

THE KEARNEY PLAN

THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR
KEARNEY, NEBRASKA

PREPARED WITH THE
CITY OF KEARNEY
BY
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IN ASSOCIATION WITH
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AND
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THE KEARNEY PLAN

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■ The Kearney Plan

TABLE OF CONTENTS

THE KEARNEY PLAN

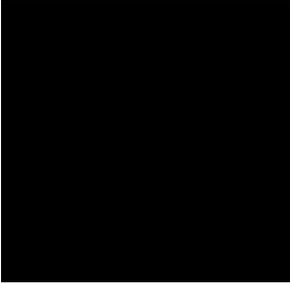
■ An Introduction to the Kearney Plan	1
■ A Profile of Kearney	10
- Population History	11
- Population Change and Migration	14
- Population Projections	21
- Employment Characteristics	24
■ A City to Lead the Region	33
- Town Patterns	36
- Challenges	43
- A Development Constitution	49
■ Growth and Land Use	61
- Existing Land Use	63
- Land Use Trends	71
- Land Use Projections	75
- Land Use Policies	82
<i>Development Concept Map</i>	<i>Follows 82</i>
<i>Future Land Use Plan</i>	<i>Follows 82</i>
■ Mobility for Urban Quality	111
- Patterns of Mobility	114
- Traffic Volumes	117
- Capacity Analysis	118
- Future Traffic Projections	121
- Analysis of Alternatives	126
- Transportation Policies	134
<i>Transportation Concept Map</i>	<i>Follows 134</i>
■ A Recreation Lifestyle	149
- Park System Vision and Goals	152
- Park Facility Analysis and Needs	156
- Park Development Plan	167
<i>Parks and Open Space Concept Map</i>	<i>Follows 180</i>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

■ Quality Public Services	183
- Public Services Goals	184
- Public Facilities	186
- Public Facilities Priorities	196
- Infrastructure Analysis	199
- Sanitary Sewers	199
- Storm Drainage	205
- Storm Drainage Policies	210
- Water Supply	211
- Solid Waste Management	213
<i>Public Facilities Map</i>	<i>Follows 186</i>
<i>Wastewater System Concept Map</i>	<i>Follows 204</i>
<i>Stormwater System Concept Map</i>	<i>Follows 210</i>
<i>Water System Concept Map</i>	<i>Follows 212</i>
■ A Unique and Vital Kearney Centre	217
- A Vision for Kearney Centre	218
- Issues Affecting Kearney Centre	221
- Opportunities	225
- Kearney Centre Development Plan	229
■ Housing and Neighborhoods	241
- Housing and Neighborhood Goals	241
- Housing Characteristics in Kearney	243
- Housing Affordability	244
- Housing Conditions	249
- Housing Policies	255
<i>Areas with Rehabilitation Needs Map</i>	<i>250</i>
- Neighborhood Planning Districts	265
- Northwest Kearney	269
- Northeast Kearney	273
- West Kearney	277
- West Central Kearney	281
- East Midtown Kearney	285
- East Central Kearney	289
- East Outlying Kearney	293
- Southwest Kearney	297
- Southeast Kearney	301
- South Outlying Kearney	305
<i>Neighborhood Planning Districts Map</i>	<i>266</i>

TABLE OF CONTENTS

■ Implementing the Kearney Plan	311
- Plan Maintenance	312
- Implementation Schedule	314



THE KEARNEY PLAN: AN INTRODUCTION

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR KEARNEY

*In the future,
Kearney must
take full
advantage of its
dynamic growth
opportunities
while preserving
its distinctive
quality as a small
city.*

Kearney is completing the transformation from a college town and agricultural market center into a dynamic, rapidly developing regional urban center. These prospects present both exciting challenges and opportunities.

The Kearney Plan provides a comprehensive vision of the city's future, based on taking strategic actions to preserve Kearney's small city quality of life while taking full advantage of its growth prospects.

Nebraska's cities live in a changing social and economic environment. The City of Kearney has made a transition from an earlier niche as a railroad and agricultural service community to a dynamic and rapidly growing suburban center. In the process, Kearney moved from being a small rural town to emerging as one of the state's major cities.

Kearney is one of the state's fastest growing communities, a center for government, recreation and residential living in its region. The city is taking steps to balance these qualities with additional business park and commercial development. With this growth will come challenges, including how to handle new demands on the city's infrastructure and transportation systems.

ROLES OF A PLAN

This comprehensive development plan for Kearney has two fundamental purposes. The first provides an essential legal basis for land use regulation such as zoning and subdivision control. Secondly, a modern comprehensive plan presents a unified and compelling vision for a community, derived from the aspirations of its citizens; and establishes the specific actions necessary to fulfill that vision.

- *The Legal Role*

Communities prepare and adopt comprehensive plans for legal purposes. Nebraska State Statutes enable cities to adopt zoning and subdivision ordinances to promote the "health, safety, morals, or general welfare of the community." Land use regulations such as zoning ordinances recognize that people in a community live cooperatively and have certain responsibilities to one another. These regulations establish rules that govern how land is developed within a municipality and its extra-territorial jurisdiction.

However, under Nebraska law, a city may not adopt land use ordinances without first adopting a comprehensive development plan. This requirement derives from the premise that land use decisions should not be arbitrary, but should follow an accepted and reasonable concept of how the city should grow. Under state statutes, a comprehensive development plan must address, at a minimum, the following issues:

- Land use, or the planned distribution of activities and uses of land in the community.
- Transportation facilities.
- Community facilities, including recreation facilities, schools, public buildings, and infrastructure.

The Kearney Plan provides the ongoing legal basis for the city's authority to regulate land use and development.

ROLES OF A PLAN

• *The Community Building Role*

A comprehensive development plan has an even more significant role in the growth of a community. The plan establishes a picture of Kearney's future, based on the participation of residents in the planning of their community. This vision is particularly crucial at this time in the community's history, as problems like traffic congestion begin to affect the intimate, small town character that Kearney continues to enjoy. Beyond defining a vision, the plan presents a unified action program that will implement the city's goals. The plan is designed as a working document - a document that both defines the future and provides a working program for realizing the city's great potential.

The Planning Process

The Kearney Plan is the result of a planning process that involved citizens of the city to define its future. This process was coordinated by a Planning Coordinating Committee, representing a wide variety of interests in the community. The first part of the process involved a three-part strategic planning program, designed to assess the city's current position; establish visions and goals for Kearney's twenty-year future; and consider an action program necessary to achieve that vision. Members of the community were invited to participate in the strategic planning process through a series of community workshops.

Community Assessment

Participants in the planning process were asked to define the most important issues and qualities of Kearney.

• *Identification of Major Issues*

In assessing the city's situation, participants defined the most important issues that would face Kearney within the next five to ten years. Participants identified the following issue areas as most crucial to the city:

- *Transportation*, including traffic congestion, poor north-south traffic flows, needed road and viaduct improvements, and the need to create better connections to link the various

THE PLANNING PROCESS • ASSESSMENT

parts of the city. Respondents often cited the need for some sort of circumferential traffic circulator to relieve congestion along Second Avenue. The lack of local, frequent, affordable air service in Kearney was also mentioned as a problem, as was the city's dependence upon Second Avenue interchange as the sole access to Interstate 80.

- *Housing*, including the need to promote the construction of housing that is affordable to low and moderate income persons, and available for elderly residents. Citizens sought more housing choice, more multi-family development, and creation of new housing opportunities for the city's substantial mobile home population.

- *Growth and Community Development*, including the need to manage the type and rate of growth to ensure that it occurs in an orderly, cost-efficient manner. Residents expressed considerable fears and uncertainty about the pace and amount of growth that could be managed, without damaging the quality of life in Kearney. Citizens mentioned land use controls, landscaping standards, and clear, targeted growth and annexation policies as important to Kearney.

- *Public services and facilities*, including the competing demands of needed repairs to older infrastructure, while population expansion creates new facility needs in growing areas. Citizens identified needs to repair streets and reconstruct drainage systems in older parts of the city. In growth areas, issues include: the need to ensure timely fire protection, new parks, and cost-effective phasing of sewer and water extensions.

- *Economic development*, including business development, the effects of recent highway commercial expansion on Kearney Centre, industrial diversification, and adequate land for industrial uses. Some participants expressed a need for better government-business cooperation and coordination.

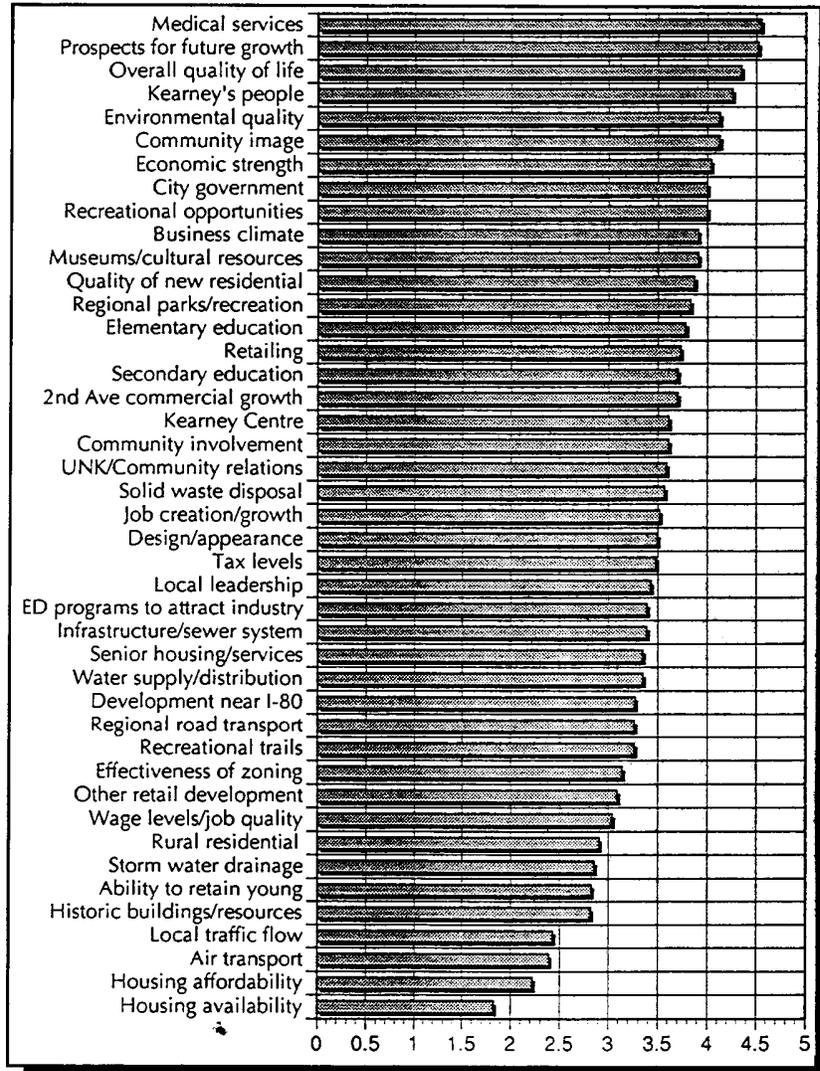
- *Recreation and expanded youth and family activities*, including the need for more active ballfields, the potential for a family aquatic center and a network of city recreational trails.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

Participants in the planning process rated important community services and facilities, which are rated at right using a one-to-four scale.

Services with an aggregate score of 3.0 or above are viewed favorably; those with scores below 2.5 represent areas for additional attention.

Generally, Kearney earned high marks for satisfaction with medical services, prospects for economic growth, and the quality of the living environment and image of the community. Residents were less satisfied with the availability and affordability of housing, personal mobility via automobile and air travel, and the city's stormwater and drainage capacity.



- *Kearney Centre*, including the need to renew the deteriorated condition of second floor spaces in Downtown , and remodeling, facade restoration, and parking, street repairs.

- *Education*, including the continued need to expand and improve resources for local education.

- *Citizen participation*, including the need to increase community spirit and involvement, and enhance the image of the city within its region.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

• *Identification of Community Strengths and Weaknesses*

In addressing these vital issues, participants in the planning process identified the following as key community strengths:

- Regional road transportation links to the region.
- Economic diversity, with major employment in industry, medical and educational services, retailing, entertainment, and lodging and convention services.
- Recreational opportunities, within both the city and the Platte River valley.
- Leading educational facilities, including the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and the excellent facilities and programs of the Kearney Public Schools.
- Regional status and growth of Good Samaritan Hospital and its related medical services.
- A traditional, dependable work ethic among residents.
- A positive community attitude about growth and new development.
- A high quality of life that is attractive to rural youth and admired by residents of other central Nebraska communities.

On the other hand, participants identified the following issues as important liabilities or problems:

- Lack of affordable housing, and the lack of interest on the part of the building industry in constructing these types of units.
- Insufficient number of permanent housing units to serve the growing population.
- Traffic congestion, especially along Second Avenue, and the key intersection of US 30 and Second Avenue.
- Traffic congestion related to the large number of student vehicles (at UNK and the high school) that must be accommodated by the local street system.
- Poor storm drainage in some parts of the city.
Uncertainty regarding the potential success of local investments related to ethanol processing, given variable federal policies and state price supports for these operations.
- Persistent inability to raise wages for local workers, related to the perception that wages are depressed due to presence of the large student population.

COMMUNITY SURVEY

- Lack of adequate regional air transportation service.
- Lack of an effective local strategy to channel youth activities to prevent misconduct, substance abuse or criminal problems.

• *Identification of Plan Focus Areas*

The community assessment and visioning process led to the completion of an interim strategic plan summary. This report summarized the results of the strategic planning phase of the planning process. It identified eight specific issue areas, including:

- Economic Development.
- Transportation.
- Growth and Growth Management.
- Urban Design.
- Parks and Recreation.
- Downtown Kearney and the City Center.
- Public Facilities and Infrastructure Services.
- Housing Conditions and Neighborhood Improvements.

These specific issues became themes for the creation of the Kearney Plan. Specific priorities, goals, and actions for each of these broad issue areas were outlined, to provide the foundation for this detailed comprehensive plan document.

The Comprehensive Plan: Approach and Format

The comprehensive plan presents a strategy-oriented approach to the future development of Kearney. The plan includes eight chapters, corresponding to the city's most important physical development issues. Many of the traditional sections of a comprehensive plan, such as land use, housing, infrastructure, and transportation, are organized as recurring components to these thematic chapters. This enables the plan to tell the story of the city's future development and presents an integrated program for the city's growth.

• *Themes Within the Kearney Plan*

The overriding theme of the Kearney Plan, based on the deliberations of the Plan Coordinating Committee and the results of the community workshops, involves managing

THEMES OF THE KEARNEY PLAN

new growth and investment within a planned city development concept that improves traffic mobility, housing opportunity, potential for business growth and recreational activities while reinforcing Kearney's traditional features and distinctive image and character.

1. A Profile of Kearney presents an analytical view of Kearney's people, economy and position within its region.

2. A City to Lead the Region examines the patterns and relationships that make Kearney special and considers challenges to its distinctive sense of place. The chapter creates a "Development Constitution" for Kearney. The Constitution establishes the general principles and ideas that guide the more detailed elements of the plan.

3. Growth and Land Use examines development demands and projects the amount of residential, commercial and industrial land needed for the next twenty years. It presents an inventory of existing land use patterns, along with detailed strategies to guide future growth in new development areas. It also provides an inventory of housing conditions and an analysis of housing costs relative to comparable towns. Important issues include the preservation of the city's older and historic housing stock, and provision of additional rental and affordable housing opportunities.

4. A Quality Urban Environment considers one of Kearney's most critical issues - its need to assure that growth occurs in beneficial ways, supporting the building of community. By uniting its subdivisions, Kearney can create a community whose whole is greater than the mere sum of its parts. Important issues discussed here include measures to manage new development and planning principles that can guide the construction to result in a high-quality, small city environment. It presents a Community Design Concept and describes the projects and design principles necessary to realize the concept. It also contains detailed traffic analysis and a Transportation Plan concept that allows Kearney to improve residents' mobility as the city continues to develop.

5. A Recreation Lifestyle describes Kearney's parks and sports facilities, and outdoor recreation as a way of life for residents in the Platte River Valley. It presents improve-

THEMES OF THE KEARNEY PLAN

ment plans for new and existing parks and trails, to be integrated into the City's growth, housing, and regional tourism efforts.

6. Kearney Centre proposes an innovative development program for the city's vital and historic town center, a distinctive place that remains an active mixed use center. This theme analyzes downtown, and presents a multi-faceted downtown development program that includes the public environment, redevelopment opportunities, and management strategies designed to improve the district's already attractive environment. It is designed to create opportunities for additional business, and to improve the functioning and financial success of the district.

7. Quality Public Services examines the quality of public facilities and infrastructure within Kearney. Facilities discussed in this chapter include City Hall, the library, city maintenance shops, and public safety buildings serving fire protection and law enforcement. These facilities are vital to the city's ability to support growth and serve present and future residents. It includes a detailed assessment of each public facility and provides a specific program for streets, sidewalks, infrastructure, and facility development.

8. Housing and Neighborhoods examines housing demand characteristics and neighborhood conditions of each part of Kearney, and presents strategies to assure that each area maintains a state of health.

9. Implementing the Plan draws together the analysis and policies of the plan into a program for implementation. It summarizes the recommendations and development policies of the plan, and presents an Implementation Schedule, listing proposed projects and the time-frame for their completion.

1

A PROFILE OF KEARNEY

DEMOGRAPHIC AND ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS

This chapter examines important demographic and regional trends that will affect Kearney as it plans for its future. This analysis will examine the community's population and demographic dynamics, including an examination of the city's future population composition. In addition, it will analyze important regional issues that will affect the quality of the city's environment.

Population History and Characteristics

Population and population characteristics help to explain the condition of a community. This discussion will present important changes in the characteristics and dynamics of Kearney's population. Table 1-1 exhibits historic population growth in Kearney, compared to other regional cities.

Kearney's early settlement coincided with federal military installations, including Fort Kearny, established to protect the westward migrations along the Platte River. The fort later served and protected homesteaders attracted by the land development offices of the Union Pacific Railroad. The 1880 census reports Kearney's population at 1,782 persons.

Kearney became an important supply and regional trade center in the years following completion of the transcontinental railroad. By 1890, Kearney's population swelled to more than 8,074 persons. By the end of the century, the wave of immigration had passed, and a series of agricultural depressions and droughts severely affected farm and ranch operations. By 1900, Kearney's population fell to 5,634. It would take nearly three decades for the City of Kearney to regain its earlier peak population. In 1930, Kearney's population was 8,575. Since 1930, Kearney's population has grown steadily and dramatically.

POPULATION HISTORY

- *Kearney's population has grown more rapidly, and for a more sustained period of time, than comparable cities.*

Kearney grew at a more rapid rate during the Great Depression, and in the post-war period after 1940, than all comparable communities except Lexington. Between 1950 and 1970, Kearney's growth rate accelerated, along with that of Columbus, Norfolk and Grand Island, while growth rates in Hastings and other communities slowed. Since 1970, Norfolk and Kearney have exhibited the highest rates of growth.

- *Kearney's population growth exceeds trends in other parts of the rural Nebraska region outside of metropolitan Omaha and Lincoln.*

Generally, suburban and metropolitan communities have grown at a faster rate than other cities. Nebraska cities of Kearney, Columbus, Grand Island and Norfolk represent rural trade centers that have joined this rapid trend of growth.

- *Kearney's greatest growth occurred during the 1960s and 1970s.*

Kearney added nearly 7000 people during these two decades. By comparison, Grand Island and Hastings added 7,437 and 1,633 persons, respectively. Overall population

**TABLE 1-1:
Population Change for Kearney and Other Regional Cities, 1930-1990.**

	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	% Change 1930-50	% Change 1950-70	% Change 1970-90
Kearney	8,575	9,643	12,115	14,210	19,181	21,158	24,396	41.28	585.32	27.19
Buffalo County	24,388	23,655	25,134	26,236	31,222	34,797	37,447	3.27	24.22	19.94
Hastings	15,490	15,145	20,211	21,412	23,580	23,045	22,837	30.48	16.67	-3.15
Stam County	26,275	24,576	28,855	28,944	30,553	30,656	29,625	9.82	5.88	-3.04
Grand Island	18,041	19,130	22,682	25,743	32,358	33,180	39,386	25.72	42.66	21.72
Hall County	27,117	27,523	31,186	35,757	42,851	47,690	48,925	18.69	33.14	14.17
Norfolk	10,717	10,490	11,335	16,640	16,607	19,449	21,476	5.7	46.51	29.32
Columbus	6,898	7,632	8,884	12,476	15,471	17,328	19,480	28.88	74.14	25.91
York	5,712	5,383	6,178	6,173	6,778	7,723	7,884	8.12	9.71	16.62
Lexington	2,962	3,688	5,068	5,572	5,654	7,040	6,601	71.11	11.56	16.75
Holdrege	3,263	3,360	4,381	5,226	5,635	5,624	5,671	34.26	28.86	0.64

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1990.

REGIONAL POPULATION TRENDS

growth between 1950 and 1990 has more than doubled the City's population from 12,115 to 24,396. During the same period, Buffalo County population increased by nearly 49%.

- *Kearney's rate of growth since 1930 has outpaced that of Buffalo County.*

In 1930, Kearney accounted for 35% of Buffalo County's population. By 1990, that percentage had grown to 65%. Buffalo County population was stable between 1930 and 1950, as the City of Kearney grew rapidly. This suggests that in the Depression and World War II eras, many rural residents of the county migrated into the city, and that most new county residents settled within Kearney.

In the period following 1950, the County's population growth rate more closely approximated the city's rate, as additional population growth in the County was distributed to areas outside Kearney's city limits. In the period since 1970, the County's growth rate has stabilized at nearly 75% of the city rate.

- *Kearney remains one of the least urbanized population centers among comparable cities.*

The proportion of Buffalo County's population living outside Kearney has steadily declined since 1930. By 1990, about 35% of County residents live outside of Kearney. This is illustrated in Table 1-2. Population within Adams and Hall Counties is far more concentrated in Hastings and Grand Island, respectively, than is population for Buffalo County in Kearney. Kearney's 1990 population concentration relative to its county is comparable to the post-World War II population concentrations in Hastings and Grand Island. In this way, Kearney may be seen as a later-developing urbanized center. These spatial trends have important implications for Kearney's housing, transportation, land use, utility investments and public services planning.

POPULATION CHANGE AND MIGRATION

**TABLE 1-2:
Population Distribution in Comparable Counties, 1930-90.**

Year	Proportion of County Population Beyond City Limits		
	Buffalo Outside of Kearney	Hall Outside of Grand Island	Adams Outside Of Hastings
1930	64.77%	33.47%	41.05%
1940	59.27%	38.75%	38.37%
1950	51.80%	29.53%	29.96%
1960	45.84%	28.01%	26.02%
1970	38.57%	24.49%	22.82%
1980	39.20%	30.42%	24.83%
1990	34.85%	19.50%	22.91%

Sources: US% Bureau of the Census;
RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1995.

Population change in a community is explained by two factors:

- *A comparison of births and deaths.* If more people are born in a community than die, the population of that community will tend to increase. Generally, a city with more population in younger age groups (particularly with people in childbearing or family formation years) will experience a high overall birth rate.
- *Migration Patterns.* Some of a community's residents choose to move out of that community; other people move into it. If more people come to the city than leave, its population will tend to increase. A community that is building new housing will experience significant in-migration, some of which are residents new to the city, while others are relocating from surrounding rural communities.

Annexation is a negligible contributor to population growth in Kearney, as most subdivisions are built in areas that have been annexed into the city. In order to assess the dynamics of Kearney's population during the 1980s, the city's expected population based solely on natural population change is calculated and compared with the actual outcome of the 1990 census. To ensure that the analysis is not inflated by the presence of University students, the student population has been removed from the base calculation, but added to the final total population projection.

POPULATION CHANGE AND MIGRATION

**TABLE 1-3:
Kearney's Non-Student Population*: Predicted vs.
Actual Population Change, 1980-90.**

	1980	1990	Change	%
Predicted Population (based on survival and birth rates)	17,528	19,121	+1,593	9.09
Actual Population	17,528	20,659	3,131	17.86

• Estimate to control for UNK population effects.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1995.

These projections are based on the following assumptions:

- The use of a cohort-survival method to develop projections. This method "ages" a five-year age range of people by computing how many of them will survive into the next five year period. Cohort survival rates used were developed by the National Center for Health Statistics (1992).

- Use of enrollment data provided by the UNK Office of Institutional Data and Analysis to adjust for population. This population produces an estimate of the "permanent" off-campus population of the city.

- Projected birth rates for the population developed by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Table 1-3 summarizes the results of this analysis. It indicates that Kearney experienced a 1990 population above the levels that would be predicted by natural population change alone. This indicates that the city enjoyed significant in-migration during the 1980s, a trend that appears to be continuing into the 1990s.

• *Kearney's non-student population increased at a more rapid rate than expected during the 1980s.*

Natural population change without the students (based on the composition of Kearney's 1980 population) would have predicted a 1990 population of 19,121, an increase of 1,593 people or 9.09% over the estimated 1980 non-student

POPULATION CHANGE AND MIGRATION

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POPULATION CHANGE AND MIGRATION

population. The city's 1990 adjusted population of 20,659 indicates that the population increase was actually closer to 18% over the last decade. This indicates significant in-migration during the 1980s.

An analysis examines the age groups that accounted for the largest share of the city's population change during the 1980s. This helps to predict what the city's population may look like if current trends continue into the future. In addition, it helps determine the types of services and investments that will be most important for the city during this current planning period.

Table 1-4 compares predicted and actual population change for each age group in the city. The predicted population projects how many people should be in each age group in 1990 if the city had experienced neither migration nor population increases caused by annexation. The variance percentage shows how well this prediction agrees with reality -- whether people in a given age group tended to move into or out of Kearney.

- *Young families with children, and elderly residents accounted for net migration to Kearney's population during the 1980s.*

The analysis shows that Kearney's 1990 population displayed the greatest in-migration of young households with members between ages 20 and 35. The actual population exceeds projected population by 1204 persons for these cohorts. The high positive variance of children below age 9 echoes the attraction for relatively young families.

The senior population in Kearney displayed stability, with substantial increases among those aged 60-64. Most age cohorts over age 60 displayed positive migration patterns, suggesting that many elderly persons are attracted to Kearney in their older years, for its lifestyle amenities, retirement housing, and for proximity to medical services. The exception is the age cohort of 75-79 years, which decreased slightly.

- *Kearney has been less successful at retaining residents in later middle-aged years.*

POPULATION CHANGE AND MIGRATION

Migration was marginal or negative for age groups between 35 and 60, suggesting that Kearney may have lacked employment opportunities, move-up houses or other appropriate settings for mature, middle-aged adults. The city's housing stock is nearly fully-occupied, given the findings of the 1990 Census and the 1994 Housing Condition Survey completed for this plan. Recent new job growth, and housing development in new subdivisions may be providing these opportunities, leading to a greater ability to retain mature households, who represent people in their peak earning years.

**TABLE 1-4:
Kearney's Adjusted Population*: Predicted and Actual
Age Cohort Changes among All Residents, 1990**

Age Group	1990 forecast	1990 actual	Actual) - (Pred)	(% variance: actual/pred.
Under 5	1,545	1,666	+121	+7.81
5-9	1,528	1,734	+206	+13.50
10-14	1,555	1,436	-119	-7.63
15-19	1,357	1,604	+247	+18.18
20-24	1,189	1,714	+525	+44.13
25-29	1,555	1,921	+366	+23.57
30-34	1,585	1,898	+313	+19.78
35-39	1,940	1,640	-300	-15.45
40-44	1,429	1,396	-33	-2.29
45-49	935	922	-13	-1.34
50-54	668	673	+5	+0.68
55-59	833	702	-131	-15.71
60-64	509	691	+182	+35.76
65-69	680	713	+33	+4.92
70-74	574	599	+25	+4.30
75-79	569	530	-39	-6.78
Over 80	672	820	+150	+22.02
	19,121	20,659	+1,538	+8.05

* Estimate to control for UNK population effects.

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census;

RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1995.

POPULATION CHANGE AND MIGRATION

Table 1-5 illustrates changes in age distribution for Kearney, including the local population of college students.

- *The median age of Kearney's population has risen during the 1980s, increasing from 24.5 in 1980 to 25.8 in 1990.*

This rise is attributable to declines among very young adults, college aged persons, and mature adults above age 50. Youth and adults ages 15-29 made up the greatest proportional decline within the total population, accounting for 36.8% of all residents in 1990, compared to 41.24% in 1980. Kearney's population over 50-65 declined as a percent of total population, from about 10.21% in 1980 to 8.47% in 1990.

- *The city's proportion of adults aged 30-44 increased from 14.64% in 1980 to 20.22% in 1990.*

An increase of young adults in family formation age cohorts has influenced the city's proportion of very young children (below age 5). This constitutes an "echo" effect of the growing number of young adults aged 30-40.

Kearney has always attracted young Nebraskans as a place to attend college, and many students remain to establish families and local careers. In a related trend, universities across the country report a rise in enrollment among mature young adults with families -- to update skills or attain postgraduate degrees. These trends may combine in Kearney to sustain continued migration among young adults who go to UNK for post-graduate coursework and career development. Such patterns offer great promise to strengthen Kearney's economic, educational and civic life.

- *The size of Kearney's households has remained relatively steady during the last ten years.*

During the last census period, Kearney has generally countered the trend toward smaller households in most American communities. This further substantiates the influence of families with children in the growth of the town. The city's average household size was 2.53 in 1980 and 2.45 in 1990. During this decade, the number of households in the city increased by 1488 or 19.88% of its

POPULATION CHANGE AND MIGRATION

1980 total. Population during this same period increased by 17.86%.

During the next twenty years, Kearney will experience a stable level, or a slight decline in the number of people per households as a result of children growing up and moving away. However, Kearney has attracted significant new family-oriented development, which will moderate this effect, and assure that household size remains relatively constant.

In summary, Kearney's age distribution indicates that:

- Kearney continues to be a relatively young community, and an attractive living environment for families with young children.

**TABLE 1-5:
Age Composition as Percent of Total
Census Population, 1980-1990 (including UNK)**

Age Group	1980 Pop	1990 Pop	Change 1980-90	% of Total 1980	% of Total 1990
Under 5	1,561	1,666	+105	7.38	6.83
5-9	1,361	1,361	+373	6.43	7.11
10-14	1,196	1,436	+240	5.65	5.89
15-19	2,832	2,800	-32	13.19	11.48
20-24	3,970	4,256	+286	18.76	17.45
25-29	1,966	1,921	-45	9.29	7.87
30-34	1,452	1,898	+446	6.86	7.78
35-39	914	1,640	+726	4.32	6.72
40-44	732	1,396	+664	3.46	5.72
45-49	750	922	+172	3.54	3.78
50-54	682	673	-9	3.22	2.76
55-59	776	702	-74	3.67	2.88
60-64	703	690	+13	3.32	2.83
65-69	550	713	+163	2.60	2.92
70-74	655	599	-56	3.10	2.46
75-79	405	530	+125	1.91	2.17
Over 80	653	820	+167	3.09	3.36
Median Age	24.5	25.8			

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census.
RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1995.

POPULATION CHANGE AND MIGRATION

- College-aged persons (ages 20-24) now represent nearly 17.45% of all persons in Kearney. However, enrollment trends suggest that the average age of college students is rising as adults return to school to earn post-graduate degrees.
- Young adults aged 30-45 and senior citizens make up an increasing proportion of the city's population.
- Kearney has been less able to attract mature adults (aged 50-65) over the past decade, whose proportion of the local population has declined from about 10% in 1980 to 8%. A decline in this cohort of peak-earning level persons has important implications on the local economy.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population Projections

Projecting the future size and makeup of Kearney's population helps predict the future demographic character of the town. This is critically important for the city's planning and policy decisions regarding future investments and growth. Forecasting future population for Kearney is complicated by the presence of a substantial number of university students, which are attributed to the city's population along with its more permanent population base.

Future population for Kearney is forecast by:

- Computing probable changes in Kearney's existing population. The calculation of the "base" population of the city assumes no net migration.
- Controlling for student population by excising the enrollment figures from the base data used for the projections, computing the projection, and then adding the student population onto the future projection total.
- Basing population forecasts on 1990 Census statistics for age distribution. As before, the cohort survival method is used to project population, utilizing birth and death rates developed by the Bureau of the Census and the National Center for Health Statistics.
- Five migration models have been utilized, designed to be relevant to the city's likely potential for growth. These correspond to migration rates of +0%, +2.0%, +4.0%, +6.0% and +8.0%. The net migration rate experienced by the city between 1980 and 1990 was approximately +9.0%. Migration rates in Kearney are partially limited by the availability of housing in the city. Thus, people who might otherwise move to the city cannot because of a lack of housing opportunities.

Table 1-6 displays the population projections for these various population scenarios in Kearney.

The projection scenario that most closely approximates Kearney's likely future population growth is a +8% migration rate, with a low series birth rate. This would result in a local population of nearly 31,000 persons by the year 2010, representing a twenty year growth rate of +26.87%, or an annual rate of about 1.34%.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

The experience of the 1980s indicates that Kearney has been capable of attracting new younger and elderly residents to town. If the city provides opportunities for new growth, desirable residential sites, and high quality education and medical support services, it should be able to sustain this performance.

However, potential growth in Kearney could greatly exceed present trends. Kearney may grow well beyond these projections because of its environment, the amenity of its "small town" qualities, the reputation of the community as a center for learning and culture, and the successes of its employers and the local economy. The technology office park proposed in later chapters of this plan may produce additional employment opportunities. Under such an alternate future development scenario, the city future population growth could accelerate. The Kearney Plan land use concept accommodates this potential by designating three growth centers in the Northwest, Northeast and Southeast parts of the city, that can be platted following traditional town-building principles to meet future housing demand.

**TABLE 1-6
Kearney Population Projections, 1990-2010, Low Birth Scenario**

	1990	1995	2000	2005	2010	Change 1990-2010	Annual Growth
No net migration	24,396	25,371	26,009	26,570	27,042		
+2.0% migration	24,396	25,584	26,451	27,253	27,976	+10.85%	+0.54%
+4.0% migration	24,396	25,798	26,897	27,950	28,939	+14.67%	+0.73%
+6.0% migration	24,396	26,011	27,347	28,660	29,930	+18.62%	+0.93%
+8.0% migration	24,396	26,224	27,802	29,930	30,950	+22.68% +26.87%	+1.13% +1.34%

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census;
RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1995.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Summary

Kearney has grown significantly since 1930, initially in response to the expansion of the railroad and agriculture, the establishment of its college (now a university), and later the result of natural increases that accompanied that population.

In post-war years, Kearney has found it difficult to accommodate population growth with its limited housing supply, especially among seniors and young persons who may not be able or desire to own and maintain a single-family home. Over the past decades, the city has frequently experienced a shortage of housing sites, especially within "in-town" settings consistent with the form and context of the traditional city. In many cases, Kearney's growth moved beyond the city limits, and new rural estates housing extended into un-incorporated parts of Buffalo County surrounding Kearney. Kearney's rapid growth, and resulting shortage of housing units has led many new workers to seek housing in surrounding rural towns in Buffalo County. These new "rural" residents represent a growing part of the community.

During the next twenty years, natural population growth and continued rates of migration will produce a population of about 31,000 persons. Kearney has an unusual opportunity to define the nature of its future as it faces a potential for significant new growth. This planning effort will enable Kearney to manage development, reinforce the city's existing character, and accommodate new residents as a resource for the future of the community.

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Employment

Kearney's economy is based on local employment opportunities at Good Samaritan Hospital, the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and numerous industrial and regional retail businesses. Most residents work within the city, or at plant sites just outside the city. This section examines various economic characteristics and dynamics of Kearney's population, in order to establish a basis for economic planning.

- *Kearney's agricultural, commercial and industrial sectors employ large proportions of the local population.*

In fact, the city's top six employers account for almost 3000 employees, about one-fourth of Kearney's local employment. Table 1-7 provides a list of local employers in both the private and public sectors. Kearney has developed and attracted large manufacturing and industrial enterprises, many of which support the region's ranch and farm operations.

- *Kearney's educational institutions are key job centers.*

UNK and the Kearney Public Schools alone account for more than 1300 employees, almost 10% of all jobs in the city.

- *Kearney secures significant employment from its role as a regional hub for retail and convention services.*

The Ramada Inn and Holiday Inn convention centers are regional meeting facilities of statewide importance. Kearney's retail establishments also serve a broad regional market. Kearney Centre is a strong, central downtown to this market, supplemented by large discount retailers and the Mall at the north end of town. Cabela's catalog sales and retail showroom represent the largest retail operation in Kearney, employing more than 800 workers.

- *Kearney residents are more likely to have jobs in education and retailing, but less likely to be employed in industry than residents of Buffalo County at-large.*

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Kearney's top six private employers, the University of Nebraska at Kearney, and the Public Schools employ about 5200 persons, comprising more than 38% of all local employment.

**TABLE 1-7
Largest Employers in Kearney**

Employer	Product or Business Type	Employees
Good Samaritan Hospital	Medical Services	920
Cabela's	Catalog Sales	845
Eaton Corporation	Automotive Valves, Gears	695
Baldwin Filters	Oil, Air and Coolant Filters	692
West Company	Pharmaceutical Stoppers	400
Coleman PowerMate	Generators	301
Richard Young Hospital	Medical Services	190
Wal-Mart	Retail Sales	183
Ramada Inn	Hotel and Convention Center	173
ITI Marketing Services	Telemarketing	170
The Buckle	Retail Sales	169
K-Mart	Retail Sales	153
Holiday Inn	Hotel and Convention Center	150
Bob's Superstore	Retail Sales	130
U-Save Foods	Retail Sales	122
Cash-Wa	Retail Sales	113
Caldwell Manufacturing	Grain Drying Equipment	101
Horizon Designers	Bath Products, Specialty Bags	100
Cookbooks By Morris Press	Cookbooks, Fundraising	99
Herberger's	Retail Sales	98
Kearney Clinic	Medical Services	94
First National Bank of Omaha	Financial Services	82
Grand Central IGA	Retail Sales	75
Platte Valley State Bank	Financial Services	68
Kearney Hub Publishing	Newspaper, Marketing	67
Marshall Engine, Inc.	Rebuilt Engines	66
Public/Semi-Public		
University of Nebraska at Kearney	Educational Services	845
Kearney Public Schools	Educational Services	482
State of Nebraska Youth Development Center	Youth Corrections and Rehabilitation Services	140
County of Buffalo	County Government	190
City of Kearney	Municipal Government	153
Nebraska Public Power	Utility Services	75

Source: Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce, The Development Council; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.

Table 1-8 compares the employment makeup of Kearney's residents with those of Buffalo County for 1990. The information indicates that Buffalo County residents are more likely to be employed in agricultural, manufacturing, transportation, utility, and wholesale trade sectors than

EMPLOYMENT CHARACTERISTICS

Kearney residents. About 39% of the county's 1990 work force is employed in these areas, in contrast to about 29% of Kearney residents. In contrast, city residents are more likely than county residents to be employed in retail trade, health, education, professional services, FIRE (finance, insurance and real estate) and professional service sectors. About 60% of the city's 1990 work force is employed in these areas, in contrast to about 54% of County residents. Kearney has a smaller proportion of its employment in manufacturing, as well as non-professional services, such as business and repair services, personal services, entertainment and recreation.

**TABLE 1-8:
Employment by Industry; Kearney and
Buffalo County, 1990**

Industry	City of Kearney		Buffalo County	
	Employed	%	Employed	%
Total Employed	13,338	100.00	19,558	100.00
Agriculture, mining	392	2.94	1,485	7.59
Construction	680	5.10	1,025	5.24
Manufacturing	1,714	12.85	3,213	16.43
Transportation	316	2.37	616	3.15
Communications and Utilities	311	2.33	442	2.26
Wholesale Trade	490	3.67	798	4.08
Retail Trade	3,351	25.12	4,280	21.88
FIRE	599	4.49	784	4.01
Nonprofessional Services	862	6.46	1,339	6.85
Health Services	1,206	9.04	1,723	8.81
Education	1,674	12.55	2,202	11.26
Professional	931	6.98	1,212	6.20
Public Administration	326	2.44	439	2.24

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census
RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1995.

Table 1-9 compares the types of jobs held by Kearney's residents in 1990 to Buffalo County. In general, the city occupational profile differs only slightly from that of the overall county.

- *Kearney residents in 1990 are more likely to be employed in professional, managerial and services jobs than residents of Buffalo County at-large.*

INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

**TABLE 1-9:
Employment by Occupation:
Kearney and Buffalo County, 1990**

Industry	City of Kearney		Buffalo County	
	Employed	%	Employed	%
Employment	13,338	100.00	19,558	100.00
Managerial and professional occupations	2,963	22.21	4,080	20.86
Technical and sales	4,433	33.24	5,981	30.07
Service occupations	2,522	18.91	3,272	16.73
Farming, forestry and fishing occupations	321	2.41	1,313	6.71
Precision production, craft and repair	1,273	9.54	2,042	10.44
Transportation, movers	392	2.94	721	3.69
Operators, fabricators, and laborers	1,434	10.75	2,249	11.50

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census;
RDG Martin Shukert, Inc., 1995.

More than 35% of Kearney residents hold professional or technical jobs. Services employment comprises another 19% of all jobs held by Kearney residents in 1990. By contrast, Buffalo County residents are more likely to be employed in farming, precision production, craft and repair, transportation, fabrication and laborer jobs.

Table 1-10 displays 1990 income distributions for Kearney, Buffalo County, Hastings, Grand Island, and Nebraska.

- *Kearney contains a larger proportion of lower income households than comparable cities.*

In 1990, Kearney's median household income was \$23,310, slightly below that of comparable communities and that of the State of Nebraska, attributable to its demographics and regional economic base, its status as a small regional hub for rural migration, and host city for a large student population. The large number (and high occupancy) of local mobile home parks is an expression of this lower income population.

INCOME CHARACTERISTICS

- *Kearney also contains a larger proportion of highest income households than comparable cities.*

Kearney is the smallest and westernmost of all comparable communities in a state where the population concentration and higher income potential often favors cities to the east. Yet, the city has a larger proportion of households with annual incomes above \$50,000 than Hastings and Grand Island, influenced by the presence of higher paying administrative and faculty positions at UNK; and medical positions at Good Samaritan Hospital.

- *In comparison to other cities, Kearney contains a smaller proportion of middle-income households.*

About 33% of Kearney households earn between \$25,000 and \$50,000. Kearney, Buffalo County (35%) and Hastings (34%) exhibit a smaller proportion of middle income households than the state average (36%). Kearney has fewer households earning between \$35-\$50,000 than comparable cities.

Kearney's income distribution and employment characteristics suggest that future residential and economic development efforts should concentrate on reinforcing and accommodating professional and managerial sectors of the economy. Kearney's location and demographic characteristics give it a potential to attract industries that can join college/university research and technology-based enterprises. At the same time, Kearney must provide permanent housing opportunities to low and moderate income residents. This should include measures to conserve and rehabilitate existing moderate income units, and create new, affordable homes for "move-up" buyers.

**TABLE 1-10:
Income Distribution for Households by Percentage, 1989**

	Under \$10,000	10,000- 14,999	15,000- 24,999	25,000- 34,999	35,000- 49,999	50,000- 74,999	Over \$75,000	Median HH Income
Kearney	20.23	12.54	20.14	18.25	14.26	10.13	4.44	\$23,310
Buffalo County	18.69	12.02	21.10	19.01	15.81	9.26	4.09	\$23,999
Hastings	17.98	12.53	23.71	18.11	15.38	9.36	2.93	\$23,317
Grand Island	16.33	11.88	21.75	20.02	17.46	9.50	3.07	\$25,019
State of Nebraska	15.86	10.73	21.31	18.01	17.77	11.36	4.97	\$26,016

Source: 1990 Census, RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.

TAXABLE RETAIL SALES

Taxable Retail Sales

Kearney has traditionally served as the trade and economic center of an area that includes all of Buffalo County and substantial parts of Kearney, Custer, and Sherman Counties. This market area extends into the southeast portion of the Nebraska Sandhills region. Recent statistics from Lexington and Holdrege suggest that Kearney's market area is expanding into Phelps and Dawson County. This is attributable to recent discount store construction in Kearney which has attracted customers from Holdrege and Lexington. Table 1-15 compares retail changes between 1984 and 1994 for these competitive markets.

Retail sales are closely dependent upon incomes and buying power of local households. Income and employment gains in Kearney and Buffalo County have been significant, and have influenced retail sales. Net taxable retail sales grew substantially in Kearney between 1984 and 1994, spurred by new facilities of new, larger discount stores by Wal-Mart, Target, and K-Mart. Sales between 1984 and 1994 grew by 69.9%, a rate higher than many comparable cities. These retailer market forces have increased Kearney's retail dominance within Buffalo County. Kearney's share of net taxable sales in Buffalo County has increased from 86.42% in 1984 to 90.64% in 1994.

Competition from the Grand Island area is a less significant factor since 1990, as Kearney gained new regional discount stores that meet or exceed the size and amenities of similar facilities in nearby regional centers. On the other hand, leakage of Kearney's retail buying is directed to Lincoln, and in some cases Denver and Omaha, with their metropolitan shopping amenities. Kearney has sales levels above those in Hastings, even though both cities had relatively similar sales levels through the early 1980s. Kearney's growing retail market appears to have cut into Holdrege's existing retail sales base, and may have slowed Lexington's rate of sales increase.

ECONOMIC FACTORS: COMMUTING PATTERNS

**TABLE 1-11:
Taxable Retail Sales (000's)**

Community	1984	1986	1988	1990	1992	1994	% Change 1984-90	% Change 1990-94
Kearney	168,144	170,649	213,428	240,809	267,305	312,541	+30.18%	+29.79%
Buffalo County	194,564	198,319	244,859	276,823	301,913	344,832	+29.72%	+24.579%
Grand Island	320,756	320,274	377,691	410,503	449,385	523,347	+21.86%	+27.89%
Hastings	154,479	153,076	177,062	192,694	211,542	229,687	+24.74%	+19.20%
Holdrege	50,030	44,401	48,865	57,698	62,109	53,307	+15.33%	-7.61%
Lexington	54,072	54,326	65,481	73,226	81,507	83,628	+35.42%	+14.21%
Lincoln	1,051,206	1,167,727	1,346,929	1,457,441	1,545,496	1,856,345	+47.02%	+27.37%

Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.

Commuting Patterns

Kearney residents generally work relatively near to their homes in town. Major industrial areas, including the Kearney Industrial Park just east of the city, are relatively accessible from most parts of the community.

Table 1-12 notes that in 1990, the average travel time to work for Kearney residents was 11.2 minutes, the lowest of all comparable cities in the region, except Columbus. About 79.8% of all workers drive to work alone, 10.8% use car pools, and 8.2% walked or worked at home.

**TABLE 1-12:
Commuting Patterns for Kearney and Other Regional
Cities, 1990**

Community	Average Travel Time to Work	% Who Walk or Work at Home	% Use Public Transportation
Kearney	11.2	8.2	0.1
Hastings	12.1	8.0	--
Grand Island	13.1	6.1	0.1
Norfolk	11.3	7.1	0.2
Columbus	10.7	7.6	--
Fremont ¹	16.1	6.2	--
Lincoln	15.6	7.8	2.2
Waverly	17.7	7.9	--
Omaha ¹	18.0	5.8	2.0
Papillion ¹	18.8	4.1	0.7

Source: 1990 Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1995.

