

BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – 2033.

DRAFT

Prepared For:



Prepared By:



BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN – 2033.

PLAN PARTICIPANTS.

COUNTY PLANNING & ZONING COMMISSION MEMBERS.

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- ❖ Willie Keep, Vice-Chairperson
- ❖ Randy Vest
- ❖ Marc Vacek
- ❖ Scott Stubblefield
- ❖ Kurt Schmidt
- ❖ Francis Biehl
- ❖ Loye Wolfe
- ❖ Tammy Jeffs

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- ❖ Sherry Morrow, Vice-Chairman
- ❖ Ron Loeffelholz
- ❖ Timothy Higgins
- ❖ Dan Lynch
- ❖ Bill Maendele
- ❖ Myron Kouba

COUNTY STAFF.

- ❖ Kari Fisk, Deputy County Attorney
- ❖ Andrew Hoffmeister, Deputy County Attorney
- ❖ Dennise Daniels,
Zoning & Floodplain Administrator

CONSULTANT.



* Lincoln, Nebraska * 402.464.5383 *

* Becky J. Hanna * Timothy M. Keelan * Keith R. Carl * Ember E. Batelaan *

TABLE OF CONTENTS & LIST OF TABLES/ILLUSTRATIONS.

<u>TABLE OF CONTENTS.</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
PARTICIPANTS.....	i
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	ii
LIST OF TABLES.....	iv
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.....	v

<u>SECTION</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
SECTION 1	THE BUFFALO COUNTY PLANNING PROCESS.....	1.1
	-The Comprehensive Plan.....	1.1
	-Planning Period.....	1.2
	-Authority to Plan.....	1.2
	-Amendment.....	1.2
SECTION 2	POPULATION, INCOME & ECONOMIC PROFILE.....	2.1
	-Introduction.....	2.1
	-General Population Trends & Projections.....	2.1
	-Income Trends & Projections.....	2.12
	-Employment & Economic Trends.....	2.15
	-Housing Stock Conditions, Value & Gross Rent.....	2.18

TABLE OF CONTENTS & LIST OF TABLES/ILLUSTRATIONS.

<u>SECTION</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
SECTION 3	LAND USE PRESERVATION & DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.....	3.1
	-Introduction.....	3.1
	-1. Population & Plan Participation & Implementation.....	3.3
	-2. Preservation of Existing Conditions in Rural Buffalo County.....	3.5
	-3. Future Development & Planning Practices.....	3.6
SECTION 4	LAND USE PROFILE & PLAN.....	4.1
	-Introduction.....	4.1
	-The Natural Environment.....	4.1
	-Existing Land Use Analysis.....	4.7
	-Agricultural Production Statistics.....	4.13
	-Future Land Use Analysis.....	4.17
	-Existing Zoning Analysis.....	4.21
SECTION 5	PUBLIC FACILITIES & TRANSPORTATION.....	5.1
	-Introduction.....	5.1
	-Public Facilities.....	5.1
	-Transportation.....	5.12
	-Future Buffalo County Transportation System.....	5.18
SECTION 6	ENERGY ELEMENT.....	6.1
	-Introduction.....	6.1
	-Public Power Distribution.....	6.1
	-Energy Conservation Policies.....	6.8
APPENDIX I	BUFFALO COUNTY TABLE PROFILE.	
APPENDIX II	BUFFALO COUNTY SURVEY RESULTS.	

LIST OF TABLES.

<u>TABLE</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
2.1	Population Trends & Projections.....	2.2
2.2A	Population Age Distribution (Buffalo County).....	2.3
2.2B	Population Age Distribution (Rural Buffalo County).....	2.4
2.3	Specific Household Characteristics Trends & Projections.....	2.6
2.4	Tenure by Household Trends & Projections.....	2.9
2.5	Median Household Income Trends & Projections.....	2.12
2.6	Per Capita Income.....	2.13
2.7	Persons Receiving Social Securing Income.....	2.14
2.8	Employment Data Trends & Projections.....	2.16
2.9	Travel Time to Work.....	2.16
2.10	Workforce Employment by Type.....	2.17
2.11	Housing Stock Profile/Units in Structure.....	2.19
2.12	Housing Stock Profile – Substandard Housing – HUD.....	2.20
2.13	Housing Stock Occupancy/Vacancy Status.....	2.22
2.14	Owner Occupied Housing Value/Gross Rent Trends & Projections.....	2.25
4.1	Existing & Future Land Use Capacity Matrix.....	4.9
4.2	Farms/Ranches by Size.....	4.14
4.3	Status of Crop Production.....	4.15
4.4	Harvested Crops by Type.....	4.16
4.5	Livestock Production Trends.....	4.17
5.1	Traffic Volume-Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts, State and Federal Roads.....	5.20

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

<u>ILLUSTRATION</u>	<u>TITLE</u>	<u>PAGE</u>
1.1	Location Map.....	1.2
4.1	General Soil Association Map.....	4.6
4.2	Existing Land Use Map.....	4.10
4.3	Future Land Use Map.....	4.19
4.4	Existing Zoning Map.....	4.24
5.1	Public Facilities Map.....	5.2
5.2	Fire District Map.....	5.10
5.3	Broadband Provider Coverage Map.....	5.14
5.4	Broadband Speed Map.....	5.15
5.5	State Functional Classification Map.....	5.18

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SECTION 1
THE BUFFALO COUNTY
PLANNING PROCESS.

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THE BUFFALO COUNTY PLANNING PROCESS.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.

This **Comprehensive Plan** was prepared to replace the existing **Buffalo County, Nebraska Comprehensive Plan**, completed in 2012. This new **Plan** will serve as a guide to direct future growth and development opportunities in **Rural Buffalo County, Nebraska** during the 10-year planning period, until 2033. The geographic focus of this Plan is the unincorporated areas of Buffalo County, less the designated Community Planning Jurisdictions of each incorporated Community.

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

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

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

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

PLANNING PERIOD.

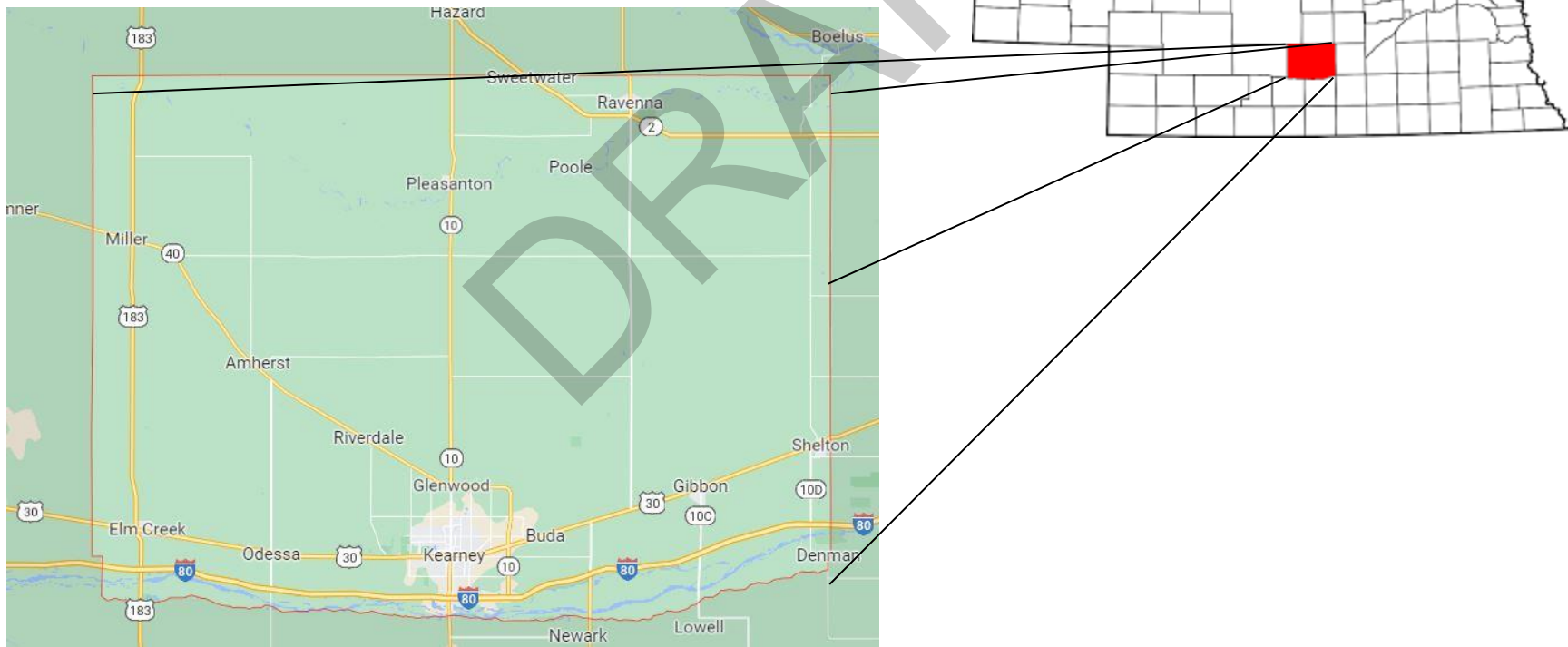
The planning time period for achieving the goals, programs and economic development activities identified in this **Comprehensive Plan** for Buffalo County, Nebraska, is 10 years (2033).

AUTHORITY TO PLAN.

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

AMENDMENT.

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





SECTION 2
**POPULATION, INCOME &
ECONOMIC PROFILE.**

POPULATION, INCOME & ECONOMIC PROFILE.

INTRODUCTION.

Population, income and economic trends in **Rural Buffalo County** serve as valuable indicators of future development needs and patterns for the County and provide a basis for the realistic projection of the future population. The quantity and location of social and economic features play an important role in shaping the details of various development plans to meet the Rural County's needs.

The population trends and projections for the years 2000 through 2032 were studied and forecasted, utilizing a process of both trend analysis and U.S. Census population estimates. **Buffalo County, as a whole, is projected to increase in population over the next 10 years, by an estimated 3,643.** The County should continue to promote the development of new businesses, industries and housing for individuals and families during the 10-year planning period. A complete “**Table Profile**” is included in “**Appendix I**” of this **Comprehensive Plan**.

GENERAL POPULATION TRENDS & PROJECTIONS.

The analysis and projection of population are at the center of all planning decisions. This process assists in understanding important changes which have and will occur throughout the planning period.

Estimating population size is critical to a planning process. Further, projecting a County population is extremely complex. Because projections are based on various assumptions about the future, projections must be carefully analyzed and continually re-evaluated due to economic and social structure.

- ❖ **Table 2.1, Page 2.2**, identifies **population trends and projections** for Buffalo County, from 2000 through 2032. An increase in population occurred for Buffalo County between 2000 and 2020, increasing by 18.5 percent, or by 7,825 people.

The total populations of Buffalo County and **Rural Buffalo County**, excluding Communities and associated Planning Jurisdictions (CPJs), are an estimated 50,703 and **6,860** respectively. The **Rural County** population is estimated to increase by 389, by 2032, likely due to new housing developments that are occurring in close proximity to Kearney but outside the City’s Two-Mile Planning Jurisdiction. The 2032 population for the entire County is projected at an estimated 54,346, an increase of 3,643 persons from 2022.

- ❖ Population growth as a result of a “County-wide Growth Initiative” is also highlighted in **Table 2.1**. The scenario of creating an additional 1,500 Full-Time Employment opportunities in Buffalo County would result in an additional population increase of 1,732, County-wide. **Rural Buffalo County** could experience a population increase of 653, between 2022 and 2032.

TABLE 2.1
POPULATION TRENDS & PROJECTIONS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2032</u>	<u># Change</u> <u>2022-2032</u>	<u>2032</u> <u>CGI*</u>
Buffalo County	42,259	46,102	50,084	50,703	54,346	+3,643	56,078
Amherst	277	248	201	196	186	-10	182
Elm Creek	894	901	979	986	1,057	+71	1,082
Gibbon	1,759	1,833	1,878	1,887	1,955	+68	2,021
Kearney	27,431	30,787	33,790	34,270	37,131	+2,861	38,252
Miller	156	136	129	128	118	-10	121
Pleasanton	360	341	361	366	382	+16	391
Ravenna	1,341	1,360	1,441	1,455	1,531	+76	1,576
Riverdale	213	182	247	250	265	+15	271
Shelton	1,140	1,059	1,034	1,041	1,065	+24	1,085
Community							
Planning	3,214	3,105	3,228	3,264	3,407	+143	3,584
Jurisdictions							(+320)
Rural Buffalo							
County	5,847	6,150	6,796	6,860	7,249	+389	7,513
							(+653)

*Includes potential estimated population increase associated with a planned “County-wide Growth Initiative” (CGI). This could include increases in 1,500 Full-Time Employment (FTE) positions and/or Housing Development activities associated with workforce/population recruitment during the next 10 years. This would create an estimated Buffalo County population increase of 1,732.

Source: 2000 & 2010 Census & 2020 Census “Redistricting Data”.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

- ❖ **Table 2.2A** provides **age distribution** for Buffalo County, from 2000 to 2032. The County is projected to experience an increase in population during the next 10 years of approximately 3,643 people. By 2032, it is estimated that the “19 and Under” and “35 to 54” age groups will comprise the largest portions of the population. The “85+” age group will remain the smallest with an estimated 1,081 persons. **In 2022, median age in Buffalo County is an estimated 33.2 years. This median age is projected to increase by 2032, to 35.6 years.**

**TABLE 2.2A
POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION
TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2000-2032**

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020*</u>	<u>2000-2020</u>		<u>2022-2032</u>	
				<u>Change</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2032</u>	<u>Change</u>
19 and Under	12,818	13,072	14,363	+1,545	14,540	15,577	+1,037
20-34	10,809	11,623	11,436	+627	11,445	11,929	+484
35-54	10,844	10,875	11,311	+467	11,384	12,028	+644
55-64	2,908	4,954	5,672	+2,764	5,767	6,242	+475
65-74	2,292	2,755	4,179	+1,887	4,404	5,177	+773
75-84	1,756	1,882	2,115	+359	2,146	2,312	+166
85+	832	941	1,008	+176	1,017	1,081	+64
Totals	42,259	46,102	50,084	+7,825	50,703	54,346	+3,643
Median Age	31.0	32.1	33.1	+2.1	33.2	35.6	+2.4

*Estimate subject to margin of error.

Source: 2000 & 2010 Census, 2016-2020 American Community Survey.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

- ❖ **Table 2.2B** provides **age distribution** for **Rural Buffalo County**, from 2000 to 2032, including Community Planning Jurisdictions. **Rural Buffalo County**. The “55-64” age group experienced the largest population increase from 2000 to 2020, increasing by 811. The “19 and Under” age group, for 2020, is the largest in **Rural Buffalo County**.
- ❖ An increase in population during the next 10 years of approximately 532 is projected for **Rural Buffalo County**. It is estimated that the “19 and Under” and “35 to 54” age groups will comprise the largest portions of the population.
- ❖ In 2022, median age in Rural Buffalo County is an estimated 41.5 years. This median age is projected to increase by 2032, to 43.9 years.

TABLE 2.2B
POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION
TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs, NEBRASKA
2000-2032

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020*</u>	<u>2000-2020</u>		<u>2022-2032</u>	
				<u>Change</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2032</u>	<u>Change</u>
19 and Under	2,917	2,746	3,056	+139	3,084	3,179	+95
20-34	1,265	1,168	1,448	+183	1,510	1,632	+122
35-54	2,744	2,766	2,515	-229	2,460	2,301	-159
55-64	807	1,341	1,618	+811	1,749	2,296	+547
65-74	549	678	834	-285	773	681	-92
75-84	310	384	395	+85	404	439	+35
85+	96	172	158	+62	144	128	-16
Totals	8,688	9,255	10,024	+1,336	10,124	10,656	+532
Median Age	36.1	40.1	41.2	+5.1	41.5	43.9	+2.4

*Estimate subject to margin of error.

Source: 2000 & 2010 Census, 2016-2020 American Community Survey.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS.

- ❖ **Table 2.3, Pages 3.6-3.8**, identifies **specific household characteristics** of Buffalo County and each Community and **Rural Buffalo County/CPJs**, from 2000 to 2032. The total number of households is projected to increase by 1,496 throughout the County between 2022 and 2032.
- ❖ During the next 10 years, “persons per household” in Buffalo County is projected to decline slightly, from an estimated 2.41 to 2.39.
- ❖ **Currently, 2,610 persons reside in Group Quarters in Buffalo County.** Group Quarters consist of both “institutionalized” and “non-institutionalized” living quarters that are not considered a household, such as dormitories, nursing care centers and correctional facilities.



HOUSEHOLD TENURE.

- ❖ **Table 2.4, Pages 3.9-3.11**, identifies **tenure by household** for Buffalo County, each Community and **Rural Buffalo County/CPJs**, from 2000 to 2032. The County is currently comprised of an estimated 19,955 households, consisting of 12,694 owner and 7,261 renter households. By 2032, owner households will account for an estimated 63.9 percent of the total households in Buffalo County, resulting in 13,687 owner households and 7,764 renter households.

Rural Buffalo County, including Community Planning Jurisdictions, is projected to increase by 281 owner households and decrease by 205 renter households by 2032. **The continued construction of single family housing units, especially within a designated residential subdivision, will be the primary contributor to population and household increases by 2032.**

TABLE 2.3
SPECIFIC HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Group Quarters</u>	<u>Persons in Households</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Persons Per Household</u>
<u>Buffalo County</u>	2000	42,259	2,788	39,471	15,930	2.48
	2010	46,102	2,225	43,877	18,037	2.43
	2020	50,084	2,494	47,590	19,590	2.43
	2022	50,703	2,610	48,093	19,955	2.41
	2032	54,346	2,988	51,358	21,451	2.39
<u>Amherst</u>	2000	277	0	277	112	2.47
	2010	248	0	248	108	2.30
	2020	201	0	201	89	2.26
	2022	196	0	196	86	2.28
	2032	186	0	186	83	2.25
<u>Elm Creek</u>	2000	894	0	894	366	2.44
	2010	901	0	901	373	2.42
	2020	979	0	979	381	2.57
	2022	986	0	986	387	2.54
	2032	1,057	0	1,057	426	2.48
<u>Gibbon</u>	2000	1,759	29	1,730	642	2.70
	2010	1,833	24	1,809	654	2.77
	2020	1,878	0	1,878	673	2.79
	2022	1,887	0	1,887	681	2.77
	2032	1,955	0	1,955	719	2.72

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TABLE 2.3 (CONTINUED)
SPECIFIC HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Group Quarters</u>	<u>Persons in Households</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Persons Per Household</u>
<u>Kearney</u>	2000	27,431	2,411	25,020	10,471	2.38
	2010	30,787	2,002	28,785	12,201	2.40
	2020	33,790	2,173	31,617	13,586	2.33
	2022	34,270	2,271	31,999	13,907	2.30
	2032	37,131	2,623	34,508	15,191	2.27
<u>Miller</u>	2000	156	0	156	58	2.68
	2010	136	0	136	59	2.31
	2020	129	0	129	49	2.63
	2022	128	0	128	49	2.61
	2032	118	0	118	45	2.60
<u>Pleasanton</u>	2000	360	0	360	150	2.40
	2010	341	0	341	140	2.44
	2020	361	0	361	158	2.28
	2022	366	0	366	159	2.30
	2032	382	0	382	167	2.29
<u>Ravenna</u>	2000	1,341	63	1,278	530	2.41
	2010	1,360	38	1,322	575	2.30
	2020	1,441	73	1,368	557	2.46
	2022	1,455	74	1,381	562	2.46
	2032	1,531	80	1,451	599	2.42

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TABLE 2.3 (CONTINUED)
SPECIFIC HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Group Quarters</u>	<u>Persons in Households</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Persons Per Household</u>
<u>Riverdale</u>	2000	213	0	213	90	2.37
	2010	182	0	182	73	2.49
	2020	247	0	247	88	2.81
	2022	250	0	250	92	2.72
	2032	265	0	265	99	2.68
<u>Shelton</u>	2000	1,140	0	1,140	421	2.70
	2010	1,059	0	1,059	391	2.71
	2020	1,034	0	1,034	406	2.55
	2022	1,041	0	1,041	408	2.55
	2032	1,065	0	1,065	422	2.52
<u>Rural Buffalo County/CPJs</u>	2000	8,688	285	8,403	3,090	2.72
	2010	9,255	161	9,094	3,463	2.62
	2020	10,024	248	9,776	3,603	2.71
	2022	10,124	265	9,859	3,624	2.72
	2032	10,656	285	10,371	3,700	2.80

Source: 2000 & 2010 Census & 2020 Census "Redistricting Data".
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C.

**TABLE 2.4
TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES &
RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2000-2032**

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Owner</u>		<u>Renter</u>	
			<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Buffalo County</u>	2000	15,930	10,128	63.6%	5,802	36.4%
	2010	18,037	11,425	65.5%	6,612	34.5%
	2020	19,590	12,518	63.9%	7,072	36.1%
	2022	19,955	12,694	63.6%	7,261	36.4%
	2032	21,451	13,687	63.9%	7,764	36.1%
<u>Amherst</u>	2000	112	97	86.6%	15	13.4%
	2010	108	88	81.5%	20	18.5%
	2020	89	73	82.0%	16	18.0%
	2022	86	70	81.4%	16	18.6%
	2032	83	65	78.3%	18	21.7%
<u>Elm Creek</u>	2000	366	273	74.6%	93	25.4%
	2010	373	283	75.9%	90	24.1%
	2020	381	291	76.4%	90	23.6%
	2022	387	295	76.2%	92	23.8%
	2032	426	319	74.8%	107	25.2%
<u>Gibbon</u>	2000	642	443	69.0%	199	31.0%
	2010	654	441	67.4%	213	32.6%
	2020	673	458	68.1%	215	31.9%
	2022	681	463	68.0%	218	32.0%
	2032	719	480	66.8%	239	33.2%

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TABLE 2.4 (CONTINUED)
TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES &
RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Owner</u>		<u>Renter</u>	
			<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Kearney</u>	2000	10,471	5,879	56.1%	4,592	43.9%
	2010	12,201	6,904	56.6%	5,297	43.4%
	2020	13,586	7,690	56.6%	5,896	43.4%
	2022	13,907	7,843	56.4%	6,064	43.6%
	2032	15,191	8,507	55.0%	6,684	45.0%
<u>Miller</u>	2000	58	50	86.2%	8	13.8%
	2010	59	44	74.6%	15	25.4%
	2020	49	37	75.5%	12	24.5%
	2022	49	37	75.5%	12	24.5%
	2032	45	33	73.5%	12	26.5%
<u>Pleasanton</u>	2000	150	128	85.3%	22	14.7%
	2010	140	116	82.9%	24	17.1%
	2020	158	128	81.0%	30	19.0%
	2022	159	128	80.5%	31	19.5%
	2032	167	130	77.8%	37	22.2%
<u>Ravenna</u>	2000	530	404	76.2%	126	23.8%
	2010	575	411	71.5%	164	28.5%
	2020	557	398	71.5%	159	28.5%
	2022	562	400	71.5%	162	28.8%
	2032	599	441	78.7%	188	31.3%

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TABLE 2.4 (CONTINUED)
TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES &
RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Owner</u>		<u>Renter</u>	
			<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Riverdale</u>	2000	90	80	88.9%	10	11.1%
	2010	73	70	95.9%	3	4.1%
	2020	88	77	87.5%	11	12.5%
	2022	92	79	85.9%	13	14.1%
	2032	99	82	83.4%	17	16.6%
<u>Shelton</u>	2000	421	322	75.5%	99	23.5%
	2010	391	298	76.2%	93	23.8%
	2020	406	301	74.1%	105	25.9%
	2022	408	301	73.8%	107	26.2%
	2032	422	301	71.5%	121	28.5%
<u>Rural Buffalo County/CPJs</u>	2000	3,090	2,452	79.4%	638	20.6%
	2010	3,463	2,770	80.0%	693	20.0%
	2020	3,603	3,065	85.1%	538	14.9%
	2022	3,624	3,078	85.4%	546	14.6%
	2032	3,700	3,359	90.8%	341	9.2%

Source: 2000 & 2010 Census & 2020 Census "Redistricting Data".
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

INCOME TRENDS & PROJECTIONS.**HOUSEHOLD AREA MEDIAN INCOME.**

- ❖ **Table 2.5** identifies **median household income** for Buffalo County, Nebraska, from 2000 to 2032. The current median income in Buffalo County is an estimated \$61,300. Median income in the County is projected to increase by an estimated 34.4 percent to \$82,400, by 2032.

Rural Buffalo County, including CPJs, currently has the highest median income in the County at \$65,950. In 2032, Gibbon is estimated to have the highest median income at \$87,100, an increase of 35.1 percent from the 2022 estimated median income of \$64,450.

TABLE 2.5
ESTIMATED MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME TRENDS & PROJECTIONS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES &
RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2019 Est.*</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2032</u>
Buffalo County	\$36,782	\$59,431	\$61,300	\$82,400
Amherst	\$39,545	\$46,250	\$46,950	\$63,500
Elm Creek	\$32,279	\$60,375	\$62,330	\$84,100
Gibbon	\$34,955	\$62,548	\$64,450	\$87,100
Kearney	\$34,829	\$57,064	\$59,400	\$67,200
Miller	\$33,125	**	\$46,350	\$59,000
Pleasanton	\$37,656	\$54,107	\$55,840	\$71,700
Ravenna	\$31,875	\$50,172	\$51,990	\$66,600
Riverdale	\$44,375	\$63,438	\$65,450	\$83,800
Shelton	\$37,583	\$49,583	\$50,850	\$64,800
Rural Buffalo County/CPJs	\$42,960	\$64,993	\$65,950	\$87,000

*Specified data used, subject to margin of error.

**Not available due to disclosure suppression.

Source: 2000 Census, 2015-2019 American Community Survey.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

PER CAPITA INCOME.

- ❖ **Table 2.6** identifies **per capita income** for Buffalo County and the State of Nebraska, from 2012 to 2032. Per capita income is equal to the gross income of an area (State, County, City, Village) divided equally between the residents of the area.
- ❖ In **2022**, per capita income in Buffalo County is an estimated \$60,400. By 2032, per capita income will increase in the County by an estimated 25.9 percent, to **\$76,100**.

