

BENNET, NEBRASKA

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROGRAM – 2029.

NEBRASKA INVESTMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY - HOUSING STUDY GRANT PROGRAM.



COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2019-2029.

PREPARED BY:

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COMMUNITY PLANNING & RESEARCH

MAY, 2019

VILLAGE OF BENNET, NEBRASKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2019 - 2029.

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*COMPREHENSIVE PLANS & ZONING * HOUSING STUDIES *
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SECTION 1

THE BENNET PLANNING PROCESS.

MAY, 2019

SECTION 1 THE BENNET PLANNING PROCESS.

INTRODUCTION.

This **Comprehensive Plan** was prepared as a guide to direct future growth and development opportunities in the Village of Bennet, Nebraska and the Village's One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction, during the 10-year period, 2019-2029. The **Comprehensive Plan** contains information about existing conditions within the Village, including population, land use, public facilities, utilities and transportation. The **Plan** also includes a community/economic development profile/plan to address issues such as business recruitment and retention and housing development, and an energy element to evaluate energy utilization and promote conservation measures. This **Plan** replaces and serves as an update to the current **Comprehensive Plan**, prepared in 2006.

As one of the fastest growing small communities in Nebraska, Bennet finds itself in a unique position, currently serving as a 'bedroom community' for the City of Lincoln, but with the opportunity to grow into a thriving small town through the implementation of new community and economic development activities, including continued housing development. Enhancing local support and engagement is critical to recruiting and retaining new businesses and services in Bennet, which residents need and desire. While Bennet's close proximity to Lincoln is beneficial to its residents in providing access to the wide variety of services and amenities a larger city offers, it also acts as a barrier to entry for new businesses seeking to locate within the Community of Bennet.

It is the intention of this **Plan** to provide guidance to residents and elected officials of the Village in making decisions regarding new development and redevelopment activities, via the consensus of the Planning Commission and through government actions. Plan implementation methods should include incentives to stimulate private action consistent with the **Plan** and the use of Local, State and Federal programs for economic development and redevelopment efforts.

The Bennet planning process included the development of a **General Plan**, which establishes specific and practical guidelines for improving existing conditions and controlling future growth. The **Plan** itself presents a planning program with "**Goals**" and "**Action Steps**" in the areas of "**Community Growth, Land Use, & Zoning;**" "**Housing & Neighborhood Redevelopment;**" and "**Education & Community/Economic Development.**"

This **Comprehensive Plan** was prepared under the direction of the **Bennet Planning Commission**, with the assistance of the **Village Board, Village Staff** and Planning Consultants **Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C.** of Lincoln, Nebraska. The **Comprehensive Plan** was funded by a **Housing Study Grant** from the **NEBRASKA INVESTMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY**, with matching funds provided by the **Village of Bennet**.

PLANNING PERIOD

The planning period for achieving the goals, programs and community and economic development activities identified in this **Comprehensive Plan** is **10 years, 2019 to 2029**. The **Plan** highlights necessary, broad-based community and economic development activities to meet the Village's goals. This approach allows the Community of Bennet to focus on a long-term vision, accomplished by means of implementing specific activities to address the social and economic well-being of its residents.

PLANNING JURISDICTION

The Village of Bennet Planning Jurisdiction includes the land areas within the current Corporate Limits and within one mile of the Village's Corporate Limits. The Village enforces planning, zoning and subdivision regulations throughout the Planning Jurisdiction, in accordance with Nebraska State Statutes. Cooperation between the Lincoln/Lancaster County Planning Commission and the Village of Bennet provides the opportunity to express its opinions regarding planning and development trends/projections in the rural Bennet area, generally two to three miles beyond the Corporate Limits.

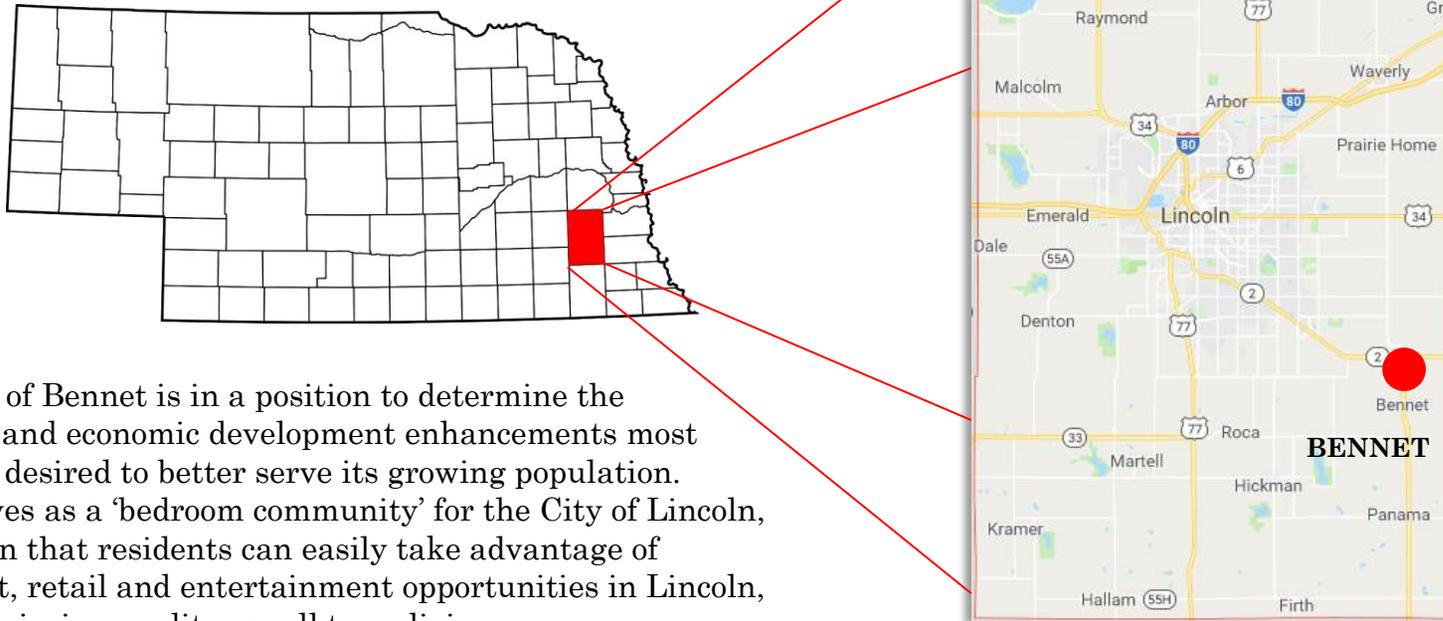
AUTHORITY TO PLAN

This **Comprehensive Plan** for the Village of Bennet is prepared under the Authority of Section 19-924 to 19-929, Nebraska State Statutes 1943, as Amended.

COMMUNITY SUMMARY

The Village of Bennet is located in Lancaster County in southeast Nebraska, approximately seven miles southeast of Lincoln, Nebraska, via State Highways 2 and 43. As of 2019, Bennet has an estimated population of 964. **Bennet is currently designated as a “Village” in the State of Nebraska and is anticipated to reorganize as a “Second Class City” once the threshold population of more than 800 residents is verified following the 2020 decennial census.** Illustration 1.1 displays the location of Bennet within the State of Nebraska and Lancaster County.

Illustration 1.1 Location Map



The Village of Bennet is in a position to determine the community and economic development enhancements most needed and desired to better serve its growing population. Bennet serves as a ‘bedroom community’ for the City of Lincoln, Nebraska, in that residents can easily take advantage of employment, retail and entertainment opportunities in Lincoln, while still enjoying quality, small town living.

Downtown Bennet is located along Highway 43 (Monroe Street) in the southern portion of the Community. The Downtown consists of small-scale commercial and industrial facilities, as well as governmental, farming and other agricultural services to help maintain a stable and diverse population and economy. The Village Office is located in the Downtown at the northwest corner of Monroe and Garden Streets. Large employers in and near Bennet include **First Nebraska Bank, Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools District OR-1, Zermatt Tool, Midwest Farmers Cooperative and Vasa Construction.**

RESPONSIBLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT

The Bennet Comprehensive Plan promotes responsible growth and sustainability of Community services and values. This includes an understanding of the growth potential within the existing built environs of Bennet, as well as the support for preserving the agricultural and natural resources associated with the Village. Undeveloped areas within the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction will be assigned land uses and zoning classifications capable of preserving the integrity of these areas, while providing for controlled, well planned growth throughout the 10-year planning period.

Responsible growth and development activities will include the ongoing planning and implementation of needed public facilities, utilities and transportation systems in Bennet. The Community is cognizant of its residential, commercial, industrial, social and recreational needs, but will need to continue to upgrade and develop modern, accessible public facilities and infrastructure to meet an increasing demand for these services.

THE PLAN AS A COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT TOOL.

The **Bennet Comprehensive Plan** has been designed to **enhance and promote community and economic development efforts**, to support the stability and growth of the local economy. To accomplish this, local leaders will need to react to changing economic conditions and access both public and private financing programs available to meet and aid in financing these changes. Local decisions will need to enhance community and economic development opportunities, as well as preserve local values. The Community's ability to utilize both **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** and **LB840 sales taxes** for economic development will play an important role in growth opportunities for Bennet. Citizen input will be needed to assist and enhance this political decision making process.

The Community of Bennet would greatly benefit from forming partnerships with effective community and economic development organizations, including the **Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties, Aging Partners, Local Major Employers** and the **Bennet Village Board and Planning Commission**, to serve as a vehicle to plan and implement residential, commercial and industrial development and redevelopment activities in the Village. Bennet should consider targeting new housing or development/rehabilitation activities to designated "**Redevelopment Areas.**" These **Areas** have the ability to utilize **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** to assist in funding public infrastructure improvements, such as water/sewer/storm water drain replacement, street and sidewalk enhancements and other public rehabilitation projects, including workforce housing. **Bennet does not currently have a designated Redevelopment Area.**

The **Future Land Use Maps** for the Village of Bennet encourage growth and expansion of the Community during the 10-year planning period, including new multifamily and single family residential, commercial, public/recreational and industrial uses outside the existing Corporate Limits. The Village must also continue to improve and enhance its older neighborhoods, including the Downtown. The Village should establish incentives for public and private partnerships for redevelopment to coincide with community growth and expansion.

Incentives such as LB840 sales taxes, TIF, Historic Tax Credits, Community Development Block Grants, and a variety of housing and economic development funding sources, coupled with private financing, should be utilized on an annual basis by the Community to achieve the goals contained within this **Comprehensive Plan**.

Under the direction of the **Bennet Planning Commission**, a new **Community Housing Study** was completed in May, 2019. The **Study** includes a **10-Year Housing Action Plan**, complete with a list of specific housing programs for both the construction of new housing and the rehabilitation of the existing housing stock. Providing safe, modern and affordable housing in Bennet during the next 10 years will ensure a population base capable of supporting various important businesses and services in the Community.

Workforce housing development and housing rehabilitation activities in Bennet, coupled with new housing opportunities for both elderly and young families, will need to be an ongoing process. The Village should support housing improvement and development efforts as a means of both expanding the population and local tax base.

ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN.

The creation of the **Bennet Comprehensive Plan** included the implementation of both **qualitative** and **quantitative research activities**, in an effort to gather pertinent planning information and data. The **qualitative approach** included a comprehensive citizen participation process consisting of meetings with members of the Bennet Planning Commission, a Community Planning Open House and the implementation of two important Community Surveys in an effort to assess the needs and wants of the local citizenry.

The **quantitative approach** included the analysis of the various statistical databases provided by the 2000 and 2010 Censuses, the 2012-2016 American Community Survey and information from other pertinent local, state and federal agencies. The **quantitative approach** also included on-site field research activities to determine the present condition and profiles of local land use, housing, public infrastructure and facilities, transportation and environmental issues.

The combined results of these two important research approaches produced this **Comprehensive Plan** and includes the following Sections:

- ❖ **The Bennet Planning Process.**
- ❖ **Community Planning Goals & Action Steps.**
- ❖ **Population, Income & Economic Profile.**
- ❖ **Land Use, Growth & Redevelopment.**
- ❖ **Public Facilities, Utilities & Transportation.**
- ❖ **Community & Economic Development Profile & Plan.**
- ❖ **Energy Element.**

The system embodied in this community planning framework is a process that relies upon continuous feedback, as goals change and policies become more clearly defined. Planning is an ongoing process that requires constant monitoring and revision throughout the proposed planning period. This **Comprehensive Plan** is organized into three elements, as summarized below.

ELEMENT 1

The **first** element of the **Comprehensive Plan** are the **Goals** and **Action Steps**, which represent the foundation for which planning components are designed and eventually implemented. The **Goals** and **Action Steps** identified in this **Comprehensive Plan** address each component of the Plan itself. Action Steps identify specific activities the Community should undertake to accomplish the **Goals**.

ELEMENT 2

The **second** element is the **Background Analysis**, which presents the research, both, quantitative and qualitative, necessary for the development of the **Plan's Goals** and **Action Steps**. This research included the investigation of demographic, economic, land use, housing, transportation and public facilities and utilities in Bennet. The careful research of past and present data allowed for the projection of future population and development needs.

ELEMENT 3

The **third** and final element of the **Comprehensive Plan** are the **Planning Components**, which present general background analysis and future plans for land use, public facilities, infrastructure, transportation and energy consumption reduction.

COMPREHENSIVE CITIZEN PARTICIPATION PROGRAM.

A **comprehensive citizen participation program** was implemented to gather the opinions of the Bennet citizenry regarding Community planning and housing issues and needs. *Planning for Bennet's future is most effective when it includes opinions from as many citizens as possible.* The methods used to gather information from the citizens of Bennet included meetings with the **Bennet Planning Commission**, a **Community Planning Open House** and the completion of two important Surveys: a “**Citizen Survey**” and a “**Workforce Housing Needs Survey**.”

BENNET CITIZEN SURVEY.

The Bennet “**Citizen Survey**” asked participants to provide input regarding various aspects of the Community, including the appearance, sustainability and future growth of Bennet, the quality and availability of public services offered and housing issues, such as their current living situation, condition of their dwelling unit and what families could afford for monthly rent or a monthly house payment. A total of **99 Surveys** were completed. The following summarizes the results of the **Survey**. The complete results of the **Survey** are available in the **Appendix** of this **Comprehensive Plan**.

- An estimated 25 percent of Survey participants have lived in Bennet for 21 years or more.
- 69 participants resided in a single family home. A majority of participants (67 percent) were satisfied with their current housing situation.
- Housing types identified by participants as “**Greatly Needed**” in the Community of Bennet included housing for middle income families, single family housing, general rental housing, rehabilitation of owner and renter occupied housing units, two- or three+-bedroom housing units and retirement housing for low- and moderate income elderly persons.
- Top-rated Community services in Bennet included Churches, Pharmacy, Fire Protection, Medical Clinic, Library and Public Transit.
- 76 percent of the Survey respondents supported the Community using State or Federal grant funds to conduct an owner housing rehabilitation program.

- 61 percent of the Survey respondents supported Bennet using State or Federal grant funds to conduct a rental housing rehabilitation program.
- 85 percent of the Survey respondents supported Bennet establishing a local program that would purchase dilapidated houses, tear down the houses and make the lots available for a family or individual to build a house.
- 82 percent of the Survey respondents supported the Community using grant dollars to purchase, rehab and resell vacant housing in the Community.
- 63 percent of the Survey respondents supported Bennet using State or Federal grant dollars to provide down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers.
- Survey participants indicated that:
 - ❖ 81.8 percent would recommend Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools to Parents.
 - ❖ 19.2 percent were graduates of Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools.
 - ❖ 36.4 percent currently have children attending Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools.
 - ❖ 28.3 percent of the respondents agreed that Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools were a factor in their decision to reside in Bennet.
- Top-rated Business/Industry Sectors in Bennet included:
 - ❖ Farming/Agriculture.
 - ❖ Education.
 - ❖ Fire Protection.
- When responding to a sample list of transportation items needing to be addressed in Bennet, the top three responses were:
 1. Pedestrian/Trails Connections.
 2. Traffic Safety Improvements.
 3. School Traffic Circulation.
- Top responses to the question, “The sustainability of the Village of Bennet can be improved with” were:
 1. Nuisance Enforcement/Property Clean-up.
 2. Improved Streets, Sidewalks & Alleys.
 3. Business Retention, Recruitment & Expansion.

WORKFORCE HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY.

The Village of Bennet Planning Commission, in cooperation with local major employers, conducted a Workforce Housing Needs Survey to determine the specific renter and owner housing needs of the Community's workforce. A total of 25 Surveys were completed.

Survey participants were asked to provide information on such subjects as issues and barriers to obtaining affordable housing, place of employment, annual household income and what participants could afford for monthly rent or house payment. The following are highlights that were developed from the Survey. The complete Survey results are available in the Appendix.

- ◆ **Survey respondents included 20 homeowners and four renters. A total of two participants were not satisfied with their current housing situation.** Reasons included: poor insulation, leaking basement and wanting to own a home rather than rent. **A total of five Survey participants indicated an interest in purchasing a home in Bennet.**
- ◆ The majority of **Survey respondents** identified the ability to afford a home priced at or above \$175,000.
- ◆ **Respondents** identified single family homes with three+ bedrooms as the type of home they would most like to purchase.
- ◆ Most **Survey** participants identified an ability to afford a monthly rent at or above \$1,000.
- ◆ The most common barriers identified when obtaining affordable **owner housing** included the **cost of utilities, housing prices and cost of real estate taxes.**
- ◆ The most common barriers faced when obtaining affordable **rental housing** included the **high cost of rent, the lack of availability of decent, affordable rental units and cost of utilities.**

COMMUNITY PLANNING OPEN HOUSE.

A Bennet Community Planning Open House was held in March, 2019 to provide the general citizenry a firsthand opportunity to provide input and participate in the development of this **Comprehensive Plan**. Citizens discussed their ideas for what is most wanted, needed or desired in the Community of Bennet during this Planning Period. An outline of the discussions that took place during this Open House is provided below to summarize key issues and potential project ideas that may need to be considered over the next ten years.

NEW BUSINESSES

- Top Businesses/Services needed in the Community:
 - Coffee Shop.
 - Dollar Store/IGA.
 - Daycare/Childcare Facility.
- How can Bennet recruit and retain new businesses in the Community, when in such close proximity to the City of Lincoln?
 - Business Incubator Program – Need a building.
 - Greater Community engagement may lead to increased Community support of Bennet businesses.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

- Maintenance issues have led to surface drainage across streets in the older areas of Bennet.
- Low water pressure; expensive.
 - Increasing the water supply will be necessary to support future growth and expansion.
- Internet and cell service is slow/spotty.

COMMUNITY HOUSING NEEDS

- Rental housing options for both young families and seniors (55+) is needed.
 - Duplexes, small apartment complexes, etc.
 - Rehabilitation of older housing units and convert to rental units.

PUBLIC FACILITIES & RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

- There is a lack of both public spaces and parks/recreation areas in Bennet.
- Bennet needs more public spaces to feel more like a Community, rather than just a place to live.
 - Senior/Retirement/Community Center.
 - Partner with Elementary School to take advantage of existing facility infrastructure.
 - Bennet Area Historical Society is looking for a new home, to include a library, museum, genealogy.
 - Public tree-lighting display and/or enhanced decorations around the holidays.
 - Plan a Community Celebration around Bennet's upcoming 150th anniversary.
- Gravel roads are in poor shape, specifically Cottonwood, east of Tyler Street.

DOWNTOWN/HIGHWAY CORRIDOR

- Highway 43 is dangerous for school children to cross. Installing a stoplight is not an option.
 - Update flashing lights/signals
 - Consider adding a school crossing guard.
- The new South Beltway connecting Highway 2 at 120th Street with Highway 77 will likely increase development near Bennet.
 - Will provide Bennet residents with a non-stop route to reach west Lincoln.

BENNET, NEBRASKA

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROGRAM – 2029.

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SECTION 2

COMMUNITY PLANNING
GOALS & ACTION STEPS.

MAY, 2019

SECTION 2 **COMMUNITY PLANNING GOALS & ACTION STEPS.**

INTRODUCTION.

The Bennet Comprehensive Plan is an essential and most appropriate tool to properly guide the development of the Village, based upon the vision, values and expectations of the Community. The ***Community Planning Goals and Action Steps***, an important aspect of the **Plan**, provide local leaders direction in the administration and overall implementation of the **Comprehensive Plan**. In essence, the goals and action steps are the **most fundamental elements of the Plan**; the premises upon which all other elements of the **Plan** must relate.

Goals are broad statements, identifying the state or condition the citizenry wishes the primary components of the planning area to be or evolve into within a given length of time. These primary components include **Community Growth & Land Use/Zoning, Housing & Neighborhood Redevelopment and Education & Community/Economic Development**.

“Goals” are long-term in nature and, in the case of those identified for the **Bennet Comprehensive Plan**, will be active throughout the 10-year planning period.

“Action Steps” help to further define the meaning of goals and represent very specific activities to accomplish a specific Goal. In many cases, specific time lines are attached to **Action Steps** and are the most measurable component of this **Comprehensive Plan**.

The main component supporting these **Goals & Action Steps** is the **Comprehensive Citizen Participation Program**. This includes meetings with the Bennet Planning Commission, two Community Surveys and a Community Planning Open House.

CITIZEN PARTICIPATION “CONSENSUS STATEMENTS”.

The Bennet Citizen Participation Process provided the following important **Consensus Statements**. These Statements were developed as a result of citizen input from the Community Planning Open House and Bennet Planning Commission meetings, as well as the two Surveys.

- **Community residents want new and expanded commercial and entertainment facilities**, particularly along the Highway 2 and 43 Corridors, including the Downtown as well as north or south of the current Corporate Limits, in an effort to be more economically competitive with surrounding communities. This includes encouraging local, County and regional residents to consider Bennet for their retail and employment needs.
- **Residents are concerned about pedestrian safety** for the general public, especially children. Parks, schools and other public facilities that are frequently utilized by local children and residents must have appropriate and efficient safety measures and devices implemented to ensure safe access to and from these facilities. The Village may consider updated crosswalk infrastructure or a school crossing guard to ensure pedestrians can safely cross Highway 43.
- **Property clean-up and nuisance abatement should be a top activity of the Village** and its residents, including building façade improvements, especially in the Downtown, housing rehabilitation and code enforcement, junk vehicle removal and aesthetic improvements along the Highway 43 Corridor (benches, street trees, street lighting, curb cuts, etc.). This will improve the overall quality of life of local citizens and enhance Community sustainability.
- **The top housing needs in Bennet include** affordable single family housing for middle-income persons and families (including first-time homebuyers, single parent households, existing/new employees and general rental housing) consisting of two+-bedrooms, rehabilitation of owner and renter-occupied housing and retirement housing for low- to moderate-income elderly persons. The majority of Bennet Citizen Survey participants identified support for the use of local, State and Federal grant opportunities to assist with owner and renter-occupied housing rehabilitation, purchase/rehab/resale or re-rent programs and down payment assistance.
- **Employees of Bennet-area businesses identified a desire to relocate to the Community if more housing types were made available.** Workforce Housing Needs Survey participants identified the cost of rent, housing prices, a lack of sufficient available homes or rental units in an affordable price range, the cost of utilities, and the cost of real estate taxes as impediments to obtaining housing in Bennet. The development of “workforce housing” will be critical to both attract and retain both local businesses and major employers.

COMMUNITY GROWTH, LAND USE & ZONING.

Goal 1 – Population Growth Activities. The Village of Bennet is projected to increase from the current (2019) population of 964, to an estimated 1,166 by 2029, representing an annual increase of 2.1 percent. The Community, through aggressive planning and development activities, could reach a “high” population of 1,308 within the next 10 years, an increase of 344 persons, or an annual increase of 3.6 percent. Land availability for residential, commercial and industrial development should correlate with future population growth projections.

- **Action Step 1:** Meet the projected population growth and land use needs by **maximizing development in existing land areas** served by municipal infrastructure, including the development/infill of vacant parcels within the Corporate Limits of Bennet. Approximately 59 acres of vacant land currently exists within the Corporate Limits of Bennet. An estimated 75 percent, or 44 acres of this area is developable.
- **Action Step 2:** Designate a minimum of **150 additional acres** of land to support **future single family and multifamily residential developments, based upon the targeted future housing demand.** Currently, the Village has a surplus of land acres designated for single family use, and shortage of land areas designated for multifamily and mobile home use, when compared to the National Planning Standard. Residential land uses should be increased through infill development of vacant land throughout the Village, as well as the incorporation of multifamily land use in the northeastern portion of the Village and adjacent the Downtown area as a buffer between commercial and industrial land uses and single family homes. Future residential growth areas beyond the current Corporate Limits are recommended to be concentrated primarily north and west of the Community. The Future Land Use Maps, **Illustrations 2.1 and 2.2, Pages 2.7 and 2.8,** display the location of these growth areas both within and beyond the current Corporate Limits.

The Land Use Plan includes:

- ❖ **Single Family Residential Growth Areas,** which should target vacant land areas within the current Corporate Limits. Additional growth areas primarily focus on vacant land northeast and northwest of the current Corporate Limits. A number of existing single family homes currently exist adjacent the northeast Corporate Limits. These homes could be annexed into the Community, along with continued development of vacant land beyond these homes. Additional growth areas for single family residential land uses are located west and northwest of the Community, between the existing Corporate Limits and the railroad corridor. Additional parks/open space should be considered a priority when developing these new subdivisions.

- ❖ **The Highway 43 Corridor Growth Area**, which is primarily focused north of the current Corporate Limits. This growth area includes the development of commercial uses along both sides of the Highway Corridor, north of the Corporate Limits. Multifamily uses should be targeted to locations further off the highway and adjacent these commercial uses, to buffer the highway commercial district from single family residential developments.
- ❖ **A housing target demand of 121 dwelling units**, including 90 owner and 31 rental units, is projected for Bennet by 2029 to support future population growth. Development within the identified primary growth areas should first focus on infill of vacant lots within the Corporate Limits, redevelopment of existing structures and development of adjacent parcels currently outside the Corporate Limits. Land uses along the Highway Corridors are recommended to primarily be of commercial use, with automotive-oriented and larger retail commercial structures located north of the Community, outside the existing Corporate Limits.

Approximately 51 percent of Citizen Survey participants identified the northern portions of Bennet as the most preferred location for future residential growth.

- **Action Step 3: Continue the development of Commercial and Industrial Land in Bennet.** An analysis of existing land uses in the Community identifies the need to designate an additional **15 acres of commercial** and **eight acres of industrial land**, based upon the targeted population growth. The location of future highway-oriented commercial uses is recommended along the Highway 43 Corridor (Monroe Street) through the Village. Future professional services, specialty retail outlets and other pedestrian-oriented businesses should be targeted to the Downtown in southern Bennet, while automotive oriented businesses or other larger commercial uses should be developed north of the current Corporate Limits, along the Highway Corridor. Light industrial uses and manufacturing companies within the Corporate Limits should be designated to industrial zoned areas in the southwestern portion of the Village. New industrial land uses should develop on currently vacant lots south and adjacent the current Corporate Limits, along Highway 43.

- **Action Step 4: Address parks, open space and public/quasi-public land uses in Bennet.** Based upon the targeted population growth, an analysis of existing land uses identifies a need for an additional **16 acres of parks, recreation or open space land uses**, as well as **16 additional acres of public/quasi-public land**. The development of public walking trails and a swimming pool were considered the top public recreational facilities needed or desired by Bennet residents. Future parks improvements should include a focus on improving the existing park facilities, as well as the development of a public trail, potentially developing it along the railroad corridor, and connecting it with the elementary school in western Bennet to Whispering Pines Park in eastern Bennet. These trails should also extend throughout and around the Village, in order to better connect Community parks, facilities, schools, neighborhoods and the Downtown area.



Goal 2 – Land Use Plan. Adopt and maintain a **Land Use Plan** capable of fulfilling the residential, employment, recreational and entertainment needs of the Community of Bennet. The Plan should encourage the preservation and protection of environmental resources while supporting development in the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction of Bennet.

- **Action Step 1:** Develop solutions/practices to **correct development barriers** in Bennet, including the prohibition of intensive agricultural uses, such as feedlot operations, from expanding or developing within the One Mile Planning Jurisdiction.
- **Action Step 2:** Promote **residential, commercial and industrial growth areas** that are located beyond designated floodplains and sensitive soil areas. Target infill residential development activities on vacant lots scattered throughout the Village, and on vacant lots created after the demolition and removal of substantially deteriorated dwellings. Commercial uses are recommended to be developed along the Highway 43 Corridor through Bennet, and the expansion of industrial uses should be targeted to the southern portion of the Community.

- **Action Step 3:** Locate future higher density (multifamily) residential developments to buffer commercial and industrial areas from lower density single family and duplex developments. Specifically, this would include areas adjacent commercial and industrial uses in the Downtown area, as well as adjacent future commercial development along Highway 43, north of the existing Corporate Limits.
- **Action Step 4:** All future development in Bennet should be accompanied with a **modern utility and infrastructure system** of public and/or private utilities and a storm water drainage plan.
- **Action Step 5:** Maintain a program of sufficient open spaces and park lands, as is necessary, in order to provide outdoor recreation, conserve natural resources and preserve historical sites as a means of giving the Community a sense of identity. Encourage the development of a trails system throughout and around the Village. Construct connecting trails as new subdivisions and other growth areas develop.

