



ASHLAND

NEBRASKA 2014 Comprehensive Plan Update

 **OLSSON**®
ASSOCIATES

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Introduction	3
Foundation	8
Goals and Objectives	24
Housing	27
Economic Development.....	29
Educational Goals	35
Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Public Safety Goals.....	36
Public Facility Goals	37
Environmental Goals	37
Land Use Goals and Policies	38
Land Use Plan.....	44
Existing Land Use Map.....	47
Education	49
Health Care	52
Public Safety.....	52
Public Services.....	53
Public Utilities.....	55
Other Utilities.....	55
Parks and Recreation.....	56
Future Needs.....	57
Sanitary Sewer Map	59
Water System Map.....	61
Transportation Plan	67
Road Classification Plan	71
Future Transportation System	73
Bicycle Facilities Plan.....	81
Energy Element.....	83
Implementation	90
Future Land Use Plan	90
Future Land Use Map.....	99
Phasing Plan	101
Phasing Map.....	107
Plan Implementation	109



Introduction

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN INTRODUCED

A comprehensive plan, also known as a master or general plan, establishes a vision for future growth. Comprehensive plans are anticipatory, forward thinking, and long-range in nature. Typically, a comprehensive plan anticipates a growth period of twenty to twenty-five years. A comprehensive plan is a planning tool designed and developed to assist well-managed communities determine needs and to set goals and recommendations to direct future development. The comprehensive plan should serve as the foundation for local planning programs, policies, and principles.

The Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update was created to serve the needs of citizens, city staff, the Planning Commission, and elected officials. The goals, objectives, and strategies described within this plan update were based on information gathered from public input and meetings with staff. The Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update describes a future vision of the community and also recommends a method in which this vision can be attained.

The plan was created in accordance with four key planning principles:

1. *The Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update is intended to be used as a guideline and decision-making tool for community development.*
2. *The Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update expects that public policy decisions, in concert with market forces, will determine the implementation timeline.*
3. *The Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update is governed by the Ashland Zoning Regulations.*
4. *The Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update contains recommendations that are designed to promote quality development that is congruent with the vision of the community.*

PURPOSE OF THE ASHLAND COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE

The purpose of the comprehensive plan update is to assist in the community's future development direction. This is best accomplished by establishing accurate population projections, determining future land use needs, anticipating growth patterns, and making land use recommendations that ensure the health, safety, and general welfare of all Ashland residents. Successful execution of the Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update will ensure predictable, contiguous, and sustainable growth. The Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update also identifies future residential, commercial, and industrial growth areas.

The Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update conforms to Nebraska state statutes. It functions as a guideline for the Ashland Planning Commission and helps direct Ashland planning policy.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN DOCUMENT

The Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update document consists of the following seven chapters:

- *Introduction*
- *Foundation*
 - *Community Assessment*
 - *Community Facilities*
- *Goals and Objectives*
- *Land Use*
- *Transportation Plan*
- *Energy Element*
- *Implementation Guide*



Each chapter covers the various required elements of a Comprehensive Plan. Each of these elements is interrelated and dependent upon the others. The plan will provide a framework that will convey the recommendations from various elements into workable programs to assist in achieving the physical, social, and economic goals and objectives of the community residents.

Purpose of Comprehensive Planning

The Ashland Comprehensive Development Plan is designed to provide policy guidelines to enable citizens and elected officials to make informed decisions about the future of the community. Many issues regarding the future of Ashland are discussed in this plan. The Comprehensive Plan is intended to encourage a strong economic base for the community, so the goals of the citizens and community can be reached.

The plan acts as a tool to “develop a road map that guides the community through change”

The Comprehensive Development Plan is an information and management tool for city leaders to use in their decision-making process when considering future developments. This plan is not a static document; it should evolve as changes in the land-use, population, or local economy occur during the planning period. Planned growth will make Ashland more effective in serving residents, more efficient in using resources, and more proficient in meeting the standard of living and quality of life each individual desires.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

Planning begins with the collection of data to provide a comprehensive picture of the existing community and development of general goals and policies, based upon current and future issues faced by the city and its residents. These are intended to be practical guidelines for addressing existing conditions and guiding future growth. Analysis of the data provides the basis for developing forecasts of what the future will be in the planning area.

The plan represents a blueprint designed to identify, assess, and develop actions and policies in the areas of population, land use, transportation, housing, economic development, community facilities, and utilities. The plan contains proposals and recommendations that need to be implemented in order to be of value to the community and its residents.

The comprehensive plan was prepared under the direction of the Ashland Planning Commission with the assistance and participation of the City Council. The planning time period for achieving these goals, programs, and developments identified in the Ashland Comprehensive Development Plan is twenty years. However, the community should look at reviewing the plan annually and completing a full update in ten to fifteen years. The update will allow the community to incorporate ideas and developments not known at the time of this project.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN ELEMENTS

Nebraska State Statutes require the inclusion of certain elements in a Comprehensive Plan. A "Comprehensive Development Plan," as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 19-903 (Reissue 1997), shall meet the following descriptions and requirements:

The regulations and restrictions authorized by sections 19-901 to 19-915 shall be in accordance with a comprehensive development plan, which shall consist of both graphic and textual material and shall be designed to accommodate anticipated long-range future growth that shall be based upon documented population and economic projections. The comprehensive development plan shall, among other possible elements, include:

- (1) A land-use element that designates the proposed general distributions, general location, and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and lands, and other categories of public and private use of land;
- (2) The general location, character, and extent of existing and proposed major roads, streets, and highways, air, and other transportation routes and facilities;
- (3) The general location, type, capacity, and area served of present and projected or needed community facilities, including recreation facilities, schools, libraries, other public buildings, and public utilities and services; and
- (4)(a) When next amended after January 1, 1995, an identification of sanitary and improvement districts, subdivisions, industrial tracts, commercial tracts, and other discrete developed areas that are or in the future may be appropriate subjects for annexation and (b) a general review of the standards and qualifications that should be met to enable the municipality to undertake annexation of such areas. Failure of the plan to identify subjects for annexation or to set out standards or qualifications for annexation shall not serve as the basis for any challenge to the validity of an annexation ordinance.

Regulations shall be designed to lessen congestion in the streets; to secure safety from fire, panic, and other dangers; to promote health and the general welfare; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to secure safety from flood; to avoid undue concentration of population; to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements; to protect property against blight and depreciation; to protect the tax base; to secure economy in governmental expenditures; and to preserve, protect, and enhance historic buildings, places, and districts.

Such regulations shall be made with reasonable consideration, among other things, for the character of the district and its peculiar suitability for particular uses, with a view to conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout such municipality.

Analyzing past and existing demographic, housing, economic, and social trends allows for 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. In addition, past trends may be skewed or the data may be inaccurate, creating a distorted picture of past conditions.

Therefore, it is important for Ashland to closely monitor population, housing, and economic conditions that may impact the city. Through periodic monitoring, the city can adapt and adjust to changes at the local level. Having the ability to adapt to socio-economic change allows the city to maintain an effective Comprehensive Development Plan for the future, to enhance the quality of life, and to raise the standard of living for all residents.