ECONOMIC CONCLUSIONS

Conclusions

- Kearney's diverse regional economy includes substantial employment in health care, education, manufacturing, and retail sectors. Kearney residents are more likely to be employed in professional, managerial and technical jobs than residents of the County in general.
- The city's top six private sector employers account for almost 3000 employees, about 25% of Kearney's local employment. UNK and the local schools employ 1300 persons, an additional 10% of all jobs in the city. Major employers are concentrated in the central or east part of the community.
- Incomes in Kearney are well above central Nebraska rural communities, but slightly below those in cities to the east.
- Kearney has a relatively high percentage of households in the lowest and highest income categories.
- Kearney residents benefit from its "small town" mobility, with a local commute about 11 minutes to work. More Kearney residents walk to work than in comparable communities. Few residents use public transportation, despite the presence of the University, and the present concentration of jobs in a few clustered places.

2

A CITY TO LEAD THE REGION

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN KEARNEY

Kearney should enhance its town design character and continue to grow as an interconnected, unified community.

Kearney is a leading community in its region. This leadership grows from its core institution – the University of Nebraska at Kearney, originally established to train professional educators for Nebraska. This image of Kearney as a place of self-improvement, opportunity, learning and culture, and service to the region has been borne out by experience. Kearney is indeed a progressive, leading community that continues to attract people from throughout the state.

Kearney's special qualities extend beyond its reputation. Its regional setting and in-city environment create a unique image that residents and visitors to the community feel immediately -- a sense of vitality, of a learned community that has achieved significant economic opportunity in the intimate context of a smaller city. Kearney's physical features support its reputation, offering distinctive and beautiful settings that reinforce Kearney's image as a community in the forefront.

Many images of the city contribute to this special sense -- the stately Museum of Nebraska Art along the historic brick streets of Kearney Centre; the West 25th Street boulevard leading to the Administration Building of the University of Nebraska at Kearney, bounded by a traditional small town neighborhood; the unique grotto and facilities of Harmon Park; the constant thundering of the Union Pacific mainline as it passes on the edge of the historic downtown; the thriving restaurant, regional meeting and entertainment corridor near 1-80; the ingenuity of irrigation and engineering that created the power canal, Lake Kearney, Cottonmill Lake and the tailrace to the Platte River; and the abrupt beginnings of the Nebraska sand hills ranch country emerging from the heights above Cottonmill Lake. These and other images make Kearney precious to its residents. They help Kearney to project an image as a leading community for its region, an intimate home to its residents, and a familiar and approachable place for visitors and tourists. Indeed, the

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN KEARNEY

preservation of these complementary characteristics is vital to the city's future well-being.

On the other hand, forces in and around Kearney create challenges that affect these traditional qualities. Kearney is located within a vast rural agricultural area, extending from the southeastern edge of Sand Hills to the Platte River valley. Kearney's economic development and status as a leadership community has attracted significant migration. Kearney's population has increased by 15,821 people or 184% between 1930 and 1990, propelled by a significant increase in regional manufacturing employment.

Kearney's highly desirable in-city environment has been affected by development pressures resulting from this growth. Additional traffic threatens traditional neighborhood streets. New housing areas permanently alter the landscape in ways that may not reflect Kearney's traditional beauty and urban form. Wealth, mobility and a sympathy of some residents for rural homesites have tended to scatter development outside the traditional urbanized area.

Contemporary retailing, with its strong orientation to the automobile, has also created conflicts with Kearney's desire to maintain a strong traditional town center. Regional transportation changes also bring additional pressure to bear on the town. State Highways 10 and 44, which once followed Central Avenue through the town center, were relocated to their present alignment along Second Avenue following construction of Interstate 80 in the 1960s. Changes in traffic and access patterns, along with development types that often gravitate toward highway interchanges, add other pressures that affect the quality and successful functioning of Kearney's built environment. As important, the scale and design of development that comes with these changes can be different from the character of traditional Kearney.

In this context, Kearney has struggled with the complex issue of maintaining its small city quality of life and community character in an environment of change. The city can proceed down different paths. A policy of relatively uncontrolled growth can produce projects that are very different from traditional Kearney in scale and function. They will also tend to just add more population,

DEVELOPMENT ISSUES IN KEARNEY

construction and traffic to the city without significantly changing the way the city handles these increased demands. As a result, the quality environment that makes Kearney distinctive and that draws people to it can be diluted.

A managed growth approach maintains the existing form of the city, but re-fashions circulation systems, infrastructure and facility investments to encourage a balanced, thoughtful pattern of development designed to meet future demands. This approach allows the city to make utility and facility investments predicated on advanced planning. As a result, the city can focus its limited resources in more strategic ways, getting more of the benefits of development for each city dollar spent.

Kearney's best policy approach involves encouraging controlled growth levels within the context of the traditional image and pattern of the community. By understanding the patterns and relationships that make Kearney beautiful, the city can develop principles for new growth and investment that reinforce, rather than destroy, the community's unique sense of place. As a result, Kearney can both accommodate growth and use it to improve community quality.

This section, then, considers the following physical features and patterns that give Kearney a distinctive environment:

- **TOPOGRAPHY**
- **CROSSROADS**
- **STREET AND BLOCK LAYOUT**
- **COMMUNITY BOULEVARD STREET**
- **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**
- **TOWN CENTER**

It then presents a general philosophy for future community growth management, forming a Development Constitution that defines the general perspectives of this comprehensive plan.

TOPOGRAPHY

Kearney straddles a major topographic divide in central Nebraska. The UPRR and most of the original city plat lie on the edge of the Platte River valley. The valley is characterized by a flat topography (soils of stream deposited silt, clay, sand and gravel) and a frequently high water table. The northwest and far northeast parts of the city are high plains overlooking the valley, a desiccated plateau eroded by water and wind into steep slopes, and sharp ridge crests.

These topographic influences have influenced the form of the city. Kearney's downtown, industrial and job centers, and important transportation routes lie on the valley floor. Second Avenue bisects the valley and scales the steep hill that leads to the high plains plateau north of 39th Street. This hilltop location has been developed as a secondary commercial center for Kearney and its region. The amenities of the views from the hilly landscape, shopping and new homes services have attracted significant development to the heights above the traditional city.

Kearney's oldest and most beloved landscape features prominently feature this topographic divide, -- including the country club, Lake Kearney, Harmon Park and the high school, and the cemetery. This feature is lost in newer developed areas. The city should restore the landmark quality of its unique topography.

CROSSROADS

Kearney's form is defined by a crossroads, partially influenced by landforms and partially by transportation. The city's settlement site was originally defined by the transportation of westward emigration. Fort Kearny, the second facility in the state with this name, was established at the junction of the major emigrant trails. Later, the Union Pacific Railroad and the Lincoln Highway followed the general path of the Platte Valley. This pattern of east-west movement was continued with the construction of Interstate 80.

Kearney then traditionally represented a major stopping point along the nation's east-west transportation arteries. However, its community form also grew from its quality as a crossroads along these arteries -- a junction point between the Platte Valley corridor and transportation lines leading to the interior of Nebraska and the Sand Hills region. At Kearney, the now abandoned Kearney and Black Hills Railroad (Union Pacific) diverged from the UP main line to provide service to such Sand Hills communities as Callaway and Stapleton. Similarly, at Kearney, regional routes such as present day Highways 10 and 44 intersected with the Platte Valley arteries to serve areas north and south of these main transportation lines.

This crossroads pattern has persisted to define land use patterns in the city. Thus, the 2nd Avenue corridor, the city's crossroads with Interstate 80, has become its dominant commercial artery and experiences heavy loads of regional and local traffic. Major commercial development also occurs at other major crossroads intersections, including 25th, 39th, and 56th Streets.

STREET AND BLOCK LAYOUT

The underlying pattern defining Kearney's community development structure is the grid of surveyor's section lines defined by the Homestead Act. These section lines have been transformed into the major part of Kearney's arterial street system -- 11th, 25th, 39th, and 56th Streets running east and west, and Antelope Road, Avenue N., 2nd Avenue, 17th Avenue, and 30th Avenue running north and south.

Within this structure of section lines, the street layout of the original plat of Kearney was made up of nearly square blocks, about 300 feet on a side. Each blockface contained six lots, generally oriented east to west.

This small block grid introduced a rhythm to the community and a high level of contact among blocks. Through most of its early history, traditional Kearney functioned as two neighborhoods divided only by the railroad, with a high degree of connection from one street to another.

The intimate rhythm created by small blocks was accompanied by wide horizontal sections of streets,

sidewalks, and building elevations. A typical cross-section includes a 100-foot wide street channel, ten to twelve-foot greenway strips between the curb line and the sidewalk, four-foot sidewalks, and 15 to 25-foot front yard setbacks. This resulted in a distance between building fronts ranging from 130 to 150 feet. This distance, combined with the landscape opportunities created by the town's relatively wide greenways, generated the early town's superb residential streets.

COMMUNITY STREET

Central Avenue was established as the spine of the city's early commercial and industrial services district. This street evolved into a "community street," an important public space that links major community institutions and unites rather than divides neighborhoods. In American towns, community streets have a processional quality, becoming civic corridors that define the town and are magnets for people who are outside to exercise, experience the town, or see other people.

Central Avenue is a superb example of a community street. Its sequence of historic buildings, open spaces, mature trees, and major civic institutions (including the courthouse and armory) create this special quality of a street that transcends its transportation role. Central Avenue lost its dominance as the city's major transportation spine after construction of the Interstate 80 interchange with Second Avenue, two blocks to the west. The opening of the Second Avenue viaduct completed Central Avenue's evolution into a secondary business collector street.

While the core of this "community street" is made up of the Kearney Centre, the procession begins at Good Samaritan Hospital six blocks north of Kearney Centre. Here, Central proceeds south to Highway 30. South of US 30, the street passes the Museum of Nebraska Art and enters Kearney Centre. The procession leads through the town center, past the city's historic commercial buildings, across the UPRR, and through a secondary commercial services corridor toward the Buffalo County Courthouse. The community street character of Central Avenue dissipates south of the Courthouse into a mixed-use industrial services area.

THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

The architectural and landmark characteristics of Kearney's buildings lend a third dimension to the interaction of land and layout in defining the character of the city. Kearney's most visible architectural landmark is the Museum of Nebraska Art (formerly the United States Post Office Building), listed on the National Register of Historic Places. However, the variety of high styles in the city's older residential, institutional, and commercial architecture gives the community distinctive buildings that showcase nineteenth century design.

The quality of the historic built environment is defined by:

- Traditional residential neighborhoods, generally located north of the Union Pacific Railroad and south of 30th Street east and west of the central business district. While examples of construction of many periods are evident in these districts, most construction occurred between 1890 and the 1920s.
- Downtown Kearney, with its high quality blocks of late nineteenth-century, predominately two-story commercial buildings along Central Avenue and intersecting streets.
- Civic architecture, including major churches in central Kearney and such public buildings as the City Utility Building and City Hall, examples of the more modern "streamlined" style of architecture of the 1930s and 1940s. Significant civic buildings also include St. Luke's Protestant Episcopal and the Kearney Women's Club, both listed on the National Register.
- The University of Nebraska at Kearney campus and surrounding residential precincts. The campus' George W. Frank House is listed on the National Register, while a number of other campus buildings, including the Electric Street Railway Power Plant, Men's Hall, and Case Hall, are eligible for Register designation.
- Harmon Park, Kearney's traditional "central park" and a centerpiece of its surrounding residential neighborhood.

KEARNEY CENTRE

Kearney's city center, located southeast of the crossroads of Second Avenue and US 30, has maintained its vitality as the community's primary commercial and civic center. The continued vitality is caused by several factors, including:

- *A location near the geographic center of town.* As Kearney grew, it expanded concentrically around the railroad and its original crossroads. As a result, Kearney Centre has remained central to most of the community's residential neighborhoods.
- *A local street pattern that concentrates all north-south and viaduct traffic onto routes abutting Downtown.* Kearney's continuous street grid is dependent upon the Second Avenue corridor for cross-town movement. All local north-south travel is interrupted by the railroad, except on the Second Avenue and Avenue H viaducts at either edge of Kearney Centre. This, coupled with the central location of the town center, maintained the district's position in the community.
- *The connections between the traditional center and surrounding residential neighborhoods.* Many segments of the city's traditional street grid flow directly from neighborhoods into Kearney Centre.
- *The scale and character of the district itself.* The Kearney Centre commercial district contains many one and two-story brick structures that are excellent examples of nineteenth century commercial architecture. Past downtown improvement projects have created a beautiful streetscape within Kearney Centre, giving it a distinctive and urbane quality. In addition, a tasteful revitalization program, providing new sidewalks and traditional street lighting, as well as a successful marketing campaign, have reinforced the district's status in the city.

The previous discussion has described features and relationships that over time have made Kearney distinctive. Yet, the forces that have changed town building and community development patterns in contemporary times also challenge Kearney's traditional character. These challenges include:

- **HIGHWAY ROUTES AND LAND PATTERNS**
- **REGIONAL GROWTH**
- **COMMERCIAL DEMANDS**
- **SUBDIVISION PATTERNS**
- **LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS**

Each of these challenges requires a concerted response if Kearney hopes to fulfill its future development potential.

TRANSPORTATION ROUTES AND LAND PATTERNS

Along with many other Nebraska communities, Kearney's history and development form was determined by topography favorable to the construction of railroad routes, rather than by regional settlement patterns. The Platte River was a natural transportation route for tens of thousands of emigrants along the Mormon Trail and Oregon Trail. By 1865, President Abraham Lincoln had selected the valley as the route of the extension of the transcontinental Union Pacific Railroad. In 1913, the transcontinental Lincoln Highway (US 30) was established and was routed through Kearney.

State Highways 10 and 40 enter Kearney on the north, and Highway 44 enters the city from the south. Highway 40 serves the region between Callaway and Kearney, along an abandoned alignment of the Kearney and Black Hills (Union Pacific) Railroad.

The Nebraska Highway 44 bridge across the Platte River connected to Central Avenue, which led into downtown Kearney. Concurrent with the construction of 1-80 during the 1960s, the Nebraska Department of Roads re-routed the highway along Second Avenue, and constructed a viaduct across the UPRR just west of downtown. Cross-town traffic in the City of Kearney was concentrated on Second Avenue, which provided the city's sole interchange with Interstate 80. Ultimately, the former Platte River crossing was also moved west to a new bridge aligned with Second Avenue.

This new bypass of Kearney Centre and Central Avenue, connected to 1-80, encouraged new, more highway-oriented commercial development. Large lots were subdivided, with development concentrated along the new highway corridor. Hotel, convention, restaurant, commercial and industrial

uses became densely developed to a two block depth along Second Avenue, and its ready access to 1-80. Highway oriented development patterns included individual freestanding buildings, streetyard parking lots and tall signage visible from 1-80, a mile in the distance. The physical characteristics of this commercial corridor at the south edge of the city lacks safe pedestrian circulation, causing all trips to and among commercial and hotel facilities to be made by automobile.

As Kearney's population has grown, the single interchange on Interstate 80 has placed substantial traffic stress on 2nd Avenue. This stress is exacerbated by the combined use of the corridor by regional and local traffic. Two significant challenges involve the development of an arterial system to distribute traffic around the 2nd Avenue corridor; and the ultimate development of additional access points to Interstate 80. However, this transportation vision must contend with fears of lost traffic and business among Second Avenue businesses, and the cost and difficulties involved with new interchange construction. The proposed alignment of any new interchange, and the potential for its eventual construction, will have fundamental implications for the future development pattern of the city.

The emergence of the Union Pacific main line through Kearney as one of America's dominant rail arteries also presents significant transportation challenges. A major project, beginning in 1996, will triple-track this main line, allowing it to accommodate over 150 daily trains. This level of rail traffic will impede the ability of vehicles to cross the railroad at grade. In addition, safety concerns have created both a railroad and state policy of closing existing urban grade crossings. This causes a choice of two difficult alternatives -- a further channeling of north-south traffic onto Kearney's two railroad overpasses, increasing traffic congestion and dividing the city; or bearing the high cost of overpass construction.

REGIONAL GROWTH

Kearney will experience development pressure caused by two forces: local employment and population growth, and land availability. Kearney's population growth has been

The Lincoln Highway symbolized the transcendence of the automobile and other technologies in American life. Kearney's connection to a transcontinental highway in effect brought Kearney "closer" to major markets. In many ways, it marked the beginning of Kearney's position as a diverse economic center, not entirely dependent upon the UPRR for transit of goods and services. In addition, the Lincoln Highway brought tourists and other travelers past the college campus and through the heart of Kearney.

rapid, while development has spread from traditional in-city sites to outlying rural estate acreages and plats.

In Kearney, these two forces tend to pull new urban development to lower cost land at sites on desiccated hills unsuitable for profitable agriculture but sensitive to development and land alterations. Acreage developments have proven popular in the Kearney area, reflecting the rural traditions of the surrounding region and offering rural lifestyles in reach of urban employment or amenities. In some cases, however, these developments represent premature urban growth subdivisions developed at urban densities, built at low costs because they are farther out of town and without standard city water and sewer services.

In addition, population growth forecasts given in Chapter One: "A Profile of Kearney" establish development demands for future housing. If Kearney meets this growth projection, it will generate a 20-year population increase of 6,500 people. Converted to housing unit demand, this suggests a 20-year demand for 3,400 additional units.

COMMERCIAL DEMANDS AND CHANGE

New population growth also creates commercial development pressures. The character of new commercial development, usually designed to accommodate automobiles, is different from traditional patterns in Kearney Centre. In contrast to the small scale and district character of the traditional business district, contemporary commercial development usually includes free-standing buildings, individual parking lots that separate the building from the street, and a lack of pedestrian accommodations. Kearney has attracted new mass-retailing development, north of its regional Hilltop Mall. These mass retailers are major traffic generators, increasing traffic loads on the already heavily loaded 2nd Avenue corridor.

In addition, highway-oriented commercial development may present a direct threat to the strength of the traditional business district. These "big-box" stores compete directly with traditional retailing in the Kearney Centre district, raising important issues and concern for preservation of the community commercial role of the traditional business

district. The downtown district must confront the need to redefine itself in the face of this major challenge.

Nonetheless, Kearney continues to experience internal and external development demands created by new population, changing retail trends, and improved regional access.

Kearney should protect and expand its traditional town center. This can be achieved by directing residential growth to sites that are nearer existing commercial centers, and modifying intersections and transportation patterns to improve mobility in the center of the city.

SUBDIVISION PATTERNS

Traditional residential development patterns in Kearney include the regular grid of Kearney's original and pre-World War II development, and the more informal, curvilinear pattern of more recent subdivision development. These different grids provide variety within the context of a connected street network and help define the urban character of Kearney.

Contemporary subdivision development follows different patterns. Generally, new subdivisions:

- Provide new streets that provide internal access to individual lots, rather than fitting into a pre-planned street network
- Use curved streets and cul-de-sacs which establish new additions as development pods that are unrelated to surrounding areas.
- Provide larger lots than those in the traditional city.
- Have larger distances between building faces on either side of a street.

These patterns are evident in the Camelot, Northeast Heights, Countryside Estates, and Imperial Village Subdivisions. While these subdivisions provide excellent homes, their character is different from that of the traditional town. As a result, new development could ring the community with residential enclaves that are unrelated

and ultimately separated from the rest of the city. The character of new growth and its relationship to the existing town presents a fundamental challenge for Kearney.

Other important issues involve the provision of urban services to new developing areas. Much of Kearney's new residential growth occurs in the Wood River watershed, requiring significant investments in lift stations to pump wastewater to the city's treatment facility. The allocation of development costs between the city and private developers has been an area of debate within the community.

LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS

Contemporary land development regulations, including zoning and subdivision controls, follow principles of single use zoning districts and numerical regulators such as minimum setbacks from property lines. Frequently, these regulations are copied from the ordinances of other towns, which have been copied themselves. They often have little relevance to the characteristics that make communities unique, instead tending to make every community look alike.

Land development regulations for Kearney should:

- Define and continue the patterns that make Kearney physically unique. These patterns include such factors as building separations and setbacks, street character, and subdivision design.
- Provide zoning districts and land use regulations with the flexibility to accommodate state of the art development while providing protection for neighborhood environments.

A DEVELOPMENT CONSTITUTION FOR KEARNEY

The basic premise of the Kearney Plan is that the community must and will grow, but its growth should make the city a better place, not simply a larger place.

The previous discussion defined patterns of the built environment that make Kearney distinctive, and described challenges that can affect that character. Growth can radically change the quality of the community's environment. This has produced considerable debate in Kearney over such questions as:

- How should the community manage growth?
- What should Kearney look like in the future?
- What impact will various infrastructure and land use decisions have on the economic strength of the city and its ability to support necessary public services?

If the city does not carefully regulate its growth, it will face high infrastructure costs, transportation congestion and a loss of community character. This would endanger the quality of community life that residents value. If it must be governed under a scenario of unmanaged growth, Kearney will spend a higher proportion of its limited financial resources to pay for new infrastructure, with less money for recreation and educational services, renewal of the older parts of the city, housing rehabilitation, and measures to improve the appearance and livability of the community.

This section presents a Development Constitution, with basic principles that should guide measures to improve Kearney. Principles of this Constitution include:

- A REGIONAL CITY OF 30,000
- OFFICIAL MAP
- URBAN GROWTH LIMIT
- TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS
- TRANSPORTATION TO MEET CITY AND REGIONAL NEEDS
- A RECREATION LIFESTYLE
- A HUB FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY
- A LARGER, MIXED USE URBAN CORE
- PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC KEARNEY

Each of these principles is discussed in the following section.

A REGIONAL CITY OF 30,000

KEARNEY SHOULD CAPITALIZE ON ITS ABILITY TO ATTRACT GROWTH AND WILL ACHIEVE A TARGET POPULATION OF 30,000 DURING THE NEXT TWENTY YEARS.

Kearney's vitality and status as a university town make it uniquely attractive to existing and future residents of central Nebraska. This attractiveness, combined with the near certain prospect of continued regional employment and population increase, has attracted new residents to Kearney and provides future growth opportunities. The city is in the fortunate position of being able to determine its own future by its policies on development. To date, attitudes toward growth have been supportive, but many residents believe that a larger Kearney might erode the quality of life and transportation mobility of the traditional small city.

Kearney must grow and should position itself to both attract and manage this future development. Growth is necessary to maintain its vitality and diversity, enhance incomes and opportunity, support a strong retail community, and expand its tax base to continue quality municipal services into the future. The community should work to achieve a target population of 30,000 at the end of this twenty-year planning period. This projects a twenty-year population increase of about 6,550 residents, or 27%, over the next twenty years. In development terms, this is equivalent to about 2,387 new single-family housing units and 1,016 new townhouse and multi-family units during the planning period, an average annual construction rate of 170 units. The land use implications of this population target are discussed in the next theme, Chapter Three: "Growth and Land Use."

OFFICIAL MAP

KEARNEY SHOULD ADOPT AN OFFICIAL MAP WHICH PRE-PLANS FUTURE STREETS AND OPEN SPACES.

Kearney's original plat in 1873 adopted an official map for the city and established the street network, the size and layout of lots, and the fundamental rhythms of the town. The official map was a momentous planning decision, because it created a context for future construction. People who built houses in town fit into this community pattern and assured the consistency of character that makes Kearney distinctive. The concept of the "official map" was used throughout the nation as towns were built.

Contemporary land use planning is often far less detailed, providing maps that outline future residential areas in fields of color. These plans do not define the basic elements that provide structure to a town, including street layouts, lot size, and open space reservations. As a result, these decisions are left to chance and to the decisions of individual developers. Some new subdivisions in Kearney have been large enough to define basic street patterns. Others have merely filled in vacant tracts once passed over for development. In the absence of an official map, the design of street systems and other features too often responds to internal, rather than community requirements.

For Kearney to accommodate growth successfully, it must determine the character of that growth and assure that it enhances rather than alters the sense of the town. This can be accomplished by reviving the tradition of the Official Map -- a pre-planned layout of important streets and open spaces that establishes a community context that orders individual development decisions,

URBAN GROWTH LIMIT

KEARNEY SHOULD ADOPT A BOUNDARY THAT DEFINES THE OUTER EDGE OF COMMUNITY GROWTH DURING THE PLANNING PERIOD.

A community benefits from contiguous, compact growth. When development occurs incrementally and adjacent to the edge of existing development and consistent with sewer capacity, the city grows in a unified way. In addition, new neighborhoods can be served most efficiently, with the most economical extensions of utilities and public services. Finally, the critical density of the town is maintained, necessary to support existing features such as the town center, schools, and community parks.

During the next twenty years, Kearney will experience two types of residential growth:

- Urban density development, utilizing conventionally-sized lots (generally under one acre) and served by urban services such as city sewer and water. The traditional city and most contemporary development on the north edge of the city fall into this category.
- Rural residential development that includes single-family houses on acreage lots, often using individual waste treatment and water systems and rural section roads.

Kearney should define the locations and development limits within its jurisdiction of each type of development. This assures a community that develops efficiently, rather than one that is increasingly dispersed throughout the countryside. It also assigns city utility responsibilities in a clear and enforceable manner. An urban growth limit which designates necessary extensions of sewers can help promote environmentally responsible waste disposal systems. In areas without city sewer service, the policy can establish density thresholds for clustered land development patterns that facilitate treatment techniques.

TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS

NEW NEIGHBORHOODS IN KEARNEY SHOULD FOLLOW THE PATTERNS OF TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOODS.

Conventional suburban development has been an important resource for Kearney as it meets its growing housing demands. Nonetheless, residential growth that occurs in Kearney should be consistent with the development patterns of the traditional community. Defining and enforcing these patterns allows the city's growth to strengthen, not dilute, its character. In addition, it offers new residents a built environment that is distinctive and consistent with the best image of Kearney.

These traditional patterns include:

- Providing continuous street networks that link neighborhoods together and prevent the development of enclaves that are separated from the life of other parts of the city.
- Integrating parks and trails into neighborhood design.
- Using the street and open space systems of the city to create a unifying structure for urban development.
- Mixing uses and housing types.
- Defining street, sidewalk and setback dimensions that create the most desirable visual quality.
- Designing street sections and distances between building faces that produce desirable environments.
- Viewing streets as public spaces in addition to being conduits for automobiles.
- Using alleys for service access where appropriate.
- Encouraging development patterns that are important to Kearney, including public squares along the street and boulevards.

These patterns are defined in detail in Chapter Four: "Mobility for Urban Quality," defining characteristics derived from Kearney traditions and unique qualities that should guide new development in the city.

TRANSPORTATION TO MEET CITY AND REGIONAL NEEDS

THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM SHOULD SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES OF KEARNEY AS A REGIONAL CENTER AND SMALL CITY.

Transportation systems are often designed to meet one goal only --the efficient circulation of automobiles. In spite of that, and perhaps because of that, they often fail to meet our expectations.

Beyond efficient circulation, Kearney's transportation system is an important defining element of the future character of the community. Transportation is inseparable from land use and a powerful formative element in the life of the community. Thus, while Kearney's most frustrating congestion problem is the intersection of US 30 and Second Avenue in the center of town, the transportation and land use pattern that begets this problem is a city-wide phenomenon.

Transportation planning in Kearney should:

- Use the potential of alternate circulator patterns to distribute land uses and traffic to the maximum advantage of the city, its business markets and its residents.
- Manage new and future regional traffic to mitigate effects of congestion and improve peripheral travel around the city.
- Use new circulation routes as a framework to encourage the emergence of desirable development patterns.
- Provide strong connections between established and developing parts of the community, uniting all parts of the city.
- Provide safe access to major activity centers for pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as for motorists.
- Reinforce the patterns, scale, and land use characteristics of the traditional city.

A RECREATION LIFESTYLE

KEARNEY SHOULD ENDEAVOR TO REINFORCE ITS IMAGE AS A CITY WITH UNEQUALED ACCESS TO RECREATION AND THE GREAT OUTDOORS.

Recreation is a lifestyle for many residents of Kearney and the Platte River valley. While parks and public spaces are vitally important to Kearney, they supplement regional recreation pursuits such as hunting, fishing, water sports, golf, and enjoyment of the wildlife and historic sites at the region's state parks, wayside areas and conservation areas. The migration of the sandhill cranes through the Kearney Rainwater Basin each year is a major event for many out-of-state tourists and naturalists. More locally, Kearney's outstanding city parks contribute to its character as an intimate, walkable city featuring a vital public life. In addition, they also provide the community with important active and passive recreational resources.

Kearney's parks each fill a different role. Harmon Park is the primary recreational facility, as well as an important civic and ceremonial space; Pioneer, Collins and Dryden Parks provide a focal point and playground ballfields for surrounding neighborhoods. Cottonmill Park provides opportunities for nature study, picnicking, lake swimming, and other more passive pursuits; Centennial, Harvey, and West Lincolnway Parks provide important civic ballfield sites. Other major open spaces contribute to the "green" quality of the community, including the UNK campus, Lake Kearney, the cemetery, country club and Meadowlark Hills Golf Course. Together, these features create an urbane small city life.

The integration and extension of these public spaces is key to Kearney's future. The city should connect its open spaces into a system of boulevards and trails, to further integrate public space into community design. In this way, parks and activity centers can help maintain the vitality of older and newer neighborhoods while providing for the recreational needs of future residents. The proposed continuous greenway system of trails and environmental corridors supports Kearney's quality of life by viewing public space as the social centers of new neighborhoods.

A HUB FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

KEARNEY'S LEADERSHIP SHOULD COLLABORATE TO GROW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY BUSINESSES TO STIMULATE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AND ADD POSITIVE VALUE TO THE CITY.

Kearney is the leading academic center of its region. It also possesses a highly educated work force, a substantial manufacturing base, and excellent access to highway and rail routes. Still, the information age permits entrepreneurs to establish technology businesses nearly anywhere, and in places that were once considered too remote from major markets. Decentralization allows technology workers and executives to work in a location that supports lifestyle, personal hobbies, and quality of life objectives. Kearney's academic base and recreation lifestyle are amenities that can be harnessed to help grow information-based companies for local economic development.

Kearney business leaders have proposed a collaborative project to develop rural Nebraska as a Virtual Community, with Kearney as its hub for information technology resources. Private and public sector leadership should continue to push for this vision, and establish a business technology park that communicates Kearney's academic and lifestyle advantages. Focuses for this policy should include:

- Collaboration among UNK, local utility (NPPD), telecommunications (GTE), and information-based firms (ITI Marketing Services) in Kearney to identify support operations that could be developed locally to exploit this potential.
- Incentives for the birth of new information services firms, as varied as creating office and research sites in a new technology park, or loan, utility rate and zoning assistance to encourage home-based, start-up technology firms.
- Recruitment of information services firms, marketing the appeal of Kearney's recreation lifestyle and urbane, small city quality of life.

A LARGER, MIXED USE URBAN CORE

KEARNEY CENTRE SHOULD GROW TO THE NORTH AS A UNIQUE REGIONAL MIXED USE DISTRICT, SIZED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF A CITY OF 30 , 000.

Kearney's traditional town center is a unique district, successfully serving several different markets -- local citizens, the UNK community, and residents of surrounding counties. The district is also the civic focus of town, with home offices of local banks, the library, the museum and City Hall. Kearney Centre is a superb environment, and is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Buildings in Kearney Centre are almost fully occupied, yet the district is bounded by major highway and rail routes, with seemingly little room for outward expansion. Kearney is a very walkable town, but most students use cars to get around. Parking and intersection congestion is a growing concern along with the age and repair of the district's buildings and brick streets.

As with the city at large, Kearney's core district must have room to evolve or it faces stagnation. Impetus for expanding the core is recent conversion activity surrounding Good Samaritan Hospital, located six block north of Kearney Centre and two blocks east of Second Avenue. Small homes in a three block radius of the hospital have been transformed into medical clinics, dentists, pharmacies and support services. At the same time, the hospital has implemented a multimillion dollar expansion of its out-patient and parking facilities. This has markedly increased traffic on adjacent streets and changed the character of parts of the neighborhood.

The City of Kearney should take the lead in defining the limits of this conversion, by identifying appropriate conversion areas, and street and intersection improvements. The result will be a larger, better functioning core for a city of 30,000 people. This core may link the growing medical center with Kearney Centre by upgrading Central Avenue to a pedestrian and vehicular boulevard, and by instituting a circulator system to connect UNK, Kearney Centre, and the hospital. Expansion of Kearney Centre should avoid the abutting historic neighborhood to its east.

PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC KEARNEY

KEARNEY'S HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT MUST BE MAINTAINED AND PRESERVED.

Street patterns, setbacks, land development regulations, and land use patterns form the historic underpinnings of Kearney. These forms set the stage for architecture in the city. Throughout its 121-year history, Kearney's architectural traditions have been remarkable, producing a collection of distinguished buildings. Building in Kearney Centre, at UNK, and historic homes across the central city are testimony to excellence in the built environment. Several potential historic districts and individual buildings in Kearney are worthy of National Register designation.

The preservation of these resources from the past is an indispensable part of the city's future. Policies which promote preservation, then, are a key corollary to the Development Constitution. These policies should:

- Discourage land uses which threaten the value or maintenance of historic neighborhoods or buildings. When conversions must occur, they should be accomplished in a way that preserves the most critical elements and architectural significance.
- Enhance the real value of historic buildings through private investment, public improvements, tax credit commitments, and rehabilitation assistance.
- Increase the profitability of Kearney Centre buildings by securing a financial return from use of second floor spaces,
- Encourage architecturally sympathetic rehabilitation and restoration of historic structures.
- Assure that new construction is consistent with design in historic districts,
- Increase awareness and appreciation of the architectural and historic importance of buildings in the city.

3

GROWTH AND LAND USE

AN ASSESSMENT OF LAND USE NEEDS AND POLICIES

Kearney should provide areas to accommodate future residential, commercial, and business park development in a way that enhances the city's overall quality, and provides efficient public services extensions.

The previous chapter of the Kearney Plan considered the factors that have helped make the city a prosperous and quality urban environment. It also discussed factors which present challenges to the management of growth and the preservation of this character. Finally, it presented a Development Constitution, to establish basic principles which can help the city encourage growth that remains true to the best features and potentials for Kearney.

This chapter considers existing land use characteristics in Kearney and projects the amount of additional land that will be needed to achieve the target population of 30,000 within twenty years. It also discusses the condition of existing neighborhoods and concludes by identifying the growth areas which will experience significant development during the next twenty years. In considering land use needs, Kearney should:

■ PROVIDE ADEQUATE LAND FOR PROJECTED AND POTENTIAL GROWTH.

Land use projections should anticipate future growth needs and permit a reasonable amount of flexibility to accommodate possible changes in trends and provide adequate choice to developers. Land use planning should neither designate too little land for development, thereby inflating land costs, nor too much land, resulting in a loss of control over utility and infrastructure extension costs and the development process.

■ ASSURE THAT NEW DEVELOPMENT CREATES THE GREATEST ADVANTAGES FOR BUILDING THE COMMUNITY.

The city should continue to benefit from the vitality and energy created by development and investment. New growth areas should be designated which will provide maximum

advantages to all parts of the city. Growth should be guided to create excellent new residential environments, and also help improve the city's existing residential and business neighborhoods. Development directions should enhance positive features of the city, rather than create new patterns which turn away from the existing fabric of the city.

■ ENCOURAGE THE CONSERVATION OF THE EXISTING HOUSING STOCK.

Residential growth includes measures to rehabilitate and conserve Kearney's supply of older, often historically significant homes. Slightly more than 1,500 single-family homes in the community need some type of rehabilitation. These homes represent a substantial housing resource that cannot be replaced at present costs. Moreover, the conservation of these units is vital to the health of traditional neighborhoods. In some cases, new housing development can support these rehabilitation efforts by making available to lower income persons the opportunity to secure "move-up" housing in better quality units. Kearney contains nearly 1,000 mobile home units, suggesting that there is a substantial potential market of persons to fill affordable permanent housing units. The community must expand housing opportunities for all by preserving its housing supply of affordable units.

■ ENCOURAGE ECONOMICAL EXTENSIONS OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES.

Efficient growth patterns conserve limited public funds. A compact urban form helps accomplish this goal by using existing public facilities, gravity flow sewers, and incremental extensions of existing public utilities. Incremental utility extensions: reduce development costs, long-term maintenance and capital expenses, and tax burdens; make housing more affordable to buyers; and enable the city to annex new developments in a timely manner. If infrastructure is financed by the city, or an SID, incremental extensions also mean that new development creates a larger return on public investment.

EXISTING LAND USE: RESIDENTIAL

This section describes land use characteristics and trends that will help determine the amount of land needed to accommodate future development in Kearney. In addition, it will project the community's probable housing demand and residential land requirements for the next twenty years.

EXISTING LAND USE

The Existing Land Use Map and Table 3-1 summarize current land uses in Kearney and its two-mile extra-territorial jurisdiction based on a detailed 1995 field survey. In addition to providing acreage and percentage breakdowns by general land use categories, the survey provides detailed information on specific uses.

■ Residential Uses

Residential uses make up Kearney's largest single land use, accounting for just over 38% of the city's developed land area. About eighty percent of this land is taken up by urban density single-family residential development in the city and surrounding subdivisions. Most of the balance is used for mobile home and multi-family residential development. Much of the city's multi-family development occurs in the west part of the city, in neighborhoods east and south of UNK, and along 39th Street in northwest Kearney. Kearney's mobile home parks are concentrated in edge-of-city locations along US 30. The largest mobile home parks are located south and southwest of UNK, or situated at the far east edge of the city, east of an industrial railroad spur and Grand Avenue.

While about 43% of Kearney's housing is renter-occupied, as-built multi-family or mobile home units account for only 3% of the total residential area. This indicates that most rental housing is found in structures built for single families.

These statistics do not include college residence halls.

■ Commercial Uses

About 8.3% of Kearney's developed land area is in commercial and office uses. Of land in these uses, 3% is

EXISTING LAND USE: RESIDENTIAL

**TABLE 3-1:
Land Use Distribution in Kearney and the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction, 1995.**

Land Use Category	City		Jurisdiction	
	Acres	% of Developed Land	Acres	% of Developed Land
Residential	2578	38.72	420	19.45
Single-Family	2070	31.09	414	19.15
Duplex	574	0.86	0	0
Multi-Family	196	2.95	0	0
Commercial	555	8.33	68	3.17
Services	18	0.27	6	0.29
Office	85	1.28	2	0.06
General Commercial	204	3.06	45	2.09
Kearney Centre Mixed Use	22	0.34	0	0
Automotive	111	4.67	22	0.99
Entertainment	114	1.72	1	0.02
Civic/Public	1639	24.62	919	42.54
Parks/Recreation/Open Space	921	13.83	603	27.94
Educational	295	4.44	0	0
Public Utilities	109	1.63	115	5.31
Other Civic	315	4.72	201	9.30
Industrial	327	4.91	274	12.71
Wholesale/Storage	36	0.51	51	2.37
General Industrial	201	3.02	223	10.34
Distribution/Transportation	46	0.70	0	0
Salvage	44	0.65	0	0
Transportation	1560	23.42	478	22.13
Street ROW (estimate)	1328	19.95	100	4.63
Active RR Right-of-Way	172	2.58	69	3.18
Abandoned RR Right-of-Way	9	0.14	62	2.87
I-80 Right-of-Way	50	0.76	247	11.45
Total Developed Land	6658	100.00	2159	100.00
Vacant Platted Land	1392		847	
Mining/Resource Extration	0		496	
Agriculture/Open	224		25010	
Total Undeveloped Land	1616		26053	
TOTAL LAND	8274		28212	

EXISTING LAND USE: COMMERCIAL • INDUSTRIAL • CIVIC

general commercial development oriented to the 2nd Avenue and US 30 highway corridors. Highway commercial development is characterized by free-standing buildings and on-site, self-contained parking. Downtown commercial uses are focused in Kearney Centre, located a few blocks south-east of the city's most important highway intersection. The compact city center accounts for about 4% of the town's commercial land. Other smaller commercial developments occur:

- South Central Avenue, between Kearney Centre and the Buffalo County Courthouse.
- Northwest of 17th Avenue and 39th Street.
- US 30 near the university district.
- US 30 east of the city, between Peavey Grain and the airport industrial park.
- Between US 30 and North Railroad Avenue to the east of Avenue E.
- Along 11th Street west of 2nd Avenue.
- Scattered commercial within residential uses in Southeast Kearney, east of Central and south of 11th Street.
- Convenience commercial development at 39th and Avenue N.

■ Industrial Uses

Just under 5% of Kearney's developed land is in industrial use. Most of this industrial land is located in the US 30 corridor, between Avenue N and the airport. Other industrial uses exist: along US 30 west of UNK; along the UPRR corridor west of 9th and east of Avenue H; one block behind the Second Street commercial corridor just north of 4th Street.

■ Civic Uses

Civic uses account for an extraordinarily high 24.6% of Kearney's developed area, ranking as the second largest

LAND USE BY QUADRANT OF THE CITY

land use category. City parks and athletic fields account for slightly more than one-third of this civic area. Other major civic uses in order of area include the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Kearney Community Schools, the country club, and the cemetery.

■ Comparisons Among Quadrants of the City

For convenience in evaluating land use patterns, quadrants are defined using 2nd Avenue and the Union Pacific Railroad as axes. Each of these quadrants displays a significantly different pattern and distribution of land uses.

- *Northwest Kearney.* Nearly 47% of the built environment of Northwest Kearney is devoted to large-scale parks, schools, golf courses and other public uses. (By contrast, parks, schools and civic uses represent less than 10% of land uses in Southeast or Southwest Kearney). In addition, Lake Kearney, the power canal, and Cottonmill Lake represent more than 90 acres of open space that is classified as a utility land use. Residential uses account for about 33% of land use, and Northwest Kearney has the largest amount of acreage dedicated to multi-family housing in the city. Less than 1% and 4% of land is dedicated to industrial and commercial uses, respectively.

- *Northeast Kearney.* Northeast Kearney contains more than 1,000 acres of developed residential land - the largest amount in the city. Residential uses comprise more than 49% of all land uses, including 180 acres of mobile home developments, the city's major public housing site, and the city's largest proportion of duplex housing. Northeast Kearney contains more than 55% of all land dedicated to office use in Kearney, and the city's second largest concentration of commercial and civic land uses, including an enclosed shopping mall, Wal-Mart, and Good Samaritan Hospital. Nearly 18% of land in Northeast Kearney is dedicated to school, park and cemetery uses.

- *Southwest Kearney.* Nearly 45% of the built environment of Southwest Kearney is devoted to residential uses, with another 25% in transportation uses such as railroad, 1-80 and local streets. The area has nearly even proportions of land dedicated to civic (8.8%), commercial (9.4%) and industrial (9.7%) uses. It contains the largest concentration

LAND USE BY QUADRANT OF THE CITY

of the city's general industrial, distribution and entertainment uses.

- *Southeast Kearney.* This quadrant is the city's smallest in size, but its most diverse in land use types. This area represents the backbone of the city's industrial and services economy, and seat of county government, as home to the Buffalo County Courthouse. Southeast Kearney has about the same proportion of land in residential use as Northwest Kearney (33%), but more than 5 times the amount of commercial and fifteen times its industrial acreage. Among all quadrants, Southeast Kearney has the city's smallest amount of land dedicated for education, parks, recreation and opens space, despite the presence of more than 900 housing units. More than (27%) of all land is dedicated to transportation, including the UPRR, 1-80 and local streets. It contains the largest concentration of the city's wholesale, warehouse, industrial salvage, automotive and agriculture uses.

■ Comparisons with Other Towns

A comparison of Kearney's land use distribution with that of other communities offers additional insights into the city's growth patterns and its functional specializations. Table 3-3 compares land use in Kearney with that of other comparable communities in central Nebraska. These comparisons include:

- Schuyler, Nebraska, a small county seat of about 4,000 located along US 30 and the UPRR mainline seventy miles west of Omaha. The city once had a self-contained economy but is increasingly in the economic orbit of employment growth in Columbus.

- Columbus, Nebraska, a growing, non-metropolitan city of about 20,000 situated along the UPRR mainline. The city has a highly diversified industrial base, most of which is located outside the corporate limits.

- Beatrice, Nebraska, a stable, non-metropolitan county seat with a population of about 12,500.

With all residential uses considered, Kearney's density is relatively low for this sample of communities. This is the

LAND USE BY QUADRANT OF THE CITY

**TABLE 3-2:
City of Kearney Land Use Distribution: By Quadrant, 1995**

Land Use Category	NW		NE		SW		SE	
	Acres	% of Developed Land						
Residential	751.1	32.63	1053.9	49.16	474.9	44.76	296.9	33.28
Single-Family	630.4	27.39	779.9	36.38	386.9	36.39	273.0	31.11
Duplex	17.1	0.74	23.4	1.09	13.6	1.28	3.0	0.35
Multi-Family	73.7	3.20	68.7	3.20	44.4	4.18	9.6	1.09
Mobile Home	29.9	1.30	181.9	8.49	30.9	2.91	11.2	1.28
Commercial	81.2	3.53	232.0	10.82	100.1	9.41	133.7	15.23
Services	2.42	0.11	5.4	0.25	3.0	0.29	6.8	0.78
Office	16.8	0.73	46.9	2.19	8.2	0.77	13.4	1.53
Gen. Commercial	42.5	1.84	129.0	6.02	16.2	1.52	16.3	1.86
Kearney Centre	--	0.00	--	0.00	0.0	0.00	22.4	2.55
Automotive	20.4	0.88	29.6	1.38	22.7	2.14	38.5	4.38
Entertainment	1.6	0.07	26.5	1.24	49.9	4.70	36.3	4.13
Civic/Public	1067.8	46.40	383.9	17.91	94.0	8.84	93.5	10.66
Parks, Recreation, and Open Space	653.2	28.38	177.7	8.29	46.2	4.34	43.6	4.98
Educational	208.2	9.05	53.3	2.49	28.7	2.70	5.1	0.58
Public Utilities	89.0	3.87	1.9	0.09	8.5	0.81	9.1	1.04
Other Civic	117.4	5.10	151.0	7.04	10.6	0.99	35.6	4.06
Industrial	17.9	0.78	76.2	3.55	104.1	9.79	128.96	14.66
Wholesale/Storage	1.1	0.05	1.9	0.09	14.7	1.39	18.5	2.11
General Industrial	16.8	0.73	54.6	2.55	66.8	6.28	62.8	7.16
Distrib., Transport	0.0	0.00	19.7	0.92	22.5	2.12	4.1	0.46
Salvage	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	43.2	4.93
Transportation	383.6	16.67	397.7	18.55	289.2	27.20	224.8	25.62
Street ROW (est.)	383.6	16.67	357.3	16.67	177.2	16.67	146.3	16.67
Active RR ROW	0.0	0.00	40.4	1.88	89.0	8.37	42.0	4.79
Aband. RR ROW	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	9.2	1.05
I-80 Right-of-Way	0.0	0.00	0.0	0.00	22.9	2.16	27.3	3.11
Total Developed	2301.6	100.00	2143.9	100.00	1063.4	100.00	877.6	100.00
Vacant platted land	314.45		271.2		468.7		337.9	
Mining, Extraction	0.0		0.0		0.0		0.0	
Agriculture/Open	58.1		66.0		12.9		223.9	
Total Undeveloped	372.6		337.2		481.6		561.9	
TOTAL LAND	2674.2				1545.0		1439.6	

COMPARISON WITH OTHER CITIES

result of a large amount of rural residential development tracts, which were platted in the 1960s, and a local tradition of very large lots and wide streets even in the compact portions of the traditional town. Kearney ranks relatively high among this sample of cities for commercial land uses. It compares most closely with other large communities like Beatrice, which has a commercial base much larger than expected for a city of its size. Both Kearney and Beatrice are the dominant retail and services centers for their regions, which extend to rural areas that are quite distant from the cities. Commercial development in Kearney is relatively less compact in comparison with other cities.