Goal 3: Ordinances and Regulations. Maintain proper **land use development ordinances** and **regulations** in Bennet. Utilize the Village’s Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to implement the development provisions in the Land Use Plan.

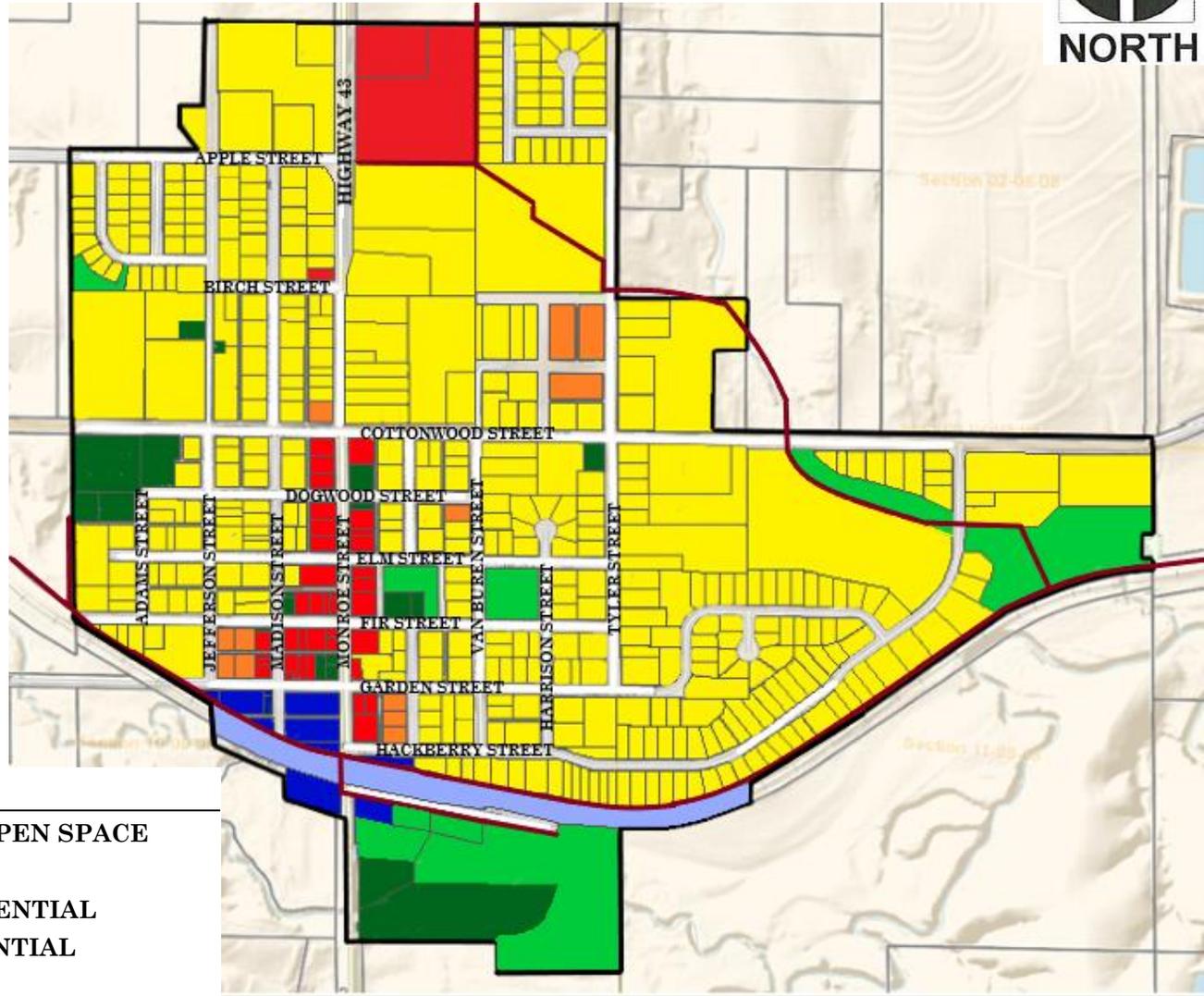
- **Action Step 1:** Adopt revised **zoning and subdivision regulations** and implement appropriate **building codes**, which support the efficient implementation of the **Land Use Plan**. Establish new provisions within these regulations and codes that support mixed land use developments and promote sustainable development principles, smart growth and green building practices. Subdivision requirements should include modern infrastructure standards and the incorporation of storm water management and alternative energy systems.
- **Action Step 2:** Utilize both **voluntary and involuntary annexation policies** in conformance with Nebraska State Statutes. These policies should serve as a guide to integrate residential and commercial growth areas adjacent the current Corporate Limits of the Village of Bennet. Future development should be encouraged to locate in areas free of environmental problems related to ground and surface water features, soil and topographic slope. **Floodplain Regulations** should be strictly enforced for all proposed developments in the Village, especially along the Little Nemaha River and its associated tributaries.
- **Action Step 3:** **Continue to enforce modern construction and property standards** by including the most up-to-date International Building, Residential and Property Maintenance Codes with the City’s current municipal codes. All development/redevelopment activities should include a safe and sanitary environment, free of air, water and noise pollution. Such action ensures that the residents of Bennet can live and work safely in structures that are built and maintained to modern safety standards.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

CORPORATE LIMITS
BENNET, NEBRASKA
2029



ILLUSTRATION 2.1



LEGEND

-  PARKS/RECREATION/OPEN SPACE
-  PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC
-  SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
-  MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL
-  COMMERCIAL
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  RAILROAD CORRIDOR
-  PUBLIC TRAIL

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COMMUNITY PLANNING & RESEARCH

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FUTURE LAND USE MAP

ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION

BENNET, NEBRASKA

2029

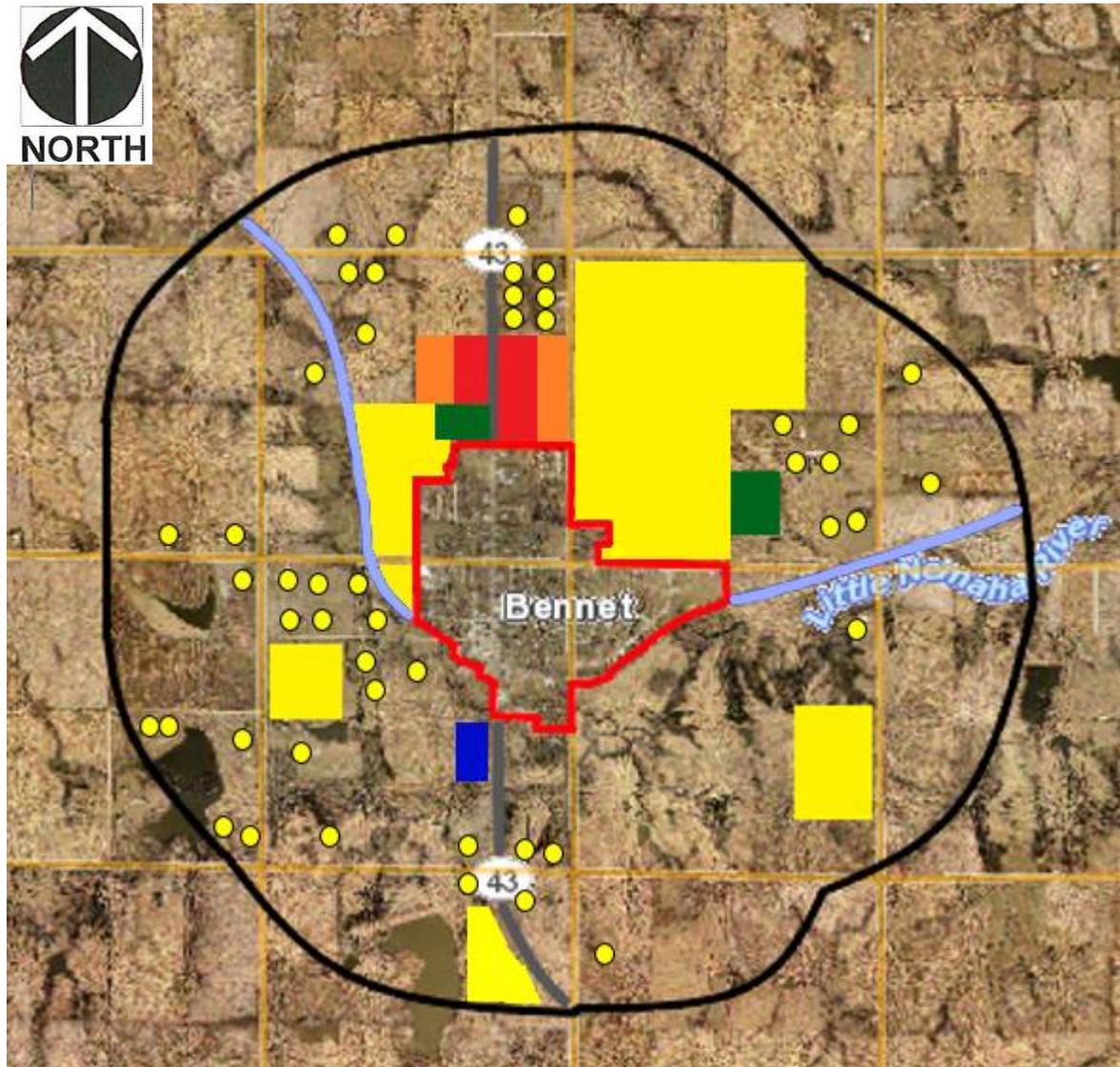


ILLUSTRATION 2.2

LEGEND

- PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC
- RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION
- MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- HIGHWAY CORRIDOR
- RAILROAD CORRIDOR
- CORPORATE LIMITS
- ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION

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Goal 4: Appearance and Sustainability. Continue to implement various Community improvement projects that enhance the quality of life and aesthetic appearance of the Village of Bennet.

- **Action Step 1:** Create a sustainable, healthy Community for residents currently living in, or families planning to move to Bennet. **Citizen Survey participants strongly agreed with nuisance enforcement/property clean-up; improved streets, sidewalks and alleys; business retention, recruitment and expansion; new/improved parks/rec/trails; and additional pedestrian safety measures as methods to improve the sustainability of the Community.** Fire protection, schools and recycling/garbage service were identified as high-quality community services/facilities in Bennet.
- **Action Step 2:** Incorporate **beautification projects** that improve the appearance of Bennet. Target areas should include, but not be limited to, public parks, the Downtown area and Highway Corridor. **Citizen Survey participants agreed with improving the appearance of the Community with nuisance enforcement/property clean-up; crosswalk enhancements; housing development/rehabilitation; and street trees, benches and landscaping.**

HOUSING & NEIGHBORHOOD REDEVELOPMENT.

Goal 1: Community-Wide Housing Development Initiative. Implement a **housing development initiative** for Bennet, as a primary economic development activity. **A core activity of this Housing Development Initiative will be the development of a Community-Wide Housing Partnership** to monitor and encourage housing development throughout Bennet. The **Partnership** should be comprised of **the Bennet Planning Commission, Village Board and Village Staff.** The **Partnership** could also include the participation of other local and regional groups and organizations, including Aging Partners (AP), Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties (CAPLSC) and the Bennet Area Community Foundation Fund (BACFF).

The **Housing Partnership** would work directly with both local and State housing stakeholders and housing funders to encourage the development of specific housing programs that meet the needs of the Community’s current and future residents, with emphasis on housing for the local workforce, families, the elderly, veterans and populations with special needs.

- **Action Step 1:** The **Housing Initiative** should target the development of up to **120 new housing units in Bennet, by 2029**, including an estimated **90 owner housing units and 31 rental units**. The development of these new housing units would add an estimated **\$34.3 Million** to the local residential property tax base. **Utilizing the “High” 10-year population projection, the potential exists for the Community to require an estimated 189 housing units, including 144 owner and 45 rental housing units by 2029. This demand would require an estimated \$49.9 Million investment.**

NOTE: The Village of Bennet has a housing vacancy deficiency of both owner and rental housing units. This vacancy deficiency results in a lack of housing supply, limiting choice by both current and future residents. With projected increases in population through 2029, it is critical that the Community be prepared by implementing housing development “plans of action” that include the identification of vacant lots within the current Corporate Limits, as well as suitable land adjacent but outside the Community for the development of a rural “build through” residential subdivision which could be annexed in the future. A purchase/rehab/resell or re-rent program involving existing vacant housing should also be implemented.

- **Action Step 2:** All new housing developments in the Village of Bennet should be developed in a manner that supports **place-based development**. Components of place-based development include sociability, access and linkage, uses and activities, and comfort and image. Additional information regarding place-based development is highlighted in the **10-Year Housing Action Plan**.
- **Action Step 3:** The **Housing Partnership** should be comprised of Community leadership and organizations from both the private and public sector, including major employers and other local “housing stakeholders” directly involved with selling and leasing real estate, builders, suppliers and representatives of organizations providing housing and related services to the elderly, workforce families and special populations.
- **Action Step 4:** The **Housing Partnership** should assist with the creation of a **Continuum of (Housing) Residential Care Program**, directed at persons and families 55+ years of age. Such a **Program** would address several facets of elderly housing and supportive services needs to coincide with a projected growth in elderly population. Attention should be given to increasing in-home health services and home maintenance, repair and modification of homes for elderly households, as well as providing additional affordable housing units, both owner and rental, both with and without supportive services.
 - ❖ Independent living housing types for the 55+ year age group should include smaller, space efficient detached single family houses, attached townhomes and duplex/triplex units of 1,200 to 1,600 square feet.

- **Action Step 5:** The **Housing Partnership**, working with major employers, AP, CAPLSC and BACFF should design and implement **Community-wide Workforce Housing Assistance Programs** in Bennet. The purpose of these **Programs** would be to encourage and directly involve major employers with assisting their employees in obtaining affordable housing. Assistance could include, but not be limited to, locating and negotiating the purchase of a home, to providing funding assistance for the purchase and/or rehabilitation of a house. Funding assistance could be, for example, a \$5,000 to \$10,000 grant and/or low-interest loan to persons and families for closing costs, down payment, etc.

An estimated 80 housing units, consisting of 62 owner and 18 rental units should be targeted for the “workforce population” in Bennet, by 2029.

Two or more major employers should consider forming a limited partnership to develop housing projects in the Community, utilizing all available public and private funding sources. Any limited partnership would collaborate with local housing developers to construct housing for local employees.

Goal 2: New Housing Developments in Bennet should address the needs of both **owner and renter households** of all age and income sectors, with varied, affordable price products.

- **Action Step 1:** Build new owner and rental housing units that are affordable for low- to middle income workforce families and households that are cost-burdened throughout the Community. Affordable homes, particularly those with three+-bedrooms, are in demand in the Community. Consider creating **Credit- or Lease-To-Own Housing Programs and a Spec-House Risk Sharing Program.**
- **Action Step 2:** Owner housing units should be constructed in Bennet, with emphasis on single family homes. **The average affordable purchase price of a home in Bennet should be at \$225,500+ for workforce families. The price product in highest demand in Bennet includes homes at or above \$335,000.** Owner housing should generally consist of three+-bedrooms, with the exception of housing for retirees, which would typically be two-bedroom units.

- **Action Step 3:** Rental units should be constructed in Bennet, with emphasis on town home and duplex/triplex units for the elderly and local workforce households. **Rental housing price products in the Community should rent at or above the average affordable monthly rent of \$875 for workforce families. The price product in highest demand in Bennet ranges from \$705 to \$985.** General rental housing, preferably units consisting of two+-bedrooms, should be constructed to provide safe, decent and affordable rental housing options.

NOTE: Future affordable rental housing in Bennet will require the creative use of available “tools” of both public intervention and credit enhancement to buy down both development and operational costs. “Tools” could come in the form of grants, low-interest loans, mortgage insurance, tax increment financing and land and/or cash donations.

- **Action Step 4:** Plan and develop additional **owner and rental housing for Special Populations;** a target number of **nine units, including six owner and three rental units.** This includes persons with a mental and/or physical disability.
- **Action Step 5: Housing development projects in Bennet should coincide with public facility, utility and infrastructure improvements,** emphasizing alternative transportation methods, such as multi-use trails and local transit services. Access to necessary amenities of public use, as well as proper water, sewer, storm water and electrical utility installation are important for prolonged sustainability in residential neighborhoods. The planning and use of **alternative energy systems** should be a goal of the Community for future residential developments.
- **Action Step 6:** Develop unique solutions to create residential developments, both on existing vacant lots as infill, and on land adjacent the Corporate Limits of Bennet. **Available tracts of vacant land, best suited for residential development within the Corporate Limits, are in the northeastern, eastern and southeastern portions of Bennet. Residential growth areas, outside the Corporate Limits, are located northwest and northeast of the Community.**
- **Action Step 7:** Employ proper, modern planning practices for the development of housing units in identified residential growth areas. This would include the design of modern infrastructure systems. **Input received from the Community Surveys, as well as from the Bennet Planning Commission, identified a need for additional housing for workforce families in the Community.**

- **Action Step 8:** Public and private sectors should create a “**shared cost**” program to finance needed public utility, sidewalk and road improvement costs in both existing and new residential developments. Tax Increment Financing is an excellent source of financing for public infrastructure systems.

Goal 3: Existing Owner and Rental Housing Stock. Housing rehabilitation programs and activities in the Village of Bennet should strive to protect and preserve the existing housing stock of the Community.

- **Action Step 1:** Develop owner and rental housing rehabilitation programs and projects, with emphasis on meeting the housing rehabilitation needs of the elderly, low and middle income families, and housing occupied by persons with special needs.
- **Action Step 2: The Community of Bennet should strive to preserve housing of historical significance.** Housing that is significant architecturally or for its association with persons or families who played key roles in the development and growth of the Village adds to the character and uniqueness of Bennet neighborhoods. Encourage future residential development that is compatible and complements existing neighborhoods, both in style and scale with existing architecture.
- **Action Step 3:** Ensure sound, decent, affordable housing for Bennet residents by enforcing existing building, plumbing, electrical and fire codes for all residential developments. Promote maximum energy efficient housing standards and provide incentives for implementation.

Goal 4: Financing Housing Development. The Village of Bennet and housing developers should consider both public and private funding sources to both construct new housing and maintain the existing housing stock.

- **Action Step 1:** The **Village of Bennet** and **local Housing Partners** should continue to pursue State and Federal Grants to assist in financing housing rehabilitation, housing purchase, rehabilitate and resale and first-time homebuyer’s programs. The Village and private builders should pursue such funding from **USDA-Rural Development, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority** and **Nebraska Department of Economic Development.**

Approximately 76 percent of Citizen Survey respondents expressed support for the Village in using State or Federal grant funds for owner housing rehabilitation, and approximately 61 percent supported using housing program grant dollars for rental housing rehabilitation.

Additionally, 85 percent of Survey respondents supported either using grant dollars or establishing a local program that would purchase dilapidated houses to demolish and make the lots available for families and singles to build a house.

- **Action Step 2:** The Village of Bennet should utilize **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** to assist in the financing of both new housing developments and the redevelopment of dilapidated housing for new replacement housing. Such activities should target low- and moderate-income families, specifically to lower the cost of land, address public facility needs, and meet utility requirements.
 - ❖ **In 2018, the Nebraska State Legislature passed “Legislative Bill 496,” which allows for the use of TIF to assist in financing the development of workforce housing.**
- **Action Step 3:** Housing developers in Bennet should be encouraged to pursue the securement of all available tools of financing assistance in the development of new housing projects in the Community. This assistance is available with the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, USDA-Rural Development, Federal Home Loan Bank and the Department of Housing and Urban Development, in the form of grants, tax credits and mortgage insurance.

Goal 5: Impediments to Fair Housing Choice. As a Community, Bennet will need to identify, discuss and establish a plan to eliminate all barriers and impediments to fair housing choice in the Village. All sectors of the Community, both public and private, should play a role in this process. This would include the involvement of Village government, schools, churches and the local business sector.

- **Action Step 1:** Address the following primary impediments to fair housing choice in Bennet, as identified by participants of the **Bennet Workforce Housing Needs Survey**. ***For Owner Households – Cost of Utilities, Housing Prices and the Cost of Real Estate Taxes. For Renter Households – Cost of Rent, Lack of Availability of Decent Rental Units in their Price Range and the Cost of Utilities.*** The **Community-Wide Housing Partnership**, along with additional local, State and Federal funding sources, could provide funding to assist in developing new, affordable housing that could potentially alleviate one or several impediments to fair housing.

- **Action Step 2:** Create and support the efforts of a **Community-wide “Fair Housing Advisory Group”** through the provision of adequate resources for the delivery of fair housing activities. **Activities of the Advisory Group could include the following:**
 - ❖ Create a **“Fair Housing Plan”** to identify strategies to further affordable housing opportunities.
 - ❖ Host a **“Housing Fair”** for developers and contactors to promote existing market opportunities that exist for the development of affordable housing.
 - ❖ Promote **“Equal Housing Opportunities”** on flyers, brochures and local newspapers.
 - ❖ Enforce fair housing policies and submit complaints of discrimination to the Nebraska Equal Opportunity Commission.
- **Action Step 3:** Continue to implement **Fair Housing Policies** and **Property Maintenance Codes** to ensure all current and future residents of the Community do not experience any discrimination in housing choice and that properties are not overtaken by debris, potentially leading to unsafe and unhealthy conditions.
- **Action Step 4:** For **persons with a disability(ies)**, supply fully accessible housing, both for rent and for sale. Include supportive services where necessary. A total of 5 percent of these new units should be fully accessible for persons with physical disabilities, while 2 percent should be accessible for persons with sensory disabilities.
- **Action Step 5:** Develop housing for **minorities** needing safe and affordable housing.
- **Action Step 6:** **Support bilingual** and **impoverished families** in their search for affordable housing. This could include housing counseling, homeownership classes and information on fair lending practices.
- **Action Step 7:** Continue to routinely inspect rental housing units to ensure minimum standards for dwelling units are met, as a form of **Fair Housing Enforcement**.

EDUCATION & COMMUNITY/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.

Goal 1: Educational Quality. Continue to provide access to a **high quality public education** for the residents of Bennet. Maintain an excellence in education by expanding facilities, amenities and employment opportunities, as needed, while creating new and expanding existing educational programs and activities to support a growing student and faculty population for Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools. **Approximately 28 percent of Citizen Survey participants identified Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools as a factor in their decision to live in Bennet. Additionally, 96 percent of Survey respondents would recommend Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools to other families looking to relocate from another community.**

- **Action Step 1:** Support a gradually **increasing enrollment** at Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools, specifically at the Elementary School, located in Bennet. In the event of a substantial increase in enrollment, educational facilities should be prepared with appropriate amenities, facilities and necessary staff to meet increased demands.
- **Action Step 2: Extra-Curricular Activities,** such as homework assistance, athletics and student clubs, should continue to be an important role in the development of education in all school children.
- **Action Step 3:** Support the **student leadership programs** that are offered by Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools. Programs of this nature will provide school children of all ages with the necessary knowledge and potential to be successful, post-graduation.
- **Action Step 4:** Reinforce and develop **continuing education programs** to address current and future needs of youths, new families, adults and senior citizens.



Goal 2: Community/Economic Development. Utilize the **Bennet Comprehensive Plan** as a **community and economic development resource and guide** to maximize economic opportunities for all residents. Foster an increase in diversified employment and business types in Bennet.

- **Action Step 1:** Focus efforts of **diversified businesses and employment opportunities** to expand existing and attract new companies. Expand the availability of retail commerce development sites and available storefronts for rent or purchase to attract non-local businesses. Maintain and improve both public and private services, businesses and industries in Bennet, to increase and diversify employment opportunities.
- **Action Step 2:** Through the creation of a **Community/Economic Development Program**, the Village should explore all funding opportunities of LB840 to maximize use of local tax dollars on an annual basis.
- **Action Step 3:** Support the development of **business retention and expansion programs** to ensure the continuation of well established businesses. Business transition services should be offered to support the transfer of businesses to new generation owners, as current owners retire. These Programs could assist in recruiting both High School and College students/graduates to train in selective career paths to become business owners. The Community should create and maintain a listing of “Home-Based Businesses” so that as businesses outgrow a home (or farm) location, appropriate space in commercial or industrial areas of the Community can be occupied with a local base, home-grown businesses.



- **Action Step 4: Housing initiatives** in Bennet should be paired with **job creation activities**. Approximately 32 percent of participants of the Workforce Housing Survey indicated they currently reside in Bennet. **The high percentage of Bennet employees living in other Communities is primarily due to the lack of available or suitable housing within Bennet.** Programs supported Bennet Planning Commission and Village Board, through the provision of housing development partners, should focus on addressing the need for housing development and redevelopment in older neighborhoods and along the Highway 43 Corridor, combined with promoting new housing development in new residential subdivisions.
- **Action Step 5: Expand efforts to utilize Federal, State and Local Governmental Incentives** for promoting economic development in Bennet and recruit and retain job/business opportunities. Continue strong relationships with Local and State agencies such as the Nebraska Department of Economic Development.



Goal 3: Community Development. Community Development practices should strive to both **stabilize and improve the local Bennet economy and quality of life.** Proper renovation, adaptive reuse and additions of existing buildings, as well as new construction activities should be components of locally available incentives to attract residents, businesses and industries.

- **Action Step 1:** Encourage local reinvestment in Bennet by both the public and private sectors. Provide infrastructure and needed amenities to support future growth of commercial, industrial and residential areas. Remove dilapidated buildings and promote building rehabilitation on structures that are considered cost-effective for such activity.

- **Action Step 2:** Enhance the attractiveness of the business and industrial areas in Bennet, specifically a **building repair/modification program** for structures along the Highway Corridor. Community leaders and residents have identified a desire for façade improvements and fewer tin structures in the Downtown, as well as stricter enforcement of Village ordinances regarding parking, junk vehicles and property maintenance.
- **Action Step 3:** Promote the development and redevelopment of highway-oriented commercial businesses along the Highway 43 Corridor through Bennet.
- **Action Step 4:** Utilize all available **public programs of financing** in funding development and redevelopment programs. These programs include, but are not limited to HOME Funds, Community Development Block Grants, SAFETEA-LU (Transportation Enhancement Act), The Nebraska Transportation Innovation Act, Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund, State and Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits and locally based **TIF**.
- **Action Step 5:** Provide **public improvements** to older residential neighborhoods in need of street and sidewalk resurfacing, landscaping and street trees. Downtown facade improvements, a public gathering/festival space and additional public parking are all needed to support the development of additional specialty retail businesses.
- **Action Step 6:** Utilize **TIF** as a financial incentive for redevelopment projects in Downtown Bennet. Identified improvements include, but are not limited to, nuisance enforcement/property clean-up, crosswalk enhancements, façade and landscaping improvements and Gateway Entry improvements near Highway 2 and along the Highway 43 Corridor.
- **Action Step 7:** Enhance the potential of **Community agency connections**, including the Bennet Planning Commission, Village Board and Staff, CAPLSC, AP and BACFF, in addition to other existing organizations or special committees for technical and financial assistance for securing new community and economic development activities. Utilize local, State and Federal funding sources to strengthen existing and assist in the creation of new business/industry.
- **Action Step 8:** Promote **Community sustainability and quality of life** in Bennet as being a great place to live, work, raise a family and retire. High quality parks and recreation areas and public facilities make communities attractive to existing and future residents. Fostering a “**sense of community**” image in Bennet, through the local public education system and close-knit neighborhoods, is important to the long-term viability of the Community.

Goal 4: Community Redevelopment Planning and Implementation. Focus on improving structures, utility mains and public facilities throughout Bennet. Utilize various local, State and Federal funding sources to achieve the redevelopment goals of Community leaders and residents.

- **Action Step 1:** Establish a **Community Development Agency (CDA)** or **Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA)** in order to creatively combine the resources of **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)** with other sources of revenue, such as Foundation monies. **TIF** can be utilized in designated **“Redevelopment Areas”** as a method of funding structural rehabilitation activities for commercial buildings. These activities could include façade renovation, improvements of public utilities, facilities, streets, sidewalks and trails and mixed use developments.
- **Action Step 3:** Support efforts to arrange and manage a variety of funding sources and development/redevelopment activities, including the implementation of improvements within future **“Redevelopment Areas”** in Bennet.

Goal 5: Public Facilities & Utilities. **Maintain and improve the existing public facilities and utilities** in Bennet. Develop, as needed, new facilities and services to reflect the Community's needs and demands during the 10-year planning period. Provide modern water and sewage treatment mains, public utility facilities, flood control and similar environmental control processes.

- **Action Step 1: Upgrade and expand public services** to keep pace with population changes and associated commercial, industrial and residential developments. Provide public services in an efficient and economic manner to protect and enhance the safety and welfare of Bennet residents. Provide modern sewage treatment facilities, refuse collection and disposal, street cleaning, flood control and similar environmental control processes.
- **Action Step 2:** Provide **adequate law enforcement, fire and ambulance protection/services**, with increased emphasis on community relations, as well as adequate civil defense and emergency services. Ensure that facilities necessary to support such services are available throughout the Community. Promote the coordination of these services among the various governmental and quasi-governmental entities. **The Village of Bennet Fire Protection Services was ranked as one of the best Public Services in the Community by the residents that completed the Citizen Survey.**

- **Action Step 3:** Maintain an **adequate supply of potable water** and an **expanded distribution system** suitable for both present and future consumption and fire protection in Bennet. In order to maintain adequate water pressures and supply, an additional water storage tank/tower will be necessary as Bennet continues to grow.
- **Action Step 4: Continue efforts to upgrade and expand segments of the Bennet municipal sanitary sewer collection system** within the 10-year planning period. Older segments of the sanitary sewer system are 60 to 70 years of age and may require repair and/or replacement during the planning period. The wastewater treatment facility has the capacity to handle future growth, but extensions of existing infrastructure will be required.