Foundation

ASHLAND INTRODUCED

Ashland was formally founded as a community after its first official meeting on March 4, 1870. However, this date does not reflect the establishment and development of the area. The once prosperous Ashland Flouring Mills, founded by Mr. Dennis Dean, was established in 1863. Fuller and Moe's General Store, another pioneering business in the area, was also established in 1863. Ashland briefly held the county seat of Saunders County; however, it was moved to Wahoo after the general election of 1873.

The population of Ashland increased rapidly between 1870 and 1880 due to the extension of the Union Pacific Railroad lines into Saunders County. This population boom was short lived, however, and Ashland's population gradually declined until 1970. Ashland has continued to grow modestly since 1970. Annual rates of growth have varied between one and seven percent annually.

Ashland's strategic location halfway between Lincoln and Omaha, its close proximity to Mahoney State Park and the Strategic Air and Space Museum, and its quaint downtown make it an attractive community to live, work, shop, and play.

PLANNING JURISDICTION

The planning and zoning jurisdiction for the City of Ashland includes the area within one mile of the corporate limits as written under the authority of Neb. Rev. Stat. § 17-1002 (Reissue 1997). The city may enforce zoning and subdivision regulations, as well as building, electrical, and plumbing codes within their planning jurisdiction.

LOCATION

Ashland is located in the southeast corner of Saunders County, Nebraska. Ashland is at the intersection of one United States Highway (U.S. Highway 6) and two Nebraska State Highways (NE Highway 63 and 66). Access to Interstate 80 is approximately seven miles away at the Gretna interchange, four miles away at the Greenwood interchange, and three miles away at the Mahoney State Park interchange. Saunders County is surrounded by Douglas, Cass, Lancaster, Butler, Dodge, Seward, Sarpy, and Colfax Counties. Ashland is located in the center of approximately 53 percent of Nebraska total population.

CLIMATE

The climate of Ashland is similar to the climate of Nebraska and the entire Great Plains region. Generally, the climate is hot during the summer months and cold during the winter months. The warmest month of the year is July with an average high of 89 degrees and an average low of 66 degrees Fahrenheit. The highest recorded temperature in Ashland was 113 degrees Fahrenheit, in 1954. The coldest month of the year is January with an average high of 35 degrees and an average low of 13 degrees Fahrenheit. The coldest recorded temperature in Ashland was negative 33 degrees Fahrenheit in 1974. The difference in average high temperatures is 54 degrees, and the difference in average low temperature is 53 degrees. The average annual precipitation for Ashland is 30.91 inches. Approximately 73 percent of precipitation falls during the growing season of April to September. On average the wettest month of the year is May with 4.82 inches of precipitation, and the driest month is January with only 0.78 inches of precipitation.

TOPOGRAPHY AND SOILS

Ashland is located in the Platte River Valley, with an altitude of 1,095 feet. The area east of Ashland consists of high bluffs overlooking the Platte River. The Salt Creek is to the south and east of the heart of Ashland. The Salt Creek is responsible for a large portion of floodway and floodplain which lies within and around Ashland's jurisdiction.

The geology of the Ashland area is comprised of ancient granites and schist rocks. Ashland's soil is comprised of the Sharpsburg-Fillmore Association. The association is characterized by deep, nearly level to gently sloping, moderately well and poorly drained, silty soils as well as silty soils with clayey sub soils formed in loess on high terraces and depressions. The Sharpsburg-Fillmore Association is found in high terraces. Ashland also has silty alluvium and clayey alluvium found along the bottom lands. The drainage of the bottom land ranges from moderate well to poor.



HISTORY

The town of Ashland, in the southeast corner of the county, has a colorful history that includes Indian lore, cattle rustling, floods, claim jumping, petty thievery, and the “stealing of county records.” Today, by contrast, it is a delightful town of approximately 2,500 law-abiding citizens, proud of their school system, churches, businesses, library, and many social clubs.

In the early days (1845-1848), it was the ford on Salt Creek that put us on the map. “Saline Ford” was a low-water crossing on a limestone ledge -- the only one in this area. Thus, the Ox-bow (a branch of the Oregon Trail), Settlers’ Road, and Military Road all came through here. As a result, tradesmen, blacksmiths, and inn keepers set up businesses to service westward-bound travelers. Before the railroads came, it is estimated that thousands of people crossed Saline Ford.

Many names were suggested for the settlement that was developing. These included the obvious, Saline Ford, to Flora City, Troy, and Washington City. About the time that the new “Calhoun County” was being organized in 1856-58, and the settlement on Salt Creek was named its seat of government, a Mr. Argyle, who was an admirer of Henry Clay named it, “Ashland,” for Clay’s home in Kentucky. Later, the name Calhoun was stripped from the records and the county was renamed “Saunders.”

Ashland celebrated its centennial in 1957. This 100 year anniversary is linked to the time that the first families – Aughey, Warbutton, and Stambaugh – had settled just north of town. Ashland was officially platted in 1866, and the first post office was established in November of 1866.

Ashland served as the county seat for several years. A two-story, stone building in the center of town provided space for county records. A general store was downstairs, and upstairs, in addition to the county offices, was the doctor’s office. A little cast iron safe held tax money and valuable records. The register of deeds book, clerk’s records, and commissioners’ minutes were stacked on a shelf in the corner. A wooden table served as a desk or judge’s bench. In 1870, a big courthouse was built. Because of frequent floods along Salt Creek, most businesses had moved away from the old Main Street to Silver Street, so named by those who had begun their businesses with profits from the silver mines of Colorado and Utah.

By the early 1870s, Saunders County was experiencing population growth through its territory. In 1873 the issue of relocating the county seat was brought to a vote. Ashland’s location within the far Southeast of the county made for a long commute for county residents. Some citizens of Saunders County complained about having to travel 40-50 miles from their homes to Ashland to visit the courthouse. In 1873 an election was held to locate the Saunders County seat. This vote ended in a four-way tie between the communities of Wahoo, Eldred, Mead (known as Alvin in 1873), and Ashland. Sources on this historical event do not agree about the specific details about the relocation of the county seat but in December of 1873 the county records were relocated to Wahoo, allegedly by stealth and the changeover was achieved. Wahoo has remained the county seat ever since.

Despite the loss of the county seat, Ashland became a boom-town in the decade from 1870-80. The railroad had arrived! The line from Plattsmouth to Lincoln via Ashland was completed in 1870. A busy rail line from day-one, it brought new settlers, which meant more homes, lumber, tools, and household goods. Coal and produce were big sale items. Many new businesses were added such as, Swifts Ice Plant, Chickering Piano Company, a broom factory, brick kiln, cigar factory, harness factory, two flour mills, limestone quarry, and a sand and gravel pit. In 1887, a second rail line from Omaha was completed and a branch line was extended across the county from Ashland to Schuyler.

During its first 100 years, Ashland had many outstanding residents. Everyone helped, each in their own way. For example, some ladies, who did not like the appearance of the cemetery, organized and, with scythes and grass scissors, took care of the problem. Another women’s group was responsible for obtaining funds for a Carnegie library, resulting in the introduction of concerts, plays, and public debates to the community. The Chamber of Commerce started the annual “Stir-Up.”

