PROJECT PARTICIPANTS

The Bennington Comprehensive Development Plan along with the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations were developed in conjunction with the Bennington Planning Commission and the Citizens of Bennington.

In addition to local support, cooperation and collaboration with other outside entities, primarily the staff of the City of Omaha and Douglas County occurred in order to address future growth patterns in the region surrounding the City of Bennington. This cooperation addressed future development pressures within the Omaha metropolitan area. This cooperation enabled the City of Bennington to develop policies that preserve the overall sense of community while, addressing development from the surrounding areas.

A portion of this planning project for the Bennington Comprehensive Development Plan was funded partially through a grant provided by the Nebraska Commission on Local Government Innovation and Restructuring. The grant intent was to create a higher degree of collaboration between local governments, to effectively handle development occurring between growing communities.

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INTRODUCTION

LOCATION

Bennington is located in northcentral Douglas County, Nebraska along Nebraska State Highway 36 and is approximately three miles north and west of the western Corporate Limits of the City of Omaha. In addition, Bennington is approximately 1-½ miles south of the Washington County, Nebraska line.

CLIMATE

The climate of Bennington is not unlike most of the climate in eastern Nebraska. The climate consists of cold winters and hot summers. The average temperature during the winter months is 26 degrees and in the summer the average temperature is 75 degrees.

Precipitation for Bennington is in the form of snowfall in the winter and rain in the spring and summer months. The average snowfall for the Bennington area is 29 inches during the winter months. During the rest of the year, precipitation is in the form of rain in the amount of 32 inches on average.

The sun shines 70 percent of the time during the summer months in Bennington and 60 percent of the time during the winter months. Prevailing winds in the spring are from the south-southwest with an average wind speed at the highest of 12 miles per hour.

HISTORY

Early in the 1870's a grocery store, a blacksmith shop and a post office were established in the area and called "Hayes." During the mid-1880's, the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad purchased land to construct a railroad line between Omaha and Fremont. Due to the establishment of the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad, a new town was platted two miles south and one mile east of Hayes, causing the community to disappear.

Bennington was originally platted in 1887 by the Pioneer Town Site Company. The community was named for Bennington, Vermont. The post office established its first facility in the community on January 30, 1888. Initially the town was called "Bunz Town," named by the settlers that were predominately of German lineage.

It is stated that Bennington was officially incorporated on April 15, 1892, when the community's census swelled to the required 100 persons by counting all the railroad workers which were camped near the community. For the next thirty years the community continued to grow and expand. For a time, Bennington had six passenger trains per day passing through the community.

The City of Bennington has had a colorful past, not unlike a number of smaller Nebraska communities. The present character of Bennington was shaped by people and personalities of the past, as well as the new

families moving to the community. As the community grows, it is important to remember the roots and the ancestry of those who established it, thus preserving the sense of community in Bennington.

Historical data for this section were found in the following sources:

"Bennington Centennial" Book Committee Gary Sather, Edna Mohr, Grechen Mangold, Mindy Laaker,

"Perkey's Nebraska Place Names" by Elton A. Perkey and published by the Nebraska State Historical Society.

"A Brief Early History of Bennington" written in 1937 by Gretchen Mangold as found on the Internet

THE PURPOSE OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The Bennington Comprehensive Development Plan(hereafter known as the comprehensive plan) is designed to promote orderly growth and development for the community. The Comprehensive Plan will provide policy guidelines to enable citizens and elected officials to make informed decisions about the future of their community. Issues regarding the future of Bennington are discussed in this Plan.

The Plan acts as a tool to "Develop
a road map that guides the community
through change"

The Comprehensive Plan will identify and develop policies related to achieving the highest quality of life in Bennington for its citizens. The Comprehensive Plan will provide a general guideline for future developments within the planning jurisdiction for the City of Bennington. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to encourage and develop a strong economic base for the community, so the goals of the citizens and the community are achieved. The Comprehensive Plan will also find the pattern of growth in Bennington as well as the surrounding areas.

The Plan will assist Bennington in evaluating the impacts of development (i.e. economic, social, fiscal, service and amenity provision, health, safety and general welfare) and encourage appropriate land uses throughout the jurisdictional area of the City. The objective of planning is to provide a framework for guiding the community—whether a village, city or county, toward orderly growth and development. The Plan assists Bennington in balancing the physical, social, economic, and aesthetic aspects of a community, as it responds to private sector interests.

Planned growth will make Bennington more effective in serving it's residents, more efficient in using it's resources, and will make it possible to meet the standard of living and quality of life for all. In planning for future growth it is important to encourage a development pattern that will provide a greater level of integration for Bennington with it's surroundings.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

Planning begins with the collection of data in order to provide a snapshot of the past and present community conditions. Analyses of data provide the basis for developing forecasts for future land-use demands in the City.

The second phase of the Comprehensive Planning process is the development of general goals and policies. These are practical guidelines for improving existing conditions and guiding future growth. The Comprehensive Plan is a vision presented in text, graphics and tables that represent the desires of the community for the future. The Comprehensive Plan contains recommendations that when implemented will be of value to the community and its residents.

Implementation is the final phase of the process. A broad range of development policies and programs are required to implement a Comprehensive Plan. The Comprehensive Plan identifies the tools, programs, and methods necessary to carry out the recommendations. The implementation of the development policies contained within the Comprehensive Plan is dependent upon the adoption of the Plan by the governing body, and the leadership exercised by the present and future elected and appointed officials of the community.

The Comprehensive Plan was prepared under the direction of the City of Bennington Planning Commission with the assistance and participation of the Bennington City Council and citizens of Bennington.

The planning time period for achieving goals, programs, and developments identified in the Bennington Comprehensive Plan is twenty (20) years, that is, 2000 to 2020. However, the community should review the Comprehensive Plan annually and update the document in ten to fifteen years, or when a pressing need is identified. Updating the Comprehensive Plan will allow the community to incorporate ideas and developments that were not known at the time of the present planning process.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPONENTS

Nebraska State Statutes require the inclusion of certain elements in a Comprehensive Plan. State Statutes prescribe that a "Comprehensive Development Plan" consists of both graphic and textual material and is designed to accommodate anticipated long-range future growth.

The Comprehensive Plan is comprised of the following components:

- A Community Profile, including an overview of population characteristics, housing and the local economy,
- Community Facilities,
- Community Goals and Policies,
- Existing Land Use Analysis,
- Land Use Analysis,
- Transportation, and
- Plan Implementation.

Analyzing past and existing demographic, housing, economic and social trends permit the projection of likely conditions in the future. Projections and forecasts are useful tools in planning for the future; however, these tools are not always accurate and may change due to unforeseen factors. Past trends may be skewed or the data may be inaccurate creating a distorted picture of past conditions. Therefore, it is important for the City of Bennington to closely monitor population, housing and economic conditions that may impact the community. Through periodic monitoring, the community can adapt and adjust to changes that occur in the community and the region. Adaptability to socio-economic change allows the community

to maintain an effective Comprehensive Plan for the future, which enhances the quality of life and standard of living for all residents.

The Comprehensive Plan documents where Bennington has come from, where it is now, and the likely direction the town may head in the future. The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document, but should evolve as changes in the land use, population or local economy occur. The Comprehensive Plan is a management tool for community leaders to base their decision-making process when considering future developments. These decisions will assist the City of Bennington in achieving their physical, social, and economic goals.

GOVERNMENTAL AND JURISDICTIONAL ORGANIZATION

The planning and zoning jurisdiction for incorporated communities that have adopted Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Ordinances, include an area of one mile from their corporate limits for cities of the second class, an area two miles from their corporate limits for cities of the first class, and metropolitan class cities have a three mile jurisdiction from their corporate limits as written under the authority of the Nebraska Revised Statutes, 1943 (as amended).

The communities that have adopted Comprehensive Planning and Zoning Ordinances, surrounding Bennington (one-mile jurisdiction), include the City of Elkhorn (2-mile jurisdiction), and the City of Omaha (3-mile jurisdiction). As these communities grow and annex land into their corporate limits, their extraterritorial jurisdictions will extend further into Douglas County.

The jurisdiction of Douglas County includes the unincorporated portions of the County, excluding the established extraterritorial jurisdiction of each community and their corporate limits (Bennington, Elkhorn, Omaha, Ralston, Valley, and Waterloo.), as written under the authority of the Nebraska Revised Statutes, 1943 (as amended).

As these communities grow together and jurisdictions change, future planning for all parties becomes more complex, seen in figure 1. This complexity if dealt with in the right manner can reduce future costs to each governmental unit in the region in time and funding. It is important for these communities and the county to keep the lines of communication open to facilitate better growth management practices.

FIGURE 1

JURISDICTIONAL MAP - (LARGER MAPS ARE LOCATED IN THE BENNINGTON CITY OFFICE AT 15514 WAREHOUSE, BENNINGTON, NE)

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT:
CONDITIONS AND TREND ANALYSIS

COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT: CONDITIONS AND TREND ANALYSIS

POPULATION AND HOUSING

Population statistics aid in developing a picture of a community. It is important for a community to understand where it has been and where it appears to be going. Population is the major force behind housing, the economy, employment and fiscal stability of communities and counties. Historic population trends assist in projecting future levels, which in turn assist in determining the future need for housing, retail, medical, employment and educational services within the community. Population projections are only estimates and a number of unforeseen factors can effect these projections significantly.

POPULATION TRENDS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 shows the population levels for each incorporated community in Douglas County. Besides the incorporated communities and the total County population; the total population for incorporated and unincorporated areas is included in the Table. Table 1 has population data from 1970, 1980, 1990 and 1998. In addition, the Table contains the percent change from each Census to the next. This gives residents of Bennington a better understanding of recent trends regarding the population of the County and the other areas within Douglas County.

TABLE 1: POPULATION TRENDS OF DOUGLAS COUNTY AND COMMUNITIES, 1970 - 1998

Community	1970	1980	% Change 1970-1980	1990	% Change 1980-1990	1998 Estimates	% Change 1990-1998	% Change 1970-1998
Bennington	**683**	**631**	**-7.6%**	**866**	**37.2%**	**988**	**14.1%**	**44.7%**
Elkhorn	1,184	1,344	13.5%	1,398	4.0%	2,984	113.4%	152.0%
Ralston	4,731	5,134	8.5%	6,236	21.5%	6,219	-0.3%	31.5%
Omaha	346,929	346,238	-0.2%	355,795	2.8%	371,291	4.4%	7.0%
Valley	1,595	1,716	7.6%	1,775	3.4%	1,778	0.2%	11.5%
Waterloo	455	450	-1.1%	479	6.4%	461	-3.8%	1.3%
Incorporated Areas	350,846	350,379	-0.1%	340,313	-2.9%	383,721	12.8%	9.4%
Unincorporated Areas	38,609	46,659	20.9%	76,131	63.2%	65,868	-13.5%	70.6%

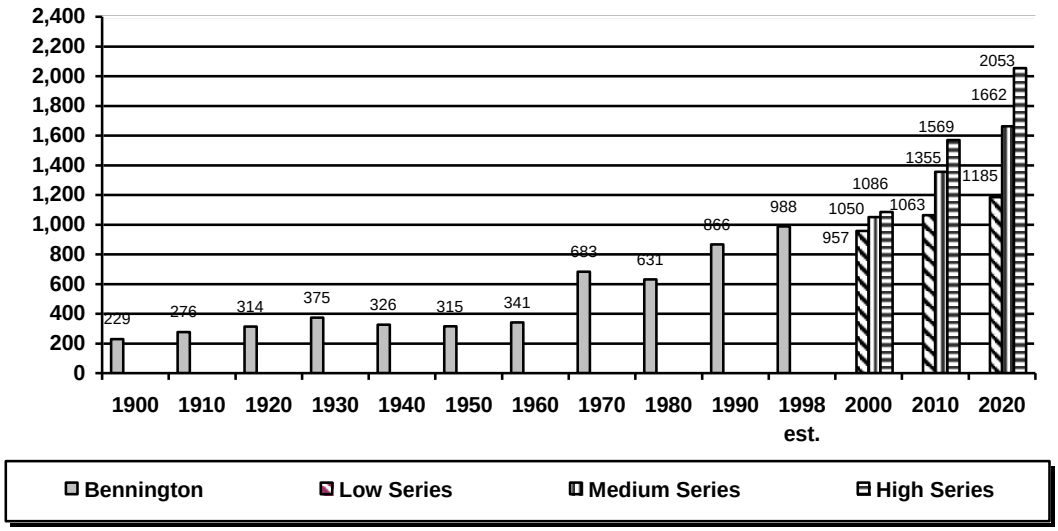
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, 1970 - 1990, 1998 Estimates

Table 1 indicates that all Douglas County municipalities, as well as, the county shown an increase in population from 1970 to 1980. The greatest increase was in the City of Elkhorn, which had an overall population change of 113.4% based upon U.S. Census data. However, in the late 1990's the City of Elkhorn completed an annexation of various SID's and subdivisions allowing the city to reclassify their population above 5, 000 for planning and zoning purposes. This is in part reflective of the decrease in the population of the unincorporated areas of Douglas County for the same time period

Bennington's population from 1970 to 1998 increased by 44.7%. The largest increase in this overall time period came between 1980 and 1990 when the community grew by 255 persons or 37.24%. This increase was a direct result of development occurring adjacent to the community, which was eventually annexed

into Bennington's corporate limits. Bennington from 1970 to 1998 had the second largest increase in population of all the municipalities in Douglas County.

FIGURE 2: POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS 1900 TO 2020



Source: US Census Bureau 1900 to 1998 and JEO Consulting Group, Inc.

Figure 2 is a historic representation of Bennington's population and future projections. The earliest US Census record for Bennington was 1900, when Bennington had 229 persons. From 1900 to 1960, Bennington's population was stable to increasing slightly to a total of 341 persons by 1960. Between 1960 and 1970, Bennington's population began to show significant increases and doubled its total population. If the population increases at the proper age cohorts, the City of Bennington will sustain future growth. The age cohorts tending to promote future growth are infants to teenage children and adults of childbearing age.

TABLE 2: AGE-SEX COMPOSITION OF THE POPULATION 1980 AND 1990

Age	1980		1990		1980-1990		1980 - 1990	
	Male and Female	% of Total	Male and Female	% of Total	Net Change	% Change	Cohort Change	% Change
0-4	50	7.9%	63	7.3%	13	26.0%	63	-
5-9	63	10.0%	83	9.6%	20	31.7%	83	-
10-14	58	9.2%	70	8.1%	12	20.7%	20	40.0%
15-19	64	10.1%	79	9.1%	15	23.4%	16	25.4%
20-24	49	7.8%	59	6.8%	10	20.4%	1	1.7%
25-29	53	8.4%	57	6.6%	4	7.5%	-7	-10.9%
30-34	46	7.3%	66	7.6%	20	43.5%	17	34.7%
35-44	89	14.1%	134	15.5%	45	50.6%	35	35.4%
45-54	63	10.0%	105	12.1%	42	66.7%	16	18.0%
55-64	41	6.5%	65	7.5%	24	58.5%	2	3.2%
65-74	34	5.4%	44	5.1%	10	29.4%	3	7.3%
75-84	19	3.0%	34	3.9%	15	78.9%	0	0.0%
85+	2	0.3%	7	0.8%	5	250.0%	-29	-80.6%
Total	**631**	**100.0%**	**866**	**100.0%**	**235**	**37.2%**	**220**	**34.9%**

Selected Characteristics	1980		1990	
	Total 18 yrs and Under	228	Total 18 yrs and Under	269
	% of total population	36.1%	% of total population	31.1%
	Total 65 yrs and older	55	Total 65 yrs and older	85
	% of total population	8.7%	% of total population	9.8%
	Median Age	28	Median Age	31.7
	Total Females	334	Total Females	451
	Total Males	297	Total Males	415
	Total Population	631	Total Population	866

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, STF-1A, 1980, 1990

AGE STRUCTURE

Age structure is an important component to population analysis. By analyzing age structure, Bennington can see present age groups and growth in these age groups, which will provide a base for the Bennington to grow and prosper into the future.

These age cohorts indicate strong growth in the number of families locating in Bennington during the 1980's. These age cohorts are critical to the future growth of a community. As the younger 1990 age cohorts increase in age by the 2000 US Census, it is hopeful they will return after college to live in Bennington while possibly working in the Omaha Metropolitan Area.

There were only two age cohorts that decreased from 1980 to 1990. These were the:
15 – 19 (1980) to 25 – 29 (1990) which saw a –10.9% change, and
75 and over (1980) to the 85 and over (1990) which saw a –66.7% change.
The decreases within these age cohorts are not especially uncommon. It is common to see teenagers from one decade go off to college and not return immediately upon completing a degree program.

The change in the 75 years and older age cohorts deal specifically with an aging population and the fact that survival rates become very low in later years of a person's life. However, another reason for this decrease can be found in the housing section of this report. The housing data indicate there were no persons living in group quarters (this includes nursing home facilities). Therefore, the elderly are being faced with moving toward Elkhorn or Omaha in order to find assisted living facilities, nursing home facilities, or other types of health care facilities.

Table 2 also indicates, in 1980, 36.1% of the total Bennington population was 18 years and younger. By 1990, the population 18 years and younger had fallen to 31.1% of the total population. The table shows the number of persons 65 and over represented 8.7% of the total population in 1980 but represented 9.8% of the total population in 1990. Finally, the Median (average) Age of the population for Bennington in 1980, was 28.0 years; which increased to 31.7 years by 1990. This indicates the population of Bennington is aging.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections allow Bennington, if all things remain equal, to estimate what the population will be in specific future years. Projections are only estimates based upon present day and past circumstances. A number of factors (economic, social, etc.) can affect projections positively or negatively. At the present time, these projections are the best crystal ball Bennington has for predicting future population changes.

Trend Line Analysis

Trend line analysis is a process of projecting future populations based upon specific changes during a specified period of time. In this analysis of Bennington, three different trend lines were reviewed; 1960 to 1998 (estimates), 1980 to 1998 (estimates), and 1990 to 1998 (estimates). From 1980 to 1998 (estimates), Bennington's population increases, on average, 2.9% per year or 29.0% per decade. The 1990 to 1998 (estimate) trend indicate an overall increase of 14.1% or 1.76% per year during the 1990's.

The following are projections based upon the three trend lines:

	1960 to 1998	**1980 to 1998**	**1990 to 1998**
2000	1,086 persons	1,050 persons	1,022 persons
2010	1,569 persons	1,355 persons	1,189 persons
2020	2,053 persons	1,662 persons	1,357 persons

Cohort Survival Analysis

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

Reviewing different age groups by sex and projecting these forward to the years 2000, 2010, and 2020, indicates that Bennington's total population will continue to grow. Using this modeling technique, the following projections were derived:

Year 2000	957 persons
Year 2010	1,063 persons
Year 2020	1,185 persons

These Cohort projections indicate a steady increase in the population from 1998 to 2020. However, the cohort survival model does not account for migration, which has been a major factor in Bennington's population changes since 1960. This projection does not also account for increased growth in the region surrounding the City of Bennington.

Summary of Population Projections

Using the modeling techniques discussed in the previous paragraphs, the following is a summary of the population projections for Bennington through the year 2020. There has been a Low Series, Medium Series and a High Series projection established in order to indicate different growth patterns which may be encountered in the next 20 years.

	Low Series	**Medium Series**	**High Series**
Year 2000	957 persons	1,050 persons	1,086 persons
Year 2010	1,063 persons	1,355 persons	1,569 persons
Year 2020	1,185 persons	1,662 persons	2,053 persons

.In addition to population estimates and the US Census releases relative to the City of Bennington, residents must also track future development in the Bennington area that will have impacts upon local services, which may not be reported with the previously mentioned data.

HOUSING

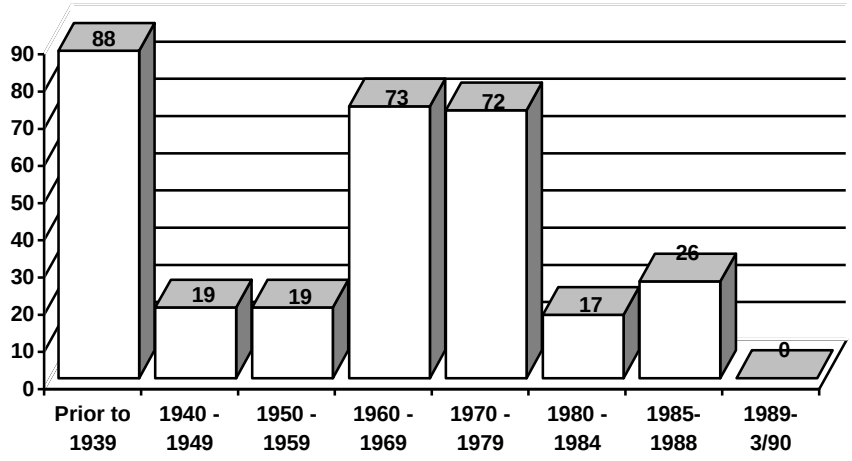
The Housing element of the Comprehensive Development Plan identifies existing housing characteristics and projected housing needs in Bennington. A primary goal of Bennington should be to provide safe, decent, and sanitary housing for every family and individual residing within the community. To project future housing needs, several factors must be considered. These factors include population changes, family income, employment, land use, and residents' attitudes.