Goal 6: Energy. Access available programs and funding sources to reduce energy consumptions and promote the use of alternative energy systems in Bennet.

- **Action Step 1:** Promote the use of **alternate energy systems** in Bennet, available through the provisions of the Nebraska Net Metering, State Statutes §70-2001. A variety of wind, solar, geothermal, biomass and methane energy sources are available in association with “green building” methods to significantly reduce energy costs for heating and cooling.

Net Metering is also encouraged to be supplemented with “green building” techniques to enhance energy efficiency by all sectors of the Village of Bennet. **Tax Increment Financing**, in combination with low-interest or no-interest loans through programs available from the United States Department of Agriculture, for example, can greatly reduce the cost of implementing these alternative energy systems.

- **Action Step 2:** Assist public and private property owners in Bennet to access available funding sources through utility districts such as Nebraska City Utilities and the Nebraska Energy Office for modern heating, cooling and lighting systems to reduce consumption rates by commercial, industrial, residential and public/quasi-public building owners.
- **Action Step 3:** Strive to establish a pilot project in Bennet that utilizes alternative energy systems to provide electric energy to multiple stores/businesses within a strip-mall setting, such as Downtown Bennet at a reduced rate or “no cost.” This would reduce overhead costs and achieve profitability.

Goal 7: Transportation. Provide an **efficient transportation system** throughout Bennet for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services.

- **Action Step 1:** Continue to annually update the coordinated **One- and Six-Year Road Plan** for maintenance and improvement of existing and future streets, roads and highways in the Community. This includes paving, curbs, gutters, street lighting and curb cuts, all in an effort to reduce excessive travel delays.
- **Action Step 2:** Maintain design standards and policies for various classes of streets, roads and highways to enhance the function and safety of the street system in Bennet.
- **Action Step 3:** Coordinate the **Bennet Land Use Plan** and the **One- and Six- Year Road Plan** to prepare the Village for future growth and development. Emphasis should be given to seeking cost effective methods to reduce/calm traffic along the Highway Corridor (Monroe Street).
- **Action Step 4:** New residential, commercial and industrial developments in Bennet should have appropriate and adequate streets, curbs, gutters and sidewalks.
- **Action Step 5:** Plan and implement a **“Safe Routes to School” initiative** in Bennet. Create a collaborative partnership including, but not limited to, educators, parents, students, community leaders, health officials and administrators to encourage school-age children to walk or bike to school through the construction of bike lanes and pedestrian walkways. Specifically address the desire of Bennet residents for the need for sidewalks and/or hiking and biking trails.
- **Action Step 6:** Address transportation issues identified in the Bennet Citizen Survey. **These include, but are not limited to, pedestrian/trails connections, traffic safety improvements, highway corridor enhancement and improved school traffic circulation.**

BENNET, NEBRASKA

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROGRAM – 2029.

NEBRASKA INVESTMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY - HOUSING STUDY GRANT PROGRAM.



SECTION 3

POPULATION, INCOME &
ECONOMIC PROFILE.

MAY, 2019

SECTION 3 **POPULATION, INCOME & ECONOMIC PROFILE.**

INTRODUCTION.

Population, income and economic trends in Bennet, Nebraska and the Village's One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction serve as valuable indicators of future development needs and patterns for the Community, and provide a basis for the realistic projection of future population, income and economics. For this **Plan**, population trends and projections for the years 2000 through 2029 were studied and forecasted for Bennet, utilizing a process of both trend analysis and popular consent.

Bennet is projected to increase in population during the next 10 years, primarily due to continued housing development for both current and future workers in Bennet and the surrounding areas. To maintain a stable population base, the Village will need to develop existing land within the Corporate Limits, while developing suitable land adjacent the Village for future annexation. This population will also require the creation of additional housing units and related public facilities and utilities for the Village.

The **Bennet Community Housing Study**, completed in May, 2019, highlighted population, income, economic and housing trends and projections, as well as determined a 10-year housing target demand for Bennet. The **Study** also identified important housing development projects to serve several different income levels in the Community.

A target demand for up to **121 new housing units** by **2029** should be implemented. A “**10-Year Housing Action Plan**” identifies specific housing projects most needed by the local citizens of Bennet.

The most critical housing issues in Bennet are to promote the development of housing for the local workforce population affordable to all salary income levels. Other priority housing needs in Bennet include housing for low- to middle-income families, single parent families, general rental housing, rehabilitation of owner-and renter-occupied housing, housing for first-time homebuyers and the elderly. Housing units of various types and styles, having three+-bedrooms are recommended. Future population and household growth in Bennet will be driven by new and expanded economic development and public service activities within the Community and surrounding areas.

GENERAL POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS.

The analysis and projection of local demographics are at the center of all planning decisions. This process assists in the understanding of important changes which have and will occur throughout the 10-year planning period. Estimating population is critical to a community planning process. Further, projecting population growth and/or decline of a community is extremely complex. Projections are based upon various assumptions about the future, and must be carefully analyzed and continually reevaluated, due to the changing economic and social structure of a community.

POPULATION

- **Table 3.1, Page 3.3** identifies **population trends and projections** for the Village of Bennet. **The current (2019) estimated population for Bennet is 964.** The “Medium” population projection for Bennet estimates a 2029 population of 1,166, an increase of 202 residents, or 21 percent. The “High” population projection indicates Bennet has the potential to experience a population increase of 344, or 35.7 percent to 1,308 by 2029, through an increase of housing development and community/economic development activities.

AGE DISTRIBUTION

For planning purposes, the various cohorts of population are important indicators of the special needs of a community. The cohorts of age, sex and family structure can assist in determining potential labor force and the need for housing, public facilities and other important local services. An analysis of age characteristics can be used to identify the potential need for public schools, recreational areas and short- and long-term health care facilities.

- **Table 3.2, Page 3.3** provides **age distribution** for the Village of Bennet, from 2000 to 2029. The “20-34” age group experienced the largest increase in population from 2000 to 2010, increasing by 93, or from 92 to 185. The large increase in this age cohort, along with stability to slight growth in older populations, indicates strong future population growth. The “35-54” age group is projected to experience the largest increase in population from 2019 to 2029, with an estimated increase of 59 persons.
- **All Bennet population age groups are projected to increase between 2019 and 2029. This includes retiree, elderly and frail elderly populations. This is due, in part, to two factors: expanding employment opportunities in both Bennet and surrounding areas, as well as an “aging in place” population. New housing for elderly, frail elderly and retirees that includes independent living, assisted living and long-term care will be needed in Bennet.**

**TABLE 3.1
POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
BENNET, NEBRASKA
2000-2029**

| | <u>Year</u> | <u>Population</u> | <u>Total</u> | | <u>Annual</u> | |
|--------|-------------|-------------------|---------------|----------------|---------------|----------------|
| | | | <u>Change</u> | <u>Percent</u> | <u>Change</u> | <u>Percent</u> |
| | 2000 | 570 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| | 2010 | 719 | +149 | +26.1% | +14.9 | +2.6% |
| | 2019 | 964 | +245 | +34.1% | +27.2 | +3.8% |
| Low | 2029 | 1,097 | +133 | +13.8% | +13.3 | +1.4% |
| Medium | 2029 | 1,166 | +202 | +21.0% | +20.2 | +2.1% |
| High | 2029 | 1,308 | +344 | +35.7% | +34.4 | +3.6% |

Source: 2000, 2010 Census; 2011-2017 Census Population Estimates
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2019.

**TABLE 3.2
POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION
TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
BENNET, NEBRASKA
2000-2029**

| <u>Age Group</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2010</u> | <u>2000-2010</u> | | <u>2019-2029</u> | |
|-------------------|-------------|-------------|------------------|-------------|------------------|---------------|
| | | | <u>Change</u> | <u>2019</u> | <u>2029</u> | <u>Change</u> |
| 19 and Under | 170 | 200 | +30 | 298 | 344 | +46 |
| 20-34 | 92 | 185 | +93 | 221 | 266 | +45 |
| 35-54 | 192 | 186 | -6 | 232 | 291 | +59 |
| 55-64 | 42 | 65 | +23 | 97 | 116 | +19 |
| 65-74 | 52 | 46 | -6 | 65 | 82 | +17 |
| 75-84 | 20 | 33 | +13 | 44 | 58 | +14 |
| 85+ | 2 | 4 | +2 | 7 | 9 | +2 |
| Totals | 570 | 719 | +149 | 964 | 1,166 | +202 |
| Median Age | 36.7 | 32.9 | -3.8 | 33.2 | 33.7 | +0.5 |

Source: 2000, 2010 Census.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2019.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

- **Table 3.3** identifies **specific household characteristics** in the Village of Bennet, from 2000 to 2029. The overall number of households in Bennet increased between 2000 and 2010, from 222 to 286 total households. **Currently, Bennet consists of an estimated 378 households, including 334 owner and 44 renter households.**
- The current number of persons per household in Bennet is approximately 2.55 and is projected to increase to 2.58 by 2029.
- Currently (2019), zero persons reside in **group quarters**. Group quarters consist of dormitories, correctional facilities and nursing/care centers and are not considered a household. The potential development of a continuum-of-care program within Bennet, during the next 10 years, including independent living, assisted living and skilled nursing facilities, would result in an increase of the group quarters population.
- **An estimated 452 households are projected to reside in Bennet by 2029. This will equal an estimated 384 owner and 68 renter households.**

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Population</u> | <u>Group Quarters</u> | <u>Persons in Households</u> | <u>Households</u> | <u>Persons Per Household</u> |
|--------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|
| 2000 | 570 | 0 | 570 | 222 | 2.57 |
| 2010 | 719 | 0 | 719 | 286 | 2.51 |
| 2019 | 964 | 0 | 964 | 378 | 2.55 |
| 2029 | 1,166 | 0 | 1,166 | 452 | 2.58 |
| 2029* | 1,308 | 0 | 1,308 | 507 | 2.58 |

*High Population.
Source: 2000, 2010 Census.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2019.

INCOME TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME GROUPS

- **Table 3.4, Page 3.6, identifies household income trends and projections** for Bennet, Nebraska, from 2000 to 2029. Household incomes in Bennet have increased in recent years and are projected to continue this trend through 2029. From 2000 to 2019, the median household income in Bennet increased from \$43,750 to \$71,180. **The median household income is projected to increase by 2029 to \$86,205, an increase of 21.1 percent from 2019.**
- The number of households in the Village of Bennet at all annual income levels below \$50,000 is expected to decrease during the next 10 years. The number of households with incomes of at least \$50,000 is expected to increase substantially.

PER-CAPITA INCOME

- **Table 3.5, Page 3.6, identifies per capita income trends & projections** in Bennet, Lancaster County and the State of Nebraska, from 2012 to 2029. Current per capita income in Bennet is an estimated \$27,295. By 2029, per capita income in the Village is projected to increase by an estimated 28.8 percent, to \$35,150.
- The current and projected per capita income in Lancaster County is greater than that of Bennet, and slightly below the State of Nebraska. By 2029, per capita income in Lancaster County is projected to increase to \$56,124.



**TABLE 3.4
HOUSEHOLD INCOME
TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
BENNET, NEBRASKA
2000-2029**

| <u>Income Group</u> | <u>2000*</u> | <u>2016 Est.*</u> | <u>2019</u> | <u>2029</u> | <u>% Change 2019-2029</u> |
|-------------------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|
| <u>All Households</u> | | | | | |
| Less than \$10,000 | 14 | 3 | 3 | 2 | -33.3% |
| \$10,000-\$19,999 | 19 | 11 | 10 | 6 | -40.0% |
| \$20,000-\$34,999 | 45 | 37 | 39 | 31 | -20.5% |
| \$35,000-\$49,999 | 63 | 35 | 42 | 40 | -4.8% |
| <u>\$50,000 or More</u> | <u>83</u> | <u>221</u> | <u>284</u> | <u>373</u> | <u>+31.3%</u> |
| Totals | 224 | 307 | 378 | 452 | +19.6% |
| Median Income | \$43,750 | \$69,107 | \$71,180 | \$86,205 | +21.1% |

* Specified Data Used. 2016 Estimate subject to Margin of Error.
Source: 2000 Census.
2012-2016 American Community Survey.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2019.

**TABLE 3.5
PER CAPITA INCOME
TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
VILLAGE OF BENNET / LANCASTER COUNTY / STATE OF NEBRASKA
2012-2029**

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Bennet</u> | | <u>Lancaster County</u> | | <u>State of Nebraska</u> | |
|------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| | <u>Income</u> | <u>% Change</u> | <u>Income</u> | <u>% Change</u> | <u>Income</u> | <u>% Change</u> |
| 2012 | \$25,451 | -- | \$42,085 | -- | \$46,066 | -- |
| 2013 | \$25,406 | -0.2% | \$41,658 | -1.0% | \$45,876 | -0.4% |
| 2014 | \$27,060 | +6.5% | \$43,215 | +3.7% | \$48,419 | +5.5% |
| 2015 | \$26,507 | -2.0% | \$44,806 | +3.7% | \$49,567 | +2.3% |
| 2016 | \$25,504 | -3.8% | \$45,484 | +1.5% | \$50,029 | +0.9% |
| 2019 | \$27,295 | +7.0% | \$47,667 | +4.8% | \$51,436 | +2.8% |
| 2012-2019 | \$25,451-\$27,295 | +7.2% | \$42,085-\$47,667 | +13.3% | \$46,166-\$51,436 | +11.4% |
| 2019-2029 | \$27,295-\$35,150 | +28.8% | \$46,667-\$56,124 | +20.3% | \$51,436-\$61,606 | +19.8% |

Source: 2012-2016 American Community Survey.
Nebraska Department of Economic Development, 2018.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2019.

COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

- **Tables 3.6 and 3.7 identify households with housing problems/cost burdened** in the Village of Bennet. Cost burdened households are those that spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing costs. Housing costs include any cost directly attributable to the cost of living and may include rent, mortgage, insurance, taxes and utilities. Housing problems may include a lack of plumbing facilities or overcrowded housing conditions. Overcrowded housing conditions exist when more than 1.01 persons per room exist in a housing unit.
- **An estimated 43 owner and eight renter households in Bennet are currently cost burdened and/or have housing problems. Owner households experiencing cost burden and/or housing problems are projected to decline by 2029, to an estimated 34 households. The number renter cost burden households is projected to increase slightly, to 10 households.**
- Substandard Housing, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, considers housing units that are experiencing overcrowded conditions (1.01+ persons per room) or homes without complete plumbing. **The 2012-2016 American Community Survey estimated all homes in Bennet had complete plumbing, but found two homes experienced overcrowded conditions.**

TABLE 3.6
ESTIMATED OWNER HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME
COST BURDENED WITH HOUSING PROBLEMS
BENNET, NEBRASKA
2000-2029

| <u>Income Range</u> | <u>2000*</u> # / #CB-HP | <u>2015*</u> # / #CB-HP | <u>2019</u> # / #CB-HP | <u>2029</u> # / #CB-HP |
|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 0%-30% AMI | 32 / 24 | 10 / 10 | 10 / 10 | 8 / 8 |
| 31%-50% AMI | 36 / 16 | 15 / 4 | 16 / 4 | 15 / 3 |
| 51%-80% AMI | 40 / 8 | 65 / 10 | 73 / 8 | 94 / 6 |
| 81%+ AMI | <u>163 / 26</u> | <u>195 / 30</u> | <u>235 / 21</u> | <u>267 / 17</u> |
| Totals | 271 / 74 | 285 / 54 | 334 / 43 | 384 / 34 |

* Specified Data Used. 2015 Estimate subject to margin of error.

= Total Households #CB-HP = Households with Cost Burden – Housing Problems

Source: 2000 & 2011-2015 CHAS Tables.
 Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2019.

TABLE 3.7
ESTIMATED RENTER HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME
COST BURDENED WITH HOUSING PROBLEMS
BENNET, NEBRASKA
2000-2029

| <u>Income Range</u> | <u>2000*</u> # / #CB-HP | <u>2015*</u> # / #CB-HP | <u>2019</u> # / #CB-HP | <u>2029</u> # / #CB-HP |
|---------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------|
| 0%-30% AMI | 12 / 8 | 4 / 4 | 4 / 4 | 4 / 4 |
| 31%-50% AMI | 4 / 4 | 10 / 4 | 10 / 4 | 12 / 4 |
| 51%-80% AMI | 10 / 0 | 0 / 0 | 10 / 0 | 22 / 2 |
| <u>81%+ AMI</u> | <u>16 / 0</u> | <u>14 / 0</u> | <u>20 / 0</u> | <u>30 / 0</u> |
| Totals | 42 / 12 | 28 / 8 | 44 / 8 | 68 / 10 |

* Specified Data Used. 2015 Estimate subject to margin of error.

= Total Households #CB-HP = Households with Cost Burden – Housing Problems

Source: 2000 & 2011-2015 CHAS Tables.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2019.

EMPLOYMENT/ECONOMIC TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS.

The most recent and comprehensive employment data available for Lancaster County was obtained from the Nebraska Department of Labor. Since some of these figures are only available County-Wide, a review and analysis of Lancaster County labor force statistics is also highlighted to provide a general understanding of the economic activity occurring in and around the Village of Bennet. Some variation due to differences in rural and urban setting may not be identified, based upon this assumption.

EMPLOYMENT TRENDS

- **Table 3.8, Page 3.9**, identifies **employment trends and projections** in Lancaster County, Nebraska, from 1990 to 2029. Since 1990, the number of employed persons in the County has increased by nearly 50,000. Currently, an estimated 168,205 employed persons exist in Lancaster County, with an estimated unemployment rate of 2.8 percent. By 2029, the number of employed persons is projected to increase by 13,844 persons, or 8.0 percent, to 181,474.

**TABLE 3.8
CIVILIAN LABOR FORCE & EMPLOYMENT
TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
LANCASTER COUNTY, NEBRASKA
1990-2029**

| | <u>1990</u> | <u>2000</u> | <u>2010</u> | <u>2019</u> | <u>2029</u> |
|------------------------------------|----------------------|----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|----------------|
| Civilian Labor Force | 124,364 | 148,280 | 162,567 | 173,050 | 186,894 |
| Unemployment | 2,702 | 3,501 | 6,851 | 4,845 | 5,420 |
| Rate of Unemployment | 2.2% | 2.4% | 4.2% | 2.8% | 2.9% |
| Employment | 121,662 | 144,779 | 155,716 | 168,205 | 181,474 |
| <u>Change in Employment</u> | | | | | |
| | <u>Number</u> | <u>Annual</u> | <u>% Change</u> | <u>% Annual</u> | |
| 1990-2000 | +23,117 | +2,311.7 | +19.0% | +1.9% | |
| 2000-2010 | +10,937 | +1,093.7 | +7.6% | +0.8% | |
| 2010-2019 | +10,483 | +1,310 | +6.4% | +0.8% | |
| 2019-2029 | +13,844 | +1,384 | +8.0% | +0.8% | |

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, 2018.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2019.

WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE

- **Table 3.9, Page 3.10**, identifies **workforce employment by type** in Lancaster County, Nebraska, as of 2018. The largest non-farm employment workforce sectors in the County are Health Care & Social Assistance (23,868 workers), State Government (20,032) and Retail Trade (19,013).
- **The major employers in Bennet and the surrounding areas include First Nebraska Bank, Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools District OR-1, Zermatt Tool, Midwest Farmers Cooperative and Vasa Construction.**

- Overall, Bennet has a strong economic outlook potential for the 10-year planning period. Economic opportunities exist, primarily due to population increases and expanded employment opportunities in and around Bennet. Bennet can continue to enhance its position as a thriving small-town Community, and also enjoy the benefits of having high accessibility to the services and amenities of a large city, due to its proximity to the City of Lincoln. Additional commercial and industrial business, as well as the expansion of existing businesses in the Bennet area, and the provision of vacant land for these economic growth activities should be pursued if the Community desires more commerce. Existing, locally-based businesses, including agricultural-related industries, will ensure Bennet has a stable economic base and a bright future for increased economic development.

**TABLE 3.9
WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE
LANCASTER COUNTY, NEBRASKA
JUNE, 2018**

| <u>Workforce</u> | <u>Employment</u> | <u>Workforce</u> | <u>Employment</u> |
|--|-------------------|--|-------------------|
| Non-Farm Employment (Wage and Salary) | 187,721 | | |
| Agriculture Forestry, Fishing & Hunting. | 0 | Professional, Scientific & Technical Services. | 8,779 |
| Mining, Quarrying and Oil/Gas Extraction. | * | Management of Companies & Enterprises. | * |
| Utilities. | * | Administrative/Support/Waste. | 7,178 |
| Construction. | 8,560 | Educational Services. | * |
| Manufacturing. | 12,161 | Health Care & Social Assistance. | 23,868 |
| Wholesale Trade. | 3,545 | Arts, Entertainment & Recreation. | 3,761 |
| Retail Trade. | 19,013 | Accommodation & Food Service. | 14,879 |
| Transportation & Warehousing. | 10,282 | Other Services (except Public Administration). | 6,949 |
| Information. | 3,439 | Federal Government. | 3,325 |
| Finance & Insurance. | 13,135 | State Government. | 20,032 |
| Real Estate & Rental/Leasing. | 1,702 | Local Government. | 14,678 |

*Data not available because of disclosure suppression.

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, 2018.

BENNET, NEBRASKA

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROGRAM – 2029.

NEBRASKA INVESTMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY - HOUSING STUDY GRANT PROGRAM.



SECTION 4

LAND USE, GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT.

MAY, 2019

SECTION 4 **LAND USE, GROWTH & REDEVELOPMENT.**

INTRODUCTION.

The **Land Use, Growth and Redevelopment** section of this **Comprehensive Plan** identifies the current and future land use development patterns in Bennet, Nebraska. The land use component examines **development opportunities and requirements and future utilization of land** in and around the Village. A discussion of the **environmental and physical characteristics** of Bennet precedes a description and analysis of **existing and future land use** conditions in the Village.

PROPER LAND USE PRACTICES.

Proper land use practices can protect the natural resources of a community and be a complement to the built environment. The natural environment of the Village of Bennet provides both opportunities and constraints for existing and future developments. As humans strive to create a sustainable living environment, they must work and live in harmony with their natural surroundings. This can occur by designing with nature, conserving unique features, protecting watersheds and using sensitive development practices.

In Bennet, the primary development constraints are associated with the soil conditions and floodplains of the Little Nemaha River and its associate tributaries, which constrain future development beyond the current Corporate Limits south and west of the Community. The State of Nebraska Department of Natural Resources continually gathers new data to understand and mitigate flood hazards associated with the State's water resources. The Floodplain Management Section of the 2018 State of Nebraska Cooperating Technical Partners (CTP) Business Plan indicates watersheds associated with the Little Nemaha River and unnamed tributaries in the Bennet area will be studied to include new data for a mapping activity during Fiscal Year 2020.

IDENTIFICATION OF FUTURE GROWTH AREAS

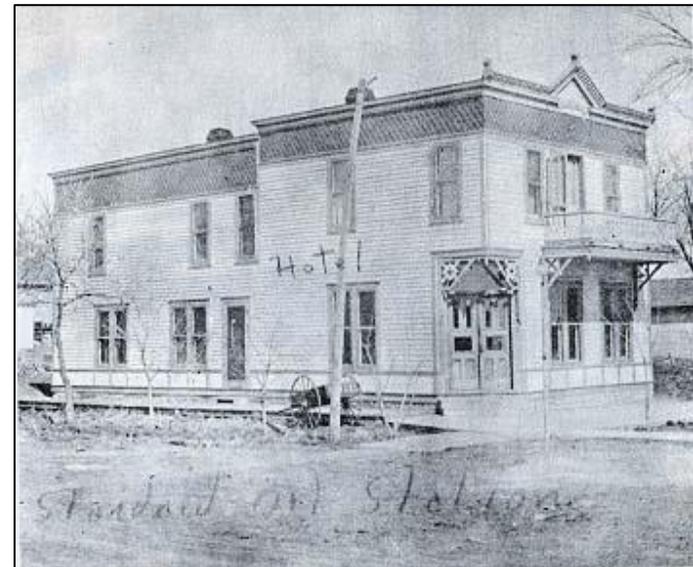
The proposed **Land Use Plan** concentrates on the use of land in the Village of Bennet and the Community's respective One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction, during the 10-year planning period. Special attention is given to the identification of future residential, public/quasi-public, parks and recreational, commercial and industrial growth areas. The identification of undeveloped land in both the Corporate Limits and Planning Jurisdiction is imperative to support growth and development opportunities during the next 10 years.

LOCATION

The Village of Bennet is located in southeast Nebraska in Lancaster County, approximately 1.5 miles south of Nebraska State Highway 2 via State Highway 43. This location directly links Bennet to the Lincoln Metropolitan Area, approximately seven miles northwest of Bennet. This proximity to Lincoln presents opportunities for creating a viable and prosperous Community.

HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT.

Bennet came into existence as a result of the development of an independent railroad line between Nebraska City and Lincoln, eventually heading onto "Fort Kearny" and connecting to the Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad main line. The Community was originally named after Mr. John Bennett (with two t's), Vice President of the independent railroad company. The Town's name was shortened in 1872, when the Community was officially incorporated as "Bennet, Nebraska." The first buildings were completed in 1871 and, by 1875, the Downtown's commercial business was beginning to thrive, when a large grain elevator was constructed by the Nebraska City Elevator Company.



Early Day Hotel, Garden & Monroe Streets.
Source: Lancaster County.

POPULATION GROWTH

Table 4.1 highlights **historical population trends** for the Village of Bennet. Population of this rural Community flourished following its official settlement in 1872, reaching nearly 500 residents by 1900. Throughout the first half of the 20th century, the population of Bennet can be characterized by a gradual decrease, to a decennial population low of 381 in 1960. Every decennial census since 1970 has recorded an increasing population in the Community, rapidly increasing since 2000. The 2010 Census recorded a 26.1 percent population increase over the 2000 population of 570. As of 2019, Bennet has an estimated population of 964 residents. Population projections for 2019 and beyond indicate that the Community should expect continued population growth over the next decade.



Bennet from the top of the Railroad Water Tower, 1900.
Source: Lancaster County.

Right: Looking East from Madison & Garden Streets.
Source: Lancaster County.

TABLE 4.1
HISTORICAL POPULATION
BENNET, NEBRASKA
1880-2019

| <u>Year</u> | <u>Population</u> | <u>+/- & Percent Change</u> |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------------------------|
| 1880 | 214 | -- / -- |
| 1890 | 474 | +260 / +121.5% |
| 1900 | 495 | +21 / +4.4% |
| 1910 | 457 | -38 / -7.7% |
| 1920 | 473 | +16 / +3.5% |
| 1930 | 428 | -45 / -9.5% |
| 1940 | 412 | -16 / -3.7% |
| 1950 | 396 | -16 / -3.9% |
| 1960 | 381 | -15 / -3.8% |
| 1970 | 489 | +108 / +28.3% |
| 1980 | 523 | +34 / +7.0% |
| 1990 | 544 | +21 / +4.0% |
| 2000 | 570 | +26 / +4.8% |
| 2010 | 719 | +149 / +26.1% |
| 2019 | 964 | +245 / +34.1% |

Source: U.S. Census.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2019.



THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

SOIL ASSOCIATIONS

The soils in and around Bennet are classified into three soil groups, or Associations, each with a broad range of characteristics. **Illustration 4.1, Page 4.6**, graphically displays the **General Soil Associations** for Bennet and the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service conducted the soil survey and developed the boundaries of the soil types found on **Illustration 4.1**. The three Soil Associations depicted in **Illustration 4.1** are the Kennebec-Nodaway-Zook, Wymore-Pawnee and Pawnee-Burchard Associations.

❖ **KENNEBEC-NODAWAY-ZOOK ASSOCIATION**

The southern portion of the Bennet Corporate Limits, as well as the east-central portion of the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction centered about the Little Nemaha River, are comprised of the **Kennebec-Nodaway-Zook Association**. Individual soils are generally described as *“deep, nearly level and very gently sloping, moderately well drained to poorly drained, silty soils that formed in alluvium; on flood plains.”* This Association consists of soils generally located on major flood plains along major drainage ways.

The soils in this Association are mainly used for cash grain farming. Flooding is common during years of more than normal precipitation. Soils in this Association are severely limited for sanitary sewer lagoons and leach fields, as well as for building sites due to the hazard of flooding. Even the construction of roads and streets is limited because of the flooding hazard and frost action during winter.

❖ **WYMORE-PAWNEE ASSOCIATION**

Nearly all of the area included in the Corporate Limits of Bennet, with the exception of the extreme southern portion adjacent and south of the Railroad Corridor are included in this Association. Additionally, the northern half and southwest portion of the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction, as well as a thin strip at the extreme southeastern portion of the Jurisdiction are included in the **Wymore-Pawnee Association**. Soils of this Association are described as *“deep, nearly level to strongly sloping, moderately well drained, silty soils that formed in loess and loamy soils that formed in glacial till; on uplands.”*

Limitations for dwellings, streets and roads are stated as severe due to shrink-swell potential. Sewage lagoons are impacted by severe limitations for steep slopes. Soils of this type are also severely limited for septic tank absorption fields due to slow permeability and slope. *Buildings located in this area can overcome these limitations by constructing re-enforced foundations that are designed to withstand these limitations.*

❖ **PAWNEE-BURCHARD ASSOCIATION**

Lands within the Bennet rural One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction, along the bluffs of the upper elevations of the bluffs over the Little Nemaha River, in the extreme southern portion of the Planning Jurisdiction, are comprised of the **Pawnee-Burchard Association**. This Association type is generally described as “*deep, gently sloping to steep, moderately well drained and well drained, loamy and clayey soils that formed in glacial till; on uplands.*”

The soils in this Association are, generally, severely limited for septic absorption fields because of slow or moderately slow permeability and slope. They are severely limited for sewage lagoons because of slope. This Association is also severely limited for building sites because of high shrink-swell or slope and for roads and streets because of high shrink-swell and high frost action.

