14 years	52 persons	+ 2 persons
35 - 44 years	150 persons	45 - 54 years	156 persons	+ 6 persons
Total Change				**+ 106 persons**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000

Benkelman saw growth in only four age cohorts. The 0 to 4 and 5 to 9 cohorts always indicate an increase, since these persons were not born when the previous census was completed. Note that the cohorts represented in Table 3 differ from those listed below in Tables 4 and 5 due to the consolidation of the 25-29 and 30-34 cohorts from 1990 into a 35-44 cohort in 2000. Outside of the 2000 age groups of 0-4 and 5-9 years, the greatest increase was the 35-44 (2000) age group.

TABLE 5:
NEGATIVE COHORTS
1990 TO 2000

1990 Age Cohort	Number	2000 Age Cohort	Number	Change
5 - 9 years	83 persons	15 - 19 years	76 persons	- 7 persons
10 – 14 years	78 persons	20 - 24 years	34 persons	- 44 persons
15 - 19 years	74 persons	25 - 29 years	38 persons	- 36 persons
20 - 24 years	46 persons	30 -34 years	45 persons	- 1 persons
25 - 34 years	138 persons	35 - 44 years	129 persons	- 9 persons
45 - 54 years	88 persons	55 - 64 years	79 persons	- 9 persons
55 – 64 years	129 persons	65 – 74 years	108 persons	-21 persons
65 years +	358 persons	75 years +	191 persons	- 167 persons
Total Change				**- 294 persons**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990 and 2000

There were eight of the age-cohorts that existed in 1990 that declined in 2000. The cohort with the greatest loss was the 75 years + (2000) which lost 167 persons over the 10 year period. This is the vast majority of the loss seen in Benkelman and accounts for over 56% of the total population losses. The majority of this loss is likely attributed to two causes, 1) people moving on after 65 years to other communities and senior care facilities, or 2) a dying population base.

The median age in Benkelman increased from 43.4 years in 1990 to 47.2 years in 2000. This increase equaled 3.8 years or an increase of 8.7%.

The proportion of persons less than 18 years of age decreased by 22.4% between 1990 and 2000, while those aged 65 years and older decreased by 16.5% overall. The population proportion for 18 years and younger and those 65 years and older can be examined to determine another piece of useful data called the "dependency ratio".

Dependency Ratio

The dependency ratio examines the portion of a community's earnings that is spent supporting age groups typically and historically dependent on the incomes of others.

- < 1: 1 Independent resident is able to support more than 1 Dependent resident
- =1: 1 Independent resident able to support 1 Dependent resident
- >1: 1 Independent resident able to support less than 1 Dependent resident

(%18 years and younger + % 65 years +

In 1990, Benkelman had a Dependency Ratio of 1.07 (51.7%/48.3%); however, by 2000 the Ratio had decreased to 0.99 (49.7%/50.3%). This is supported by the substantial decrease in the 75+ age group and no increases in the under 18 age groups.

Population Projections

Population Projections are estimates based upon past and present circumstances. The use of population projections allows Benkelman to estimate what the population will be in future years by looking at past trends. By scrutinizing population changes in this manner, the City will be able to develop a baseline of change from which future scenarios can be generated. A number of factors (demographics, economics, social, etc.) may affect projections positively or negatively. At the present time, these projections are the best crystal ball Benkelman has for predicting future population changes. There are many methods to project the future population trends; the four projections used below are intended to give Benkelman a broad overview of the possible population changes that could occur in the future.

Trend Line Analysis

Trend Line Analysis is a process of projecting future populations based upon changes during a specified period of time. In the analysis of Benkelman, four different trend lines were reviewed: 1960 to 2007, 1980 to 2007, 1990 to 2007, and 2000 to 2007. A review of these trend lines indicates Benkelman will see varied growth scenarios during the coming 30 years. The following projections summarize the decennial population for Benkelman through 2030.

Benkelman Trend Analysis

Year	1960 to 2007	1980 to 2007	1990 to 2007	2000 to 2007
2010	849 persons	842 persons	830 persons	821 persons
2020	778 persons	751 persons	698 persons	664 persons
2030	713 persons	669 persons	587 persons	536 persons

Cohort Survival Analysis

Cohort Survival Analysis reviews the population by different age groups and sex. The population age groups are then projected forward by decade using survival rates for the different age cohorts. This projection model accounts for average birth rates by sex and adds the new births into the future population.

The Cohort Survival Model projection indicates Benkelman's population will decline slightly in 2010 and then begin a steady increase each decade through 2030. The following projection for Benkelman is based on applying survival rates to age cohorts, but does not consider the effects of either in-migration or out-migration.

Benkelman Cohort Survival Analysis

Year	Cohort Survival Model
2010	899 persons
2020	934 persons
2030	962 persons

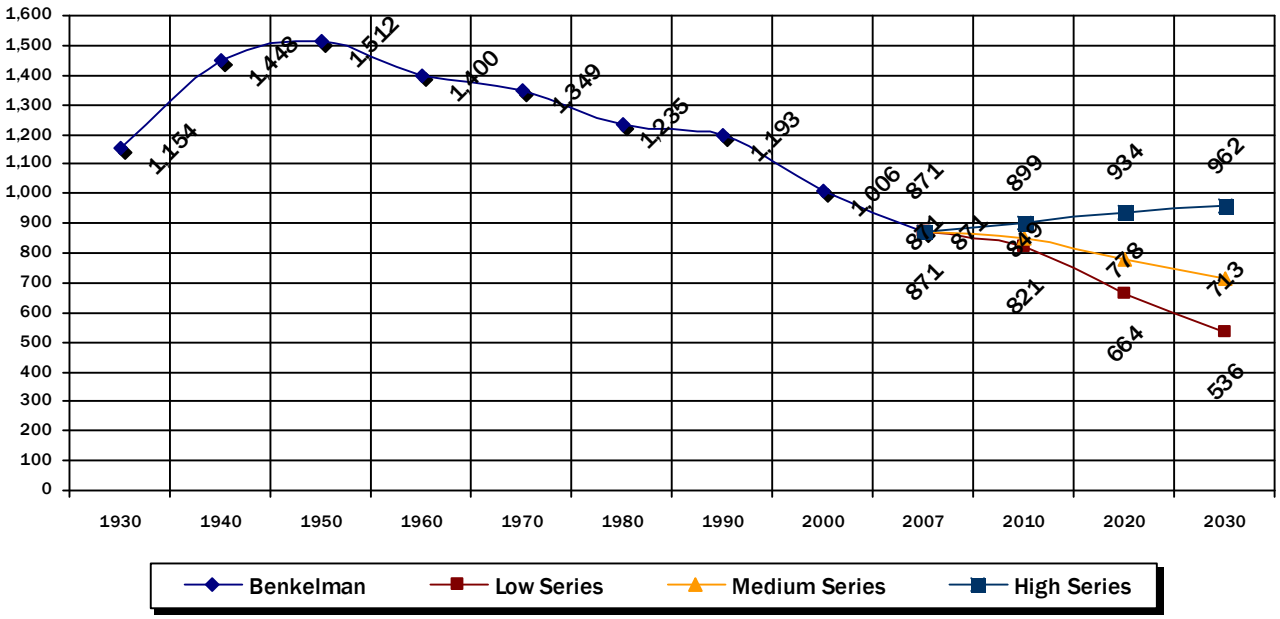
Summary of Population Projections

Using the modeling techniques discussed in the previous paragraphs, a summary of the five population projections for Benkelman through the year 2030 is shown in Figure 1. Three population projection scenarios were selected and include (1) a Low Series; (2) a Medium Series; and, (3) a High Series. Two of the three projections forecast an overall increase for Benkelman through the year 2030. The following population projections indicate the different scenarios that may be encountered by Benkelman through the year 2030.

Year	Low = *2000-2007)*	Medium = *1960-2007*	*High = Cohort*
2010	821 persons	849 persons	899 persons
2020	664 persons	778 persons	934 persons
2030	536 persons	713 persons	962 persons

Figure 1 reviews the population history of Benkelman between 1930 and 2007, and identifies the three population projection scenarios into the years 2010, 2020, and 2030. Figure 1 indicates the peak population for Benkelman occurred in 1950 with 1,512 people. Beginning in 1960, Benkelman has had and overall steady population. However, the most critical decline appears to be occurring between 2000 and 2007; since this period is entirely based upon population estimates it will be critical for Benkelman to reevaluate these trends in approximately 2012 when the new 2010 Census data is released.

FIGURE 1:
POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS, BENKELMAN
1930 TO 2030



Source: U.S. Census Bureau

As stated previously, the projections have been developed from data and past trends, as well as present conditions. A number of external and internal demographic, economic and social factors may affect these population forecasts. Benkelman should monitor population trends, size and composition periodically in order to understand in what direction their community is heading. Benkelman's greatest population threats will continue to be out-migration of youth, and strategies should be developed to further examine and prevent this phenomenon.

HOUSING PROFILE

The Housing Profile in this Plan identifies existing housing characteristics and projected housing needs for residents of Benkelman. The primary goal of the housing profile is to allow the community to examine past and present conditions; while, identifying potential needs including provisions for safe, decent, sanitary and affordable housing for every family and individual residing within community.

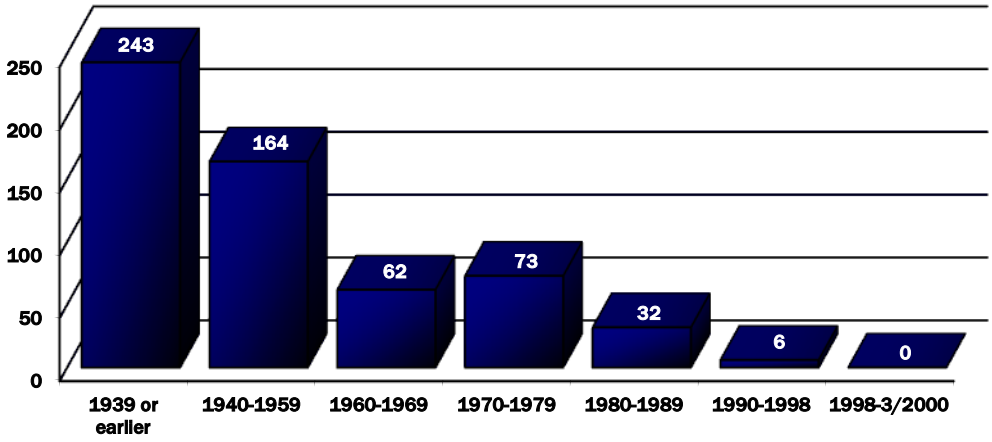
The housing profile is an analysis that aids in determining the composition of owner-occupied and renter-occupied units, as well as the existence of vacant units. It is important to evaluate information on the value of owner-occupied housing units, and monthly rents for renter-occupied housing units, to determine if housing costs are a financial burden to Benkelman residents.

To project future housing needs, several factors must be considered. These factors include population change, household income, employment rates, land use patterns, and residents' attitudes. The following tables and figures provide the information to aid in determining future housing needs and develop policies designed to accomplish the housing goals for Benkelman.

Age of Existing Housing Stock

An analysis of the age of Benkelman's housing stock reveals a great deal about population and economic conditions of the past. The age of the housing stock may also indicate the need for rehabilitation efforts, or new construction within the community. Examining the housing stock is important in order to understand the overall quality of housing and the quality of life in Benkelman.

FIGURE 2:
AGE OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK, BENKELMAN
2000



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, SF3, 2000

Figure 2 indicates 243, or 41.9% of Benkelman's 580 total housing units, were constructed prior to 1940. There were 164 housing units, or 28.3% of the total, constructed between 1940 and 1959. Therefore, 70.2% of the community's housing stock is at least 50 years old. Between 1970 and 1979 there were 73 housing units or 12.6% of the total units built. Since 1979 there has only been 38 new units constructed, as of the 2000 US Census.

Nearly 3/4 of Benkelman's housing units were built prior to 1960, due to the age of these units there may be a need for a housing rehabilitation program or other similar programs to assist with improving the quality and energy efficiency of some of these older homes. Additionally, the community may need to examine a demolition option for some of the units that are beyond rehabilitation may be necessary. All of these options are examined within the Benkelman Housing Study completed in 2010.

Housing Trends

An analysis of housing trends can reveal a great deal about the different sectors of the population in the community. Housing trends indicate the breakdown between owner- or renter-occupied housing as well as the number of people living in Group Quarters. Examining housing trends is important in order to understand the overall diversity of the population and their quality of life within Benkelman.

TABLE 6:
COMMUNITY HOUSING TRENDS, BENKELMAN
1990 AND 2000

Selected Characteristics	1990	2000	% Change 1990-2000
Population	1,193	1,006	-15.7%
Persons in Household	1,129	950	-15.9%
Persons in Group Quarters	64	56	-12.5%
Persons per Household	2.09	2.07	-1.0%
Total Housing Units	621	576	-7.2%
Occupied Housing Units	539	458	-15.0%
Owner-occupied units	379	347	-8.4%
Renter-occupied units	160	111	-30.6%
Vacant Housing Units	27	118	337.0%
Owner-Occupied vacancy rate	1.0%	6.2%	520.0%
Renter-Occupied vacancy rate	12.6%	22.9%	81.7%
Single-family Units	485	471	-2.9%
Duplex/Multiple-family units	90	74	-17.8%
Mobile Homes, trailer, other	46	33	-28.3%
Median Contract Rent - 1990 and 2000			
Benkelman	$144	$255	**77.1%**
Nebraska	**$348**	**$491**	**41.1%**
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units - 1990 and 2000			
Benkelman	$27,900	$31,900	**14.3%**
Nebraska	**$50,000**	**$88,000**	**76.0%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000

Table 6 indicates that 179 fewer people lived in households in 2000 than in 1990; this was a change of -15.9% compared to an overall population change of -15.7%. In addition the number of people living in Group Quarters[1] in 2000 decreased from 64 persons in 1990 to 56 persons in 2000, a change of -12.5%. Benkelman saw significant declines in all aspects of the community's housing makeup. In addition, the number of persons per household decreased from 2.09 to 2.07 persons. The trend nationally has been towards a declining household size; however, Benkelman appears to be slightly lower than what would be expected for a similar community.

Table 6 also indicates the number of occupied housing units increased from 539 in 1990 to 458 in 2000, or -15.0%. Due to the significant decline in occupied housing units, the number of vacant units saw a major increase from 27 in 1990 to 118 in 2000 or an increase of 337.0%. Single-family housing units decreased slightly from 485 in 1990 to 471 in 2000, or -2.9%. Duplex and multi-family housing also saw a decrease going from 90 units in 1990 to

[1] Group Quarters identifies people that are living in special housing conditions such as a nursing home facility.

74 units in 2000, or -17.8%. Finally, during the same period, mobile homes and trailers decreased from 46 units in 1990 to 33 units in 2000 or -28.3%.

Median contract rent in Benkelman increased from $144 per month in 1990 to $255 per month in 2000, or 77.1%. The State's median monthly contract rent increased by 41.1%. This indicates Benkelman has seen contract rent increase at a greater rate than the state but was still less than the state's average by nearly 50%. Comparing changes in monthly rents between 1990 and 2000 with the Consumer Price Index[2] (CPI) enables the local housing market to be compared to national economic conditions. Inflation between 1990 and 2000 increased at a rate of 32.1%, indicating Benkelman rents increased at a rate over 2 ½ times faster than the rate of inflation. Thus, Benkelman tenants were paying considerably higher monthly rents in 2000, in terms of real dollars, than they were in 1990, on average. However, it is critical to note that the rates in 1990 were considerably less than the state's median value.

The Median value of owner-occupied housing units in Benkelman increased from $27,900 in 1990 to $31,900 in 2000 and represents an increase of 14.2%. The median value for owner-occupied housing units in the state showed an increase of 76.0%. Housing values in Benkelman increased at a rate considerably less than the statewide average. In addition, the median value for owner-occupied units grew at a rate approximately ½ the CPI. This indicates housing values statewide exceeded inflation and were valued considerably higher in 2000, in terms of real dollars, than in 1990, on average; however, the median value in Benkelman was even less in 2000 than in 1990 in terms of real dollars.

In terms of real dollars, tenants in Benkelman were paying greater contract rent. This trend is consistent with the state, as data show housing costs across Nebraska have exceeded inflation.

The residents in the community actually saw the median value of an owner-occupied unit decline during this period. This trend was not similar to the state of Nebraska and may be a result of several factors including:

- Location of Benkelman in the state
- Market forces due to the number of vacant units identified in the 2000 US Census

Recent market forces during the recent economic downturn may impact the value of housing in Benkelman even more causing an even smaller increase if not a slight decrease in the value of the housing. It may take several years of this planning period to fully see the complete and eventual impact of the present time.

[2] If the median value of a home increases at the same rate as inflation (CPI) then it has the same value in the resulting year compared to the beginning year (in real dollars).

TABLE 7:
HOUSING UNITS BY COMMUNITY, DUNDY COUNTY AND COMMUNITIES
2000

Community	Housing Units 2000	Occupied Housing Units 2000	Vacant Units 2000	Owner Occupied 2000	Renter Occupied 2000	Persons per Household 2000
Benkelman	576	458	118	347	111	2.07
Haigler	104	92	12	78	14	2.29
Incorporated Areas	680	550	130	425	125	2.18
Unincorporated Areas	516	411	105	274	137	-
Dundy County	1,196	961	235	699	262	2.29

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Table 7 compares some of the housing data of Benkelman from Table 6 with the other community in Dundy County, as well as the county. One key item to note is the Persons per Household in Benkelman as compared to Haigler and the county was considerably lower. In addition, ½ of all vacant within Dundy County; however, there are nearly as many vacant units within the unincorporated areas of Dundy County.

TABLE 8:
TENURE OF HOUSEHOLD BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS, BENKELMAN
1990 TO 2000

Householder Characteristic	1990				2000				O.O.	R.O.
	Owner-Occupied	% O.O	Renter-Occupied	% R.O	Owner-Occupied	% O.O	Renter-Occupied	% R.O	Percent Change	
Tenure by Number of Persons in Housing Unit (Occupied Housing Units)										
1 person	109	28.8%	98	59.0%	116	33.4%	61	55.0%	6.4%	-37.8%
2 persons	141	37.3%	29	17.5%	131	37.8%	24	21.6%	-7.1%	-17.2%
3 persons	55	14.6%	12	7.2%	52	15.0%	12	10.8%	-5.5%	0.0%
4 persons	52	13.8%	15	9.0%	33	9.5%	11	9.9%	-36.5%	-26.7%
5 persons	14	3.7%	6	3.6%	13	3.7%	1	0.9%	-7.1%	-83.3%
6 persons or more	7	1.9%	6	3.6%	2	0.6%	2	1.8%	-71.4%	-66.7%
TOTAL	378	100.0%	166	100.0%	347	100.0%	111	100.0%	-8.2%	-33.1%
Tenure by Age of Householder (Occupied Housing Units)										
15 to 24 years	2	0.5%	34	30.6%	5	1.4%	15	13.5%	150.0%	-55.9%
25 to 34 years	36	9.5%	33	29.7%	24	6.9%	20	18.0%	-33.3%	-39.4%
35 to 44 years	68	18.0%	27	24.3%	58	16.7%	16	14.4%	-14.7%	-40.7%
45 to 54 years	51	13.5%	9	8.1%	74	21.3%	15	13.5%	45.1%	66.7%
55 to 64 years	50	13.2%	13	11.7%	42	12.1%	6	5.4%	-16.0%	-53.8%
65 to 74 years	83	22.0%	21	18.9%	56	16.1%	14	12.6%	-32.5%	-33.3%
75 years and over	88	23.3%	29	26.1%	88	25.4%	25	22.5%	0.0%	-13.8%
TOTAL	378	100.0%	166	149.5%	347	100.0%	111	100.0%	-8.2%	-33.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000

Table 8 shows tenure (owner-occupied and renter-occupied) of households by number and age of persons in each housing unit. Analyzing these data gives Benkelman the opportunity to determine where there may be a need for additional housing. In addition, Benkelman could target efforts for housing rehabilitation and construction at those segments of the population exhibiting the largest need.

The largest section of owner-occupied housing in Benkelman in 2000, based upon number of persons, was two person households, with 131 units, or 37.8% of the total owner-occupied units. By comparison, the largest household size for rentals was the single person households which had 61 renter-occupied housing units, or 55.0% of the total renter-occupied units. Benkelman was comprised of 332 1-or 2-person households, or 72.5% of all households. Households having 5-or more persons comprised only 4.3% of the owner-occupied segment, and 2.4% of the renter-occupied segment. Communitywide, households of 5-or more persons accounted for only 18 units, or 3.9% of the total.

When compared to 1990, only one of the six owner-occupied household groups grew in number. Owner-occupied household groups of one-person were the only group to increase, increasing by seven units, or 6.4%. None of the six renter-occupied housing unit groups saw an increase. As far as owner-occupied units, those having three-, four- and six-person households saw a substantial decrease, changing by -5.5%, -36.5%, and -71.4% respectively.

Rental-occupied units actually saw major declines in all but one size (three-person units). The ones with the greatest changes were the one-, four, five, and six persons or more groups changing by -37.8%, -26.7%, -83.3%, and -66.7% respectively.

According to the 2000 data in Table 8, the largest groups of the owner-occupied units were the 75 years and older and 45 to 54 years cohorts. The age groups accounted for 25.4% and 21.3% of the total, respectively. The two groups combined totaled 46.7%. In addition, the owner-occupied units containing persons 45 years old and older accounted for 74.9% of the total owner-occupied households. This type of scenario indicates that residents in Benkelman have been staying in their homes longer than the average community. This on the face is a positive thing; however, some of there will be a major need to turn these houses over to other residents in the future. This situation is one potential cause for the increasing vacancy rates in Benkelman; people staying in their homes longer and not turning the house over to someone else.

Tenure by age indicates 74.9% of owner-occupied housing units were comprised of persons aged 45 years and older, while 54.0% of renter-occupied units were comprised of persons aged 45 years and younger. Rental units in the possession of persons less than 34 years of age accounted for less than 50% of the total rental units. The largest category of renter-occupied units was the 75 years and older cohort, with 22.5% of the renter-occupied total; this was followed closely by the 25 to 34 and 35 to 44 age cohorts with 18.0% and 14.4% respectively.