Age of Existing Housing Stock

The age of a community's housing stock can indicate a great deal about population and economic conditions of the past. The age of the housing stock can also indicate any needed repairs or needed replacements within the community. This category is important in understanding the overall quality of housing and the quality of life in the community.

The age of the existing housing stock can be seen in Figure 3. The data are up to March of 1990 when the US Census was taken. Figure 2 shows that 88 homes or 28.0% of the housing stock in Bennington was built in 1939 or earlier. Between 1960 and 1980, Bennington had 145 homes built or 46.2% of the community's current housing stock. This indicates that a large influx in population occurred in this twenty-year period. This has been further supported by the population data from the same period.

FIGURE 3: AGE OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK



Source: US Census Bureau, Census of population & housing, STF-1A 1990

HOUSING STOCK

The housing stock of Bennington is analyzed as to its make up of owner-occupied, renter-occupied, and vacant units. These data provide a picture of the housing composition and can be broken down in many additional ways. Besides these data units, it is important to compare data regarding median value of owner-occupied and median contract rent for housing units.

Table 3 reviews housing statistics regarding household population, persons per household, types of housing units, and housing make-up. Also included are vacancy rates and the median value of owner-occupied and median contract rent for housing units. These data are compared for 1980 and 1990.

In 1980 and 1990, all of Bennington's population lived in households. This left no population residing in Group Quarters. As stated previously, Group Quarters includes nursing homes, assisted-living, and retirement communities. The lack of population in Group Quarters indicates no such facilities exist in Bennington. Therefore, as Bennington's population ages, the elderly in need of these facilities are required to relocate to Elkhorn, Omaha, Fremont, or other locales. As the baby boomers age, as will be seen in the 2000 and 2010 US Census, there will be a greater need for these facilities and Bennington could lose a greater deal of population if the baby boomers move to other communities.

TABLE 3: COMMUNITY HOUSING TRENDS 1980 AND 1990

Selected Characteristics	1980	1990	Change
Population	631	866	6.4 %
Persons in Households	631	866	6.4 %
Persons in Group Quarters	0	0	No Change
Persons per Household	2.95	2.78	%
Total Housing Units	**251**	**320**	**%**
Occupied Housing Units	242	312	6.5 %
Owner-occupied units	174	222	5.0 %
Renter-occupied units	68	90	15.4 %
Vacant Housing Units	9	8	60.0 %
Single-family Units	194	241	-4.9 %
Duplex/Multiple-family Units	146	74	300.0 %
Mobile Homes, trailer, other	2	10	8.3 %
Owner-occupied Vacancy Rate	3.6%	2.2%	%
Renter-occupied Vacancy Rate	0.0%	1.1%	%
Median Contract Rent – 1980 and 1990			
Bennington	$151	$274	%
Douglas County	$	$	%
Nebraska	**$170**	**$348**	**104.7 %**
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units – 1980 and 1990			
Bennington	$34,900	$54,000	%
Douglas County	$	$	%
Nebraska	**$38,000**	**$50,000**	**31.6 %**

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, STF-1A, 1980, 1990

There were a total of 251 year-round housing units within Bennington in 1980. Of the 251 total housing units, 242 or 96.4% were occupied. Only 9, or 3.6% of the units were vacant. According to the Census data, all of the vacancies were found in owner-occupied units.

In 1990, the total number of year round housing units increased to 320; an increase of 69 new units. Of the 320 total housing units, 312 or 97.5% were occupied. Vacant units totaled 8, or 2.5% of the total housing units.

Owner-occupied Housing Units

As stated previously, Bennington had a total of 251 housing units in 1980. Of the total occupied units, 174 or 71.9% were owner-occupied. By 1990, there were 312 housing units. The 1990 US Census stated that 222 or 71.5% of the total occupied units were owner-occupied. From 1980 to 1990, the proportion of owner-occupied units remained stable.

The 1980 and 1990 US Census reviews the median value of owner-occupied units. In 1980, the median value of owner-occupied units in Bennington was $34,900.00, compared to $38,000.00, for the State of Nebraska. By 1990, the median value of owner-occupied units increased to $54,000.00, or a change of 54.7%. The median value of owner-occupied units for the State of Nebraska increased to $50,000.00, or a change of 31.6%. Bennington saw greater increases in the median value of owner-occupied units than the State of Nebraska.

Finally, the increase seen in Bennington from 1980 to 1990 must be compared to the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the same period. As stated previously, Bennington had an increase of 54.7% in median value of owner-occupied units; however, the CPI increased by 60.7% for the same period. Even though the increases in Bennington were strong, they fell short of keeping pace with inflation. This means housing values, on average, were much better in 1990 but the homes were actually worth less in real dollars when adjusted for inflation.

Renter-occupied Units

Renter occupied units in Bennington increased from 68 units in 1980, to 90 units in 1990, an increase of 32.4%. The renter-occupied units, in 1980, made up 28.1% of the total occupied units. By 1990, renter-occupied units made up 28.5% of the total occupied housing units.

The average amount of rent paid by renters is measured by the median contract rent. The median contract rent for Bennington, in 1980, was $151.00 compared to $170.00 for the State of Nebraska. By 1990, the median contract rent for Bennington increased to $274.00, an increase of 61.2%. The State of Nebraska saw the median contract rent increase to $348.00 or 104.7%. The median contract rent for Bennington increased at a rate greater than the CPI. This means that renters in Bennington were paying more in real dollars in 1990 than they were in 1980.

ECONOMICS AND EMPLOYMENT

Economic data are collected in order to understand area markets, changes in economic activity and employment needs and opportunities. In this section, family income statistics are reviewed for Bennington and Nebraska.

Family Income Statistics

Income Statistics for families are important in examines the earning power of the families in a community. These data indicate the earning level for families as compared to the State. In addition, these data are reviewed for purposes of determining if family incomes are increasing comparable to the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

TABLE 4: FAMILY INCOME STATISTICS 1980 AND 1990

Family Income Ranges	1980 (Income in 1979)				1990 (Income in 1989)			
	Bennington	% of Total	State of Nebraska	% of Total	Bennington	% of Total	State of Nebraska	% of Total
Less than $5,000	4	2.3%	27,188	6.6%	3	1.2%	33,706	5.6%
$5,000 to $9,999	30	17.0%	52,984	12.8%	17	6.9%	61,896	10.3%
$10,000 to $14,999	26	14.8%	67,769	16.3%	18	7.3%	64,661	10.7%
$15,000 to $24,999	56	31.8%	137,124	33.1%	61	24.6%	128,454	21.3%
$25,000 to $34,999	36	20.5%	75,516	18.2%	55	22.2%	108,560	18.0%
$35,000 to $49,999	22	12.5%	35,773	8.6%	46	18.5%	107,111	17.8%
$50,000 and over	2	1.1%	18,239	4.4%	48	19.4%	98,470	16.3%
Total	176	100.0%	414,593	100.0%	248	100.0%	602,858	100.0%
Median Family Income	$20,000		$19,122		$30,556		$31,634	
Number of Families	176		414,503		248		418,471	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, STF-3A, 1980, 1990

The data in Table 4 indicate the families in Bennington had a median income of $20,000 in 1980 compared to $19,122 for the State of Nebraska. This shows the average family in Bennington was earning more than the average Nebraska family. By 1990, the median income for Bennington families increased to $30,556 or 52.8%. The median income for Nebraska families increased to $31,634; slightly more than families in Bennington. The increase of Nebraska families increased by 65.4%. Families in Bennington saw strong increases overall but the change did not match the growth of the CPI for the same period. This translates into Bennington families, on an average, earning less in real dollars in 1990 than in 1980.

Bennington had 116 families, or 66.0%, that earned less than $25,000 in 1980. By 1990, there were only 99 families, or 39.8%, earning less than $25,000. The family income ranges showing the greatest increases, were those in the $35,000 to $49,000 and $50,000 and up. Families earning between $35,000 and $49,000 increased by 24 families, or 109.1%. These families comprised 12.5% of all families in 1980 and 18.5% in 1990. Families earning $50,000 or more went from 2 in 1980 to 48 in 1990; an increase of 2,300%. Families earning more than $50,000 went from 1.1% of all families to 19.5% in 1990.

There are a number of basic reasons for these increases. Including:

- Better paying jobs.
- Solid increases in wages in their jobs, and/or
- Increasing number of two-income families.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Employment by Industry assists in painting a picture of Bennington's employment force. This section indicates the type of jobs the local residents have and will assist in identifying those jobs, which may be attracting residents of Bennington to leave the community during work hours.

Table 5 contains data on Employment by Industry for residents aged 16 or older. These are not solely the jobs within Bennington, but the number of residents 16 and over that are employed. Of the 15 industries listed, 10 industries had increases in employment. These industries were:

▪ Personal Services, Entertainment, & Recreational Services	300.0%
▪ Business & Repair Services	200.0%
▪ Other Professional & Related Services	188.0%
▪ Communication & Other Public Utilities	180.0%
▪ Health Services	159.0%
▪ Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	144.0%
▪ Educational Services	61.0%
▪ Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, & Mining	50.0%
▪ Wholesale Trade	50.0%
▪ Retail Trade	46.0%

TABLE 5: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY - 1980 AND 1990

Industry Categories	Bennington				State of Nebraska			
	1980	% of Total	1990	% of Total	1980	% of Total	1990	% of Total
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Mining	12	4.0%	18	4.1%	78,840	11.0%	66,476	8.6%
Construction	47	15.7%	37	8.4%	43,296	6.0%	40,821	5.3%
Manufacturing, nondurable goods	20	6.7%	18	4.1%	45,269	6.3%	47,720	6.2%
Manufacturing, durable goods	32	10.7%	18	4.1%	53,777	7.5%	50,624	6.5%
Transportation	13	4.3%	13	2.9%	40,771	5.7%	37,478	4.8%
Communication and other Public Utilities	5	1.7%	14	3.2%	26,063	3.6%	25,032	3.2%
Wholesale Trade	16	5.3%	24	5.4%	33,961	4.7%	35,726	4.6%
Retail Trade	65	21.7%	95	21.5%	120,958	16.9%	138,179	17.9%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	18	6.0%	44	10.0%	44,014	6.1%	52,137	6.7%
Business and Repair Services	10	3.3%	30	6.8%	24,929	3.5%	35,089	4.5%
Personal, Entertainment & Recreational Services	4	1.3%	16	3.6%	27,836	3.9%	30,928	4.0%
Health Services	17	5.7%	44	10.0%	58,363	8.1%	66,275	8.6%
Educational Services	23	7.7%	37	8.4%	63,328	8.8%	68,165	8.8%
Other Professional Services	8	2.7%	23	5.2%	27,084	3.8%	48,754	6.3%
Public Administration	10	3.3%	10	2.3%	28,144	3.9%	30,009	3.9%
Total Employed persons - 16 years and older	300	100.0%	441	100.0%	716,633	100.0%	773,413	100.0%

Source: US Census Bureau, Census of population, STF-1A 1980 and 1990

Bennington's employment by industry shows "Personal Services, Entertainment, and Recreational Services" increased by the greatest percentage at 300.0%. Of the ten sectors indicating growth from 1980 to 1990, seven were service-based industries. Increases in service-based industries have been common for the past two decades in Nebraska and the United States.

Most of the increases in Bennington were driven by either Bennington's growth or the Omaha Metropolitan area's growth. Most of this growth has occurred because of growth in the Omaha Metropolitan area. The employment increases in Bennington are related to people living in Bennington and driving into Omaha and other areas for the workday.

BENNINGTON: IMPORT/EXPORT ANALYSIS

Table 6 reviews the employment needs of Bennington on a ratio basis compared to the State of Nebraska. This analysis is referred to as the Location Quotient. With Location Quotients, a quotient of "1" means a particular industry is meeting the local demand. Any quotient less than "1" means a community must import goods and services to satisfy local demand. Finally, a quotient greater than "1" means a community is self-sufficient plus and either exporting goods and services or is exporting labor.

TABLE 6: EMPLOYMENT IMPORT/EXPORT – 1990

	Actual Jobs-1990	Location Quotient	Jobs required for self-sufficiency	Jobs tied to Exports
Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries, and Mining	18	0.49	37	**-19**
Construction	37	1.59	23	**14**
Manufacturing, nondurable	18	0.66	27	**-9**
Manufacturing, durable goods	18	0.62	29	**-11**
Transportation	13	0.61	21	**-8**
Communication & other Public Utilities	14	0.98	14	**0**
Wholesale Trade	24	1.18	**20**	**4**
Retail Trade	95	1.20	**79**	**16**
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	44	1.48	**30**	**14**
Business & Repair Services	30	1.50	**20**	**10**
Personal Services, Entertainment, & Recreational Services	16	0.91	**18**	**-2**
Health Services	44	1.16	**38**	**6**
Educational Services	37	0.95	**39**	**-2**
Other Professional and Related Services	23	0.84	**27**	**-4**
Public Administration	**10**	**0.58**	**17**	**-7**

Source: US Census Bureau Census of population, STF-1A 1980 and 1990

Based upon the data in Table 6, Bennington had six employment sectors with a "1" or greater. These sectors were:

Construction	1.59
Business & Repair Services	1.50
Finance, Insurance, & Real Estate	1.48
Retail Trade	1.20
Wholesale Trade	1.18
Health Services	1.16

These data indicate there is either an export of goods and services or an export of labor in each of these areas. In nearly every case, the export involved appears to be labor, based upon the number of businesses within and around Bennington and the close proximity to Omaha, Elkhorn, Valley, and Fremont.

The final two columns refer to the total jobs required for self-sufficiency, based upon the ratio discussed previously, and the total jobs tied to exports. The last column, "Jobs Tied to Exports," has both negative and positive numbers. A positive number indicates the potential number of persons working towards exportation of goods and services, while a negative number indicates the need to import labor to meet self-sufficiency.

TRAVEL TIME TO WORK

Table 7 examines the travel time to work for Bennington residents. The table is divided into 1980 and 1990 data and has the percentage change between the two years. Table 7 indicates there were 275

individuals either traveling to work or working at home in 1980. By 1990, this number increased by 159 persons, or 57.8%, to 434 total persons. However, the mean average travel time changed only slightly from 24.5 minutes in 1980, to 22.6 minutes in 1990.

The largest increases were in the following travel ranges:

Less than 5 minutes	+18 persons	100%
10 to 19 minutes	+45 persons	93.8%
20 to 29 minutes	+65 persons	75.6%
30 to 44 minutes	+42 persons	66.7%
Worked at home	+5 persons	166.7%

TABLE 7: TRAVEL TIME TO WORK, BENNINGTON, 1980 AND 1990

Travel Time to Work	1980	1990	% Change
Less than 5 minutes	18	36	100.0%
5 to 9 minutes	39	26	-33.3%
10 to 19 minutes	48	93	93.8%
20 to 29 minutes	86	151	75.6%
30 to 44 minutes	63	105	66.7%
45 to 59 minutes	10	12	100.0%
60 minutes or more	8	3	-62.5%
Worked at home	3	8	166.7%
Total	275	434	57.8%
Mean Travel Time (minutes)	24.5	22.6	-7.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, STF-3A, 1980, 1990

In actual numbers, the largest increases were seen in the 10-44 minutes trips from Bennington. In this travel range there were 152 more persons leaving Bennington, these three time ranges account for 60.6% of Bennington's total increase. These travel times make it difficult to pinpoint where people are actually working since nearly all of the Omaha Metro area can be reached in this amount of time, as well, as the cities of Fremont, Elkhorn, and Valley. These data continue to support the idea that a large number of Bennington residents commute to other communities for employment.

BENNINGTON: REGIONAL BASIC/NON-BASIC ANALYSIS

The following data examines six occupational areas that were established by the U.S. Census Bureau to evaluate trends in employment and the area economy. Blakely defines basic employment and non-basic employment in, "Planning Local Economic Development: Theory and Practice" as follows:

- Basic employment is associated with business activities that provide services primarily outside the area via sales of goods and services, but whose revenues are directed to the local area in the form of wages and payments to local suppliers[1]
- Non-Basic employment is primarily the sale of goods and services within the local area and the revenues re-circulating in the form of wages and payments.

Basic jobs are considered exports, which is the engine of growth. Export industries generate the money that flows into a City. A portion of the export-earned dollars is spent locally by the export workers, creating local jobs. Employees serving the local economy, in turn, spend much of their earning locally thus supporting additional jobs. If employment serving export markets rises or falls, employment serving the local market is presumed to move in the same direction. For example, when a factory (which is an export business) closes, retail merchants (local business) feel the impact as laid-off factory workers have less to spend.

This analysis is used to understand which occupational areas are exporting goods and services outside the area, thus importing dollars into the local economy. This analysis is performed for the City of Bennington and compared to the State of Nebraska. The six occupational areas are listed below:

- Managerial and Professional specialty occupations
- Technical, sales and administrative support occupations
- Service occupations
- Farming, forestry, and fishing occupations
- Precision production, craft and repair occupations
- Operators, fabricators, and laborers

Table 8 contains the work sector, the percentage of basic employment, the percentage of non-basic employment, and the percent of the State workforce in each occupational area. Basic employment percentages are the remaining points left after subtracting the State Workforce from the local workforce within a Work Sector. If the study area is less than the State percentage, then the entire percentage for the study area is non-basic. The bolded occupations in Table 8 indicate areas that appear to be basic. The economic base multiplier designates the number of non-basic jobs created and/or supported by every basic job in the area.

TABLE 8: BASIC / NON-BASIC EMPLOYMENT 1990

Work Sector	Basic	Non-Basic	% of Bennington Workforce	% of State Workforce
Managerial and Professional	0.0 %	18.6 %	18.6 %	23.1 %
Technical, Sales & Administrative Support	2.7 %	30.6 %	33.3 %	30.6 %
Service	**2.7 %**	**14.5 %**	**17.2 %**	**14.5 %**
Farming, Forestry & Fishing	0.0 %	4.1 %	4.1 %	7.4 %
Precision Production, Craft & Repair	**6.3 %**	**10.3 %**	**16.6 %**	**10.3 %**
Operators, Fabricators & Laborers	**0.0 %**	**10.2 %**	**10.2 %**	**14.1 %**
Totals	**11.7 %**	**89.3 %**	**100.0 %**	**100.0 %**

Economic Base Multiplier for Bennington is 8.55
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, STF-3A, 1990

[1] Blakley, p. 297, Sage Publications, Newbury Park, 1989

Table 8 indicates Bennington had three occupation sectors with Basic Employment in 1990. These occupational sectors were:

- Technical, Sales, and Administrative Support occupations,
- Service Occupations, and
- Precision production, crafts, and repair occupations.

Each of these sectors agrees with data found in Employment by Industry; however, the basic data does refer to individuals employed in Bennington.

The data in Table 8 also shows Bennington had 11.7% of its labor force tied to exportation of either goods, services, or labor. Since this exportation was spread across three sectors and the sectors were not too out of balance, the labor force side of Bennington appears relatively stable. Bennington is not overly dependent upon one labor area to supply exports.

The economic base multiplier is an indication of the balance between basic employment and non-basic employment. Bennington has an economic base multiplier of 8.55. The economic base multiplier can be read two ways:

- Every job on the basic side supports 8.55 jobs, meeting the needs locally; or
- Every dollar generated from exports generates 8.55 dollars locally.

Because of the two reasons above, it is critical for the economic base multiplier to be based upon a stable and spread-out level of basic employment; too much dependence on one sector can cause major economic problems in the community.

TABLE 9: REGIONAL AND STATE LABOR FORCE COMPARISONS 1990

Location	Managerial and Professional	Technical, Sales, & Administrative Support	Service	Farming, Forestry, & Fishing	Precision Production, Craft & Repair	Operators, Fabricators & Laborers	**Base Multiplier**
Nebraska	**23.1 %**	**30.6 %**	**14.5 %**	**7.4 %**	**10.3 %**	**14.1 %**	**NA**
Bennington	**18.6 %**	**33.3 %**	**17.2 %**	4.1 %	**16.6 %**	**10.2 %**	**8.55**
Douglas County	28.7 %	36.8 %	13.1 %	0.9 %	8.9 %	11.4 %	8.42
Blair	24.6 %	33.9 %	14.9 %	1.5 %	10.8 %	14.2 %	17.06
Valley	20.0%	24.0 %	17.0 %	5.4 %	13.6%	20.0 %	8.53
Omaha	27.1 %	36.7 %	14.0 %	0.8 %	9.1 %	12.3 %	9.90
Elkhorn	23.9 %	34.7 %	15.3 %	1.2 %	12.2 %	12.8 %	13.28

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, STF-3A, 1990

Table 9 is a summary of Bennington's basic/non-basic sectors, as well as the percentage and economic base multipliers for nearby communities and Douglas County. The data shows Blair and Elkhorn with the most sectors with Basic Employment. Both Blair and Elkhorn had four sectors with basic employment; however,

only two of the four, in each, were balanced, while the other two were minor in the amount of Basic Employment. Elkhorn had an economic base multiplier of 13.28 and Blair had a 17.06 multiplier. Based upon indicated entities in Table 9, Bennington and Valley appear to have the most balanced economic base multipliers.

