



THE KEARNEY PLAN

THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR

KEARNEY, NEBRASKA

PREPARED WITH

THE CITY OF KEARNEY

BY

RDG PLANNING & DESIGN

The authors gratefully acknowledge the support, friendship, and commitment of the citizens of Kearney. We would like to express special gratitude to the members of the Planning Coordinating Committee, the Planning Commission, and the City Council, for lending their time and vision to this effort. We are especially grateful to Lance Lang for his leadership during the planning process and to city staff for sharing their time, knowledge, and expertise with us. We appreciate the efforts of these people and others, and are excited about the future of this extraordinary city.

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AN INTRODUCTION TO THE KEARNEY PLAN

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.

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 Kearney Plan

• *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.

• *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. A Planning Coordinating Committee, representing a wide variety of interests in the community, coordinated this process. 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 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.

- *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.

Participants in the planning process rated important community services and facilities, which are rated below 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 storm-water and drainage capacity.

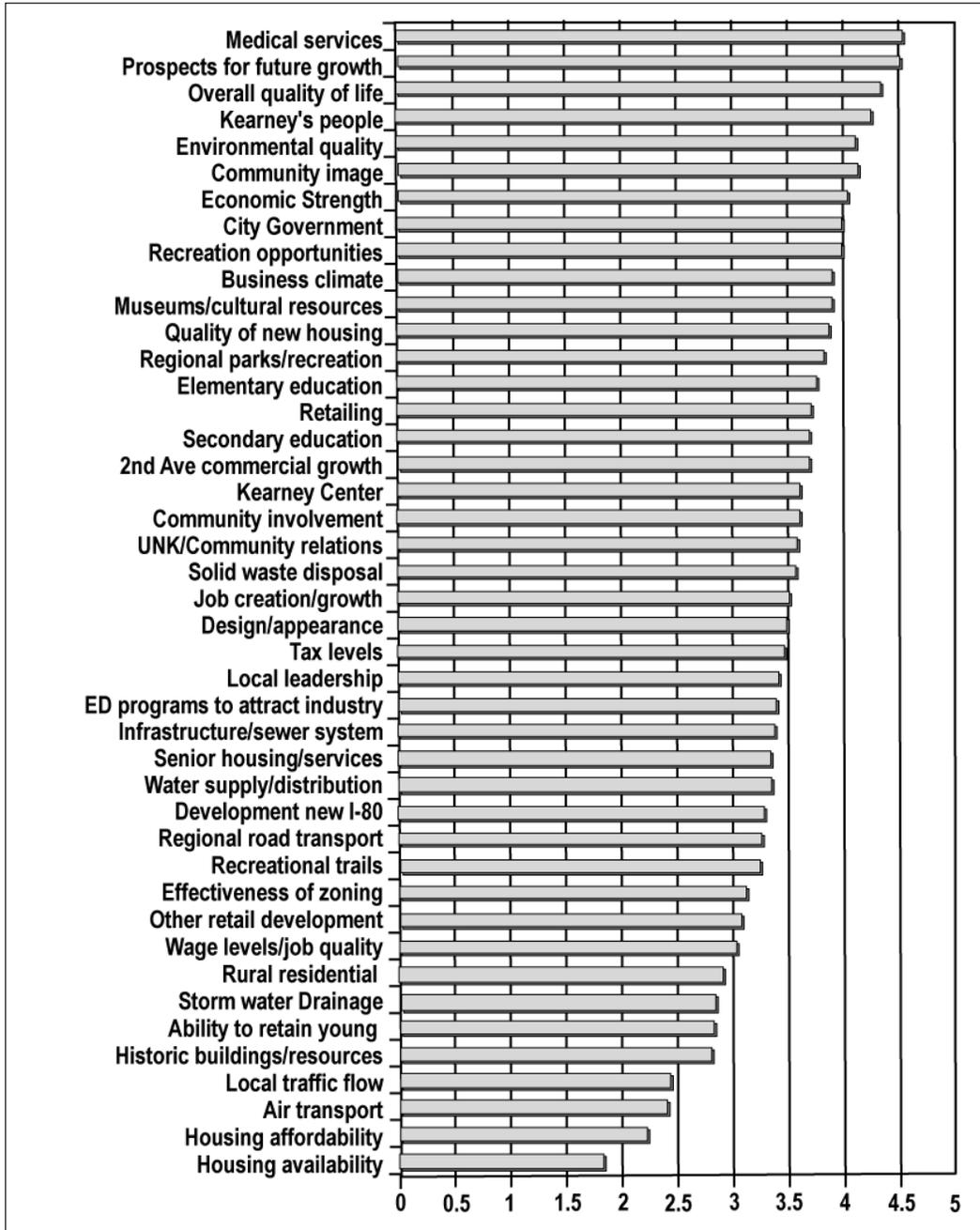
• ***Identification of Community Strengths and Weaknesses***

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:

Chart 1: Kearney Community Report Card





- 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.
- 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 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 improvement 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.



CHAPTER ONE: 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.



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- *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 1980, Lexington and Kearney have exhibited the highest rates of growth.

- *Kearney's population growth exceeded other rural trade centers.*

Generally, suburban, and metropolitan communities have grown at a faster rate than other cities in Nebraska. The exceptions to this are communities like Lexington that experienced a large increase in immigrant population and rural trade centers, communities like Kearney, Columbus, and Norfolk. Kearney's growth during the 1990s exceeds these other communities.

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

Kearney added nearly 7,000 people during the two decades. By comparison, Grand Island and Hastings added 7,437 and 1,633 persons, respectively. Kearney's overall population growth between 1960 and 2000 has grown by 93% from 14,210 to 27,431. During the same period, Buffalo County population increased by 61%.

- *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

TABLE 1.1: Population Change for Kearney and Other Regional Cities, 1940-2000

	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1960-1980	% Change 1980-2000	% Change 1990-2000
Kearney	9,643	12,115	14,210	19,181	21,158	24,396	27,431	48.9%	29.6%	14.3%
Buffalo County	23,655	25,134	26,236	31,222	34,797	37,447	42,259	32.6%	21.4%	13.8%
Hastings	15,145	20,211	21,412	23,580	23,045	22,837	24,064	7.6%	4.4%	5.3%
Adams County	24,576	28,855	28,944	30,553	30,656	29,625	31,151	5.9%	1.6%	5.0%
Grand Island	19,130	22,682	25,743	32,358	33,180	39,386	42,940	28.9%	29.4%	10.7%
Hall County	27,523	32,186	35,757	42,851	47,690	48,925	53,534	33.4%	12.3%	9.7%
Norfolk	10,490	11,335	13,640	16,607	19,449	21,476	23,516	42.6%	20.9%	10.5%
Columbus	7,632	8,884	12,476	15,471	17,328	19,480	20,971	38.9%	21.0%	8.6%
York	5,383	6,178	6,173	6,778	7,723	7,940	8,081	25.1%	4.6%	1.8%
Lexington	3,688	5,068	5,572	5,654	7,040	6,601	10,011	26.3%	42.2%	48.4%
Holdrege	3,360	4,381	5,226	5,635	5,624	5,671	5,636	7.6%	0.2%	-0.6%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003

TABLE 1-2: Population Distribution in Comparable Counties, 1940-2000



A Profile of Kearney

Year	Proportion of County Population Beyond City Limits		
	Buffalo Outside of Kearney	Adams Outside of Hastings	Hall Outside of Grand Island
1940	59.23%	38.37%	30.49%
1950	51.80%	29.96%	29.53%
1960	45.84%	26.02%	28.01%
1970	38.57%	22.82%	24.49%
1980	39.20%	24.83%	30.43%
1990	34.85%	22.91%	19.50%
2000	35.09%	22.75%	19.79%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003

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. This was especially true during the 1990s when the percentage of residents living in the county increased for the first time since 1940.

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

The proportion of Buffalo County’s population living outside Kearney steadily declined between 1930 and 1990. By 1990, 34.85% of County residents lived outside of Kearney, down from almost 60% in 1940. This is illustrated in Table 1-2. There was a stabilization of this trend during the 1990s with 35.09% of residents living outside of Kearney. 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 2000 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 in a community is explained by three 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.



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- *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.* A city's population can grow through annexation of populated areas.

In order to assess the dynamics of Kearney's population during the 1990s, the city's expected population based solely on natural population change is calculated and compared with the actual outcome of the 2000 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.

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 in the UNK Factbook to adjust for population. Removal of this population produces an estimate of the "permanent" off-campus population of the city. In 1991 UNK had a population of 5,611 between the ages of 17 and 24. By 2000 this had dropped to 5,022 and continued to decline to 4,921 in 2002.

- 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 2000 population above the levels that would be predicted by natural population change alone. This indicates that the city enjoyed significant in-migration during the 1990s, a trend that appears to be continuing.

- *Kearney's non-student population increased at a more rapid rate than expected during the 1990s.*

Natural population change without the students (based on the composition of Kearney's 1990 population) would have predicted a 2000 population of 20,894, an increase of 2,109 people or 11.23% over the estimated 1990 non-student population. The city's 2000 adjusted population of 22,409 indicates that the population increase was actually over 19% over the last decade. This indicates significant in-migration during the 1990s.

Analysis of the age groups that accounted for the largest share of the city's population change during the 1990s 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

**TABLE 1-3: Kearney's Non-Student Population*:
Predicted vs. Actual Population Change, 1990-2000**

	1990	2000	Change	%
Predicted Population (based on survival and birth rates)	18,785	20,894	2,109	11.23%
Actual Population	18,785	22,409	3,624	19.29%

*Estimate to control for UNK population effects

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003



A Profile of Kearney

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 2000 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 a net positive migration to Kearney during the 1990s.*

The analysis shows that Kearney’s 2000 population displayed the greatest in-migration of young households with members between ages 25 and 34. The actual population exceeds projected population by 1,435 persons for these cohorts. The high positive variance of children below age 9 echoes the attraction for relatively young families with children. This was also true during the 1980s, however as these cohorts moved into their late thirties and forties they were moving out of Kearney.

The senior population in Kearney displayed stability, with substantial increases among those over the age of 75. All age cohorts over age 60 displayed positive migration patterns, a trend that was continued from the 1980s. A closer examination of Buffalo County’s population indicates that the county, excluding Kearney, experienced an out-migration among those over the age of 65. It should be noted that this would only account for a small portion of Kearney’s growth in elderly residents. This would suggest that many elderly persons from the region are attracted to Kearney, for its lifestyle amenities, retirement housing, and for proximity to medical services.

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

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. This was also an issue for the city in the 1980s. With a vacancy rate of only 5% the city’s housing stock is nearly fully-occupied. Despite significant construction activity and strong economic activity during the 1990s the city has been unable to retain mature households.



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TABLE 1-4: Kearney's Adjusted Population*: Predicted and Actual Age Cohort Changes among All Residents, 2000

Age Group	2000 forecast	2000 actual	(Actual)-(Pred.)	% variance: actual/pred.
Under 5	1,335	1,836	501	37.56%
5-9	1,510	1,603	93	6.17%
10-14	1,662	1,627	-35	-2.11%
15-19	1,729	1,300	-429	-24.80%
20-24	1,427	1,252	-175	-12.27%
25-29	996	2,174	1178	118.31%
30-34	1,381	1,638	257	18.60%
35-39	1,902	1,628	-274	-14.41%
40-44	1,875	1,754	-121	-6.45%
45-49	1,611	1,673	62	3.85%
50-54	1,356	1,367	11	0.78%
55-59	878	944	66	7.55%
60-64	621	694	73	11.78%
65-69	618	644	26	4.15%
70-74	565	632	67	11.76%
75-79	526	604	78	14.74%
Over 80	901	1,039	138	15.32%
Total	20,894	22,409	1515	7.25%

*Estimate to control for UNK population effects
 Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003

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 25.8 in 1990 to 27.3 in 2000.
- The city's proportion of adults aged 45 to 54 increased from 6.54% in 1990 to 11.08% in 2000.

This would be indicative of babyboomers moving through the cohorts.

- The decrease in the number of adults 30 to 39 would account for the decrease in the number of children 5 to 9.

Kearney has always attracted young Nebraskans as a place to attend college, and many students remain to establish families and local careers. However, between 1992 and

TABLE 1-5: Age Composition as percent of Total Census Population, 1990-2000 (including UNK)

Age Group	1990 Pop	2000 Pop	Change 1990-2000	% of Total 1990	% of Total 2000
Under 5	1,666	1,836	170	6.83%	6.69%
5-9	1,734	1,603	-131	7.11%	5.84%
10-14	1,436	1,627	191	5.89%	5.93%
15-19	2,800	2,907	107	11.48%	10.60%
20-24	4,256	4,667	411	17.45%	17.01%
25-29	1,921	2,174	253	7.87%	7.93%
30-34	1,898	1,638	-260	7.78%	5.97%
35-39	1,640	1,628	-12	6.72%	5.93%
40-44	1,396	1,754	358	5.72%	6.39%
45-49	922	1,673	751	3.78%	6.10%
50-54	673	1,367	694	2.76%	4.98%
55-59	702	944	242	2.88%	3.44%
60-64	690	694	4	2.83%	2.53%
65-69	713	644	-69	2.92%	2.35%
70-74	599	632	33	2.46%	2.30%
75-79	530	604	74	2.17%	2.20%
Over 80	820	1,039	219	3.36%	3.79%
Median Age	25.8	27.3			

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003



A Profile of Kearney

2002 total enrollment at UNK has decreased by over 23% or nearly 1,000 students. More specifically, the number of undergraduate students over the age of 25 decreased by 59%. This trend could begin to hurt the city and its ability to sustain continued migration among young adults who attend UNK to for additional education opportunities and career development. These groups offer great promise to strengthen Kearney's economic, educational and civic life.

- *The size of Kearney's households has slowly declined during the last ten years.*

The rate of decline in household size has remained constant since 1980. The city's average household size was 2.53 in 1980, 2.45 in 1990 and 2.37 in 2000. During the past decade, the number of households in the city increased by 17.6% of its 1990 total. Population during this same period increased by 12.4%.

During the next ten years, Kearney will likely continue to experience this same pattern of slowly declining household size. As more and more baby-boomers become empty nesters this will continue to be a common trend for most communities.



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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.
- College-aged persons (ages 20-24) now represent nearly 17.01% of all persons in Kearney.
- Mature adults 40 to 59 make up a larger percentage of the city's population in 2000 than in 1990.
- Kearney has been less able to attract adults 35 to 44 over the past decade, and therefore has also seen a decline among those 10 to 19.



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.



Table 1-6 displays population projection scenarios for the City of Kearney. The calculations are based on:

- *A 0% migration scenario.* This base scenario excludes the student population and calculates the city’s remaining population based solely on births and deaths. The student population of 5,022 in 2000 and 4,921 after 2000 (based on the 2002 student population) is then added to this base.
- *An annual growth rate of 1.8%.* This is what actually occurred during the 1990s when student population is excluded from the city’s overall growth. The student population is then added back into this projection.
- *An annual growth rate of 1.18%.* This is what actually occurred between 1990 and 2000 when the student population is not controlled for.

The 1.8% and 1.18% annual growth rates closely resemble each other. However for planning purposes the 1.8% annual rate will be utilized with a flat 4,921 college population factored back into the projection. Therefore Kearney is projected to experience a 2010 population of 31,707, a 2020 population of 36,938 and a 2025 population of 39,925.

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 University

TABLE 1-6: Kearney Population Projections, 2000-2030

Controlling UNK Population	2000	2005	2010	2015	2020	2025	2030
No net migration	22,409	22,682	22,890	23,085	23,308	23,461	23,428
1.8% Annual Growth Rate	22,409	24,500	26,786	29,285	32,017	35,004	38,270
UNK Population							
No net migration	27,431	27,603	27,811	28,006	28,229	28,382	28,349
1.18% Annual Growth Rate	27,431	29,088	30,845	32,709	34,684	36,780	39,002
1.8% Annual Growth Rate	27,431	29,421	31,707	34,206	36,938	39,925	43,191

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003



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could also experience a reversal of the current trend of declining enrollment. Over the past ten years UNK student headcounts have slowly declined by approximately 1,000 students. However, during economic downturns people often choose to stay in college or go to college in hopes of finding a better job or delaying entering the job market until it improves. The Kearney Plan land use concept accommodates this potential by designating three growth centers around the city, that can be platted following traditional town-building principles to meet future housing demand.

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 40,000 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

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.



A Profile of Kearney

A list of Kearney's largest employers is provided in Table 1-7 and indicates:

- Since 1995 the number of people employed at UNK and Good Samaritan Health Systems has increased by over 1,300.
- Outside of public sector employers Baldwin Filters, Eaton Corporation, and Cabela's have remained the top three employers in the city.
- Wal-Mart has almost tripled its workforce in Kearney since 1995.
- Cabela's has decreased its workforce by over 200 employees since 1995.

• *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 Center 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 600 workers. Since 1995 Wal-Mart has also become a major employer with over 500 employees.

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



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 and manufacturing sectors than Kearney residents. About 19% of the county's 2000 work force is employed in these areas, as opposed to about 14% of Kearney residents. In contrast, city residents are more likely than county residents to be employed in retail trade and arts and entertainment sectors. The largest percentage of both city and county residents are employed in education, health and social services sectors, almost 70% of this workforce actually lives in Kearney.

Table 1-9 compares the types of jobs held by Kearney's residents in 2000 to Buffalo County. Employment by occupation describes the kind of work a person does on the job, as opposed to the type of industry an individual works in, which relates to the



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TABLE 1-7: Largest Employers in Kearney

Private Sector	Product or Business Type	Employees 2003	Employees 1995
Baldwin Filters	Filters	716	692
Eaton Corporation	Auto Valves	697	695
Cabela's	Retail Sales	630	845
Wal-Mart	Retail Sales	501	183
Coleman PowerMate	Electrical Generators	396	301
The Buckle	Retail Sales	285	169
Cash-Wa Distributing	Retail Sales	242	113
Morris Press	Publishing	225	99
Holiday Inn/Captain's Table	Hotel and Convention Center	200	150
Marshall Engines, Inc.	Rebuilt Engines	170	
Kearney Clinic	Medical Services	166	94
West Pharmaceutical	Pharmaceutical Stoppers	157	400
Chief Ag Industries, Inc.	Material Handling	151	
Kearney Family YMCA	Entertainment	131	
Bob's Superstore	Retail Sales	125	130
SunMart Foods	Retail Sales	124	
FNBO Service Center	Financial Services	116	82
Target	Retail Sales	116	
Herberger's	Retail Sales	112	98
Platte Valley Medical Group	Medical Services	112	
Mid-Nebr. Individual Services	Social Services	112	
Mount Carmel Home	Medical Services	110	
Builder's How-To Warehouse	Retail Sales	105	
Platte Valley State Bank	Financial Services	105	68
Hamilton Telecommunications	Telemarketing	101	
Mid-Nebr. Community Action	Social Services	100	

Source: Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003

TABLE 1-7cont'd: Largest Employers in Kearney

Public/Semi-Public	Product or Business Type	Employees 2003	Employees 1995
University of NE Kearney	Educational Services	1,611	845
Good Samaritan Health Systems	Medical Services	1,487	920
Kearney Public Schools	Educational Services	728	482
City of Kearney	Municipal Government	230	153
Buffalo County	County Government	205	190
Richard H. Young Hospital	Medical Services	171	190
Tri-City Arena	Arena	150	
YRTC	Youth Corrections and Rehabilitation Services	143	
St. John's Center	Medical Services	111	
Nebraska Public Power District	Utility Services	102	

Source: Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003



A Profile of Kearney

kind of business conducted by the person's employer. For example, 241 persons worked in Agriculture and Mining industries in 2000 while only 137 individuals' occupations involved farming, fishing and forestry. In general, the city's occupational profile differs only slightly from that of the overall county.

- *Kearney residents in 2000 are more likely to be employed in sales and office jobs than residents of Buffalo County at-large.*

For both the county and the city the vast majority of residents, 60% for the city and 58% for the county, were employed in management and professional, and sales and office occupations.



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TABLE 1-8: Employment by Industry; Kearney and Buffalo County, 2000

Industry	City of Kearney		Buffalo County	
	Employed	%	Employed	%
Total Employed	15,762	100.00%	23,404	100.00%
Agriculture, mining	241	1.53%	1,025	4.38%
Construction	903	5.73%	1,398	5.97%
Manufacturing	1,967	12.48%	3,419	14.61%
Wholesale trade	556	3.53%	789	3.37%
Retail trade	2,583	16.39%	3,493	14.92%
Transportation, warehousing	348	2.21%	689	2.94%
Information	422	2.68%	550	2.35%
Finance, insurance, real estate	782	4.96%	1,070	4.57%
Professional	719	4.56%	977	4.17%
Education, health and social services	4,006	25.42%	5,762	24.62%
Arts, entertainment	1,953	12.39%	2,335	9.98%
Other services	722	4.58%	1,147	4.90%
Public administration	560	3.55%	750	3.20%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003

Income

Table 1-10 displays 2000 income distributions for Kearney, Buffalo County, Hastings, Grand Island, and Nebraska.

- *Kearney contains a larger proportion of lower income households than the state as a whole.*

In 2000, Kearney's median household income was \$34,829, 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.

- *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 \$75,000 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.

TABLE 1-9: Employment by Occupation: Kearney and Buffalo County, 2000

Industry	City of Kearney		Buffalo County	
	Employed	%	Employed	%
Total Employment	15,762	100.00%	23,404.00	100.00%
Management, professional	4,677	29.67%	7,067	30.20%
Service occupations	2,862	18.16%	3,842	16.42%
Sales and office	4,789	30.38%	6,511	27.82%
Farming, fishing, forestry	137	0.87%	308	1.32%
Construction, extraction, maintenance	1,292	8.20%	2,179	9.31%
Production, transportation	2,005	12.72%	3,497	14.94%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003



A Profile of Kearney

TABLE 1-10: Income Distribution for Households by Percentage, 1999

	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	10.4	7.1	16.8	16.0	18.0	18.0	13.7	\$34,829
Buffalo County	9.0	6.8	15.7	15.7	19.5	20.1	13.2	\$36,782
Hastings	9.6	7.7	15.8	16.3	20.1	19.1	11.3	\$35,461
Grand Island	10.4	7.5	16.1	14.5	19.8	19.8	12.0	\$36,044
State of Nebraska	8.3	6.6	14.8	14.7	18.4	20.4	16.8	\$39,250

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003

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

About 18% of Kearney households earn between \$35,000 and \$50,000. Buffalo County (19.5%), Hastings (20.1%) and Grand Island (19.8%) exhibit a larger proportion of middle-income households than the state average (18.4%).

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.



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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 Holdrege suggest that Kearney's market area is expanding into Phelps County. This is attributable to discount store construction in Kearney, which has attracted customers from Holdrege and the surrounding region. Table 1-15 compares retail changes between 1991 and 2001 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 1991 and 2001, specifically between 1995 and 2001 when only Lincoln experienced an equivalent level of growth. 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 92.96% 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

Table 1.11: Taxable Retail Sales (000's)

Community	1991	1993	1995	1997	1999	2001	% Change 1991-1995	% Change 1995-2001
Kearney	251,706	283,579	325,215	359,006	413,651	453,933	29.20%	39.58%
Buffalo County	290,218	317,913	355,015	393,736	448,904	488,287	22.33%	37.54%
Grand Island	417,924	479,233	544,779	581,617	626,373	669,714	30.35%	22.93%
Hastings	196,424	216,938	235,401	242,116	254,864	255,234	19.84%	8.43%
Holdrege	60,560	56,729	54,170	55,181	52,623	55,852	-10.55%	3.11%
Lexington	76,197	81,159	87,547	84,198	86,981	94,485	14.90%	7.92%
Lincoln	1,496,142	1,701,467	1,947,730	2,259,594	2,567,664	2,720,031	30.18%	39.65%

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003

TABLE 1-12: Commuting Patterns for Kearney Other Regional Cities, 2000

Community	Average Travel Time to Work	% Who Walk to Work	% Use Public Transportation
Kearney	13.8	3.3	0.2
Hastings	14	3.9	0.3
Grand Island	14.5	1.9	0.3
Norfolk	12.5	2.4	0.5
Columbus	12.6	1.5	0.3
Fremont	18.5	3	0.1
Lincoln	17.1	3.4	1.3
Waverly	20.6	3.7	0
Omaha	18.2	2.4	1.9
Papillion	18.9	1.3	0.1

Source: U.S. Bureau of the Census; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2003



A Profile of Kearney

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 2000, the average travel time to work for Kearney residents was 13.8 minutes, the lowest of all comparable cities, except Norfolk and Columbus. Despite being one of lowest commute times this is an increase from 11 minutes in 1990. About 86.5% of all workers drive to work alone, up from 79.8% in 1990. Another 7.4% use car pools, and 5.4% walked or worked at home.



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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.
- Good Samaritan Health Systems and UNK account for over 3,000 employees or over 59% of the workforce in the top five employers in the city.
- 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 of about 14 minutes to work. Few residents use public transportation, despite the presence of the University, and the present concentration of jobs in a few clustered places.



CHAPTER TWO: A REGIONAL CITY

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. It also grows from its diverse economic base, which includes a variety of industries that take advantage of the many skills of the city’s people. As a regional leader, Kearney has succeeded in attracting 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, a community of learning 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 Center; 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; the abrupt beginnings of the Nebraska sand hills ranch country emerging from the heights above Cottonmill



Lake; and the Great Platte River Archway Monument, forming a dramatic entrance on the nation's busiest highway. These and other images help Kearney project an image as a regional economic power, an intimate home to its residents, and a familiar and approachable place for visitors and tourists. Indeed, the preservation of these 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 18,856 people or 220% between 1930 and 2000, propelled by a significant increase in regional manufacturing employment.

Growth and change create their own challenges to Kearney's desirable urban environment. Traffic continues to increase along the 2nd Avenue corridor, and creates continuing congestion at certain points. Major development has pushed northward to the edge of the area currently served by sewers, creating pressures for subdivision development with individual wastewater systems in the city's primary urban growth area. Affluence and lifestyle preferences have also scattered large lot developments in sensitive environmental areas beyond the city's boundaries. Financial constraints limit the ability of the city to extend and improve services and facilities. And maintaining a strong traditional city center in the face of contemporary retail trends is always a challenge.



However, Kearney has successfully addressed a number of these key community development challenges. Since approval of its 1997 comprehensive plan, Kearney has:

- Advanced the process of developing a new I-80 interchange at Cherry Avenue.
- Completed new grade separated crossings over the UP mainline at 30th Avenue and Avenues M/N, greatly improving the ease and safety of north-south access through the city.
- Completed the Archway, and prepared a specific plan to direct land use and design standards in the strategic corridor between the monument and the existing Kearney interchange.
- Prepared specific plans for two other opportunity areas – the East Bypass corridor from the Cherry Avenue interchange to Highway 10 at Glenwood Corners; and the Platte River corridor south of 11th Street and west of 2nd Avenue.

- Approved a new Unified Development Ordinance that provides new design standards and techniques, greater neighborhood protections, and a higher level of consistency to aid developers.
- Maintained a strong central business district and completed the Kearney Gateway Plan, a strategy for the continued health of Downtown Kearney and the commercial and mixed use corridors that lead to it.



These efforts exemplify a managed growth approach, maintaining the form of the city, but re-fashioning 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 continues to be managing growth 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.



TOWN PATTERNS

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

- **TOPOGRAPHY**
- **CROSSROADS OF TRADITIONAL CORRIDORS**
- **STREET AND BLOCK LAYOUT**
- **COMMUNITY BOULEVARD STREET**
- **THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT**
- **CITY 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 the junctions of different landforms 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 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.

Some of Kearney's oldest and most notable landscape features, including the country club, Lake Kearney, Harmon Park, the high school, and the cemetery, follow this topographic divide.

Kearney's urbanized area also falls within two watersheds – the Platte and Wood Rivers. The drainage divide runs just north of 56th Street. As a result, the city's most intensive new development ends abruptly at the edge of the urban service area. Kearney should develop a policy framework that allows owners to develop property in a timely way, while not limiting logical urban development.

CROSSROADS OF TRANSPORTATION CORRIDORS

Kearney is a crossroads, largely because of the interplay of landforms and transportation. Westward emigration routes defined the city's settlement site. 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, the Lincoln Highway, and Interstate 80 also followed the Platte Valley route.

Kearney traditionally was a major stopping point along the nation's east-west transportation arteries. But its community form also grew from its nature as 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, Arnold, and Stapleton. Similarly, at Kearney, regional routes such as present day Highways 10 and 44 intersected with the Platte Valley arteries to serve rural areas to the north and south.



A City to Lead The Region

This crossroads pattern continues to influence land use patterns in the city. Thus, the 2nd Avenue corridor, the city's crossroads with Interstate 80, is the dominant commercial artery and has heavy 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 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, typically 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 corridor 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 good 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.

Kearney Center is the nucleus of this "community street," but the procession begins at Good Samaritan Hospital six blocks north of downtown. The street crosses US 30 and enters Downtown Kearney, passing the landmark Museum of Nebraska Art. The procession continues through the city's historic "Main Street" district, across the UPRR, and through the Old Town district toward the Buffalo County Courthouse. The community street character of Central Avenue changes south of the Courthouse into a mixed-use industrial services area. Between 2000 and 2002, Kearney has improved Central Avenue between Archway Parkway and 12th Street to a three-lane urban section. This investment has encouraged the upgrade of neighboring commercial and industrial uses.



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 designs.

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.

CITY CENTER

Kearney’s city center, centered along Central Avenue between the UP and US 30, has maintained its vitality as the community’s primary commercial and civic center. The continued strength results from:

- *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 Center has remained central to most of the community’s residential neighborhoods.

- *A local street pattern that concentrates north-south traffic in the center of town.* Traditionally, Central Avenue was the principal crossing over the railroad. Later, 2nd Avenue provided the only grade-separated crossing, routing traffic along the west edge of the downtown district. The more recent Avenue H viaduct channeled traffic from the southeastern part of the city into downtown via 22nd Street. Only with the completion of the 30th Avenue viaduct in 2000 and the Avenue M/N crossing in 2002 has it become possible to cross the main line without traveling through downtown.

- *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 Center.

- *The scale and character of the district itself.* The Kearney Center 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 Center, 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 maintained the district’s status in the city.





The Kearney Plan

CHALLENGES

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

- **TRANSPORTATION ROUTES AND LAND PATTERNS**
- **REGIONAL GROWTH**
- **COMMERCIAL DEMANDS AND CHANGE**
- **SUBDIVISION PATTERNS**
- **URBAN SERVICE REQUIREMENTS**
- **SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES**
- **NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION**

Kearney should address each of these challenges to assure a strong development future.

TRANSPORTATION ROUTES AND LAND PATTERNS

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, paralleling 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 I-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. Crosstown 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.

The 2nd Avenue route, connected to I-80, encouraged automobile-oriented commercial development. Hotel, convention, restaurant, commercial and industrial uses became densely developed to a two block depth along Second Avenue. Through some of its length, this corridor still lacks continuous pedestrian circulation, causing most trips to and among commercial and hotel facilities to be made by automobile. The extension of the Cottonmill Trail to and beyond 2nd Avenue improves pedestrian access in the lower end of the corridor. The Kearney Gateway Plan, completed in 2003, also advocates full pedestrian continuity along 2nd Avenue.

As Kearney has grown, it has become clear that a single I-80 interchange places excessive traffic loads on 2nd Avenue. Comparable cities like Grand Island and North Platte now have two entrances. The 1997 comprehensive plan recommended a new interchange at Cherry Avenue, three miles east of the current exit. The city and state have completed an interchange justification study, and planning has proceeded for a north-east bypass, linking the interstate with regional highways to the northwest.



Kearney has also met the major transportation challenge of improving north-south continuity over the Union Pacific with the completion of the 30th Avenue and Avenue M/N overpasses.

REGIONAL GROWTH

Local employment and population growth and land availability will continue to encourage development in Kearney. Development has in turn spread from traditional in-city sites to outlying rural estate acreages and plats, using lower cost land at sites on desiccated hills relatively unsuitable for agriculture but sensitive to development impacts. Acreage development is popular in the Kearney area, reflecting the rural traditions of the surrounding region and offering rural lifestyles near urban employment or amenities. In the past, some of these developments were built to urban density, lacking standard city water and sewer services.

Kearney will generate continued demand for new housing. The analysis in Chapter One indicates a 25-year population increase of 12,500 people, and consequent demand for 5,800 housing units. The city must accommodate this continued growth potential in ways that provide a range of housing choices and maintain the city's relatively compact community character.



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 Center. 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 Hilltop Mall. These mass retailers are major traffic generators, increasing traffic loads on the 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 Center district, raising important issues and concern for preservation of the community commercial role of the traditional



business district. To date, Downtown Kearney has successfully met this challenge and continues as an unusually vital mixed use district.

In 2003, the Kearney Gateway Plan was completed, proposing a downtown strategy linked to the improvement and branding of the corridors and districts connecting the city center to Interstate 80. Implementing these concepts for the benefit of the entire retail and service community should continue to be part of the city's development agenda.

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.

URBAN SERVICE REQUIREMENTS

Kearney's natural growth directs a considerable share of development north of 56th Street, into the Wood River watershed. Because of this drainage divide, Kearney's urban service area ends abruptly just north of 56th Street. New interceptor sewer construction has opened a northeast sector to urban development. However, the highest demand areas, including the central 2nd Avenue corridor, are not served. Topography requires extension of an extensive sewer network to serve this area, taking flows to the north and east. Extension of urban services into these key growth areas will be a substantial community challenge.

SPECIAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Archway, Yanney Park, and the Cherry Avenue Bypass corridor all provide Kearney with significant development opportunities that may direct some growth into directions different from the natural northward pattern. Since the adoption of the 1997 plan, Kearney has adopted three specific plans to guide growth in these areas: The Interstate Corridor Mixed Use Plan (1999), the West Platte River Corridor Plan (2000), and the Cherry Avenue Corridor Plan (2001). The city should act to implement these plans to take full advantage of these opportunities.

NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION

The conservation of existing neighborhoods is a challenge for Kearney as for all cities. The Unified Development Ordinance, approved during 2002, provides significant protections for neighborhoods, and helped resolve the issue of multi-family conversions of previously single-family houses. It also created a special district for the Pioneer Park neighborhood, with the capability of creating neighborhood conservation overlay districts in other parts of the city. Yet, problems such as deteriorating housing in some areas and land use incompatibilities still can affect the integrity of residential areas.





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?

Management of logical and desirable growth can address issues of infrastructure costs, transportation service and maintenance of community character. This section presents the basic principles that should guide measures to improve Kearney. These principles include:

- **A REGIONAL CITY OF 40,000**
- **OFFICIAL MAP**
- **URBAN SERVICE AREA**
- **THE NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT**
- **TRANSPORTATION TO MEET CITY AND REGIONAL NEEDS**
- **A RECREATION LIFESTYLE**
- **A HUB FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY**
- **KEARNEY GATEWAY**
- **PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC KEARNEY**

Each of these principles is discussed in the following section.

A REGIONAL CITY OF 40,000

KEARNEY SHOULD CAPITALIZE ON ITS ABILITY TO ATTRACT GROWTH AND WILL ACHIEVE A TARGET POPULATION OF 40,000 BY 2025.