Newer organizations include: senior citizens, Boy and Girl Scouts, 4-H clubs, each adding something to the community.



Foundation - Community Assessment

DEMOGRAPHICS INTRODUCED

Simply defined, demographic data is descriptive statistical information about a population group. Demographic data describes the population, social, housing, and economic characteristics of a community. Demographic data also provides a historical perspective on community growth and change.

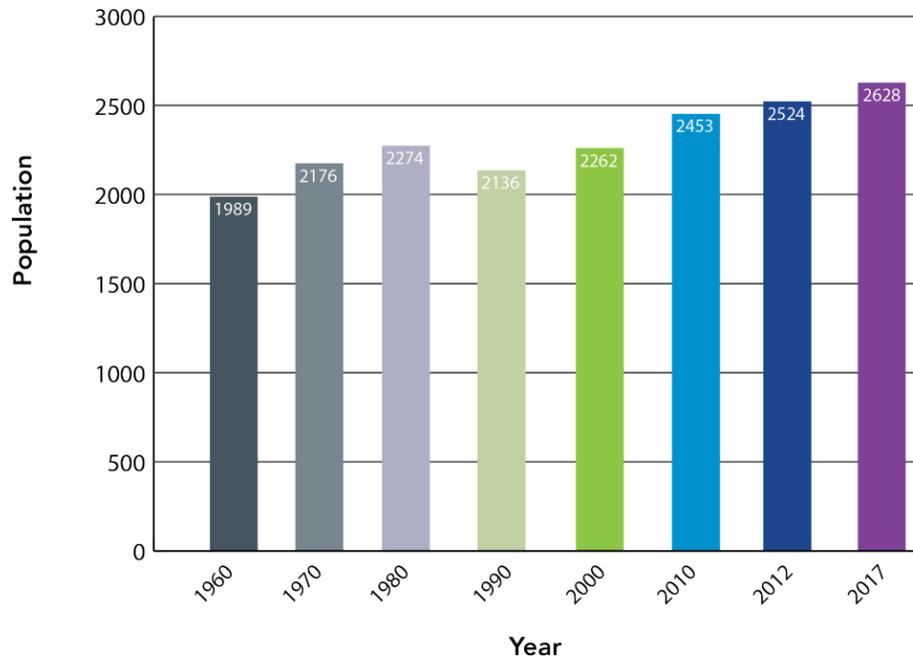
The purpose of the demographic section of the Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update is to use objective quantitative data to analyze the makeup and composition of the community. Understanding demographic characteristics is a useful first step in learning about the profile of the community.

ASHLAND DEMOGRAPHICS

This section uses text and graphs to convey characteristic information about Ashland. The following demographic data is analyzed:

- *Population Trends*
 - Population Change By Decade
 - Population Distribution by Age Groups
- *Employment Trends*
 - Household Income
 - Employment by Industry
 - Educational Attainment
- *Housing Trends*
 - Age of Housing
 - Rate of Home Ownership
 - Affordability of Owner and Renter-Occupied Housing
- *Fiscal Trends*
 - Retail Marketplace Analysis

Population by Decade



POPULATION

This graph displays Ashland's total population over the past 50 years. Population is represented by the vertical axis, while the horizontal axis identifies past decades (1960-2010). In addition, this graph includes population estimates for the years 2012 and 2017. These estimates are the products of the U.S. Census and ESRI produced for the purpose of showing the continuing trends of local population growth and/or decline.

Ashland has experienced both growth and decline over the past 50 years. From 1960 to 1980, the population grew by 285 residents or 14.3%. During the period from 1960 to 1980, the population grew by an average of 0.7% per year. In the following decade from 1980 to 1990, the population of Ashland declined by just over 6% or 138 residents. In the following three decades from 1990 to 2010, the population increased by 14.8%. During the period from 1990 to 2010 the population grew by an average of 0.7% per year. This rate is nearly identical to the rate of growth experienced from 1960 to 1980. Future population estimates for Ashland predict that the community will continue to grow. The United States Census Bureau projects that Ashland's population will reach 2,524 residents in 2012 and 2,628 residents in 2017. This population estimate represents a 7.1% projected increase in population from 2010 to 2017 or 1.0% each year.

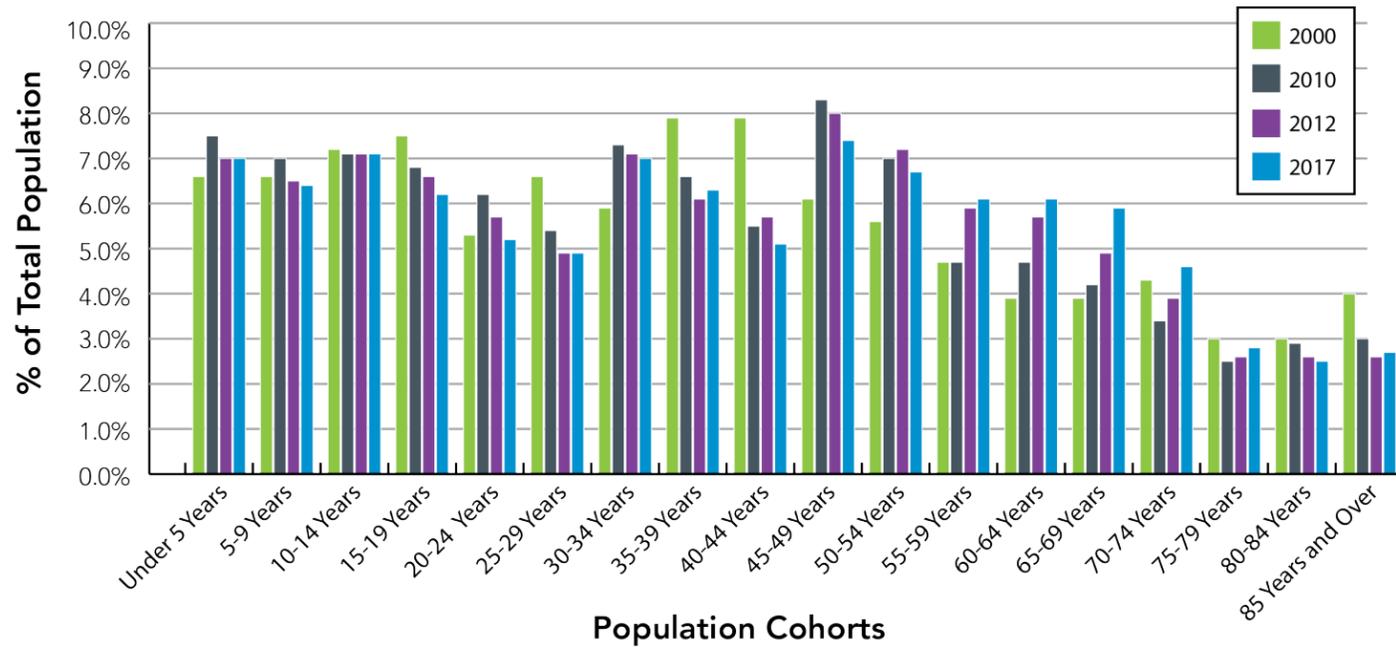


The historic population trends for Ashland over the past 50 years indicate that the community has a relatively stable population base. While Ashland is not immune to periods of population decline, the community has experienced only short-term population loss (1980 – 1990) at a relatively low rate. In subsequent time periods, the community has seen stable and significant population growth. Future indications infer that the community should expect continued growth for the population of Ashland at rates comparable to the past.