RETAIL TRADE

Retail trade analyzes, Bennington's Net Taxable Sales and determines any positive or negative trends. In addition, Net Taxable Sales for Bennington are compared to the total for the State of Nebraska on a per capita basis. Through the State comparison, a determination of Bennington's ability to attract consumers can be made. As with the Location Quotient comparison, "1" is the magic number. If Bennington has a "pull factor" of "1, then the retailers are attracting sales in an amount equal to supplier local demand. If the ratio is less than "1," then Bennington residents are leaving the community to meet their needs. Finally, if the ratio is "1" or greater, then Bennington merchants are servicing Bennington residents and are attracting outside sales into the community.

FIGURE 4: PRIMARY RETAIL TRADE AREA

Map Source: Nebraska Department of Roads State Highway Map

Figure 4 analyzes Bennington's Retail Trade based upon Reilly's Retail Gravitational Model. This model examines and compares Bennington's population and distance to other retail areas. The calculation creates a break point where people will go one direction or the other for goods and services.

NET TAXABLE SALES

Table 10 contains the Net Taxable Sales for Bennington from 1984 through 1996. During this time period, Bennington had a low of $2,810, 224.00 in 1985, and a high of $4,611,615.00 in 1990. Throughout the entire period, the amount of the Net Taxable Sales has fluctuated up and down annually. Overall, the Net Taxable Sales increased by $1,341,700.00, or 43.4%.

TABLE 10: NET TAXABLE SALES 1984 –1996

Year	*Net Taxable Sales ($)	State Sales Tax ($)
1984	3,091,338	111,448,.44
1985	2,810,224	98,358.41
1986	3,556,505	124,828.41
1987	3,540,033	141,601.32
1988	3,865,152	162,188.85
1989	3,985,047	206,657.05
1990	4,611,615	210,222.40
1991	4,201,448	193,329.55
1992	3,908,303	188,022.85
1993	3,760,457	160,273.31
1994	3,182,718	175,205.77
1995	3,504,115	221,657.90
1996	4,433,038	239,305.50

*Does not include motor vehicle sales
State of Nebraska sales tax collections amounted to $495,120,950 in 1990; $701,767,002 in 1995 $788,289,653 in 1998.
Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue, 1999

Comparing the CPI for the same period of 51.0%, Bennington merchants were lagging behind in real dollars for 1996 as opposed to 1984. Merchants in Bennington were making less in 1996 as opposed to 1984 when dollars are adjusted for inflation. This theory assumes the same merchants were in operation in 1996 and 1984. One other possibility is that fewer merchants were in business and were actually seeing an increase in sales; fewer people selling more, thus a better income for those that have survived.

PULL FACTORS

When reviewing the Net Taxable Sales Data and comparing it to the State as a whole on a per capita level, pull factors can be determined for Bennington. The analysis shows a small circle around Bennington. Individuals within this area will likely use local goods and services compared to the other communities. However, anyone outside the circle will likely get specific goods and services in Omaha, Elkhorn, or Blair.

Based upon the data for 1980, 1990, and 1998, the following are the pull factors for Bennington:

1980 1.01
1990 0.80
1996 0.49

These pull factors indicate Bennington has a rapidly declining share of the retain market within the Omaha Metro area. By using the determined population projections, plus projecting our future Net Taxable Sales for Bennington and the State of Nebraska, using the past trend lines, the pull factors for 2000, 2010, and 2020 appear to be worsening. For example (the worst case scenario), using the High Series population projection, the following appear to be future pull factors for Bennington:

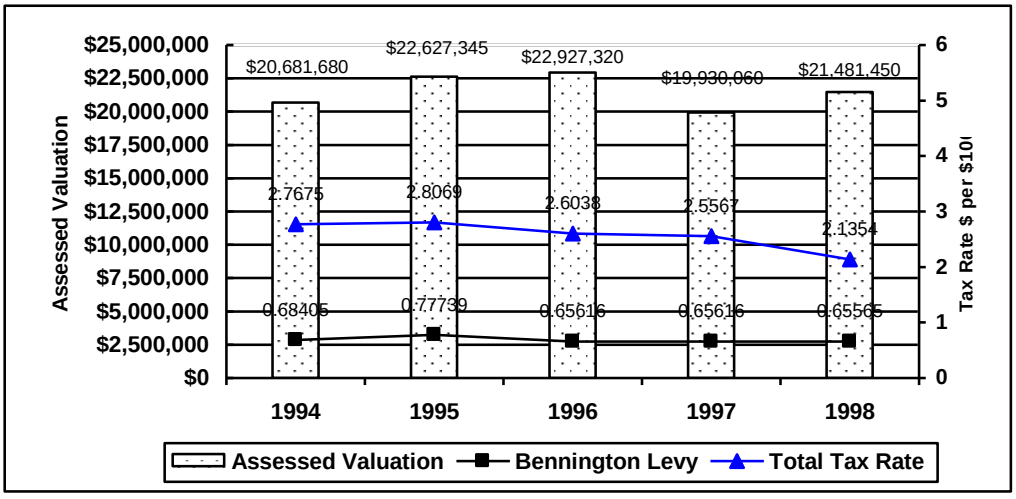
2000 0.45
2010 0.30
2020 0.20

Over the next twenty years, Bennington will become even more dependent upon the Omaha retailers and merchants. In order to correct this scenario, Bennington must either develop a strategy to attract more people to purchase good and services in Bennington, or attract a major retailer that may begin the process of creating Bennington into a retail trade center for the area. A good is developed in the latter portion of this plan in the land use plan section. Potential areas for future commercial development will be designated thus enabling Bennington to attract future retailers for the community. Other strategies must be implemented beyond the policies within this plan to make this a reality. (ie Community Brochure about Economic Development possibilities in Bennington.)

FISCAL TRENDS

Specific fiscal trends about a community can produce evidence of a local government's economic stability with regards to overall Assessed Valuations and tax rates for that community. In addition to this information fiscal trends can reveal information pertaining to municipal indebtedness and school district information. Fiscal Trends examines the municipality's ability to provide services while generating the appropriate amount of revenue. This step reviews Bennington's growth in Assessed Valuation, the changes in the tax levies both municipal and other.

FIGURE 5: FISCAL TRENDS 1996 – 1998



Source: Douglas County Assessors Office, 1999

Figure 5 shows the Total Assessed Valuation for properties within Bennington. The figure also shows the Total Tax Levied by the City of Bennington and the Total Tax Levy paid by a resident of Bennington. These data are from fiscal 1994 through fiscal 1998.

The data found in Table 11 is graphically displayed in Figure 5. The data review the Assessed Valuations, the local tax rate, and the overall county tax rate for the City of Bennington. Table 11 shows that the City of Bennington had an assessed valuation of $20,681,680, in 1994, by 1998 the Assessed Valuation had increased to $21,481,450 or 3.9%. The overall peak within these years was in 1996 at $22,927,320.

Between these years the City Tax Rate went from $0.68405 per $100 of Assessed Valuation to $0.65565 per $100 of Assessed Valuations or – 4.2%. This indicates that the tax rate decreased at a faster rate than the valuations increased for the city. It must be known that the county controls the Assessed Valuations were as the City controls the city tax rate. Comparing these two figures indicates that residents actually paid a little less in taxes in 1998 than they did in 1994.

Including the City Tax Rate, the overall tax rate paid to all entities by the residents of the City of Bennington went from $2.76749 per $100 Assessed Valuation to $2.135360 per $100 Assessed Valuation. This was a change of -$.63213 or –23%. This decrease indicates that the residents of Bennington actually paid less in taxes overall than they did in City taxes between this time span of 5 years.

TABLE 11: TAX LEVIES AND ASSESSED VALUATIONS

CITY OF BENNINGTON	199-1995	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999
Assessed Valuation	$20,681,680	$22,627,345	$22,927,320	$19,930,060	$21,481,450
City Levy	$0.68405	$0.77739	$0.65616	$0.65616	$0.65565
Debt Service	$0	$0	$0	$0	$0
City Total	$0.68405	$0.77739	$0.65616	$0.65616	$0.65565
Other Levies	$2.083440	$2.029480	$1.900490	$1.900490	$1.479710
Total Levy	**$2.76749**	**$2.80687**	**$2.60379**	**$2.55665**	**$2.135360**

Source: City of Bennington and Douglas County Assessor's Office

Finally when figuring total revenue brought in by the City of Bennington though taxes it can identify pertinent information. In 1994 the city of Bennington brought in $141473.03 at a tax rate of $.68405. By 1998 the City of Bennington received $140,843.13 through a tax rate of $.655565. At the peak of revenue for this time period, which was 1996, the total revenue brought in that year was $150,439.90. It is evident that the City is trying to operate at the same budget while keeping taxes down. The City of Bennington was actually running off a budget of less in 1998 than it was in 1994. This is very difficult to accomplish with the increasing costs of maintaining a government. As cities grow, expanded administration costs as well as increasing public facility costs become reality, Bennington should consider this when evaluating tax levies and municipal budgeting.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES:
EXISTING AND FUTURE NEEDS

COMMUNITY FACILITIES: EXISTING AND FUTURE NEEDS

Community facilities are provided to insure the safety and well being of the residents of Bennington. Community facilities provide citizens with social, cultural, educational, health care, law enforcement, fire protection and recreational facilities designed to meet the needs of the area. Public utilities provide water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer and solid waste disposal for residents of Bennington.

Four general objectives have been established as guidelines for the Public Facilities and Utilities Section of the Comprehensive Plan. These objectives are as follows:

1. Determine the present capacity of all public facilities/services;
2. Compare these capacities with established present needs and accepted standards in determining adequacy to meet current demands;
3. Determine future adequacy of these facilities/services to meet future estimated demands within the planning period; and
4. Recommend improvements where community facilities are not considered adequate for present or future needs.

EDUCATION

One K-12 school building serves the Bennington school district, with a total district valuation of $137,119,504.00. The 1999-2000 school year enrollment amounted to 575 students K-12, with a projected ten year growth of an additional 910 students. For the same enrollment year the average cost per student was $6,101.69. The Bennington Public School District is provided with occupational therapy, physical therapy and psychological counseling therapy through a contract with the Educational Service Unit Number 3 located in Omaha. Bennington school staff provides speech therapy in addition to serving the learning disabled and educable mentally handicapped. Sports opportunities in the Bennington Public School System include football, basketball, volleyball, softball, golf, cross-country, track and field, and wrestling.

"Post-Secondary Schools, Colleges & Universities"

Several Post-secondary schools, colleges, and universities serve the Bennington area. These include:

- Metropolitan Community Technical School (Elkhorn)
- University of Nebraska-Omaha(Omaha)
- University of Nebraska-Lincoln (Lincoln)
- Bellevue University(Bellevue)
- Midland College(Fremont)
- Dana College(Blair)
- Wesleyan University (Lincoln)

These institutions are only an example of several institutions that could serve the needs of local students. However, several others are available but are located outside the immediate vicinity.

EDUCATION RECOMMENDATIONS

Some time in the near future it will be beneficial to examine the possibility of expanding or building new school facilities to meet the demand of the increased student population, which is in direct proportion to the general population increase in the area. Also it would be in the best interest to create a greater communication between the School Board, the Planning Commission, and the City Council on new developments in the Bennington area as well as the Omaha Metropolitan area that falls within the Bennington School district. This would enable the school district to better evaluate the potential increase in student population to accommodate the needs of the present as well as future students. The School Board should be actively involved with evaluating new subdivision plats that come to the Planning Commission and the City Council, this would open lines of communication in the future.

HEALTH CARE

Hospital

There are no hospitals located in Bennington. All hospitals are located within a short trip of Bennington, that include:

Hospital Facility	Location	Distance (miles)
Immanuel Medical Center	72nd & Redick	9.7 miles
Methodist / Children's Hospital	84th & Dodge	12.5 miles
Bergan Mercy Hospital	72nd & Center	18.1 miles

Note: all miles are approximate and may vary depending on route and traffic conditions.

Source: MKA 1979 Bennington Comprehensive Development Plan

Clinics

Bennington does not have any Medical Clinics located in the planning jurisdiction. The only medical services provided in the jurisdiction are Dental. Several clinics are located within close proximity to the Bennington area in Omaha, these are:

Medical Facility	Location	Distance
Clarkson Primary Care – North	13410 W. Maple Rd.	6.2 miles
Eagle Run Medical Center	13110 Birch Drive	6.0 miles
Fort Calhoun Clinic – Ft. Calhoun	1420 Clark Street	9.5 miles
Good Shepard		
Healthspring Medical Group – NW	3317 N. 107th Street	9.0 miles
Immanuel Professional Center	6828 N. 72nd Street	9.7 miles
Physicians Clinic	10710 Fort Street	7.8 miles

Note: all miles are approximate and may vary depending on route and traffic conditions.

Source: JEO

Nursing Home

Presently, there are no Nursing Home facilities located in the Bennington planning jurisdiction. However, there are several facilities located throughout the Omaha Metropolitan Area, these include:

Nursing Facility	Location	Distance
Alegent Health		
(Immanuel Fontenelle Home)	6901 N. 72nd Street	9.7 miles
Ambassador Subacute &		
Rehabilitation Center	1540 N. 72nd Street	10.0 miles
Beverly Health & Rehabilitation	300 W. Meigs Street–Valley	19.0 miles
Crowell Memorial Home	245 S. 22nd Street – Blair	14.0 miles

Elkhorn Manor	315 Hopper Street–Elkhorn	9.0 miles

Note: all miles are approximate and may vary depending on route and traffic conditions.

Source: JEO

HEALTH CARE RECOMMENDATIONS

At the present time there are no health care facilities in Bennington. In the future the community should look at the validity of attracting a clinic to serve the needs of its residents. With the projected growth that Bennington faces in the future it might make sense that some form of health care is needed. In the past health care may have not been needed, but with the aging population in the community and the addition of new residents, it is a possibility that a clinic could be established and sustained.

PUBLIC SAFETY

Police Protection

Bennington has two full time officers, a chief and one regular officer, who provide 80 to 100 hours of police protection per week. In addition to full time officers Bennington retains three part time officers that provide 20 to 35 hours per week and five reserve officers. All dispatching is handled through Douglas County/Omaha Police Communication Center.

The police department has three fully equipped patrol units all being Ford Crown Victoria of which one is 9 years old, another is 6 years old and the last is a year old. All units are equipped with a light-bar, radios, and sirens. (no cameras or computers. The Police Station, at approximately 250 square feet, contains ten file cabinets, an evidence cabinet, four desks, two computers, and fax machine. The attached garage contains two 24' x 24' stalls, six lockers, one evidence cabinet, and one cabinet for supplies. The Station contains no holding cells, so all detainment is handled through the Douglas County Sheriff. The facility at this time does not meet the needs of the department and it was expressed that an expansion is badly needed.

Fire Protection & Ambulance Service

The Bennington Volunteer Fire and Rescue Squad, located at 15509 Warehouse Road in Bennington provides fire and rescue service not only for the city of Bennington but also the surrounding area. In addition to this station in Bennington there is a satellite station located in the village of Washington, 4 miles to the northwest. The area which the Bennington fire district covers is roughly from Fort Street to two miles north of the Douglas County line, from 108th Street to 220th Street, approximately 45 square miles. The department was established in 1892 and has been a volunteer service ever since. The facility that houses the department is 30 years old, with an addition that was constructed in 1993. The 48' x 84' addition which was added to the south of the original facility added 3 additional bays, a large meeting room, new kitchen, conference room, new bathrooms, and a new office. The facility is adequate at the present time but improvements are expected for the future.

At the present time the department relies on 28 volunteers for support. The department expects all volunteers to have at least an EMTB (Emergency Medical Technician Basic) status, currently 23 are at this level with one in training. The four additional volunteers are certified paramedics. Training takes place through Immanuel hospital in Omaha on a regular basis to keep volunteers current. This training consists of 30 hours every 3 years for EMT's and 80 hours every 2 years for Paramedics.

The Bennington Fire department not only relies on its volunteers for support, but also for its equipment. The following is an equipment list of which the department owns:

Year, Make and Type	Pump Size	Tank Size
1988 Ford/Collins Type III Ambulance		
1996 Ford/Lifeline Type III Ambulance		
1990 Ford Central Mini-Pumper/Attack Unit	150 GPM	300 Gallon
1993 Spartan/Central Class A Pumper	1250 GPM	1000 Gallon
1985 Ford Chassis/1962 Smeal Body	750 GPM	1250 Gallon
1997 Chevrolet Suburban/Utility		
1979 Ford/Pierce Pumper		

All vehicles listed range from fairly good condition to excellent condition. New equipment is expected in the future and older equipment are expected to be phased out or rotated to the satellite station to the northwest of Bennington in the Village of Washington in Washington County.

PUBLIC SAFETY RECOMMENDATIONS

In the future it may be advantageous to consider the construction of a new police facility or relocation of the existing police services. At the present time the police headquarters for the community is very cramped and in much need of more space. The present facility does not offer the option for expansion so another site must be found if the option is considered.

If expansion of 156th Street through Bennington does occur in the future the fire hall may become inadequate do to space lost to the right of way (ROW). As there is no additional room at this site it may be beneficial to relocate or to construct a new building.

An option for the police headquarters, the fire hall, and the city offices would be relocate together in the same building on a site that would position all three public facilities in the optimal place to serve the public. This would lower the overall costs to the community rather than relocating to separate buildings elsewhere. Although, development costs for public facilities increase with time and should be evaluated so that public expenditure will not create a cost burden for the community.

The services offered both by the police department and fire district are excellent. Continued training and replacement of equipment would be the best plan of action. In addition future specific planning by both public departments should also be continued as well as continued cooperation with Washington and Douglas County Sheriff's Departments as well as Omaha and Elkhorn's Fire Departments.

PUBLIC SERVICES

City Library

The Bennington Public Library, located at 15505 Warehouse Street (east of the Fire Station) was constructed in 1970 with addition that was completed in 1996. The library contains 16,477 volumes and has an annual circulation of 21,566. The building encompasses 1927 square feet and meets ADA compliance. The space used by the library is slowly becoming inadequate. In addition to the space limitation the site leaves no room for expansion.

City Hall

The Bennington City Hall is located at 15514 Warehouse Street. The facility has two employees located within the building. The building is ADA compliant. Presently, there are no plans for future expansion; however, if expansion would be required in the future, there is not adequate room to accommodate any expansion. The facility houses the City Office, a meeting room, and the Police Department. The facility is considered to be in good condition.

City Maintenance Facility

The City Maintenance Facility is located near the city ballfields. The equipment housed there includes lawn mowers and city tools. The facility was constructed in 1998 – 1999 and is adequate for present day needs. If expansion were needed, there is adequate space for an addition.

Postal Facility

The Post Office in Bennington is located at 124 S. Stark Street. The General Services Administration leases the facility to the Postal Service. The facility is presently adequate for the needs of the community. However, if expansion became necessary, space is not adequate for an addition.

Refuse Collection

Christianson Trash Service handles the entire community of Bennington for refuse collection.

PUBLIC SERVICE RECOMMENDATIONS

The community might want to explore the possibility of relocating or constructing new facilities for the city offices and public library. This in light of the space limitations both may have in the future as the community continues to grow while providing services in the future. Increasing development cost must be kept in mind when exploring these recommendations so that the community can effectively handle the extra burden to the city's operating budget.

Existing Municipal Parks

Bennington has four park facilities within the community. These include Centennial Park, Tim Ohrt Park, and Johns-Bohn Park. These parks include a total of 41 acres. The following is an outline of the different park facilities in Bennington. Additional information on the parks can be found in the adopted Bennington Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Park	Total Acres	Land Acres	Water Acres	Recreational Facilities
Centennial Park	0.3 acres	0.3 Acres	0 acres	Gazebo, Picnicking, and Playground equipment.
Tim Ohrt Park	5.5 acres	5.5 acres	0 acres	Baseball, Park Shelter, Playground, and Picnicking.
Johns-Bohn Park	8.75 acres	8.75 acres	0 acres	Picnicking, Playground equipment, 2 soccer fields, Tennis courts, basketball court, sand volley ball court, and park shelter.
Four Ball Complex	24.25 acres	24.75 acres	0.5 acres	Four baseball / softball fields, playground equipment, concession stands, basketball court, and park shelter.