Kearney's economic vitality, status as a university town, and overall quality are 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 some residents believe that a larger Kearney might erode the quality of life and transportation mobility of the traditional small city.

Kearney should 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 plan to achieve a target population of 40,000 at the end of this twenty-year planning period. This forecast is based on an annual growth rate within the local (non-student) population of about 1.8%, similar to that experienced by the city during the last two decades. 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 created the framework for future development by pre-defining streets and block sizes. People who built houses in town fit into this community pattern, giving Kearney a consistent character. 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.



A City to Lead The Region





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 major streets and open spaces that establishes a community context that orders individual development decisions. The official map concept also establishes the linkages that keep new parts of the city connected to one another and reserves the corridors that are necessary to maintain street connectivity.

URBAN SERVICE AREA

KEARNEY SHOULD DEFINE ITS URBAN SERVICE AREA AND ASSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THAT AREA ACCOMMODATES SANITARY SEWERS AND CITY WATER SUPPLY.

A feasible gravity flow sewer system for Kearney defines the edge of an Urban Service Area. This area defines the edge of eventual, long-term urban development – residential growth of sufficient density to support subdivisions that are served by sanitary sewer and municipal water.



During the next twenty years, the Kearney jurisdiction 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. This development will occur within the Urban Service Area defined by this plan.

- Rural residential development that includes single-family houses on acreage lots, often using individual waste treatment and water systems and rural section roads. This type of development should generally occur outside the Urban Service Area, encompassing parts of the jurisdiction that are unlikely to be served by urban infrastructure. Development of this type within the boundaries of the Urban Service Area will obstruct the sound extension of urban infrastructure.

The problem is that much of the Urban Service Area is not currently served by sewer facilities. Property owners within unserved parts of the U.S.A. may feel that they have the right to realize a return on their property, and may be unwilling to wait for the long-term extension of urban infrastructure. Therefore, city policy should:

- Divide the planning jurisdiction into an Urban Service Area, the area that will ultimately be served by urban infrastructure, and a Rural Development Area, the area which will not have urban services within the foreseeable future.
- Within the Urban Service Area:



- In areas that currently have interceptor sewer service, only urban development is permitted
- In areas that will be served by interceptor sewers before 2010, only urban development is permitted. Any development that occurs within this area prior to actual extension of urban services must be developed to urban standards, including construction of local sewer lines. Agreements will require connection to the urban sewer system, with appropriate connection or benefit fees, when sewers are extended.
- In areas that will be served by interceptor sewers after 2010, one-third of a parcel may be developed at rural densities on individual or community wastewater systems. The balance of the development parcel must be left as open space, to be developed to urban density when urban sewers are extended. The rural density parcel may be developed to intermediate street standards, using guidelines for intermediate streets defined by the subdivision ordinance.
- The city will develop a specific plan for the timing and financing of infrastructure extensions, using a benefit fee concept that calculates the overall cost of the system within a specific service area, and includes a charge on a per unit basis, based on the unit's fractional share of the total benefit of the system.
- In the Rural Development Area, permit large lot or rural estate development. In environmentally sensitive areas, apply conservation development standards to preserve common open space.

THE NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT

RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN GROWTH AREAS OF KEARNEY SHOULD BE ORGANIZED AS NEIGHBORHOOD UNITS WITHIN SECTIONS, RELATING NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS, PARKS, ACTIVITY CENTERS, AND SEVERAL TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.

Typically, residential development in Kearney occurs in relatively small increments, each designed to work on its own parcel. Connections between these subdivisions are scarce and street patterns are sometimes confusing and discontinuous. As a result, two points that are relatively close together require a long and sometimes circuitous trip. Frequently, people who seek to walk from their house to a commercial center on the periphery of the neighborhood have no choice but to navigate arterial streets. This contrasts with the fine-grained circulation pattern of traditional towns and older neighborhoods that provide a network of streets and pedestrian paths.

This trend is not the fault of developers, but rather the natural consequence of individual development decisions made in the absence of principles of urban structure. This plan suggests a different conceptual framework for development in Kearney, borrowed from the "neighborhood unit" concepts of the 1920s, but updated for a modern urban setting. This concept links the major features of a neighborhood - school, recreation, commercial activity, and neighborhood housing. It avoids the concept of building walls between different types of land uses, and improves pedestrian access from one type of use to another.



While the specific design of the neighborhood unit varies from one section to another, common features include:

- A neighborhood park and school site at the heart of the unit. At a gross density of 3 units per acre, a section will have a population of from 5,500 to 6,000 people, generally supporting an elementary school. This central space provides about 25 acres, including a 15-acre school site and a 10-acre adjacent neighborhood park.
- A neighborhood mixed use center at the external major intersections. This gives local commercial and service development the street exposure needed to work economically.
- A parkway and green “mall” connection between the educational/recreational neighborhood heart and the mixed-use center. This links the neighborhood directly and internally to its two major types of activity centers.
- A concentric grid of streets providing local circulation. These include midsection collectors that link neighborhood units together. These collectors are diverted around the school/park sites to provide connectivity, but also to slow and discourage through traffic.
- Medium and mixed density housing around the periphery of the unit, with lower density residential development in the center, away from section-line roads.

The design of individual subdivisions would fall within the context of this neighborhood unit diagram. While topography and land ownership patterns may modify the specific outcome, the framework principles should remain constant.

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 central 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 pro-



viding 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 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 technology 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.

KEARNEY GATEWAY

THE 2ND AVENUE INTERCHANGE, DOWNTOWN KEARNEY, AND THE BUSINESS CORRIDORS AND DISTRICTS BETWEEN THEM ARE PARTS OF A LINKED ENTERPRISE DISTRICT, AND THE SUCCESS OF THE CORRIDOR DEPENDS ON THE SUCCESS OF EACH PART.



A City to Lead The Region

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The Kearney Gateway Plan identifies five distinct sub-districts that together connect the traditional city center to Interstate 80. These five sub-districts include:

- The 2nd Avenue Hospitality District between the interchange and 11th Street.
- The Middle Second District, along 2nd Avenue between 11th Street and the UP viaduct.
- The Central Avenue corridor.
- The Old Town District, along Central between 18th Street and the Union Pacific tracks.
- Kearney Center, the city's traditional downtown district.

Each of these districts has their own personality and function, but also should be a part of a coordinated "brand" that serves as the front door to Kearney. The Kearney Gateway concept calls for individual investments in each of these districts, designed to enhance their physical and business environment. It also calls for coordination of these individual efforts into a unified whole through branding, marketing, and graphic themes. This dual approach of a unified array of diverse sub-districts should guide overall city policies and investments in these corridors.

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 history, Kearney's architectural traditions have been remarkable, producing a collection of distinguished buildings. Building in Kearney Center, 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 that 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 Center 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.



CHAPTER THREE: 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 FOR EFFICIENT PUBLIC SERVICES EXTENSIONS.

The previous chapter of the Kearney Plan considered the factors that have helped make the city 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 about 40,000 by 2025. It also discusses the condition of existing neighborhoods and concludes by identifying the growth areas that 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. In 1995, slightly more than 1,500 single-family homes in the community needed 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. In 1995 Kearney contained 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. They make housing more affordable to buyers and enable the city to annex new developments in a timely manner. If the city, or an SID finances infrastructure, incremental extensions also mean that new development creates a larger return on public investment.

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 3-1 and Table 3-1 summarize current land uses in Kearney and its two-mile extra-territorial jurisdiction based on a detailed 2002 field survey. In addition to providing acreage and percentage breakdowns by general land use categories, the survey provides detailed information on specific uses.



Growth and Land Use

Residential Uses

Residential uses make up Kearney's largest single land use, accounting for just over 35% of the city's developed land area. Seventy-four percent of this land is taken up by 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, and situated at the far east edge of the city, east of an industrial railroad spur and Grand Avenue.

While about 44% of Kearney's housing is renter-occupied, multi-family or mobile home units account for only 16% of the total residential area. This indicates that a significant percentage of rental housing is found in structures built for single families.

These statistics do not include college residence halls.



Commercial Uses

About 8.85% of Kearney's developed land area is in commercial and office uses. Of land in these uses, 34% is general commercial development mostly oriented to the 2nd Avenue and US Highway 30 corridors. Freestanding buildings and on-site, self-contained parking characterize highway commercial development. Downtown commercial uses are focused in Kearney Center, located a few blocks southeast 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 Center 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.



TABLE 3.1: Land Use Distribution in Kearney and the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction, 2002

Land Use Category	City		Jurisdiction	
	Acres	% of Developed Land	Acres	% of Developed Land
Residential	2,018.99	35.25%	1,650.44	32.66%
Single-Family	1,618.25	28.25%	1,543.24	30.54%
Duplex	70.77	1.24%	4.26	0.08%
Multi-Family	168.88	2.95%	-	0.00%
Mobile Home	161.09	2.81%	102.94	2.04%
Commercial	507.2	8.85%	198.86	3.94%
Services	74.14	1.29%	58.58	1.16%
Office	70.7	1.23%	16.20	0.32%
General Commercial	171.47	2.99%	42.51	0.84%
Kearney Centre Mixed Use	20	0.35%	-	0.00%
Automotive	80.27	1.40%	12.24	0.24%
Entertainment	90.62	1.58%	69.33	1.37%
Civic/Public	1,377.34	24.05%	2,597.61	51.40%
Parks/Recreation/Open Space	564.16	9.85%	269.53	5.33%
Educational	140.94	2.46%	16.69	0.33%
Public Utilities	14.44	0.25%	18.54	0.37%
Other civic	657.8	11.48%	2,292.85	45.37%
Industrial	278.24	4.86%	606.65	12.00%
Wholesale/Storage	32.75	0.57%	-	0.00%
General Industrial	148.93	2.60%	266.59	5.28%
Distribution/Transportation	17.86	0.31%	34.80	0.69%
Salvage	37.32	0.65%	14.66	0.29%
Ag Industry	41.38	0.72%	290.60	5.75%
Transportation	1,546.34	27.00%		0.00%
Street ROW (estimate)	1449.1	25.30%	--	
RR Right-of-Way	97.24	1.70%	--	
Total Developed Land	5,728.11	100.00%	5,053.56	100.00%
Vacant Platted Land	308.76		25.81	
Mining/Resource Extraction	12.88		43.59	
Agriculture/Open	1,567.37		37,432.08	
Total Undeveloped Land	1,889.01		37,501.48	
Total Land	7,617.12		42,555.04	

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert

Industrial Uses

Just less than 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.



Growth and Land Use

Civic Uses

Civic uses account for an extraordinarily high 24.1% of Kearney's developed area, ranking as the third largest land use category. City parks and recreation areas account for almost 41% of this civic area. Other major civic uses include the University of Nebraska at Kearney, Kearney Community Schools, and the YRTC.

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 39% 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 16% of land uses in Southeast or Southwest Kearney). In addition, Lake Kearney, and the power canal, account for over 570 acres of open space, only Southeast Kearney with a string of lakes and open area north of Interstate has more open space (733 acres). Residential uses account for about 36% of land use, and Northwest Kearney has the largest amount of acreage dedicated to multi-family housing in the city. Less than 2% of land is dedicated to industrial and less the 6% to commercial uses.

- *Northeast Kearney.* Northeast Kearney contains more than 800 acres of developed residential land - the largest amount in the city. Residential uses comprise more than 46% of all land uses, including 107 acres of mobile home developments, the city's major public housing site, and the city's largest proportion of duplex housing. Northeast Kearney contains the city's largest concentration of commercial land, with more than 45% of all the land dedicated to general commercial use in Kearney. The area also has the city's second largest concentration of civic land uses, including Good Samaritan Hospital. Over 5% of land in Northeast Kearney is dedicated to school, park and public facilities uses.

- *Southwest Kearney.* This quadrant is now the city's smallest in size, but fairly diverse. Nearly 28% of the built environment of Southwest Kearney is devoted to residential uses. The area has nearly even proportions of land dedicated to civic (15.4%), commercial (14.16%) and industrial (14.33%) uses. It contains the largest concentration of the city's wholesale/storage, ag industries and entertainment uses.

- *Southeast Kearney.* 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. Annexations north of I-80, west to the Archway have led to an increase in open space,



TABLE 3-2: City of Kearney Land Use Distribution: By Quadrant, 2002

Land Use Category	NW		NE	
	Acres	% of Developed Land	Acres	% of Developed Land
Residential	770.83	35.74%	833.19	45.58%
Single-Family	614.85	28.51%	624.53	34.17%
Duplex	32.37	1.50%	34.59	1.89%
Multi-Family	84.4	3.91%	66.12	3.62%
Mobile Home	39.21	1.82%	107.95	5.91%
Commercial	127.56	5.92%	189.36	10.36%
Services	6.61	0.31%	15.80	0.86%
Office	23.94	1.11%	25.21	1.38%
General Commercial	65.9	3.06%	76.43	4.18%
Kearney Centre Mixed Use	0	0.00%	20.00	1.09%
Automotive	21.39	0.99%	27.40	1.50%
Entertainment	9.72	0.45%	24.52	1.34%
Civic/Public	830.54	38.51%	304.42	16.65%
Parks/Recreation/Open Space	431.36	20.00%	28.00	1.53%
Educational	70.78	3.28%	64.56	3.53%
Public Utilities	9.41	0.44%	0.67	0.04%
Other civic	318.99	14.79%	211.19	11.55%
Industrial	27.41	1.27%	43.98	2.41%
Wholesale/Storage	0.73	0.03%	0.22	0.01%
General Industrial	26.32	1.22%	42.09	2.30%
Distribution/ Transportation	0.36	0.02%	1.29	0.07%
Salvage	0	0.00%	0.38	0.02%
Ag Industry	0	0.00%	-	0.00%
Transportation	400.18	18.56%	457.03	25.00%
Street & Railroad ROW (estimate)	400.18	18.56%	457.03	
Total Developed Land	2156.52	100.00%	1,827.98	100.00%
Vacant Platted Land	134.06		52.30	
Mining/Resource Extraction			-	
Agriculture/Open	574.28		159.95	
Total Undeveloped Land	708.34		212.25	
Total Land	2864.86		2,040.23	

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert

TABLE 3-2: City of Kearney Land Use Distribution: By Quadrant, 2002

Land Use Category	SW		SE	
	Acres	% of Developed Land	Acres	% of Developed Land
Residential	189.47	27.61%	225.47	20.90%
Single-Family	169.93	24.76%	208.93	19.36%
Duplex	2.97	0.43%	0.84	0.08%
Multi-Family	12.91	1.88%	5.44	0.50%
Mobile Home	3.66	0.53%	10.26	0.95%
Commercial	97.16	14.16%	93.10	8.63%
Services	29.52	4.30%	22.21	2.06%
Office	5.58	0.81%	15.97	1.48%
General Commercial	13.31	1.94%	15.83	1.47%
Kearney Centre Mixed Use	0	0.00%	-	0.00%
Automotive	6.86	1.00%	24.62	2.28%
Entertainment	41.89	6.10%	14.47	1.34%
Civic/Public	105.65	15.40%	136.71	12.67%
Parks/Recreation/Open Space	99.64	14.52%	5.14	0.48%
Educational	2.07	0.30%	3.52	0.33%
Public Utilities	0	0.00%	4.36	0.40%
Other civic	3.94	0.57%	123.69	11.46%
Industrial	98.34	14.33%	108.52	10.06%
Wholesale/Storage	30.5	4.44%	1.31	0.12%
General Industrial	37.32	5.44%	43.20	4.00%
Distribution/ Transportation	4.7	0.68%	11.51	1.07%
Salvage	0	0.00%	36.94	3.42%
Ag Industry	25.82	3.76%	15.56	1.44%
Transportation	195.61	28.51%	515.22	47.75%
Street & Railroad ROW (estimate)	195.61	28.51%	515.22	
Total Developed Land	686.23	100.00%	1,079.02	100.00%
Vacant Platted Land	19.67		102.72	
Mining/Resource Extraction	0		12.88	
Agriculture/Open	100.06		733.09	
Total Undeveloped Land	119.73		848.69	
Total Land	805.96		1,927.71	

Source: RDG Cruse Gardner Shukert



Growth and Land Use



leading all other quadrants with 733 acres. Southeast Kearney also has the smallest percentage of residential land with less than 21% of all land in residential use. With only 5 acres the area also has the least amount of parks and recreation land. Southeast Kearney also has almost 99% of all the salvage in the city and 29% of all industrial land.

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. Tables 3-3 and 3-4 compares land use in Kearney with that of other comparable communities in Nebraska. These comparisons include:

- Norfolk, Nebraska, a growing non-metropolitan city of about 24,000 in northeast Nebraska. The city is a major commercial hub for the region drawing from a significant portion of northeast and north-central Nebraska.
- Fremont, Nebraska, a growing city of 25,000 that experiences a significant pull from the Omaha metro area.
- Beatrice, Nebraska, a stable, non-metropolitan county seat with a population of about 12,500.



Overall Kearney's land use pattern is very comparable to these other communities. Fremont, which also has a college and is the county seat, has a comparable amount of civic land. Beatrice's high percentage of civic land is due to the inclusion of the airport within city limits. Kearney's commercial dominance is demonstrated with the second highest percentage of commercial land.

With all residential uses considered, Kearney's density is the highest among comparable cities. Kearney ranks relatively high among this sample of cities for commercial land uses. It compares most closely with Norfolk, another regional commercial hub, which services rural areas that are quite distant from the city. Commercial development in Kearney is relatively less compact in comparison

with other cities, with 1.85 acres per 100 people, the lowest among the communities in Table 3-4.

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 about changes in city land use patterns and distributions over the last 26 years.

Tables 3-5 and 3-6 summarize the evolution of land use in Kearney during this period. 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

TABLE 3-3: Comparative land use in City Limits by proportion: Kearney and other Nebraska Cities

	% of Developed Area			
	Kearney	Norfolk	Fremont	Beatrice
Residential	35.25%	40.42%	39.63%	34.11%
Commercial	8.85%	9.66%	6.52%	5.12%
Industrial	4.86%	3.85%	4.68%	5.25%
Civic	14.20%	9.76%	14.65%	23.03%
Parks/Recreation	9.85%	8.08%	9.34%	6.33%
Transportation	27.00%	28.22%	25.19%	26.17%
Total Developed Area	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Source: Kearney Land Use Survey, RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2002; The Norfolk Plan, 2001; The Fremont Plan, 1999; The Beatrice Plan, 2001.



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

	Acres/100 people			
	Kearney	Norfolk	Fremont	Beatrice
Residential	7.36	7.64	6.97	9.21
Commercial	1.85	1.79	1.14	1.38
Industrial	1.01	0.73	0.82	1.42
Civic	2.96	1.85	2.61	6.21
Parks/Recreation	2.06	1.53	1.66	1.71
Transportation	5.64	5.34	4.43	7.07
Total Developed Area	20.88	18.88	18.02	27.00

Source: Kearney Land Use Survey, RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2002; The Norfolk Plan, 2001; The Fremont Plan, 1999; The Beatrice Plan, 2001.



TABLE 3-5: Comparative Density of Land Use in Kearney

Land Use Category	Acres/100 people	
	1976	2002
Low-Density Residential	4.83	6.16
Medium-Density Residential	0.56	0.62
Mobile Homes	0.38	0.59
All Residential	5.78	7.36
Commercial	1.45	1.85
Industrial	0.93	1.01
Civic	2.67	5.02
Transportation	6.45	5.64
Total Developed	17.31	20.88

Source: City of Kearney; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2002

TABLE 3-6: Urban Land Consumption for Principal Uses, City of Kearney

Land Use Category	City (acres)			Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction			Annual Land Consumption		
	1976	2002	Change	1976	2002	Change	City	ETJ	Total
Low-Density Residential	935	1,689	754	315	1,548	1,233	29.0	47.4	76.4
Medium-Density Residential	109	169	60	3	-	(3)	2.3	(0.1)	2.2
Mobile Homes	75	161	86	14	103	89	3.3	3.4	6.7
All Residential	1,119	2,019	900	332	1,650	1,318	34.6	50.7	85.3
Commercial	281	507	226	17	199	182	8.7	7.0	15.7
Industrial	181	278	97	385	607	222	3.7	8.5	12.3
Civic	518	1,377	859	518	2,598	2,080	33.1	80.0	113.0
Transportation	1,252	1,546	294	888	NA	NA	11.3		
Total Developed	3,351	5,728	2,377	2,140	5,054	2,914	91.4	112.1	203.5

consumption. These rates, in turn, provide one basis for projecting future requirements for each type of land use. 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 7.36 during the last twenty-six years. Much of this increase is attributable to a significant increase in parkland and conventional subdivision development during this period. It should also be noted that Kearney's overall density would be even lower if the student population was excluded from the calculation.
- Significant residential development within the city's extra-territorial jurisdiction. In 1976 there were only 332 acres of extra-territorial residential development. That development increased by almost 400% to over 1,600 in 2002.
- A 71% increase in the overall land area of the city, due to annexation of areas to the west and northwest of the community and most recently to the southeast. This is reflected in the dramatically higher totals of residential and civic land uses. Parkland has increased with the development of the Meadowlark Hills Golf Course, Ted Baldwin Park, West Lincolnway Park and Yanney Park.
- A significant increase in civic land within the extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) due to the inclusion of the airport. Annexations have extended the city's ETJ to include part of the airport however the calculations do include the entire airport area.
- Reductions in density for commercial and industrial land. Commercial land has grown from over 281 acres in 1976 to over 507 acres in 2002. Similarly, industrial land has grown from over 181 acres in 1976 to over 278 acres in 2002.
- Overall the city has added 91.4 acres annually to the city. Of private uses, new housing development has accounted for the largest share of this conversion, with total consumption 34.6 acres annual over the past 26 years.
- During the last twenty-six years, Kearney converted an average of 85 acres of land annually to residential use, increasing its amount of developed residential land by more than 157%. However, the city's population grew by only about 30% during this same period, reflecting the low-density nature of most recent development.





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 229 dwelling units annually, with an almost even split between single-family and multi-family units. Kearney saw the bulk of this construction occur in the five-year period between 1992 and 1996 when the annual construction rate was 288 units. As was evident by the last five years that level of development was difficult for the city to maintain, however the city should experience a level above that between 1990 and 2002. 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 39,925 by 2025.

Table 3-7 presents the projected twenty-year housing demand 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 2.37 in 2000 to about 2.30 people per household in 2025.
- The city’s non-household population (people in student dormitories, institutions, group quarters, or nursing homes) does not reflect a demand for conventional housing. These forecasts project that the non-household population will remain at its 2000 rate of 8.8% of the city’s population.

TABLE 3-7: Projected Housing Development Demand

	2000-2010	2010-2020	2020-2025	Total
Population at the End of Period	31,707	36,938	39,925	
Household Population at End of Period	28,920	33,691	36,416	
Average People/Household	2.32	2.30	2.30	
Household demand at End of Period	12,465	14,648	15,833	
Projected Vacancy Rate	4.96	4.96	4.96	
Unit Needs at End of Period	13,116	15,413	16,659	
Replacement Need	90	90	45	225
Cumulative Need	2,098	2,387	1,291	5,776
Average Annual Construction	210	239	258	231

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2002

- Kearney's current vacancy rate is a low 4.96% should remain fairly constant.
- Between 1997 and 2002 Kearney issued permits for 53 residential demolitions or approximately 9 units annually.



These projections reinforce a cumulative demand of 5,776 units for Kearney during the next 20 years. Based on the 2000 census, 57% of the city's units are owner-occupied and 43% renter occupied. As a University community the demand for rental housing is common, however future demand for housing will more likely come in the form of owner-occupied units for permanent residents looking to raise families in the community. For this reason future projections are based on a 60% single-family detached, 10% single family attached and 30% multi-family. This also 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 detached units will require one acre of land while the average gross density of single-family attached will be 6 units to an acre and 12 units per acre for multi-family.
- 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.



Table 3-8 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 56 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 2,792 acres.

Commercial Development

Table 3-9 shows that commercial land conversion in Kearney has occurred at a rate of about 8.7 acres per year since 1976 within the city and 15.7 within the city and its jurisdiction. 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 218 acres of commercial land by 2025. 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 Center adjacent to the crossroads of US 30 and Second Avenue.



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TABLE 3-8: Required Residential Land For Kearney, 2000-2025

2000-2010	% of Demand	Units	Gross Density (du/A)	Land Needs	Designated Land (x2)
Single Family Detached	60%	1258.8	3	419.6	839.2
Single Family Attached	10%	209.8	6	35.0	69.9
Multi-family	30%	629.4	12	52.5	104.9
Total	100%	2098		507.0	1,014.0
2010-2020					
Single Family Detached	60%	1,432.2	3	477.4	954.8
Single Family Attached	10%	238.7	6	39.8	79.6
Multi-family	30%	716.1	12	59.7	119.4
Total	100%	2,387		576.9	1,153.7
2020-2025					
Single Family Detached	60%	774.6	3	258.2	516.4
Single Family Attached	10%	129.1	6	21.5	43.0
Multi-family	30%	387.3	12	32.3	64.6
Total	100%	1,291		312.0	624.0
Total 2000-2025		5,776		1,396	2,791.7

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2002

TABLE 3-9: Required Commercial Land for Kearney, 2000-2020

Population Proportion Method	2000	2010	2020	2025	Conversion Need	Designated Land (x1.5)
Projected Population	27,431	31,707	36,938	39,925		
Comm Use/100 res.	1.85	1.85	1.85	1.85		
Projected Commercial Use (acres)	507.2	586.26	682.98	738.21	231.01	346.52
Residential Use Proportion Method						
Residential Land (acres)	2,018.99	2,526.01	3,102.87	3,414.86		
Commercial/Residential Ratio	0.251214716	0.251214716	0.251214716	0.251214716		
Projected Commercial Use (acres)	507.20	634.57	779.49	857.86	350.66	525.99
Absorption Trend Method						
Annual Absorption	8.7	8.7	8.7	8.7		
New Commercial Land	507.2	594.2	681.2	724.7	217.50	326.25

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2002

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:

- *Absorption 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.
- *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 3-9 compares the results of these three methods. The last two methods suggest a need for between 231 and 351 acres of commercial land during the next twenty years. In order to provide alternative sites, the land use plan should designate 1.5 times the hard demand for commercial land. This means that 347-526 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. Within Kearney and its jurisdiction there has been an increase of 319 acres over the past 26 years or 12.3 acres annually. 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. It should also be noted that a single major corporate decision could dramatically increase (or decrease) the projected industrial demand in a community. In addition, a decision by the city to pursue industrial development aggressively can affect industrial land needs.

Based on population and land use proportion methods, Kearney should provide for absorption of between 125 and 192 acres of industrial land over a 20-year period and a designation of about 375 to 577 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 in 1995 suggested that residents did 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 3-10: Required Industrial Land for Kearney, 2000-2020

Population Proportion Method	2000	2010	2020	2025	Conversion Need	Designated Land (x1.5)
Projected Population	27,431	31,707	36,938	39,925		
Industrial Use/100 res.	1.01	1.01	1.01	1.01		
Projected Industrial Use (acres)	278.24	320.24	373.07	403.24	125.00	375.01
Residential Use Proportion Method						
Residential Land (acres)	2,018.99	2,526.01	3,102.87	3,414.86		
Industrial/Residential Ratio	0.13781	0.13781	0.13781	0.13781		
Projected Industrial Use (acres)	278.24	348.11	427.61	470.61	192.37	577.10

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2002

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
- DEVELOPMENT TIERS
- MIXED LAND USE CATEGORIES
- STREET CONNECTIVITY
- PARKWAY STREETS AS PUBLIC SPACES
- COMPLETE AND BALANCED NEIGHBORHOODS
- EQUAL FACILITIES AMONG CITY QUADRANTS
- INTERSTATE CORRIDOR MIXED USE DISTRICT
- CHERRY AVENUE BYPASS CORRIDOR
- WEST PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR
- DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK
- LAND USE COMPATIBILITY
- ANNEXATION PROGRAM

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





The Kearney Plan

ADEQUATE LAND SUPPLY

KEARNEY SHOULD DESIGNATE ENOUGH LAND FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT TO MEET ITS 20-YEAR POPULATION TARGET OF 40,000.

Tables 3-8, 3-9 and 3-10 display the amount of land needed for residential, commercial, and industrial uses during the next twenty years in order to produce a population of 40,000. 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 ensure cost-effective, efficient development patterns that maximize the benefits of development to the community.



Development needs are summarized in Table 3-11 below. Land use and housing allocations are given by city quadrant in Tables 3-12. Kearney should encourage the creation of balanced neighborhoods, avoiding 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. Neighborhoods and future development areas should integrate parks, schools, residential areas of various densities, and commercial and mixed use areas to the maximum degree possible.

DEVELOPMENT TIERS

THE KEARNEY JURISDICTION SHOULD INCLUDE DISTINCT DEVELOPMENT TIERS, DESIGNED TO PROVIDE FOR SOUND GROWTH AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, CONSISTENT WITH THE GRADUAL EXTENSION OF URBAN SERVICES.

Kearney’s planning jurisdiction falls within two watersheds, the Platte River and Wood River sheds. The drainage divide between these watersheds is just north of 56th Street. Despite the extension on interceptor sewer service north of 56th Street parallel to the abandoned Union Pacific right-of-way to Avenue N, development within the planning period will require the use of land not currently served by interceptor sewers. In 2001, the city developed a sewer expansion concept that defines a specific Urban Service Area (USA). This plan proposes an USA based on this plan, modified to include the higher-density Glenwood Corners development.

The land use plan proposes a system of development policy tiers, implementing the principle presented in Chapter Two. This policy tier system is designed to permit sound extension of urban services and appropriate development, and to avoid hemming urban growth in close-in development of rural density subdivisions using individual wastewater systems. The concept also preserves the development prerogatives of owners in close-in areas that will not receive urban infrastructure in the near term future. The system provides the following policy tiers:

TABLE 3-11: Summary of Twenty-Year Future Land Use Needs

Land Use	Actual Demand (acres)	Designated Land (acres)
All Residential	1,396.00	2,791.70
- Single-Family Residential	1,251.50	2,503.00
- Multi-Family Residential	144.50	289.00
Commercial	231.01	346.52
Industrial	125.00	375.00
Parks and Open Space (based on standard of 0.05 acres per unit)	340.40	340.40
Total Land Needs	2,092.41	3,853.62

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2002



TABLE 3-12: Future Land Use Allocation by Growth Quadrant of the City (in Acres)

Land Use	NW	NE	SW	SE	Total
All Residential	3376.29	2057.96	655.29	1955.71	8045.25
Low Density	2242.15	997.5	403.32	433.09	4076.06
Medium Density	779.52	706.18	154.88	934.35	2574.93
Multi-Family Residential	354.62	354.28	97.09	588.27	1394.26
Commercial/Office	543.61	1124.59	717.22	615.97	3001.39
Mixed Use 1	271.91	306.33	136.87	68.98	784.09
Mixed Use 2	214.05	242.01	198.09	233.38	887.53
Mixed Use 3	0	329.84	82.1	150.42	562.36
Commercial	57.65	120.16	47.57	71.29	296.67
Kearney Centre	0	54.93	0	0	54.93
Kearney Gateway	0	0	210.24	0	210.24
Commercial Recreation	0	71.32	42.35	91.9	205.57
Business Park	0	475.36	11.64	14.78	501.78
Industrial	30.02	581.57	28.16	264.68	904.43
Civic	225.65	2460.34	19.31	66	2771.3
Parks and Open Space	582.7	282.62	247.24	220.3	1332.86
Conservation Reserve	0	0	348.07	0	348.07
Urban Reserve	0	601.07	0	934.35	1535.42
Total Land Designation	4758.27	7583.51	2026.93	4071.79	18440.5

Source: RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, 2002



Urban Service Area Tiers

Tier One: Areas within the USA that are currently served by interceptor sewers. All development in these areas must be developed at urban densities and served by urban infrastructure, including sanitary sewers and city water.

Tier Two: Areas within the USA that will be served by interceptor sewers by 2010. Rural estate development on individual systems should not be permitted within these areas. Development may occur in advance of extension of services, but any such development must be connected to a community wastewater system, and be developed to urban standards, including construction of local sewer lines. Agreements will require connection to the urban sewer system, with appropriate connection or benefit fees, when sewers are extended.

Tier Three: Areas within the USA that will not be served by interceptor sewers until after 2010. One-third of a development parcel in this tier may be developed at rural densities

on individual or community wastewater systems. The balance of the development parcel must be left as open space, to be developed to urban density when urban sewers are extended. The rural density portion may be developed to intermediate street standards, using guidelines for intermediate streets defined by the subdivision ordinance. The area reserved for urban development must be in the area most logically served by urban services.



Rural Development Area (RDA) Tiers

Tier Four: Areas designated for potential rural residential development without substantial environmental constraints. Rural density development using individual or community wastewater systems is permitted in these areas. Typically, individual systems will require lots with a minimum size of 3 acres.

Tier Five: Areas designated for potential rural residential development with substantial environmental resources, including hill environments. Rural density development using individual or community wastewater systems is permitted in these areas. However, development here should follow conservation development standards, as set forth in the Unified Development Ordinance. These areas should carry a C Conservation Development Overlay District.

Tier Six: Areas designated for agriculture. Normal subdivision should not be permitted in these areas. Residential development will require very large sites, in excess of 20 acres per unit. Agricultural uses will predominate in these areas.

MIXED LAND USE CATEGORIES

LAND USE POLICY IN KEARNEY SHOULD PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY THAT ALLOWS THE EMERGENCE OF MIXED USE URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS.

Traditional land use planning, and consequently zoning, is “Euclidean” in nature, an adjective derived from the famous Supreme Court case of *Ambler Real Estate v. Village of Euclid* that upheld the constitutionality of zoning. This technique establishes single-use districts, defining locations for residential, commercial, and industrial uses.

Limited use land use policy and zoning remains appropriate. Zoning often provides homeowners with the security of process — the knowledge that incompatible uses cannot easily be established next to them. However, contemporary development frequently involves mixing of uses. Land use policy should reflect these changes in patterns by defining ranges of permitted uses within specific areas, based on their location in the city and the nature of surrounding access systems.

Residential Uses

The land use plan identifies four residential land use categories:

- *Residential Estates includes residential uses with densities of less than 1 unit per acre.* These developments are frequently served by individual or community wastewater systems. Residential estates areas include existing areas west of 30th Avenue and north of Cottonmill Park. This development is proposed in Tier 4 areas. Conservation residential developments are a variation of residential estates, clustering development in portions of an environmentally sensitive site that are least sensitive to environmental impact. The balance of the site is reserved as common open space.
- *Low-Density Residential, including residential development with urban services ranging in density from 1 to 4 units per acre.* Under certain circumstances, these areas may also include small-lot and attached single-family settings, up to 6 units per acre. These policy districts include the single-family areas that dominate land use in Kearney and in developing areas are generally located toward the center of neighborhood units defined by section line roads.
- *Medium-Density Residential, including residential development with urban services ranging from 3 to 12 units per acre.* This continuum ranges from moderate-density single-family development to attached and low-density multifamily settings. These areas are located along section line roads and toward the periphery of neighborhood growth units.
- *High-Density Residential, including multi-family development with densities in excess of 12 units per acre.* These areas generally are planned along arterials or as transitional uses between major commercial areas and surrounding residential areas. Multifamily development is also encouraged within the context of mixed-use districts.