Not surprisingly, Kearney has a very large percentage of land in civic use compared with other communities. Kearney has far more civic and public land per 100 people than comparable communities.

**TABLE 3-3:
Comparative Land Use in City Limits by Proportion:
Kearney and Other Nebraska Cities**

	% of Developed Area			
	Kearney	Schuyler	Columbus	Beatrice
Residential	38.72	34.04	41.97	36.48
Commercial	8.33	3.73	6.03	8.35
Industrial	4.91	1.91	4.63	5.07
Civic/Semi-public	24.62	12.19	10.21	6.68
Parks/ Rec	13.83	14.18	6.73	4.38
Transportation and ROWs	23.42	33.94	24.82	25.94
Total Developed Area	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

Sources: Kearney Land Use Survey, RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1995; The Schuyler Plan, 1995; The Columbus Plan, 1993;

This is evidence of the influence of the college as Kearney's leading land user. However, even if the University were excluded, Kearney still has more than 20% of all its developed land in civic uses and parkland, well above other cities in the sample. This level of park, recreation and civic use contributes to the quality of life in the city and its ability

COMPARISON WITH OTHER CITIES

to attract housing reinvestment and new residential development.

The comparative land use statistics also emphasize the relatively compact nature of development in Kearney. The city has 25.39 acres of developed land per 100 people, slightly below the ratio for this sample of communities, but comparable to the experience of Columbus. Kearney devotes 5.95 acres of street to serve 100 people, compared with 6.18 acres in Columbus and 6.91 acres in Beatrice. This is partially attributable to the tendency for growing communities like Columbus and Kearney to generate new subdivisions with street patterns other than traditional urban grids.

**TABLE 3-4:
Comparable Land Use in City Limits by Population
Ratio: Kearney and Other Nebraska Cities**

	Acres/100 people			
	Kearney	Schuyler	Columbus	Beatrice
Residential	9.83	9.34	10.45	9.72
Commercial	2.11	1.02	1.50	2.23
Industrial	1.25	0.52	1.15	1.35
Civic/Semi-public	6.25	3.35	2.54	1.78
Parks/ Rec	3.51	3.89	1.68	1.17
Transportation and ROWs	5.95	9.31	6.18	6.91
Total Developed Area	25.39	27.45	24.92	35.09

Sources: Kearney Land Use Survey, RDG Martin Shukert Inc., 1995; The Schuyler Plan, 1995; The Columbus Plan, 1993; The Beatrice Plan, 1992.

Nonetheless, compactness and efficiency of land use emerge as important development features in Kearney that land use planning policy should preserve.

Land Use Trends

Land use surveys for the city were completed during a previous comprehensive planning process, conducted in 1976. While differences in categories and tabulation methods make direct comparisons with the 1976 survey difficult, it is possible to draw some general conclusions

LAND USE TRENDS

about changes in city land use patterns and distributions over the last 19 years.

Tables 3-5 and 3-6 summarize the evolution of land use in Kearney during this period. The most significant changes during this period include:

- A significant reduction in the overall density of the city. The number of residential acres per 100 people increased from 5.78 to 10.56 during the last nineteen years. Much of this increase is attributable to rural residential and conventional subdivision development during this period. When rural acreages are excluded, Kearney's density remains relatively compact.
- A rapid increase in the overall land area of the city, due to annexation of large agricultural and open space tracts in areas to the west and northwest of the community. This is reflected in dramatically higher totals of residential and civic land uses. Park land has increased with the development of the new Meadowlark Hills Golf Course, Ted Baldwin Park, and West Lincolnway Park.
- Reductions in density for commercial and industrial land. Commercial land has grown from over 281 acres in 1976 to over 554 acres in 1995. The ratio of commercial land to 100 residents has increased by 57% during this period, and now represents about 2.3 acres per 100 people. Similarly, industrial land has grown from over 181 acres in 1976 to over 327 acres in 1995. The ratio of industrial land to 100 residents has increased by 44% during this period, and now represents about 1.3 acres per 100 people.
- A declining proportion of land in transportation development. Although the city's population over the past twenty years has increased by more than 26%, the ratio of transportation land to 100 residents has actually declined slightly, and now represents about 6.39 acres per 100 people. While normally a positive finding, this decline, in the face of significant population growth, declining population densities, and additional business and industrial development, may suggest a lack of adequate arterial and collector streets throughout the city.

LAND USE TRENDS

- Rural land use increases, but at stable or increasing density levels in the extra-territorial jurisdiction. Un-incorporated commercial and industrial land uses in 1995 comprise a smaller ratio of land per 100 persons than in 1976.

**TABLE 3-5:
Comparative Density of Land Uses in Kearney and Its
Jurisdiction**

Land Use Category	City of Kearney		Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction	
	1976	1995	1976	1995
Low-Density Residential	4.83	8.72	1.63	1.72
Medium-Density Residential	0.56	0.80	1.55	0.00
Mobile Homes	0.38	1.04	7.23	2.46
All Residential	5.78	10.5	1.72	1.75
Commercial	1.45	2.27	0.98	0.27
Industrial	0.93	1.34	1.99	1.13
Civic	2.67	6.72	2.68	3.76
Transportation and Rights-of-Way	6.45	6.39	4.59	1.96
Total Developed	17.31	27.28	11.01	8.87

Sources: *Kearney Comprehensive Plan*, 1976.

Kearney Land Use Survey, RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1995.

■ Land Use Absorption

Table 3-6 compares changes in residential, commercial, and industrial land use between 1976 and 1995. These findings are used to calculate annual average rates of land consumption. These rates, in turn, provide one basis for projecting future requirements for each type of land use.

Between 1976 and 1995, Kearney converted about 3,433 acres, or 158 acres of land annually, for residential, commercial, industrial and public uses. Of private uses, new housing development has accounted for the largest share of this conversion, with total consumption of 1,297 acres. Between 1976 and 1995, conversion of land to civic uses grew by about 400 acres, while the jurisdiction's industrial land base declined by 100 acres.

LAND USE TRENDS

**TABLE 3-6:
Urban land Consumption for Principal Uses, City of Kearney 1976-1995**

Land Use Category	City			Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction			Annual Land Consumption		
	Area (Acres) Change			Area (Acres) Change			City	ETJ	Total
	1976	1995	1976-95	1976	1995	1976-95			
Low-Density Residential	935	2127	+1192	315	420	+105	+63	+6	+69
Medium-Density Residential	109	196	+87	3	0	-3	+5	0	+5
Mobile Homes	75	254	+179	14	6	-8	+9	-1	+8
All Residential	1119	2577	+1458	332	426	+94	+77	+5	+82
Commercial	281	554	+273	17	68	+51	+14	+3	+17
Industrial	181	327	+146	385	275	-110	+8	-5	+3
Civic	518	1639	+1121	518	918	+400	+59	+21	+80
Transportation and Rights-of-Way	1252	1558	+306	888	477	-411	+16	-22	-6
Total Developed	3351	6655	+3662	2140	2164	+25	+174	+1	+175

Sources: *Kearney Comprehensive Plan, 1976.*
Kearney Land Use Survey, RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1995.

During the last twenty years, Kearney converted an average of 82 acres of land annually to residential use, increasing its amount of developed residential land by more than 103%. However, the city's population grew by only about 26% during this same period, reflecting the low-density nature of most recent development.

Commercial development accounted for the absorption of about 17 acres annually between 1976 and 1995. On the other hand, industrial uses have contracted in Kearney's extraterritorial jurisdiction since 1979.

Consumption of in-city land for industrial uses has increased by more than 8 acres annually, while the jurisdiction's industrial land base declined by 5 acres annually. Industrial locations are the result of individual decisions by a limited number of companies. Thus, it may be incorrect to project any further decline in the proportion of industrial land uses, since a single new industrial user could reverse the observed trend with one expansion or new site location.

Land Use Projections

■ Residential Land Use Projections

Kearney's previous land use rates, combined with population and development projections, suggests forecasts of land consumption over the next twenty years. Since 1990, Kearney has added about 161 units annually (51 % single-family and 49% multi-family units). That level of development is expected to continue during the future planning period. Kearney's population forecasts appear in Chapter One under the theme, "A Profile of Kearney." Projections are summarized in Table 1-6 and predict a population of 30,950 by 2010.

Tables 3-7 and 3-8 present the projected twenty-year housing demands for this scenario. The analysis is based on the following methods and assumptions:

- The basic method used in projecting annual demands is to compare the number of units needed in a given year (number of households plus projected vacancy rate) with the number of units available during that year (housing supply during the year less the units that leave the housing supply and must be replaced). Twenty-year demands are based on multiples of the five year demand computed in this section.
- Household size in Kearney is expected to decrease slightly during the twenty-year period, from 2.40 in 1995 to about 2.35 people per household in 2010.
- The city's non-household population (people in student dormitories, institutions, group quarters, or nursing homes) does not produce a demand for conventional housing. These forecasts project that the non-household population will remain at its 1990 rate of 14.7% of the city's population.
- Kearney's current vacancy rate is a low 4.8%. This means that there are few available units in Kearney's inventory. As the city grows, housing choice should expand to enable people to "move up" among a variety of units suited to their needs. As a result, housing projections are designed to produce a slight increase in the vacancy rate, to a more comfortable level of 5.5%.

LAND USE PROJECTIONS: RESIDENTIAL USES

**TABLE 3-7:
Projected First Ten Year Housing Development, (1990 Base)
Probable Growth Scenario For Kearney**

	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000
Population	24396	24762	25128	25494	25860	26224	26540	26856	27172	27488	27802
Household Pop	21994	22324	22654	22984	23314	23642	23927	24212	24497	24782	250965
People/household	2.45	2.44	2.43	2.42	2.41	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40	2.40
Household demand	8977	9149	9323	9497	9674	9851	9970	10088	10207	10326	10444
Vacancy rate	4.3	4.4	4.5	4.6	4.7	4.8	4.9	5.0	5.1	5.2	5.3
Total unit needs	9381	9570	9762	9955	10151	10348	10483	10619	10755	10892	11028
Available from previous year	Base	9372	9570	9762	9955	10151	10348	10483	10619	10755	10892
Lost Units	9372	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Total Units Available		9352	9550	9742	9935	10131	10328	10463	10599	10735	10872
Annual Need	Base	218	212	214	215	217	156	156	156	157	156
Cumulative Need		218	430	643	859	1076	1231	1387	1543	1700	1856

**TABLE 3-8:
Projected Second Ten Year Housing Development, (1990 Base)
Probable Growth Scenario for Kearney**

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Population	28118	28434	28750	29066	29384	29697	30010	30323	30636	30950
Household Pop	25350	25634	25919	26204	26491	26773	27055	27337	27620	27903
People/household	2.40	2.39	2.39	2.385	2.38	2.37	2.37	2.36	2.36	2.35
Household demand	10562	10726	10845	11010	11131	11297	11416	11584	11703	11873
Vacancy rate	5.3	5.3	5.4	5.4	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Total unit needs	11153	11326	11464	11639	11778	11954	12080	12258	12384	12565
Available from previous year	11028	11153	11326	11464	11639	11778	11954	12080	12258	12384
Lost Units	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20
Total Units Available	11008	11133	11306	11444	11619	11758	11934	12060	12238	12364
Annual Need	145	193	158	195	160	196	146	198	147	200
Cumulative Need	2001	2194	2352	2547	2706	2902	3048	3246	3392	3592

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1995.

LAND USE PROJECTIONS: RESIDENTIAL USES

- For the thirteen year period beginning in 1980 (and including 1993), Kearney issued permits for 2100 new residential units (1067 single-family, and 1,033 multi-family units), or about 161 annually. Using a different 10 year period (1980-1990), the 1990 census indicated an increase of 1,296 units, while Kearney building permit data records an increase of 1,289.

- Loss of existing units will be significant during the next twenty year period. A city-wide housing survey, presented in Chapter Seven: A City of Strong Neighborhoods," identifies more than 600 units in the city in poor condition. In some areas of Midtown near the hospital, conversion of some houses to office use may take place.

These projections reinforce a cumulative demand of 3,592 units for Kearney during the next 20 years. Based on previous proportions of owner and renter occupancy noted in the 1990 census, about 60% of these units should be developed for owners (predominantly single-family) and 40% should accommodate renters (predominantly in multi-family, duplex, townhome and mobile home units). Projections for residential land needs assume a 70%/30% single-family/multi-family split. This tends to overestimate the amount of land needed for single-family construction in the near term, but is designed to account for housing replacement needs.

■ Required Residential Area

Residential land projections estimate the amount of land that will be needed to accommodate growth during the next twenty years. Projections are based on the following assumptions:

- Typically, three single family units will require one acre of land while the average gross density of multi-family development will be 10 units to an acre.
- Land designated in the land use plan for residential development over a twenty year period should be equal to twice the area that new growth actually needs. This is necessary to preserve competitive land pricing.

LAND USE PROJECTIONS: RESIDENTIAL USES

Table 3-9 presents the amount of new area that will be required for additional development. Annual actual absorption of residential land will be in the range of 57 acres annually. Using the rule of designating land at a rate of two times the "hard demand," this suggests a total reservation of land for residential development of about 1,800 acres over the twenty year period.

**TABLE 3-9:
Required Residential Land for Kearney, 1995-2015**

Years:	1990-1995	1995-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010	2010-2015	Total
Projected Units	1076	800	850	887	850	338
Single-Family (70%)	753	560	595	621	595	2371
Multi-Family (30%)	324	240	255	266	255	1016
SF Need (acres)	251.0	186.7	198.3	207.0	198.3	790.3
MF Need (acres)	32.4	24.0	25.5	26.6	25.5	101.6
TOTAL NEED (acres)	283.4	210.7	223.8	233.6	223.8	891
Designated SF Area	502.0	373.4	396.6	414.0	396.6	1580.6
Designated MF Area	64.8	48.0	51.0	53.2	51.0	203.2
TOTAL DESIGNATED (acres)	566.8	421.4	447.6	467.2	447.6	1783.8

LAND USE PROJECTIONS: COMMERCIAL USES

■ Commercial Development

Table 3-10 shows that commercial land conversion in Kearney has occurred at a rate of about 17 acres per year since 1976. A simultaneous expansion in Kearney by several of the country's largest discount retailers accounts for this extraordinary change. If development continued at this rate, the community would require an additional 340 acres of commercial land by 2015. The largest share of this past growth has occurred at the intersections of Second Avenue with 39th Street and 25th Street (US 30), and extending a dozen blocks to the north and east of these respective intersections. Commercial development has also expanded on the west and north edges of Kearney Centre adjacent to the crossroads of US 30 and Second Avenue.

This plan does not include a comprehensive retail market analysis. However, probable development needs and the plan's overall policy of encouraging appropriate development suggests that Kearney will require new commercial space during the next twenty years. Three methods can be used to help project commercial land needs:

- *A straight-line trend analysis*, assuming that the amount of land absorbed annually in the past will continue into the future. A weakness in this method is its assumption that the last twenty years' experience is a good predictor of future needs. This is a risky assumption given the extraordinary levels of conversion of commercial land in the city recently.
- *A population service relationship*. This method relates commercial growth to population projections. It assumes that the absolute amount of commercial land per 100 people will remain relatively constant and that new commercial development will grow in proportion to population growth.
- *Residential use proportion*. This assumes a constant relationship between the amount of land used for residential and commercial purposes, thereby relating commercial growth directly to residential development rates.

Table 3-10 compares the results of these three methods. The last two methods suggest a need for between 132 and 192 acres of commercial land during the next twenty years. In

LAND USE PROJECTIONS: INDUSTRIAL USES

order to provide alternative sites, the land use plan should designate 1.5 times the hard demand for commercial land. This means that 200-288 acres of land should be designated for future commercial development. It is important to note that this development demand is generated by population growth and internal needs. Development of an entirely new project type, such as a regional research or business park, falls outside the demand forecasts presented here.

■ Industrial Development

The need for industrial land is not directly related to population growth, making it much more difficult to predict. Kearney has experienced a reduction of land used for conventional industrial purposes. However, a single major corporate decision can dramatically reverse this trend. In addition, a decision by the city to pursue industrial development aggressively can affect industrial land needs.

**TABLE 3-10:
Required Commercial Land for Kearney, 1995-2015.**

	1995-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010	2010-2015	Need	Designate
ABSORPTION TREND METHOD						
Annual Absorption	17.06	17.06	17.06	17.06		
New Commercial Land (A)	85.30	85.30	85.30	85.30	341.2	511.8
POPULATION PROPORTION						
Projected Population	27802	29384	30950			
Comm Use/ 100 res.	2.11	2.11	2.11			
New Projected Comm Use (A)	33.29	33.38	33.04	33.24	132.95	199.43
RESIDENTIAL USE PROPORTION						
New Residential Land (A)	210.70	223.80	233.60	223.80	891.90	
Comm Land/ Res L Ratio	1/4.64	1/4.64	1/4.64	1/4.64	1/4.64	
Projected Comm Use (A)	45.41	48.23	50.34	48.23	192.22	288.33

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1997.

LAND USE PROJECTIONS: INDUSTRIAL USES

The projection methods used to predict commercial demand may also be used to approximate industrial needs. A straight-line trend analysis is a poor measure of demand for industrial acres and is not used.

Based on population and land use proportion methods, Kearney should provide for an absorption of between 144 and 179 acres of industrial land over a 20-year period and a designation of about 300 to 350 acres. The character of this industrial land should be related to Kearney's overall community and economic development objectives. Surveys conducted as part of the planning process suggest that residents do not favor industrial traffic patterns that further burden local streets. Future industrial growth should capitalize on Kearney's unique assets, including its environment, academic resources, and location.

**TABLE 3-11:
Required Industrial Land for Kearney, 1995-2015.**

	1995-2000	2000-2005	2005-2010	2010-2015	Need	Designate
ABSORPTION TREND METHOD						
Annual Absorption	1.89	1.89	1.89	1.89		
New Industrial Land (A)	9.45	9.45	9.45	9.45	37.80	75.60
POPULATION PROPORTION						
Projected Population	27802	29384	30950			
Ind Use/ 100 res.	2.29	2.29	2.29			
New Projected Ind Use (A)	36.13	36.23	35.86	36.00	144.22	288.44
RESIDENTIAL USE PROPORTION						
New Residential Land (A)	210.70	223.80	233.60	223.80		
Ind Land/ Res Land Ratio	1/4.98	1/4.98	1/4.98	1/4.98		
Projected Ind Use (A)	42.31	44.94	46.91	44.94	179.10	358.20

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1997.

LAND USE POLICIES

Kearney's city growth policies must manage new development to protect the quality, character, and health of the community.

This section presents land use strategies that will enable Kearney to plan successfully for projected growth. Overall Development patterns should reinforce the functional and aesthetic values of a compact city. In Kearney, this implies that new development should be contiguous to existing city infrastructure, and designed to provide a high degree of pedestrian and vehicular mobility. In addition, Kearney should continue to provide its residents with attractive and convenient living, shopping, and working environments. The city's growth program should:

- Designate growth areas for residential development, designed to provide the appropriate amount of land for urban conversion.
- Ensure that new development is consistent with the traditional land and street patterns for the City of Kearney.
- Encourage adequate commercial growth to respond to market needs in Kearney, supportable by the city's service systems.
- Provide adequate land to support an economic development program that capitalizes on Kearney's resources.

The components of this program include:

- ADEQUATE LAND SUPPLY
- CONTINUOUS TRANSPORTATION
- STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACES
- HOUSING NEARER TO EMPLOYMENT CENTERS
- COMPACT DEVELOPMENT PATTERN
- COMPLETE AND BALANCED NEIGHBORHOODS
- OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
- EQUAL FACILITIES AMONG CITY QUADRANTS
- COMMERCIAL NODES
- BETTER ACCESS FOR INDUSTRY
- BUSINESS AND TECHNOLOGY PARK

Each component of land use policy is described below. The Land Use Plan maps the concepts presented in these policies and recommendations.

ADEQUATE LAND SUPPLY

KEARNEY SHOULD DESIGNATE ENOUGH LAND FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT TO MEET ITS 20-YEAR POPULATION TARGET OF 30,000.

Tables 3-9, 3-10 and 3-11 display the amount of land needed for residential, commercial, and industrial uses during the next twenty years in order to produce a population of 30,000. These proposed land supplies approximate the demand closely enough to allow managed growth, but do not create artificial scarcity.

New development in Kearney should occur only in those areas designated by the Land Use Plan. Such a disciplined approach will help to insure cost-effective, efficient development patterns that maximize the benefits of development to the community.

Development needs are summarized in Table 3-12 below. Land use and housing allocations are given by city quadrant in Tables 3-13 and 3-14. Kearney must reverse its past land use practices that have made some quadrants of the city into “bedroom residential suburbs” while other parts of the city have comparatively much small proportions of schools, park, and open space amenities. In the future, Kearney should better match the location of its amenities with its population, and its affordable housing with its job sites.

**TABLE 3-12:
Summary of Twenty Year Future Land use Needs**

Land Use	Actual Demand (Acres)	Designated Land (Acres)
All Residential	892	1,784
- Single-Family Residential	790	1,581
- Multi-Family Residential	102	203
Commercial	192	288
Industrial	144	288
Parks and Open Space (Based on standard of .04 acres per unit)	135	135
Total Land Needs	1,363	2,495

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 1995.

**TABLE 3-15:
Future Land Use Allocations by Growth Quadrant
of the City (in Acres)**

Land use	NW	NE	SW	SE
All Residential	698	663	247	294
Conven. Single-Family Res.	663	530	247	120
Manufactures Homes SF Res.	0	80	0	117
Multi-Family Residential	35	133	20	57
Commercial/Office	42	120	52	70
Industrial	16	67	92	113
Parks and Open Space Based on standard of .04 acres per unit)	33	60	20	22
Total Land Designation	789	910	411	499

**TABLE 3-16:
Future Housing Units: Allocations by Type and Growth
Quadrant of the City**

Growth Area	Type of Subdivision	Single-Family Units	Multi-Family Units
Northwest	Conventional	994	175
Northeast	Conventional	795	665
	Manufactured Home	180	--
Southwest	Conventional	427	133
Southeast	Conventional	178	59
	Manufactured Home	178	--
Total	Conventional	2,394	1,032
	Manufactured Home	356	NA

CONTINUOUS TRANSPORTATION

NEW GROWTH AREAS IN KEARNEY SHOULD BE SERVED BY CONTINUOUS STREET NETWORKS THAT ARE LINKED TO ESTABLISHED PARTS OF THE CITY.

Kearney's traditional city neighborhoods were built along a street grid of continuous, relatively closely spaced streets. The grid pattern generally disperses traffic by providing a number of alternative routes in and out of residential neighborhoods. However, more contemporary development patterns diverge from the grid, using cul-de-sacs and other devices to limit the through routes available through the neighborhood. This design technique tends to concentrate traffic on a few collector streets and on major arterials, increasing traffic loading and congestion on these streets. The high and growing traffic volumes on such streets as 2nd Avenue, 39th Street, and 17th Avenue illustrate this consequence.

In addition, the incremental nature of contemporary subdivision development fails to pre-designate major collector routes. As a result, these streets emerge informally and in an unplanned way, sometimes creating unintended traffic on local streets. Finally, this pattern of discontinuous streets, designed only to meet the needs of an individual subdivision, can create enclaves that separate neighborhoods from one another and from the fabric of the traditional town.

Kearney should pre-plan a system of collector streets and local major links to guide traffic through developing residential areas. In addition, while contemporary subdivisions often do not use closely-spaced street grids, streets in newly developing areas should maintain the positive features of these grids – alternative routes through neighborhoods, connections to other residential areas, a network of local streets linked to collectors, and avoidance of long cul-de-sacs. New building sites should not block streets designated on the Official Map.

The Land Use Plan proposes these key transportation links:

- A *Regional Bypass*, providing additional access to Interstate 80 and a bypass route for truck traffic around the congested

2nd Avenue corridor. This bypass is also designed to provide direct access to Kearney's industrial park and airport.

- *An Inner Beltway* composed of major arterial or emerging arterial routes around the city. The beltway distributes local and regional traffic around the city, opens new areas for housing, and improves access to new industrial sites, a new sewer, and the airport. It is designed to reduce growing traffic pressure on 2nd Avenue. Segments of the Beltway include 11th Street on the south, Antelope Avenue on the east, 56th Street on the north, and 30th Avenue on the west.

- *A Circumferential Boulevard*, designed to link new neighborhoods and provide continuous access for new neighborhoods that complements and parallels major arterial streets. This boulevard is designed for local residential traffic, rather than through commercial or regional traffic. It begins at 39th Street east of Avenue N and curves to the north and west, intersecting 2nd Avenue about 1/3 to 1/2 mile north of 56th Street. It continues westward to 30th Avenue. Right-of-way along the alignment of this boulevard should be reserved as subdivisions are developed.

- *A 6th Avenue Parkway in Northwest Kearney*, extending south from the circumferential boulevard and connecting new neighborhoods with the amenities and features of the existing city. These features include the Senior High School, YMCA, several community churches, Harmon Park, Lake Kearney, and the UNK campus.

- *An upgraded 17th Avenue*, linking the circumferential boulevard with 39th Street.

- *A crosstown collector*, following the alignments of 48th and 50th Streets between 2nd and 30th Avenues, providing a continuous collector route that supplements the 39th and 56th Street arterials.

- *An extended University Drive*, connecting the campus to the Beltway along 11th Street and integrated into the 6th Avenue Parkway system.

PARKWAY STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACES

NEW COLLECTOR STREETS IN KEARNEY SHOULD HAVE MULTIPLE USES, BECOMING GREEN CORRIDORS THAT LINK THE “ROOMS” OF THE GROWING CITY.

In addition to moving vehicular traffic, streets are also important public spaces, providing the front yards for homes and businesses. Yet, cities rarely consider this quality in street design. Those cities, such as Minneapolis, that historically considered the public quality of streets have produced environments of special distinction and value.

Key elements of the transportation system of Kearney should also transcend their traffic moving function and become links of a parkway system, providing structure to the community and adding value to the properties and neighborhoods around them. The Kearney Plan envisions major local circulator streets as parkways and boulevards, connecting neighborhoods with one another and with major activity centers. These parkways have the following characteristics:

- *They include features such as ornamental lighting, landscaped medians, and additional greenway width and landscaping.* Boulevard sections may or may not be divided roads. In areas where a single street channel is used, greenway setbacks should be expanded.
- *They include parallel facilities for pedestrians and bicyclists.* This often includes wider than standard sidewalks on at least one side of the street to accommodate both pedestrians and recreational users. Paths may include gentle curves and street furniture to provide interest and accommodations for users.
- *They connect major activity centers.* Neighborhood parks in developing areas should be expanded green areas along the parkways. The parkways become linear parks, leading people between new and old parts of the community.
- *They are designed for local traffic moving at slow to moderate speeds, rather than becoming high speed routes.* Thus, parking is allowed along parkways and houses can front on them.

They are designed as public spaces and thrive on residential features such as porches and front doors.

- *They emerge organically out of the fabric of traditional and new neighborhoods, linking them together.* Parkways in existing areas grow out of the groupings of major civic facilities. In new areas, they become the structuring elements for new features and neighborhood amenities. As a result, the parkway concept becomes a critical determinant of community land use patterns and design.

Boulevard and parkway segments included in the Kearney Plan include:

- The circumferential boulevard, serving northwestern and northeastern development during the planning period. This route begins at 39th Street, east of Avenue N and continues north and west to 30th Avenue at approximately 64th Street. This boulevard includes a link to Avenue N south of the new middle school site.
- A north-south community parkway that connects new developing areas in the northern part of the city with Kearney's procession of community features. This parkway system would intersect the circumferential boulevard at about 7th Avenue, and proceed south past the new YMCA, crossing 39th Street at 6th Avenue. It continues south past Harmon Park to 29th Street, following 29th and University Drive through the UNK campus. The parkway would extend University Drive south to 11th Street.
- An extension and upgrading of 17th Avenue from 30th Street north to the circumferential boulevard.
- An east-west crosstown parkway between 2nd Avenue and 30th Avenue following the extended alignments of 48th and 50th Streets.
- An east-west crosstown extension and upgrade of 16th Street from an extended University Drive to a greenway and extended Avenue Q in Southeast Kearney. Parkway links should also be extended from 16th Street to Centennial Park and a new Southeast Park.

HOUSING NEARER TO EMPLOYMENT CENTERS

KEARNEY CAN IMPROVE THE FLOW OF ITS TRAFFIC SYSTEM BY ENCOURAGING MORE HOUSING IN AREAS CLOSER TO MAJOR EMPLOYMENT AREA.

Kearney residents are concerned about traffic congestion and its effects upon the quality of life. Local mobility and ease of travel has been reduced by a widening gap in geography between the location of the city's industrial employment areas and the housing that serves those workers. Although major industrial sites are located south and east of the center of town, much of the city's recent housing construction has been in Northwest Kearney. To make matters worse, most recent multi-family construction has also been located in Northwest Kearney - a condition that lengthens commuting distances and adds more cross-city vehicles to local street traffic. Most of all, the mismatch unnecessarily loads more vehicles through two Second Avenue intersections - at 39th and 25th Streets - as workers line up to move across the city from Northwest housing areas to jobs to the south and east of the city.

Only carefully considered land use policies will produce measurable change in the distribution of traffic within the city. Kearney must manage its new development to reduce the need for large-scale cross-city commuting.

Public policies which execute this strategy should:

- *Expand housing opportunities in the east and south parts of the city.* Kearney should encourage new housing construction closer to the job sites, effecting shorter trips and commuting distances between work and home.
- *Distribute multi-family development around all parts of Kearney.* New multi-family construction should be directed to a variety of locations around the city. In addition, multi-family development should be integrated into the structure of new neighborhoods, rather than separated in large, single-use complexes.

COMPACT DEVELOPMENT PATTERN

KEARNEY SHOULD ENCOURAGE COMPACT GROWTH THAT IS DISTRIBUTED EQUALLY AROUND THE TRADITIONAL CITY.

In the most established parts of the city, and in some newer areas, Kearney has achieved a pattern of compact development. This pattern produces an intimate, walkable community that is efficient to serve, minimizes travel distances, and supports a strong city center. As Kearney anticipates increased residential growth, it should act to become more compact in its character.

Public policies which execute this strategy should:

- *Define and channel growth into development areas contiguous to existing infrastructure, existing developments, and with street patterns consistent with the city development concept.*
- *Encourage residential development that builds from existing community investments. The city should encourage growth and other key utilities. Additional growth adjacent to remote developments south of the city must be contiguous to existing subdivisions and should not exceed the carrying capacity of existing infrastructure.*
- *Limit outlying development in areas at odds with the city's development policies. Kearney should discourage the expansion of urban residential, commercial, or industrial development to those properties that are located beyond watersheds served by existing or programmed sewer extensions.*

COMPLETE AND BALANCED NEIGHBORHOODS

KEARNEY WILL BALANCE AND GUIDE ITW NEW RESIDENTIAL GROWTH TO CREATE BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS AND IMPROVED MOBILITY.

The Development Constitution proposes principles that are designed to accommodate necessary growth while strengthening the overall community character. These principles can be realized by conceiving of the quadrants of the city as essential parts of the whole, each requiring community investments and features that create desirable living environments. Each of Kearney's quadrants should reflect the city image that characterizes Kearney. These four areas will accommodate most of Kearney's projected growth during the next two decades. Amenity features that must be provided in each growth center include:

- A mixture of housing types and lot sizes.
- Organization of new neighborhoods around traditional street patterns, including a community boulevard that links civic, educational and park facilities.
- Dedication of new neighborhood parks, trails and ballfield areas, designed as central open spaces that are focuses of each quadrant of the city.
- Development of higher-density residential and limited commercial, service, and civic uses at nodes along boulevards and near neighborhood parks.
- Care in establishing setbacks, landscaping, and streetscape standards along boulevards to ensure the appearance of a traditional community promenade.

The elements of these systems are woven throughout the themes of this plan.

The four Growth Centers include:

- *Northwest Kearney Growth Center.* This area will continue to be the dominant area of residential growth, supplying about 700 acres for new development during the next twenty years. Growth to the northwest will continue to be on of Kearney's dominant residential growth directions during the next twenty years. Investments necessary to support further development include:

- Dedication and improvement of a grid of collector streets with links to 30th, 17th, and 2nd Avenues, and 39th, 48th and 56th Streets.
- A system of boulevards and parkways that act both as local collector routes and as civic spaces that unite neighborhoods with open spaces and activity centers. These parkway segments include:
 - the circumferential boulevard on the northern edge of the Growth Center.
 - the 6th Avenue corridor, connecting northwest development to the high school, Harmon Park, and other community amenities to the south.
 - 17th Avenue between the circumferential boulevard and 39th Street.
 - a crosstown parkway along 48th and 50th Streets between 2nd and 30th Avenues.
- Improvements to Harmon, Apollo and Ted Baldwin Parks, including the extension of a quadrant-wide recreational trail route linking parks and activity centers with surrounding residential subdivision.

The Northeast quadrant will accommodate about 1,000 single-family lots and about 35 acres for multi-family development.

• *Northeast Kearney Growth Center.* This area is already Kearney's most populous quadrant, and can supply about 663 acres for new development over the next twenty years. Although the area continues to experience some new housing development, major growth in Northeast Kearney has been limited by the lack of both convenient local neighborhood schools and major neighborhood features and amenities. The Union Pacific spur (formerly the Kearney and Black Hills line to Stapleton) is still used for grain car storage as far north as 56th Street; this corridor further limits development to the northeast. However, new amenities are making northeast Kearney a much more competitive housing market. These projects include a new elementary school at 56th Street and Avenue N, and a middle school and playfield site near 45th Street and Avenue N. Further improvements needed to support development include:

- Development of safe pedestrian links along Avenue N.
- Development of a grade-separated crossing over the Union Pacific, connecting Avenues M and N.
- Development of the circumferential boulevard ringing the Northeast Growth Center, along with adjacent neighborhood parks and open spaces.
- Construction of the Inner Beltway on the east edge of the city, following the Antelope Avenue alignment between 11th and 56th Streets. This beltway will also include a grade separation over the Union Pacific. It should be augmented by an eastern regional bypass with an Interstate 80 interchange at Eaton (Cherry) Road.
- Development of a greenway and one-street trails generally along 45th Street between the circumferential boulevard, middle school, Harvey Park, cemetery and established neighborhoods toward 2nd Avenue.

The Northeast quadrant can furnish about 795 single-family lots and about 130 acres for multi-family development. It can also accommodate possible expansion of an affordable single family manufactured housing subdivision, or expanding “move up” mobile home housing if built to high-quality standards in a park development, at sites south of 39th Street.

- *Southwest Kearney Growth Center.* This area south of US 30 and west of 2nd Avenue will accommodate residential development oriented around open space, trails corridors, and community boulevard features. It will supply about 247 acres for housing during the next twenty years. Fulfillment of the UNK Master Facilities Plan will extend University Drive south of US 30, to add a football stadium and other buildings to improve UNK’s physical and educational environment. The expansion and traffic changes will also reduce land use and parking conflicts, promote higher quality living environments, and encourage adjacent mixed density and multi-family development on the south edge of campus. The Southwest quadrant can furnish about 427 single-family lots and about 20 acres for multi-family development. Needed improvements to support development include:

- Extension of University Drive south of US 30 to the 11th Street segment of the proposed Inner Beltway. This will extend the north-south parkway system from the circumferential boulevard in northern Kearney to the University. Ultimately, this extension should include a grade separation over the UPRR viaduct, and a future west I-80 interchange near 30th Avenue.
- Development of safe bicycle and pedestrian links across US 30 and the UPRR.
- Improvement of land along the NPPD Power Canal as a greenbelt corridor, complete with landscaping and a recreational trail, and completion of the Cottonmill Trail to Cottonmill Park.
- Development of Centennial Park as a signature park for the city, along with development of a major facility for active recreation site along the proposed NPPD canal trail corridor west of 30th Avenue.
- Gradual conversion of industrial and agricultural land uses between the UPRR and 16th Street to residential home sites.
 - *Southeast Kearney Growth Center.* This area will supply about 294 acres for new residential development. It will accommodate affordable housing development between the abandoned Burlington Northern right-of-way and 8th Street, and industrial development opportunities between 8th Street and the North Channel of the Platte River. Needed improvements include:
 - Potential future school expansion, or a new facility.
 - Extension of Avenue H between 8th Street and 4th Street.
 - Redevelopment of 16th Street east of 2nd Avenue as a community parkway, including a new civic "courthouse square" on 16th Street at Central Avenue.
 - Development of a street grid through the area to serve new residential and industrial sites.
 - Development of a significant neighborhood park, generally along the 11th Street corridor and mirroring the location of

Centennial Park in southwest Kearney. This should be combined with a 16th Street Parkway and a north-south greenway on the approximate alignment of Avenue Q to provide a complete open space system for the growth center. The Avenue Q greenway would connect to a riverfront trail and park system following the North Platte channel to the existing Fort Kearny Trail to the state recreation and historic park.

- Improved sites and access for industrial development north of the North Channel Platte, with improvement and rationalization of the industrial access system. These improvements include:

- Construction of an industrial circulator link along 4th Street at the south perimeter of the city, linking 2nd Avenue and Antelope Avenue to I-80.
- Development of a new regional bypass, interchanging with I-80 at Eaton Road and providing direct access to the Kearney Industrial Park and Airport. This system also includes a link to the Inner Beltway and Avenue H viaduct with a connector following the former Burlington right-of-way.

EQUAL FACILITIES AMONG CITY QUADRANTS

KEARNEY'S PUBLIC FACILITIES SHOULD SERVE ITS FOUR GROWTH AREA EQUITABLY TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY GROWTH OBJECTIVES.

Kearney should balance the development of its public facilities and amenities with its population – assigning parks, schools and other amenities to each city quadrant in equitable proportion with the number of people who live there. Public facility improvements are needed to ensure continued viability of each neighborhood. Detailed park and recreation improvements are discussed in detail in Chapter Five: “A Recreation Lifestyle.” Apparent needs during the coming twenty years include expansion of the plant and campus of the University of Nebraska at Kearney, the public school district's need to rehabilitate older schools, and the development of improved neighborhood open space and recreation facilities for Southeast and Southwest Kearney residents.

The Land Use Plan proposes reservation of land necessary to accommodate these required facilities.

■ Recreational Facilities

Development of new open space and recreational facilities will be key to the orderly, balanced development of the city. Kearney maintains a high level of recreational standards and services. The Land Use Plan proposes the following to help the city keep up with evolving recreational demands:

- *Northwest Quadrant.* Expansion of Ted Baldwin Park and conservation of the drainage corridor north to 56th Street. This environmental corridor would be devoted to nature study and passive recreational uses.
- *Citywide Trails Network.* Development of a city-wide trails network, with regional connections and links back to the university, established city neighborhoods, Kearney Centre, and emerging job and commercial centers.
- *Neighborhood Parks along Boulevards.* Organization of new neighborhood parks and open spaces along “community

boulevard streets” which will create focuses for public life in Kearney’s new neighborhoods.

- *Centennial Park Upgrade.* Redesign and development of Centennial park as a signature feature and “community green” for Southwest Kearney.
- *Southeast Park.* Development of a significant neighborhood open space for neighborhoods in Southeast Kearney.
- *Regional Facilities.* Development of new regional and community facilities, including a community aquatics center and a multi-sport ballfield complex. A regional facility for active recreation would allow competition ballfields in neighborhood parks such as Centennial to be closed in favor of local neighborhood uses.

■ UNK Expansion

The University of Nebraska at Kearney has developed a campus master plan to guide the future facility planning of the institution. The primary direction for land development is southwest of the university, opposite Highway 30 from the main campus. This expansion site has been designated in the Future Land use component of the Kearney Plan for public and civic land uses. The plan envisions integrating this expansion area into the city’s street and open space networks by extending University Drive south to 11th Street and extending the city’s greenway system south along the NPPD canal to the North Channel of the Platte River.

■ Public School Facilities

The city’s school district has maintained an aggressive facility maintenance and expansion program. New high school and middle schools were developed in Northwest Kearney during the 1970s with complete athletic fields. The District has an on-going master facility planning effort to respond to recent substantial gains in enrollment. A new northeast elementary school will open in 1995, and construction of a new middle school is underway in 1996. The school district care-fully monitors actual population and development trends.

While future construction of another facility is not imminent, the Kearney Plan identifies a potential future school site in the south east part of the city. Such a facility could be designed to expand or replace an existing school. The Land Use Plan proposes a reservation of land near 11th Street and Avenue M within the proposed Southeast Growth Center as a public use site. A school could be developed at this location in conjunction with a neighborhood park.

OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

LARGE LOT DEVELOPMENT IN KEARNEY SHOULD MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF THE LOCAL LANDSCAPE AND SHOULD DIFFER IN DESIGN FROM URBAN SUBDIVISIONS.

The Kearney jurisdiction has experienced substantial development in the rural landscape beyond the urban boundaries of the city. Most of this development has occurred west of the city, near Cottonmill Lake and in the hills that mark the junction of the Platte Valley and Sandhills ecologies. The exceptional beauty of these areas has encouraged the development of substantial homes. Other "rural residential" development has occurred to the west along Highway 30 and to the north at Glenwood. Some of these areas are actually developed to urban densities, but do not receive the sewer services and other features characteristic of conventional development. These development patterns have created significant service problems for the City of Kearney.

In the future, rural residential subdivision should be located in specific areas that are unlikely to demand or receive future urban services and, for reasons of topography or market, are beyond the future direction of conventional urban development. As these areas are subdivided, development techniques such as lot clustering should be utilized to maintain the character of the rural landscape. In such subdivision, environmentally important or sensitive features, such as desiccated hills, are owned and maintained in common. Urban density subdivisions, using septic systems in place of sewers, should not be permitted.

Areas designed for open space residential development include:

- The hill environments around Cottonmill Lake.
- The gravel pit lakes area south of the Platte's North Channel. Here, subdivisions can use a chain of lakes as a significant recreational and aesthetic feature. Public recreation may be integrated into these residential developments.

COMMERCIAL NODES

KEARNEY'S NEW COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE LOCATED WITHIN WELL-DEFINED NODES OR DISTRICTS, EACH WITH A UNIQUE AND COMPLEMENTARY ROLE.

Commercial uses are important both economically and as centers for community activity. In order to maximize its twin business and city-building roles, commercial growth should occur in specific nodes or districts, each with a specialized function. Together, these nodes will furnish the equivalent of 288 acres of new commercial sites for Kearney over the next twenty years.

Unlike residential and industrial land uses, commercial strategies are linked less to projected absorption rates than to the function that different commercial areas should fill in the community. This plan envisions a hierarchy of commercial areas, with distinct roles to play. Growth of each area will result from a combination of new construction, public improvements, changes to land and building use, conversions and redevelopment, and improved zoning and subdivision processes and regulations.

Major Commercial Districts

Kearney's three major commercial areas are relatively distinct, and include: the I-80/South 2nd Avenue Services Corridor; Kearney Centre; and the North 2nd Avenue Major Retail Corridor.

- *Kearney Centre.* Kearney Centre will continue to be the flagship mixed use business district for the city, combining retail, office, and civic sectors in a vital city center. The Downtown development program presented in Chapter Six can expand by making better use of space, buildings, and facilities already in place. To benefit Kearney Centre, the city should:

- Develop the Inner Beltway, which will make viable concentric housing growth around Kearney Centre, boosting its role as a convenient, neighborhood retail services area.

- Develop convenient access from interchanges and the regional road system into Kearney Centre. This includes the maintenance of 2nd Avenue and US 30 as primary city entrances; and the development of a direct access route from a new eastside interchange to the Avenue H/22nd Street viaduct.

- Adopt zoning policies that encourage the location of civic, financial, entertainment, local service and specialty retail, and personal service uses in the city center, combined with programs to expand available space.

- Expand the reach of Kearney Centre by incorporating the medical campus into the fabric of the Downtown district along Central Avenue.

• *I-80 Regional Services along 2nd Avenue.* Access limitations and the traveler services role of this area have created a narrow linear corridor of commercial development extending between I-80 and 11th Street. To ensure maturation of this area into a successful mixed-use node, the city should:

- Build new cross streets leading to the planned regional arterial system.

- Concentrate commercial and industrial sites into distinct, planned districts, located at intersections along circulator routes. The city should resist pressure to permit more "strip" or linear commercial development, which tends to dissipate market concentration and increase traffic friction and congestion.

- Improve the public environment of 2nd Avenue, including evolution of the streetscape and signage to reflect qualities of a local boulevard.

• *North 2nd Avenue Regional Retail.* This area comprises the city's largest concentration of major retailing outside of Kearney Centre, and includes the Mall and several large mass-retailing facilities. The district extends along 2nd Avenue from 39th to 56th Street, and has already begun a transformation into a mixed-use urban corridor, combining major retail, office, and multi-family residential uses. Nonetheless, there is only a weak design relationship

between these adjacent land uses, with few pedestrian amenities.

To guide development of the 2nd Avenue Retail areas, the city should:

- Build new cross streets leading to 30th and 17th Avenues, Avenues E and N, and the proposed East Circulator. These cross streets should be located at quarter mile intervals.
- Construction of a “ring road” around the 56th Street and 2nd Avenue intersection, designed to create a local circulation pattern that moves around the principal arterials and reduces traffic friction.
- Clustered commercial and office sites located at intersections along collector street routes. The city should resist pressure to permit further “strip” or linear commercial development along 2nd Avenue or 56th Street.
- Improve the public environment of North 2nd Avenue, including landscaping and pedestrian amenities.

Secondary Commercial Areas

While most development in Kearney will be concentrated in these three districts, other areas should accommodate limited commercial uses. These areas will accommodate neighborhood services and complement the city’s three major commercial centers. They include:

- *Beltway Commercial Nodes.* The construction of the proposed Circulator is not intended to encourage development of any additional regional commercial nodes. Land in this areas is currently used for agriculture, industry or edge-of city housing. Any emerging retailing should be small-scale and oriented to serve commuters and neighborhood needs. These nodes should be located:
 - Southeast of 29th Street and 30th Avenue.
 - Southeast of US 30 and 30th Avenue.
 - Northwest of 11th Street and Antelope Avenue.
 - 56th and 30th Avenue.

- *Neighborhood Service Nodes.* Neighborhood commercial and office development should be directed to appropriate infill sites. These nodes will provide small-scale commercial services for each of the four growth areas. The neighborhood nodes should be limited to intersections of collector streets with arterial streets, designed to blend compatible limited retail service and office uses, day care services, convenience commercial, and higher-density residential developments.

Potential locations for new neighborhood service nodes include:

- 39th and Avenue N.
- 56th and Avenue N.
- 2nd Avenue and the circumferential boulevard.
- 56th and the 6th Avenue Parkway.
- 56th and 17th Avenue.
- 20th Avenue and 50th Street Parkway.