POPULATION DISTRIBUTION

This graph depicts Ashland's population distribution by age cohorts. Population age cohorts are displayed on the x-axis and the percent of total population is displayed on the y-axis. An age cohort is a group of similar aged individuals. The Population Distribution graph contains both actual values obtained from the 2010 Census as well as 2012 and 2017 estimated values obtained from the United States Census Bureau.

Percentage of Population by Age Group



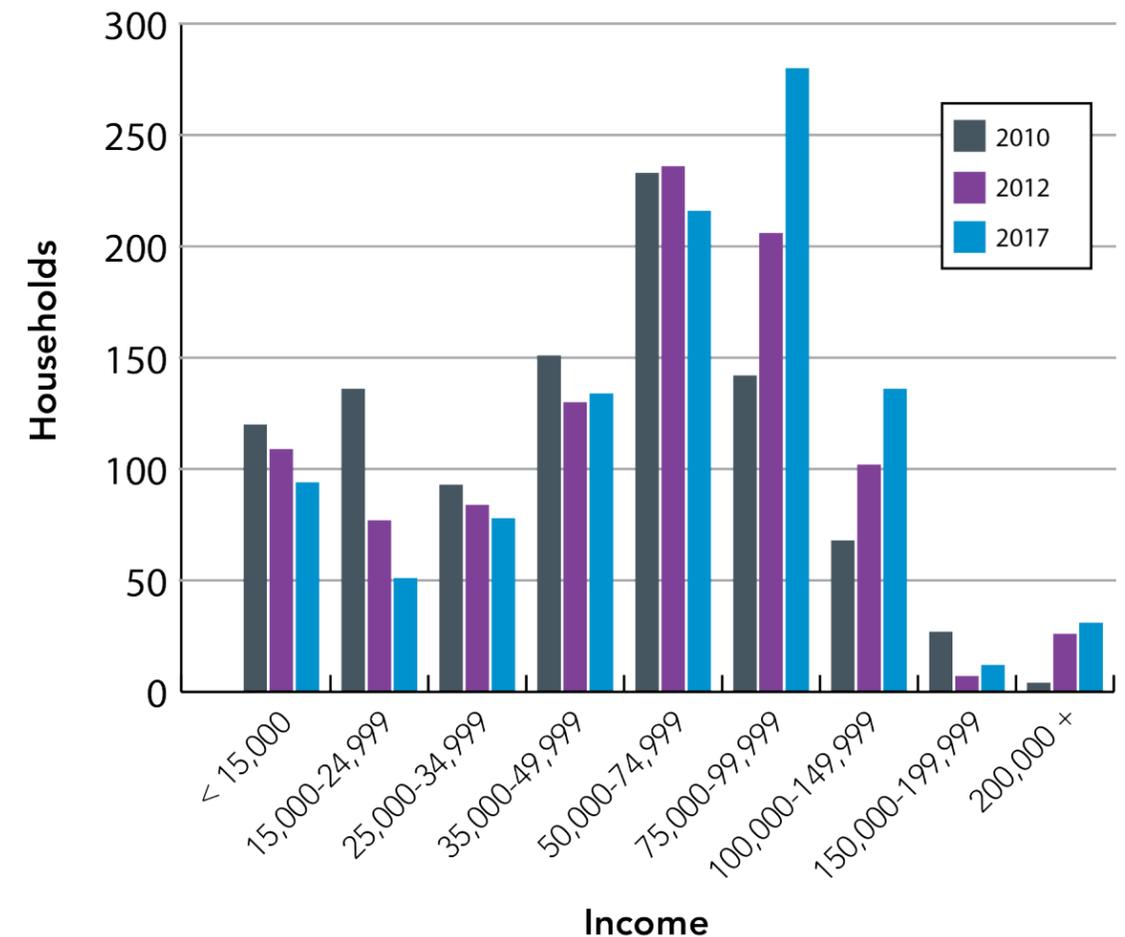
Several age cohorts are projected to experience significant change. The 50 – 59 age cohort projects an increase of 48 residents, the 60 – 69 age cohort projects an increase of 97 residents, and the 70 – 79 age cohort projects an increase of 49 residents. Only four age cohorts are projected to decrease in population, including the 0 – 9 age cohort, the 20 – 29 age cohort, the 40 – 49 age cohort, and the 85+ age cohort.

HOUSEHOLD INCOME

This graph depicts the income stratification among Ashland residents. The number of Ashland households is identified on the y-axis and nine income ranges are located on the x-axis. Household income is defined as the sum of the gross income earned by all members of a household. The Household Income graph contains both actual values obtained from the 2010 Census as well as 2012 and 2017 estimated values obtained from the United States Census Bureau.

In 2010, 233 Ashland households earned between \$50,000 and \$74,999. This was Ashland's most prevalent income bracket in 2010. Ashland's second most prevalent income bracket, \$35,000 and \$49,999, was earned by 151 households.

Household Income



According to the United States Census Bureau, 280 households are expected to earn between \$75,000 and \$99,999 in 2017. This income bracket is expected to represent the largest percentage of Ashland households in 2017. The United States Census Bureau also projects that the \$100,000 to \$149,999 income bracket will experience significant growth. The United States Census Bureau identified 68 Ashland households in 2010 that earned between \$100,000 and \$149,999. The United States Census Bureau estimates that 136 Ashland households will earn between \$100,000 and \$149,999 in 2017. This represents an increase of 100%.

- Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining (11,12)
- Construction (23)
- Manufacturing (31-33)
- Wholesale Trade (42)
- Retail Trade (44-45)
- Transportation and warehousing, and utilities (48-49)
- Information (51)
- Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing (52)
- Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services (54)
- Educational services, and health care and social assistance (61-62)
- Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation and food services (71-72)
- Other services, except public administration (81)
- Public administration (92)

EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION

This graph depicts the categorization of all Ashland jobs by occupation. The x-axis lists the 13 standard occupation classifications. The number of Ashland jobs is identified on the y-axis. The Employment by Occupation graph contains actual values obtained from the 2010 Census.

The occupation with the most jobs in 2010 was educational services, health care, and social assistance. This occupation type accounted for over 280 jobs. The occupation type with the second most jobs in 2010 was retail trade. This occupation type accounted for nearly 160 jobs.