TABLE 2.6
PER CAPITA INCOME
TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
BUFFALO COUNTY / STATE OF NEBRASKA
2012-2032

<u>Year</u>	<u>Buffalo County</u>		<u>State of Nebraska</u>	
	<u>Income</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>% Change</u>
2012	\$48,512	--	\$46,066	--
2013	\$44,226	-8.8%	\$45,876	-0.4%
2014	\$47,253	+6.8%	\$48,419	+5.5%
2015	\$50,199	+6.2%	\$49,567	+2.3%
2016	\$49,800	-0.8%	\$50,029	+0.9%
2017	\$51,638	+3.7%	\$51,436	+2.8%
2018	\$56,293	+9.0%	\$52,893	+2.8%
2019	\$57,453	+2.1%	\$54,567	+3.2%
2022	\$60,400	+2.1%	\$57,200	+1.9%
2012-2022	\$48,512-\$60,400	+24.5%	\$46,066-\$57,200	+24.1%
2022-2032	\$60,400-\$76,100	+25.9%	\$57,200-\$71,800	+25.5%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2022.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME.

- ❖ **Table 2.7** identifies the number of **persons receiving Social Security Income and/or Supplemental Security Income** in Buffalo County. A total of 8,565 persons received Social Security Income in Buffalo County in 2019. Of the 8,565 persons, 81.8 percent, or 7,005 persons were aged 65 years or older.

TABLE 2.7	
PERSONS RECEIVING SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME	
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA	
2019 ESTIMATE	
<u>Social Security Income-2019</u>	<u>Number of Beneficiaries</u>
<u>Retirement Benefits</u>	
Retired Workers	6,435
Wives & Husbands	320
Children	80
<u>Survivor Benefits</u>	
Widows & Widowers	515
Children	245
<u>Disability Benefits</u>	
Disabled Persons	830
Wives & Husbands	0
Children	140
Total	8,565
<u>Aged 65 & Older</u>	
Men	3,080
Women	3,925
Total	7,005
<u>Supplemental Security Income-2019</u>	<u>Number of Beneficiaries</u>
Aged	24
Blind and Disabled	446
Total	470
Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Social Security Administration, 2022.	

EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC TRENDS.

A review and analysis of Buffalo County labor force statistics provides a general understanding of the economic activity occurring in and around the County.

EMPLOYMENT DATA.

- ❖ **Table 2.8, Page 2.16**, identifies **employment data trends and projections** for Buffalo County, Nebraska, from 2010 through 2032. Current data estimates 27,273 employed persons in Buffalo County with an estimated unemployment rate of 1.9 percent. By 2032, employed persons in the County are projected to increase by 1,252 persons, to 28,525 with an unemployment rate of 1.8 percent.

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK.

- ❖ **Table 2.9, Page 2.16**, illustrates the **travel time to work** for residents of Buffalo County, in 2019. Approximately 77.1 percent of the employed residents of Buffalo County traveled less than 20 minutes to work or worked at home, whereas 8.8 percent travel 40 minutes or more.

WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT.

- ❖ **Table 2.10, Page 2.17**, identifies **workforce employment by type**, in Buffalo County, Nebraska, for 2022. The largest employment sectors include the Health Care & Social Assistance, Retail Trade, Manufacturing, Accommodation & Food Service and Local Government sectors.

TABLE 2.8
EMPLOYMENT DATA TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2010-2032

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Employed Persons</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent Unemployment</u>
2010	25,371	--	3.7%
2011	25,930	+559	3.5%
2012	26,378	+448	3.2%
2013	26,486	+108	3.2%
2014	26,745	+259	2.7%
2015	26,582	-163	2.4%
2016	26,687	+105	2.5%
2017	26,686	-1	2.4%
2018	27,156	+470	2.4%
2019	27,227	+71	2.6%
2020	26,430	-797	4.0%
2021	27,617	+1,187	2.0%
2022*	27,273	-344	1.9%
2032	28,525	+1,252	1.9%
2010-2032	25,371-28,525	+3,154	3.7%-1.9%
2032 Boost*	29,445	+920	1.8%

*Estimate as of August, 2022.

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, 2021.
 Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

TABLE 2.9
TRAVEL TIME TO WORK
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2019 ESTIMATE*

<u>9 Minutes or Less</u>	<u>10-19 Minutes</u>	<u>20-29 Minutes</u>	<u>30-39 Minutes</u>	<u>40 Minutes or More</u>
9,406	10,698	2,252	1,434	2,302

*Subject to margin of error.

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey.

TABLE 2.10
WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2022

Workforce

Non-Farm Employment (Wage and Salary)	26,367
Agriculture Forestry, Fishing & Hunting.	*
Mining, Quarrying and Oil/Gas Extraction.	50
Utilities.	*
Construction.	1,354
Manufacturing.	3,349
Wholesale Trade.	1,124
Retail Trade.	3,350
Transportation & Warehousing.	905
Information.	217
Finance & Insurance.	801
Real Estate & Rental/Leasing.	221
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services.	963
Management of Companies & Enterprises.	*
Administrative/Support/Waste.	808
Educational Services.	378
Health Care & Social Assistance.	4,207
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation.	246
Accommodation & Food Service.	2,543
Other Services (except Public Administration).	1,206
Federal Government.	131
State Government.	1,676
Local Government.	2,124

*Data not available because of disclosure suppression.
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, 2022.

HOUSING STOCK CONDITIONS, VALUE & GROSS RENT.

HOUSING STOCK CONDITIONS.

- ❖ **Tables 3.11 and 3.12, Pages 3.19 and 3.20**, identify a **Housing Stock Profile** for Buffalo County, including “units in structure” and “substandard housing” as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. A substandard unit is one that is lacking complete plumbing, plus the number of households with more than 1.01 persons per room, including bedrooms, within a housing unit.
- ❖ Between 2000 and 2019, both Buffalo County (overall) and the **Rural County**, including CPJs, increased in the total number of housing units. Buffalo County (overall) increased an estimated 3,652 housing units, while **Rural Buffalo County** increased an estimated 470 housing units. The majority of housing units in the County are comprised of a single unit.
- ❖ Of the 19,062 occupied housing units in Buffalo County, 34 were identified as lacking complete plumbing and 342 units were considered to be overcrowded.



TABLE 2.11
HOUSING STOCK PROFILE/UNITS IN STRUCTURE
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2000 & 2019 ESTIMATE*

	<u>Year</u>	<u>1 unit</u>	<u>2-9 units</u>	<u>10+ units</u>	<u>Other**</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Buffalo County</u>	2000	11,679	2,384	1,159	1,608	16,830
	2019	14,439	2,526	2,016	1,501	20,482
<u>Amherst</u>	2000	99	0	0	18	117
	2019	73	2	0	8	83
<u>Elm Creek</u>	2000	307	21	10	51	389
	2019	374	23	8	42	447
<u>Gibbon</u>	2000	495	77	21	76	669
	2019	611	42	37	58	748
<u>Kearney</u>	2000	6,734	2,187	1,118	973	11,012
	2019	8,937	2,339	1,706	977	13,959
<u>Miller</u>	2000	53	2	0	13	68
	2019	73	0	0	3	76
<u>Pleasanton</u>	2000	149	0	0	7	156
	2019	151	0	4	6	161
<u>Ravenna</u>	2000	539	29	0	16	584
	2019	587	49	36	20	692
<u>Riverdale</u>	2000	90	0	0	0	90
	2019	91	0	0	4	95
<u>Shelton</u>	2000	380	30	7	41	458
	2019	379	50	10	25	464
<u>Rural Buffalo County/CPJs</u>	2000	2,833	38	3	413	3,287
	2019	3,163	21	215	358	3,757

*Specified Data Used. 2019 Estimate subject to margin of error.

**Includes mobile homes and trailers.

Source: 2000 Census, 2015-2019 American Community Survey.

TABLE 2.12
HOUSING STOCK PROFILE
SUBSTANDARD HOUSING – HUD
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2019 ESTIMATE*

<u>Community</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Complete Plumbing</u>		<u>Lack of Complete Plumbing</u>		<u>Units with 1.01+ Persons per Room</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>% of Total</u>
Buffalo County	19,062	19,028	99.8%	34	0.2%	342	1.8%
Amherst	65	65	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Elm Creek	427	421	98.6%	6	1.4%	6	1.4%
Gibbon	719	719	100.0%	0	0.0%	13	1.8%
Kearney	12,987	12,979	99.9%	8	0.1%	222	1.7%
Miller	61	57	93.4%	4	6.6%	0	0.0%
Pleasanton	159	159	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Ravenna	606	602	99.3%	4	0.7%	5	0.8%
Riverdale	95	95	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Shelton	429	429	100.0%	0	0.0%	7	1.6%
Rural Buffalo County/CPJs	3,514	3,502	99.6%	12	0.3%	88	2.5%

*Specified Data Used. 2019 Estimate subject to margin of error.
Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey Estimate.

HOUSING OCCUPANCY/VACANCY

- ❖ **Table 2.13 highlights housing stock occupancy/vacancy status in Buffalo County, including each Community and respective CPJs and Rural Buffalo County, Nebraska. In 2022, Buffalo County contains an estimated 21,697 housing units, consisting of approximately 13,607 owner and 8,090 rental units.** Of these 21,697 units, approximately 1,742 are vacant, resulting in an overall, estimated housing vacancy rate of 8 percent. The 1,742 vacant housing units consist of an estimated 913 owner and 829 rental units, equaling an owner housing vacancy rate of 6.7 percent and a rental housing vacancy rate of 10.2 percent. The overall vacancy rate includes, but is not limited to any rented or sold but unoccupied residential dwelling unit, seasonal/vacation home, upper level downtown commercial buildings and vacant housing units used for storage or not currently on the market for sale or rent.
- ❖ **Rural Buffalo County/CPJs are comprised of an estimated 3,917 housing units (3,276 owner, 641 rental), of which 293 are vacant. Thus, the Balance of County/CPJs have an overall vacancy rate of 7.4 percent.**
- ❖ **The Adjusted Housing Vacancy Rate (AHVR) includes only vacant units that are available for year-round rent or purchase, meeting current housing code and having modern amenities. A vacancy rate of 6 percent is the minimum rate recommended for Buffalo County, to have sufficient housing available for new and existing residents. The overall, estimated AHVR for Buffalo County is 2.1 percent, which includes an AHVR for owner housing of 1.8 percent and 2.6 percent for rental housing. This concludes that Buffalo County has a deficiency of vacant, up-to-code owner and rental housing units.**
- ❖ **Rural Buffalo County/CPJs maintains an AHVR of 2.5 percent, including 2.1 percent for owner housing units and 5 percent for rental housing units.**
- ❖ Buffalo County, including Communities, CPJs and **Rural Buffalo County** should take a position to assist property owners in upgrading their housing units during the next 10 years. This can be accomplished by, both, building new homes and rehabilitating (economically feasible) existing housing units. Housing units that are severely deteriorated or dilapidated should be targeted for substantial rehabilitation or, in extreme cases, demolition and replacement.

TABLE 2.13
HOUSING STOCK OCCUPANCY/VACANCY STATUS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2022

	<u>Buffalo County</u>	<u>Amherst</u>	<u>Elm Creek</u>	<u>Gibbon</u>	<u>Kearney</u>
	21,697	93	449	767	14,975
a) Housing Stock	(O=13,607; R=8,090)	(O=76; R=17)	(O=331; R=118)	(O=511; R=256)	(O=8,313; R=6,662)
b) Vacant Housing Stock	1,742	7	62	86	1,068
c) Occupied Housing Stock	19,955	86	387	681	13,907
*Owner Occupied	12,694	70	295	463	7,843
*Renter Occupied	7,261	16	92	218	6,064
d) Housing Vacancy Rate*	8.0% (1,742)	7.5% (7)	13.8% (62)	11.2% (86)	7.1% (1,068)
*Owner Vacancy	6.7% (913)	7.9% (6)	10.9% (36)	9.4% (48)	5.6% (470)
*Renter Vacancy	10.2% (829)	5.9% (1)	22.0% (26)	14.8% (38)	8.9% (598)
e) Adjusted Vacancy Rate**	2.1% (456)	3.2% (3)	4.0% (18)	3.4% (26)	1.7% (256)
**Owner Vacancy	1.8% (247)	2.6% (2)	3.0% (10)	2.9% (15)	1.4% (116)
**Renter Vacancy	2.6% (209)	5.9% (1)	6.8% (8)	4.3% (11)	2.1% (140)

CONTINUED:

TABLE 2.13 (CONTINUED)
HOUSING STOCK OCCUPANCY/VACANCY STATUS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2022

	<u>Miller</u>	<u>Pleasanton</u>	<u>Ravenna</u>	<u>Riverdale</u>	<u>Shelton</u>	<u>Rural Buffalo County/CPJs</u>
	76	175	694	94	457	3,917
a) Housing Stock	(O=57; R=19)	(O=139; R=36)	(O=493; R=201)	(O=80; R=14)	(O=331; R=126)	(O=3,276; R=641)
b) Vacant Housing Stock	27	16	132	2	49	293
c) Occupied Housing Stock	49	159	562	92	408	3,624
*Owner Occupied	37	128	400	79	301	3,078
*Renter Occupied	12	31	162	13	107	546
d) Housing Vacancy Rate*	35.5% (27)	9.1% (16)	19.0% (132)	2.1% (2)	10.7% (49)	7.4% (293)
*Owner Vacancy	35.1% (20)	7.9% (11)	18.9% (93)	1.3% (1)	8.5% (30)	6.0% (198)
*Renter Vacancy	36.8% (7)	13.9% (5)	19.4% (39)	5.6% (1)	15.1% (19)	14.8% (95)
e) Adjusted Vacancy Rate**	10.5% (8)	3.4% (6)	3.9% (27)	0.0% (0)	3.3% (15)	2.5% (97)
**Owner Vacancy	10.5% (6)	2.9% (4)	3.9% (19)	0.0% (0)	3.0% (10)	2.1% (65)
**Renter Vacancy	10.5% (2)	5.6% (2)	4.0% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.0% (5)	5.0% (32)

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

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

Source: Buffalo County Communities, 2022.
 Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

HOUSING VALUE & GROSS RENT.

- ❖ The cost of housing in any Community is influenced by many factors, primarily the cost of construction, availability of land and infrastructure and, lastly, the organizational capacity of the Community or County to combine these issues into an applicable format and secure the appropriate housing resources, including land and money. Buffalo County is challenged to organize necessary resources to meet the needs of their residents, including both financial and organizational resources.
- ❖ **Table 2.14, Pages 3.25 and 3.26** identifies **owner occupied housing values and gross rent** in Buffalo County, from 2000 through 2032.
- ❖ Currently, the estimated Buffalo County **median owner housing value** is \$183,460. By 2032, the estimated median housing value is projected to increase an estimated 23.5 percent to \$226,650. The **Rural County**, including CPJs, is also projected to experience a substantial increase in housing values, increasing an estimated 32.1 percent through 2032, or from \$188,200 to \$248,600. The significant increase in both total and **Rural Buffalo County** are attributed to new housing developments in close proximity to Kearney. Housing units in this location have an estimated valuation in the \$100,000 to \$350,000 range.
- ❖ The 2022 estimated **median gross rent** for Buffalo County is \$808. The median gross rent is projected to increase an estimated 22.8 percent to \$992 by 2032. Gross rents in the **Rural County** are projected to increase by 17.7 percent through 2032 from \$803 to \$945.

TABLE 2.14
ESTIMATED MEDIAN GROSS RENT &
MEDIAN OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING VALUE
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Median Rent</u>	<u>Median Value Owner Housing</u>
<u>Buffalo County</u>	2000	\$402	\$87,600
	2019*	\$779	\$174,800
	2022	\$808	\$183,460
	2032	\$992	\$226,650
<u>Amherst</u>	2000	\$438	\$64,100
	2019*	\$717	\$92,000
	2022	\$745	\$94,937
	2032	\$885	\$109,550
<u>Elm Creek</u>	2000	\$458	\$65,500
	2019*	\$888	\$114,800
	2022	\$918	\$119,989
	2032	\$1,127	\$144,545
<u>Gibbon</u>	2000	\$404	\$72,200
	2019*	\$815	\$118,300
	2022	\$849	\$123,153
	2032	\$1,055	\$146,550
<u>Kearney</u>	2000	\$509	\$94,700
	2019*	\$767	\$178,900
	2022	\$799	\$187,763
	2032	\$996	\$246,400
<u>Miller</u>	2000	\$467	\$42,500
	2019*	**	\$40,000
	2022	\$595	\$60,120
	2032	\$653	\$68,100

CONTINUED:

TABLE 2.14 (CONTINUED)
ESTIMATED MEDIAN GROSS RENT &
MEDIAN OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING VALUE
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY /CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Median Rent</u>	<u>Median Value Owner Housing</u>
<u>Pleasanton</u>	2000	\$531	\$64,600
	2019*	\$936	\$115,600
	2022	\$962	\$120,968
	2032	\$1,157	\$146,600
<u>Ravenna</u>	2000	\$414	\$50,100
	2019*	\$611	\$92,400
	2022	\$642	\$96,853
	2032	\$755	\$118,100
<u>Riverdale</u>	2000	\$400	\$67,100
	2019*	\$850	\$122,500
	2022	\$891	\$128,332
	2032	\$1,115	\$156,165
<u>Shelton</u>	2000	\$466	\$60,700
	2019*	\$658	\$108,400
	2022	\$686	\$113,421
	2032	\$786	\$137,400
Rural Buffalo County/CPJs	2000	\$517	\$95,200
	2019*	\$775	\$179,400
	2022	\$803	\$188,200
	2032	\$945	\$248,600

*Specified Data Used. 2019 Estimate subject to margin of error.

**Data not available due to disclosure suppression.

Source: 2000 Census, 2015-2019 American Community Survey.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.



SECTION 3

**LAND USE PRESERVATION &
DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.**

LAND USE PRESERVATION & DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES.

INTRODUCTION

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

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

A **qualitative research** process included meetings with the Buffalo County Planning & Zoning Commission, comprised of appointed rural residents of the County, representing various points of the County. Public meetings were also held in the Communities of Elm Creek, Gibbon and Ravenna, allowing both rural and community residents the opportunity to discuss future land use activities in the County.

An important activity of the **qualitative research** process was the implementation of the **Buffalo County, Nebraska County-Wide Opinion Survey**. The **Survey** allowed the **Buffalo County Citizenry** to provide their opinion of future land use activities in the **Rural County areas**. A total of **252 residents** of the County completed the **Survey**. The results of the **Survey**, included as “**Appendix I**” of this **Plan**, provided future **Rural County** land use priority preference by the citizenry and direction in the preparation of the following **Land Use Preservation and Development Initiatives**.

Quantitative research activities included the collection, analysis and projection of pertinent population, income, economic and agricultural data from local, State and National sources, all in an effort to understand both past and present demographic and land use development trends in **Rural Buffalo County, Buffalo County, Nebraska** has, is and will continue to grow in population during the next 10 years and the **Rural County areas** will be directly impacted by this growth. Planning for **Land Use Preservation and Development Initiatives** will be a necessity to maintain the quality life style and economic prosperity currently experienced in **Rural Buffalo County, Nebraska**. An important statistical analysis of land use in Buffalo County was the preparation of a **Land Use Matrix**, presenting both the current and projected pertinent land use requirements in the County and highlighted in **Section 4** of this **Comprehensive Plan**.

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

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

1. POPULATION & PLAN PARTICIPATION & IMPLEMENTATION.

- Buffalo County, Nebraska is expected to continue a **population growth pattern** of near 1 percent per year, reaching an estimated population of 54,346 by 2032. **Rural Buffalo County** currently has an estimated population of 6,860. This population base is expected to increase an estimated 389 persons, to 7,249 during the next 10 years. This represents a very stable population base, for both the County, overall, as well as the **Rural County, requiring planned housing, public facilities and transportation networks and economic development activities, including agricultural activities for the future.**
- A possible *County-wide Growth Initiative*, primarily consisting of increasing full-time employment positions by an additional 1,500 by 2032, would increase the Buffalo County population by an additional 1,375, including an estimated 364 in **Rural Buffalo County**, resulting in the two population bases being an estimated 56,078 and **7,513**, respectively.
- The **future image of Rural Buffalo County** will greatly depend on the ability of residents to accept changes in the population and economic structure and their willingness to be a part of the ongoing planning and implementation process of the County.
- A stable population base in **Rural Buffalo County**, with potential for growth during the next 10 years, will require local leadership to **foster and market the values of rural residents** to encourage the creation of organized local action to preserve and strengthen the **Rural County**.
- The **success of the Comprehensive Plan** will greatly depend upon **planned programs of citizen participation**, to allow local residents the opportunity to both monitor and provide input for preservation and development activities in **Rural Buffalo County**.



- A stable and/or increasing population in Buffalo County, by 2032, will require local leadership to continue to **strengthen relationships** between **Rural Buffalo County** and each Community, to conduct planning practices supportive of proper land usage, economic growth, housing, public facilities and services, transportation and recreation opportunities, as well as appropriate planning and zoning administration procedures to ensure the proper implementation of each component of the **Comprehensive Plan**.
- Local Buffalo County leadership will need to continue to take an active role in **marketing the development potential of Rural Buffalo County** supporting the broadening of the local economic base and expanding employment opportunities. Emphasis will be placed on **agricultural related commercial and industrial types, supportive of the local Rural Buffalo County**, with attention given to the location of such business types, so as to not interfere with the local agricultural operations.



- Maintain and utilize the **Comprehensive Plan** as the **primary tool for decision making**, regarding the preservation and development of land areas in **Rural Buffalo County**.
- The **implementation of the Comprehensive Plan** should include the coordination of local **Rural County** groups and organizations to carry-out these Planning Initiatives.
- The Buffalo County Planning and Zoning Commission should maintain an **annual review process** of the **Comprehensive Plan and Zoning and Subdivision Regulations**, coupled with changes, modifications and/or amendments prepared upon consensus of the Commission and the general public.

2. PRESERVATION OF EXISTING CONDITIONS IN RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY.

- Local leadership should continue to promote the **preservation of the agricultural industry in Rural Buffalo County**, including the diversification of crop developments. Historically, agriculture has been the primary income producing activity for the **Rural County**. This is anticipated to remain as such through the 10-year planning period (2033). This will include **protecting the natural resources and living environs of Rural Buffalo County** by controlling and prohibiting, in specific regions, large scale intensive livestock/confinement facilities in areas deemed inappropriate for such activities.
- The **preservation of the existing housing stock in Rural Buffalo County** should be a priority initiative of the **Comprehensive Plan**, during the next 10 years, focusing, first, on ensuring that safe and decent housing types exist for both existing and future farmsteads. *Non-agricultural, both large lot and planned residential subdivisions will need to be planned and developed with little or no intent to infringe on the operation of general agricultural activities.*
- Appropriate **public services and facilities** should be maintained and planned accordingly, to service the population base in **Rural Buffalo County**. This would include, but not be limited to Park/Recreation Areas, including State Recreation and Wildlife Areas, as well as built facilities associated with local public providers of goods and services.
- The preservation of the **Rural Buffalo County transportation system** will require proper planning and implementation of all levels of local road networks, with emphasis on the safe transport of people and goods. Both the State and County One-Year Road Plans should be “key” in directing a proper, modern road system in **Rural Buffalo County**.

- Preserve and expand **existing commercial and industrial land uses**, as needed, with emphasis on commercial and industrial types that benefit **Rural Buffalo County** residents, especially the local agricultural sector.
- Encourage the use of **Conservation Easements** in environmentally sensitive areas of the County, closely associated with the Platte River and South Loup River Corridors. Support the preservation activities of Nebraska Crane Trust, Nebraska Audubon Society and the Platte River Recovery Implementation Plan.



3. FUTURE DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING PRACTICES.

- **Maintain and follow the Land Use Plan for Rural Buffalo County**, which is based upon present conditions and the sound forecast of future needs. **By 2033, additional land acreage will be needed in Rural Buffalo County for land conservation easements, public/quasi-public uses, park/recreation uses, non-farmstead residential dwellings and commercial and industrial land uses.**
- **Coordinate all land development and planning activities, including land use changes** with the input of the general public and County and State officials.
- Ensure that **all developments in Rural Buffalo County conform to uniform planning standards.** Evaluate the concepts of “**permissive**” and “**special permitted**” **land uses** throughout the rural County, as it pertains to future developments. Special permitted uses should contain all land use provisions associated with permissive uses, with the addition of other development and/or operational conditions as deemed necessary by the County.
- Implement zoning and other policies/regulations that will provide incentives for maintenance of **agricultural lands for traditional agricultural uses.**
- **General farming practices** should be the priority agricultural land use type in **Rural Buffalo County**, followed by confined livestock facilities.

- Utilize the **Land Use Plan** and associated **Zoning Regulations** as a means to ensure that all development efforts in **Rural Buffalo County** result in the preservation and protection of the **highest concentration of irrigated and dry land crop production areas** along the South Loup and Platte River valleys, generally located in the northern half of the County. Emphasis on groundwater protection and preservation of agricultural land uses should be emphasized.
- **Confined livestock facilities** should be classified as agricultural uses and allowable as either a **Use-By-Right** or a **special use permit**, as per the Zoning Regulations, depending upon size and location.
- The **development of confined livestock confinement facilities and operations** should be avoided in **Rural Buffalo County** areas containing sensitive soils conditions. Regions along the Platte River (generally south of the Interstate 80 Corridor) and adjacent the South Loup River contain the highest concentration of sensitive soils conditions. Consider an **“Agricultural Protection Zone”** in the northern portion of the County that could potentially support intensive livestock confinement facilities.
- Future **non-agricultural developments in Rural Buffalo County are equipped with an adequate, modern utility systems.**
- **Avoid non-agricultural developments that could result in the contamination of soils and ground water resources.**
- **Encourage compatible adjacent land uses** throughout the County by implementing Zoning Regulations and other local planning policies suited to the unique characteristics and location of each use requested.
- **Limit future non-agricultural developments in Rural Buffalo County** to locations that are relatively free of environmental constraints relating to soils, slope, flood plain, drainage, ground water, endangered species or other natural resources.
- Enforce State and Local regulations protecting the environment from developments resulting in **contamination or pollutants.**
- Require all developments in **Rural Buffalo County** to be consistent with zoning and other related regulations set forth for flood prone areas.