GENERAL SOIL ASSOCIATIONS MAP

ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION

BENNET, NEBRASKA

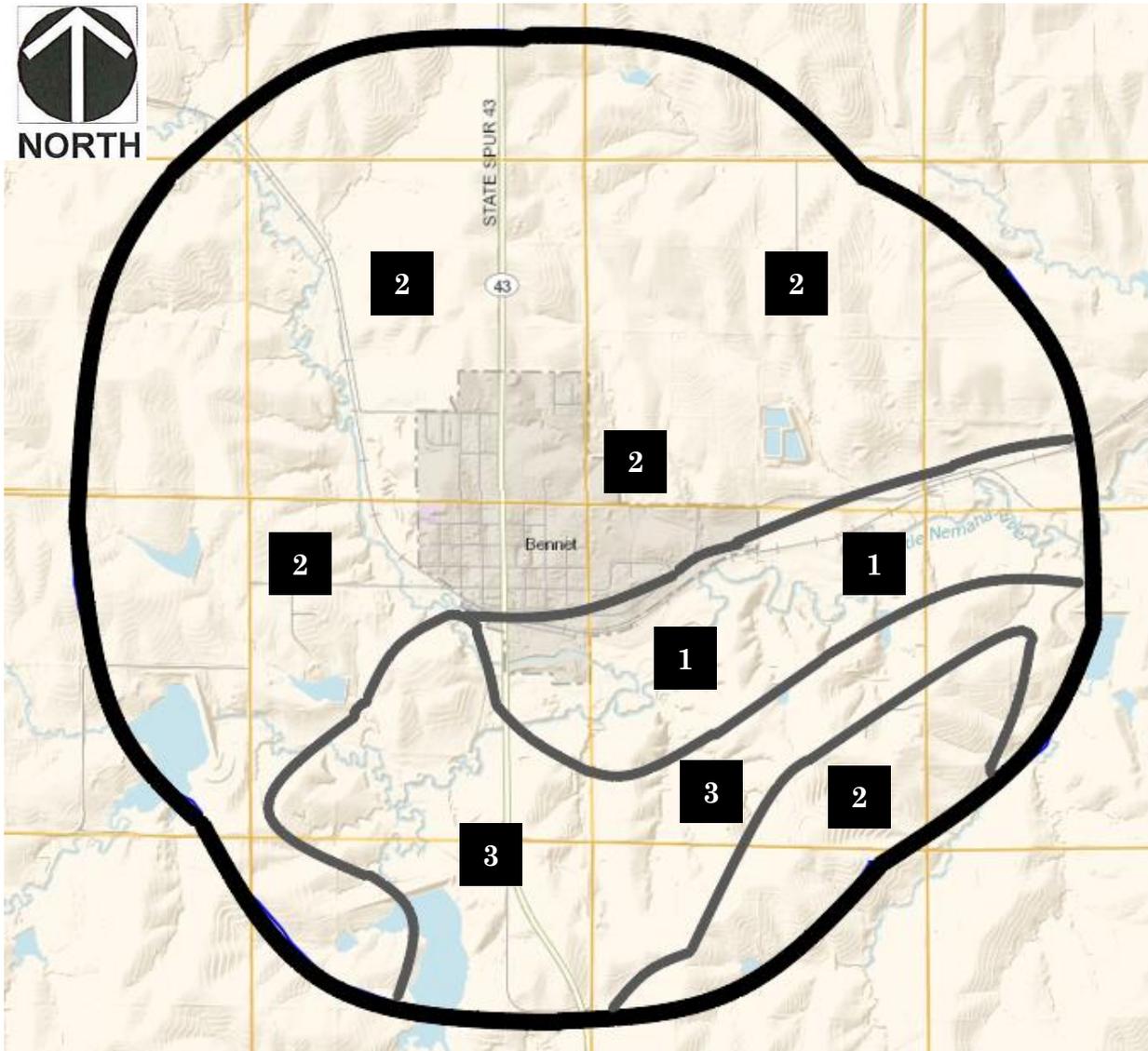


ILLUSTRATION 4.1

LEGEND

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | Kennebec-Nodaway-Zook |
| 2 | Wymore-Pawnee |
| 3 | Pawnee-Burchard |

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WATERSHEDS

The topography and terrain of Bennet and the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction are varied. The natural landscape has been formed by wind and water erosion and deposits creating areas of nearly level lands on stream terraces. The Village of Bennet generally rests above and to the north of the Little Nemaha River. The natural topography of Bennet is gently rolling hills to areas that are nearly level. Lands slope from developed areas of the Community to the south, southeast, carrying stormwater runoff to the Little Nemaha River and other drainage ways, ultimately converging with the Missouri River in the extreme southeastern portion of Nebraska.

Groundwater is the primary source of drinking water used by Lancaster County Rural Water District #1 (LCRWD #1), which supplies water to the Village of Bennet. The water is pumped from wells maintained by LCRWD #1. A description of the municipal water system is provided in the utilities discussion of **Section 5** of this **Plan**.

No flood protection structures exist or are planned for the subject watershed. As the Community continues to grow, future development within the floodway and flood plain should be discouraged and only allowed through the strict adherence to the local flood plain regulations.

Protection against natural hazards is the responsibility of the local government and its officials. The effect of high water or flooding can be lessened by planned open space within the designated flood plain, maintenance of the floodway and the application of design standards to reduce runoff.

Surface drainage and streams account for a small percentage of the water resources in the Bennet One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction. The Village of Bennet relies upon the Lancaster County Rural Water District to supply municipal water to the Community. Local leaders have expressed concerns regarding water quality in the Community, specifically maintaining an appropriate supply and pressure as the population continues to increase. The Village will need to look at increasing its supply in the near future by adding an additional water storage facility.

The underground water supply is vital to the region and is the source of water for numerous rural private drinking and irrigation wells. Any endangerment to the supply threatens public health, as well as the local farm economy. This natural resource must be protected. Securing the quality of drinking water from private wells in the rural areas within the Bennet One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction is very important, if in fact the rural dwellings are not connected to the Rural Water District. **A minimum lot size of three acres is recommended for residences in agricultural zoned areas.** This standard generally ensures that adjacent households do not contaminate each other's drinking water. Rural dwellings typically have septic tanks and/or leach fields. If located too close to each other, contamination could occur. Adequate residential lot sizes help ensure residents' health, safety, and welfare into the future.

WELLHEAD PROTECTION PROGRAM

The Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality (NDEQ) regulates ground water quality and quantity. To assist local municipalities with protecting their municipal drinking water supply, NDEQ has developed the **Nebraska Wellhead Protection (WHP) Program**. The voluntary program intends to prevent the contamination of ground water used by public water supply wells.

The **WHP Program** provides the following in accordance with the federal laws: 1) duties of the governmental entities and utility districts, 2) determines protection area, 3) identify contamination sources, 4) develop a contaminant source management program, 5) develop an alternate drinking water plan, 6) review contaminated sources in future wellhead areas, and 7) involve the public.

The purpose of **Nebraska's WHP** is to prevent the location of new contaminant sources in wellhead protection areas through planning, minimize the hazard of existing sources through management, and provide early warning of existing contamination through ground water monitoring. The **Wellhead Protection Area** is a region with restrictive regulations on land use to prevent potential contaminants from uses located in the sensitive area. The boundaries are delineated by a time-of-travel cylindrical displacement calculation. The boundary is then mapped by NDEQ so Communities can apply zoning regulations to the floating district. **Due to the fact that Bennet purchases all of its water from Lancaster County Rural Water District #1, the Village does not have an active WHP Area.**

CLIMATE

The climate of the Bennet area is continental and characterized by widely ranging seasonal temperatures and rapidly changing weather patterns. The temperature ranges from an average daily minimum of 13.5°F in January and maximum of 89.3°F in July. The average annual precipitation in Bennet is 29" of rain and 27" of snow. These climatic characteristics and fertile soils create an environment for a productive agricultural industry.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.

The built environment of Bennet is characterized by its districts, paths, edges, nodes and landmarks. The combination of these physical features creates a sense of place for the citizens and patrons of the Community. The natural terrain enhances the built environment by providing an aesthetic base for urban development. The districts and neighborhoods are defined by their edges or boundaries. The major transportation corridors and the physical barriers of the terrain generally create the edge of each district, giving the neighborhoods distinct boundaries.

Designating the proper land uses adjacent the Highway 43 Corridor is essential. The general trend is to guide commercial development along Highway 43 (Monroe Street), specifically in the Downtown area in southern Bennet. The Industrial uses are generally concentrated in the industrial park in the southwest portion of the Village, adjacent the railroad corridor. A small number of multifamily and mobile home uses are scattered throughout Bennet, while single family uses are the dominant land uses in the Community.

Future industrial uses are planned to remain in their current locations with growth extending into the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction south of the current Corporate Limits. Downtown Bennet is planned to remain the primary focus of retail commerce, which should expand north to Cottonwood Street. The majority of future automotive oriented commercial uses are recommended to locate in the northern portion of the Village outside the existing Corporate Limits, along Highway 43. New multifamily land uses should buffer single family homes from commercial and industrial uses in both the southern and northern portions of the Community.



LAND USE ANALYSIS.

EXISTING LAND USE PROFILE

Table 4.2 identifies the current (2019) existing land use in Bennet, per land use type and acres per 100 people. As a reference, the National Planning Standard for acres per 100 people per land use category is also shown. **The total land area within the Village of Bennet is currently estimated to be 331.6 acres. Existing land use in and around Bennet is also identified in Illustrations 4.2 and 4.3, Pages 4.13 and 4.14.**

By 2029, the Village of Bennet will need to have an estimated 677 acres designated for multiple land use types.

| | 2019 | | BENNET PLANNING STANDARD | NATIONAL PLANNING STANDARD | TOTAL ACRES NEEDED (Bennet / National) | | | Future Land Use Map Bennet Adjusted (Per Note 2) |
|---|--------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|---|----------------------|----------------------|--|
| | ACRES | PERCENT | | | 2019 | 2029** | 2029*** | |
| 2019 ESTIMATED POPULATION - 964 | | | | | | | | |
| 2029 PROJECTED (MEDIUM) POPULATION - 1,166 | | | | | | | | |
| 2029 PROJECTED (HIGH) POPULATION - 1,308 | | | | | | | | |
| Parks & Rec / Open Space | 15.6 | 4.7% | 1.6 | 2.0 | 15.6 / 19.3 | 18.7 / 23.3 | 20.9 / 26.2 | 32 Acres |
| Public/Quasi-Public | 13.1 | 4.0% | 1.4 | 2.8 | 13.1 / 27.0 | 16.3 / 32.6 | 18.3 / 36.6 | 29 Acres |
| Residential | 140.2 | 42.3% | 14.6 | 10.0 | 140.2 / 96.4 | 170.2 / 116.6 | 190.9 / 130.8 | 292 Acres |
| <i>Single & Two-Family</i> | <i>137.9</i> | <i>41.6%</i> | <i>14.3</i> | <i>7.5</i> | <i>137.9 / 72.3</i> | <i>166.7 / 87.5</i> | <i>187.0 / 98.1</i> | <i>285 Acres</i> |
| <i>Multifamily</i> | <i>0.5</i> | <i>0.2%</i> | <i>0.1</i> | <i>2.0</i> | <i>0.5 / 19.3</i> | <i>1.2 / 23.3</i> | <i>1.3 / 26.2</i> | <i>3 Acres</i> |
| <i>Mobile Home</i> | <i>1.8</i> | <i>0.5%</i> | <i>0.2</i> | <i>0.5</i> | <i>1.8 / 4.8</i> | <i>2.3 / 5.8</i> | <i>2.6 / 6.5</i> | <i>4 Acres</i> |
| Commercial | 12.1 | 3.6% | 1.3 | 2.4 | 12.1 / 23.1 | 15.2 / 28.0 | 17.0 / 31.4 | 27 Acres |
| Industrial | 7.8 | 2.4% | 0.8 | 2.3 | 7.8 / 22.2 | 9.3 / 26.8 | 10.5 / 30.1 | 16 Acres |
| Streets/Alleys/RR Corridor | 83.8 | 25.3% | 8.7 | 9.0 | 83.8 / 86.8 | 101.4 / 104.9 | 113.8 / 117.7 | 174 Acres |
| Total Developed | 272.6 | 82.2% | 28.4 | 28.5 | 272.6 / 274.8 | 331.1 / 332.2 | 371.4 / 372.8 | 570 Acres |
| Total Vacant | 59.0 | 17.8% | 6.1 | 6.5 | 59.0 / 62.7 | 68.5 / 75.8 | 75.1 / 85.0 | 107 Acres |
| <i>Developable*</i> | <i>44.1</i> | <i>74.7%</i> | <i>4.6</i> | <i>6.5</i> | <i>44.1 / 62.7</i> | <i>53.6 / 75.8</i> | <i>60.2 / 85.0</i> | <i>92 Acres</i> |
| <i>Not Developable</i> | <i>14.9</i> | <i>25.3%</i> | <i>1.5</i> | <i>NA</i> | <i>14.9 / NA</i> | <i>14.9 / NA</i> | <i>14.9 / NA</i> | <i>15 Acres</i> |
| Total Acreage | 331.6[^] | 100% | 34.5 | 35.0 | 331.6 / 337.5 | 399.6 / 408.0 | 446.5 / 457.8 | 677 Acres |
| [^] Based on Net Area Acreage. | | | | | | | | |
| Note 1: Bennet and National Planning Standards identify number of acres per 100 persons. | | | | | | | | |
| Note 2: Designated Land Requirements (Future Needs) should include 3x 2019 to 2029 High Estimates presented on Future Land Use Map. | | | | | | | | |
| *Vacant Land Capable of Development. | | | | | | | | |
| **Based on Medium Population Projection. | | | | | | | | |
| ***Based on High Population Projection. | | | | | | | | |
| Source: Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2019. | | | | | | | | |

The following **existing land use** discussion focuses on each of the land use types in Bennet, utilizing **Table 4.2** in comparison to National Planning Standards.

PARKS/RECREATIONAL

Park facilities in the Village of Bennet include two public parks, a splash pad and ballfields. Land attributed to parks and recreational use accounts for approximately 4.7 percent of the total land area within Bennet. The 15.6 acres of park land equates to 1.6 acres per 100 people, slightly lower than the national planning standard of two acres per 100 people.

PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC

Public/Quasi-Public land acreage in Bennet totals an estimated 13.1 acres, or four percent of the total platted Village area. This land classification includes churches, public schools, government buildings, the American Legion or any other public buildings. This land use classification equals an estimated 1.4 acres per 100 people, approximately 50 percent lower than the recommended planning standard of 2.8 acres per 100 people.

RESIDENTIAL

Single family residential uses are the primary housing types in the Community. Residential uses, including single family, multifamily and mobile home uses, occupy an estimated 140.2 acres of land, or 42.3 percent of the Village's total area. The 14.6 acres of residential land per 100 persons in Bennet is approximately 46 percent more than the planning standard of 10 acres.

- ❖ *Single Family* land usage calculates to approximately 137.9 acres, an estimated 41.6 percent of the total Village land area. The 14.3 acres of single family residential land per 100 persons is approximately 91 percent more than the planning standard of 7.5 acres per 100 people.
- ❖ *Multifamily* land usage in Bennet totals approximately 0.5 acres, an estimated 0.2 percent of the Community's total land area. This calculates to 0.1 acres of multifamily land per 100 persons. The national planning standard is two acres per 100 people.
- ❖ *Mobile Homes* comprise approximately 1.8 acres, an estimated 0.5 percent of the total platted land within the Bennet Corporate Limits. The 1.8 acres of mobile home land use equals 0.2 acres per 100 persons. This total is 60 percent less than the recommended planning standard of 0.5 acres per 100 persons.

COMMERCIAL

Commercial land uses comprise approximately 3.6 percent of Bennet’s total land area, or about 12.1 acres. A comparison of land use ratios from the national planning standards indicates that Bennet has approximately 46 percent less commercial land uses than the recommended standard. Although commercial uses should continue to be developed along the Highway 43 Corridor north of the Corporate Limits and through Bennet, the Community should strive to enhance the Downtown as a desired location of Bennet residents to be the focus of entertainment and social activities in the Village.

INDUSTRIAL

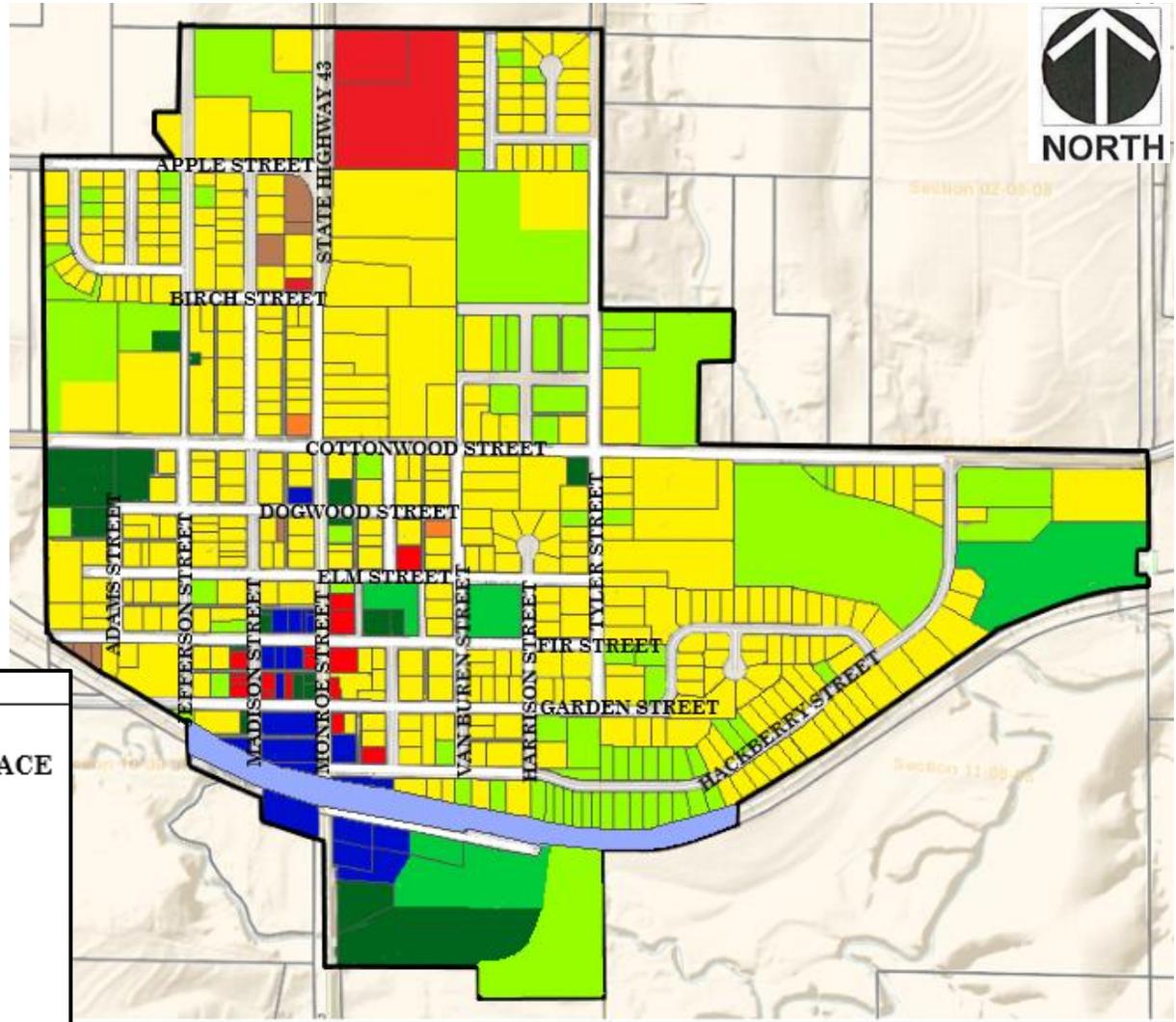
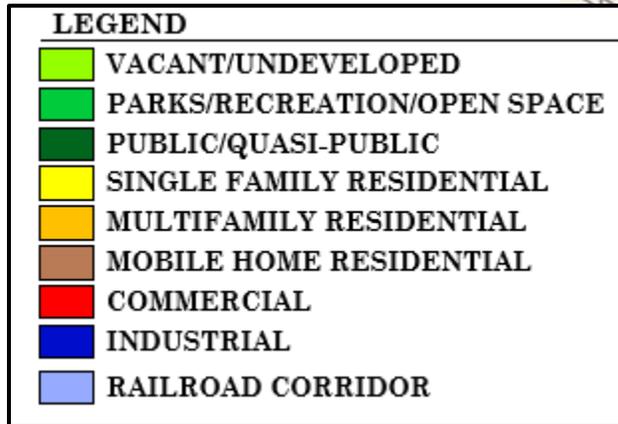
The total acreage of classified *industrial* land use in Bennet is approximately 7.8 acres. Industrial acreage per 100 people is 0.8, compared to the planning standard of 2.3 acres per 100 persons. Nearly all of the industrial land uses are located in the southwestern portion of the Village.



EXISTING LAND USE MAP

CORPORATE LIMITS
BENNET, NEBRASKA
2019

ILLUSTRATION 4.2



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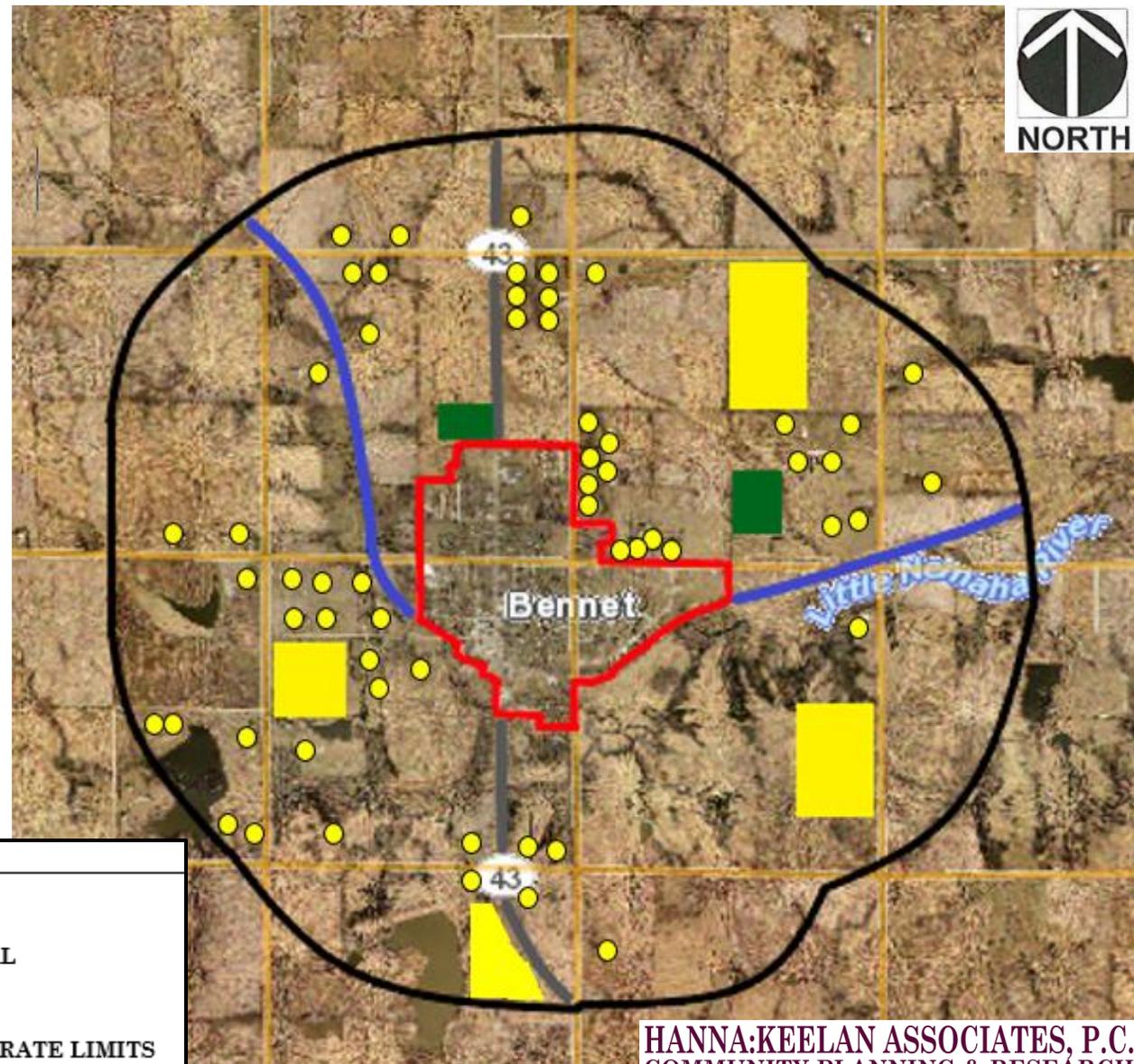
EXISTING LAND USE MAP

ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION

BENNET, NEBRASKA

2019

ILLUSTRATION 4.3



GROWTH & DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

The results of the Land Use Capacity Matrix revealed Bennet should continue to concentrate on maximizing development of existing land areas, including infill development of vacant and/or undeveloped parcels within the existing Corporate Limits. Infill is especially important considering the natural hazards that complicate development beyond Bennet's current Corporate Limits. These hazards include highways, railroads, industrial development and the natural hazards of the topography and floodplains of the Little Nemaha River. However, to accommodate projected growth, the Community should target additional land outside the current Corporate Limits to be designated for a variety of uses, including residential, commercial and industrial.

- ❖ *The Village must continue to designate undeveloped, vacant land for both single family and multifamily housing.*
- ❖ *Consider the development of multifamily housing within/adjacent Downtown Bennet.*
- ❖ *Increase efforts to attract and retain commercial retail businesses along the Highway Corridor, specifically in the Downtown area.*
- ❖ *Automotive oriented commercial uses should be developed along the Highway 43 Corridor north and adjacent the current Corporate Limits.*



FUTURE LAND USE.

The Village of Bennet should propose a goal of implementing appropriate community and economic development initiatives to increase the population base and provide additional wealth to the Community. Since its founding the Village has experienced population growth, and is currently at its historical peak with an estimated population of 964 residents as of 2019. A decreasing population was evident throughout the first half of the 20th Century, but every decennial census since 1970 has recorded an increasing population. Projections beyond 2019 indicate the population will continue to increase throughout the planning period.

The Village should plan for an estimated population of 1,166 residents by 2029, an increase of 202 persons during the next 10 years. **Through the creation of additional housing and full-time employment opportunities, greater population growth is possible during the next 10 years. The “High” population projection for Bennet during this planning period is 1,308 residents by 2029, or an increase of 344 persons.**

Achieving the projections for growth through 2029 will require the annexation of undeveloped land and the expansion of infrastructure and utilities to support residential, commercial and industrial development. The identification of future growth areas for all land use types adjacent and beyond the Village of Bennet Corporate Limits is necessary to support growth opportunities. **Illustrations 4.4 and 4.5, Pages 4.18 and 4.19 identify future land use patterns for Bennet and its One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction.**

INFILL DEVELOPMENTS

The strategic development of infill lots and other undeveloped land areas within the Corporate Limits of Bennet would allow for managed growth and the utilization of existing infrastructure, including streets, electrical, gas and water and sewer systems. The current available undeveloped parcels are not sufficient to meet the needs for future development opportunities throughout the 10-year planning period, 2019 to 2029. **Thus, the identification of residential, commercial, industrial and parks and recreational growth areas beyond the current Corporate Limits is a vital component of this Comprehensive Plan.**

Illustration 4.4, Future Land Use Map, highlights the future land use development recommendations for areas within the Corporate Limits of Bennet. **Future Land Use Map, Illustration 4.5**, identifies the growth areas proposed beyond the current Corporate Limits, but within the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction.

PARKS & RECREATION

An estimated 15.6 acres of parks and recreation land currently exists in Bennet. This acreage is slightly lower than the national planning standards, based on the population of Bennet. The Village currently maintains two public parks, a splash pad and two ballfields.

A continued effort to modernize and expand park equipment should be a focus during the 10-year planning period. Community leaders and residents have identified a public trails network and a swimming pool as potential projects most desired in the Community. Expanding available parks and recreation areas in conjunction with population increases will be necessary.

The development of a public trails network that extends throughout the Village, connecting schools, parks, neighborhoods, the Downtown and other Community facilities would provide several benefits, including safe and healthy recreation and transportation opportunities, as well as become a source of community identity and pride.

PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC

New public/quasi-public land uses are desired by Bennet residents. Participants of the Community Planning Open House identified the development of additional public spaces as important to the future development of Bennet as a thriving community, rather than “*just a place to*

live.” Future public/quasi-public land uses in Bennet could include expansions of existing public infrastructure through a partnership with Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools, for example. The Community is recommended to designate 16 additional acres of public/quasi-public land space through the current planning period.