Existing Regional Park Facilities

Bennington has two additional parks within the general vicinity. These include Standing Bear Lake and Glen Cunningham Lake. Both lakes are outside Bennington's planning jurisdiction. The following is some information on each of the facilities.

Park	Total Acres	Land Acres	Water Acres	Recreational Facilities
Standing Bear Lake	685 acres	550 Acres	135 acres	Picnicking, Bicycling, Wildlife, Fishing, Boating, Ice Skating, Playground Equipment.

Park	Total Acres	Land Acres	Water Acres	Recreational Facilities
Glen Cunningham Lake	1,552 acres	1,162 acres	390 acres	Camping, Picnicking, Bicycling, Hiking, Winter Sports, Outdoor Games, Wildlife, Fishing, Boating

The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission recommends that communities with population of less than 2,500 provide a minimum of 25 acres of park/recreation space per 1,000 persons. This recommendation would indicate 23.1 acres of park or recreation space should be available for Bennington, based upon the 1996 Census estimates. Bennington has an estimated 41.5 acres of park/recreation land, which is approximately 38.4 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. At the present level of parkland, Bennington could accommodate 1,660 persons without adding any additional park space.

Bennington is located in the Nebraska Recreation Planning Region I. Recreation Planning Region I consists of three Metro Area Nebraska counties. These counties are Douglas, Sarpy, and Washington. Basic park and recreation space and location plan offers the following recommendations for parks and recreation areas. High density recreation areas should be located near urban areas and be user-oriented in design and provide a range of recreational facilities which are appropriate to the park setting and mass use. General outdoor recreation areas should utilize natural resources and be equipped with man-made facilities.

The adopted Bennington Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides additional information on Bennington's existing facilities as well as those recreational facilities in surrounding areas. The Master Plan identifies service areas for each type of facility and provides recommendations for new parks and trails and improvements to existing facilities based upon adopted standards, policies and public input.

PARKS AND RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS

At the present time the City of Bennington has more than the needed amount of parks in comparison to other communities its size. A continued plan for the future for the parks should be as much as same as it is for the present. Within existing parks continued maintenance and replacement of old and substandard equipment should occur as well as an equal addition of parks in newly developed areas to compliment already developed parks. Also, it would be advantageous for Bennington to connect these parks with future parks in the local area as well as the region through the use of a trail network. Ultimately these parks could utilize the major trail system that is established to the southwest along the Big Papillion Creek.

As far as regional park planning around the Bennington area, it would be favorable to cooperate with the City of Omaha and Douglas County on a the region wide Master Parks Plan that the City of Omaha initiated. Working together all parties should have equal input on how to develop parks in the future overall benefiting the public at large.

Although Bennington may have an adequate amount of recreational facilities when compared to other communities its size, Bennington is also in a position to serve residents outside of its corporate limits. As part of the Omaha Metropolitan Area, Bennington has been and will continue to serve a growing population outside its one-mile zoning jurisdiction. The increasing population has been determined in the Bennington Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The Master Plan provides recommendations for new parks and trails and improvements to existing facilities based upon adopted standards, policies, pubic input, and this growing population. Such changes shall be incorporated into the Omaha Suburban Park Master Plan.

Municipal Water System

The City of Bennington has a central water system that serves the City and the Bennington Park area. Bennington Park is a Sanitary Improvement District adjacent to the City (SID No. 293).

The water system consists of four water supply wells, mains and a 250,000 gallon elevated storage tank. The water supply wells have a relatively low capacity, in the range of 200 gallons per minute, and deliver the water directly to the mains and storage. No treatment is provided to the water prior to distribution.

The distribution system consists of 2", 4", 6", 8", and 10" mains. The elevated water storage is located adjacent to 4th Avenue and 158th Street and provides pressure for the entire system. A recent wash out inspection indicated that the interior of the storage tank was in good condition.

The quality of the water from the wells is hard with some level of iron and manganese. Treatment of the water for removal of these elements may be desirable.

Sanitary Sewer System

The existing sanitary sewer system consists of the gravity collection system that serves all of the City and the Bennington Park Sanitary and Improvement District. The collection system discharges to the main wastewater pump station located at the Wastewater Treatment Plant site.

The Wastewater Treatment facilities were constructed in 1983 and is an extended aeration activated, sludge system with sludge treatment facilities and disinfection. These treatment facilities include:
A two-pump lift station (wet well type),

- Two aeration tanks,
- Two final clarifiers,
- Ultraviolet disinfection,
- Aerobic digestion,
- Standby generation, and
- Blower – laboratory – UV Building

The treatment facilities have a design capacity of 186,000 gallons per day and the existing wastewater flows are approximately 50 to 60% of design capacity. The operation of the existing facilities has been satisfactory and has been in compliance with the limits established in the City's Discharge permit.

OTHER UTILITIES

Natural gas is supplied and distributed to residential, commercial and industrial customers in Bennington by Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD).

Propane is locally supplied by Rob's Oil Company.

Electricity

Electricity is supplied to Bennington by the Omaha Public Power District. The nearest service office is State Street in Irvington, Nebraska.

PUBLIC UTILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS

During update of the Comprehensive Development Plan many issues about public facilities were discussed. These issues were in direction relation to the quality of services provided and development pressures that surrounded the City of Bennington. The specific public utilities that were discussed included municipal water and sanitary sewer services. Outlined below are outcomes of these discussions.

Future Municipal Water Service

Municipal water service for the City of Bennington was discussed between elected officials of Bennington as well as residents, actual users and the Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD), a potential provider of future water service. Engineering reports, by outside consultants, were provided to the City of Bennington to evaluate the costs and benefits of using water services provided by MUD or to remain on the existing municipal water system. Ultimately the decision to use MUD as a water service provider came to the community through the elected official's of Bennington. The overall feeling for the community was to use MUD for water service. The community, as a whole, concluded that a higher standard of water quality outweighed the higher costs, which would occur with MUD. (The mentioned water reports evaluated the present water system and gave options to the community about future water service needs. The Studies are available with the City of Bennington if specific details are needed.)

Future Sanitary Sewer Service

The sanitary sewer service for the City of Bennington has been another topic of discussion during the update of the Comprehensive Development Plan. Development pressure adjacent to the community raised concerns about the city's existing sanitary sewer treatment facility and how it would be impacted by additional users. The City of Bennington faced three options including (1) expansion of the existing treatment facility in order to increase the capacity to meet the future demand (2) connecting to a sanitary sewer interceptor that the City of Omaha could construct along the Papio Creek from southeast of Bennington. Upon connection to the interceptor line, he City of Omaha would then treat the wastewater. (3) or continue operating the existing wastewater treatment facility until future development in the area would put the facility at capacity.

Air Transport

The City of Bennington is not served directly by an airport. The nearest private small craft airport is the North Omaha Airport at approximately 72nd Street and Nebraska State Highway 36. In addition, there are airport facilities available in Fremont and Millard.

The nearest commercial airport facility is Eppley Airfield in Omaha. Eppley Airfield offers in- and out-bound flights on several commercial carriers. In addition, Eppley Airfield also has companies offering commuter flights.

Bus Transportation

The City has no direct bus services. Services are available in Omaha.

Railroads

Bennington has no direct rail service. All rail service is located in Omaha. The Omaha area is serviced by the Union Pacific and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroads. Both railroads provide piggy-back depots in Omaha. Amtrak provides passenger service to the area.

Trucking

Bennington is served by several intrastate and interstate carriers located throughout the Omaha Metropolitan Area.

Telephone Service

US West services the telephone needs of the Bennington area. These services are assumed to be adequate for the time being and future upgrades will be handled as needed.

Radio and Television

Bennington does not have its own radio or television stations, but is served by numerous regional stations carrying local news.

Newspaper

Bennington is served by the Omaha World Herald and the Douglas County Post-Gazette. All Legal notices for Bennington are published in the Douglas County Post Gazette.

TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATIONS RECOMMENDATIONS

All transportation Communications public needs are being met at the present time

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ISSUES

GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ISSUES

Community Goals

A series of general community goals will be used as guidelines for city budgeting and decision making towards future development. These community goals will need to be refined to provide who, what, when and where information to bring them to mature.

Identified Issues

The following lists include the answers to the four questions asked at the Town Hall Meeting on Thursday May 6, 1999. Besides the listed issue, the final tabulation is also included and the items were ranked.

The first question discussed at the Town Hall Meeting was; "What are some of the negatives in Bennington?" The answers are ranked in order of the most negative to the least negative. However, not all items received points but are included in the list. For those that did not receive points they are listed for the fact they still have importance to the community.

Negatives	Points
Water Quality	7
Lack of Elderly Housing	6
Employment Oppurtunities	5
Lack of Development in Downtown Area	4
Lack of Medical Services	3
Lack of Meeting Facilities	2
Expansion of Tax Base	2
Lack of Recreation	2
Size of Library Facility	0
Limited Types of Recreation	0
Growth only in Westward Direction	0
Transportation to and from Omaha	0
Lack of Housing	0
Size of Police Facility	0
Make up of education	0
Growing Pains	0
Public Safety	0
Not having representation of Attorney at Meetings	0
Total	**31**

The second question discussed at the Town Hall Meeting was; "What are some of the positives Bennington?" The answers are ranked in order of the most positive to the least positive. However, not all items received points but are included in the list. Again those listed without points came up in the meeting so they still have the attention of the community.

Positives	Points
Sense of Community	9
Own public Utilities	8
Park Space	4
Excellent Library System	3
Low Crime	3
Education System	3
Safe Community	2
Friendly Atmosphere	1
Stable Economy	1
Emergency Response	1
Bennington Athletics	1
Proximity to Omaha	0
Orderly Growth	0
Property Values	0
Volunteerism	0
Clean Community	0
Road System	0
No Envrinomental Problems	0
Interest in Bennington from outside and inside the community	0
Civic Organizations	0
Quite community	0
Total	**36**

The third question discussed at the Town Hall Meeting was; "What are some issues within Bennington?" The answers are ranked in order of the most important to the least important. However, not all items received points but are included in the list and since some did not receive points it does not mean that they should not be looked at for future consideration.

Issues	Points
Public Utilities	8
Keep Independence	6
School	4
Growth	4
Keeping Small Town Character	4
Recreation	3
Youth Employment	2
Zoning	2
Traffic	1
Elderly Care	1
Downtown Development	1
Relationship with Omaha	1
Public Safety	0
Library	0
Health Care	0
Litter on Highway	0
Cable TV	0
Dog Problem	0
Lack of Industrial Development	0
Entrances to City	0
Commercial Development	0
Hotels and Motels	0
City Ordinances	0
Total	**37**

The fourth question discussed at the Town Hall Meeting was; "What are some projects that need to be done in the future in Bennington?" The answers are ranked in order of the most important to the least important. However, not all items received points but are included in the list and since some did not receive points it does not mean that they should not be looked at for future consideration.

Projects	Points
Sewer and Water Plans	9
More School Facilities	9
Development of Downtown	4
Community Building	4
Recreational Facilities	3
Street Improvements	3
Annexation	2
Library	2
Law Enforcement Facilities	0
Cable TV	0
Playground Equipment	0
Community Entrances	0
Community Brochures	0
ADA in certain areas of community	0
Ball fields	0
Fire Equipment	0
Total	**36**

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives are important elements in the future development of a community. The goals and objectives assist in establishing future desires, policies, and needs for the community. These should represent the basic beliefs and feelings of the community at large. In most cases these goals and objectives are established by a group of people with vast backgrounds from within the community.

Goals are desires, necessities and issues that should be attained in the future. A goal should be established in a manner that can be accomplished. Goals are the end state of a desired outcome. Goals also play a factor in the establishment of policy within a community. In order to attain certain goals, policies within the local governments may need to be modified or changed.

Objectives are steps that are performed in order to attain specific goals. Objectives must be an action, must be measurable through both specific degree of achievement and in terms of time. Objectives can be established in a way that assigns specific activities to specific individuals. Policies can also be a derivative of objectives.

It is important for communities to establish their goals and objectives in a fashion that will allow for long-term accomplishments and short-term accomplishments. The short-term goals and objectives serve several functions: Allow for immediate feedback and success, which fuels the desire to achieve additional goals and objectives

Allows for the distribution of resources over time thus assuring a balanced use of public investment.
Some goals will naturally take longer to accomplish than others, therefore the appropriate time frame should be allocated.

GOALS FOR BENNINGTON'S FUTURE

At the time of this plan there were several issues at the forefront of the community. The most important topic that came out of the town hall meeting was that of the poor water quality. Another issue at the top of the list was the lack of elderly housing in Bennington. Some other issues that came up during the town hall meeting included lack of employment opportunities for youth in town, needed downtown development, and lack of medical services and meeting facilities.

On the positive side of the meeting, some topics that were discussed included a good sense of community, generous park space, and an excellent library system. Other issues that were talked about were the low crime rate and the education system. Finally a major discussion not only during this meeting was the topic of bringing water and sanitary sewer lines into Bennington from the outside. The following pages will address these issues as well as others identified during the planning process. Along with the goals, objectives will be formulated and addressed in regard to time frame, participants and possible funding sources for accomplishing each goal. The following goals and objectives will need specific policies and defined actions placed on them, by the community, in order to achieve each issue. The Planning Commission should review these goals and objectives and vote on which take priority regarding concentration of funding and energy.

PUBLIC HEALTH AND SAFETY

Goal:

Work with the specific issues facing Bennington regarding both Public Health and Safety concerns in the City of Bennington.

Objectives:

1. The Bennington fire department should continue to train personnel and update equipment as needed.
2. When the time is appropriate the city should review the possibility to move from a volunteer-based department to a full-time department.
3. The city should look into options of expanding the local law enforcement facilities to meet current and future needs.
4. Work to expand medical services in the Bennington area, for both short term and long term care.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Goal:

Support park and recreation projects that can further improve the appearance and Quality of Life for residents in and around Bennington as identified in the Bennington Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Objectives:

1. Continue to develop the abundant amount of unused parkland within and around the City of Bennington to promote recreation in the area.
2. Work with developers in the future to create more parks in and around new developments.
3. Continue to promote the strong recreation activities that are currently taking place within the community and develop more recreational activities. As needed, increase/upgrade the facilities for these activities.
4. Work Closely with Omaha's Suburban Master Park Plan so that both city's parks systems mesh or become seamless.
5. Update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, specifically the action plan, as needed.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Goal:

Bennington will explore programs and facilities to insure adequate utilities for existing and future residents. Develop pro-active strategies that will not cause future growth to stagnate due to the inability to provide the proper utilities to serve this growth.

Objectives:

1. Explore different options for the sanitary sewer system in Bennington and the surrounding areas. This includes connecting the city to a new sanitary sewer interceptor extended by the Omaha Public Works Department. Also look at the potential of expanding the existing sewer plant. (The cost to the community for either option should benefit the community as a whole.)
2. Direct utilities to areas of the community where development should occur. ("Development Follows the Pipe")

HOUSING

Goal:

The City will explore programs and policies to increase and support safe, affordable and alternative housing. These programs include single-family residential, multi-family residential and elderly housing.

Objectives:

1. Encourage the elimination of housing that is in a substandard condition through either restoration or demolition.
2. Encourage the development of both moderate and affordable multi-family housing units. These housing units do not necessarily include subsidized housing but housing where the tenant pays full rent.
3. Investigate options for the development of elderly housing in the city, the use of assisted living could be an option.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Goal:

As the population of Bennington increases it will become more important to attract and/or develop new commercial entities within the community. In addition, new industrial interests need to be encouraged provided these meet the goals of the community.

Objectives:

Through the Land Use Policies and Zoning Regulations establish areas dedicated to commercial and industrial development.

1. Through the Land Use Policies and Zoning Regulations establish areas dedicated to commercial and industrial development.
2. At a point after completion of the Comprehensive Development Plan and Zoning Regulations, complete a Blight and Substandard Study. In conjunction, complete a Redevelopment Plan to address the results of the Blight Study and future development for the community.
3. Market the city to potential investors outside and inside the community to establish more commercial and industrial development.
    A. Develop a brochure that gets the word out about the community.
    B. Put together a "developer's packet" about the community.
4. Look at putting together a Downtown Master Plan, which would eventually lead to downtown redevelopment thus making it a stronger commercial and retail center contributing development.
5. Explore options on constructing "Community Entrances" north and south of town.
6. Make strides towards attracting hotels and motels inside or in close proximity to the city.

CONSERVATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Goal:

The goal is to effectively allow development in and around Bennington while practicing good conservation and environmental sense.

Objectives:

1. Develop Zoning and Subdivision Regulations that reward developers for developments that work with the lay of the land, wetlands, and/or other environmental concerns.
2. Develop Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to protect corridors along existing wooded creeks. These work to preserve the wooded areas and act as habitat corridor areas.
3. Work closely with outside public entities such as the Natural Resource District, the Army Corps of Engineers, Department of Environmental Quality, and others to ensure sound environmental quality when new development in around the city occurs.

EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

An analysis of the existing land uses is important in understanding potential needs in the future. Existing land uses are determined through visual survey of the community. From this survey the different uses are placed into categories, which are:

- Residential (single-family, multi-family, and mobile homes.)
- Commercial (retail, office, etc.)
- Industrial and Railroad
- Public Right-of-Way
- Public/Semi Public, and
- Vacant and Agriculture

Table 12 contains data from a field survey that was conducted on April 2, 1999 and information from the last Comprehensive Plan Update that was completed in 1979. The table represents the existing land use of Bennington in acres, percent of total area of the city, and acres of use per 100 persons using the 1990 census data.

TABLE 12: EXISTING LAND USE AREA

Type of Use	1979[2] Area (% of total area)	1999[2] Area (% of total area)	% Chg. 1979to 1999	Acres per 100 persons
Residential	59.3 (31.3%)	70.62 (24.0%)	16%	7.6
Single-family	57.5 (29.9%)	65.82 (22.4%)	12.6%	7.1
Multi-family	1.7 (0.9%)	4.8 (1.6%)	64.6%	0.5
Mobile Home	0.1 (0.5%)	0 (0.0%)	NA	0.0
Commercial	9.4 (4.8%)	7.9 (2.71%)	-19.8%	0.9
Industrial / Railroad	7.3 (4.2%)	7.367 (2.5%)	0.9%	0.8
Parks	42.0 (29.6%)	38.8 (8%)	-8.2%	4.2
Public / Semi-public	16.3 (8.5%)	23.58 (8%)	8.4%	2.6
Streets and Alleys	41.2 (21.4%)	44.98 (15.29%)	8.4%	4.9
Total Developed Area	**175.5 (91.3%)**	**193.25 (65.7%)**	**-9.1%**	**20.9**
Vacant / Agricultural	16.6 (8.7 %)	101.27 (34.3%)	83.6%	11
Total Area	**192.1 (100.0%)**	**294.26 (100%)**	**34.7%**	**31.9**

1Bennington Comprehensive Plan 2000 – 1979 Mits Kawamoto and associates
2Bennington Comprehensive Development Plan 2020 – 1999 JEO Field Survey

Within the corporate limits of Bennington the total developed land was at 65.7% of the total land area. Within that 65.7% Residential held the most land at 24.0%, with streets and alleys at 15.29%, and with the third greatest land area is Parks at 13.2%. Of the survey done for this plan the most surprising number came with the vacant or Agriculture use at 34.3%, this number changed quite drastically since the 1979 existing land use survey.

The last column in Table 12, acres per 100 persons is used to compare land use areas to other cities regardless of population. It is a good tool to use to find an average among other communities and compare land quantities in a

given land use. The number in this area to look at is total developed land per 100 persons, in Bennington that number came out to be 20.9 acres per 100 persons of total developed land within the corporate limits.

Table 13 looks at the information in Table 12 and takes it a step further. The information in Table 13 looks at the land use quantities in the corporate limits plus the first two phases of Bennington Park less a large piece of undeveloped land. This gives a different picture to these values due to obvious development trends within this community. These changes slightly alter the numbers to a better representation of the city in regards to how the community has developed.

TABLE 13: EXISTING LAND USE AREA INCLUDING BENNINGTON PARK PHASE 1 & 2

Type of Use	1999[2] Bennington Corporate Limits	1999[2] Bennington Park Phase 1 & 2	Total	Acres per 100 persons
	Area (% of total area)	Area (% of total area)	Area (% of total area)	
Residential	70.62 (24.0%)	14.72(59.6%)	85.34(34.6%)	7.1
Single-family	65.82 (22.4%)	14.72(59.6%)	80.54(32.6%)	6.7
Multi-family	4.8 (1.6%)	0	4.8(2%)	0.4
Mobile Home	0 (0.0%)	0	0	0
Commercial	7.9 (2.71%)	0	7.9(3.2%)	0.7
Industrial / Railroad	7.367 (2.5%)	0	7.37(3.0%)	0.6
Parks	38.8 (8%)	0	38.8(18.7%)	3.2
Public / Semi-public	23.58 (8%)	0	23.58(9.6%)	2.0
Streets and Alleys	44.98 (15.29%)	4.44(18.0%)	49.42(20%)	4.1
Total Developed Area	**193.25 (65.7%)**	**19.16(77.6%)**	**212.41(86.1%)**	**17.7**
Vacant / Agricultural	101.27 (34.3%)	5.53(22.4%)	34.35(13.9%)	2.9
Total Area	**294.26 (100%)**	**24.69(100%)**	**246.76(100%)**	**20.6**

*Vacant land totals are excluding Area One on existing land use map.