TABLE 9:
SELECTED HOUSING CONDITIONS, BENKELMAN
1990 AND 2000

Housing Profile	Benkelman		State of Nebraska	
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
1990 Housing Units	621		660,621	
1990 Occupied Housing Units	539	86.8%	602,363	91.2%
2000 Housing Units	576		722,668	
2000 Occupied Housing Units	458	79.5%	666,184	92.2%
Change in Number of Units 1990 to 2000				
Total Change	-45	-7.2%	62,047	9.4%
Annual Change	-4.5	-0.7%	6,205	0.9%
Total Change in Occupied Units	-81	-15.0%	63,821	10.6%
Annual Change in Occupied Units	-8.1	-1.5%	6,382	1.1%
Characteristics				
1990 Units Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	1	0.2%	5,242	0.8%
1990 Units with More Than One Person per Room	3	0.5%	10,512	1.6%
2000 Units Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	0	0.0%	6,398	0.9%
2000 Units with More Than One Person per Room	6	1.0%	17,963	2.5%
Substandard Units				
1990 Total	4	0.6%	15,754	2.4%
2000 Total	6	1.0%	24,361	3.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000

Table 9 indicates changes in housing conditions and includes an inventory of substandard housing for Benkelman. The occupied household rate in Benkelman decreased from 86.8% of all housing in 1990 to 79.5% of all housing in 2000. Between 1990 and 2000, the number of housing units in Benkelman saw a change of -45, or an average of -4.5 units per year.

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines, housing units lacking complete plumbing or are overcrowded are considered substandard housing units. HUD defines a complete plumbing facility as hot and cold-piped water, a bathtub or shower, and a flush toilet. HUD defines overcrowding as more than one person per room. These criteria when applied to Benkelman indicate six housing units, or 1.0% of the total units, were substandard in 2000. However, this figure was reached by adding together the number of housing meeting one criterion to the number of housing units meeting the other criterion. However, the largest amount of substandard units was based on lack of complete plumbing.

What these data fail to consider are housing units that have met both criterion and any such housing unit was counted twice, once under each criterion. Even so, the community should not assume that these data overestimate the number of substandard housing. Housing units containing major defects requiring rehabilitation or upgrading to meet building, electrical or plumbing codes should also be included in an analysis of substandard housing. A comprehensive survey of the entire housing stock should be completed every five years to determine and identify the housing units that would benefit from remodeling or rehabilitation work. This process will help ensure that a community maintains a high quality of life for its residents through protecting the quality and quantity of its housing stock.

ECONOMIC AND EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

Economic data are collected in order to understand area markets, changes in economic activity and employment needs and opportunities within Benkelman. In this section, employment by industry, household income statistics, and commuter analyses were reviewed for Benkelman and Nebraska.

Income Statistics

Income statistics for households are important for determining the earning power of households in a community. The data presented here show household income levels for Benkelman in comparison to the state. These data were reviewed to determine whether households experienced income increases at a rate comparable to the state of Nebraska and the Consumer Price Index (CPI). Note that income statistics may exhibit different numbers than housing statistics; for example, Table 8 shows that there were 458 households in Benkelman in 2000, but Table 10 shows that there were only 455. Discrepancies of this nature are to be expected, and can be accounted for by the fact that these data were derived from different census survey formats.

TABLE 10:
HOUSEHOLD INCOME, BENKELMAN
1990 AND 2000

Household Income Ranges	1990				2000			
	Benkelman	% of Total	State of Nebraska	% of Total	Benkelman	% of Total	State of Nebraska	% of Total
Less than $10,000	121	24.2%	95,602	15.9%	58	12.7%	55,340	8.3%
$10,000 to $14,999	84	16.8%	64,661	10.7%	55	12.1%	43,915	6.6%
$15,000 to $24,999	145	29.1%	128,454	21.3%	93	20.4%	98,663	14.8%
$25,000 to $34,999	89	17.8%	108,560	18.0%	71	15.6%	97,932	14.7%
$35,000 to $49,999	31	6.2%	107,111	17.8%	58	12.7%	122,654	18.4%
$50,000 and over	29	5.8%	98,470	16.3%	120	26.4%	248,491	37.3%
Total	**499**	**100.0%**	**602,858**	**100.0%**	**455**	**100.0%**	**666,995**	**100.0%**
Median Household Income	$17,418		$26,016		$27,788		$39,250	
Number of Households	499		602,858		455		666,995	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Table 10 indicates the number of households in each income range for Benkelman for 1990 and 2000. In 1990, the household income range most commonly reported was $15,000 to $24,999, which accounted for 29.1% of all households. By 2000, the income range reported most was the $50,000 and over which accounted for 26.4% of the total. Those households earning less than $15,000 decreased from 41.0% in 1990 to 24.8% in 2000, nearly ½ of the 1990 total.

One key item to note for both the 1990 and 2000 data is that household incomes in Benkelman were considerably less than compared to the entire state. In 1990 the Median Household Income for Benkelman was $17,418 compared to $26,016 for the state of Nebraska; a difference of approximately $9,000 and was 67% of the Median state income.

By 2000, the Benkelman Median Household Income increased by 59.5% to $27,788. The Median Household Income for the state of Nebraska during the same period increased by 50.8% to $39,250. The positive in Benkelman's increase is that it exceeded the CPI of 32.1% for the same period; this means that households in Benkelman were earning more in terms of real dollars in 2000 than in 1990. However, the Benkelman Median Household Income compared to the state of Nebraska saw an even greater gap appear; increasing to $11,462 but was only 70.8% of the state median household income.

TABLE 11:
HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE (55 YEARS & OLDER) BENKELMAN 2000

Income Categories	55 to 64 years	65 to 74 years	75 years and over	Households age 55 and over	Households age 55 and over	Total Households	% of Total Households age 55 & over
Less than $10,000	2	18	13	**33**	15.3%	28	117.9%
$10,000 to $14,999	1	12	20	**33**	15.3%	28	117.9%
$15,000 to $24,999	16	10	24	**50**	23.3%	83	60.2%
$25,000 to $34,999	4	8	17	**29**	13.5%	53	54.7%
$35,000 to $49,999	6	8	9	**23**	10.7%	100	23.0%
$50,000 or more	17	14	16	**47**	21.9%	118	39.8%
Total	**46**	**70**	**99**	**215**	**100.0%**	**410**	**52.4%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Table 11 indicates household income for Benkelman householders aged 55 years and over in 2000. The purpose for this information is to determine the income level of Benkelman's senior households. The Table indicates 215 households meeting this criterion. Of the 215 households in Table 11, 116 or 53.9% had incomes less than $25,000 per year. Furthermore, 66 of these households, or 30.6% of the total households, had incomes less than $15,000 per year; in addition, these 66 households accounted for 58.4% of all households in the community earning less than $15,000. Another oddity is that 47 households or 39.2% of all households earning $50,000 or more fit into the 55 years and older category.

This information indicates many of these households could be eligible for housing assistance to ensure they continue to live at an appropriate standard of living. The number of senior households will likely continue to grow during the next twenty years. Typically, as the size of the 55 and over age cohort increases, these fixed income households may be required to provide for their entire housing needs during a longer period of time. In addition, the fixed incomes that seniors tend to live on generally decline at a faster rate than any other segment of the population, in terms of real dollars. As data from the 2010 US Census becomes available the community may need to review these statistics for additional changes.

TABLE 12:
HOUSING COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME, BENKELMAN 2000

Income Categories	Owner-Occupied Households	% O.O. Households	Renter-Occupied Households	% R.O. Households	Total Households	% of Total Households
Less than $10,000						
Less than 30% of income	13	4.2%	7	8.1%	**20**	**5.0%**
More than 30% of income	12	3.8%	15	17.4%	**27**	**6.8%**
$10,000 to $19,999						
Less than 30% of income	42	13.4%	23	26.7%	**65**	**16.4%**
More than 30% of income	18	5.8%	4	4.7%	**22**	**5.5%**
$20,000 to $34,999						
Less than 30% of income	75	24.0%	18	20.9%	**93**	**23.4%**
More than 30% of income	2	0.6%	0	0.0%	**2**	**0.5%**
$35,000 to $49,999						
Less than 30% of income	53	16.9%	4	4.7%	**57**	**14.3%**
More than 30% of income	3	1.0%	0	0.0%	**3**	**0.8%**
$50,000 or more						
Less than 30% of income	95	30.4%	15	17.4%	**110**	**27.7%**
More than 30% of income	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	**0**	**0.0%**
TOTAL	**313**	**100.0%**	**86**	**100.0%**	**399**	**100.5%**
Housing Cost Analysis						
Less than 30% of income	**278**	**88.8%**	**67**	**77.9%**	**345**	**86.5%**
More than 30% of income	**35**	**11.2%**	**19**	**22.1%**	**54**	**13.5%**
TOTAL	**313**	**100.0%**	**86**	**100.0%**	**399**	**100.0%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000

Table 12 shows owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing costs as a percentage of householder income in 2000. In addition, the Table identifies the number of households experiencing a housing cost burden. A housing cost burden, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), occurs when gross housing costs, including utility costs, exceed 30% of gross household income, based on data published by the U.S. Census Bureau. Table 12 shows 278 households, or 88.8% of total households, paid less than 30% of their income towards housing costs. This means the remaining 35 households, or 11.2% of the total, were experiencing a housing cost burden.

Comparing Benkelman to the state of Nebraska and the United States as a whole, Benkelman has a lower level of housing cost burden than either of the other entities. As mentioned, Benkelman has an 11.2% housing cost burden for Owner-occupied; 22.1% for Renter-occupied and 13.5% overall. The state of Nebraska has 15.8% and 33.0% respectively or 21.7% overall; finally, the United States has housing cost burdens of 22.0% and 39.9% respectively or 28.6% overall.

Table 13 shows owner and renter costs for householders age 55 and over. Similar trends are shown in Table 13 as were shown in Table 12. A housing cost burden affects 27

households age 55 and over. In 2000, there were 19 owner-occupied households age 55 and over with a housing cost burden or 54.3% of the total households with this burden. However, eight renter-occupied households age 55 and over experienced a housing cost burden, or 42.1% of the total households with this burden. While only 11.2% of the community population as a whole experienced a housing cost burden, 12.8% of all households over age 55 experienced a housing cost burden. This finding is of particular importance because it shows that elderly households account for 50.0% of all the households indicating a housing cost burden.

TABLE 13:
AGE 55 AND OLDER COSTS AS PERCENTAGE OF INCOME, BENKELMAN 2000

Income Categories	Owner-Occupied Households	% O.O. Households	Renter-Occupied Households	% R.O. Households	Total Households age 55 and Over	% of Total Households 55 years and older
Housing Cost Analysis						
Less than 30% of income	161	89.4%	23	74.2%	**184**	**87.2%**
More than 30% of income	19	10.6%	8	25.8%	**27**	**12.8%**
TOTAL	**180**	**100.0%**	**31**	**100.0%**	**211**	**100.0%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, SF 3 Table H71 and H96, 2000

Industry Employment

Analyzing employment by industry assists a community in determining the key components of their labor force. This section indicates the type of industry that makes up the local economy, as well as identifying particular occupations that employ residents. Table 14 indicates employment size by industry for Benkelman and the State of Nebraska for 2000 (these data indicate the types of jobs residents have, not the number of jobs locally). Unfortunately, it is not possible to compare the 2000 data with previous years due to the fact that the US Census Bureau changed the reporting category for the 2000 US Census.

TABLE 14:
EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, BENKELMAN AND THE STATE OF NEBRASKA
2000

Industry Categories	Benkelman		State of Nebraska	
	2000	% of Total	2000	% of Total
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting and Mining	58	12.1%	48,942	5.6%
Construction	42	8.7%	56,794	6.5%
Manufacturing	8	1.7%	107,439	12.2%
Wholesale Trade	17	3.5%	31,265	3.6%
Retail Trade	68	14.1%	106,303	12.1%
Transportation and warehousing and utilities	32	6.7%	53,922	6.1%
Information	11	2.3%	21,732	2.5%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	20	4.2%	67,370	7.7%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management	20	4.2%	63,663	7.3%
Educational, health, and social services	143	29.7%	181,833	20.7%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	22	4.6%	63,635	7.3%
Other services (except public administration)	26	5.4%	40,406	4.6%
Public Administration	14	2.9%	33,933	3.9%
Total Employed Persons	481	100.0%	877,237	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000

Table 14 shows that the employment sector with the greatest number of employees was the Educational, health and social services. This sector employed 143 people or 29.7% of the total employed residents. This is not an unusual circumstance in smaller communities or in Nebraska as a whole. Even though these data represent the types of jobs held by residents and do not necessarily represent specific local jobs, it can be assumed that key sectors such as Educational, health, and social services; Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing; Agriculture, Forestry and Hunting and Mining are predominately tied predominately to local employment. Protecting especially these jobs will be critical to the long-term employment health of the community.

Commuter Trends

Tables 15 show the commuter characteristics for Benkelman in 1990 and 2000. Travel time to work is another factor that can be used to gauge where Benkelman's workforce is employed. Table 15 shows how many residents of Benkelman travel to work in each of several time categories.

TABLE 15:
TRAVEL TIME TO WORK, BENKELMAN
1990 TO 2000

Travel Time Categories	1990	% of Total	2000	% of Total	% Change
Less than 5 minutes	122	24.1%	142	29.6%	16.4%
5 to 9 minutes	228	45.1%	190	39.7%	-16.7%
10 to 19 minutes	73	14.4%	69	14.4%	-5.5%
20 to 29 minutes	18	3.6%	35	7.3%	94.4%
30 to 44 minutes	26	5.1%	19	4.0%	-26.9%
45 to 59 minutes	8	1.6%	9	1.9%	12.5%
60 minutes or more	8	1.6%	8	1.7%	0.0%
Worked at home	23	4.5%	7	1.5%	-69.6%
Total	**506**	**100.0%**	**479**	**100.0%**	**-5.3%**
Mean Travel Time (minutes)	**8.9**		**10.3**		**15.7%**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1990, 2000

Table 15 indicates that there was an overall decrease in the number of people working in Benkelman in 2000 compared to 1990. The number of people working fell from 506 in 1990 to 479 in 2000 or a change of -5.3%. The -5.3% decrease in persons working compared to an overall population change of -15.7% would suggest that the overall population change was only partly impacted by a smaller workforce. This would suggest that those departing the workforce likely took children with them when they left or they retired and moved away or other external factors such as a considerable number of people already out of the workforce either moving away or dying.

Table 15 indicates the workforce in 2000 spent approximately 1 ½ minutes more traveling to work than in 1990. The average travel time increased from 8.9 minutes in 1990 to 10.3 minutes in 2000. The largest increase occurred in the less than five minutes category, which increased by 20 people or 16.4%. The second greatest group was the 20 to 29 minute category, which increased by 17 persons, or 94.4%. Several of these groups saw decreases in the number of people making a specific journey. The final group, persons working at home, also decreased going from 23 persons in 1990 to seven persons in 2000 or a change of -69.6%.

CITY FACILITIES

State and local governments provide a number of services to their citizens. The people, buildings, equipment and land utilized in the process of providing these goods and services are referred to as public facilities.

Public facilities represent a wide range of buildings, utilities, and services that are built and maintained by the different levels of government. Such facilities are provided to insure the safety, well being and enjoyment of the residents of Benkelman. These facilities and services provide residents with social, cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities, as well as law enforcement and fire protection services designed to meet area needs.

It is important for all levels of government to anticipate the future demand for their services if they are to remain strong and vital. The analysis of existing facilities and future services are contained in the Facilities Plan. Alternatively, in some instances, there are a number of services that are not provided by the local or state governmental body and thus are provided by non-governmental private or non-profit organizations for the community as a whole. These organizations are important providers of services and are in integral part of the community.

Community Facilities Plan

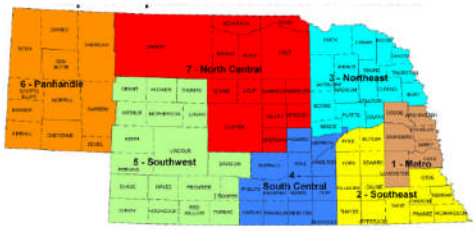
The Facilities Plan component of a Comprehensive Development Plan reviews present capacities of all public and private facilities and services.

The Facilities Plan for Benkelman is divided into the following categories:

- Recreational Facilities
- City Buildings
- Educational Facilities
- Fire and Police Protection
- Health Facilities
- Transportation Facilities
- Communication Facilities
- Public Utilities

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Benkelman is located in Nebraska's Southwest Recreation Planning, Region 5, and a region within the Nebraska Department of Game and Parks system. The Region includes 18 counties in southwest Nebraska.



Source: Nebraska Game and Parks

Basic minimum recommendations for parkland in a small community range from 14 acres to 25 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. Therefore, the minimum parkland in Benkelman should be between 14 and 25 acres.

City Park

The Ward Bond Memorial Park in Benkelman offers relaxation, excitement, and everything in-between. The city park includes a swimming pool, basketball court, tennis court, Skate Park, jungle gym, RV hookups, and shaded picnic areas. The park is clean and well-maintained. Kids can play on the jungle gym while the rest of the family gathers beneath the picnic shelter.

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/city_park.html

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/city_park.html

Basketball Court, Tennis Court and Skate Park

Adjacent to the city swimming pool is a full-size basketball court, tennis court, and a skate park with obstacles such as kinked rail slide, spine ramp, picnic bench, launch ramp, spine ramp hump, banked launch ramp, and fun box bank with stairs and rails.

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/park_extras.html

Swimming Pool

One of Benkelman's newest additions is a heated, Olympic size swimming pool with perimeter shelters for shaded observation by parents and friends. The swimming pool normally opens on Memorial Day and Closes after Labor Day. Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/swimming_pool.html

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/swimming_pool.html

Golf Courses

Benkelman Golf Course is a 9-hole regulation length golf course in Benkelman, Nebraska. The course was constructed in 1982. The facility also has a driving range.

Other golf courses serving an area within a 60 mile radius of Benkelman include:

Course	Community
Heritage Hills Golf Course	McCook
Broken Tee Golf Course (Par 3)	McCook
Wauneta Country Club	Wauneta
Imperial Country Club	Imperial
Grant Golf Course	Grant
Bird City Golf Club	Bird City, KS
Atwood Country Club	Atwood, KS
Sugar Hills Golf Club	Goodland, KS
Meadow Lake Golf Club	Colby, KS
Wray Country Club	Wray, CO
Indian Hills Golf Course	Yuma, CO
Plainsman Golf Course	Kirk, CO
Prairie Pines Golf Club	Burlington, CO

Source:

http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/golf.html

Recreational Recommendations

Based upon the existing recreational facilities and programs, Benkelman residents have adequate recreational opportunities available to them. The City and other partners need to continue to maintain and grow the existing facilities and programs into the future.

EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Public Schools

The public schools in Nebraska are grouped into six classes, depending upon the type of educational services provided and the size of the school district. The six classes, as defined by the State of Nebraska, are:

- ***Class 1*** ***Any school district that maintains only elementary grades under the direction of a single school board. Recently dissolved by Legislative action***
- Class 2 Any school district with territory having a population of 1,000 inhabitants or less that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.
- Class 3 Any school district with territory having a population of more than 1,000 and less than 100,000 that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.
- Class 4 Any school district with territory having a population of 100,000 or more and less than 200,000 inhabitants that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.
- Class 5 Any school district with territory having a population of 200,000 or more that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.
- Class 6 Any school district that maintains only a high school under the direction of a single school board. The territory of Class 6 district is made up entirely of Class 1 districts (or portions thereof) that have joined the Class 6.

The public school district serving Benkelman and surrounding areas is the Dundy County Stratton Public Schools. The school district is a consolidation of school districts within Dundy County including Benkelman and Stratton Public School District. The District is considered a Class 3 District. The district operates four school facilities:

- Stratton Elementary – Stratton
- Haigler Elementary – Haigler
- Benkelman Elementary and Junior High
- Dundy County Stratton High School – Benkelman

The following Table identifies the four primary facilities for Dundy County Stratton along with their 2008-2009 enrollments.

TABLE 16:
Dundy County Stratton Public Schools – Enrollment
2008-2009

Facility	Pre K	K-6	7-8	9-12	Total Enrollment	Teacher FTE	Pupil-Teacher Ratio	Total Staff FTE
Dundy County Stratton Public Schools	21	212	63	115	411	38.6	10.6	85.0
Benkelman Elementary	14	155	-	-	169	11.4	14.8	-
Haigler Elementary	-	24	-	-	24	4.1	5.9	-
Stratton Elementary	7	33	-	-	33	5.8	6.9	-
Dundy County High School	-	-	63	115	178	17.5	10.2	-

Source: U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, 2009

The district has the following assessed valuation, tax levies:

TABLE 17:
DUNDY COUNTY STRATTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS – VALUATION AND TAX RATES
2008-2009

District	Total Revenue	Total Revenue / Student	Total Expenditures / Student	Assessed Valuation	Levies per $100 of Valuation	
					General	Total Other Levies
Dundy County Stratton Public Schools	$4,396,000	$13,083	$12,607	$390,754,857	$0.9506	$0.0062

Source: Nebraska Department of Education, 2008-2009; U.S. Department of Education Institute of Education Sciences, 2009

The Dundy County Stratton Public Schools is a member of Educational Service Unit #15 (ESU) based in Trenton. The ESU serves the counties of Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Lincoln, Perkins, and Red Willow.

Post-Secondary Education

There are no post-secondary education schools in Dundy County.