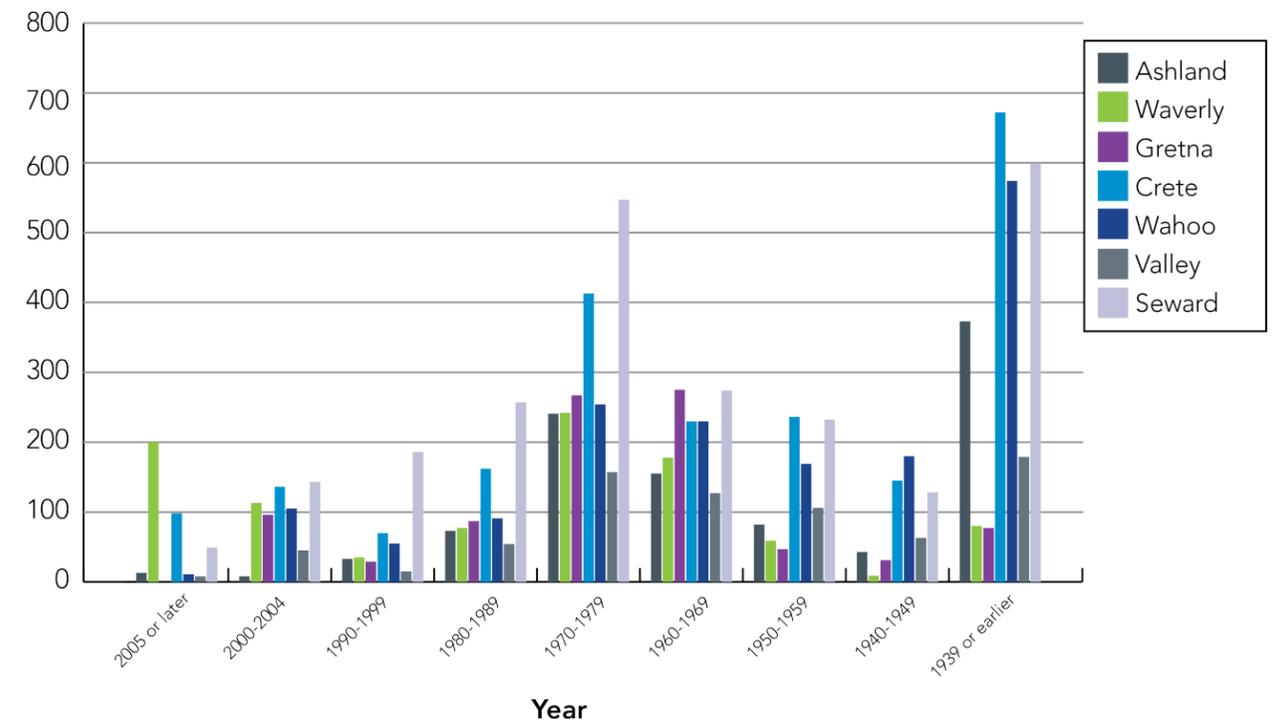
YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT

This graph identifies the number of homes that were constructed between 1939 or before and 2005 or later. The x-axis lists nine date ranges and the y-axis identifies the number of homes.

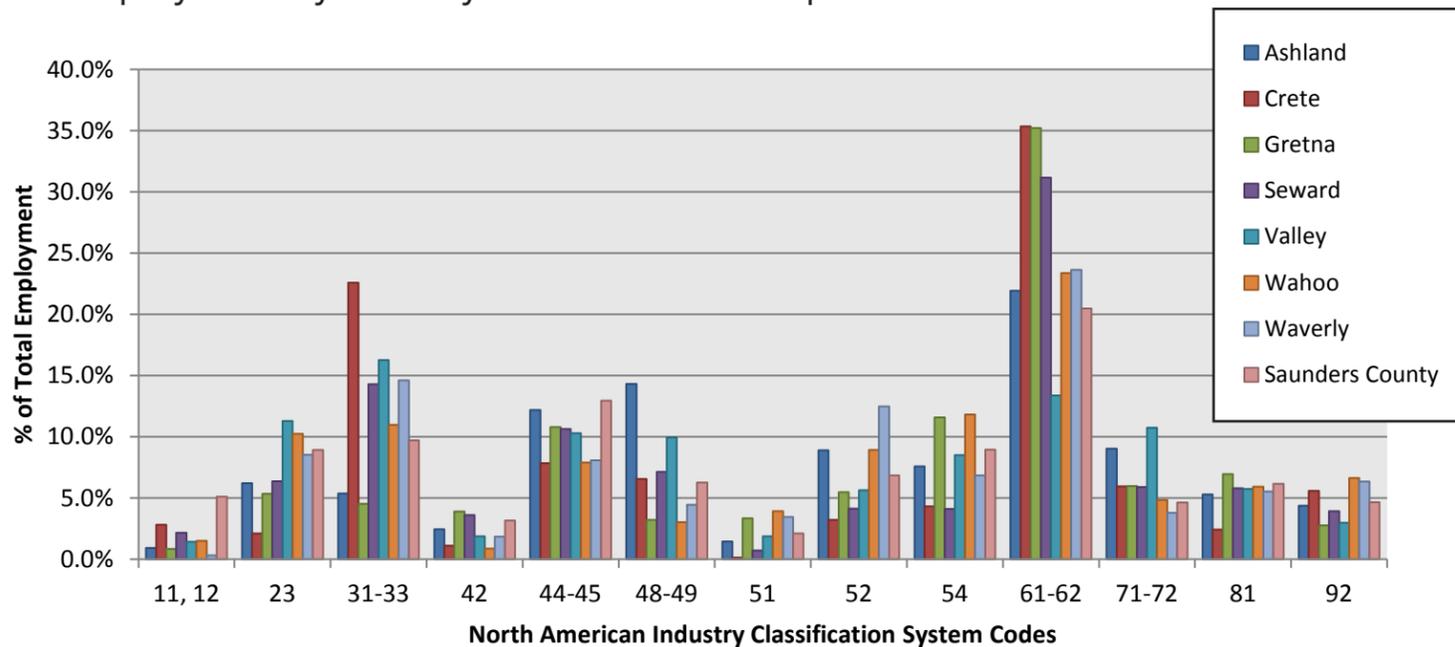
Ashland's largest housing construction period occurred prior to 1939. According to the United States Census Bureau, 373 Ashland homes were built prior to 1939. Homes built prior to 1939 account for approximately 37 percent of Ashland's total housing stock.

Ashland's second largest housing construction boom occurred between 1970 and 1979. A total of 241 homes were built during this time period. These homes account for approximately 24 percent of Ashland's housing stock.