Mixed Use Districts

The Land Use concept includes a variety of mixed use districts, typically replacing single-use commercial and office districts. Land use patterns and market trends in these areas are too complex to be able to predict single uses with certainty. Rather, mixed-use districts would provide a range of uses, developed according to specific standards for parking, scale, and pedestrian access.

- *Neighborhood mixed use (Mixed Use 1)*, providing neighborhood activity centers that include medium to high-density residential development, offices, and limited commercial services. Neighborhood mixed use centers are located at major street intersections, usually involving section- or half section-line streets, but are linked directly into the fabric of their residential areas.
- *Office/commercial mixed uses (Mixed Use 2)*, accommodating high-density residential development and major office and commercial uses. These mixed-use areas are located in such areas as the 2nd Avenue corridor north of 56th Street and along Cherry Avenue at 11th Street.
- *Commercial/industrial mixed use (Mixed Use 3)*, providing areas for office, major commercial development, and industrial development completed to high design standards. This mixed-use district is proposed along the Highway 30 corridor west of Avenue M and on either side of the 2nd Avenue commercial corridor.
- *Kearney Gateway mixed use*, applying to the 2nd and Central Avenue corridors south of the Union Pacific, consistent with the Kearney Gateway Plan.

STREET CONNECTIVITY

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, 11th Street, and 39th Street 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.



Growth and Land Use

The Land Use Plan proposes these key transportation features:

- *Major Arterials.* These regional trafficways act as both a major arterial for the city and significant regional traffic carrier. Major arterials include: 2nd Avenue, the Cherry Avenue Bypass system, the Inner Beltway composed of 11th and 39th Streets, and 30th and Cherry Avenues, and US Highway 30. Along the proposed bypass, the city should restrict full access to section line roads and one intermediate point as close to the half-section as practicable.

- *Minor arterials.* These major through traffic carriers generally will occur along other section line roads and significant inter-neighborhood routes, and include such streets as Antelope Avenue, Avenue M and N, Avenue H and 22nd Street, 17th Avenue, and Railroad Street.

- *Collector system.* The collector system is critical to making an overall network work effectively and providing alternatives to arterials for local trips between neighborhoods and to local activity centers. Traffic calmers such as circles or diverters may be used at some locations to slow traffic along collectors that may take on some of the speed and load characteristics of arterials. In addition, the collector system through new neighborhood units is diverted around the central park/school sites.



- *Civic streets and parkways.* These involve multi-modal streets that will accommodate motor traffic, bicycles, and pedestrians in an attractive public environment. In the north development area, the civic street concept is integrated into neighborhood units and links parks and activity centers. This circumferential system forms an arc approximately on half-section lines, and leads from 39th Street between Avenue N and Antelope Avenue to UNK at Highway 30.

- *Local street networks.* Developments should provide a web of local streets to provide well-distributed access. Subdivision standards should establish minimum required levels of street connectivity. One way of measuring connectivity is calculating the ratio of street segments to nodes (which include



Within this hierarchy, proposed upgrades to the existing street network include:

- 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.

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, connecting neighborhoods with one another and with major activity centers. These parkways have the following characteristics:

- They may 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.* Parkway 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 parkway, serving northwestern and northeastern development during the planning period.
- 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.

COMPLETE AND BALANCED NEIGHBORHOODS

USING THE NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT CONCEPT, KEARNEY WILL BALANCE AND GUIDE ITS NEW RESIDENTIAL GROWTH TO CREATE BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS AND IMPROVED MOBILITY.

The previous chapter 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 key intersections and along arterial corridors, connected to the center of neighborhoods by greenways and streets.
- Care in establishing setbacks, landscaping, and streetscape standards along parkways 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 one 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 parkways and civic streets 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 parkway 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 parkway and 39th Street.
- a cross town collector 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.

- *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 the circumferential parkway through the growth center, along with adjacent neighborhood parks and open spaces.
- Construction of the Beltway on the east edge of the city, following the Cherry Avenue alignment between 11th and 56th Streets. This beltway will also include a grade separation over the Union Pacific.
- Development of trails through the area, as recommended in Chapter Five of the plan.



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. 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 Railroad Street.
- Continued development of Mary Yanney Park.
- Rehabilitation of Centennial Park as a major community park.
- 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.



- 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:
- Development of the Cherry Avenue Bypass.

In addition, the city has developed specific plans for three special development areas: the Interstate Corridor Mixed Use Area, the Cherry Avenue Bypass Corridor, and the West Platte River Corridor. Policies for these areas are presented below.

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 Center, and emerging job and commercial centers.
- *Neighborhood Parks along Parkways.* Neighborhood parks are proposed as community green spaces in the heart of neighborhood units. These parks are located along the circumferential parkway system, assuring that these parkways do not act as high-speed arterials. In addition, the neighborhood parks are also sized to accommodate neighborhood elementary schools.

- *Mary Yanney Park.* Mary Yanney Park will serve as a community-wide resource and a major community green for the southwest growth center and the West Platte Corridor special development area.
- *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.



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 opened in 1995, and the new eastside middle school was completed in 1997. 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 southeast 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. In addition, the core of each neighborhood unit north of 56th Street is designed to accommodate both a neighborhood park and an elementary school.

INTERSTATE CORRIDOR MIXED USE DISTRICT

THE INTERSTATE 80 CORRIDOR BETWEEN 2ND AVENUE AND CHERRY AVENUE, INCLUDING THE ARCHWAY AREA, SHOULD COMBINE COMMERCIAL, OFFICE, RESIDENTIAL, AND CULTURAL /RECREATIONAL USES, WITH SPECIFIC DESIGN STANDARDS TO ENCOURAGE QUALITY DEVELOPMENT.

The Land Use Plan for the Interstate Corridor area proposes a comprehensively planned community on this strategically located parcel to take advantage of a major evolving development opportunity and to avoid the harmful and unattractive effects of uncontrolled development along a highly visible corridor. The Land Use Plan is built upon the following basic principles:



Conservation Design Framework. The Interstate Corridor concept utilizes the principle of conservation design. Major natural features, including river channels and surrounding lands and lakes created by sand extraction, become centerpieces of the development concept. Development parcels are then defined in ways that take maximum advantage of these natural features.

Limits On Commercial Development. The four miles of Interstate 80 in the study area have an extremely high profile after development of the Archway and are particularly vulnerable to uncontrolled commercial development. Uncontrolled development will harm the image of the approach to the Archway and will draw activity from established activity centers in the city, working against the overriding concept of unified development that is a central theme of this plan.

A Mixed Use Development Area. A mix of uses will take best advantage of the diverse growth opportunities within the Interstate Corridor. The plan envisions a new type of environment, providing quality residential and workplace environments, as well as extensive open space and recreational sites.



A Unified Community. The corridor concept of unification relates to its mixed-use character. The plan is based on the concept of close functional and aesthetic connections among diverse use types. Components of this concept include:

- **Transportation system continuity.** The transportation system is designed to connect development sites together, rather than to create isolated development “pods.” The use of long cul-de-sacs is discouraged or avoided, with street system design and traffic calming features used to channel heavier traffic onto

designated streets.

- **Greenway system continuity.** A greenway system, with a network of recreational trails, links all parts of the study area together with all other parts. Components of this system include a greenway incorporating public land along the north channel of the Platte, and connection of the site to the city’s emerging trail system.
- **Relationships Among Land Uses and Development Parcels.** The Land Use Plan avoids the tendency of uses in development “pods” to place their most negative effects at their outside boundaries. The plan emphasizes a more organic relationship at boundary conditions. The perimeters of land use areas are designed to provide a landscaped aspect, with parking and vehicular circulation located to the interior of development sites.

Multi-Modal Transportation. The site will ultimately accommodate a number of modes of transportation successfully, including industrial and business park traffic, visitor

vehicles, residents, bicycle transit, and pedestrians. The plan creates a street hierarchy, using design, street alignments, and ease of access to channel different types of access naturally to their destinations. This system provides alternatives to 1st Street, which will be the principal means by which visitors approach the Archway.

The details of the land use plan are presented in the Interstate Corridor Specific Area Plan, included as an appendix to this document.



CHERRY AVENUE BYPASS CORRIDOR

THE BYPASS CORRIDOR, EXTENDING ALONG CHERRY AVENUE NORTH FROM THE PROPOSED EAST INTERCHANGE TO GLENWOOD CORNERS, SHOULD INCLUDE CLUSTERS OF DEVELOPMENT, SEPARATED BY RURAL LAND. THESE CLUSTERS WILL INCLUDE AN URBAN VILLAGE, THE EXPANDED KEARNEY INDUSTRIAL PARK, AND A DEVELOPMENT CLUSTER AT GLENWOOD CORNERS.

The Land Use Plan for the Kearney Bypass Corridor is built upon the following basic principles:

Clustered development. The Bypass concept proposes concentrated clusters of development, separated by broad expanses of rural and agricultural land. Each cluster has the sense of arrival of a “town” separated by rural open space, following the development pattern of the Platte Valley landscape.

The land use concept includes four distinct development clusters, surrounded and separated by the agricultural landscape:

- *A visitor services and attraction area*, from the I-80 corridor to an extended 4th Street. This area provides for commercial services, potentially related to small lakes. It also includes an opportunity for a destination attraction east of the Bypass corridor. Such an attraction would complement the Archway, while maintaining high visibility from I-80. This area also incorporates the city’s wastewater treatment plant and an appropriate buffer between the plant and surrounding uses.
- *A mixed use “urban village”* between 4th Street and an extended 16th Street. The proposed village incorporates a mixture of housing types, neighborhood commercial development, and office and research uses. Like traditional rural villages and towns, it features a strong edge between developed area and the rural countryside.
- *A primary industrial area* along the corridor and associated with Kearney Municipal Airport between US 30 and 65th Street. This expanded industrial park features rail access, development lots of various sizes, and accommodation for appropriate commercial uses, including potential for an expanded Cabella’s facility.
- *A Glenwood Corners cluster*, providing a mixed use but primarily residential village north and south of the intersection of Highway 10 and the North Bypass (78th Street).



Limits On Commercial Development. The development concept focuses commercial development at specific nodes along the corridor, including:

- The Cherry Avenue interchange.
- Neighborhood commercial services serving the “urban village” at the 11th Street intersection.
- An expended retail opportunity at the Cabella’s site at the US 30/UP crossing.
- Airport related commercial development at along US 30 south of the Airport.
- The primary airport entrance at the 56th Street intersection.
- Neighborhood commercial to serve the Glenwood Corners village at the 2nd Avenue terminus of the Bypass.

A Mixed Use Development Area. The Land Use Plan proposes a mix of uses to take advantage of growth opportunities presented by the Bypass Corridor. The plan anticipates a diverse corridor that includes residential, commercial, and substantial industrial development opportunities.

Industrial Locations. Kearney’s premier industrial locations will be on either side of the Bypass, rather than on property owned by the Airport. These sites have better access to both road and rail transportation than the relatively remote sites northeast of the Airport’s runways. These areas should be maintained in current agricultural uses. The plan concept is also designed to maintain open space along airport approach corridors.



Transportation System Integrity. The plan proposes limiting access to section and half-section lines. This is accomplished by designing a system of “rearage” roads that generally parallel the bypass corridor. The

rearage concept is superior to the more conventional frontage road because it can be double-loaded and provides adequate setbacks from principal intersections. A grid of local streets in both the urban villages and the industrial area supplements the rearage roads.

A Unified Community. The Bypass corridor as a unified development, establishing four primary clusters that are punctuated by a rural landscape. But linking this corridor back to the City of Kearney is also an important objective. The plan maintains these linkages by:

- Connecting the corridor to the Archway access system.
- Extending Kearney’s arterial grid to the Bypass Corridor.
- Integrating of the city’s trail system into the corridor.

The details of the land use plan are presented in the Kearney Bypass Corridor Land Use Plan, included as an appendix to this document.

WEST PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR

E.K. AND MARY YANNEY HERITAGE PARK AND OTHER FACTORS WILL GENERATE SUBSTANTIAL GROWTH IN THE SOUTHEAST PART OF THE CITY. THIS AREA SHOULD DEVELOP AS A BALANCED COMMUNITY, INCORPORATING A MIX OF RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, RECREATIONAL, AND CULTURAL USES.



Growth and Land Use

The Land Use Plan for the West Platte River Corridor is built on the following principles:

Yanney Park as a Commons For A New Development District. Because of its location and opportunity for linkage to the rest of the city through the Cottonmill Trail system, the park is ideally suited to serve as a neighborhood common – the focus around which new development takes place.

Limited Commercial And Industrial Expansion. The land use plan provides space for expansion of non-residential uses, while establishing a distinct, buffered edge between these uses and developing residential areas.

Incremental Residential Growth East of the Tailrace. The plan calls for continuation of existing residential development patterns east of the tailrace into newly developing areas. Thus, primarily single-family residential development would occur north of 8th Street, consistent with pre-existing neighborhood. Higher-density development, including multi-family growth, may take place south of 8th Street.

Mixed Use Community West Of Tailrace. The plan proposes a mixed-use community on developable land west of the tailrace to 30th Avenue. Proposed development is oriented to a school site and a mixed-use neighborhood center, surrounded by a variety of housing types. Commercial and mixed-use development is proposed along the 30th Avenue corridor, continuing existing development trends.

Limited Residential Development in the 100-Year Floodplain. The plan generally proposes that residential development should be encouraged outside of the 100-year floodplain.

Transportation Continuity. The Land Use Plan recommends a continuous major street system that links parts of the planning area together and to the established city. These include east-west collectors and arterials, including 16th, 11th, 8th, 4th, and Talmadge Streets, and a north-south system that includes extensions of 17th Avenue and Kea West Road on either side of Yanney Park.

Open Space Connection to the Cottonmill Trail. Parks and open space are fundamental parts of the Land Use Plan. The plan recommends the use of trails and greenway corridors to connect the area's open spaces to the rest of the city. The major link is the proposed Cottonmill Trail link to Cottonmill Park on the west and the Archway area to the east. In addition, offshoots of this main trail should link proposed development areas into the Cottonmill system.

The details of the land use plan are presented in the West Platte River Corridor Land Use Plan, included as an appendix to this document.



The Kearney Plan

DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK

KEARNEY'S FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND POLICIES SHOULD PROVIDE BOTH GUIDANCE AND FLEXIBILITY TO DECISION MAKERS IN THE LAND USE PROCESS.

Future Land Use Plan provides a development vision for the city that guides participants in the process of community building. However, it cannot anticipate the design or specific situation of every rezoning application. Therefore, the plan should not be taken as an inflexible prescription of how land must be used. Rather, it provides a context that helps decision-makers, including city administrative officials, the Planning Commission, and the City Council, make logical decisions which implement the plan's overall principles.

The Land Use Plan establishes a number of categories of land uses, some of which provide for single primary uses while others encourage mixed uses. The discussion below identifies various use categories and establishes criteria for their application.

This forms a framework for findings by the Planning Commission and City Council that provides both needed flexibility and consistency with the plan's overall objectives.

Use Type	Use Characteristics	Features and Location Criteria
Agriculture and Open Space	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally in agricultural or open space use. • Agriculture will remain the principal use during the planning period. • Extension of urban services is unlikely during the foreseeable future. These areas correspond to Tier 6 in the policy tier system. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These areas should remain in primary agriculture use. Urban encroachment, including large lot subdivisions, should be discouraged. Residential development will occur only on very large acreages, in excess of 20 acres per unit. • Primary uses through the planning period will remain agricultural. • Intensive agricultural operations, such as confined feeding or intensive animal production uses are not permitted within this jurisdictional area.
Urban Reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally in agricultural or open space use. • Areas may be in the path of future urban development after the planning horizon contained in this plan. • Very low-density residential uses may be located in the area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • These areas should be reserved for long-term urban development and fall within the city's eventual Urban Service Area. • Primary uses through the planning period will remain agricultural. • Any interim large lot residential development should be clustered in one part of a development parcel, accounting for no more than 1/3 of the parcel area. The balance of the site will be left in open space for eventual conversion to urban uses.





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Use Type	Use Characteristics	Features and Location Criteria
Residential Estates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictive land uses, emphasizing housing and open space. • Civic uses may be allowed with special use permission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes area that have developed to low densities, but utilize conventional subdivision techniques, or are outside the city's projected Urban Service Area. • Applies to areas where conventional large lot subdivisions have been established. • Most houses use individual or community wastewater systems and are unlikely to experience extensions of urban services. • Gross densities will generally be less than one unit per three acres with septs, but may increase with provision of community systems.
Conservation Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restrictive land uses, emphasizing housing and open space. • Civic uses may be allowed with special use permission. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applies to hill or other environmentally sensitive environments with significant environmental features. Golf course subdivisions share characteristics of conservation development. These areas are typically outside the city's projected Urban Service Area. • Development regulations should promote reservation of common open space and design of projects to take best advantage of open space resources. • Gross densities will generally be similar to those for Residential Estates. • Special regulations are needed to promote conservation developments. These regulations are included as part of the Conservation Development Overlay District in the Unified Development Ordinance.

Use Type	Use Characteristics	Features and Location Criteria
Low-Density Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrictive land uses, emphasizing single-family detached development, although unconventional single-family forms may be permitted with special review. Typical densities between 1 and 4 units/acre. Projects in planned districts may achieve higher densities with high design standards. Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Primary uses within residential growth centers. Should be insulated from adverse environmental effects, including noise, smell, air pollution, and light pollution. Should provide a framework of streets and open spaces. In growth areas, should be incorporated into the neighborhood unit concept.
Medium-Density Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restrictive land uses, emphasizing housing. May incorporate a mix of housing types, including single-family detached, single-family attached, and townhouse uses. Limited multi-family development may be permitted with special review and criteria Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applies to established neighborhoods of the city that have diverse housing types, and in developing areas that incorporate a mix of development. May occur along the edges of neighborhood units and in areas with high access to services. Typical maximum density is 3 to 12 units per acre Innovative design should be encouraged in new projects.





The Kearney Plan

Use Type	Use Characteristics	Features and Location Criteria
<p>High-Density Residential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allows multi-family and compatible civic uses. • Allows integration of limited office and convenience commercial within primarily residential areas. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Locate at sites with access to major amenities or activity centers. • Should be integrated into the fabric of nearby residential areas, while avoiding adverse traffic and visual impacts on low-density uses. • Traffic should have direct access to collector or arterial streets to avoid overloading local streets. • Should use Planned Development designation when developed near lower intensity uses or in mixed use developments. • Developments should avoid creation of compounds. • Attractive landscape standards should be applied. • Typical density is in excess of 10 units per acre.
<p>Mobile Home Residential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accommodates mobile homes that are not classified under State law as “manufactured housing.” • May include single-family, small lot settings within planned mobile home parks. • Manufactured units with HUD certification that comply with other criteria in State statute are treated as conventional construction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop in projects with adequate size to provide full services. • Generally locate in complexes, but should include linkages to other aspects of the community. • Typical maximum density is 8 units per acre. • Development proposals generally require Planned Development designations.
<p>Mixed Use</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporates a mix of uses in various settings. • Includes a variety of mixed use contexts, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦Neighborhood Mixed Use (MU-1) ◦Residential/Office Commercial (MU-2) ◦Commercial/Industrial (MU-3) ◦Kearney Gateway 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May apply to planned areas in new growth areas that incorporate an urban mix of residential, office, and commercial uses. • Developments should emphasize relationships among parts. • Pedestrian traffic should be encouraged and neighborhood scale retained when applicable. • Projects should avoid large expanses of parking visible from major streets. • Signage and site features should respect neighborhood scale when located in or near residential areas.

Use Type	Use Characteristics	Features and Location Criteria
<p>Mixed Use Cont'd.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commercial and office development in mixed-use areas should minimize impact on housing. MU-1 areas generally occur at intersections of major and minor arterials and collectors; or intersections of minor arterials and collectors. MU-2 areas represent major mixed-use concentrations, and occur along 2nd Avenue corridor, and emerging corridors such as Interstate 80 between 2nd and 30th Avenues, and Cherry Avenue between I-80 and 11th Street. MU-2 areas also emerge at major arterial intersections, including 56th and 2nd Avenue, 56th and Cherry Avenue, and 11th Street and 30th Avenue. MU-3 areas include districts where a mix of commercial and industrial uses is appropriate, including the East Highway 30 corridor and districts east and west of the 2nd Avenue hospitality district. Kearney Gateway includes the 2nd Avenue and Central Avenue corridors south of 25th Street.
<p>Limited Commercial/ Neighborhood Commercial</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes a range of low-impact commercial uses, providing a variety of neighborhood services. Includes low to moderate building and impervious coverage. May include office or office park development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Should be located at intersections of major or collector streets. Should avoid a “four corners” configuration, except within neighborhood business districts. Development should emphasize pedestrian scale and relationships among businesses. Uses should be limited in terms of operational effects. Good landscaping and restrictive signage standards should be maintained. Good pedestrian/bicycle connections should be provided into surrounding areas. The dominance of automobiles should be moderated by project design. Includes areas identified in the land use plan as MU-1.





The Kearney Plan

Use Type	Use Characteristics	Features and Location Criteria
<p>Community Commercial</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes a variety of commercial uses, with larger buildings and parking facilities than Limited Commercial uses, oriented to overall community retail and service needs. May be incorporated into areas designated as MU-2 in the land use plan. • Generally includes major retailers, multi-use shopping centers, restaurants, and service enterprises. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be located at intersections of arterials or other major streets. • Traffic systems should provide alternative routes and good internal traffic flow. • Negative effects on surrounding residential areas should be limited. • Good landscaping and restrictive signage standards should be maintained. • Good pedestrian/bicycle connections should be provided into surrounding residential service areas. • Buffering from surrounding uses may be required.
<p>General Commercial</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Includes a wide variety of commercial uses, some of which can have significant external effects. • Accommodates auto-related commercial uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Should be located along arterials or other major streets, and in areas that are relatively isolated from residential, parks, and other vulnerable uses. • Traffic systems should provide alternative routes and good internal traffic flow. • Negative effects on surrounding residential areas should be limited by location and buffering. • Activities with potentially negative visual effects should occur within buildings. • Development should maintain a reasonable amount of landscaping, focused in front setbacks and common boundaries with lower-intensity uses.

Use Type	Use Characteristics	Features and Location Criteria
Limited Industrial/ Business Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited industrial provides for uses that do not generate noticeable external effects. Business parks may combine office and light industrial/research uses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited industrial uses may be located near office, commercial, and, with appropriate development standards, some residential areas. Strict control over signage, landscaping, and design is necessary for locations nearer to low intensity uses. Includes research park opportunities and proposes areas along the Cherry Avenue corridor north of the existing industrial park, centering around 56th Street.
General Industrial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General industrial provides for a range of industrial enterprises, including those with significant external effects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> General industrial sites should be well-buffered from less intensive use. Sites should have direct access to major regional transportation facilities, without passing through residential or commercial areas. Developments with major external effects should be subject to Planned Development review.
Civic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes schools, churches, libraries, and other public facilities that act as centers of community activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May be permitted in a number of different areas, including residential areas. Individual review of proposals requires an assessment of operating characteristics, project design, and traffic management. Neighborhood parks and schools are included in the heart of the Neighborhood Unit in new growth areas.
Public Facilities and Utilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Includes facilities with industrial operating characteristics, including public utilities, maintenance facilities, and public works yards. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrial operating characteristics should be controlled according to same standards as industrial uses. When possible, should generally be located in industrial areas.





LAND USE COMPATIBILITY ISSUES

Some of the most difficult issues in planning implementation arise at edge conditions, where more intensive uses are proposed adjacent to less intensive uses. The following compatibility guide assesses the relationships between existing land uses and provides a basis for review of land use proposals based on their context.

1. *High Incompatibility:* The proposed use is incompatible with adjacent land uses. Any development proposal requires a Planned Unit Development and extensive documentation to prove that external effects are fully mitigated. In general, proposed uses with this level of conflict will not be permitted. This condition exists for general or heavy industrial uses are proposed adjacent to low- or medium-density residential uses.

2. *Medium Incompatibility:* The proposed use has significant conflicts with the pre-existing adjacent use. Major effects must be strongly mitigated to prevent impact on adjacent uses. A Planned Development may be required to minimize project impact and define development design. The following are examples of this condition:

- Community and general commercial development proposed against residential uses.
- Limited industrial development proposed against residential uses.

Table 3.13: Land Use and Compatibility Matrix

Proposed Land Use	Existing Adjacent Land Use										
	Estate	Low - Density	Mobile Home	Medium - Density	High - Density	Limited Commercial	Office	Community Commercial	Limited Industrial	General Industrial	Civic
Residential Estates (<1 unit/acre)											
Low-Density Residential (1-6 units/acre)	5										
Mobile Home (<8 units/acre)	3	4									
Medium Density Residential (6-12 units/acre)	4	3	4								
High Density Residential (>12 units/acre)	2	2	4	4							
Limited Commercial Neighborhood Commercial	1	2	3	3	4						
Office	2	2	3	3	4	5					
Community Commercial	1	2	2	3	3	5	5				
Limited Industrial/Business Park	1	1	3	2	2	3	4	4			
General Industrial	1	1	1	1	1	2	2	3	4		
Civic	3	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	1	
Utilities	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	3	4	5	2

3. *Potential Incompatibility*: The proposed use may have potential conflicts with existing adjacent uses, which may be remedied or minimized through project design. Traffic and other external effects should be directed away from lower-intensity uses. Landscaping, buffering, and screening should be employed to minimize negative effects. A Planned Unit Development may be advisable. The following are examples of this condition:



- High-density residential development proposed against lower density residential uses.
- Office and limited commercial development against residential uses.

4. *Compatible with Minor Conflict Potential*: The proposed use is basically compatible with the pre-existing adjacent use. Traffic from higher intensity uses should be directed away from lower intensity uses. Building elements and scale should be consistent with surrounding development. Examples include medium density residential proposed against low-density residential uses.

5. *Compatible*: Identical to pre-existing land uses or totally compatible. Development should be designed consistent with good planning practice.



The Compatibility Guide Table that sets forth the system of compatibility ratings for adjacent land uses.

ANNEXATION PROGRAM

KEARNEY'S ANNEXATION PROGRAM SHOULD CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT AND FACILITATE THE GOALS OF THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN.

As Kearney continues to grow the city will need to create opportunities for new development and reserve land necessary to carry out the goals of the future land use plan. To do this the city will need to annex adjacent territory and expand its extra-territorial jurisdiction. The City's annexation program should:

- *Control Future Fringe Development*. In order to allow the city to guide its growth and development more effectively, fringe development will need to be managed. Through annexation, a city can extend its zoning ordinance to adjacent areas and thus guide development in a direction that will provide safe and healthy environments.
- *Protect and Enhance the City's Tax Base*. Those residents living in fringe developments benefit from the city's parks and recreational facilities, streets, utilities, and other facilities and programs without contributing to the tax base.
- *Avoid Jurisdictional Confusion*. Squaring off the city and county boundaries can aid in providing services by establishing an orderly and logical boundary.
- *Increase In Size and Population*. An increase in the city's physical size and population can mean an increase in its level of political influence and attractiveness for commercial and industrial development. Annexation may force new development to occur in the



city, and therefore increase jobs and the tax base. It may also increase the city's ability to attract grant assistance.

The Annexation Plan map (Map 3-3) illustrates those areas around the City of Kearney that should be considered for annexation. The areas are categorized into four phases based on the estimated likeliness for incorporation into the city. Phase 1 being the most likely and Phase 4 being the least likely. The following is a description of the issues associated with each phase as illustrated on the Annexation Map. Within each phase, areas are delineated by their relevance regarding the need for annexation and the services the city will need to provide to the area. This delineation should not indicate the order that annexation will occur. The need for annexation should be determined by each areas unique situation.

Phase One. Location and associated issues will likely warrant consideration for annexation in the immediate future.



Section 1a. Section 1a is located north of 56th Street. The recent extension of a sewer interceptor line adjacent to the Union Pacific Railroad line to Avenue N creates an opportunity for new development in this area. Additional sewer lines need to be constructed to allow flows north of 56th Street into this new interceptor. The city has also constructed a new water main running north of 56th along Avenue N to service this area.

Section 1b. Section 1b's location south of 56th Street and west of the railroad line provides easy access to existing services. This area is also adjacent to existing development. Development of Section 1b should include connecting links to existing developments to the south and west.

Section 1c. Section 1c is located east and south of Yanney Park. New water and sewer services to Yanney Park should create development opportunities within this area. Growth in this area will likely be divided by the North Channel with development occurring on the north side first adjacent to existing city development. This would lead to the northern half of Section 1c being annexed before the southern half. The city should insure extension of the road system to provide adequate links to surrounding development.

Section 1d. Section 1d is located north of Rolling Estates. The area's adjacency to existing residential development and proximity to Meadowlark Golf course makes this a prime location for future residential development.

Section 1e. Located in the northwest corner of 30th Avenue and 39th Street, Section 1e is almost completely surrounded by the city. This areas easy access to city services and existing development increases the likelihood of development and need for annexation.

Section 1f. Section 1f is located south of 56th Street and west of 17th Avenue. A new sewer interceptor line running along 56th Street should provide an opportunity for future development of this area. However, development of this area would require extension of water service along 56th Street or 30th Avenue.

Section 1g. Located south of 56th Street and west of 2nd Avenue Section 1g is well positioned for future development. The area does have access to sewer service through the new 56th Street line and water access from the 48th Street line to the south. Development of the northern portion of Section 1g will likely require extension of water service along 56th Street and 17th Avenue.



Section 1h. Section 1h is located south of 56th Street and west of Avenue E. The area is surrounded by the city on the east, south and west. City services are available along 56th Street. Development of this area should be considered for immediate annexation not only because the area will use city services but to also avoid boundary confusions.

Phase Two. Opportunities exist to warrant future consideration of annexation within the twenty-year life of the Kearney Plan. These areas should be reevaluated for annexation within the next five years.

Section 2a. Section 2a is located north of 56th Street and west of 2nd Avenue. The area is located within the Wood River watershed and is not currently served by the city's water or sewer systems. This area should not develop until these services have been extended. Extension of the sewer system has been laid out in a plan completed by Miller and Associates. Development of individual wastewater systems this close to the city would limit the future growth and expansion of the city.

Section 2b. Located north of a future 70th Street and east of 2nd Avenue, Section 2b includes the existing Clearview subdivision and Glenwood Corners. Development of this area will depend not only on extension of city services but also construction of a new north bypass along 78th Street that would connect to the new Cherry Avenue interchange. This area is also within the Wood River watershed, which should limit development until city services have been extended.

Section 2c. Section 2c is located north of 56th Street, west of Avenue N and east of 2nd Avenue. This area falls within Sub-Districts 1, 2, and 3 of the Wood River Watershed, all of which are either completed or early priorities. The city has completed extension of a 30 inch main from the west to Avenue N. Development should follow these extensions protecting the area from individual wastewater system development.

Section 2d. Section 2d is located northeast of the Union Pacific line and 56th Street. The area does not receive city services but the recent sewer interceptor line along the Union Pacific will eventually provide access to this area. Extension of the city's sewer system into this area is not currently scheduled within the study prepared by Miller and Associate. However, these extensions are possible within the twenty-year life of this plan.

Section 2e. Section 2e is located south of 56th and west of Antelope Avenue. Extensions of interceptor lines along Antelope Avenue and 56th Street have placed Section 2e within the city's urban service area. Water mains would still need to be extended to the northern portion of this area to support future development and should include lines along 56th and Antelope Avenue to maintain a looped system.

Section 2f. Located north of the Highway 30 corridor in eastern Kearney, Section 2f includes some existing development. This area has access to a trunk line for water along 39th Street but is waiting on extension of the city's sewer system. This should be a key area for sewer extension during the planning period.



Section 2g. Section 2g is located South of Highway 30 and the Union Pacific line and north of Coal Chute Road. Easy access to city services, the highway and railroad could make this an ideal location for future industrial development.

Section 2h. Section 2h is east of the existing city limits between Coal Chute Road and 11th Street. The area is adjacent to a mixture of existing development and city services. There are numerous vacant lots to the west, which should be developed ahead of this area. Development of Section 2h should include extension of the city's existing street pattern to the west and south.

Section 2i. Located west of Avenue N, Section 2i could have easy access to city services. Development of this area should include extension of the city's existing street system to provide the necessary linkages to the community.

Section 2j. Section 2j is located along the Cherry Avenue corridor north of the proposed interchange. There are issues related to city services in this area. Currently the city's sewer treatment plant is located to the west of Section 2j with the main trunk line coming into the plant from the west. Therefore, sewer service to this area will need to identify ways to tap into the existing system. To provide water service to Section 2j additional treatment options will need to be addressed. Currently treatment occurs within the system, Section 2j's proximity to the well field means that the water has not been fully treated when it reaches this area.

Section 2k. Section 2k is located south of Interstate 80 and east of the city's existing city limits. The area has experienced some large lot residential development and expansion of this development could create a situation in which annexation should be considered. City water or sewer does not serve this area but there are existing lines south of the interstate.

Section 2l. Section 2l is located north of Interstate 80, west of Yanney Park and south of North Railroad Street. The eastern portion of Section 2l is within the city's urban service area with plans for expansion. The street pattern in this area should include linkages to existing development in the southwest.

Section 2m. Section 2m is located north of Meadowlark Golf Course. There are opportunities for water and sewer service along 30th Avenue. The area has been identified for future sewer service. In addition some existing residential development could create interest in the area.

Phase Three. These areas are situated beyond the expected growth areas of the city. Conditions exist that may bring about the need for annexation of these areas. Annexation will not be necessary until well beyond the life of the Kearney Plan, however these areas should be reevaluated within six to ten years.

Section 3a. Section 3a is located north and south of the proposed North Bypass along 78th Street and west of Avenue N. The area is outside the city's project urban service area and has been identified for agriculture and open space within the city's future land use plan. Development of the bypass could influence development along this corridor and therefore create a need for annexation.

Section 3b. Section 3b is located east of Avenue N and south of the proposed 78th Street North Bypass. Some existing development and easy access to the bypass corridor could

create development pressures in this area, however the area is envisioned to remain in agriculture and open space use except for those areas that have already developed.

Section 3c. This area includes existing commercial and industrial development adjacent to the Airport. Section 3c is located north of 39th Street, West of Antelope Avenue and east of Railroad Avenue and will likely see expanded city services during the planning period. The construction of the new Cherry Avenue Bypass and easy access to the airport and railroad could accelerate development of this area. For these reasons a need to annex this area could arise during the planning period. Development and annexation to the south and west should progress to ensure a logical expansion of the city's jurisdiction.



Section 3d. Section 3d is located south of Highway 30 and west of Cherry Avenue. The Future Land Use Plan envisions the area remaining in agricultural and open space uses during the planning period. However, proximity to these corridors could create development pressures.

Section 3e. Section 3e covers an area east of Avenue N, North of the existing city limits and south of Coal Chute Road. This area is envisioned to remain in agricultural use and remain as an Urban Reserve area for future development. If the city grows beyond present projections this area could be tapped for future expansion.