- *New Highway Services.* The proposed construction of an eastside interchange, discussed in detail in the next chapter, opens an opportunity for highway service development. This area should be limited in scale in order to avoid competition with Kearney's major convention, lodging, and service infrastructure along 2nd Avenue.

- *Gateway Arch.* Kearney is exploring the possibility of construction of a monumental arch over Interstate 80 at a point between Avenue M and Antelope Avenue. This project has substantial tourism and development potential for the city and would be served by an east interchange. However, commercial development, emphasizing services to visitors, must be carefully planned to assure high design standards. In addition, the development of the arch and surrounding growth should be designed to conserve the unique Platte River environment and should be integrated into a proposed regional greenway system.

BETTER ACCESS FOR INDUSTRY

THE AIRPORT AND MAJOR INDUSTRIAL SITES SHOULD RECEIVE IMPROVED HIGHWAY AND UTILITY ACCESS FOR ACCELERATED MARKETING AND DEVELOPMENT.

In its early history, Kearney's industrial uses clustered in a corridor along the Union Pacific railroad in the middle of town. As the town grew, industrial uses expanded outward to the east, in a belt along US 30 and the Union Pacific Railroad. In the post-war era, industry expanded in two directions: to airport industrial park sites about three miles east of the city; and to secondary sites behind the South 2nd Avenue commercial frontage. To meet future needs, Kearney must clarify its industrial land use policies to designate concentrated sites for future expansion. These sites must be better linked to US 30 and I-80 than present development allows. Kearney will generate a future demand for new industrial space. This demand must be guided by land use policies that resolve problems of traffic congestion, indiscriminate site development and a lack of clear industrial market focus. To implement this policy, Kearney should:

- Define a new Industrial Triangle, bounded by the former Burlington Northern right-of-way, the Union Pacific main line, and Eaton Road.
- Develop a regional access system designed to meet the needs of all types of uses. Components of this system include:
 - An eastside interchange on I-80 at approximately Eaton Road. Eaton Road becomes an east bypass, leading directly to Kearney Industrial park and the Airport and continuing north and west as Highway 40.
 - A circulator road approximately following the former Burlington Northern right-of-way, providing access to the Avenue H viaduct.
 - The Inner Beltway, with legs made up of 11th, 56th, Antelope Avenue, and 30th Avenue. The Burlington Northern circulator links this beltway to a proposed new interchange.

- An improved connection between Coal Chute Road and Avenue M.
- Overpass development over the UP at Antelope Avenue and Eaton Road.
- Revise land use and zoning controls to remove industrial uses from residential areas in Southeast Kearney.
- Encourage an evolution of older in-city railroad industrial sites into land uses which are more compatible with the land-locked, residential character of older neighborhoods. Ultimately, establish a land use pattern that concentrates major industrial development into the proposed Industrial Triangle and the Kearney Industrial Park.

PLACES FOR NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

KEARNEY SHOULD USE ITS ACADEMIC AND ENVIRONMENTAL ASSETS TO ENCOURAGE A BUSINESS AND RESEARCH PARK.

Economic development efforts in Kearney should take maximum advantage of the community's primary assets – its quality of life, academic resources, and good regional transportation access. The land use plan proposes development of a business and research park upon the route of the proposed Inner Beltway or its extended links along 11th, US 30, 39th or 56th Streets. The site should be located to prevent additional cross-city commutes or any intensified congestion of local neighborhood streets. It must be specifically designed for marketability for its special purposes.

The research park site consists of these potential areas:

- Site One: The eastern edge of the Industrial Triangle, generally between Eaton Road and Antelope Avenue between the Burlington Northern connector and the Union Pacific Railroad.
- Site Two: North of the Union Pacific Railroad between Antelope and Eaton Road.
- Site Three: Near a proposed 30th Avenue interchange south of the Inner Beltway at 11th Street. This site has a direct relationship to UNK and would be served by a University Drive extension.

To encourage the development of the research park, the city should:

- Develop the regional arterial system and its supporting extensions.
- Ensure availability of new housing sites near this future employment center.
- Promote a master plan for the project, relating buildings to one another and providing common parking and pedestrian plans.
- Enact land use regulations that limit development to office, research uses, and limited industrial uses.
- Integrate the research park into the city's planned recreation trails and open space system.

4

MOBILITY FOR URBAN QUALITY

A CITY DESIGN THAT IMPROVES LIFE AND MOBILITY

Kearney will direct its physical growth in accordance with a planned framework that can improve traffic movement and upgrade the visual quality of the city.

Transportation and land use interact in a critical way to determine the quality of life in the Kearney Plan. In any community, the transportation system fills many functions - as a lifeline for business and industry, a tool for economic self-sufficiency and human dignity, a form-giver to the city, and an amenity and vital service for residents. In Kearney, transportation is particularly critical because of congestion and capacity problems that are characteristic of much larger cities.

This key chapter is designed to provide the city with a city design concept and transportation system that fills these varied roles for Kearney. The overall assumption of this chapter is that land use policies and major transportation improvements in Kearney must:

- Address and solve existing and emerging circulation problems; and,
- Help to define development patterns which will distribute land uses and traffic loads more evenly in the future.

As Kearney's combined pattern of land use and transportation systems develops, it must strive to:

■ PROVIDE FOR THE SAFE AND CONVENIENT MOVEMENT OF ALL RESIDENTS OF KEARNEY.

Safety is a fundamental consideration for all elements of a transportation system. Transportation conflicts and a mixture of turning movements create traffic "friction" that slows travel and increases the probabilities of accidents. A traffic system that sorts out these varied demands and provides alternatives will become a safer and more expeditious system. In addition, system design should anticipate future problems and plan for them. Finally, the community should serve the needs of a growing number of pedestrians and bicyclists and help insure their safety as well. This chapter will address

MOBILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

these concerns, provide solutions for identified problems and suggest direction for future needs that will emerge from community change.

■ ASSURE THAT THE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IS ADEQUATE TO MEET THE DEMANDS PLACED UPON IT.

Although transportation has been a vital part of Kearney's development history and economic growth, the city's system is not well developed in many ways. Specifically, its over-reliance on a few arterial streets creates both congestion and safety problems on major highways such as 2nd Avenue and 25th Street; or regional through traffic which creates demands for the widening and upgrading of in-city streets. A major goal of the plan must be to create an overall system which reduces or eliminates these conflicts or pressures.

The transportation plan should also look at limited cost solutions that can also increase the system's ability to serve the city's needs. For example, system management strategies that spread out peak loads and eliminate local problems that slow traffic load can economically increase the practical capacity of existing streets.

■ USE THE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK TO SUPPORT DESIRABLE PATTERNS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT.

Transportation systems do more than move people from one place to another. They also form the structure of the community and are a very important implementation tool in the comprehensive planning process. In the case of Kearney, transportation "balance" also means opening new areas to development. This, over the long term, will load the traffic system more equally and assure that streets are equal to the task of serving an increasing population and industrial base. Indeed, a growth pattern that produces residential development in one direction combined with industrial growth in the opposite direction, will eventually overload any street improvement project.

■ PROVIDE MOBILITY FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE NOT USING AUTOMOBILES.

MOBILITY AND QUALITY OF LIFE

Kearney's physical layout makes traveling around the city by means other than cars a distinct possibility. The city's pedestrian system should provide good access for all to major features in the city. In addition, Kearney could make increasing use of bicycle transportation for recreational, shopping, and even work trips. A balanced transportation system addresses these other needs which, although less visible than street construction, are nevertheless very important.

In addition, some of Kearney's residents suffer from mobility impairments. For example, elderly residents are increasingly transportation-disadvantaged because the city provides few alternatives to the use of cars. Many senior citizens can no longer drive or feel uncomfortable about using automobiles. Students at UNK lack public transportation alternatives to bring them to shopping and entertainment in Kearney Centre or other retail centers. For its residents, and for the sake of reduced traffic congestion, Kearney should work to increase transportation options and mobility for all its citizens.

■ ENCOURAGE A BALANCED GROWTH PATTERN THAT DISTRIBUTES TRAFFIC IN WAYS THAT SAFEGUARD THE CITY'S TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.

In order to realize the full benefits of the planned transportation system, growth in Kearney must be more evenly distributed. The proposed network is designed to promote development in each of the city's quadrants, which will reduce the city's current dependence on two major traffic corridors.

Kearney's land use policies and decision making must reinforce the long-term city development concepts. The result will be a community that is more balanced physically and more economical to serve and operate. In addition, a balanced development pattern will guard against future failures of the city's transportation system.

PATTERNS OF MOBILITY

This section examines important elements of the transportation system that will assist in developing specific projects and policies. It discusses the structure of the city's street system and the role that its individual parts play. It will also analyze current and projected trends in Kearney's transportation system to determine critical problems.

The Structure of the Street System

The underlying structure of Kearney's street system is the surveyor's grid of section lines. These section line roads eventually became the city's arterial street system -- 11th, 25th, 39th, and 56th Streets forming the east-west parallels, and Antelope Avenue, Avenue N, 2nd Avenue, 17th Avenue, and 30th Avenue becoming the north-south "meridians." The grid of Kearney's original plat developed within this overall structure, and is generally defined by 9th Avenue on the west, Avenues N and M on the east, 11th Street on the south, and 39th Street on the north. The grid is roughly bisected east-west by the Union Pacific Railroad, and north-south by State Highways 10/44. The traditional grid provides a high degree of street continuity along east and west streets. However, the railroad limits major north-south crossings to 30th, 8th, 5th, 2nd, Central Avenue and Avenue H. Of these, only 2nd Avenue and Avenue H are grade-separated.

The west boundary of the original grid, 8th Avenue, abuts the UNK campus. The city's primary cross-town arterial is 2nd Avenue, which crosses the UPRR on a viaduct one block west of downtown. The eastern boundary of the grid, Avenue H, provides the city's secondary grade separation over the busy railroad main line. The western boundary of the traditional grid is made up of major community uses, including the UNK campus; Harmon, Apollo, Pioneer and Centennial Parks; Memorial Field; the high school and middle school; Central and Kenwood Elementary schools; and several landmark community churches. As a result, 5th Avenue provides a crossing of the UPRR serving the west part of the city grid.

Continuous north-south connections to the traditional grid south of 39th Street are limited to Avenue E, creating conflicts between traffic and local residents. On the eastern

STREET SYSTEM STRUCTURE AND CLASSIFICATIONS

edge of this traffic area, the Union Pacific spur, formerly the Kearney and Black Hills Railroad, poses a barrier for both east-west traffic movement and eastward growth.

Later additions to the grid have been less continuous. Recent development, especially in the Northwest quadrant of the city, tends to break the local street grid and channel traffic onto the few remaining cross-town streets. This pattern directs traffic onto arterial streets such as 39th Street and other perimeter arterials. Northeast Kearney has made less extensive use of cul-de-sacs. A pattern of local collector streets has preserved east-west continuity at the north edge of the quadrant, between homes and retail areas.

Peripheral parts of the street system are isolated. Subdivisions west of Lake Kearney and the country club, located in the extreme west part of Northwest Kearney, are accessible only along 35th and 39th Streets. This creates an elaborate cul-de-sac which creates significant safety and public service concerns. Major industrial areas to the east are connected to the city by 25th Street (US 30), and direct industrial traffic loads to the intersection at 2nd Avenue, to proceed south over the 2nd Avenue viaduct.

This street pattern, coupled with the presence of a single 1-80 interchange at 2nd Avenue, channels traffic along a relatively small number of major arterials. These dominant streets, all of which are experiencing traffic stress, include 2nd Avenue (N-44), 25th Street (US 30), and 39th Street. The mixture of through traffic, regional intercity movement, and local trips creates significant congestion and conflicts along the city's arterial streets.

Street Classifications

The Street Classification Map displays the city's existing Federal Aid system with State functional classifications. A street segment must be designated part of the Federal Aid system to be eligible for Federal funding assistance for major improvements.

Streets are placed into four functional categories:

- *Expressways*: Expressways are restricted access, free-flow roads, designed to carry high traffic volumes at high speeds

STREET CLASSIFICATIONS

with minimum friction. All traffic movement is lane-separated by flow direction, and all intersections with local and regional roads are made with grade-separated interchanges. Interstate 80 is an expressway through Kearney.

- *Major Arterials:* These roads serve regional needs and connect major activity centers. They usually serve the highest traffic corridors and are designed to accommodate relatively high speeds (usually above 40 miles per hour in urban areas). These streets often use access control devices such as raised medians to reduce traffic conflicts. The state's expressway system in Nebraska (which includes US 30 in some parts of the state) will provide a multi-lane limited access system to connect major urban centers and complement or feed Interstate 80. US 30 (25th Street) and 2nd Avenue through Kearney are classified as major arterials. Congestion and safety problems emerge when major arterials also are called upon to move local trips, such as trips to shopping facilities. This occurs in the absence of connected street networks, which provide alternative routes.

- *Other Arterials:* These major streets connect with and complement the major arterial system by linking major activity centers and connecting various parts of the city together. Unlike expressways, other arterials usually provide access to adjacent properties and generally accommodate extensive left-turn movements and curb cuts. These major streets are designed for speeds of 40 mph or below. As a rule, these streets are spaced at 0.5 to 1.0 miles in developed urban areas and 2.0 miles in fringe areas. Kearney streets in this classification include 56th, 39th, and 11th Streets, 30th Avenue and Avenue N.

- *Collectors:* The collector system links neighborhoods together and connects them to arterials and activity centers. Collectors are designed for relatively low speeds (30 mph and below) and provide unlimited local access. Collectors run within residential areas and distribute trips from arterials, to their ultimate destinations. They also collect traffic from a neighborhood's local streets and channel it to arterials. Examples of collectors in Kearney's current system include: 17th, 4th, and Central Avenues; Avenues A, E, F, H and I; and 48th, 46th, 34th, 16th, 13th, 11th and 8th Streets.

TRAFFIC VOLUMES

- *Local Streets.* Local streets serve individual properties within residential or commercial areas. They provide direct, low-speed access for relatively short trips. Local streets may include cul-de-sacs, which should exceed 300 feet in length only in exceptional circumstances. The street system in the far west part of the city is based on a pattern of cul-de-sacs, often limiting access to one point.

Traffic Volumes

The 1994 Traffic Volume Map indicates traffic loads on major segments of Kearney's street system. It indicates the following:

- The heaviest loads in Kearney's street system occur along 2nd Avenue between the Union Pacific viaduct and 39th Street, ranging from 24,000 to about 27,000 vehicles per day (vpd). Second Avenue volumes drop to 21,600 vpd between 39th and 56th Streets and below 20,000 vpd south of the railroad viaduct. The impact of these volumes is increased by local movements along 2nd Avenue into access driveways.
- The second most heavily traveled corridor is 25th Street (US 30) north of Kearney Centre. These volumes hover around the 20,000 vpd mark, dropping equivalently to the east and west.
- The third most heavily travelled road in the city is 39th Street in Northwest Kearney between 2nd Avenue and about 8th Avenue. Traffic levels here are about 16,000 vpd, declining to about 10,000 to 11,000 vpd to the east and west.

Traffic levels on other streets are well below 10,000 vpd. This is indicative of the heavy traffic loads placed upon three major street corridors by discontinuities in the major street system. The most rapid growth in traffic has occurred in the northwestern part of the city. The most rapidly growing individual corridors are 39th Street between Avenue E and 30th Avenue, 2nd Avenue north of Kearney Centre, and 17th Avenue north of 39th Street.

CAPACITY ANALYSIS

Capacity Analysis

A capacity analysis compares the traffic volumes on a street segment with the design traffic capacity of that segment. The ratio of volume over capacity (V/Q) corresponds to a "level of service" (LOS), which describes the quality of traffic flow.

Measures of Levels of Service (LOS)

System performance of a streets is evaluated using a criterion called the "level of service" or LOS. LOS is a qualitative measure that examines such factors as speed, travel time, traffic interruptions, freedom of maneuvering, safety, convenience, and operating costs of a road under specific volume conditions. A ratio of volume to capacity (that is how much traffic the street carries divided by how much traffic the street was designed to carry) provides a short method for determining LOS. LOS categories are described as follows:

- *LOS A*: This describes free-flowing operation. Vehicles face few impediments in maneuvering. The driver has a high level of physical and psychological comfort. Minor accidents or breakdowns cause little interruption in the traffic stream. LOS A corresponds to a volume/capacity ratio of 0 to 0.60.
- *LOS B*: This condition is a reasonably free-flowing operation. Maneuvering ability is slightly restricted, but ease of movement remains high. LOS B corresponds to a V/C ratio of 0.60 to 0.70.
- *LOS C*: This level provides stable operation. Traffic flows approach the range in which increases in traffic will degrade service. Minor incidents can be absorbed, but a local slow-down of traffic will result. In urban settings, LOS C is a good level of service to work toward. It corresponds to a V/C ratio of 0.70 to 0.80.
- *LOS D*: This level borders on an unstable traffic flow. Small traffic increases produce substantial service deterioration. Maneuverability is limited and comfort levels are reduced. LOS D represents a V/C ratio of 0.80 to 0.90.

STREET CAPACITY ANALYSIS

LOS D is frequently used as a compromise standard in dense urban settings.

- *LOS E*: LOS E represents typical operation at full design capacity of a street. Operations are extremely unstable, because there is little margin for error in the traffic stream. LOS E corresponds to a V/C ratio of 0.90 to 1.00.
- *LOS F*: LOS F is a breakdown in the system. Such conditions exist when queues form behind a breakdown or congestion point. This condition occurs when traffic exceeds the design capacity of the street.

Street Performance Evaluation

The *Transportation and Traffic Engineering Handbook* (1982) indicates that the capacity of an urban arterial is about 675 vehicles per hour per lane. If peak hour represents 10% of the daily traffic load, the design capacity of a two-lane street is 13,500 vpd and a four-lane street is 27,000 vpd. Separate left-turn lanes increase roadway capacity by about 2,000 vpd.

Currently, traffic conditions below LOS C exist along:

- 2nd Avenue between the Union Pacific viaduct and 39th Street. Here, performance drops to LOS D and E. Second Avenue stands out as the city's primary traffic problem. In addition to high traffic volume, operations, the combination of different types of traffic, mixing regional automobile and truck movements with local commercial and residential trips degrades safe traffic operation. In addition, intersections with 2nd Avenue at 25th and 39th Streets operate at LOS E.
- 25th Street just east of the 2nd Avenue intersection, performing at LOS D. Other locations along 25th Street also experience significant delays, often caused by the conflict between regional and local traffic service needs. The operation of this crucial street is further complicated by:
 - Frequent traffic signals between Second Avenue and Avenue N, to permit north-south crossings of local and collector streets.

STREET CAPACITY ANALYSIS

- The high number of business access points along the corridor. Several businesses have very shallow entrances, which increase conflicts and create unpredictable traffic movements.

In addition, while its statistical performance is satisfactory, the 39th Street corridor creates an important challenge. This corridor is one of Kearney's fastest growing streets, a condition worsened by steep topography at the 2nd Avenue hilltop, creating safety, congestion and visibility problems for motorists. Northeast Kearney residents frequently avoid the intersection of 2nd and 39th Street by using Avenue E, Northeast Kearney's only other north-south midtown through route. This limited accessibility and through-traffic situation has created conflicts with Avenue E's predominately residential setting.

Future Traffic Projections

The Kearney Plan's land use projections and proposed allocations were used to project year 2020 traffic volumes on the major street system. The city was divided into transportation analysis zones (TAZ's) in order to compute probable daily traffic levels. Trip generations rates are based on *Trip Generation* by the Institute of Transportation Engineers (1991).

The Year 2020 Traffic Volumes diagram distributes these traffic loads over the existing system. These projected future volumes indicate severe problems in Kearney's future street network. Specifically:

- Peak traffic volumes on the 2nd Avenue corridor between the UP and 39th Street range between 39,600 and 41,000 vpd. These levels decline slightly between 39th and 56th Streets. However, even this segment will experience loads larger than current levels.
- Maximum loads on the 25th Street corridor east of 2nd Avenue range between 26,600 and 28,000 vpd.
- Traffic levels on 39th Street between E Avenue and 17th Avenue will approach today's peak traffic volumes on 2nd Avenue, at between 27,000 and 28,000 vpd.

STREET CAPACITY ANALYSIS

- Large increases in traffic occur along road segments that ring the city. Eleventh Street will experience a doubling to tripling of 1994 traffic volumes, peaking at about 13,000 vpd at Avenue M. Antelope Avenue, which currently experiences negligible traffic, will increase dramatically with additional northeastern development. Fifty-sixth Street, emerging as a major arterial, will experience loads in the range of 11,000 vpd, while 30th Avenue will also experience significant traffic increases. This suggests the emergence of a loop of major streets, distributing traffic around the congested 2nd Avenue corridor.

Future Capacity Analysis

The Future Capacity Analysis diagram overlays street segments that will operate at below standard levels of service in 2020 without further action. These include:

Levels of Service "E" and "F"

- 2nd Avenue from 16th Street to 56th Street.
- 22nd Street from 2nd Avenue to Avenue E.
- 39th Street from Avenue E to 30th Avenue.
- 25th Street at the 2nd Avenue intersection.
- Antelope Avenue from Highway 30 to 39th Street.

Level of Service D

- 39th Street from Avenue E to Antelope Avenue.
- 25th Street from Avenue Q to 2nd Avenue.
- 11th Street from Antelope Avenue to Avenue H.
- Antelope Avenue from 11th Street to Highway 30.

This analysis indicates that:

- An exclusive reliance on 2nd Avenue as the city's principal north-south through arterial will cause a severe failure of the traffic system. The costs of widening 2nd Avenue to accommodate projected traffic are extremely high and will create an unacceptable impact on the city and neighboring businesses. Additional north-south through routes will be urgently needed during the next twenty years.
- East-west circulation, up to now provided by a section line road network, will exhibit significant stress during the next

twenty years. This loading will be most evident along the 39th Street corridor.

- Major corridors are emerging that route traffic around the city's existing major arterials -- 2nd Avenue, 25th Street, and 39th Street. These corridors define a peripheral loop system, composed of Antelope Avenue, 11th Street, 56th Street, and 30th Avenue.

Traffic "Channelization"

Traffic loading problems in Kearney are intensified by the channelization of the city's traffic along heavily travelled corridors. This channelization is intensified by two factors:

- *Interchange location.* Kearney has a single interchange with 1-80 at 2nd Avenue (Nebraska Highway 44). This channels most traffic entering the city to a congested corridor in the center of the city. Trips destined for developing areas in the northern parts of the city also must travel through this corridor. A single, centrally located interchange can no longer serve the needs of a city of Kearney's size and future growth prospects.

Some relief of the central Kearney interchange is gained by the use of the Minden interchange (exit 279), seven miles to the east. Travelers bound for Kearney use this interchange and approach the city on Coal Chute Road. However, the Coal Chute access requires a difficult crossing over the Union Pacific on the eastern edge of the city, and suffers from indirect access to the south part of the city over unimproved roads. The existing crossing from Coal Chute to Highway 30 may be closed with future railroad expansion.

- *The Union Pacific Corridor.* This corridor, a major feature dividing north and south parts of the city, will become a more formidable barrier with the triple-tracking of the main line. This triple-tracking will accommodate traffic in excess of 150 daily trains; in addition, operation of trains up to two miles long is projected. This expansion of rail traffic will increase both the difficulty and danger of Kearney's current at-grade crossings, at 30th Avenue, 8th Avenue, 5th Avenue, Central Avenue, Avenue Q (Coal Chute Road), Antelope Avenue, and Eaton Road. In addition, the closure of the 8th

Avenue crossing was proposed in 1996. Closure of some grade crossings and delays at others in the face of expanded rail traffic will force even more city traffic on the two existing grade separated crossings -- 2nd Avenue and Avenue H.

Analysis of Alternatives

This transportation element of the Kearney Plan provides a comprehensive improvement program that, if implemented, will provide the city with a balanced transportation network. However, the capacity analysis and traffic projections suggest that two regional transportation priorities have extremely important implications for the movement of traffic in and around Kearney. These include:

- Development of one or two additional 1-80 interchanges, together with a bypass route for regional traffic around the city. This will relieve the channelization of all local and regional traffic along the 2nd Avenue corridor.
- Development of an Inner Beltway to distribute local and interurban traffic around the periphery of the city. This responds to projected traffic growth along peripheral arterial streets, including 11th and 56th Streets on the south and north, and Antelope Avenue and 30th Avenue on the east and west. This beltway should be tied to additional 1-80 access.

However, several options exist for the development and location of these key improvements. An alternatives analysis, using a computerized traffic assignment model, was used to assess the comparative benefits of these options. Five development options were tested. The results of this analysis are illustrated in the traffic assignment diagrams for each option.

- *Option One* proposes interchanges at Antelope Avenue and 30th Avenue and an Inner Beltway composed of I 11th, 56th, Antelope, and 30th Avenue. This option has the most significant impact on 2nd Avenue, decreasing projected volumes by 25 to 33% from the 2020 Existing System forecast. In this option, 2nd Avenue operates at LOS D and E.

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

- *Option Two* proposes interchanges at Eaton Road and 30th Avenue and an Inner Beltway composed of 11th, 56th, Antelope, and 30th Avenue. Eaton Road continued north serves as a regional bypass route. A link is made between the Inner Beltway and Eaton Road along the abandoned Burlington Northern right-of-way. This option performs similarly to Option One, although 2nd Avenue volumes remain slightly higher.
- *Option Three* proposes development of a west interchange at 30th Avenue only, connected to the Inner Beltway. This concept reduces peak traffic volumes on 2nd Avenue by about 12% and has relatively minor effects on the rest of the system. Second Avenue continues to operate at LOS F between the UP and 25th Street.
- *Option Four* proposes development of an east interchange at Antelope Avenue only, connected to the Inner Beltway. This concept reduces peak traffic volumes on 2nd Avenue by about 20% and reduces peak loads on 25th Street by about 10%. However, Second Avenue continues to operate at LOS F between the UP and 25th Street.
- *Option Five* proposes development of an east interchange at Eaton Road only, connected to the Inner Beltway by a link on the former BN right-of-way. This concept reduces peak traffic volumes on 2nd Avenue by about 17% and reduces peak loads on 25th Street by about 5%. However, Second Avenue continues to operate at LOS F between the UP and 25th Street.

■ Conclusions

This analysis suggests that:

- Kearney will need both eastside and westside interchanges by the year 2020. Of the two, an eastside interchange provides relatively more relief to the 2nd Avenue corridor, and should therefore be built first.
- East interchanges at Antelope or Eaton Road perform similarly. The Antelope Avenue alignment performs marginally better. However, other factors, including ground conditions and direct access to the airport and

ALTERNATIVES ANALYSIS

industrial park provide more than compensating advantages for the Eaton Road location.

- An Inner Beltway, made up industrial park provide more than compensating advantages for the Eaton Road location.

of 11th Street, Antelope Avenue, 56th Street, and 30th Avenue is an essential improvement. This beltway should be directly linked to additional I-80 interchanges.

- Even with all of these improvements, other projects, including efforts to reduce traffic friction by separating local residential and commercial traffic from through and regional movements, and improved traffic management, are essential to maintain a relatively good performing transportation system.

TRANSPORTATION POLICIES

Kearney's transportation program should maintain reasonable mobility around the city while enhancing a quality urban environment.

In Kearney, a transportation program should meet current and future mobility needs without compromising the character of the city's urban environment. This general policy includes:

- To the greatest degree possible, establishing route alternatives, rather than continuing to widen a single corridor.
- Improving north-south through routes to decrease exclusive dependence on the 2nd Avenue corridor.
- Providing routes and alternative modes for local trips to prevent friction on major arterials.
- Using transportation as a formative and positive determinant of design and urban form.

The components of this program include:

- **INNER BELTWAY**
- **EAST AND WEST INTERCHANGES**
- **REGIONAL BYPASS**
- **FUNCTIONAL SEPARATIONS**
- **PRE-PLANNED COLLECTORS**
- **REARAGE ACCESS LOOPS**
- **CIVIC STREETS**
- **GRADE SEPARATIONS**
- **SECONDARY REGIONAL ACCESS**
- **SERVICE ROUTE TRANSIT**
- **MULTI-USE CORRIDORS**

Each component of transportation policy is described below. The Transportation Plan and Street Classification Maps illustrate the concepts presented in these policies and recommendations.

INNER BELTWAY

KEARNEY SHOULD DEVELOP AN INNER BELTWAY USING EXISTING ROADS TO DISTRIBUTE TRAFFIC AROUND ITS GROWTH CENTERS.

This Inner Beltway should be developed in Kearney which will distribute traffic around the city's growth areas and

relieve an exclusive reliance on the Second Avenue corridor. The Inner Beltway's segments include:

- 11th Street as the south segment, serving industrial and business areas in the southern part of the city and providing a local cross axis that parallels Interstate 80 about one mile to the north. Year 2020 traffic volumes on this segment will range from 10,000 to 14,000 vpd, suggesting a four-lane section by that time.
- 56th Street as the north segment, serving a major commercial growth node at 2nd Avenue and the city's primary residential growth areas. This segment will achieve maximum volumes of 11,000 vpd by the year 2020. It should be complemented by a circumferential residential boulevard and other traffic distribution measures to relieve loading.
- Antelope Avenue as the ultimate east segment, serving northeast development and industrial areas on the east side of the city. Peak loads in this area will approach 18,000 vpd by the year 2020, indicating a need for a four-lane section at least between Coal Chute and 39th Street.
- 30th Avenue as the west segment, serving UNK and development in the northwestern sections of the area. Peak traffic volumes here will achieve about 8,500 vpd by year 2020, suggesting maintenance of a high capacity two-lane section with adequate right-of-way for widening.

All design should include eventual upgrading to a four-lane section. The Inner Beltway should be directly linked to new I-80 interchanges.

EAST AND WEST INTERCHANGES

BY THE YEAR 2020, KEARNEY WILL REQUIRE TWO NEW INTERCHANGES WITH I-80, SERVING BOTH THE EAST AND WEST SIDES OF THE CITY.

Kearney has outgrown its ability to be adequately served by a single interchange. Year 2020 traffic projections on the existing system, channeling most traffic off Interstate 80 to the 2nd Avenue corridor, will produce Level of Service F conditions on much of 2nd Avenue between the Union

Pacific corridor and about 45th Street. These problems are compounded by the mixing of local and regional traffic created by a single interchange and discontinuities in the local traffic pattern. Projected development and traffic patterns support the development of two additional interchanges, with one each developed east and west of 2nd Avenue.

A recommended location for an east interchange is Eaton Road, providing buildable soils and a direct connection to the Kearney Industrial Park and Airport. This interchange will also feed a regional bypass, moving truck traffic away from the city center. This interchange should be linked to the Inner Beltway via a diagonal roadway on the former Burlington Northern right-of-way. Continued westward, this feeder road leads to the Avenue H/22nd Street viaduct and provides direct access into Kearney Centre.

A west interchange should be developed at 30th Avenue. This interchange should be supported by an extension of University Drive south to the Inner Beltway at 11th Street, providing direct access to the UNK campus. The 30th Avenue interchange also serves the Regional Development Center and major residential growth programmed for the northwest part of the city.

Of the two interchanges, the alternatives analysis indicates that the east interchange provides significantly greater traffic relief to 2nd Avenue and should be pursued first. In addition, the east interchange more effectively separates truck traffic from the local traffic stream. Interim access to UNK can be enhanced by improvements to 11th Street and extension of University Drive.

REGIONAL BYPASS

AN EAST INTERCHANGE SHOULD PROVIDE A BYPASS FOR REGIONAL TRUCK AND TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS AROUND KEARNEY TO THE NORTHWEST.

Traffic flow in Kearney is hampered by a mix of truck and automobile traffic. Because trucks, with less maneuverability and slower acceleration, tend to impede flow, this mixed traffic further contributes to congestion on both the 2nd Avenue and 25th Street corridors. Currently,

truck traffic moving northwest to the Sandhills region must pass through the center of Kearney.

A method of separating regional truck from local and regional automobile traffic would further improve traffic flow characteristics. Therefore, the development of an east side interchange at Eaton Road should be coordinated with the development of an east regional bypass. This bypass should be routed along an improved Eaton Road, turning west with a free-flow curve along an existing county road 1.5 miles north of 56th Street. This bypass route joins Highway 40 northwest at the Highway 10/44 intersection (Glenwood Junction). The bypass route also provides a direct, conflict-free connection as well to Kearney Regional Airport and to the Kearney Industrial Park. Bypass development should ultimately include a grade separated crossing over the Union Pacific mainline.

Year 2020 traffic projections on this east bypass forecast a peak load of 6,500 vpd. This suggests development of a high-quality two-lane road with paved shoulders.

FUNCTIONAL SEPARATIONS

THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN SHOULD MINIMIZE CONFLICTS BETWEEN LOCAL AND THROUGH TRAFFIC BY PROVIDING LOCAL TRAFFIC WITH ALTERNATIVES TO THE MAJOR ARTERIAL SYSTEM.

Kearney can help extend the capacity of its arterial system by providing specialized road facilities which channel specific types of traffic away from the arterial system. This will extend the usefulness of arterial roads and minimize the obstructions and loss of capacity created on arterials by mixed through and local traffic. Specifically:

- The proposed parkway system proposed in Chapter Three of the Kearney Plan is designed to provide a secondary circulation network for local and residential collector traffic, giving local traffic a convenient and continuous way to travel around the city without using the arterial system. The creation of the parkway system will relieve stress on 2nd Avenue, 39th Street, and 56th Street, as well as creating a significant multi-use street system that links developing parts of Kearney with one another.

- The regional bypass system channels regional truck and highway traffic away from the center of Kearney. In addition, two other industrial access projects will further assist the functional separation of incompatible traffic flows. These include:

- The proposed link along the former Burlington Northern right-of-way between Eaton Road and the Avenue H viaduct.

- An improved Coal Chute Road to Avenue M alignment, providing an improved route to industrial areas in east central Kearney.

- North-south street continuity combining Avenues M and N by developing a grade separation over the Union Pacific tracks at this point. This continuity would establish an east side arterial in the near term and can act on a temporary basis as the east leg of the inner beltway. Alignment problems between these two north-south streets create design challenges for a grade separation; however, a crossing at this location would be highly desirable. In addition, it would tend to discourage the use of local and collector streets on the east side of Kearney by regional or through traffic.

- A commercial circulator system that can move local commercial traffic around rather than through principal intersections. Such a system discourages commercial strip development and takes start and stop movements into commercial developments off the major arterial system.

PRE-PLANNED COLLECTORS

THE COLLECTOR STREET AND PARKWAY SYSTEM IN DEVELOPING AREAS SHOULD BE DESIGNATED AHEAD OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEDICATED AS GROWTH TAKES PLACE.

Contemporary residential and commercial development tends to occur on an incremental, project-by-project basis. As a result, projects provide for their own internal circulation needs, but rarely anticipate the cross connections and linkages necessary to create an integrated transportation network. This creates a "pod" type of development patterns,

by which most traffic exits a development onto arterial streets, where it comes into conflict with through and regional traffic.

The circulation network that connects different neighborhoods together cannot be left to develop by chance. Instead, these important links should be pre-designated through this comprehensive plan. As projects are designed, they should reserve the required collector routes and dedicate their rights-of-ways. While actual alignments of the collector network may differ somewhat from those proposed in this plan, the general structure should be preserved. In some cases, the city may pre-develop a street segment to create necessary linkages.

COMMERCIAL REARAGE ACCESS LOOPS

AT 56TH AND 2ND AVENUE AND OTHER EMERGING COMMERCIAL CENTERS, KEARNEY SHOULD ESTABLISH A PATTERN OF REARAGE ACCESS LOOPS WHICH TAKE PRIMARY ACCESS OFF ARTERIAL STREETS.

Traffic friction, mixing local commercial and through traffic, erodes the carrying capacity of major arterials and creates safety problems because of deceleration and turning movements. This in turn hurts the function of arterials, creating pressure for further widenings which are both expensive and do not always solve the problem of traffic conflicts. Linear frontage roads are sometimes presented as solutions to this problem. However, frontage road systems are expensive, require large amounts of right-of-way, and pose traffic conflicts at intersections, unless they are flared well away from major four-way crossings. In addition, frontage systems tend to encourage commercial strip development, rather than the nodal pattern proposed under the Kearney Plan's land use policies.

The plan proposes the use of rearage loops to provide access to major commercial development. The rearage loop system moves access to parking off a service loop around an intersection, limiting access to defined intersections. The system defines commercial nodes and provides both better street landscaping and a reduction in the number of conflicts at the intersection. Finally, the rearage loop provides

opportunities for a more comfortable link between commercial development and surrounding residential and mixed use neighborhoods.

The rearage loop concept is initially proposed for the intersection of 56th Street and 2nd Avenue. At this emerging commercial center, the system can provide good access while specifically defining the amount of major commercial development to manageable proportions. The loop provides opportunities for good pedestrian connections to commercial projects, including greenway links from the circumferential boulevard to this commercial node. The rearage loop pattern should also be used when appropriate at other emerging commercial centers.

CIVIC STREETS

KEARNEY'S STREETS SHOULD BE DESIGNED AS PUBLIC SPACES AS WELL AS MOVERS OF TRAFFIC.

Good streets have more than one purpose. In addition to moving traffic, they are important public spaces and should be designed appropriately. The concept of civic streets defines strategic streets as parkways that connect neighborhoods, parks, and activity centers, and provide a strong and unified image for the community. These streets have special characteristics that serve to unify rather than divide neighborhoods; accommodate pedestrian and bicycle, as well as vehicular traffic; and encourage adjacent development to be oriented toward rather than away from the public right-of-way. These characteristics may include:

- A pedestrian/bicycle domain set back from the roadway by street landscaping and an adequate greenway setback. Walk.
- Special lighting and street graphics.
- Well-marked pedestrian crossings, sometimes with features such as crossing nodes which reduce the distance that pedestrians must travel to cross the street.
- Street furniture that claims part of the street environment or people who are outside of vehicles.

Civic streets will have different roles, ranging from neighborhood circulators and collectors to major arterials. In Kearney, these civic streets include:

- Links of the proposed parkway system.
- Central Avenue.
- Portions of the Inner Beltway that link or serve important community features.
- Other important streets that pass by major community features, including Avenue N, 39th Street, 22nd Street, and Avenue H.
- Major highway routes, including 2nd Avenue and 25th Street.

As these streets are developed or upgraded, the design features that mark civic streets should be incorporated into their design.

GRADE SEPARATION PROGRAM

KEARNEY SHOULD WORK WITH THE STATE OF NEBRASKA AND THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD TO PROVIDE AN ADEQUATE SYSTEM OF GRADE-SEPARATED ROUTES LINKING THE NORTH AND SOUTH PARTS OF KEARNEY.

The planned triple-tracking of the Union Pacific mainline through Kearney, combined with operation of longer, more frequent trains, will reduce or eliminate the utility of grade crossings and place more stress on Kearney's two grade separated crossings at 2nd Avenue and Avenue H. This increased traffic, coupled with the drive to close grade crossings for safety and liability reasons threatens to make the railroad a greater community barrier. Additional grade-separated crossings are necessary to provide adequate north to south access for Kearney in light of this major expansion of railroad operations.

Priority locations for grade separations include:

- 30th Avenue, the west segment of the Inner Beltway. This will also serve the proposed west interchange.
- Avenue N/M on the east side of Kearney, if this connection is economically feasible.
- Eaton (Cherry) Road, tied to the proposed east side interchange and serving as the east link of the regional bypass route.

Ultimate locations for grade separations include:

- The extension of University Drive. This extension may precede the development of a west interchange to provide more direct access to the UNK campus from the existing Highway 44 interchange.
- Antelope Avenue, the east segment of the Inner Beltway. An Antelope Avenue location may replace an Avenue N/M location if the latter is not feasible.

The Central Avenue grade crossing cannot be closed or grade separated without major impact on businesses within Kearney Centre. However, steps should be taken to enhance safety at this remaining grade crossing. A pedestrian overpass or underpass should be considered at this location. Such a grade separation would allow the two parts of the central business district to function in a unified way. It could also be treated as a major urban design element in Kearney Centre.

SECONDARY REGIONAL ACCESS

KEARNEY SHOULD IMPROVE SECONDARY REGIONAL ACCESS ROUTES FROM THE EAST AND WEST.

The proposed interchanges and Inner Beltway/regional bypass will provide the structure of the regional access system that relieves the 2nd Avenue and 25th Street corridors. However, additional improvements are necessary to provide secondary access into the city from developed industrial and developing residential areas on the periphery of the city. These secondary regional improvements include:

- A road connection generally following the former BN right-of-way to provide access between Eaton Road and the existing Avenue H and proposed Avenue N/M viaducts. This route may use a combination of the railroad right-of-way and 16th Street. The connection provides a secondary route to existing east side industrial areas and between the east side interchange, Inner Beltway and Kearney Centre. Year 2020 projections on this route suggest a traffic demand in the range of 11,000 vpd.
- An improved connection between Coal Chute Road and Avenue M on the south side of the UP tracks. The Avenue Q crossing to Highway 30 should be closed for safety

reasons. This will improve access to industrial areas in the east central part of the city and eliminate a confusing and tortuous existing route over unimproved streets. This routing should tie into a new road on the Burlington Northern right-of-way.

- A continuation of 39th Street west to Cottonmill Road. This links developing subdivisions west of the city into Kearney's developing commercial core.

SERVICE ROUTE TRANSIT

KEARNEY SHOULD CONSIDER DEVELOPING A SERVICE ROUTE TRANSIT SYSTEM CONNECTING MAJOR COMMUNITY FEATURES AND REDUCING RELIANCE ON AUTOMOBILES FOR SOME SHORT TRIPS.

Currently, Kearney's public transportation system is limited to demand responsive service for seniors and disabled people. The city should investigate the development of an innovative transit system, combining aspects of demand responsive and service route systems. Service routes are circulators that link major community attractions and traffic generators. In Kearney, a service route loop would connect UNK, Kearney Centre, the hospital, the YMCA, commercial attractions, and other features.

A hybrid concept operates as a two-tiered system. For a specific time, a vehicle operates as a demand responsive service, picking passengers up or leaving them near home. It then enters a service route phase, leaving passengers at specific points on the scheduled route and picking up others to distribute at home during the next "demand responsive" phase. Some trips may also provide special services for hotels and conventions. In addition, seasonal attractions, such as the visits of the sandhill cranes, may be linked into the system. Service route stops may vary for different times of day. For example, the stop and route structure may change during the day for specific demands, such as transportation of children from schools to after-school facilities such as parks and the YMCA.

Vehicle appearance is part of a marketing strategy for the program. The use of buses that have the exterior appearance of trolleys have proven popular in other places

and would allude to Kearney's former operation of electric trolleys. Signage, shelter, and other features can contribute to a festive quality of a public transit system. Development of a demand responsive service route system should be investigated through a process that considers and evaluates the specific needs of potential system users.

MULTI-USE CORRIDORS

KEARNEY SHOULD DEVELOP A NETWORK OF MULTI-USE CORRIDORS THAT ENCOURAGE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRANSIT.

A trail network for Kearney should go beyond recreation to make pedestrian and bicycle transportation viable transportation options for the city. Elements of this system include:

- *Trail corridors* that combine recreation and non-vehicular transportation uses. These trail corridors will include:
 - The Cottonmill Trail corridor from Lake Kearney to Cottonmill Lake along the canal.
 - The NPPD Canal corridor from Lake Kearney and UNK south to the North Channel of the Platte River.
 - The North Channel route, extending from the canal tailrace east to the Fort Kearny Trail and on to Gibbon via the Basswood Strip State Wildlife Management Area. This route could be extended west from the tailrace at about 18th Avenue to 30th Avenue.
- *Multi-Use Corridors*, combining vehicular and non-motorized transportation in the same transportation corridor. These multi-use corridors include:
 - The proposed parkway and boulevard system, including the circumferential boulevard, the north-south 7th/6th Avenue parkway, and other links.
 - Highway 30 to the Kearney Industrial Park.
 - The south and west legs of the Inner Beltway.
 - Railroad Street from Kearney Centre to the NPPD Canal.
 - 45th Street and the cemetery from 2nd Avenue to the circumferential boulevard.
- *On-Street Routes*, providing good pedestrian accommodations and signed bicycle routes along key community links. These routes include Central Avenue, 5th Avenue, and the Avenue M/N corridors.

5

A RECREATION LIFESTYLE

PARKS AND RECREATION ISSUES AND POLICIES

Kearney should provide a quality park system to support the needs of its current and future residents and serve as a symbol of the unique character of the community.

Kearney residents enjoy extraordinary access to an excellent city parks and recreation system as well as other major resources in the Platte Valley. Indeed, parks and recreation facilities are vital to the community lifestyle of Kearney. Park needs in the community include both active and passive recreation. A balance of nature and recreation is the vision of Kearney's future park and open space system.

Parks are an important part of life in Kearney. The park system includes such signature facilities as Harmon Park and Cottonmill park, two facilities which rank high on the city's list of its major attractions and resources. Kearney's lighthouse logo is derived from the lighthouse in Harmon Park. A well-managed system of parks of all sizes and a complete recreational program are equally fundamental to life in the city. Its regional recreation facilities are also attracting increased regional and national attention. The annual migration of the sandhill cranes has become a major tourist attraction and has acquainted people from around the country with the unique characteristics of the Platte River environment.

Park System Master Planning: A Process of Added Value

Parks and natural resources within a community have both economic and humanistic attributes. They add value to the community enhancing both the experience of living and the value of property in the community. Parks can be major determinants in the stabilization of existing neighborhoods and the development of high quality new residential settings. Studies find that a high quality, diverse recreational system ranks second only to the educational system in attracting new residents to a community. Kearney's park and natural resource system should be integrated into the city's development pattern and should provide recreational opportunities for all citizens.

PARK SYSTEM VISION AND GOALS

Communities often view the development of park facilities or the preservation of natural open spaces for the public as secondary to the construction of residential or commercial neighborhoods. Parks and open space are thought to be less important because they are wrongly perceived as not contributing to producing tax revenue. In reality, parks and natural resources within a community are both economic and humanistic attributes. Parks enhance real estate values, which directly increase tax revenues. The phrase "quality of life" so often mentioned by Kearney residents as their community's primary asset originates from their appreciation of parks and nature. A quality park and open space plan encourages a balance in the emphasis of a community's development. Indeed, the city's park system is intertwined with all aspects of the vision that will create a city that continues to lead other communities.

This park element will become a policy making tool to ensure the logical and systematic development of Kearney's parks. A subsequent benefit from this systematic development policy will be more efficient, less costly maintenance and operations. The plan sets priorities for the expenditure of capital funds to eliminate potential duplication. As a result, the City's park system will meet the needs of its community, enhance the "quality of life" already known in Kearney, and be efficiently managed and operated.

A Quality Park System

Kearney's park facilities are relatively evenly distributed, meeting the needs of the majority of the public. Some undeveloped natural areas, such as the wetlands corridor along the North Channel of the Platte River, still remain, providing opportunities for future expansion of the open space network.