Year Structure Built



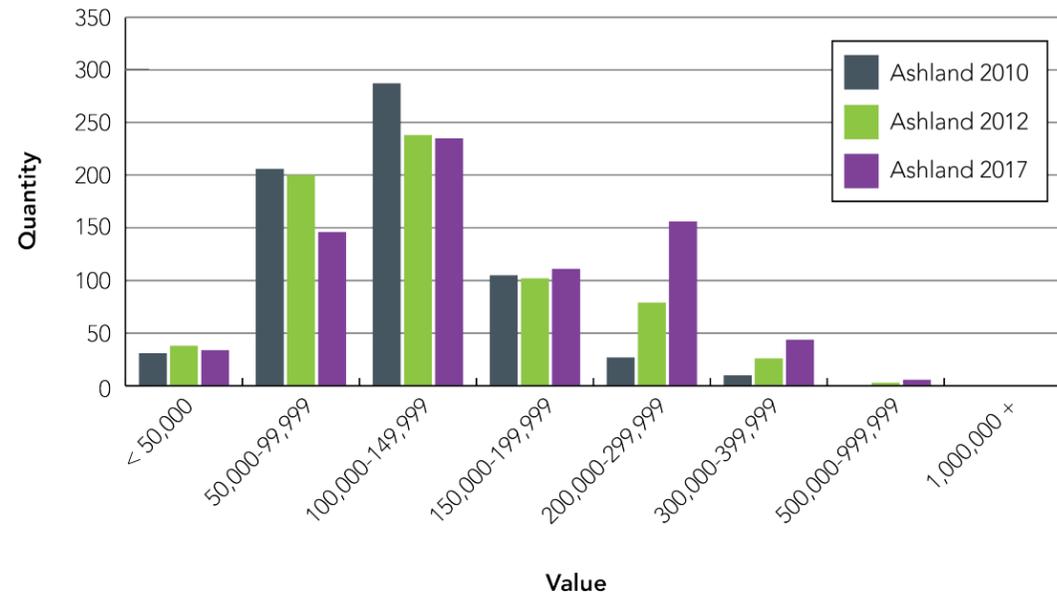
Employment by Industry: Ashland and Comparable Communities



VALUE OF ASHLAND HOMES

This graph depicts the value of Ashland's homes. The housing price ranges are located on the x-axis and number of homes is identified on the y-axis. The Ashland Housing Values graph contains both actual values obtained from the 2010 Census as well as 2012 and 2017 estimated values obtained from the United States Census Bureau. In 2010, 206 houses in Ashland were worth between \$50,000 and \$99,999. This was Ashland's most prevalent home value bracket in 2010.

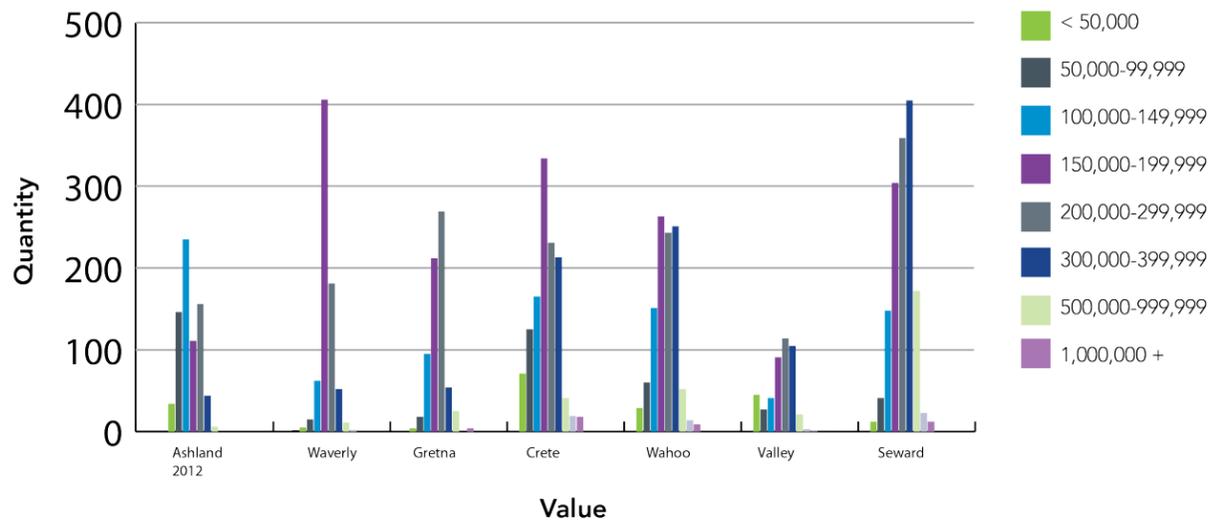
Ashland Housing Values



According to the United States Census Bureau, 235 homes are expected to be worth between \$100,000 and \$149,999 in 2017. This home value bracket is expected to be Ashland's most prevalent home value bracket and will account for nearly half of Ashland's total homes.

Ashland's median home value was \$120,000 in 2010. Ashland's median home value is projected to increase to \$139,574 by 2017. This would represent an increase of 16 percent over seven years or 2.3 percent annually.

Housing Values



ASHLAND VISION – ENVISIONING THE FUTURE

The Ashland Comprehensive Plan provides a broadly painted picture for the community's future and guidance for land use decisions and other actions, both public and private that collectively will determine the future of Ashland.

The core promise embedded in the Ashland Plan Update is to maintain and enhance the health, safety, and welfare of our community during times of change, to promote community ideals and values as changes occur, and to meet the needs of today without sacrificing the needs of future generations. The plan acknowledges the importance of the connections between economic, environmental, and social components of the community. This effort is a combination of practicality and vision, and provides guidelines for sustaining the rich fabric of the Ashland community.

Change is continuous; therefore, Ashland must decide specific criteria that will be used to judge and manage change. Instead of reacting

to development pressures after the fact, the community along with their strategic vision, can better reinforce the desired changes, and discourage negative impacts that may undermine the vision. A shared vision permits Ashland to focus its diverse energies and minimize conflicts in the present, and in the future.

Visioning is a process of evaluating present conditions, identifying problem areas, and bringing about consensus on how to overcome existing problems and manage change. By determining Ashland's liabilities, assets, needs, and dreams, the community can decide how it wants to be perceived, and then develop a "road map" guiding decisions and, ultimately, fulfilling the vision of the community. However, the plan cannot only be based upon this "vision" and "road map" concept. The residents of Ashland must also act or implement the necessary steps involved in achieving this "vision."

VISION – DEFINING ASHLAND

Early during the Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update process, community residents, city staff members, and other stakeholders participated in a L.A.N.D. exercise. During this exercise, all participants were asked to express their concerns and opinions about what kind of community they want Ashland to become in the future. The topics of the exercise included:

- *Liabilities are those features that limit or prevent a community from moving forward. Liabilities are detriments and hinder progress.*
- *Assets are those things in the community that residents value, cherish, and appreciate.*
- *Needs are those items which are important to maintain or improve the quality of life.*
- *Dreams are inspirational and forward-thinking.*

The following is a summary of the L.A.N.D. analysis that came out of specific input from the community. A L.A.N.D. analysis examines the Liabilities, Assets, Needs, and Dreams of the community. The following table illustrates the relationship of the four elements to Ashland.