Section 3f. Section 3f is located west of Avenue M and bordered by the city on three sides. Development of this area will be heavily influenced by the development of the Archway Parkway corridor and areas to the west. Extension of city services and the existing street pattern will be necessary for development of this area.



Section 3g. Located south of Interstate 80 and the Lake Villa Estates subdivision Section 3g has easy access to the interstate, Highway 44 and recreational opportunities of the Platte River. For these reasons the area could experience development pressures during the planning period.

Section 3h. Section 3h is located south of the interstate and west of Highway 44. Like section 3g easy access and recreational opportunities could create development pressures in the area. In addition, a possible third interchange at 30th Avenue could increase development pressures in the area.

Section 3i. Section 3i is located south of Highway 30 and west of 30th Avenue. The area should be reserved for future urban development that will likely occur outside the scope of this plan. However, the visibility of Highway 30 could create development pressures within the corridor.

Section 3j. Section 3j includes Cotton Mill Park and the surrounding residential development. The Park is the responsibility of the city however development to the west should continue to occur before this area is considered for annexation.



Section 3k. Section 3k is bounded by 17th Avenue, 56th Street, 30th Avenue and a future 70th Street. The area is located within the Sub-Districts 9 and 10 for expansion of the city's sewer system. This area should be reserved for development until these extensions occur.

Section 3l. Located north of Section 2a, Section 3l is located outside the city's projected growth area for this plan. However, easy access to Highway 40 and 2nd Avenue corridors, the UPRR and existing residential development could create development pressures in the area.

PHASE FOUR. This area is situated beyond the expected growth areas of the city. Annexation will not be necessary until well beyond the life of the Kearney Plan. Rural development will likely be an end use in many of these locations, as urban development will likely occur nearer the current urbanized area. These areas should be reevaluated in approximately 10 years.

The city's remaining jurisdiction falls within Phase Four. There are a few areas in which development could occur because of their visibility, including the corridors of Highways 44, 30, 40 and 10. A future interchange at Cherry Avenue could create some recreational and possibly residential pressure to the South of Interstate 80. However, development should be directed to areas to the north.



CHAPTER FOUR: 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 to help determine the form of the city and distribution of development. In any community, the transportation system fills many functions. It gives residents access to the necessities and amenities of the city, provides a lifeline for business and industry, and helps determine form to the city. In Kearney, transportation system planning has been particularly important because of two fundamental problems:

- Interstate access and its impact on the local transportation system. The city's single I-80 interchange places excessively heavy traffic loads on the 2nd Avenue corridor and complicates access to the city's airport and industrial areas. The 1997 comprehensive plan evaluated the benefits of alternative interchange locations at Cherry Avenue, Antelope Avenue, and 30th Avenue, and concluded that the Cherry Avenue option had the most benefits. Subsequently, the city completed an interchange justification study and the Cherry Avenue interchange is firmly placed in the city and state's transportation program.
- North-south arterial continuity and railroad grade separations. The triple-tracking of the Union Pacific Railroad and substantial increases in rail traffic on the mainline threatened frequent traffic interruptions, and even heavier pressure on 2nd Avenue. Since then, the city and the railroad have cooperatively added two new overpasses, at 30th Avenue and Avenue M/N, providing grade-separated crossings at each of the central city's major section line arterials.



The Interstate 80 access issue remains high on the city’s agenda, but the city has acted aggressively to address other transportation issues. This chapter builds on that work to provide the city with a conceptual transportation system that meets Kearney’s development and circulation objectives. 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.

Safe circulation is fundamental to 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 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.

Kearney’s street system is built on the foundation of the section line grid, interrupted on the west side of town by Lake Kearney. The overpass construction program has helped distribute arterial traffic to routes other than 2nd Avenue, improving the functioning of the city’s street network. However, a major goal of the plan continues to be the evolution of a transportation network that smoothly distributes traffic and provides reasonably expeditious access to most major community features.

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.

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. Since 1997, Kearney has also made major progress in trail and bicycle system development, completing the Cottonmill Trail between Cottonmill Lake and 2nd Avenue by 2002 and proceeding in 2003/04 to extend the trail east to the Archway and ultimately to Fort Kearny State Recreation Areas. It has also begun development of multi-modal corridors, developing sidewalk trails along major street corridors. This allows Kearney to integrate 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. 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 Center 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.

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.

■ PROVIDE A VOCABULARY OF STREET DESIGNS THAT DEVELOPS THE CONCEPT OF STREET AS PUBLIC SPACES

Streets make up the majority of publicly-owned land in Kearney and other cities. As a result, they have a major impact on the city's environment. Yet, we rarely think about streets as more than conduits for traffic. Streets are part of the way people experience the city, and the transportation plan should provide guidance to both the public and private sectors on how they contribute to urban design. In addition, there is growing evidence that attractive streets actually are safer because of their ability to calm traffic.



The Kearney Plan

THE STRUCTURE OF THE STREET SYSTEM

The Arterial 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 2nd Avenue (State Highways 10/44). The traditional grid always provided good street continuity along east and west streets, parallel to the UP corridor. The construction of the 30th Avenue and Avenue M/N overpasses also provides good north-south continuity on section lines, augmenting the earlier overpasses at 2nd Avenue and Avenue H. The city still provides grade-level crossings at Central Avenue and 5th Avenue; in addition, both Antelope and Cherry Avenues east of the city cross the UP at grade.

Both of these remaining grade crossings serves important community functions and have physical characteristics that make their replacement difficult. Central Avenue, as Kearney's traditional main street, links the two sides of the central business district, Kearney Center north of the tracks and the emerging Old Town district on the south. Closing the Central Avenue crossing would have greatly negative effects on the district and would effectively destroy many aspects of the Kearney Gateway concept, discussed in Chapter Seven of this plan. Grade separation of the Central Avenue crossing has been studied, but has dramatic effects on the scale and character of the surrounding main street districts.

The Fifth Avenue crossing serves a number of major community uses on the western side of the city, 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. Without an intermediate grade-separated crossing, retaining a grade level Westside crossing in central Kearney remains essential.

Local Connectivity

Collectors and local street connectivity supplement arterials in the street network by providing alternative routes for short distance and local trips. Kearney has a relative lack of north-south collector connections in the traditional grid south of 39th Street. Between 2nd Avenue and Avenue N, Avenue E provides a north-south collector on the half-section line and links into the Avenue H/22nd Street overpass. Avenue I also serves as a collector south of 39th Street. However, on the eastern edge of this traffic area between Avenue N and Antelope Avenue, the Union Pacific spur presents a barrier to both east-west traffic movement and eastward growth. To the west of 2nd Avenue, the traditional urban grid distributes traffic reasonably well to 9th Avenue; however, Lake Kearney and the UNK campus change patterns of access further west to local street enclaves served off major arterials.

Typically, more recent development tends to break the local street grid and channel traffic to 39th and 56th Streets, the major east-west arterials, and the north-south section line streets. Northeast Kearney has maintained local continuity more successfully to date than the northwestern development.

Peripheral parts of the street system are also relatively 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.



Industrial access is also an important issue, addressed in large part by the Cherry Avenue interchange proposal. Currently, major industrial areas to the east are connected to the city by 25th Street (US 30), and direct industrial traffic loads through Kearney to Exit 272, or east along the Highway 30 or Coal Chute Road corridors to the Minden exit, Exit 279.

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 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 sometimes 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. Major arterials in Kearney include:

- US 30 (25th Street)
- 2nd Avenue
- 11th Street
- 39th Street
- 56th Street
- 30th Avenue
- The Cherry Avenue/Northeast Bypass

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:

- Talmadge Street/ Archway Parkway
- North Railroad Street
- 22nd Street/ Avenue H
- 29th Street west of 2nd Avenue
- Coal Chute Road
- Antelope Avenue
- Avenue M and N
- Central Avenue
- 17th Avenue

- *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 includes Avenues A, E, F, H and I; and 48th, 46th, 34th, 16th, and 8th Streets.



- *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 2000 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, in the range of 28,000 vehicles per day (vpd). Second Avenue volumes drop to 24,000 vpd between 39th and 56th Streets and about 22,000 vpd south of the railroad viaduct. The impact of these volumes is increased by local movements along 2nd Avenue into access driveways between the viaduct and 11th Street. South of 11th Street, parallel service roads distribute local traffic off the 2nd Avenue "mainline."
- The second most heavily traveled corridor is 25th Street (US 30) north of Kearney Center. These volumes hover around the 21,000-23,000 vpd mark, with loads dropping significantly to the west and sustaining relatively high volumes (19,000 vpd) to the east.

- The third most heavily traveled 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 8,000 vpd near the Avenue N intersection and the 17th Avenue intersection 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 Center, and 17th Avenue north of 39th Street.

During 2003, Kearney will be updating its transportation plan and developing a transportation model, which will establish new traffic count information.

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.

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

Traffic issues will continue to emerge along 39th and 56th Streets, Kearney's two primary growth corridors. The 39th Street corridor continues to experience significant growth and merges some of the functions of a neighborhood collector and a major arterial. A steep vertical grade east of 2nd Avenue will be corrected with future improvements. Northeast Kearney residents often avoid the 2nd Avenue and 39th Street intersection by using Avenue E, channeling significant traffic along a residential collector. Also, as development continues along 56th Street, the current two-lane section will not handle traffic demands.

Future Traffic Projections

The 1997 Kearney Plan used land use projections and proposed allocations 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). These data will be updated as part of a transportation planning process, being executed during 2003-04.

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.
- 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. This finding substantiated the need for at least one additional interchange on Interstate 80.





- 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.

Major Traffic Recommendations in the 1997 Plan

The 1997 Kearney Plan recommended several major transportation system investments, designed to address these existing and emerging problems. Major recommendations included:

- *At least one additional I-80 interchange.* The 1997 plan identified a need for at least one additional I-80 interchange, based on traffic projections and needs generated solely by the city's continued residential, commercial, and industrial development. The plan examined the benefits of interchanges at Cherry Avenue, Antelope Avenue, and 30th Avenue, and concluded that the Cherry Avenue location produced the greatest benefits. While interchanges at Antelope and Cherry Avenues performed similarly, the Cherry Avenue site provides better access to Kearney Industrial Park and Airport. The study also indicated the need for a Westside interchange at 30th Avenue.



- *A northeast bypass.* This would connect with a Cherry Avenue interchange and continue north along Cherry Avenue, turning west at 78th Street, connecting back to 2nd Avenue and Highway 10/40 at Glenwood Corners. This bypass would correct an existing misalignment at Coal Chute Road and include a grade separation over the Union

Pacific right-of-way and US 30.

- *An inner loop.* This loop includes 11th Street, 56th Street, 30th Avenue, and Cherry Avenue, and provides an arterial loop that distributes traffic around the city. Antelope Avenue from 11th to 56th is also a part of this arterial system. This loop was factored into the traffic performance projections for the system.

An interchange justification study was completed in 1999 for the Cherry Avenue interchange, incorporating the northeast bypass. The subsequent construction of the Great Platte River Archway Monument one-half mile west of Cherry Avenue provided added justification for interchange construction. However, the Archway construction was not anticipated by the 1997 study. The interchange is clearly justified with or without the Archway, and the demand for it is generated by projected community growth.

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, continuing to establish alternative routes, rather than focusing exclusively on single arterial corridors.
- Improving north-south continuity 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
- COMMERCIAL REARAGE ACCESS
- CIVIC STREETS
- GRADE SEPARATIONS PROGRAM
- 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 the 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 residential parkway collector and other local traffic distribution measures to relieve loading. 56th Street should be extended east of Cherry Avenue and will serve as the primary entrance to Kearney Municipal Airport.
- Cherry and Antelope Avenues as the east segments, serving northeast development and industrial areas on the east side of the city. Cherry Avenue is the main north-south link of the bypass, and will carry industrial, airport, and regional traffic. In this concept, Antelope Avenue will act as a local arterial, similar to Avenue N. Traffic projections completed in 1997 suggest a need for a four-lane section on these segments at least between Coal Chute Road and 56th 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.

The east interchange is to be located at Cherry Avenue, providing a direct connection to the Kearney Industrial Park and Airport. This interchange will also feed the northeast regional bypass, routing truck traffic bound to the region northwest of Kearney around

the center of the city. This interchange should be linked to the rest of the city along the east-west arterials of 11th, 39th, and 56th Streets.

A west interchange should also ultimately be developed at 30th Avenue. This interchange should be supported by an extension of University Drive south to North Railroad Street, providing a direct route to the UNK campus. The 30th Avenue interchange also serves the Kearney Regional Development Center and major residential growth planned for the northwest part of the city.



Of the two interchanges, the Cherry Avenue interchange has the greatest short-term traffic advantages; planning for this facility is already in advanced stages. However, the Westside interchange should remain on the medium-term agenda, because of growth in the northwest sector of the city, the ability to provide direct access to the UNK campus, and southwest growth encouraged by the development of Yanney Park.

REGIONAL BYPASS

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

The Cherry Avenue interchange is paired with a northeast bypass, designed to route truck and other industrial and regional traffic around the city. Separation of industrial and regional traffic streams from urban traffic will improve the functioning of 2nd Avenue, and will provide excellent access between Interstate 80 and agricultural and rural markets to the northwest. The upgraded Cherry Avenue corridor will also become the main street for an urban village development immediately to the north and connected to the rest of Kearney by a greenway along the former Burlington Northern corridor; and an expanded industrial park that features rail service, sites for flex buildings and major industries, and significant airport-related commercial opportunities.



The northeast bypass is routed along an improved Cherry Avenue, turning west with a free-flow curve along 78th Street, 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 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 and protected left-turns at major intersections.



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 proposed by the Future Land Use concept 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 parkway concept uses existing roads, such as Country Club Lane, and new alignments to connect future neighborhood parks, residential areas, and activity centers. It creates an arc around the city from Country Club Lane and 24th Street to 39th Street west of Antelope Avenue. The creation of the parkway system will divert local and inter-neighborhood traffic from arterials and create a significant multi-use civic street 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. An additional industrial access projects that can further separate incompatible traffic flows is an improved Coal Chute Road to Avenue M, providing an improved route to industrial areas in east central Kearney.

- 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. These are included as part of the neighborhood unit design concept.

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 net-

work 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.

The circulation network identified by the transportation plan, including the parkway loop, is not the result of a detailed corridor study, and actual alignments may vary with project design. The major objective is to identify the approximate points that should be served, and to provide a basis for dedication of appropriate links as individual subdivisions are submitted for approval.

Some examples of collector street extensions include:

- 48th Street from 2nd to 30th Avenues.
- Avenue E from 56th to 78th Streets.
- The 5th and 6th Avenue system to 73rd Street.

COMMERCIAL REARAGE ACCESS

AT EMERGING COMMERCIAL OR MIXED USE CENTERS, KEARNEY SHOULD ESTABLISH A PATTERN OF REARAGE ACCESS LOOPS OR ROADS THAT REMOVE PRIMARY ACCESS FROM ARTERIAL STREETS.

Traffic friction, mixing local commercial and through traffic, compromises the function of major arterials and creates safety problems because of deceleration and turning movements. The land use concept and transportation plan proposes the use of “rearage” loops to provide access to major commercial development. The rearage loop or road system provides access to parking areas, limiting arterial 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 access concept is proposed at the following locations:

- 56th Street and 2nd Avenue. Here, a loop road would serve future commercial development on the northeast corner, with a diagonal local road and greenway connecting that development to a neighborhood park in the interior of the section.
- 56th and 17th Avenue. A neighborhood mixed use center would receive access from a rearage loop around this intersection.
- 56th and N Avenue. A neighborhood mixed use center on the northwest corner would be served by a rearage loop, with a connection to a neighborhood park and school site in the interior of the section between 2nd and N Avenues.
- Cherry Avenue industrial corridor. Rearage roads would be provided parallel to Cherry Avenue north of 39th Street to provide access to industrial and commercial uses along the corridor. This protects the functional integrity of the Cherry Avenue bypass.





- 11th and Cherry Avenue. Commercial and mixed use development in the proposed urban village north of the planned interchange would be served by rear access roads.
- 11th Street and 24th Avenue. This loop serves a village center in the West Platte Corridor development area.

The rear access concept should be encouraged in other emerging commercial centers where practical.

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.
- 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 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.

In addition, the civic streets concept provides general guidelines to direct the platting and development of all new or enhanced streets in the city. The following describes general street contexts and design guidelines to direct their development.

Local Streets

Right-of-way width: 60 feet

Street channel width (back to back of curb): 36 feet outside of planned development districts, down to 28 feet within planned developments, traditional neighborhood developments, or local access loops.

Back of curb to sidewalk setback: 6-8 feet typical. Gently winding sidewalks may be used, and may come as close to 4 feet from back of curb.

Sidewalk width: 4 feet

Street trees: In new developments, overstory trees of approved species should be planted. Mixed species should be utilized. Planting locations should avoid utility alignments.

Lighting: City standard lighting is acceptable, but may be modified within planned developments.

Collector Streets

Right-of-way width: 70 feet, may vary in different contexts

Street channel width (back to back of curb): 36 feet.

Back of curb to sidewalk setback: 8 feet typical. Gently winding sidewalks may be used, and may come as close to 4 feet from back of curb.

Sidewalk width: 4 feet, except in trail applications.

Trail applications: Sidewalk trails may be used in arterial street corridors. Minimum trail width is 8 feet, desirable width is 10 feet. Ideal trail should be set back a minimum of 8 feet from curb if separated. If the trail is located along the back of the curb, the clear trail should be marked off by a strip with a contrasting pavement surface, such as patterned concrete. Street crossings should be clearly marked, and major streets should be signed to advise motorists of bicycle crossings.

Street trees: Overstory trees of approved species should be planted. Mixed species should be utilized. Planting locations should avoid utility alignments.

Lighting: City standard lighting is acceptable, but may be modified within planned developments or in civic street contexts.

Arterial Streets

Right-of-way width: 80 feet, may vary between 66 and 100 feet in different contexts

Street channel width (back to back of curb): 36-60 feet, depending on context.

Back of curb to sidewalk setback: 8 feet minimum.

Sidewalk width: 4 feet, except in trail applications.





Trail applications: Sidewalk trails may be used in arterial street corridors. Minimum trail width is 8 feet, desirable width is 10 feet. Ideal trail should be set back a minimum of 8 feet from curb if separated. If the trail is located along the back of the curb, the clear trail should be marked off by a strip with a contrasting pavement surface, such as patterned concrete. Street crossings should be clearly marked, and major streets should be signed to advise motorists of bicycle crossings.

Street trees: Overstory trees of approved species should be planted. Mixed species should be utilized. Planting locations should avoid utility alignments. Trees should be setback a minimum of eight feet from curb lines for safety purposes.

Lighting: City standard lighting is acceptable. Special lighting is used in civic street contexts.

Parkways

Right-of-way width: 70 feet minimum, 80 feet typical, may vary between 66 and 100 feet in different contexts

Street channel width (back to back of curb): 36 feet typical. Could include divided sections, with each channel between 20 and 22 feet.

Back of curb to sidewalk setback: 8-12 feet minimum.

Sidewalk width: Trail on one side of street, desirably 10 feet in width.

Trail applications: Street crossings should be clearly marked, and major streets should be signed to advise motorists of bicycle crossings.

Street trees: Overstory trees of approved species should be planted. Mixed species should be utilized. Planting locations should avoid utility alignments.

Lighting: Special lighting consistent with street design character.

GRADE SEPARATION PROGRAM

KEARNEY SHOULD WORK WITH THE STATE OF NEBRASKA AND THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL GRADE SEPARATIONS OVER THE MAIN LINE.

Kearney, in partnership with the Union Pacific, has completed two grade separated crossings of major arterials over the railroad, at 30th Avenue and Avenue M/N. During the planning period, three other grade separations should be considered, including:

- A crossing between 2nd and 30th Avenues, preferably at 17th or 16th Avenue. This would permit closure of the 8th Avenue grade crossing.
- Cherry Avenue, critical to the northeast bypass route.
- Antelope Avenue, the east segment of the Inner Beltway.

The Central Avenue grade crossing cannot be closed or grade separated without major impact on businesses within Kearney Center. 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 Center.



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:

- 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 to the upper 2nd Avenue commercial district.
- An extension of Key West Road north to 16th Street and east as Talmadge Street to 2nd Avenue. The north extension can connect to a future UP grade separation, linking the Yanney Park area to the UNK campus. A south extension under I-80 and extending east can serve the north side of the Platte River corridor.



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 Center, 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 Cottonmill Lake to Fort Kearny State Recreation Area. As of 2003, this trail is complete from Cottonmill to 2nd Avenue. The trail may be extended east to Gibbon via the Basswood Strip State Wildlife Management Area and west of Kearney along the Platte River.

- An eastside system, connecting the Archway and Cottonmill Trail and the Cherry Avenue "urban village" to Avenue M along the abandoned Burlington right-of-way, and north to 56th Street along the Union Pacific (Kearney & Black Hills) spur.

- A 48th Street extension 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 system, including the circumferential parkway, 7th/6th Avenue parkway, and other links.
- Highway 30 to the Kearney Industrial Park.
- 11th Street, Avenue M/N, 30th Avenue, and 56th Street.
- Railroad Street from Kearney Center to the NPPD Canal.
- 45th Street and the cemetery from 2nd Avenue to the circumferential boulevard.
- The northeast bypass, following Cherry Avenue and 78th Street to Glenwood Corners.
- A south Fort Kearney Loop, following 2nd Avenue, Link 50A, and the Fort Kearny Hike and Bike Trail over the Platte River.
- Grand Avenue from Avenue N to 39th Street.

- 39th Street from Central Avenue to Cherry Avenue.
- Central Avenue south of 13th Street.

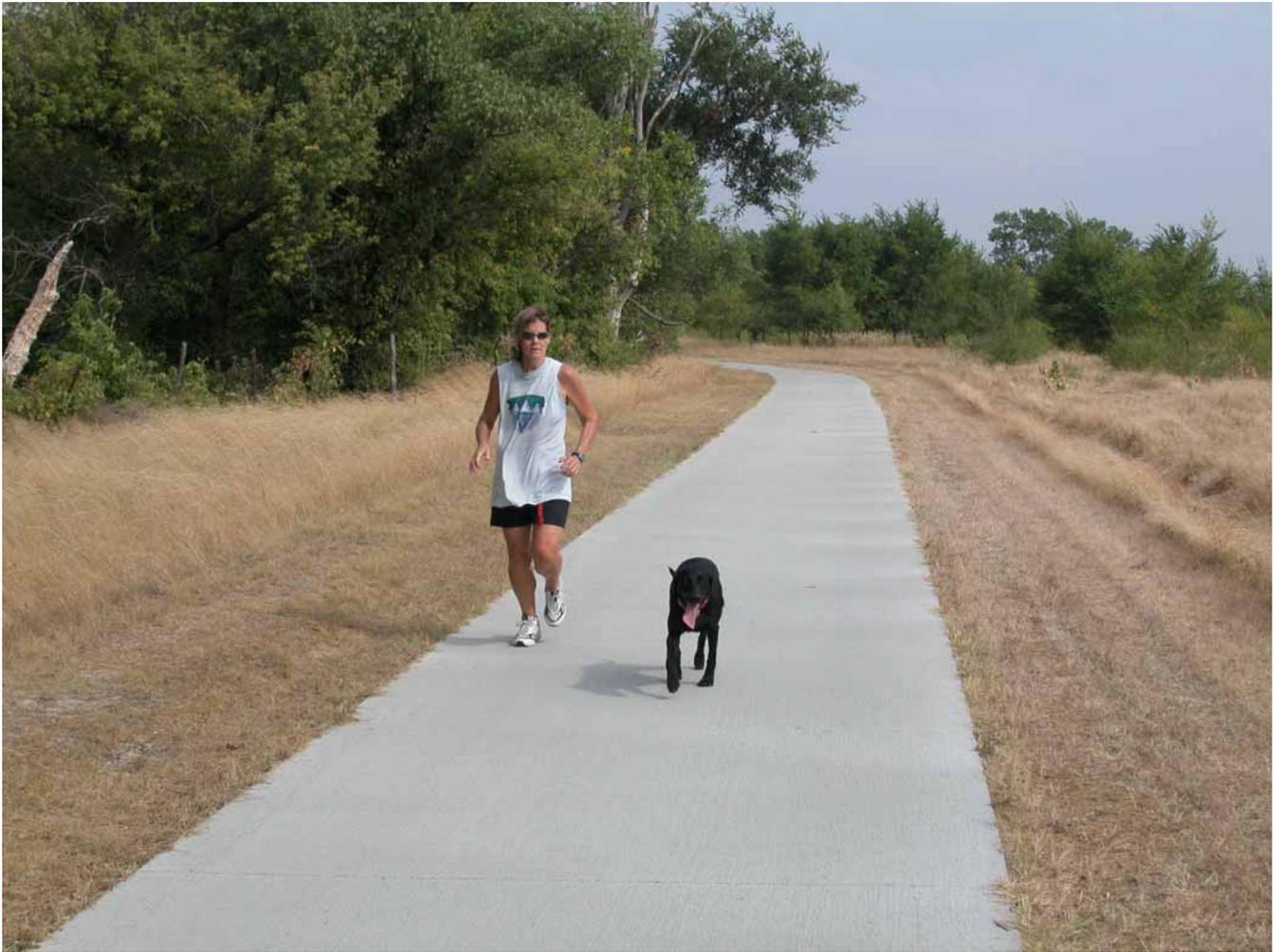
These corridors ideally should include parallel trails either separated from the street channel. They may also use sidewalk trails, trail width sidewalks adjacent to the back of the curb. The riding or walking surface of these trails should be separated by a minimum 18 inch buffer of patterned and/or colored paving as a safety standard. Crosswalks should also be clearly marked.

- *On-Street Routes*, providing good pedestrian accommodations and signed bicycle routes or lanes along key community links. These routes include Central Avenue north of 13th Street, 5th Avenue, Avenue E, 16th Street, and other routes. These routes should be marked with share the road signage.





The Kearney Plan





CHAPTER FIVE: A RECREATION COMMUNITY

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 access to an excellent city parks and recreation system as well as other major resources in the Platte Valley. 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 light-house logo represents the unique "inland" lighthouse in Harmon Park. Most recently, the dedication and initial development of E.K. and Mary Yanney Memorial Park in southwest Kearney will provide another signature open space for the city and will anchor development in the West Platte Corridor development area.

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

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 good example of a traditional park that has become in many ways a symbol of its community. Yanney Park will serve much this same role in a modern idiom.



In addition, the city is in the process of developing a quality trail system. The Cottonmill Trail now connects Cottonmill Park, UNK, and the 2nd Avenue corridor. By 2004, it will extend to the Archway along the North Channel, and will ultimately continue to the Fort Kearny Hike and Bike Bridge. The city has also begun a policy of developing sidewalk trails along major streets with the completion of the Avenue N Trail. These diverse facilities serve a variety of recreational and open space needs in the city.

In spite of this overall quality, 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 Green Streets

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 green streets 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 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.

Progress Since the 1997 Plan

Kearney has made substantial progress since the completion of its 1997 Comprehensive Plan and has implemented several of the goals and policies included in that document. These major projects have included:

- The dedication, planning, and beginning of development of E.K. and Mary Yanney Memorial Park south of 11th Street and east of Key West Road. This 87-acre park will anchor major development planned for the city's southwest sector and is conceived as a signature urban park for the community.
- The replacement of the Youth Recreation Center at Harmon Park.
- Development in 2003 of a southeast neighborhood park near 12th Street and Avenue N.
- Completion of the Cottonmill Trail from Cottonmill Park to 2nd Avenue, and secured funding in 2003 for an eastward extension along the North Channel.
- Restoration of Cottonmill Lake.





GOALS FOR THE PARK SYSTEM

In order to build on this progress and enhance its excellent facilities, Kearney should:

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

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. A Saint Louis University School of Public Health study of communities where more walking trails had been built found that nearly 40% of people with access had used the trails and more than 55% of trail walkers had increased their walking since beginning to use a trail. Walking is the most common physical activity among the general population, especially among older persons and racial/ethnic minorities. 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 UNDERUTILIZED 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 THE 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,

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 parks should ensure safe, convenient, and desirable pedestrian access from neighborhoods to parks. In addition, parks should fit within the framework of the greenway and neighborhood unit concepts.



■ 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 and Yanney Park provide important recreation sites 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 has established a replacement program for 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.



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 490 acres (excluding Meadowlark Hills Golf Course). Standards published by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) indicate a current requirement for 274 acres in Kearney. Therefore, the city's park facilities are about 216 acres above national standards. To serve its twenty-year future population, Kearney would not need to obtain additional parkland; however, residents have come to expect this level of service. To continue equitable service, the city should use its current standard of 18 acres per 1,000 people as a standard for future planning.



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. 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 22.1 acres of land. National standards suggest a current need for 55 acres of neighborhood park space and a 20-year need for 80 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 picnic-



ing, 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 six community parks contain about 208 acres of land, compared with a current need for 96 acres of community park space and a 20-year need for 140 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. Future Cottonmill Park improvements include:

- Replacement of the marina rental storage building with a new rental and restroom facility.
- Continued extension of the trail to loop around the lake.

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:

- Pools
- Playgrounds
- Ice Hockey

- Kearney exceeds national and state standards for:

- Soccer facilities.
- Running tracks
- Baseball fields
- Tennis Courts
- Golf

- Kearney experiences a deficit for:

- Picnic Shelters
- Outdoor public volleyball.
- Softball Fields

- With population growth, the city will experience a need for additional:

- Softball Fields
- Tennis Courts
- Playgrounds
- Volleyball Courts
- Picnic Shelters.

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 5-2 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.
- 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 provides direct linkages to Cottonmill Park and North Channel.
- Yanney Park will be developed as a major public space anchor for this sector of the city.

- *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 would help 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.
- *Expansion of the city's pool facilities with a third water recreation facility in the northeast.* The northeast quadrant of the city remains fairly distant from the city's existing pool facilities. As growth occurs within this area this deficit will become more acute.
- *Continued expansion 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 Cottonmill Park and 2nd Avenue. As of 2003, funds are in place to extend the trail to the Great Platte River Archway Monument. However, additional links and the emergence of multi-use transportation and public space corridors will help to create a comprehensive greenway system for Kearney.
- *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.



TABLE 5-1: Major Recreation Facilities in Kearney



A Recreation Community

Criterion	Recreation Facilities									
	Area (Acres)	Picnic Shelters	Base-ball	Soft-ball	Basket-ball	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	7	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	15	1	4	2	0	8	0	0	0	1
Ted Baldwin Park	34.0	1	0	0	0	4	0	0	0	1
Nina Hammer Park	3.0	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Meadowlark North Park	120	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Yanney Park	87	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	640.4	11	9	6	11	21	17	3	3	14

Source: City of Kearney 2002



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

Criterion	Standard	Existing Facility	Comments
Total Park Land	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 10 acres per 1,000 population. - Current Need: 274 acres - Projected Need: 400 acres 	Public Park: 490 acres not including Meadowlark Golf Course	Kearney exceeds current standards for parkland. The city's existing standard is 18 acres per 1,000 people. To maintain this level of service the city will need to add over 228 acres by 2025.
Neighborhood Parks and Playgrounds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 2 acres per 1,000 population. - Area of less than 10 acres - Current need: 55 acres - Projected need: 80 acres 	Kearney has about 22 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: 96 acres - Projected need: 140 acres 	Kearney has 348.3 acres of community parks.	Kearney meets national standards for community parks. Its current acreage also meets 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: 1-2 pools - Projected need: 3 pools 	1 pool with a 2nd being renovated.	The number of existing facilities is adequate to satisfy current requirements. One additional pool may be required to meet future growth requirements.
Baseball Fields	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 diamond per 6,000 population. - Current need: 4-5 diamonds - Projected need: 5-6 diamonds 	9 diamonds	Kearney is adequately served by base-ball 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: 9 diamonds - Projected need: 13 diamonds 	6 diamonds	Kearney requires 3 additional softball diamonds to accommodate current demands and 7 to meet future projections.
Tennis Courts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 1 court per 2,000 population. - Current need: 14 courts - Projected need: 20 courts 	17 courts.	Kearney has enough tennis courts. Future population demands will require 3 additional courts.

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
Golf Courses	· 1 18-hole course per 25,000 population	1 public course	Kearney's 18-hole Meadowlark Golf Course serves current needs.
Playgrounds	· 1 area per 2,000 population. · Current need: 14 playgrounds · Projected need: 20 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	· 1 field per 10,000 population. · Current need: 3 fields · Projected need: 4 fields	21 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.
Football Fields	· 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	· 1 court per 5,000 population. · Current need: 5 courts · Projected need: 8 courts.	11 courts	Kearney is adequately served by basketball courts.
Running Track	· 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	· Indoor: 1 per 100,000 population. · Outdoor: depends upon climate.	No outdoor ice hockey facilities exist in Kearney. The Tri-City Arena provides in-door ice.	The city is adequately served by the Tri-City Arena.
Volleyball	· 1 court per 5,000 population. · Current need: 5 courts · Projected need: 8 courts	3 courts	Kearney needs 2 additional volleyball courts to meet current needs and 5 courts to meet long-term needs.
Picnic Shelters	· 1 shelter per 2000 population. · Current need: 14 shelters	11 shelters	Kearney should develop additional picnic facilities with shelters. About 3-4 new facilities are needed.
Recreational Trails	· 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. Kearney has developed an extensive Trails system since 1995 including the Channel Trail	The Cottonmill/Fort Kearney Trail system provides a major regional recreational facility.



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.



PARK DEVELOPMENT PLAN

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 feature. 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.
- Encourages a neighborhood unit concept, placing neighborhood parks, co-located with school sites, at the heart of new neighborhoods and linking them with each other and with activity centers through parkways and trails.
- Links Kearney's park system into a regional recreation network.

The components of this program include:

- GREEN NETWORK
- PHASED TRAIL SYSTEM
- PARKSITE ENHANCEMENTS
- NEIGHBORHOOD UNITS
- COMMUNITY PARKS AND NEW RECREATION CENTERS
- UNIQUE FACILITIES: YANNEY PARK AND THE ARCHWAY MONUMENT
- REGIONAL PLATTE RIVER 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.

The evolution of a connected network of parks, greenways, and trails is a fundamental part of the park plan and a basic element of Kearney's future urban pattern. This network expands the use of the park system beyond individual service areas by providing safe access to major parks from all parts of the community. It effectively merges parks and open spaces into all parts of the life and development of the 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. These specific features include:

- The city's existing park system. The largest existing multi-use developed open spaces in the system are Cottonmill, Ted Baldwin, Harvey, and Harmon Parks. Yanney Park is in the initial stages of development and Meadowlark North Park has yet to be master planned.
- New community parks, to meet the active recreational needs of each part of the city.
- New neighborhood parks in the heart of developing residential neighborhoods, connected to each other, residential areas, and activity centers by a community parkway system.
- A comprehensive network of exclusive trails, roadside trails, and shared multi-modal routes, linking parks together.
- The Platte River Corridor, made accessible to more people with the completion of the Cottonmill Trail and the continued development of the Archway site and adjacent public space.