The residents of Benkelman and the surrounding area have a large selection of in-state and out-of-state post-secondary schools to select. Some of these include:

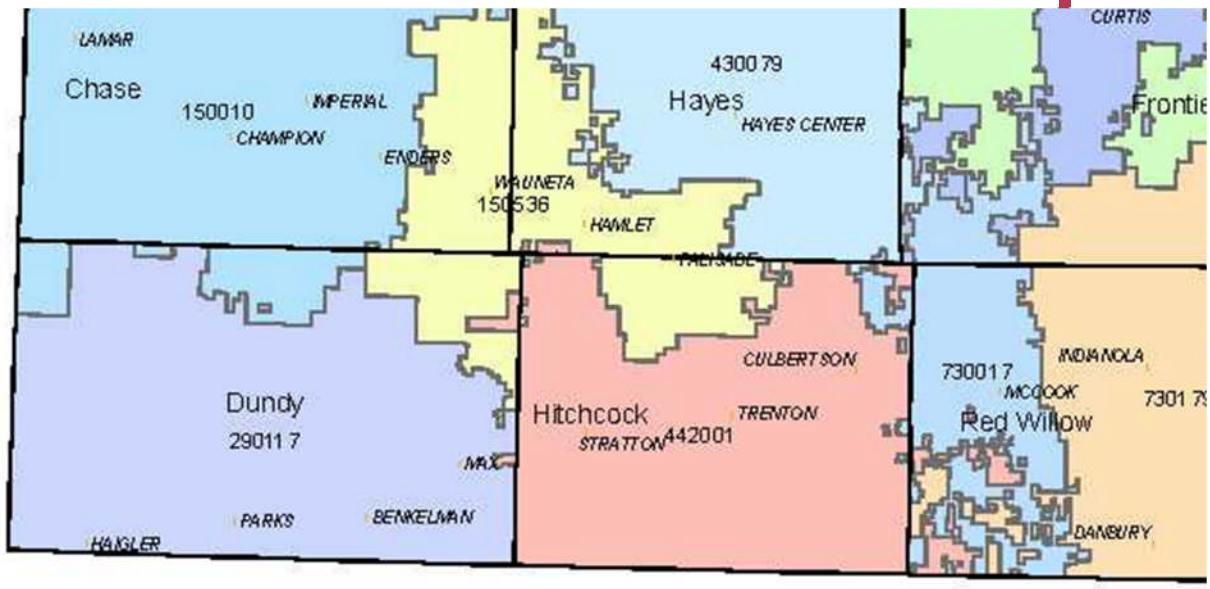
- University of Nebraska — Lincoln
- Nebraska Wesleyan — Lincoln
- University of Nebraska — Kearney
- University of Nebraska — Omaha
- Creighton University — Omaha
- Western NE Comm. College — Scottsbluff, Sidney, Alliance
- Bellevue University — North Platte
- North Platte Community College (Mid-Plains Community College) — North Platte
- McCook Community College (Mid-Plains Community College) — McCook
- Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture — Curtis
- Northwest Kansas Technical College — Goodland, KS
- Colby Community College — Colby, KS
- Morgan Community College — Ft. Morgan, CO

- University of Colorado — Boulder, CO
- Colorado State University — Ft. Collins, CO
- Northern Colorado University — Greeley, CO

Educational Recommendations

Providing quality education to the Benkelman and Dundy County area will be critical to continuing as a sustaining community in southwestern Nebraska. The City will need to work continually with the School District to evaluate programs and facilities in order to continue to provide quality education in the future.

FIGURE 3:
SCHOOL DISTRICT MAP
2006 - 2007



Dundy County Stratton Public Schools – District #29-0117

Source: NE Department of Education 2006 - 2007

FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION

Fire and Rescue

The Benkelman City/Rural Volunteer Fire Department is located in two building located at 703 "A" Street (City) and 709 "A" Street (Rural). The buildings were constructed in 1953 and houses all fire equipment and ambulance for both departments. There are 28 volunteer fire fighters.

TABLE 18:
FIRE AND RESCUE EQUIPMENT
2010

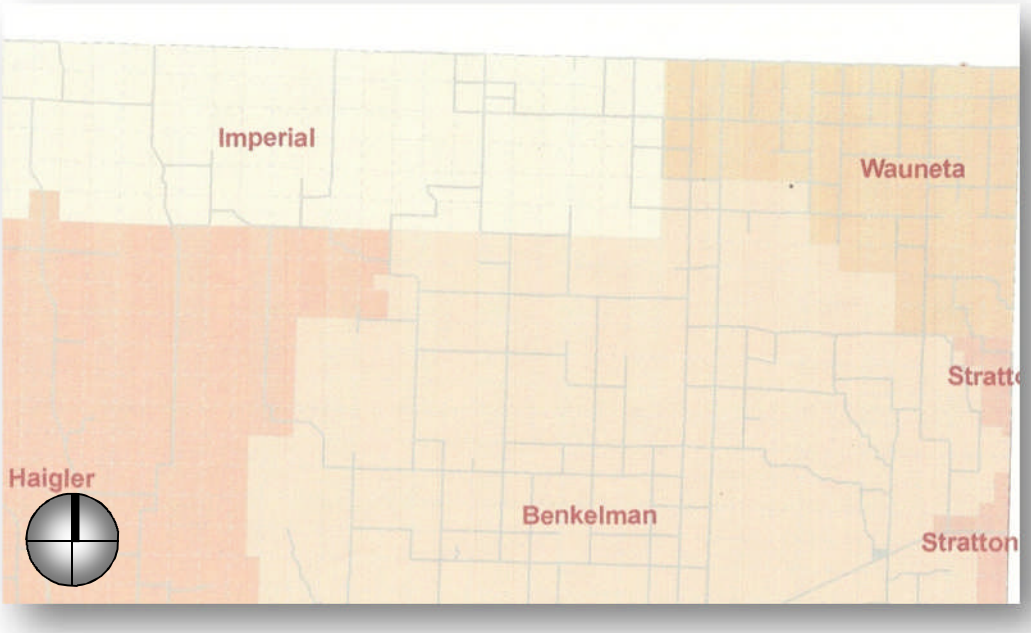
Equipment	Year	Storage Capacity (gallons)	Pump (gpm)
International 6x6	2002	750	1200
GMC	1989	3000	
6x6	1970	1500	15-20
6x6	1970	1500	15-20
Ford	1998	350	20
¾ ton 4WD Ford	2000		
Equipment Van	1983		

Source: City of Benkelman

Fire and Rescue Recommendations

The Benkelman City/Rural Volunteer Fire Department should continue to update and replace older equipment. The City and Rural Departments need to maintain their cooperative agreements in order to provide the best possible protection for Benkelman and the surrounding area. In addition, the department should continue to maintain their excellent level of training through department training and the annual Nebraska Fire School.

FIGURE 4:
FIRE DISTRICT MAP



Source: Dundy County Emergency Management Office and GeoComm

LAW ENFORCEMENT

Law enforcement in Benkelman is contracted to the Dundy County Sheriff's Department. The Dundy County Sheriff's Department has a total of four sworn officers and four civilian employees. The department covers a population base of approximately 2,001 people and has an officer ratio of 2.0 officers per 1,000 residents (compared to 2.1 officers per 1,000 people in Chase County and 1.4 officers per 1,000 people in Hitchcock County).

CITY BUILDINGS

City Office

The offices for the City of Benkelman are located within the Benkelman Municipal Building located at 126 7th Avenue East. The City Office contains the office of the City Clerk and Deputy City Clerk. The building was constructed in 1953 and is a one-story brick facility.

Benkelman Municipal Building

Source:

http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/city_library.html

Library

The library is also located within the Benkelman Municipal Building adjacent to the City Office. The facility officially became a Public Library in 2007 after being the Benkelman Women's Club Library since 1932. The Library offers the following services:

- Public Access Computers
- Wireless Hotspot
- Inter-Library Loan
- Pre-School Story Time
- Summer Reading Program
- Homebound Delivery
- Photocopier, Shredder, Typewriter, Paper cutter
- Used Book Sale
- Books

City Shop Facility and Garage

The City Shop and Garage was constructed in 1910 and is located at 508 Railroad Street. The building besides holding all the main equipment for the City it is home to the Electric, Water, Sewer and Street Departments.

Community Building

The Community Building is located at 908 Huron Street and was built in 1975. The building was originally built as a church. The building now provides the City and other civic groups with meeting space, as well as a home for City Council meetings.

COMMUNICATION FACILITIES

Telephone Services

Telecommunication services are provided by BWTelcom which serves communities throughout southwest Nebraska. The company was founded in 1944. The company is headquartered in Benkelman.

Radio Stations

There is not any radio stations located in Benkelman. The majority of the radio stations originate out of North Platte, McCook, and Ogallala in Nebraska. In addition, radio coverage originates out of Northwest Kansas and Eastern Colorado.

Television Stations

Presently there is no local television stations located in Benkelman. The over the air stations that serve the area originate out of Lincoln, North Platte and Grand Island in Nebraska including the following:

- KOLN/KGIN CBS Affiliate (Lincoln and Grand Island)
- KIIT-TV Fox Affiliate (North Platte)
- KNOP-TV NBC (North Platte)
- KPNE-DTV PBS (North Platte) (Translator located in Max)

In addition to these Nebraska stations there are several stations serving the Benkelman area out of Northern Kansas and the Denver area.

Besides over the air television, BWTelcom supplies Benkelman with Cable Television services.

Internet/World Wide Web Service Providers (ISP)

Internet service for the residents of Benkelman is provided primarily through BWTelcom based in Benkelman.

Newspapers

The residents of Benkelman are served locally by the Benkelman Post. The Benkelman Post is published weekly. There are various other newspapers serving the residents of Benkelman. Listed below are newspapers in circulation within the Benkelman area:

- North Platte Telegraph
- McCook Gazette
- Southwest Nebraska News

Communication Recommendations

These services are typically supplied by private entities and the future supply of these will be dependent upon the demand and profitability of these items.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Electricity

The City of Benkelman owns its electrical system and, as a member of the Nebraska Municipal Power Pool, purchases power from MEAN. Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) provides additional power. Peak KW demand - 1,992. The electrical system includes a standby generator in the event of a power outage. The City has completed a major electrical project which included sub-station and distribution upgrades, as well as installation of computerization which will monitor the entire electrical system.

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/city_utilities.html

Natural Gas

Natural gas is supplied to the City of Benkelman by SourceGas. Through the Choice Gas program, residents can choose their supplier from the following:

- PACE (Public Alliance for Community Energy)
- Midwest United Energy
- Kansas Gas Marketing
- SourceGas

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/city_utilities.html

Water Supply

The municipal water system in Benkelman is supplied by five wells, which have an average depth of 100 feet. The well system has a pumping capacity of 1,000 gallons per minute and a storage capacity of 250,000 gallons. The average daily demand is 360,000 gallons and the historic peak daily consumption is 1,000,000 gallons. The water pressure varies from 43 to 80 pounds per square inch.

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/city_utilities.html

Sanitary Sewer

The City of Benkelman sewage lagoons have a capacity of 500,000 gallons per day. The present load is 142,000 gallons per day.

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/city_utilities.html

Solid Waste

Municipally-owned refuse collection service provides weekly pick-up for both residential and commercial customers. Customers have the choice of a 64-gallon toter or a 2-yard dumpster.

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/city_utilities.html

City Construction and Demolition Disposal Site

The City's C & D site is located 3.5 miles west of Benkelman on the "Doane" Road. It is open Wednesday – 1 to 4:30 p.m. and Saturday – 9 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

ACCEPTABLE WASTE: Construction and demolition waste, concrete rubble, yard waste, trees & tree branches.

UNACCEPTABLE WASTE: Municipal solid waste, batteries, liquid waste, oil, tires, appliance, furniture, hazardous waste, etc.

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/city_utilities.html

Recycling

The recycling center is located at 2nd & Eagle Street (west of the swimming pool).

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/city_utilities.html

Public Utilities Recommendations

The City should continue to update older infrastructure in the future, as well as work closely with electrical and natural gas providers to maintain their systems within the community.

HEALTH FACILITIES

Hospital

Dundy County Hospital was built in 1968 and serves the southwestern corner of Nebraska, northeastern Colorado, and portions of Kansas. Initially constructed to accommodate 30 acute and swing beds, this Medicare-certified facility located in Benkelman has lowered its bed size to 14 to meet the conversion requirements of "Critical Access Hospital" designation in December, 2000, and serves an underserved and rural Nebraska population.

Dundy County Hospital

Source: www.bwtelcom.net/dch/fronthospital.JPG

Dundy County Hospital is a county-governed, non-profit organization. The facility has over 9,500 outpatient visits and 1,250 inpatient days per year. Dundy County Hospital services a county population and adjoining area base of nearly 4,800 rural residents, with majority of patient's residing in Dundy and Hitchcock Counties and encompassing a large Medicare population. Dundy County Hospital offers comprehensive inpatient and outpatient services, 24-hour emergency care, preventive health screenings and wellness activities through the knowledge and expertise provided through three active medical providers, 12 outreach specialty providers, 76 dedicated staff members, and over 17 volunteers working on the DCH Board of Trustees and DCH Foundation Board.

The hospital includes a full array of ancillary services:

Radiology services include:

- General X-ray Services
- In-house Mammography
- In-house Computerized Tomography (CT)
- Ultrasound
- Dexa (Bone Density) Scanning
- MRI Imaging Services
- Nuclear Medicine

Other Ancillary Services include:

- Full service Laboratory Department
- Physical Therapy
- Respiratory Therapy
- Surgery
- Obstetrical
- Emergency services

The hospital has a comprehensive outreach specialty clinic program that includes:

- Cardiology
- Internal medicine
- Oncology
- Pediatrics
- Podiatry
- Prosthetics specialists
- Pulmonology
- Surgery
- Urology

Other provided consulting services include:

- Dentistry
- Dietary
- ENT (Ear, Nose and Throat) via Telemedicine
- Mental Health via Telemedicine
- Pharmacy
- Speech Therapy via Telemedicine

The hospital is part of a small health system comprised of two Rural Health Clinics (RHC's), wellness, and rehabilitative services.

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dch/

Nursing Home Facility

Sarah Ann Hester Memorial Home

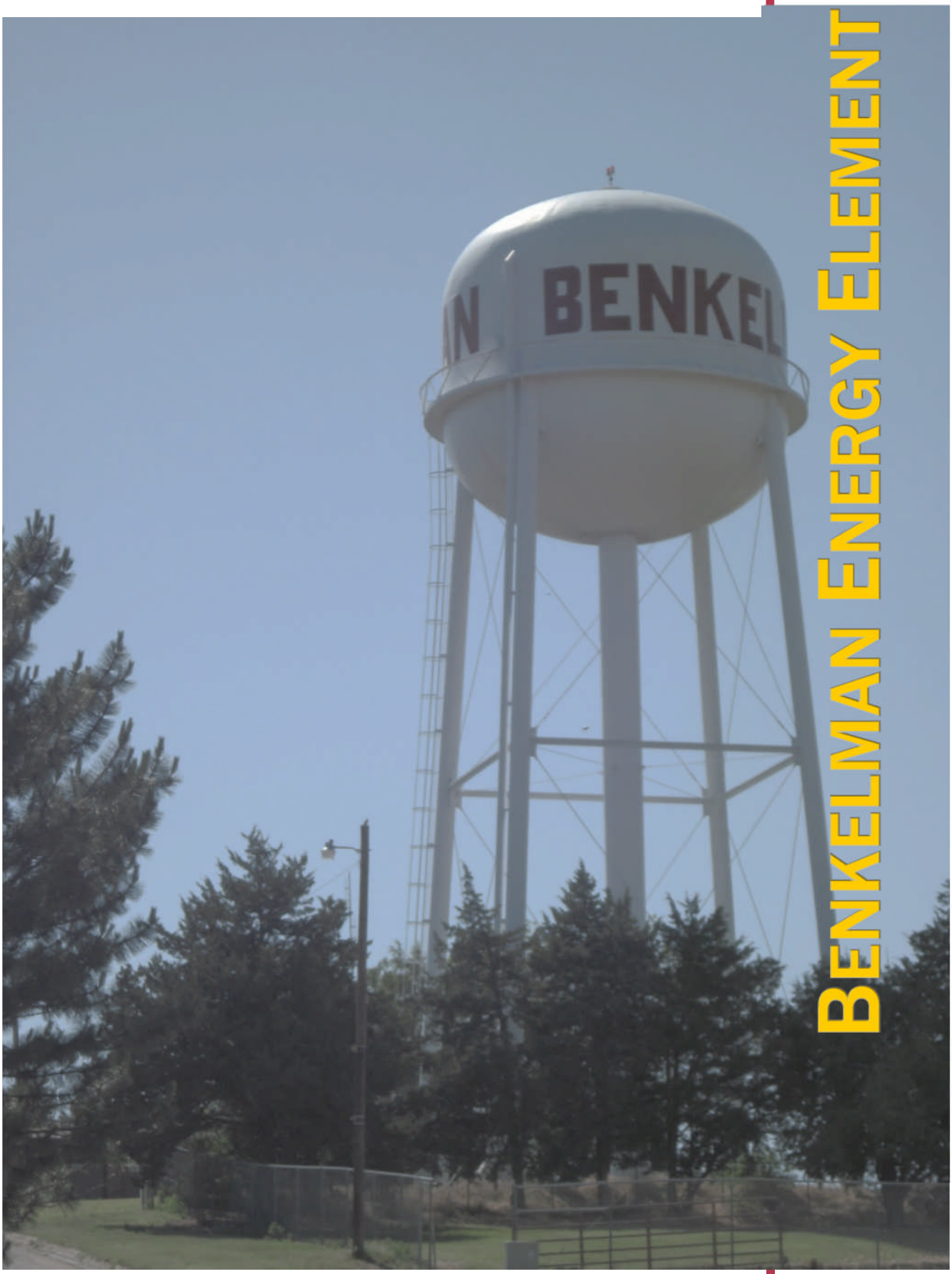
The Sarah Ann Hester Memorial Home is a non-profit 55 bed nursing facility. The nursing staff is available 24 hours a day to assist each resident with their individual care and needs in a professional and comfortable living environment. Residents have on-site services that include: Clinical Lab, Dietary, Housekeeping, Mental Health, Occupational Therapy, Pharmacy, Physical Therapy, Physician care, Podiatry care, and Speech/Language and Pathology care.

Rural Health Clinics

The Dundy County Quality Healthcare Medical Clinic is a part of the Dundy County Hospital.

Health Facilities Recommendations

Due to the competitive nature of health care and nursing home facilities, future plans are typically not discussed in this type of forum. If their future plans are reflective of their past actions, then it appears that the organization will continue to meet the needs of the community.



BENKELMAN ENERGY ELEMENT

ENERGY ELEMENT

Energy usage in the early 21st Century is becoming a critical issue throughout Nebraska as well as the entire United States. Our dependency on energy sources that are not renewable has increased significantly over the past 100 years. In addition, some of these energy sources are not the friendliest to our environment, especially the ozone layer. Energy usage comes in several forms, such as:

- Lighting our homes and businesses
- Heating our homes and businesses
- Heating our water for homes and businesses
- Food preparation
- Transportation – both personal and business related
- Recreation and Entertainment – vehicular, computers, music, etc

The 21st Century ushered in an increased concern for energy usage and its impacts on the environment. With the increased concern for the environment came an increased understanding of the carbon footprint generated by any one individual as well as striving towards modifying our behavior patterns in order to lessen that footprint. In addition, the phrase and concept of sustainability has become more widely used, even in the smaller communities of Nebraska and United States.

Energy and the issues connected to the different sources are becoming more critical every year. The need for the Energy Element in the Benkelman Comprehensive Development Plan should be something that is desired as opposed to required. However, during the 2010 Legislative Session of the Nebraska Unicameral, the State Senators passed LB 997 which required this section become a part of all community and county comprehensive plans, except for Villages. The passage of LB 997 appears to be a first step toward new comprehensive plans addressing the entire issue of Sustainability.

Sustainability

Sustainability, in today's discussions, has a number of meanings. According to Webster's Third International Dictionary, the verb "sustain" is defined as "to cause to continue…to keep up especially without interruption, diminution or flagging". However, the Brundtland Commission Report in 1987,[1] described sustainability as "…development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs". In other words, sustainability is the ability of present day generations to live without jeopardizing the ability of future generations to sustain life as we know it today.

Our generation's ability to stabilize and begin to make the switch to cleaner and more renewable resources will aid future generations with their quality of life. The more renewable energy sources become the norm for our generation, the more likely these sources will be second nature and common place in the future.

Americans have grown to rely more heavily on electricity. However, state and federal policies have been increasingly more insistent on curbing this increasing reliance on electricity; especially, those sources that are produced by non-renewable fossil fuels such as oil and coal. Federal policy has set a goal that 20% of all electricity, 2020, in the United States be from renewable sources such as solar and wind.

Community Involvement

People question what a smaller community like Benkelman can do to make for a better environment. There are a number of activities that can be undertaken and pursued to make an impact in this small part of Nebraska. The following information will perform at a minimum the requirements of LB 997 but they will also examine strategies that communities like Benkelman can undertake to make a contribution to the overall solution.

Energy Infrastructure

Electrical

The City of Benkelman owns its electrical system and, as a member of the Nebraska Municipal Power Pool, purchases power from MEAN. Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) provides additional power. The power lines are owned and maintained by the City of Benkelman. The City is fed by a transmission line from the north through Southwest Public Power District.

Peak KW demand in Benkelman is 1,992 KW. The electrical system is supported by a standby generator in the event of a power outage. The City has completed a major electrical project which included sub-station and distribution upgrades, as well as installation of computerization which will monitor the entire electrical system.

Natural Gas Service

Natural gas is supplied to the City of Benkelman by SourceGas. Through the Choice Gas program, residents can choose their supplier from the following:

- PACE (Public Alliance for Community Energy)
- Midwest United Energy
- Kansas Gas Marketing
- SourceGas

Source: http://www.bwtelcom.net/dcccd/city_utilities.html

Unfortunately, contact with SourceGas failed to net this study any data for comparison.

ENERGY USE BY SECTOR

This section analyzes the electrical and natural gas usage by residential, commercial, industrial and other users. The Tables in this section are intended to show the actual usage as well as the annualized change in each energy source and category.

The goal of this section and chapter is to identify specific levels of demand and to determine policies and strategies to ultimately see an overall decline in the dependency in non-renewable sources as well as examining potential renewable sources that may be available to local consumers.

Table 19 shows the overall electricity usage by all consumers in Benkelman. The categories are reflective of the ones established by the City. The categories are defined as:

Residential = all connections and demand by households in Benkelman
Commercial = all retail, office, and industrial users within Benkelman
Demand = Peak demand
Municipal = electricity used by the City of Benkelman

TABLE 19:
TOTAL ELECTRICITY USAGE - BENKELMAN
2005 - 2009

Year	Residential (KW)	Commercial (KW)	Industrial (KW)	Demand (KW)	Municipal (KW)	Total (KW)	Annual Change (%)
2005	4,316,458	1,554,874	NA*	3,609,516	305,664	9,786,512	
2006	4,319,741	1,561,613	NA*	3,439,184	298,032	9,618,570	-1.72%
2007	4,652,090	1,629,638	NA*	3,623,050	309,203	10,213,981	6.19%
2008	4,693,239	1,676,203	NA*	3,655,563	285,019	10,310,024	0.94%
2009	4,966,753	1,652,270	NA*	3,608,136	274,500	10,501,659	1.86%
Total	**22,948,281**	**8,074,598**		**17,935,449**	**1,472,418**	**50,430,746**	**7.31%**
Average Annual Usage	**4,589,656**	**1,614,920**		**3,587,090**	**294,484**	**10,086,149**	

Source: City of Benkelman, 2010
NA = City of Benkelman does not have a classification for industrial users. Any industrial users are lumped into the commercial category.