RESIDENTIAL AREAS

Future residential development in and around the Village of Bennet should be a high priority during the 10-year planning period. Based upon the targeted housing demand, the Village will require an estimated 30 acres of land during the next 10 years, for residential development, providing additional housing options to all income sectors, age groups and family types/sizes in the Community.

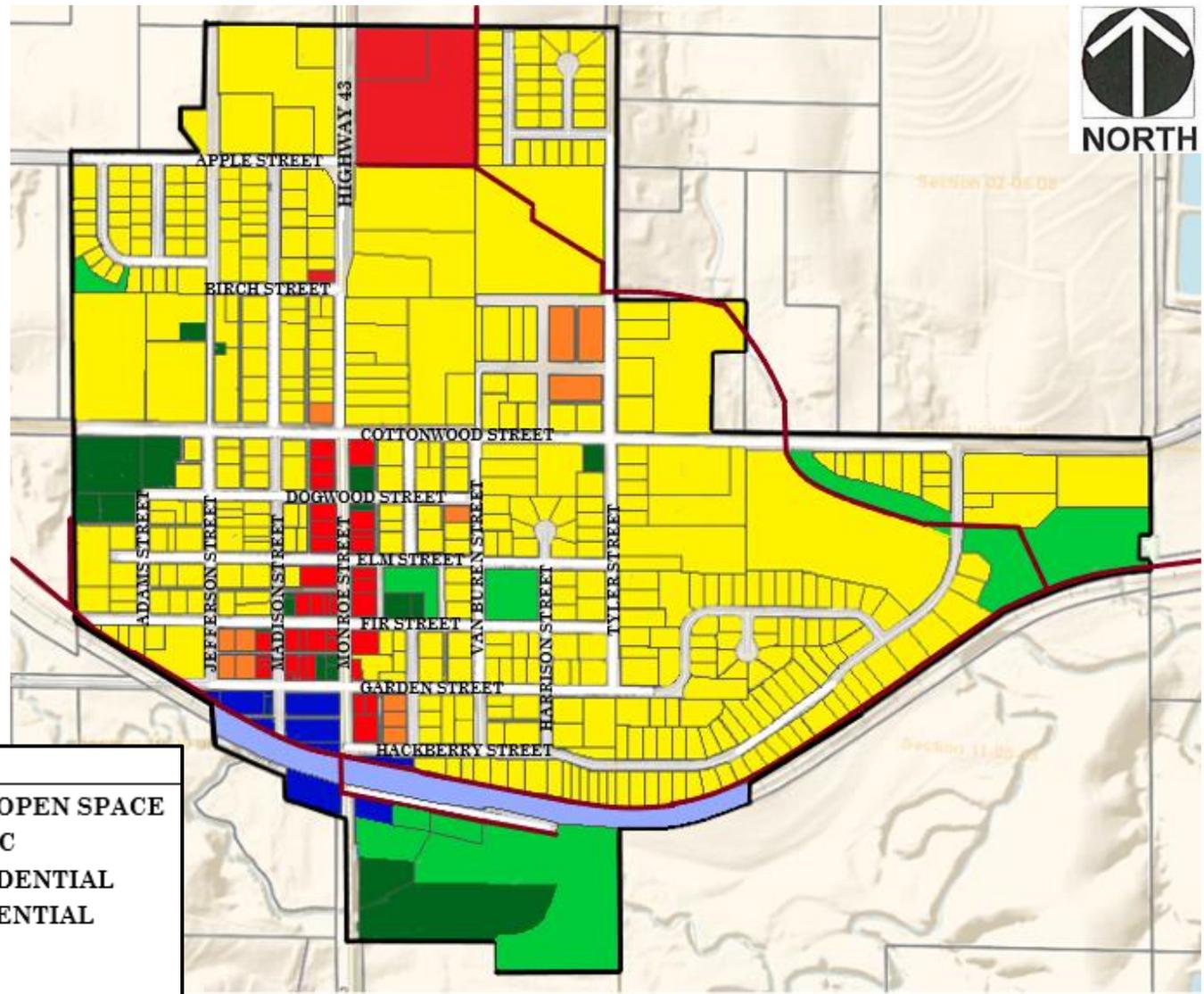
The “High” population projection for Bennet would require up to an estimated 50 additional acres of land for residential development. The Village should designate, or reserve, approximately 150 acres for future/planned residential subdivisions, totaling 292 acres at both developed and planned residential uses.

The **Future Land Use Maps, Illustrations 4.4 and 4.5, Pages 4.18 and 4.19**, identify designated residential areas in and around Bennet as single family and multifamily uses. These designations will allow developers the option of providing a variety of housing for persons and families, of all ages and incomes.

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

CORPORATE LIMITS
BENNET, NEBRASKA
2029

ILLUSTRATION 4.4



| LEGEND | |
|--------|-----------------------------|
| | PARKS/RECREATION/OPEN SPACE |
| | PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC |
| | SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL |
| | MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL |
| | COMMERCIAL |
| | INDUSTRIAL |
| | RAILROAD CORRIDOR |
| | PUBLIC TRAIL |

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FUTURE LAND USE MAP

ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION

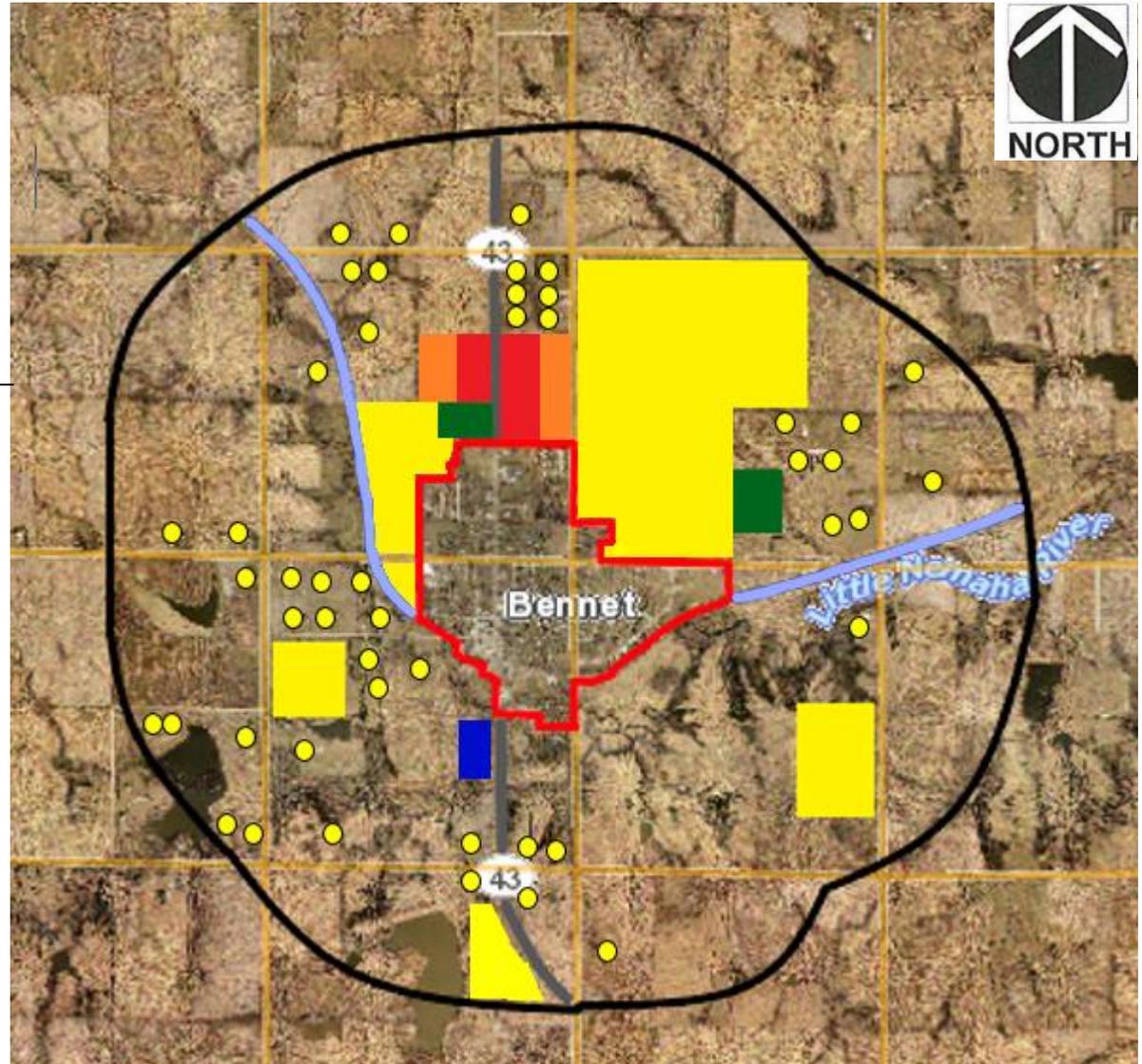
BENNET, NEBRASKA

2029

ILLUSTRATION 4.5

LEGEND

- PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC
- RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION
- MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- HIGHWAY CORRIDOR
- RAILROAD CORRIDOR
- CORPORATE LIMITS
- ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION



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The following provides a description of future residential land uses for the Community.

❖ **Single family housing** development should, first, occur within the Corporate Limits of Bennet. Vacant parcels within established neighborhoods on lots created with the demolition of dilapidated houses, as well as in planned residential areas in the northeastern and southeastern portions of the Village should be targeted as priority areas for new residential development. These areas would have reasonable access to existing water and sewer utility systems.

Secondly, development of single family residential subdivisions should be encouraged within the planned single family growth areas beyond the existing Corporate Limits. However, the cost of development in the designated growth areas will be significantly more than on vacant parcels within existing neighborhoods of Bennet that have direct access to the existing infrastructure systems. The Village should designate, or reserve, an additional 147 acres for future/planned single family residential subdivisions, totaling 285 acres of both developed and planned single family residential uses.



❖ **Multifamily housing** development must be pursued during the 10-year planning period, for both elderly and family households. The existing land use analysis concluded that multifamily acreage in Bennet is currently 19 acres less than recommended by National Planning Standards. New multifamily areas within Bennet should primarily be targeted to the Downtown area to serve as a buffer between single family land uses and commercial or industrial uses, as well as on vacant parcels in the northeast portion of the Community adjacent 162nd Street (Tyler Street).



The **Future Land Use Map, Illustration 4.5**, identifies multifamily growth areas beyond the Corporate Limits as being located in the northern portion of the Planning Jurisdiction, adjacent the current Corporate Limits and buffering future single family residential development from commercial land uses along the Highway 43 Corridor. To expand housing options for retirees and the elderly, Bennet should establish a priority for the development of a continuum-of-care program that includes independent living, assisted living and skilled nursing facilities.

FUTURE HOUSING & UTILITY SERVICE NEEDS

Housing projections through 2029 must be supported by expanding the Utility Service Area. Bennet is expected to need up to 121 new housing units over the next 10 years, including 90 owner and 31 rental units. If projections for 2029 are to be met, the following housing and utility service needs must be achieved:

- Designated residential growth areas north of the existing Corporate Limits will require the extension of infrastructure and utilities systems to support proposed developments.
- A new water storage tower or tank is needed to support future growth in order to maintain an adequate supply as well as increase water pressures.
- The waste water treatment facility has a sufficient capacity to support projected growth through 2029. However, continued maintenance and/or replacement of older sanitary sewer mains may be required, as the oldest segments are 60 to 70 years of age.



COMMERCIAL

Future commercial land uses in Bennet, along the Highway 43 Corridor, are anticipated to include infilling vacant lots and replacing existing deteriorated and/or abandoned buildings. Automotive oriented commercial uses and big box retail outlets should be developed along the Highway Corridor in the northern portion of the Community, beyond the existing Corporate Limits. Future highway commercial development should proceed with caution so as to promote the role of Downtown Bennet as the primary center of commerce and entertainment.



The Village should designate, or reserve, 15 additional acres for future/planned commercial developments, totaling 27 acres of both developed and planned commercial uses.

Specialty retail, cafes/restaurants and professional offices are encouraged, so as to diversify commercial venues in Downtown Bennet.



INDUSTRIAL

The Village of Bennet does not have sufficient vacant land within its Corporate Limits for additional industrial land uses. An estimated 7.8 acres of industrial land currently exists within the Corporate Limits of Bennet. The current industrial tracts within the Village, in a state of transition or possessing vacant parcels in close proximity to residential development, are encouraged to become "light" industry. The reason is twofold: one, it creates a more compatible land use with adjacent commercial and residential properties; and two, it satisfies a need in the Community.

The Village should designate, or reserve, eight additional acres for future/planned industrial developments, totaling 16 acres of both developed and planned industrial uses.

To provide jobs for an increasing population base, and to continue to attract additional business and industry to Bennet, it is recommended that lands in the southwestern portion of the Community, between Garden Street and the railroad corridor, be prepared to support new industrial uses. The Village must maintain enough industrial land for growth and development. Local economic development groups, organizations and property owners are encouraged to promote and continue their support for additional industrial land development.

The **Future Land Use Maps, Illustrations 4.4 and 4.5**, identify proposed industrial land use areas both within the Village and the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction, primarily in the southern portion of the Community. Desirable transportation corridors are adjacent these industrial districts. Those areas outside the Corporate Limits (currently on vacant lands) would require an extension of appropriate infrastructure to facilitate future developments.

INTENSIVE AGRICULTURAL USES

The Bennet Planning Commission recognizes the importance of agricultural practices to the economy of the Community, including livestock facilities. The expansion of existing livestock confinement operations within the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction of the Village should only be permitted in unique circumstances. The development of new livestock confinement operations should be prohibited within the Planning Jurisdiction. Floodplains associated with the Little Nemaha River limit or complicate the development of the Village beyond its current Corporate Limits, primarily to the southeast. Therefore, the remaining portions of the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction of the Village are vital to the continued growth and development of Bennet. **Livestock confinement operations are best suited for locations within rural Lancaster County, outside the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction of the Village of Bennet.**

LAND USE PLAN / IMPLEMENTATION

Various funding sources exist for the preparation and implementation of a capital improvement budget designed to meet the funding needs of proposed development activities. These include Local, State and Federal funds commonly utilized to finance street improvement funds, i.e. Community Development Block Grants, Special Assessments, General Obligation Bonds and Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The use of TIF for redevelopment projects in the areas such as the Downtown and adjacent older residential neighborhoods is deemed to be an essential and integral element of development and redevelopment planning. Through the establishment of a Community Development Agency (CDA) or Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA), Bennet could utilize TIF in designated “Redevelopment Areas” as a method of funding such activities.

PLACE-BASED DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS.

Future development efforts within identified growth areas are encouraged to incorporate “**Place-Based**” development **components**, whereby development supports the Community’s quality of life and availability of resources including, but not limited to: public safety, community health, education and cultural elements. The four general concepts of place-based development include the following:

ACCESS AND LINKAGES:

- Does the development area have adequate accessibility and walkability to other neighborhoods and centers in the Community?
- What are the programs proximity to local services and amenities?
- Can people utilize a variety of transportation modes, such as sidewalks, streets, automobiles, bicycles and public transit, to travel to and from the development area?
- Is the development program visible from other neighborhoods or parts of the Village?
- Is public parking available for visitors to the development site?

COMFORT AND IMAGE:

- Is the proposed development located in a safe neighborhood?
- Are there historic attributes to consider for the proposed development?
- Is the neighborhood of the proposed development located safe, attractive and well maintained for all residents?
- Are there any environmental impacts that could hinder the development of the proposed facility?

USES AND ACTIVITIES:

- How will the proposed development be used? By young families and local workforce? By elderly or special needs populations?
- Are there amenities proposed, or existing and nearby the development that will keep residents active, including parks and recreation opportunities?
- Does the development program include a central gathering space for workers, residents and/or visitors?
- Does the housing program include a central gathering space for residents, workers and visitors to the site, as well as Community residents?

SOCIABILITY:

- Will the development program be developed in a way the will allow residents to socialize and interact with one another?
- Will people take pride in living at the proposed development site?
- Are diverse population encouraged to reside at the development site?
- Does the housing program present a welcoming environment for both current and future residents?

ANNEXATION.

VOLUNTARY AND INVOLUNTARY ANNEXATION

Future annexation activities in the Village of Bennet, both **voluntary and involuntary**, should occur in the non-agricultural land use areas identified in **Illustration 4.5, Future Land Use Map**. Land can be annexed at a point in time when in conformance with and meeting the criteria of Nebraska State Statutes, (Neb.Rev. Stat.§17-405.1). Specifically, if such land, lots, tracts, streets, or highways are contiguous or adjacent and are urban or suburban in character. Agricultural lands that are “rural in character” are not included under such authority.

The terms “adjacent” or “contiguous” under §17-405.2, states that *“lands, lots, tracts, streets, or highways shall be deemed contiguous although a stream, roadway, embankment, strip, or parcel of land not more than five hundred feet wide lies between such lands, lots, tracts, streets, or highways and the corporate limits of a city of the second class or village.”*

Documenting that the character of the land proposed for annexation is **“urban or suburban in character” and not “agricultural in nature”** has no clear definitions or thresholds established by State Statues. Although court cases have found that the use of land for agricultural purposes is not *“dispositive of the character of the land, nor does it mean it is rural in character. It is the nature of its location as well as its use which determines whether it is rural or urban in character.”*

Standard Planning Methodology also advocates:

1. Lands that are planned for the growth of the Village are best identified in the Comprehensive Plan, specifically the “Future Land Use Maps.” Lands are identified to support future growth needs for residential, commercial, industrial, parks/recreation and open space.
2. Also, planning practice dictates that if the land is bound on two sides by the Corporate Limits of a Village it should be considered for annexation. If it also has municipal water, but not sewer access; or municipal sewer, but not water access, a stronger case for the land being **“urban or suburban in nature”** is made.
3. If the land is bound on three sides by the Corporate Limits of the Village, and has access to municipal water and sewer service, general planning practice dictates that the land should be annexed.

The Village of Bennet **Future Land Use Map** of the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction, **Illustration 4.5**, also maintains that a certain amount of **vacant land** will be needed to provide an overall functional land use system. To develop the Community in the most efficient and orderly manner possible, the focus should be placed, first, on the development of suitable vacant land within the Corporate Limits of Bennet. When land within the Corporate Limits is not sufficient in area to support a proposed development project, developers are recommended to identify land appropriate to the scope of the project within identified residential, commercial, industrial, public/quasi-public and parks/recreation growth areas identified in **Illustration 4.5**.

There currently exists an estimated 59 acres of vacant land within the Corporate Limits. An estimated 44 acres, or 75 percent of the vacant land is developable. The remaining 25 percent of vacant land can be considered “not developable” due to its location within or near topographical features such as floodplains or tributaries of the Little Nemaha River.

AREAS FOR ANNEXATION

Areas directly adjacent the existing Corporate Limits to the west, north and northeast of the Village are recommended for future annexation, throughout the 10-year planning period. These areas are all capable of being served by extensions of municipal infrastructure and utility systems adjacent the current incorporated areas of the Village. These areas are also identified on the **Future Land Use Maps, Illustrations 4.4 and 4.5**.

BENNET, NEBRASKA

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROGRAM – 2029.

NEBRASKA INVESTMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY - HOUSING STUDY GRANT PROGRAM.



SECTION 5

**PUBLIC FACILITIES, UTILITIES &
TRANSPORTATION.**

MAY, 2019

SECTION 5

PUBLIC FACILITIES, UTILITIES & TRANSPORTATION.

INTRODUCTION.

Section 5 of the **Bennet Comprehensive Plan** discusses the existing conditions and planned improvements to the public facility and utility systems in the Community. Quality public facilities, services and parks & recreation systems are provided to ensure a high quality of life for all residents of Bennet. All improvements to these Community components are aimed at maintaining or improving the quality of life in the Village of Bennet.

Public Facilities identify existing facilities in Bennet and determine future needs and desires during the 10-year planning period. Public Facilities provide citizens with social, cultural and educational opportunities. Facilities in Bennet include Village government buildings, education, fire protection and recreational facilities such as parks and athletic fields. **Unless otherwise identified, general maintenance is planned for all public facilities in Bennet, which also implies that the identified facility is adequate and meets the needs of the Community through the 10-year planning period.** The locations of these public facilities are identified in the **Bennet Public Facilities Map, Illustration 5.1, Page 5.2.**

Public Utilities address the water and wastewater utility systems in the Community, including current condition and capacity. It is the responsibility of any community to provide sound public infrastructure for its citizens, as well as to provide for anticipated growth. Therefore, it is important that the expansion and maintenance of these systems be coordinated with the growth of Bennet. Analysis of these infrastructure systems, via conversations with Village maintenance and utility personnel, confirmed that the Village must continue to maintain and improve these utility systems.

Transportation examines the systems that provide for safe travel of pedestrians and automobiles. The availability of a convenient and efficient transportation system is essential to the continued economic and physical development of Bennet. An adequate transportation system is required to transport goods and services to and from major travel routes and market centers outside the Village, and provide for the circulation needs within the Community. The overall purpose of the transportation plan is to provide the necessary guidelines for the safe movement of people and vehicles throughout the Community and One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction.

PUBLIC FACILITIES MAP

CORPORATE LIMITS BENNET, NEBRASKA



ILLUSTRATION 5.1

LEGEND

Parks & Recreation

- 1 American Legion Ballfield
- 2 Bennet Park
- 3 "T" Ball Park
- 4 Whispering Pines Park

School/Educational Facilities

- 5 Bennet Elementary School

Health, Wellness & Elderly

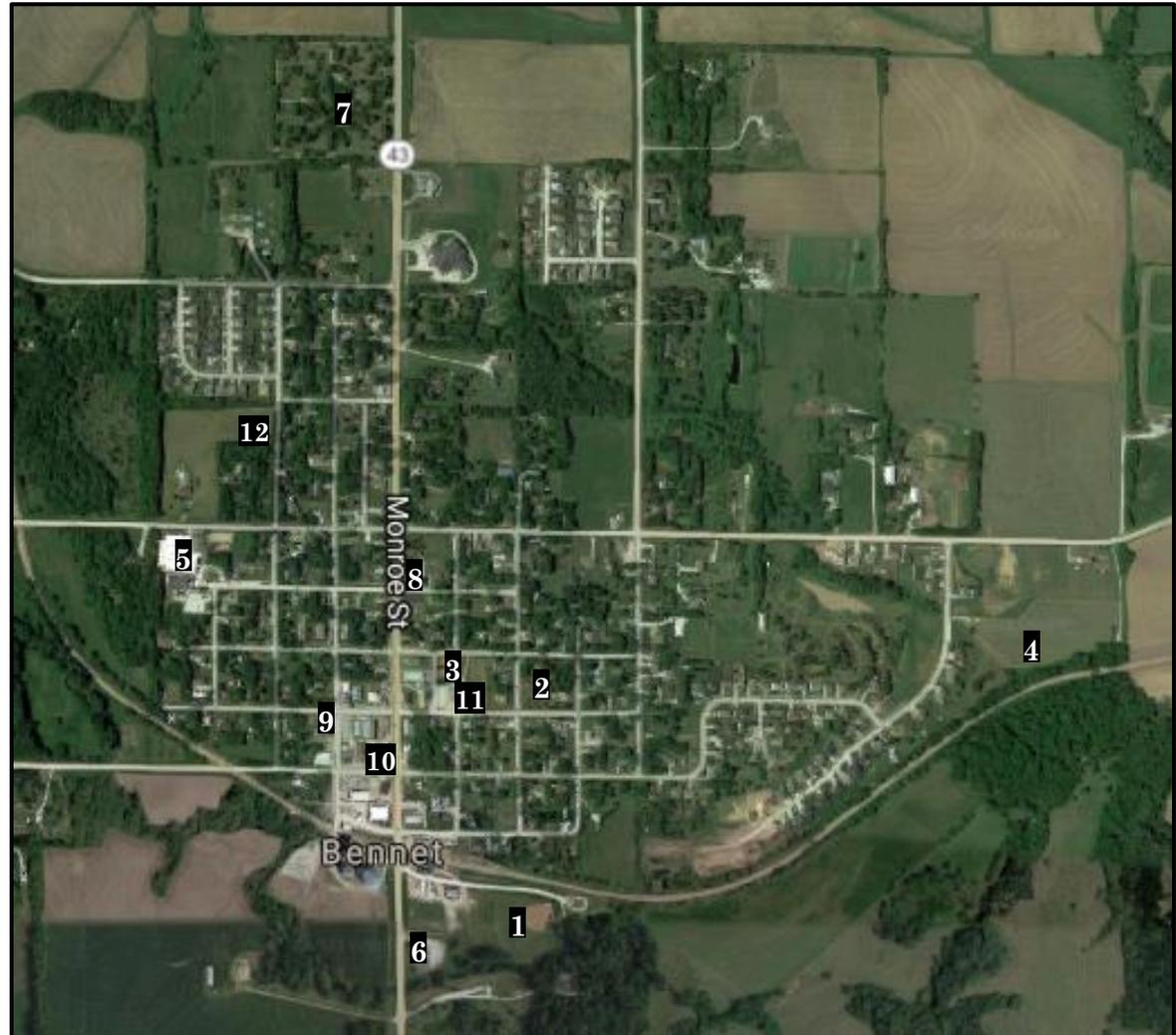
- 6 Bennet Senior Center/Legion Hall

Public, Safety, Government & Commerce

- 7 Bennet Cemetery
- 8 Bennet Community Church
- 9 Post Office
- 10 Village Office
- 11 Volunteer Fire Department
- 12 Water Tower

HANNA:KEELAN ASSOCIATES, P.C.
COMMUNITY PLANNING & RESEARCH

* Lincoln, Nebraska * 402.464.5383 *



EDUCATION.

A broader-based education, with emphasis on technical and human relation skills has become necessary and desired in today's society. Standards developed by educators and planners can provide guidance in the creation of, and addition to, the School District's educational facilities. The **Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools District OR-1** is a major contributor to the quality of life and well-being in the Community of Bennet. Students in grades Pre-K through 6th grade attend Bennet Elementary, while 7th through 12th grades attend the High School in the nearby Village of Palmyra. During the 10-year planning period, it will be important for the facilities maintained by District OR-1 to have the ability to support a growing population, specifically youth populations.

DISTRICT FACILITIES

- ❖ **Bennet Elementary School** – Bennet Elementary School is located at 50 Dogwood Street, in western Bennet. A recent expansion of the school building added new classrooms for Pre-K, Kindergarten, Art and Music classes, for a total of 30 classrooms. Amenities include computers in every classroom, a computer laboratory and gymnasium. Students in 4th through 6th grades receive Chromebooks as a way to enhance their learning experience.

Bennet Elementary currently employs approximately 32 total staff members, and an additional 11 staff members employed by both Bennet Elementary and Palmyra High School. The Elementary School enrolled 380 students Pre-K through 6th grade during the 2018-19 school year. Future expansions and/or renovations are likely within the next 10 years to accommodate increased enrollment numbers, although no specific plans currently exist.

- ❖ **Palmyra High School** – Palmyra High School contains grades 7 through 12, and employs approximately 25 total staff members, in addition to 11 staff members employed by both the Elementary and High Schools. The High School was completely modernized and updated in 1998, and recently completed a \$7 million expansion and renovation. The School has computer laboratories, at least one computer in every classroom and all High School students receive a Chromebook during the school year. Approximately 205 students grades 7 through 12 were enrolled at Palmyra High School during the 2018-19 academic year.

A \$5.5 million athletic complex is currently under construction and is expected to be completed by Spring 2020. The new complex will include a track and football, baseball and softball fields. Conversations for new plans regarding future school facility upgrades and/or expansions are expected to take place in 2020.

- ❖ **Educational Service Unit (ESU) #6** – ESU #6 has its main offices located in Milford, Nebraska and serves an area of southeast Nebraska area, including Lancaster County and the school districts surrounding Bennet. Created by the Nebraska Unicameral in 1965, “Educational Service Units” were intended to fill educational service gaps in local School District budget that did not provide for audio/visual aids, special education, school nurse services, and other specialized personnel, equipment or diagnostic needs.

AREA COLLEGES & UNIVERSITIES

- ❖ **Nebraska Wesleyan University (NWU)** – NWU has campuses located in both Lincoln (main campus) and Omaha. The university offers more than 100 degree majors, minors and pre-professional programs. NWU currently enrolls approximately 2,100 students, and maintains 13:1 student-to-faculty ratio.
- ❖ **Southeast Community College (SCC)** – SCC is a two-year college with three campuses which are easily accessible to Bennet residents: Lincoln, Beatrice and Milford. SCC offers more than 50 Programs of Study, including online courses, dual credit agreement with other schools, easy transferring of credits and excellent computer/technology access. In Fall, 2019, SCC will transition from a quarter academic calendar to one that is semester-based, so as to better align with the academic schedule of four-year colleges and reduce the amount of time and cost of transfer students in obtaining a four-year degree. The college also maintains an Entrepreneurship Center and a Continuing Education Center, both located in Lincoln. The Entrepreneurship Center serves as a resource center for anyone interested in starting their own business, and offers business consultation and office rental space. The Continuing Education Center offers continuing education classes for business, industry and health care professionals, as well as non-credit leisure learning courses.
- ❖ **University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL)** – UNL is a land-grant university, classified within the Carnegie “R-1: Doctoral Universities – Highest Research Activity” category, with three campuses located in Lincoln. UNL offers undergraduate degree paths in more than 150 majors across ten different colleges. Additionally, the university offers more than 140 master’s and doctoral degree programs, and 32 graduate certificates. UNL enrolled a total of 25,820 students during the 2018 Fall Semester.