- Review and, if deemed necessary, modify the local sign ordinances for Rural Buffalo County, for both commercial and industrial businesses and within public right-of-way.
- Practice modern development measures in the **Rural County** that limit or reduce flood hazards, control water run-off and enhance the quality of surface and ground water.
- Promote the **development of housing in Rural Buffalo County**, considering a variety of styles, prices, densities and quantities, in locations consistent with the Land Use Plan. Ensure that all new residential subdivisions contain paved roads. Also, consider a Zoning District for new residential subdivisions that allow for smaller lot sizes.
- The estimated population gain (up to 653) in **Rural Buffalo County**, during the next 10 years, would require an additional, estimated **285 new housing units**.
- Ensure that future residential development practices will not be **detrimental to the environment**.
- Encourage **future residential development in Rural Buffalo County** to be located in close proximity to communities, or at appropriate locations along paved transportation corridors.
- **Non-farm dwellings should also be encouraged to locate in rural areas near** the City of Kearney Planning Jurisdiction and generally within one half mile of Ravenna Road and Highway 10, 30 and 40 Corridors.
- **Develop organizational structures** to improve housing conditions throughout **Rural Buffalo County**, including a County-wide or Regional Housing Development Corporation.
- Create and support an ongoing **County-wide housing rehabilitation program** for both owner and renter housing.
- Create a program to **demolish substantially dilapidated housing units** within **Rural Buffalo County**, with emphasis on units located in close proximity to Buffalo County Communities.



- Identify and rehabilitate **historically significant housing units** in **Rural Buffalo County**.
- Review and re-evaluate **special permitted requirements** for both wind and solar energy conversion systems, including **commercial wind and solar farms** in **Rural Buffalo County**, to harmonize the Zoning Regulations with the desires of the Rural Buffalo County citizenry, while considering the health and safety of the general public and minimalizing any economic and/or personal liabilities to the County. Such review should address the potential decommissioning of these systems and the proper reclamation of the subject land areas.
- Evaluate land use and zoning requirements of any **private/public venues** and “**Airbnb**” facilities, to ensure both the health and safety of the general public and minimize any economic and/or environmental liabilities to the County, as well as collect any and all appropriate fees and taxes from such land use.
- **Provide adequate, efficient and appropriate public utilities and services** to both new and existing agricultural and residential developments in **Rural Buffalo County**.
- **Maintain and plan and develop, as needed, public facility and utility systems** in **Rural Buffalo County**. Ongoing communication with public service providers will be pertinent to the proper location and design and development of any new facility and/or systems. **A Public Facilities Plan is a primary component of a Comprehensive Plan**.
- Provide for the equitable distribution of public facilities to meet the **cultural, educational, social, recreational, safety and health needs of the Rural County**.
- **Ensure adequate open and recreational space and trail systems** are both maintained and developed in **Rural Buffalo County**. Emphasize recreational opportunities associated with the Platte, Wood and South Loup River Corridors.
- Provide facilities and services in **Rural Buffalo County necessary to prevent degradation of the environment**, including modern sewage treatment, refuse collection and disposal, street cleaning and similar environmental control processes as necessary. This includes the proper disposal of animal waste.
- Ensure rules and regulations governing **safe drinking water and sewage treatment** are adhered to.
- Provide **adequate public health, safety and crime prevention systems** throughout the **County**.

- **Promote a social and cultural environment that provides opportunities for all residents to experience, develop and share their values, abilities, ambitions and heritage.**
- Continue to support the **evolution of the public educational system** and ensure that it is capable of elevating the **Rural County's overall educational level.**
- Expand the availability of **supportive services to youth and older adults in Rural Buffalo County.**
- Utilize the **County's and State's One & Six Year Road Plans** to both maintain and provide new and improved transportation networks in **Rural Buffalo County. Include and maintain a Transportation Plan in the Comprehensive Plan.**
- Coordinate **transportation systems with the planning and development of other elements** of the **Rural Buffalo County**, including public utilities and facilities.
- Continue to develop County road systems in accordance with the standard State of Nebraska "Functional Street Classifications".
- Support the **expansion of the agricultural businesses and industries in Rural Buffalo County.** Ensure all **economic development activities** in the **Rural County** are consistent with the **Comprehensive Plan.**
- Promote **cooperative economic development activities** in **Rural Buffalo County** with **neighboring Counties.**
- Encourage the development and redevelopment of **local businesses at strategic locations along County highway corridors** that are within or adjacent the Planning Jurisdiction of Buffalo County Communities.
- **Rural highway commercial uses are recommended** along the north side of Highway 30, between the Gibbon and Kearney Planning Jurisdictions. Industrial uses in **Rural Buffalo County** are recommended to locate along the east side of Highway 10, between the Interstate 80 and Highway 30 Corridors.



- Encourage **joint Community/County economic development activities in Rural Buffalo County** that create permanent employment opportunities with competitive wages, especially for low- to moderate income persons and families.
- Ensure that all industrial and commercial developments occur within and/or adjacent the Communities of Buffalo County, or in rural areas with **adequate access to transportation systems and utilities**.
- **The Comprehensive Plan will include an Energy Plan directed at both documenting and monitoring the consumption of energy and conservation policies** for all sectors in **Rural Buffalo County** and promote of the implementation of alternative energy sources such as Wind, Solar, Geothermal, Biomass and Methane, to reduce the reliance on traditional fuel and energy sources.
- **Provide for the use of alternative energy systems** to supplement individual residential and business, in **Rural Buffalo County**, with electric consumption in accordance with Nebraska State Statue 70-1012, as amended August, 2009. The use of Solar, Methane, Wind, Biomass, Hydropower and Geothermal Energy systems on individual properties to supplement or sell excess energy produced to the local utility district, a process known as **“Net Metering.”**
- Encourage and promote the development and use of **broadband and telecommunication technologies** throughout **Rural Buffalo County**, with an emphasis for provisions in the underserved areas of Buffalo County. Recently, the Nebraska Public Service Commission awarded \$3.2 Million from the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program to Kearney area communities that could assist in making broadband technologies more accessible to providers in **Rural Buffalo County**.
- Support the creation of **public-private partnerships** with the Buffalo County Planning & Zoning Commission, Board of Commissioners, local municipal governments, public power districts, communications providers and private investments in providing **broadband infrastructure** to underserved areas of **Rural Buffalo County**. Information regarding service providers and coverage throughout the **Rural County** is discussed in **Section 5** of this **Comprehensive Plan**.



SECTION 4
LAND USE PROFILE & PLAN.

BUFFALO

DRAFT

LAND USE PROFILE & PLAN.

INTRODUCTION.

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

THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

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

Buffalo County contains an estimated total land area of 624,000 acres, or 975 square miles. **Rural Buffalo County contains an estimated 550,000 acres.** Major waterways include the Platte, Wood and South Loup Rivers, which generally flow from west to east. Soils are primarily used for pasture, range land and crop production.

SOILS.

The Soil Conservation Services has identified 10 soils associations in the Soil Survey of Buffalo County. These include Coly-Uly-Holdrege, Valentine-Orthello, Wood River, Blendon-Thurman, Wood River-Slickspots-Gibbon-Saline, Gibbon-Leshara-Alda, Platte-Loamy Alluvial Land-Boel, Holdrege-Hall, Kenesaw and Hoard-Hull-Cozad Associations. **Illustration 4.1, Page 4.6**, identifies the location of soils associations in Buffalo County. The map identifies soil types that are conducive for certain types of development. The following narrative describes the general characteristics of the 10 soil types. For a detailed analysis, refer to the Soil Survey of Buffalo County, Nebraska.

❖ **Coly-Uly-Holdrege Association.**

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

❖ **Valentine-Orthello Association.**

The **Valentine-Orthello Association** is located mainly in the northeast part of the County. The Association is described as *"deep, undulating to rolling, excessively drained and well drained, mainly sandy soils in uplands."* Valentine Soils are located on uplands and both Valentine and Orthello soils are found in wind reworked loamy and sandy material. Soil blowing causes a hazard, especially to cultivation. This Association makes up about 5 percent of the County. All soils in the Association are impacted by rapid permeability which have seepage limitations for sewage lagoons and slight problems with septic tank absorption fields. **Soils conditions in this Association are good in terms of bearing capacity for building foundations.**

❖ **Wood River Association.**

The Wood River Association is mainly located in the southeast part of the County. The soils are characterized as *"deep, nearly level, moderately well drained soils that have a claypan, on stream terraces."* The Association occupies about 4 percent of the County. The Wood River Association soils are found along the Platte and Wood Rivers. Irrigation has overcome poor dryland crop production due to clay subsoil that slows root penetration. Irrigated crops have made this Association one of the most productive areas in Buffalo County. Slow permeability causes moderate limitations for sewage lagoons and septic tank absorption fields. **Fair conditions exist due to high shrink-swell potentials of these soils for building foundations in terms of bearing capacity.**

❖ **Blendon-Thurman Association.**

The **Blendon-Thurman Association** is mainly located along the northern part of the County. The soils are characterized as *"deep, nearly level to gently sloping, well drained to excessively drained loamy and sandy soils on stream terraces."* The Association comprises about 2 percent of the County. The soils in this Association are located in highest concentrations along the South Loup River with more limited areas along the Platte River. In general, soils along the Platte River are irrigated while those along the South Loup River are dry-farmed or are in native grasses. **Bearing capacity presents only slight problems for these soils, while moderately rapid permeability requires sealing or lining in certain regions for sewage lagoons.**

❖ **Wood River-Slickspots-Gibbon-Saline Association.**

The **Wood River-Slickspots-Gibbon-Saline Association** is located in the southwestern part of the County. The soils are described as *"deep, nearly level, moderately well drained and somewhat poorly drained, mainly saline and alkali soils on low stream terraces."* Wood River-Slickspots soils are found in the stream terraces of the Platte River Valley. Gibbon soils are nearly-level soils on bottom lands and stream terraces. This Association comprises about 1 percent of the County. The primary uses for this Association are irrigated crop lands and livestock. **This soil association has limitations for sewage lagoons and septic tank filter fields due to high water table. The water table depth, two to six feet, severely limits septic tanks and filter fields, while rapid permeability also severely limits sewage lagoons.**

❖ **Gibbon-Leshara-Alda Association.**

The **Gibbon-Leshara-Alda Association** borders the Platte and South Loup Rivers. This association is characterized as *"deep and moderately deep, nearly level, somewhat poorly drained silty and loamy soils on bottom lands."* This Association comprises about 5 percent of the County. Gibbon and Leshara soils are nearly level. Leshara soils are found on the bottom lands bordering the Platte and Southern Loup River. Alda soils are nearly flat and can be found on the bottom lands of the Platte River. **The soils along the Platte River should primarily be used for irrigated cropland, while the remainder should be used for hayland.**

❖ **Platte-Loamy Alluvial Land-Boel Association.**

The **Platte-Loamy Alluvial Land-Boel Association** is located on the bottom lands of the South Loup and Platte Rivers. The Association is described as *"very shallow to deep, nearly level, mainly somewhat poorly drained loamy soils on bottom lands."* The Association covers about 8 percent of the County. The Platte and Loamy alluvial soils are found along the Platte River. The Boel soils are along the South Loup River. Over one-fourth of the soils are covered by water and another third is covered by trees. The primary use for the soils is range or hayland. Soil-blowing and erosion are hazards associated with this soil type. **Severe limitations include septic tanks and sewage lagoons, bearing capacity is good when soils are dry, which is difficult because depth to water table is two to six feet. Nearly all of the lands of this Association are within the 100-year flood plain of Buffalo County.**

❖ **Holdrege-Hall Association.**

The **Holdrege-Hall Association** is located primarily in the central part of the County. This Association is described as *"deep, nearly level, well drained silty soils on uplands."* The Association covers about 11 percent of the County. Holdrege soils are located on rounded ridge tops while Hall soils are found on the flats of uplands. This Association is used primarily for cropland, and over half is irrigated. Farms in this Association also raise cattle. **Development limitations in this Association are due to moderate permeability, requiring lining in certain instances for lagoons.**

❖ **Kenesaw Association.**

The **Kenesaw Association** is located in the northeast part of the county. This Association is characterized as *"deep nearly level to gently undulating, well-drained silty soils on uplands"*. The Kenesaw Association covers about 3 percent of the County. Kenesaw soils are found in loamy material that may have been reworked by the wind. This Association is primarily used for farmland. Grain is the main crop and most farms have cattle and hogs. **The only moderate development limitations in this Association exist for septic tanks filter fields and sewage lagoons.**

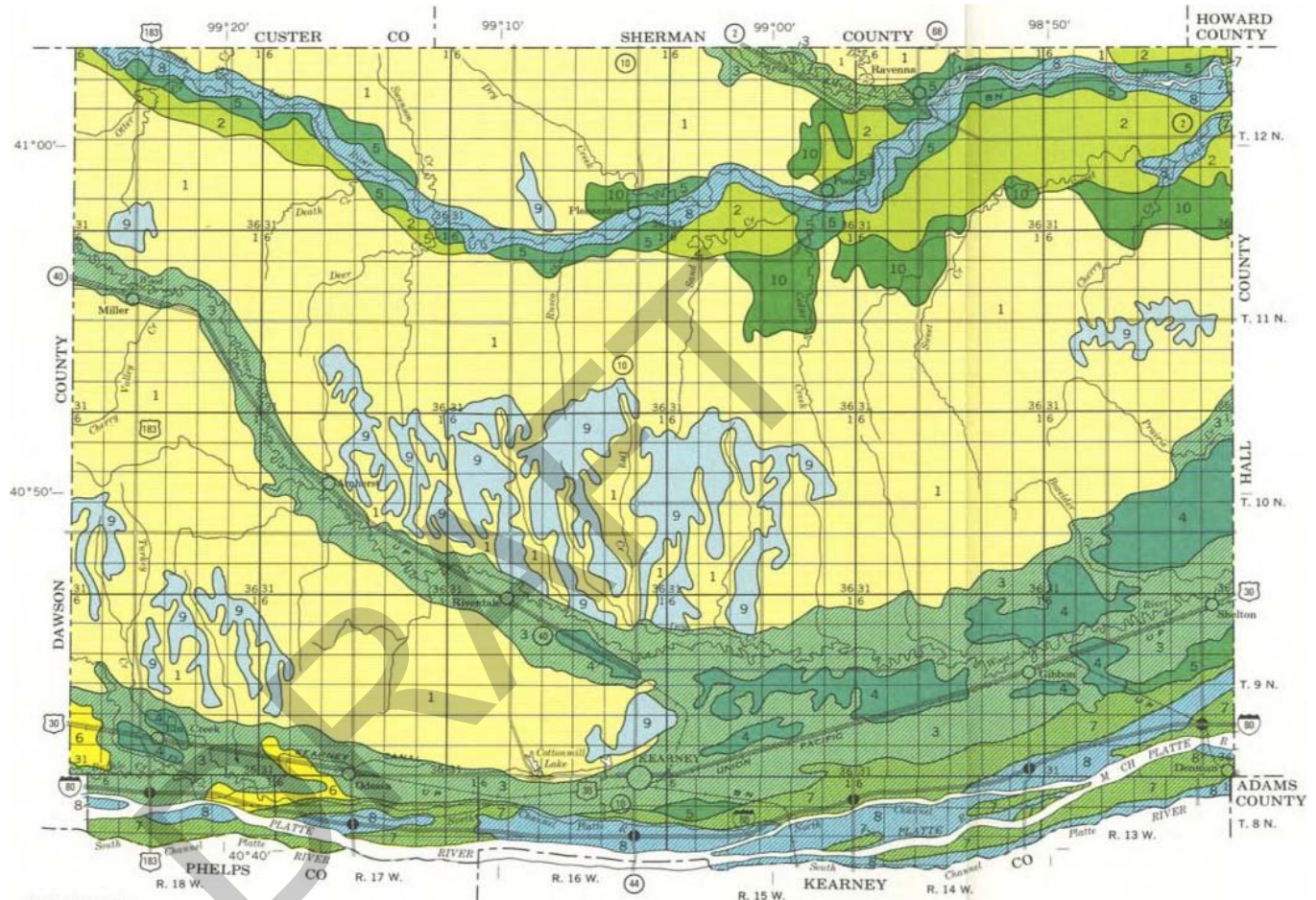
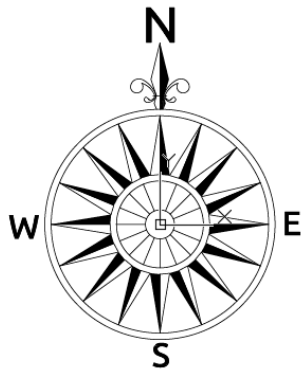
❖ **Hord-Hull-Cozad Association.**

The **Hord-Hull-Cozad Association** is located along the Platte and Wood Rivers. It is characterized as *"deep, nearly level, well-drained silty soils on stream terraces."* The Association covers 14 percent of the County. All of the soil types are found along the stream terraces of the Platte and Wood Rivers. Most of the soils are used for irrigated crops. The only moderate limitations for development impact septic tanks and sewage lagoons, while good bearing capacity supports development.











GENERAL SOIL ASSOCIATION MAP.

BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA

ILLUSTRATION 4.1



LEGEND

- | | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|---|--|--|---|
|  1 | Coly-Uly-Holdrege Association |  4 | Wood River Association |  7 | Gibbon-Leshara-Alda Association |
|  2 | Valentine-Ortello Association |  5 | Blendon-Thurman-Valentine Association |  8 | Platte-Loamy Alluvial Land-Boel Association |
|  3 | Hord-Hall-Cozad Association |  6 | Wood River-Slickspot-Gibbon-Saline Association |  9 | Holdrege-Hall Association |
| | | | |  10 | Kenesaw Association |

CLIMATE.

The climate of Buffalo County is continental and characterized by widely ranging seasonal temperatures and rapidly changing weather patterns. The temperature ranges from an average daily minimum of 13 degrees in January to an average daily maximum in July of 87 degrees. The annual total precipitation is 25 inches and annual total snowfall is 24 inches. Thunderstorms are common and tornados occur occasionally.

WATERSHEDS AND TOPOGRAPHY.

The topography and terrain of Buffalo County is varied. Erosion by the South Loup, Platte and Wood Rivers have modified the topography. The topography of Buffalo County is generally comprised of plains that have been modified by wind and stream erosion and deposition into high divides or tablelands that are separated by valleys. Two-thirds of the County is mainly comprised of uplands in the northern portion of the County. An area of sandhills is located to the east and south of Ravenna. The valleys of the Platte and Wood Rivers are broader, and the terraces consist of broad flats that have silty soils. The valley of the South Loup River is less than a mile wide in most places and is comprised of sandy soils. Nearly all of the County is well drained, except in the Sandhills where adequate surface drainage has not been established. The Platte River flows eastward through Buffalo County.

GROUNDWATER.

Surface drainage and streams account for a small percentage of the Buffalo County water resources. The majority of the water is in an underground aquifer, the Ogallala formation. Groundwater is of good quality. The underground water supply for the County is part of an aquifer which flows across the majority of the state. Groundwater levels have declined in the central and western portions of Buffalo County. The depth of water ranges from 10 feet in some stream valleys to over 300 feet in upland areas. The surface water in drainage ways and depressions seeps into the aquifer to recharge it, thus the surface and ground water are part of one interactive system which can not be separated.

The underground water supply is vital to the region. It is the source of water for numerous municipal and irrigation wells. Any endangerment to the supply threatens the public's health as well as the vital farming economics of the region. Therefore, the natural resource must be protected to secure the prosperity of Buffalo County. The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) regulates ground water quality and quantity. To assist local municipalities with protecting their municipal drinking water supply, the NDEE 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 federal laws: 1) determines protection area, 2) identify contamination sources, 3) develop a contaminant source management program, 4) emergency, contingency and long-term planning and 5) public education and participation.

EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS.

An Existing and Future Land Use Matrix for Buffalo County, from 2022 to 2032, is presented in Table 4.1, Page 4.9. Buffalo County, Nebraska, consists of an estimated 624,000 acres of land in south central Nebraska. Currently, an estimated 75,602 acres are encompassed by the planning jurisdictions of each Community in the County. An estimated 4,672 acres consist of water area. **Since 2012, the Planning Jurisdictions of the Cities of Kearney and Ravenna have expanded due to local annexation procedures.** Rural Buffalo County consists of an estimated 548,398 acres, comprised of a variety of land uses including, but not limited to agricultural, commercial, industrial, public/quasi-public and park and recreation areas.

The **Existing Land Use Map, Illustration 4.2, Page 4.10,** serves as the basis for establishing a **Future Land Use Plan for Rural Buffalo County.** The **Existing Land Use Map** highlights the impact of concentrations of rural dwellings, commercial businesses and agricultural areas throughout the County.

EXISTING LAND USES.

❖ Agricultural Uses.

Undeveloped, agricultural land for crop harvest and livestock production are the most prolific rural land uses in Rural Buffalo County. An estimated 422,516 acres of land in the Rural County are utilized for general agricultural purposes and are not associated with any land conservation easements/restrictions. Additional information regarding land in farms for the entirety of Buffalo County, as well as statistics from the Nebraska Agricultural Census are included in this Section.

TABLE 4.1
LAND USE MATRIX-PRESERVATION/DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2022-2032

POPULATIONS

2022 – 50,703

2032 – 54,346

2032 (CGI) – 56,078

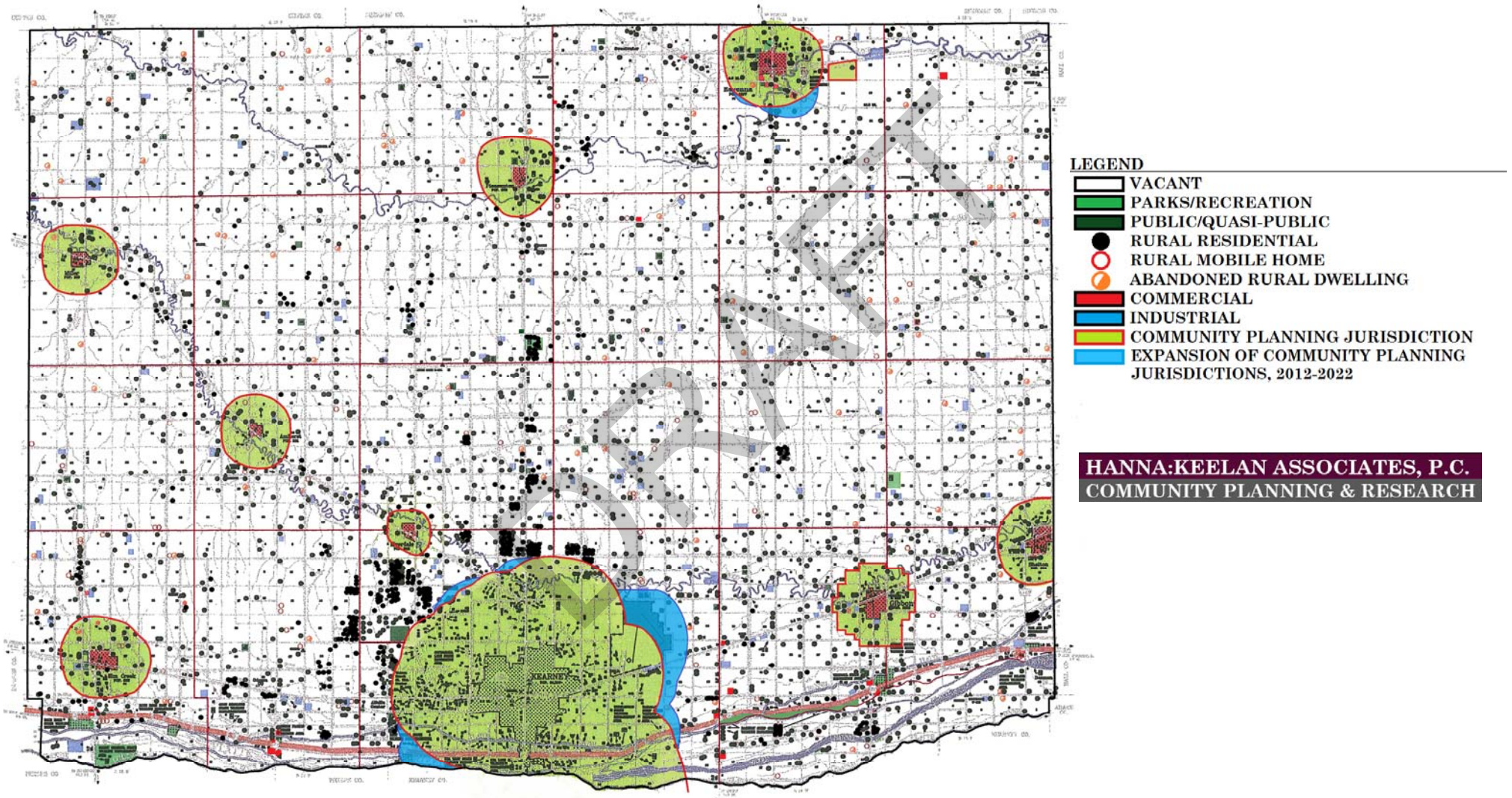
<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Land Area (Acres)</u>		
	2022	2032	2032 (CGI)
- Community & Associated Planning Jurisdictions	75,602	76,705	77,230
- General Agricultural (Including Farmsteads)	422,516	415,265.7	412,588.7
- Land Conservation Easements [^]	100,665.8	108,700	110,230
- Public/Quasi-Public	231	249	260
- Parks/Recreation	1,653.3	1,833.3	1,843.3
- <i>State Recreation Areas</i>	<i>373.4</i>	<i>373.4</i>	<i>373.4</i>
- <i>Wildlife Management Areas</i>	<i>1,279.9</i>	<i>1,279.9</i>	<i>1,279.9</i>
- <i>Other</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>190</i>
- Residential (Non-Farmsteads)	13,100	13,464	14,000
- Commercial	588.1	606	620
- <i>In Commercial-Zoned Districts</i>	<i>94.3</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>105</i>
- <i>In Non-Commercial Zoned Districts*</i>	<i>493.8</i>	<i>506</i>	<i>515</i>
- Industrial	2,439.9	2,505	2,556
- <i>In Industrial-Zoned Districts</i>	<i>554.4</i>	<i>582</i>	<i>595</i>
- <i>In Non-Industrial Zoned Districts*</i>	<i>1,885.5</i>	<i>1,923</i>	<i>1,961</i>
Total Land Area	619,328	619,328	619,328
Water Area	4,672	4,672	4,672
TOTAL ESTIMATED ACRES[^]	624,000	624,000	624,000

*Operations granted by Special Use Permit.