Residential Usage

The following Table lists the electrical usage in Benkelman for residential users. The data examines usage for 2005 through 2009 and consists of total usage, annual change, Usage per capita, and the annual change per capita. The data was provided by the City of Benkelman.

TABLE 20:
RESIDENTIAL ELECTRICITY USAGE - BENKELMAN
2005 - 2009

Year	Residential (KW)	Annual Change (%)	Usage per capita (KW)	Annual Change per capita (%)
2005	4,316,458		4,850	
2006	4,319,741	0.08%	4,965	2.38%
2007	4,652,090	7.69%	5,467	10.10%
2008	4,693,239	0.88%	5,621	2.82%
2009	4,966,753	5.88%	5,920	5.32%
Total	**22,948,281**	**15.07%**		**22.06%**
Average Annual Usage	**4,589,656**			

Source: City of Benkelman, 2010

During the five year period identified in Table 20, residential customers increased their electrical usage by a total of 15.07%, an average of 3.02% per year. However, during this same period the overall population decreased by 5.7%. On a per capita level the increase is even more dramatic; the overall increase on a per capita basis was 22.06% or over 4.0% per year.

Rational thoughts would seem to indicate that a declining population would use less electricity on an annual basis; however, in 2006 and 2007, SourceGas took over the natural gas system in Benkelman. This change in corporate ownership resulted in a large number of residential customers switching their homes from natural gas to electric. This is the primary reason for the major increase in 2007.

However, a number of issues could explain the increased usage. These might include:

- An increase in computer usage by the average household
- An increase in air conditioning usage on a house by house basis
- An increase in heating usage on a house by house basis
- An increase in the use of newer technological appliances
- An outright increase in overall lighting and other appliances

Commercial Usage

The following Table lists the electrical usage in Benkelman for commercial users which includes industrial users within Benkelman. The data examine usage for 2005 through 2009 and consists of total usage and annual change only. Population change does not have a direct impact on the usage from a commercial point of view. The data was provided by the City of Benkelman.

TABLE 21:
COMMERCIAL ELECTRICITY USAGE - BENKELMAN
2005 - 2009

Year	Commercial (KW)	Annual Change (%)
2005	1,554,874	
2006	1,561,613	0.43%
2007	1,629,638	4.36%
2008	1,676,203	2.86%
2009	1,652,270	-1.43%
Total	**8,074,598**	**6.26%**
Average Annual Usage	**1,614,920**	

Source: City of Benkelman, 2010

Table 21 shows that the commercial usage from 2005 to 2009 increased by 6.26%. The annual changes have fluctuated throughout the years ranging from a decrease from 2008 to 2009 to a 4.36% increase from 2006 to 2007. The changes in commercial usage could be as simple as businesses opening and closing in the community; even the type of business can have an impact on the total usage.

TABLE 22:
DEMAND ELECTRICITY USAGE - BENKELMAN
2005 - 2009

Year	Demand (KW)	Annual Change (%)
2005	3,609,516	
2006	3,439,184	-4.72%
2007	3,623,050	5.35%
2008	3,655,563	0.90%
2009	3,608,136	-1.30%
Total	**17,935,449**	**-0.04%**
Average Annual Usage	**3,587,090**	

Source: City of Benkelman, 2010

The Demand category tracks the electrical usage during peak demand periods. According to the data in Table 22 the Demand Usage has been relatively stable between 2005 and 2009. Part of this stability may be due in part to the fact that the City now has peak load controllers on residence that have given them permission to install the devices.

Table 23:
Municipal Electricity Usage - Benkelman
2005 - 2009

Year	Commercial (KW)	Annual Change (%)
2005	305,664	
2006	298,032	-2.50%
2007	309,203	3.75%
2008	285,019	-7.82%
2009	274,500	-3.69%
Total	**1,472,418**	**-10.20%**
Average Annual Usage	**294,484**	

Source: City of Benkelman, 2010

Municipal Usage

Table 23 shows that the municipal usage from 2005 to 2009 changed by -10.2%. The reason for this decrease is due to some energy conservation measures within the municipal buildings/facilities. However, the major reason for the decrease in demand is due to the upgrading and fixing of older, major transformers in the community. In addition, city personnel have been working to identify and repair areas in the system that had leaks.

SHORT-TERM AND LONG-TERM STRATEGIES

As the need and even regulatory requirements for energy conservation increases, residents of communities and even rural areas will need to:

1. Become even more conservative with energy usage
2. Make use of existing and future programs for retrofitting houses, businesses, and manufacturing plants
3. Increase their dependence on renewable energy sources.

Residential Strategies

There are a number of different strategies that can be undertaken to improve energy efficiency and usage in residences. These strategies range from simple (less costly) to complex (costly). Unfortunately not all of the solution will have an immediate return on investment. As individual property owners, residents will need to find strategies that will fit into their ability to pay for savings at the present time.

Compact Florescent Light
Source: Yahoo Images

Benkelman currently has load controls on central air conditioners in town as part of their agreement with the power pool. Recently the City installed 100 new control units. This is a volunteer program and is growing in involvement and more units are expected to be installed in the future.

There are several ways to make a residence more energy efficient. Some of the easiest include:

- Converting all incandescent light bulbs to Compact Florescent Lights
- Installing additional insulation in the attic
- Converting standard thermostats to digital/programmable thermostats
- Changing out older less efficient Air Conditioners and Furnaces to newer high-efficiency units

- Changing out older appliances with new EnergyStar appliances

Some of the more costly ways to make a residence more energy efficient include:

- New insulation in exterior walls
- Addition of solar panels for either electrical conversion and/or water heater systems
- Adding individual scale wind energy conversion systems
- Installing geothermal heating and cooling system
- Installation of energy-efficient low-e windows

Commercial Strategies

Strategies for energy efficiency within commercial facilities are more difficult to achieve than those in for residential uses. Typically, these improvements will require a greater amount of investment due to the size of most of these facilities.

There are a number of different strategies that can be undertaken to improve energy efficiency and usage in residences. Unfortunately not all of the solutions will have an immediate return on investment. Again, as individual property owners, property owners will need to find strategies that will fit into their ability to pay for savings at the present time.

There are several ways to make a commercial business more energy efficient. Some of the easiest include:

- Converting all incandescent light bulbs to Florescent Lights or Compact Florescent Lighting on small fixtures
- Converting standard thermostats to digital/programmable thermostats
- Installing additional insulation in an attic space
- Changing out older less efficient Air Conditioners and Furnaces to newer high-efficiency units

Some of the more costly ways to make a business more energy efficient include:

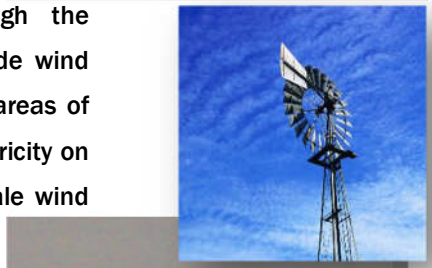
- Installation of energy-efficient low-e windows and/or storefronts
- New insulation in exterior walls
- Addition of solar panels for either electrical conversion and/or water heater systems
- Adding individual scale wind energy conversion systems
- Installing geothermal heating and cooling system
- New storefronts with insulated panels and insulated Low-E glazing

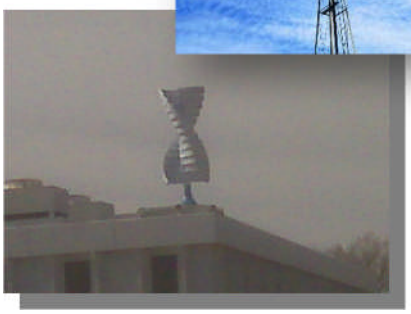
RENEWABLE ENERGY SOURCES

Renewable energy sources, according to are those natural resources such as the wind, the sun, water, the earth (geothermal), and even methane (from natural resources or man-made situations) that can be used over and over again with minimal or no depletion. The most common sources of renewable energy resources used in Nebraska in the wind, the sun, water and earth. The following are examples of how these renewable resources can be used to reduce our dependency on fossil fuels.

Wind

The wind is one of those resources that seem to be in abundance in Nebraska. Wind is not a new technology in Nebraska; the pioneers that settled in Nebraska used wind mills for power and to work the water wells on their farms and ranches.





Wind can be used to produce electricity through the construction of small-scale or utility/commercial grade wind conversion systems (wind turbines). However, not all areas of the state have the ideal levels needed to produce electricity on a utility or commercial level; gut the use of small-scale wind turbines on homes and businesses will work in most parts of Nebraska.

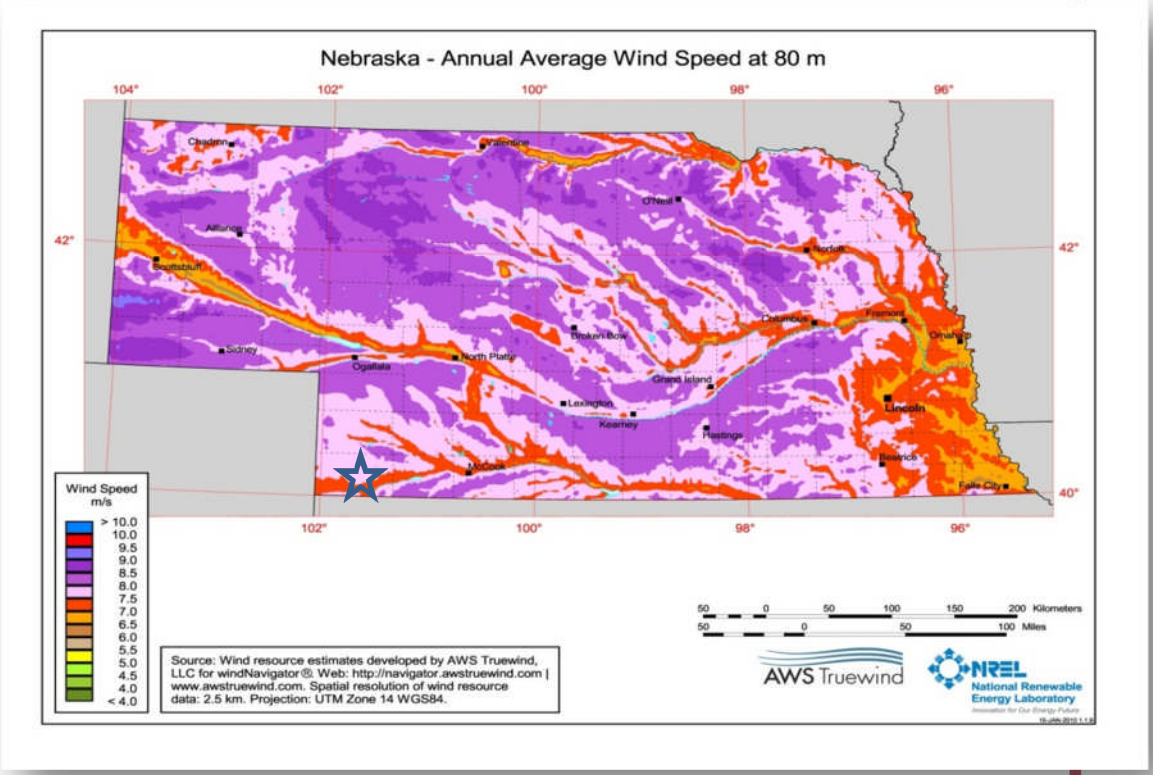
The following provides a basic history and description of some newer programs in Nebraska; interested parties should contact the State of Nebraska Energy Office or their local public power district.

The following information is an excerpt from the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency.

C-BED Program

In May 2007, Nebraska established an exemption from the sales and use tax imposed on the gross receipts from the sale, lease, or rental of personal property for use in a community-based energy development (C-BED) project. The Tax Commissioner is required to establish filing requirements to claim the exemption. In April 2008 L.B. 916 made several amendments to this incentive, including: (1) clarified C-BED ownership criteria to recognize ownership by partnerships, cooperatives and other pass-through entities; (2) clarified that the restriction on power purchase agreement payments should be calculated according to gross* and not net receipts; (3) added language detailing the review authority of the Tax Commissioner and recovery of exempted taxes; and (4) defined local payments to include lease payments, easement payments, and real and personal property tax receipts from a C-BED project.

FIGURE 5:
ANNUAL AVERAGE WIND SPEED AT 80 METERS
NEBRASKA



A C-BED project is defined as a new wind energy project that meets one of the following ownership conditions:

- For a C-BED project that consists of more than two turbines, the project is owned by qualified owners with no single qualified owner owning more than 15% of the project and with at least 33% of the power purchase agreement payments flowing to the qualified owner or owners or local community; or
- For a C-BED project that consists of one or two turbines, the project is owned by one or more qualified owners with at least 33% of the power purchase agreement payments flowing to a qualified owner or local community.

In addition, a resolution of support for the project must be adopted by the county board of each county in which the C-BED project is to be located or by the tribal council for a C-BED project located within the boundaries of an Indian reservation.

A qualified C-BED project owner means:

- a Nebraska resident;
- a limited liability company that is organized under the Limited Liability Company Act and that is entirely made up of members who are Nebraska residents;
- a Nebraska nonprofit corporation;
- an electric supplier(s), subject to certain limitations for a single C-BED project; or
- a tribal council.

In separate legislation (LB 629), also enacted in May 2007, Nebraska established the Rural Community-Based Energy Development Act to authorize and encourage electric utilities to enter into power purchase agreements with C-BED project developers.

** LB 561 of 2009 established that gross power purchase agreement payments do not include debt financing if the agreement is entered into on or before December 31, 2011, and the qualified owners have a combined total of at least 33% of the equity ownership in the C-BED project.*

Local Government and Renewable Energy Policies

Local governments need to take steps to encourage greater participation in wind generation. Cities and counties can do a number of items to make these projects more attractive. Some of the things that could be done are:

- Develop or amend existing zoning regulations to allow small-scale wind turbines as an accessory use in all districts
- Develop or amend existing zoning regulations to exempt small-scale turbines from maximum height requirements when attached to an existing or new structure.
- Work with the Nebraska Public Power District and/or local public power district on ways to use wind turbines on small-scale individual projects or as a source of power for the community.

Solar

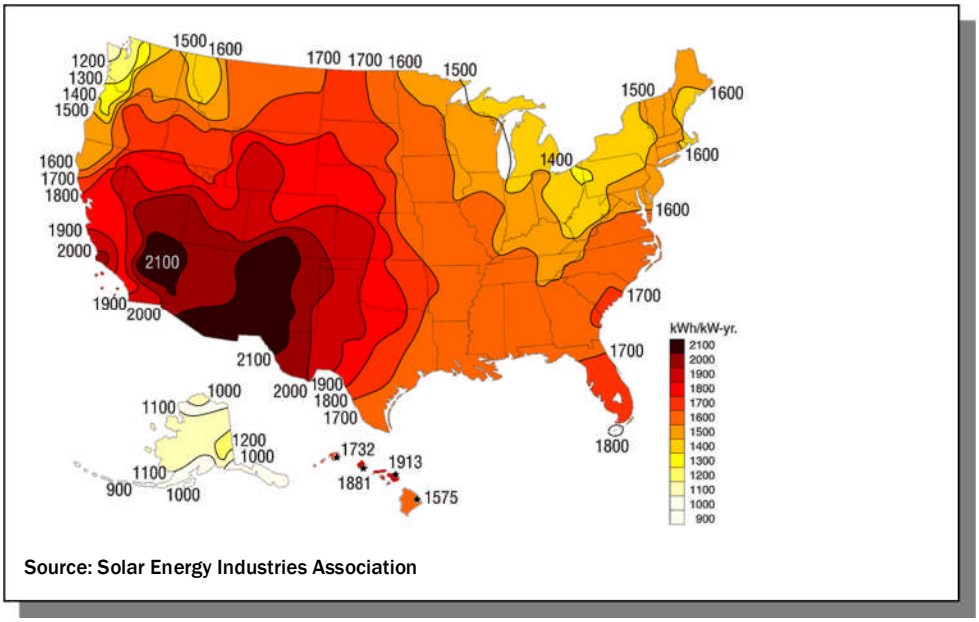
Solar energy has been around for decades and it last hit a high in popularity in the 1970's. However, today's solar energy design is much more efficient and are more aesthetically pleasing. Some of the aesthetic improvements have to do with the fact that today's systems are not as bulky as their ancestors. Today solar is being used much like wind turbines, on a small-scale level (home or business) or a much grander level (solar farms).

Solar panels on a roof in San Jose, California
Source: American Planning Association PAS Memo January/February 2009
Photo by: Suzanne Ryanne

Solar energy includes solar water and space heating as well as taking solar photovoltaic panels to convert the sun's rays into electricity. Solar panels can typically produce between 120 and 200 watts per square meter at an installed coat of $11 to $22 per watt, according to the American Solar Energy Society but these costs are becoming less every year as more solar units are commissioned and new more cost effective technologies are developed.

Based upon the diagram below there is great solar potential in the state of Nebraska. A majority of the state lies within some of the better areas in the country for solar potential.

FIGURE 6:
SOLAR CONTOURS
NEBRASKA



Source: Solar Energy Industries Association

Geothermal Energy

Geothermal energy includes a process where a series of pipes are lowered into vertical cores called heat-sink wells. The pipes carry a highly conductive fluid that either is heated or cooled by the constant temperature of the ground. The resulting heat exchange is then transferred back into the heating and cooling system of a home or other structure. This is call a geothermal heat exchange system or ground source heat pumps. The California Energy Commission estimates the costs of a geothermal system can earn net savings immediately when financed as part of a 30-year mortgage *(Source: American Planning Association, PAS Memo January/February 2009)*.

Methane Energy

The use of methane to generate electricity is becoming more cost-effective to use within the rural areas of Nebraska. Methane electrical generation can be accomplished through the use of a methane digester which takes the raw gas, naturally generate from some form of waste material, and converts the gas into electrical power.

There have been some attempts to take the methane generated from animal manure and convert it into electricity; most have been successful but were costly to develop. Another approach to methane electrical generation is to tap into the methane being generated from a solid waste landfill; instead of burning off the methane, it can be piped into a methane convertor and generated into electricity for operating a manufacturing plant or placed on the overall grid for distribution.

Methane convertors make use of unwanted gases and are able to produce a viable product. As long as humans need to throw garbage into a landfill or the production of livestock is required, there will be a source of methane to tap for electrical generation.

In addition to converting methane into electricity, it can also provide a source of power by replacing natural gas as a heating source.

NET METERING IN NEBRASKA

LB 436, signed in May 2009, established statewide net metering rules for all electric utilities in Nebraska. The rules apply to electricity generating facilities which use solar, methane, wind, biomass, hydropower or geothermal energy, and have a rated capacity at or below 25 kilowatts (kW). Electricity produced by a qualified renewable energy system during a month shall be used to offset any kilowatt-hours (kWh) consumed at the premises during the month.

Any excess generation produced by the system during the month will be credited at the utility's avoided cost rate for that month and carried forward to the next billing period. Any excess remaining at the end of an annualized period will be paid out to the customer. Customers retain all renewable energy credits (RECs) associated with the electricity their system generates. Utilities are required to offer net metering until the aggregate generating capacity of all customer-generators equals one percent of the utility's average monthly peak demand for that year.

STATE LAW OF SOLAR AND WIND EASEMENTS

Nebraska's solar and wind easement provisions allow property owners to create binding solar and wind easements for the purpose of protecting and maintaining proper access to sunlight and wind. Originally designed only to apply to solar, the laws were revised in March 1997 (Bill 140) to include wind. Counties and municipalities are permitted to develop zoning regulations, ordinances, or development plans that protect access to solar and wind energy resources if they choose to do so. Local governing bodies may also grant zoning variances to solar and wind energy systems that would be restricted under existing regulations, so long as the variance is not substantially detrimental to the public good.

LB 568, enacted in May 2009, made some revisions to the law and added additional provisions to govern the establishment and termination of wind agreements. Specifically, the bill provides that the initial term of a wind agreement may not exceed forty years. Additionally, a wind agreement will terminate if development has not commenced within ten years of the effective date of the wind agreement. If all parties involved agree to extend this period, however, the agreement may be extended.

CURRENT RENEWABLE ENERGY PROGRAMS AND FUNDING SOURCES

Geothermal Heat Pumps - Residential

The Nebraska Public Power District offers rebates for homeowners who purchase energy efficient heat pumps and window air conditioning units. Incentives are also available for residential customers who recycle their old, functioning refrigerators/freezers and for residential customers who have a cooling system tune-up.

High-Efficiency Heat Pump Program

The High Efficiency Heat Pump Program offers rebates for both air-source and geothermal heat pumps. Once the installing contractor has installed the heat pump, they must conduct a Performance Verification Test of the system. Results from this test must be attached to the program application. If the installed heat pump operates within 10% of the manufacturer's specification, then the contractor also receives a $100 rebate.

Refrigerator Recycling Program

The Nebraska Public Power District offers the Refrigerator Recycling Program from late spring to early fall of each year. Residential customers can recycle up to two refrigerators/freezers that are in working condition and receive $35 for each. JACO environmental will pick up the appliance at the customer's home.