TABLE 14: LAND USE COMPARISONS

Type of Use	South Bend [1] acres (%)	South Bend acres per 100 persons	Ashland [2] acres (%)	Ashland acres per 100 persons	Bennington [3] acres (%)	Bennington acres per 100 persons	Albion [4] Acres (%)	Albion acres per 100 persons
Residential	16.8 (34.8%)	15.7	210.6 (30.5%)	9.2	70.6 (24%)	7.6	180.2 (35.8%)	9.9
Commercial	1.1 (2.3%)	1.0	16.0 (2.3%)	0.7	7.9 (2.71%)	.9	32.6 (6.5%)	1.8
Industrial / Railroad	0 (0%)	0	46.0 (5.7%)	1.8	7.4 (2.5%)	.8	16.2 (3.2%)	0.9
Public / Semi-Public	2.0 (4.2%)	1.90	95.4 (8.5%)	4.2	23.6 (8%)	2.6	45.0 (8.9%)	2.5
Parks	0 (0%)	0	NA	NA	38.8 (13.2%)	4.2	25.1 (5.0%)	1.4
Streets and Alleys	16.6 (34.5%)	15.5	153.6 (22.2%)	6.7	44.9 (15.29%)	4.9	181.7 (36.1%)	9.9
Total Developed Land	**36.5 (75.8%)**	**34.1**	**517.4 (74.9%)**	**22.6**	**193.3 (65.7%)**	**20.9**	**480.8 (95.5%)**	**26.29**
Vacant / Agriculture	11.6 (24.2%)	10.9	173.6 (25.1%)	7.6	101.3 (34.3%)	11	22.9 (4.5%)	1.25
Total Area	**48.2 (100%)**	**45.0**	**691.0 (100.0%)**	**30.2**	**294.3 (100%)**	**31.9**	**503.7 (100.0%)**	**27.54**

Source: 11999 Bennington Comprehensive Development Plan 2020 – JEO Field Survey
2 1998 Weeping Water Comprehensive Development Plan Update - JEO Field Survey
3 1997 Albion Comprehensive Development Plan Update - JEO Field Survey
4 1997 Ashland Comprehensive Development Plan Update - JEO Field Survey

Table 14 compares the figures indicated in table 12 to three other cities in Nebraska. The three cities which Bennington was compared to are: Weeping Water (1996 pop. Est. = 1,042), Albion (1996 pop. Est. = 1,829), and Ashland (1996 pop. Est. = 2,185). In all areas the City of Bennington numbers of acres per 100 person compared very close to what these three other communities had. The only number that was somewhat higher than the other three was that of parkland quantities. This should not be a concern, but rather a benefit to the city of Bennington. All other areas seemed to be well represents with no deficiencies.

EXISTING LAND USE MAP

The Existing Land Use Map, Figure 6, displays the existing land use data for Bennington in a graphical form. This map and existing land use data, presented earlier, is then taken into account when formulating the Future Land Use policies, the future land use map, and when making future land use decisions.

Existing Land Use Map

Figure 6

PROJECTED LAND USE REQUIREMENTS

The following data in Table 15 indicates the land needed to meet the population projections for Bennington. Each of the three projections (Low, Medium, and High) is reviewed. The table indicates the amount of land needed to meet projected future demand by decennial years. This is the amount of additional land needed at each point. Finally, there is an indication of the total land required for each new decade. The projected amount of acres in each designated land use area in Table 15 are based upon the population projections of Bennington. In this light some areas will show increases above and beyond what is projected in Table 15 do to growth pressures from the Omaha Metropolitan area. Table 15 should be used as a guide for future planning but it should be kept in mind that outside development pressures have considerable amount of impact upon a community.

TABLE 15: PROJECTED LAND USE REQUIREMENTS (ACRES)

Low Series	**2000**	**2010**	**2020**	**Total Acres**
Residential	.18	.45	.48	1.11
Commercial	.01	.03	.03	.07
Industrial / Railroad	0	0	0	0
Public / Semi-public	.02	.05	.06	.13
Parks	0	0	0	0
Streets and R.O.W.	.17	.45	.48	1.10
Total Developed Land	**.38**	**1.43**	**1.05**	**2.86**
Medium Series	**2000**	**2010**	**2020**	**Total Acres**
Residential	.49	.55	.61	1.64
Commercial	.03	.04	.04	.11
Industrial / Railroad	0	0	0	0
Public / Semi-public	.06	.07	.07	.20
Parks	0	0	0	0
Streets and R.O.W.	.48	.54	.60	1.62
Total Developed Land	**1.06**	**1.2**	**1.32**	**3.57**
High Series	**2000**	**2010**	**2020**	**Total Acres**
Residential	.61	.73	.79	2.12
Commercial	.04	.05	.05	1.14
Industrial / Railroad	0	0	0	0
Public / Semi-public	.07	.09	.10	.26
Parks	0	0	0	0
Streets and R.O.W.	.6	.72	.78	2.11
Total Developed Land	**1.32**	**1.59**	**1.72**	**4.63**

LAND USE PLAN

Introduction

The Land Use Plan assists the community in determining the type, direction, and timing of future growth. The criteria established in this Land Use Plan reflects the following:

- The current use of land within and around the community
- The desired types of growth, including location of growth
- Growth Pressures from outside the community.
- Physical characteristics, and strengths and constraints to future growth
- Current population and economic trends affecting the community

Land Use Plan Objectives

- Identify past trends in demand for various land use categories (residential, commercial, industrial, public). Determine which are working and which may need modification.
- Combine community goals with estimated future demands to project future land use needs.
- Determine the growth patterns in the region that can affect growth in and around the community and plan for them.
- Establish policies and land use suitability standards to;
    a. Preserve the sense of community
    b. Protect and enhance current and future building/land use;
    c. Provide reasonable alternatives and locations for various land uses; and
    d. Promote efficient use of public facilities and utilities
    e. Provide a greater level of integration
- Creating smooth transitions between jurisdictions and areas around municipalities to benefit the region as a whole. Where jurisdictions meet, the land uses should be similar in intent and requirements (as much as possible), as well as the actual uses allowed.
- Create a system of review and agreements for development that occurs across jurisdictions. This could work through:
    a. Inter-local agreements between political subdivisions
    b. The creation of a system of cooperation that would involve direct communication by both communities so that all parties that have an interest would be notified of new information.

Primary Land Use Types

The Future Land Use in and around Bennington will center on six primary use categories, which are:

- Residential
- Commercial
- Industrial / Railroad
- Public / Semi-Public
- Streets and R.O.W.
- Agricultural

However, each use category will be broken down further to provide further detail for future development. The following list illustrates the break down for each Land Use:

Residential	**Commercial**	**Industrial / Railroad**	**Public / Semi-Public**	**Agricultural**
Low Density	Downtown Commercial	Storage Facilities	Public	Transitional Agriculture
Medium Density	Highway Commercial Centers	Light Manufacturing	Parks	
Lake Side			Churches	
Mobile Home			Private Utility Companies	

Each of these Land Use categories will be discussed in full detail in the following paragraphs. Each section will address the intent of the Land Use District and what general development guidelines should be applied in the future.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN MAP

The six general land use areas noted previously have been expanded into a total of 11 areas to accommodate specific land uses in the community in the efforts to lessen conflict between various land uses, while promoting the health, safety, and general welfare of the public. These land use areas will then become the basis when developing the zoning regulations. These 11 areas have been incorporated into the Future Land Use Map, Figure 7. This key element of the Comprehensive Plan has been developed by the citizens and elected officials of Bennington as well as other interested parties. This map lays out how the land use of Bennington should develop in the future. The land use areas used to develop this map are as follows, but not limited to the following:

TRANSITIONAL AGRICULTURE (TA)

The TA land use area is intended to protect and promote the continuation of certain agricultural operations. These areas are predominately located in prime farmland areas where the soil suitability is greatest and development pressure appears to be evident but not until development patterns. The following items are examples of what is intended for this land use classification:

- Residential development in this district is discouraged until adequate infrastructure is provided and is contiguous to the established municipal corporate limits.
- Farmsteads and necessary structures associated with the farming operations are permitted.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (LDR)

The Low-Density Residential land use area is intended to accommodate larger lot residential development. The LDR areas generally located along the edges of the community where land uses become less dense. This district will accommodate a density of two (2) to four (4) housing units per acre or less. Uses within this district include:

- Single-family housing, including accessory uses
- Support services, i.e. churches, parks, etc.

In addition to these uses, neighborhood parks should be encouraged so future residents may enjoy recreation without traveling a great distance. These neighborhood parks should be centrally located within a close distance to a number of subdivisions, as close to the center of each section as possible. Park users should not be required to cross a major roadway to gain access. In addition to establishing neighborhood parks, new residential development of this type adjacent to the Big Papillion Creek should follow the Flood Plain Development Reserve Policy, when applicable.

MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MDR)

The Medium Density Residential land use area is intended to accommodate denser residential development. The location of these districts is such that they act as a buffer between more intensive uses, (i.e., Commercial and Industrial) and the Low Density and High Density Residential District. The developed density of these districts should be four (4) to seven (7) Housing units per acre. Intended uses in this district are:

- Single-family units
- Multiple-family dwellings
- Apartment buildings
- Multiple building complexes
- Include support services similar to other residential districts

As specified in the Low-Density Residential area, neighborhood parks should also be encouraged for the convenience of future residents so that they may enjoy recreation without traveling a great distance. These neighborhood parks should be centrally located within a close distance to a number of subdivisions. Park users should not be required to cross a major roadway to gain access. In addition to establishing neighborhood parks, new

residential development of this type adjacent to the Big Papillion Creek should follow the Flood Plain Development Reserve Policy, when applicable.

HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (HDR)

The High-Density Residential land use area is intended to accommodate denser residential development. This land use area is generally located around the original City of Bennington or downtown area. Lot sizes are considerably smaller than in more recent residential developments. The developed density of these districts should be seven (7) to thirty-five (35) Housing units per acre. Intended uses in this district are:

- Single-family housing units, including accessory uses
- Multi-family dwellings
- Apartment buildings
- Include support services similar to other residential districts

LAKE RESIDENTIAL (LR)

The Lakeside Residential land use area is intended to accommodate lakeside residential development, more specifically the Bennington Lake subdivision or also know as Sanitary Improvement District (SID) number 425. This district is located in what will be an established lake area. In such unique areas in the community certain land use guidelines must be set up to insure proper growth.

Intended uses in this district are:

- Single-family units
- Public Utilities and services
- Other support services similar to other residential districts

HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL CENTER OVERLAY (HCC)

The Highway Commercial Center overlay area is intended to accommodate commercial uses at points along the highway corridors through Bennington with specific densities for development. Areas specified in and surrounding Bennington are at the intersections of 156th, 168th, and 180th Streets at Highway 36. These sites usually include lot sizes, which accommodate larger commercial development. Intended uses in this district would include:

- Commercial developments requiring on-site parking
- Businesses and services supplying retail products
- Offices for professional employment
- Governmental facilities
- Businesses supplying goods and services to residents in need of expedient transactions, i.e. Convenience Stores, Laundromats, Restaurants
- Auto and travel related uses such as: Service Stations, Motels, Fast Food Restaurants, Automobile dealerships

Each of the areas specified has the same intent in land use but differ in density by the number of acres intended for build-out. The purpose of different density address the relationship of the specified land use area with the adjacent future transportation classification and other commercial areas identified in the region. The overall goal, in setting different densities, attempts to locate these commercial land uses within areas that have the best fit with the future transportation network and allow for commercial areas to be effective with surrounding commercial areas. The number following the Highway Commercial Center land use area abbreviation denotes the suggested acreage size that should be developed as commercial near that intersection. In the event that a single corner of an intersection is developed to the maximum amount specified then the remaining land use designation will be that of the underlying designation. (ie. if Low Density Residential adjoins a HCC-80 land use then the remaining HCC would convert into a Low Density Residential area)

Highway Commercial Center-80 (HCC-80)

At the time of this plan two areas were designated with this land use designation, one was at the intersection of 180th Street and Nebraska Highway 36. This intersection was given this size designation was based upon future transportation systems. Future transportation plans in Omaha, Douglas County, and Bennington identify 180th Street as a six-lane arterial, which intersects Nebraska Highway 36, another Major Arterial. Nebraska Highway 36 is planned to be a four-lane expressway style Highway connection into Highway 275(another planned four-lane within the next twenty years). This area in the future will have the capacity to handle large amounts of traffic thus making it suitable in placing a large commercial center at this location.

The other area with this land use designation was at the intersection of 156th Street and Nebraska Highway 36. When development occurs it is recommended that the Planning Commission work closely with developers so that this area is not overdeveloped causing undue pressure at this intersection. This reasoning was brought about with the concerns of the citizens of Bennington, elected, and appointed officials about the future of this major thoroughfare.

With this in mind, 156th Street through the community should be expanded from its present two lanes to no wider than three (3) lanes in the future, two full lanes with one turning lane. This density has been identified as the best fit with the transportation network and the established community, if certain transportation design standards are meet. (These design standards can be found in the Future Transportation Plan)

Highway Commercial Center-20 (HCC-20)

At the time of this plan the only area designated with this land use type was at the intersection of 168th Street and Nebraska Highway 36. This intersection was given the 20-acre designation in regard to the future transportation plan. . Future transportation plans in Omaha, Douglas County, and Bennington identify 168th Street as a five-lane arterial (four full lanes with one turning lane that intersects Nebraska Highway 36 a Major Arterial. This area in the future will handle heavy volumes of traffic, thus making it suitable to place a moderate sized commercial center at this location.

Highway Commercial Center-12 (HCC-12)

The Highway Commercial Center-12 was established in accordance with the surrounding commercial and residential land uses in the area and the future transportation network. This land use area will have a maximum land use density of 12 developed acres, denoted by the number after the land use area abbreviation, to accommodate a smaller commercial area. (i.e. a convenience store) At this time of this plan, the only land use area designated as HCC-12 was at the intersection of 168th and Bennington Road.

DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL (DC)

The DC land use area is intended to accommodate smaller commercial uses that are compatible with the downtown character while preserving a sense of community. This area is concentrated on the original down town area. Intended uses in this area would include:

- Businesses and services supplying retail products
- Offices for professional employment
- Governmental facilities
- Restaurants and other related uses that conform to the established character of the area.

Based upon community input, the most logical approach to this area would to begin preservation and redevelopment of this area. Strategies and concepts should be identified through a master plan that focuses on this area of Bennington. This area has the potential to become an area attraction for the residents of Bennington, as well as people from outside the community.

Examples of what this area could become are:

- Old Dundee in Omaha,
- Old Bethany in Lincoln,

- Old Havelock in Lincoln.

This type of redevelopment would allow the community to maintain their historic qualities and heritage as the Omaha Metropolitan area continues to encroach on Bennington.

LIGHT INDUSTRIAL (LI)

This land use area is intended to accommodate smaller less intensive manufacturing companies.
Intended uses included the following:

- Small scale production
- Production with minimal odors, noise, hazardous chemicals, and other pollution and water usage
- Full scale wholesaler / distributors

These types of land use areas have been located in the community away from less intense uses to minimize conflict between uses. (i.e. residential and public uses) This separation allows the industrial uses a place in the community to effectively operate without disruption.

PUBLIC USE (PUB)

This land use area is located at areas where a large amount of land is required for public uses. These areas include the Public School's building sites, and City facilities. There are other public facilities scattered around the City and these will be accommodated in the particular land use districts. Public land use areas are also indicate future locations for public facilities. Intended uses in this district include:

- Continuation of existing public uses: Bennington Public Schools, Municipal properties, etc.
- Provide future areas for public related uses in the community.

PARKS AND RECREATION (PARKS)

This land use area accommodates the existing parks and recreational facilities and expands these facilities to begin the development of a trails system throughout Bennington and Douglas County. This district can be highly integrated with Omaha's Park Plans as well as the Papio trails system. The adopted Bennington Parks and Recreation Master Plan describes existing facilities, provides recommendations, and identifies locations and types of future recreational facilities needed in the Bennington Recreational System. The Existing and Proposed Parks and Facilities Map and the Existing and Proposed Service Areas Map graphically illustrate these recreational facilities and areas of service. Intended uses in this area would include:

- Existing city parks
- Future city parks and a trails system

SPECIFIC FUTURE RECREATION PROJECTS

Papio trail system

The Papio trail system established to the southwest of Bennington along the Big Papillion Creek is eventually planned to reach the City of Bennington as development occurs. These areas are identified on the Future Land Use and Transportation Maps to accommodate this. Future residential developments that occur adjacent to the trail should take advantage of this opportunity and continue trails to neighborhood developments to interconnect local parks with the rest of the region. In addition to residential development, municipal parks should be connected to trail access. At certain points along the trail, bridges may need to be placed to present access to the greatest amount of users. These points have been identified on the Future Transportation Plan Map, Figure 8. All future trails are also identified on the Existing and Proposed Parks and Facilities Map and the Existing and Proposed Service Areas Map. Any conflicting trail locations shall adhere to those recommended in the adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Such locations are approximate. Parks and trails are shown in the general area where the facilities may be located. These proposed locations may shift or be altered when the planning and development of subdivisions or roadways becomes more detailed.

Dam Site 6 Recreation Area

Included within the Parks and Recreation future land use area would be a recreation development that is under direct supervision of the Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District. At the time of development of this plan a portion of this future project fell within Bennington's jurisdiction. The overall size of the recreation area was approximately 80 acres including a 40-acre lake.

The project's intent was to develop a aesthetically pleasing recreation area that would enhance future low density residential development providing for such outside recreation that would include fishing, hiking, picnicking, and bird watching among others. The site location was approximately a half mile south of Highway 36 and to the east of 180th Street, with 180th street providing access to the site.

Certain aspects of the site include parking for the area with a boat ramp and dock area directly adjacent. A picnic area is also included in the plan for this site including two structures, a picnic shelter and public access restrooms. The style of these structures will appear to draw their design from the original farmstead that previously occupied the site. Certain improvements surrounding the lake for this project include: improvements to the shoreline for improved fishing opportunities as well as construction of an island to which footbridge will connected to the main shore. (For a more detail on this Recreation project, the Master Plan for Dam Site 6 conducted by the Papio-Missouri Natural Resources District can be reviewed.) Additional information for this recreational area can be found in the adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan. At the time of said Master Plan adoption, this recreational area has already been constructed.

FLOOD HAZARD AREA

This land use area accommodates the existing flood hazard areas along the Big Papillion Creek that runs directly through Bennington. This area protects land surrounding the Big Papillion Creek while preserving the natural environment. Urban Development in this area is highly discouraged, although it is possible through standards set by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Uses, if located in the best areas that would lessen the impact upon the area include:

- Existing and future city parks
- Trails

*This area was based from maps produced through the National Flood Insurance Program, including the Flood Insurance Rate Map, Flood Boundary Map, and Floodway Map.

Flood Plain Development Reserve Policy

The Flood Plain Development Reserve Policy addresses how future land uses along the Big Papillion Creek will develop. The following development standards already exist along the Big Papillion Creek. The standards are implemented in Bennington so that development is consistent in Bennington as well as surrounding areas. This policy sets a 3:1 (rise over run) ratio along creek bank plus an additional twenty- (20) foot setback, on both sides of the creek. This minimum standard establishes distances from the creek for development to be constructed. This allows for maintenance of the creek by the Natural Resource District or the Army Corp of Engineers. In addition to the a twenty (20) foot set back on both sides, an additional setback of twenty (20) Feet should be set aside for the future Papio Trail System on the designated side, that exists currently down stream. Allowing for this land to be protected from development would be consistent with current development aspects along the Big Papillion Creek downstream.

Future Land Use Map

Figure 7

Land Use Suitability Criteria

How will this plan be implemented? The major assumption of this plan is:

"Specific development criteria will be adopted to help guide builders, investors, and community leaders in making good decisions concerning Bennington's future."

These criteria will be specific statements that:

- Describe the relationship between/among land uses
- Establish criteria or design standards that new development must meet.

LAND USE TRANSITIONS OF DIFFERING USES

New development should provide, if needed, any screening, buffers, or extra setbacks when located next to existing uses. Screening or buffers can be plant material, low earthen berms, solid fences, or any combination of the above. Boundaries between different land uses are done along streets, alleys or natural features (streams, railroads, etc.) whenever possible.

COMMUNITY GROWTH

New development should, to the greatest extent possible, be contiguous to existing development or services. This would allow for the logical and cost effective extension of streets and utility services. The City may authorize non-contiguous development if:

- The developer pays for the "gap" costs of extending services from the existing connections to the proposed development, or
- The extension would open up needed or desirable areas of the community for additional growth.