Kearney's system includes heavily used neighborhood parks, such as Pioneer Park and Dryden Park. Collins Park is an ideal example of a neighborhood park working in concert with an elementary school. Ted Baldwin Park and Harvey Park are ideally located to serve the growing northwest and northeast portions of the city. Some larger facilities, such as Centennial and Harvey Parks provide key active recreation sites. Harmon Park is a superb example of

PARK SYSTEM VISION AND GOALS

a traditional park that has become in many ways a symbol of its community. In addition, the city is beginning development of a significant trail system; its trail along the NPPD canal is an excellent example of an inter-agency partnership to make multiple use of a utility corridor. These diverse facilities serve a variety of recreational and open space needs in the city.

In spite of this overall excellence, some gaps in service exist. In some cases, growth has outpaced park development, causing crowding of facilities and intense active recreation. Recreational deficiencies also exist in the southeast and southwest portions of the city. In common with many park systems, the demands of active recreation tend to reduce the amount of area available for multi-use, unstructured open space. Finally, new population and housing growth will increase demand for new neighborhood parks.

A Vision: Greenways and Boulevards

With strategic enhancements, Kearney's park system will provide for the present and future needs of the city's population. However, the City's vision of its parks and open space system can be even greater. Kearney's park system can become a network of greenways, and boulevards that touches all parts of the community and provides the glue that unites its neighborhoods. It will provide for active recreation, as well as passive recreation, and appreciation of the environment.

This greenway and boulevard system can distinguish Kearney with a feature that makes the city a model for quality urban development. It can improve the design quality of the city and improve the mobility of residents around the city and among activity centers.

Goals for the Park System

To enhance its excellent facilities and distinguish itself as the area's leading metropolitan community, Kearney should:

■ **CREATE A LINKED PARK NETWORK OF GREENWAYS AND BOULEVARDS THAT CONNECT OPEN SPACES, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND ACTIVITY CENTERS.**

PARK SYSTEM VISION AND GOALS

Such a network can help define the growing city and provides convenient access to its park and open space resources. Tying Kearney's parks into an overall network of open spaces connected by trails, greenways and boulevards is a major element of the Kearney Plan. In this way, the city's present and future parks work together as one system, providing unique resources that at the same time are accessible to all parts of the city. The greenway helps to merge the concepts of recreation and neighborhood, by making the park system part of every residential area. It also assures that unique facilities, like UNK and the Harmon Park swimming pool, are linked to all parts of the community.

Such a system also has important recreational benefits. According to the President's Commission on the Outdoors, eighty-eight percent (88%) of the American population participates in walking, bicycling, or jogging as a principal form of recreation. The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) reveals that bicycling has the widest participation of any form of active outdoor recreation in Nebraska. The configuration of the city's open spaces, including the Kearney power canal and the North Channel Platte River corridors, make the evolution of a linked system particularly feasible.

■ Maximize use of the existing park system by capitalizing on under-utilized resources.

Kearney has a number of special natural areas that provide resources for passive recreational activities or nature preservation. These types of areas should be incorporated into the park system to provide a balance of recreational opportunities. For example, Oldfather Prairie has been purchased and incorporated into Cottonmill Park. Some existing parks also could incorporate more passive activities into the current park uses.

■ PROVIDE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO SERVE FUTURE HOUSING, BUT MEET THOSE NEEDS OF NEW NEIGHBORHOODS WITHOUT OVERLAP.

Kearney should provide neighborhood parks in growth areas, as well as other recreational experiences, such as nature interpretation, resource conservation, trail systems,

PARK SYSTEM VISION AND GOALS

and other passive activities. Active residential growth will occur over the next twenty years in each of the city's quadrants. Since neighborhood parks are the foundation of Kearney's park system, it is vitally important to set aside quality park land during the planning stages of new residential developments. Planning of these neighborhood park spaces should ensure safe, convenient, and desirable pedestrian access from neighborhoods to parks. In addition, parks should fit within the framework of the greenway concept.

■ DISTRIBUTE ACTIVE RECREATION USE ACROSS THE GEOGRAPHICAL AREA OF THE CITY, GUARDING AGAINST OVER-CONCENTRATION OF PARK RESOURCES IN ANY QUADRANT OF THE CITY.

Currently, active recreation is concentrated in the north part of the city, although Centennial Park provides an important recreation site in Southwest Kearney. Ultimately, Kearney's ability to ensure balanced growth requires a commitment to an equitable distribution of recreation and open space in each quadrant of the city. A more even geographical distribution of facilities can even support the objective of reducing cross-community traffic congestion.

■ ENSURE THAT ALL PLAY EQUIPMENT AND PUBLIC FACILITIES ARE INSTALLED AND MAINTAINED TO PROVIDE FULL ACCESSIBILITY IN COMPLIANCE WITH THE AMERICANS WITH DISABILITIES ACT.

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) governs all public facilities to ensure accessibility. Specifically, park and playground equipment must provide an "equal opportunity" for play. Not every component of each play structure must be accessible, but the city must ensure that disabled people can participate in each of the recreational activities being provided.

■ MINIMIZE CITY LIABILITY AND ENSURE PUBLIC SAFETY THROUGH PROPER INSTALLATION AND MAINTENANCE OF PLAY EQUIPMENT.

Kearney has done an excellent job of maintaining its aging play equipment and is in the process of replacing many of

PARK SYSTEM VISION AND GOALS

its older structures. The City should anticipate future increased use, and should continue to budget for the replacement of specific play equipment as recommended by this plan.

■ CAPITALIZE ON THE REGIONAL RECREATION AMENITIES OF THE PLATTE RIVER VALLEY, ITS NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND ITS UNIQUE WILDLIFE HABITATS.

The Platte River represents a key source of water and recreation for central Nebraska residents. Kearney lies in a strategic location along the Platte River near the Rainwater Basin, a favored wildlife migratory flyway for sandhill cranes, herons and other species. Area streams, lakes and habitats offer exceptional fishing and hunting opportunities as well. These recreational resources attract visitors, tourists, and residents to Kearney. In the future, the city should link its own greenway system to these regional features. In this way, Kearney can reinforce its image as a setting for living in the midst of a vast outdoor "playground."

■ BALANCE ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATION OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL PEOPLE OF KEARNEY.

The City should reestablish a balance between active and passive recreation, with a re-emphasis on creating new passive recreational use areas. These areas should be designated within both existing and future parks, and building a more balanced system and harmony among users.

■ USE PARKS AND OPEN SPACES TO ENCOURAGE NEIGHBORHOOD REINVESTMENT AND TO HELP TO DEFINE KEARNEY'S URBAN FORM.

Parks and open spaces can help to provide structure for a growing community. In traditional towns, the green or commons was a focus for both civic life and community amenity. Park development can have equal value for contemporary development, adding a public aspect to life in new residential areas.

PARK ANALYSIS AND NEEDS

Parks and Recreation Facility Analysis

This section examines the city's park and recreation system and includes all city-owned and operated recreational areas. Tables 5-1 and 5-2 summarize the parks and facilities included in this evaluation. The accompanying map locates the city's current parks and recreation areas, and provides a basis for the recommended park improvement program in this plan.

Facilities are evaluated in four ways:

- *Facilities by Classification.* Parks are classified into different categories to determine the level and area they should serve.
- *Facilities Relating to Overall Population Service Standards.*
- *Geographical Distribution.* The service radius of each facility is analyzed to identify geographical gaps in service.
- *Park inventory and assessment.* Improvement needs are noted for each city-owned park.

Facilities by Classification

In order to systemically analyze the park system, the major recreation and open space areas are classified as follows:

Overall Open Space: Kearney's public park system contains approximately 275 acres (excluding Meadowlark Hills Golf Course). Standards published by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) indicate a current requirement for 375 acres in Kearney. Therefore, the city's park facilities are about 100 acres below national standards. To serve its twenty-year future population, Kearney will have a need for about 200 acres of additional open space during the next 20 years.

Neighborhood Parks: This category includes parks that contain play areas and community open space and serve immediate neighborhood areas. Such parks often contain areas for both active and passive uses such as field games, court games, play equipment, and picnicking. The maximum service radius is usually 1/4 to 1/2 mile.

PARK CLASSIFICATION • POPULATION STANDARDS

Neighborhood parks often contain areas for both active and passive uses and contain between 2 and 10 acres. Kearney's five neighborhood parks contain about 28.7 acres of land. National standards suggest a current need for 50 acres of neighborhood park space and a 20-year need for 62.5 acres.

Community Parks: These include areas of diverse use and environmental quality. Such parks often include areas suited for intense recreational facilities, such as athletic complexes and may also provide places of natural quality for passive uses such as picnicking, walking /jogging, sitting, or viewing. Such parks contain between 10 and 50 acres and serve a variety of needs. The typical service radius of a community park is approximately 1 to 2 miles. Kearney's five community parks contain about 106 acres of land, compared with a current need for 87.5 acres of community park space and a 20-year need for 108.5 acres.

Regional Parks. Cottonmill Park, with 140 acres, is categorized as a regional park and includes a variety of specialized facilities, including limited camping for groups on a reservation basis, lake recreation, and an amphitheater. Cottonmill Park is in the middle of a major improvement program that will secure its future as a key regional recreational facility. Elements of this program include:

- Expansion of the Cottonmill Park Nature Barn.
- Cottonmill Lake renovation, including sediment removal, shoreline stabilization, construction of a fishing jetty, and installation of a new inlet and filtered intake manifold under the sand in the canal.
- Restoration of a wetlands in an area between the dam and original canal.

Facilities in Relation to Population Service Standards

An evaluation of the community's recreational facilities based on quantitative national and state standards leads to the following conclusions:

- Kearney generally meets national and state standards for:
 - Adult softball.
 - Little League and competitive baseball.
 - Tennis.

PARK DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

- Basketball.
- Golf.
- Kearney exceeds national and state standards for:
 - Soccer facilities.
 - Swimming pools.
 - Golf.
- Kearney experiences a deficit for:
 - Neighborhood playgrounds.
 - Outdoor public volleyball.
- With population growth, the city will experience a need for additional:
 - Baseball and softball facilities.
 - Tennis facilities.

As development proceeds, the city must require quality land to be set aside for future neighborhood parks. In addition, the city must provide a system of trails to link new subdivisions with other recreational opportunities in the city. Table 5-3 relates the city's facilities to its served population.

Facilities by Geographical Distribution

In order to assess park and recreation service to geographic areas, Kearney's system was evaluated by "service quadrants," using 2nd Avenue and the UP as the axes of the quadrants. It is important to note that these service quadrants do not have equal populations. As a result, actual park service requirements will be different for each area. This assessment leads to the following findings:

- *Northeast Service Quadrant*
 - Good distribution of park facilities.
 - Need for additional neighborhood park development with northeast growth.
- *Northwest Service Quadrant*
 - Good distribution of park facilities.

PARK DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

- Small service gap north of the Country Club.
- Need for additional neighborhood park development with northwest growth.

- *Southwest Service Quadrant*

- Good distribution of park facilities.
- Trail system will provide direct linkages to Cottonmill Park and North Channel.
- Need for additional neighborhood park development with southwest growth.

- *Southeast Service Quadrant*

- Deficit of neighborhood and community park service.
- Park development and linkage is a priority to encourage further development efforts. A new southeast park helps to fill this need.

Major Park Development Issues

In general, Kearney's park system is exceedingly well-managed and is in excellent physical condition. Major park development issues resulting from the analysis of the park system include the following:

- *Grouping of active recreational areas, such as competition ballfields, into central facilities separated from neighborhood parks.* Active recreational facilities, such as league baseball or softball fields, bring traffic, lights, and noise into neighborhoods. Often, these parks have inadequate parking and support facilities. These problems can be remedied by developing central facilities for competitive play, reserving neighborhood facilities for local use.
- *Incremental upgrading of existing park facilities.* Typical projects include upgrading of playground facilities and improvement of site landscaping.
- *Updating of city pool facilities with state-of-the-art features, including zero-depth entry.* Contemporary practice in water recreation has moved away from a "competition tank" to facilities with leisure park features, as well as improved accessibility for disabled people. The area may also provide an opportunity for private development of a regional water park.

PARK DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

TABLE 5-1: Major Recreation Facilities in Kearney

Criterion	Recreation Facilities									
<u>Public Parks</u>	Area (Acres)	Picnic Shelters	Baseball	Softball	Basketball	Soccer Fields	Tennis Courts	Pools	Volleyball	Play Areas
Apollo Park	3.7	0	0	0	4	0	4	0	0	0
Centennial Park	11.7	1		1	1	1	2	1	1	1
Collins Park	6.2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Cottonmill Park	140.0	2	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
Dryden Park	7.1	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Harmon Park	21.1	2	1	0	1	0	4	1	1	3
Harvey Park	27.5	1	1	3	1	7	4	0	0	2
Meadowlark Hills Golf Course	150.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Memorial Park	12.0	0	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Pioneer Park	2.1	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
West Lincolnway Park	9.6	0	2	2	0	6	0	0	0	1
Ted Baldwin Park	34.0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1
Southeast Park	3.0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	398.0	8	7	6	10	19	14	3	3	14

TABLE 5-2: Park and Recreation Services Related to Population

Criterion	Standard	Existing Facility	Comments
Total Park Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 acres per 1,000 population. • Current Need: 375 acres • Projected Need: 465 acres 	Public Park: 275 acres not including Meadowbrook Golf Course	Kearney exceeds current standards for parkland. Future population growth will require an additional 67 acres to meet national standards.
Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 acres per 1,000 population. • Area of less than 10 acres • Current need: 50 acres • Projected need: 62 acres 	Kearney has about 32 acres of parkland that have characteristics of neighborhood parks. Several larger parks also provide neighborhood park functions.	Because larger parks also serve neighborhood park functions, Kearney currently provides an adequate level of neighborhood park service. Geographically, service is least adequate in the Southeast Kearney neighborhood. Future development will require dedication of additional neighborhood parks.
Community Parks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3.5 acres per 1,000 population. • Area between 10 and 50 acres • Current need: 88 acres • Projected need: 109 acres 	Kearney has 106 acres of community parks.	Kearney meets national standards for community parks. Its current acreage also comes close to meeting future needs. Geographically, Kearney should provide additional community park service for the Southeast neighborhood and for newly developing areas.
Swimming Pools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 50-meter pool per 20,000 population. • 1 25-yard pool per 10,000 population. • Current need: 2 pools • Projected need: 3 pools 	2 outdoor pools	The number of existing facilities is adequate to satisfy current requirements. One additional pool may be required to meet future growth requirements.

Sources: *Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan*, Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, 1973.
Urban Land, Vol. 20, No. 5, Urban Land Institute.
National Park, Recreation, and Open Space Standards, National Recreation and Park Association, 1971.

TABLE 5-2: Park and Recreation Services Related to Population

Criterion	Standard	Existing Facility	Comments
Baseball Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 diamond per 6,000 population. • Current need: 4-5 diamonds • Projected need: 5-6 diamonds 	7 diamonds	Kearney is adequately served by baseball fields. However, ballfields include use of diamonds within neighborhood parks. In addition, the system lack baseball practice areas
Softball Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 diamond per 3,000 population. • Current need: 8 diamonds • Projected need: 10 diamonds 	6 diamonds	Kearney requires 2 additional softball diamonds to accommodate current demands and 4 to meet future projections.
Tennis Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 court per 2,000 population. • Current need: 13 courts • Projected need: 16 courts 	14 courts. Six courts are judged to be in standard playing condition.	Kearney has enough tennis courts for current needs. However, eight courts are either unplayable or require major renovation. In addition, future population demands will require two additional courts.
Golf Courses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 18-hole course per 25,000 population 	1 public course	Kearney's 18-hole Meadowlark Golf Course serves current needs.
Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 area per 2,000 population. • Current need: 13 playgrounds • Projected need: 16 playgrounds 	14 playgrounds	Kearney is adequately served by playground areas for current needs. Additional playgrounds will be required in new neighborhood/community parks to accommodate future population.
Soccer Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 field per 10,000 population. • Current need: 3 fields • Projected need: 4 fields 	19 fields	Kearney has a plentiful supply of soccer facilities, making it a major regional center for the sport. However, the number of soccer participants continues to grow, placing pressure on existing fields and requiring additional game and practice fields.
Criterion	Standard	Existing Facility	Comments

TABLE 5-2: Park and Recreation Services Related to Population

Football Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 field per 20,000 population. 	1 field each at Kearney High School, Kearney Catholic High School, and UNK	Kearney is adequately served by football fields.
Basketball Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 court per 5,000 population. • Current need: 5 courts • Projected need: 7 courts. 	10 courts	Kearney is adequately served by basketball courts.
Running Track	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 track per 20,000 population. 	1 track each at Kearney High School, Kearney Catholic High School, and UNK	Kearney is adequately served by running tracks.
Ice Hockey	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor: 1 per 100,000 population. • Outdoor: depends upon climate. 	No outdoor ice hockey facilities exist in Kearney.	An indoor or outdoor ice facility is emerging as a need for the city.
Volleyball	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 court per 5,000 population. • Current need: 5 courts • Projected need: 6-7 courts 	3 courts	Kearney needs 2 additional volleyball courts to meet current needs and 3-4 courts to meet long-term needs.
Picnic Shelters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 shelter per 2000 population. • Current need: 13 shelters 	8 shelters	Kearney should develop additional picnic facilities with shelters. About 5 new facilities are needed.
Recreational Trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 trail system per community/region. • Based on standards, Kearney requires a local trail with links to a regional trail system 	Trails/paths exist within municipal parks. An unpaved trail exists along the Kearney Canal from UNK to Cottonmill Park. This trail is scheduled for paving in 1997. Phase 2, extending from UNK south along the tailrace and along the North Channel of the Platte River has received funding from ISTEA Enhancements. Phase 3 will extend the North Channel Trail to the Fort Kearney Hike and Bike Trail.	The Cottonmill/Fort Kearney Trail system will provide a major regional recreational facility.

PARK DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

- *Equitable open space service in Southeast Kearney and development of neighborhood parks as part of new residential growth.* Southeast Kearney's only developed open space is Collins Park.
- *Evolution of a trails and greenway system to connect existing and future parks.* The first major link in this system is the Cottonmill Trail, extending along the NPPD Canal between the UNK campus and Cottonmill Park. A 1996 ISTEA grant will permit the improvement of this trail and its extension south along the tailrace to the North Channel of the Platte and along the North Channel to the Ramada Convention Center. However, additional links and the emergence of multi-use transportation and public space corridors will help to create a comprehensive greenway system for Kearney.
- *Replacement of the Harmon Youth Center.* This facility in Harmon Park provides meeting and program areas for a number of youth groups in the city. The condition of the building suggests that replacement by a new structure is the most economical alternative.
- *Use of park and open space amenities to support other community development and neighborhood revitalization efforts.* This strategy views park facilities as major amenities that support other neighborhood development efforts.

Kearney's excellent park system should continue to be one of the city's greatest future growth assets.

This section presents strategies designed to maintain Kearney's park system as a leading community features. The overall concept:

- Envisions a linked park system, molding Kearney's open space system into a green network that unites the community and makes each major park the territory of everyone in the city.
- Allows the park system to grow with the community.
- Proposes two new centers for active recreation, which are integrated into a greenway system and allow neighborhood parks to be returned to neighborhood use.
- Links Kearney's park system into a regional recreation network.

The components of this program include:

- GREEN NETWORK
- PARKSITE ENHANCEMENTS
- GREENWAY ACCESS TO MAJOR COMMUNITY FEATURES
- NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS IN GROWTH CENTERS
- JOINT USE SCHOOL SITES
- MAJOR RECREATION CENTERS
- YOUTH CENTER REPLACEMENT
- SOUTHEAST PARKS
- REGIONAL FORT KEARNY TRAIL

GREEN NETWORK

KEARNEY'S PARK SYSTEM SHOULD BE A NETWORK OF PARKS, CONNECTED BY CONTINUOUS GREEN CORRIDORS DEFINED BY TRAILS, GREENWAYS, BOULEVARDS, AND CIVIC STREETS.

A linked greenway system merges parks and open spaces into all parts of the life and development of the city. It expands the use of the park system beyond individual service areas to encompass the entire city. The components of Kearney's Green Network will include its existing and future parks, and major linear open space links, such as

trails, boulevards and parkways, and civic streets. Major green space linkages will include:

- The proposed boulevard and parkway system. This system should feature extensive street landscaping between curb and trail, and a trail paralleling the roadway. It should also include benches, street furniture, and special signage.
- The Cottonmill Trail, linking Cottonmill Lake with Lake Kearney, the UNK Campus, and the North Channel of the Platte River.
- A North Channel Greenway, extending along the North Channel of the Platte River between 30th Avenue and the Fort Kearny Hike/Bike Bridge.
- A Union Pacific Trail, following the Union Pacific right-of-way along Railroad Street between the Cottonmill Trail and Kearney Centre.
- A 45th Street Connector between Harvey Park and 2nd Avenue.
- Off-street trails paralleling major transportation improvements, most notably the south and west links of the Inner Beltway.
- Designated on-street links with good pedestrian and bicycle accommodations.

The Park and Greenway System Plan illustrates this open space network, designed to link most neighborhoods and features of the city together.

PARKSITE ENHANCEMENTS

KEARNEY SHOULD IMPLEMENT A REGULARLY BUDGETED, INCREMENTAL PROGRAM OF PARK SITE IMPROVEMENTS AT ITS EXISTING PARKS

Continued investment in Kearney's existing park system will maintain its status as a major community asset. The parksite enhancement program is an incremental process, based on a needs assessment completed by the city's Parks Department. Recommendations for park facility development follow:

- *Apollo Park*
 - Improve paving and plant shade trees at Veteran's Memorial.

- Tennis court resurfacing.
- Development of an outdoor ice skating area.
- Development of a specific facility for roller hockey.
- Upgrading of rest rooms to ADA standards.

- *Centennial Park*

- Completion of a comprehensive development plan for the park.
- Redevelop park as a Community Green, emphasizing neighborhood uses and providing improved landscaping, shelters and park structures, and multi-use open space.
- Possible relocation of competition ballfield to a new recreational complex. In the short term, backstop replacement at the existing field.
- Swimming pool rehabilitation. Possible upgrade swimming pool and bath house to design themes consistent with the Community Green concept.

- *Collins Park*

- Development of a consolidated restroom, concession, and storage building, providing accessible rest rooms. This project is scheduled for completion during 1996-97.
- Removal of existing storage building.
- Plant additional trees to enclose southwest area of park and introduce autumn color.

- *Cottonmill Park*

- Complete Cottonmill Lake restoration project, under construction in 1997. Elements of the project include:

- § Sediment removal and increasing depth of lake. About 20% of the lake will be 12 feet or deeper.

- § Development of islands.

- § Shoreline stabilization.

- § Construction of a fishing jetty.

- § Installation of a new inlet with intake manifold to decrease future sedimentation.

- Develop Cottonmill Park as a "bicycle-accessible fishery" linked into the city's trail system.
- Restore wetlands between the dam and the original canal.
- Upgrade restrooms to ADA standards.

- Develop a consolidated shower/ restroom /concession building.
- Complete enhancement program for playground areas.
- Develop internal pedestrian system, including a wetlands interpretive trail now in progress and paved paths linking major elements of the park.

- *Dryden Park*

- Develop new park building consolidating ADA compliant rest rooms, concessions, and storage.
- Install new ball field lighting.
- Develop paths to connect main park features.
- Install an irrigation system.

- *Harmon Park*

- Replace the Harmon Park Youth Center.
- Maintain park's historic character.
- Install new ball field lighting.
- Develop an improved tennis center by replacing four existing courts, developing four new courts, and developing a consolidated restroom /concession structure.
- Rehabilitate the Lily Pond area.

- *Harvey Park*

- Carry out a ball field complex improvement project if a new west Kearney sports complex is not completed.
- Elements include:

§ Improved outfield drainage.

§ New outfield fences with 12-foot height.

§ Hard-surfacing the ballfield complex hub area.

- Upgrade restroom to ADA standards.
- Develop a sand volleyball court.
- Replace tennis courts, installing an improved sub-base.
- Develop new path system and links to proposed city greenway system.

- *Memorial Park*

- Improve site landscaping with shade trees and other features.

- Install wing extensions to bleachers, adding about 500 seats.

- Consider Memorial Park as site for new Youth Center.

- *Pioneer Park*

- Upgrade rest rooms to ADA standards.

- Install irrigation system.

- *West Lincolnway Park*

- Provide path to playground.

- Landscape for shade, buffering, and perimeter definition.

- *Cemetery*

- Expand flat stone area.

GREENWAY ACCESS TO COMMUNITY FEATURES

MAJOR COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTERS SHOULD HAVE PEDESTRIAN CONNECTIONS TO THE GREENWAY SYSTEM.

Kearney's park and greenway system should not be separate from other elements of community life. Instead, it should suffuse the entire community and be constantly in use and evidence. The open space system is a major structuring element of the city.

In order to reinforce its role as a major community resource, the greenway and park system should provide a secondary transportation connection to major community facilities, such as retail centers. Therefore, nearby links in the greenway system should have pedestrian connections to these major centers. In addition, new projects should be designed to incorporate and encourage pedestrian and bicycle access. Thus, site plan review and zoning regulations governing the development of new projects should encourage or require good pedestrian and bicycle connections when nearby trail or greenway links are available.

An example of this pattern is proposed at the 56th and 2nd Avenue commercial node. Greenway links should be included in the design of projects to provide a connection

between the circumferential boulevard and commercial projects within the service road loop.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS IN GROWTH CENTERS

KEARNEY SHOULD DEVELOP NEW NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS IN GROWTH AREAS. THESE PARKS SHOULD DEVELOP AS NODES ALONG THE GREENWAY SYSTEM.

New residential development should include reservation of new park ground to accommodate continuing neighborhood needs. This ongoing acquisition will be important to maintain the city's level of park system. However, parks must be carefully located to provide maximum use and amenity. Thus, parks hidden within the interior of neighborhoods have little public exposure and tend to serve a small local area. In addition, parks should be located on sites that are best for park use, not worst for residential or commercial use.

In developing areas of Kearney, new parks should be adjacent to segments of the greenway system, thereby extending their service areas and accessibility. Safe access to parks from wider areas, afforded by trail connections, reduces the amount of new park land that will be required. In addition, parks with street exposure reinforce the quality of the public environment, creating neighborhoods that repeat the civility and public life of traditional neighborhoods. Thus, the land use plan associates lands proposed for park development with the circumferential boulevard, creating the sense of green "rooms" along a major community corridor.

In order to finance acquisition of appropriately sized parks, Kearney should establish a park acquisition fund, financed along with new subdivision development. This acquisition fund, administered through the city's subdivision process, establishes a per lot assessment, based on the incremental demand for park land generated by each unit. For example, NRPA standards project 15 acres of park land for each 1,000 residents, or .015 acres per person. If the average single-family unit in Kearney accommodates 2.5 people, each unit produces a demand for .0375 acres of park land. Thus, each subdivision would contribute sufficient funds to purchase .0375 acres per unit, placed in a fund to purchase park land

that serves that specific subdivision. If the subdivision is located in an area that contains a location planned for a neighborhood park, a land dedication may act in lieu of the park assessment. If the city requires additional land in that subdivision for parks, the owner would be paid for that land from the park acquisition fund.

This program can provide adequate funding to acquire parks that are large enough for multiple uses and make a significant impact in their communities. In addition, a park system made of connected, larger parks is more efficient to maintain than a system made of more small disconnected parks. A "benefit fee" approach to park financing must trace expenditures to the direct benefit of those areas that are paying the fee.

JOINT USE SCHOOL SITES

KEARNEY SHOULD CONTINUE ITS POLICY OF IDENTIFYING JOINT SCHOOL/PARK OPPORTUNITIES AT NEW SCHOOL SITES.

As Kearney grows and needs additional school sites for an expanding population, the school district and parks department should continue to cooperate to identify joint use opportunities for park and recreational development. This policy is being implemented at two new school sites serving the Northeast Kearney growth center. These include:

- *Meadowlark Elementary School.* The Parks Department has asked the School District to landbank the property at this site for future park development. One future alternative may be use of this site for a northeast swimming pool.
- *Middle School site at 45th and Avenue N.* This future school site should be developed as a twin to West Lincolnway Park, providing a ballfield center. Four ballfields here should accommodate Senior, Junior, and Little Leagues, as well as general play. This would permit conversion of the ballfield at Dryden Park to general play.

New school sites should similarly follow a joint development strategy. School sites should also be selected which have a relationship to the city's proposed greenway system.

NEW RECREATION CENTERS

KEARNEY SHOULD DEVELOP OR ENCOURAGE NEW CENTERS FOR ACTIVE RECREATION, INCLUDING A NEW WEST SPORTS COMPLEX.

Two issues emerge from an analysis of Kearney's park system that involve the development of significant facilities:

- The need to consolidate competition facilities that attract substantial traffic out of neighborhood parks.
- The need to accommodate new recreational demands and program needs.

A new sports complex would permit relocation of competition fields in neighborhood parks and eliminate local traffic, parking, and security problems. This facility would include a major baseball/softball center with support features, including adequate parking, concessions, participant services and stands. A new facility should be linked to the greenway system and provide good adequate parking and auto access. An excellent location for such a facility is on state-owned property southwest of 30th Avenue and Highway 30, providing links to all parts of the city and adjacent to the Cottonmill Trail.

Other potential recreational projects include development of a three hole golf learning center on former landfill property north of the existing Meadowlark Hills Golf Course; and a sporting clays range.

In addition, Kearney should encourage private development of regional facilities for both residents and visitors. Potential private development may include unique facilities that are not found elsewhere in the region, including an indoor ice rink. In addition, locations such as the former DX sand pits north of I-80 and west of 2nd Avenue could provide sites for additional water and other recreation. This site has excellent highway visibility, is adjacent to the North Channel Trail, and has excellent access to hotels and convention facilities.

YOUTH CENTER REPLACEMENT

KEARNEY SHOULD REPLACE THE EXISTING HARMON PARK YOUTH CENTER WITH A NEW FACILITY IN THE SAME GENERAL AREA.

The Harmon Park Youth Center is a unique public facility, providing accommodations for youth group meetings and programming. The center is located in Harmon Park, central to most parts of the city and integrated into the proposed greenway system. However, the building is experiencing significant deterioration and obsolescence, and requires replacement.

Kearney should program the replacement of the Youth Center. Development of a detailed architectural program should involve both the city and user groups. However, basic facility needs will require about an 8,000 square foot facility, including a large multi-purpose room as well as smaller meeting and program spaces. The multi-purpose room may have joint use potential as a mini-gym.

The Youth Center's location should remain in the current central park complex formed by Harmon, Memorial, and Apollo Parks. A site within Memorial Park may lend itself to the new facility.

SOUTHEAST PARKS

KEARNEY SHOULD DEVELOP A COMMUNITY PARK FACILITIES TO SERVE SOUTHEAST KEARNEY. THESE FACILITIES SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.

While Kearney's parks are relatively well distributed around the community, Southeast Kearney has a deficit of park service. Its only park facility is Collins Park, a 6.2 acre space at 16th Street and Avenue E.

The city should pursue two major opportunities to upgrade park facilities for Southeast Kearney:

- An existing three-acre site southeast of Collins Park. This semi-developed site should be improved according to a park development plan as a neighborhood park. Facilities should

include a playground, multi-use open space, landscaping, park shelter and rest rooms. The park should be designed largely for neighborhood use, and should be designed and programmed with the assistance of the surrounding neighborhood.

- The use of land in public ownership near Avenue M on the North Channel of the Platte River. This area should develop as a natural park featuring opportunities for passive recreation, multi-use open space, nature study and interpretation, picnicking, and paths. It should be connected to the North Channel trail between Fort Kearny and Cottonmill Lake; it should also connect to the rest of the Kearney urban greenway system, utilizing the Avenue M drainageway as a connecting corridor.

FORT KEARNEY TRAIL

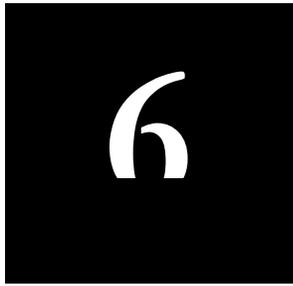
KEARNEY'S GREEN NETWORK SHOULD BE LINKED TO A REGIONAL TRAIL, CONNECTING TO THE EXISTING FORT KEARNEY TRAIL TO THE STATE RECREATION AREA.

The Kearney area has become increasingly noted as a regional recreation and nature study resource. The Platte Valley provides Kearney with some of its most important and evocative tourist attractions, including sandhill crane observation areas, Fort Kearny State Historical Park, and the state recreation area. The Fort Kearny Hike and Bike Trail and Bridge, a 1.8 mile rail-trail that extends north from Fort Kearny State Recreation Area across the Platte River to Interstate 80, has proved particularly popular, especially during the crane season.

Kearney's greenway system should be linked to the north end of the existing Fort Kearny hike and bike bridge by trail development along the North Channel of the Platte River. This trail provides excellent opportunities for natural and historical interpretation. It also links the city to the cross-country American Discovery Trail, the route of which in Nebraska runs from Omaha to the Colorado border near Big Springs. Nationally, the ADT route crosses the country, from Cape Henlopen, Delaware to Point Reyes, California. Ultimately, the Platte Channel Trail should continue eastward through Basswood Strip State Wildlife

Management Area to Windmill State Recreation Area near Gibbon. This would provide a major regional recreational resource that would augment Kearney's other visitor attractions, and would provide a good alternative to auto traffic during peak park visitation seasons.

The North Channel Trail, extended to 30th Avenue, could also encompass two state lakes in borrow pits just north of Interstate 80. These lake areas can provide important active and passive recreation for both local residents and travelers. Trail spurs from the North Channel Trail can link these potential recreation areas into the regional trail system.



QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES

ASSESSMENT OF INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

Kearney should renew its physical infrastructure to conserve its present resources, maintain quality services, and build value for the future.

Kearney capital facilities represent major community investments. Municipal utilities, infrastructure, and streets and sidewalks represent large capital assets which must perform in response to community needs. Residents' satisfaction with their community is tied closely to their experiences and perceptions of these basic resources.

This element of the Kearney Plan evaluates operation of public facilities and infrastructure and assesses their physical condition. It suggests policies and actions which: protect and improve capital facility investment through systematic maintenance, preserve viable existing infrastructure, and develop new facilities to serve the needs and convenience of residents.

Earlier sections of the Kearney Plan identified projects intended to support quality of life, visitor and tourism services. These projects will strengthen Kearney's historic resources, recreation potential, and business climate when supported by strong public facilities and enable the city to offer good quality public services during the next century.

A successful community development strategy requires continued investment in the city's public service systems. Citizens generally support these investments if they are shown to be necessary and cost-efficient. In an era of limited financial resources and growing capital needs, projects that will obtain the broadest community support will be those which also fulfill strategic improvement objectives, and help to implement the vision for the future of the Kearney.

This section presents the goals which will be accomplished through the theme of providing quality public services and facilities. In continuing to provide good municipal service to its taxpayers and users, Kearney should:

■ ASSURE THAT UTILITIES SYSTEMS CAN MEET CAPACITY AND ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY DEMANDS.

People in every community expect good performance from their water, sewer and drainage systems. Kearney is free from many of the environmental quality problems that affect large cities. Clean, high quality drinking water and pollution control are important local issues.

The City recently rehabilitated its water supply facilities, added six wells in 1992, and is carrying out a water system facility plan that will define capital improvement projects through 2016. It is now focusing attention on sanitary sewer interceptor lines and the treatment plant. A program of improvements is underway to meet federal treatment mandates and safeguard water quality in the streams that receive the city's wastewater. Upgrading these utility systems is consistent with Kearney's commitment to provide high quality services and support intelligent measures to protect the environment.

■ MAINTAIN THE QUALITY OF KEARNEY'S PUBLIC SERVICES IN THE MOST ECONOMICAL WAY POSSIBLE.

This section of the plan inventories and evaluates the city's major facilities, including:

- City Hall.
- Law Enforcement Center.
- Fire Station. Library.
- Public works and utilities maintenance facilities.
- Park maintenance and storage facilities.
- The city's infrastructure, including drainage, water system, solid waste disposal, and the sewage treatment plant. These public services facilities are very important to the future of Kearney, and the city's ability to maintain quality services and accept new development.

INFRASTRUCTURE AND PUBLIC FACILITIES

■ SEEK THE GREATEST POSSIBLE EFFICIENCIES IN THE DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION OF FACILITIES.

Infrastructure and public services costs can be minimized in many ways, including maintenance savings realized through efficient planning and programming. Savings frequently can occur through such techniques as facility sharing, consolidations, joint-use, the appropriate location of improvements, and budgeting for routine maintenance. Simply stated, the City of Kearney cannot afford redundancies in the development and operation of facilities or the provision of services. By avoiding duplication and encouraging inter-agency cooperation, the City can often enjoy increased quality and reduced costs. The public facilities plan will address these possibilities.

■ REHABILITATE AGING INFRASTRUCTURE TO MAINTAIN THE QUALITY SERVICE LEVELS EXPECTED BY RESIDENTS.

Kearney is similar to most communities in its need to reconstruct portions of its aging infrastructure. Infrastructure systems in Kearney which need particular attention include storm sewers, streets, sidewalks, and the sanitary sewer collection and treatment system. The city has already undertaken detailed survey and study work to assess the condition of these support facilities that are too often taken for granted. Kearney has implemented a comprehensive program to correct structural problems with these systems. It has also extended these infrastructure systems into newly developing areas. To successfully finance and implement these on-going projects will be one of the City's greatest challenges.

This section examines the current conditions of Kearney's vital infrastructure and public service system. It examines three basic components: the city's public facilities, those structures and resources which provide the home bases of major municipal operations; its infrastructure systems, including sanitary sewers, stormwater management, and water distribution systems.

Public Facilities

■ Inventory of Facilities

The City of Kearney owns buildings and structures that are used in meeting municipal responsibilities for public services. City Hall contains administrative offices for city management, finance, public works, and utility departments, and is located on the east edge of the city's traditional business district. Other downtown facilities include the library and police department. Other service and utility facilities are distributed around the city. The following discussion provides an inventory and evaluation of Kearney's public facilities. This assessment is based on existing conditions and potential community needs.

- *City Hall*

The municipal administration building faces 22nd Street, Downtown's most important street leading to 2nd Avenue. It has become an important anchor for the east end of the central business district. The two-level building contains administrative offices for the city. The upper level is accessible via an elevator, and contains the council chambers. City Hall has accessible rest rooms that meet standards of the recent federal Americans with Disabilities Act.

The building fulfills the city's present and expected space needs, largely due to the city's use of electronic mapping and information systems to meet growing space needs. Nonetheless, the next twenty years may require the city to accommodate more workstations for more employees. These pressures are already evident in the first floor operations of the utility department. The city should monitor these trends, and identify instances of operations that could be consolidated or relocated nearer to the sites most important to their operational responsibilities.

- *Police Department*

The Police Department is located in the Buffalo/Kearney Law Enforcement Center, along with the operations of the Buffalo County Sheriff, which operates joint dispatch and a jail near the Courthouse. The Law Enforcement building is located on the southeast edge of Downtown, and was initially built in 1948 as a regional electric utility headquarters. The structure was rehabilitated in 1993 and is in excellent condition. It has been designed to serve law enforcement space needs for the next twenty years.

Law enforcement operations in Kearney have been increasingly focused on "problem-oriented policing" by officers, as a key to preserving and maintain public perceptions of the high quality of life in the city. This decentralized approach empowers individual officers to take personalized service initiatives to respond to residents needs, whether focused on crime, traffic and parking, environmental health, abandoned vehicles, or animal control. The department has expanded the use of non-sworn people and "Volunteers in Policing" service workers in providing records-related services.

Providing direct police services is the fundamental task of police personnel, with cruiser-based citizen response most important. Kearney has an increasing proportion of youth and elderly residents, underlying a need for the capability to provide a direct, personal and comprehensive response to disturbances and the "fear" of crime.

Resources to implement this approach are based less on physical buildings than on new equipment to ensure officer mobility, communication and ready response. Mobile live data technology, which puts computer data terminals into cruisers and at the scene of disturbances, offers the optimal tool to fulfill the vision of the department. Accompanying this need is a need for staff training in information technology, to create an electronic network that organizes all data and records that drive the whole of the community's criminal justice system. This data technology will enable the department to surmount the huge support demand for interactive records, identification, evidence, and data processing. The cost of these technologies could exceed \$500,000, requiring a multi-year implementation of these tools. When this data system is operational, long term

staffing levels are expected to remain relatively constant. Few other capital needs are evident, except for on-going maintenance and replacement of the cruiser fleet. In a critical way, resources for the public works vehicle maintenance division are linked to the success of the police's community-based initiative. City shops must be given more staff support and space to ensure the reliability of police vehicles.

Supplemental facilities of the police department include the vehicle impound lot, located east of the building, and the police firing range, located along the North Channel of the Platte River west of the sanitary sewer treatment plant. Space needs for vehicle impound, cruiser parking and staging, and maintenance will increase during the next twenty years, and additional land must be acquired to meet future needs. Optimal vehicle staging and storage sites are located east of B Street, east of the present facility.

- *Fire District Station*

Fire protection services are based in a structure located on the block east of City Hall. Built in the 1970s, the fire station is a city-owned facility; the Suburban Fire Protection District #1 rents space for its trucks from the city. The jurisdiction of the fire companies covers more than 272 square miles, extending 11 miles west, 10 miles north, 2 miles south and east to Highway 10.

The city owns the Kearney building and its equipment. In addition, the rural district owns a small satellite building and equipment located far north of the city in Riverdale. While operational and geographic efficiencies could be obtained by the complete integration of the two fire services, Fire District #1 has a long history and tradition which is valued by its members. There have been measured efforts to discuss consolidating the rolling stock of the two fire services. The City of Kearney and the Suburban Fire Protection District #1 should cooperate to consolidate capital and operating costs, maintain a high level of service, and respond to the traditions of the district.

The Kearney Fire Station contains six bays, double loaded between the street and alley for through access. An additional service bay is provided from the alley. An adjoining building houses the offices of the volunteer fire

service organization, equipment and a large community meeting and training hall. The Fire Station is expected to meet the basic space needs of the department during the next twenty years.

The Fire Station's Downtown location provides ready access to all parts of the city. However, Kearney's outward physical growth and resultant traffic congestion has affected the rapid response times of the Fire District. Major, convenient, cross-town routes lead into neighborhoods to the east, north and south. By contrast, routes to the west lead to congestion at the 2nd Avenue intersections of 22nd and 25th Streets, which can increase response times to parts of Northwest Kearney beyond five minutes. Growth in traffic over the next twenty years will further erode the capacity of the district to quickly navigate these intersections.

A short-term alternative to construction of a northwest fire station involves implementing traffic control and management efforts to reduce congestion. This effort should begin with the installation of signaling devices at the 16th, 22nd, 25th, 31st, and 39th Street intersections of 2nd Avenue. Enhanced controlling devices should be installed on traffic signals, activated by equipment installed in key fire response vehicles operated by the Fire District. To date, the Nebraska Department of Roads has not agreed to installation of these devices. Equipment costs may approach \$5,000 per intersection, and \$2,000 per vehicle. The signal control program could reduce response times for all public safety agencies, including fire, police, sheriff, and Good Samaritan Hospital ambulance services, providing a basis for cost-sharing.

Even if traffic control improvements were installed, a need for a northwest fire station will exist, requiring site acquisition. The City should obtain a site for a new station in the approximate area of 30th Avenue and 39th Street for future development of a satellite equipment storage and response station after 2010. This site, located on the planned Inner Beltway, will be relatively free of localized congestion, and offers ready access to rural routes extending out from the city. Access to the west should be improved by a future extension of 39th Street west of 30th Avenue, around the north end of Cottonmill Lake.

- *Kearney Public Library and Information Center*

The Kearney Public Library is located in Kearney Centre on the southwest corner of 21st Street and 1st Avenue. The modern 22,800 square foot building was constructed in 1975 on the site of the city's former Carnegie library. Municipal off-street parking lots abut the building to the south and west, although access to the west lot is circuitously routed along a narrow one-way alley leading to 21st Street. This west lot is also in poor condition.

The Library is a comprehensive information center, providing traditional reading and reference materials (adult services, children's services, young adults), as well as substantial facilities for electronic media (CD-ROM collections, Nebraska@Online, Kearney Freenet, and the Internet, designed in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development as a local site for learning to access electronic information). Children's services support early education with computer youth workstations featuring interactive reading software. The library has recently automated its circulation and reference operations with the Ameritech automation system, which can generate user profile information to support decisions regarding collections and operations. The Ameritech system was funded by local and state contributions and a grant from the Peter Kiewit Foundation.

The library's Technology Learning Center was created with a grant from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, and provides an interactive video conference room and public access room to provide hands-on experience with computers, scanners and software. The library is expanding business data services with a CD-ROM investment database. The library's Kearney room is filled with historic and contemporary memorabilia, maps and reference data specific to Kearney and Buffalo County.

The library building is in very good condition. Improvements that are taking place in 1996 or are planned include a new roof, carpet, window replacement, and restroom renovations. The Library Advisory Board is currently involved in a Continuous Library Improvement Program, assessing current and future services and building needs.

The excellent physical facility has enabled staff to focus on the recent changes in information and computer technology that have revolutionized the world of library services. That revolution is driven by the need to obtain the electronic tools needed to give patrons access to the new "information superhighway", and the need to provide basic education to patrons so that they can articulate their data requests into formats that allow the information systems to give them the information they seek.

Given this, the library's principal needs during the next 20 years involve improving access, both physical and electronic, to information, including providing direct and dedicated access to the Internet. Measures to improve physical access include parking expansion, continued support of the Bookmobile outreach, and potential staff outreach to day care centers and other child-focused organization to guide learning programs. In addition, community growth and expanding citizen needs may create a future need for building expansion or development of a satellite facility.

- *City Maintenance Facilities*

The City of Kearney operates a vehicle and utility maintenance operations compound located in West Central Kearney northeast of 15th Avenue and North Railroad Street. The maintenance facility was developed by the city in the early 1960s, with a major expansion in 1979.

The maintenance shop consists of five buildings used by the Public Works and Utilities Departments. The two main masonry vehicle buildings contain 6 vehicle bays, with 5 bays used for repair and storage of equipment for street maintenance, snow plowing, and water/sewer maintenance, and one bay dedicated to supplies for central stores. Central stores maintains inventory levels for all city departments at this location. A more recent metal building contains the materials recovery facility (MRF) of recyclables affiliated with the city's sanitation program. An older metal carport shed is used as a shed for storage of grader vehicles and snow removal material. The yard contains one wooden storage structure used as a salt shed. Major stockpiles of sand, debris, pipes, solid waste containers, and material are located on the north and east edges of the compound. Additional outdoor storage is sited at the old tree dump site west

of the city's sewer plant along the North Channel Platte River. Other remote structures throughout the city are operated by the utility department for water pumping, storage and distribution, and wastewater treatment.

Population growth and the geographical expansion of the city have increased demands for maintenance services. During this period of growth, the city has been able to purchase better quality vehicles and equipment. In daily operation, this expanding fleet of municipal vehicles must travel on more city streets to reach ever more distant parts of the built city.

New ways of operating have resulted from new growth. For example, most recent development has occurred in the hills above the city, where schools and streets are vulnerable to more severe winter storms. This increases the costs of plowing service (in time, frequency and staff hours) and suggests the need to create new collector street circulation patterns to move maintenance vehicles efficiently to growing parts of the city.