Cooling System Tune-up Program

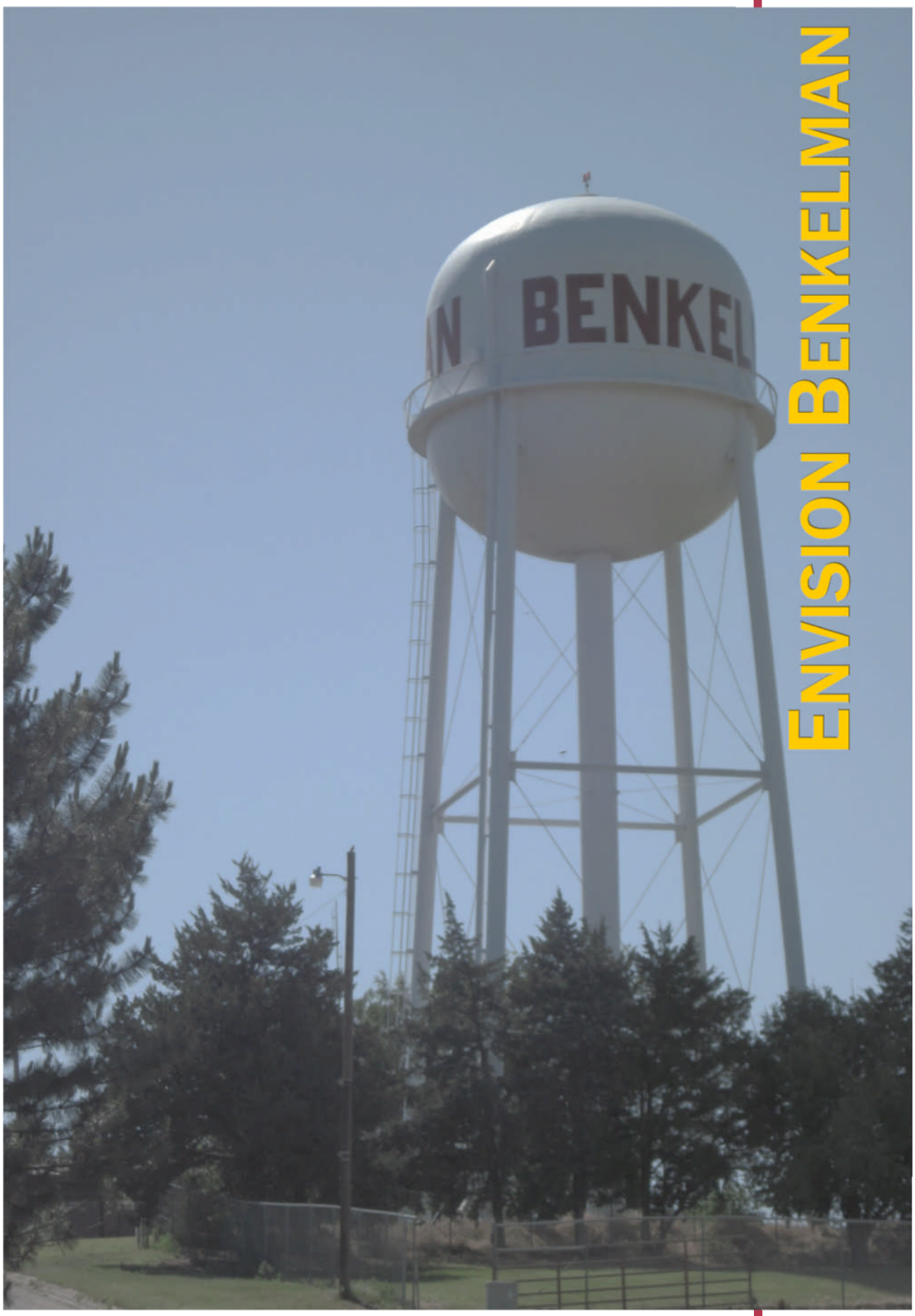
The Cooling System Tune-Up Program offers a $30 incentive to home owners that have any type of cooling system tuned-up. Customers are eligible for only one incentive every three years.

Low interest Loan Program

This program makes available low interest loans for residential and commercial energy efficiency improvements. The Nebraska Energy Office administers this program, which was created in 1990 using oil overcharge funds. Only improvements to existing buildings that are at least 5 years old are eligible for loan assistance. As of March 31, 2010, 25,618 loans have been made totaling $205.3 million and financing $210.8 million in eligible projects.

NPPD Rebates

Nebraska Public Power District offers multiple rebates for their commercial and industrial customers to save energy in their facilities. Rebates are available for energy efficient lighting, HVAC measures, high efficiency motors, and variable speed drives. The lighting rebate program is for new construction only. The program offers several prescriptive rebates and a custom lighting rebate for projects that save energy but are not listed in the program brochure. For all rebates, projects over $5,000 dollars require pre-approval from the utility. The lighting rebate also requires pre- and post inspections of projects over $5,000. Program Brochures and Applications are located on the program website. Nebraska Public Power District also provides commercial and industrial energy solutions to its customers. Please see program website for more information on these programs.



ENVISION BENKELMAN

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The Envision Benkelman section is critical to soliciting public input as well as establishing goals and policies for the community. Planning for the future land uses of the community is an ongoing process of goal setting and problem solving aimed at encouraging and enhancing a better community with a better quality of life. Planning focuses upon ways of solving existing problems within the community, and providing a management tool enabling Benkelman citizens to achieve their vision for the future.

Visioning is a process of evaluating present conditions, identifying problem areas, and bringing about consensus on how to overcome existing problems and manage change. By determining Benkelman's strengths and weaknesses, the community can decide what it wants to be, and then develop a "roadmap" guiding decisions and ultimately fulfilling the vision of the community. However, the plan cannot only be based upon this "vision" and "road map" concept. The residents of Benkelman must also act or implement the necessary step involved in achieving this "vision".

Vision without action is merely a dream
Action without vision is just passing time
Vision with action can change the world

– ***Joel Barker***

Change is continuous, therefore Benkelman must decide specific criteria that will be used to judge and manage change. Instead of reacting to development pressures after the fact, the community along with their strategic vision, can better reinforce the desired changes, and discourage negative impacts that may undermine the vision. A shared vision permits Benkelman to focus its diverse energies and minimize conflicts in the present, and in the future.

A key component of a Comprehensive Plan is the goals and policies. The issues and concerns of the citizens are developed into a vision. The vision statement can then be further delineated and translated into action statements, used to guide, direct, and base decisions for future growth, development and change within Benkelman. Consensus on "what is good land use?" and "how to manage change in order to provide the greatest benefit to the community and its residents?" is formed. Benkelman's goals and policies attempt to address various issues, regarding the questions of "how" to plan for the future.

Goals are desires, necessities and issues to be attained in the future. A goal should be established in a manner that allows it to be accomplished. Goals are the end-state of a desired outcome. Goals also play a factor in the establishment of policies within a county. In order to attain certain goals and/or policies within county government, they may need to be modified or changed from time to time.

Objectives are measurable, definable steps that lead to the eventual completion of the goal. Objectives are a means to achieving the goals established by the Community. They are

specific statements of principle or actions that imply a clear commitment that is not mandatory. Objectives have three different elements:

1. an end that needs to be achieved,
2. a means by which to achieve that end, and
3. an administrative mechanism by which the means are carried out

These objectives will synthesize the information from the goals, as well as the responses from the participants of the various input processes. Objectives play an important role in the Comprehensive Development Plan because they direct the different actions will need to be taken to meet the goals.

The goals and objectives assure that the Comprehensive Development Plan accomplishes the desires of the residents. This section of the Plan is therefore, a compilation of local attitudes collected through public meetings and surveys. When followed, development proposals in the community should be evaluated as to their relationship with the citizens' comments. Therefore, "goals and objectives" should be referred to as diligently as the Future Land Use Map or any other part of the Comprehensive Development Plan. Likewise, they should be current, in order to reflect the attitudes and desires of the City and its residents.

It is important for communities to establish their goals and policies in a manner that allows for both long-term and short-term accomplishments. The short-term goals and objectives serve several functions:

- Allow for immediate feedback and success, which fuels the desire to achieve additional goals and better objectives.
- Allow for the distribution of resources over time thus assuring a balanced use of public investment.
- Establish certain policies that need to be followed before the long-term goals can be accomplished.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION PROCESS

There were two primary means of collecting public input during the planning process, including two Town Hall meetings and four Focus Group meeting. The Town Hall meetings were held on February 3, 2010 at the Community Building in town; one meeting was held at 11:30 am and one at 7:00 pm. The Focus Group meetings were held on March 4, 2010 and included selected youth from the High School, Economic Development/Chamber of Commerce individuals, Administrators from various organizations and individuals involved in housing in Benkelman.

Town Hall Meetings

The Town Hall meetings were designed so residents in attendance would break into small groups and discuss the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (S.W.O.T) regarding Benkelman. The groups would then report back to the larger group where the individual group items were placed onto one larger list for the meeting time. The actual instructions given to the different groups were as follows:

1. Break into groups
2. Individually take 5 minutes to identify specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to Benkelman
3. As a group, prioritize your top 5 for each one
4. Report back to the entire group
5. Entire group to prioritize

A key to understanding this exercise is how the S.W.O.T. is defined, which is:

Strengths = positive elements that are internal and/or can be directly controlled

Weaknesses = negative elements that are internal and/or can be directly controlled

Opportunities = positive elements that are external and/or cannot be directly controlled

Threats = negative elements that are external and/or cannot be directly controlled

Ironically, something can be a "strength" and a "weakness" as well as an "opportunity" and a "threat".

Town Hall Meeting (11:30 am)

The 11:30 am Town Hall meeting had 20 people in attendance. There were enough in attendance that the group was split into four smaller groups for purposes of this exercise. The following are the summaries of each group.

Group 1

Strengths	Weaknesses
Schools	Limited job opportunities
Hospital/doctor	Business growth
Communication system	Lack of specialized services
Support of community	Better recycling center
County seat	Housing availability
Opportunities	**Threats**
Growth in community/opportunity for growth	Water quality
Grant money	Job opportunities
People wanting to move out of cities	Irrigation water/Republican River
	Town's appearance
	Depopulation
	Surrounding communities opportunities

Group 2

Strengths	Weaknesses
Support for agricultural businesses	Lack of adequate grain storage and marketing facilities
Excellent recreational opportunities	Lack of co-operation
Philanthropy	Lack of housing and the vacant houses
Network to the world	General appearance
Emergence of new businesses	Lack of jobs for young people
Opportunities	**Threats**
Higher education and continuing education readily available	State and federal regulation and legislation
Financial support for local ****	Declining optimism statewide/unbalance population east and west
Increased travel accommodations	Regulations that do not fit small rural communities
	Exterior retail threats and lack of support for local businesses
	Isolation (lack of network to south and west)

Group 3

Strengths	Weaknesses
Recreational opportunities	Declining population
Schools	Lack of quality jobs
Medical facilities	Aging infrastructure
Telecommunications	Community pride
County seat	Diminished retail capacity
Opportunities	**Threats**
Lifestyle	National economy
New business opportunities	Excessive government regulations
Internet services	Water resources
Business incubator	Brain drain
National security	Wealth/Estate transfer

Group 4

Strengths	Weaknesses
Farm service office	Grain facility
School system	Vacant buildings
Hospital and medical personnel	General appearance
Communication/Phone company	Lack of cooperation
Hunting/Recreation	Lack of housing
Transportation	
Veterans	
Library	
Opportunities	**Threats**
Dr. Stout Foundation	No tax base to support
Off-campus education	State government
	Water
	Closing of courthouse/county consolidation

Once everyone had generated their group responses, the groups then were asked to share with everyone else. Everyone's responses were placed on a sheet in the front of the room. Once the compilation was complete, then each individual was given one colored dot per question (four dots in all). They were to place one dot on the most important item on each list of the overall lists. The summary along with the point totals are in the following table.

Town Hall meeting summary and total

Strengths		Weaknesses	
Schools	8	Lack of jobs for young people	9
Hospital/Doctors	3	Lack of housing/Larger % of vacant	2
Communication system/Telecommunications	2	Lack of cooperation	1
Recreation – Theater, Winery, fairgrounds, etc	2	General appearance	1
Community network to the world – gas line, transportation	1	Limited job opportunities	1
County seat		Declining population	1
Philanthropy		Aging infrastructure	1
Support of community		Low community pride	1
General Recreational opportunities		Lack of adequate grain storage	
Support for Agricultural community		Lack of business growth	
Emerging new businesses		Lack of specialized services	
		Better recycling center	
		Lack of quality jobs	
		Diminished Retail capacity	
Opportunities		**Threats**	
Quality lifestyle	5	State/Federal regulations and legislation	6
New business incubator	5	Job opportunities	2
Internet service	2	Irrigation problems/Republican River	2
Financial support for local projects	2	Town's appearance/Depopulation	1
Increased travel accommodations	1	Exterior retail threats/Lack of local support for local businesses	1
New business opportunities		Extremely excessive governmental regulations	1
National security		Water resources	1
Higher/continued education availability		Brain drain	1
Recreation facilities i.e. Auto racing		Wealth/Estate transfer	1
Opportunity for growth		Water quality	
Grant money		Lack of involvement	
People moving out of big cities		Declining optimism statewide/population not proportionate	
		Regulations that do not apply to small towns	
		Isolation within Nebraska	
		National Economy	

Town Hall Meeting (7:00 pm)

The 7:00 pm Town Hall meeting had eight people in attendance. Those in attendance were split into two smaller groups for purposes of this exercise. The following are the top five from each group.

Group 1

Strengths	Weaknesses
Hospital/EMT/Fire Department/Schools/Home	Declining population
County seat	Lack of housing
Internet/Communication system	Attitudes
Heartfelt donors/giving foundations	Appearance
Safety/Clean air/caring	Job Market
Opportunities	**Threats**
Financial support for community program	Wal*Mart
New business incubator	Water issues
Retired people	Economy
Internet business	Government regulations
Past graduates	Nebraska Tax base

Group 2

Strengths	Weaknesses
People – Charity, Tradition, Community Spirit, Churches, Safety	People – negative attitude, difficulty accepting change, newcomers, lack of vision from existing residents
Physical setting	Non-use of railroad system
School system	Lack of entrepreneurial guidance
Medical community – Professional Hospital, Hester House, Chiropractors, Prosthetics, Pharmacy	Limited retail opportunity
Telecommunications	Limited higher educational opportunity
Opportunities	**Threats**
World Wide Web	National economy
Foundation funding – grants, loans, private donators	East/west divide
Proximity to urban amenities	Water/Air quality
Outdoor activities and entertainment – hunting, golf, fishing, nature	Government regulations
Entrepreneurial incubator	Loss of Medical facility – domino effect

Town Hall meeting summary and total

Strengths		Weaknesses	
People	6	Attitudes	3
Internet Communication	4	Job Market	3
Churches	1	Lack of Housing	2
Charity		Lack of Entrepreneurial Guidance	2
Traditions		Appearance	2
Community Spirit		Declining population	
Safety/Clean Air		Limited retail opportunities	
Hospital/Schools/EMT		Limited higher education opportunities	
County Seat		Non-use of the railroad	
Donors/Foundations			
Opportunities		**Threats**	
Entrepreneurial Incubator	3	Water issues	5
Retired people	3	Nebraska Tax Base	2
Foundation funding	2	National economy	2
Outdoor activities/entertainment	2	Water/Air quality	1
Past graduates	1	Wal*Mart	
World Wide Web		Global economy	
Proximity to urban amenities		Government regulation	
Financial support for community programs		East/West divide	
		Loss of medical facility	

Focus Group Meetings

Focus Group meetings were held with four different groups within the community on March 4, 2010. The four groups were:

- Selected youth from the High School
- Economic Development/Chamber members
- Administrators of key operations in the community
- Housing representatives

These groups represent key aspects of Benkelman's future and it is critical to see how these individuals are thinking as well as any plans that might need to be incorporated into this comprehensive plan. The following summaries will not include complete conversations that occurred but will be a synopsis of what happened. However, the information from the meetings will be used in determining goals and policies for Benkelman.

Youth Focus Group

The first focus group was held with selected youth from the High School. Their grade level ranged from sophomore to senior. There was an initial set of seven questions that would be asked of the participating youth; these were intended to spark additional conversation on other matters. The meeting lasted approximately 1 ½ hours and included extremely good conversation and brainstorming for the future of the community and how to give youth more options for activities. The questions were simple and were as follows:

1. What do you really like about Benkelman?
2. What do you want to do when you graduate High School?
3. Where is your dream place to live and why?
4. What would need to happen to have you move back or stay in Benkelman?
5. Define Benkelman? One sentence or so
6. How long have you lived in Benkelman?
7. Disadvantage of living in Benkelman?

Questions 1, 3, and 4 had some interesting and not so typical answers. Some of the answers to question 3 were surprising for this specific age group. The following is a brief summary of some the answers from these specific questions:

1. What do you really like about Benkelman?
   - Secure/lack of crime
   - Unique businesses – home owned
   - How the community revolves around the school system
   - Friendly
   - Activities driven by the community
   - Good place to grow up

3. Where is your dream place to live and why?
   - Small town, maybe not Benkelman
   - Small town with more opportunity maybe with a college (McCook, Imperial, Kearney)
   - Benkelman would be good once married and established
   - Somewhere not secluded
   - Nebraska
   - Not Benkelman as a young adult (as a young adult…. Travel, see the world)
   - Not Nebraska

4. What would need to happen to have you move back or stay in Benkelman?
   - More career options/opportunities
   - More activities for kids and adults (a lot of people go to McCook on weekends)
   - Family
   - Benkelman needs to expand…. Housing opportunities and vision
   - More "name brand" places i.e. restaurants
   - More young adults to socialize
   - Housing needs to be cleaned up
   - Newer developments

With regard to question 5, "Define Benkelman? One sentence or so", the group came up with a joint answer which is:

"The community has a comfortable family feeling that is a great place to grow up"

These answers are not ones that would be expected from teenagers living in community as small and as rural as Benkelman. Their answers were very insightful and honest with regard to the community now and in the future.

Their insightfulness also showed a level of leadership as the meeting continued. Their thoughts began turning to what could be done by themselves and their friends to improve the current level of activities for the youth of the community. The conversation even began to plan out specific things that would need to be done and how to organize activities. The

consultant and faculty sponsor allowed this brainstorming to continue and a majority of their thoughts are recorded as part of the meeting.

Due to the success of this focus group meeting, it was recommended to the participants and the Mayor that these youth members be invited whenever possible to be a part of the steering committee as well as other visioning sessions in the community.

Economic Development/Chamber Focus Group

The second focus group was held with invited members of the Chamber of Commerce and individuals interested in the future economic development of Benkelman. There was an initial set of three questions that were asked of the group; these were intended to address key issues in the community as well as spark additional conversation on other matters. The meeting lasted approximately 1 hour and included extremely good conversation and answers. The questions were simple and were as follows:

1. What is the biggest obstacle Benkelman faces?
2. What is the biggest need in Benkelman?
3. What are some of your thoughts, solutions and ideas?

The following are the answer provided to each question.

1. What is the biggest obstacle Benkelman faces?
   - Stagnation – lack of growth
   - Lack of financial resources available – LB840 funds, CDBG to assist businesses
   - Lack of ground available
   - Limited economic base has tended to allow other economic bases to go away
   - Need some sort of stimulus to stir things up – look out 10 years plus to see past the immediate situation
   - Finding businesses to move here
   - Dwindling professional services
   - The "plan" and community agreement on the "plan" – Implementation
   - Population decline
   - Economy is based solely on agriculture – requires huge cash outlay to start up a young farmer
   - Lack of resources, people, money, and even will to diversify

2. What is the biggest need in Benkelman?
   - Housing
   - Replacing retiring professionals
   - New business would need to move specially trained employees here
   - Housing stock has dwindled to a lack of quality housing
   - Keeping jobs for younger people
   - Jobs
   - More vision
   - Always looking at attracting new businesses vs growing new businesses from within
   - Survival of school/hospital are critical to the future
   - Housing

3. What are some of your thoughts, solutions and ideas?
   - Use aging population as a base to grow the rest of the community
   - Mentoring/business transition program
   - Spec building
   - Use West Central Nebraska Development District to chase CDBG and other DED funds
   - Publicize West Central Nebraska Development District's financial capabilities
   - Age in place facility hard or loosely tied to the hospital
   - Revenue/resources to assist businesses and expansion
   - Better housing stock available
   - More competitive financial environment
   - Spec facilities for people to set up a telecommuting center/incubator (convert community building into this facility; plus daycare)

Administrators Focus Group

The third focus group was held and administrators from the following were invited to attend; the hospital, the school district, the senior center, and the nursing home. Unfortunately conflicts prevented two of the four from attending. The two administrators that were able to

attend included the hospital and the senior center. However, discussion was very enlightening.

The meeting lasted approximately 1 hour and included extremely good conversation and answers. Five questions were asked of the two in attendance. The questions were simple and were as follows:

1. What are some of your biggest obstacles in the community?
2. What are some of the short-term and long-term goals of your organization?
3. What are some of the hurdles you encounter when trying to recruit or hire staff?
4. What are some of the things that need to be addressed or done in Benkelman (realistic)?
5. What things can be done collaboratively between your organization and the City?

The following are the answer provided to each question.

1. What are some of your biggest obstacles in the community?
   - General economy
   - Mobility of people – McCook, Imperial, Wray Co., CO
   - People not coming in like they used to
   - Aging workforce
   - Uninsured people
   - Age factors
   - Attitude and Apathy

2. What are some of the short-term (ST) and long-term (LT) goals of your organization (SC = Senior Center; H = Hospital)?
   - Maintain and attract qualified staff (H)
   - Younger below 80 years to understand for senior center to continue (SC) (LT)
   - Need to maintain what is there now (SC) (ST)
   - Grow via more specialty services (H)
   - Keep doors open (SC) (ST)

3. What are some of the hurdles you encounter when trying to recruit or hire?
   - Getting people here at first
   - Getting and keeping entry level people
   - Aging workforce
   - Paying higher wages to get people to come to Benkelman
   - Overall shortage of health care providers statewide

4. What are some of the things that need to be addressed or done in Benkelman (realistic)?
   - More jobs
   - Community clean-up
   - Get buy in by people and business owners
   - Need better financial backing of local businesses vs out of town businesses
   - Housing
   - Spruce up downtown
   - Take better care of what is here i.e. buildings
   - Water/irrigation of cropland

5. What things can be done collaboratively between your organization and the City?
   - Continue to work together on recruitment of provider
   - Hospital/Nursing Home have tried to do laundry jointly
   - Senior Center uses handi-van to move seniors, transport people to the hospital, transport students occasionally
   - Development of some senior housing

Housing Focus Group

The final focus group was held with individuals involved in the community's housing market. The primary discussion involved filing out a survey. The results of this survey will be covered in detail within the Housing Market Analysis

Goals and Policies for Benkelman

The goals and policies that have been generated for Benkelman are organized into general categories. The categories are broad enough to allow many issues to fall within them, but

narrow enough to allow a fairly clear distinction and separation. These categories are used for a logical organization of goals and policies. The following goals and policies are general in nature; while more specific goals and policies for transportation and land use can be found within those individual sections further in the document:

Housing Goals

Specific housing goals and objectives can be found in the Benkelman Housing Market Analysis

Economic Development Goals

Economic Development Goal 1

The City of Benkelman should promote the recreational aspects of the community to attract visitors to the area.