The Land Use Plan is one of the three statutory requirements in the Nebraska State Statutes. The Land Use Plan, and the Transportation Plan, provide the tools to direct future development in Bennington. The Land Use Plan is based upon existing and projected conditions with the community.

The need for residential uses will be driven by the future population, the ratio of Owner-Occupied to Renter-Occupied, and the projected number of future units needed. The development of new residential units drives the need for additional commercial developments, additional streets, public and park facilities, and industrial developments. Residential development is the primary force that drives all other uses in smaller communities. Therefore, decisions regarding future residential development will have implications through all other land use areas.

COMMUNITY ENTRANCES

First impressions of the community are made at the entrances. These impressions are critical to a community's overall image. New development should have larger set backs and higher landscaping standards when located at any of the entrances to the community. For example, all new development along 156th Street, south of town, might be required to provide an extra three to five feet (3' to 5') of front yard set back to be landscaped into ground cover or lawn. Also, signs, storage areas or parking lots may be regulated to limit adverse site impacts to community entrances into Bennington.

EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION

The one-mile area beyond the City limits will play a major factor in Bennington's future growth. The land uses in the extraterritorial area will include all the Land Uses.

ANNEXATION POLICY

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

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

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

Following three separate readings of the ordinance, a majority of affirmative votes by the City Council in favor of an annexation is required at each reading, to pass the annexation. The certified map is then filed with the Register of Deeds, County Clerk and County Assessor, together with a certified copy of the annexation ordinance. The City has one year to adopt a plan to provide services to residents of the annexed area.

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

As previously described, the planning and zoning jurisdiction of Bennington is complex changing year by year. The influence of the Omaha metropolitan area has become more profound in recent years. As the edges of these two cities grow together, the issue of annexation raises the question of when and how to handle future annexations.

The citizens of Bennington would like to retain a sense of community, however, annexation by Omaha may be possible in the future. Proper planning may address Bennington's concerns, and enable the community to retain its small town character and sense of place. Thus any annexation should not take the form of a unilateral appropriation by outside entities, but rather as a situation where both communities can win. The issue of annexation may not happen but in the event of this occurring in the future it is beneficial for Bennington to consider its possibilities.

POTENTIAL ANNEXATIONS

The City of Bennington, at present and in the future, has three primary areas for annexation. These areas include Bennington Park Phase I and II and Bennington Lake (Future). However, the present debt services on these Sanitary Improvement Districts (SID) is well beyond the City's ability for debt assumption. As the debt service decreases, the potential for these SID's to be annexed will become more feasible.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

The Transportation Plan identifies the future transportation system needs for the City of Bennington. Primary emphasis is given to the improvement and development of both motor vehicle and pedestrian traffic systems in the City. These systems are classified as (1) motor vehicle roads; and (2) pedestrian routes (sidewalks, paths, crossing, etc.). The implementation of this plan during the planning period will result in the continued safe movement of people and vehicles within Bennington's Planning Jurisdiction. The adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan also identifies existing and proposed roadways and trails in Bennington's jurisdiction. Any conflicting trail locations shall adhere to those recommended in the adopted Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Such locations are approximate. Trails are shown in the general area where the facilities may be located. These proposed locations may shift or be altered when the planning and development of subdivisions or roadways becomes more detailed.

The primary sources of information utilized in the development of the Transportation Plan were (1) City of Bennington's "One and Six Year Plan"' (2) State of Nebraska's "One and Five Year Plan"' and community input.

The One and Six Year Plans are reviewed and adopted by the local unit of government to address the issues of proposed road and street system improvements and development. Upon approval of these plans by the Board of Public Road Classifications and Standards, the governmental units are eligible to receive highway-user revenue from the State Highway Department.

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

STREET AND ROAD CLASSIFICATION

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

1. 1nterstate: federally-designed National System of Interstate and defense highways;
2. Expressway: second in importance to Interstate. Consists of a group of highways following major traffic desires in Nebraska and ultimately should be developed to multiple divided highway standards;
3. Major Arterial: consists of the balance of routes that serve major statewide interests for highway transportation in Nebraska. Characterized by high speed, relatively long distances, travel patterns;
4. Other Arterial: consists of a group of highways of less importance as through-travel routes. Serve places of smaller population and smaller recreation areas not served by the higher systems;

5. Collector: consists of a group of highways that pick up traffic from the local or land-service roads and transport community centers or to the arterial systems. Main school bus routes, mail routes, and farm-to-market routes;
6. Local: consists of all remaining rural roads, generally described as land-access roads providing service to adjacent land and dwellings; and
7. Bridges: structures crossing a stream three hundred feet or more in width or channels of such a stream having a combined width of three hundred feet or more.

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

Street and road classifications for the circulation system within the City of Bennington are outlined below:

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

FUTURE TRANSPORTATION CLASSIFICATIONS

This portion of the Transportation Plan deals with the future classification of the road network in Bennington and the surrounding area. Roads that exist at the present time will need to be improved to a higher classification in order to accommodate future traffic conditions and in some cases be expanded to additional lanes to meet further growth in the area. The following streets and traffic projects have been listed below:

Expansion of 156th to three lanes (Highway 36 to Rainwood Road Connector)

At the present time 156th Street through Bennington exists as two lanes with no turning lane. As development has occurred in and around the City of Bennington, 156th street has seen a considerable increase in traffic flow with a diminished amount of safety. To accommodate this increase in traffic and to increase safety, 156th Street is planned for an expansion to three-lane from its present two lane. Any additional lanes would be physically difficult due to

existing structures and utilities. In addition, a larger cross section of 156th would threaten the character of the community. This expansion of 156th Street from Highway 36 to the Rainwood Road extension would include adding a turning lane and a larger lane width for the other two lanes. This turning lane would allow through traffic to travel a greater ease while allowing turning traffic time to make their desired movement. Traffic lights are a consideration along this roadway in the future to increase safety for both the motoring public as well as pedestrians.

Additional Modification of 156th Street,

Many concerns from the citizens of Bennington about traffic, which travels through the center of the community on 156th Street, were discussed and were taken into account for the future planning of this street. One of the main reasons for this increase is future development south of the City that has caused an increase in traffic volume on this roadway. Certain roadway improvements on a case to case basis must be developed to minimize safety hazards that will increase with increased traffic flow from Nebraska Highway 36 and from the south.

Expansion of 168th & Expansion of 180th

Both 168th and 180th Streets have been scheduled for improvement in the future, expanding from their present two lane cross sections. Future plans show 168th Street is scheduled to become a total of five lanes coming from the south (four full lanes and one turning lane). In addition, 180th Street is scheduled to become a total of six lanes coming from the south (six full lanes). These scheduled expansions should be taken into consideration in future land use decisions along these roadways to accommodate the right fit between traffic routes and land development.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN MAP

In Figure 8, these road classifications were specified to certain transportation routes within Bennington and to the extents of the city's one-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction as well as some cooperated overlap between City of Omaha's Extraterritorial Jurisdiction and Douglas County's. These classifications will be used to schedule future transportation projects. The transportation plan map must be used in conjunction with the future land use map so that certain road types can be correlated with certain land uses. Thus creating better growth patterns and more effective transportation routes.

Transportation Plan Map (full size maps are available for review in the Bennington City Office)

Figure 8

TRANSPORTATION DESIGN STANDARDS

The following Transportation Design Standards are recommended to create a better transportation pattern in Bennington as well as surrounding areas within Douglas County.

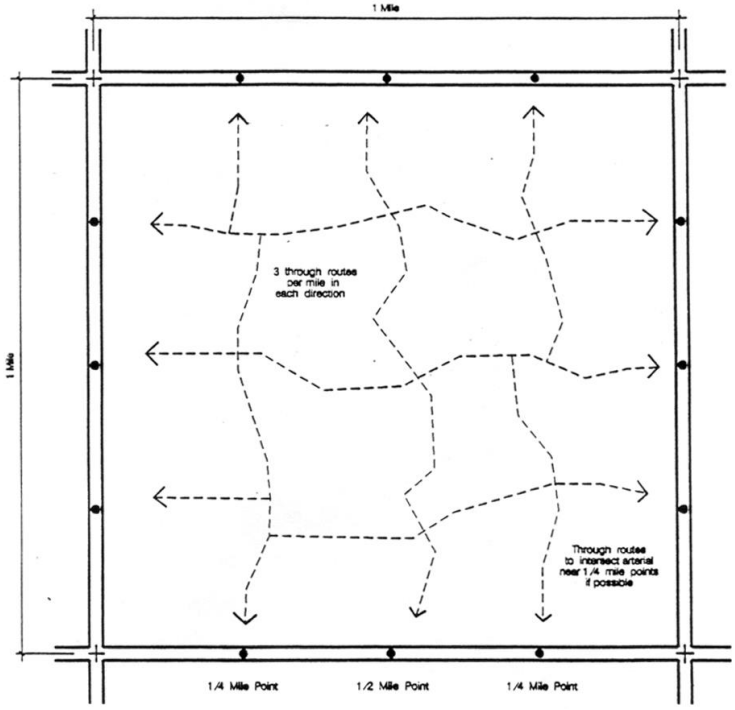
The road classification system described earlier works to match corresponding land uses with levels of roadway function, specific design standards for the City's Transportation System would also benefit the community's effort in handling and controlling growth and would create a better transportation network. The following text and figures represent the process of controlling access points along roadways in Bennington's jurisdiction. The overall goal of these policies is to better integrate rural development with existing and planned development in Douglas County and the Omaha Metropolitan area.

POLICY 1:

THREE THROUGH ROUTE PER SECTION POLICY

As seen in Figure 9, requiring three through routes per section would require future subdivisions in the same section to connect local streets thus creating a better traffic flow between neighborhoods. These routes should fall as close as possible to the ¼, ½, and ¾ mile along each section(every mile). Simply this would reduce confusion while traveling through neighborhoods, eliminate dead ends, and would direct concentrated traffic flow to specific intersections in the community. Considering these recommendations of three through routes, minimal offsets of roadway design should also be implemented to discourage high speed cut trough traffic.

Figure 9: Through Street Diagram

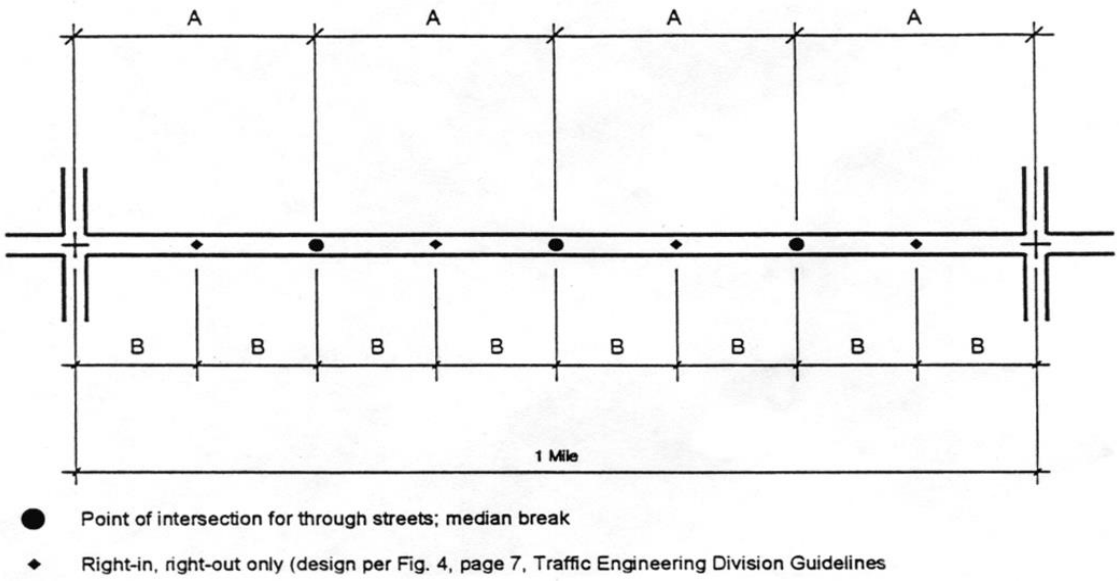


POLICY 2:

ACCESS POINT POLICY

This transportation policy simply builds upon the three through routes per section concept but adds certain access criteria along section lines or every mile. Full access points are recommended every quarter mile (A). Full access points are entrances into subdivisions allowing full turns in all directions, both right and left (allowing for a median break). In addition to these full access points, intermediate access points should be recommended to be place at the eight mile (B) with limited access, see Figure 10. Limited access would only allow for right in right out only traffic movement. This would relieve traffic congestion at these points.

Figure 10: Access Point



POLICY 3:

INTERSECTION POLICY

Intersections along section lines should not be offset, but meet directly at recommended access points. In addition to relieving traffic congestion along roadways, turn lanes should be installed at both full access points and intermediate access points.

FUTURE SCHEDULED PROJECTS

One scheduled transportation project in the area of Bennington is the two-lane bridge replacement at the south of town along 156th street. This project consists of the removal of the existing structure and replacement with a two-lane bridge. The tentative schedule of this project is from May 2000 to September of 2000. Another project in 2000 include repaving Highway 36 east of 156th Street, parts of Bennington Road, 180th Street, and 168th Street. A long-term project that the State Department of Roads has in the planning stages is the improvement of Highway 36 to four lanes directly north of Bennington having a direct impact of transportation as well as land use in the Bennington

area. In addition to these scheduled projects Bennington and the surrounding area is scheduled for regular maintenance.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

ACHIEVING BENNINGTON'S FUTURE PLAN

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

There are numerous goals and objectives in this plan. We recommend reviewing the relevant goals during planning and budget setting sessions. However, we also recommend that the City select three elements of the plan for immediate action; the goals of highest priority. This is the Action Plan.

ACTION AGENDA

The Action Agenda is a combination of the following:

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

It will be critical to earmark the specific funds to be used and the individuals primarily responsible for implementing the goals and policies in and around the Bennington area.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR THE ACTION AGENDA

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

1. Zoning Regulations--updated land use districts can allow the community to provide direction for future growth.
2. Subdivision Regulations--establish criteria for dividing land into building areas, utility easements, and streets. Implementing the Transportation Plan is a primary function of subdivision regulations.
3. Capital Improvements Financing--an annual predictable investment plan that uses a six-year planning horizon to schedule and fund projects integral to the plan's implementation.
4. Plan Maintenance--an annual and five-year review program will allow the community flexibility in responding to growth and a continuous program of maintaining the plan's viability.

METHODS FOR EVALUATING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

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

If a development proposal is not consistently supported by the plan, serious consideration should be given to making modifications to the proposal or the following criteria should be used to determine if a comprehensive plan amendment would be justified:

- the character of the adjacent neighborhood
- the zoning and uses on nearby properties
- the suitability of the property for the uses allowed under the current zoning designation
- the type and extent of positive or detrimental impact that may affect adjacent properties, or the community at large, if the request is approved
- the impact of the proposal on public utilities and facilities
- the length of time that the subject and adjacent properties have been utilized for their current uses
- the benefits of the proposal to the public health, safety, and welfare compared to the hardship imposed on the applicant if the request is not approved
- comparison between the existing land use plan and the proposed change regarding the relative conformance to the goals and policies
- consideration of professional staff recommendations

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAINTENANCE

Annual Review of the Plan

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

After adoption of the comprehensive plan, opportunities should be provided to identify any changes in conditions that would impact elements or policies of the plan. At the beginning of each year a report should be prepared by the Planning Commission that provides information and recommendations on:

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

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

1. Provide citizens or developers with an opportunity to present possible changes to the plan;
2. identify any changes in the status of projects called for in the plan; and
3. bring forth any issues, or identify any changes in conditions which may impact the validity of the plan.

If the Planning Commission finds major policy issues or major changes in basic assumptions or conditions have arisen which could necessitate revisions to the plan, they should recommend changes or further study of those changes. This process may lead to identification of amendments to the plan that would be processed as per the procedures in the next section.

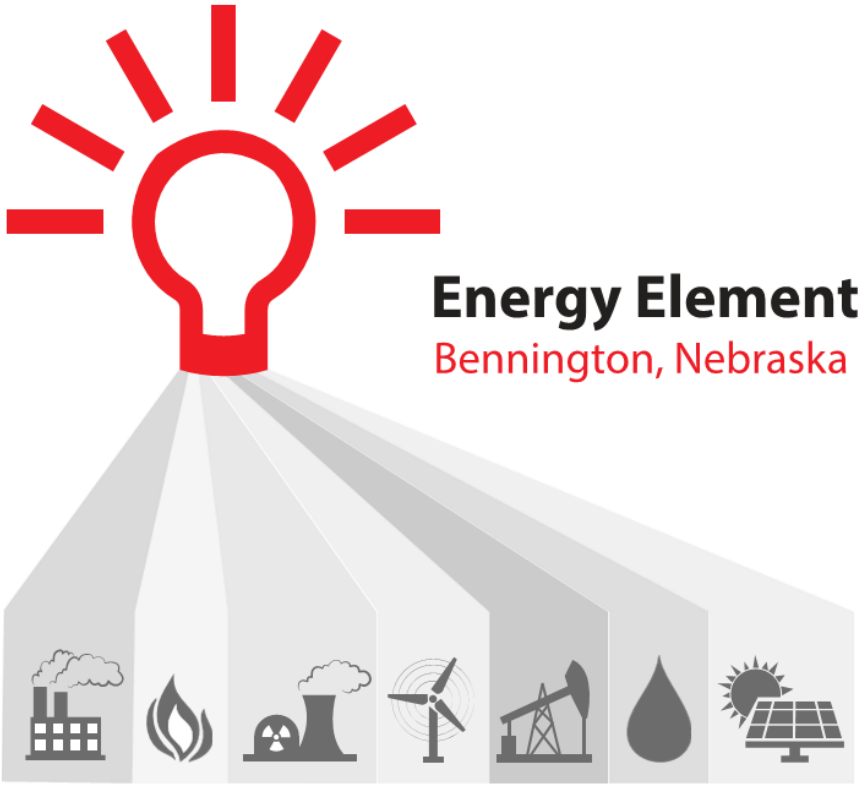
PLAN AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

It is anticipated that each year individuals and groups may come forward with proposals to amend the plan. The Zoning Administrator should compile a list of proposed amendments received during a year, prepare a report providing pertinent information on each proposal, and recommend action on the proposed amendments. By reviewing all proposed amendments at one time, the effects of each proposal can be evaluated for impacts on other proposals and all proposals can be reviewed for their net impact on the comprehensive development plan. The comprehensive plan amendment process should adhere to the adoption process specified by Nebraska law and should provide for organized participation and involvement of interested citizens.

UNANTICIPATED OPPORTUNITY

If major new, innovative development opportunities arise which impacts several elements of the plan and that are determined to be of importance, a plan amendment may by proposed and considered separate from the annual review and other proposed plan amendments. Examples of an unanticipated opportunity would include a large residential development or a new industry that wants to locate in or around the community. Since the comprehensive plan may not have addressed such an issue it is important to weigh the positives and negatives when considering new development of this type. Yet this new development may seam like a good idea it is important to deal with the basic issues of how much this development will cost the community (i.e. infrastructure, police and fire protection, education, etc) and how much this will benefit the community (increased tax base, growth in population, etc).

EXHIBIT A



Energy Element

Bennington, Nebraska

Adopted October 13, 2014
Ordinance No. 426

JEO CONSULTING GROUP INC

Table of Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Acknowledgements

This energy element was created using data from the following sources:

The Nebraska Energy Office
National Renewable Energy Laboratories (NREL)
US Dept. of Energy (DOE)
Omaha Public Power District (OPPD)
AWS Truepower
US Energy Information Administration (EIA)
American Wind Energy Association
US Environmental Protection Agency
Eastern Interconn.States' Planning
Social Explorer

Introduction

Energy plays a crucial role in nearly every aspect of our lives. It is used to grow our food, to move us from place to place, to light and heat our homes, and to make the products we buy. The vast majority of our energy is currently supplied by fossil fuels, which is a finite resource. Federal regulations are tightening emission rules for power plants, thus increasing the cost of using fossil fuels. By planning for energy, Bennington can save money, have a more resilient economy, conserve natural resources, and be better prepared for the future.

Nebraska Energy Policy Overview

Nebraska Legislation LB997

In 2010, Nebraska Legislators passed LB 997 requiring comprehensive plans to include an energy element. Energy elements are required to have three components:

1. Energy infrastructure and energy use by sector
2. Utilization of renewable energy sources
3. Energy conservation measures that benefit the community

The following energy element is included within Bennington's Comprehensive Plan in order to fulfill the requirement of LB 997.