OTHER EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Other Area Education Facilities – Several Colleges and Universities are located within a reasonable distance of Bennet. These Colleges and Universities include the following:

- **University of Nebraska-Omaha** – Omaha, NE
- **Nebraska Methodist College** – Omaha, NE
- **College of Saint Mary** – Omaha, NE
- **Clarkson College** – Omaha, NE
- **Union College** – Lincoln, NE
- **Doane University** – Crete, Grand Island, Lincoln and Omaha, NE

PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Schools in Bennet should strive to meet the following standards and guidelines:

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

The Village and Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools District OR-1 should support and provide a **high quality of elementary, junior and senior-level education** for residents of the Community and surrounding area. The District should strive to maintain an excellence in education by expanding facilities, amenities and employment opportunities, as needed, while creating new and expanding existing educational programs and activities to support a growing student and faculty population within the Public School system.

DISTRICT OR-1 PUBLIC SCHOOLS STRATEGIC PLAN

A committee of over 30 members, including parents, business leaders, teachers, staff and school administrators developed a District OR-1 Strategic Plan during Summer 2018. The process produced the three following Strategic Goals and associated Strategic Objectives:

- **Strategic Goal 1:** By 2020 District OR-1 Public Schools will provide the facilities needed to be competitive with other area schools in athletics and fine arts programs.
 - **Strategic Objective 1.1:** Construct an outdoor athletic facility (to meet current and future needs of the district.)
 - **Strategic Objective 1.2:** Coordinate with (Palmyra and Bennet Village Boards and community organizations) for joint uses of the spaces for community as well as school programs.
 - **Strategic Objective 1.3:** Form inter-local agency agreements for joint funding, revenue sharing, or both if advisable.

- **Strategic Goal 2:** By 2019, District OR-1 Public Schools will foster a unified community.
 - **Strategic Objective 2.1:** Promote the benefits and successes of OR-1 schools to the district community with an emphasis on the return on investment of the resources needed to support the district.
 - **Strategic Objective 2.2:** Promote and advance collaboration and effective communication between the school district and the various stakeholder groups within the district (for example, community members and groups, alumni and village and county government) to support students/staff, coordinate activities and build relationships.
 - **Strategic Objective 2.3:** Promote increased attendance of events across the district and a more inclusive environment for families with students of all ages at those events. Coordinate efforts of both booster clubs and alumni association for joint events and promotion of all school activities.

- **Strategic Goal 3:** The District OR-1 Schools District will continuously implement (academic) programs and the curriculum needed to remain competitive with other area schools.
 - **Strategic Objective 3.1:** Expand high skill/high need/high pay curriculum/courses and co- and extra-curricular opportunities for all students.
 - **Strategic Objective 3.2:** Examine the K-12 information science and technology curriculum and programs to ensure development of technological knowledge and skills.
 - **Strategic Objective 3.3:** Ensure 100% of students grades 6-12 can engage in all core courses 24 hours per day and 7 days per week and have an opportunity to complete at least one a-synchronous course for credit. (Access to educational opportunities).

LIBRARY

- ❖ Bennet does not currently have a library facility within its Corporate Limits. As residents of Lancaster County, however, the citizens of Bennet have access to libraries in other parts of the County, including the City of Lincoln library system. The nearest branch is the Charles H. Gere Public Library, located at 56th Street and Normal Boulevard, in Lincoln. Gere Library is open seven days per week. Additionally, the nearby Community of Palmyra maintains the Palmyra Memorial Library, located at 525 Illinois Place. Palmyra Memorial Library is open 3:00 PM to 8:00 PM on Sunday, Monday and Wednesday.

The Lied Bookmobile Program, through the Lincoln City Libraries, provides individualized service throughout Lincoln and Lancaster County, including the Village of Bennet. The Lied Bookmobile carries adult and juvenile fiction and nonfiction, magazines, DVDs and videos, audiobooks on tape and CD, computer games and large print titles. Requests for other items can also be made. The Program serves Bennet residents every second and fourth Wednesday of the month at the Community Church, located at Monroe and Dogwood Streets, from 1:30 PM to 4:30 PM.

PARKS/RECREATION.

An integral part of the quality of life in a Community is the park system and recreational opportunities provided to its residents and visitors. Additionally, parks and recreational facilities ensure the health of families and individuals, and contribute to the economic and environmental well-being of a Community. The following highlights Bennet's Public Parks and other recreational amenities.

- ❖ **Bennet Park** – The Village's main park is centrally located within a 1.6 acre block bounded by Elm and Fir Streets on the north and south, and Harrison and Van Buren Streets on the east and west. Amenities available at Bennet Park include modern playground equipment, restrooms, picnic shelter and kitchen, small band shell and a splash pad. The kitchen area offers hot water, spacious counters with numerous electric outlets, refrigerator and screened food service windows. The kitchen, picnic tables and restrooms are all ADA accessible. The splash pad is open 11:00 AM to 8:00 PM, May through September.

- ❖ **Whispering Pines Park** – Bennet’s newest park, Whispering Pines Park, is located on the northeastern edge of the Community, connecting the rural landscape to Bennet’s newest urban areas. The Whispering Pines Park concept was developed through the Village’s 2016 park master planning process, emphasizing natural plantings, outdoor education and enjoyment of outdoor open spaces. In 2017, the Village completed phase one improvements to the park, creating off street parking for school bus parking and easy accessibility to the park entrance, safety railing, storm water drainage improvements and a concrete pad for portable restroom facilities.

Future improvements at Whispering Pines Park will include extending the concrete accessible trail, construction of a pedestrian bridge spanning a natural water way and incorporating a mowed native grass trail looping the Park. A shelter area, portable restroom and park benches will also be installed to allow for extended use of the park by families and group visitors.

- ❖ **Village Ballfield** – The Village Ballfield is located in southern Bennet along Juniper Street, near the American Legion Hall. Amenities include restrooms, a concession stand and electronic scoreboard. The Legion baseball team schedules games here during the regular season. A smaller, neighborhood ballfield is located at the intersection of Elm and Quincy Streets, one block west of Bennet Park.

FUTURE PARK & RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Park maintenance and improvement, specifically continuing the development of Whispering Pines Park, is vital to the continued growth and prosperity of Bennet. Additionally, Bennet is in need of a Community-wide public trails network, one that ultimately extends throughout and around the Village, in order to better connect all Community parks, schools, neighborhoods, the Downtown and other entertainment districts. Maintaining quality public trails provides citizens safer, healthier alternative modes of transportation, and can help attract and retain both new and current residents to the Community. The potential of a public trail connecting the Elementary School in the west with Whispering Pines Park in the east, and extending through new, future residential developments, as identified in the Future Land Use Map, should be explored. With future expansions of such a trail, this route would connect nearly all parks, the school, Downtown and identified residential growth areas northeast of the existing Corporate Limits. Such a trail may be partially funded by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission’s **Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant**. Eligible projects for this grant include trail development, trail related support facilities, renovation and repair of trails, trail support facilities and acquisition of land for trails.

HEALTH, WELLNESS & ELDERLY SERVICES.

A full range of medical and elderly services are available to residents of Bennet within a reasonable distance of the Community. Regional health and elderly services available to the Village of Bennet include St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center, Bryan Health Hospitals and the Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals, all in Lincoln, approximately 15 miles northwest of Bennet. Additionally, the Lincoln-Lancaster County Public Health Department provides basic preventative medical care to all residents of Lancaster County, including Bennet.

- ❖ **CHI Health St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center** –The nearest health delivery facility in the Bennet area is the St. Elizabeth Regional Medical Center, located at 555 South 70th Street in Lincoln, approximately 14 miles northwest of Bennet. The Medical Center is a full service regional hospital equipped with a specialty clinic, fitness center and full laboratory. The 260-bed hospital specializes in the treatment areas of newborn and pediatric care, women’s health, burn and wound, cardiology, oncology, emergency medicine, orthopedics and neuroscience. St. Elizabeth has been designated as a Magnet organization in 2004, 2009 and 2014, a prestigious designation that recognizes excellence in nursing services. St. Elizabeth is the only Magnet Hospital in Lincoln, and one of five in the State of Nebraska. Site visits for a potential 2019 designation are currently in progress.

While St. Elizabeth has not undertaken major projects in recent years, several smaller, significant projects are being planned. The hospital began doing hyperbaric oxygen treatments in November 2018, starting with two chambers, and recently added a third due to high demand. A renovation of the facility’s burn center is expected to be completed in the summer of 2019, which will enhance the clinic space for nurses and physicians and will create an improved healing environment for patients. Additionally, the hospital plans to combine its emergency pediatrics and inpatient hospital pediatrics departments together in one space.

- ❖ **Bryan Health Medical Center** – Bryan Health Medical Center is another full service regional hospital located within a reasonable distance of Bennet residents. Bryan LGH has two main locations in Lincoln, as well as health clinics located throughout the city and the surrounding region. The Hospital provides a full array of medical services, including acute care, emergency unit, helicopter patient transport, outpatient care, pediatrics, pathology, radiology and cardiac unit. Bryan LGH is one of the largest medical service providers in the region, with 640 licensed beds and more than 4,000 trained staff members between the two Lincoln campuses.

A \$47 million expansion project is currently underway as Bryan Health's East Campus. The project will take approximately three years to complete, and involves four phases. Overall, the project will include the construction of 14 modern surgical rooms, the renovation of 16 operating rooms, 42 new private patient rooms for before and after surgery care and 18 new rooms for recovery after surgery.

- ❖ **Madonna Rehabilitation Hospitals** – The Madonna Rehabilitation Hospital and Specialty Hospital are located at 5401 South Street in Lincoln. The hospitals provide a total of 146 licensed beds, and specialize in complex medical, traumatic brain injury, spinal cord injury, pulmonary conditions, severe stroke, other neurological conditions and pediatric rehabilitation.

Madonna recently completed a \$2 million expansion of its transitional care unit, which is a short-term rehabilitation facility for people who need to recover from an injury, surgery or illness but do not need hospital care. The expansion gives the hospital 26 private rooms. Previously it maintained 11 private rooms and five semi-private rooms.

- ❖ **Lincoln-Lancaster County Public Health Department** – Qualified residents may be eligible to receive reduced-cost services provided by the Lincoln-Lancaster County Public Health Department, which serves the Village of Bennet. Medical services offered at the Primary Health Clinic, located at 3131 O Street in Lincoln, include a vaccine clinic, refugee health clinic, adult health services, dental health and nutritional services and health promotion and outreach services, among others.

- ❖ **Bennet Senior Center** – The Bennet Senior Center is located at the American Legion Hall, 970 Monroe Street, adjacent Highway 43 south of the railroad tracks. The Senior Center is open every Tuesday and Thursday from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, and offers games, cards, visiting, educational programs, music programs, occasional trips to Mahoney Park Melodramas, and tours to the Loft, Lincoln Community Playhouse and a variety of other special activities.

The American Legion building hosts many other events and activities throughout the year, as it offers community space for public meetings and large gatherings. The facility meets all ADA standards.

PUBLIC SAFETY & GOVERNMENT.

Public administration facilities are facilities which serve the citizens of the Community and conduct the business of government and carry out its operations. Therefore, it is essential these services are centrally located and convenient to the majority of the citizens in the Community.

PUBLIC SAFETY

- ❖ **Police** – The Village of Bennet is served by the **Lancaster County Sheriff's Office**, located at 575 South 10th Street in Lincoln. There is no local Law Enforcement Facility in the Village of Bennet. The County Sheriff's Office has 78 commission officers, 19 part-time civilian employees and eight building security officers. The Patrol Division responds to calls for service, enforcing traffic regulations, serving warrants, conducting follow-up, giving presentations and generally assisting citizens. The Patrol Division responds to approximately 12,000 calls for service annually, many of which require follow-up investigation by the deputy.

The Lancaster County Department of Corrections Adult Detention Facility (ADF), located at 3801 West O Street in Lincoln, opened in 2013 and was built in response to an overcrowded inmate population in the previous facilities. The ADF has a current maximum capacity of 786 inmates, and has 29 multipurpose rooms to provide space for a variety of programs, many of which focus heavily on substance abuse and adult education.

- ❖ **Bennet Volunteer Fire & Rescue** – The Bennet Volunteer Fire Department and Rescue Squad is located at 480 Fir Street, and has approximately 23 volunteers. Bennet Fire and Rescue provides 24/7 response to all fires, vehicle accidents, HAZMAT/chemical spills and medical emergencies for the people who live in and visit the approximately 95 square mile service area, along with assisting area departments and agencies when requested upon mutual aid. The Fire Department has various types of equipment available, including ambulances and a duel pumper/tanker truck. **The Village of Bennet has an ISO rating of “7” inside the Corporate Limits.**



- ❖ **Civil Defense** – Civil defense is managed and planned by the Lancaster County Civil Defense Office, which coordinates civil defense along with local volunteer fire departments, throughout the County, in planning for public safety. Civil defense is responsible for notifying citizens in the case of an emergency. In the case of an emergency, a list of trained volunteers is maintained on an as-needed basis. The planning and preparation for natural disaster and man-made emergencies consist of the following: Mitigation, Preparation, Response, and Recovery. Examples of natural and man-made disasters include floods, tornadoes, winter storms, chemical spills, explosions, plane crashes, etc. Other services include weather alert of severe weather, tornado awareness week education, winter time road services, etc.

GOVERNMENT

- ❖ **Village Office** – The Bennet Village Office is located at 685 Monroe Street, in southern Bennet. The facility houses the Village Clerk/Treasurer, Utility Office, Maintenance and other Administrative offices. The Village Board of Trustees Chambers is also located in the facility. The office is used for other pertinent government committee meetings and public use, such as meetings for the Planning Commission. The Village Office is open 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Monday through Thursday.
- ❖ **Post Office** – The U.S. Post Office of Bennet is located at 605 Madison Street. The Post Office building is ADA compliant, and has a total of 264 postal boxes. The Post Office employs four personnel, and maintains multiple rural delivery routes to serve rural box holders in the Bennet vicinity. The Service Center is open from 7:00 AM to 12:00 PM and from 12:30 to 1:30 PM, Monday through Friday, as well as 7:45 to 9:15 AM on Saturdays. The Lobby is open 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

PUBLIC UTILITIES.

It is the responsibility of any community to provide a sound public infrastructure for its citizens, as well as to provide for anticipated growth. Therefore, it is important that the expansion of these systems be coordinated with the growth of the Village. The following information and input was provided by Village Staff reflect the most up-to-date conditions of the City's public utilities.

WATER SYSTEM

The Village of Bennet purchases all of its water from Lancaster County Rural Water District #1 (LCRWD #1). The Village does not have any wells, but maintains one water storage facility, a 100,000 gallon water tower located in northwest Bennet near Jefferson and Birch Streets. Average daily water use in the Village is about 70,000 gallons per day, meaning the total water storage capacity is approximately 143 percent of the average daily use.

Bennet's water distribution system consists of mains ranging in size from 4" to 8". All water lines have been updated in recent years, with the oldest segments of the system being approximately 20 years of age. Because the Village purchases its water from LCRWD #1, it does not have a water treatment facility.

Currently, the Village has 395 water connections. Of those connections, 384 are residential connections. All connections to the City's water system are metered. Village Staff have expressed concerns about maintaining adequate water pressures as the Community continues to grow. Water pressures currently meet minimum standards, but the northern portion of the Community specifically has seen declining water pressures. Bennet is expected to continue to grow to the north, and a new water storage facility will be necessary in the near future to accommodate growth by adding storage capacity and increasing water pressure.

SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM

The wastewater system is served by a Waste Water Treatment Facility (WWTF) located at 17200 Bennet Road, east of the current Corporate Limits. The WWTF has a maximum design capacity of 150,000 gallons per day. The facility is currently running at half capacity, and was designed to allow for expansion of the system once required.

The sanitary sewer collection system consists of 6"-10" sewer mains. Older segments of the sanitary sewer system are 60 to 70 years old, and thus may require minor modification, rehabilitation or replacement. In recent years the Village has replaced or slip lined sewer mains in select problem areas throughout the Community. Overall, the system has adequate capacity to handle growth, but will require the extensions of existing infrastructure.

ELECTRICAL SYSTEM

The electric distribution system is owned, operated and supplied by Nebraska City Utilities. **Section 7 – Energy Element** of this **Comprehensive Plan** provides more information regarding the Village's energy utilization.

TRANSPORTATION.

The transportation network of a Community includes its streets, sidewalks and trails. Streets are only one component of the transportation plan. Thus, non-vehicular modes of transportation for pedestrians and bicycles need to be evaluated and discussed as well.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

Illustration 5.2, State Functional Classifications Map, Page 5.15, depicts the transportation system in the Village of Bennet and surrounding areas. The streets within the Bennet Corporate Limits are primarily in a grid network, especially in older subdivisions of the Village, with lower functioning streets connecting to the higher volume streets. Nebraska State Highway 43 is a north-south “*Major Arterial*” that bisects Bennet from the northern to southern Corporate Limits. All other streets within the Bennet Corporate Limits are classified as local streets. Other major routes which comprise the transportation system in the surrounding areas of Bennet include State Highway 2, an east-west “*Expressway*” approximately 1.5 miles north of Bennet, and Roca Road, an east-west route designated as an “*Other Arterial*” west of Highway 43, and as a “*Collector*” east of Highway 43. Local streets provide transportation services throughout the Village, while the State Highways and other nearby major routes provide transportation services into the County, adjacent communities and areas beyond.

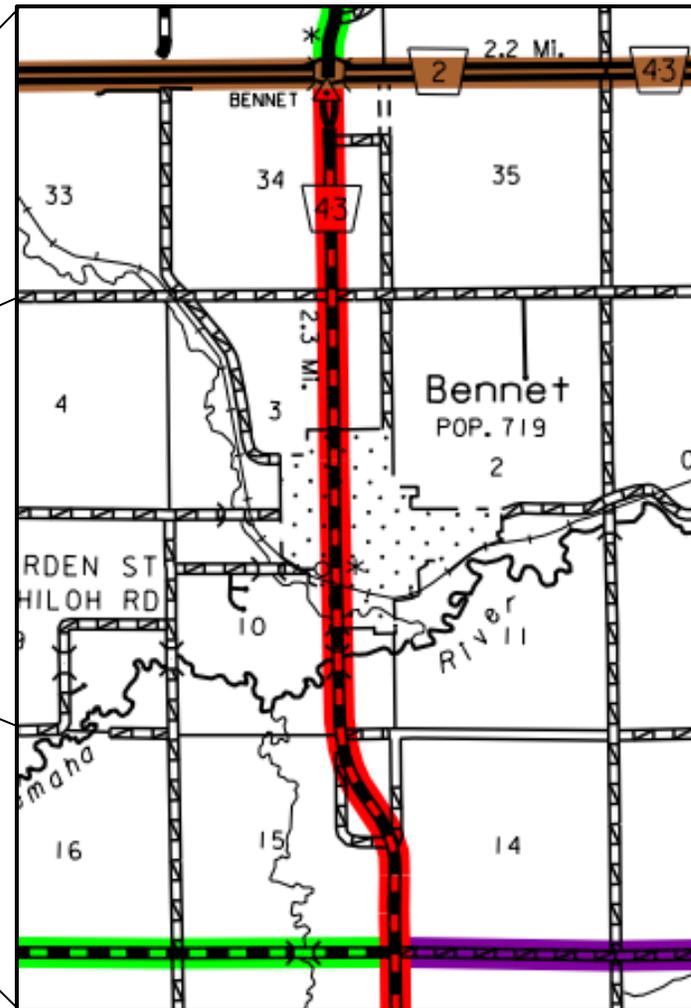
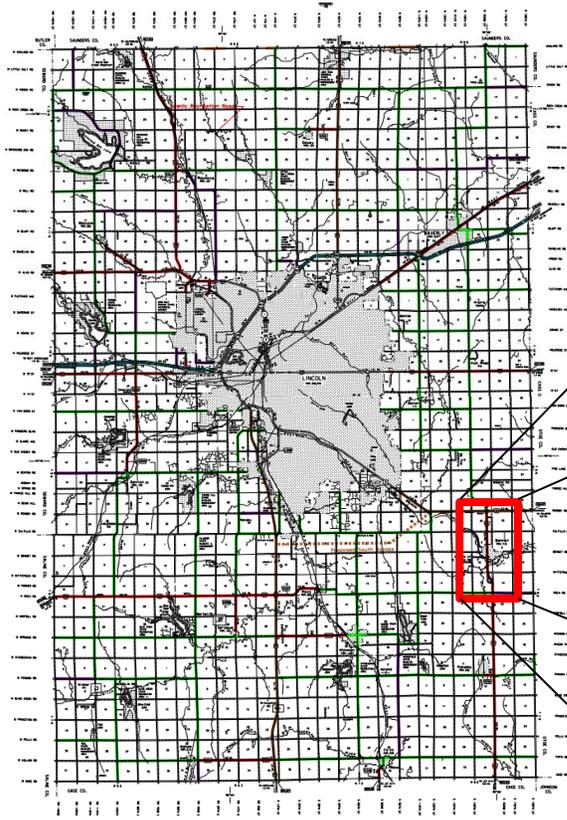
TRAFFIC VOLUME

The Nebraska Department of Transportation monitors traffic volume on County roads and State and Federal highways throughout the State of Nebraska, including the Bennet area. This tabulation process is done to identify appropriate existing road classification and engineering standards.

Illustration 5.3, Page 5.16, identifies the average daily traffic counts for select transportation routes around Bennet, from 2012 to 2017. Average daily traffic counts have increased substantially over the five year period, particularly north of the Bennet Corporate Limits. Total daily traffic counts along State Highway 43, between Bennet and State Highway 2 (Segment C, Illustration 5.3), have increased by nearly 2,500 vehicles per day since 2012, or about 50.2 percent. Since 2012, heavy truck traffic along this segment has increased by more than 200 vehicles per day, or about 54.5 percent. The Village of Bennet should regularly monitor traffic counts along routes both within the Corporate Limits and the surrounding areas to ensure traffic safety measures such as speed limits and pedestrian crosswalks remain both efficient and adequate.

STATE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS MAP

BENNET, NEBRASKA



| LEGEND | |
|--|--|
| STATE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION | |
| INTERSTATE | |
| EXPRESSWAY | |
| MAJOR ARTERIAL | |
| OTHER ARTERIAL | |
| COLLECTOR | |
| REMOTE RESIDENTIAL (Rural Only) | |
| MINIMUM MAINTENANCE (Rural Only) | |
| SCENIC RECREATION (Rural Only) | |
| URBANIZED BOUNDARY | |

Source: Nebraska Department of Transportation,
General Highway Map - Lancaster County.

ILLUSTRATION 5.2

AVERAGE ANNUAL 24-HOUR TRAFFIC

BENNET, NEBRASKA



ILLUSTRATION 5.3

| ANNUAL AVERAGE 24-HOUR TRAFFIC | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| | 2017 | 2016 | 2014 | 2012 |
| SEGMENT A | | | | |
| TOTAL VEHICLES | 13,495 | 12,775 | 12,330 | 11,205 |
| HEAVY TRUCK TRAFFIC | 2,933 | 2,556 | 2,315 | 1,970 |
| SEGMENT B | | | | |
| TOTAL VEHICLES | 12,215 | 11,920 | 11,200 | 10,335 |
| HEAVY TRUCK TRAFFIC | 3,187 | 2,825 | 2,581 | 2,195 |
| SEGMENT C | | | | |
| TOTAL VEHICLES | 7,435 | 6,635 | 5,385 | 4,950 |
| HEAVY TRUCK TRAFFIC | 587 | 453 | 390 | 380 |
| SEGMENT D | | | | |
| TOTAL VEHICLES | N/A | 2,740 | 2,450 | 2,740 |
| HEAVY TRUCK TRAFFIC | N/A | 220 | 195 | 220 |

N/A = 'Reference Post' not available.

Source: Nebraska Department of Transportation, Traffic Volume Maps & Information, 2012-2017.

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ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS

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

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

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

FUTURE BENNET TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The future transportation system in the Village of Bennet is outlined in the Village **One and Six Year Road Improvement Programs**. Bennet's One-Year Plan is for projects to be undertaken in 2019. Bennet's Six Year Plan is for projects to be undertaken through 2024, or earlier if funding becomes available.

Upcoming Village of Bennet Projects within the Planning Jurisdiction of Bennet:

ONE-YEAR PLAN (Fiscal Year 2019).

1. **M-151 (16):** Elm Street from Adams Street to Monroe Street; Asphalt Resurfacing; 0.18 Miles; \$75,000.
2. **M-151 (17):** Adams Street from Dogwood Street to Fir Street; Asphalt Resurfacing; 0.10 Miles; \$60,000.

SIX-YEAR PLAN (Fiscal Year 2019 to Fiscal Year 2024).

1. **M-151 (9):** South 162nd Street – Cottonwood north to Prairie Clover Lane; Grading, Drainage Structures, Erosion Control and Asphalt Resurfacing; 0.61 Miles; \$150,000.
2. **M-151 (10):** Cottonwood Street – 162nd Street east to Hackberry Street; Grading, Drainage Structures, Erosion Control and Asphalt Resurfacing; 0.71 Miles; \$175,000.
3. **M-151 (13):** Cottonwood Street from Van Buren Street to 162nd Street; Asphalt Resurfacing; 0.10 Miles; \$60,000.
4. **M-151 (15):** Hackberry Street from Monroe Street to Harrison Street; Asphalt Resurfacing; 0.18 Miles; \$75,000.

Upcoming Nebraska Department of Transportation Projects within the Planning Jurisdiction of Bennet:

SIX YEAR PLAN (Fiscal Year 2019 to Fiscal Year 2024).

1. **N-41 – Bennet:** Nebraska State Highway 43; Mill, Resurfacing and Bridge Repair; 15.97 Miles; \$12,320,000).

Upcoming Lancaster County Projects within the Planning Jurisdiction of Bennet:

Lancaster County has no projects to be completed within the Village of Bennet Planning Jurisdiction in neither the One- nor Six-Year Plans.

BENNET, NEBRASKA

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROGRAM – 2029.

NEBRASKA INVESTMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY - HOUSING STUDY GRANT PROGRAM.



SECTION 6

COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROFILE & PLAN.

MAY, 2019

SECTION 6 ECONOMIC & COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PROFILE & PLAN.

INTRODUCTION.

This **Section** addresses strategies, general procedures and concepts for an **Economic and Community Development Profile and Plan** for the **Village of Bennet**.

“**Economic Development**” addresses the topics of *business recruitment, retention, development and public relations*. Bennet continues to attract a large number of residents who do not work within the Community, in addition to a number of non-resident employees that commute to Bennet for work. These trends alert Community leadership of the need for local economic organizations to prepare and implement programs of both business recruitment and housing development.

“**Community Development**” is a term that encompasses such varied activities as neighborhood redevelopment, urban design, public facility provisions, Downtown redevelopment and historic preservation. The underlying theme that unifies these activities is the conservation and reuse of existing built development and infrastructure.

EXISTING CONDITIONS.

The Village of Bennet is located in southeast Nebraska in Lancaster County, approximately 1.5 miles south of Nebraska State Highway 2 via State Highway 43. This location directly links Bennet to the Lincoln Metropolitan Area, approximately seven miles northwest of Bennet. The Community’s proximity to Lincoln presents both opportunities and challenges for creating a prosperous Community with a thriving business/economic environment.

Identified needs include rental housing options and housing rehabilitation, new businesses and services, more public spaces and parks/recreational areas and the annexation of land in support of new residential development, including the expansion of existing infrastructure systems. The challenges facing Bennet are unique given its history as a ‘bedroom’ community and proximity to the City of Lincoln, combined with its rapid population growth since 2000.

Bennet has the population base to support new businesses and services, but a much larger variety of amenities and services are available in Lincoln. However, Bennet residents have indicated a need or desire for new businesses and services, thus a business recruitment and retention strategy should be a top priority for Community leaders. Community engagement and support among Bennet residents will be necessary to create a sustainable environment for new businesses.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

The Village of Bennet should establish a Community Development Agency (CDA) or Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA), to become eligible to use Tax Increment Financing (TIF). TIF can be used in designated “Redevelopment Areas” as a method of funding new developments or structural rehabilitation activities for commercial buildings, such as façade renovation, improvements of public utilities, facilities, streets, sidewalks and trails and mixed use developments. TIF can be combined with other sources of revenue such as Foundation monies, or various Local, State and Federal funding sources. In 2018, the Nebraska State Legislature passed “Legislative Bill 496,” which allows for the use of TIF to assist in financing the development of workforce housing.

Bennet should also consider the development of an Economic Development Program plan for the purpose of seeking approval of a Local Option Municipal Economic Development (LB840) plan. LB840 authorizes communities to collect and appropriate local tax dollars for economic development purposes. The Economic Development Program forms a foundation for the collection and expenditure of local tax revenues for economic development, and requires voter approval. Such an Economic Development Fund would allow the Village of Bennet to offer loans, grants and other funding to support local businesses in a variety of forms, including, but not limited to, the purchase of real estate, relocation assistance, job training and new construction or rehabilitation.

Economic and Community development activities are important to the sustained vibrancy of any Community. Urban design guidelines, public facility provisions, historic preservation, neighborhood rehabilitation and reinvestment and the identification of growth areas are key activities that the Village of Bennet needs to consider during the life of this **Comprehensive Plan**. Residential, commercial and industrial growth areas are highlighted in the **Future Land Use Map, Illustration 6.1, Page 6.5**, for the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction.