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

PHASED TRAIL SYSTEM

KEARNEY SHOULD DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF TRAILS AND BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ROUTES TO LINK ITS PARKS, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND ACTIVITY CENTERS, BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE COTTONMILL TRAIL.

Trails and greenways make up the fabric of a Green Network and are the essential connectors for the park system. They also accommodate the city's most popular and accessible forms of recreation – walking, running, and bicycling. The Trail Plan presents a



four phased program for trail development, making use of exclusive trails, roadside or sidewalk trails along streets, and shared routes that provide barrier free pedestrian access and share-the-road signage (and bicycle lanes where space is adequate) along appropriate streets. Each phase represents a four to five-year program and is designed to provide a trail network that stands on its own or builds on earlier phases. Major projects for each phase of the system are listed below (with trail type in parentheses):

Phase One

- Completion of the Cottonmill Trail to Fort Kearny State Recreation Area (Exclusive)
- Harmon Park Trail from 29th to 39th Streets (Exclusive)
- Harvey Park Connector to Avenue N (Exclusive)
- 2nd Avenue Trail from Talmadge to 11th Street (Roadside and Exclusive through the drainageway between 2nd and 3rd Avenues)
- Railroad Trail from 5th to 30th Avenues (Roadside)
- Avenue M/N Trail from 16th to 56th Streets (Roadside)
- 30th Avenue Trail from Railroad to Cottonmill Trails (Roadside)
- 11th Street Trail from Tailrace to Central Avenue (Roadside)
- YMCA Trail (6th Avenue and 48th Street) Trails from 39th Street to 2nd Avenue (Roadside)
- Central Avenue Trail from Archway Parkway to 13th Street (Roadside)
- First stages of the Share-the-Road (STR) network, including Central Avenue, 45th Street, 29th Street, 16th Street, and 5th /7th Avenues)

Phase Two

- Ted Baldwin Trail, from 7th Avenue to 30th Avenue (Exclusive)
- 17th Avenue Trail from 45th to 56th Streets (Roadside)
- 56th Street Trail from 17th Avenue to Avenue N (Roadside)
- 39th Street Trail from Central to Antelope Avenues (Roadside)
- Grand Avenue Trail from Avenue N to 39th Street (Roadside)
- Railroad Trail from 5th Avenue to Avenue M (Roadside)
- Avenue M Trail from 16th Street to Cottonmill Trail (Roadside)
- 11th Street Trail from Central Avenue to Avenue M (Roadside)
- 30th Avenue Trail from Cottonmill to Ted Baldwin Trails (Roadside)
- Parkway Trail from 56th and 7th Avenue to 56th and Avenue E (Roadside and Exclusive)
- Second stages of the STR system, including 22nd Street / Avenue H, Avenue E, Avenue I, East 34th Street, West 35th Street, Country Club Lane, and 17th Avenue.

Phase Three

- Burlington Trail from Avenue M to Cottonmill Trail (Exclusive)
- West Platte and Yanney Trails from Tailrace to proposed 24th Avenue (Exclusive)
- Cherry Avenue Trail from Burlington Trail to 39th Street (Roadside)
- 39th Street from Cherry Avenue to Antelope Avenue (Roadside)
- West Platte Trail from 2nd Avenue to Cottonmill Trail via river channel (Exclusive or Roadside)
- 11th Street Trail from 17th Avenue to 30th Avenue (Roadside)
- 30th Avenue Trail from 11th Street to Railroad Trail (Roadside)
- Parkway Trail Segments from 25th Avenue and 48th Street to 39th Street (Exclusive or Roadside)

- Highway 30 Trail from Avenue N to Cherry Avenue (Roadside)

Phase Four

- Kearney & Black Hills Trail from Railroad to 56th Street (Exclusive)
- Antelope Avenue Trail from Cottonmill Trail to Highway 30 (Roadside)
- Fort Kearny Loop from 2nd Avenue South to Fort Kearny State Recreation Area (Roadside)
- Northeast Bypass Trail from 39th Street to Glenwood Corners (Separated Roadside)
- Parkway Connectors (Exclusive)



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.
- Possible relocation of competition ballfield to a new recreational complex. In the short term, backstop replacement at the existing field.
- Swimming pool rehabilitation.

• Collins Park

- Removal of existing storage building.
- Plant additional trees to enclose southwest area of park and introduce autumn color.

• Cottonmill Park

- 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**

- 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**

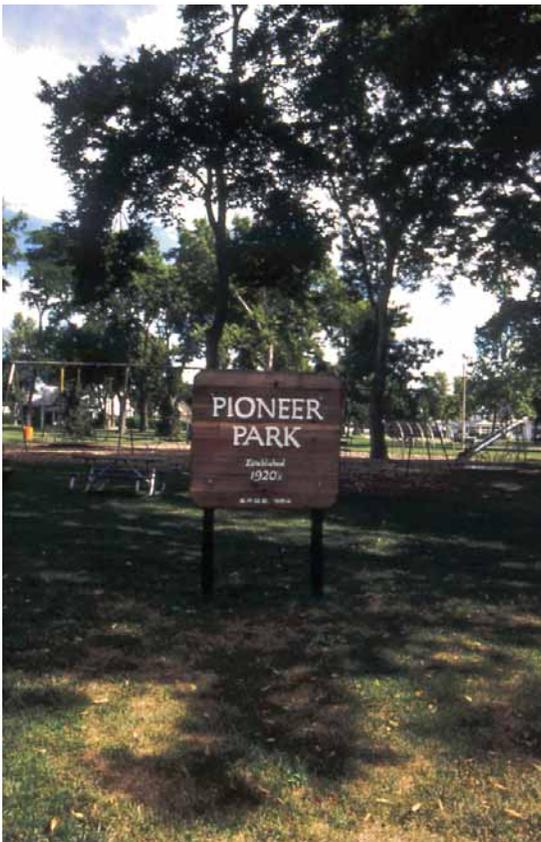
- Upgrade rest rooms to ADA standards.
- Install irrigation system.

• **West Lincolnway Park**

- Provide path to playground.
- Landscape for shade, buffering, and perimeter definition.

• **Cemetery**

- Expand flat stone area.



NEIGHBORHOOD UNITS

JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND SCHOOL SITES SHOULD FORM THE HEART OF KEARNEY'S NEW RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS.

The Neighborhood Unit concept, outlined as a basic principle for the growth of new neighborhoods in Kearney, proposes a framework that links neighborhood activity centers, commercial services, parks and recreation, and residential areas together. A basic concept of the Neighborhood Unit is the location of a neighborhood park site generally in the center of each square mile of residential development, ordinarily co-located with a neighborhood school site. The neighborhood park, linked to all parts of the residential section by a pedestrian system and safe street connections, serves as the public commons for the residential area. This assures that most new residents live within one half mile of a highly accessible neighborhood park.

This concept further avoids the service and operational problems associated with a proliferation of very small, isolated park facilities. Generally, these parks serve a very limited local area, and disperse the city's park maintenance efforts.

In the Neighborhood Unit Concept, the neighborhood park is typically 10 to 12 acres in size, based on Kearney's desirable level of neighborhood park service. A typical elementary school site is in the range of 10 to 15 acres; therefore, each neighborhood commons area (consisting of a neighborhood park and school site) is proposed at about 25 acres.

In addition to this reservation of land, the city should establish a typical menu of recreational facilities through a more detailed park planning process. The appropriateness of this "menu" should be reviewed periodically to be certain that it responds to the demands and needs of the city's population. Based on the survey results summarized earlier, neighborhood parks should generally include:

- Playground facilities.
- Picnic areas and shelters.
- Unstructured but relatively level open space for active recreation.
- Trails and walking paths.
- Fields for informal play, such as a ballfield with backstop and infield.
- Some accommodation for court sports, including basketball, tennis, and volleyball.

In order to finance neighborhood parks on an equitable basis, Kearney should consider a park finance system that brings about the cooperative acquisition of neighborhood park ground. The principles of this finance system are considered later in this discussion.

The Kearney development concept and park plan proposes parks in the following locations:

- The center of the section between 17th and 30th Avenues north of 56th Street.
- The center of the section between 2nd and 17th Avenues north of 56th Street.
- The center of the section between 2nd Avenue and Avenue N north of 56th Street.





- The West Platte Corridor development village, north of 11th Street at about 25th Avenue.
- The Cherry Avenue “urban village” north of the Cherry Avenue interchange.
- Creek-related greenways near Glenwood Corners.

These parks are typically connected by the parkway, or integrated into the rest of the park system by trails.

COMMUNITY PARKS AND 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.
- The requirement for additional large multi-purpose parks to serve emerging growth areas.

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 at Meadowlark North Park north of the existing Meadowlark Hills Golf Course; and a sporting clays range.

Emerging Kearney neighborhoods will also generate demands for community parks, larger, multi-use facilities usually in excess of 30 acres. Cottonmill, Harvey, Ted Baldwin, and Harmon Parks currently function as the city’s leading community parks. Other proposed community park locations include:

- Yanney Park. This signature open space can also accommodate community park uses. The plan recommends possible expansion of the park south to Interstate 80.
- A Northeast Community Park between the proposed parkway and the Union Pacific spur between 45th and 56th Streets.
- A Cherry Avenue Community Park, with development around and north of the Cherry Avenue interchange.

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.



UNIQUE FACILITIES: YANNEY PARK AND THE ARCHWAY MONUMENT

KEARNEY SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TWO UNIQUE RECREATIONAL AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES: YANNEY PARK AND THE ARCHWAY MONUMENT.

The 87 acre E.K. and Mary Yanney Park will provide the city with an excellent new community park in a sector of the city served primarily by the highly utilized Centennial Park. The site has been master planned to incorporate a number of features, serving both local and regional communities. The city, with substantial private sector support, should move ahead to implement the master plan for this important site, which also provides community parkland to support southwestern development.

The Archway Monument, although not city park, is also an important recreational resource. Indeed, the economic performance of the Archway may well depend on the productive recreational and cultural use of the adjacent site, with its wooded areas, wetlands, and lakes. The Cottonmill Trail extension will serve the Archway area, and will include installation of an historic bridge. This cooperative association between the Archway Foundation and the City of Kearney should be expanded to apply to recreational programming of the grounds and the cooperative use of other public lands adjacent to the Archway property.



A REGIONAL PLATTE RIVER TRAIL

KEARNEY'S GREEN NETWORK SHOULD BE LINKED TO A REGIONAL TRAIL AND GREENWAY SYSTEM ALONG THE PLATTE RIVER.

The Big Bend region of the Platte River is a unique ecological and recreational resource, integrated into Kearney's park system by the Cottonmill Trail. The 1997 plan advocated an extension of the Cottonmill Trail to the Fort Kearny Hike and Bike Trail and Bridge and Fort Kearny State Recreation Area, a link that the city is in the process of implementing.

Ultimately, the Platte Channel Trail should continue eastward through Basswood Strip State Wildlife Management Area to Windmill State Recreation Area near Gibbon and westward through other state wildlife management areas to Elm Creek. This would provide a major regional recreational resource that would augment Kearney's other visitor attractions, and would reinforce vital environmental education and preservation efforts along the Platte.



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CHAPTER SIX: 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's public facilities, infrastructure, and streets and sidewalks represent large capital assets that must respond to the needs of current and future residents and urban development. These features sustain life in the community – they are often noticed only in their absence or when something goes wrong. Yet, they have a major impact on residents' satisfaction with the city and with the direction of future growth.

This element of the Kearney Plan evaluates public facilities and infrastructure and assesses their physical condition. It suggests policies and actions designed to 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. It also considers the extension of utility services to newly developing areas, an issue of vital concern if the city's development and land use concepts are to be realized.

A successful community development strategy requires continued investment in the city's public service systems. Citizens generally support these investments if they are demonstrably necessary and cost-effective. When financial resources are limited and capital needs continue, projects that fulfill strategic improvement objectives, prove to be good investments over time, and implement an overall vision for Kearney will obtain the broadest community support.



GOALS

This section presents goals for the city's public facilities and infrastructure systems. To continue 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 has completed a water system facility plan that defines capital improvement projects through 2016. In recent years the planning focus has been on sanitary sewer interceptor

lines and the treatment plant to accommodate future growth, particularly in areas north of 56th Street. The city has completed a program of improvements to meet federal treatment mandates and safeguard water quality for 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.

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

Citizens want excellent public services at minimum cost – an understandable goal that can be difficult to achieve. Meeting this goal requires efficient utilization and operation of facilities. Cost savings can be realized 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 that 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.

■ DEVELOP PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS AND INFRASTRUCTURE THAT HELPS THE CITY MEET ITS GROWTH OBJECTIVES.

Kearney's topography, placing its primary growth area in the Wood River watershed, separated by a ridgeline from the rest of the city, creates difficult financing and public service problems. Currently, the border of the city's urban service area is just north of 56th Street for areas west of Avenue N, very close to leading edge of Kearney's most intensive commercial, residential, and mixed use development. Moreover, because the drainage patterns in the Wood River watershed is south to north, considerable sewer must be laid through areas with less development demand to serve areas with more immediate pressures. Property owners adjacent to the urban services limit and near existing urbanization have a justifiable claim to be permitted to develop all or part of their property. However, if this development occurs at low density on individual systems, Kearney's sound urban growth will be blocked. The city should develop a mechanism that permits areas in the path of urban development to grow soundly according to market demands and long-term community growth objectives.





PUBLIC FACILITIES

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.

Inventory of Facilities

The City of Kearney owns a variety of facilities that provide a base for its array of 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. The library and police department are also located downtown while 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*

City Hall, housing Kearney's municipal administrative offices, is located at 22nd Street and Avenue A and is an important anchor for the east end of the central business district. The building's upper level is accessible via an elevator, and contains the council chambers and public works, planning, and building inspections offices. City Hall has accessible rest rooms that meet standards of the federal Americans with Disabilities Act.



The Utility Department has moved from the building since 1997. A space needs review has been completed to identify more efficient use patterns within the building. The review also examined the building's heating and cooling needs. Generally, the building is in good condition and should meet the city's needs for the next ten years. The city should implement the building as-

essment plan to ensure the most efficient use of the building.

• *Police Department*

The Police Department is located in the Buffalo/Kearney Law Enforcement Center, and is co-located with the Buffalo County Sheriff's office, 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 good condition. In 2003, the city acquired the adjacent building and is in the process of renovating that structure for use by the police department. The addition will provide a screening lab, victims witness unit, tactical briefing area and computer services. The new screening lab will be the biggest investment in the coming years. The lab will allow the department to screen material before it goes to the State Lab.

Law enforcement operations in Kearney have focused on “problem-oriented policing” by officers, as a key to preserving and maintaining public perceptions of the high quality of life in the city. This decentralized approach enables 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.



Quality Public Services

Providing direct police services is the fundamental task of police personnel, with cruiser-based citizen response most important. Kearney has an increasing percentage of both young and older residents, requiring services that 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. To meet this need, the Police Department has installed computers in cruisers and has implemented an in-car reporting system. The department is also considering a web-based interface that citizens can utilize to expand community outreach and communication. The city should continue to focus on expanding communication between the department and members of the community.

The city’s vehicle impound lot is located east of the department’s headquarters. For the most part, the impound lot operates at capacity but lacks room for expansion. As a result, the city attempts to move vehicles out of the lot as quickly as possible. Since 1996 the department has lost its firing range. A new site will be required to meet this training need. This could be done on a regional basis, with other law enforcement agencies participating in funding and jointly using the 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 northwest 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. 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.

While the Downtown location provided good access to most parts of the city, routes to the west encountered significant traffic congestion. In response, the city built a west satellite facility in 1998 at 30th Avenue and 39th Street. The deployment of facilities and response times can be further improved by implementing traffic control and management efforts. The city installed signaling devices at the intersections of 22nd and 39th, and should in the future install such devices at the 16th, 25th, and 31st Street intersections of 2nd Avenue. The signal control program should reduce response times for all public safety agencies, including fire, police, sheriff, and Good Samaritan Hospital ambulance services, providing a basis for cost-sharing in the expansion of this system.

In the future, the city should monitor development in the southeast closely. Extensive development in this sector and the Archway district could produce a need for an additional satellite facility.

• *Kearney Public Library and Information Center*

The Kearney Public Library is located in Kearney Center on the southwest corner of 21st Street and 1st Avenue. The 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, with paving and parking improvements made to this area in 2003.

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, and the Internet). Children's

services support early education with six computer youth workstations featuring interactive reading software and four additional computers for automated systems. The library has recently updated its automated circulation and reference operations with the Cinex, which allows remote access.



The library's Technology Learning Center provides 16 terminals for public use with high-speed internet access and an interactive videoconference room, and public access room to provide hands-on experience with computers, scanners and software. 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 good condition. Improvements that haven taken place since 1996 include a new roof, carpet, replacement of some of the windows, and restroom renovations. The Library Advisory Board has done a needs assessment with a consultant and selected an architectural firm to explore additions to the library. Technology changes will continue to be one of the Library's biggest challenges. A needs assessment is being completed to formulate a plan to deal with this issue.

Given this, the library's principal needs during the next 20 years include improving physical and electronic access to information. Measures to improve physical access include possible renovations and additions to the building, continued support of the Bookmobile outreach with a possible satellite connection, and potential staff outreach to day care centers and other child-focused organization to guide learning programs. In order to address access to electronic information, the Library should complete a technology needs assessment and implement recommendations proposed by the technology plan.



• ***City Vehicle and Street Maintenance Facility and Central Stores***

The City of Kearney operates a vehicle and street 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 eight buildings used by the Public Works Departments. In recent years the Utilities Department and recycling building have relocated. This has provided additional space at the facility. 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 metal building contains the materials recovery facility (MRF) of recyclables affiliated with the city's sanitation program; however, this facility will be relocated to East 39th Street providing additional storage to maintenance. An older metal carport shed is used as a shed for storage of grader vehicles and snow removal material. The yard contains two storage structure used for salt storage. Major stockpiles of sand, debris, and material are located on the north and east edges of the compound. Additional outdoor storage is sited at the old tree dumpsite west of the city's sewer plant along the North Channel of the Platte River.

Population growth and the geographical expansion of the city have increased demands for maintenance services. While the city has purchased better quality vehicles and equipment, the city's increasing size spreads services by requiring equipment to travel longer distances.

New operating demands have also resulted from growth. For example, most recent development has occurred in the hill environments in the northern and western parts of the city. Requirements for snow clearance in these areas increases the cost of plowing service (in time, frequency and staff hours) and requires new collector street patterns to move maintenance vehicles more efficiently.

Other maintenance shop facility and central stores issues include space configuration and the interdependence of central stores procurements. 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. The removal of the utilities department and recycling addresses space needs that existed previously; however, the overall layout of the facility needs redesign to meet maintenance and central store needs.

While the street shop is adequate in site area, a new maintenance shop is needed to meet contemporary requirements. To this end, an association of RIDE Buses, UNK, the school district, the city, the hospital and the driving center completed a joint-use study. A proposed \$13 million joint maintenance facility would be managed by the city and may



require additional land area. The maintenance facility coalition is currently working to secure federal funding for the facility.

The city vehicle maintenance staff is critical to the city's public works and public safety operations. Budget issues have resulted in reductions of maintenance staff since 1973. However, the city's purchase of better quality heavy vehicles and equipment over the period has helped a smaller staff keep effectively maintain the vehicle fleet. Nevertheless, 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. General aviation comprises most traffic; since the original review of the airport in 1996, Great Lakes Aviation has become the commercial carrier for the airport. Recent improvements to the Kearney Municipal Airport include new fencing and gates, resurfacing of the main runway and taxiway with new markings, new signs, and a new slow blower and plow.

Airport staff has directed a dramatic conversion of the old Air Base into a nearly self-supporting facility. Largely revenues from crop farming and industrial land leases on airport land surrounding the facility have funded this transformation. These leases provide the airport with approximately \$1.3 million in revenue a year. 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, industrial site leases and crop rents on the remaining airport site help fund airport operations, and potentially surplus airport lands suffer from separation from existing industrial areas and relatively limited access and utility service. The land use concept of this plan recommends extensive industrial development west of Airport Road, featuring extended railroad spur service.

Important airport issues include:

- Retaining airport land leases as a permanent source of operating funds.
- Improving the airport road serving the terminal and adjacent industries, and establishing 56th Street as the primary airport entrance.
- Building a new terminal to support 10,000 passengers a year.
- Providing additional hangers within 10 to 15 years.
- Improving signage at Highway 30.
- Purchasing an easement off Runway 316 for a runway protection zone.
- Upgrading runway lighting.
- Developing a new airport rescue firefighting structure, potentially as part of a new terminal.

TABLE 6.1: Kearney Public School Enrollment

School	Location	Grades	Enrollment
Kearney High School	3610 6th Ave.	9-12	1,400
Horizon Middle School	915 West 35th Street	6-8	463
Sunrise Middle School	4611 Avenue N	6-8	539
Bryant Elementary	1611 Avenue C	K-5	192
Central Elementary	300 West 24th Street	K-5	247
Emerson Elementary	2705 Avenue E	K-5	243
Glenwood Elementary	8105 9th Avenue	K-5	135
Kenwood Elementary	1511 5th Avenue	K-5	245
Meadowlark Elementary	1010 East 53rd	K-5	280
Northeast Elementary	910 East 34th Street	K-5	305
Park Elementary	3000 7th Avenue	K-5	234
Windy Hills Elementary	4211 20th Avenue	K-5	253

Source: City of Kearney 2002

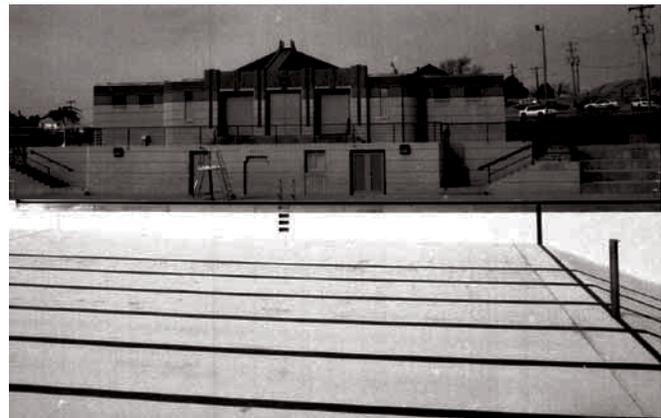


• Municipal Pool

Kearney’s two municipal pools are located in Centennial and Harmon Parks. Centennial Pool was constructed in 1977 and closed in 2001 with renovation completed in 2003. Harmon Pool was built in the 1930s and previously renovated in 1989. Harmon is in good condition but needs additional water amenities and play features. The existing water slide also requires rehabilitation. Renovation of the Centennial Pool will provide the city with two good facilities. but additional water amenities not included in the renovation of Centennial Pool should also be considered in the future.

• Meadowlark Hills Golf Course

Meadowlark Hills Golf Course is an 18-hole course located at 3300 30th Avenue. The facility opened in 1995 and includes a driving range, putting green, clubhouse and pro-shop, snack bar, irrigation, lessons, leagues and handicap carts. The course and buildings, which include the clubhouse, cart barn, and maintenance building, are in excellent condition. In order to expand the facilities ability to provide a better learning center the city should consider development of land to the north with additional par-3 holes.





The Kearney Plan

• *City of Kearney Cemetery*

The City of Kearney Cemetery is located at 4400 Avenue I and consists of 60 developed acres and an additional 30 acres for future expansion. At this location are two storage buildings, cemetery offices, a house for the cemetery supervisor, and a shop for the parks department. The city's tree and turf nurseries are also located at this site. The facility is also irrigated.

Overall, cemetery buildings and grounds are in good condition. As of 2003, the City is replacing all of the asphalt roads. Additional storage is needed for equipment. Future priorities include roads project completion, tree work on the grounds, a new pumping station, an update to the computerized irrigation system in the next five years, replacement of the ton truck in the next 5 to 10 years, new shingles on the house, and a new mausoleum.

• *Public Schools*

The Kearney Public Schools consist of nine elementary schools, two middle schools and one high school (see the list of schools and enrollment below). The buildings are all in good condition. The schools district along with support from the community is currently raising funds for a new performing arts center. The \$4.7 million plan includes restoration and expansion of the historic Central Elementary's existing theater. This project provides a unique opportunity for top quality performing arts center adjacent to the downtown.



In the coming years the districts most significant concern will be addressing the needs of the city's new growth areas. Continued growth, especially in the northeast quadrant of the city, could mean a need for expansion of existing sites or development of new sites.

The district is working to put together a steering committee that would include key community stakeholders to address these issues.

• *Parks Shop*

The city's parks shop and offices are located adjacent to Memorial Field and Apollo Park. The facility includes offices, a heated bay and break room and a separate chemical building. The facility is only five years old and in excellent condition. Satellite facilities are located at each park during the summer. There is also an additional shop building at Cottonmill Park and at the cemetery. There are storage areas at each of the parks ranging from one to two bays. The parks department provides its own maintenance crew with a staff of 7 fulltime employees. Overall the parks maintenance and storage facilities are in good condition and meeting the city's needs. As new park facilities are developed the system will need to be expanded.

• *Harmon Youth Center.*

The Harmon Youth Center is a 1951 building originally constructed at Kearney Airbase. The building is in poor condition and is scheduled to be replaced within five years. The new facility will include a catering kitchen and a large meeting room that can be divided into three rooms.

Public Facilities Priorities

Kearney generally enjoys excellent public facilities that provide the city with a strong service base. Still, some facility needs require attention. Based on the analysis, Kearney's highest public facility priorities include:

- ***A new City Maintenance Shop.*** The City has assembled a partnership of several agencies to develop a new maintenance facility. The city should continue to work with state, local and federal officials to secure funding for development of this facility.
- ***A new police firing range.*** The city should identify a location for a new firing range. The new training facility should be a cooperative effort between the City of Kearney and other regional law enforcement agencies, reducing the direct costs of each jurisdiction.
- ***Expanded vehicle impound, staging and parking for the Law Enforcement Center.*** The City should secure sites for parking and vehicle impound.
- ***A facility assessment of the City Vehicle and Street Maintenance Facility and Central Stores.*** The relocation of the Utilities Department and materials recovery facility helps the 15th Avenue and North Railroad Street location meet space requirements, but a functional reconfiguration will be necessary. This plan should be prepared in conjunction with the development of a new maintenance facility.
- ***Replacement of the Harmon Youth Center.*** The facility, located within Harmon Park, has severely deteriorated over the past 40 years of use. The building has served the city but needs to be replaced. The facility has been designed and construction should begin as soon as possible.





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 provide critical services and have a major impact on future development patterns. The system uses the city's topography, relying on gravity flows through the downhill swales and slopes of the city. A ridgeline bisects northern Kearney, creating two drainage basins - the Wood River basin to the north and the Platte River basin south of Kearney. Most of Kearney is situated in the Platte River basin, with gravity flows to the south and east. Flows in the level mid-town 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. Interceptor pipes in the system are typically at least 21 inches in diameter. The minimum size of the city's network of 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.



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, and then turns diagonally to the southeast toward the wastewater treatment plant. Recent sewer extensions have also included:

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- Service along the Kearney Archway (1st Street) corridor, serving the Archway and potentially serving adjacent development.
- Service into the southwestern part of the city, serving Yanney Park and surrounding areas. This sanitary sewer extends west along the 4th Street alignment to Kea West Road, then extending north along the west edge of Yanney Park to 11th Street. Extensions of this sewer west along 11th Street to 30th Avenue and north along 30th Avenue to the UP have been designed, but have not been built because of cost considerations.

The Wood River Watershed

Kearney's major sewer service challenges occur in the Wood River watershed. This is particularly difficult, because the city's primary market-driven growth direction is to the north. An inability to provide sewer service in this watershed will create pressure for development on septic systems, effectively blocking Kearney's ability to grow contigu-

ously. To address sewer service needs in the Wood River watershed, Kearney has taken several major steps:

- Completion of the 56th Street sewer. Flows north of the ridge line are directed by gravity north to 56th Street, where a force main and a series of lift stations directs wastewater to the Antelope Avenue. This system serves intensively developed residential, commercial, and mixed use areas along the growing 56th Street corridor. Some development has also occurred in a linear configuration along the north side of 56th Street; these projects lift wastewater to the 56th Street main. While this solution serves individual projects, it does not address regional sanitary sewer needs and limits Kearney's urban service area to a short distance north of 56th Street.
- Completion of a new line generally along the former Union Pacific grade northwest from 56th and Antelope Avenue to Avenue N. This is the first increment in an overall planned system to serve urban development in the Wood River watershed, and opens a development sector in the northeast part of the city.
- Completion of a sewer master plan for the Wood River watershed. This plan, prepared by Miller & Associates, defines Kearney's future urban service area, dividing the area into nine incremental subdistricts, each of which is served by a gravity flow interceptor. In the plan, the major interceptor sewer continues northwest from the current Avenue N terminus along the former UP grade to the Clearview subdivision near 2nd Avenue. It then turns southwest, crossing 2nd Avenue at the section line north of 56th Street (73rd Street). The economic challenge is that much of this system needs to be built in order to serve some development areas that experience the heaviest short-term demand. An inability to complete the system will cause landowners of these near-city properties to develop their land on individual wastewater systems, a serious underuse of property that will ultimately block Kearney's logical growth. Map 6-1 illustrates existing and proposed sewer lines that will be necessary to accommodate future growth in this watershed.

Other Sewer Expansions

Other regional sewers that remain on the city's agenda include:

- A network of local sewers serving the planned industrial and business park west of the airport. This system would include laterals that take wastewater east to an interceptor line that roughly parallels Cherry Avenue. The planned system continues south to the Union Pacific/US 30 corridor, where a lift station and force main would continue west to the Antelope Avenue interceptor.
- Continuation of the southwest sewer system along 11th Street and 30th Avenue.

In addition, the hills west and northwest of Kearney contain several rural estate subdivisions operating on septic systems.

Lift Stations

In some areas, the city's natural topography prevents natural gravity flows, and sanitary sewer lift stations are required. The city operates 16 such lift stations, including:





- Two lift stations to redirect flows from the Wood River watershed into the 56th Street Interceptor.
- 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.
- One lift station at 4th Street and 6th Avenue on an interceptor main serving the area south of 11th Street between 6th Avenue and Kea West.

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 sewer plant is a secondary treatment facility with trickling filters, constructed in 1972. A major renovation project was completed in 1998 and added aeration and improved headworks operation. The plant treats about 3.8 million 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 according to state requirements. The remainder of the sludge is land filled.

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 Center. 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 in 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 \$16.0 million reconstruction of the existing facility. The project improved 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. However, future development of the Cherry Avenue corridor includes sites that are relatively close to the plant. Development of this corridor and surrounding areas also will require the construction of the sewer network discussed earlier.

- **Growth Management and Sewer Construction.** Sewer system extensions to support future growth are clearly one of the city's primary infrastructure development challenges. 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. This study resulted in the construction of the 56th Street force main and interceptor sewer, generally including most areas south of 56th Street west to 30th Avenue in the city's urban service area. The city has begun the process of opening the Wood River watershed by completing the first increment of the comprehensive system north of 56th Street. Financing and implementing this system, necessary to support future development, is a major community priority. The financing system should include public action, while ultimately requiring development to finance the network that opens new areas for urban development. Other areas that will require extensions include the Cherry Avenue corridor and southwest growth areas.

Additionally, the city must ensure that sanitary sewer connections and lift stations that are constructed by private developers are adequately sized to provide for adequate capacity for future adjacent development.

Extension of the sewer system into the northwest, northeast and southwest has provided additional opportunities for future development. The city should work to guide development to those areas with existing service before additional extensions are made to the





TABLE 6.2: Wood River Watershed Development Subdistricts

Wood River Sub-District	Required Sewer Segments	Comments
1	A	Already built. Development should reimbursement public construction, recapitalizing interceptor sewer fund.
2	A,D,E	Early Priority
3	A,D,F	Early Priority
4	B	Area includes significant lateral runs to get to interceptor sewer.
5	A,B,C	This sector is relatively remote, but construction is necessary to serve the 56th Street corridor
6	A,B,C,G	Development requires completion of the 30-inch interceptor system
7	A,B,C,H	Probably a later development phase, permitting short-term "build-around": cluster development
8	A,B,C,H,J	Small subdistrict, more efficiently served by lift station to 56th Street
9	A,B,C,H,J	
10	A,B,C,H,J,K	Probably a later development phase, permitting short-term "build-around": cluster development

Source: City of Kearney 2002

sewer system. The city's policy of avoiding "leap-frog" developments that extend infrastructure to developments that are not contiguous to the city should be continued. This ensures the most cost effective and efficient extension of the city's infrastructure systems.

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. The NPPD Canal tailrace poses an obstacle to this extension.

Sanitary Sewer Expansion Program

Kearney should develop a program that develops sanitary interceptor sewers necessary to support community growth and prevent the possibility of developers or property owners developing close-in sites with subdivisions that utilize individual wastewater systems. The framework of this system is to:

- Establish a timetable for extension of increments of the Wood River watershed system. This relates to the development policies of the land use plan, granting owners in areas that will not receive near-term interceptor service rights to develop at least a portion of their property.

- Provide front-end public financing of the incremental interceptor sewer extensions.
- Calculate a benefit fee on an acreage or unit basis that development is charged to reimburse near-term public expenditures and to capitalize an interceptor fund for future extensions. This fee is calculated on the development yield of areas that are opened up by each sewer extension. The fee should be based on the cost of improvements that benefit each individual sub-district.



To illustrate an equitable benefit fee system, the Wood River watershed is divided into ten sub-districts and eleven sewer increments (See Map 6.2). Table 6.1 below indicates the sewer segments that benefit each individual sub-district. One concept would have development in these sub-districts contribute to the cost of building the segments that are necessary for their individual services.

An alternative concept would calculate the cost of the entire interceptor system, and establish a single benefit fee assessment for the entire watershed. This removes the very high cost of developing in the western part of the urban watershed that the strict application of benefit costs produces.

Other Sanitary Sewer System Priorities

Other 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 man-holes.
- ***Inflow inspection program.*** The City of Kearney should continue its efforts to prevent stormwater flows from entering the wastewater system.
- ***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. 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.
- encourage use of community wastewater system using contemporary technologies such as managed wetlands.

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 ridgeline 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 has completed a major comprehensive study of its stormwater drainage system. 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 ridgeline 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 since been completed. While these study areas include some storm sewers, a large portion of local stormwater is handled by surface drainage in street channels.

Avenue G roughly divides the Phase II area. 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 jogs 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 proceed 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 daylight into a paved channel south of the former Burlington Northern right-of-way.

Storm sewers sporadically serve Southeast Kearney, 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*

A detailed study of the Phase II drainage area has been completed and Phase III drainage area is in progress. 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. The diking effects of existing and former railroad rights-of-ways exacerbate these problems. 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 interrelated 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 area drains toward the 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 that 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 at about 56th and Central Avenue and are proposed 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 drainage-ways. 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.
- ***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. This process is being done on an incremental basis.
- ***Completion of the Phase III Storm Drainage System Analyses.*** This plan 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. This is currently being done along with establishing a GIS database of the system.