[^]Comprises land conservation easements with Nebraska Crane Trust, Platte River Recovery Implementation Plan and Nebraska Audubon Society.

Source: Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

**EXISTING LAND USE MAP.
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
ILLUSTRATION 4.2**

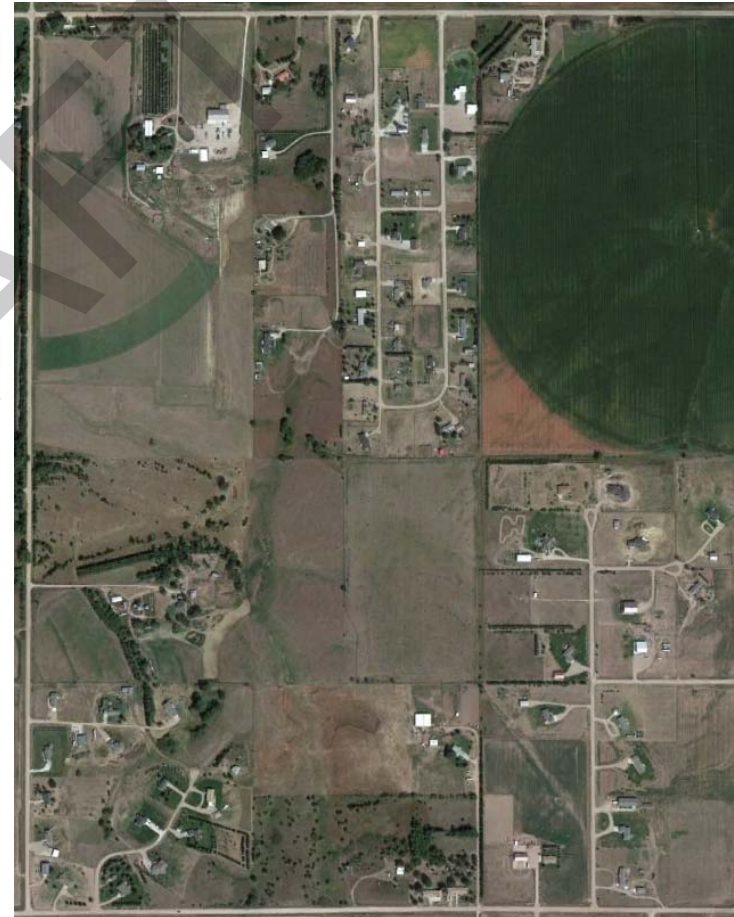


❖ Rural Residential Development (Farmsteads & Residential Subdivisions).

The **Existing Land Use Map** indicates rural dwellings exist throughout Buffalo County in areas where soil conditions are permissible for development. Most rural residential dwellings are located along hard surfaced and gravel roads, with larger concentrations located along the Highway 10, 30 and 40 Corridors.

The majority of non-farm dwellings are constructed on large lots of three acres or more. Non-farm dwellings have been developing in increasing numbers in the south-central portion of the County, generally concentrated north of Interstate 80 and north and west of the Kearney Planning Jurisdiction. Flood plains, wetlands and lands with limited access limit the development of non-farm dwellings south of the Interstate 80 Corridor. An estimated 13,011 acres of land in Buffalo County is dedicated to non-farmstead residential developments, including single family residential subdivisions.

Buffalo County Staff identified significant residential development activity has, and continues to occur in Riverdale Township, located northwest of the City of Kearney. The western portion of this Township is located outside of the Kearney two-mile planning jurisdiction. New residential development is also in progress in the eastern portions of Odessa Township and along the Highway 10 Corridor in Rusco Township, south of the Community of Pleasanton.



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

Public/quasi-public land uses, such as churches, cemeteries and rural utility substations are scattered throughout Rural Buffalo County and account for an estimated 231 acres. **Wildlife management and state recreation land uses** are generally concentrated along or in close proximity to the Platte River. These wildlife management and recreation areas are detailed in **Section 5** of this **Comprehensive Plan**.

Park and recreation lands in Rural Buffalo County comprise an estimated 1,653 total acres. This includes an estimated 373.4 acres dedicated to State recreation areas and 1,279.9 acres for wildlife management areas.



❖ Land Conservation.

Land conservation efforts in Buffalo County are generally conducted by State and National non-profit efforts. This includes Nebraska Crane Trust, Nebraska Audubon Society and land designated as part of the Platte River Recovery Implementation Plan. Over 100,000 acres of land in Rural Buffalo County are dedicated to these conservation efforts. Activities in land conservation include restoration of physical, hydrological and biological habitats for migratory birds and other wildlife. The Platte River Recovery Implementation Plan focuses on similar activities along the entirety of the Platte River Basin, including Buffalo County, while also analyzing and documenting river and stream flow data and adaptive management in mitigating potential hazards.

❖ Commercial & Industrial Uses.

Commercial and Industrial uses are generally located within the Cities and Villages and their associated planning jurisdictions in the County, as well as along the Interstate 80 Corridor and associated interchanges with National, State and County highways. Commercial and industrial land uses are functioning throughout Buffalo County in areas both zoned and not zoned for a particular use.

An estimated 588.1 acres in Rural Buffalo County are being utilized for commercial uses. An estimated 94.3 acres, or 16 percent are located in areas zoned for commercial use, while the remaining 84 percent, or 493.8 acres are not zoned for commercial use, but have been granted via Special Use Permits.

An estimated 2,439.9 acres of industrial land uses exist in Rural Buffalo County, a total of 554.4 acres. An estimated 22.7 percent are zoned for industrial uses, while the majority (77.3%) are not zoned for such use.



AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION STATISTICS.

NUMBER AND SIZE OF FARMS/RANCHES.

The development of new, small scale farms/ranches has been the trend in Buffalo County between 2007 and 2017. Statistics included in the Nebraska Census of Agriculture are released every five years; the latest being 2017.

The number and size of farms/ranches, identified in **Table 4.2**, indicates that the number of farms/ranches in the “1 to 9” and “10 to 49” acre categories experienced the largest increases. The “1 to 9” category increased by a total of 32 farms/ranches, or 59.3 percent, between 2007 and 2017. The “10 to 49” acre category increased by 36 farms/ranches, or 25.3 percent in the same time period, despite an overall decrease from 2012 to 2017. Large scale, 1,000+ acre farms/ranches declined by 18 (0.6%), and “500 to 999” acre farms declined by 33 (18.8%).

The average farm/ranch size has decreased by 14.1 percent, from 645 in 2007 to 554 acres in 2017. The decrease in the number of large farms and a decrease in average farm/ranch size suggests the disaggregation of some large farms and the repurposing of farmland for other uses, such as pasture or grazing lands. This may have a significant impact on the County’s economy as agriculture is the main source of income.

<u>Size</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>% Change 2007 - 2012</u>	<u>% Change 2007 - 2017</u>
1 to 9 Acres	54	75	86	+46.7%	+59.3%
10 to 49 Acres	142	233	178	+64.1%	+25.3%
50 to 179 Acres	219	204	206	-6.8%	-5.9%
180 to 499 Acres	165	206	165	+24.8%	0.0%
500 to 999 Acres	176	152	143	-13.6%	-18.8%
1,000 to Acres or More	193	176	175	-8.8%	-0.6%
Total Farms	949	1,046	953	+10.2%	+0.4%
Total Crop Land	371,615	342,337	324,488	-7.9%	-12.7%
Land in Farms	612,171	580,579	528,404	-5.2%	-13.7%
Average Farm Size	645	555	554	-14.0%	-14.1%

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

CROP PRODUCTION TRENDS.

Table 4.3 identifies the **status of crop production** in Buffalo County from 2007 to 2017. The acreage of harvested cropland decreased by 10.8 percent from 2007 to 2017, and the acreage of farms/ranches with irrigated cropland decreased by 20.5 percent. Overall, total crop land decreased by 12.7 percent. **This trend suggests that total farmland in the county is being repurposed for other non-agricultural uses.**

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>% Change 2007 - 2012</u>	<u>% Change 2007 - 2017</u>
IRRIGATED LAND					
Farms	508	483	491	-4.9%	-3.3%
Acres	<u>269,141</u>	<u>240,799</u>	<u>214,055</u>	<u>-10.5%</u>	<u>-20.5%</u>
HARVESTED CROP LAND					
Farms	711	760	721	+6.9%	+1.4%
Acres	<u>340,514</u>	<u>325,556</u>	<u>303,729</u>	<u>+4.4%</u>	<u>-10.8%</u>
TOTAL CROP LAND					
Farms	778	824	744	+5.9%	-4.4%
Acres	<u>371,615</u>	<u>342,337</u>	<u>324,488</u>	<u>-7.9%</u>	<u>-12.7%</u>

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

Table 4.4, Page 4.16, identifies **harvested crops by type** in Buffalo County, from 2007 to 2017. Each Census of Agriculture, since 2007, identified a majority of production acres in Buffalo County being dedicated to corn for grain or seed. Soybeans for beans crop is the only crop type experiencing consistent increases in production acreage since 2012. Oat production experienced the highest percentage decrease of 83.2 percent from 280 acres in 2007 to 47 acres in 2017.

**TABLE 4.4
HARVESTED CROPS BY TYPE
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2007-2017**

CROP BY TYPE	Production in Acres			% Change	% Change
	2007	2012	2017	2007-2012	2007-2017
Corn for Grain or Seed	231,763	196,474	180,210	-15.2%	-22.2%
Corn for Silage or Green Chop	3,231	7,712	2,351	+138.7%	-27.2%
Sorghum for Grain or Seed	1,316	204	451	-84.5%	-65.7%
Wheat for Grain	9,635	5,008	2,322	-48.0%	-75.9%
Oats for Grain	280	282	47	+0.7%	-83.2%
Soybeans for Beans	58,193	79,414	84,860	+36.5%	+45.8%
Forage - Hay-alfalfa, Silage	42,502	35,897	33,262	-15.5%	-21.7%

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

LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION TRENDS.

Table 4.5, Page 4.17, identifies **livestock production trends** from 2007 through 2017. During this period, the total number of livestock producing farms/ranches for “Cattle/Calves” increased by 42 farms/ranches, and the total number of cattle/calves decreased, slightly, by 7,490 or 7.4 percent during the same period. The number of ranches raising “Beef Cows” declined from 454 to 448 (1.3%) during the same period. The number of farms/ranches raising “Milk Cows” has declined from 12 to three and the number of farms/ranches raising “Hogs and Pigs” has declined from 26 to 18 between 2007 and 2017. Additionally, the number of farms raising “Sheep and Lambs” decreased from 29 to 26.

**TABLE 4.5
LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION TRENDS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2007 – 2017**

<u>Type</u>	<u>Total Farms / Total Animals</u>			<u>% Change</u>	<u>% Change</u>
	<u>2007</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>2007 – 2012</u>	<u>2007 – 2017</u>
Cattle/Calves	507 / 101,975	549 / 106,059	528 / 94,485	8.2% / 4.0%	4.1% / -7.4%
Beef Cows	454 / 38,677	471 / (D)	448 / (D)	3.7% / (D)	-1.3% / (D)
Milk Cows	12 / 3,382	9 / (D)	3 / (D)	-25.0% / (D)	-75.0% / (D)
Hogs and Pigs	26 / 5,549	8 / 3,150	18 / 2,544	-69.2% / -43.2%	-30.8% / -54.2%
Sheep and Lambs	29 / 5,319	36 / 2,251	26 / 1,071	-24.1% / -57.7%	-10.3% / -79.9%

*(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

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

SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURAL STATISTICS.

Agricultural statistics between 2007 and 2017 indicate that total cropland has declined by 47,127 acres, or 12.7 percent. As the total number of farms/ranches has increased from 949 to 953, and with a 0.6 percent reduction in the number of farms/ranches larger than 1,000 acres as well as an 18.8 percent reduction in the number of farms/ranches between 500 and 999 acres, consolidation is not a likely cause for the reduction in total cropland. The reduction in total cropland is likely due to farms ceasing operation or changing to other land use types.

Reductions in agricultural production may also be related to changes in crop prices as certain crops become less profitable. Extreme weather events and climatic changes in precipitation, including heavy flooding and extended periods of drought, may have decreased the viability of some farms, especially the farms located near the floodplain or lacking irrigation systems. The construction of acreages near Kearney on land formerly used for agriculture may be responsible for some of the reduction in cropland as well.

FUTURE LAND USE ANALYSIS.

Illustration 4.3, Page 4.19, identifies the **Future Land Use** for Rural Buffalo County. The primary hard-surfaced County roads and State highways were reviewed to determine the potential impact of rural development adjacent these corridors. Rural residential land uses not associated with farming or ranching are most suitable adjacent Highways 10, 30 and 40.

GENERAL AGRICULTURAL AREAS.

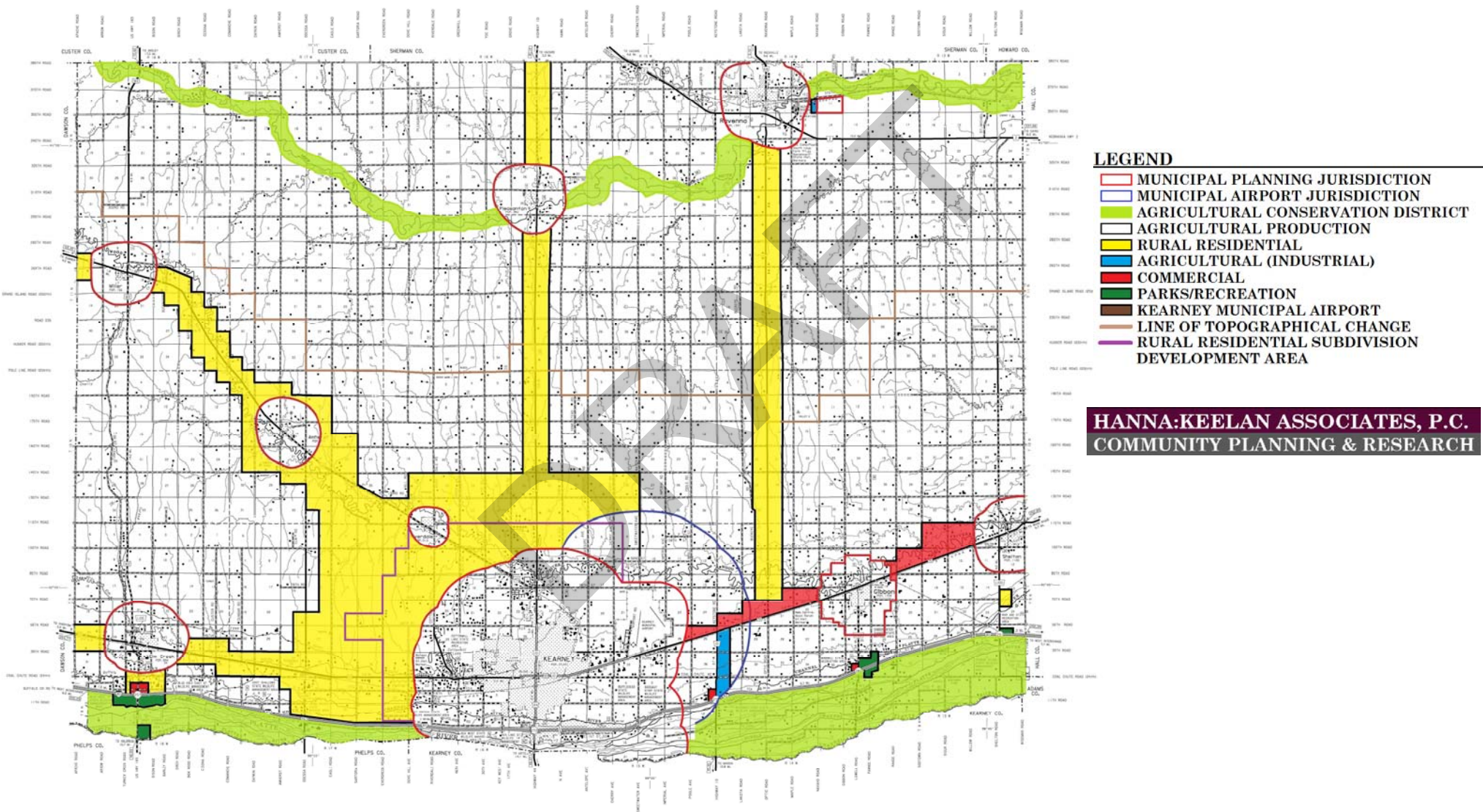
Agricultural and ranch lands exist for a large majority of Rural Buffalo County, as identified in the **Future Land Use Map**. These areas are recommended to be preserved and protected from unnecessary encroachment of undesirable residential, commercial or industrial development and allowing said developments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

RESIDENTIAL AREAS.

Residential areas are primarily located within the Cities and Villages of Buffalo County, as well as associated Planning Jurisdictions. Existing rural farmstead dwellings are widely spread throughout the County, but concentrations of large lot subdivisions exist along major Highway Corridors and, especially, in close proximity to the City of Kearney Planning Jurisdiction.

The **Future Land Use Map** promotes the continued development of non-farm/ranch dwellings in AGR “Agricultural Residential District” areas along the Highway Corridors. By promoting non-farm/ranch residential development in the Agricultural Residential areas, the County also seeks to preserve and protect agricultural production areas from further encroachment of conflicting uses. This practice also would locate these future dwellings nearest local goods and services. The development of residential subdivisions is encouraged in close proximity to the Kearney Planning Jurisdiction.

**FUTURE LAND USE MAP.
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
ILLUSTRATION 4.3**



PARK AND RECREATION AREAS.

State Wildlife Management and Recreation Areas associated with the Platte River are the largest parks/recreation land uses in Rural Buffalo County. Preservation of these and other natural open space areas, such as river corridors and wetland areas, should be a priority during the 10-year planning period. By 2032, an estimated **180 to 190 additional acres of park and recreation land** should be designated throughout Rural Buffalo County. Although land areas dedicated for existing State recreation and wildlife management areas will likely remain the same through 2032, new park and recreation land areas could be established to enhance accessibility along the Platte and South Loup River Corridors to provide natural resource educational opportunities.

COMMERCIAL & INDUSTRIAL AREAS.

Future commercial uses in Rural Buffalo County should consist of “General Commercial” developments, including all permissible uses, as allowed via the **Buffalo County Zoning Regulations**. Land zoned as “C – Commercial” should be located in close proximity to the Interstate 80 and could be considered at the junction of major highway corridors. By 2032, total designated commercial land uses should range from 606 acres to 620 acres in both commercial and non-commercial zoned districts (granted by Special Use Permit). This would require an additional 18 to 32 acres, in Rural Buffalo County, from the current commercial land designation of 588.1 acres.

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

Much of the existing industrial land areas in Rural Buffalo County, generally, support intensive agricultural uses, including feedlots, gravel extraction and animal confinement operations. By 2032, total designated industrial land uses should range from 2,505 acres to 2,556 acres in both industrial and non-industrial zoned districts (granted by Special Use Permit). This would require an additional 65 to 181 acres, in the Rural Buffalo County, from the current industrial land designation of 2,439.9 acres.

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

RURAL CONSERVATION AREAS.

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

An estimated 108,700 to 110,230 acres of land should be designated for habitat and natural resource conservation and restoration purposes in Rural Buffalo County, by 2032. A significant amount of these land areas should be located along the Platte River Basin, with consideration for additional land conservation areas along the South Loup River Corridor.



EXISTING ZONING.

Illustration 4.3, Page 4.24, identifies the **Zoning** for Rural Buffalo County. **Future Land Use** should conform with existing zoning districts as defined in the **Buffalo County Zoning Regulations**. Existing **Zoning Districts** in Buffalo County include:

AG – AGRICULTURE DISTRICT.

The **Agriculture District** is designated for general agriculture use and is intended to preserve and protect agriculture production from encroachment by incompatible uses. The **District** supports farming and ranching activities, ranch and farm dwellings, grain/produce storage, irrigation, flood, erosion and sediment control projects, as well as greenhouses and garden centers. Additionally, bed and breakfast homes, temporary roadside produce stands, animal hospitals and pertinent accessory buildings are permitted in the **District**.

RC – RURAL CONSERVATION DISTRICT.

The **Rural Conservation District** is intended for those areas which, because of limiting environmental characteristics such as scenic status, excessive slope, soils conditions, high water table, or other factors, require the regulation of development in keeping with the conditions imposed by the natural environment. Farming and ranching activities and associated home occupations, in accordance with the **Buffalo County Zoning Regulations** are permitted in the **District**.

AGR – AGRICULTURAL RESIDENTIAL DISTRICT.

The **Agricultural Residential District** is intended to provide for low-density, acreage residential development in selected areas in close proximity to the Communities of Buffalo County, or in rural areas with reasonable access to major rural roads. Generally, these districts are located near urban and built-up areas within reasonable reach of fire protection and hard surfaced roads.

C – COMMERCIAL DISTRICT.

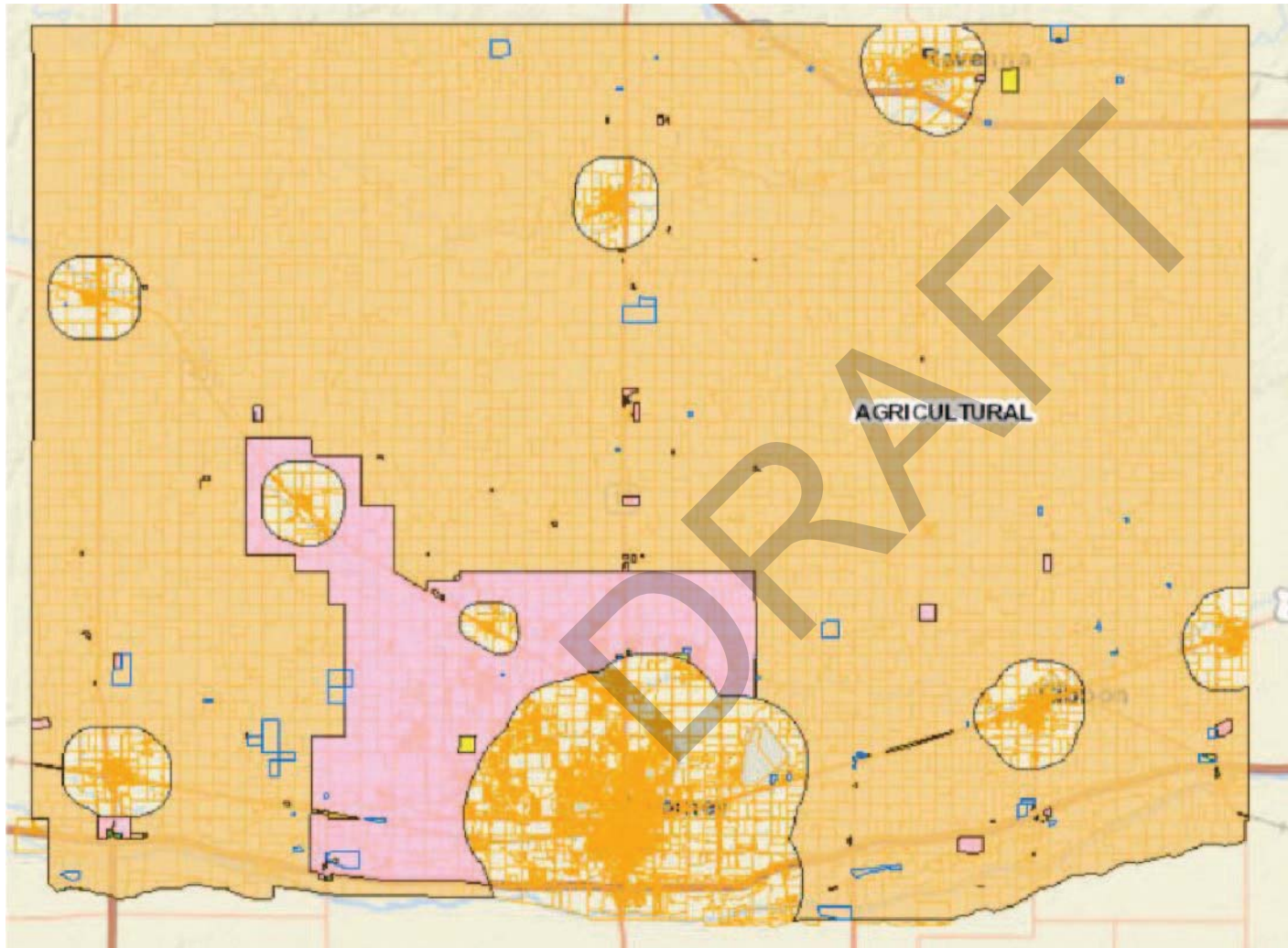
The **Commercial District** is intended for the purpose of providing limited commercial services. These services include, but are not limited to, farm machine, equipment and implement sales and services, construction sales and services, convenience store or filling station and truck and freight terminals.

I – INDUSTRIAL DISTRICT.


The **Industrial District** is designed to provide for a wide range of industrial and related uses. These include, but are not limited to, gas utility maintenance yard, manufacturing operations and service stations.



**EXISTING ZONING MAP
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
ILLUSTRATION 4.3**



LEGEND

-  AGRICULTURAL
-  AGRICULTURAL-RESIDENTIAL
-  COMMERCIAL
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  SPECIAL USE

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

SECTION 5
PUBLIC FACILITIES &
TRANSPORTATION.

BUFFALO

DRAFT

PUBLIC FACILITIES & TRANSPORTATION.

INTRODUCTION.

Section 5 of this **Comprehensive Plan** discusses current conditions and planned improvements to existing **public facilities and transportation systems** in Buffalo County, including the **Rural County**. All improvements to these components are aimed at maintaining or improving the quality of life in the County. The intent of this **Section** is to determine the adequacy of these public facilities to meet the future estimated demand during the current planning period.