Other maintenance shop facility and central stores issues include: space availability, the interdependence of vehicle and utility services, the interdependence of central stores procurements, and the long-term status of the MRF facility. The location of the present facility has good access to major traffic routes. In addition, the city shops constitute a major investment in well-constructed masonry buildings. However, any future expansion of the maintenance shops site would require land acquisition and relocation of parts of adjacent mobile home (west) or industrial (east) uses. Expansion pressures also could be fueled by the needs of sanitation and recycling, which will grow with the growing population, and with rising levels of prosperity, awareness and participation in recycling.

Avoiding land expansion would require severing some shop and central stores functions from others, and relocating them to remote sites. There is an inherent inefficiency in this prospect, since Kearney's present maintenance operations are interdependent, and served by a common vehicles shop, parts and equipment inventory. Most modern public works departments have joined a trend toward joint maintenance facilities.

The city should respond to these site issues by optioning adjacent land and programming relationships among shop facilities. The existing Buffalo County highway maintenance yard may serve as a supplemental site, although its location and access attributes are less desirable than Kearney's present facility. Kearney's optimal solution may be an expansion of the present maintenance shop land to the east. This may include obtaining access easements across the rear of the burial vault firm to reach vacant land to the east.

The city vehicle maintenance staff is critical to the city's public works and public safety operations. Maintenance staff has been reduced by one-third since 1973, due to budget restraints. However, the city's purchases of better quality heavy vehicles and equipment over the period has enabled the staff to keep pace with fewer major repair problems. Nonetheless, city services departments have added more vehicles, and use them more intensively. The City of Kearney should complement existing maintenance and central stores staff with additional resources and/or personnel to meet growing needs during the next decade. The success of the city's police, fire and public safety response depends upon committing adequate resources to vehicle maintenance operations.

- *Kearney Airport*

The Kearney Municipal Airport Corporation was created in 1950 to assume flight operations at the decommissioned Kearney Air Base, a 2,500 acre site east of the city. The city continues to own and operate the facility under the direction of an Airport Director. The airport presents a highly visible, industrial park setting adjacent to US Highway 30. It contains a 7,100 foot runway used for about 30,000 landings per year. General aviation comprises most traffic; Kearney is currently seeking a new commercial carrier following cessation of GP Express' Platte Valley service. Recent improvements to the Kearney Municipal Airport include a \$2 million reconstruction of the primary runway, and the final installation of an FAA-owned ILS precision navigational system to enable full instrument approaches to the primary runway.

Airport staff has directed a dramatic conversion of the old Air Base into a nearly self-supporting facility. This transformation has been funded largely by revenues from crop

farming and industrial land leases on airport land surrounding the facility. Agency rules of the Federal Aviation Authority governing old air bases prohibit land sales revenues from being used for operating expenses. In the past, the city sold its most prominent airport land sites along US 30 to Baldwin, Eaton and the local development corporation as a 40-60 acre industrial tract. However, it is not in the city's interests to sell additional land, since industrial site leases and crop rents provide the basis for funding the airport's operations. The airport is no longer a favorable site for industrial development since access and saleable land are limited. New major plant sites should be developed elsewhere to meet future industrial needs.

Important airport issues include: restoration of commercial air service is a critical transportation and economic development issue for the city; retaining airport land leases as a permanent source of operating funds; improving the airport road serving the terminal and adjacent industries; and protecting air rights above runway approaches with land use and zoning regulations and easements.

- *Municipal Pool*

In addition to park pools, the city's major recreation facility is the municipal pool and bathhouse, located in Harmon Park west of 5th Avenue. The pool is operated and managed by the Kearney Parks and Recreation Department. Although the city has been diligent in repairing cracks, caulking and structural maintenance of the pool, it remains a struggle to meet repair needs with available resources. Future improvements, including a new bathhouse and water slide have been envisioned for the pool. The pool is a highly popular, well-maintained and managed seasonal attraction.

- *Other Major Facilities.*

The city's wastewater is treated at a plant located southeast of the city along the North Channel of the Platte River. Substantial reconstruction of Kearney's wastewater treatment plant will be completed by January 1, 1998, in accordance with the recommendations of a recent engineering study. In addition, the city has retained a water engineering consultant to evaluate the supply and distribution system of its Platte River source. The water study is scheduled for completion by 1996.

Public Facilities Priorities

Kearney has an excellent inventory of public facilities. The City has constructed a fine municipal building, administered an outstanding record of maintenance and repair, and cooperative facility agreements among departments and with Buffalo County. Still, some facility needs require attention. Based on the analysis, Kearney's highest public facility priorities are:

- ***Rehabilitate aging infrastructure.*** Older sections of Kearney contain capital improvements that are nearing the end of their life-span. Deteriorated segments of streets, sanitary and storm sewers, sidewalks, and water lines must be scheduled for repair on a rotating basis to prevent unexpected and costly failures. The most important projects involve street paving in Southeast Kearney, storm drainage in the central city, and the completion of the new wastewater treatment plant.
- ***Install signal control devices in fire vehicles to expedite fire service from the Downtown station.*** The City faces an immediate period of rapid growth in many geographical directions, adding uncertainty to the timing and location of new facilities. Kearney's current fire station has good access to all parts of the city, but is hampered by congestion on 2nd Avenue. The city should implement and install signal control devices at key intersections along 2nd Avenue to be activated by emergency response vehicles. This project will help fire protection and public safety officials speed fire service to Northwest Kearney.
- ***Acquire a site for future development of a satellite fire protection facility.*** Kearney will face a future need to establish a satellite facility in northwest Kearney. Facility construction may involve cooperation between the City Fire District, Rural Fire District #1 and perhaps the State of Nebraska, which has major institutions in the west/northwest parts of the city. The facility should be located along the Inner Beltway, providing good access to developing areas. One such site is in the vicinity of 39th Street and 30th Avenue. The city also should extend 39th Street west of 30th Avenue (along the north side of Cottonmill Lake) to link the facility to rural estates sites west of the city.

- ***Expand the City Maintenance Shop.*** The City should secure additional land for the expansion of the streets and utilities shop. The optimum expansion would extend from the present site to the east. The city should work to maintain the "joint-use" quality of the facility and develop a comprehensive facility master plan for its future development. The city must ensure that it adds resources and staff for vehicle maintenance and central stores as it increases the number of city vehicles in the police, fire, streets, utilities, sanitation and parks department fleets.
- ***Equip law enforcement vehicles with mobile live data technology.*** The city should phase in the installation of computer data terminals into cruisers, along with staff training to create an electronic records system to support "problem-oriented policing" objectives and the community's criminal justice system.
- ***Expand vehicle impound, staging and parking for the Law Enforcement Center.*** The City should secure sites east of the police station for parking and vehicle impound. This can be accomplished by acquiring the immediately adjacent site to the east, or by demolishing dilapidated homes east of Avenue B to create a favorable site.
- ***Maintain and improve the municipal pool.*** The Harmon Park pool is an expensive and popular community feature. An ongoing preventive maintenance program should delay major rehabilitation needs. Continued effective management of the facility will sustain its popularity, and should support a future community campaign to add amenities.
- ***Acquire intervening land between 2nd Avenue and the library.*** The City should secure the business site west of the library to improve parking and traffic circulation. An entry park could be created at the corner of 2nd Avenue and 21st Street, landscaped to enhance visibility and the image of the library from 2nd Avenue. The city should expand and reconfigure the alley and parking circulation pattern.

Infrastructure Analysis

This section presents an inventory and evaluation of the city's existing infrastructure systems. These include the systems for sanitary sewer, stormwater drainage and storm sewers, water distribution and storage, and operations for the collection, recycling and disposal of solid waste.

■ Sanitary Sewers

Kearney's wastewater disposal and sanitary sewer system is a vital community system that has major impact on growth directions. The system uses the city's topography, relying on gravity flows through the downhill swales and slopes of the city. A natural ridge line bisects northern Kearney, with Hilltop Mall and the North 2nd Avenue commercial corridor perched above the rest of the city. This hill forces the sewer system into two drainage basins - the Wood River basin to the north and the Platte River basin south of Kearney. Sewer lines collect wastewater from developed areas in each of these basins, and move it toward larger interceptor pipes sized 20 inches or larger. The minimum size of the city's network of sewer pipes is 6 inches in many older parts of the city, and 8 inches in newer areas, which gradually transition to larger 10-15 inch lateral lines leading to the interceptors.

Flows in the level midtown parts of the city generally are directed into interceptors flowing eastward to Antelope Avenue, where flows are directed south to the wastewater treatment plant along the North Channel of the Platte River. Flows in the rolling hills of the northwest and north part of Kearney are directed to the north (in accordance with prevailing topography) toward 56th Street, where a force main and a series of lift stations directs wastewater around the northeast perimeter of the city to Antelope Avenue.

Sanitary sewer flows in areas extending west of UNK generally drain south toward the UPRR and ultimately 11th Street. The major interceptor providing sewer service for all of Kearney south of US 30 to the North Channel Platte River follows 11th Street. This sewer line extends east to intersect with the city's other major interceptor at Antelope Avenue, then turns diagonally to the southeast toward the waste-

water treatment plant. Sanitary sewer service has recently been improved and extended to areas east of 4th Avenue to Central Avenue.

The hills west and northwest of Kearney contain several unincorporated rural estate subdivisions operating on septic systems.

- *Lift Stations*

In a few isolated areas, the city's natural topography prevents natural gravity flows, and sanitary sewer lift stations are required. The city operates 15 such lift stations, including:

- Two lift stations to redirect flows from the Wood River watershed into the 56th Street Interceptor force main.
- One lift station to overcome an elevation problem at 20th Avenue and 39th Street.
- Two lift stations to counter unfavorable topography at the north end of Lake Kearney.
- Three lift stations to overcome level topography in Northeast Kearney neighborhoods near the fairgrounds.
- Two lift stations to join the airport industrial park to the city sewer system. One of these stations is located near the new National Guard Armory and one near the Eaton Corporation plant.
- Two lift stations to serve the highway commercial corridor west of 4th Street and 2nd Avenue.
- One lift station to serve housing and businesses south of the North Channel of the Platte River along both sides of I-80 from 3rd Avenue to Avenue M.
- One lift station to overcome an elevation problem at 48th Street and 11th Avenue.
- One lift station to overcome an elevation problem at 11th Street and 6th Avenue.

Several private lifts have been installed to overcome topographical problems with sewer service, including:

- Two locations west of Lakeview Drive at 32nd Street.
- One location at Camelot and Country Club Lane. The city has no maintenance responsibilities for these private lift stations.

- *Wastewater Treatment Facilities*

Kearney's principal municipal wastewater plant is located on the north bank of the North Channel of the Platte River, about one quarter mile east of Antelope Avenue. The city also operates several treatment lagoons northwest of the airport, although the lagoons are scheduled to be abandoned by 1997 upon connection to the principal treatment plant. The city sewer plant is a secondary treatment facility with trickling filters, constructed in 1972. A major renovation project is scheduled for completion by January 1, 1998. The plant treats about 2.8 gallons of wastewater per day, with an intended design capacity of slightly more than 4.5 million gallons per day. Solids collected from the wastewater treatment process are composted and applied to farm fields as a soil conditioner.

Wastewater System Issues

An analysis of Kearney's sanitary sewer system identifies the following major issues:

- ***Aging sewers.*** Some elements of Kearney's sewer system date from the early 1900s. The oldest sewers in the city are located in residential areas immediately to the east, west and south of Kearney Centre. The City should identify segments that are of greatest priority and prepare to engage in selective reconstruction projects.
- ***Infiltration and Inflow of Stormwater.*** Infiltration of groundwater is insignificant and does not require corrective action. However, stormwater inflow inundated the sanitary system and affected the treatment plant for a short period as recently as 1989. A rainfall event exceeding a 150-year storm generated large quantities of stormwater inflow from submerged manholes and flooded basements, surcharging the sewer collection system and causing sewer backups into adjoining properties. As a result of this event, the City investigated possible stormwater connections to the sanitary sewer system, but found no connections.

The City has implemented a strict policy to prevent the entry of non-contact water into the sanitary system and pursues leads to find stormwater connections into the sanitary system. Kearney should continue to take measures to

prevent stormwater from entering the sanitary system, in order to ensure that all volumes of water subjected to the treatment process actually belong in the system. This will prevent the community from overspending its treatment finances, or adding unnecessary wear, stress, and depreciation to equipment. One such measure is requiring new subdivisions to submit and follow a grading plan, establishing finished floor elevations that will prevent stormwater from flooding basements in the future.

- **Wastewater Treatment Plant.** A 1994 Wastewater Treatment Study by CH2M Hill of Denver has guided the \$14.0 million reconstruction of the existing facility. The project improves the design efficiency, technical coordination and operational management of the city's wastewater treatment plant, ensuring compliance with federal and state environmental regulations. However, additional Federal mandates could require the city to build additional steps into the treatment process. The City should maintain reserves within a sewer capital fund to assist in the maintenance and potential upgrading of equipment at the sewer treatment plant.

The treatment plant is ideally sited to accommodate future growth and is sufficiently distant from the city to avoid conflicts. Future development is unlikely to surround the plant; probable development associated with a new east side interchange is proposed for industrial uses, causing few land use conflicts.

- **Growth Management and Sewer Construction.** The 1992 North Kearney Growth Management Analysis Study by Miller and Associates established a comprehensive program of sewer capital improvements to support Kearney's population growth and development trends. Subsequent construction of the 56th Street force main and interceptor sewer has opened many new development sites north to 56th Street, and south to the Platte River.

Sewer extensions will continue to respond to market demands for additional housing in the northern part of Kearney. The growth policies defined in the land use plan will assure that these extensions are incremental and economic-ally feasible. The city must ensure that sanitary sewer connections and lift stations which are constructed by

private developers are adequately sized to provide for adequate capacity for future adjacent development.

In addition, the city should encourage sewer policies that result in the ultimate abandonment of individual septic fields serving rural estates in the Cottonmill Lake watershed, in favor of connection to the city's sewer system. This would be facilitated by the westward extension and increase in capacity of the North Railroad Street sanitary interceptor. However, the NPPD Canal tailrace poses an obstacle to this extension.

■ Sanitary Sewer System Priorities

Based on the analysis, Kearney's highest sanitary sewer system priorities are:

- *Continued rehabilitation of aging infrastructure.* Kearney should continue its ongoing program to monitor and undertake preventive maintenance on older lines and manholes.
- *Completion of the interceptor extensions envisioned in the 1992 North Kearney Study.* These extensions allow Kearney to serve more than 1,400 vacant acres to meet future development needs.
- *Inflow inspection program.* The City of Kearney should continue its efforts to prevent stormwater flows from entering the wastewater system.
- *Complete the treatment plant re-construction.* The City of Kearney should begin preparing for future changes even as the plant is completed. The city should build its sewer fund to anticipate future changes which may be mandated in the treatment process.
- *Incremental sewer extensions within Growth Centers.* The city should only approve the creation of Sanitary and Improvement Districts within the growth areas designated in the Kearney Plan. It should carefully review the financial performance of proposed SID's and limit connections to municipal sewer service to developments within designated growth areas.

• ***Sewer Extensions to Urban Subdivisions Outside the Growth Centers, but within the Territorial Jurisdiction.*** The City of Kearney should discourage urban subdivision development or the provision of urban utility services to areas outside the Growth Centers designated in the plan. The City should avoid the creation of SIDs in geographical areas outside the Growth Centers. In this way the City will discourage urban development that does not conform to City growth policies and require that such projects must be privately financed.

• ***Rural Estates Subdivision in the Territorial Jurisdiction.*** The City of Kearney should discourage rural subdivisions within the jurisdiction from developing to urban densities with septic systems. Regulatory trends are moving toward the prohibition of these types of developments. New environmental regulations will be accompanied by new sanitary technologies, which will likely collect effluent from clusters of rural residential estates and provide a simplified centralized chemical treatment service. Rural subdivisions should be designed for centralized collection of waste, which could be stored and transported to an urban treatment facility for processing. Anticipating this technology, The Kearney Plan has identified rural residential corridors which form a framework for sound land use policies. Within these corridors, city policy should:

- promote development design that arranges housing patterns for easy future sanitary wastewater collection.
- encourage the development of open space subdivisions, which permit clustering of houses on smaller sites while preserving the balance of a subdivisions area in common open space.

For areas within its two mile planning and zoning limits, the City of Kearney should limit rural estate lots to those areas designated in the land use plan. These areas are generally located along the Cottonmill Lake watershed and the basin immediately to its west, which drain these rural lands toward the North Channel of the Platte River. Outside of open space subdivisions, rural estate lots must be at least two acres in size, and must be situated within one of these corridors. In addition, lots should establish home sites within 300 feet of the centerline of the primary drainage swale across or near the property. Such housing will be

appropriately oriented to land topography to facilitate the future installation of rural-scale sanitary collection lines and devices.

In general, the best sites within these rural estate corridors for rural estate lots are those which meet two criteria: direct, or private driveway access to a dedicated road and a house building pad within 300 feet of the primary drainage swale.

■ Storm Drainage and Flood Prone Areas

Kearney incorporates two large watersheds, divided by a ridge line that runs generally from southwest to northeast. On the west side, the drainage divide roughly follows 31st and 35th Street north of Lake Kearney, crosses 2nd Avenue at 39th Street, and continues to the northwest. The southern watershed flows to the Platte River, while the northern watershed is directed to the north into Wood River.

Kearney in 1996 is in the process of completing a major comprehensive study of its stormwater drainage system. The first installment of this study, the North Kearney Growth Management Analysis by Miller & Associates of Kearney (1992) investigated drainage basins in the Wood River watershed. The current planning process, investigating drainage problems in the Platte River watershed, is also being executed by Miller & Associates. The first component of this study, the Phase I Master Plan, was published in 1996 and includes the western portion of the Platte drainage basin, located west of Avenue A south of 25th Street and 1st Avenue between 25th and 39th Streets.

■ Phase I Drainage Area

The Phase I drainage area comprises the western part of the Platte River watershed south of the Wood River drainage divide. This drainage area includes two major north-south drainage systems. The West Main Line drains about two-thirds of this basin. This storm sewer, which reaches a maximum size of 54 inches at its southernmost end, runs generally along 5th Avenue from 33rd Street to 24th Street, turns east to 4th Avenue, continues south to 15th Street, turns east to 3rd Avenue, and continues south to 11th Street. Here, the storm sewer empties into the major concrete-lined surface channel between 2nd and 3rd Avenue. This conduit

takes storm drainage to the North Channel of the Platte River. The West Main Line is fed by a system of local branches and transverse lines. The transverse lines run along 33rd, 29th, 24th, 21st, and 15th Streets, and along the Union Pacific right-of-way. In spite of these lines, a large portion of stormwater loads into the West Main Line flow as surface drainage through the basin's streets.

The 2nd Avenue Main Line drains the eastern third of this drainage area. The line begins as an 18-inch storm sewer near 39th Street and follows 2nd Avenue. At 11th Street, the 72-inch section daylights, merging with the West Main Line in the concrete-lined channel between 2nd and 3rd Avenue.

• *Major Issues in the Phase One Area*

The Phase I drainage area experiences significant problems that have effects both inside and outside of this specific basin. These issues include:

- *Inadequate Capacity.* Existing stormwater facilities in this drainage area are severely undersized. The 1996 Miller & Associates study concludes that capacity of pipes at the outfall is only 30% of the peak flows for a two-year storm event. This causes significant flooding problems in many parts of the Phase I area.

- *Bypass Phenomenon.* The undersized west drainage system causes stormwater to bypass the two main storm lines and flow via streets farther to the east. This exacerbates serious drainage problems in this part of the Platte River watershed.

- *Built-Up Nature of the Basin.* The Phase I drainage area is almost completely developed, decreasing the stormwater management options that are available to the city. Retention or detention facilities would require significant property acquisition, while additions storm sewer development will require the removal and reconstruction of streets.

■ **Phase II and III Drainage Areas**

This drainage area comprises areas in the Platte River watershed generally east of Avenue A south of 25th Street and 1st Avenue between 25th and 39th Street. North of 39th Street, the ridge line that marks the drainage divide proceeds to the

northwest toward 48th Avenue N. The eastern edge of the basin extends along Avenue N from 48th to 39th, skirts around the Fairgrounds, and follows the dike formed by the former Kearney and Black Hills line to 27th Street. It then follows Avenue Q south to 11th Street. The Phase II and Phase III study areas are divided by the Union Pacific right-of-way, with the Phase II area making up the north part of this overall study area. Work began on a comprehensive study of the Phase II basin in July, 1995 and is expected to be completed during 1996. While these study areas include some storm sewers, a large portion of local stormwater is handled by surface drainage in street channels.

The Phase II area is roughly divided by Avenue G. Between Avenue G and 1st Avenue, surface drainage and east-west tributary storm sewers take stormwater to two north-south main lines along Avenues E and C. The Avenue E line begins near 39th Street and jobs over to the Avenue C alignment at 29th Street. The Avenue C Main Line begins at about 31st Street and continues south to the now abandoned Burlington Northern right-of-way. Here, storm drainage is conducted east to a paved channel along Avenue M and to the North Channel of the Platte River. The largest transverse lines feeding this system include 25th Street and the Union Pacific right-of-way.

East of Avenue G, the spine of the drainage system is a major storm sewer along Avenue N. Drainage patterns proceeds from west to east to this line. Drainage north of 39th Street flows to a 39th Street line, continuing east to Avenue N. The Avenue N line jogs west along the former Kearney and Black Hills line to Avenue M and daylights into a paved channel south of the former Burlington Northern right-of-way.

Southeast Kearney is sporadically served by storm sewers, with most drainage proceeding on the surface. Major drainage corridors conduct stormwater south along Avenue F to the 11th Street channel, and then east to the Avenue M drainageway. A major transverse feed into this system extends east along 16th Street from Avenue A.

- *Major Issues in the Phase II and III Areas*

Detailed studies of the Phase II and III drainage areas are in progress, with the Phase II plan scheduled for completion during 1996. These drainage areas experience significant stresses, including:

- *Periodic flooding problems.* The relatively sparse storm sewer systems in these areas, combined with increased runoff, create significant surface drainage and local flooding problems. These problems are exacerbated by the diking effects of existing and former railroad rights-of-ways. For example, sites between Avenue N and the K&BH branch north of 39th Street experience drainage problems from flows directed from the northwest. Development in this area must address these drainage problems. Farther south, surface drainage problems also affect developed neighborhoods in central and Southeast Kearney.

- *Inadequate Capacity.* Existing stormwater facilities in this drainage area appear to be severely undersized. This raises the issue of development of north-south reliever lines.

- *Bypass Phenomenon.* Inadequate storm drainage in the upland Phase I area causes surface drainage flows to the east, further stressing these drainage systems. The various Platte River sub-watersheds are part of an inter-related system that must be developed together.

- *Built-Up Nature of the Basin.* Many parts of the Phase II and III basins are developed, decreasing the stormwater management options that are available to the city. Some opportunities exist for retention or detention facilities and improved surface channels in developing parts of the basin.

■ Wood River Drainage Basins

Kearney's most rapidly growing development areas drain toward Wood River to the north. Recommendations for these drainage basins were developed in the 1992 North Kearney Growth Management Analysis. The Wood River watershed was divided into two sub-basins by the 1992 study. Area 3 includes areas generally west of a ridge that follows an extended 9th Avenue, turning northeast from 50th to 56th Street and 2nd Avenue. Area 4 extends east to the Kearney and Black Hills right-of-way.

The primary issue in the Wood River watersheds is discharge of urban run-off over agricultural lands to the north into Wood River. Concerns over stormwater management and potential erosion of land have become significant issues. The 1992 study proposes a strategy of local storm sewers serving development areas, combined with a complete system of detention facilities to collect and hold stormwater flows. These facilities then discharge into local surface drainageways which carry water to the Wood River.

In Area 3, a retention lake has been developed at Ted Baldwin Park. Detention cells are also proposed along the 22nd Avenue drainageway (Glenwood Park Creek) at 39th Street, 48th Street, and 56th Street; and along a drainageway following the alignment of 12th Avenue at 48th and 56th Streets.

In Area 4, a retention facility has been constructed along with surrounding residential development south of 48th Street and east of 2nd Avenue. New detention facilities are proposed at about 56th and Central Avenue; at 52nd and 56th Streets along the drainageway below the existing retention pond; and along the UP (K&BH) spur at about 48th Street.

■ Floodplains

Kearney's extensive floodplain areas are principally located in the Platte River valley. Most areas between the North Channel and the Main Channel of the river are located within 100-year floodplains, including areas with significant commercial development. One-hundred year floodplain areas generally follow the north side of the North Channel relatively closely, while 500-year floodplains extend north to 11th Street in some areas. Floodplains also extend through much of Kearney's planning jurisdiction across the main channel to the south. Many of these areas incorporate valuable wetlands that provide extensive wildlife habitat, including roosting areas for sandhill cranes.

One-hundred year floodplain areas closely follow the Kearney Canal north and west to Cottonmill Lake. The canal is a part of the surface drainage system that serves the western part of the city. Five-hundred year floodplain areas exist between the canal and the Union Pacific right-of-way.

Other floodplain areas include:

- Glenwood Park Creek and the Wood River corridors in the northern part of the zoning jurisdiction. The creek flows north along an extended 22nd Avenue, crossing 56th Street and joining the Wood River near Highway 10.
- The Airport Draw, extending north from 56th Street at about Avenue H to the former K&BH grade, continuing east of the railroad grade, and proceeding east to the airport area on the alignment of about 52nd Street.

■ Stormwater Policies

While Kearney is still in the process of a comprehensive study of its stormwater system, the following policies have emerged as integral parts of a stormwater strategy for the city.

- ***A Storage-Oriented Approach for North Growth Areas.*** Kearney should make use of detention and retention facilities to reduce urban storm flows from north growth areas onto agricultural lands in the Wood River watershed. Even with increasing urbanization, this approach will reduce the necessary size and urgency of storm sewers and drainageways. This policy calls for implementing the recommendations of the 1992 Miller & Associates study and continues the pattern of storage facilities as new growth occurs. In many cases, storage facilities can be incorporated into the design of new neighborhoods, establishing important community features.
- ***Watershed Protection.*** The flow characteristics of major surface drainageways that serve north growth areas should be preserved. These drainageways include Glenwood Park Creek and the Airport Draw. Ultimately, drainageway protection techniques can be both more economical and more attractive than storm sewer solutions.
- ***Development Design to Moderate Runoff.*** Kearney's development ordinances should establish maximum impervious coverage ratios and site design features, including onsite retention, which moderate the worst effects of major stormwater flows. These measures can reduce peak loads into the system, and prevent local flooding and erosion problems.

- ***Implementation of Relief Measures for the West Main Line Storm Sewer.*** The 1996 Miller & Associates analysis indicates the need for north-south relief of the West and 2nd Avenue Main Lines. The study suggests the most feasible reliever to be a sewer along 6th and 8th Avenues, conducting water to the Kearney Canal Tailrace. This alternative removes land from the Phase I drainage basin and can prevent bypassing to the east.

- ***Completion of the Phase II and III Storm Drainage System Analyses.*** This plan, when published in 1996, will address drainage problems in the eastern part of the city.

- ***Maintenance Program for Existing Drainage System.*** Measures should be implemented which maximize the capacity of the existing system. An important part of this program is cleaning of clogged inlets and manholes.

■ **Water Supply**

As with its storm drainage system, Kearney is also in the process of completing a comprehensive study of its water supply and distribution system. This study is being executed by CH2M Hill and is scheduled for completion during 1997. This description briefly summarizes key elements of the Kearney water system and describes some of the major issues considered by the study.

- ***Water Supply***

Kearney's main water supply is derived from a central wellfield located east of the city along the main channel of the Platte River and south of Interstate 80. Six wells at this site provide the bulk of Kearney's current water supply, supplanting a system of smaller wells scattered around the city. This field is located between the extended alignments of Antelope Avenue and Eaton Road. A 36-inch transmission line along 11th Street conducts water from the well field to the distribution system.

- ***Major Storage***

A looped transmission system, assisted by booster pumps, conducts water to Kearney's three major storage facilities. These include:

- A west water tower, providing 1.5 million gallon capacity, located near 30th Avenue and 39th Street.
- A central water tower, providing a 0.25 million gallon capacity, at the northeast corner of the high school site at 6th Avenue and 39th Street.
- An underground storage reservoir, providing 1.0 million gallon capacity, at Memorial Park, near 8th Avenue and 33rd Street.

• Major Issues

Major water supply and distribution issues included in the CH2M Hill study include:

- *The need for additional water supply.* Kearney's projected growth will stress the city's existing wellfield system, necessitating development of a new water supply. Potential water sources include far south Kearney, the northwestern part of the city, and the Wood River corridor.
- *Water treatment.* Currently, Kearney's water supply has depended on natural filtration for primary treatment and is disinfected with chlorine within the transmission main from the wellfield. The city is waiting for a state ruling on requirements for additional treatment. Cost of a treatment plant, if required, could approximate \$25 million.
- *Additional storage capacity.* Kearney's growth is likely to require expansion of the city's current reservoir capacity. Alternatives include the expansion of current towers, or the development of a new storage facility to serve the northeastern part of the city.
- *System looping.* Main construction should be directed toward the looping of the major water supply system. Areas of concentration may include:
 - Looping the transmission main system. At present, Kearney's wellfield transmission main is a single-ended line extending along 11th Street and turning north and south at Avenue M. The Avenue M main branches to the west to provide service to South Kearney neighborhoods. A transmission loop should be considered, extending the

current north-south line from the wellfield north along Antelope Avenue to an existing line north of the Union Pacific along Antelope and the existing 39th Street line between the airport and Avenue N.

- Northwest transmission loops. This would loop the current system along 56th Street and 30th Avenue, tying into the existing water tower and providing looped service to growing areas in northwest Kearney.

■ Solid Waste Management

The City of Kearney, in cooperation with Buffalo County, participates in the Kearney Area Solid Waste Agency which operates the city's solid waste disposal facilities. The agency's current landfill is located one-half mile west of Cottonmill Road on 56th Street. The landfill, which began operation on April 1, 1994, was the first facility to be permitted by the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality under Title 132 after revisions to meet current EPA regulations. The facility consists of a two-foot compacted clay liner with a permeability of less than 1×10^{-7} centimeter per second, which is then covered with 60 mil HDPE synthetic liner. A leachate collection system is also used to collect and store leachate for treatment.

The 117 acre facility was developed at an initial construction cost of \$1.5 million. Additional city funding is programmed as new cells are opened. An eight acre expansion in 1996 required an additional city contribution of \$852,000.

The site has a 35-year life expectancy. Major issues involved with solid waste management in Kearney include:

- Continuing programmed funding and expansion of the current facility.

- Extending the life of the land fill by maximizing use of recycling programs.

- At the end of the twenty-year plan horizon, considering locations for new landfills well in advance of the completion of the current facility.

7

A UNIQUE AND VITAL KEARNEY CENTER

A VISION FOR KEARNEY'S DOWNTOWN

Kearney Centre will emerge as a strong center and a place of great importance, focusing on retail, office, civic, and residential uses.

Downtowns occupy a particular place of importance within cities and towns. They are unique to their individual communities - no downtown looks exactly like any other downtown. Because of this relationship, people often measure the health of their city by the health of their traditional business center.

Kearney Centre clearly has this sense of importance for the city. The district is Kearney's largest single, compact concentration of commercial development - a place where the tradition of long-standing businesses mix with new enterprises in a unique setting. It is also a critical mixed use center, a focus for business, civic life, entertainment and the arts, situated within many of Nebraska's finest historic structures.

Yet, many believe that Kearney Centre's balance is fragile, as it faces the competition of large discount department stores and decentralized development pattern that the automobile has brought with it. Yet, Kearney Centre is an essentially strong district that can benefit from strong private action and beneficial public policies and investments. This section of the plan is designed to provide a realistic development program for the downtown area that will enable it to expand and continue its role as a vital center for many kinds of activity.

Even though it is no longer the city's exclusive retail center, Kearney Centre can strengthen its role as a mixed use center, a place that combines shopping, working, civic life, and living in a vital, richly textured way. The district should be alive with people, and use its distinctive environment to best advantage.

To position itself to meet the district's future needs, the city should:

■ MAINTAIN AGING INFRASTRUCTURE TO PRESERVE PUBLIC SAFETY AND THE DISTRICT'S STRUCTURES.

Preservation requires city investment in infrastructure improvements to keep pace with public service needs, including water mains adequate for fire suppression and prevention. The district's brick streets also add a distinctive texture to the physical environment.

■ STRENGTHEN KEARNEY CENTRE'S ROLE AS A "FLAGSHIP" DISTRICT FOR THE CITY.

Kearney Centre is a psychological focus for the city. It is undoubtedly discussed, worried about, and sometimes fought about more than any other part of Kearney. Downtown's image is bound up with that of the entire community. Downtown can capitalize on this identification by becoming a source of pride and vitality, a center that people in the city and around the region like to visit for enjoyment, commerce, and cultural enrichment.

■ CREATE A MIX OF USES AND ACTIVITIES.

The dramatic changes in retailing that have created the shopping center and discount store have eroded the exclusive role that downtowns once held in American communities. This does not mean that Downtown is declining. It simply means that it will experience a transition which, if successful, can create a new and equally rewarding environment. This will be a place that provides settings for many kinds of activities, including, but not limited to, the traditional focus on general retailing.

Yet, Downtowns sometimes try to revitalize themselves by trying to make themselves into something they are not. The failure around the country of many pedestrian mall experiments on Main Streets suggests that life in a city center is a delicate ballet that includes vehicles, pedestrians, places for activity, windows on the street, and other features. The revitalization of Kearney Centre should build on the intrinsic character of the district - strengthening what is good, improving what no longer works well.

■ STRENGTHEN THE DOWNTOWN RETAIL ENVIRONMENT.

In many communities, the role of Downtown has changed from one of primary retailing in pre-auto era days to one of specialty retailing, small business, and service activities. Kearney Centre has many of these small enterprises and indeed acts as an incubator for small business. Yet, it still includes significant general retailing. Kearney carried out a successful and highly appropriate downtown improvement project a decade ago. Further improvements in the public environment can further improve the district's business environment and strengthen its attraction for shoppers and other users.

■ INCREASE THE ECONOMIC REWARDS OF BUILDING OWNERSHIP IN KEARNEY CENTRE.

Any investment must provide a reasonable rate of return to its investor. This rule is equally relevant to Downtown properties. Older buildings are often fully amortized, avoiding debt service costs that tend to increase rents. However, upper levels of buildings in Kearney are frequently vacant or bring very limited revenue. As a result, property owners receive a relatively low return on investment. In addition, further investment, involving rehabilitation, adaptive reuse, or bringing structures into compliance with contemporary codes or federal regulations, may seem unattractive to building owners.

When owners can expect a good return on downtown property, investment similarly increases. Therefore, the downtown development strategy must provide reasonable economic rewards to the district's property owners.

■ PRESERVE THE PHYSICAL APPEARANCE AND HISTORIC INTEGRITY OF KEARNEY CENTRE.

The historic value of the city's town center and its role as a symbol of the character of Kearney require measures to preserve and rehabilitate Kearney Centre buildings. The creation of a Historic National Register District would be an important step toward achieving this goal. The city has several buildings more than a century old, and many other structures that can play a supporting role to the continued revitalization of the historic retail core of the city.

■ IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND THE INTENSITY OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITY IN KEARNEY CENTRE.

Downtowns are made of people and community life as surely as they are of buildings. Kearney Centre must be alive with people and activity. Some aspects of this life are physical - the district must provide an attractive and pleasant environment for its users; and should provide settings for events and programs. Other aspects are programmatic - providing attractions that attract people to the area.

Kearney Centre also has the advantage of being located near, but not on, the city's major highways. This permits a slower, more leisurely pace that enhances the "small town" quality of the city center.

Finally, Kearney Centre has distinct districts -- its areas north and south of the Union Pacific tracks on Central Avenue have specific personalities and extend Downtown's influence to both the north and south parts of town. These special attributes create a foundation for creating a fine downtown environment, a place that is attractive because it is distinctly different from the more mundane commercial world of the shopping strip, the parking lot, and the large, free-standing commercial building.

Issues Affecting Kearney Centre

This section examines important features of Kearney Centre that can help determine the directions of a development policy for Kearney Centre.

Land Use Patterns and the Surrounding Environment

Although Kearney Centre is a relatively large business district, it follows the underlying pattern of a "main street" downtown. This main axis, Central Avenue, includes commercial development oriented to it both north and south of the Union Pacific Railroad corridor. More contemporary downtown development, characterized by newer, freestanding buildings and more abundant parking, extend to the west from Central Avenue toward 2nd Avenue.

The primary commercial district is defined by two major arterials on its west and north sides -- 2nd Avenue and 25th Street respectively. On Downtown's north edge, 25th Street (US Highway 30) exhibits auto-oriented commercial development patterns. To the north, land uses transition into civic, office, and residential settings, as landscaping increases and land use intensity tends to decrease. The Good Samaritan Hospital campus is a major neighbor north of 31st Street. An historic residential neighborhood borders Kearney Centre on the east. To the west, the 2nd Avenue viaduct establishes a hard edge to the downtown district, and acts as a barrier separating Kearney Centre from the adjacent neighborhood.

The Union Pacific Railroad bisects the Central Avenue commercial corridor. The district's development pattern established the main commercial district with its larger, more elaborately detailed buildings north of the tracks. Central Avenue south of the railroad is characterized by one and two-story buildings accommodating other retail and service uses. Civic facilities were distributed on both sides of the tracks. Thus, the city's classical revival post office (now the Museum of Nebraska Art), modern-style city hall, and contemporary library are all located in the northern part of the district. South Central Avenue, on the other hand, was anchored by the Buffalo County Courthouse, since replaced at the same site at 16th and Central by a new, single-story courthouse and the Buffalo County Detention Center, and the former Armory. Continuing to the south, the district transitions into Southeast Kearney's residential area. However, Central Avenue itself includes a mix of commercial, residential, office, and light industrial uses.

The railroad corridor itself presents a significant land use and development challenge for Kearney Centre. In common with many major railroad corridors through downtown districts, the UP corridor accommodates industrial uses east and west of Central Avenue. The railroad's barrier quality will increase with its expansion to a three track main line with more frequent, longer trains.

Blight Conditions

The *Blight and Substandard Determination Study*, completed in 1996 by Hanna:Keelan Associates, determined that blighting

conditions exist in the Kearney Centre Study Area. The study determined that:

- About 48% of all structures were found to be "deteriorated or dilapidated."
- Factors of faulty lot layout were determined to be present.
- Unsanitary and unsafe conditions exist throughout the study area.
- Diversity of ownership is strongly present in the area.
- Conditions which endanger life or property are strongly present in the area.
- About 82% of all structures exceed 40 years of age.

These blighting conditions permit the preparation of one or more redevelopment plans for the revitalization of the district. They also qualify the district for the use of redevelopment tools, including land assembly and tax increment financing (TIF), pending Redevelopment Plan approval.

Historic Significance

Historically sympathetic reinvestment can be an important revitalization element in a Downtown program because of the availability of tax credits for certified projects. In addition to economic advantages, historic importance adds distinctive themes to a downtown development program. Several individual structures, including the Museum of Nebraska Art, are individually listed or are eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places. In addition, the Central Avenue Business District is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Circulation and Parking

The ability of Downtown to accommodate vehicles will be important to the future growth of the district. A successful Downtown must balance the needs of vehicular and pedestrian traffic and must accommodate the automobile without becoming dominated by it.

- *Traffic Flow and Circulation*

Kearney's two busiest trafficways in 1996 - 2nd Avenue and 25th Street - form the western and northern edges of the

present Kearney Centre district. This gives the district high community visibility, but insulates it from heavy regional traffic. Previous revitalization programs have used image-making techniques, including directional signage and banners, to forge a link between these boundary arterials and the district's commercial core. Directional information remains a vital part of an overall circulation strategy.

In spite of this excellent transportation access, the two major arterials also pose challenges. The intersection of US 30 and 2nd Avenue is the city's busiest, and often operates over its design capacity. The resulting congestion can frustrate turning movements and create some traffic backups at this intersection. In addition, 2nd Avenue approaches Downtown from the south on a viaduct over the Union Pacific tracks. The northern approach to the viaduct restricts access to 2nd Avenue from 21st Street to a right-turn only condition.

- *Local Access*

Kearney Centre's major internal axes are Central Avenue and 22nd Street. Its major east-west street is 22nd Street, which provides the major route into the city center from 2nd Avenue with a signalized intersection. East of Downtown, the Avenue H viaduct was designed to improve traffic flow into Kearney Centre from east and southeast Kearney. This curved viaduct directs traffic along 22nd Street, forming the east entrance to Kearney Centre.

Major north-south access from neighborhoods north of Kearney Centre is provided by Central Avenue and Avenue A. These provide linkages to Good Samaritan Hospital, Kearney Catholic High School, Emerson School and Northeast Kearney housing areas. Both streets provide two-lane, two way traffic and provide signalized intersections at US 30. Central Avenue jogs near the hospital, at its intersection with 31st Street, which has acquired characteristics of a busy minor arterial within this mixed office-residential district. As a result, these streets are used extensively for both on-street parking and internal circulation.

To the south, Central Avenue crosses the railroad at grade and continues to the south edge of the city. Other north-south streets in Kearney Centre terminate at the UP corridor

with intersections at parallel North Railroad Street. The triple-tracking of the UP main line and expanded rail operations will increase the difficulty of the Central Avenue grade crossing. However, either a grade separation or closure would be harmful to existing businesses and the character of the city center.

North Railroad Street, parallel to the Union Pacific tracks, continues as a through street between US 30 and 30th Avenue, routed as a continuous through street beneath both of the city's viaducts. North Railroad Street requires street repairs and lacks adequate queuing distance at Central Avenue in the event of a passing train. The route is mirrored south of the tracks by South Railroad Street, which is continuous between Central Avenue and Avenue H in Southeast Kearney.

- *Parking*

The availability of Downtown parking is important in Kearney's relatively large downtown district. Parking in Kearney is provided in both private and public parking lots and along the district's streets. Because parking is relatively unrestricted on Kearney Centre's street grid, on-street parking becomes an especially important resource.

Kearney generally provides an adequate supply of parking to meet its current demand. The district is highly dependent upon its on-street, angled parking to provide a well-distributed parking supply.

- *The Pedestrian Environment*

Kearney Centre, in common with other central business districts, is both a pedestrian and vehicular environment. Most users will park their vehicles and become pedestrians as they move through the district. In addition, the pedestrian environment offers the opportunity to develop a sense of civic space that can be an important part of an overall revitalization program. The district's major shopping street, Central Avenue, and the 22nd Street entry route already present relatively positive pedestrian environments. Central Avenue does not carry excessive through or truck traffic; vehicular traffic is buffered from moving traffic by diagonal parking on each side of the street.

OPPORTUNITIES

By contrast, 22nd Street carries significantly larger traffic loads than Central. Its sidewalks are less buffered from moving traffic. Similar patterns also pertain to the remaining streets through the Kearney Centre.

Street trees, sidewalk canopies and awnings represent the major open space and shade amenity in Kearney Centre. The area has plentiful street furniture, landscaping, and other pedestrian amenities, the result of Kearney Centre's revitalization program during the 1980s. These features included new sidewalks pedestrian-scale street lighting, banners, street landscaping, and furniture. However, some of the sidewalk concrete paving surfaces are in poor repair. In addition, Kearney Centre, as a linear "main street" district, lacks a significant public open space.

Opportunities

While challenged by the growth of new mass retailing in the 2nd Avenue corridor north of 39th Street, Kearney Centre has several important assets which can form the basis of a development strategy. These include:

- *A strong, varied business community.* Kearney Centre maintains a mix of uses, including retailing, service, entertainment, and civic uses. This mixed use basis is a foundation for future development.
- *An excellent inventory of developable buildings.* The substantial building stock of the Central Avenue district provided excellent opportunities for development. National Register eligibility, multi-story buildings, and a strong demand for housing also provide incentives for conversion of upper levels of these commercial structures to alternative uses such as housing.
- *A central, highly accessible location.* Kearney Centre remains near the geographical center of the city and is close to most of its neighborhoods. As a result, the district remains a central part of life in the community. It is also highly visible and accessible from major bordering arterials such as 2nd Avenue and 25th Street.
- *The UNK Campus.* The University of Nebraska at Kearney campus is located about 1/2 mile to the west along 25th

OPPORTUNITIES

Street. This adjacency makes Downtown the campus' logical business and entertainment district. In addition, the UNK campus creates a demand for convenient, affordable housing that can be at least partially satisfied in or near Kearney Centre.

- *Civic and Cultural Institutions.* The Museum of Nebraska Art, located in the historic Post Office building and since expanded, is one of the state's finest art museums and is uniquely devoted to the work of Nebraskans. In addition, Kearney Centre is the seat of city government and houses the city's excellent and heavily used library.
- *Public Environment.* The district enjoys a good pedestrian environment. Most traffic on its major commercial streets is local in nature. The district has also benefited from its well-designed streetscape revitalization program, completed during the 1980s. As a result, Kearney Centre provides users with a positive experience.
- *Adequate Parking.* Downtown parking is generally in balance with parking demands. Potential future development could generate a need for additional stalls. New planned projects should furnish their own parking.
- *Distinct Districts.* While a challenge, the separation of Kearney Centre by the rail corridor creates two distinct business districts with individual characteristics. The North Central Avenue district is the center of "mainstream" retailing, while the south of the tracks area exhibits a mix of industrial and service uses. Each of these districts should develop its own integrity, but maintain connections.
- *Tourism Potential.* Kearney has experienced a substantial increase in tourism, because of growing awareness and interest in environment and wildlife, particularly the annual visits of the sandhill cranes and other birds; and the Oregon and Mormon Trails. In addition, Kearney has emerged as a major convention center for Nebraska. Kearney Centre is ideally situated to provide attractions to serve this growing visitor population.

The succeeding section, then, presents development policies and concepts for Kearney Centre based on these substantial assets.

This section presents a strategy designed to help Kearney Centre maintain and expand its role as a regional mixed use center. The downtown development program is designed to provide realistic steps leading to the revitalization of the city center. The overall concept proposes:

- A vision of Kearney Centre as a mixed use district, placing an emphasis on office and residential development, along with civic and community activities to augment a traditional reliance on major retailing.
- A strengthened downtown management system, to coordinate and implement the downtown improvement program and to provide a unified marketing and promotional effort.
- Enhancements to the district's image and public environment, in order to establish a niche as a center for entertainment, specialty shopping, and apartment living.
- Stabilized existing occupancy, and the redevelopment or rehabilitation of specific buildings and sites, including the the upper levels of commercial structures.
- Redevelopment of under-used areas on the south and east for major business development.

The components of this program include:

- DISTRICT MANAGEMENT
- DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES
- A LARGER MIXED USE DISTRICT
- CENTRAL AVENUE
- INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS
- PUBLIC TRANSIT LINKS WITHIN THE CITY
- ADAPTIVE REUSE AND PRESERVATION
- DOWNTOWN PLAN

DISTRICT MANAGEMENT

KEARNEY CENTRE SHOULD STRENGTHEN ITS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE TO MANAGE AND PROMOTE THE COMMERCIAL DISTRICT.