Downtown Bennet should be promoted as the Community’s social and economic focal point. The Downtown is located along Highway 43 (Monroe Street) in southern Bennet.

HOUSING REHABILITATION

The housing stock in Bennet is generally well-maintained, but a need for moderate rehabilitation exists among a large portion of the existing housing units. As the housing stock in older portions of the Community continues to age, programs such as rehabilitation grants are encouraged to provide all Bennet inhabitants with safe and decent housing. *A total of 365 housing structures located in Bennet were recorded and reviewed. Of these structures, 47, or 12.9 percent were identified as being in a “Fair” or “Poor” condition, while two additional units were identified as “Very Poor”. During the next 10 years, these structures should be targeted for substantial rehabilitation or, in extreme cases, demolition. Units in a “Poor” condition have the highest potential to be targeted for demolition and should be replaced with appropriate, modern, safe and decent housing units, with a special focus on the local workforce populations. A total of six dilapidated housing units not cost effective for rehabilitation, should be targeted for demolition and replacement.*

The utilization of local, State and Federal funding sources will be vital in providing appropriate incentives for property owners to rehabilitate substandard dwellings. The use of TIF for the redevelopment of infrastructure and private property identified in the **Comprehensive Plan** is strongly encouraged. Supplementing Local programs with additional State and Federal funding, such as Community Development Block Grants, will assist the citizens of Bennet in improving and rehabilitating their dwelling units.

DOWNTOWN/HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL AREAS

Downtown Bennet should be targeted as the center for business and professional activity. The population of Bennet is expected to reach approximately 1,166 residents by 2029. Such a population base has the capacity to support new businesses and services to create a more thriving Downtown district. In addition to its growing population, Bennet’s location near State Highway 2, which provides easy access to Interstate 80, Lincoln, Omaha and Kansas City, should aid in continuing to attract new businesses such as Zermatt Tool to the Highway 43 Corridor north and adjacent the current Corporate Limits. Community leaders should strive to attract retail service-type businesses to the Downtown area, while larger businesses and automotive-oriented retail should locate along Highway 43 north of Bennet. Retail commercial uses outside the Downtown must be limited in scope as to not diminish the role of Downtown Bennet in the local retail market. A wider variety of retail in the Downtown is needed to provide goods and services to local citizenry, as well as to residents of surrounding communities.

A variety of organizations including the Bennet Planning Commission, Village Board and Staff, Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties (CAPLSC), Aging Partners (AP) and Bennet Area Community Foundation Fund (BACFF), as well as Downtown property owners, merchants and civic groups should all work together to improve the appearance and viability of the Downtown. Nuisance enforcement and property clean-up, primarily in the Downtown area and on lots adjacent Highway 43 through Bennet, was considered a top priority by respondents of the Citizen Survey as measures to improve both the appearance and sustainability of the Village of Bennet. To build on successes, “tools of public intervention,” such as the National Main Street Program, Historic Preservation Tax Credits, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Community Development Block Grants must be used creatively and jointly to impact change.



Highway 43, looking north.



Downtown-area businesses (Near Madison & Garden Streets).

FUTURE LAND USE MAP

ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION

BENNET, NEBRASKA

2029

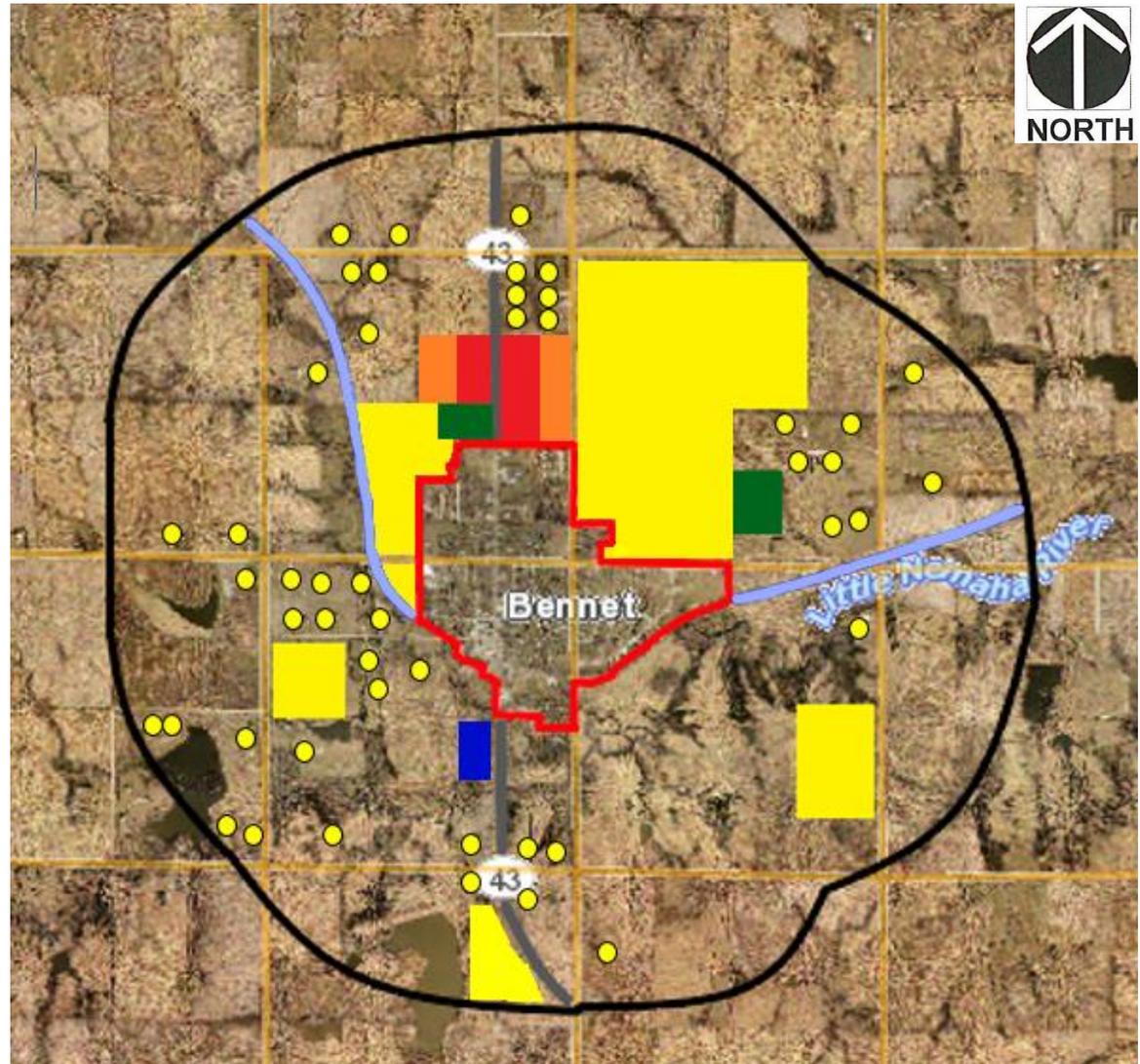
ILLUSTRATION 6.1

LEGEND

- PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC
- RESIDENTIAL SUBDIVISION
- MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- HIGHWAY CORRIDOR
- RAILROAD CORRIDOR
- CORPORATE LIMITS
- ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION

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In order to maintain and expand its commercial enterprises, all sectors of the Bennet retailing industry must work together. Through changes in technology and social behavior, buildings can become functionally and economically obsolete. To enhance the Bennet commercial areas, the following activities are recommended to compliment the current redevelopment activities:

- ❖ *Update and enforce minimum building codes to prevent vacant buildings from deteriorating.*
- ❖ *Encourage property and business owners to utilize the provisions of Tax Increment Financing as both a development and redevelopment tool in Downtown Bennet and along the Highway 43 Corridor. Specifically, encourage property clean-up and rehabilitation/renovation/façade improvements of tin and metal exteriors.*
- ❖ ***Promote the attitude of ‘Bennet First’. If a local business has the products residents need, encourage them to purchase products in the Community, rather than in larger Communities in the area.***
- ❖ *Maintain and improve the aesthetic appearance of Community, particularly along the Highway Corridor, including street trees, adequate pedestrian walkways, street lighting and directional signage and pole banners.*
- ❖ *Expand marketing efforts to promote the benefits the Village of Bennet provides residents wanting to live in the area, including a small town environment, lower property taxes and quality public schools and parks, in addition to easy access to the wider variety of health and entertainment services offered in Lincoln. Consider hosting more special events to better promote Bennet, such as a Community Celebration for Bennet’s 150th anniversary in 2021.*
- ❖ *Encourage the development of additional retail and/or service businesses, both in the Downtown and along the Highway Corridors, so as to cater to the needs of visitors and travelers.*
- ❖ *Utilize vacant buildings in the Downtown to encourage residents to start their own businesses through entrepreneur programs supported in incubator building spaces or malls that support start-up businesses.*
- ❖ *Support successful home-based businesses that have outgrown the “home” and are in need of permanent commercial or industrial locations. The development of a “**business incubator program**” would provide retail space for in-home businesses.*
- ❖ *Target highway-oriented commercial business to the Highway 43 Corridor north of Bennet, and preserve and enhance the retail, commerce and professional office character of the Downtown.*

HISTORIC PRESERVATION

The goal of historic preservation is to protect the historic resources of a community and preserve the historic properties and/or districts as a reflection of their heritage.

Bennet is recommended to become an “associate member” of the Heritage Nebraska “Main Street” Program. This organization implements the **National Main Street Program** by providing technical assistance to participating communities. Technical assistance focuses on the components of the Main Street Program, which includes a variety of services to help create a more attractive and sustainable Downtown, and ultimately redevelopment of historic properties and districts by listing historically significant structures and sites on the **National Register of Historic Places**. Bennet is also recommended to seek a designation as a certified local government through the Nebraska State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) to preserve its historical resources.

The preservation of Bennet’s residential and commercial buildings is vital to retaining the architectural integrity and heritage of the Community. To assist in the reuse and renovation of these historic resources, the Village is encouraged to consider adopting historic preservation guidelines and also participating in the **Certified Local Government (CLG)** program of the Nebraska State Historical Preservation Office. This process can be facilitated by creating a local Historic Preservation Commission and adopting a local Historic Preservation Ordinance.

The **Historic Preservation Ordinance** would provide protection for historic buildings. Individual buildings or Districts that may be listed on the National Register do not have any legal protection from being modified or even demolished. The National Register is only an honorarium to promote historic buildings by creating a coordinated effort restore or preserve properties that retain architectural integrity and historic significance. The Nebraska State Historical Preservation Office (SHPO) maintains a historic building database of each of the Counties in Nebraska and their Communities.

Buildings in the Downtown and throughout the Village listed on the National Register are eligible for a 20 percent federal tax credit to be deducted against personal federal income taxes of building owners or investors. Buildings that are designated as contributors to the historic district are eligible for a 10 percent credit. For every dollar spent on restoration or renovation of a building, 10 to 20 percent can be deducted. This Federal program has been successful in providing incentives for Downtown rehabilitation projects in Communities of all sizes throughout the Nation.

NEBRASKA “MAIN STREET” PROGRAM

Since the mid-1970s, the National Trust has implemented the National *"Main Street"* Program. The Program was developed to combine historic preservation programs with a four-point approach to rejuvenate America's Downtowns. The Main Street Four-Point Approach includes the following:

- **Design:** Capitalizing on the Downtown’s best assets, including historic buildings, and creating an inviting atmosphere through attractive window displays, parking areas, building improvements, streetscapes and landscaping. Design also includes a focus on good maintenance practices within the commercial district, enhancing the physical appearance through historic building rehabilitation, encouraging appropriate new construction, developing sensitive design management systems and integrating long-term planning.
- **Economic Restructuring:** Expanding and diversifying the Community’s economic base through business expansion and recruitment, resulting in the conversion of unused spaces to productive properties.
- **Promotion:** Marketing the Downtown’s unique characteristics to residents, visitors, investors and business owners. Developing a positive, promotional strategy through advertising, retail activities, special events and marketing campaigns in an effort to encourage commercial activity and investment in the area.
- **Organization:** Involving all of the Community’s stakeholders and getting everyone working toward a common goal. A governing board and four standing committees comprise the organization structure. Volunteers are coordinated and supported by a paid program director or Main Street manager.

The primary foundation of the Main Street Program is time. Successfully rejuvenated Downtowns do not happen overnight. However, the principles of “Main Street” are proven methods by which America's small to medium sized communities have rejuvenated their Downtowns.

Nebraska established a State-wide Main Street program in 1995. There are currently six Nebraska communities designated as a “Nebraska Main Street Community.”

NEBRASKA STATE HISTORIC TAX CREDIT PROGRAM.

On April 16, 2014, Legislative Bill 191 was signed into law, which created the **Nebraska Historic Tax Credit**. This new historic tax credit serves as a valuable incentive to allow Nebraska real property owners to offset Nebraska income, deposit or premium tax amounts equal to twenty percent of "eligible expenditures" on "improvements" made to "historically significant real property." The **Nebraska Historic Tax Credit** establishes an annual \$15,000,000 tax credit pool, and the Nebraska State Historical Society (NSHS) implements the annual allocation of the credits each year.

The program encourages the preservation of the state's historic buildings for the following important outcomes:

- Incentives for redevelopment of historic properties and districts.
- Private investment in historic buildings, downtowns, and neighborhoods.
- New uses for underutilized and substandard buildings.
- Jobs and economic development in Nebraska communities.
- Creation of housing units.
- Revitalized communities through preservation of historically significant buildings and districts.
- More heritage tourism in communities.

Basic provisions of the NHTC:

- Twenty percent (20%) Nebraska tax credit for eligible expenditures made to rehabilitate, restore or preserve historic buildings.
- Maximum of \$1 million in credits for a project, a dollar-for-dollar reduction in state tax liability.
- Tax credits can be transferred with limitations.
- Rehabilitation work must meet generally accepted preservation standards.
- Detached, single-family residences do not qualify.

To qualify, a historic property must be:

- Listed individually on the National Register of Historic Places, or
- Located within a district listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or
- Located within a historic district designated under a certified local preservation ordinance.

The minimum project investment must equal or exceed:

- The greater of \$25,000 or 25% of the property's assessed value (for properties in Omaha and Lincoln), or \$25,000 (for properties located in other Nebraska communities).

NEBRASKA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT LAW

The **Nebraska Community Development Law** was approved by the Unicameral in 1975. The law was developed to assist communities with economic growth and redevelopment activities. To use the Community Development Law to provide Tax Increment Financing (TIF), an area must first be declared blighted and substandard. Bennet should consider the establishment of a Community Redevelopment Authority or Community Development Agency, which could be utilize TIF to fund various development and/or redevelopment activities.

ECONOMIC EXPECTATIONS.

The existing economic conditions in Bennet have the potential to allow for increased development activities across all sectors. The Village has recognized the need to continue to diversify its economic base, relying on light manufacturing industries, retail and highway commercial and service-oriented businesses, while continuing a deep agriculture-based economy.

ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIPS.

Much of the recent economic success of Bennet has revolved around new housing development. Locally organized efforts to create public and private partnerships, including Community Action Partnership of Lancaster and Saunders Counties (CAPLSC), Aging Partners (AP), the Bennet Area Community Foundation Fund (BACFF), Bennet Village Board, Planning Commission and Village Administration, would help to not only continue these housing efforts, but play an important role in bringing new business and services to Bennet. Various approaches to promote investment in new housing development or housing rehabilitation activities by both existing and potential major employers of the Bennet area should be explored.

The Bennet Community has expressed the desire to expand and diversify its business and employment opportunities by attracting unique businesses and industries to the Community. This could be accomplished through a Business Stewardship/Support Program or through the provision of local, State and/or Federal governmental incentives. Bennet is an excellent location for industries to locate, due to its location near Highway 2, and easy access to Interstate 80, Lincoln, Omaha and Kansas City. Appropriate amounts of land, both within the Corporate Limits and in designated growth areas beyond Bennet are available for future commercial and industrial developments.

HOUSING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The Village of Bennet completed a **Community Housing Study**, in May, 2019, focusing on a 10-year planning period. This Study documents housing demand for all components of the housing market, with emphasis on all income categories and specific housing types, by 2029.

The **Bennet Community Housing Study** identifies an estimated housing target demand of up to **121 housing units** during the next 10 years, including **90 owner** and **31 rental housing units**, to accommodate Bennet’s 2029 population projection of 1,166 residents. This target housing demand could increase if existing and future businesses expand to provide additional full-time employment opportunities. The 2029 “High” population projection for Bennet (1,308 residents) identifies an estimated housing target demand of up to **189 housing units**, including **144 owner** and **45 rental units**.

The Village should first focus on developing available vacant land within the Corporate Limits of Bennet, before platting a rural subdivision. Residential Growth Areas are identified within the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction on the **Future Land Use Map, Illustration 6.1, Page 6.5**. Development activities need to include the construction of safe, affordable housing for families of all income ranges, including workforce and elderly populations. Recommended housing types include both single and multifamily homes, duplex/triplex, and town home developments.

A shortage of safe, decent and affordable housing presently exists in Bennet. The lack of an appropriate amount of modern rental housing coupled with an expected increase in owner and renter households by 2029 will require a variety of new residential developments.



Housing development in Bennet should be closely monitored by an organized **Community-Wide Housing Partnership**. The Housing Partnership should have a close relationship with public and private financing agencies and housing developers to encourage the construction of various housing types in the Community. Knowledge and implementation of housing programs, including those that support **Employers Assistance** and **Continuum of Residential Care, for elderly households**, ensures complete Community housing provisions.

Important to the future economic development success of Bennet is the recognition that *housing is economic development* and should be considered when planning new tourism, commercial and industrial projects. It is recommended that all local and regional housing development entities be supported by public and private organizations in Bennet to continue to implement its housing goals and objectives.

BUSINESS & INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Bennet needs to continue to pursue the service, commercial and industrial businesses needed to serve both the Community and surrounding areas. Local educational and recreational facilities should play a major role in attracting new business. Organizations such as CAPLSC, AP, BACFF, the Bennet Village Board, Planning Commission and Village Administration, as well a potential Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) or Community Development Agency (CDA), should all work collectively to address the recruitment, planning and financing of new business, industry and housing.

The retention and expansion of existing businesses should have equal priority to that of new developments. This team of organizations, or potential CRA or CDA, should prepare an annual **Strategic Economic Development Initiative** for Bennet. *This initiative should include a detailed listing of service, commercial and industrial business types most appropriate for Bennet.*

JOB CREATION

As discussed throughout this **Comprehensive Plan**, the Village of Bennet should be cognizant of an increasing population, and both the opportunities and challenges the Community faces, given its proximity to the City of Lincoln. For Bennet to provide its residents with needed and desired services and businesses, **the Village will need to actively pursue the creation of new employment opportunities, during the next 10 years**. The majority of the new jobs during the planning periods should be created in the professional, services and light industrial sectors, keeping pace with today's employment trends in Midwestern Communities.

BENNET, NEBRASKA

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROGRAM – 2029.

NEBRASKA INVESTMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY - HOUSING STUDY GRANT PROGRAM.



SECTION 7

ENERGY ELEMENT.

MAY, 2019

SECTION 7 **ENERGY ELEMENT.**

INTRODUCTION.

This **Section** of the **Bennet Comprehensive Plan** assesses the energy infrastructure and energy use in Bennet, and is also intended to evaluate the utilization of renewable energy sources and promote energy conservation measures.

PUBLIC POWER DISTRIBUTION.

Energy usage and consumption within the Village of Bennet has followed the trends prevalent in the State of Nebraska. Energy utility services are provided to the Village by **Nebraska City Utilities (NCU)**. Nebraska City is one of approximately 2,000 cities in the country to provide its own electric service through a not-for-profit, publicly owned electric utility, and provides electrical services to several communities in southeast Nebraska, across the Counties of Otoe, Lancaster and Nemaha, including the Village of Bennet. NCU also serves many farm customers along its rural distribution lines, and has various radial distribution circuits within the counties. NCU's electrical system was purchased in 1944, and the City Commission created the Board of Public Works to operate the combined electric, gas and water utility system. Local control of the utilities systems gives all ratepayers an active voice in policies affecting rates, service and operation.



Nebraska City Utilities Building.

NCU – INTEGRATED RESOURCE PLAN.

The following information summarizes select data available in NCU's **2016 Integrated Resource Plan**, prepared by the Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska (MEAN).

The Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) is a Federal agency that markets and delivers hydroelectric power and related services throughout a 15 state region, including Nebraska. NCU's agreement with WAPA is the Upper Great Plains (UGP) Division. As of 2016, approximately 22 percent of NCU's total needs come from WAPA UGP. To satisfy WAPA's requirements, NCU must periodically prepare and update an Integrated Resource Plan (IRP), to develop two- and five-year implementation plans to serve NCU's power supply requirements at the lowest reasonable cost.

NCU is a summer peaking utility, and in 2016, experienced a system peak of 35,918 kilowatts (kW). NCU's annual energy consumption was 171,095 megawatt-hours (MWh), for an annual load factor of 54.2 percent. Of NCU's 5,716 total electric customers, 4,759 were of the Residential sector (83.3 percent), 922 Commercial customers (16.1 percent), 34 Industrial customers (0.6 percent) and one wholesale customer (Village of Talmage, Nebraska). NCU's 2016 IRP projects total energy consumption in 2020 to be 169,520 MWh with a 53.3 percent load factor. In 2025, the IRP projects total energy consumption to be 172,396 MWh, with a 54.7 percent load factor.

GENERATING RESOURCES

- ❖ **Local Generation** – NCU owns and operates three diesel engine generator plans and its own natural gas utility, fueled by natural gas and/or oil.
- ❖ **WAPA** – WAPA delivers firm electric service to Nebraska City as part of an agreement set to terminate in 2020. NCU executed a new contract with WAPA in 2012 (beginning January 1, 2021) that extends the current agreement to December 31, 2050 with potential one percent reductions in deliveries over each of the ten-year periods of 2021, 2031 and 2041.
- ❖ **Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska (MEAN)** – MEAN provides scheduling, purchasing, marketing and transmission agent services for Nebraska City.

- ❖ **Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) Nebraska City Unit #2 (NC-2)** – NCU has a contract with OPPD for 1.67 percent of 682 MW (or 11.39 MW) of NC-2, which came online in 2009. The contract has an initial term of 40 years.
- ❖ **Public Power Generation Agency (PPGA)** – NCU has entered into a Participation Agreement with PPGA for 4.55 percent of 220 MW (or 10.1 MW) of Whelan Energy Center Unit #2 (WEC-2) near Hastings, Nebraska, which came online in 2011.
- ❖ **Renewable Energy Credits** – In 2015, NCU executed a purchase and sell agreement with Grand Island Utility Department (GI) for seven MW, or 19.55 percent of the Prairie Breeze III Wind Project.
- ❖ **Transmission** – Nebraska City is interconnected at 69 kilovolts (kV) with OPPD at both Nebraska City and Syracuse, Nebraska. OPPD provides transmission service for WAPA purchases, NC-2 and WEC-2. MEAN serves as the scheduling agent for all transmission service.

LOAD AND RESOURCES COMPARISON

A ten year study period (2015-2025) forecasted peak demand and energy requirements and compared to existing capacity and energy resources to determine the future need for resources. This comparison resulted in the following conclusions:

- NCU has sufficient capacity throughout the study period and likely to 2031.
- NCU may need outage replacement energy during scheduled outages of NC-2 and WEC-2.
- NCU operates local generation for peaking, back-up and generation for emergencies to supply energy needs; however, it often has been more economic to purchase non-firm energy from the Southwest Power Pool (SPP) market for these needs. Market purchases may continue to be less expensive than the operating costs of peaking generation.

Although local generation operated by NCU has been used minimally in recent years because the cost of energy from these resources is usually greater than the cost of energy in the SPP market, the reliability benefit for these units in emergency situations provides a high value to NCU and its customers.

RENEWABLE RESOURCES

In addition to the Grand Island Wind participation agreement, in which NCU obtained a 19.55 percent share of the Prairie Breeze III Wind Project, NCU has many options to acquire renewable energy through ownership, purchased energy or renewable energy credit (REC) markets.

NCU has the option to take wind from MEAN's wind resource pool, including the MEAN-owned wind project in Kimball, Nebraska and MEAN's contracted purchases from NPPD-owned wind resources. Additional renewable resources are likely to be developed under the concept of a Community Solar Project, similar to the one being offered by Lincoln Electric System (LES) and other regional utilities. These projects allow customers to purchase shares in a Utility-operated facility and avoid installing solar panels on individual rooftops. Individuals can purchase different amounts of solar energy based on their annual electricity usage.

PUBLIC OPINION ON RESOURCE OPTIONS

In 2016, NCU conducted a customer survey to determine service satisfaction levels and Energy Saving Program awareness. **The following presents select survey results as recorded in NCU's 2016 IRP.**

- ❖ Customers ranked a list of potential future resource options according to their preference as follows:
 - 1) Reduce Energy Usage with Efficiency and Conservation Programs.
 - 2) Construction of New Renewable Generation (Wind).
 - 3) Construction of New Fossil Fuel Generation (Natural Gas).
 - 4) Construction of New Renewable Generation (Solar).
 - 5) Customer Owned Renewable Generation (Solar).
 - 6) Purchase Power from the Market.

- ❖ Approximately 70 percent of survey respondents indicated that they would be willing to pay a premium for ownership of a community solar resource, if NCU offered a Community Participation Solar Generation Project.
 - 7 percent of respondents indicated they would be willing to spend more than \$10 per month.

- ❖ 34 percent of survey respondents expressed an interest in installing a photovoltaic solar energy system on their home.

- ❖ Customers were asked to rate their interest in the installation of a Smart Meter at their home or business. A rating of 1 would indicate ‘no interest’ and a rating of 5 would indicate ‘high interest.’ The average rating was 2.55.
- ❖ The survey asked about customers’ awareness levels regarding the following Programs offered by NCU.
 - 42 percent of customers were not aware of NCU’s **“Energy Saving Tree” Planting Program.**
 - 37 percent of customers were not aware of the **Arbor Day Free “Energy Saving Trees” Program.**
 - 79 percent of customers were not aware of the **Refrigerator Rebate Program.**

DEMAND SIDE RESOURCES

Demand Side Options (DSM) modify the customer or end use load shape to increase the utilization of facilities. Fifteen types of DSM programs were evaluated in NCU’s 2012 IRP. Findings of the 2012 analysis were used in the 2016 IRP to recommend the expansion of existing DSM programs. Based upon NCU’s resources and load profile, the following types of DSM were found to be most suitable:

- ❖ Strategic conservation (summer season) to reduce end-use consumption during peak periods such that base load generation may be sold on the SPP market and transmission cost can be reduced.
- ❖ Strategic load building (winter season) to build loads during periods of surplus capacity increasing the system Load Factor.
- ❖ Peak clipping (summer season) to reduce peaking needs such that base load generation may be sold on the SPP market and transmission cost can be reduced.

ACTION PLANS

Based upon the assumptions used, analyses completed and conclusions reached, the following actions plans were recommended of NCU in its 2016 IRP.

Two-Year Action Plan:

- ❖ NCU has adequate base load and emergency generation resources, and thus has no need for additional supply-side resources.

- ❖ Expand the promotion of the Tree Planting Programs.
 - NCU and National Arbor Day Foundation’s “Three Free Trees” which provides up to three trees 2 to 4 feet in height at no cost to the customer. NCU will also reimburse a customer for one-half of the cost, up to \$100, for a more mature tree.
 - National Arbor Day Foundation’s “Ten Free Trees” offering.
 - “Right Tree in the Right Place” Program, which is designed to strategically place trees for reducing future air conditioning costs for customers.
- ❖ Expand the promotion and partnerships with the Nebraska Energy Office (NEO) for viable programs such as energy saving loans.
- ❖ Expand the pick-up and rebate for old working refrigerators and freezers to include window air conditioners, such that these old and inefficient appliances are environmentally recycled and disposed.
- ❖ Monitor other utilities’ experience with Community Solar Projects for potential future NCU projects.

Five-Year Action Plan:

- ❖ Continuation of Two-Year Action Plan.
- ❖ Review other options as they become available.

ELECTRICAL ENERGY CONSUMPTION.

Nebraska City Utilities provided the electric consumption data for each of the land use sectors within Bennet, highlighted in **Table 7.1, Page 7.7**. In Bennet, energy consumption is tracked in two sectors: residential and commercial. **Table 7.1** compares each sector individually and combined to represent the annual total of Village usage. From 2013 to 2018, both Total Consumption and Average Consumption by customers increased by 19.4 and 6.5 percent, respectively. The number of residential customers increased by 13.9 percent, or 47 customers over the five year period. The commercial sector added two customers during that time.