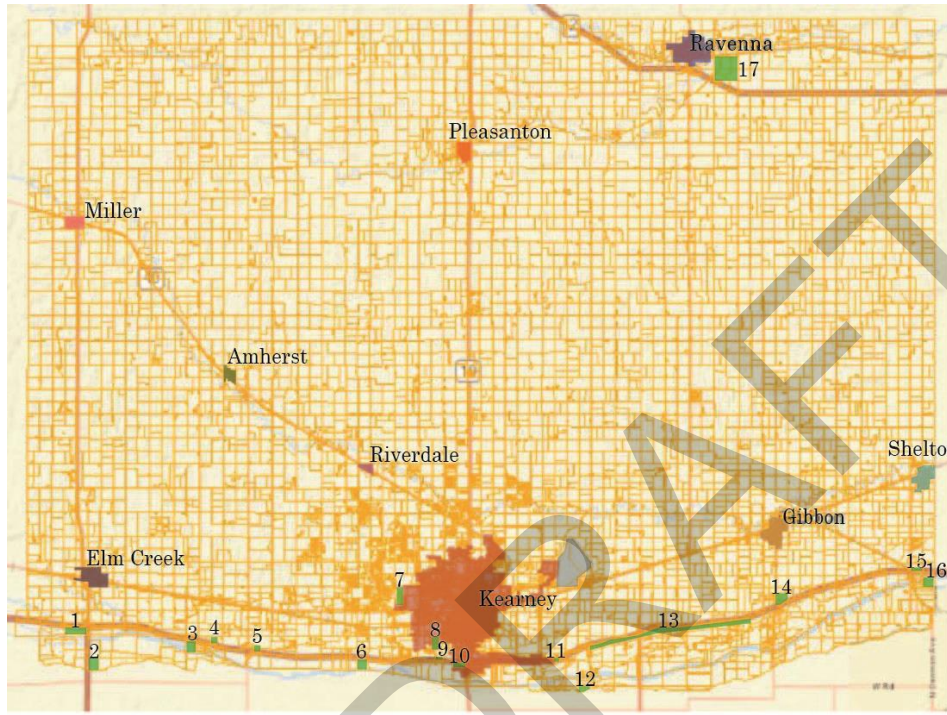


PUBLIC FACILITIES.

Public Facilities identify existing public places in the County and determine future needs of and desires for pertinent public facilities during the planning period (2033). Public facilities provide citizens with social, cultural and educational opportunities in Buffalo County. Facilities can include, but are not limited to schools, fire protection, medical/elderly services and recreational facilities such as parks and sports fields. A majority of the listed and other public facilities are located within City or Village Corporate Limits or Planning Jurisdictions, but serve the needs of the **Rural Buffalo County** resident.



**PUBLIC FACILITIES MAP.
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
ILLUSTRATION 5.1**



- Buffalo County Public Parks, State Recreation Areas and State Wildlife Management Areas**
- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. Blue Hole Wildlife Management Area | 9. Kea West Wildlife Management Area |
| 2. Sandy Channel State Recreation Area | 10. Kea Lake Wildlife Management Area |
| 3. Blue Hole East Wildlife Management Area | 11. Bufflehead Wildlife Management Area |
| 4. Coot Shallows Wildlife Management Area | 12. Ft Kearny State Recreation Area |
| 5. Union Pacific State Recreation Area | 13. Bassway Strip Wildlife Management Area |
| 6. East Odessa Wildlife Management Area | 14. Windmill State Recreation Area |
| 7. Cottonmill Park | 15. War Axe State Recreation Area |
| 8. Yanney Park | 16. Denman Island Wildlife Management Area |
| | 17. Buffalo County Recreation Area - Ravenna Lake |

- Miller**
- Miller Volunteer Fire Department
 - Miller Post Office

- Pleasanton**
- Pleasanton Public Schools
 - Pleasanton Volunteer Fire Department
 - Pleasanton Post Office

- Riverdale**
- Riverdale Post Office

- Amherst**
- Amherst Public Schools
 - Amherst Volunteer Fire Department
 - Amherst Post Office

- Elm Creek**
- Elm Creek Public Schools
 - Elm Creek Public Library
 - Elm Creek Country Clinic (Medical)
 - Elm Creek Volunteer Fire Department
 - Elm Creek Post Office

- Gibbon**
- Gibbon Public Schools
 - Gibbon Library
 - Gibbon Volunteer Fire Department
 - Gibbon Post Office

- Kearney**
- Kearney Public Schools
 - Central Community College-Kearney Center
 - University of Nebraska-Kearney
 - Kearney Public Library
 - Kearney Regional Medical Center
 - CHI Health Good Samaritan (Medical)
 - Cambridge Court Assisted Living
 - Kinship Pointe Assisted Living
 - Peterson Senior Center
 - Buffalo County Sheriff's Office
 - Kearney Volunteer Fire Department
 - Buffalo County District/County Court
 - USDA Service Center
 - Kearney Post Office

Kearney Regional Airport

- Ravenna**
- Ravenna Public Schools
 - Ravenna Public Library
 - Heartland Health Center Ravenna Medical
 - Grand Manor Nursing Home
 - Seneca Sunrise Assisted Living
 - Ravenna Senior Center
 - Ravenna Volunteer Fire Department
 - Ravenna Post Office

- Shelton**
- Shelton Public Schools
 - Shelton Township Library
 - Shelton Volunteer Fire Department
 - Shelton Post Office

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

EDUCATION.

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

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

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



❖ School Districts in Buffalo County.

Kearney Public Schools maintains 11 elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school. The High School was built in 2016, replacing the previous building. The School District employs approximately 539 total staff members, including 349 certified teachers, averaging 16 students per teacher. The District office is located at 320 West 24th Street in Kearney, Nebraska. Extra-curricular activities offered in the Kearney Public School District include the standard clubs and organizations, as well as a variety of athletic teams.

Ravenna Public School District includes the Ravenna Elementary and Junior/Senior High School. The schools are adjacent and located at 41750 Carthage Road in Ravenna, Nebraska. The School District has approximately 10 students per teacher.

Amherst Public Schools, located at 100 North Sycamore in Amherst, Nebraska, includes an elementary and high school supporting approximately 14 students per teacher.

Gibbon Public Schools have a student to teacher ratio of 15 to 1. The School District has one elementary and one high school, both located at 1030 Court Street in Gibbon, Nebraska.

Pleasanton Public Schools includes one elementary and one high school, both located at 303 Church Street. The School District averages a student to teacher ratio of 14 to 1.

Shelton Public Schools are located at 210 9th Street in Shelton, Nebraska, with a student to teacher ratio of 10 to 1. The School District maintains an elementary and high school.

Elm Creek Public Schools averages 12 students per teacher and includes one elementary and one high school. The schools are located at 230 East Caulkins Avenue in Elm Creek, Nebraska.

❖ Colleges/Universities in Buffalo County.

Central Community College-Kearney Center is located at 1215 30th Avenue in Kearney, Nebraska. The College offers degrees in General Education, Skilled & Technical Sciences, Health Sciences and Business & Entrepreneurship.

The **University of Nebraska-Kearney** was established as a Nebraska State Normal School in 1905 and located at 2504 9th Avenue in Kearney, Nebraska, now offers 170 majors and 20 pre-professional programs, as well as some key post-graduate and online programs.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES.

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

Elm Creek Public Library: 241 N Tyler Street, Elm Creek, NE

Open Hours: Monday-Tuesday, 3-7 pm, Wednesday, 2-7 pm, Thursday, 3-7 pm and Saturday, 8-5 pm

Gibbon Library: 116 Labarre Street, Gibbon, NE

Open Hours: Monday-Friday, 11-6 pm and Saturday, 11-2 pm

Kearney Public Library: 2020 1st Avenue, Kearney, NE

Open Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9-9 pm, Friday-Saturday, 9-5 pm and Sunday, 1-5 pm

Ravenna Public Library: 324 Milan Avenue, Ravenna, NE

Open Hours: Monday, 9-6:30pm, Tuesday-Thursday, 9-5 pm, Friday, 9-5:30 pm and Saturday, 9-12 pm

Shelton Township Library: 313 C Street, Shelton, NE

Open Hours: Monday, 11-5 pm, Tuesday, 1-7 pm, Wednesday, 12-6 pm, Thursday, 1-7 pm, Friday, 10-4 pm



PARKS/RECREATION.

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

❖ State Recreation Areas in Buffalo County.

Buffalo County Recreation Area-Ravenna Lake is a recreational area near Ravenna, Nebraska with amenities including a dog park, modern and primitive camping spots, a pavilion and a playground.

Fort Kearny State Recreation Area includes seven small lakes and 186 acres with both modern and primitive camping amenities, as well as a wheelchair-accessible fishing pier.

Sandy Channel State Recreation Area consists of 180 acres with six lakes, accessible to scuba divers, primitive camping amenities and boat ramps.

Union Pacific State Recreation Area consists of 26 acres of land and a 12 acre lake with amenities including boating, picnicking, fishing and camping.

War Axe State Recreation Area provides a 16 acre lake and both fishing and picnicking amenities.

Windmill State Recreation Area, a 167 acre park located in southeast Buffalo County, gets its name from the old-time windmills in the park that have been restored to working order. The oldest was built in 1880 and used to pump water for steam locomotives. Amenities include a six-lake chain for fishing, boating and swimming, as well as camping and picnicking amenities and trails.

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

Bassway Strip State Wildlife Management Area is a 915 acre Area that allows hunting, fishing and camping.

Blue Hole Wildlife Management Area has a 37 acre lake and a boat ramp. Hunting is allowed in this Wildlife Management Area.

Blue Hole East Wildlife Management Area is located east of Blue Hole Wildlife Management Area and allows hunting.

Bufflehead Wildlife Management Area has a 15 acre lake and boat ramp.

Coot Shallow Wildlife Management Area has a 12 acre lake and boat ramp.

Denman Island State Wildlife Management Area is located southeast of War Axe State Recreation Area and allows hunting.

East Odessa Wildlife Management Area has a seven acre lake and allows hunting.

Kea Lake Wildlife Management Area has a 20 acre lake and boat ramp.

Kea West Wildlife Management Area has an eight acre lake and a primitive boat ramp.



MEDICAL FACILITIES.

Medical facilities for **Rural Buffalo County** residents are primarily located in the City of Kearney. A variety of specialized clinics, as well as two hospitals are located in Kearney, including Kearney Regional Medical Center and CHI Health Good Samaritan. Clinics located elsewhere in the County include Heartland Health Center Ravenna Medical and Elm Creek Country Clinics. Nursing homes and senior centers exist in Kearney and Ravenna.

❖ **Medical Facilities.**

CHI Health Good Samaritan Hospital is a 268 bed regional referral center offering services including, but not limited to, emergency care, cardiac care, neonatal intensive care and mental health. The Hospital is located at 10 East 31st Street in Kearney, Nebraska.

Elm Creek Country Clinic is located at 515 West Boyd Avenue in Elm Creek, Nebraska.

Heartland Health Center Ravenna Medical Facility, located at 104 West Seneca Street in Ravenna, Nebraska, offers services including adult medicine, women's health, pediatric care, acute care and behavioral health.

Kearney Regional Medical Center is located at 804 22nd Avenue in Kearney, Nebraska, and offers services including, but not limited to emergency care and maternal care.

❖ **Nursing Homes.**

Cambridge Court Assisted Living is located at 4107 Central Avenue in Kearney, Nebraska.

Grand Manor is located at 1001 Grand Avenue in Ravenna, Nebraska.

Kinship Pointe Assisted Living is located at 5410 North Avenue in Kearney, Nebraska.

Seneca Sunrise is located at 710 Grand Avenue in Ravenna, Nebraska.

❖ **Senior Centers.**

Peterson Senior Center is located at 2020 West 11th Street in Kearney, Nebraska. The Center's mission is to support the independence and well-being of adults 50 and older, enhance their dignity and self-respect and promote their participation in all aspects of community life.

Ravenna Senior Center is located at 315 Grand Avenue in Ravenna, Nebraska, and offers a variety of services including activities, entertainment, information and meals.

PUBLIC SAFETY.

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

- ❖ **Law Enforcement – Law Enforcement** in Rural Buffalo County is provided by the **Buffalo County Sheriff's Office**, located at 2025 Avenue A in Kearney, Nebraska. The Sheriff's Office is part of a joint venture with the Kearney Police Department to share law enforcement related resources.
- ❖ **Fire Protection** – To assist in serving **Rural Buffalo County**, fire departments are located in Amherst, Elm Creek, Gibbon, Kearney, Miller, Pleasanton, Ravenna and Shelton, as well as an unmanned fire station in Riverdale. Buffalo County Fire Districts are highlighted in **Illustration 5.2, Page 5.10**.

Amherst Volunteer Fire Department is located at 302 S Ash Street in Amherst, Nebraska.

Elm Creek Volunteer Fire Department is located at 535 West Boyd Avenue in Elm Creek, Nebraska.

Gibbon Volunteer Fire Department is located at 714 1st Street in Gibbon, Nebraska and averages 32 volunteer members. Volunteers have various levels of firefighting and EMT training.

Kearney Volunteer Fire Department is comprised of three separate entities including the City of Kearney Fire Department, Suburban Fire Protection District 1 and the Kearney Volunteer Fire Department. These entities are comprised of 12 fire engineers, a Fire Administrator and 12 part time firefighters, as well as a fire chief, two assistant fire chiefs, five captains and seven lieutenants. The Department, located at 2211 A Avenue and 3820 30th Avenue in Kearney, Nebraska, has an Insurance Classification Rating (ISO) of "2".

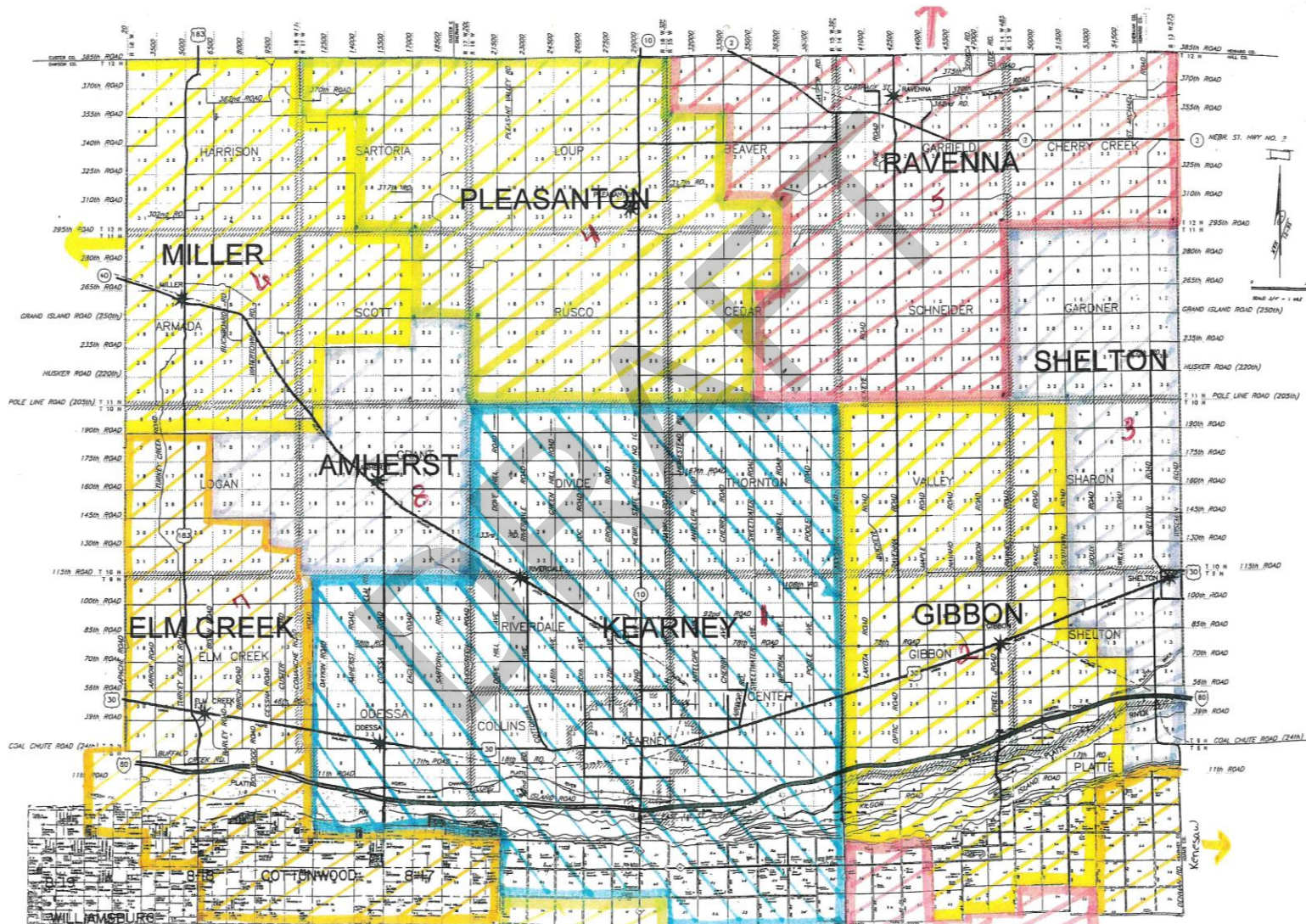
Miller Volunteer Fire Department is located at 103 S 4th Street in Miller, Nebraska.

Pleasanton Volunteer Fire Department is located at 105 Elm Street in Pleasanton, Nebraska and is comprised of 27 volunteer members.

Ravenna Volunteer Fire Department is located at 224 Alba Avenue in Ravenna, Nebraska.

Shelton Volunteer Fire Department is located at 218 C Street in Shelton, Nebraska.

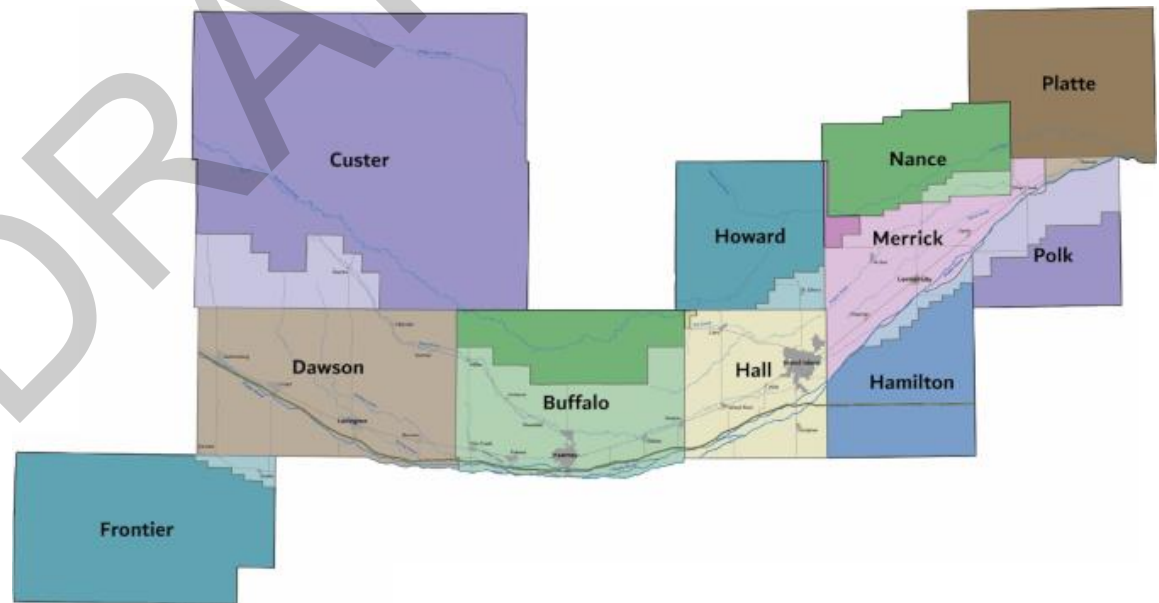
**FIRE DISTRICT MAP
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
ILLUSTRATION 5.3**



- ❖ **Airport – Kearney Regional Airport** is located in Buffalo County. The Airport has approximately 35 aircraft and handles an estimated 30,000 operations per year including corporate activity, training and pleasure flying.
- ❖ **Civil Defense** – The present **Civil Defense** services in Buffalo County are managed by the Emergency Manager, local volunteer fire departments, the County Sheriff's Department and other County officials.

GOVERNMENT & PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION.

- ❖ **County Courthouse** – The **Buffalo County District/County Court** is located at 1512 Central Avenue in Kearney, Nebraska. The Courthouse meets ADA standards. Buffalo County Commissioner meetings are conducted at the Courthouse on the second and fourth Tuesday of each month. The **Buffalo County District/County Court** includes the Buffalo County Jail, Child Support, County Assessor, County Attorney, County Board of Commissioners, County Clerk, County Clerk of District Court, County Election Commissioner, County Register of Deeds, County Treasurer, County Building and Zoning Administrator, Department of Motor Vehicles, Health and Human Services, Juvenile Diversion and Veteran Services.
- ❖ **Central Platte Natural Resources District** – The Central Platte Natural Resources District (CPNRD) serves all or part of Dawson, Custer, Buffalo, Hall, Howard, Nance, Merrick, Hamilton, Platte, Polk and Frontier Counties with the main office located in Grand Island and field offices located in various locations including Kearney.



❖ **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** – The USDA Services Center is located at 4009 6th Avenue in Kearney, Nebraska. The USDA utilizes various local, State and National land and natural resource conservation programs include the following:

- Environmental Quality Incentives Program.
- Well Head Identification and Protection.
- Wetlands Reserve Program.
- Conservation Reserve Program.
- Nebraska Soil & Water Conservation Program.

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

❖ **Postal Services** – There are Post Offices located in Amherst, Elm Creek, Gibbon, Kearney, Miller, Pleasanton, Ravenna, Riverdale and Shelton, Nebraska. These Post Offices offer services including general delivery, domestic money orders and pickup of hold mail among other services.

Amherst Post Office: 119 N Main Street, Amherst, Nebraska.

Open Hours: Monday-Friday, 7:30-11:30 am, 12-2 pm and Saturday, 7:30-9 am.

Elm Creek Post Office: 100 E Front Street, Elm Creek, Nebraska.

Open Hours: Monday-Friday, 8-11 am, 1-4 pm and Saturday, 8:30-10 am.

Gibbon Post Office: 29 Labarre Street, Gibbon, Nebraska.

Open Hours: Monday-Friday, 9-12:30 pm, 1:30-4 pm and Saturday, 10-11:30 am.

Kearney Post Office: 2401 E Avenue, Kearney, Nebraska.

Open Hours: Monday-Friday, 8-5 pm and Saturday, 9-11:30 am.

Miller Post Office: 301 W Cummings Avenue, Miller, Nebraska.

Open Hours: Monday-Friday, 10-12 pm and Saturday, 10:45-12 pm.

Pleasanton Post Office: 109 W Elm Street, Pleasanton, Nebraska.

Open Hours: Monday-Friday, 8-12 pm and Saturday, 8:30-9:45 am.

Ravenna Post Office: 401 Milan Avenue, Ravenna, Nebraska.

Open Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:15-11:30 am, 12:30-4:30 pm and Saturday, 8:30-10 am.

Riverdale Post Office: 216 3rd Avenue, Riverdale, Nebraska.

Open Hours: Monday-Friday, 9:30-1:30 pm and Saturday, 9:30-10:30 am.

Shelton Post Office: 201 C Street, Shelton, Nebraska.

Open Hours: Monday-Friday, 9-12 pm, 12:30-3:30 pm and Saturday, 8:30-10 am.

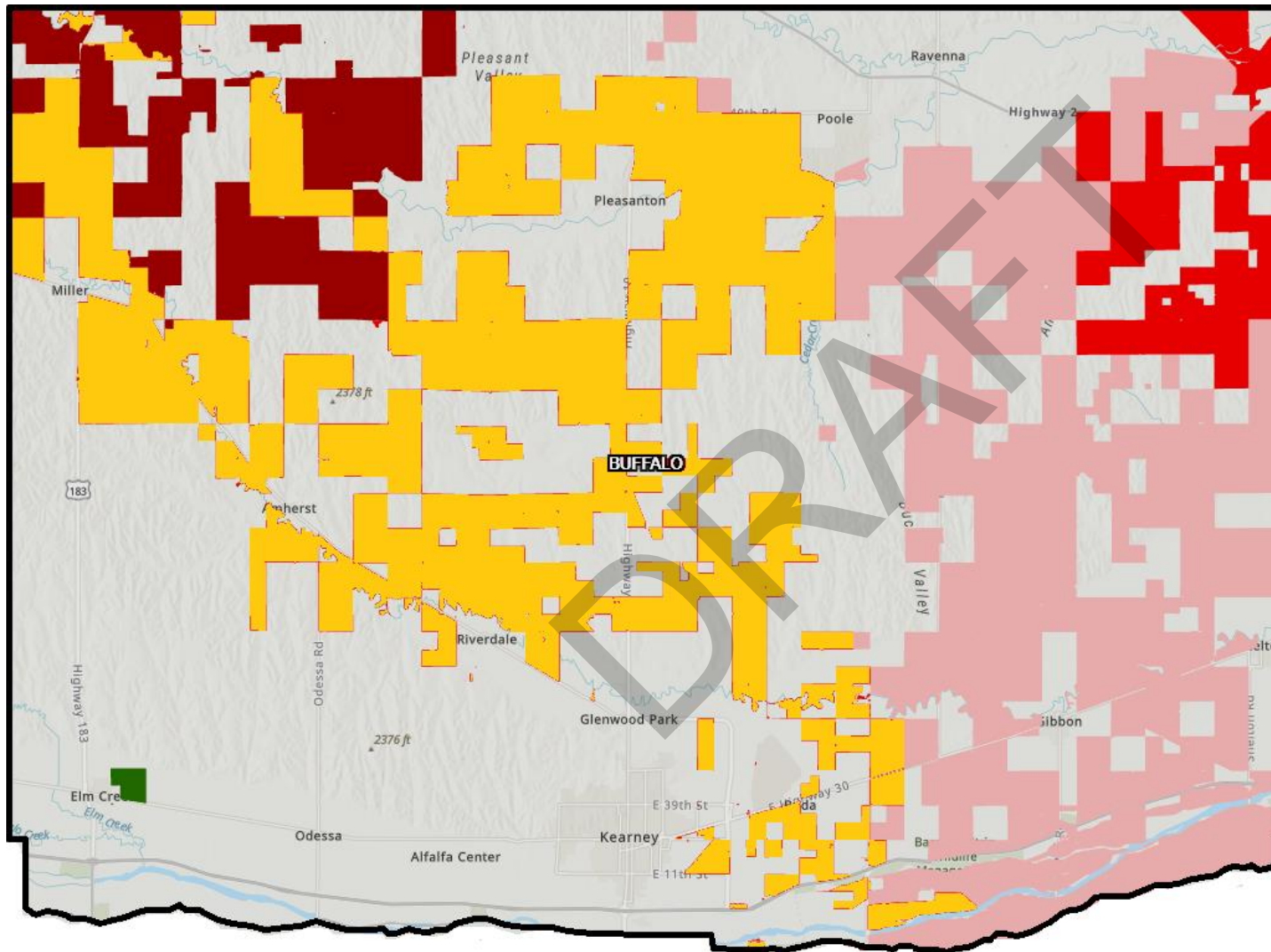
BROADBAND & TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Broadband infrastructure and technology is a critical component for information accessibility in the United States, the State of Nebraska and **Rural Buffalo County**. Fiber optic, wireless, Digital Subscriber Line and Cable/Satellite are the most common methods of modern broadband delivery. According to “Fixed Broadband Deployment” statistics from the Federal Communications Commission, **an estimated 69.7 percent of Rural Buffalo County residents have broadband available through fiber and cable accessibility**. The Nebraska Broadband Mapping Project highlights broadband carriers and coverage areas in the **Rural County**, on a Census block basis. See **Illustration 5.3, Page 5.14**.