Water Supply

Kearney completed a comprehensive study of its water supply and distribution system in 1997 that was executed by CH2M Hill. 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. Fifteen wells at this site provide the bulk of Kearney's current water supply with six smaller wells scattered around the city that are used infrequently to supplement the wellfield on peak days. This field is located between the extended alignments of Antelope Avenue and Cherry Avenue. A 36-inch transmission line along 11th Street and a 30 inch transmission main along Cherry Avenue to 39th Street and Airport Road conducts water from the well field to the distribution system.

- *Major Storage*

A looped transmission system conducts water to Kearney's two major storage facilities. These include:

- A west water tower, providing 1.5 million gallon capacity, located near 30th Avenue and 39th Street.
- A 2.0 million gallon water tower completed in 2002 located at 8th Avenue and 48th 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, northwest of the city, and the Wood River corridor. The 1997 Water System Facility Plan recommended a northwest field.

- *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 received a credit from the state for natural filtration and can continue using this process in the near term.

- *System looping.* Main construction should be directed toward the looping of the major water supply system. Since the 1997 Kearney Plan was completed the only remaining area of concentration is the 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.

- *Wellfield protection.* The Kearney Unified Development Ordinance established a Wellfield Protection overlay zoning district that establishes specific performance standards in areas that can have a direct impact on the city's Platte River wellfields and the integrity of its water supply. The effectiveness of this new ordinance should be monitored, and the concept applied to other potential wellfield areas.



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 at 6711 West 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 Subtitle D 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 Kearney Plan

The 117 acre facility was developed at an initial construction cost of \$1.5 million. Additional funding is programmed as new cells are opened. An eight acre expansion was constructed in 1996 at a cost of \$852,000.

The site has a 30-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 landfill 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.

The City of Kearney and the Kearney Area Solid Waste Agency are in the process of relocating the recycling center. The new building will be located along East 39th Street with a projected opening in January 2004. The new facility was funded through assistance from a \$200,000 grant from the Environmental Trust and an additional \$250,000 grant for equipment.



CHAPTER SEVEN: KEARNEY GATEWAY

CONCEPTS FOR KEARNEY'S FRONT DOOR

The 1997 Kearney Plan included a general development policy for the Kearney Center district, the city's traditional downtown. In 2002, the City, in coordination with area businesses and stakeholders, completed a planning process that resulted in the Kearney Gateway Plan. This plan began as an effort to develop an updated, comprehensive master plan for Kearney Center. Downtown Kearney has traditionally been a strong retail district, buoyed by a central location in the city, excellent access from surrounding neighborhoods, a strong business community, and the market of the adjacent university. This allowed downtown to remain a strong district, despite the development of contemporary, auto-oriented retailing along 2nd Avenue generally north of 39th Street. During the 1980s, Kearney's downtown went through a successful streetscape and branding effort that has helped the district retain its vitality.

Kearney Center continues to be one of Nebraska's most vital central business districts. It successfully attracts new businesses, maintains its major anchors, and sustains significant new investment. During the Downtown planning process, it became evident that major redirection of the district was both unnecessary and inadvisable. In many ways, the key to the continued success of Downtown Kearney lay in its linkage to Kearney's front door – the 2nd Avenue interchange on Interstate 80.

The concept of a Kearney Gateway Plan emerged from this realization. Kearney Center and the business corridors between Downtown and Interstate 80 are all parts of a linked enterprise district whose continued prosperity depends on the prosperity and successful functioning of each part. The Gateway Plan considers a variety of issues, including the land use character of each part of the corridor, the nature of surrounding neighborhoods, the physical and economic environment, and the transportation network. The plan proposes a series of concepts that include branding issues, promotions and packaging, potential development projects, and urban design that, taken together over the long-term, can assure that the front door to Kearney communicates the vitality and distinctiveness of the city and works to the mutual benefit of local businesses.



The Scope of the Gateway Study Area

The Kearney Gateway study area includes the business corridors from the 2nd Avenue interchange with Interstate 80 to 25th Street, US Highway 30. The study area includes the Central and 2nd Avenue corridors. South of 11th Street, the study area also incorporates 3rd Avenue. Here, 3rd Avenue acts as a service road for 2nd Avenue, divided from the main highway by a major drainage corridor.



EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Transportation Context

Kearney Gateway derives its commercial character from the transportation function of its major streets. Second Avenue and Central Avenue, the two spines of the Gateway study area have distinct functions. Second Avenue (Nebraska Highway 10) is the city's principal north-south arterial. Central Avenue, on the other hand, classified as a minor arterial, is Kearney's community street, the traditional main street that before the coming of the interstate and the ascendancy of the multi-lane highway linked the north and south sides of town. Major east-west streets that link the corridors to surrounding neighborhoods cross Kearney Gateway's two transportation spines. These include arterials like 25th Street (US Highway 30) and 11th Street; and collectors including 8th, 16th, Railroad, and 22nd Streets.



Kearney Gateway

The Character of the Transportation Spines

In addition to filling different transportation functions, 2nd Avenue and Central Avenue have different sections and roadway design characteristics from each other and even along different segments of their own corridors. These characteristics are summarized below:

2nd Avenue

- Kearney's only continuous north-south arterial, extending south of Interstate 80 as Nebraska Highway 40 and north as Nebraska Highways 10 and 40.
- Four-lane divided facility throughout the study area, with various road sections.
- South of 11th Street, a controlled access "boulevard," with parallel service road on the east and parallel 3rd Avenue about 300 feet to the west serving as a service road. The area between 2nd and 3rd Avenues is a large open drainage corridor. Access in this segment is limited to Talmadge, 4th, 8th, and 11th Streets. These access points are all signalized with left turn facilities in the median. Stacking space between 2nd Avenue and the east service road is limited at intersections, and most inadequate at 11th Street.
- Urban four-lane section with a raised concrete median from 11th to 25th Streets. Most intersections have median breaks providing left-turn pockets. Exceptions are intersections that are close to the Union Pacific viaduct approaches. Signalized intersections are provided at 16th, 22nd, and 25th Streets. Unrestricted right-in, right-out access is provided between intersections throughout this segment.
- Crosses north channel of the Platte River north of Talmadge Street and crosses over Union Pacific main line over a grade-separated overpass.
- Serves as the central arterial for commercial development south of the overpass and forms the western edge of Kearney Center.

Central Avenue

- Serves as the local spine of the Gateway corridor, running parallel to 2nd Avenue, but providing continuous local access and slower speeds.



- New three-lane, 36-foot wide section with continuous left-turn lane south of 13th Street. As of 2002, upgrade to this section from a two-lane rural section is complete south of 11th Street. The segment from 11th to 13th Street is scheduled for future completion.
- Wide urban street from 13th to 18th Street, accommodating diagonal parking at Buffalo County Courthouse. Street includes a wide greenway setback and sidewalks.
- Brick-surfaced town center street with diagonal on-street parking from 18th to 25th Streets. Streetscape improvements, including lighting, corner nodes, landscaping, and street furniture, completed during the 1980s in the Kearney Center district, between Railroad Street and 25th Street.
- Includes a new bridge over the north channel of the Platte River.
- Crosses Union Pacific mainline at grade. Electronic signals have been installed recently at the crossing to improve safety and minimize sound impact of train horns.

Land Use

The Kearney Gateway study area displays a variety of land use patterns. These various patterns, indicated on the Gateway Land Use Map, suggest different character sub-districts, organized around use patterns and functions. These districts are summarized below:

2nd Avenue, I-80 to 11th Street

- The leading hospitality and conference center for central Nebraska. Lodging, restaurants, meeting and conferencing facilities, and visitor services dominate uses along this segment. A new car dealership is also a significant use in the segment, which also includes a large Nebraska Public Power District substation at Talmadge Street.
- Large-scale uses, with site design that reflects a strong orientation to automobile transportation. Sidewalks are located for most of the distance along the east service road from 4th to 11th Streets; and along segments of 3rd Avenue. However, pedestrian access is discontinuous.
- This segment represents the major entrance to the Archway area. Talmadge Street east of 2nd Avenue is designated "Archway Parkway;" traffic visiting the Archway is directed east on Talmadge, south on an improved segment of Central Avenue, and east along Archway Parkway (1st Street) to the monument, about 2.5 miles to the east. Adjacent uses at the 2nd and Talmadge entrance include restaurants and lodging on the north, the NPPD substation on the south.

2nd Avenue, 11th Street to Union Pacific Overpass

- Mixed land use pattern, characteristic of older, more established segment of a commercial strip or linear district.
- Relatively shallow pattern of commercial development, typically with commercial uses limited to one lot depth. This pattern produces a smaller-scale, strip

development pattern. Exceptions to the one lot depth rule are the 11th to 12th Street block; and the 16th to 17th Street block on the east side of the street, accommodating a large grocery and discount department store.

- Typical uses including smaller motel properties, primarily fast-food restaurants, used car sales lots, other auto services, and neighborhood service commercial. Some vestigial residential development remains, primarily on the east side of the street near 15th Street and north of 17th Street. Houses north of 17th Street are affected by the approaches to the Union Pacific viaduct.



Kearney Gateway

2nd Avenue, Union Pacific Overpass to 25th Street

- Edge of Kearney Center district, with larger scale uses generally served by self-contained parking.
- Industrial uses predominate along both sides of the railroad below the overpass. Parking, financial offices, and various commercial uses located north of the viaduct, with office and commercial uses at the 25th Street (Highway 30) intersection.
- West side of the street is residential in scale, including both housing and businesses located in converted residential buildings.



Central Avenue, Talmadge to 13th Street.

- At one time, included edge commercial and industrial uses characteristic of the edge of a small city and the back side of a major commercial and highway corridor. However, segment is going through a period of use upgrading, with the emergence of business park uses that combine office and industrial characteristics. Good building design and landscape standards are characteristic of these evolving uses.
- Upgrade of street is encouraging upgrading of land use profile.
- Lodging and visitor services have developed on the Talmadge Street edge of the segment.

Central Avenue, 13th to 17th Streets

- Mixed use urban street, combining civic, residential, industrial, recreational, and automotive uses.
- Largest-scale uses include Buffalo County Courthouse complex on the west side of the street between 14th and 16th Streets; and an auto repair/body shop operation on the east side between 15th and 16th Streets.
- Armory is a significant landmark use, located at 16th Street intersection.
- High-intensity uses with industrial character are expanding and becoming increasingly incompatible with the surrounding neighborhood.



The Kearney Plan

- Residential uses predominate between the two spines, along intervening 1st Avenue.

Central Avenue, 17th Street to the Union Pacific

- Small-scale Main Street district, including primarily single-story, masonry buildings.
- 17th to 18th Street block is a transitional block between the more residential, detached building scale of the street south of 17th Street, and the main street character of the district north of 18th Street.
- Typical uses in this segment are non-retail services, trade services, restaurants, and entertainment. A lumber yard has been a traditional part of the district, along with other wholesale and trade sales.
- District has identified and is marketing itself as Old Town Kearney, defined somewhat separately from the Kearney Center district to the north.



- Use character west of Central corridor is primarily industrial north of 18th Street because of railroad and railroad impact.

Central Avenue, Union Pacific to 25th Street

- Kearney Center district, the core street of the downtown district.
- Mixed use district with high building occupancy, and a variety of service, retail, entertainment, office, and civic uses. One of the state's best preserved traditional downtown districts. Typical building scale ranges from two to five stories.

- Scale changes somewhat approaching 25th Street. The Museum of Nebraska Art defines the north edge of the district. Automotive uses predominate along 25th Street between 1st and Central Avenues.

A Avenue, Union Pacific to 25th Street

- Uses characteristic of the parallel street of a "main street" district. Street definition of buildings is effective, but somewhat less strong than along the principal street.
- Civic uses, including City Hall, the City-County Law Enforcement Center, and the Kearney Children's Museum are significant uses along this street segment.
- Street includes a mix of substantial office and commercial uses, with some new residential development.

Neighborhood Contexts

The Kearney Gateway study area exists in the context of surrounding neighborhoods. In some cases, boundary conditions where uses change significant affect both the growth

and development of the Gateway and the condition of adjacent neighborhoods. This discussion considers the policy issues caused by the relationship between the Gateway corridors and these surrounding neighborhoods.



Kearney Gateway

West of the Corridor, South of 11th Street

- Uses neighboring the Gateway corridor on the west are primarily large-scale commercial and industrial uses. Residential development to the west begins north of 8th Street and west of 6th Avenue, and is only minimally affected by the Gateway corridor.
- The West Platte River Corridor Land Use Plan, discussed in Chapter Three, proposes mixed commercial and low-impact industrial uses south of 8th Street and west of 6th Avenue, with a buffer along the 8th Street residential edge. It also proposes conservation of the North Channel corridor, along with construction of the Cottonmill Trail along this corridor, completed in 2002. Gravel pit lakes adjacent to the lodging district and south of Talmadge are proposed for water-related recreation.

West of the Corridor, 11th Street to the Union Pacific

- This area has significant potential conflicts between strip development along the 2nd Avenue corridor and residential neighborhoods to the west.
- North of 12th Street, adjacent use is predominately residential. Expansion of commercial uses to the west affects the residential fabric of the east side of 3rd Avenue. In addition, site maintenance problems can create additional pressures. At present, most commercial development along the corridor is east of the alley between 2nd and 3rd Avenues.
- Land use policy should protect the integrity of residential areas to the west. Any rezoning or expansion of commercial uses along 2nd Avenue should incorporate excellent buffering and generous setbacks along 3rd Avenue; and should provide buffering and extensive protective landscaping and screening against directly adjacent houses.

West of the Corridor, North of the Union Pacific

- This area includes the Pioneer Park neighborhood, one of Kearney's most interesting and diverse traditional neighborhoods, featuring a combination of housing types and occupancies.
- Second Avenue forms a strong edge to the Kearney Center district. Commercial development on the west side of the highway is limited to date. Major issue is preservation of residential scale on the west side of 2nd Avenue. Office and limited commercial conversions may be acceptable, but must maintain residential scale.
- Central School may be converted to a significant community facility and performing arts and events center. Site area around the school building provides opportunities for parking and neighborhood open space. This development should be connected to downtown. A strong pedestrian crossing at 22nd Street is a logical connection.



East of Corridor, South of Talmadge Street

- This area is included in the Interstate Corridor Mixed Use District (ICMU). The district envisions future mixed use development, taking advantage of the Interstate 80, water features, and the entry corridor to the Archway.
- Interstate corridor is linked to the Gateway district along Talmadge, Central, and 1st Streets. The Interstate Corridor Plan (Chapter Three) envisions a traffic circle as a major oriented feature to direct traffic to the Archway and to create a terminus for the Talmadge Street access. This feature also would direct traffic leaving the Archway into Kearney Center and the Gateway corridor in general.

East of Corridor, Talmadge Street to 11th Street

- Mixed use commercial, industrial, and residential area south of 11th Street. Area south of 8th Street is predominately industrial.
- Most sites adjacent to the Gateway corridor are industrial or commercial; land use in gateway has minimal impact on surrounding areas.

East of Corridor, 11th Street to Union Pacific

- Residential uses predominate adjacent to the Gateway corridor in this segment. An elementary school and neighborhood park are located east of the corridor along 16th Street.
- 16th Street functions as a significant neighborhood collector.
- Expanding auto service and industrial character uses along the east side of Central Avenue are increasingly in conflict with neighboring residential areas. Some of these non-residential uses may be outgrowing sites in the Gateway corridor and may be more appropriately located in nearby industrial areas.
- Industrial uses predominate east of the Gateway along the Union Pacific.

East of Corridor, Union Pacific to 25th Street

- Residential and mixed use edge adjacent to A Avenue in Kearney Center, displaying fairly typical neighborhood land use pattern adjacent to a downtown district.
- Commercial corridor along 25th Street (US Highway 30), extending commercial uses farther to the east.
- Commercial expansion southward from 25th Street has a greater impact on the evolution of land uses in this segment than the Kearney Gateway corridor.

Urban Design Issues

The design and function of the Gateway district are extremely important to the role of the 2nd and Central Avenue corridors as front entrances to the city and the chief links between the Interstate and Kearney Center. This discussion identifies major design issues in the Gateway district, described from south to north, as a visitor would experience the sequence.

Interchange and Initial Entrance

Ramp Grade and NPPD Substation. Most frequent movement is the ramp from westbound I-80 to northbound 2nd Avenue. Ramp level is above the level of the adjacent grade. A large Nebraska Public Power District substation is located along this frontage. The substation is relatively well-screened from the south, but is exposed on the west and north.



Kearney Gateway

2nd and Talmadge. This intersection is the initial decision point for visitors to Kearney and the first signalized intersection after the Interstate 80 exit. The intersection is very large in scale, requiring pedestrians to negotiate two lanes of traffic, an extensive median, and left-turn lanes in order to cross 2nd Avenue. This is significant because of the large concentration of hotel and conferencing facilities on the southwest corner of 2nd and Talmadge. In addition, the Cottonmill Trail currently extends from the North Channel to its current terminus at the 2nd and Talmadge intersection.

Signage provides direction to the Archway along Talmadge Street and identifies Talmadge east of 2nd as "Archway Parkway."

Talmadge and Central. Talmadge between 2nd and Central is a relatively unattractive passage, bordered on the south by the unscreened NPPD substation. Talmadge terminates in a T-intersection at Central Avenue. Directional signage directs motorists to the Archway, but not to Kearney Center or other points north along Central Avenue. The Talmadge Street terminus is poorly defined – a traffic circle with a vertical component that could provide directional information that could improve this situation.



North Channel Crossings

Both 2nd and Central Avenue cross the North Channel of the Platte River between Talmadge and 4th Streets. The Second Avenue bridge lacks pedestrian access across the channel. The Cottonmill Trail will follow the North Channel under the 2nd Avenue bridge, turn south along the east side of 2nd Avenue, and continue on public right-of-way to Central and 1st Street (Archway Parkway), ultimately continuing eastward. This important regional trail should be connected to the Gateway corridors.

"Second Avenue Boulevard" and Reconstructed Central Avenue

Second Avenue "Boulevard." Second Avenue is a wide, limited access section south of 11th Street, conveying a sense of great spaciousness, despite its land use character as a commercial strip. Local service is provided by two parallel service roads. A block wide grass area and drainage flume separates 2nd and 3rd Avenue, acting as the west local service road, from the North Channel to 11th Street. Drainage flows southward into the North Channel. This area also includes a natural gas pumping station. The east frontage road is separated from 2nd Avenue by an approximately 40-foot wide grass strip. All business signage is located on the outer edges of the service roads.

Central Avenue. Between 2000 and 2002, Central Avenue south of 11th Street has been converted from a rural two-lane to an urban three-lane section, greatly improved the design quality of the street and encouraging significant development.



Pedestrian continuity. Sidewalks are not fully developed along the Gateway corridor. The most continuous links occur on the east side of the east service road south of 11th Street.

Stacking space and intersection design. Fourth, Eighth, and Eleventh Streets provide access to 2nd Avenue at signalized intersections. The service road alignment shifts to the east to maximize distance from the main line road; however, the service road intersections are still close to 2nd Avenue. The problem is most severe at 11th Street, designated as part of Kearney's inner beltway. The city is implementing plans to relocate the east service road to the 1st Avenue, remedying this problem.

Urban Street Segments

The "middle section" of 2nd Avenue. The section of 2nd Avenue presents a relatively hard landscape. The street is a four-lane divided section with a narrow raised median; left turn pockets are provided at each east-west street. Typically, a five-foot sidewalk is present on both sides of the street, typically set back about four feet from the back of the curb. Commercial land uses are developed on single lot depth parcels, and, in many cases, are developed or paved to the property line. On some east-west streets, commercial uses are encroaching on public right-of-way.



Central Avenue. The reconstructed Central Avenue section will continue to 13th Street. North of 13th, the street has an established urban section. Here, sidewalks are set back about 12 to 15 feet from the edge of the curb. At the courthouse, north of 15th Street, the street section provides diagonal parking on its west side. On the east side of Central, south of 16th Street, commercial and automotive uses encroach on public right-of-way.

2nd Avenue Viaduct. The approach to the 2nd Avenue viaduct over the Union Pacific mainline begins just north of 18th Street. A vacant site at 18th and 2nd Avenue marks the initial approach to this structure. A block of houses between 18th and 19th Streets face the side of this approach ramp. The viaduct has a narrow pedestrian walk on the east side.

Old Town. Between 17th and 18th Streets, the development pattern along Central Avenue transitions from a residential and civic scale to the main street scale of a traditional town center. North of 18th Street, brick paving and diagonal parking reinforces this pattern. The property line is defined largely by single-story commercial buildings. North of 19th Street, large-scale industrial buildings and outdoor storage characterize the railroad corridor toward the 2nd Avenue viaduct.

Railroad Corridor

The crossing. The Union Pacific mainline separates the two parts of Kearney's main street business district. Median construction and sidewalk development has improved the quality of the grade crossing at Central Avenue; however, it remains a barrier between the two districts. The previous streetscape development of Kearney Center does not extend south of the Union Pacific.

The immediate railroad corridor. The mainline of the Union Pacific is a major feature of the Gateway environment. North and South Railroad Street generally define the immediate corridor, and much of it is land that is owned by the UP. Some of the corridor includes

parking and railroad facilities; however, much of it is relatively undeveloped. Some landscape efforts have occurred on privately owned land along South Railroad Street.

Kearney Center

Streetscape and the Built Environment. Downtown Kearney is an extremely attractive district, punctuated by its signature broad, brick streets and effective streetscape treatment. The major north-south streets of the district have somewhat different characters. Central Avenue is a classical main street, with well-detailed, masonry buildings appropriate in scale with the width of the street. A Avenue, one block east, has a strong, but less defined and more mixed building character, typical of the secondary downtown street of a linear main street district. The built environment of 1st Street varies, from the secondary main street pattern south of 21st Street to a larger, more automobile-oriented scale on the north.

Downtown Entrance. The north approach of the 2nd Avenue viaduct reaches grade just south of 21st Street. Kearney Public Library's back façade and parking lot is highly visible from this approach. Because of the geometry of the approach, the 2nd Avenue median is not broken at 21st Street. The city recently purchased property on 21st Street just north of the parking lot to improve the appearance of the library and downtown entrance. An entry tower for Kearney Center was installed as part of the 1980s streetscape program at the 21st and 2nd Avenue intersection.

22nd Street crossing. Twenty-second Street is the primary entrance to the center of downtown from 2nd Avenue. The streetscape project extended downtown's thematic lighting to 2nd Avenue along 22nd. This intersection also represents the strongest pedestrian link across 2nd Avenue to the Pioneer Park neighborhood. The development of a performing arts center at Central School makes this crossing even more important.



Kearney Gateway





KEARNEY GATEWAY: BASIC DYNAMICS AND PREMISES

An analysis of the Kearney Gateway study area suggests the following basic conclusions and premises. These in turn guide the directions of the specific plan.

- **Kearney Gateway is an economically strong area.** All parts of the district display high business occupancy and function successfully for their specific purposes.
- **Second Avenue corridor south of 11th Street has become a major conferencing and hospitality district for the state.** Construction between 1990 and 2003 has added about 1,000 hotel rooms and resulted in major upgrades in convention and conferencing facilities. This, combined with its strategic location on Interstate 80 in the center of the state, has made Kearney the destination of choice for Nebraska conferences and conventions outside of the two metropolitan areas. Other associated actions, including the Archway, the new ice arena, and the successful positioning of Kearney as the headquarters of the sandhill crane migration, have made Kearney a major lodging, restaurant, and conferencing center.



- **Central Avenue corridor is emerging as a significant office and light industrial corridor south of 13th Street.** The improvement of the Central Avenue corridor has upgraded development and land use south of 13th Street. New, upgraded uses, generally characterized by higher business design standards, include office uses, combined office/industrial facilities, and commercial uses.
- **Kearney Center retains its traditional economic strength and business variety, and continues to generate new business starts and major investments.** In 2002, about 60% of all first floor occupancies include retail or food/entertainment uses, an extremely high percentage in comparison with other similar cities, and probably quite similar to Kearney's historic pattern. While most comparable cities have replaced their retail communities with offices and services to maintain building occupancy, Kearney has uniquely retained its retail base. This also generates a higher than typical demand for office uses on upper levels, again contrasting with a more typical pattern of high upper level vacancy.

- **The Old Town district along Central Avenue south of the railroad is identifying itself as a distinct district and experiencing an economic resurgence.** The district south of the railroad has successfully "branded" itself as Old Town, and has continued its traditional role as a center for trade services, while adding some restaurants and entertainment establishments.
- **The basic approach for planning in Kearney Gateway should be to reinforce strengths and strengthen weaknesses, rather than pursue major redevelopment or redirection.** Major redevelopment or reshaping of the vital Gateway area and its sub-districts is inadvisable – clearly the area is strong commercially and economically. The most appropriate overall policy is to secure a good business and physical environment without major tampering with a strong and vital entity – by identifying and strengthening what works and repairing what does not.

- **Strategies are related as much to marketing as to physical change – and even physical changes have marketing characteristics.** Business districts and development planning are often viewed from the perspective of physical projects – redevelopment, hardscape, trails, and other physical improvements – and these are certainly components of a comprehensive development strategy. Increasingly, particularly in economically strong areas like Kearney Gateway, appropriate strategies relate to viewing the area as a product that must continue to be successful. Thus, issues like the nature of the product that is offered, the advertising and promotion of this product, and the type of experience and message conveyed to customers become especially important.



Kearney Gateway





PRINCIPLES FOR KEARNEY GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT

The program for Kearney Gateway includes eleven general principles and overall policies, described below. These in turn guide the physical improvement program described in the next section. The basic principles of the Kearney Gateway Plan include:

- **THE GATEWAY BRAND**
- **IDENTIFIABLE SUBDISTRICTS**
- **MARKETING AND READING THE CITY**
- **CITY DESIGN ENHANCEMENTS**
- **REDEVELOPMENT ON SELECTED SITES**
- **CONNECTIONS AND DIRECTIONAL INFORMATION**
- **KINETIC AND ARRIVAL ENVIRONMENTS**
- **SAFE AND PLEASANT CIRCULATION FOR ALL MODES**
- **ECONOMIC REWARDS FOR DOWNTOWN BUILDING**
- **GREATER PERMEABILITY**
- **INTERPRETATION**
- **DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS**
- **IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM**

THE GATEWAY BRAND

KEARNEY GATEWAY SHOULD BE DEFINED AS A BRAND OFFERING A VARIETY OF GOODS, SERVICES, AND SETTINGS TO CUSTOMERS.

The process of developing business in a community should involve a “value-added” point of view. When items are sold as commodities, the potential for development is limited. When those commodities are processed or enhanced, the economic benefits of this added value resound through an economy. A district like Kearney Center works in much the same way. For example, if a traveler exits Interstate 80, buys fuel, and returns to the journey, the economic benefit of this action is extremely limited; Kearney is selling a single commodity. The economic development concept of the Archway follows a similar premise. If a customer visits the Archway and returns to the Interstate, again the benefit to the city is very limited; the value comes when that visit is linked to other retail and service providers in the city.

The concept of packaging or “branding” Kearney Gateway is derived from this value-added concept. The Gateway should transmit the message that a number of opportunities for experience and service exist beyond the purpose of the initial visit. Thus, the visitor to the Archway should also be directed to an attractive and active Downtown. A customer of an auto dealership should know that the linked district offers a variety of places to eat, and the guest at a hotel or participant at a conference should be aware of the variety of conveniently available goods and services that the unified district offers. Elements of this branding strategy include:

- *Common advertising theme and graphic, visually linking parts of the Gateway and used throughout the district to link its features.* The brand logo should be physically displayed throughout the district, as banners or medallions on lighting standards. The mark should convey thematic aspects of the Gateway concept. It should also appear in marketing materials and wayfinding or directional graphics.
- *Shared, district-wide marketing strategies, using print and Internet materials.* These include directories of services and signs and kiosks located at businesses in the

Gateway district. The Gateway directory should also be on a website and linked to the city's overall travel information system.

- *Organization of a Kearney Gateway board to establish overall marketing and management policies.* This provides a unified promotional and management body for the entire area, and will help to strengthen the concepts of cooperative promotion and policy development. Each segment of the Gateway can benefit from cross-referrals and, once again, the added value created by visits to multiple destinations. A Kearney Gateway board may evolve or be organized as a Business Improvement District (BID) board. BID's have the ability to assess non-residential property for public improvements, management, and promotions within business districts. Logical uses for a Gateway BID include promotional materials, maintenance, and some physical improvement projects.



Kearney Gateway

IDENTIFIABLE SUBDISTRICTS

WITHIN THE UNIFIED KEARNEY GATEWAY BRAND, DEFINE SUBDISTRICTS THAT HAVE SPECIFIC PRODUCT OFFERINGS, SPECIAL NICHEs, AND CHARACTER. CONSIDER GATEWAY AS A COLLECTION OF VALUABLE, DISTINCT, AND COMPLEMENTARY BUSINESS CENTERS.

The "value-added" concept of Kearney Gateway recommends a unified brand and promotional approach that links features and services together. But the Gateway district is made up of individual subcenters, each of which specializes in a specific role and has a different image. These individual business centers include:

- *Hospitality District:* This area, generally along 2nd Avenue from I-80 to 11th Street, should be marketed as the hospitality and conference center of mid-Nebraska and the place of choice to stay along Interstate 80. Its collection of large, full-service hotels and motels, eating places, and visitor services establish this niche. The Hospitality District also includes the city's Chamber office and visitor information center. The nearby arena and Archway reinforce the visitor attraction and service aspects of this center.
- *Middle 2nd:* The older commercial strip between 11th Street and the Union Pacific. This area provides some visitor and hospitality services, including older motel properties and restaurants, but also includes such neighborhood and community businesses as a major grocery store and discount retailer, and auto-oriented businesses.



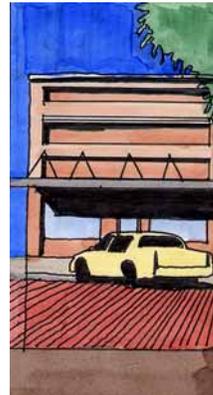
Hospitality



Middle 2nd



Kearney Center



Old Town



Central Avenue



- *The Central Avenue business corridor*, including the area from Talmadge to 17th Street. Land use and development changes, discussed earlier in this plan, provides a business address with increasing prestige and forms an improving entrance to historic Kearney. Its slower speeds and local traffic characteristics contrast with the highway environment of 2nd Avenue. The Central Avenue subcenter is also the center of Buffalo County government and can accommodate offices that are related to government operations, such as attorneys, title offices, and related uses. The historic Kearney Armory is a landmark of this district. The Central Avenue corridor also incorporates houses, especially in the segment from 13th to 16th Streets, offering a mixed-use quality to this subcenter.
- *Old Town*, Kearney's original downtown district, located between 17th Street and the railroad. This district should be marketed as providing a variety of unique services, products, and ethnic restaurants. Services range from an "old-fashioned" lumberyard to home repair, trade, and personal services. The district's straightforward one- and two-story commercial structures and brick street gives the area a distinctly western look, and some of the businesses in the area speak to this theme. The district also has a strong railroad heritage.
- *Kearney Center*, the principal downtown district, including A, Central, 1st, and 2nd Avenues from the railroad to 25th Street. Kearney Center is one of the nation's great town centers, a district that retains a timeless quality that combines traditional retailing with contemporary development. It includes a variety of specialty stores, general retailing, niche retailers such as furniture stores, city government, offices, restaurants and entertainment, and other services. The Museum of Nebraska Art defines the north edge of the district and reinforces its role as a cultural as well as commercial and civic center.

Each one of these subdistricts should have a distinct mark and image. This trademark should be incorporated into banners or street graphics that alternate with the Kearney Gateway trademark. The graphic should also be placed on a sign that marks the entrance to each subcenter. This reinforces the concept of a unified district with specific specializations. The image should be derived from some aspect of the character or theme of the subcenter. In addition to identifying different components and images for Kearney Gateway, the individual business centers may also be the organizing elements for future business improvement districts.

MARKETING AND READING THE CITY

THE GATEWAY DISTRICTS SHOULD HELP MARKET KEARNEY, APPEALING TO THE CITY'S VISUAL IMAGES AND SERVING AS THE GATEWAYS TO THE CITY.

Because the Gateway district is the front door to Kearney, it should also help to establish a physical image and impression of the city and express some of the community's signature features. Public art, sculpture, landscape, and graphic elements can help visitors read the city and identify some of the qualities that they will find in it. Some features and city themes that may be expressed by design elements in the Gateway corridors include the Platte River environment; the history of trails and westward emigration; the sandhill crane migrations; the university; recreation and signature parks like Harmon, Yanney, and Cottonmill; arts and culture; and others.

CITY DESIGN ENHANCEMENTS

THE DISTRICTS SHOULD IMPROVE THEIR PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE AND STREETScape, ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE THAT THE TRAVELER RECEIVES AND STRENGTHENING THE CITY'S IMAGE OF QUALITY.

Quality design features will provide visitors to the city with a good impression of community quality, and are also a source of pride to residents who experience them on a daily basis. But, importantly, good design also improves the experience of the Gateway district for visitors and residents who use it and its businesses on a regular basis. Because of the large number of visitors and event participants, many people experience this area at a pedestrian or slow speed scale, making design details particularly important. A district that invites visitors should respect its users by making itself pleasant and attractive.

There are qualities of the Gateway's design that already suggest a sense of quality. The wide public right-of-way and adjacent open space of 2nd Avenue south of 11th Street, along with underground utilities, give this entrance an uncluttered and spacious look. The brick streets of Old Town and Kearney Center are also defining elements, while the reconstruction of the southern segments of Central Avenue also improves the appearance of the street and adjacent development.

REDEVELOPMENT ON SELECTED SITES

REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON VACANT LAND OR OBSOLETE LAND USES. HOUSING IN THE GATEWAY DISTRICTS SHOULD BE UPGRADED AND SHOULD INCLUDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES.

Kearney Gateway is an economically strong area and does not require major redirection or large scale redevelopment projects. Yet, some parcels along the street should ultimately be redeveloped. Typically, redevelopment should not be forced, but should be a cooperative venture, especially when a local business or industry that has an impact on primary land uses may be relocated to a site that provides better opportunities for growth with fewer land use conflicts.

Major redevelopment focuses include:

- Vacant sites.
- Sites with obsolete uses (including mobile homes and marginal or deteriorated industries), that were economically more appropriate when the corridor received less intensive use and neighboring investment.
- Sites that are blighting influences on surrounding residential neighborhoods, or introduce land use conflicts.

An additional land use issue is raised by commercial expansion or redevelopment along the west side of 2nd Avenue between 11th Street and the Union Pacific. Any commercial expansion should define 3rd Avenue as the boundary between commercial and residential uses; provide a substantial buffer and no access along 3rd Avenue to protect residences across the street; and provide buffering to any adjacent residential property to the north and south along 3rd Avenue. Commercial development and site plans must be carefully evaluated and designed to avoid negative impacts on residential properties that could cause their deterioration and increase the pressure on them to change use.



Kearney Gateway



CONNECTIONS AND DIRECTIONAL INFORMATION

DESIGN ELEMENTS SHOULD CONNECT AND DIRECT VISITORS TO VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF GATEWAY AND TO OTHER FEATURES OF THE CITY.