Nebraska Energy Plan

The 2011 Nebraska Energy Plan outlines 14 strategies for the state to consider in meeting the following objectives:

1. Ensure access to affordable and reliable energy for Nebraskans to use responsibly
2. Advance implementation and innovation of renewable energy in the state
3. Reduce petroleum consumption in Nebraska's transportation sector

The strategies for Nebraska to consider include the following:

- Continue support of Nebraska's unique public power system
- Increase opportunities for demand-side energy management and energy efficiencies
- Maximize the investment in Nebraska's coal plants
- Expand Nebraska's nuclear power generation capacity
- Increase opportunities for industrial and municipal waste-to-energy projects
- Optimize the use of Nebraska's water resources for hydroelectric power generation
- Improve municipal water and wastewater management strategies and water quality
- Continue building Nebraska's wind energy through public-private partnerships
- Increase opportunities for methane recovery from agricultural and community biomass resources
- Increase opportunities for woody biomass in Nebraska
- Support distributed generation of renewable technologies
- Increase ethanol production, blended and delivered across Nebraska and to markets outside the state
- Increase development and use of other alternative fuels
- Diversify and expand opportunities for renewable diesel in Nebraska

Energy Codes

Under §§81-1608 to 81-1616, the State of Nebraska has adopted the International Energy Conservation Code as the Nebraska Energy Code. Any community or county may adopt and enforce the Nebraska Energy Code or an equivalent energy code. If a community or county does not adopt an energy code, the Nebraska Energy Office will enforce the Nebraska Energy Code in the jurisdiction.

The purpose of the Code, under §81-1608, is to insure that newly built houses or buildings meet uniform energy efficiency standards. The statute finds that:

> *there is a need to adopt the International Energy Conservation Code in order (1) to ensure that a minimum energy efficiency standard is maintained throughout the state, (2) to harmonize and clarify energy building code statutory references, (3) to ensure compliance with the National Energy Policy Act of 1992, (4) to increase energy savings for all Nebraska consumers, especially low-income Nebraskans, (5) to reduce the cost of state programs that provide assistance to low-income Nebraskans, (6) to reduce the amount of money expended to import energy, (7) to reduce the growth of energy consumption, (8) to lessen the need for new power plants, and (9) to provide training for local code officials and residential and commercial builders who implement the International Energy Conservation Code.*

The Code applies to all new buildings, as well as renovations of or additions to any existing buildings. Only those renovations that will cost more than 50 percent of the replacement cost of the building must comply with the Code. There are exceptions to the Nebraska Energy Code including: buildings that are neither heated nor cooled, buildings registered as a historic place, or buildings with very low average energy use. Visit the Nebraska Energy Office website to see all the rules, regulations, and exceptions regarding the Energy Code.

Nebraska Legislation LB436 - Net Metering

The Nebraska Legislature passed LB436 which allows for net metering. Citizens have the opportunity to generate their own energy and it is found to be in the public interest because it encourages customer-owned renewable energy resources. It also can stimulate the economic growth, encourage diversification of the energy resources used, and maintain the low-cost, reliable electric service for the State of Nebraska. By supplementing your electric bill through "credits" for energy purchased back from the utility company, the citizens of Bennington can save money and alleviate pressure on the utility grid.

According to their website, Bennington's electricity provider, Omaha Public Power District (OPPD), has offered net metering since 2009. OPPD allows net metering for any consumer that has a qualified generator using methane, wind, solar, biomass, hydropower or geothermal energy with a total capacity of 25 kilowatts or less. As of December 31, 2013, OPPD had 44 qualified facilities with total generating capacity of 280 kilowatts. In 2013, the total estimated amount of energy produced by these customer generators was 368,883 kilowatt-hours, and the net received from them was 4,436 kilowatt-hours.

Solar and Wind Easements and Local Option Rights Laws

Nebraska's easement provisions allow property owners to create binding solar and wind easements in order to protect and maintain proper access to sunlight and wind. Counties and municipalities are allowed to develop zoning regulations, ordinances, or development plans that protect access to solar and wind energy resources. Local governing bodies may also grant zoning variances to solar and wind energy systems that would be restricted under existing regulations, so long as the variance is not substantially detrimental to the public good.

For summaries of additional programs, incentives and policies in Nebraska visit the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency (DSIRE) website:
http://www.dsireusa.org/incentives/index.cfm?re=0&ee=0&spv=0&st=0&srp=1&state=NE

Energy Infrastructure

Local Utility Providers

As seen in figure 1, Bennington's electricity provider is OPPD. OPPD's generating capacity is 3,237 megawatts (MW). OPPD has 15,567 miles of electric line. The closest power plant to Bennington is the Elk City Station which is a 6.2 MW landfill-gas plant. The Metropolitan Utilities District (MUD) provides natural gas for the City and the greater Omaha area. As of 2013, MUD serves over 221,023 customers with 2,771 miles of gas mains.

Figure 1 Communities Served by OPPD

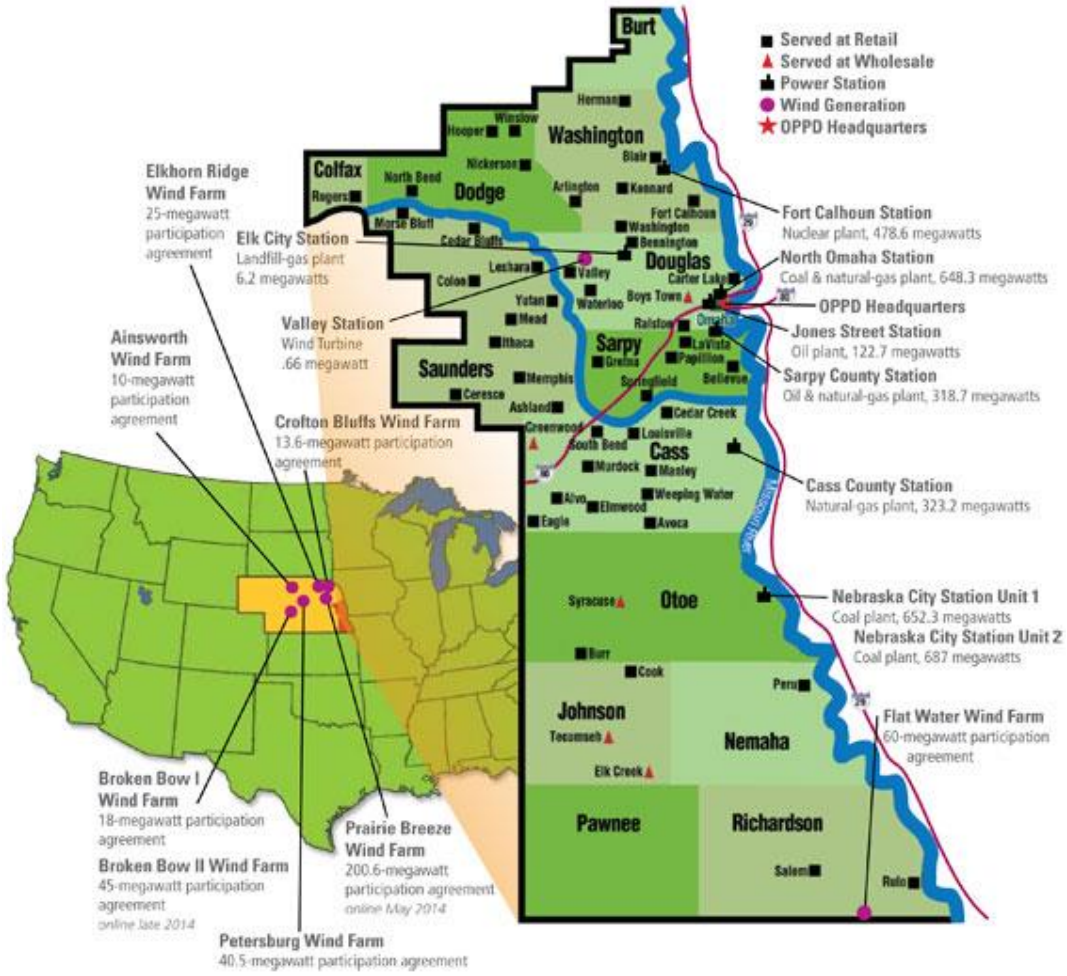
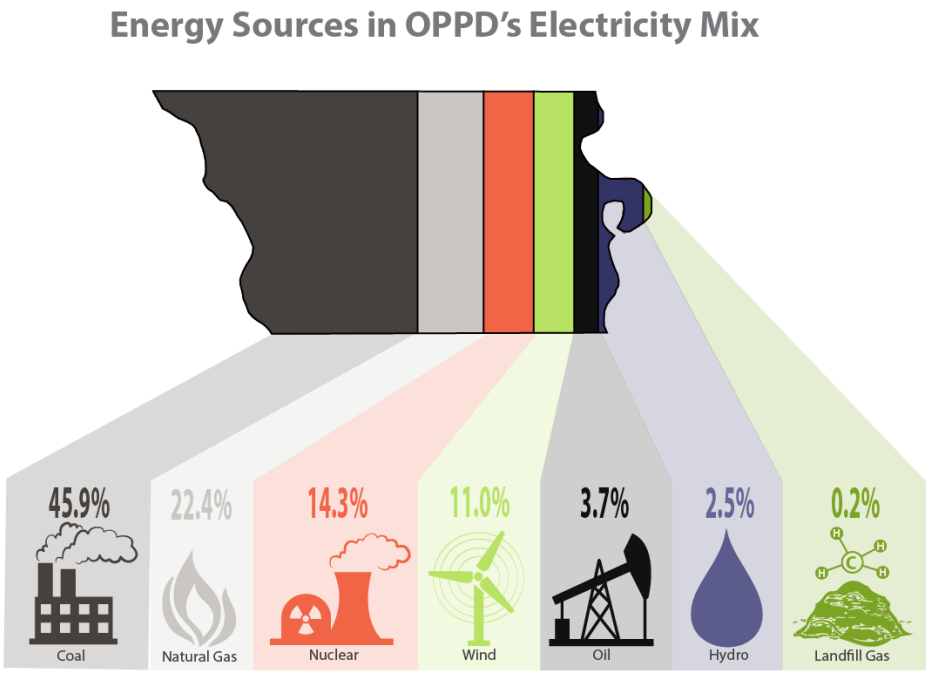


Figure 2 shows the mix of energy resources that OPPD uses to generate electricity. Fossil fuels (coal, natural gas, and oil) are the energy source for 72% of OPPD's electricity generation. Using fossil fuels for electricity generation results in emissions. Twenty-eight percent of OPPD's energy sources produce little to no carbon dioxide emissions (nuclear, wind, hydro, landfill gas). As concerns for air quality increase, there will likely be a push to rely on low carbon dioxide emitting technologies for our energy. Currently, 13.7% of OPPD's electricity is generated from renewable energy sources, most of which comes from wind. OPPD will likely purchase additional wind power in the future.

Figure 2



In 2014, OPPD created a plan to lower its carbon emissions in reaction to new proposed EPA regulations on power plants.

The OPPD board adopted a plan to:

- Retire units 1-3 of the North Omaha coal plant by 2016
- Retrofit units 4-5 of North Omaha in 2016
- Convert units 4-5 of North Omaha to natural gas by 2023
- Retrofit Nebraska City One by 2016
- Maintain at least 33% of their portfolio in renewable energy beginning in 2018
- Reduce demand by 300 MW through energy efficiency and demand side management program

This plan would reduce:

- Carbon dioxide emissions by 49%
- Mercury emissions by 85%
- NOx (nitric oxide and nitrogen dioxide) emissions by 74%
- SOx (sulfur oxide) emissions by 68%

If OPPD plans on maintaining at least 33% of their portfolio in renewable energy beginning in 2018, they will have to increase renewable energy generation considerably. Given the latest data, renewable energy was responsible for 13.7% of their electricity generation mix. In order to meet that goal of 33% by 2018, OPPD will need to aggressively invest in renewable energy and purchase renewable energy elsewhere.

Bennington Energy Use

Table 1 shows Bennington's electricity consumption in 2012 and 2013. Data prior to 2012 was not available from OPPD. Generally, energy consumption for the residential

and commercial sectors is for lighting, heating and cooling buildings, appliances, and electronic devices. Overall electricity consumption was nearly identical in Bennington between 2012 and 2013 as there was only a 0.07% decrease in consumption. Residential expenditures increased 8.4% from 2012 to 2013. Despite using less energy in 2013, the commercial sector spent 2.4% more on electricity than they did in 2012.

Table 1 Bennington's Electric Consumption in Kilo-watt Hours (kWh) and Expenditures

Bennington	2012		2013	
	Expenditures	kWh	Expenditures	kWh
Residential	$780,793.43	8,001,144	$846,362.36	8,194,383
Commercial	$592,031.23	7,071,195	$606,188.55	6,865,358
Street lighting	$50,467.23	177,588	$50,780.61	179,256
Total	**$1,423,291.89**	**15,249,927**	**$1,503,331.52**	**15,238,997**

Data for this table was provided by OPPD.

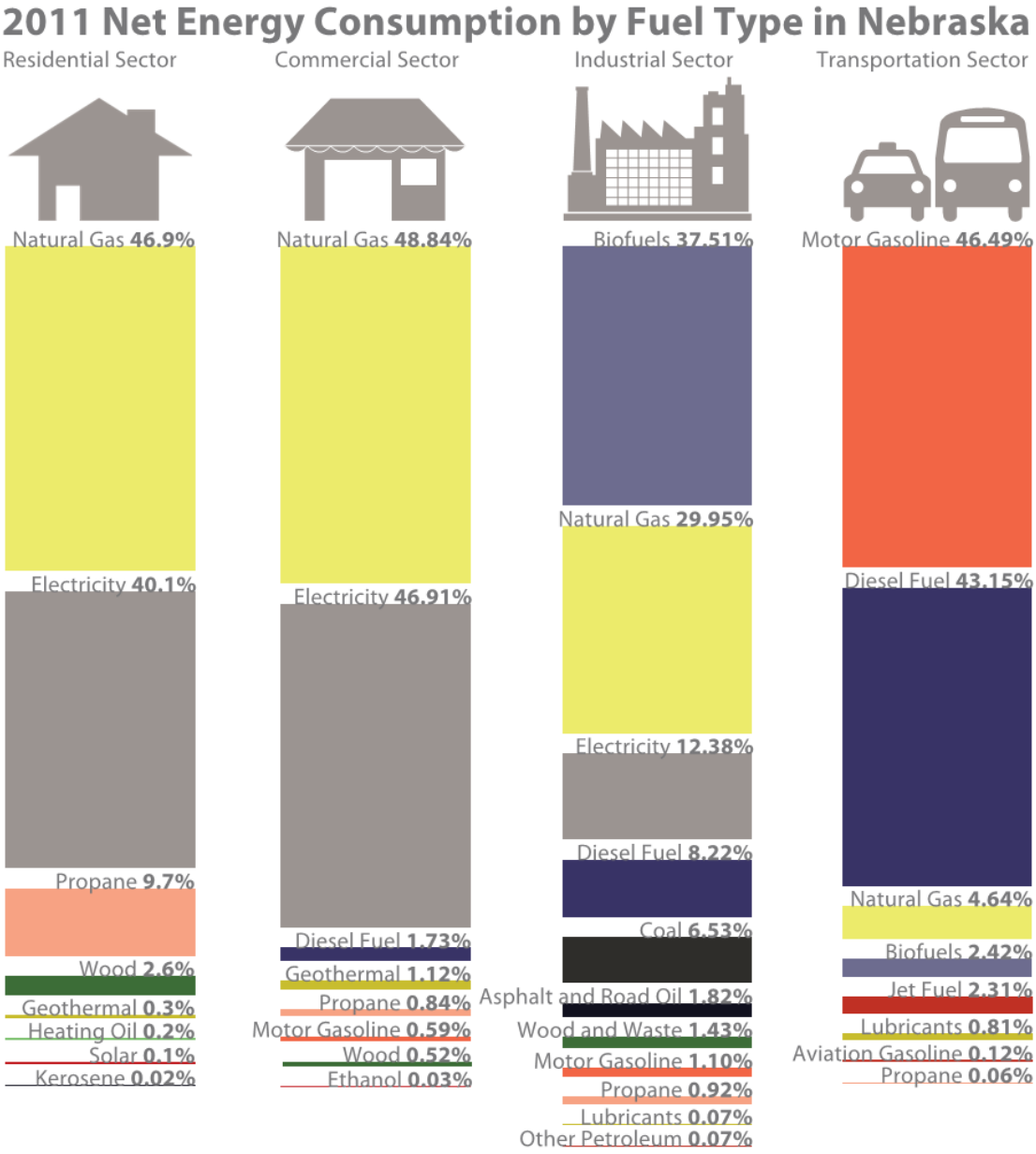
Consumption data for municipal operations was not available for Bennington. However, the City of Bennington should strive to set an example for its citizens by reducing its energy consumption. Bennington can reduce its energy consumption by following the goals and strategies described later in this energy element.

NEBRASKA ENERGY CONSUMPTION

The following Nebraska energy consumption data is used as consumption data by fuel type was not available for Bennington.

Figure 3 shows the net energy consumption by fuel type in the residential, commercial, industrial and transportation sectors in Nebraska. A majority of the energy spent in the residential and commercial sectors in the form of natural gas and electricity is for heating, cooling, and lighting buildings. The industrial sector relies on biofuels for 37.51% of its energy consumption.

Figure 3

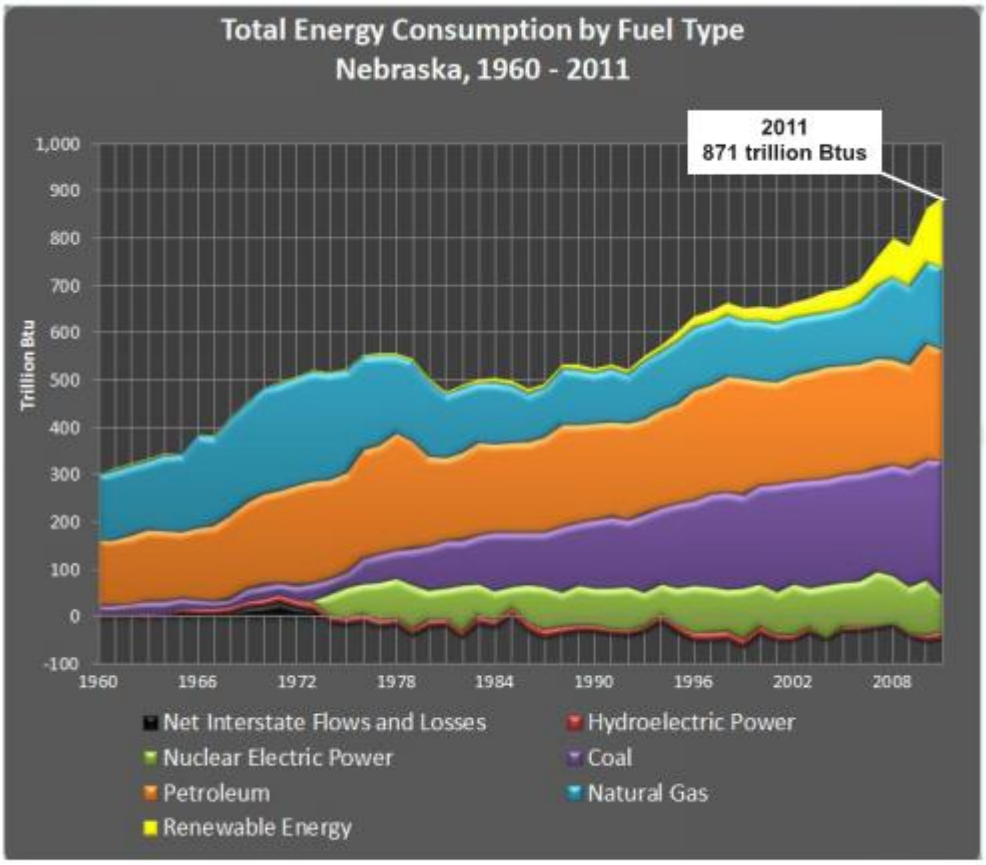


Data for figure 3 is from the Nebraska Energy Office.

As shown in figure 4 below, Nebraskans rely on fossil fuels for an overwhelming majority of their energy needs. Energy consumption continues to increase from year to year with Nebraska consuming 871 trillion British Thermal Units (BTUs) in 2011. Natural gas and renewable energy

consumption are expected to increase in the future as technology advances and as these sources become more economical.

Figure 4



Sources: State Energy Data Report. Energy Information Administration, Washington, DC.
Nebraska Energy Office, Lincoln, NE.

Tables 2 and 3 show how much energy Nebraska consumed in 2012 and how much money Nebraska spent on energy in 2012. Total energy consumption decreased by 10 trillion BTUs from 2011 to 2012, or 1%. Even though transportation consumption was just under 23% of the consumption total in 2012, Nebraska spent more money on transportation than residential, commercial and industrial energy uses combined.