Currently, five broadband carriers provide service in Buffalo County, including Sodtoun Telephone Company, Nebraska Central Telephone Company, Frontier Communications Corporation, AMG Technology Investment Group and CenturyLink. Nebraska Central Telephone is also in the process of expanding its broadband coverage in eastern Buffalo County with grant funding from the Nebraska Universal Service Fund, which administers quality accessibility to telecommunications and information services in Nebraska. Additionally, the Communities of Ravenna and Gibbon received grant funding for broadband expansion to underserved areas of each respective Community via the Nebraska Broadband Bridge Program (NBBP-Legislative Bill 388).

Illustration 5.4, Page 5.15, highlights **broadband speed** throughout Buffalo County, Nebraska. The highest broadband speed in Buffalo County, 100 Megabits Per Second (MBPS) for download and 20 MBPS for upload are provided in the eastern portions of the County and in close proximity to the City of Kearney. A large portion of **Rural Buffalo County** has broadband speeds of less than 100 MBPS for download and 20 MBPS for upload and, according to NBBP, are considered to be “underserved.” Concerns with underserved broadband areas in the County include delayed data, information and communication transfers and limited internet, mobile and cellular accessibility.

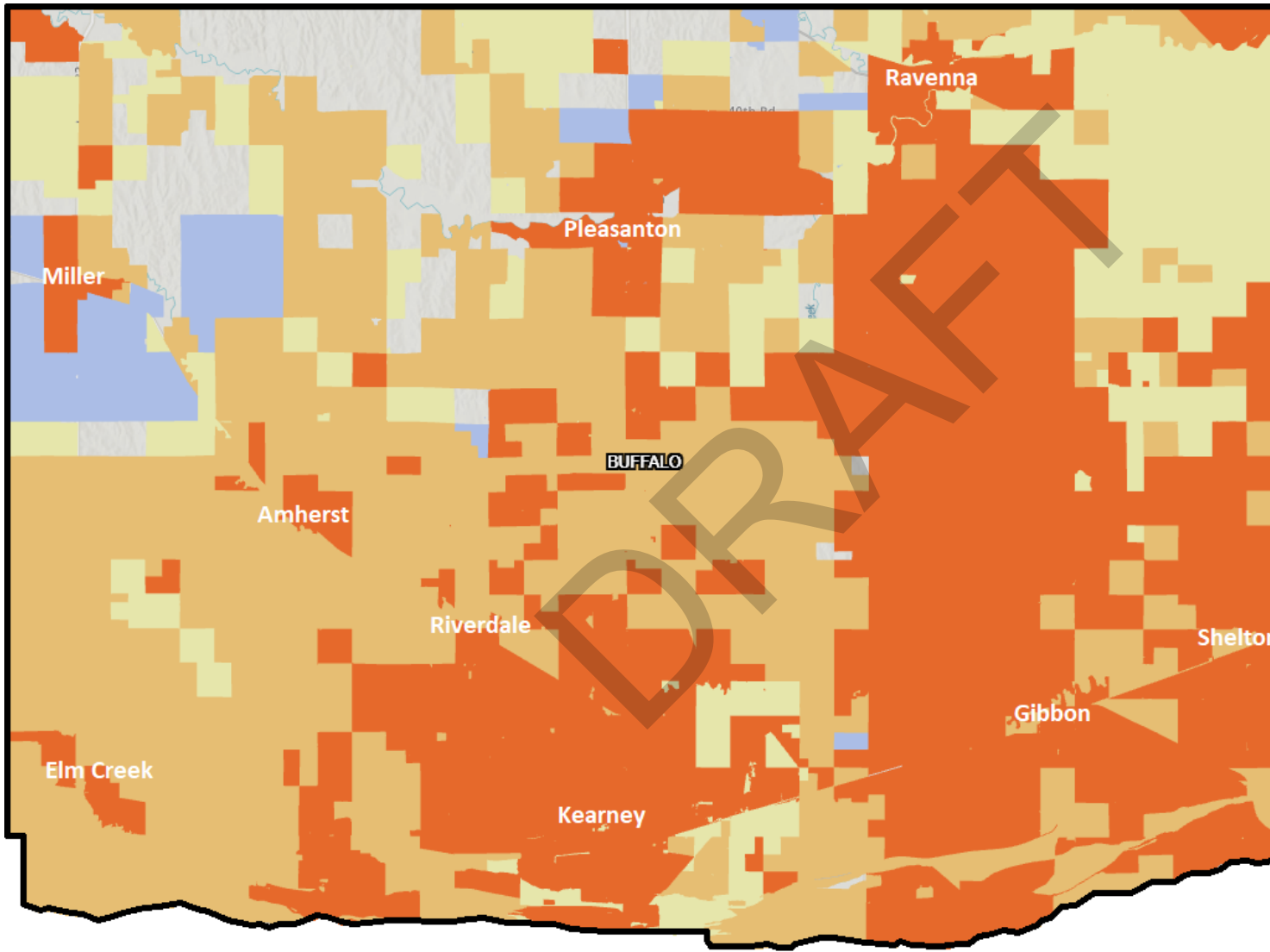
**BROADBAND PROVIDER COVERAGE MAP
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
ILLUSTRATION 5.3**



- LEGEND**
- SODTOWN TELEPHONE COMPANY
 - NEBRASKA CENTRAL TELEPHONE COMPANY
 - FRONTIER COMMUNICATIONS CORPORATION
 - AMG TECHNOLOGY INVESTMENT GROUP
 - CENTURYLINK

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

**BROADBAND SPEED MAP
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
ILLUSTRATION 5.4**



LEGEND

MBPS = Megabits Per Second
DL = Download
UL = Upload

	100 MBPS DL/20 MBPS UL
	50 MBPS DL/3 MBPS UL
	25 MBPS DL/3 MBPS UL
	10 MBPS DL/1 MBPS UL
	2 MBPS DL/0.06 MBPS UL

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

TRANSPORTATION.

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

The primary sources of information utilized to develop the transportation analysis were the (1) Buffalo County “One- and Six-Year Road Improvement Program” and (2) State of Nebraska Department of Transportation “Nebraska Statewide Transportation Improvement Program (STIP)” (Fiscal Years 2022-2025).

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

The **State Functional Classification Map** as identified by the Nebraska Department of Transportation in **Illustration 5.5, Page 5.18**, depicts the transportation system in Buffalo County. The transportation network in the County comprises one U.S. Interstate (I-80), two U.S. Highways (30 and 183), four Nebraska State Highways (2, 10, 40 and 68) and local access County roads. U.S. Highway 183 serves as the main north-south highway through Buffalo County, while Interstate 80 serves as the east-west access through the county.



ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS.

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

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

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

TRAFFIC VOLUME.

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

Table 5.1, Pages 5.20 and 5.21, identifies the average daily traffic counts for State and Federal transportation routes throughout Buffalo County. Each of the road segments are identified as “*Major Arterial*” roads. All other roads within the County jurisdiction are classified as “*Other Arterial*,” “*Collector*” or minimum maintenance roads.

The analysis of average 24-hour traffic volumes at the identified locations indicates that in the two-year period between 2016 and 2018, traffic volumes increased throughout the County. As depicted in **Table 5.1**, counts on U.S. Highway 30, East of Kearney and East of Odessa decreased slightly between 2016 and 2018. Counts also decreased slightly on U.S. Highway 183 near Elm Creek, as well as along the Highway 10 Corridor, south of Pleasanton. Traffic counts on all segments of Highways 68 and 40, except west of Riverdale, decreased slightly. All other segments increased in traffic



TABLE 5.1
TRAFFIC VOLUME - AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS
STATE AND FEDERAL ROADS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2016/2018

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2018</u>
Interstate 80, Between Shelton and Gibbon	22,095	22,360
Interstate 80, West of Gibbon	21,760	22,460
Interstate 80, East of Kearney	21,425	22,480
Interstate 80, West of Kearney	20,895	20,905
U.S. Highway 30, Buffalo/Hall County Line	4,955	5,785
U.S. Highway 30, East of Gibbon	5,275	5,870
U.S. Highway 30, West of Gibbon	6,390	6,620
U.S. Highway 30, Kearney (East of Kearney)	9,275	7,860
U.S. Highway 30, Kearney (East City Limits)	10,940	9,105
U.S. Highway 30, Kearney (East of 2nd Avenue)	14,490	14,500
U.S. Highway 30, Kearney (West of 2nd Avenue)	15,060	16,040
U.S. Highway 30, Kearney (West City Limits)	10,995	11,365
U.S. Highway 30, East of Odessa	4,455	4,245
U.S. Highway 30, East of Elm Creek	3,435	3,185
U.S. Highway 30, West of Elm Creek	2,660	2,950
U.S Highway 183, South of Interstate 80	4,460	5,055
U.S Highway 183, South of Elm Creek	5,370	5,160
U.S Highway 183, North of Elm Creek	5,370	3,110
U.S Highway 183, South of Miller	865	805
U.S Highway 183, North of Miller	815	800

CONTINUED:

TABLE 5.1 (CONTINUED)
TRAFFIC VOLUME - AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS
STATE AND FEDERAL ROADS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2016/2018

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2018</u>
NE Highway 2, Southeast of Ravenna	3,060	3,235
NE Highway 2, Southwest of Ravenna	2,350	2,425
NE Highway 10, South of Pleasanton	3,960	3,785
NE Highway 10, Kearney (South of NE Highway 40)	2,220	2,240
NE Highway 10, Kearney (North City Limits)	2,375	2,420
NE Highway 10, Crossing Interstate 80	3,082	3,195
NE Highway Spur 10B, South of Odessa	4,275	2,495
NE Highway Spur 10C, South of Gibbon	1,785	1,580
NE Highway Spur 10D, South of Shelton	650	690
NE Highway 40, West of NE Highway 10	3,365	3,365
NE Highway 40, Riverdale	2,670	2,435
NE Highway 40, West of Riverdale	1,970	1,990
NE Highway 40, Between Amherst and Miller	1,265	1,135
NE Highway 40, West of Miller	920	955
NE Highway 44, Kearney (South of U.S. I-80)	9,720	9,345
NE Highway 44, Kearney (South City Limits)	8,060	9,905
NE Highway 68, South of Ravenna	2,830	2,695
NE Highway 68, North of Ravenna	930	875

Source: Nebraska Department of Transportation, 2022.

FUTURE BUFFALO COUNTY TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

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

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

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

The Nebraska "State Transportation Improvement Program 2023-2026" is an annual publication that includes a list of one-year short-term and six-year long-range improvement projects for State and Federal Highways. Improvement projects located in Buffalo County include the following projects:

- ❖ **NH-80-5 (76):** On Interstate 80, from the Dawson/Buffalo County line east to 0.4 miles west of Odessa; Replace dual 4-lane concrete roadway; widen/redeck, ramp, asphalt resurface; Estimated cost: \$56,280,000.
- ❖ **NH-80-5 (77):** Along Interstate 80, between the Dawson County line and Odessa Interchange; Crossovers; Estimated cost: \$2,993,000.
- ❖ **BRO-7467 (1):** Poole Road Bridge, approximately 0.5 miles south of Poole; Bridge replacement; approach roadway widen and surfacing; erosion control; Estimated cost: \$2,795,000.
- ❖ **NH-80-5 (83):** Eastbound Interstate 80, approximately 0.4 miles west Odessa link L10-B to 0.4 mile west N-44 grading separation; Replace existing roadway and shoulder with concrete pavement; Estimated cost: \$34,548,000.
- ❖ **NH-80-5 (84):** Interstate 80, approximately 0.4 miles west of N-44 grade separation in Kearney; Construct crossover for Odessa-Kearney Eastbound; reconstruction project; Estimated cost: \$511,000.

- ❖ **NH-80-6 (116):** Interstate 80 from approximately 0.4 miles west of Minden interchange to 2.0 miles west of Gibbon link L-10C; Resurface, mill and fill 4”, Bridge work; Estimated cost: \$5,777,000.
- ❖ **STP-10-2 (123):** N-10 from Junction N-40 to approximately 10.2 miles south of Pleasanton; Resurface; Estimated cost: \$2,630,000.
- ❖ **STP-10-2 (124):** N-10 from approximately 0.2 miles south of Pleasanton to 0.1 miles south of Junction N-2 southwest of Hazard; Resurface and shoulder; Bridge work; Estimated cost: \$6,226,000.
- ❖ **STP-NH-10-2 (12):** Multiple bridge locations on N-10 Kearney East Bypass; Repair and replace bridge expansion joints and overlay; Estimated cost: \$1,367,000.
- ❖ **STP-183-2 (111):** US-183 from near the north limits of Elm Creek to near the north limits of Miller; Resurface; Estimated cost: \$14,179,000.
- ❖ **STP-183-2 (112):** US-183 from near the north limits of Miller to the Buffalo/Custer County line; Resurface; Estimated cost: \$7,974,000.
- ❖ **STP-40-4 (104):** N-40 from Dawson/Buffalo County line to Amherst; Resurface; Bridge replacement; Estimated cost: \$7,013,000.
- ❖ **STP-40-4 (105):** N-40 from Amherst to Junction N-10; Resurface; Estimated cost: \$5,456,000.
- ❖ **NH-80-6 (120):** Interstate 80 at the Minden interchange; Replace lighting; Estimated cost: \$608,000.
- ❖ **NH-80-5 (87):** Joint sealing project between Odessa and Kearney (Westbound only); Estimated cost: \$512,000.
- ❖ **STP-30-4 (167):** Kearney east from around Grand Avenue to approximately Marshall Avenue; Lighting; Estimated cost: \$723,000.

SECTION 6
ENERGY ELEMENT.

BUFFALO

DRAFT



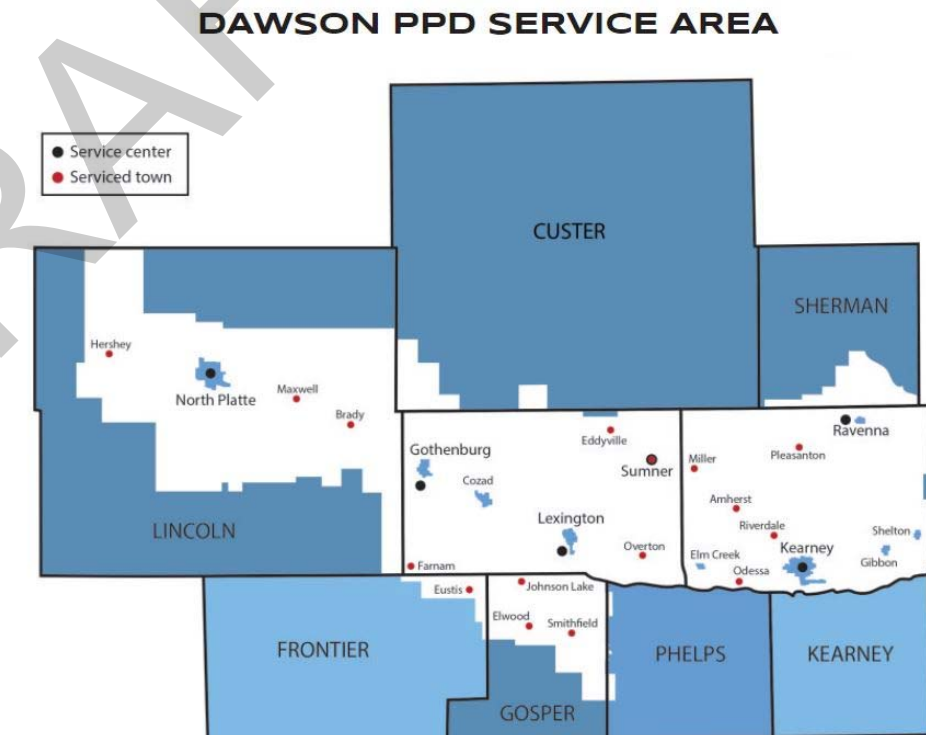
ENERGY ELEMENT.

INTRODUCTION.

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

PUBLIC POWER DISTRIBUTION.

Energy usage and consumption throughout Buffalo County has followed the trends prevalent in the State of Nebraska. Electrical power is distributed across rural Buffalo County by the **Dawson Public Power District (Dawson PPD)**, which purchases electricity from the **Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD)**. Dawson PPD’s service area includes all of the rural areas in Dawson and Buffalo Counties, approximately two-thirds of Gosper County, a third of Lincoln County and parts of Custer, Sherman and Frontier Counties. The District also serves the Villages of Miller, Amherst, Riverdale, Odessa and Pleasanton. The other communities in Buffalo County are served directly by NPPD.



NEBRASKA PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT (NPPD).

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

- ❖ NPPD was formed in 1970 through the merger of two public power districts and the assets of the former Nebraska Public Power System.
- ❖ More than 5,200 miles of overhead and underground power lines make up NPPD's electric system.
- ❖ NPPD revenue is derived from wholesale power supply agreements with 46 municipalities and 25 public power districts and cooperatives. NPPD also serves 80 Nebraska communities at retail, consisting of more than 89,000 customers.

GENERATING RESOURCES.

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

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

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

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

NPPD RENEWABLE ENERGY CAPABILITIES.

1.) Hydroelectric Facilities

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

2.) Wind Turbine Generators

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

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

3.) Solar Energy

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

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

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

NPPD TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION FACILITIES.

Coal-Fired Generators

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

Natural Gas & Oil-Fired Generators

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

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

NPPD EMISSION FREE ELECTRICITY.

Nuclear Facilities

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

“NET METERING”.

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

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

BUFFALO COUNTY ENERGY CONSUMPTION.

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

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

STATEWIDE TRENDS IN ENERGY CONSUMPTION.

During the last 40+ years, the State of Nebraska, as a whole, has vastly increased energy consumption. 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 *“2020 Annual State Energy Report”* of the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy, is mirrored in each of the individual energy categories, coal, natural gas, gasoline and distillate fuel oil (primarily diesel fuel), nuclear power, and hydroelectric production. Each energy type is detailed between 1960 and 2018, as follows:

- ❖ **Coal** consumption has increased from 20 trillion British Thermal Units (BTUs) in 1960 to 264.1 trillion BTUs in 2018. Peak use of coal was reached in 2013, surpassing the previous high set in 2011. The increase through 2013 was attributable to coal energy used to generate electricity.
- ❖ **Natural Gas** consumption has risen and fallen during the 58-year period between 1960 and 2018, 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 2018. Gasoline consumption increased by nearly 29 percent, from 78.8 to 102.4 trillion BTUs, as of 2018, 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 2018. The peak use of nuclear power was in 2007 at 115.8 trillion BTUs.
- ❖ **Renewable energy** consumption has grown, beginning in 1960 at 13.4, and peaking in 2018 at 193.6 trillion BTUs. Hydropower was the primary renewable energy source from 1960 to 1994. Biofuels, or ethanol production, began equaling hydropower in 1995. As of 2018, 63.3 percent of all renewable energy produced came from biofuels, 6.6 percent from hydroelectric, 26.5 percent from wind, and 2.1 percent from wood products. Minor amounts came from geothermal and solar energy.

NEBRASKA ENERGY CONSUMPTION BY SECTOR.

- ❖ **Commercial Sector:** The commercial sector includes non-manufacturing business establishments, including energy use by local, state and federal governments. Energy use in the commercial sector closely parallels consumer energy use and economic activity in the State of Nebraska. More than 90 percent of all fuel used in the commercial sector was supplied by natural gas and electricity. Although natural gas has historically been the dominant fuel type, recent trends suggest a period of near parity between the two fuel types is likely into the near future. In 2018, a total of 147.5 trillion BTUs were consumed in the commercial sector.
- ❖ **Residential Sector:** The residential sector consumed 167.8 trillion BTUs in 2018. Natural gas and electricity accounted for 90.7 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 2018, it accounted for 386.9 trillion BTUs of the State's total energy consumption.
- ❖ **Transportation Sector:** Public and private vehicles, railroads, aircraft and boats are all included in the transportation sector. Motor gasoline and diesel fuel products accounted for 86 percent of the energy use in the transportation sector in 2018. Approximately 195 trillion BTUs were used in the transportation sector in 2018.
- ❖ **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.

Agricultural Energy Demand & Conservation.

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

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

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

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

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

ENERGY CONSERVATION POLICIES.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

❖ **Plant Urban Forests.**

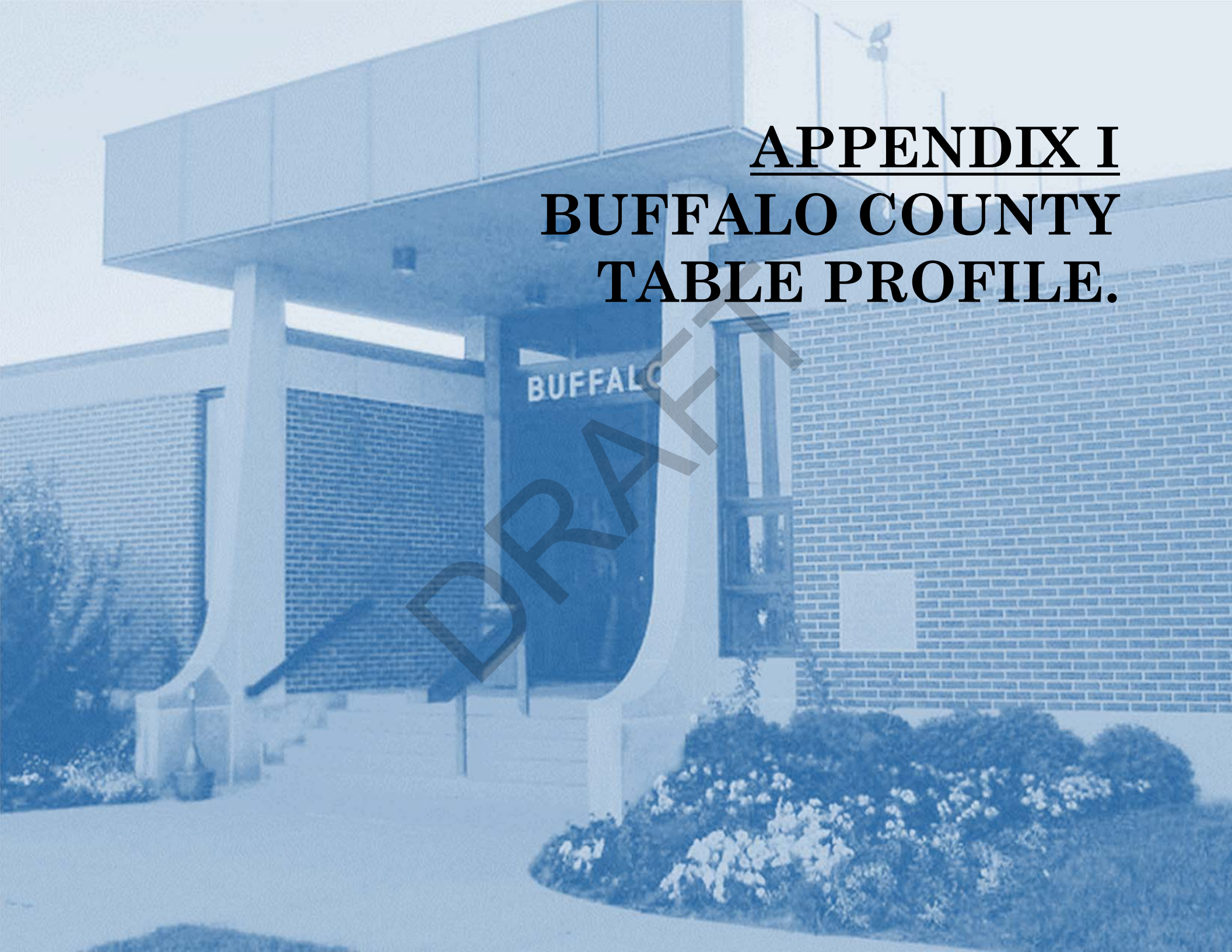
- Trees / Urban Forest – provide incentives for city rebate programs to replant new trees.
- Compost brush and trimmings – utilize the Best Management Practices utilized by other communities to provide a public deposit site to compost brush and trimmings.
- Create a waste wood recycling/composting/energy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

❖ Create “Zero Waste” Communities.

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

APPENDIX I
BUFFALO COUNTY
TABLE PROFILE.