Single-owner shopping centers maintain unified management to promote businesses and the overall facility. While Kearney has developed a strong downtown association, a renewed Kearney Centre Association should fill many of the roles of a shopping center manager. These roles include the preparation and distribution of promotional materials, development of programs, management of improvement projects, and the recruitment of businesses into Kearney Centre. The Association should also maintain a close relationship with both the City and the Community Redevelopment Authority.

The Kearney Centre Association should organize and administer a development foundation, able to pool the resources of private contributors to make strategic investments in Kearney Centre. Examples of important investments may include rehabilitation of important Kearney Centre properties, developing financing packages to maintain key retailers in Kearney Centre, and acting as a general partner for development projects.

However, the most important part of the Association's efforts will be marketing and promotional events. Some directions for the partnership include:

- *A Program of Activities and Events*, providing an ongoing series of attractions that bring people into the center.
- *Marketing and Management Programs*, developing and gaining wide distribution of advertising materials to add the district to Kearney's list of significant visitor attractions.
- *Establishing Uniform Service Standards and Store Hours*, establishing a uniform service mission for Kearney Centre, defining the district as an area in which customers can expect personalized, knowledgeable attention.

DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES

KEARNEY SHOULD INCREASE SPACE FOR NEW HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN WALKING DISTANCE OF THE KEARNEY CENTRE RETAIL DISTRICT.

Downtown housing has proven to be an effective mechanism for the revitalization of traditional business districts.

It is a particularly appropriate strategy in districts that have the potential to experience evening use. Housing can make Kearney Centre a neighborhood as well as a business district. In addition, adaptive reuse of second and third-floors of commercial buildings can increase economic returns for Downtown building owners and provide badly needed housing in the community.

Kearney Centre's building stock and configuration are particularly encouraging for adaptive reuse. The main street orientation generally gives upper levels clear views to both the east and west. The relatively large scale of Central Avenue buildings also provides opportunities for significant projects. These developments can use a variety of financing mechanisms, including tax increment financing, equity financing utilizing the low-income housing tax credit, historic tax credits, and the use of CDBG/HOME funds. Pooling of several adjacent properties into unified developments can provide shared elevator service and help overcome difficulties with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

Kearney Centre should also encourage new development of urban housing on under-used sites on the fringes of the district, particularly on its eastern edge. These developments may include townhouses or apartments that echo the design patterns of the traditional town center. The use of the city's redevelopment powers may be necessary to assemble these sites for new development.

Kearney Centre can be a resource that accommodates a portion of the city's substantial annual housing demand. Conversely, the character and economics of the district can also benefit substantially from its evolution as a mixed-use neighborhood.

A LARGER, MIXED USE CORE DISTRICT

KEARNEY SHOULD SUPPORT THE EXPANSION OF BUSINESS AND OFFICE USES AT ITS CORE TO BETTER MATCH THE NEEDS OF A CITY OF 30,000.

Downtown Kearney can grow by expanding to join other growing civic use areas, expanding its connection to other major community resources. These major growth areas include the Good Samaritan medical complex to the north and

the University of Nebraska at Kearney campus to the west. This can result in a larger mixed use district, anchored by major features with the traditional business core at the fulcrum. Policies which can create these connections include:

- Linking Downtown and the medical campus by redeveloping Central Avenue as a mixed use boulevard between the two facilities. Residential conservation as well as office development should be encouraged along Central between 25th and 31st Streets. In addition, Central Avenue should be redesigned as a boulevard with appropriate lighting and landscaping between the downtown district and the medical campus. This relationship between Downtown and the hospital was established early in Kearney's development history by the siting of Good Samaritan's original main building on the axis of Central Avenue.
- Encouraging housing rehabilitation and restoration along the boulevard portion of 25th Street between Kearney Centre and the university. In addition, the boulevard landscape along this section of 25th Street should be restored.
- Encouraging new residential development on peripheral sites surrounding Kearney Center. Sites for new development on the east side of Kearney Centre can help to cement connections between the district and residential neighborhoods to the east.

CENTRAL AVENUE

KEARNEY SHOULD EMPHASIZE THE BOULEVARD STREET AS A FEATURE THAT UNIFIES ITS CORE RETAIL AREA AND PROVIDES LINKS TO SURROUNDING NEIGHBORHOODS.

Central Avenue is Kearney Centre's unifying street, linking the north and south sides of Kearney through the central business district. Its character as a central street should be strengthened, with branches that link it to peripheral arterials such as Second Avenue. Elements of a Central Avenue development strategy include:

- A revitalized landscaping and public environment program. This program should emphasize the quality of

Central Avenue as a public space, using special street design features including graphics, lighting, street landscaping, and furniture. Central Avenue should take on the role of a civic corridor, complementing the faster vehicular traffic of 2nd Avenue two blocks to the west.

- Development of entrance features on peripheral arterials, most notably at 22nd and 2nd Avenue; and at Central and 25th Street.
- Development on or near Central of a town green or festival street, providing a place for special events and programs. This feature provides opportunities for events that both reinforce the civic character of Central Avenue and provide a program of events for Kearney Centre.
- Treatment of the Union Pacific Railroad crossing as a special feature, with railroad related themes and beautification adjacent to the right-of-way. The railroad corridor is now a relatively dusty, industrial space. However, the drama of the railroad, along with its dominance in the visual and audio environment of Kearney Centre, can make this corridor an important design feature.
- Maintenance of the grade crossing at the UP tracks, with investigation of a pedestrian underpass or overpass. An overpass should be developed with special thematic features.

INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS

STREET IMPROVEMENTS SHOULD BE USED TO EASE CROSSING OF MAJOR STREETS AND TO INCREASE THE VISIBILITY OF PEDESTRIANS.

Kearney Centre's Business Improvement District project during the 1980s produced an appealing streetscape. This quality public environment has reinforced the district's business setting. However, the district's major streets are wide and accommodate diagonal parking on both sides. These characteristics increase the difficulties of crossing streets for pedestrians, particularly senior citizens.

Corner and crossing nodes should be installed to ease crossing at critical points. Amenities of these nodes should include trees, benches, ornamental lighting, and information kiosks. Their design should include a contrasting paving surface, such as brick. In addition to concentrating landscaping and ornamental paving in strategic areas, nodes allow handi-capped accessibility in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, decrease the length of street crossings for pedestrians, increase pedestrian safety, and protect parked cars.

PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION LINKS WITHIN THE CITY

KEARNEY SHOULD INVESTIGATE DEVELOPMENT OF A SERVICE ROUTE BASED TRANSIT SYSTEM, FEATURING A MAJOR STOP AT KEARNEY CENTER.

Kearney, in common with many medium-sized communities, provides public transportation only through limited paratransit services. While the subject of public transportation has been discussed in the community, the traditional model of transit oriented to commuting trips makes little sense in a compact, largely automobile oriented community. However, specific transit business opportunities, including the university, increasing tourism, and substantial populations of young and old people, suggest investigation of a different transit model -- the service route.

Service routes connect key features and attractions of the community together along routes that serve specific populations. The routes may change for different clientele at different times of day. For example, one route operating at specific times might meet the needs of seniors, while a different route, covered by the same equipment, may take children from schools to after-school attractions such as the YMCA. During tourist season, a special run may take visitors from hotels to Kearney Centre and to crane watching areas at sundown.

However, the development of a service route-based transit system, designed specifically to meet the needs of Kearney, should feature Kearney Centre. Graphics, "stations," historic interpretation, and other features should be utilized to make a transit stop into a special, festive space for Kearney Centre.

Transit service, should it emerge, will be focused on an expanded Downtown district, developed in concert with a growing medical center.

ADAPTIVE REUSE AND PRESERVATION

HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND REHABILITATION OF KEY BUILDINGS SHOULD BE ENCOURAGED TO COMPLEMENT OTHER PRIVATE AND PUBLIC INVESTMENT.

Kearney Centre's built environment is one of its most salient features. The scale and continuity of buildings in the Central Avenue district and surrounding streets helps define the special character of the area and gives it a unique sense of place. As a result, development policies should capitalize on this quality to the district's economic and environmental advantage. This principle should be implemented through three efforts: adaptive reuse, building facade rehabilitation, and a preservation ordinance.

- *Adaptive Reuse.* The city and local lenders should encourage the improvement of several existing, occupied buildings in the center of Kearney Centre, and develop an ongoing program to finance and encourage reuse of under-utilized spaces. This program should make use of available sources of funding, including TIF, CDBG/HOME funds, and tax credits, combined with participation by local lenders.
- *Facade Improvements.* The community should develop a facade improvement program, providing readily available and affordable financing for facade and code improvements in buildings.
- *National Register Listing and Preservation Ordinance.* The city should work to list Kearney Centre on the National Register of Historic Places and to implement a program of historic designation and design review.

DOWNTOWN PLAN

KEARNEY CENTRE SHOULD DEVELOP A PHYSICAL AND ECONOMIC VISION OF ITS FUTURE THROUGH A DOWNTOWN DEVELOPMENT PLAN.

Kearney Centre has sustained itself through the 1980s and early 1990s by developing a coherent marketing image and physical vision during the Business Improvement District planning process of the 1980s. However, the district faces renewed competition with the expansion of mass retailers during the 1990s. Therefore, a new planning process is necessary to define a new vision and niche for the district, designed to take advantage of contemporary opportunities. This process should address:

- Market focuses, such as services and specialty retailing.
- Programmatic visions, defining the character of the experience of being in Kearney Centre.
- Design visions, establishing design themes and improvements for the district.
- Service visions, defining opportunities for downtown and establishing the methods by which these opportunities will be developed.

The vision plan should be developed through a participatory process, involving a broad range of businesses, property Owners, and others who have an interest in the character of Kearney Centre. The plan should include a strategic, implementable, step-by-step program that creates clear implementation responsibilities and techniques.

8

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS

ASSESSMENT OF HOUSING PATTERNS AND ISSUES

The continued economic health of Kearney is dependent on the city's ability to conserve existing housing and provide new residences for a growing population.

Kearney's existing and future housing stock is critical to the city's future growth and development. Neighborhoods are one of Kearney's most important economic development amenities, and the city's housing supply represents its single largest cumulative capital investment. This chapter considers housing and neighborhood conditions and establishes a program to improve housing and neighborhood quality of life.

This chapter examines dynamics of Kearney's housing market and reviews neighborhood conditions, including housing, streets, sidewalks, neighborhood public facilities, and private amenities. It also suggests general policies and actions to assure neighborhood vitality.

Basic goals for neighborhood-based policies are presented in this section. These goals begin with the assumption that Kearney's neighborhoods have special, unique qualities that demand individualized actions to:

■ CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT IN KEARNEY THAT OFFERS BETTER HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL.

The city's recent growth has placed pressure on the housing market, reducing the supply of vacancy units and limiting housing choices for many residents. Even with substantial new housing construction, the city struggles to meet the housing needs of its growing population of university students, retirees, young families and long-time residents seeking to better their own housing situations. Kearney must work to meet the needs of all in order to prosper.

■ BUILD AN ENVIRONMENT WHICH ALLOWS PEOPLE FROM ALL PARTS OF THE CITY TO PARTICIPATE IN ITS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOOD GOALS

As programs are implemented which change or improve the physical form of the city, it is critical to keep in mind the process that must be present to get the job done. Planning and city improvement is as much about people participating in decision making as it is about physical improvements. Neighborhoods that are strong usually have a nucleus of residents who understand the importance of citizen participation in making communities work.

■ CREATE COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS THAT WILL UNITE NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE CITY.

Strengthening cooperation and involvement of residents throughout the city must include the creation of physical connections that develop subdivisions into neighborhoods of the city. Community streets, parks, and public facilities can work to strengthen the city and its identity to residents.

■ ASSURE THAT EACH NEIGHBORHOOD IN KEARNEY REMAINS HEALTHY.

The success of a community depends upon the ability of its neighborhoods to achieve a wholeness that provides a good living environment. A neighborhood's public facilities and services must be readily available to all sections of the community. In addition, access to retail services and other private amenities are also important in defining the quality of wholeness. Neighborhood policies and strategies must address both public and private sector service issues if the city is to provide complete living environments.

■ ASSURE THAT EACH NEIGHBORHOOD PROVIDES A GOOD RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENT FOR ITS RESIDENTS.

A good residential neighborhood provides high quality schools, churches, day care facilities, parks, and cultural facilities to support the city's living environment. One of the most fundamental services a city can provide is to protect housing areas from major intrusions and hazards. Deteriorated streets, traffic problems, poor property maintenance, poor pedestrian circulation, and code violations can diminish the living quality that neighborhoods offer. These conditions interfere with the

resident's enjoyment of their own property, reduce property values, and make neighborhood rejuvenation more difficult. Thus, neighborhood policies must accentuate the positive aspects of a neighborhood, and seek to reduce negative or deteriorating influences.

Housing Characteristics in Kearney

This discussion will examine housing value and physical characteristics of Kearney's housing stock.

■ Housing Occupancy and Tenure

Table 8-1 compares changes in housing occupancy for Kearney. During the last decade, Kearney has added more than 1300 housing units, about 560 (43%) owner-occupied and 928 (57%) renter occupied units. The city's vacancy rate has nearly halved in that period, declining to about 4.3% by 1990. Median home values have increased by more than 13% since 1980, while the median contract rent in Kearney has risen by 56%.

Table 8-2 illustrates the composition of Kearney's housing stock, as reported in the 1990 Census. More than 10% of Kearney's housing stock is in mobile home units, with another 28% comprised in multi-family units. About 62% of all housing units are in single-family structures.

■ Housing Values and Rental Rates in Kearney

Housing values increased significantly in Kearney during the 1980s. In 1990, owner-occupied housing in Kearney exhibited a median value of \$54,400, the median highest home value among comparable communities. Table 8-3 compares changes in the value of housing for Kearney and other comparable communities. Most communities experience a greater increase in home value during this period than Kearney, which posted an increase of 13.33% from average 1980 values. Kearney's median contract rent is also the highest in the region, and increased at a greater rate than most comparable cities between 1980 and 1990.

HOUSING VALUES AND RENTAL RATES

**TABLE 8-1:
Changes in Key Housing Occupancy Indicators, 1980-1990**

	1980	1990	Change 1980-90	% Change 1980-90
Total Housing Units	8,070	9,372	+1,302	+16.13
Owner Occupied Units	4,411	4,971	+560	+12.70
% Owner Occupied	54.7	53.0	-1.7%	--
Renter Occupied Units	3,074	4,002	+928	+30.19
% Renter Occupied	38.1	42.7	4.6%	--
Vacant Units	585	699	-186	-31.79
Vacancy Rate	7.2	4.3	-2.9%	--
Median Value	\$48,000	\$54,400	+\$6,400	+13.33
Median Contract Rent	\$175	\$273	+ \$98	+56.00

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 8-2:
Composition of Kearney's Housing Stock by Building
Type, 1990**

Number of Units in Structure	All Units	Occupied Units Only
1-Family Detached	5,618	5,225
1-Family Attached/Other	219	207
2-unit	641	609
3-4 units	686	644
Over 5 units	1,341	1,268
Mobile Home Units	979	923
Total Units	9,392	8,973

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census.

Table 8-4 examines the distribution of values for housing in these same five communities. The lower quartile is the value of rent below which only 25% of all units in the city fall; the upper quartile is a value or rent that is higher than that of 75% of the city's housing units. Half of all units fall above or below the median.

Among comparable communities, Kearney has the greatest distribution of housing value around its respective mean. This suggests that the city is relatively diverse in terms of overall housing values and has the largest differences between the most expensive and least expensive homes in the community. The age of a city's housing stock has an

influence on this factor, as does the demand for housing created by local and regional economic conditions. Kearney has experienced substantial growth in population over the past decade. A significant amount of the new housing construction during the 1990s has been in expensive subdivisions. These higher priced developments stand in contrast to older areas immediately surrounding Kearney Centre and immediately south of the railroad.

**TABLE 8-3:
Comparative Housing Value Trends:
Kearney and Other Communities**

	Home Value			Contract Rent		
	1980	1990	%	1980	1990	% change
Kearney	48,000	54,400	13.3	175	273	56.0
Grand Island	41,000	47,600	16.1	177	256	44.6
Hastings	41,300	44,200	7.0	158	252	59.5
Columbus	45,250	52,800	16.8	170	259	52.4
Norfolk	42,100	51,500	22.3	177	256	44.6

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

**TABLE 8-4:
Housing Value Distribution: Kearney and Other
Communities, 1990.**

	Home Value			Contract Rent		
	Low Quart	Median	High Quart	Low Quart	Median	High Quart
Kearney	41,400	54,400	71,500	202	273	346
Grand Island	35,600	47,600	61,900	187	256	323
Hastings	32,200	44,200	60,700	191	252	306
Columbus	41,400	52,800	67,900	196	259	324
Norfolk	37,700	51,500	67,500	196	256	300

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census

The rent deviations of the five cities are relatively similar, although the rent levels are not. Rents in Kearney are above levels in comparable communities. The relatively high rent level at the high quartile indicates that Kearney has a larger supply of relatively high cost or luxury rental housing.

■ Construction Activity in Kearney

CONSTRUCTION ACTIVITY

Kearney experienced substantial new housing development, with the construction of more than 1,296 single family and multi-family units between 1980 and 1990. New construction increased the city's housing stock by more than 16% during this period.

Table 8-5 illustrates the city building permit activity since 1984. In the years immediately following the 1990 Census, about 1,568 housing units were built including 814 single family and 754 multi-family units. Single-family home construction occurred in all parts of Kearney, with the heaviest activity focused in Northeast and Northwest areas. Several mature in-city neighborhoods also experienced significant housing growth during the decade on vacant lots.

The largest concentration of new multi-family apartment construction occurs north of 39th Street in Northwest Kearney. Major new retirement centers are being developed northwest of 39th Street and 6th Avenue and 56th Street and 2nd Avenue in Northwest Kearney. Multi-family construction in Kearney has accelerated in recent years, adding 566 units since 1991, ranging from an additional 126 to 168 units annually.

**TABLE 8-5:
Residential Construction Permits for Kearney, 1984-1990**

Year	Number of Single-Family Units	Number of Multi-Family Units	Total Number of Units
1996	98	165	263
1995	102	201	303
1994	139	126	265
1993	164	168	332
1992	128	150	278
1991	105	96	201
1990	78	16	94
1989	52	4	56
1988	55	36	91
1987	31	47	78
1986	33	6	39
1985	32	42	74
1984	69	120	189
Total	1,086	1,177	2,263

Source: City of Kearney

AFFORDABILITY

■ Housing Affordability

The pricing of a community's housing supply in relation to the income of its residents helps determine whether the city's housing is affordable for its citizens. Theoretically, a household budget must be divided among basic housing costs, other essential needs, and costs to maintain the house. Those households which must spend a disproportionately large share of their income for basic housing have less money for other essentials, and fewer resources to maintain their homes and neighborhoods. Table 8-6 evaluates the availability of affordable housing in the City of Kearney. This analysis concentrates on those people who are most likely to experience housing affordability problems - those whose earnings are at or below Nebraska's statewide household median income.

The table compares the distribution of households by income group to the distribution of housing units in price ranges affordable to each respective income group. A positive balance indicates that more units exist within a specific cost range than people who require housing in that range; a negative balance indicates that fewer units exist in the cost range than people who can afford those units.

The analysis indicates that:

- Kearney has a significant shortage of units affordable to the lowest income population groups. An estimated 2,955 households in Kearney require housing priced at \$25,000 or below, or requiring monthly payments of \$200 or below, while only 1,361 units exist within those ranges. In many cases, these lower cost units also display some signs of distress.
- Kearney had 6,436 housing in 1990 valued between \$25,000 and \$75,000 or with rents between \$200 and \$500, compared to 3,461 households requiring housing in these ranges. Superficially, this suggests that Kearney has an adequate supply of housing for moderate income groups. However, a shortage of housing with values above \$75,000 increases competition for housing in these middle cost ranges. In addition, many people with higher incomes will continue to occupy "lower cost" houses out of personal or economic

EXISTING HOUSING: AFFORDABILITY

choice. Thus, the production of moderate cost housing remains a significant priority for Kearney.

In addition, a portion of these “affordable” housing units are off-campus rental units used by on school-year basis by students of the University of Nebraska-Kearney. While student demand tends to increase the supply of affordable rental units in the community, availability for other low income residents is limited.

- The city displays a significant deficit of houses in the \$75,000 to \$100,000 range. This is a key area of community concern, because it represents the typical targets for affordable new construction and first-time home buyers. In addition, Kearney, in 1990, displayed a relative lack of higher-cost housing to provide a move-up resource. Since 1990, a significant part of Kearney’s new development activity has addressed this high-end market.

This analysis suggests that Kearney’s primary affordable housing agenda should include:

- Securing additional low cost permanent and transitional housing, and
- Preserving/maintaining existing units serving low income residents.

**TABLE 8-6:
Housing Affordability Analysis for Kearney**

Income Range	% of City Median	% of HH	# House-holds in Each Range	Affordable Range for Owner Units	# of Owner Units	Affordable Range for Renter Units	# of Renter Units	Total Aff Units	Balance
\$0-10,000	0-43	20.23	1,824	\$0-15,000	59	\$0-10	247	306	-1,518
\$10-14,999	43-64	12.54	1,131	\$15-25,000	246	100-200	809	1,055	-76
\$15-24,999	64-107	20.14	1,816	\$25-50,000	1,782	200-350	2,027	3,809	+1,993
\$25-34,999	107-150	18.25	1,645	\$50-75,000	1,870	350-500	757	2,627	+982
\$35-49,999	150-214	14.26	1,286	\$75-100,000	645	500-650	113	759	-527
\$50-74,999	214-325	10.13	913	\$100-150,000	263	650-750	17	280	-633
\$75,000+	Over 325	4.45	414	\$150,000+	106	750+	31	137	-267
Total		100.00	9,016		4,971		4,002	8,973	-43

Sources: U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1990 Census; RDG Cross Gardner Shukert, 1996.

HOUSING AFFORDABILITY • HOUSING CONDITIONS

- Developing moderate and middle-cost housing, in the range of \$75,000 to \$100,000 or with rents in the range of \$500.

The community should continue to secure housing assistance funds to provide subsidies to low income residents who may only find housing at higher rent levels. Rental subsidies from housing authorities are a typical source of assistance.

■ Housing Conditions

Table 8-7 summarizes the results of a citywide housing condition survey, conducted as part of this plan. The survey included 5,802 single family units, 1,814 multi-family units, and 956 mobile home units in Kearney and 121 public housing units in areas within and just outside the city.

**TABLE 8-7:
Housing Conditions: City of Kearney**

Single Family								
Condition Rating	Pre-War	%	Post-War	%	Post 1990	%	Total	%
Poor	485	23.5	14	0.6	10	0.0	5096	8.8
Fair	872	42.2	124	5.0	2	0.0	1,001	17.3
Good	670	32.4	1,068	43.0	53	0.0	1,821	31.4
Excellent	38	1.8	1,279	51.5	1,154	0.0	2,471	42.6
Total	2,065	35.6	2,485	42.8	1,252	21.6	5,802	100.00
Other Residential								
Condition Rating	2-4 Units	%	5+ Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority	
Poor	19	4.5	67	4.8	0	92 pads	0	
Fair	54	12.7	239	17.2	0	276 pads	0	
Good	97	22.8	335	24.1	0	419 pads	0	
Excellent	255	60.0	748	53.9	0	169 pads	121	
Total	425	100.0	1,389	100.0	0	956 pads	121	

Source: Housing Condition Survey; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.

CITY-WIDE HOUSING CONDITIONS • SUMMARY

The overall survey indicates that Kearney has a very good overall housing supply, with specific areas of concern. About 1,500 single-family units, 73 units in two- to four-unit structures, and 300 multi-family units require significant rehabilitation. The largest part of Kearney's single-family housing stock (4,292 units, or 74%) requires no attention, or has minor maintenance needs. About 64% of this housing stock has been built since World War II.

Computation of overall rehabilitation needs assumes that houses in "poor" condition will eventually drop out of the housing supply through demolition; houses in "fair" condition require substantial rehabilitation, estimated at \$10,000 to \$15,000 per unit; houses in "good" condition require minor repair, estimated on the average to incur a cost of \$2,000 per unit; and units in "excellent to good condition" require no further investment beyond routine maintenance. Based on this computation, the capital value of all rehabilitation needs of the community ranges from \$13.6 million to \$18.6 million.

Of the city's 2,065 housing units more than 50 years old, 65.7% are in fair or poor condition, requiring substantial rehabilitation. These 1,357 units are located primarily in neighborhoods of the city with a concentration of pre-war housing. About 54% of these units in poor and fair condition are located immediately west, north and east of Kearney Centre. These areas comprise 53.8% of the pre-war housing stock. Neighborhoods south of the UPRR contain 32% of all pre-war housing in need of substantial rehabilitation in the city. Southeast Kearney contains 388 units, (29% of all pre-war housing in need of substantial rehabilitation), while Southwest Kearney contains 180 units, or nearly 13% of such units in the city.

Kearney's housing condition problems are not exclusive to that part of the housing stock which was built prior to World War II. Since the end of World War II, Kearney has added approximately 3,737 new single family units, representing more than 64.4% of its current housing stock. About 26% of this post-war housing stock requires substantial rehabilitation.

Mobile home units constitute a relatively large percentage of Kearney's housing stock (956 units, or 11%), about 38% of

HOUSING SUMMARY

these units are in “fair to poor” condition. The improvement of design and maintenance standards for mobile home facilities becomes an important issue for planning implementation through development ordinances.

Kearney’s multi-family residential units display less rehabilitation needs than its single family units, largely because almost all of Kearney’s multi-family units have been built within the last twenty years.

■ Summary

An analysis of Kearney’s housing conditions reveals that:

- During the last decade, Kearney has added more than 1,300 housing units, with more renter occupied units than owner-occupied units. Kearney has a relatively low home ownership rate, which declined slightly from 54% to 53%.
- About 10% of Kearney’s housing units are mobile homes, with another 28% comprised in multi-family units. About 62% of all housing units are in single-family structures.
- The city’s vacancy rate has nearly halved since 1980, declining to about 4.3% by 1990.
- Kearney housing, taken as a whole, exhibits higher costs and rent levels than comparable cities in the region.
- Housing values in Kearney display a relatively wide relationship to the median when compared to other cities in the region. This means that Kearney has a relatively wider range of housing prices and values, especially at the upper price levels, than comparable communities.
- Kearney has a relatively larger supply of high cost, or luxury rental housing than comparable communities.
- Since 1989 (including the first six months of 1995) about 1,178 housing units were built including 668 single family and 510 multi-family units.
- Multi-family units are concentrated near the University along the 39th Street corridor in the north part of the city. Some townhomes or duplexes exist north of the hospital and

HOUSING SUMMARY

in the south part of the city. Construction since 1984 has added nearly 1,000 new multi-family units.

- A significant proportion (26%) of Kearney's single family supply of housing is in fair or poor condition. These problems are concentrated in the city's pre-World War II housing stock, and exist mainly in neighborhoods immediately surrounding Kearney Centre.
- An analysis of affordability of Kearney's housing stock indicates:
 - a shortage of units affordable to the city's lowest income groups.
 - a high degree of competition for housing in lower cost ranges, because of occupancy of lower cost units by higher income households in the city.
 - a shortage of housing within moderate price ranges from \$75,000 to \$100,000.
 - in 1990, a relative shortage of higher cost units, a deficit that has been a major focus of the private development market since 1990.

The following section provides housing policies and examines the characteristics and conditions of each individual planning district in detail.

HOUSING POLICIES

Land use policies, including provision of adequate land and supporting public facilities for residential development, are important components of a housing policy. This section considers additional issues for Kearney's housing market.

The city's primary housing challenges include:

- A shortfall of available housing to meet growth demands, resulting in limited choice and a relative inability to meet the needs of new residents.
- Affordability, affecting about 761 of the area's lowest income households.
- Maintenance of the structural integrity of older homes and the quality of Kearney's existing housing supply.

Policies which address these issues include:

- **A HOUSING PARTNERSHIP**
- **PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT FINANCING**
- **RETIREMENT HOUSING**
- **NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION**
- **A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES**
- **MANUFACTURED HOME DEVELOPMENT**

A HOUSING PARTNERSHIP

KEARNEY SHOULD CONSIDER THE CREATION OF A HOUSING PARTNERSHIP, ORGANIZED TO DEVELOP AFFORDABLE HOUSING WITHIN GROWTH AREAS.

Kearney should consider the creation of a Housing Partnership, a lenders consortium oriented toward the development of affordable single- and multi-family housing on sites integrated within growth areas.

The partnership has two basic roles to play in housing development:

- It should provide short-term financing for development of affordable single-family housing; and more flexible financing for specific project types such as downtown housing conversions.

- It should act as a financier of developments of Community Housing Development Organization (CHDO's) such as Mid-Nebraska Community Services.

■ The Partnership as a Financer of Private Affordable Developments

In its capacity as a catalyst for private development, the partnership should:

- Develop a second mortgage loan program to provide reductions in principal to qualified homebuyers. Under this program, loan funds from sources such as CDBG are blended with private loans to produce reduced effective interest rates or decreased borrowing requirements.
- Help spread the risk of financing specific development projects that respond to market requirements and community development objectives, but are perceived as risky developments. Downtown housing development may fall within this category of projects. The Partnership may also be a lender of Tax Increment Financing funds for rehabilitation or affordable multi-family developments using TIF for acquisition or development.
- Utilize existing external programs, such as the Federal Home Loan Bank affordable housing program, special subsidy programs of the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, state of CDBG funds, or the Community Investment Program of the Federal national Mortgage Administration. These programs provide low-interest loans for first-time home buyers; second deferred payment mortgages to lower housing payments; and relaxation of down payment requirements for mortgage loans purchased by the FNMA.
- Capitalize a construction financing pool with loaned funds from local lenders and businesses. Pool provides revolving front-end financing for builders and developers at lower than market interest rates. After a specified period, funds are returned to original contributors.

These programs are designed to lower the cost of monthly payments to homebuyers, ultimately making housing more affordable to moderate income people.

■ The Partnership as a Partner with CHDO's

The Partnership may act as a partner with the Kearney area's CHDO in major development projects by:

- Helping to organize low-income tax credits to create limited partnerships to inject equity into rental housing development.

- Provide low-interest, blended second mortgage financing through state-administered HOME program. Second mortgages should put city or redevelopment authority in an equity position.

- Arranging debt financing to match other sources and administer project development.

Through these techniques, the partnership should develop or promote the development of a major affordable housing development during the next five years, providing up to 75 units. This development should occur on the edge of Northeast and Southeast Kearney, integrating single-family and multi-family housing.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT FINANCING

KEARNEY SHOULD REDUCE THE COST OF LAND ACQUISITION AND INFRASTRUCTURE DEVELOPMENT BORNE BY HOUSING UNITS IN AFFORDABLE DEVELOPMENT.

Kearney should use tools to provide financing assistance for public improvements such as sewer extensions, intersection, major streets, and other necessary facilities. The cost of providing infrastructure and site improvements typically accounts for \$10,000 to \$12,000 of a house's cost. Financing tools can help to lower this initial cost to a buyer, or lessen the initial financing burden to a developer.

Potential financing tools include:

- **Tax Increment Financing.** Within a TIF district, the tax basis of a site is frozen at pre-development levels. The added taxes created by development are then used to repay publicly-issued revenue bonds that financed public

improvements. Thus, the future taxes created by a residential development pay for improvements, allowing a pass-through of the savings directly to homeowners or indirectly to renters. Kearney has designated at least four areas as a TIF district, opening the use of this technique for assisting affordable housing development.

TIF diverts taxes that would go to all jurisdictions, including the school system, to help finance a specific project. Therefore, the technique should be used in a focused, targeted way, with the partnership of the Kearney Community Schools. TIF is most appropriate for projects that would not otherwise occur without the assistance program.

- ***Shared Risk/Front-End Financing.*** A shared risk approach is most appropriate for situation that do not require a subsidy, but do need risk-cushioning for the developer. When this is not feasible in subsidized projects, improvements may be publicly funded. The shared risk approach represents a middle ground and provides an alternative to the use of Sanitary and Improvements Districts to finance major public improvements that will be used by several developments.

With this technique, the city finances infrastructure through the sale of bonds or the use of appropriated public funds. The city is then repaid by a specific charge for each lot, paid at the time of issuance of a building permit. The device shares the risk of development by lessening the initial risk of financing for the private developer. Yet, it provides a pay-back to the city. The tool is particularly effective in Kearney's potentially high demand housing market.

- ***Public Funding.*** In some situations, direct public financing of infrastructure and improvements will be required or desirable. This device will be necessary in projects that require significant subsidy, but in which the use of TIF is either unacceptable or unfeasible; or when the benefit of a public improvement flows to the general community rather than to a specific development.

Public funding tools include general obligation bonds or appropriations of general funds; Community Development Block Grants, targeted to benefit projects that have a direct

benefit to low and moderate income families; and the use of various state grant programs.

- *Private Financing.* Private financing will continue to be a staple of infrastructure development in Kearney. The economics of private development and city policies will help to assure that projects require relatively short, incremental extensions of sewers, streets, and utility services. This, in turn, will help produce a compact development pattern and long-term economics to the city as it provides public services.

RETIREMENT HOUSING

KEARNEY SHOULD ENCOURAGE CONSTRUCTION OF AN INDEPENDENT LIVING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SENIORS.

Kearney provides a superior environment for senior citizens. About 2,662, or 11% of the city's residents are over the age of 65. Kearney's amenities, such as the clinics and hospital, attract retirement age residents from the surrounding region. This increases the demand for housing, which is already pronounced among young family households and low-income households. Kearney should encourage more new market-rate senior housing developments.

Affordability problems are often most severe among low-income elderly renters. Kearney provides 121 public housing units for low-income families and elderly residents, and numerous programs exist to provide supplemental rent assistance. Demographic, income and housing statistics suggest a significant additional demand for lower cost retirement housing. Such a project, which may provide some support services, meets demonstrated housing needs and may free up some of the city's existing single-family supply. Development of such a project may be a priority for the proposed housing partnership.

In addition to direct project assistance, Kearney is experiencing development of continuing care retirement centers, projects which permit aging in place from independent living to various forms of living assistance. Kearney's development regulations should permit flexibility in permitting these facilities in a variety of urban settings, including residential neighborhoods.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION

KEARNEY SHOULD CONTINUE ITS NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAMS AND INSTITUTE AN EFFORT TO REHABILITATE HOUSES IN NEEDS OF REPAIR.

The preservation of existing neighborhoods and housing stock become especially important when housing shortages exist. Most of Kearney's affordable housing stock is already in place. Indeed, its rehabilitation or preventive maintenance is the city's most cost-effective way of assuring a continued supply of good housing. Kearney must institute measures to repair its large number of existing housing units in poor and fair condition.

Kearney should continue zoning and land use policies which protect the integrity of its neighborhoods. Zoning policies should include the implementation of neighborhood Conservation overlay districts, designed to maintain a delicate mixture of uses in traditional city neighborhoods primarily south of 25th Street. These districts can prevent the gradual erosion of owner-occupied neighborhoods by conversion of residential structures to multiple unit uses. In addition, it should develop rehabilitation programs (including the use of private loans leveraged by CDBG or HOME funds) to promote the rehabilitation of the 26% of its housing stock that is in need of significant rehabilitation. These programs should emphasize the leveraging of private funds to extend the use of scarce public resources.

A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES

KEARNEY'S NEW GROWTH AREAS, ALONG WITH LAND DEVELOPMENT REGULATIONS, SHOULD ENCOURAGE A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES.

Kearney should continue to integrate a variety of housing types in new growth areas. Land development ordinances should provide adequate flexibility to accommodate innovative or economical designs within traditional town patterns. Some of these configurations may include:

- **Cluster Subdivisions.** In clusters, the overall density of a single-family project, including open space, must comply

with the maximum density requirement of the zoning district. However, individual lots have smaller area and setback requirements. Clusters are useful when infrastructure costs should be minimized or environmental features exist which should be protected.

- ***Single-Family Attached Development.*** Here, single-family units comply with the minimum lot sizes of the zoning district, but have a common wall. The opposite side yard is ordinarily larger than normal. This housing type provides construction economies and more useful side yards.
- ***Townhouses.*** Townhouses, which are three or more attached units, can be developed as owner-occupied or rental housing. They provide construction and land use efficiencies, while continuing the sense of a single-family neighborhood.
- ***Multi-family development.*** Multi-family development should be integrated into the structure of new neighborhoods, rather than developed on peripheral sites. Design standards should provide a residential scale and prevent creating a “project” look.

MANUFACTURED HOME DEVELOPMENT

KEARNEY SHOULD ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH-QUALITY MANUFACTURED HOME SUBDIVISION ENVIRONMENTS.

Manufactured housing development has emerged as a potential instrument to provide relatively immediate and lower cost solutions to affordable housing needs. Manufactured housing subdivisions can be designed to provide good environments for residents. However, rightly or wrongly, they often create conflicts with neighbors in adjacent or nearby conventional single-family housing, who fear neighborhood effects and reduced property values. Kearney should plan for and encourage a limited amount of manufactured home subdivision development. This can help to channel the efforts of potential developers to sites and housing standards that support city objectives. Likewise, problems associated with location of mobile homes on relatively small sites within otherwise conventional development can be avoided. Elements of this policy include:

- *Encouragement for manufactured home subdivisions.* Manufactured home subdivisions are indistinguishable from conventional subdivisions, except that manufactured homes are established on owner-occupied lots. This housing form can combine a sense of permanence and proprietorship with the affordability of pre-constructed units.
- *Designation of specific parts of the city for manufactured home development.* These areas should be in the direction of the present growth, in order to prevent the creation of subdivisions that are isolated from the rest of the community. Manufactured home development may be a part of the Northeast and Southeast Kearney growth areas, on sites consistent with best zoning and design standards.
- *Site development standards.* The City should adopt improved standards for manufactured home development. These standards should provide a two acre minimum park size, installation of adequate circulation and utility systems, open space, unit design standards that are compatible with conventional residential construction, and peripheral landscaping and buffering. These standards can help to assure that manufactured home developments are well-planned and consistent in appearance with their neighborhoods.

Neighborhood Planning Districts

Kearney's neighborhoods represent at least ten distinct living areas, which for the purposes of this plan are identified as neighborhood Districts. These areas are, within themselves, often rather similar in relation to physical characteristics such as age, density, and type of housing unit. The most varied housing characteristics can be found in older, pre-war neighborhoods.

This section examines conditions in the ten neighborhood planning districts, to aid in the development of strategies and planning principles which are tailored to the needs of each area. Since a good city is a network of healthy parts, neighborhood planning districts must not be viewed as self-contained. Their boundaries are extremely fluid as people travel and conduct daily business throughout the community. A key priority of this plan is to unify areas and reduce sectionalism.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING DISTRICTS

■ Definition of Districts

The ten Kearney planning districts, their approximate boundaries, and general characteristics are as follows:

- **Northwest Kearney.** One of the city's developing areas, this neighborhood primarily consists of moderately expensive single-family subdivisions and multi-family buildings situated north of 39th Street. The area includes significant large-scale commercial development, the new YMCA and new building sites of several relocated community churches. Boundaries of the neighborhood are 56th Street on the north, 2nd Avenue on the east, and 29th Street on the south.
- **Northeast Kearney.** This area of recently developed moderate to expensive single-family homes includes a mix of detached units, condominiums, duplexes, elderly housing complexes, and multi-family units. The district abuts Hilltop Mall, Wal-Mart and the Second Avenue regional retailing corridor. Boundaries of the Northeast neighborhood are 56th Street on the north, 39th Street on the south, the Peavey elevator railroad spur to the east, and 2nd Avenue on the west.
- **West Kearney.** This neighborhood is a mature but developing area, containing relatively expensive single-family homes and a few multi-family buildings situated northwest of the UNK campus and Lake Kearney. Recent housing within the neighborhood is among the city's most expensive, and adjoins many large-scale civic and institutions, including the high school, middle school, the country club, and numerous city parks and community churches. Boundaries of the district are 39th Street on the north, and the UPRR on the south. The east boundary is defined as a line extending from 2nd Avenue near 29th Street, along the topographic ridge that runs through Harmon Park and UNK to US 30. South of UNK, the east boundary is the NPPD power canal.
- **West Central Kearney.** This neighborhood of older pre-war homes adjoins UNK to the east and south, and reflects the influence of transitional student housing, fraternity and sorority houses, and mixed housing occupancy. Housing condition is fair to good overall, and the neighborhood contains the second highest number of units in need of

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING DISTRICTS

repair in the city. The neighborhood also includes community institutions such as the Pioneer Park, Central Elementary, and numerous churches. Boundaries are 29th Street on the north, North UNK and the NPPD power canal on the west, the UPRR on the south, and 2nd Avenue on the east.

- **East Midtown Kearney.** This neighborhood contains a diverse mix of single family homes, with about one-third pre-war and two-thirds post-war constructed units. Significant community facilities, such as Kearney Catholic High School and the Good Samaritan Hospital and medical clinics and the Buffalo County Fairgrounds attract residents from throughout the community to the neighborhood. This area is bordered by 39th Street on the north, 25th Street (US 30) on the south, the Peavey grain elevator railroad spur on the east, and 2nd Avenue on the west.

- **East Central Kearney.** This area lies just east of Kearney Centre and contains the oldest homes in the city. The area is a mix of modest single family homes, apartments, commercial and industrial services, and civic and public facilities, such as the post office. The district's multi-family units range from large apartment buildings to conversion units. The area is bordered by 25th Street (US 30) on the north; the UPRR on the south and east, and 2nd Avenue on the west.

- **East Outlying Kearney.** This area lies beyond the city limits, east of the Peavey grain elevator railroad spur and north of US 30. The area is dominated by the presence of several huge mobile home parks, major employers along the US 30 commercial highway corridor, and the Kearney Airport, with its industrial parks sites. These uses represent only a small portion of this largely undeveloped district.

- **Southwest Kearney.** This neighborhood of primarily single family homes is a blend of old and new, with much of its housing built in the pre-war period or after 1908. Historic homes in the east part of the neighborhood about the 2nd Avenue commercial corridor, while more recent housing extends to the west. Multi-family units are primarily focused on 11th Street. The area is bordered on the north by the UPRR, the east by 2nd Avenue, and the south by the North Channel of the Platte River.

NEIGHBORHOOD PLANNING DISTRICTS

- **Southeast Kearney.** This neighborhood is Kearney's most diverse district - a mixture of older industrial buildings, businesses, and single-family homes located south of Kearney Centre. Multi-family development is concentrated in areas south of 8th Street. The neighborhood also includes community institutions such as the Buffalo County Courthouse and surrounding office buildings, Collins Park, Bryant Elementary, and numerous churches. Boundaries are the UPRR on the north, 2nd Avenue on the west, and the North Channel of the Platte River on the south.
- **South Outlying Kearney.** This housing district lies south of the North Channel of the Platte River, largely beyond the city limits. Housing development is concentrated along the banks of the Platte River and the sand pit lakes remaining from discontinued sand and gravel excavation operations. These subdivisions represent only a small portion of this district, which is divided among Interstate 80 highway service businesses and floodplain agricultural uses.

Northwest Kearney

■ General Description

The Northwest Kearney neighborhood contains the newest collection of homes in the city, and adjoins major commercial development along 2nd Avenue. It represents one of the most successful commercial and residential property markets in the city. Almost all of this district's single-family and multi-family units have been built since 1980. As a result, the neighborhood is relatively homogeneous in terms of condition and price range. Available land in this neighborhood has attracted several new community institutions, including the Richard Young Hospital, the YMCA, and several new facilities for community churches.

■ Housing Characteristics and Conditions

Northwest Kearney contains 597 housing units, more than 54% of which are single-family. All of these units were built after World War II, with nearly 52% built after 1980. Nearly all of the housing units are in excellent condition. The neighborhood contains 252 multi-family units, about 18% of all such units in the city. Multi-family units are concentrated along 39th Street. Occupants of higher density areas use 39th Street to reach shopping and employment centers east of the neighborhood.

■ Street and Sidewalk Conditions

Northwest Kearney area has an efficient street network with good access to 39th Street, the district's most important adjacent arterial. As future development extends streets to the north and east, links to 48th Street and 2nd Avenue will become critical to traffic flows. The recent completion of 6th Street from 39th to 48th Streets further enhances the local street network.

Most of the streets in the Northwest Kearney neighborhood are in excellent condition, a fact largely explained by the recent construction of infrastructure in the neighborhood.

Northwest Kearney contains a relatively complete sidewalk system, with most walks in good condition. Some scattered gaps in the system occur; future development of vacant parcels is expected to remedy this problem.

■ Parks and Public Facilities

Northwest Kearney contains Ted Baldwin Park located near the northwest edge of the neighborhood. The park is located just west of Windy Hills Elementary School. Northwest Kearney residents enjoy convenient access to many community facilities along 39th Street, including the YMCA, and the high school and middle school. The city-operated Meadowlark Hills golf course is located southwest of the district.

■ Neighborhood Trends and Policies

Northwest Kearney represents one of the most successful commercial and residential property markets in the city. To help the area fulfill its potential, the city should:

- Encourage new housing development on vacant land between 48th and 56th Streets, to the north of the current developed area.
- Complete street extensions along 48th Street, Country Club Lane, 20th Street, Palamino Road and 6th Street as locations for residential growth.
- Encourage commercial, office and higher density residential development between 2nd and 4th Avenues, north of 48th Street, designed along a rearage loop road surrounding the corner of 56th Street and 2nd Avenue. The area is a prime location for new housing near existing services.
- Develop 6th Avenue as a community boulevard north of 39th Street, with quality landscape design and streetscape amenities.
- Develop the drainageway land north of Ted Baldwin Park into a recent recreational trails corridor.
- Acquire new neighborhood park space and/or a corridor for a recreational trail adjacent to and north of Ted Baldwin Park and north of the YMCA.

TABLE 8-8: Housing Conditions in Northwest Kearney

Single Family								
Condition Rating	Pre-War	%	Post-War	%	Post 1990	%	Total	%
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Fair	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Good	0	0.0	13	8.4	0	0.0	13	0.0
Excellent	0	0.0	142	91.6	168	100.0	310	96.0
Total	0	0.0	155	48.0	168	52.0	323	100.00
								5.6% of city total
Other Residential								
Condition Rating	2-4 Units	%	5+ Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority	
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	
Fair	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	
Good	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	
Excellent	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	
Total	22	100.0	252	100.0	0	0	0	
		5.2% of city total		18.1% of city total				

Northeast Kearney

■ General Description

The Northwest Kearney neighborhood contains a diverse mix of newer housing units located in rapidly-developing area east of the 2nd Avenue commercial corridor. The district is situated on a high ridge above the city's cemetery, with many homes with commanding views of the valley east of the city. The neighborhood contains a diverse mix of housing including units of single-family, multi-family, retirements living condominium, and group care residential. The neighborhood adjoins major office and regional retail uses, including Hilltop Mall and Wal-Mart.

■ Housing Characteristics and Conditions

Northeast Kearney contains 855 housing units, more than 83% of which are single-family. Nearly 75% of these units were built in the period immediately after World War II, with the remainder (180 units) built since 1980. Among single-family residences, about 91% are in excellent condition and 8% are in good condition.

Multi-family units are concentrated along 39th Street, or immediately behind the 2nd Avenue corridor. The neighborhood contains 141 multi-family units, 103 of which are duplex or four unit buildings.