LIABILITIES	ASSETS	NEEDS	DREAMS
Aesthetics of Highway 6 between underpass and overpass	Downtown District	Traffic lights	Downtown parking
Swamp	Mahoney State Park	Pedestrian walk	Park improvements
Gateways (north, east, west, Highways 6, and 66 interchange)	Zoo Wildlife Safari	Business infrastructure	Cemetery implementation
Dangerous intersections	Oxbow Lake and trail	Pedestrian linkage between the two areas of the city	New police building
Aesthetics of Highway 6 corridor	Ashland – Greenwood School	Pool	Development south of new water tower
Annexation of Iron Horse	Iron Horse	Sewer lines	More downtown business
Pedestrian cross at Highway 6 and railroad: underpass	Future White Tail area	Parks	Entertainment/ night life
Highway 6 and 66 intersection (traffic light, appearance, safety)	Ball field area	Industrial space to offer incoming business	Subdivision annexation
Appearance of Industrial area	Oxbow trail crossing	Street improvements	Additional Highway connection
Dilapidated housing	Future developments	East Ashland infrastructure	
Unpaved streets (east Ashland)	Cemetery	Install new and repair public sidewalks	
Underpass (appearance, age)	NRD open grounds		
Retail leakage due to proximity to Omaha/Lincoln	Lake communities		
	Medical Center complex		
	Avenue of flags		
	Proximity to Omaha/Lincoln		
	Library/ Community Center		



Ashland is a strong community that uses its historic resources and close proximity to Lincoln and Omaha among various regional recreational resources to attract business, residents, and visitors. The city’s reinvestment in housing and community services provides the basis for economic and social prosperity.

In addition, the following areas of community interest were uncovered as part of the LAND process:

UTILIZE HISTORIC RESOURCES

Utilize buildings, parks, and monuments both in and near Ashland as a way to build tourism in conjunction with trails and recreational facilities. Included in this element as the following:

- Enhancement and enlargement of the existing city park system
- Continuation of the linear park and connecting trail system throughout the entire community
- Creation of a recreational and historic trails system connecting Ashland to the Mahoney State Park/ Strategic Air and Space Museum area as well as other communities in Saunders and Cass Counties

ATTRACT BUSINESSES, RESIDENTS, AND VISITORS

Create a business environment to support the following:

- New businesses, residents, and tourists to the Ashland, Mahoney State Park / Strategic Air and Space Museum area
- Downtown business development capable of attracting nearby tourism revenue to Ashland
- Primary business development capable of supplying jobs and revenue multiplication to support the local tax base, downtown businesses, and area attractions

REINVEST IN THE HOUSING STOCK

Explore options for improving, reinvesting, rehabilitating and enforcing building code standards to ensure quality housing stock presence locally through the following:

- Identification of structures in need of rehabilitation
- Establishment or identification of financing vehicles to assist in rehabilitation
- Demolition of dilapidated and unsafe housing stock
- Prioritize investment and rehabilitation of housing located in the central core and eastern side of the community

ASSURE PROVISION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES

Focus on retaining the existing level of services and expanding services as necessary, considering fluctuating population and business needs. Community service priorities include the following:

- Assessment of infrastructure service systems and public facilities for age, function, capacity, and suitability
- Consideration of transportation systems for vehicular, truck, and pedestrian use with special consideration of the following:
 - Alternative means, including bike paths and bike lanes
 - Fringe population segments, including the very young and elderly
 - Primary economic development uses, including truck traffic and their access and staging needs
- Public and open spaces for optimal design to accommodate local use patterns



ADVOCATE FOR ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL PROSPERITY

The prioritization on business development opportunities is critical as these lead to taxable capital investment and local job creation. Taxable revenues and increased primary jobs lead to quality of place . . . flourishing downtown businesses, adequately funded schools, and funds for infrastructure stability. Support of economic development leads to social prosperity and the following are key factors:

- Identification of appropriate primary development tracts and designation/protection of these tracts within the future land use plan
- Education of local lenders to understand grant, loan guarantee, and business assistance options to assist in creating stability of the local economy
- Assessment of appropriate economic development recruitment opportunities and preparation of infrastructure to serve these prospective users
- Review of permitting and development codes to support ease of development consistent with neighboring communities

While the above-listed, broad categories are of primary importance to the citizens of Ashland, it is necessary to dive in deeper by developing specific goals, policies, objectives, and plans of action to accomplish the tasks that will bring this vision to fruition.

Goals and Objectives

CHARTING THE COURSE

A key component of a Comprehensive Plan is the identification of community goals and policies. The goals and objectives ensure that the Comprehensive Development Plan accomplishes the desires of the residents that ultimately develop a community's vision. The vision statement can then be further delineated and translated into action statements, used to guide, direct, and base decisions for future growth, development, and change within Ashland. Consensus on "what is good land use?" and "how to manage change in order to provide the greatest benefit to the community and its residents?" is formed. Ashland's goals and policies attempt to address various issues, regarding the questions of "how" to plan for the future.

This chapter is critical to soliciting public input as well as establishing goals and policies for the community. Planning for the future land uses of the community is an ongoing process of goal setting and problem solving aimed at encouraging and enhancing a better community with a better quality of life. Planning focuses upon ways of solving existing problems within the community, and providing a management tool enabling Ashland citizens to achieve their vision for the future.

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 the community.

Goals are desires, necessities, and issues that should be attained in the future. A goal should be established in a manner that it 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 to attain specific goals. Objectives must be an action and 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. These objectives will synthesize the information from the goals, as well as the responses from the participants of the various input processes. Objectives play an important role in the Comprehensive Development Plan because they direct the different actions that will need to be taken to meet the goals.

It is important for communities to establish their goals and objectives in a fashion that allows for long-term and short-term accomplishments. The short-term goals and objectives serve several functions:

- *Allows 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.*

IMPLEMENTATION – DREAMS TO REALITIES

Diligent creation of plan implementation strategy is critical in ensuring that this effort is not viewed as a community 'dust collector' with great ideas. This plan provides a framework for the Ashland community to achieve its goals and implement its vision. Goals and objectives are specifically crafted to assist in guiding development priorities. The Capital Improvements Plan (CIP) additionally provides specific priority projects for community pursuit.

This Plan is designed to be a working document that guides community leaders in making decisions, establishing priorities, and committing time and resources that will positively affect the future of Ashland.



Implementation provides the foundation recommendations and aggregates other recommendations for a plan of action. To successfully implement the recommendations set forth within this plan, the following elements must be present:

- *Identified actions steps to achieve the community vision*
- *Identification of an Implementation Committee*
- *Prioritization of identified action steps*
- *Delegation of responsibility to implement action steps*
- *Framework for informing, engaging, and updating the City of Ashland and its citizens about implementation activities*

It is important to remember that a "plan is a plan." The City of Ashland, city staff, and Ashland citizens must be energized and committed to the implementation tasks associated with this effort to take this from "plan to reality."

ASHLAND AND THE FUTURE

Several issues exist as primary concerns within the Ashland community. The first concern is determining the location of future industrial, or primary, development as a means of bringing new investment and job creation to the community. The second concern involves the existence of dangerous or unsightly properties within the community. Next, the community is interested in seeking options to capture and multiply tourism dollars locally. The final major point of interest involves the effective management of growth, accommodating both residents and tourists, to the benefit of the community as a whole. The following pages will address these issues as well as others identified during the planning process through the development of goals and objectives aligned to community desires. The stated 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.