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**TABLE 1
POPULATION TRENDS & PROJECTIONS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA & COMMUNITIES
2000-2032**

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2032</u>	<u># Change</u> <u>2022-2032</u>	<u>2032</u> <u>CGI*</u>
Buffalo County	42,259	46,102	50,084	50,703	54,346	+3,643	56,078
Amherst	277	248	201	196	186	-10	182
Elm Creek	894	901	979	986	1,057	+71	1,082
Gibbon	1,759	1,833	1,878	1,887	1,955	+68	2,021
Kearney	27,431	30,787	33,790	34,270	37,131	+2,861	38,252
Miller	156	136	129	128	118	-10	121
Pleasanton	360	341	361	366	382	+16	391
Ravenna	1,341	1,360	1,441	1,455	1,531	+76	1,576
Riverdale	213	182	247	250	265	+15	271
Shelton	1,140	1,059	1,034	1,041	1,065	+24	1,085
Community Planning Jurisdictions	3,214	3,105	3,228	3,264	3,407	+143	3,584 (+320)
Rural Buffalo County	5,847	6,150	6,796	6,860	7,249	+389	7,513 (+653)

*Includes potential estimated population increase associated with a planned “Community Growth Initiative” (CGI). This could include increases in 1,500 Full-Time Employment (FTE) positions and/or Housing Development activities associated with workforce/population recruitment during the next 10 years. This would create an estimated Buffalo County population increase of 1,732.

Source: 2000 & 2010 Census & 2020 Census “Redistricting Data”.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

**TABLE 2A
POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION
TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2000-2032**

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020*</u>	<u>2000-2020 Change</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2032</u>	<u>2022-2032 Change</u>
19 and Under	12,818	13,072	14,363	+1,545	14,540	15,577	+1,037
20-34	10,809	11,623	11,436	+627	11,445	11,929	+484
35-54	10,844	10,875	11,311	+467	11,384	12,028	+644
55-64	2,908	4,954	5,672	+2,764	5,767	6,242	+475
65-74	2,292	2,755	4,179	+1,887	4,404	5,177	+773
75-84	1,756	1,882	2,115	+359	2,146	2,312	+166
85+	832	941	1,008	+176	1,017	1,081	+64
Totals	42,259	46,102	50,084	+7,825	50,703	54,346	+3,643
Median Age	31.0	32.1	33.1	+2.1	33.2	35.6	+2.4

*Estimate subject to margin of error.

Source: 2000 & 2010 Census, 2016-2020 American Community Survey.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

**TABLE 2B
POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION
TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2000-2032**

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>2000</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2020*</u>	<u>2000-2020</u> <u>Change</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2032</u>	<u>2022-2032</u> <u>Change</u>
19 and Under	2,917	2,746	3,056	+139	3,084	3,179	+95
20-34	1,265	1,168	1,448	+183	1,510	1,632	+122
35-54	2,744	2,766	2,515	-229	2,460	2,301	-159
55-64	807	1,341	1,618	+811	1,749	2,296	+547
65-74	549	678	834	-285	773	681	-92
75-84	310	384	395	+85	404	439	+35
85+	96	172	158	+62	144	128	-16
Totals	8,688	9,255	10,024	+1,336	10,124	10,656	+532
Median Age	36.1	40.1	41.2	+5.1	41.5	43.9	+2.4

*Estimate subject to margin of error.

Source: 2000 & 2010 Census, 2016-2020 American Community Survey.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

TABLE 3
SPECIFIC HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Group Quarters</u>	<u>Persons in Households</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Persons Per Household</u>
<u>Buffalo County</u>	2000	42,259	2,788	39,471	15,930	2.48
	2010	46,102	2,225	43,877	18,037	2.43
	2020	50,084	2,494	47,590	19,590	2.43
	2022	50,703	2,610	48,093	19,955	2.41
	2032	54,346	2,988	51,358	21,451	2.39
<u>Amherst</u>	2000	277	0	277	112	2.47
	2010	248	0	248	108	2.30
	2020	201	0	201	89	2.26
	2022	196	0	196	86	2.28
	2032	186	0	186	83	2.25
<u>Elm Creek</u>	2000	894	0	894	366	2.44
	2010	901	0	901	373	2.42
	2020	979	0	979	381	2.57
	2022	986	0	986	387	2.54
	2032	1,057	0	1,057	426	2.48
<u>Gibbon</u>	2000	1,759	29	1,730	642	2.70
	2010	1,833	24	1,809	654	2.77
	2020	1,878	0	1,878	673	2.79
	2022	1,887	0	1,887	681	2.77
	2032	1,955	0	1,955	719	2.72

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TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)
SPECIFIC HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Group Quarters</u>	<u>Persons in Households</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Persons Per Household</u>
<u>Kearney</u>	2000	27,431	2,411	25,020	10,471	2.38
	2010	30,787	2,002	28,785	12,201	2.40
	2020	33,790	2,173	31,617	13,586	2.33
	2022	34,270	2,271	31,999	13,907	2.30
	2032	37,131	2,623	34,508	15,191	2.27
<u>Miller</u>	2000	156	0	156	58	2.68
	2010	136	0	136	59	2.31
	2020	129	0	129	49	2.63
	2022	128	0	128	49	2.61
	2032	118	0	118	45	2.60
<u>Pleasanton</u>	2000	360	0	360	150	2.40
	2010	341	0	341	140	2.44
	2020	361	0	361	158	2.28
	2022	366	0	366	159	2.30
	2032	382	0	382	167	2.29
<u>Ravenna</u>	2000	1,341	63	1,278	530	2.41
	2010	1,360	38	1,322	575	2.30
	2020	1,441	73	1,368	557	2.46
	2022	1,455	74	1,381	562	2.46
	2032	1,531	80	1,451	599	2.42

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TABLE 3 (CONTINUED)
SPECIFIC HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Group Quarters</u>	<u>Persons in Households</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Persons Per Household</u>
<u>Riverdale</u>	2000	213	0	213	90	2.37
	2010	182	0	182	73	2.49
	2020	247	0	247	88	2.81
	2022	250	0	250	92	2.72
	2032	265	0	265	99	2.68
<u>Shelton</u>	2000	1,140	0	1,140	421	2.70
	2010	1,059	0	1,059	391	2.71
	2020	1,034	0	1,034	406	2.55
	2022	1,041	0	1,041	408	2.55
	2032	1,065	0	1,065	422	2.52
<u>Rural Buffalo County/CPJs</u>	2000	8,688	285	8,403	3,090	2.72
	2010	9,255	161	9,094	3,463	2.62
	2020	10,024	248	9,776	3,603	2.71
	2022	10,124	265	9,859	3,624	2.72
	2032	10,656	285	10,371	3,700	2.80

Source: 2000 & 2010 Census & 2020 Census "Redistricting Data".
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C.

**TABLE 4
HOUSEHOLD TYPE BY HOUSEHOLD SIZE
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2019 ESTIMATE***

Community	1 Person	2 Persons	3 Persons	4 Persons	5 Persons	6 Persons	7+ Persons
Buffalo County	5,556	6,618	2,901	2,364	1,096	332	195
Amherst	36	36	16	10	8	2	0
Elm Creek	109	126	61	40	26	10	1
Gibbon	158	212	97	80	65	27	15
Kearney	3,707	4,262	1,802	1,476	638	224	92
Miller	21	17	11	5	3	1	1
Pleasanton	42	45	17	22	14	0	0
Ravenna	206	186	66	63	34	17	3
Riverdale	14	28	18	7	6	0	0
Shelton	98	118	66	61	27	11	10
Rural Buffalo County/CPJs	1,165	1,588	747	600	275	40	73

*Subject to margin of error.
Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

**TABLE 5
TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2000-2032**

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Owner</u>		<u>Renter</u>	
			<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Buffalo County</u>	2000	15,930	10,128	63.6%	5,802	36.4%
	2010	18,037	11,425	65.5%	6,612	34.5%
	2020	19,590	12,518	63.9%	7,072	36.1%
	2022	19,955	12,694	63.6%	7,261	36.4%
	2032	21,451	13,687	63.9%	7,764	36.1%
<u>Amherst</u>	2000	112	97	86.6%	15	13.4%
	2010	108	88	81.5%	20	18.5%
	2020	89	73	82.0%	16	18.0%
	2022	86	70	81.4%	16	18.6%
	2032	83	65	78.3%	18	21.7%
<u>Elm Creek</u>	2000	366	273	74.6%	93	25.4%
	2010	373	283	75.9%	90	24.1%
	2020	381	291	76.4%	90	23.6%
	2022	387	295	76.2%	92	23.8%
	2032	426	319	74.8%	107	25.2%
<u>Gibbon</u>	2000	642	443	69.0%	199	31.0%
	2010	654	441	67.4%	213	32.6%
	2020	673	458	68.1%	215	31.9%
	2022	681	463	68.0%	218	32.0%
	2032	719	480	66.8%	239	33.2%

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TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)
TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Owner</u>		<u>Renter</u>	
			<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Kearney</u>	2000	10,471	5,879	56.1%	4,592	43.9%
	2010	12,201	6,904	56.6%	5,297	43.4%
	2020	13,586	7,690	56.6%	5,896	43.4%
	2022	13,907	7,843	56.4%	6,064	43.6%
	2032	15,191	8,507	55.0%	6,684	45.0%
<u>Miller</u>	2000	58	50	86.2%	8	13.8%
	2010	59	44	74.6%	15	25.4%
	2020	49	37	75.5%	12	24.5%
	2022	49	37	75.5%	12	24.5%
	2032	45	33	73.5%	12	26.5%
<u>Pleasanton</u>	2000	150	128	85.3%	22	14.7%
	2010	140	116	82.9%	24	17.1%
	2020	158	128	81.0%	30	19.0%
	2022	159	128	80.5%	31	19.5%
	2032	167	130	77.8%	37	22.2%
<u>Ravenna</u>	2000	530	404	76.2%	126	23.8%
	2010	575	411	71.5%	164	28.5%
	2020	557	398	71.5%	159	28.5%
	2022	562	400	71.5%	162	28.8%
	2032	599	441	78.7%	188	31.3%

CONTINUED:

TABLE 5 (CONTINUED)
TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Owner</u>		<u>Renter</u>	
			<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Riverdale</u>	2000	90	80	88.9%	10	11.1%
	2010	73	70	95.9%	3	4.1%
	2020	88	77	87.5%	11	12.5%
	2022	92	79	85.9%	13	14.1%
	2032	99	82	83.4%	17	16.6%
<u>Shelton</u>	2000	421	322	75.5%	99	23.5%
	2010	391	298	76.2%	93	23.8%
	2020	406	301	74.1%	105	25.9%
	2022	408	301	73.8%	107	26.2%
	2032	422	301	71.5%	121	28.5%
<u>Rural Buffalo County/CPJs</u>	2000	3,090	2,452	79.4%	638	20.6%
	2010	3,463	2,770	80.0%	693	20.0%
	2020	3,603	3,065	85.1%	538	14.9%
	2022	3,624	3,078	85.4%	546	14.6%
	2032	3,700	3,359	90.8%	341	9.2%

Source: 2000 & 2010 Census & 2020 Census "Redistricting Data".
 Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

**TABLE 6
RACE AND HISPANIC ORIGIN
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2000, 2010 & 2019**

Race	2000		2010		2019 Est.*	
	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
White	40,616	95.0%	43,344	92.7%	45,150	93.6%
Black	335	0.8%	581	1.2%	492	1.7%
Native American	247	0.6%	337	0.7%	105	1.0%
Asian	416	1.0%	726	1.6%	651	1.9%
Other	1,107	2.6%	1,767	3.8%	2,811	5.7%
Totals	42,721	100.0%	46,755	100.0%	49,209	100.0%
Hispanic Origin	2,116	5.0%	3,621	7.7%	4,429	9.0%

*Specified Data.

Source: 2000, 2010 Census.

2015-2019 American Community Survey.

**TABLE 7
ESTIMATED MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME TRENDS & PROJECTIONS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES &
RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2000-2032**

	<u>2000</u>	<u>2019 Est.*</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2032</u>
Buffalo County	\$36,782	\$59,431	\$61,300	\$82,400
Amherst	\$39,545	\$46,250	\$46,950	\$63,500
Elm Creek	\$32,279	\$60,375	\$62,330	\$84,100
Gibbon	\$34,955	\$62,548	\$64,450	\$87,100
Kearney	\$34,829	\$57,064	\$59,400	\$67,200
Miller	\$33,125	**	\$46,350	\$59,000
Pleasanton	\$37,656	\$54,107	\$55,840	\$71,700
Ravenna	\$31,875	\$50,172	\$51,990	\$66,600
Riverdale	\$44,375	\$63,438	\$65,450	\$83,800
Shelton	\$37,583	\$49,583	\$50,850	\$64,800
Rural Buffalo County/CPJs	\$42,960	\$64,993	\$65,950	\$87,000

*Specified data used, subject to margin of error.
 **Not available due to disclosure suppression.
 Source: 2000 Census, 2015-2019 American Community Survey.
 Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

**TABLE 8
PER CAPITA INCOME
TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
BUFFALO COUNTY / STATE OF NEBRASKA
2012-2032**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Buffalo County</u>		<u>State of Nebraska</u>	
	<u>Income</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>% Change</u>
2012	\$48,512	--	\$46,066	--
2013	\$44,226	-8.8%	\$45,876	-0.4%
2014	\$47,253	+6.8%	\$48,419	+5.5%
2015	\$50,199	+6.2%	\$49,567	+2.3%
2016	\$49,800	-0.8%	\$50,029	+0.9%
2017	\$51,638	+3.7%	\$51,436	+2.8%
2018	\$56,293	+9.0%	\$52,893	+2.8%
2019	\$57,453	+2.1%	\$54,567	+3.2%
2022	\$60,400	+2.1%	\$57,200	+1.9%
2012-2022	\$48,512-\$60,400	+24.5%	\$46,066-\$57,200	+24.1%
2022-2032	\$60,400-\$76,100	+25.9%	\$57,200-\$71,800	+25.5%

Source: Bureau of Economic Analysis, 2022.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

TABLE 9	
PERSONS RECEIVING SOCIAL SECURITY INCOME	
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA	
2019 ESTIMATE	
<u>Social Security Income-2019</u>	<u>Number of Beneficiaries</u>
<u>Retirement Benefits</u>	
Retired Workers	6,435
Wives & Husbands	320
Children	80
<u>Survivor Benefits</u>	
Widows & Widowers	515
Children	245
<u>Disability Benefits</u>	
Disabled Persons	830
Wives & Husbands	0
Children	140
Total	8,565
<u>Aged 65 & Older</u>	
Men	3,080
Women	3,925
Total	7,005
<u>Supplemental Security Income-2019</u>	<u>Number of Beneficiaries</u>
Aged	24
Blind and Disabled	446
Total	470
Source: Department of Health and Human Services, Social Security Administration, 2022.	

**TABLE 10
EMPLOYMENT DATA TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2010-2032**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Number of Employed Persons</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent Unemployment</u>
2010	25,371	--	3.7%
2011	25,930	+559	3.5%
2012	26,378	+448	3.2%
2013	26,486	+108	3.2%
2014	26,745	+259	2.7%
2015	26,582	-163	2.4%
2016	26,687	+105	2.5%
2017	26,686	-1	2.4%
2018	27,156	+470	2.4%
2019	27,227	+71	2.6%
2020	26,430	-797	4.0%
2021	27,617	+1,187	2.0%
2022*	27,273	-344	1.9%
2032	28,525	+1,252	1.9%
2010-2032	25,371-28,525	+3,154	3.7%-1.9%
2032 Boost*	29,445	+920	1.8%

*Estimate as of August, 2022.

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, 2021.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

**TABLE 11
TRAVEL TIME TO WORK
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2019 ESTIMATE***

9 Minutes or Less	10-19 Minutes	20-29 Minutes	30-39 Minutes	40 Minutes or More
9,406	10,698	2,252	1,434	2,302

*Subject to margin of error.
Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey.

**TABLE 12
WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2022**

Workforce

Non-Farm Employment (Wage and Salary)	26,367
Agriculture Forestry, Fishing & Hunting.	*
Mining, Quarrying and Oil/Gas Extraction.	50
Utilities.	*
Construction.	1,354
Manufacturing.	3,349
Wholesale Trade.	1,124
Retail Trade.	3,350
Transportation & Warehousing.	905
Information.	217
Finance & Insurance.	801
Real Estate & Rental/Leasing.	221
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services.	963
Management of Companies & Enterprises.	*
Administrative/Support/Waste.	808
Educational Services.	378
Health Care & Social Assistance.	4,207
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation.	246
Accommodation & Food Service.	2,543
Other Services (except Public Administration).	1,206
Federal Government.	131
State Government.	1,676
Local Government.	2,124

*Data not available because of disclosure suppression.
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, 2022.

**TABLE 13
HOUSING STOCK PROFILE/UNITS IN STRUCTURE
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2000 & 2019 ESTIMATE***

	<u>Year</u>	<u>1 unit</u>	<u>2-9 units</u>	<u>10+ units</u>	<u>Other**</u>	<u>Total</u>
<u>Buffalo County</u>	2000	11,679	2,384	1,159	1,608	16,830
	2019	14,439	2,526	2,016	1,501	20,482
<u>Amherst</u>	2000	99	0	0	18	117
	2019	73	2	0	8	83
<u>Elm Creek</u>	2000	307	21	10	51	389
	2019	374	23	8	42	447
<u>Gibbon</u>	2000	495	77	21	76	669
	2019	611	42	37	58	748
<u>Kearney</u>	2000	6,734	2,187	1,118	973	11,012
	2019	8,937	2,339	1,706	977	13,959
<u>Miller</u>	2000	53	2	0	13	68
	2019	73	0	0	3	76
<u>Pleasanton</u>	2000	149	0	0	7	156
	2019	151	0	4	6	161
<u>Ravenna</u>	2000	539	29	0	16	584
	2019	587	49	36	20	692
<u>Riverdale</u>	2000	90	0	0	0	90
	2019	91	0	0	4	95
<u>Shelton</u>	2000	380	30	7	41	458
	2019	379	50	10	25	464
<u>Rural Buffalo County/CPJs</u>	2000	2,833	38	3	413	3,287
	2019	3,163	21	215	358	3,757

*Specified Data Used. 2019 Estimate subject to margin of error.

**Includes mobile homes and trailers.

Source: 2000 Census, 2015-2019 American Community Survey.

TABLE 14
HOUSING STOCK PROFILE
SUBSTANDARD HOUSING – HUD
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2019 ESTIMATE*

Community	Total	Complete Plumbing		Lack of Complete Plumbing		Units with 1.01+ Persons per Room	
		Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total	Number	% of Total
Buffalo County	19,062	19,028	99.8%	34	0.2%	342	1.8%
Amherst	65	65	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Elm Creek	427	421	98.6%	6	1.4%	6	1.4%
Gibbon	719	719	100.0%	0	0.0%	13	1.8%
Kearney	12,987	12,979	99.9%	8	0.1%	222	1.7%
Miller	61	57	93.4%	4	6.6%	0	0.0%
Pleasanton	159	159	100.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Ravenna	606	602	99.3%	4	0.7%	5	0.8%
Riverdale	95	95	100.0%	0	0.0%	1	1.1%
Shelton	429	429	100.0%	0	0.0%	7	1.6%
Rural Buffalo County/CPJs	3,514	3,502	99.6%	12	0.3%	88	2.5%

*Specified Data Used. 2019 Estimate subject to margin of error.
 Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey Estimate.

TABLE 15
HOUSING STOCK PROFILE/YEAR UNITS BUILT
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2022

<u>Year</u>	<u>Buffalo County</u>	<u>Amherst</u>	<u>Elm Creek</u>	<u>Gibbon</u>	<u>Kearney</u>	<u>Miller</u>
2014 to Present	2,006	10	7	23	1,379	2
2010 to 2013	380	0	8	8	274	0
2000 to 2009	2,550	1	23	47	1,867	4
1990 to 1999	2,836	11	54	77	1,985	1
1980 to 1989	2,883	1	37	84	2,089	13
1970 to 1979	4,204	18	86	162	3,131	2
1960 to 1969	1,719	7	39	82	1,244	12
1950 to 1959	1,181	8	46	38	919	0
1940 to 1949	926	4	26	59	581	6
1939 or Before	3,060	33	126	189	1,522	38
SUBTOTAL	21,745	93	452	769	14,991	78
Units Lost (2014 to Present)	-48	0	-3	-2	-16	-2
TOTAL EST. UNITS – 2022	21,697	93	449	767	14,975	76
% 1939 or Before	14.1%	35.5%	28.1%	24.6%	10.2%	50.0%
% 1959 or Before	23.8%	48.4%	44.1%	37.3%	20.2%	57.9%

CONTINUED:

TABLE 15 (CONTINUED)
HOUSING STOCK PROFILE/YEAR UNITS BUILT
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2022

<u>Year</u>	<u>Pleasanton</u>	<u>Ravenna</u>	<u>Riverdale</u>	<u>Shelton</u>	<u>Rural Buffalo County/CPJs</u>
2014 and After	14	10	2	12	547 (243/304)
2010 to 2013	1	8	0	0	81
2000 to 2009	9	31	7	23	538
1990 to 1999	8	41	8	51	600
1980 to 1989	10	76	4	42	527
1970 to 1979	43	65	13	36	648
1960 to 1969	15	86	2	24	208
1950 to 1959	8	52	3	29	78
1940 to 1949	12	66	15	36	121
<u>1939 or Before</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>264</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>211</u>	<u>579 (454/125)</u>
SUBTOTAL	175	699	97	464	3,927
<u>Units Lost (2014 to Present)</u>	0	-5	-3	-7	-10
TOTAL EST. UNITS – 2022	175	694	94	457	3,917
% 1939 or Before	31.4%	38.0%	45.7%	46.2%	14.8%
% 1959 or Before	42.9%	55.0%	62.9%	60.4%	19.9%

Source: 2015-2019 American Community Survey.
 Buffalo County Communities, 2022.
 Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

TABLE 16
HOUSING CONDITIONS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2022

	<u>Buffalo County</u>	<u>Amherst</u>	<u>Elm Creek</u>	<u>Gibbon</u>	<u>Kearney</u>	<u>Miller</u>	<u>Pleasanton</u>	<u>Ravenna</u>	<u>Riverdale</u>	<u>Shelton</u>	<u>Rural Buffalo County/ CPJs</u>
Excellent	6	1	0	0	3	0	0	0	1	1	0
Very Good	49	1	1	1	38	0	0	3	1	3	1
Good	3,351	28	85	127	2,636	12	80	178	38	119	48
Average	9,474	150	302	546	7,027	55	175	341	96	261	521
Badly Worn	1,849	77	74	170	787	32	68	212	33	98	298
Worn Out	209	13	7	15	52	9	9	25	0	8	71
Total	14,938	270	469	859	10,543	108	332	759	169	490	939

Source: Buffalo County Assessor's Office, 2022.

**TABLE 17
HOUSING STOCK OCCUPANCY/VACANCY STATUS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2022**

	<u>Buffalo County</u>	<u>Amherst</u>	<u>Elm Creek</u>	<u>Gibbon</u>	<u>Kearney</u>
	21,697	93	449	767	14,975
a) Housing Stock	(O=13,607; R=8,090)	(O=76; R=17)	(O=331; R=118)	(O=511; R=256)	(O=8,313; R=6,662)
b) Vacant Housing Stock	1,742	7	62	86	1,068
c) Occupied Housing Stock	19,955	86	387	681	13,907
*Owner Occupied	12,694	70	295	463	7,843
*Renter Occupied	7,261	16	92	218	6,064
d) Housing Vacancy Rate*	8.0% (1,742)	7.5% (7)	13.8% (62)	11.2% (86)	7.1% (1,068)
*Owner Vacancy	6.7% (913)	7.9% (6)	10.9% (36)	9.4% (48)	5.6% (470)
*Renter Vacancy	10.2% (829)	5.9% (1)	22.0% (26)	14.8% (38)	8.9% (598)
e) Adjusted Vacancy Rate**	2.1% (456)	3.2% (3)	4.0% (18)	3.4% (26)	1.7% (256)
**Owner Vacancy	1.8% (247)	2.6% (2)	3.0% (10)	2.9% (15)	1.4% (116)
**Renter Vacancy	2.6% (209)	5.9% (1)	6.8% (8)	4.3% (11)	2.1% (140)

CONTINUED:

TABLE 17 (CONTINUED)
HOUSING STOCK OCCUPANCY/VACANCY STATUS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2022

	<u>Miller</u>	<u>Pleasanton</u>	<u>Ravenna</u>	<u>Riverdale</u>	<u>Shelton</u>	<u>Rural Buffalo County/CPJs</u>
	76	175	694	94	457	3,917
a) Housing Stock	(O=57; R=19)	(O=139; R=36)	(O=493; R=201)	(O=80; R=14)	(O=331; R=126)	(O=3,276; R=641)
b) Vacant Housing Stock	27	16	132	2	49	293
c) Occupied Housing Stock	49	159	562	92	408	3,624
*Owner Occupied	37	128	400	79	301	3,078
*Renter Occupied	12	31	162	13	107	546
d) Housing Vacancy Rate*	35.5% (27)	9.1% (16)	19.0% (132)	2.1% (2)	10.7% (49)	7.4% (293)
*Owner Vacancy	35.1% (20)	7.9% (11)	18.9% (93)	1.3% (1)	8.5% (30)	6.0% (198)
*Renter Vacancy	36.8% (7)	13.9% (5)	19.4% (39)	5.6% (1)	15.1% (19)	14.8% (95)
e) Adjusted Vacancy Rate**	10.5% (8)	3.4% (6)	3.9% (27)	0.0% (0)	3.3% (15)	2.5% (97)
**Owner Vacancy	10.5% (6)	2.9% (4)	3.9% (19)	0.0% (0)	3.0% (10)	2.1% (65)
**Renter Vacancy	10.5% (2)	5.6% (2)	4.0% (8)	0.0% (0)	4.0% (5)	5.0% (32)

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

** Includes only year-round vacant units available for rent or purchase, meeting current housing code and modern amenities.

Does not include vacant units either not for sale or rent, seasonal units, or units not meeting current housing code.