Table 2 Nebraska Consumption in Trillion BTU 2012 (EIA)

Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Transportation	Total
147.0	131.9	384.8	196.9	860.6
17.1%	15.3%	44.7%	22.9%	100%

Table 3 Nebraska Energy Expenditures in Million Dollars 2012 (EIA)

Residential	Commercial	Industrial	Transportation	Total
1,390.3	990.5	2,289.5	5,423.0	10,093.3
13.8%	9.8%	22.7%	53.7%	100%

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENERGY CONSERVATION

Efficiency Improvements

Energy efficiency is the easiest and cheapest method to prepare for the energy future. There are many efficiency improvements that can be made in homes and businesses in order to conserve energy. According to the 2012 American Community Survey, over 63% of the houses in

Bennington were built before 1970. These homes are an opportunity for Bennington to significantly reduce its energy use. In older homes, improvements in areas such as insulation, windows, lighting and appliances can cause them to be significantly more energy efficient. Efficiency improvements to homes and businesses not only save the owner in energy costs, but also reduce the need for utility companies to add costly infrastructure improvements.
There are tools such as the ENERGY STAR Energy Tracking Tool that a home or business owner/facility manager can use to track a building's energy use and progress towards energy goals.
Links to resources that describe the many possible efficiency improvements are provided in the education section below.

Transportation

According to the American Community Survey and Social Explorer, the average commute time for the Bennington area is 24 minutes. Bennington residents are spending money and energy commuting almost an hour each work day to and from work. The Corporate Average Fuel Economy standards will nearly double vehicle fuel economy by 2025 to 54.5 miles per gallon. Without any action this will lower fuel consumption per capita in Bennington. Finding strategies to reduce fuel consumption will result in further energy conservation and more disposable income for Bennington residents. Possible strategies for reducing transportation energy use may include: encouraging carpooling, encourage multi-modal transportation, and investing in trails and other pedestrian/bicycle infrastructure.

Landscaping

A well-designed landscape not only improves the aesthetics of a home or business, it can reduce water use and lower energy bills. According to the Nebraska Energy Office, a well-designed landscape saves enough energy to pay for itself in less than eight years. For example, when planted in the right spot, trees can provide shade from the sun in the summer and block the cold wind in the winter.

Recycling and Composting

Recycling and composting preserves energy by reducing the energy needed to extract raw materials. These practices also reduce the amount of solid waste that is dumped in a landfill.

Local Food

Food takes energy to grow, harvest, process and transport. Conditions such as the distance from where the food is grown to our table affect how much energy is used to produce our food. Supporting locally grown food reduces the energy needed for food production.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY

Nebraska is the only state in the U.S. that is 100% public power. Since they are not seeking profits, public power districts have been able to maintain some of the lowest electricity prices in the nation. The low cost of energy is one of the reasons that Nebraska has not fully taken advantage of its renewable energy potential. Unlike places such as California, where electricity prices are higher, renewable energy systems have historically not been economical for Nebraskans and the state.
With new proposed federal regulations, power plants will have to lower their carbon emissions by 30% by 2030. This means that heavy carbon emitters such as coal power plants will require

retrofits or improvements in order to meet that goal. Since a large amount of the electrical energy consumed in Bennington comes from coal, this will most likely affect the price of electricity coming from these power plants. Therefore, it would be in Bennington's best economic interest to decrease per capita energy consumption and begin to increase the amount of renewable energy produced in Bennington. Below is a summary of potential renewable energy options for Bennington.

Wind

According to the American Wind Energy Association, Nebraska has one of the best wind resources in the United States, 92% of Nebraska has the adequate wind speeds for a utility scale wind farm. Nebraska ranks 3rd in the U.S. in gigawatt hour (GWh) wind generation potential, but has been slow in utilizing this resource compared to other states. Nebraska currently ranks 23rd in total megawatts (MW) installed with 534 MW. According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Nebraska's wind potential at 80 meters hub height is 917,999 MW. It is estimated that wind power is capable of meeting more than 118 times the state's current electricity needs.

Nebraska has continued to add wind capacity in the following years:

2013: 74.8 MW
2012: 122 MW
2011: 124.5 MW

As figure 5 indicates, Bennington and the rest of Douglas County has some of the lowest wind energy resources in the state at 300-400 watts per square meter. Despite this, areas around Bennington may be suitable for a wind energy operation. Electricity produced through wind power will be most cost effective on the utility/commercial scale. Small scale wind systems for homes and businesses may not be as cost effective, but they should not be discouraged.

Figure 5

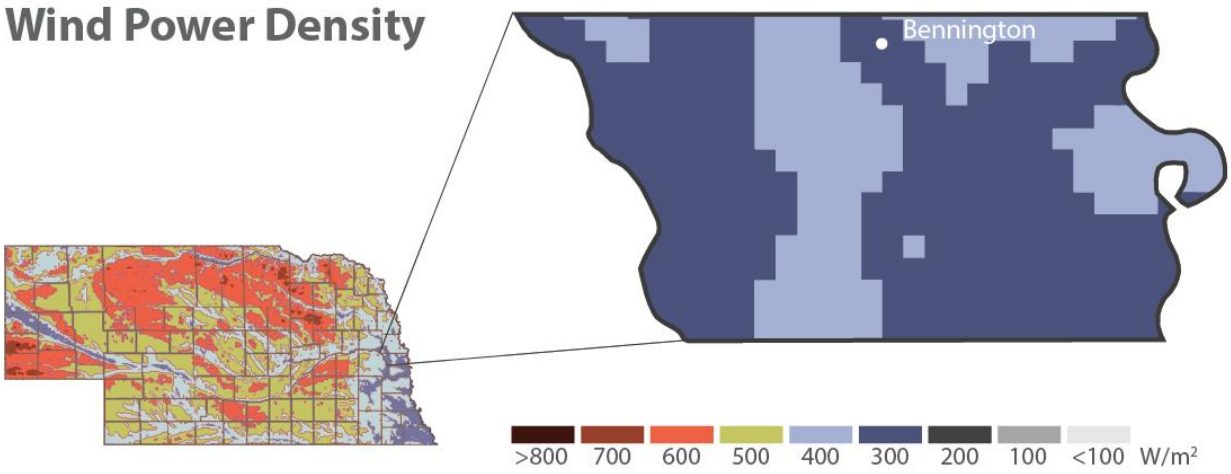


Figure 5 represents the gross estimated annual average wind power density for Nebraska and Douglas County. This data indicates how much energy is available for conversion by a wind turbine at a particular location. This map was created with data from EISPC and AWS Truepower.

Biomass

Biomass (biodiesel, ethanol, landfill gas, methane, wood and wood waste) accounted for 81.7% of all renewable energy generated in Nebraska in 2011.

Direct-fired System- Most biomass plants that generate electricity use direct-fired systems. Simply, these plants burn biomass feedstock directly to produce steam. This steam turns a turbine, which turns a generator that converts the power into electricity. The feedstock for direct systems can be a number of things: wood and wood waste, agricultural residues, municipal solid waste, or industrial waste. Wood fueled systems currently provide energy for a number of manufacturing facilities, two colleges, and other buildings across Nebraska. Wood fueled energy systems have the potential to create significant energy savings versus traditional fossil fuels. The Nebraska Forest Service currently has a grant program to help with the up-front costs of converting to a wood energy system.

Biodiesel- The two current Nebraska commercial scale plants have the estimated production capacity of 5.4 million gallons per year, but both closed in the late 2000s due to the price of soybeans used for feedstock. A joint venture between Flint Hills Resources and Benefuel, Inc. is currently retrofitting a biodiesel plant in Beatrice with plans to start operation of the 50 million gallon per year plant in the summer of 2015.

Ethanol- Ethanol produced from corn and grain sorghum is a growing energy resource in Nebraska. According to the Renewable Fuels Association, Nebraska has the second largest ethanol production capacity in the nation and the second largest current operating production in the nation. Approximately 14% of the nation's ethanol capacity is in Nebraska's 27 ethanol plants. The Nebraska ethanol plant operating closest to Bennington is located in Blair.

91% of Nebraska's ethanol production goes to U.S. domestic markets, 5% is exported to other countries, and 4% is used by Nebraskans. The state's Ethanol Board estimates that 40% of Nebraska's corn crop and 75% of the state's grain sorghum crop are used in the production of ethanol.

Ethanol consumption is mainly in the form of blended gasoline. Ethanol production and consumption is expected to continue to increase as national legislation continues to affect state policies. The Renewable Fuel Standard, established in 2005 as a part of the Energy Policy Act, requires a minimum of 36 billion gallons of renewable fuel to be used in the nation's gasoline supply by 2022. In 2013, 87 octane fuel without ethanol began to be phased out and replaced with an ethanol-blended 87 octane gas. Nearly all fuel stations in Nebraska and Iowa have phased out 87 octane fuel without ethanol as of 2014.

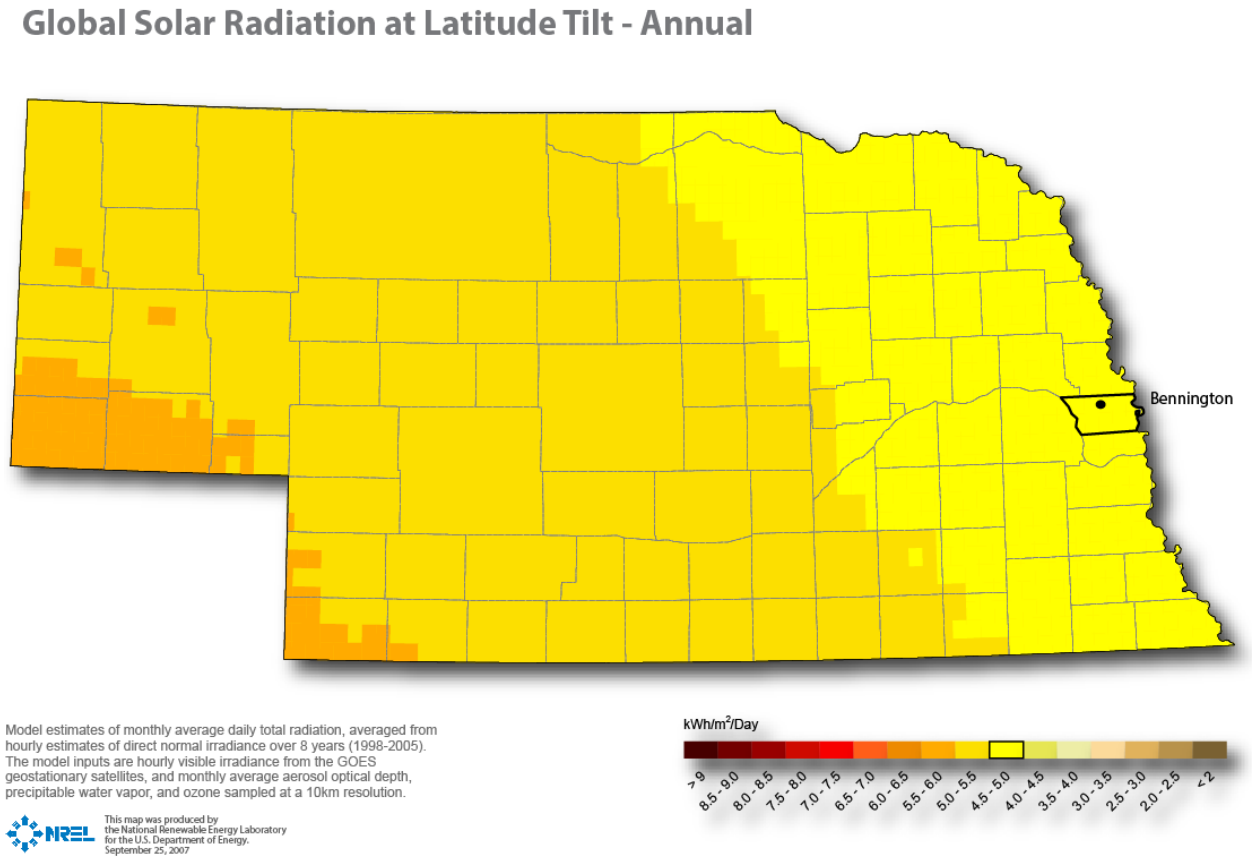
Biogas- Biogas is a product of the decomposition of manure, via anaerobic digestion, and is typically made of about 60% methane, and 40% carbon dioxide. Biogas can be used to generate electricity, as a boiler fuel for space or water heating, upgraded to natural gas pipeline quality, or other uses. After the production of biogas, the remaining effluent is low in odor and rich in nutrients. The byproducts of biogas production can be used as fertilizer, livestock bedding, soil amendments or biodegradable planting pots.

Methane gas can also be extracted from a landfill or wastewater treatment plant using a similar process. The Elk City Station 6.2 MW facility, located southwest of Bennington, is a landfill gas power plant. The facility will be able to produce electricity from landfill gas for at least 20 years. Waste Management currently operates the plant and sells the power to OPPD.

Solar Power

According to the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, Nebraska is ranked 13th in solar energy potential. Currently, solar technologies are marginally used in Nebraska because it has historically been difficult for solar technologies to compete with the state's low electric rates. As seen in figure 6, Bennington has an average solar radiation of 4.5-5 kWh per square meter per day.
According to the Department of Energy, the average cost of a solar energy system dropped by more than 50% from 2010 to 2013. As the cost of solar systems continue to decrease, solar can be utilized at an individual home or business scale to help supplement electrical needs. Many utilities have incentives to help with the cost of solar, but additional steps should be taken to increase the amount of solar energy generated in Bennington.

Figure 6



Passive solar- Passive solar design takes advantage of a building's site, climate, and materials to minimize energy use. A well-designed passive solar home first reduces energy use for heating and cooling through energy-efficiency strategies and then meets the reduced need in whole or part with solar energy. In simple terms, a passive solar home collects heat as the sun shines through south-facing windows and retains it in materials that store heat, known as thermal mass.

Geothermal
The geothermal application that is most practical and economical for the residents of Bennington is the use of geothermal heat pumps. Geothermal heat pumps are slowly becoming a popular method of heating and cooling buildings. Heat pumps use much less energy than traditional

heating and cooling systems. This translates into energy and money savings while also reducing air pollution. There are many state and utility level incentives to help with the initial cost of geothermal energy.

There are two different types of geothermal heat pumps: closed loop systems and open loop systems also known as "pump and dump". Closed loop systems move fluids through continuous pipeline loops that are buried underground at depths where the temperature does not fluctuate much. Heat picked up by the circulating fluid is delivered to a building through a traditional duct system. Geothermal heat pumps discharge waste heat into the ground in the summer months and extract heat from the ground in the winter months.

Open loop systems require an ample source of ground water. An open loop system pumps water directly from a ground water source into a building where it is used for heating and cooling. The used water is either deposited on the surface in a pond or river, or back into the water source. Open loop systems may have environmental impacts due to introducing higher temperatures and minerals into the water sources. Open loop systems may also have some effect on the local aquifer or a neighbor's well source if there is not enough groundwater.

EDUCATJION

Bennington will not be able to achieve its energy goals without the help of its citizens. Bennington should educate the public on the benefits of energy efficiency and the most feasible renewable energy systems. In the following subsections there are resources provided that Bennington can use to raise awareness regarding energy efficiency and renewable energy systems.

Energy Saving Tips

Bennington and its residents and businesses are encouraged to take advantage of the following energy saving information:

The Nebraska Energy Office has listed ways to save money on energy bills for the home, farm, business, or vehicle. Options for energy savings are listed on the Nebraska Energy Office's website at http://www.neo.ne.gov/tips/tips.htm.

The U.S. Department of Energy created the *Energy Saver Guide* that explains tips on saving money and energy at home:
http://energy.gov/sites/prod/files/2014/05/f16/Energy_Saver_Guide_PhaseI_Final.pdf
On their website, OPPD has links to many energy saving tips and tools. Visit www.oppd.com for more information.

Jobs and Economic Development Impact Models (JEDI)

Developed for the National Renewable Energy Laboratory, the JEDI models were created to demonstrate the economic benefits associated with renewable energy systems in the United States. This model can be used by anyone: government officials, decision makers, citizens. The model is simple, the user enters in information about the project and it will generate economic impact data such as jobs, local sales tax revenue etc.

FUNDING

Financial Incentives

Nebraska has a number of financial incentives for renewable energy production and energy efficiency. These include:

- Renewable Energy Tax Credit (Corporate)
- Renewable Energy Tax Credit (Personal)
- Property Tax Exemption for Wind Energy Generation Facilities
- Sales and Use Tax Exemption for Community Wind Projects
- Sales and Use Tax Exemption for Renewable Energy Property
- Dollar and Energy Savings Loans (State Loan Program)

Many utility companies have rebate programs for energy efficiency or renewable energy systems. For summaries of additional programs, incentives and policies in Nebraska visit the Database of State Incentives for Renewables & Efficiency (DSIRE) website: http://www.dsireusa.org/incentives/index.cfm?re=0&ee=0&spv=0&st=0&srp=1&state=NE

Energy Assistance Programs

Residents wanting help paying their utility bills can visit this website with links to many programs in Nebraska: http://nebraskaenergyassistance.com/assistance/

The Weatherization Assistance Program helps lower income families save on their utility bills by making their homes more energy efficient. The Nebraska Energy Office administers the federally-funded program. This website describes the program and how to apply: http://www.neo.ne.gov/wx/wxindex.htm

Grants

There are a number of grant opportunities from federal, state, and non-profit agencies that distribute funding for energy efficiency improvements and renewable energy. The City of Bennington should explore grant opportunities to help fund energy conservation or renewable energy projects.

Green Funds

The City of Bennington could create a program to help fund municipal energy projects. One such program could be a revolving green fund. First, the City would establish a baseline year for municipal energy use. After making energy improvements, track the energy savings, and then use the money from the energy savings to create funding for continued energy improvements. A program such as this can help fund energy saving projects at the same cost as if the City did nothing. Many universities have created a green revolving fund such as this.

DEFINITIONS

LEED: Voluntary LEED certification provides independent, third-party verification that a building, home or community was designed and built using strategies aimed at achieving high performance in key areas of human and environmental health: sustainable site development, water savings, energy efficiency, materials selection and indoor environmental quality. Building to LEED standards does not require LEED certification. (http://www.usgbc.org/DisplayPage.aspx?CMSPageID=1988)

ENERGY STAR: A U.S. Environmental Protection Agency voluntary program that helps businesses and individuals save money and protect our climate through energy efficiency. The ENERGY STAR program has influenced the adoption of energy efficient products, practices, and services through partnerships, objective measurement tools, and consumer education. (http://www.energystar.gov/)

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The following are goals and strategies suggested for Bennington.

1. Reduce energy use per capita in Bennington
    a. Encourage Multi-Modal Transportation
        i. Increase use of trails, walking, and bicycling as alternative modes of transportation
        ii. Plan trails and sidewalks to connect neighborhoods and provide access to commercial areas and community facilities
    b. Encourage the development of electric car charging stations and other alternative fuels infrastructure
    c. Ensure efficient use of land resources
        i. Encourage new development adjacent to existing development
        ii. Encourage infill development
        iii. Encourage mixed use development
    d. Increase local jobs to decrease average commute time and energy use
    e. Increase the energy efficiency of buildings within Bennington
        i. Educate homeowners regarding practical energy efficiency measures
        ii. Encourage meeting current LEED standards for new buildings and renovations in Bennington
        iii. Partner with utility companies to enhance Bennington's efforts to understand: energy use patterns, rates, programs, and incentives
        iv. Encourage residential and commercial energy upgrades
        v. Encourage energy conservation through the siting of development and landscaping
        vi. Encourage the use of green roofing systems
    f. Educate citizens regarding energy element
        i. Implement education, outreach and citizen engagement strategies
            A. Establish a webpage where the City can inform citizens of its energy related efforts, as well as provide energy saving tips

B. Develop a demonstration garden at a highly visible public facility

ii. Raise Bennington's residents' awareness of the wise use of energy

iii. Recognize local projects that support the goals and strategies of the energy element

iv. Encourage recycling in Bennington

2. Increase the amount of renewable energy generated in Bennington
    a. Inform citizens about practical renewable energy options
    b. Examine and remove unintended barriers for appropriate renewable energy generation
    c. Evaluate the feasibility of producing energy from a City owned facility
    d. Encourage renewable energy use in buildings
3. Increase the amount of local food that is consumed in Bennington
    a. Review existing codes regarding composting
    b. Support local food production
        i. Support markets for local food such as farmers' markets
        ii. Encourage community education regarding locally produced food
4. Reduce energy consumption within the City of Bennington's operations
    a. Conduct building energy audits on priority City buildings to identify energy retrofit and improvement opportunities
    b. Educate City staff regarding energy consumption
    c. Educate City staff on latest trends, energy codes, and systems
    d. Explore feasible on-site renewable energy applications in appropriate City facilities and projects
    e. Research funding opportunities to finance energy efficiency improvements
    f. As City vehicles are decommissioned, consider replacing them with alternative fuel or fuel efficient vehicles