Objectives

ED-1.1 The City needs to develop a strategy for exploiting local hunting and fishing opportunities.

ED-1.2 The City needs to work with Dundy County to identify all zoning needs in order to accomplish specifics that may fall outside the City's jurisdiction.

ED-1.3 The City needs to work with Dundy County and adjacent counties to identify a specific auto tour of the Southwest Nebraska area, using Benkelman as the center of the area.

ED-1.4 Work with the Department of Economic Development's Tourism Division to promote the recreational aspects of Benkelman, Dundy County and the southwest region.

ED-1.5 Work with the youth of the community to continually determine what additional recreational needs there are in Benkelman.

Economic Development Goal 2

Benkelman needs to promote itself as a place to retire, relax, and recreate.

Objectives

ED-2.1 The City along with property owners need to identify key housing needs and strategies in cooperation with the Housing Market Analysis in order to attract a retiring population.

ED-2.2 Key retail goods and services needed for supporting a retiree community must be identified and established.

ED-2.3 Work with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and West Central Nebraska Development District to identify potential funding sources to attract businesses including new business start-ups.

ED-2.4 Work with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and West Central Nebraska Development District to identify potential funding sources to attract retirees to southwest Nebraska.

ED-2.5 Update zoning and other codes in the community to allow for different types of uses such as golf carts and other low speed transportation

ED-2.6 Work with the Dundy County Hospital to insure that there will be proper facilities to care for the retiring population.

ED-2.7 Work with the Dundy County Hospital and the nursing home facility to develop an "aging in place" development that allows the senior population to move from low maintenance self-supported housing through assisted living to full care.

ED-2.8 Establish new and expanded infrastructure/technologies throughout the community needed to support aspects of this population, including:

- Charging stations and parking for golf carts
- Additional handi-bus support
- Walking trails

Economic Development Goal 3

Expand the existing retail, service, and industrial base in Benkelman

Objectives

ED-3.1 Identify new retail businesses and services that will be needed to support Economic Development Goals 1 and 2.

ED-3.2 Establish an entrepreneurship/investment group that will work with and financially support new ideas for business and industry in Benkelman.

ED-3.3 Declare the area around the intersection of Nebraska Highway 61 and U.S. Highway 34 as blighted and substandard.

ED-3.4 Identify funding sources available from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and West Central Nebraska Development District for construction of new production/warehousing facilities near the intersection of the two highways.

ED-3.5 Establish tax increment financing as an element of the community's overall incentive tool kit.

ED-3.6 Expand infrastructure to the north to support new commercial and industrial business near and around the intersection of Nebraska Highway 61 and U.S. Highway 34.

ED-3.7 Identify other areas of the community where redevelopment activity needs to be undertaken.

ED-3.8 Develop a business transition program that will allow existing business owners to sale out their business to someone else at retirement.

ED-3.9 Tap into the existing telecommunication infrastructure to expand the economic reach of local businesses.

ED-3.10 Develop a new business incubator for individuals/businesses that are start-ups needing to minimize their immediate overhead and expenses.

Recreational Goals

Recreational Goal 1

The City of Benkelman should continue to provide adequate park and recreation opportunities for local residents and visitors to the community.

Policies

REC-1.1 Park and recreation facilities should be designed to accommodate the particular needs and interests of area residents while protecting, preserving, and conserving the environmental character and quality of the area.

REC-1.2 Provide parks and recreational facilities that are reasonably accessible to residents of Benkelman as new developments occur along the perimeter of the community.

REC-1.3 Preserve the natural attributes of both the floodplain to avoid loss of life and property while providing open space.

REC-1.4 Promote recreation as a continuing means of economic development for Benkelman.

REC-1.5 Work with local individuals to develop newer passive recreational areas through Benkelman including the drainageway on the north end of the community.

REC-1.6 Work with area youth to develop unique forms of recreation for the school aged population of the community. Examples include a youth game night, movie nights, etc.

Educational Goals

Educational Goal 1

Quality education is a vital component of positive growth. Although the City's role is limited, objectives and policies need to be established with regard to locating development to insure cost effective use of existing facilities.

Policies

EDU-1.1 Cooperate with Dundy County Stratton Public Schools in expanding public uses of educational facilities.

EDU-1.2 The school district should review all new development proposed within the zoning jurisdiction of Benkelman so that they can accommodate for future school populations.

Educational Goal 2

The city will coordinate the school district to insure adequate areas for future educational needs. Above all, the main goal is to encourage excellence in the public school curriculum and facilities.

Policies

EDU-2.1 Cooperate with Dundy County Stratton Public Schools on the expansion or the development of new joint facilities.

EDU-2.2 Work with students to continually identify new facilities that will be needed in the future.

Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Public Safety Goals

Safety (Fire Protection) Goal 1

The goal of the City of Benkelman is to maintain fire protection programs by exploring programs and alternative services to insure optimum service levels and public costs.

Policies

SAFE -1.1 Continue to work with the fire department to maintain quality equipment levels.

SAFE-1.2 Work to expand fire safety education and prevention throughout the community.

Safety (Law Enforcement) Goal 2

The goal of the City of Benkelman is to maintain quality law enforcement within the community.

Policies

SAFE -2.1 Continue to identify specific needs with the County and the County Sheriff regarding protection within the corporate limits of Benkelman.

SAFE-2.2 Continue to support minimum standards regarding equipment used by law enforcement.

Safety (General Health and Safety) Goal 3

The goal of the City of Benkelman is to maintain regulations that will protect the general health and safety of all residents.

Policies

SAFE -3.1 Clean and regulate nuisances and poorly maintained properties. This includes continued efforts to regulate junk cars, junkyards and dilapidated/deteriorated residences across the City.

SAFE-3.2 Establish regulations protecting the City residents from the secondary effects of adult entertainment.

Public Facility Goals

Public Facility Goal 1

The City of Benkelman, as the population grows, will feel the pressure to provide certain upgraded or new facilities the residents of the community. The expansion of public facilities is a major factor in directing development.

Policies

PUB-1.1 Continue to expand and upgrade the water and sanitary sewer system in a manner that will guide growth in a systematic and responsible manner without creating large shortfalls for the City to meet demand.

PUB-1.2 Public facilities should be strategically located within Benkelman in order to provide cost-effective, efficient, and timely service to all residents.

PUB-1.3 Work with BWTelcom to continue to provide quality telephone services to the community.

PUB-1.4 Work with BWTelcom to continue to provide quality internet services to the community.

Environmental Goals

Environmental Goal 1

The goal of Benkelman is to guide development in a manner that conserves and protects the natural resources; minimizes potential conflicts between rural/urban residents; promotes compatible land uses; encourages compact development and an efficient provision of services.

Policies

ENV-1.1 Zoning regulations and design standards should be created to protect the environmental and natural resources of Benkelman through the encouragement of preservation and conservation practices.

ENV-1.2 Federal requirements and regulations shall be followed when land use regulations are being developed. Benkelman's regulations should, at a minimum, be as strict as federal standards, and where necessary, may be enforced in a manner stricter than federal guidelines.

ENV-1.3 Protect all water supplies and aquifers from development activities that may affect the quality and/or quantity of water.

ENV-1.4 Development shall demonstrate a positive or, at least, a neutral impact on surface and ground water supplies.

ENV-1.5 Encourage the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, wooded areas, waterways (streams, ponds, lakes, rivers, etc.), landmark trees and other amenities.

ENV-1.6 The City of Benkelman will continue participation in the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program to prevent flood-caused loss of life and property, by applying identified mapped areas showing the floodplain and floodway.

ENV-1.7 Restrictions on land uses within the floodplain which are open and undeveloped, including forestry, agriculture, wildlife habitat and recreational areas should be established.

ENV-1.8 The City will work to enforce and monitor the requirements for Stormwater Management under the NPDES Phase II program.

ENV-1.9 The City will, in making land use decisions relative to industrial or other uses likely to pose a threat to air quality, consider proximity of the proposed use to residential areas and meteorological factors such as prevailing wind direction and velocity.

Transportation Goals

Transportation Goal 1

Benkelman is to develop and support an efficient road system to serve current and future circulation and access needs. Provide and encourage an efficient, safe, convenient transportation and communication system.

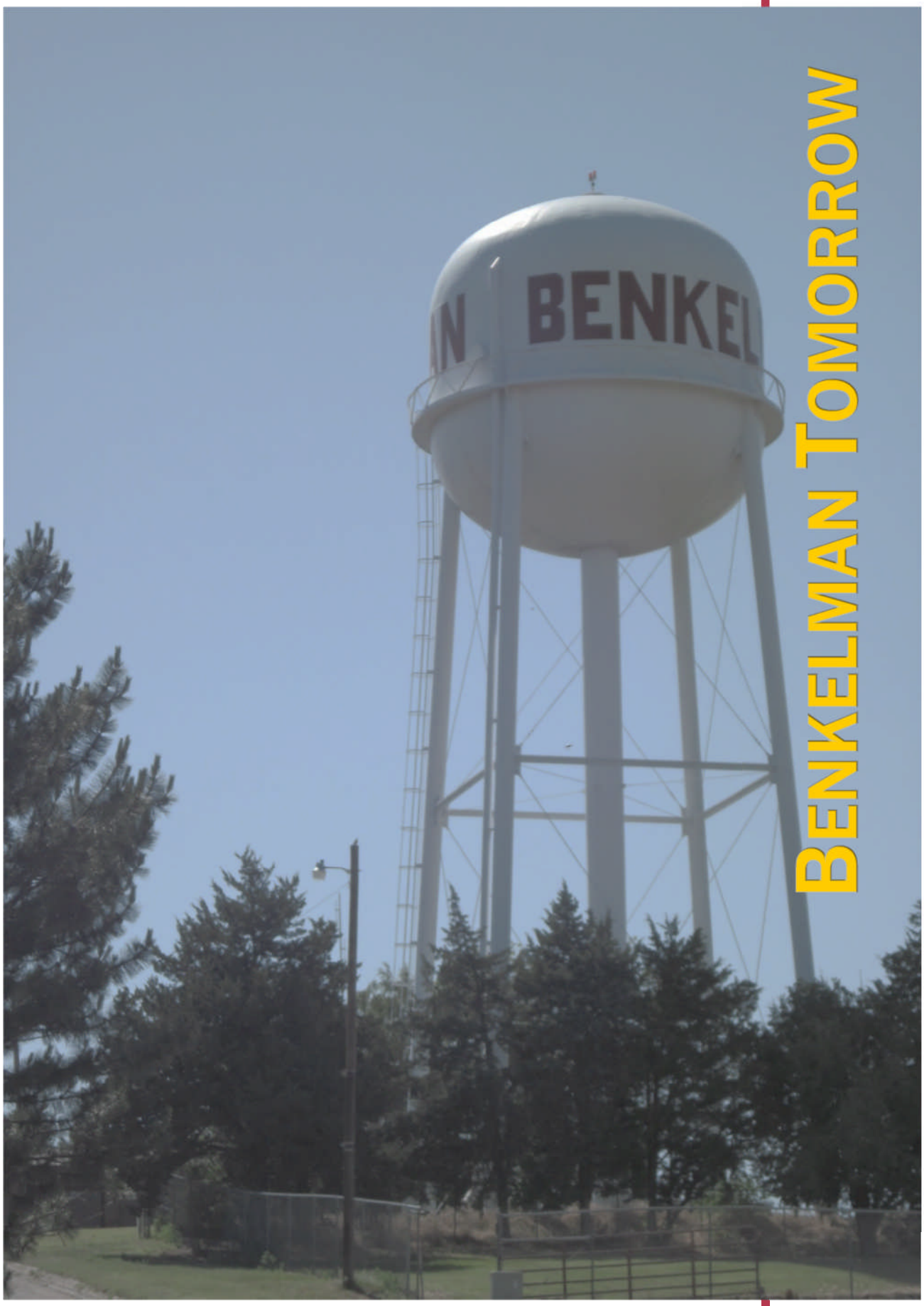
Policies

TRAN-1.1 Encourage new pedestrian and bicycle trails through the drainage ways on the north part of the community.

TRAN-1.2 Improve, develop, and maintain well-traveled roads with hard surfacing.

TRAN-1.3 When new or reconstructed streets are built, there should provisions made in the design documents that provide for additional space along a wider shoulder or path within the R.O.W. for pedestrian/bicycle access.

TRAN-1.4 Right-of-way and pavements shall be sufficiently wide and of sufficient strength to accommodate anticipated future traffic loads.


BENKEL
BENKELMAN TOMORROW

INTRODUCTION

Within any planning jurisdiction, whether a large growing urban area or a small declining rural county, there will be changes in land uses throughout the planning period. The purpose of the Benkelman Tomorrow Chapter is to provide a general guide to direct changes in land use and transportation over time. The resulting changes in land uses and transportation networks should be capable of coexisting with a minimum number of conflicts. This Chapter must reflect the existing conditions and be flexible in order to meet the needs of its citizens as well as their vision for the community's future.

The Benkelman Tomorrow Chapter provides the basis for the formulation of land use and the zoning regulations. For this reason, it is imperative to formulate a plan tailored to the needs, desires and environmental limitations of the planning area. The Chapter should promote improvements in all the components of the local economy.

LAND USE ELEMENTS

The elements of the Benkelman Tomorrow Chapter include:

- **Existing Land Use**
- **Existing Transportation System and Facilities**
- **Future Land Use Plan, and**
- **Transportation Plan**

All of these elements are integrated in some manner. Effective evaluations and decisions regarding development decisions require a substantial amount of information to be utilized.

EXISTING LAND USE

The term "Land Use" refers to the developed uses in place within a building or on a specific parcel of land. The number and type of uses are constantly changing within a community, and produce a number of impacts that either benefit or detract from the community. Because of this, the short and long-term success and sustainability of the community is directly contingent upon available resources utilized in the best manner given the constraints the city faces during the course of the planning period.

Existing patterns of land use are often fixed in older communities or at least in established sections, while development in newer areas is often reflective of current development practices. Overall, development patterns in and around Benkelman have been influenced by topography and manmade features such as water, a railroad line and a U.S. Highway, and will likely continue to influence development patterns throughout the course of the planning period.

Existing Land Use Categories

The utilization of land is best described in specific categories that provide broad descriptions where numerous businesses, institutions, and structures can be grouped. For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, the following land use classifications are used:

- Single Family Residential

- Multi-Family Residential (includes Duplexes and Apartments)
- Manufactured Housing (including Trailers and Mobile Homes)
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Quasi-Public (includes churches and hospitals)
- Public (including City facilities and schools)
- Parks & Recreation (including Open Space)
- Vacant/Agricultural

These land use classifications are used throughout both the existing land use analysis as well as the future land use plan to ensure continuity and methodology.

Existing Land Use Analysis within Corporate Limits

As part of the planning process, a survey was conducted through field observations via a windshield survey. This survey noted the use of each parcel of land within the city of Benkelman. The data from the survey is analyzed in the following paragraphs.

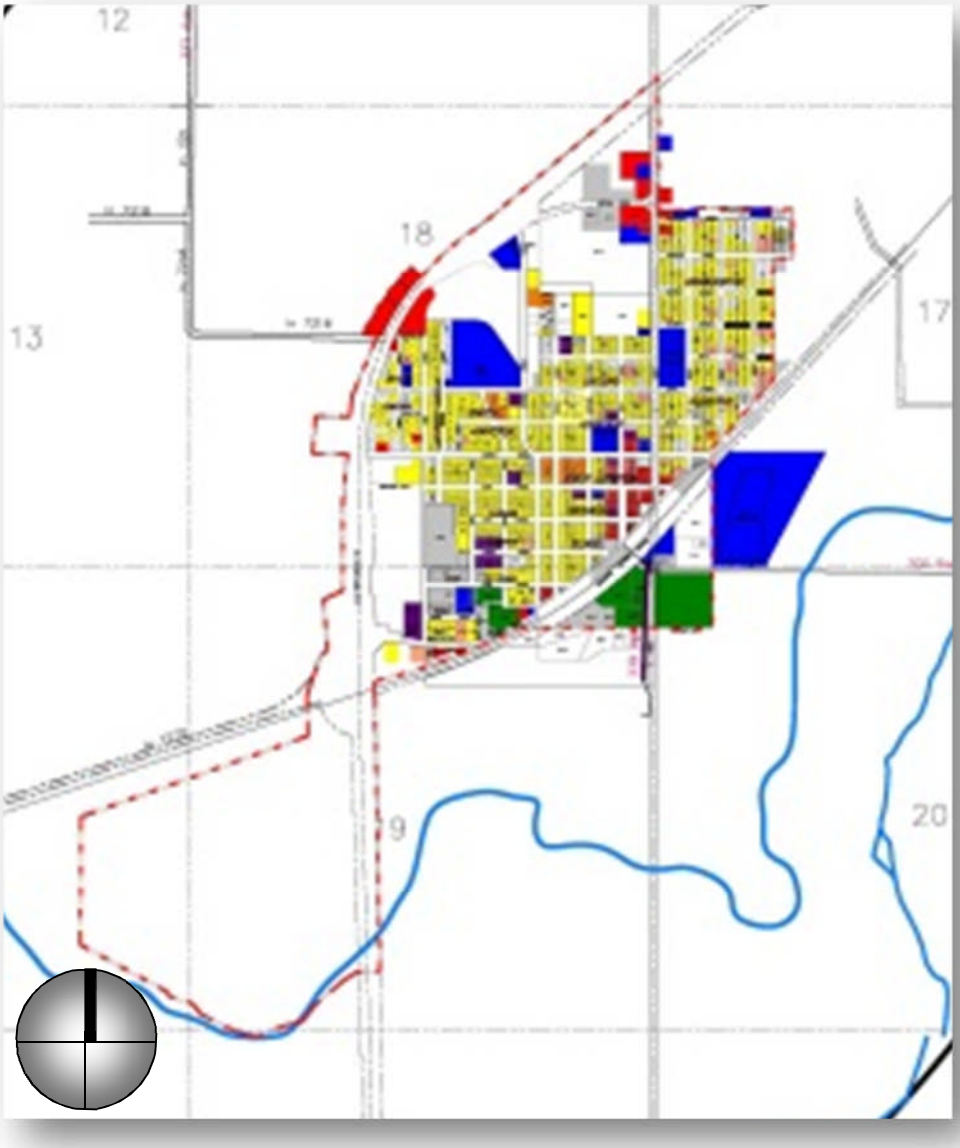
Table 24 includes the different types of data. The first set of data are the total acres determined per land use from the survey; next is the percentage of those areas compared to the total developed land; the third set of data compare the all land uses to the total area within the corporate limits of Benkelman; finally, the last column examines the data in terms of acres per 100 persons. The persons per 100 acre establishes a baseline from which land use numbers can be equally compared from one community to another as well as to project future land use needs due to population. The results of the land use survey are presented graphically on Figure 7.

TABLE 24:
EXISTING LAND USE, BENKELMAN
2009

Type of Use	Acres	Percent of Developed Area	Percent of Total Area	Acres per 100 persons
Residential	119.2	31.1%	25.0%	12.09
Single-family	105.27	27.4%	22.1%	10.68
Multi-family	5.25	1.4%	1.1%	0.53
Manufactured Housing	8.68	2.3%	1.8%	0.88
Commercial	21	5.5%	4.4%	2.13
Industrial	29.69	7.7%	6.2%	3.01
Quasi-Public/Public	66.22	17.3%	13.9%	6.72
Parks/Recreation	19.02	5.0%	4.0%	1.93
Transportation	128.66	33.5%	27.0%	13.05
Total Developed Land	383.79	100.0%	80.6%	38.92
Vacant/Agriculture	92.27	-	19.4%	9.36
Total Area	476.06	-	100.0%	48.28

Source: 2009 Benkelman Comprehensive Development Plan, Marvin Planning Consultants
Note: Acres per 100 is based upon the 2007 population estimates.

FIGURE 7:
EXISTING LAND USE MAP



Legend:

- Commercial
- Industrail
- Mobile Home Residential
- Multi Family Residential
- Parks Recreation
- Public
- Quasi Public
- Single Family Residential
- Vacant

future land use needs due to population. The results of the land use survey are presented graphically on Figure 7.

Land Use Comparative Analysis

Table 25 compares the land use make-up of Benkelman to three other similar communities. The table shows that there are varying levels of uses in each community. The table is purely for comparison purposes and does not indicate that one community's make-up is better than another. All three of the other communities are being influenced by a larger regional city.

TABLE 25:
LAND USE COMPARISONS (IN ACRES)
2009

Type of Use	Benkelman (1)	Percent of Total Area	Henderson (2)	Percent of Total Area	Alda (3)	Percent of Total Area	Wood River (4)	Percent of Total Area
Residential	119.2	25.0%	125.73	32.5%	64.6	26.9%	150.7	34.1%
Single-family	105.27	22.1%	120.09	31.1%	47.7	19.8%	137.8	31.2%
Multi-family	5.25	1.1%	4.89	1.3%	0.9	0.4%	6.4	1.4%
Manufactured Housing	8.68	1.8%	0.75	0.2%	16.1	6.7%	6.5	1.5%
Commercial	21	4.4%	5.58	1.4%	10.3	4.3%	25.8	5.8%
Industrial	29.69	6.2%	40.92	10.6%	30.6	12.7%	0.0	0.0%
Quasi-Public/Public	66.22	13.9%	11.69	3.0%	10.3	4.3%	8.77	2.0%
Parks/Recreation	19.02	4.0%	88.61	22.9%	4.1	1.7%	9.1	2.1%
Transportation	128.66	27.0%	97.40	25.2%	80.7	33.6%	168.4	38.1%
Total Developed Land	383.79	80.6%	369.93	95.7%	200.6	83.4%	362.7	82.1%
Vacant/Agriculture	92.27	19.4%	16.79	4.3%	39.9	16.6%	79.3	17.9%
Total Area	476.06	100.0%	386.72	100.0%	240.4	100.0%	442.0	100.0%

Source: (1) 2010 Comprehensive Development Plan – Marvin Planning Consultants Field Survey
(2) 2010 Comprehensive Development Plan – Marvin Planning Consultants Field Survey
(3) 2002 Comprehensive Development Plan - JEO Field Survey
(4) 2002 Comprehensive Development Plan - JEO Field Survey

Existing Land Use Analysis within the ETJ

During the course of the land use survey, land uses in the one-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction of Benkelman were also noted, with the results presented graphically on Figure 7. The predominate land use within the outlying areas is agriculture and agricultural related uses such as a private airfield and farm houses.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND FACILITIES

Residents within a community, even the size of Benkelman, have specific transportation needs. These include rail service, bus service, air transportation, as well as vehicular transportation. All of the transportation facilities present are not available within the community and require residents to travel to the nearest location. This portion of the Comprehensive Development Plan examines those services with regard to the closest proximity for residents of Benkelman.