Wayfinding and environmental graphics are becoming major issues in American cities that attract significant numbers of visitors from a larger region. Signs and billboards on private property provide users with a tremendous amount of information (and sometimes more than they can process) about the individual establishments along a street. Yet, we provide only sparse and often difficult to read information on how to get to major public destinations in cities. For Kearney Gateway to “illuminate” the city, it should include a system that directs visitors to key destinations clearly and attractively.

Directional graphics should typically be located at key decision points, where the visitor must decide which way to go. These decision points will typically be major intersections along 2nd and Central Avenues, and include:

- The base of the I-80 exit ramps.
- Talmadge Street/ Archway Parkway
- 8th Street
- 11th Street
- 16th Street
- 22nd Street
- 25th Street

A sign system should be developed that identifies major destinations, providing clear and continuous directions and trailblazers to points of interest. The directional signs should incorporate the Kearney Gateway trademark into their design. This system should form the basis of an overall, community-wide directional graphics system.

KINETIC AND ARRIVAL ENVIRONMENTS

SECOND AND CENTRAL AVENUES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS “KINETIC” ENVIRONMENTS, GENERALLY EXPERIENCED AT NORMAL DRIVING SPEEDS; WHILE OLD TOWN AND KEARNEY CENTER ARE “ARRIVAL” ENVIRONMENTS, EXPERIENCED AT SLOW SPEEDS OR ON FOOT. IN ARRIVAL ENVIRONMENTS, SPACES FOR PUBLIC GATHERING AND EVENTS SHOULD BE PROVIDED.

Different parts of the Gateway corridors will be experienced in different ways and at different speeds. Second Avenue will largely be experienced by cars moving at moderate speeds – 45 miles per hour south of 11th and 30 to 35 mph north of 11th Street. Features, including graphics and physical elements, should be designed appropriate to this speed. Much of Central will also be experienced by car, although at slower speeds. On the other hand, Old Town and Kearney Center are “arrival” environments, usually experienced at slower vehicular speeds or on foot. Here, features can be smaller in scale, with more intricate details. Arrival environments should also provide some accommodations for public gatherings and events. This is a challenge in Kearney’s downtown districts, because their linear nature does not provide a town square or commons.

SAFE AND PLEASANT CIRCULATION FOR ALL MODES

KEARNEY GATEWAY SHOULD OFFER A SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE TRANSPORTATION EXPERIENCE, WHETHER THEY ARE MOVING BY CAR OR BICYCLE, OR ON FOOT.

The Gateway district accommodates significant numbers of pedestrians, despite the fact that many of its key corridors are highly oriented to automobile traffic. Second Avenue south of 11th Street has significant pedestrian traffic, generated by hotels and restaurants along the corridor. In addition, the Cottonmill Trail, Kearney's signature recreational trail, crosses 2nd Avenue here. The trail currently ends at 2nd and Talmadge, and will ultimately extend under 2nd Avenue along the North Channel. Connecting this regionally important trail to 2nd Avenue businesses will be beneficial economically. Second Avenue north of 11th Street, while still an auto strip, serves pedestrians from adjacent neighborhoods. Central Avenue south of 13th Street lacks sidewalks, although some segments are being developed with new projects along this reconstructed street. North of 13th, Central is an urban street with parallel sidewalks and becomes a "main street" north of 18th Street. Central Avenue will also be the clearest bicycle access from the Cottonmill Trail to Kearney Center. Because of these roles, pedestrian and bicycle continuity is an important objective of the Kearney Gateway concept. Specific principles include:

- Providing continuous and clear pedestrian access without obstruction along 2nd Avenue, including access over the North Channel crossings.
- Safe and clearly marked pedestrian crossings at strategic points along 2nd Avenue.
- Direct links from the Cottonmill Trail to 2nd and Central Avenues.
- Designation of Central Avenue as a bicycle route to Kearney Center, including at the least share-the-road signage and installation of bicycle-safe sewer grates. Ultimately, a Central Avenue bikeway should include sidewalk trail development along the new section south of 13th Street; and development of bicycle lanes in the street north of 13th Street.



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ECONOMIC REWARDS FOR DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS

CITY POLICY SHOULD MAXIMIZE THE ECONOMIC YIELD OF DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF UPPER FLOOR DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES WHEN THEY PRESENT THEMSELVES.

Kearney Center has an excellent supply of historic town center buildings, many of which provide significant development opportunities. Upper-level occupancy in downtown's buildings is well above average for comparable city centers, the result of the predominance of retail, consumer service, and hospitality uses at street level. In downtowns with less retail success, office and service uses, traditionally housed on upper levels, move to street level, leaving upper levels vacant. In Kearney, many office uses remain on upper levels, above retail storefronts. Despite this, Kearney does have significant upper level underuse in major buildings and a relatively small amount of downtown residential



use. Taking advantage of Kearney's continuing strong markets by converting upper levels can increase the economic yield of downtown property.

The highest priority potential opportunities for adaptive redevelopment includes buildings that are rank as landmarks or buildings that strongly contribute to the historical or architectural significance of Downtown with upper-levels that are at least partially vacant or underused. These buildings represent major historic resources that may be threatened economically by low use. Other priorities include background buildings with upper level vacancy. Loss of these buildings would result in gaps on the street.

The city should institute policies and programs that encourage adaptive reuse of significant buildings. These policies include:

- Promoting listing of the downtown Kearney district on the National Register of Historic Places, making projects within the district eligible for the use of historic tax credits.
- Utilizing tax increment financing (TIF) on a project specific basis to assist with financing. TIF proceeds are generally adequate to finance about 10 to 15% of the development cost of a major adaptive reuse project.
- Using Section 42 housing tax credits and applying for CDBG/HOME funds when appropriate to increase equity funding for eligible housing developments.

GREATER PERMEABILITY

KEARNEY GATEWAY SHOULD REDUCE THE DIVIDING EFFECTS OF POTENTIAL BARRIERS SUCH AS ROADWAYS, THE RAILROAD, AND THE NORTH CHANNEL. FEATURE THESE ONE-TIME BARRIERS AS SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF THE GATEWAY ENVIRONMENT.

Several barriers, both natural and artificial, divide parts of the Gateway district from one another. These include:

- *The North Channel.* While not a wide divide, the 2nd Avenue bridge lacks a safe pedestrian path, dividing visitor-related businesses on the north and south sides of the channel.
- *The Union Pacific mainline.* This busy corridor separates Old Town and Kearney Center with a relatively dusty and incommensurate swath of land. In addition, the 2nd Avenue viaduct is difficult for pedestrians to negotiate and is a relatively unattractive crossing for vehicles as well.
- *2nd Avenue.* This busy corridor itself is a wide corridor that divides neighborhoods on its east and west sides, and creates further challenges to pedestrians in the area. This division is reinforced further by the large scale of 2nd Avenue south of 11th Street, the result of the wide drainage corridor between 2nd and 3rd Avenues.

Specific projects should reduce the impact of these corridors by:

- Providing safe and dedicated pedestrian crossings over the North Channel.

- Softening the crossing of the Union Pacific at Central Avenue, and making the railroad a key feature of the downtown district.
- Improving the visual experience of crossing the railroad over the 2nd Avenue viaduct, as well as pedestrian passage along it.
- Providing clear, negotiable crossings across 2nd Avenue, and using the drainage area south of 11th Street as an open space feature with pedestrian and bicycle access.



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INTERPRETATION

THE GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND INTERPRETATION TO TELL THE STORY OF THE COMMUNITY.

Major districts should tell the story of the city and its development. The two major historic areas within Kearney Gateway, Old Town and Kearney Center, have buildings and features that tell these stories. In addition, both districts have special features, such as brick street paving, that are intrinsic to their image and quality. Policies for interpretation should:

- Include graphics and interpretive installations in appropriate areas as streetscape enhancements.
- Preserve brick paving in the Old Town and Kearney Center districts.
- Interpret the Union Pacific Railroad and develop features that emphasize the railroad's role in the development of the city.

DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

THE CITY AND THE GATEWAY COMMUNITY OF INTEREST SHOULD PURSUE PROJECTS THAT ENHANCE THE AREA'S DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT AND ADDRESS THE PROGRAM'S OVERALL GOALS.

The Kearney Gateway Plan included a catalogue of potential projects and physical development directions. The scope of project development will follow from detailed deliberations and implementation planning. The discussion below presents project concepts that the City and owners and stakeholders in the Gateway districts should consider as they implement an overall program.



General District Wide Features

These features involve improvements or policies that should be implemented consistently throughout the Kearney Gateway district. They include:

- Streets and Sidewalks
- Lighting
- Environmental Graphics



Streets and Sidewalks

Second and Central Avenues, the major corridors of Kearney Gateway, includes three typical street sections:

- *2nd Avenue from interchange to 11th Street.* This existing street section should be maintained, with special features discussed below in the greenway setbacks. Continuous sidewalks should be provided along the east side of the east frontage road and the west side of 3rd Avenue.
- *2nd Avenue, 11th Street to Overpass.* This urban section of 2nd Avenue includes a 4-lane divided section with narrow concrete median and left-turn pockets. Some left turns may be consolidated, resulting in less frequent median breaks. The central part of median between left-turn pockets should include vertical lighting and graphic elements, featuring the Kearney Gateway and Middle Second logos. The urban section of 2nd Avenue north of 11th Street should provide a sidewalk with a minimum, obstruction free width of five feet sidewalk, set back at least three feet from the curb. The setback should utilize an attractive, contrasting paved surface such as stamped concrete for safety and visual articulation. Lighting should generally be located behind the setback to maintain clearance standards on the state highway.
- *Central Avenue.* The new section of Central Avenue is a new 36-foot wide section with 8 to 10-foot sidewalk setbacks. This section should include a “sidewalk trail” at least 8-feet in width on the west side of the street, connected to Cottonmill/Fort Kearny Trail. This trail should be signed as the primary route to Kearney Center from the Cottonmill Trail and east side of Archway area. A conventional sidewalk should be developed on the east side of the street.



North of 13th Street, Central Avenue’s section changes considerably. Between 13th and 15th, the street is approximately 34 to 36 feet wide, with deep sidewalk setbacks ranging from 16 to 20 feet on either side of the street. North of 15th Street, the west setback is replaced by diagonal parking. In this area, the street should include at a minimum share-the-road signage, indicating a shared vehicle/pedestrian route. Bicycle-safe grates should also be installed. Ideally, the street section should be modified to include striped bicycle lanes, requiring a minimum curb-to-curb width of 46 feet (maintaining parallel parking on both sides of the street). The bicycle lane would be located behind diagonal parking stalls north of 15th Street.

Lighting

Current lighting in the Gateway districts uses standard “cobra-head” sodium and mercury vapor lighting standards. These lights provide adequate functional illumination levels. However, lighting can be an effective way of establishing themes and linkages, identifying the primary Gateway corridors as distinctive places and directing visitors along specific routes. Kearney’s new Unified Development Ordinance also establishes new lighting requirements designed to reduce glare and deliver more lighting downward to the ground surface.

To these ends, the Kearney Gateway district should include a gradual re-lamping program, providing good lighting that reinforces the themes of Kearney's front door, while remaining consistent with Kearney's new ordinance requirements. The program should include:



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- Gradual replacement of cobra-head fixtures with sharp cut-off lamps for ambient roadway lighting along major corridors.
- Complementing the roadway lights with a lower-scale, thematic lamp that establishes consistent linkages and establishes pedestrian level lighting, consistent with Kearney's new dark sky standards. Corridors that should be addressed include:
 - 2nd Avenue, with the hybrid lighting concept.
 - Central Avenue, with the hybrid concept in the new section south of 13th Street, and lower level lighting in the residential/mixed use segment north of 13th Street.
 - Talmadge Street, using the hybrid concept from 2nd Avenue to Central Avenue.
 - 11th Street, using the hybrid concept from 2nd Avenue to Central Avenue
 - 16th Street, with lower-level lighting between 2nd Avenue and Central Avenue.
- Maintaining the current lighting in Kearney Center, and extension of these thematic lights south along Central Avenue at least to 17th Street. These lamps may be utilized along Central Avenue through the mixed use segment south to 13th Street.

Environmental Graphics

The Gateway district is both a collection of major business districts and the city's front door. Consistent with the policy principle of CONNECTIONS AND DIRECTIONAL INFORMATION, the Gateway should provide directions that link this front door to other community features and attractions. An environmental graphics program, designed to implement this principle, includes:

- A comprehensive directional graphics program to major community features, both in and out of Gateway corridor. The sign system should incorporate a Kearney Gateway logo. Signs are located at major decision points – locations at which motorists must make a major directional decision.
- A Gateway graphics system identifying each of the five sub-districts and the overall Gateway district with their respective special logos. The plan envisions alternating the sub-district logos with the overall Kearney Gateway logo, displayed on banners or medallions using lighting standards.
- Sub-district entrance signs, incorporating the sub-district logo and located at the entrances to each sub-district.
- Parking directional signs in Kearney Center.
- Other features noted below.



Potential Projects by Segment

The Kearney Gateway Plan includes a number of specific projects and concepts that fulfill the overall principles described above. The following presents these projects by segment and are indicated in the Kearney Gateway Master Plan map.

Interstate 80 Interchange to North Channel Bridge.

- *Landscape/flower bed treatments on northeast quadrant of interchange.* An attractive and colorful landscape treatment would provide a strong initial entrance into the city. This should be paired with a complementary treatment for the east-bound ramp into Kearney from the interstate.
- *Improved screening of Nebraska Public Power District substation, with primary attention to the north and east sides.* The substation is relatively well screened by trees on its southern face, but is open on its north and east exposures. These are important exposures, given the routing of Archway-bound traffic from 2nd Avenue to Talmadge, and the potential link of the Archway to Kearney Center along Central Avenue.
- *Cottonmill/Fort Kearny Trail extension from the North Channel south along 2nd Avenue and parallel to the interchange to Central and Archway Parkway.* The Cottonmill Trail should provide a link to Central Avenue. A grade separation for the trail under 2nd Avenue is also vitally important for safe use of what will be one of the state's most significant recreational trails.
- *Defined crosswalk at 2nd and Talmadge, using stamped concrete or contrasting paver surface.* This is necessary because of pedestrian traffic across this wide intersection, which includes an entrance to the Cottonmill Trail network. A defined crosswalk will also help to slow traffic coming off the Interstate.
- *A major vertical and directional entrance feature on the northeast corner of 2nd and Talmadge.* This helps to reinforce the sense of entry into Kearney from the high-speed interstate and highway environment, and defines a key decision point that directs visitors to the Archway and the Old Town/Kearney Center subdistricts.
- *Regular linear landscaping and special lights on Talmadge (Archway Parkway) between 2nd and Central Avenues.* An attractive treatment of this entrance block of Talmadge creates a strong connection between the highway and the Central Avenue/Archway corridors.
- *Traffic circle at Central and Talmadge T-intersection, with a vertical directional/design feature in the circle.* The traffic circle concept establishes a needed visual terminus to the Talmadge Street connector between 2nd and Central Avenues. The circle and its vertical element would also play a vital directional information function, leading Archway visitors to their destination and directing Archway visitors to the downtown districts as they return to the west.
- *Trail bridges on both sides of 2nd Avenue, linking with the Cottonmill Trail along the south bank of the creek.* This would connect the Cottonmill Trail safely to side-

walks and businesses on either side of 2nd Avenue, and provide safe accommodations for pedestrians and bicycles along 2nd Avenue.

North Channel to 11th Street

- *Construction of a wetlands in the drainage preserve between 2nd and 3rd Avenues.* A constructed wetlands here would provide a major thematic feature and, in the long run, would require less maintenance than the current lawn area. The wetlands project would also include a trail winding through the preserve north to 11th Street and a water feature with a fountain at the 11th Street edge. This water feature could have the additional benefit of providing some level of stormwater retention to control downstream flows.
- *A major public art/environmental graphic installation between 4th and 8th Streets in the greenway between the 2nd Avenue main line and the frontage road.* This installation could consist of vertical elements, topped with icons that reflect Kearney's themes and features.
- *Realignment of the 2nd Avenue frontage road to align with 1st Avenue at 11th Street.* This realignment is in the city's short-term street plan.
- *Continuation of a sidewalk/trail and landscaping along Central Avenue.* The Central Avenue improvement from Talmadge to 11th has established the basic section of the street.
- *Widening and median development of 11th Street from 3rd to Central.* The median should include an opportunity for a vertical graphic, possibly mounted to a lighting standards in the median.
- *Street landscaping of 11th Street.*



Kearney Gateway



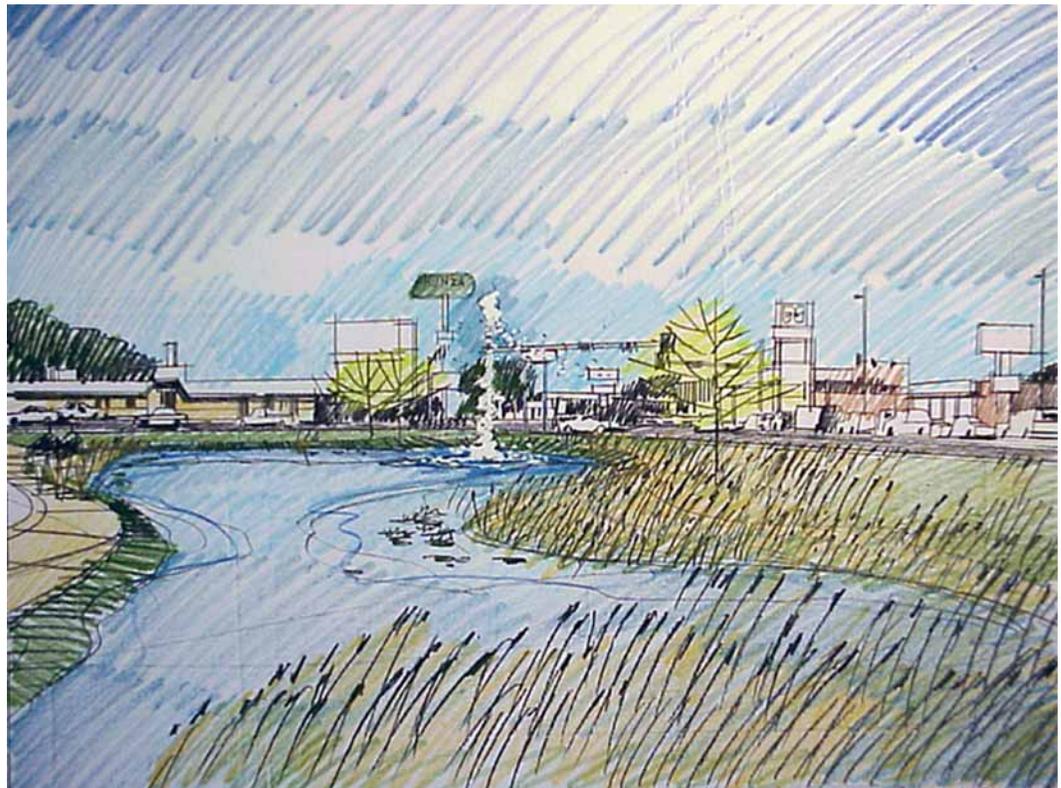
Concept for enhancement of Archway Parkway (Talmadge Street) east of 2nd Avenue.



- *Defined crosswalk across 2nd Avenue at 4th, 8th, and 11th Streets.* This treatment is similar to that proposed at the Talmadge intersection.
- *Office development on a vacant site at 4th and Central.* A potential project on this site can accommodate up to 24,000 square feet of office space on one level.

11th Street to Union Pacific Railroad

- *Development of an improved 2nd Avenue, using the standard block section discussed above.* This section includes:
 - Redesigned medians with Gateway/Middle Second feature in the center of the median.
 - Reclaimed right-of-way encroachments. In some cases, neighboring private uses have crept over the right-of-way line, blocking pedestrian access.
 - Continuous sidewalks with stamped concrete or other contrasting pavement along curb.
 - Possible closings of some median breaks. This can provide both aesthetic and safety improvements, but must take the access concerns of neighboring businesses and residential areas into account.
- *Consolidations or reductions in width where possible of drive accesses on 2nd Avenue.* In many cases, continuous or overly wide curb cuts affect both the appearance of the street and pedestrian safety. Narrowing of access points can also provide better functioning parking areas by channeling traffic more effectively.



Concept for a constructed wetlands and water feature between 2nd and 3rd Avenues south of 11th Street.



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Art columns, themed around special attributes of Kearney, proposed along 2nd Avenue.

- *Strategic landscaping of unused paved areas of commercial uses along 2nd Avenue.* Curb cut consolidations can provide opportunities for landscaping. In addition, some sites have excessive paving, with hard surfacing developed by default to avoid the cost and ongoing maintenance of landscaped areas. New landscaping may be maintained on a common area basis through a business improvement district.
- *Packaging and redevelopment of residential remnants or vacant sites along 2nd Avenue.* Second Avenue's traffic volumes and surrounding use patterns make continued residential uses difficult in this stretch of the corridor. Remnant residential sites could be converted to commercial or office uses. Generally, buildings should be sited along the street frontage with parking behind. This arrangement places most parking accesses at the alley and allows parking and landscaping to buffer residential uses. It also produces a more attractive and pedestrian-scaled street frontage.
- *Implementing a Second Avenue Overpass renewal project, including relighting, improvement of walkway, and development of overlooks over the tracks.* This four-lane overpass is a key entrance into Kearney Center and links the north and south parts of town on the city's busiest street. While the basic structure of the overpass is probably sound, its unique role as a connector can be strengthened by a renewal project that improves both lighting and pedestrian accommodations.
- *Multifamily residential redevelopment of trailer court north of 11th between 1st Avenue and Central and on vacant site north of 11th and east of Central.* The plan recommends reuse as a contemporary, standard affordable housing development. New development can provide up to 48 units in a two-level, townhouse configuration.



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Improved lighting, graphics, and median improvements proposed for 2nd Avenue between 11th Street and the Union Pacific viaduct.



- *Residential redevelopment of vacant site on A Avenue north and south of 15th Street. Redevelopment provides single-family attached homes.*
- *Relocation of industrial and commercial uses on the east side of Central Avenue between 15th and 16th Streets to an industrial location and redevelopment of site north and south of 16th Street along Central Avenue with a residential village, including single-family attached homes. An industrial site would provide these growing uses with room to expand. Any redevelopment should be done voluntarily with the cooperation of the business owners, but could provide benefits to both the city and the existing businesses.*
- *Landscaping and lighting of 16th Street from 2nd Avenue to Central Avenue as an entrance street to the Old Town part of the Gateway district. This street is the one signalized intersection along 2nd Avenue between 11th Street and the viaduct, and provides direct access to the Buffalo County Courthouse, an important regional destination.*
- *Acquisition of property north of the Armory at 17th Street and development as parking for an Armory adaptive reuse project and the courthouse. The Armory, one of Central Avenue's major landmarks, provides an important opportunity for adaptive reuse. Development of this underused site for parking can support reuse of the Armory and also provide parking needed by the courthouse and Old Town district.*
- *Street landscaping of Central Avenue between 11th and 17th Streets. This stretch of Central Avenue should ultimately include striped bicycle lanes, to provide a direct bikeway connection between the Cottonmill Trail and the facilities that it serves, and Kearney's two downtown sub-districts.*
- *Continuation of the Kearney Center streetscape design in the Old Town part of the district from the railroad to 17th Street. Treatment includes landscaped corner nodes,*



Kearney Gateway

Improved lighting, railings, pedestrian features, overlooks, and planters could help make the viaduct a true gateway to Downtown Kearney.

lighting, thematic graphics or medallions reflecting the Old Town mark, street furniture, and defined crosswalks. Gateway features should be used to define the boundaries of Old Town at the railroad and 16th Street.

- *A Railroad Park on the south side of the Union Pacific on the east side of Central Avenue.* The Railroad Park provides opportunities for observing rail operations and learning about Kearney's history with the UP. Some efforts have already been made to soften the railroad right-of-way with landscaping on the north side of South Railroad Street.
- *Redevelopment of sites backing up to 2nd Avenue off 1st Avenue between 17th and 19th Streets.* These sites currently include houses in relatively poor condition. The area could be a new subdivision of affordable homes. A recommended subdivision plan provides affordable home sites and a central green space on line with 18th Street.

Kearney Center

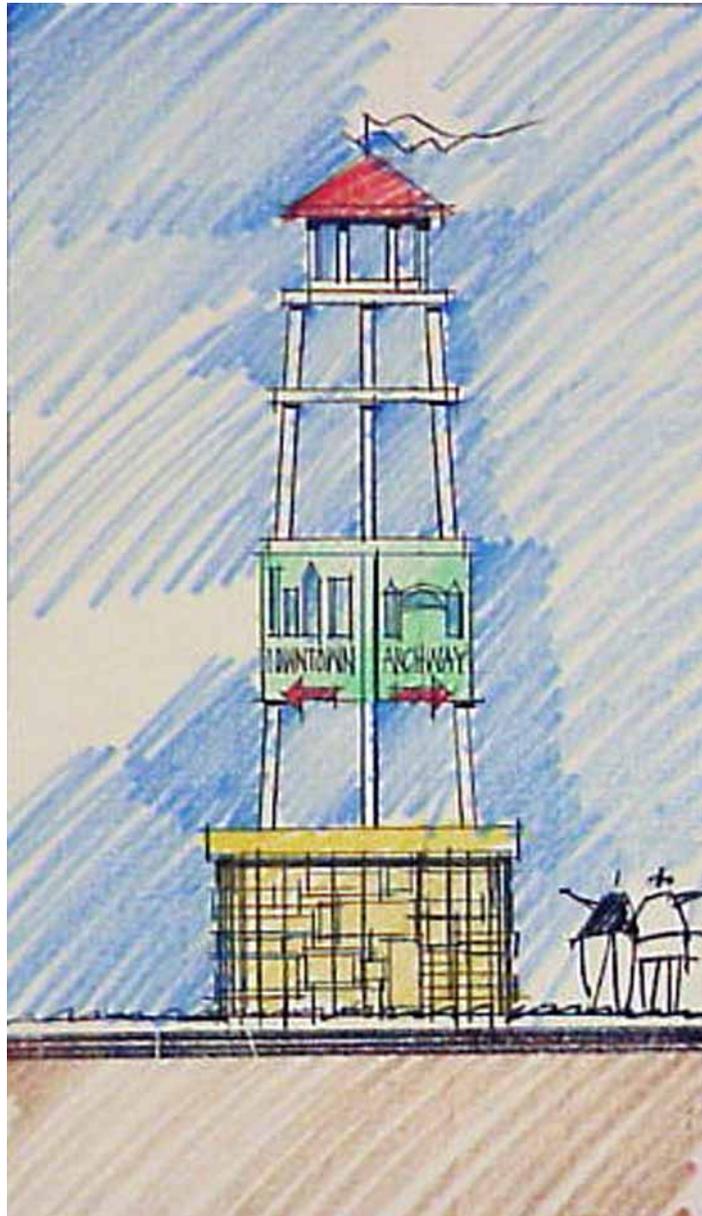
- *Developing a Library Park at 21st and 2nd Avenue, along with improvement of the Kearney Public Library's existing parking lot.* During 2001, the city acquired property north of the library lot to develop a new entrance and green area at this strategic location in Downtown. It also provides one of the few available opportunities for public "square" development in Kearney Center. This project includes:
 - Removing parking from south side of 21st Street, relocating the curb radius to the north.
 - Developing an entrance park on the north edge of the parking lot, with frontage along 21st Street.



The Kearney Plan

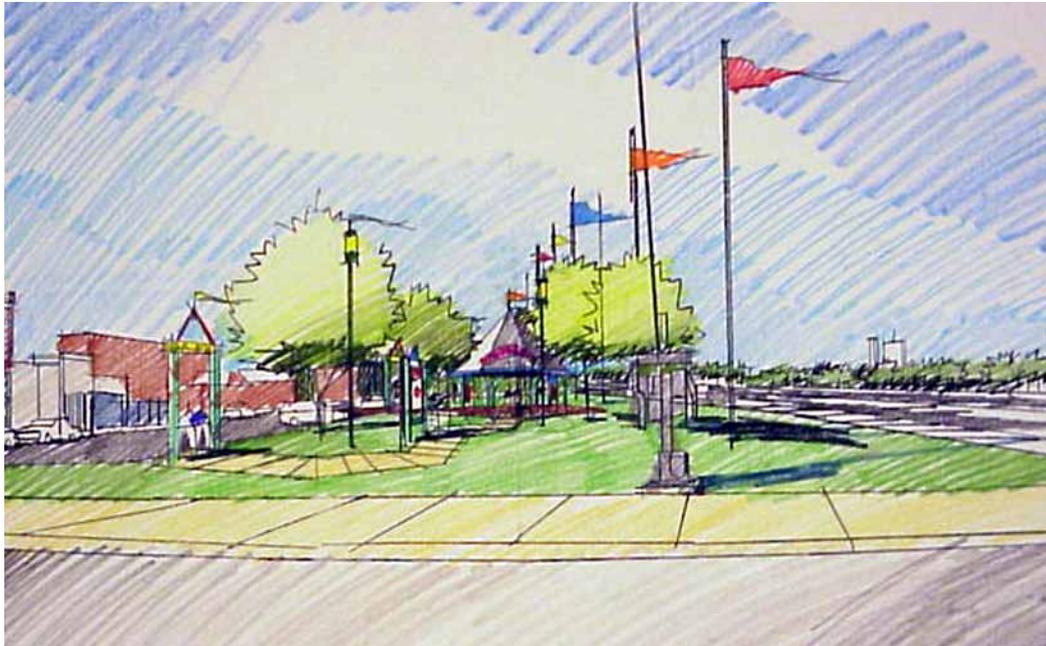
- Redesigning the parking lot to provide additional landscaping and more convenient access from cars to the library's entrance.
- Replacement of the existing Kearney Center tower with a new, more contemporary vertical feature.

- A *Railroad Park North*, providing landscaping, observation, and interpretive features on either side of Central Avenue north of the Union Pacific. This, along with a similar feature on the south side of the tracks, is designed to help unite Kearney Center and Old Town. The Railroad Park is designed to both celebrate the railroad and soften its impact on Downtown. The Railroad Park North development should also include landscaping of the railroad corridor along North Railroad Street.
- Residential redevelopment of industrial and deteriorated residential properties north of North Railroad Street between B and C Avenues. This redevelopment site also provides a terminus for 21st Street. The site could accommodate new, moderate density multi-family development, reinforcing the residential component of the Kearney Gateway district.



- Development of 21st Street from the Library Park to B Avenue as a "festival" street, capable of being converted into an auto-free community square for special downtown events. Kearney Center lacks a public square – a base for events and a central commons open for informal public use and enjoyment. Development of 21st Street as a festival street, a street that normally remains open but is designed for closure during special events, can help to address this issue. The festival street design may include special bollards, lights, graphics, and electrical service. This street is ideal for festival street designation, because it provides right-in, right-out access only at 2nd Avenue and extends east only to B Avenue, meaning that temporary closings of portions of the street will have little effect on traffic flow. In addition, 21st Street is adjacent to the proposed Library Park, incorporating that

Gateway Tower, proposed for a roundabout at Archway Parkway and Central Avenue.



Kearney Gateway

North Railroad Park, an interpretive park proposed for the area between North Railroad Street and the Union Pacific tracks on the south edge of Kearney Center.

planned open space and its downtown entry feature into the design of specific events.

- *Creating a program to finance adaptive residential reuse of strategic buildings.* Financing techniques include tax increment financing, CDBG/HOME funds for low and moderate-income upper level housing development, and historic and Section 42 tax credits. Priority buildings should have high historical and architectural value and low upper level utilization. As part of this program, the city should pursue listing of the Kearney Center district on the National Register of



Library Park, including a new Kearney Center entrance tower.



Historic Places, making projects in the area eligible for the use of historic tax credits.

- Replacement of the Kearney Gateway tower at 25th and Central Avenue. A new entrance feature should be consistent in design with one developed for the Library Park at 21st Street and 2nd Avenue.

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

THE KEARNEY GATEWAY PROGRAM REQUIRES AN EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE THAT INCLUDES ALL OF THE AREA'S SUB-DISTRICTS.

Kearney Gateway presents an ambitious, long-term program for the development of the city's front door. In many ways, the plan is a catalogue of possibilities, describing concepts that can be implemented over time as resources, interest, and opportunities develop. Yet, the plan includes fundamental priorities that should be put in place to assure that momentum continues. This discussion considers the general order of projects, and describes some of the funding methods available for implementation.

Initial Steps: Organization and Branding

The Kearney Gateway effort should begin with relatively low capital initiatives, designed to build momentum, common identification, and the capability to push for the plan's more difficult and expensive concepts. These initial steps include:

- *Organizing a Kearney Gateway Partnership.* This partnership, which may be incorporated, is an overall organizing and cooperative body to encourage businesses and property owners in the five sub-districts to think of Gateway as a unified commercial area and development opportunity. The partnership board should include representatives of all five areas and should be the coordinating body for future joint efforts. Its responsibilities should include joint marketing, branding, and development of annual programs for strategic accomplishments. The partnership will ultimately be charged with defining priorities and coordinating the overall implementation of the Gateway concept.
- *Considering creation of Business Improvement Districts.* BID's can be the implementing devices of the Gateway Partnership, providing funding sources that can be used for management, promotion, maintenance, and some capital development in the area. The creation of districts should be managed by the partnership and businesses within individual sub-districts. The most flexible organization would involve creation of an overall BID for Kearney Gateway, responsible for overall marketing and management, with individual BID's in each sub-district, designed to meet the specific needs of each.
- *Implementation of branding and graphics programs.* These efforts involve the adoption of an overall Gateway brand, related but distinctive sub-district brands, and implementation of the identification and directional graphics programs. These low-capital programs can cement public identification of the Gateway district, help the Gateway corridors channel visitors to all parts of the city, and strengthen the identity and distinctiveness of individual areas.



CHAPTER EIGHT: 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.

Preserving Kearney's existing housing stock and neighborhoods and accommodating future housing needs are vital to the city's future. The city's existing housing supply represents its single largest cumulative capital investment. This chapter considers housing and neighborhood conditions and considers efforts to improve housing and neighborhood quality of life.

This chapter also 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.

GOALS

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. 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 seek-



ing to better their own housing situations. Kearney must work to meet the needs of all in order to prosper.

■ BUILD ENVIRONMENTS THAT ALLOW PEOPLE FROM ALL PARTS OF THE CITY TO PARTICIPATE IN ITS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.

Planning and city improvement are as much about people participating in decision making as about physical improvements. Neighborhoods that are strong 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 over the past 20 years. Kearney has added over 3,000 dwelling units in the past 20 years, the majority of which were constructed in the 1990s. These units are almost split evenly between owner and renter occupied units. Over the past 20 years the overall number of vacant units decreased by 35. After the city's vacancy rate reached a very low 4.3% vacancy rate in 1990, new development during the 1990s produced a nearly optimal 5% vacancy rate by 2000. Between 1980 and 2000 the city's median home value increased by over 97% while the median contract rent increased by over 190%. Most of these increases occurred during the economically robust 1990s.