Total charges increased in both sectors, from 2013 to 2018. The annual total of “Average Income per Kilowatt” increased by approximately 6.5 percent, with the residential sector seeing the larger increase at a rate of 7.3 percent.

| TABLE 7.1 COMPARISON OF UTILITY RATES AND CONSUMPTION BENNET, NEBRASKA 2013 & 2018 | | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---------------------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| SECTOR | TOTAL CHARGES | TOTAL CONSUMPTION IN KILOWATTS | AVERAGE NUMBER OF CUSTOMERS | AVERAGE CONSUMPTION | AVERAGE INCOME / KILOWATT |
| 2013 | | | | | |
| RESIDENTIAL | \$443,296 | 4,300,515 | 339 | 12,686 | \$0.103080 |
| COMMERCIAL | \$176,156 | 1,636,632 | 65 | 25,179 | \$0.107633 |
| TOTAL | \$619,452 | 5,937,147 | 404 | 14,696 | \$0.104335 |
| 2018 | | | | | |
| RESIDENTIAL | \$581,184 | 5,255,851 | 386 | 13,616 | \$0.110578 |
| COMMERCIAL | \$206,337 | 1,830,844 | 67 | 27,326 | \$0.112700 |
| TOTAL | \$787,521 | 7,086,695 | 453 | 15,644 | \$0.111127 |

Source: Nebraska City Utilities, 2019.

“NET METERING”

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

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

STATE-WIDE TRENDS IN ENERGY CONSUMPTION.

During the last 40+ years, the State of Nebraska, as a whole, has vastly increased energy consumption. However, percentage share of personal income has remained constant, although it has declined in recent years. In 1970, 11.5 percent of the percentage share of personal income was spent on energy. As of 2015, 8.9 percent was spent on energy usage. The peak percentage occurred in 1980 at 16.6 percent.

Trends in the Total Energy Consumption for the State of Nebraska, published in the *“2018 Annual Report” of the Nebraska Energy Office*, is mirrored in each of the individual energy categories, coal, natural gas, gasoline and distillate fuel oil (primarily diesel fuel), nuclear power, and hydroelectric production. Each energy type is detailed between 1960 and 2016, as follows:

- ◆ **Coal** consumption has increased from 20 trillion British Thermal Units (BTUs) in 1960 to 240.5 trillion BTUs in 2016. Peak use of coal was reached in 2013, surpassing the previous high set in 2011. The increase through 2013 was attributable to coal energy used to generate electricity.
- ◆ **Natural Gas** consumption has risen and fallen during the 56-year period between 1960 and 2016, beginning at 140.4 trillion BTUs, peaking in 1973 at 230.8 trillion BTUs and, by 2016, declining to 172.9 trillion BTUs.
- ◆ **Gasoline and Diesel Fuel** consumption nearly doubled in Nebraska between 1960 and 2016. Gasoline consumption increased by just under 25 percent, from 78.8 to 102.2 trillion BTUs, as of 2016, and peaked in 1978 at 116 trillion BTUs.

Diesel fuel consumption more than quadrupled from 24.2 trillion BTUs to 111.4 trillion BTUs, primarily due to an increase in trucking and agricultural use. Petroleum consumption, overall, peaked in 1978 at 246.7 trillion BTUs.

- ◆ **Nuclear** power generation began in Nebraska in 1973 at 6.5 trillion BTUs. Usage has since increased to 97.8 trillion BTUs as of 2016. The peak use of nuclear power was in 2007 at 115.8 trillion BTUs.
- ◆ **Renewable energy** consumption has fluctuated, beginning in 1960 at 13.4, and peaking in 2016 at 161.3 trillion BTUs. Hydropower was the primary renewable energy source from 1960 to 1994. Biofuels, or ethanol production, began equaling hydropower in 1995. As of 2016, 69.97 percent of all renewable energy produced came from biofuels, 4.9 percent from hydroelectric, 21.7 percent from wind, and 2.5 percent from wood products. Minor amounts came from geothermal and solar energy.

NEBRASKA ENERGY CONSUMPTION BY SECTOR

- ◆ **Commercial Sector:** The commercial sector includes non-manufacturing business establishments, including energy use by local, state and federal governments. Energy use in the commercial sector closely parallels consumer energy use and economic activity in the State of Nebraska.

More than 90 percent of all fuel used in the commercial sector was supplied by natural gas and electricity. Although natural gas has historically been the dominant fuel type, recent trends suggest a period of near parity between the two fuel types is likely into the near future. In 2016, a total of 134.5 trillion BTUs were consumed in the commercial sector, down 1.9 percent from 2015.

- ◆ **Residential Sector:** The residential sector consumed 17 percent, or 147.9 trillion BTUs, of the State's total energy demand in 2016. Demand decreased 0.4 percent from 148.4 trillion BTUs in 2015. Natural gas and electricity accounted for 89.6 percent of the total energy use in the residential sector.
- ◆ **Industrial Sector:** The industrial sector includes manufacturing, construction, mining, forestry and agricultural operations. Energy use in the industrial is more diverse, with natural gas, renewable energy, electricity, coal and a variety of petroleum products all being utilized.

The industrial sector consumes more energy than any other sector in the State. In 2016, it accounted for 44 percent, or 384.8 trillion BTUs, of the State's total energy consumption. This was a 4.5 percent increase in energy use from 2015.

- ◆ **Transportation Sector:** Public and private vehicles, railroads, aircraft and boats are all included in the transportation sector. Petroleum products accounted for 93 percent of the energy use in the transportation sector in 2016. Approximately 23 percent of the State's total energy consumption (201.1 trillion BTUs) was used in the transportation sector in 2016.
- ◆ **Electric Power Sector:** The electric power sector consists of facilities which generate electricity primarily for use by the public. About 60 percent of energy usage in this sector comes from coal, while nuclear energy accounted for approximately 27 percent in 2016. Demand in the State's electric power sector totaled 368.4 trillion BTUs in 2016, a 17.5 percent decrease, or 35.4 trillion BTUs, from 2015.
- ◆ **Agricultural Sector:** As per the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, there were 47,400 farms and ranches on 45.2 million acres in Nebraska in 2017, encompassing 91 percent of the State's total land area. Energy demand information in this sector is not available on a consistent or annual basis.

ENERGY CONSERVATION POLICIES.

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

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

- ◆ **Promote the use of “Net Metering” or the use of one or more combinations of the five alternative energy sources to reduce residential, commercial and industrial facilities consumption of energy.**
 - Utilize the Bennet Zoning Regulations to control the placement and operation of alternative energy systems.
 - Require compliance with the Conditional Use permit process so that established conditions are met by the applicant.
 - Promote the development of vocational education opportunities in Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools to educate the current and future workforce in alternative energy design, fabrication of equipment and maintenance.
- ◆ **As other sources of Alternative Energy Systems are developed or become cost-effective for use in Nebraska, amend planning documents of the Village to locate and control their operation.**
- ◆ **Promote the use of conservation methods to reduce the consumption of energy usage in each of the individual sectors including residential, commercial and industrial (which includes agricultural and public uses).**
 - Promote the expanded use of solar and geothermal exchange energy systems for applications throughout Bennet’s One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction. Subareas of the Community, such as the Downtown, a residential neighborhood or individual subdivisions, are encouraged to collectively pursue an alternate energy source or combination of sources to lower energy consumption and to make energy more affordable.
 - Promote the rehabilitation of agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial and public/quasi-public buildings utilizing weatherization methods and energy efficient or “green building” materials in conformance to the “LEED” Certified Building techniques.

- Implement conservation programs supported by NCU for its member communities. For example, the Refrigerator & Freezer Recycling Program pays residents \$35 to recycle old, inefficient refrigerators and freezers.
- The Village of Bennet could also access grant and loan programs to replace street light fixtures with LED fixtures that reduce consumption and are more energy efficient.

◆ **Increase Building Efficiency.**

- Lighting — transition Village street lighting to a Light Emitting Diode (LED) system.
- Retrofit Residential Buildings — provide incentives and construction advice to the public to expand the restoration of homes including windows, doors, attic ventilation, insulation and alternative energy systems such as solar panels.
- Retrofit Old Public and Commercial Buildings — provide incentives and construction advice to the public for Restoration Best Management Practices for windows, doors, attic ventilation, insulation, solar panels and lighting.
- New Construction Codes – Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to village codes and educate homeowners and realtors.
- Include financial incentives within the annual Village Budget to encourage residents of Bennet to plant new trees and replace damaged trees to maintain and expand the urban forest. Shade from trees reduce peak electric demands during the summer and provide wind breaks during the winter.

◆ **Increase Transportation Efficiency.**

- Seek out funding sources to establish an “Electric / Natural Gas” Village Fleet of Vehicles.
- Promote Pedestrian Uses — sidewalks, crossing guards, public hiker/biker trails, etc.

- Increase and encourage bicycling; carpooling.
- Increase residential development density- with parking requirements.
- Redevelop older existing neighborhoods by establishing architectural design standards as an overlay district within residential districts of the Bennet Zoning Regulations.

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

- Specify LID design options in engineering services contracts for subdivision development, storm water and parking lot improvements.
- Provide continuous education to the Village Planning/Zoning Staff, Administrator/Clerk and Public Works Staff in the new LID designs and BMPs (Best Management Practices) for operation and maintenance of LID projects.
- Calculate and track the public and private construction and life cycle cost savings for LID projects.
- Promote Water Conservation through use of low impact lawn care, rain barrels, alternatives to paved driveways, gray water & potable water systems and xeriscaping.
- Require LID and Green Infrastructure Storm Water Detention and urban forestry practices in Subdivision Agreements.
- Create an incentive program that motivates the general public as well as developers to expand energy efficiency, LID and Green Infrastructure, within the annual Village Budget.
- Connect community improvement projects, such as neighborhood revitalizations or street redesigns, with the implementation of Green Infrastructure practices that aim to improve the environment and provide added economic benefits.

- Install green roofs on underutilized roofs of downtown buildings and structures to decrease energy bills and increase economic activity with the inclusion of vegetable gardens.
- Plant rain gardens throughout the Village wherever possible to decrease stormwater runoff, and create more aesthetically pleasing streets, alleys and pedestrian districts.

◆ **Plant Urban Forests.**

- Trees / Urban Forests — provide incentives for rebate programs to replant new trees. NCU provides to customers a reimbursement of one-half the cost for an “Energy Saving Tree” (up to \$100), for pre-approved tree locations.
- Compost brush and trimmings — utilize the Best Management Practices utilized by other communities to provide a public deposit site to compost brush and trimmings.
- Create a waste wood recycling/composting/energy generation program.
- Establish and maintain a dead-tree wood recovery and re-use program.

◆ **Create a Zero Waste Community.**

- Reduce waste disposal with a 10-year Zero Waste strategy in support of achieving 90% resource recovery (recycling, reuse, repair, composting, redesign).
- Provide universal access to curbside recycling services for all residential dwellings and businesses.
- Establish financial incentives to increase recycling by charging for trash service based on volume.
- Gather annual data on waste disposal and resource recovery by volume.

- Provide access to recycling in public areas and major Community events.
- Establish designated public drop-off sites and promote the benefits of recycling facilities and develop the most efficient collection and transport of recycled materials possible.
- Investigate “regional hub and spoke system” promoting efficient transportation of recycled materials.
- Support creation of publicly owned Zero Waste facilities, including contracting approaches for private operations, or explore public-private partnership opportunities for Zero Waste infrastructure and services.
- Upcycle goods for other uses.
- Provide Community Gardens & Composting — divert organic compost to a local compost operation.
- Establish education and awareness campaigns promoting the benefits of Zero Waste for the local economy, the environment, and public health.

BENNET, NEBRASKA

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROGRAM – 2029.

NEBRASKA INVESTMENT FINANCE AUTHORITY - HOUSING STUDY GRANT PROGRAM.



APPENDIX

BENNET SURVEY RESULTS.

MAY, 2019

Bennet, Nebraska Comprehensive Planning Program

CITIZEN SURVEY

The **Village of Bennet Planning Commission** is currently conducting a Comprehensive Planning Program, to determine both the present and future needs of the Community for the next 10 years. **The Program is funded by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority-Housing Study Grant Program, with matching funds from the Village.** An important activity of this **Planning Program** is to ask you about the needs and wants of the Community. Please take a few minutes to complete and return the following **Citizen Survey** to Village Hall by **WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21ST.**

TOTAL SURVEYS: 99

COMPLETE THE SURVEY AND BE ELIGIBLE FOR A \$50 GAS CARD DRAWING!!

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

1. How long have you lived in Bennet?

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Less than 1 Year (6) | <input type="checkbox"/> 11 to 20 Years (20) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 5 Years (22) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 21+ Years (25) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6 to 10 Years (11) | <input type="checkbox"/> I do not live in Bennet (11) |

2. Including yourself, how many persons are there in your family/household?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> One (10) | <input type="checkbox"/> Four (26) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Two (36) | <input type="checkbox"/> Five (11) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Three (9) | <input type="checkbox"/> Six or More (3) |

3. How many persons in your family are in each of the following age groups?

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| <u>46</u> Less than 18 Years | <u>16</u> 55 to 64 Years |
| <u>8</u> 18 to 24 Years | <u>10</u> 65 to 74 Years |
| <u>26</u> 25 to 34 Years | <u>10</u> 75 to 81 Years |
| <u>32</u> 35 to 44 Years | <u>9</u> 82+ Years |
| <u>17</u> 45 to 54 Years | |

EDUCATION

4. Check all that apply.

- I am a graduate of Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools. (19)
- I have children attending Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools. (36)
- Public Schools were a factor in my decision to locate in Bennet. (28)

5. Are there sufficient and safe routes to School for children?

- Yes (48)
- No (26)

If No, what could be done to improve the safety of children commuting to and from school?

Top Responses: Improved sidewalks and crosswalk safety enhancements.

6. Would you recommend Bennet-Palmyra Public Schools to parents?

- Yes (81)
- No (3)

PUBLIC FACILITIES & COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

7. What new public recreational opportunities should be considered for Bennet?

Top Responses: Public walking trails and swimming pool.

8. What three new businesses would you like to see in Bennet?

Top Responses: Dollar store, café/coffee shop/restaurant, grocery store.

9. What three services would you like to see offered in the Village of Bennet that are currently not available? (Example: Daycare, Taxi service, etc.)

Top Responses: Child care and grocery delivery.

10. Please rate the quality of the following Community Services & Public Facilities in Bennet. (Average Rating; 1 = Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Fair, 4 = Poor).

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|--|
| <u>2.1</u> Church | <u>3.9</u> Discount/Variety Store | <u>2.8</u> Repair Services |
| <u>3.9</u> Grocery Store | <u>3.3</u> Downtown Businesses | <u>3.8</u> Entertainment/Theater |
| <u>3.9</u> Pharmacy | <u>2.8</u> Senior Center | <u>3.4</u> Library |
| <u>1.4</u> Fire Protection | <u>2.0</u> Post Office | <u>3.9</u> Medical Clinic |
| <u>2.2</u> Village office | <u>3.3</u> Restaurants/Cafes | <u>2.8</u> Police Protection |
| <u>2.0</u> Parks/Recreation | <u>3.2</u> Convenience Stores | <u>2.1</u> Banks |
| <u>3.9</u> Wellness/Fitness Center | <u>3.3</u> Streets/Sidewalks | <u>1.5</u> Schools |
| <u>1.9</u> Recycling/Garbage Service | <u>2.6</u> Utilities | <u>3.0</u> Child Care Opportunities |
| <u>2.6</u> Local Government | <u>3.7</u> Retail Goods/Services | <u>3.1</u> Internet/Telecommunications |
| <u>3.3</u> Cable TV | <u>3.8</u> Employment Opportunities | <u>3.8</u> Public Transit |
| | | Other _____ |

11. Please select the top three (3) most important business/industry sectors to the Village of Bennet.

- | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <u>33</u> Farming/Agriculture | <u>2</u> Leisure/Hospitality/Tourism | <u>44</u> Education |
| <u>7</u> Manufacturing | <u>2</u> Government | <u>5</u> Home-Based Businesses |
| <u>1</u> Wholesale Trade | <u>20</u> Medical Emergency | <u>23</u> Law Enforcement/Protection |
| <u>3</u> Retail Trade | <u>3</u> Automotive | <u>41</u> Fire Protection |
| <u>11</u> Utilities | <u>1</u> Entertainment | Other _____ |
| <u>3</u> Information | <u>2</u> Financial Activities | |
| <u>8</u> Health | <u>5</u> Professional & Business | |

TRANSPORTATION

| | Greatly Needed | Somewhat Needed | Not Needed | Comments |
|---|----------------|-----------------|------------|----------|
| 12. Which Transportation items need to be addressed in Bennet? | | | | |
| ▪ Traffic Safety Improvements | 14 | 33 | 13 | |
| ▪ Railroad Crossing Improvements | 3 | 10 | 11 | |
| ▪ Pedestrian/Trails Connections | 33 | 23 | 8 | |
| ▪ School Traffic Circulation | 18 | 26 | 10 | |
| ▪ Improved Traffic Control | 9 | 26 | 23 | |
| ▪ Improved Truck Routes | 7 | 29 | 22 | |
| ▪ Highway Corridor Enhancement | 13 | 28 | 17 | |
| ▪ Access Management/Frontage Roads | 6 | 21 | 29 | |
| ▪ More Parking | 6 | 21 | 32 | |
| ▪ Control Storm Water Run-off | 16 | 26 | 17 | |
| ▪ Congestion Reduction | 2 | 12 | 43 | |
| ▪ Public Transit | 5 | 9 | 7 | |

COMMUNITY GROWTH/LAND USE/ZONING

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | No Opinion/ Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-------|---------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 13. The appearance of the Village of Bennet can be improved with... | | | | | |
| ▪ Street & Pedestrian Lighting | 17 | 24 | 21 | 2 | 0 |
| ▪ Special Sales, Events and Welcome Banners | 9 | 32 | 21 | 3 | 1 |
| ▪ Crosswalk Enhancements | 20 | 30 | 15 | 2 | 0 |
| ▪ Street Trees, Benches & Landscaping | 17 | 28 | 19 | 2 | 0 |
| ▪ Pedestrian Seating Areas and Sidewalk Cafes | 16 | 26 | 16 | 5 | 0 |
| ▪ Vehicular Traffic Safety | 9 | 27 | 23 | 6 | 0 |
| ▪ Coordinated Traffic Control Lighting | 6 | 14 | 26 | 11 | 4 |
| ▪ Directional Signage | 3 | 32 | 24 | 5 | 1 |
| ▪ Restoration/Preservation of Historic Buildings/Housing | 13 | 28 | 24 | 2 | 1 |
| ▪ Gateway Entrance Signage and Advertising | 14 | 24 | 21 | 5 | 0 |
| ▪ Design Guidelines for Facades, Awnings, etc. | 6 | 19 | 28 | 8 | 4 |
| ▪ Nuisance Enforcement/Property clean-up. | 37 | 15 | 14 | 3 | 1 |
| ▪ Housing Development/Rehabilitation | 20 | 27 | 19 | 2 | 1 |

| | Strongly Agree | Agree | No Opinion/ Neutral | Disagree | Strongly Disagree |
|--|----------------|-----------|---------------------|----------|-------------------|
| 14. The sustainability of the Village of Bennet can be improved with... | | | | | |
| ▪ Water, Sewer & Utility Replacement | 13 | 27 | 21 | 3 | 1 |
| ▪ Improved Streets, Sidewalks & Alleys | 37 | 25 | 6 | 1 | 0 |
| ▪ Additional Pedestrian Safety Measures | 22 | 23 | 19 | 2 | 0 |
| ▪ Additional Parking for Businesses/in Downtown | 5 | 22 | 28 | 9 | 0 |
| ▪ Burying Overhead Utility Lines | 13 | 18 | 26 | 5 | 1 |
| ▪ Business Retention, Recruitment & Expansion | 33 | 27 | 8 | 0 | 0 |
| ▪ Marketing of Sales & Festivals | 15 | 36 | 13 | 0 | 0 |
| ▪ Coordinated Business Hours | 5 | 15 | 37 | 4 | 1 |
| ▪ Designation of a “Historic District” | 10 | 14 | 34 | 5 | 3 |
| ▪ Increased Marketing of Vacant Buildings | 20 | 27 | 16 | 2 | 1 |
| ▪ Development of an Incubator Business Program | 9 | 18 | 34 | 1 | 0 |
| ▪ Reducing utility costs with alternative energy sources | 22 | 31 | 9 | 1 | 0 |
| ▪ New/Improved Parks/Rec/Trails | 26 | 23 | 15 | 2 | 0 |
| ▪ Nuisance Enforcement/Property clean-up. | 40 | 17 | 9 | 3 | 1 |

15. Do you feel that Bennet’s current zoning laws and regulations *promote* or *constrain* future growth and development?

- Promote development (11) Constrain development (16) **No opinion (41)**

16. Where should future residential growth in Bennet take place?

- North (50)** East (31)
 South (16) West (18)

17. Should the Community of Bennet expand to include new commercial and entertainment facilities?

Yes (57) No (7)

18. Do you support stricter enforcement of Village ordinances regarding parking, junk vehicles and property maintenance?

Yes (60) No (8)

HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

19. Do you own or rent your place of residence?

Own (66) Rent (6)

20. Describe the type of housing you currently reside in.

House (69) Apartment (2)
 Mobile Home (1) Town Home/Duplex (0)

21. Are you satisfied with your current housing situation?

Yes (67) No (5)

If No, why not? _____

22. How would you rate the condition of your home or place of residence?

Excellent (33) Fair – Needs Minor Repair (8)
 Good (30) Poor – Needs Major Repair (1)

If minor or major repair is needed to your home, please describe the type of repair needed.

23. Which of the following additional housing types are needed in Bennet, in the next 10 years?

| | <u>Greatly Needed</u> | <u>Somewhat Needed</u> | <u>Not Needed</u> |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------|
| ▪ Housing For: | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| <i>*Family Income: 2.5 persons per household income.</i> | | | |
| 1. Lower-Income Families 0%-60% AMI (\$0-\$31,950)* | 13 | 24 | 17 |
| 2. Middle-Income Families 61%-100% AMI (\$32,000-\$53,250)* | 26 | 29 | 2 |
| 3. Upper-Income Families 101%+ AMI (\$53,251+)* | 7 | 30 | 15 |
| 4. Single Parent Families | 16 | 27 | 10 |
| 5. Existing / New Employees | 14 | 26 | 15 |
| ▪ Single Family Housing | 21 | 31 | 5 |
| ▪ Rental Housing (General) | 15 | 28 | 11 |
| ▪ Manufactured Homes | 3 | 21 | 30 |
| ▪ Mobile Homes | 1 | 8 | 48 |
| ▪ Condominiums/Townhomes | 12 | 32 | 12 |
| ▪ Duplex Housing | 10 | 31 | 15 |
| ▪ Apartment Complexes (3 to 12 Units per Complex) | 8 | 26 | 20 |
| ▪ Rehabilitation of Owner-occupied Housing | 17 | 26 | 9 |
| ▪ Rehabilitation of Renter-occupied Housing | 17 | 24 | 10 |
| ▪ Housing Choices for First-Time Homebuyers | 18 | 29 | 12 |
| ▪ Single Family Rent-to-Own | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 1. Short-Term 3 to 5 Years | 7 | 24 | 19 |
| 2. Long-Term 6 to 15 Years | 7 | 27 | 20 |
| ▪ Duplex/Townhouse Rent-to-Own | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 1. Short-Term 3 to 5 Years | 5 | 26 | 21 |
| 2. Long-Term 6 to 15 Years | 4 | 25 | 24 |
| ▪ One Bedroom (Apartment or House) | 4 | 27 | 19 |
| ▪ Two Bedroom (Apartment or House) | 13 | 31 | 8 |
| ▪ Three Bedroom (Apartment or House) | 17 | 22 | 13 |
| ▪ Independent Living Housing for Persons with a Mental/Physical Disability | 10 | 30 | 20 |

| | | | |
|---|-------|-----------|-----------|
| ▪ Group Home Housing for Persons with a Mental/Physical Disability | 3 | 23 | 31 |
| ▪ Retirement Housing – Rental | 17 | 32 | 10 |
| ▪ Retirement Housing – Purchase (Owner occupant) | 15 | 33 | 10 |
| ▪ Retirement Housing For: | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| 1. Low-income Elderly Persons | 21 | 29 | 8 |
| 2. Middle-income Elderly Persons | 19 | 33 | 6 |
| 3. Upper-income Elderly Persons | 12 | 29 | 14 |
| ▪ Licensed Assisted Living, with Specialized Services (i.e. health, food prep, recreation services, etc.) | 16 | 27 | 13 |
| ▪ Single-Room-Occupancy Housing (Boarding Homes) | 1 | 13 | 43 |
| ▪ Short-Term Emergency Shelters – 30 Days or Less | 2 | 13 | 40 |
| ▪ Long-Term Shelters – 90 Days or Less | 1 | 11 | 43 |
| ▪ Transitional Housing (3-12 month temporary housing) | 0 | 13 | 42 |

24. Would you support the Village of Bennet using State or Federal grant funds to conduct:

- ... an owner housing rehabilitation program? **Yes (47)** No (15)
- ... a renter housing rehabilitation program? **Yes (39)** No (25)

25. Would you support the Village of Bennet establishing a local program that would purchase dilapidated houses, tear down the houses and make the lots available for a family or individual to build a house? **Yes (56) No (10)**

26. Would you support the Village of Bennet using grant dollars to purchase, rehabilitate and resell vacant housing in the Community? **Yes (54) No (12)**

27. Would you support the Village of Bennet using State or Federal grant dollars to provide down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers? **Yes (40)** No (24)

28. As a Bennet resident, would you be willing to contribute or donate money to support a local Community, Economic or Housing development activity?
Yes (26) **No (39)**

29. Please provide additional comments regarding the future of Bennet, Nebraska:

Thank you for your participation!

Workforce Housing Needs Survey

The Village of Bennet Planning Commission, in cooperation with major employers in and near Bennet, is conducting the following Survey to determine the specific renter and owner housing needs of the Community's workforce. This Survey is funded by a Housing Grant from the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, with matching funds from the Village of Bennet. We would appreciate you completing and returning the following Survey to your employer by WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 21ST.

TOTAL RESPONSES: 25

1. Place of Employment? Village of Bennet, Bennet-Palmyra District OR-1, First Nebraska Bank.

2. Where do you currently reside?

Bennet (8) Rural Lancaster County (4) **Other (12)** (Identify) _____

If Other, where and why? Palmyra, Otoe County, Lincoln

If outside of Bennet, would you be interested in moving to the Community?

Yes (7) **No (8)**

3. Do you commute to Bennet for work? **Yes (17)** No (7)

If yes, how far is your commute?

Less Than 10 Minutes (10) 10-20 Minutes (5) 21-30 Minutes (2)

31-40 Minutes (0) 41-50 Minutes (0) 51-60 Minutes (0) 61+ Minutes (0)

4. Number of Persons in your household? 1 (2) 2 (7) 3 (3) 4 (4) **5 or More (8)**

5. Do you rent or are you a homeowner? Rent (4) **Own (20)**

6. How much is your monthly rent or mortgage payment? Less Than \$500 (5)

\$500-\$650 (1) \$651-\$800 (6) \$801-\$950 (1) \$951-\$1,100 (3) **\$1,251+ (7)**

7. Are you satisfied with your current housing situation? **Yes (22)** No (2)
 If no, why? _____

8. What is your current annual total household income?
 Less than \$35K (2) \$35K-\$50K (1) \$51K-\$70K (4) \$71K-\$85K (6) **\$86K+ (9)**

9. As a renter or homeowner, what issues or barriers have you experienced with obtaining affordable, suitable housing for your household? Please check your top three.

| For Renters | | For Owners | |
|-------------|--|------------|--|
| 0 | Lack of handicap accessible housing | 0 | Lack of handicap accessible housing |
| 0 | Lack of adequate public transportation | 0 | Lack of adequate public transportation |
| 0 | Lack of knowledge of fair housing rights | 0 | Lack of knowledge of fair housing rights |
| 4 | Cost of rent | 6 | Housing prices |
| 0 | Restrictive zoning/building codes | 3 | Restrictive zoning/building codes |
| 0 | Job status | 1 | Job status |
| 0 | Attitudes of landlords & neighbors | 2 | Attitudes of immediate neighbors |
| 3 | Lack of availability of decent rental units in your price range | 0 | Mortgage lending application requirements |
| 0 | Use of background checks | 2 | Excessive down payment/closing costs |
| 1 | Excessive application fees and/or rental deposits | 9 | Cost of utilities |
| 1 | Cost of utilities | 0 | Lack of educational resources about homeowner responsibilities |
| 0 | Lack of educational resources about tenant responsibilities | 1 | Cost of homeowner's insurance |
| | | 3 | Lack of Sufficient Homes for Sale |
| | | 4 | Cost of Real Estate Taxes |
| | Other: _____ | | Other: _____ |

10. If you are currently a renter and would like to become a homeowner, or if you are currently an owner and desire to upgrade or change housing in the next five years, please complete the following questions. If not, your Survey is complete.

10.a. Where would you like to purchase a home?

Bennet (5) Rural Lancaster County (2) Other (1) Retirement Community

10.b. Which one of the following housing types would you most like to purchase/rent?

Single Family (9) Attached Townhouse or Duplex-Type Unit (0)
Mobile Home (0) Patio Home/Slab Home (0)
I plan to remain where I am (2)

10.c. How many bedrooms would your family need?

One (0) Two (1) **Three (5)** **Four + (5)**

10.d. What is the most your family could afford for a home?

Less than \$50K (1) \$50K-\$100K (0) \$100K-\$120K (1) \$120K-\$135K (0)
\$135K-\$175K (1) **\$175K-\$225K (4)** **\$225K+ (4)**

10.e. What is the most your family could afford for monthly rent? Less than \$400 (1)

\$400 to \$500 (0) \$500 to \$600 (1) \$600 to \$700 (1) \$700 to \$800 (1)
\$800 to \$900 (0) \$900 to \$1,000 (0) \$1,000 to \$1,100 (2) **\$1,100+ (5)**

Thank You For Participating!