Railroad Service

The closest rail freight service to Benkelman is in McCook. McCook is served by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe and has a small switching yard on the south side of the community. The nearest Union Pacific freight service is available in North Platte. The nearest passenger service is located in McCook through Amtrak.

Bus Service

The nearest commercial bus service with ticketing services is available in North Platte and Ogallala via Greyhound. In addition, Burlington Trailways offers both connections throughout the United States with the nearest depots located in North Platte and Ogallala.

Commercial Airport Service

McCook Regional Airport is the nearest point for commercial service. However, airlines and flight schedules are limited. The airport is served strictly by Great Lakes Airlines with direct service to Denver. Once in Denver one can fly any number of airlines throughout the United States and North America.

Small craft Public Airports

The closest small craft public airport facilities in Nebraska include:

- McCook Regional Airport
- Imperial Municipal Airport
- North Platte Regional Airport

Surface Transportation

The surface transportation system for Benkelman is based primarily upon the system of local streets that are connected to the state highway network and county road system, which allows the community access to the surrounding region. These roadways are an essential aspect of community development for the residents of Benkelman as they provide for movement of goods and services into and through the city.

State and Federal Highways

The city of Benkelman has a newer alignment of U.S. Highway 34 running along the northern edge of the community. The older alignment is still in place and used as a regular roadway. U.S. Highway 34 connects Benkelman with eastern Nebraska and Colorado.

Community Street System

The street system in Benkelman is comprised predominately of local streets in a typical grid pattern throughout the community. The grid pattern deteriorates on the far north edge of the community where it becomes more a set of curvilinear streets due to a large drainage area, the alignment of Nebraska Highway 61/US Highway 34 and a number of larger parcels of land. The grid is cut off on the south edge by the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad which abuts on community in another curvilinear pattern.

Street and Road Classification System

All of the public highways, roads, and streets in Nebraska are divided into two broad categories, and each category is divided into multiple functional classifications. The two broad categories are Rural Highways and Municipal Streets. State statute defines Rural Highways as "all public highways and roads outside the limits of any incorporated

municipality," and Municipal Streets as "all public streets within the limits of any incorporated municipality." Neb. Rev. Stat. § 39-2102 (RRS 1998)

Nebraska Highway Law (Chapter 39, Article 21, Revised Reissue Statutes of Nebraska 1943) proposes the functional classification of both rural and municipal roads and streets and public highways. Chapter 39, Article 21.03 lists rural highway classifications as:

1. Interstate: federally-designed National System of Interstate and defense highways;
2. Expressway: second in importance to Interstate. Consists of a group of highways following major traffic desires in Nebraska and ultimately should be developed to multiple divided highway standards;
3. Major Arterial: consists of the balance of routes that serve major statewide interests for highway transportation in Nebraska. Characterized by high speed, relatively long distances, travel patterns;
4. Other Arterial: consists of a group of highways of less importance as through-travel routes.
5. Collector: consists of a group of highways that pick up traffic from the local or land-service roads and transport community centers or to the arterial systems. Main school bus routes, mail routes, and farm-to-market routes;
6. Local: consists of all remaining rural roads, generally described as land-access roads providing service to adjacent land and dwellings; and
7. Bridges: structures crossing a stream three hundred feet or more in width or channels of such a stream having a combined width of three hundred feet or more.

It is noted in article 39-2103, that the combined rural highways classified under subdivisions (1) and (3) should serve every incorporated municipality having a minimum population of at least one hundred inhabitants or sufficient commerce, a part of that will be served by stubs or spurs, and the major recreational areas of the state. Street and road classifications for the circulation system within the City of Benkelman are outlined below:

1. Arterial streets - public ways where large volumes of high-speed, through traffic are carried, and may serve as primary circulation routes for local traffic. These streets also provide access to abutting property.
2. Collector streets - are connecting links between Arterials and various sectors of the City, over which local residential traffic moves in routine daily trips to centers of activity.
3. Local streets - function primarily to provide access to properties. They are characterized by short trip length and low traffic volumes.
4. Marginal access streets - parallel and adjacent to arterial streets and/or provides access to abutting property. They increase the safety and efficiency of thoroughfares by separating the property access function from the traffic flow function.
5. Alleys - provide secondary access to properties. They provide service access in the case of commercial and industrial properties. Alleys should be provided for residential properties only when necessary for safe access, due to the fronting of the property on a major thoroughfare.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan provides the basis for the formulation of land use policy and zoning regulations. For this reason, it is imperative to formulate a plan tailored to the needs, desires and environmental limitations of the planning area. The Future Land Use Plan should promote improvements in all components of the local economy. The following common principles and land use concepts have been formed to guide future development and redevelopment activities within Benkelman's planning and zoning jurisdiction.

The plan is based upon existing conditions and projected future conditions for the community. The Land Use Plan also assists the community in determining the type, direction and timing of future community growth, development and redevelopment activities. The criteria used in this Plan reflect several elements, including:

- the current use of land within and around the community
- the desired types of growth, including location of growth
- future development activities
- future redevelopment desires and concepts
- physical characteristics, opportunities and constraints of future growth areas
- current population and economic trends affecting the community

The Benkelman Tomorrow section of the comprehensive development plan typically identifies more land for development and redevelopment then forecasted for the planning period. The process of identifying more land area allows for several development/redevelopment activities and opportunities without giving one or even two property owners an unfair advantage. Typically, the value of land can increase merely as a result of Plan designation. However, value should be added to land by the real and substantial investments in roads, water, sewer or parks, not by the designation of land in the Plan.

Efficient allocation of land recognizes the forces of the private market and the limitations of the capital improvement budget. This Plan acknowledges that these factors play an important role in the growth, development, and redevelopment of Benkelman. A Land Use Plan is intended to be a general guide to future land use that balances private sector development (the critical growth element in any community) with the concerns, interests, and demands of the overall local economy.

FUTURE LAND USE DEMANDS

Using the data in Table 26, future demand for the different land uses can be projected. Unfortunately, only one of the population projects indicates a stable or increase in population for Benkelman. The data "Acres per 100 persons" is the mechanism needed to examine future demand; however, this projection is not an absolute science and any number of positive and negative factors may impact this significantly.

TABLE 26:
FUTURE LAND USE DEMAND - BENKELMAN

Type of Use	Acres (2010)	Percent of Developed Area (2010)	Percent of Total Area (2010)	Acres per 100 persons (2010)	Acres needed 2020 (High)	Acres needed 2030 (High)
Residential	119.2	31.1%	25.0%	13.26	123.84	127.55
Single-family	105.27	27.4%	22.1%	11.71	109.37	112.65
Multi-family	5.25	1.4%	1.1%	0.58	5.45	5.62
Manufactured Housing	8.68	2.3%	1.8%	0.97	9.02	9.29
Commercial	21	5.5%	4.4%	2.34	21.82	22.47
Industrial	29.69	7.7%	6.2%	3.30	30.85	31.77
Quasi-Public/Public	66.22	17.3%	13.9%	7.37	68.80	70.86
Parks/Recreation	19.02	5.0%	4.0%	2.12	19.76	20.35
Transportation	128.66	33.5%	27.0%	14.31	133.67	137.68
Total Developed Land	383.79	100.0%	80.6%	42.69	398.73	410.69
Vacant/Agriculture	92.27	-	19.4%	10.26	95.86	98.74
Total Area	476.06	-	100.0%	52.95	494.59	509.42

LAND USE CATEGORIES

The future land uses for Benkelman are separated into 12 categories. The following list shows the land uses within this plan:

- **Transitional Agriculture**
- **Low Density Residential**
- **Medium Density Residential**
- **High Density Residential**
- **Downtown Commercial**
- **General Commercial**
- **Highway Commercial**
- **Flex**
- **Industrial**
- **Public**
- **Parks / Recreation**
- **Floodplain Overlay**

Transitional Agricultural: This land use designation intends for the continued use of cropland, farmsteads, limited livestock, animal services, crop services, horticulture, community supported agriculture and tree farms. In specific cases, where the design criteria can be and will be met, mobile home residential development may be allowed in any of this area. At some point in the future this land area may transition into a more urbanized area depending upon specific growth patterns.

Residential: Residential development is the backbone of a community. These areas are where the residents live and spend the quality time in their lives. The next three land use designations are intended for single-family dwellings, townhouses, duplexes, multifamily dwellings, apartments, group homes and elderly homes. Other secondary uses which may be compatible to the residential uses of each area are churches as well as other similar uses.

In specific cases, where the design criteria can be met, mobile home residential development may be allowed in any of the residential areas. The difference among the various groups is the density of development in each land use category.

Low Density/Estate Development: The first among the residential land uses. The recommended density for this land use designation is a minimum of two acres per unit. This type of land use is not recommended in prime developable areas in or near Benkelman due to the amount of land consumed.

However, this type of use should be located near existing acreages and in areas where the land is not suitable for agricultural use or traditional suburban/urban development. An example of a typical low density residential/estate development area would be a cluster development that works to incorporate the natural amenities of the area. A portion of the development site would allow single family residential and the remaining area of the site would be left undeveloped. City services could either be or not be provided within this land use designation.

Medium Density Residential: This designation is the next highest residential density. The proposed density for this area ranges from three to 10 units per acre. This would be a common density found throughout the existing portions of Benkelman. This density would allow lots for single family dwellings ranging from approximately 14,500 square feet to 7,500 square feet. City services such as water and sewer would be provided.

Example of Estate Residential

Medium Density Residential development will allow for a greater number of homes than the Low Density/Estate Development area, by providing more useable open space or specific amenities as a tradeoff. This density is intended to encourage variations to the standard detached single-family environment. The area will include predominantly single-family detached dwellings, with some occasional townhouse, condominium, and small multi-family apartment developments.

New subdivisions should be designed using principles of environmental conservation and clustering. When clustering is used in subdivision design, the same number of dwelling units may be realized while natural features are preserved. The areas being protected can be used as natural open spaces, linear parks, or trails. This should affect property values in a positive way as people are drawn to live in areas that provide natural amenities. Another beneficial affect that accompanies cluster development is an overall increase in open space

without having to increase the park system. Density bonuses can be used to encourage developers to preserve natural space within their developments, while still developing approximately the same number of lots.

Redevelopment activities in these areas should be closely coordinated with both the Housing Market Analysis and the General Redevelopment Plan prepared for the community. Strategies should be centered on improving the overall appearance, marketability and accessibility to housing within Benkelman.

High Density Residential: This land use category is intended to accommodate denser residential development. The locations of these areas are such that they occasionally act as a buffer between more intensive uses (i.e. commercial and industrial) and the Low to Medium Density Residential areas. The developed density of these areas should be between 10 to 20 dwelling units per acre.

Residential Transition: This district is intended as a transitional area along "A" Street. Within this transitional area, a mixture of residential, commercial retail and office uses are encouraged. This transition is intended primarily for the area between 6th Street and 14th Street. The following will be allowable uses within this district:

- Single-family residential
- Small retail, professional office uses (i.e. Dental Office, Attorney's Office)

Specific criteria that should be followed within this District include:

- Small retail and office space must make use of existing residential style buildings/structures
- If a new structure is required, construction style must meet the neighborhood character and immolate a residential structure.
- Density within this District should be a maximum of 7 Units/Acre

Commercial: The Commercial land use category is divided into three different sub-categories. Commercial areas in general are located where existing uses meet this definition as well as areas throughout Benkelman's extraterritorial jurisdiction along major roadways and highways. The three sub-categories are Downtown Commercial, General Commercial, and Highway Commercial.

Downtown Commercial: This area is focused on the heart of Benkelman's commercial activities. The area is centered on "A" Street and Chief Street between 8th Street on the north and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad on the south. This area should continue to promote basic retail, service, and office uses. In addition, this area typically will not have any setbacks and new buildings can be constructed right to the property line.

General Commercial: This land use category is intended to provide a location for less intense commercial uses similar to those found in the Downtown Commercial area. However, the big difference is that uses locating within this particular area will be required to meet established setbacks as well as other minimal design criteria.

Highway Commercial: This land use area is intended to provide a location where more intensive commercial use can locate. These include uses that provide goods and services to the motoring public. These uses are typically too intensive and large to fit into the typical downtown area. They might include truck stops, motels, larger convenience stores, and others. Typically these areas will need to have direct access from a highway or major arterial. In some cases, multiple operations in a row may require that a service road be constructed as opposed to individual driveways off the highway.

Flex Uses: The "Flex" land uses category is intended to be used in portions of the Benkelman jurisdiction where both commercial and less intensive industrial uses may be appropriate, including a mixture of both types of uses. These areas will typically be large enough to accommodate larger uses as opposed to small businesses. An example of what may be an appropriate mixture of uses is a less intense manufacturing facility and a convenient store or even a truck stop.

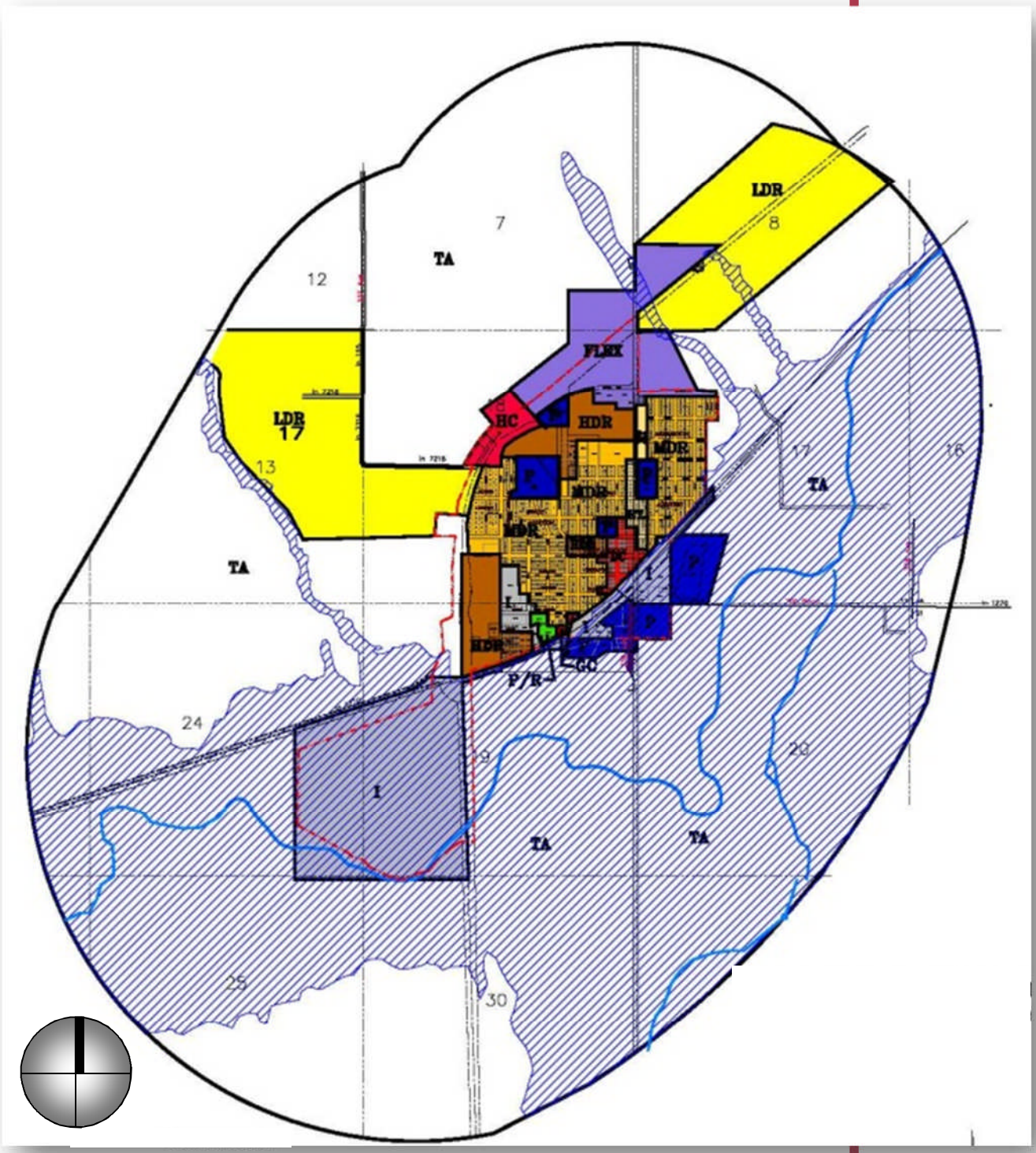
Industrial Uses: Industrial land uses are important in order to accommodate the manufacturing base of the community. These typically need require large tracts of ground in order to deal with the buildings required for manufacturing. In addition, the location of industrial uses needs to be sensitive to other uses which are not compatible such as residential uses.

Public Uses: Public land uses are those uses specifically owned and operated by a public entity such as the City of Benkelman, Dundy County, Dundy County Stratton Public Schools as well as state and federal agencies. The public land use areas are only delineated when there are larger parcels of land associated with the use. Smaller areas such as City Hall and the Post Office are not singled out due to this reason.

An example of Open Space

Park/Recreation/Open Space: This land use district is intended for parks, green space, trails, recreational areas, and areas for environmental protection. These areas may or may not be used as an extension of the city's existing park system. One issue to note is that not all areas suitable for future parks and open space are indicated on the Future Land Use Map, this is done for the purpose of not artificially or prematurely inflating land values.

FIGURE 8:
FUTURE LAND USE MAP



Legend:

- Transitional Agriculture
- Low Density Residential
- Medium Density Residential
- High Density Residential
- Residential Transition
- Downtown Commercial
- General Commercial
- Highway Commercial
- Flex
- Industrial
- Public
- Parks and Recreation
- Floodplain

In addition, as new development or future redevelopment activities occur, the City should be working to ensure that new park space is incorporated into the project, especially in the northern and eastern portions of the community where existing park space appears to be available.

Open space areas can work excellently as a buffer area between different developments and uses. In addition, these areas can be used to preserve natural features. To encourage the appropriate use of open space in this manner, the City should work with developers to identify areas worthy of protection rather than allow individual developers identifying these areas.

Floodplain: This area is considered an Overlay Land Use District. An Overlay Land Use District is one that applies additional criteria and policies to another land use district such as the Transitional Agricultural District. The Floodplain Overlay District is based upon the Flood Insurance Map produced and distributed the FEMA. These areas lie predominately south of the community and are mostly along the Republican River.

FUTURE LAND USE GOALS

Land Use Goal and Objectives

Guiding future growth, development, and redevelopment in Benkelman towards a compact pattern of land uses based upon the efficient and economical expansion of public infrastructure will continue to maintain and improve the quality of life for everyone in the community.

Objectives

GENLU-1.1 The cost of required improvements, both on-site and off-site, to a subdivision that are to exclusively serve the property owners of the subdivision will be borne by the developer or those property owners within said subdivision.

GENLU-1.2 The City of Benkelman, when feasible, may choose to aid a development or redevelopment with specific funding mechanisms such as Tax Increment Financing, special assessments, etc.

GENLU-1.3 Designate areas in the Land Use Plan that address the anticipated future growth needs of Benkelman.

GENLU-1.4 Develop zoning and subdivision regulations that promote efficient land usage, while avoiding land use conflicts.

GENLU-1.5 Discourage and minimize leapfrog development outside of the corporate limits.

Commercial Land Use Objectives

COMLU-2.1 Include commercial development within the special land use designation “Flex”

COMLU-2.2 Encourage the location of commercial land uses at the intersections of major transportation networks.

COMLU-2.3 Promote the efficient expansion of public infrastructure through the development of commercial centers.

COMLU-2.4 Utilize frontage roads, as possible, when locating along major roads/highways.

COMLU-2.5 Encourage the continued redevelopment of the downtown commercial district

COMLU-2.6 Appropriate transitional methods should be considered at all locations where the development or expansion of commercial land use abuts residential property (either built or zoned).

COMLU-2.7 Commercial land use districts and uses within commercial zoning districts need to be lenient yet focused in manner that will allow for new and innovative business to develop and locate within Benkelman.

COMLU-2.8 Within the "Flex" use areas, work to promote compatible commercial and industrial uses.

Industrial Land Use Objectives

INDLU-3.1 Include lighter industrial uses within the special land use designation "Flex"

INDLU-3.2 Look at redevelopment opportunities along the western side of the community near Eagle Street.

INDLU-3.3 Provide guidelines and incentives that will promote clean industrial uses.

INDLU-3.4 Within the "Flex" use areas, work to promote compatible commercial and industrial uses.

Residential Land Use Objectives

RESLU-4.1 Promote residential land use policies that implement the strategies within the Housing Market Analysis.

RESLU-4.2 Residential development should be separated from more intensive uses, such as agriculture, commercial, and industrial development, by the use of setbacks, buffer zones, or impact easements, when possible.

RESLU-4.3 Promote the development of housing that varies in size, density, and location.

RESLU-4.4 Develop subdivision regulations that provide for a quality living environment while avoiding inefficient and expensive public infrastructure expansions.

RESLU-4.5 Support housing options for all incomes and physical capabilities of Benkelman's residents.

RESLU-4.6 New residential developments should be accompanied by covenants, when appropriate, which provide for the maintenance of common areas, easements and drainage.

RESLU-4.7 Encourage the establishment of a rehabilitation program to maintain and improve the existing housing stock.

RESLU-4.8 Develop relationships and partnerships with housing professions in the public and private sector to establish a range of affordable housing options, ranging from a First Time Homebuyer program to rental assistance.

RESLU-4.9 Promote low to zero non-farm densities in agricultural districts by providing proper distances between residential and agricultural uses.

TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PLAN

Introduction

Transportation networks tie communities together as well as providing a link to the outside world. Adequate circulation systems are essential for the safe and efficient flow of vehicles and pedestrians, and accessibility to all parts of the community. The Transportation Plan will identify future improvements planned and those necessary to provide safe and efficient circulation of vehicles within Benkelman, including major projects that ensure implementation of the Land Use Plan.

Transportation Planning and Land Use

Land use and transportation create the pattern for future development and are extremely interdependent upon one another in order to effectively shape the community. An improved or new transportation route generates a greater level of accessibility and determines how adjacent land may be utilized in the future. In the short term, land use shapes the demand for transportation and vice versa; one key to good land use planning is to balance land use and transportation. However, new or improved roads, as well as, county and state highways may change land values, thus altering the intensity of which land is utilized.

In general, the greater the transportation needs of a particular land use, the greater its preference for a site near major transportation facilities. Commercial activities are most sensitive to accessibility since their survival often depends upon how easy a consumer can get to the business. Thus, commercial land uses are generally located near the center of their market area and along highways or at the intersection of arterial streets.

Industrial uses are also highly dependent on transportation access, but in a different way. For example, visibility is not as critical for an industry as it is for a retail store. Industrial uses often need access to more specialized transportation facilities, which is why industrial sites tend to be located near railroad lines or highways to suit individual industrial uses.

Transportation Goals

Transportation Goal 1

Benkelman will maintain its existing road network and enhance it as future development and vehicle counts justify. The City will provide and encourage an efficient, safe, convenient transportation and communication system.

Objectives

TRAN-1.1 Encourage bicycle and pedestrian access to and within existing and future commercial areas.

TRAN-1.2 Encourage the use of smaller vehicles such as golf carts during months when the weather is milder. In addition, examine the potential need for special signing to make drivers aware of this transportation method.

TRAN-1.3 Discourage the diversion of commercial traffic into residential neighborhoods.

TRAN-1.4 When new development is contemplated, due consideration must be given to the carrying capacity of the existing road system in the area, and development should be discouraged from occurring in areas where the road system is insufficient to handle any additional traffic load.

TRAN-1.5 Improve, develop, and maintain well-traveled roads with hard surfacing.

TRAN-1.6 Right-of-way and pavements shall be sufficiently wide and of sufficient strength to accommodate anticipated future traffic loads.

TRAN-1.7 Commercial signing along major arterials shall be kept to a minimum and shall be low profile.

TRAN-1.8 When new or reconstructed streets are built, there should provisions made in the design documents that provide for additional space along a wider shoulder or path within the R.O.W. for pedestrian/bicycle access.

TRAN-1.9 The City of Benkelman will encourage bicycle and pedestrian traffic as an element of the street transportation system

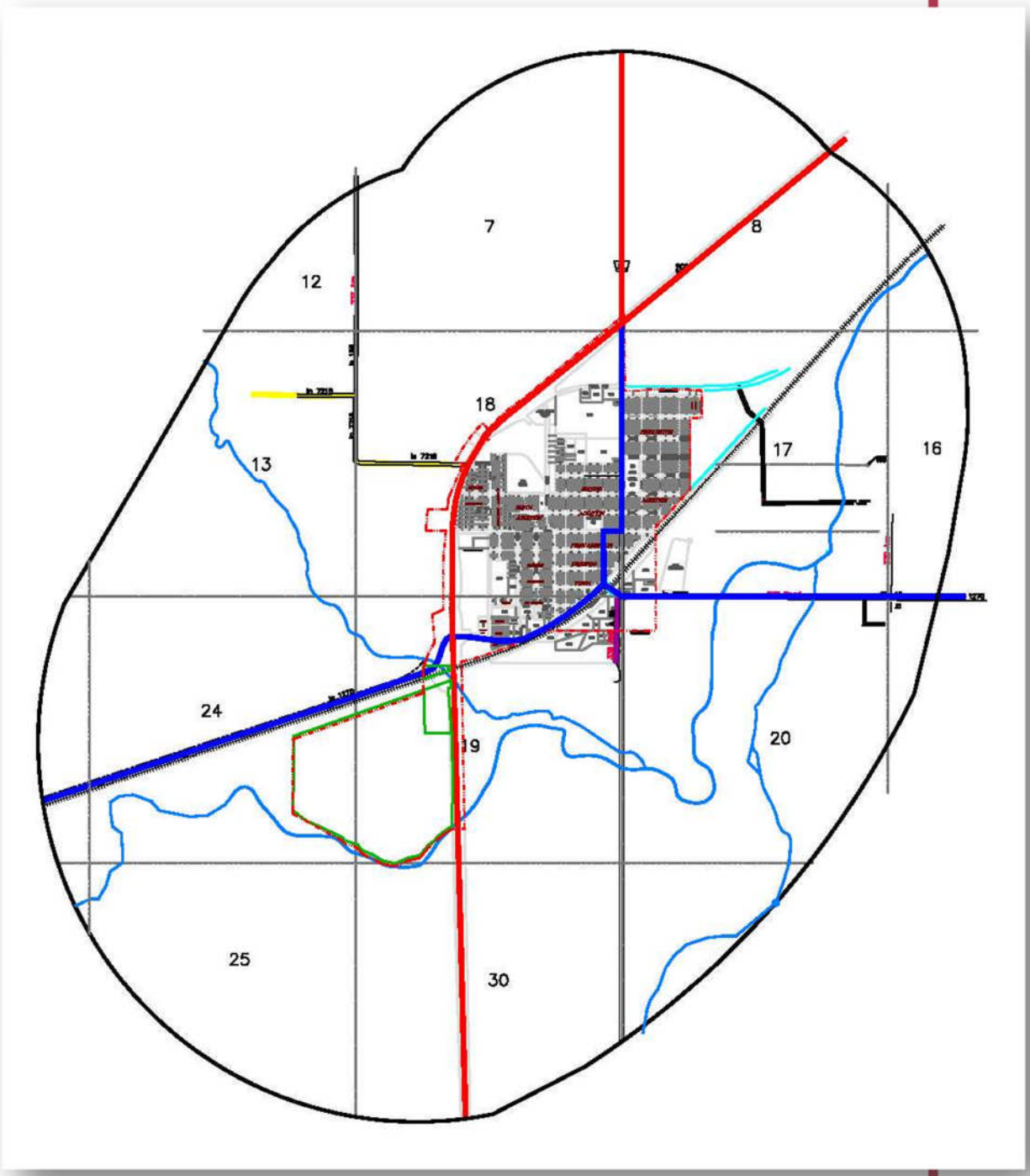
Transportation Financing Issues

The primary sources of information utilized in the maintenance and development of the transportation and circulation system are (1) City "One and Six Year Road Plan" and (2) the State of Nebraska "One and Five Year Highway Program." These state and local improvement plans should only be viewed as a planning tool, which are subject to change depending on financing capabilities of the governmental unit.

The City's "One and Six Year Road Plan" is reviewed and adopted by the local unit of government to address the issues of proposed road and street system improvements and development. Upon approval of these plans by the Board of Public Road Classifications and Standards, the governmental units are eligible to receive revenue from the Nebraska Department of Roads and the State Treasurer's Office, which must be allocated to county road improvement projects.

The "One and Five Year Highway Program", developed by the Nebraska Department of Roads, establishes present and future programs for the development and improvement of state and federal highways. The One-Year Program includes highway projects scheduled for immediate implementation, while the Five-Year Program identifies highway projects to be implemented within five years or sooner if scheduled bids and work for one-year projects cannot be awarded and constructed.

FIGURE 9:
TRANSPORTATION PLAN



Benkelman's One- and Six-Year Plan

The City of Benkelman has a limited number of projects indicated in the current one- and six-year plan. The primary items would include maintenance of the street system. However, they are planning on replacing 200 lineal feet of curb and gutter in the plan as well as replacing concrete panels as needed.

Nebraska Department of Roads' Improvements

The Nebraska Department of Roads publishes an annual list of proposed projects for the current fiscal year, for fiscal years one to five years from the present, and six years and beyond. Benkelman is in the Department of Road's District 7. Between Fiscal Years 2011 and 2015, there are a number of projects budgeted for the Benkelman area. These projects include:

- 8.3 miles of resurfacing east and west of Benkelman
- Bridge and Viaduct Repair and Rehabilitation
- 7.4 miles of resurfacing along US Highway 34.

Trails Development

Trails are becoming a larger part of people's lives. Trails are being used as a means of relaxation and physical fitness. The further development of a trials system in Benkelman will be a key to future transportation demands. The city currently has no or limited trails in the and around the community. The trails system needs to be expanded to all parts of the community. A proposed system is identified on the Future Transportation Plan Map.

One key way of developing this expanded system is to make trails a component of any future street reconstruction project or new street project as new developments are constructed. Trails can even be a part of an existing or new sidewalk system; however, the sidewalks will need to meet state and federal standards for width in order to be called an official trail.

EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION

The one-mile area beyond the City limits will play a major factor in Benkelman's future growth. The land uses in the extraterritorial area are typically agricultural at the present time. Other than areas immediately adjacent to Benkelman's corporate limits it is not anticipated that there will be any major development in the future.

It will be critical that the City take a solid stand on future growth being contiguous and adjacent to the current corporate limits. Growth adjacent to the existing corporate limits will allow the City to cost-effectively serve these new developments with all services including water, sewer, snow removal, etc.

ANNEXATION POLICY

As cities grow in size the borders must be extended in order to provide a higher quality of life for it residents. The State of Nebraska has established a process for communities to extend their corporate limits into urban or suburban areas situated contiguous to an existing community, provided the criteria for such action is justified. This power should be used, as development becomes urban in nature rather than rural. An important restriction must be followed before contiguous lands are considered for annexation, that is, the land may not be further than 500 feet from the corporate limits of the municipality. There are two means for annexing land into the corporate limits:

- Land that has been requested to be annexed by the property owner(s), or
- Any contiguous or adjacent lands, lots, tracts, streets, or highways which are urban or suburban in character.

Landowners that desire annexation of land must submit a plat, by a licensed surveyor. This plat must be approved by the City Engineer and filed with the Clerk along a written request signed by all owner(s) of record within the proposed annexed area.

Following three separate readings of the ordinance (waiver of the three readings is not allowed by State Law under this process), a majority of affirmative votes by the City Council in favor of an annexation is required at each reading, to pass the annexation. The certified map is then filed with the Register of Deeds, County Clerk and County Assessor, together with a certified copy of the annexation ordinance. The City has one year to develop a plan that addresses the providing of services to residents of the annexed area.

With regard to annexation, the City should establish subdivision improvement agreements and non-contested annexation agreements with future Sanitary Improvement Districts (SID's). This agreement gives the SID a possible financing vehicle, the City gets an agreement that states that the SID can be annexed, at the discretion of the City, and the SID will not contest the annexation action.

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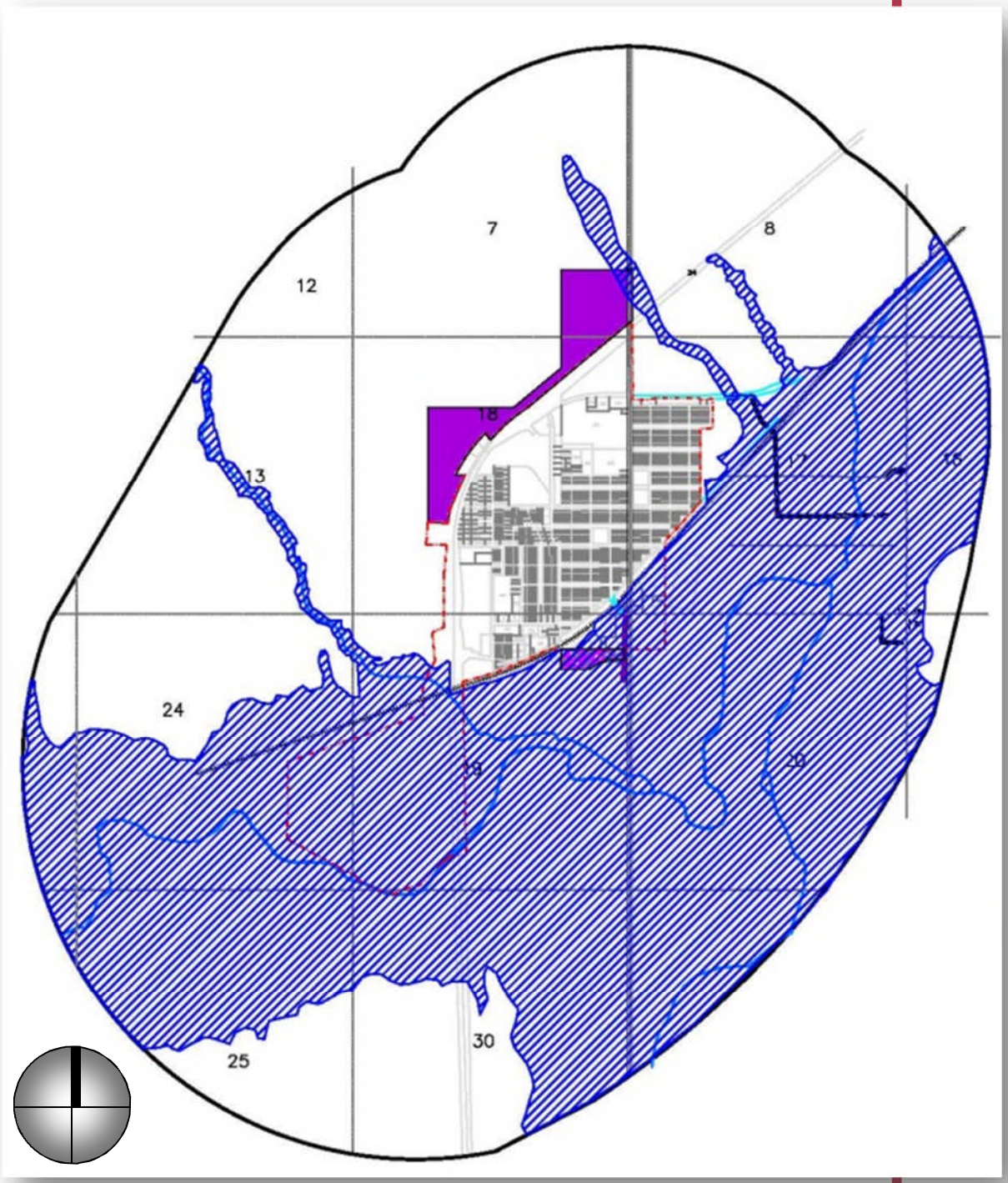
Potential Annexations

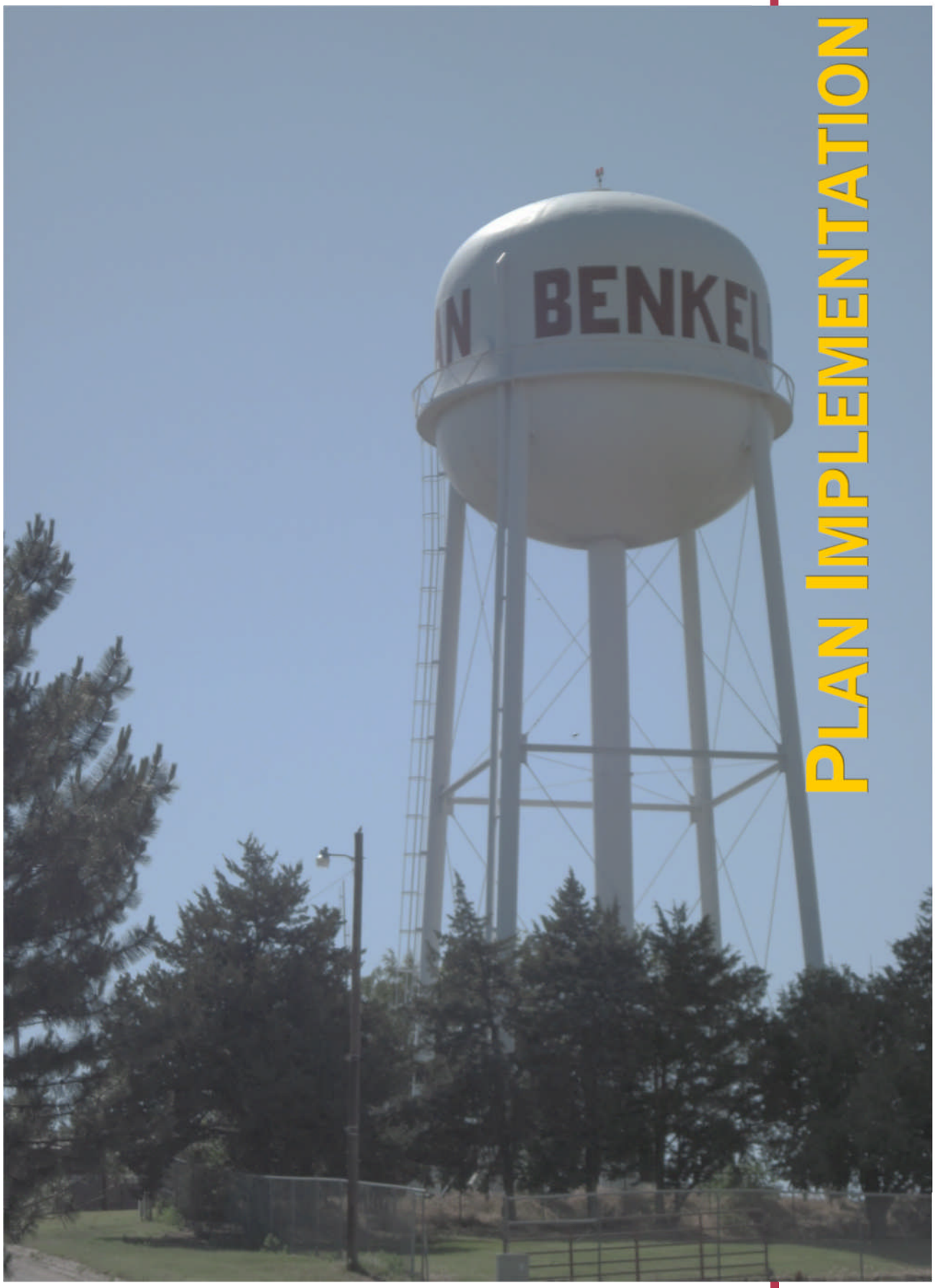
There are two types of annexations that can occur in the Benkelman area.

The first is immediate annexations; this area consists of the lots along the southern edge of the community near or even containing a portion of the Dundy County Fairgrounds. This area is able to be annexed immediately if the City chooses to do so.

The second area is to the west and north of the community. These areas are considered to be in the future growth area of Benkelman. As development projects are proposed, the City should annex these areas into the corporate limits.

FIGURE 10:
POTENTIAL ANNEXATIONS





PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

ACHIEVING BENKELMAN'S FUTURE

Successful community plans have the same key ingredients: "2% inspiration and 98% perspiration." This section of the plan contains the inspiration of the many city officials and residents who have participated in the planning process. However, the ultimate success of this plan remains in the dedication offered by each and every resident.

There are numerous goals and objectives in this plan. We recommend reviewing the relevant goals during planning and budget setting sessions to determine what projects may need to be undertaken during the course of the fiscal year.

Action agenda

The Action Agenda is a combination of the following:

- Goals and Objectives
- Land Use Policies
- Support programs for the above items

It will be critical to earmark the specific funds to be used and the individuals primarily responsible for implementing the goals and objectives in Benkelman.

Support Programs for the Action Agenda

Six programs will play a vital role in the success of Benkelman's plan. These programs are:

1. **Zoning Regulations**–updated land use districts can allow the community to provide direction for future growth.
2. **Subdivision Regulations**–establish criteria for dividing land into building areas, utility easements, and streets. Implementing the Transportation Plan is a primary function of subdivision regulations.
3. **Plan Maintenance**–an annual and five-year review program will allow the community flexibility in responding to growth and a continuous program of maintaining the plan's viability.
4. **Housing Study** – the Housing Study will be critical to use in direct relationship to the Comprehensive Plan due to the need for housing issues in the community. The study will help guide the community in the redevelopment and future development of housing throughout the corporate limits.
5. **The Blight and Substandard Study and General Redevelopment Plan** – these documents will help guide the community through the overall redevelopment efforts within Benkelman. These documents also provide the basis for the use of tax Increment Financing now and in the future.
6. **Strategic Plan** – The Strategic Plan will assist in identifying future economic development strategies that will tie into the overall planning effort of the community. It will be critical to work with this document and the Plan in unison.

Plan Financing

The Implementation Plan is a reiteration of the goals and objectives; however, the goals and policies have been prioritized by the importance to the community. This prioritization was undertaken during the comprehensive planning process with the Planning Commission and the Plan Review Committee.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAINTENANCE

Annual Review of the Plan

A relevant, up to date plan is critical to the on-going planning success. To maintain both public and private sector confidence; evaluate the effectiveness of planning activities; and, most importantly, make mid-plan corrections on the use of community resources, the plan must be current. The annual review should occur during the month of January.

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. At the beginning of each year a report should be prepared by the Planning Commission, which provides information and recommendations on:

- whether the plan is current in respect to population and economic changes; and
- The recommended goals, objectives, and/or policies are still valid for the City and its long-term growth.

The Planning Commission should hold a public hearing on this report in order to:

1. Provide citizens or developers with an opportunity to present possible changes to the plan,
2. Identify any changes in the status of projects called for in the plan, and
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 which could necessitate revisions to the Comprehensive Plan, they should recommend changes or further study of those changes. This process may lead to identification of amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and would be processed as per the procedures in the next section.

UNANTICIPATED OPPORTUNITIES

If major new, innovative development and/or redevelopment opportunities arise which impact any number of elements of the plan and which are determined to be of importance, a plan amendment may by proposed and considered separate from the Annual Review and other proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments. The Comprehensive Plan amendment process should adhere to the adoption process specified by Nebraska law and provide for the organized participation and involvement of citizens.

METHODS FOR EVALUATING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The interpretation of the Comprehensive Plan should be composed of a continuous and related series of analyses, with references to the goals and policies, the land use plan, and specific land use policies. Moreover, when considering specific proposed developments, interpretation of the Comprehensive Plan should include a thorough review of all sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

If a development proposal is not in conformance or consistent with the policies developed in 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 on nearby properties
- the suitability of the property for the uses allowed under the current zoning designation
- the type and extent of positive or detrimental impact that may affect adjacent
- properties, or the community 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 policies
- consideration of City staff recommendations