■ Street and Sidewalk Conditions

Street in Northeast Kearney have a curvilinear pattern that modifies the grid streets of the Midtown East neighborhood to the south. Northeast Kearney area has an efficient street network with good access to 2nd Avenue and 29th Street, the district's most important adjacent arterials. Avenue E is a continuous collector street to the south, while links to Avenue N are less direct. Recent development has improved east-west travel routes, extending 48th and 52nd Streets between Avenues E and N. The Union Pacific (Former K&BH) spur on the eastern edge of the neighborhood tends to block further expansion to the east.

Most of the streets in the Northeast Kearney neighborhood are in excellent condition, since most infrastructure in the neighborhood is relatively new. Northeast Kearney contains a relatively complete sidewalk network.

■ Parks and Public Facilities

Northeast Kearney contains Harvey Park located near the southeast edge of the neighborhood. The park is located just south of the cemetery, abutting Avenue N, and contains a major ballfield complex. Northeast Kearney residents will soon acquire their first neighborhood school, with the completion of meadowlark Elementary southwest of 56th Street and Avenue N. In addition, a new middle school is being developed northeast of 45th Street and Avenue N.

■ Neighborhood Trends and Policies

Northeast Kearney is a successful commercial and residential area that has reached 56th Street, and is beginning to extend east toward the UP railroad spur. To help the area fulfill its potential, the city should:

- Encourage new housing development on vacant land between Avenue N and Antelope Avenue, to the east of the current developed area.
- Extend 48th and 45th Street, Avenue R and other routes to establish multiple east-west and north-south links to facilitate new residential growth to the east of the city.
- Develop the circumferential boulevard along Avenue R through the district, including a link along 45th Street to Avenue N, with quality landscape design and streetscaping.
- Develop a new neighborhood park east of the planned middle school as a joint venture between the Parks Department and the school system, with links to a recreational trails corridor.
- Continuation of Avenue N as a north-south through street in combination with Avenue M by developing a grade separated crossing at the Union Pacific tracks.

TABLE 8-9: Housing Conditions in Northeast Kearney

Single Family								
Condition Rating	Pre-War	%	Post-War	%	Post 1990	%	Total	%
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
Fair	0	0.0	4	0.7	1	0.6	5	0.7
Good	0	0.0	56	10.5	1	0.6	57	8.0
Excellent	0	0.0	474	88.8	178	98.9	652	91.3
Total	0	0.0	534	74.8	180	25.2	714	100.00 12.3% of city total
Other Residential								
Condition Rating	2-4 Units	%	5+ Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority	
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	
Fair	0	0.0	22	57.9	0	0	0	
Good	2	1.9	0	0.0	0	0	0	
Excellent	101	98.1	16	42.1	0	0	0	
Total	103	100.0	38	100.0	0	0	0	
		24.2% of city total		2.7% of city total				

■ General Description

The West Kearney neighborhood includes many of Kearney's signature features. It is situated across the topographic divide through the city, which relatively new, expensive homes situated on hills above the campus of the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Harmon Park, Lake Kearney, and the country club. These features represent the image of the city to most visitors and residents. However, they also create barriers to convenient movement among the various parts of the neighborhood. West Kearney also includes a number of low-density rural subdivisions in the hills west of 30th Avenue.

■ Housing Characteristics and Conditions

West Kearney contains 1,588 housing units, more than 64% of which are single-family. Only 16% of these units were built prior to World War II, with 50% built since 1980. Among single-family residences, about 66% are in excellent condition and 30% are in good condition. The neighborhood contains 459 multi-family units, attracted by West Kearney's central location to the University, 2nd Avenue shopping amenities. Most multi-family units are located near UNK or along the 39th Street corridor. West Kearney contains about 11% of all mobile home in the city.

■ Street and Sidewalk Conditions

Streets in West Kearney initially continued the grid of the traditional city plat until development encountered the hills northwest of UNK and branched into a pattern of cul-de-sacs around Lake Kearney and the country club. Elsewhere, streets represent a modified grid pattern, tied to 39th Street. West Kearney's only internal collector street is 35th Street west of 4th Avenue, which serves as a parallel corridor to 39th Street. Country Club Road is becoming a similar north-south collector street north of US 30. Undeveloped land interrupts street connections to 30th Avenue on the west.

West Kearney is bisected on the south by US 30, and the Kearney Canal parallel to the highway on the north. These features tend to isolate abutting subdivisions from one another.

Most of the streets in West Kearney are in excellent condition, since most infrastructure in the neighborhood is relatively new. West Kearney's rural estate subdivisions contain unpaved streets and roads with rural sections. In the steep hills west of the city, this contributes to roadside erosion. West Kearney's sidewalk network is relatively complete within in-city subdivisions, with major gaps in connections among the various subdivisions. Future development of vacant parcels is expected to remedy this problem.

■ Parks and Public Facilities

West Kearney contains a higher proportion of land dedicated to civic and park uses than any other part of the city. The high school, middle school, park Elementary School, UNK, Harmon Park, Apollo Park, memorial Field, the country club, Meadowlark Hills Golf Course, and Cottonmill Lake each provide major open spaces in the center of the neighborhood. Harmon Park is the city's traditional community park, sit of the community pool, mature trees, and a grotto containing a small lighthouse that has become a symbol of the City of Kearney.

Lake Kearney, and the irrigation/power canal that feeds it, are under ownership o the Nebraska Public Power District. Like the country club, these features are "private" Kearney open space facilities.

West Kearney residents in the La Platte subdivision recently gained West Lincolnway Park, located southeast of 30th Avenue and US 30. The facility includes a ballfield complex for community sports organizations, as well as play equipment for the adjacent neighborhood.

■ Neighborhood Trends and Policies

To help the area fulfill its best potential, the city should:

- Encourage new housing development on vacant land northwest of 31st Street and Country Club Lane, to the northwest of the current developed area.
- Develop a perimeter traffic circulator system on the west edge of the neighborhood, using 30th Avenue as an alternate to 2nd Avenue.

WEST KEARNEY

- Extend Country Club Lane, 35th and 37th Streets, to establish multiple east-west links to facilitate new housing west of the city. Extend LaCrosse Drive west of 30th Avenue for a similar purpose.
- Develop the NPPD power canal as a recreational trails corridor between Cottonmill Lake and UNK. The trail should continue south of US 30 along the tailrace of the canal to connect to 11th Street and Southwest Kearney. ISTE A Enhancement funding has been secured during 1996 for this trail development.

TABLE 8-10: Housing Conditions in West Kearney

Single Family

Condition Rating	Pre-War	%	Post-War	%	Post 1990	%	Total	%
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	7	0.0
Fair	28	16.9	14	4.0	0	0.0	42	4.1
Good	117	70.5	146	42.2	50	9.7	313	30.4
Excellent	21	12.7	186	53.8	466	90.3	673	65.5
Total	166	16.1	346	33.7	516	50.2	1,028	100.0 17.7% of city total

Other Residential

Condition Rating	2-4 Units	%	5+ Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority
Poor	1	7.7	0	0.0	0	25	0
Fair	4	30.8	0	0.0	0	59	0
Good	5	38.5	137	30.7	0	16	0
Excellent	3	23.1	3.9	69.3	0	1	0
Total	13	3.1	446	100.0	0	101	0
				32.1% of city total		10.6% of city total	

West Central Kearney

■ General Description

West Central Kearney neighborhood is a small area containing some of the city's oldest housing stock. The neighborhood is bounded by man-made barriers, including the UPRR, university and both of the city's busiest regional highways. The neighborhood has a mix of condition and price range. The neighborhood contains the second highest number of units in need of repair in Kearney, as well as numerous historic properties that may qualify for listing on the National historic Register of Historic Places.

■ Housing Characteristics and Conditions

West Central Kearney contains 937 housing units, about 63% of which are single-family. Almost 80% of these units were built prior to World War II, with another 19% built prior to 1980. Only 9 units have been built since 1980. Among single-family residences, about 11% are in excellent condition and 25% are in good condition. The neighborhood contains 222 multi-family units, and significant housing for students of the adjacent university. The neighborhood also contains several fraternity and sorority houses, some conversion units, and a mobile home park on the district's west edge.

■ Parks and Public Facilities

Public facilities in West Central Kearney include Pioneer Park and Central Elementary School, near 22nd Street and 3rd Avenue. Harmon and Apollo Parks and the city's swimming pool are located within ten blocks of most residents of West Central Kearney. West Central Kearney residents also enjoy convenient access to many community facilities in Kearney Centre, located a few blocks east of the districts, along 22nd Street.

■ Street and Sidewalk Conditions

Streets in West Central Kearney replicate the basic grid of the traditional city plat, which constitutes the east part of the district. West Central Kearney is bisected by US 30. Its principal collector streets are 22nd Street and 5th Avenue. Links to other neighborhoods and Kearney Centre are limited to these routes, which are among the only through

street connections which cross US 30 and the UPRR, or access the 2nd Avenue viaduct. Streets in West Central Kearney are in good condition, although many older streets exhibit repair needs.

West Central Kearney's sidewalk network is relatively complete but has several segments which need to be repaired or rebuilt.

■ Neighborhood Trends and Policies

To help the area fulfill its best potential, the city should:

- Encourage housing conservation and rehabilitation of more than 250 units of single-family housing throughout the district.
- Rehabilitate older streets and sidewalks in poor condition.
- Encourage redevelopment of the west edge of the district for multi-family units to serve UNK student housing needs.
- Protect single-family homes from multi-family conversions by directing apartments uses to sites to the west.
- Complete development of the NPPD power canal tailrace into a recreational trails corridor.
- Develop public transportation links between student housing areas and Kearney Centre.
- Improve mobility and ease of travel of West Central residents by relieving traffic congestion at the intersection of US 30 and 2nd Avenue.

TABLE 8-11: Housing Conditions in West Central Kearney

Single Family								
Condition Rating	Pre-War	%	Post-War	%	Post 1990	%	Total	%
Poor	115	24.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	115	19.5
Fair	254	54.3	4	3.5	0	0.0	258	43.7
Good	90	19.2	60	53.1	1	11.1	151	25.6
Excellent	9	1.9	49	43.4	8	88.9	66	11.2
Total	468	79.3	113	19.2	9	1.5	590	100.00 10.2% of city total
Other Residential								
Condition Rating	2-4 Units	%	5+ Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority	
Poor	1	9.1	67	31.8	0	49	0	
Fair	5	45.5	92	43.6	0	66	0	
Good	2	18.2	52	24.6	0	10	0	
Excellent	3	27.3	0	0.0	0	0	0	
Total	11	100.0	211	100.0	0	125	0	
		2.6% of city total		15.2% of city total		13.1% of city total		

East Midtown Kearney

■ General Description

The East Midtown Kearney neighborhood is one of Kearney's most densely populated areas, containing almost 2,000 housing units in an area slightly larger than one square mile. The East midtown neighborhood is surrounded by the city's busiest arterial streets and regional highways, and is mixed in terms of housing condition and price range. Several industrial and salvage land uses abut housing along 26th Street east of Avenue I.

■ Housing Characteristics and Conditions

East Midtown Kearney Contains 1,994 housing units, about 80% of which are single-family. About 30% of these units were built prior to World War II, with another 68% built prior to 1980. About 29 infill units have been built since 1980. Among single-family residences, about 25% are in excellent condition and 55% are in good condition. The neighborhood contains 400 multi-family units, and significant housing for elderly residents living near the hospital and downtown. The neighborhood also contains the city's only public housing development (121 units).

■ Parks and Public Facilities

Public facilities in East Midtown include Dryden Park and Emerson and Northeast Elementary Schools.

■ Street and Sidewalk Conditions

East Midtown streets include a large portion of the traditional city plat in the southwest part of the district. Later development patterns extended this basic grid to the north and east, but with larger, elongated blocks. East Midtown Kearney's principal collector streets are Central Avenue, Avenues E and I, each of which abut schools serving area residents. Links to other neighborhoods and Kearney Centre are limited to these routes, which are among the most convenient through street connections across US 30 to Kearney Centre. As a result, local streets in the East Midtown neighborhood alternate between quiet residential side streets and busy collectors leading to clinics and downtown.

EAST MIDTOWN KEARNEY

Streets in East Midtown Kearney are in good condition, although many older streets exhibit repair needs. East Midtown's sidewalk network is relatively complete but has several segments which need to be repaired or rebuilt.

■ Neighborhood Trends and Policies

The East Midtown neighborhood contains a diverse mix of pre-war and post-war units, and a venerable stock of small and affordable older homes that should be rehabilitated and conserved. To help the area fulfill its best potential, the city should:

- Encourage housing conservation and rehabilitation of more than 242 units of single-family housing throughout the district.
- Rehabilitate older streets and sidewalks in poor condition.
- Encourage redevelopment of the southwest edge of the district for office and medical support uses to serve the expansion needs of Good Samaritan Hospital.
- Unite Kearney Centre and the emerging hospital services node into a linked business district, with boulevard improvements to Central Avenue, public transportation services and other land use and zoning policies.
- Protect single-family homes from office conversions by directing such uses to designated sites at the west edge of the neighborhood.
- Modify intersections of 31st Street with 2nd, Central Avenue and Avenue E, to improve traffic flow and safety.
- Improve mobility and ease of travel of East Midtown residents by relieving traffic congestion at the intersection of US 30 and 2nd Avenue.
- Continuation of Avenue N as a north-south through street in combination with Avenue M by developing a grade separated crossing at the Union Pacific tracks. This will reduce the rough traffic on north-south local streets.

TABLE 8-12: Housing Conditions in East Midtown Kearney

Single Family								
Condition Rating	Pre-War	%	Post-War	%	Post 1990	%	Total	%
Poor	69	14.3	3	0.3	0	0.0	72	4.5
Fair	188	38.8	53	4.9	1	3.4	242	15.3
Good	223	46.1	644	60.1	1	3.4	868	54.8
Excellent	4	2.4	371	34.6	27	93.1	402	25.4
Total	484	30.6	1,071	67.6	28	1.8	1,584	100.00 27.3% of city total
Other Residential								
Condition Rating	2-4 Units	%	5+ Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority	
Poor	12	7.1	0	0.0	0	3	0	
Fair	40	23.7	0	0.0	0	7	0	
Good	71	42.0	49	44.5	0	0	0	
Excellent	46	27.2	61	55.5	0	0	121	
Total	169	100.0	110	100.0	0	10	121	
		39.8% of city total		7.9% of city total		1.4% of city total	100.0% of city total	

East Central Kearney

■ General Description

The East Central neighborhood is a small and relatively isolated area, containing some of the city's oldest housing stock. The neighborhood is sharply bounded by man-made barriers, such as the railroad, Kearney Centre and US 30. The neighborhood is mixed in terms of land use, housing condition and price range. The neighborhood is bounded by numerous civic institutions and community churches, including the city hall, the fire and police stations, and the post office. The district contains numerous historic properties that may qualify for listing on the National Historic Register of Historic Places. Boundaries of East Central Kearney are: 25th Street (US 30) on the north, the UPRR on the south and east, and 2nd Avenue on the west.

■ Housing Characteristics and Conditions

East Central Kearney contains 262 housing units, about 62% of which are single-family. Almost 99% of these units were built prior to World War II. East Central Kearney contains a relatively high proportion of units in need of repair. Among single-family residences, about 67% are in fair or poor condition. The neighborhood contains 100 multi-family units, mostly located in an apartment complex east of the post office, behind the US 30 corridor.

■ Park and Public Facilities

East Central Kearney contains no public parks or schools. However, neighborhood residents have convenient access to many community facilities in Kearney Centre, which abuts the neighborhood on the west.

■ Street and Sidewalk Conditions

East Central Kearney streets make up part of the city's original plat. It is bisected by two of the central city's most important collector streets, 22nd Street and Avenue E. The 22nd Street route serves as Kearney Centre's principal east west street, while Avenue E is the east side of town's only continuous north-south street. The intersection of these two routes (near the post office) is the base of the city's east viaduct over the UPRR. As a result, local streets in East

EAST CENTRAL KEARNEY

Central Kearney are busy with community-wide traffic, which tends to degrade the quality of some housing areas.

Streets in East Central Kearney are in fair to good condition, although many older streets exhibit repair needs. East Central Kearney's sidewalk network is relatively complete but has several segments which need to be repaired or rebuilt.

■ Neighborhood Trends and Policies

The East Central neighborhood is threatened by its central location between busy crossroads. To help the area fulfill its best potential, the city should:

- Conserve and rehabilitate more than 100 units of single-family housing in East Central Kearney.
- Rehabilitate older streets and sidewalks in poor condition.
- Encourage redevelopment of the southwest edge of the district for multi-family housing adjacent to downtown.
- Encourage additional elderly housing development within walking distance of Kearney Centre shopping and services.
- Protect single-family homes from multi-family conversions by directing apartments uses to sites to the west.
- Develop a neighborhood playground to serve residents.
- Develop public transportation links between key housing areas, Kearney Centre, UNK, and medical services at Good Samaritan Hospital.
- Improve mobility and east of travel of East Central residents by routing new growth in Northeast Kearney traffic to Avenue N, instead of Avenue E. Facilitate Avenue N traffic crossing at US 30 so it can easily travel along North Railroad Street to reach the 22nd Street viaduct.

TABLE 8-13: Housing Conditions in East Central Kearney

Single Family								
Condition Rating	Pre-War	%	Post-War	%	Post 1990	%	Total	%
Poor	43	26.9	0	0.0	0	0.0	43	26.5
Fair	65	40.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	65	40.1
Good	52	32.5	2	100.0	0	0.0	54	33.3
Excellent	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0
Total	160	98.8	0	1.2	0	0.0	162	100.00 2.8% of city total

Other Residential							
Condition Rating	2-4 Units	%	5+ Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0
Fair	2	33.3	34	36.2	0	0	0
Good	4	66.7	60	63.8	0	0	0
Excellent	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0
Total	6	100.0	94	100.0	0	0	0
		1.1% of city total		6.8% of city total			

EAST OUTLYING KEARNEY

East Outlying Kearney

■ General Description

This area lies beyond the city limits, east of the Peavey grain elevator railroad spur and north of US 30. The area is dominated by large mobile home parks, major employers along the US 30 commercial highway corridor, and the Kearney Airport, with its industrial park sites. The neighborhood contains the highest number of mobile home units in Kearney, and as many housing units as Southeast Kearney, although most of the units lie within several large mobile home parks. The neighborhood is mixed in terms of condition and price range, with wide disparities in housing conditions and values among mobile homes. It includes a few multi-family units and single-family units, and the St. Luke's Good Samaritan Village housing development for seniors. The neighborhood also contains some farm homes that have become surrounded by development.

■ Housing Characteristics and Conditions

East Outlying Kearney contains 776 housing units, only 43 (6%) of which are single-family. Over 53% of these units were built prior to World War II, with nearly 42% built prior to 1980. Only two units appear to have been built since 1980. The neighborhood contains 85 multi-family units, mostly located in apartment buildings on Boa Drive, just west of Grand Avenue.

■ Park and Public Facilities

East Central Kearney contains no public parks or schools. The largest mobile home park development in the neighborhood provides a private park and playground for its residents. City parks nearest the residents of East Outlying Kearney include Harvey Park and Dryden Park, each located more than one-quarter mile distant. Neighborhood residents must travel across the railroad spur and two major arterial streets to enjoy these community facilities.

■ Street and Sidewalk Conditions

East Outlying Kearney is the city's most isolated housing area. Its street pattern departs from the earliest traditional city plat, largely caused by the diagonal UP spur which serves the area from the rest of town and creates triangular

EAST OUTLYING KEARNEY

parcels. All neighborhood streets depend upon Grand Avenue for access, which itself is aligned as a diagonal collector street between US 30 and the railroad spur. Secondary access to East Outlying Kearney is provided by 34th Street.

Streets in East Outlying Kearney are in good to excellent condition. Most neighborhood streets are privately maintained within the mobile home parks and built of concrete. East Outlying Kearney's sidewalk network is limited, consistent with the lack of many public streets and in relative isolation from the rest of the city. The sidewalk network has been partially established along major streets, such as Grand Avenue and 34th Street, but has several segments that are missing or require repairs.

■ Neighborhood Trends and Policies

This neighborhood is an important housing resource for the City of Kearney. However, it does not yet provide a balance of community facilities and amenities proportional to its housing size and neighborhood needs. To help the area fulfill its best potential, the city should:

- Rehabilitate 10 units of single-family housing.
- Complete sidewalks along Grand Avenue and 34th Street.
- Encourage new manufactured housing subdivision on vacant land north of the current developed area between the rail spur and Antelope Avenue. Extend new north-south streets to connect these area together.
- Develop Grand Avenue as a community boulevard, with quality landscape design and streetscaping.
- Acquire and develop a new neighborhood park along Grand Avenue, with links to a recreational trails corridor.
- Investigate public transportation links between the mobile park housing areas and Kearney Centre, UNK, and medical services at Good Samaritan Hospital.

TABLE 8-14: Housing Conditions in East Outlying Kearney

Single Family								
Condition Rating	Pre-War	%	Post-War	%	Post 1990	%	Total	%
Poor	1	4.3	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	2.3
Fair	10	43.5	1	5.6	0	0.0	11	25.6
Good	10	43.5	14	77.8	0	0.0	24	55.8
Excellent	2	8.7	3	16.7	2	100.0	7	16.3
Total	23	53.5	18	41.9	0	4.7	43	100.00 0.7% of city total
Other Residential								
Condition Rating	2-4 Units	%	5+ Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority	
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	5 pads	0	
Fair	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	113 pads	0	
Good	4	6.0	0	0.0	0	377 pads	0	
Excellent	63	94.0	18	100.0	0	153 pads	0	
Total	67	100.0	18	100.0	0	648 pads	0	
		15.8% of city total		1.3% of city total		67.8% of city total		

SOUTHWEST KEARNEY

Southwest Kearney

■ General Description

The Southwest Kearney neighborhood has two distinct living areas within one compact neighborhood. The north and east portions of the district contains some of the oldest homes in the city, situated on generous lots platted on the traditional grid of the original city. The west portion of the district is much newer, with most homes built within the last two decades. As a result, the neighborhood is mixed in terms of condition and price range. The neighborhood contains both repair needs and several properties worthy of listing on the National historic Register of Historic Places.

■ Housing Characteristics and Conditions

Southwest Kearney contains 796 housing units, about 79% of which are single-family. About 27% of these units were built prior to World War II, with another 19% built prior to 1980. More than 277 units (about 44% of units) have been built since 1980. Southwest Kearney contains a large number of units in needs of repair. Among single-family residences, about 200, or 31% are in fair or poor condition.

The neighborhood contains 148 multi-family units, mostly located south of 11th Street, a perimeter arterial street on the south edge of the district. The older part of the neighborhood also contains some conversion units.

■ Parks and Public Facilities

Southwest Kearney contains Kenwood Elementary School, in the heart of the historic neighborhood. Centennial Park is located further to the south, along the north side of 11th Street. The park contains play equipment and active ballfield areas that serve the area's recreation needs. Neighborhood residents are relatively distant from community facilities in the remainder of the city of Kearney Centre.

■ Street and Sidewalk Conditions

Parts of Southwest Kearney were laid out with the original city plat. The area is bordered by several of the city's most important transportation routes, including 2nd Avenue, the UPRR, isolating it from other neighborhoods and city facilities. The at-grade crossing of the UPRR at 5th Avenue

SOUTHWEST KEARNEY

provides a critical link to activity centers of West central and West Kearney, including UNK and Harmon Park. Eleventh Street is a major section line road that will emerge as a portion of the Inner Beltway.

Streets in Southwest Kearney are in good condition, although many older streets exhibit repair needs. Southwest Kearney's sidewalk network is relatively complete but has several segments which need to be repaired or rebuilt.

■ Neighborhood Trends and Policies

The Southwest neighborhood unifies older and newer homes, in a central location bounded by busy cross-town routes. Recent new home construction has extended the neighborhood west, but only to the NPPD power canal. To help the area fulfill its best potential, the city should:

- Conserve and rehabilitate 200 units of single-family housing in Southwest Kearney.
- Rehabilitate older streets and sidewalks in poor condition.
- Encourage redevelopment of the north edge of the district for multi-family housing proximate to downtown and UNK.
- Direct apartment uses to sites to the north and southwest.
- Continue to develop the NPPD power canal tailrace into a recreational trails corridor. Acquire land along the NPPD canal tailrace for use as a park/ballfield complex and playground to serve future residents.

TABLE 8-15: Housing Conditions in Southwest Kearney

Single Family								
Condition Rating	Pre-War	%	Post-War	%	Post 1990	%	Total	%
Poor	48	20.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	48	7.6
Fair	132	56.7	19	15.7	1	0.4	152	24.1
Good	53	22.7	59	48.8	18	635	130	20.6
Excellent	0	0.0	43	35.5	258	93.1	301	47.7
Total	233	36.9	121	19.2	277	43.9	631	100.00 10.9% of city total
Other Residential								
Condition Rating	2-4 Units	%	5+ Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority	
Poor	1	6.3	0	0.0	0	3	0	
Fair	1	6.3	19	14.4	0	13	0	
Good	1	6.3	21	15.9	0	1	0	
Excellent	13	81.3	92	69.7	0	0	0	
Total	16	100.0	132	100.0	0	17	0	
		3.8% of city total		9.5% of city total		1.8% of city total		

■ General Description

The Southeast Kearney neighborhood is a unique mixed use area, containing older housing north of 13th Street and more recent affordable homes south to 8th Street. The district lies directly south of Kearney Centre and is ringed by industrial uses on both its north and south edges. The Central Avenue corridor contains many service businesses of community-wide focus, and complements the retail core of the northern part of Kearney Centre. The southeast neighborhood has developed a market for industrial uses, some of which are mixed with residences. This reflects itself in the mixed zoning pattern of the area.

The neighborhood includes numerous civic institutions and churches, such as the Buffalo County Courthouse. It also includes several national Register eligible properties. The district is considered one of Kearney's primary community development target areas; much of it has been designated a blighted area for redevelopment purposes.

■ Housing Characteristics and Conditions

Southeast Kearney contains 847 housing units, about 81% of which are single-family. Almost 75% of these units were built prior to World War II, and about 50 units have been built in the post-war era. Southeast Kearney contains a high proportion of units in needs of repair. Among single-family residences, about 64% are in fair or poor condition. The neighborhood contains 106 multi-family units, mostly located in an apartment complex south of 8th Street. The neighborhood also contains some conversion units. Southeast Kearney contains about 55 mobile home units.

■ Parks and Public Facilities

Southeast Kearney contains Collins Park and Bryant Elementary School. As a result, the district is relatively poorly served by neighborhood park facilities, and is block by major community barriers from other community parksites.

■ Street and Sidewalk Conditions

The neighborhood is bounded by major barriers. Its proximity to major transportation routes makes it a corridor

SOUTHEAST KEARNEY

for major commercial and industrial development, including major parts of the 2nd Avenue commercial corridor. Most of the area's street pattern is platted in a grid pattern, although street continuity south of 8th Street is incomplete. Local streets in the district include some unpaved segments. Paved streets in Southeast Kearney are in fair to good condition. Southeast Kearney's sidewalk network is spotty as well, requiring expansion in residentially developed areas.

■ Neighborhood Trends and Policies

The Southeast neighborhood is a major residential and industrial redevelopment area for Kearney. To help the area fulfill its fullest potential, the city should:

- Conserve and rehabilitate more than 100 units of single-family housing in Southeast Kearney.
- Improve streets and sidewalk patterns and continuity in existing and planned residential areas.
- Develop a significant new southeast neighborhood park facility.
- Review the existing zoning and land use configuration of the neighborhood. Rezone areas that are currently zoned industrial but used primarily for residential uses to a residential zone. Within this zone, recognize the existence of home-based businesses with appropriate controls to prevent negative effects on surrounding homes.
- Designate industrial areas for redevelopment, with adequate buffering between these areas and residential development.
- Improve greenway links between Southeast Kearney and other parts of the city, including development of a greenway along the Avenue M drainage corridor.
- Upgrade 16th Street to a civic street, providing improved pedestrian accommodations and establishing the street as a major community corridor for the neighborhood.

SOUTHEAST KEARNEY

- Development of Avenue M as a north-south through street in combination with Avenue N by developing a grade separated crossing at the Union Pacific tracks.
- Encourage infill affordable residential development on appropriate sites in the neighborhood.
- Establish a strong buffer between industrial and salvage areas defined by the existing UP and form BN lines and residential areas to the south.
- Improve industrial access through the neighborhood by developing an industrial access road along the former BN right-of-way, connecting to an east side interchange at Eaton Road and the Inner Beltway at Antelope Avenue.

TABLE 8-16: Housing Conditions in Southeast Kearney

Single Family

Condition Rating	Pre-War	%	Post-War	%	Post 1990	%	Total	%
Poor	199	38.6	11	9.1	10	20.0	220	32.1
Fair	189	36.7	27	22.3	2	4.0	218	31.8
Good	125	24.3	73	60.3	12	24.0	210	30.6
Excellent	2	0.4	10	8.3	26	52.0	38	5.5
Total	515	75.1	121	17.6	50	7.3	686	100.00 11.8% of city total

Other Residential

Condition Rating	2-4 Units	%	5+ Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority
Poor	4	22.2	0	0.0	0	7 pads	0
Fair	2	11.1	72	81.8	0	18 pads	0
Good	8	44.4	16	18.2	0	15 pads	0
Excellent	4	22.2	0	0.0	0	15 pads	0
Total	18	100.0	88	100.0	0	55 pads	0
		4.2% of city total		6.3% of city total		5.7% of city total	

SOUTH OUTLYING KEARNEY

South Outlying Kearney

■ General Description

This district, including relatively extensive land areas but a small amount of residential development, includes land south of the North Channel of the Platte River. Its dominant land uses included commercial activity along Highway 44, related to the Interstate 80 interchange. However, the district includes a small amount of residential development. These areas include scattered houses along the North Channel of the Platte; the Lake Villa subdivision south of Interstate 80 and east of the extended Central Avenue; and Brandt's Lakewood subdivision on the west side of the highway south of the river.

■ Housing Characteristics and Conditions

South Outlying Kearney contains a mixed housing stock, with over 50% of the single family housing built since 1980. These units are almost entirely developed in the -- subdivision south of I-80. Other older houses are scattered along the river channels.

South Outlying Kearney contains 41 housing units, all of which are single-family. Of these, about 54% are in excellent condition. However, many of the remaining units exhibit only fair or poor conditions.

■ Street and Sidewalk Conditions

Many of the roads serving the South Outlying area are unimproved. These include service roads running parallel to Interstate 80. Avenue M continues south as a gravel road through the district, crossing the Interstate on a viaduct and connecting to a south service road paralleling I-80.

Highway 44 is a divided highway through the area and at its interchange with Interstate 80. Paved commercial service roads, including Talmadge Street, lead to developed and growing highway-related commercial developments.

Roads within Brandt's Lakewood subdivision are paved, rural section roads. Roads within Lake Villa subdivision are urban section paved roads with curb and gutter.

The district essentially lacks a sidewalk system.

SOUTH OUTLYING KEARNEY

■ Parks and Recreational Facilities

The South Outlying district has no park and recreation facilities. However, it includes a system of privately-owned gravel pit lakes which have significant recreational potential. These lakes also provide rich wildlife habitats. The district also includes two significant motel related convention center facilities.

A recreation trail is planned along the North Channel of the Platte. To the west, this trail will extend to the Kearney Canal Tailrace and link with the Cottonmill Trail system. Extended to the east, the trail will extend to the Fort Kearny Hike and Bike Trail, providing alternative access to nationally important areas for historic and environmental education.

■ Neighborhood Issues and Trends

Policies which can help take advantage of the unique characteristics of South Outlying Kearney include:

- Encouraging joint recreational and residential development around gravel pit lakes south of the North Channel. These developments should follow open space subdivision techniques and preserve some common access to the lakes.

Any development must be consistent with good floodplain management practices and stewardship of a unique environment.

- Extension of the North Channel trail east to the Fort Kearny Hike and Bike Bridge and west to the Kearney Canal tailrace, providing a significant multi-use trail link.
- Development of a wilderness-oriented nature park at the publicly-owned tree dump site along the North Channel near Avenue M.
- Consideration for private commercial development of a regional aquatic leisure park around the gravel pit lake west of the Ramada Convention Center.

SOUTH OUTLYING KEARNEY

- Improvement of strategic roads into the area, including improvement of the frontage road between 2nd Avenue and Avenue M; and Avenue M between 11th Street and the frontage road. In spite of improvements, zoning practices must prevent commercial development along this one-mile long corridor.
- Continued support for an east side interchange at Eaton Road (Cherry Avenue).

TABLE 8-17: Housing Conditions in South Outlying Kearney

Single Family								
Condition Rating	Pre-War	%	Post-War	%	Post 1990	%	Total	%
Poor	10	62.5	0	0.0	0	0.0	10	24.4
Fair	6	37.5	2	50.0	0	0.0	8	19.5
Good	0	0.0	1	25.0	1	0.0	1	2.4
Excellent	0	0.0	1	25.0	21	100.0	22	53.7
Total	16	39.0	4	9.8	21	51.2	41	100.00 0.7% of city total

Other Residential							
Condition Rating	2-4 Units	%	5+ Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0
Fair	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0
Good	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0
Excellent	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0
Total	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0

9

IMPLEMENTATING THE KEARNEY PLAN

REALIZING THE VISION

Kearney should implement the visions and actions presented by the plan through a realistic program that is in step with the resources of the community.

The eight previous chapters, with their narratives and maps, are the core of the Kearney Plan. This section addresses the scheduling of plan implementation by both public agencies and private decision-makers. These key areas include:

- *Development Policies and Actions.* This section summarizes the policies and actions proposed in the Kearney Plan, and presents projected time frames for the implementation of these recommendations.
- *Plan Maintenance.* This section outlines a process for maintaining the plan and evaluating Kearney Plan progress in meeting its goals.

The tables following in this chapter present a concise summary of the recommendations of the Kearney Plan. These recommendations include various types of efforts:

- *Policies,* which indicate continuing efforts over a long period to implement the plan. In some cases, policies include specific regulatory or administrative actions.
- *Action Items,* which include specific efforts or accomplishments by the community.
- *Capital Investments,* which include public capital projects that will implement features of the Kearney Plan.

Each recommendation is listed as part of its theme in the Kearney Plan. In addition, a time frame for implementing recommendations is indicated. Some recommendations require ongoing implementation. Short-term indicates implementation within five years, medium-term within five to ten years, and long-term within ten to twenty years.

Plan Maintenance

The scope of the Kearney Plan is both ambitious and long-term. Each of the many actions and policies described in the plan can contribute to the betterment of the city. Yet, presenting a twenty-year development program at one time can appear daunting. Therefore, the city should implement an ongoing planning process which uses the plan to develop year-by-year improvement programs. In addition, this process should also evaluate the plan on an annual basis in relation to the development events of the past year.

Such a process should include the following features:

- *Annual Action and Capital Improvement Program.* The Planning and Zoning Commission and City Council should use the plan to define annual strategic work programs of policies, actions, and capital investments. This program should be coordinated with Kearney's existing capital improvement planning and budgeting process, although many of the plan's recommendations are not capital items. This annual process should be completed before the beginning of each budget year and should include:
 - *A specific work program for the upcoming year.* This program should be specific and related to the city's projected financial resources. The work program will establish the specific plan recommendations that the city will accomplish during the coming year and will use this plan's implementation and capital improvement schedules as guides.
 - *A three-year strategic program.* This component provides for a multi-year perspective, informing the preparation of the annual work program. It provides a middle-term implementation plan for the city.
 - *A six-year capital improvement program.* This is merged into Kearney's current capital improvement program.

In addition, this process should include an annual evaluation of the comprehensive plan. This evaluation should occur at the end of each calendar year. Desirably, this evaluation should include a written report that:

PLAN MAINTENANCE

- *Summarizes key land use developments and decisions during the past year and relates them to the comprehensive plan.*
- *Reviews actions taken by the city during the past year to implement plan recommendations.*
- *Defines any changes that should be made in the comprehensive plan.*

The plan should be viewed as a dynamic changing document that is used actively by the city.

A CITY TO LEAD THE REGION: Development Constitution Summary

	Type	On-going	Short	Med.	Long
<p>A REGIONAL CITY OF 30,000 <i>Kearney should capitalize on its ability to attract growth and will achieve a target population of 30,000 during the next twenty years.</i></p>	Policy				
<p>OFFICIAL MAP <i>Kearney should adopt an official map which pre-plans future streets and open spaces.</i></p>	Action		•		
<p>URBAN GROWTH LIMIT <i>Kearney should adopt a boundary which defines the outer edge of community growth during the planning period.</i></p>	Action		•		
<p>TRADITIONAL NEIGHBORHOOD PATTERNS <i>New neighborhoods in Kearney should follow the patterns of traditional neighborhoods.</i></p>	Policy	•			
<p>TRANSPORTATION TO MEET CITY AND REGIONAL NEEDS <i>The transportation system should support development objectives of Kearney as a regional center and small city.</i></p>	Policy	•			
<p>A RECREATION LIFESTYLE <i>Kearney should endeavor to reinforce its image as a city with unequalled access to recreation and the great outdoors.</i></p>	Policy Action	•			
<p>A HUB FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY <i>Kearney's leadership should collaborate to grow information technology businesses to stimulate research and development and add positive value to the city.</i></p>	Action			•	
<p>A LARGER, MIXED USE URBAN CORE <i>Kearney Centre should grow to the north as a unique regional mixed use district, sized to meet the needs of a city of 30,000.</i></p>	Action			•	•
<p>PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC KEARNEY <i>Kearney's historic built environment must be maintained and preserved.</i></p>	Policy	•			
<p>ADEQUATE LAND SUPPLY <i>Kearney should designate enough land for new development to meet its 20-year population target of 30,000.</i></p>	Policy	•			
<p>CONTINUOUS TRANSPORTATION <i>New growth areas in Kearney should be served by continuous street networks that are linked to established parts of the city.</i></p>	Policy	•			
<p>PARKWAY STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACES <i>New and major streets in Kearney should have multiple uses, becoming green corridors that link the "rooms" Of the growing city.</i></p>	Policy	•			
<p>HOUSING NEARER TO EMPLOYMENT CENTERS <i>Kearney can improve the flow of its traffic system by encouraging more housing in areas closer to major employment areas.</i></p>	Policy		•	•	

LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT: Summary of Recommendations

	Type	On-going	Short	Med.	Long
<p>COMPACT DEVELOPMENT PATTERN <i>Kearney should encourage compact growth that is distributed equally around the traditional city.</i></p>	Policy	•			
<p>COMPLETE AND BALANCED NEIGHBORHOODS <i>Kearney will balance and guide its new residential growth to create better neighborhoods and improved mobility.</i></p>	Policy	•			
<p>EQUAL FACILITIES AMONG CITY QUADRANTS <i>Kearney's public facilities should serve its four growth areas equitably to serve community growth objectives.</i></p>	Policy Capital		•	•	
<p>OPEN SPACE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT <i>Large lot development in Kearney should maintain the quality of the local landscape and should differ in design from urban subdivisions.</i></p>	Policy	•			
<p>COMMERCIAL NODES <i>Kearney's new commercial development should be located within well-defined nodes or districts, each with a unique and complementary role.</i></p>	Policy Action	•			
<p>BETTER ACCESS FOR INDUSTRY <i>The airport and major industrial sites should receive improved highway and utility access for accelerated marketing and development.</i></p>	Capital			•	
<p>PLACES FOR NEW INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY <i>Kearney should use its assets to encourage a business and research park.</i></p>	Action			•	
<p>INNER BELTWAY <i>Kearney should develop an Inner Beltway using existing roads to distribute traffic around its growth centers.</i></p>	Capital			•	•
<p>EAST AND WEST INTERCHANGES <i>By the year 2020, Kearney will require two new interchanges with I-80, serving the east and west sides of the city, located at:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eaton (Cherry Road) • 30th Avenue 	Capital Capital			•	•
<p>REGIONAL BYPASS <i>An east interchange should provide a bypass for regional truck and traffic movements around Kearney to the northwest.</i></p>	Capital				•
<p>FUNCTIONAL SEPARATIONS <i>The transportation plan should minimize conflicts between local and through traffic by providing local traffic with alternatives to the major arterial system.</i></p>	Capital	•			
<p>PRE-PLANNED COLLECTORS <i>The collector street and parkway system in developing areas should be designated ahead of development and dedicated as growth takes place.</i></p>	Policy	•			

A RECREATION LIFESTYLE: Summary of Recommendations

	Type	On-going	Short	Med.	Long
GREEN NETWORK					
<i>Kearney's park system should be network of parks, connected by continuous green corridors defined by trails, greenways, boulevards, and civic streets, including:</i>					
• The boulevard and parkway system.	Capital			•	•
• The Cottonmill Trail.	Capital		•		
• The North Channel Trail	Capital			•	
• Union Pacific Trail	Capital			•	
• 45th Street Connector	Capital			•	
• Multi-use transportation corridors	Capital	•			
• On-street routes	Action		•		
PARKSITE ENHANCEMENTS					
<i>Kearney should implement a regularly budgeted, incremental program of park site improvements at its existing parks.</i>					
	Capital	•			
GREENWAY ACCESS TO COMMUNITY FEATURES					
<i>Major community activity centers should have pedestrian connections to the greenway system.</i>					
	Policy	•			
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS IN GROWTH CENTERS					
<i>Kearney should develop new neighborhood parks in growth areas. These parks should develop as nodes along the greenway system.</i>					
	Action		•		
	Capital		•	•	
JOINT USE SCHOOL SITES					
<i>Kearney should continue its policy of identifying joint school/park opportunities at new school sites.</i>					
	Policy	•			
NEW RECREATION CENTERS					
<i>Kearney should develop or encourage new centers for active recreation, including a new west sports complex.</i>					
	Capital			•	
YOUTH CENTER REPLACEMENT					
<i>Kearney should replace the existing Harmon Park Youth Center with a new facility in the same general area.</i>					
	Capital		•		
SOUTHEAST PARKS					
<i>Kearney should develop community park facilities to serve southeast Kearney. These facilities should be designed to encourage new residential development, and include:</i>					
• A site southeast of Collins Park.	Capital			•	
• Public land near Avenue M on the North Channel.	Capital				•
FORT KEARNY TRAIL					
<i>Kearney's Green Network should be linked to a regional trail, connecting to the existing Fort Kearny Trail and bridge leading to the state recreation area and historic park.</i>					
	Capital			•	•

QUALITY PUBLIC SERVICES: Summary of Recommendations

	Type	On-going	Short	Med.	Long
PUBLIC FACILITIES PRIORITIES					
<i>Major priorities for a public facility improvement program include:</i>					
• Rehabilitate aging infrastructure.	Capital	•			
• Install signal control devices in fire vehicles.	Capital			•	
• Acquire a site and develop a satellite fire protection facility.	Capital		•	•	
• Expand city maintenance shop.	Capital			•	
• Equip law enforcement vehicles with mobile live data technology.	Capital		•		
• Expand vehicle impound, staging, and parking for Law Enforcement Center.	Capital			•	•
• Maintain and improve municipal pool.	Capital		•	•	
• Acquire land for library parking and enhancement.	Capital				•
SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM PRIORITIES					
<i>Major priorities for a sanitary sewer system improvement program include:</i>					
• Continued rehabilitation of aging infrastructure.	Capita.	•			
• Completion of the interceptor extensions envisioned in the 1992 North Kearney Study.	Capital		•	•	
• Inflow inspection program.	Action	•			
• Completion of treatment plant reconstruction.	Capital		•		
• Incremental sewer extensions within growth centers.	Capital	•			
• Discouragement of urban subdivisions out of Growth Centers.	Policy		•		
• Prevention of urban density subdivisions on septic systems.	Policy		•		
STORMWATER PRIORITIES					
<i>Major priorities for a stormwater management improvement program include:</i>					
• Storage-oriented approach for new growth areas.	Policy	•			
• Watershed protection	Policy	•			
• Development design standards to minimize runoff.	Policy	•			
• Implementation of relief measures for West Main Line storm sewer.	Capital		•		
• Completion of Phase II and III storm drainage system analyses.	Action		•		

A UNIQUE AND VITAL KEARNEY CENTRE: Summary of Recommendations

	Type	On-going	Short	Med.	Long
• Maintenance program for existing drainage system.	Capital	•			
WATER SYSTEM PRIORITIES					
<i>Major priorities for a water system improvement program include:</i>					
• Development of additional water supply.	Capital			•	•
• Resolution of water treatment requirements.	Action		•		
• Development of additional storage capacity.	Capital				•
• Looping the transmission main system	Capital			•	
• Developing northwest transmission loops.	Capital			•	
DISTRICT MANAGEMENT					
<i>Kearney Centre should strengthen its organizational structure to manage and promote the commercial district.</i>	Action		•		
DOWNTOWN HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES					
<i>Kearney should increase space for new housing opportunities within walking distance of the Kearney Centre retail district.</i>	Action	•			
	Capital	•			
A LARGER MIXED USE CORE DISTRICT					
<i>Kearney should support the expansion of business and office uses at its core to match the needs of a city of 30,000.</i>	Action	•			
CENTRAL AVENUE					
<i>Kearney should emphasize this boulevard streets as a feature that unifies its core retail area and links to surrounding neighborhoods. Features include:</i>					
• A revitalized public environment.	Capital			•	
• Entrance features.	Capital		•		
• A town green or festival street.	Capital		•		
• Treatment of the UP crossing as a special feature.	Capital			•	
• Maintenance of a grade crossing at the UP, with possibility of a pedestrian overpass.	Action	•			
INTERSECTION IMPROVEMENTS					
<i>Street improvements should be used to ease crossing of major streets and to increase the visibility of pedestrians.</i>	Capital	•			
PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION LINKS WITHIN THE CITY					
<i>Kearney should investigate development of a service route based transit system, featuring a major stop at Kearney Centre.</i>	Action			•	
	Capital			•	
ADAPTIVE REUSE AND PRESERVATION					
<i>Historic preservation and rehabilitation of key buildings should be encouraged to complement other private and public investment. Components include:</i>					
• Adaptive reuse programs.	Action	•			
• Facade improvement program, providing financing.	Capital		•		
• National Register district designation and Preservation Ordinance.	Action		•		

HOUSING AND NEIGHBORHOODS: Summary of Recommendations

	Type	On-going	Short	Med.	Long
<p>DOWNTOWN PLAN <i>Kearney Centre should develop a physical and economic vision of its future through a Downtown Development Plan.</i></p>	Action		•		
<p>A HOUSING PARTNERSHIP <i>Kearney should consider the creation of a housing partnership, organized to develop affordable housing within growth areas.</i></p>	Action		•		
<p>PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT FINANCING <i>Kearney should reduce the cost of land acquisition and infrastructure development borne by housing units in affordable development.</i></p>	Action Policy		•		
<p>RETIREMENT HOUSING <i>Kearney should continue to encourage construction of independent living residential development for seniors.</i></p>	Policy	•			
<p>NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION <i>Kearney should continue its neighborhood conservation programs and institute an effort to rehabilitate houses in need of repair.</i></p>	Policy	•	•		
<p>A VARIETY OF HOUSING TYPES <i>Kearney's new growth areas, along with land development regulations, should encourage a variety of housing types.</i></p>	Policy	•			
<p>MANUFACTURED HOME DEVELOPMENT <i>Kearney should encourage development of high-quality manufactured home subdivision environments.</i></p>	Policy		•	•	