Table 8-2 illustrates the composition of Kearney's housing stock, as reported in the 1990 and 2000 Censuses. In 1990 more than 12% of Kearney's housing units were mobile home units, by 2000 this had decreased to almost 9%. An increase of 637 multi-family units means they now account for 30% of all units. Kearney experienced a decrease in the total number of 3-4 unit structures and mobile home units during the 1990s and saw the most significant increase in single-family attached units.

Housing Values and Rental Rates in Kearney

Housing values increased significantly in Kearney during the 1980s and 90s. Most of this increase occurred during the 1990s when the median home value increased by 74% as opposed to 13% in the 1980s. Of the comparable communities in Table 8-3 Kearney experienced the largest increase in home value in the 1990s, while in the



TABLE 8.1: Changes in Key Housing Occupancy Indicators, 1980-2000

	1980	1990	2000	Change 1980-00	Change 1990-00	% Change 1980-00	% Change 1990-00
Total Housing Units	8,070.0	9,372.0	11,099.0	3,029	1,727	37.53%	18.43%
Owner Occupied Units	4,411.0	4,971.0	5,955.0	1,544	984	35.00%	19.79%
% Owner Occupied	54.7	53.0	53.7	-1.0	0.7		
Renter Occupied Units	3,074.0	4,002.0	4,594.0	1,520	592	149.45%	14.79%
% Renter Occupied	38.1	42.7	41.4	3.3	-1.3		
Vacant Units	585.0	399.0	550.0	-35	151	94.02%	37.84%
Vacancy Rate	7.2	4.3	5.0	-2.2	0.7		
Median Value	\$48,000	\$54,000	\$94,700	\$46,700	\$40,700	97.29%	75.37%
Median Contract Rent	\$175	\$273	\$509	\$334	\$236	190.86%	86.45%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000



TABLE 8.2: Composition of Kearney's Housing Stock by Building Type, 1990-2000

Number of Units in Structure	1990 All Units	2000 All Units	1990 Occupied Units Only	2000 Occupied Units Only	% Change All Units	% Change Occupied Units
1-Family Detached	5,399	6,303	5,247	6,075	16.74%	15.78%
1-Family Attached/Other	219	431	213	382	96.80%	79.34%
2-Unit	641	715	599	677	11.54%	13.02%
3-4 Units	686	681	639	619	-0.73%	-3.13%
Over 5 Units	1,341	1,909	1,249	1,813	42.36%	45.16%
Mobile Home Units	1,086	973	1,026	905	-10.41%	-11.79%
Total Units	9,372	11,012	8,973	10,471	17.50%	16.69%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000

TABLE 8-3: Comparative Housing Value Trends: Kearney and Other Communities

	Median Home Value				
	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1980-90	% Change 1990-00
Kearney	48,000	54,400	94,700	13.3%	74.1%
Grand Island	41,000	47,600	82,500	16.1%	73.3%
Hastings	41,300	44,200	74,900	7.0%	69.5%
Columbus	45,250	52,800	80,300	16.7%	52.1%
Norfolk	42,100	51,500	83,000	22.3%	61.2%
	Median Contract Rent				
	1980	1990	2000	% Change 1980-90	% Change 1990-00
Kearney	175	273	426	56.0%	56.0%
Grand Island	177	256	380	44.6%	48.4%
Hastings	158	252	368	59.5%	46.0%
Columbus	170	259	375	52.4%	44.8%
Norfolk	177	256	368	44.6%	43.8%

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000

1980s the city's increase was second lowest. Kearney's contract rent was also the highest among the comparable cities. Median contract rents experienced a more steady increase over the past 20 years, increasing by 56% each decade.

TABLE 8.4: Residential construction Permits for Kearney, 1990-2000

Year	Number of Single-Family Units	Number of Multi-Family Units	Total Number of Units
2002	124	63	187
2001	116	44	160
2000	130	63	193
1999	102	160	262
1998	105	165	270
1997	93	70	163
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
Total	1,484	1,487	2,971

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000



Construction Activity in Kearney

From 1980 to 1990 Kearney experienced the construction of more than 1,296 single-family units. This rate more than doubled during the 1990s when over 2,900 units were constructed. Table 8-4 illustrates the city building permit activity since 1990. Beginning in 1991 Kearney experienced a significant increase in building activity that was sustained throughout the 1990s except for a slight drop in 1997. The beginning of the new decade has again seen a decrease in over all housing construction, though it has remained above the 1980s average of 130 units annually.

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 8-5 presents an Affordability Analysis, relating household income ranges with housing cost categories. This affordability analysis is based on owner occupied units value being two to two and a half times a household's total income and affordable rental units accounting for about 30% of a household's monthly income including utilities. In



this analysis, a positive balance indicates a surplus of housing within the affordability range of each income group, while a negative balance indicates a shortage.

The analysis indicates:

- Kearney is experiencing shortage of housing for those households earning less than \$25,000. An estimated 3,611 households in Kearney require housing priced at \$50,000 or below, or requiring monthly rents below \$400, while only 2,310 units exist within those ranges. Based on the 1995 survey of housing conditions in the city, many of these lower cost units also display some signs of distress.

- Kearney is also experiencing a negative balance of housing for those earning more than \$50,000. In 2000, there were about 680 fewer housing units in price ranges affordable to these higher income groups than there were households. However, a similar analysis completed in the 1997 plan displayed a negative balance of about 900 units in these ranges. Clearly, new construction has accommodated a good portion of the move-up housing need for upper-income households during the 1990s.

- The city is meeting the needs of those households at or near the city's median household income of \$34,829.

- Since 1990 the number of units affordable to households earning less than \$25,000 has decreased from 5,170 to 2,310. However, the number of units affordable to those earning between \$25,000 and \$75,000 increased by 3,638 and the number units affordable to households earning more than \$75,000 increased by 798. This would indicate that the vast majority of new home construction during the 1990s was directed toward moderate to upper income households.

Some residents in the lowest income bracket include seniors on fixed incomes who have paid off their houses. Thus, the actual shortage of units affordable to low-income households may be smaller than indicated by this analysis. Despite accelerated activity during the 1990s, a continuing market for "move-up" housing exists as well. Occupancy by high-income households in relatively low-cost housing creates competition that may make it more difficult for moderate-income families to find affordable housing. This is compounded by the fact that number of housing units affordable to the

TABLE 8.5: Housing Affordability Analysis for Kearney

Income Range	% of City Median	% of Households	# Households in Each Range	Affordable Range for Owner Units	# of Owner Units	Affordable Range for Renter Units	# of Renter Units	Total Affordable Units	Balance
\$0-25,000	0-72%	34.23%	3611	\$0-50,000	362	\$0-400	1948	2310	-1301
\$25,-49,999	73-144%	33.97%	3583	\$50- 99,999	3040	\$400-800	2529	5569	1986
\$50-74,999	145- 215%	18.05%	1904	\$100-149,999	1646	\$800-1250	89	1735	-169
\$75-99,999	216-287%	8.05%	849	\$150-200,000	527	\$1250-1500	7	534	-315
\$100,000+	Over 287%	5.71%	602	\$200,000+	380	\$1500+	21	401	-201
Median	\$34,829		10549		5955		4594	10549	0

Source: US Bureau of the Census, 1990 and 2000

city's lowest income households has decreased over the past decade. The challenge will be identifying ways to capitalize on this supply the existing supply of what could be affordable housing. 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 of these units for other low income residents is limited.



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.
- Developing, moderate and higher-cost housing.

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 8-6 summarizes the results of a citywide housing condition survey that was completed in 1995 as part of the original Kearney Plan. The survey included 5,802 single

TABLE 8.6: 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	2-4Units	%	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.



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.

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 Center. 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 and as of 1995, Kearney added approximately 3,737 new single family units, representing more than 64.4% of its housing stock. About 26% of this post-war housing stock requires substantial rehabilitation.

In 1995 Mobile home units constituted a relatively large percentage of Kearney's housing stock (956 units, or 11%), about 38% of 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 1,727 housing units, with an almost even number of owner and renter occupied units. Kearney has a relatively low home ownership rate, which increased only slightly during the 1990s.
- About 9% of Kearney's housing units are mobile homes, with another 30% comprised in multi-family units. About 61% of all housing units are in single-family structures.
- The city's vacancy rate increased slightly during the 1990s to nearly 5%.
- Kearney housing, taken as a whole, exhibits higher costs and rent levels than comparable cities in the region.
- Since 1990 approximately 2,971 housing units were built including 1,484 single-family and 1,487 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 in the south part of the city.
- 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 Center.
- 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.
 - in 2000, 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:

- Development of affordable equity housing to meet the needs of new residents.
- Affordability of housing to low-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, or of groups like Habitat for Humanity.

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 administers 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 situations 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 CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE CONSTRUCTION OF AN INDEPENDENT LIVING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SENIORS.

Kearney provides a superior environment for senior citizens. 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. The 1997 plan identified a need for additional senior housing. Since then, two continuing care retirement centers have been developed within the city. However, additional senior settings, including attached housing with maintenance provided, may continue to exist.

Affordability problems also persist among low-income elderly renters. Kearney provides public housing units for low-income families and elderly residents, and numerous programs exist to provide supplemental rent assistance. However, demographic, income and housing statistics suggest a continued 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.

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. The Unified Development Ordinance established a Neighborhood Conservation overlay district that allows neighborhoods to define specific characteristics and include those within the city's zoning regulations. It also created the first of these neighborhood conservation districts in the Pioneer Park neighborhood. This concept should be extended to other areas by making other neighborhood groups aware of its existence and capabilities.



The city should also develop rehabilitation programs (including the use of private loans leveraged by CDBG or HOME funds) to promote the rehabilitation of the approximately one-quarter 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. The new UDO provides both flexibility and incentives such as narrower streets and higher potential densities 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 set-back requirements. Clusters are useful when infrastructure costs should be minimized or environmental features exist which should be protected.

- **Small Lot Single-Family Detached Development.** Smaller lot sizes combined with common area amenities can produce excellent urban living environments,

and are particularly well-adapted to infill and in-city redevelopment sites. However, they also have significant applications to newly developing areas.

- **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.

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 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 Center 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 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, dominate the area. 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 abut 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.

• **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 Center. 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 Cannel 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 flood-plain 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 street north of 39th Street, with quality landscape design and streetscape amenities.



TABLE 8.7: 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	2-4Units	%	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	22	100	252	100.0	0	0	0	
Total	22	100	252	100.0	0	0	0	
		5.2% of city total		18.1% of city total				

Source: Housing Condition Survey; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.



- 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.

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 neigh-

TABLE 8.8: 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	2-4Units	%	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		

Source: Housing Condition Survey; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.

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 parkway east of the Union Pacific siding 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.
- Develop a community park for the northeast sector between the proposed parkway and the tracks south of 56th Street.

West Kearney

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

TABLE 8.9: 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	100.00
								17.7% of city total
Other Residential								
Condition Rating	2-4Units	%	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	
		3.1% of city total		32.1% of city total		10.6% of city total		

Source: Housing Condition Survey; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.





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.
- 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.

West Central Kearney/Pioneer Park General Description

West Central Kearney neighborhood is a small area containing some of the city's oldest housing stock. Man-made barriers, including the UPRR, university and both of the city's busiest regional highways, bound the neighborhood. 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 Center, 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 Center 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.

TABLE 8.10: 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	2-4Units	%	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

Source: Housing Condition Survey; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.



- Develop public transportation links between student housing areas and Kearney Center.
- Improve mobility and ease of travel of West Central residents by relieving traffic congestion at the intersection of US 30 and 2nd Avenue.
- Monitor the effectiveness of new provisions of the Unified Development Ordinance, including the neighborhood conservation overlay and the nonconforming multifamily housing provisions, allowing registration of multi-family conversions and their status as legal non-conforming uses subject to providing standard off-street parking and meeting life safety regulations.

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 abuts schools serving area residents. Links to other neighborhoods and Kearney Center are limited to these routes, which are among the most convenient through street connections across US 30 to Kearney Center. As a result, local streets in the East Mid-town neighborhood alternate between quiet residential side streets and busy collectors leading to clinics and downtown.

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.

TABLE 8.11: Housing Conditions in East Midtown Kearne

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	2-4Units	%	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			100% of city total
						1.4% of city total		

Source: Housing Condition Survey; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.



- Unite Kearney Center 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.
- Consider traffic calming measures along major north-south streets, primarily Avenue E and Avenue I.

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 Center 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 Center, 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 Center'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

Central Kearney is 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 cross-roads. 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.



TABLE 8.12: 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	2-4Units	%	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				

Source: Housing Condition Survey; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.



- 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 Center 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 Center, 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.

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 Air-port, 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 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



TABLE 8.13: 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	100.0	
								0.7% of city total	
Other Residential									
Condition Rating	2-4Units	%	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			

Source: Housing Condition Survey; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.



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 areas 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 Center, UNK, and medical services at Good Samaritan Hospital.
- Develop a community park for the northeast sector between the proposed parkway and the tracks south of 56th Street.

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 contain 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 need 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 has experienced major improvements in park service since completion of the 1997 Kearney Plan. It contains E.K. and Mary Yanney Memorial Park, a signature open space that will provide a major anchor for this potentially growing

neighborhood. The area also includes Centennial Park, a highly utilized open space along the north side of 11th Street. The park contains play equipment and active ballfield areas that serve the area's recreation needs, as well as a rehabilitated pool. Kenwood Elementary School is located in the heart of the historic neighborhood. The Cottonmill Trail also runs through the area, linking it directly to UNK, Cottonmill Park, and the Platte corridor.



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,



TABLE 8.14: 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	2-4Units	%	5+Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority	
Poor		48	20.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	
Fair		48	7.6	132	56.7	19	15.7	
Good		1	0.4	152	24.1	53	22.7	
Excellent		59	48.8	18	635	130	20.6	
Total		0	0.0	43	35.5	258	93.1	
		3.8% of city total			9.5% of city total			1.8% of city total

Source: Housing Condition Survey; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.



the UPRR, isolating it from other neighborhoods and city facilities. The at-grade crossing of the UPRR at 5th Avenue 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.
- Continue development of Yanney Park.
- Direct apartment uses to sites to the north and southwest.
- Maintain a clear landscaped buffer marking the boundary between the east edge of the 2nd Avenue commercial corridor and residential development west of 3rd Avenue.
- Implement recommendations of the Kearney Gateway Plan for the 2nd Avenue corridor.

Southeast Kearney

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 Center 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 Center. 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 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.
- Complete the planned development of a new southeast neighborhood park.
- Redevelop sites in the Kearney Gateway corridor that offer significant opportunities. These include sites along Central Avenue currently in industrial or commercial use.





TABLE 8.15: 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	2-4Units	%	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		

Source: Housing Condition Survey; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.

- Implement Kearney Gateway Plan recommendations for the 2nd Avenue and Central Avenue corridors.
- 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.

- 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.



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.

A major change affecting the district has been the development of the Great Platte River Archway Monument. This major project may encourage additional development in this district, especially in areas north of I-80. The city’s desire to manage land use change in this high visibility corridor resulted in adoption of the Interstate Corridor Specific Area Plan and the ICMU (Interstate Corridor Mixed Use) zoning district, establishing strong and performance and design standards for private development.

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

Archway Parkway, the service road paralleling Interstate 80, was paved in coordination with the Archway project. However, many of the other roads serving the South Outlying area are unimproved. 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 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.

Since the completion of the 1997 Plan, the city has completed an interchange justification study for the Cherry Avenue interchange.

The district essentially lacks a sidewalk system. However, the Cottonmill Trail will be extended along the North Branch corridor to the Archway.

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.

The Archway site also includes lands that can provide significant opportunities for public recreational use. These will become increasingly accessible with completion of the Cottonmill Trail.

Neighborhood Issues and Trends

Policies that 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.
- Completion of the Cottonmill Trail and coordination of public recreational use between the Archway Foundation and the Parks and Recreation Department.
- Monitoring the application of the ICMU district.
- 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 aquatics leisure park around the gravel pit lake west of the Ramada Convention Center.
- 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 Cherry Avenue.



TABLE 8.16: 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	100.0
								0.7% of city total
Other Residential								
Condition Rating	2-4Units	%	5+Units	%	Mobile Homes	Mobile Home Parks	Housing Authority	
Poor	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Fair	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Good	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Excellent	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0	0	0
Total		100.0	88	100.0	0	55 pads	0	

Source: Housing Condition Survey; RDG Crose Gardner Shukert, Inc., 1995.



The Kearney Plan



CHAPTER NINE: IMPLEMENTING 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 the Kearney Plan's progress in meeting its goals.

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



The Kearney Plan

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:

- *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.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND ACTIONS

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.



Implementation





The Kearney Plan

A Regional City: A Development Constitution for Kearney

	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
<p>A REGIONAL CITY OF 40,000 <i>KEARNEY SHOULD CAPITALIZE ON ITS ABILITY TO ATTRACT GROWTH AND WILL ACHIEVE A TARGET POPULATION OF 40,000 BY 2025.</i></p>	Policy	X			
<p>OFFICIAL MAP <i>KEARNEY SHOULD ADOPT AN OFFICIAL MAP WHICH PRE-PLANS FUTURE STREETS AND OPEN SPACES.</i></p>	Action		X		
<p>URBAN SERVICE AREA <i>KEARNEY SHOULD DEFINE ITS URBAN SERVICE AREA AND ASSURE THAT DEVELOPMENT WITHIN THAT AREA ACCOMMODATES SANITARY SEWERS AND CITY WATER SUPPLY.</i></p>	Action		X		
<p>THE NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT <i>RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT IN GROWTH AREAS OF KEARNEY SHOULD BE ORGANIZED AS NEIGHBORHOOD UNITS WITHIN SECTIONS, RELATING NEIGHBORHOOD SCHOOLS, PARKS, ACTIVITY CENTERS, AND SEVERAL TYPES OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.</i></p>	Policy	X			
<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	X			
<p>A RECREATION LIFESTYLE <i>KEARNEY SHOULD ENDEAVOR TO REINFORCE ITS IMAGE AS A CITY WITH UNEQUALED ACCESS TO RECREATION AND THE GREAT OUTDOORS.</i></p>	Policy Action	X			
<p>A HUB FOR INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY <i>KEARNEY'S LEADERSHIP SHOULD COLLABORATE TO GROW TECHNOLOGY BUSINESSES TO STIMULATE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT AND ADD POSITIVE VALUE TO THE CITY.</i></p>	Action			X	
<p>KEARNEY GATEWAY <i>THE 2ND AVENUE INTERCHANGE, DOWNTOWN KEARNEY, AND THE BUSINESS CORRIDORS AND DISTRICTS BETWEEN THEM ARE PARTS OF A LINKED ENTERPRISE DISTRICT, AND THE SUCCESS OF THE CORRIDOR DEPENDS ON THE SUCCESS OF EACH PART.</i></p>	Action			X	
<p>PRESERVATION OF HISTORIC KEARNEY <i>KEARNEY'S HISTORIC BUILT ENVIRONMENT MUST BE MAINTAINED AND PRESERVED.</i></p>	Policy	X			

Growth and Land Use: Land Use Policies



Implementation

	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
<p>ADEQUATE LAND SUPPLY KEARNEY SHOULD DESIGNATE ENOUGH LAND FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT TO MEET ITS 20-YEAR POPULATION TARGET OF 40,000.</p>	Policy	X			
<p>DEVELOPMENT TIERS THE KEARNEY JURISDICTION SHOULD INCLUDE DISTINCT DEVELOPMENT TIERS, DESIGNED TO PROVIDE FOR SOUND GROWTH AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT, CONSISTENT WITH THE GRADUAL EXTENSION OF URBAN SERVICES.</p>	Policy	X			
<p>MIXED LAND USE CATEGORIES LAND USE POLICY IN KEARNEY SHOULD PROVIDE FLEXIBILITY THAT ALLOWS THE EMERGENCE OF MIXED USE URBAN NEIGHBORHOODS.</p>	Policy	X			
<p>STREET CONNECTIVITY NEW GROWTH AREAS IN KEARNEY SHOULD BE SERVED BY CONTINUOUS STREET NETWORKS THAT ARE LINKED TO ESTABLISHED PARTS OF THE CITY.</p>	Policy	X			
<p>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.</p>	Policy	X			
<p>COMPLETE AND BALANCED NEIGHBORHOODS USING THE NEIGHBORHOOD UNIT CONCEPT, KEARNEY WILL BALANCE AND GUIDE ITS NEW RESIDENTIAL GROWTH TO CREATE BETTER NEIGHBORHOODS AND IMPROVED MOBILITY.</p>	Policy	X			
<p>EQUAL FACILITIES AMONG CITY QUADRANTS KEARNEY'S PUBLIC FACILITIES SHOULD SERVE ITS FOUR GROWTH AREA EQUITABLY TO SUPPORT COMMUNITY GROWTH OBJECTIVES.</p>	Policy-Capital		X	X	
<p>INTERSTATE CORRIDOR MIXED USE DISTRICT THE INTERSTATE 80 CORRIDOR BETWEEN 2ND AVENUE AND CHERRY AVENUE, INCLUDING THE ARCHWAY AREA, SHOULD COMBINE COMMERCIAL, OFFICE, RESIDENTIAL, AND CULTURAL/RECREATIONAL USES, WITH SPECIFIC DESIGN STANDARDS TO ENCOURAGE QUALITY DEVELOPMENT.</p>	Policy-Action			X	X
<p>CHERRY AVENUE BYPASS CORRIDOR THE BYPASS CORRIDOR, EXTENDING ALONG CHERRY AVENUE NORTH FROM THE PROPOSED EAST INTERCHANGE TO GLENWOOD CORNERS, SHOULD INCLUDE CLUSTERS OF DEVELOPMENT, SEPARATED BY RURAL LAND. THESE CLUSTERS WILL INCLUDE AN URBAN VILLAGE, THE EXPANDED KEARNEY INDUSTRIAL PARK, AND A DEVELOPMENT CLUSTER AT GLENWOOD CORNERS.</p>	Policy			X	X



The Kearney Plan

Growth and Land Use: Land Use Policies

	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
<p>WEST PLATTE RIVER CORRIDOR <i>E.K. AND MARY YANNEY HERITAGE PARK AND OTHER FACTORS WILL GENERATE SUBSTANTIAL GROWTH IN THE SOUTHEAST PART OF THE CITY. THIS AREA SHOULD DEVELOP AS A BALANCED COMMUNITY, INCORPORATING A MIX OF RESIDENTIAL, COMMERCIAL, RECREATIONAL, AND CULTURAL USES.</i></p>	Policy-Action		X	X	
<p>DECISION MAKING FRAMEWORK <i>KEARNEY'S FUTURE LAND USE MAP AND POLICIES SHOULD PROVIDE BOTH GUIDANCE AND FLEXIBILITY TO DECISION MAKERS IN THE LAND USE PROCESS.</i></p>	Policy	X			
<p>ANNEXATION PROGRAM</p>	Policy-Action	X			

Mobility for Urban Quality: Transportation Policies



Implementation

	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
<p>INNER BELTWAY KEARNEY SHOULD DEVELOP AN INNER BELTWAY USING EXISTING ROADS TO DISTRIBUTE TRAFFIC AROUND ITS GROWTH CENTERS.</p>	Capital			X	X
<p>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.</p>	Capital			X	X
<p>REGIONAL BYPASS A NORTHEAST INTERCHANGE SHOULD PROVIDE A BYPASS FOR REGIONAL TRUCK AND TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS AROUND KEARNEY TO THE NORTHWEST.</p>	Capital				X
<p>FUNCTIONAL SEPARATIONS THE TRANSPORTATION PLAN SHOULD MINIMIZE CONFLICTS BETWEEN LOCAL AND THROUGH TRAFFIC BY PROVIDING LOCAL TRAFFIC WITH ALTERNATIVES TO THE MAJOR ARTERIAL SYSTEM.</p>	Capital	X			
<p>PRE-PLANNED COLLECTORS THE COLLECTOR STREET AND PARKWAY SYSTEM IN DEVELOPING AREAS SHOULD BE DESIGNATED AHEAD OF DEVELOPMENT AND DEDICATED AS GROWTH TAKES PLACE.</p>	Policy	X			
<p>COMMERCIAL REARAGE ACCESS AT EMERGING COMMERCIAL OR MIXED USE CENTERS, KEARNEY SHOULD ESTABLISH A PATTERN OF REARAGE ACCESS LOOPS OR ROADS THAT REMOVE PRIMARY ACCESS FROM ARTERIAL STREETS.</p>	Action-Capital	X			
<p>CIVIC STREETS KEARNEY'S STREETS SHOULD BE DESIGNED AS PUBLIC SPACES AS WELL AS MOVERS OF TRAFFIC.</p>	Policy	X			
<p>GRADE SEPARATION PROGRAM KEARNEY SHOULD WORK WITH THE STATE OF NEBRASKA AND THE UNION PACIFIC RAILROAD TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL GRADE SEPARATIONS OVER THE MAIN LINE.</p>	Capital			X	X
<p>SECONDARY REGIONAL ACCESS KEARNEY SHOULD IMPROVE SECONDARY REGIONAL ACCESS ROUTES FROM THE EAST AND WEST.</p>	Capital			X	X
<p>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.</p>	Action-Capital			X	
<p>MULTI-USE CORRIDORS KEARNEY SHOULD DEVELOP A NETWORK OF MULTI-USE CORRIDORS THAT ENCOURAGE PEDESTRIAN AND BICYCLE TRANSIT.</p>	Capital	X			



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A Recreation Community: A Summary of Recommendations

	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
<p>GREEN NETWORK <i>KEARNEY'S PARK SYSTEM SHOULD BE A NETWORK OF PARKS, CONNECTED BY CONTINUOUS GREEN CORRIDORS DEFINED BY TRAILS, GREENWAYS, BOULEVARDS, AND CIVIC STREETS.</i></p>	Capital	X			
<p>PHASED TRAIL SYSTEM <i>KEARNEY SHOULD DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE SYSTEM OF TRAILS AND BICYCLE AND PEDESTRIAN ROUTES TO LINK ITS PARKS, NEIGHBORHOODS, AND ACTIVITY CENTERS, BUILDING ON THE FOUNDATION OF THE COTTONMILL TRAIL.</i></p>	Capital	X			
<p>PARKSITE ENHANCEMENTS <i>KEARNEY SHOULD IMPLEMENT A REGULARLY BUDGETED, INCREMENTAL PROGRAM OF PARK SITE IMPROVEMENTS AT ITS EXISTING PARKS</i></p>	Capital	X			
<p>NEIGHBORHOOD UNITS <i>JOINT DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS AND SCHOOL SITES SHOULD FORM THE HEART OF KEARNEY'S NEW RESIDENTIAL NEIGHBORHOODS.</i></p>	Action-Capital	X			
<p>COMMUNITY PARKS AND NEW RECREATION CENTERS <i>KEARNEY SHOULD DEVELOP OR ENCOURAGE NEW CENTERS FOR ACTIVE RECREATION, INCLUDING A NEW WEST SPORTS COMPLEX.</i></p>	Capital			X	X
<p>UNIQUE FACILITIES: YANNEY PARK AND THE ARCHWAY MONUMENT <i>KEARNEY SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF TWO UNIQUE RECREATIONAL AND OPEN SPACE FACILITIES: YANNEY PARK AND THE ARCHWAY MONUMENT.</i></p>	Action		X		
<p>A REGIONAL PLATTE RIVER TRAIL <i>KEARNEY'S GREEN NETWORK SHOULD BE LINKED TO A REGIONAL TRAIL AND GREENWAY SYSTEM ALONG THE PLATTE RIVER.</i></p>	Capital			X	X

Quality Public Services: Summary of Recommendations



Implementation

PUBLIC FACILITIES PRIORITIES

MAJOR PRIORITIES FOR A PUBLIC FACILITY IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM INCLUDE:

	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
· A new City Maintenance Shop.	Capital		X		
· A new police firing range.	Capital			X	
· Expanded vehicle impound, staging and parking for the Law Enforcement Center.	Capital			X	
· A facility assessment of the City Vehicle and Street Maintenance Facility and Central Stores.	Capital		X		
· Replacement of the Harmon Youth Center.	Capital		X		

SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM PRIORITIES

MAJOR PRIORITIES FOR A SANITARY SEWER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM INCLUDE:

· Continued rehabilitation of aging infrastructure.	Capital	X			
· Inflow inspection program.	Policy	X			
· Incremental sewer extensions within Growth Centers.	Capital	X			
· Sewer extensions to urban subdivisions outside the growth centers, but within the territorial jurisdiction should be discourages.	Policy	X			
· Rural Estates Subdivision in the Territorial Jurisdiction should be discouraged to develop at urban densities with septic systems. Within the identified rural residential corridors, city policy should:	Policy				
- promote development design that arranges housing patterns for easy future sanitary wastewater collection.	Policy				
- 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.	Policy				
- encourage use of community wastewater system using contemporary technologies such as managed wetlands.	Policy				

STORMWATER PRIORITIES

MAJOR PRIORITIES FOR A STORMWATER MANAGEMENT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM INCLUDE:

· Storage-oriented approach for new growth areas. Watershed protection	Policy Capital	X			
· Development design standards to minimize runoff.	Policy		X		
· Implementation of relief measures for West Main Line storm sewer.	Capital		X		
· Completion of Phase II and III storm drainage system analyses.	Capital		X		
· Maintenance program for existing drainage system.	Capital	X			

WATER SYSTEM PRIORITIES

MAJOR PRIORITIES FOR A WATER SYSTEM IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM INCLUDE:

· Development of additional water supply.	Capital			X	
· Monitor water treatment requirements.	Policy	X			
· Looping the transmission main system.	Capital				X
· Apply wellfield protection overlay zoning district to any new wellfield sites and monitor the effectiveness of the ordinance.	Policy	X			



The Kearney Plan

Kearney Gateway: A Summary of Recommendations

	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
<p>THE GATEWAY BRAND <i>KEARNEY GATEWAY SHOULD BE DEFINED AS A BRAND OFFERING A VARIETY OF GOODS, SERVICES, AND SETTINGS TO CUSTOMERS.</i></p>	Policy-Action	X			
<p>IDENTIFIABLE SUBDISTRICTS <i>WITHIN THE UNIFIED KEARNEY GATEWAY BRAND, DEFINE SUBDISTRICTS THAT HAVE SPECIFIC PRODUCT OFFERINGS, SPECIAL NICHEs, AND CHARACTER.</i></p>	Action		X		
<p>MARKETING AND READING THE CITY <i>THE GATEWAY DISTRICTS SHOULD HELP MARKET KEARNEY, APPEALING TO THE CITY'S VISUAL IMAGES AND SERVING AS THE GATEWAY TO THE CITY.</i></p>	Action	X			
<p>CITY DESIGN ENHANCEMENTS <i>THE DISTRICTS SHOULD IMPROVE THEIR PHYSICAL LANDSCAPE AND STREETScape, ENHANCING THE EXPERIENCE THAT THE TRAVELER RECEIVES AND STRENGTHENING THE CITY'S IMAGE OF QUALITY</i></p>	Action-Capital		X	X	
<p>REDEVELOPMENT ON SELECTED SITES <i>REDEVELOPMENT EFFORTS SHOULD BE FOCUSED ON VACANT LAND OR OBSOLETE LAND USES. HOUSING IN THE GATEWAY DISTRICTS SHOULD BE UPGRADED AND SHOULD INCLUDE AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPPORTUNITIES.</i></p>	Policy-Action	X			
<p>CONNECTIONS AND DIRECTIONAL INFORMATION <i>DESIGN ELEMENTS SHOULD CONNECT AND DIRECT VISITORS TO VARIOUS COMPONENTS OF GATEWAY AND TO OTHER FEATURES OF THE CITY</i></p>	Policy	X			
<p>KINETIC AND ARRIVAL ENVIRONMENTS <i>SECOND AND CENTRAL AVENUES SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS "KINETIC" ENVIRONMENTS, GENERALLY EXPERIENCED AT NORMAL DRIVING SPEEDS; WHILE OLD TOWN AND KEARNEY CENTRE ARE "ARRIVAL" ENVIRONMENTS, EXPERIENCED AT SLOW SPEEDS OR ON FOOT. IN ARRIVAL ENVIRONMENTS, SPACES FOR PUBLIC GATHERING AND EVENTS SHOULD BE PROVIDED.</i></p>	Policy	X			
<p>SAFE AND PLEASANT CIRCULATION FOR ALL MODES <i>KEARNEY GATEWAY SHOULD OFFER A SAFE AND ATTRACTIVE TRANSPORTATION EXPERIENCE, WHETHER THEY ARE MOVING BY CAR OR BICYCLE, OR ON FOOT.</i></p>	Policy	X			
<p>ECONOMIC REWARDS FOR DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS <i>CITY POLICY SHOULD MAXIMIZE THE ECONOMIC YIELD OF DOWNTOWN BUILDINGS BY TAKING ADVANTAGE OF UPPER FLOOR DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES WHEN THEY PRESENT THEMSELVES.</i></p>	Policy	X			
<p>GREATER PERMEABILITY <i>KEARNEY GATEWAY SHOULD REDUCE THE DIVIDING EFFECTS OF POTENTIAL BARRIERS SUCH AS ROADWAYS, THE RAILROAD, AND THE NORTH CHANNEL. FEATURE THESE ONE-TIME BARRIERS AS SIGNIFICANT FEATURES OF THE GATEWAY ENVIRONMENT.</i></p>	Policy Capital		X		

Kearney Gateway: A Summary of Recommendations

	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
<p>INTERPRETATION <i>THE GATEWAY DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM SHOULD TAKE ADVANTAGE OF OPPORTUNITIES FOR HISTORIC PRESERVATION AND INTERPRETATION TO TELL THE STORY OF THE COMMUNITY.</i></p>	Action		X		
<p>DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS <i>THE CITY AND THE GATEWAY COMMUNITY OF INTEREST SHOULD PURSUE PROJECTS THAT ENHANCE THE AREA'S DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT AND ADDRESS THE PROGRAM'S OVERALL GOALS.</i></p>	Action	X			
<p>IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM <i>THE KEARNEY GATEWAY PROGRAM REQUIRES AN EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION STRUCTURE THAT INCLUDES ALL OF THE AREA'S SUB-DISTRICTS</i></p>	Action		X		



Implementation



The Kearney Plan

Housing and Neighborhoods: A Summary of Recommendations

	Type	On-going	Short	Medium	Long
<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		X		
<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		X		
<p>RETIREMENT HOUSING <i>KEARNEY SHOULD CONTINUE TO ENCOURAGE CONSTRUCTION OF AN INDEPENDENT LIVING RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT FOR SENIORS.</i></p>	Policy	X			
<p>NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION <i>KEARNEY SHOULD CONTINUE ITS NEIGHBORHOOD CONSERVATION PROGRAMS AND INSTITUTE AN EFFORT TO REHABILITATE HOUSES IN NEEDS OF REPAIR.</i></p>	Policy	X	X		
<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	X			
<p>MANUFACTURED HOME DEVELOPMENT <i>KEARNEY SHOULD ENCOURAGE DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH-QUALITY MANUFACTURED HOME SUBDIVISION ENVIRONMENTS.</i></p>	Policy		X	X	