Source: Buffalo County Communities, 2022.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

**TABLE 18
ESTIMATED MEDIAN GROSS RENT &
MEDIAN OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING VALUE
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2000-2032**

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Median Rent</u>	<u>Median Value Owner Housing</u>
<u>Buffalo County</u>	2000	\$402	\$87,600
	2019*	\$779	\$174,800
	2022	\$808	\$183,460
	2032	\$992	\$226,650
<u>Amherst</u>	2000	\$438	\$64,100
	2019*	\$717	\$92,000
	2022	\$745	\$94,937
	2032	\$885	\$109,550
<u>Elm Creek</u>	2000	\$458	\$65,500
	2019*	\$888	\$114,800
	2022	\$918	\$119,989
	2032	\$1,127	\$144,545
<u>Gibbon</u>	2000	\$404	\$72,200
	2019*	\$815	\$118,300
	2022	\$849	\$123,153
	2032	\$1,055	\$146,550
<u>Kearney</u>	2000	\$509	\$94,700
	2019*	\$767	\$178,900
	2022	\$799	\$187,763
	2032	\$996	\$246,400
<u>Miller</u>	2000	\$467	\$42,500
	2019*	**	\$40,000
	2022	\$595	\$60,120
	2032	\$653	\$68,100

CONTINUED:

TABLE 18 (CONTINUED)
ESTIMATED MEDIAN GROSS RENT &
MEDIAN OWNER OCCUPIED HOUSING VALUE
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA, COMMUNITIES & RURAL BUFFALO COUNTY/CPJs
2000-2032

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Median Rent</u>	<u>Median Value Owner Housing</u>
<u>Pleasanton</u>	2000	\$531	\$64,600
	2019*	\$936	\$115,600
	2022	\$962	\$120,968
	2032	\$1,157	\$146,600
<u>Ravenna</u>	2000	\$414	\$50,100
	2019*	\$611	\$92,400
	2022	\$642	\$96,853
	2032	\$755	\$118,100
<u>Riverdale</u>	2000	\$400	\$67,100
	2019*	\$850	\$122,500
	2022	\$891	\$128,332
	2032	\$1,115	\$156,165
<u>Shelton</u>	2000	\$466	\$60,700
	2019*	\$658	\$108,400
	2022	\$686	\$113,421
	2032	\$786	\$137,400
<u>Rural Buffalo County/CPJs</u>	2000	\$517	\$95,200
	2019*	\$775	\$179,400
	2022	\$803	\$188,200
	2032	\$945	\$248,600

*Specified Data Used. 2019 Estimate subject to margin of error.

**Data not available due to disclosure suppression.

Source: 2000 Census, 2015-2019 American Community Survey.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

**TABLE 19
LAND USE MATRIX-PRESERVATION/DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2022-2032**

POPULATIONS

2022 – 50,703

2032 – 54,346

2032 (CGI) – 56,078

<u>Land Use</u>	<u>Land Area (Acres)</u>		
	<u>2022</u>	<u>2032</u>	<u>2032 (CGI)</u>
- Community & Associated Planning Jurisdictions	75,602	76,705	77,230
- General Agricultural (Including Farmsteads)	422,516	415,265.7	412,588.7
- Land Conservation Easements^	100,665.8	108,700	110,230
- Public/Quasi-Public	231	249	260
- Parks/Recreation	1,653.3	1,833.3	1,843.3
- <i>State Recreation Areas</i>	<i>373.4</i>	<i>373.4</i>	<i>373.4</i>
- <i>Wildlife Management Areas</i>	<i>1,279.9</i>	<i>1,279.9</i>	<i>1,279.9</i>
- <i>Other</i>	<i>0.0</i>	<i>180</i>	<i>190</i>
- Residential (Non-Farmsteads)	13,100	13,464	14,000
- Commercial	588.1	606	620
- <i>In Commercial-Zoned Districts</i>	<i>94.3</i>	<i>100</i>	<i>105</i>
- <i>In Non-Commercial Zoned Districts*</i>	<i>493.8</i>	<i>506</i>	<i>515</i>
- Industrial	2,439.9	2,505	2,556
- <i>In Industrial-Zoned Districts</i>	<i>554.4</i>	<i>582</i>	<i>595</i>
- <i>In Non-Industrial Zoned Districts*</i>	<u><i>1,885.5</i></u>	<u><i>1,923</i></u>	<u><i>1,961</i></u>
Total Land Area	619,328	619,328	619,328
Water Area	4,672	4,672	4,672
TOTAL ESTIMATED ACRES^	624,000	624,000	624,000

*Operations granted by Special Use Permit.

^Comprises land conservation easements with Nebraska Crane Trust, Platte River Recovery Implementation Plan and Nebraska Audubon Society.

Source: Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

TABLE 20
FARMS BY SIZE
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2007 – 2017

<u>Size</u>	<u>2007</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>% Change</u> <u>2007 - 2012</u>	<u>% Change</u> <u>2007 - 2017</u>
1 to 9 Acres	54	75	86	+46.7%	+59.3%
10 to 49 Acres	142	233	178	+64.1%	+25.3%
50 to 179 Acres	219	204	206	-6.8%	-5.9%
180 to 499 Acres	165	206	165	+24.8%	0.0%
500 to 999 Acres	176	152	143	-13.6%	-18.8%
<u>1,000 to Acres or More</u>	<u>193</u>	<u>176</u>	<u>175</u>	<u>-8.8%</u>	<u>-0.6%</u>
Total Farms	949	1,046	953	+10.2%	+0.4%
Total Crop Land	371,615	342,337	324,488	-7.9%	-12.7%
Land in Farms	612,171	580,579	528,404	-5.2%	-13.7%
Average Farm Size	645	555	554	-14.0%	-14.1%

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

TABLE 21
STATUS OF CROP PRODUCTION
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2007 – 2017

	<u>2007</u>	<u>2012</u>	<u>2017</u>	<u>% Change</u> <u>2007 - 2012</u>	<u>% Change</u> <u>2007 - 2017</u>
IRRIGATED LAND					
Farms	508	483	491	-4.9%	-3.3%
Acres	<u>269,141</u>	<u>240,799</u>	<u>214,055</u>	<u>-10.5%</u>	<u>-20.5%</u>
HARVESTED CROP LAND					
Farms	711	760	721	+6.9%	+1.4%
Acres	<u>340,514</u>	<u>325,556</u>	<u>303,729</u>	<u>+4.4%</u>	<u>-10.8%</u>
TOTAL CROP LAND					
Farms	778	824	744	+5.9%	-4.4%
Acres	<u>371,615</u>	<u>342,337</u>	<u>324,488</u>	<u>-7.9%</u>	<u>-12.7%</u>

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

TABLE 22
HARVESTED CROPS BY TYPE
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2007-2017

CROP BY TYPE	Production in Acres			% Change	% Change
	2007	2012	2017	2007-2012	2007-2017
Corn for Grain or Seed	231,763	196,474	180,210	-15.2%	-22.2%
Corn for Silage or Green Chop	3,231	7,712	2,351	+138.7%	-27.2%
Sorghum for Grain or Seed	1,316	204	451	-84.5%	-65.7%
Wheat for Grain	9,635	5,008	2,322	-48.0%	-75.9%
Oats for Grain	280	282	47	+0.7%	-83.2%
Soybeans for Beans	58,193	79,414	84,860	+36.5%	+45.8%
Forage - Hay-alfalfa, Silage	42,502	35,897	33,262	-15.5%	-21.7%

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

TABLE 23
LIVESTOCK PRODUCTION TRENDS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2007 – 2017

Type	Total Farms / Total Animals			% Change	% Change
	2007	2012	2017	2007 – 2012	2007 – 2017
Cattle/Calves	507 / 101,975	549 / 106,059	528 / 94,485	8.2% / 4.0%	4.1% / -7.4%
Beef Cows	454 / 38,677	471 / (D)	448 / (D)	3.7% / (D)	-1.3% / (D)
Milk Cows	12 / 3,382	9 / (D)	3 / (D)	-25.0% / (D)	-75.0% / (D)
Hogs and Pigs	26 / 5,549	8 / 3,150	18 / 2,544	-69.2% / -43.2%	-30.8% / -54.2%
Sheep and Lambs	29 / 5,319	36 / 2,251	26 / 1,071	-24.1% / -57.7%	-10.3% / -79.9%

*(D) Withheld to avoid disclosing data for individual operations.

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

TABLE 24
TRAFFIC VOLUME - AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS
STATE AND FEDERAL ROADS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2016/2018

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2018</u>
Interstate 80, Between Shelton and Gibbon	22,095	22,360
Interstate 80, West of Gibbon	21,760	22,460
Interstate 80, East of Kearney	21,425	22,480
Interstate 80, West of Kearney	20,895	20,905
U.S. Highway 30, Buffalo/Hall County Line	4,955	5,785
U.S. Highway 30, East of Gibbon	5,275	5,870
U.S. Highway 30, West of Gibbon	6,390	6,620
U.S. Highway 30, Kearney (East of Kearney)	9,275	7,860
U.S. Highway 30, Kearney (East City Limits)	10,940	9,105
U.S. Highway 30, Kearney (East of 2nd Avenue)	14,490	14,500
U.S. Highway 30, Kearney (West of 2nd Avenue)	15,060	16,040
U.S. Highway 30, Kearney (West City Limits)	10,995	11,365
U.S. Highway 30, East of Odessa	4,455	4,245
U.S. Highway 30, East of Elm Creek	3,435	3,185
U.S. Highway 30, West of Elm Creek	2,660	2,950
U.S Highway 183, South of Interstate 80	4,460	5,055
U.S Highway 183, South of Elm Creek	5,370	5,160
U.S Highway 183, North of Elm Creek	5,370	3,110
U.S Highway 183, South of Miller	865	805
U.S Highway 183, North of Miller	815	800

CONTINUED:

TABLE 24 (CONTINUED)
TRAFFIC VOLUME - AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC COUNTS
STATE AND FEDERAL ROADS
BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2016/2018

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2018</u>
NE Highway 2, Southeast of Ravenna	3,060	3,235
NE Highway 2, Southwest of Ravenna	2,350	2,425
NE Highway 10, South of Pleasanton	3,960	3,785
NE Highway 10, Kearney (South of NE Highway 40)	2,220	2,240
NE Highway 10, Kearney (North City Limits)	2,375	2,420
NE Highway 10, Crossing Interstate 80	3,082	3,195
NE Highway Spur 10B, South of Odessa	4,275	2,495
NE Highway Spur 10C, South of Gibbon	1,785	1,580
NE Highway Spur 10D, South of Shelton	650	690
NE Highway 40, West of NE Highway 10	3,365	3,365
NE Highway 40, Riverdale	2,670	2,435
NE Highway 40, West of Riverdale	1,970	1,990
NE Highway 40, Between Amherst and Miller	1,265	1,135
NE Highway 40, West of Miller	920	955
NE Highway 44, Kearney (South of U.S. I-80)	9,720	9,345
NE Highway 44, Kearney (South City Limits)	8,060	9,905
NE Highway 68, South of Ravenna	2,830	2,695
NE Highway 68, North of Ravenna	930	875

Source: Nebraska Department of Transportation, 2022.



APPENDIX II
BUFFALO COUNTY
SURVEY RESULTS.

DRAFT

BUFFALO COUNTY SURVEY RESULTS.

BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA COUNTY-WIDE OPINION SURVEY RESULTS.

Where do you live?		
Rural Buffalo County	87	35%
Amherst	6	3%
Elm Creek	11	4%
Gibbon	16	6%
Kearney	99	40%
Miller	1	0%
Pleasanton	13	5%
Riverdale	3	1%
Ravenna	12	5%
Shelton	3	1%
Total	251	100%

If you live in Rural Buffalo County, do you live within one or two miles of a City/Village?		
Yes	41	47%
No	46	53%
Total	87	100%

Do you own property in Rural Buffalo County?		
Yes	118	48%
No	127	52%
Total	245	100%

Do you feel the current Buffalo County Zoning and Subdivision Regulations are effective in managing growth and land development?		
Yes	87	35%
No	38	15%
No Opinion	127	50%
Total	252	100%

Which of the following Land Use items do you support for the future of Rural Buffalo County?

General Agricultural Uses		
Very Supportive (3)	140	56%
Supportive (2)	81	32%
Not Supportive (1)	6	2%
No Opinion (0)	25	10%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	2.59	

Land Conservation Easements		
Very Supportive (3)	64	25%
Supportive (2)	102	41%
Not Supportive (1)	41	16%
No Opinion (0)	45	18%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	2.11	

Intensive Agricultural Uses		
Very Supportive (3)	74	29%
Supportive (2)	99	39%
Not Supportive (1)	29	12%
No Opinion (0)	50	20%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	2.22	

Residential Development (General)		
Very Supportive (3)	51	20%
Supportive (2)	115	46%
Not Supportive (1)	55	22%
No Opinion (0)	31	12%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	1.98	

Planned Rural Residential Subdivisions		
Very Supportive (3)	47	19%
Supportive (2)	94	37%
Not Supportive (1)	66	26%
No Opinion (0)	45	18%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	1.91	

Parks/Recreation		
Very Supportive (3)	92	37%
Supportive (2)	91	36%
Not Supportive (1)	44	17%
No Opinion (0)	25	10%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	2.21	

Public Infrastructure/Facilities/Utilities		
Very Supportive (3)	75	30%
Supportive (2)	99	39%
Not Supportive (1)	43	17%
No Opinion (0)	35	14%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	2.15	

Commercial Development		
Very Supportive (3)	32	13%
Supportive (2)	104	41%
Not Supportive (1)	65	26%
No Opinion (0)	51	20%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	1.84	

Industrial Development		
Very Supportive (3)	28	11%
Supportive (2)	97	39%
Not Supportive (1)	61	24%
No Opinion (0)	66	26%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	1.82	

Zoning/Subdivision Ordinances/Regulations		
Very Supportive (3)	40	16%
Supportive (2)	108	43%
Not Supportive (1)	51	20%
No Opinion (0)	53	21%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	1.94	

Transportation Systems		
Very Supportive (3)	67	27%
Supportive (2)	106	42%
Not Supportive (1)	46	18%
No Opinion (0)	33	13%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	2.10	

Personal Alternative Energy Systems		
Very Supportive (3)	58	23%
Supportive (2)	82	33%
Not Supportive (1)	73	29%
No Opinion (0)	39	15%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	1.93	

Commercial Alternative Energy Systems		
Very Supportive (3)	45	18%
Supportive (2)	66	26%
Not Supportive (1)	91	36%
No Opinion (0)	50	20%
Total	252	100%
Average Score	1.77	

BUFFALO COUNTY, NEBRASKA COUNTY-WIDE OPINION SURVEY COMMENTS.

Comments have been edited for clarity.

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

- I believe they are too restrictive. A property owner should not have the added time and cost to make improvements.
- I don't quite understand the reasoning but when I speak to home builders they say they can put up many more homes than they are if it weren't for government roadblocks and something about low income. More houses built would accommodate demand and lower cost of buying homes and renting as we build more and close in on meeting demand. No need for any road blocks. Just let builders build, low income or not. Get more dwellings up. I do not support zoning in general.
- I feel like many of the rules are too restrictive and property owner has little say in things. I agree with many of the zoning regulations but feel some are over the top. Those that live and own a pivot quarter corner of ground are told they have 2 front yards and cannot building an accessory bldg in their front yard. If you consider practically everything their front yard, that leaves no where to put an accessory building. Many people will decide they've been slighted and must build elsewhere.
- I feel there needs to be better planning on development and consequences of development. This questionnaire is a start to better planning.
- I have insufficient knowledge of these regulations.
- I have no zoning issues
- I haven't seen any problems at this point.
- I really have not looked into it.
- I see people that want to live in a rural area and then turn it into a city setting. Or run big machinery in and out of country roads, with their business equipment that is not agriculture related.
- I think it's too easy to change a rural zoning.
- I think they are a little over reaching

- I think too many subdivisions are popping up and the county is lacking the infrastructure to appropriately manage these. For example, the increase of use of graveled, county roads. Additionally, the amount of increase in traffic on north Hwy 10.
- I think we need less regulations to promote growth
- It seems Kearney is developing into ag land. Need to contain development and preserve ag land for ag use
- It'd be real nice if you could keep the city people out of the country somehow.
- It's important to keep everything under regulations so everyone follows the same rules
- My family farms a significant amount of ground and they keep wanting to develop it and basically if they want it they are going to take it one way or another.
- No opinion
- Not enough info
- Not really sure what they are protecting and condoning. would like to see their regulations
- Odessa is not well managed. So many houses in disrepair. Yards full of junk. Nobody wants live there.
- really don't know what they are.
- school levys killing tax payers.
- Seem to be guiding the growth of the county well.
- Subdivisions should be keep close around Kearney area, rural County gravel roads can't handle all the extra use of subdivisions. Regulations should be a lot more restrictive then they are now, subdivision developers are making money and the tax payers of Buffalo County are paying the bills.
- The cost on the County to provide services to individuals choosing to live in the country but live like they are in the city is too expensive. If they would like paved roads and live in the middle of nowhere they can provide for it themselves.
- The county needs to maintain & develop all subdivision roads for consistent quality, condition and equality of taxation.
- The county supervisors always vote to overturn existing zoning laws whenever an outsider wants to move in and chop up more rural land.
- The regulations are well developed. We could do something to encourage a bit more development with our current housing shortage.
- There doesn't seem to be an overarching strategy for development.

- There is a need for some planning. We do want Buffalo Co to be strong on agriculture. Protect agriculture.
- There needs to be some rhyme or reason to how we develop our ag lands.
- There seems to be no planning in how residential homes are placed in the county.
- They have provided a guideline for growth but need to be updated.
- To my knowledge, there is no real zoning out in my area. I think people who have moved in go to city council to approve certain zoning, but that is a guess.
- Too many housing developments taking too much farm land. If you keep letting them take crop land away, where are you going to grow and raise the things we live on.
- Way too much land is being allowed to be chopped up into 3-10 acre parcels and is ruining the rural landscape. It is also taking valuable ag land out of production. Zoning needs to be stricter to keep this from happening. Pretty soon there won't be much rural land left between Kearney and Amherst. These acreages push up the value of land so farmers are taxed more even though they don't make any more money off the land.
- We dont need to be ruining ag land with houses.
- We hate to see so many subdivisions in the rural areas. Keep rural rural.
- We need more housing in Kearney and the surrounding area. We can't keep having a growth in the commercial word but not accomodating with enough houses in the area. I think we should encourage more developers to come into our area, and give incentives to those who are willing to put in the work and build more high-quality homes and design more unique subdivisions.
- Yes, think the county as a good plan to manage growth.

Please include any additional comments/suggestions regarding the future of Rural Buffalo County, Nebraska.

- A family member of mine went to a county zoning meeting to oppose someone on a rural acreage from changing the rural zoning laws and wasn't given the time of day. If we have rural zoning laws, make the board enforce them. The board always favors the person wanting to chop up the land rather than follow the existing laws. If development is so good, keep it in the city.
- Affordable housing is a need, more entertainment for residents is necessary
- Areas such as Gibbon need adequate housing for residential. Any housing development is needed for families.
- Better roads! The County needs a better system and way to maintain roads over time. Eliminating roads is not the answer!
- Buffalo co for agriculture
- Buffalo County must be responsive to the changes that will be necessary to support both urban and rural growth. There are only a few "growth centers" in out-state Nebraska and Buffalo County is one of them. The next 20-30 years will require creative, forward thinking and planning. Setting up arbitrary barriers to change does not encourage progress. We need Broad Band in all parts of the County. We need quality affordable housing both within the various city limits as well in non-urban areas.
- Concern that with all the growth of towns and Kearney, will Buffalo county lose its rural character? I like to see growth and welcome new faces, but want to see the ag producers able to continue making their livelihood
- Do not forget that Ne is an agricultural state.
- Educate maintainer operators how drive, keep more gravel on the roads than in the ditches. Allocate more funds to rural development rather than give Kearney everything. If it's within their city limits they can do it themselves.
- Farm ground should be farm ground first, otherwise, who will feed the world!
- Growth is going to continue and at a more rapid pace. Planned growth will balance all demands better than unplanned growth. Parks and land conservation improve quality of life for all residents and should be given that consideration. Roads need to be planned and installed NOW so that movement flows well and integrates with existing roads, air and rail also need strong consideration.
- Heavy agriculture use should be restricted to the least populated areas.
- I am not in favor of Kearney to Amherst being one big city. The minimum rural lot size needs to be 40 acres.

- I am not in favor of wind farms in any way. I feel solar farms could be better placed on existing large buildings rather than take up land space currently being used for either agricultural purposes or an area of natural habitat.
- I am straight west of high school. All of a sudden a new street sign has popped up but I have no idea if our address has changed. It is very confusing.
- I do not support wind farms!
- I do not support zoning. Allow people to purchase and use land as they see fit. Free market in a free country. Less regulation and restrictions is what we need to turn things around.
- I have no words for you except that I am very passionate about our land that generations of my family have worked very hard for.
- I think acreages in rural is acceptable. industry, commercial and neighborhoods should be kept within 1-2 miles of city limits.
- I think that Buffalo County is so enamored by Kearney that they lose sight in that there are people that don't want to spend \$65,000 on a 1/4 acre lot to build a house on it. Instead they would choose to spend less money for more land outside of Kearney. In order to do this rural developments need to become more priority. Instead of passing regulations that increase the upfront cost of the developer. Which in turns deters development in rural because it now becomes to risky.
- I think we need to resurface most blacktop rural roads I believe our gravel roads are in better shape
- I would like to see a minimum acreage size of 5 acres for residential homes. Also, it would be good to have financial incentives for solar/wind energy and transfer-switch expenses, such as a one-time offset of property taxes. Buffalo County already does a great job maintaining the gravel roads and the sheriff response times, I suspect, are good. Rural Buffalo County is a great place to live, so the most important suggestion is to not screw it up!
- If all this rural growth continues as it's going now, Buffalo County will need to pave many many more miles of gravel roads to even begin to keep up (Huge cost to tax payers). I am not against growth, but it needs to be around Kearney. Developers need to pay for road pavement in rural Buffalo County area's before creating subdivisions and selling lots just like developers in Kearney do.

- If we over regulate with zoning rules that make very little sense in the 21st century, it will make it much easier for our younger generations to decide they want to leave Buffalo County for a neighboring county/state that may not be so harsh. If we want our youth to leave Nebraska then I say continue to limit/over regulate and we'll be left with Massive Farming Corporations farming our state/county and making the profits and the small farmer will be no longer.
- It would be good to hard surface Pawnee rd from Hwy 30 to Gibbon golf course.
- Kearney is growing too quickly. also tax rates are not in line. they are too high. I wonder if we could actually get what the assessor has our property valued at.
- Keep up the good work
- Let people alone. Stop regulating.
- Let's not be in a hurry to do something with every square inch of land. Open space is valuable too, to the health and beauty of the planet.
- Love how Denver has maintained open spaces. Kearney has the chance to do the same as we grow. Protecting wildlife/grasslands/trails/outdoors is important to my family. Would love to see the county set aside other areas like oldfather and Yany. These were privately established, but widely used by the community. Buffalo County could be more proactive to grow these kinds of spaces.
- Natural animal habitation that is being replaced by urban development. The people that move to the rural area and then are disturbed by the animals that lived there before.
- No commercial wind generators
- Please conserve ag land. If I wanted to live in Denver and have houses everywhere, I'd be there already. I want peace and quiet. Build Kearney up instead of out.
- Please fix Turkey Creek. We live and own property 1 1/2 miles west of the high school. along the interstate. It is a real problem for people in that area. Our county roads when it rains and floods become impassable. It is very frustrating.
- Please make sure to allow wind and solar, do not fall for the nonsense that they are harmful. Do the research and leave politics at the door. Nebraska could easily become the first state to get almost all of our energy needs from nature and save every citizen money.

- Please use the survey to guide your decisions on what the public wants. Don't just appease us and do what you want anyway. Why is the planning commission an appointed bureaucrat position. The public should be able to vote on who we want on such a powerful board.
- quit choppin our trees down
- reduce taxes/drop levey/keep schools/ 1% or lower in increase
- support or encouragement to clean up old run down buildings, houses etc in the county
- Supportive of alternative, sustainable agriculture
- Thank you for doing this survey
- Thank you for taking the time to listen to the residents!
- The issue of flooding needs to be addressed. The city water overflow is to go into the rural area and out towards the river; however, lack of maintenance of the water way prevents the water from flowing as it should.
- The new rules with residential subdivision roads being the responsibility of the developer seems to be a good idea. I have concerns that they will find ways to avoid this in the future.
- The roads in Buffalo County are terrible and need to be better maintained. Also the ditches need to cleaned out so that it is safer for travel.
- There are a lot of negative connotations with wind farms (the shadows, whooshing noises, migraines from folks that live near by, upkeep/maintenance, debris of failed windmills in mass graves, electricity to run the windmills, etc) that make me not really lean in that direction. However, I do feel that we need to find a good source of alternative energy that isn't wasteful or creating other issues. Thus, perhaps solar, but I haven't taken the time to do my own research on that, yet.
- Very supportive of road maintenance
- We are in need of affordable housing within the Buffalo County area. The poverty rate is 16.9% we are the highest in the state.
- We currently have a good agricultural/ rural housing mix and believe we should keep it the same.
- We need more public nature parks or areas for people in the city to experience nature or a hybrid like Mahoney Park... Eastern Nebraska keeps getting more public nature/nature park upgrades and it would be an economic and public benefit to have something similar in Buffalo County.

- We need to be more friendly to large scale animal agriculture. Large dairies, hog confinement operations and feedlots should be welcome because it is the easiest way to add value to the feed resources in this county. A balanced, paced strategy for increasing these enterprises is feasible and sustainable. Housing for workforce, capacity for educating more and diverse K-12 population and other infrastructure needs must be part of any livestock development proposal.
- We need to maintain a healthy balance between various land use purposes. While Buffalo County is more suburban compared to many counties, we still must maintain growth opportunities for agriculture. This includes large livestock and agriculture processing opportunities.
- Widen or increase the speed on Ravenna Rd.
- Wind farms kill migratory birds. Solar farms are ugly just look at antelope.
- With a growing and relatively large population I think more paved county roads should be considered and implemented. I sometimes think the county board does not realize how big the county population is. I think installing standard address signs at rural locations should be strongly considered. Smaller counties with less than half Buffalo County's population, such as Saunders County, have such signs in place. I think the question of signage should be presented to first responders in the county.