The goals and policies that have been generated for Ashland are organized into general categories. The categories are broad enough to allow many issues to fall within them, but narrow enough to allow a fairly clear distinction and separation. These categories are used for a logical organization of goals and policies. The following goals and policies are general in nature; while more specific goals and policies for transportation and land use can be found within those individual sections further in the document:

1997 COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOALS AND OBJECTIVES:

- *Creation of a Commercial/ Industrial Park in close proximity to Ashland*
Locate and secure a tract of land which is suitable for creation of a Commercial/ Industrial Park.
 - o Based on locations identified within the Land Use Plan, prioritize the possible locations for an Industrial/ Commercial Park within Ashland's planning jurisdiction. This study should identify ideal soil conditions, if possible, access to major transportation routes (currently and in the future), access to water and sanitary sewer (currently or in the future), and potential for conflict with other uses.
 - o Create a Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) to address the issues of redevelopment, blight, and substandard conditions. A CRA can work with consultants in developing a Redevelopment Plan for the community. The CRA, by State Statute, has taxing authority, bonding capabilities, ability to own and sell property, and many others.
 - o Begin development of the Industrial/ Commercial Park. This should include: purchase of property, platting of streets, lots, blocks, and utility easements. By having ownership and platted property, the community can begin to market and attract businesses immediately upon completion.
- *Enhance the Economic Development programs within Ashland*
This section provides goals and policies that support cooperation and coordination at a regional level to ensure sustainable local economic development. The City of Ashland does not have a hired, local economic development director; however, there are many regional utility, state, and local community partners engaged in economic development activities capable of providing significant support to Ashland in achieving their economic development objectives. It is in the best interest of Ashland to support and collaborate with these regional organizations. By focusing on common goals and allocating resources effectively, both the public and private sector can work together regionally to maximize successful business start-up, retention, expansion, and recruitment efforts.

Focus marketing efforts towards enhancing existing businesses/ enterprises and creating markets for new businesses/ enterprises.

- o Recruit new businesses and industries that work to solve two conditions: meet the skills of the present work force and will fill leakages in the current economic base. The following activities need to be accomplished in order to achieve these two conditions:
 - A survey of the present labor force needs to be undertaken to determine specific skills that may be underutilized or unknown.
 - A survey of the present employers in and around Ashland needs to be conducted in order to determine what skills are already required.

- o Promote Ashland as a bedroom community with small town qualities and values in close proximity to metropolitan cities. This objective builds on one of Ashland's greatest assets - its proximity to Omaha and Lincoln. This goal works on a short-term and long-term basis. Ashland can accommodate a variety of residents, including:
 - Residents who live and work in Ashland.
 - Residents that live in Ashland and work in the Omaha metro, the Lincoln metro, and Wahoo.
 - Residents that wish to telecommute to work (workers that work at home by computer and their actual employer could be anywhere in the world).
- o Begin developing a regional recreational/ tourism hiker-biker trail system. This system would connect Ashland to the recreational and tourism amenities of Douglas, Lancaster, Cass, Sarpy, and Saunders Counties. This trail system would build off of existing trails being developed, within Ashland. The trail system would connect Ashland with Mahoney State Park, the Strategic Air and Space Museum, Linoma Beach, Platte River State Park, Lincoln and Omaha, as well as, other identified points of interest. Any opportunities for further development, i.e. Nebraska Department of Roads highway construction should be taken advantage of while they are in design and construction.
- o Identify properties within Ashland's planning jurisdiction that are in need of redevelopment. These may include junkyards, deteriorated homes, and structures. Once identified and the CRA is in place, work within the law to upgrade the value of these projects through redevelopment of the properties.

- *Improve Ashland's Quality of Life*

Begin and continue projects that will affect the existing and future resident's quality of life.

- o Review infrastructure recommendations and project list from Town Hall Meeting. Those projects identified include, but are not limited to:
 - Sewer plant expansion
 - Water treatment
 - Continued upgrading of the water distribution and sanitary sewer collection systems to handle existing and future needs of the community
 - Street repairs
- o These engineering projects will add to the current quality of life by upgrading services to existing residents and providing the necessary services to attract future industry and residents.
- o Begin a drive to build several new community facilities in Ashland. These facilities include, but are not limited to:
 - Development of an expanded sports complex.
 - Continued expansion of the soccer field project.
 - Development of an area airport to relief stress from Eppley and Millard Airports in Omaha.

These projects should be a joint effort of the city and fundraising by private residents.

- o Develop new housing opportunities and enhance existing housing. Work with the city to continue rehabilitation of housing units in the community. In addition to existing housing rehabilitation, the community should develop additional opportunities for elderly housing in the community. These activities will allow Ashland to rehabilitate existing housing thus improving the image of the residential neighborhoods. While development of elderly housing will aid in attracting and maintaining a major asset in small towns, the people who aided in Ashland's development.

Housing

H 1: HOUSING GOAL

Maintain Ashland's stock of historic buildings.

Objectives

- H 1.1 Develop a full listing of historic building assets in Ashland.
- H 1.2 Develop a facade improvement program for the historic buildings in Ashland.

H.2: HOUSING GOAL

Affordable housing should be distributed throughout the community.

Policies

- H 2.1 Develop zoning and subdivision regulations and policies that will minimize the cost of extending infrastructure to new development areas.
- H 2.2 Encourage development of housing that accommodates fringe population segments such as the disabled and elderly, ensuring that housing options for these population segments have sufficient access to retail and service hubs within walking distance.

- H 2.3 Encourage of permitting lenience on construction styles and building types to encourage cost-effective approaches to new housing.
- H 2.4 Encourage the redevelopment of older lots (with older homes) for more affordable units.
- H 2.5 Create zoning regulations that will work in conjunction with the smaller/narrower residential lots throughout the community.
- H 2.6 Seek input from major community employers and school administrators to accommodate housing needs for existing employees and projected future growth.
- H 2.7 Preserve existing, affordable housing and promotion of new affordable housing throughout the community should be encouraged.
- H 2.8 Collaborate with the Southeast Nebraska Development District to identify potential funding opportunities that will aid in making affordable housing a reality.
- H 2.9 Down payment assistance programs.
- H 2.10 Mortgage buy downs.
- H 2.11 Infrastructure grants.
- H 2.12 New residential development should be discouraged in areas of environmental concern, including floodplain corridors.

H.3: HOUSING GOAL

Collaborate with local agencies to identify solutions to address elderly housing needs.

Policies

- H 3.1 Collaborate via the facilitation of the City of Ashland to develop an elderly housing and services task force to identify met and unmet housing and service needs for this community population segment.
- H 3.2 Develop targeted deficiencies in housing and community service needs to the elderly population and identify local agencies from which solutions may be found to discuss alternatives for mitigation.
- H 3.3 Following identification of deficiencies and agencies capable of taking actions to address elderly housing and service deficiencies, develop a strategic plan for implementation of targeted mitigation tasks.
- H 3.4 Consider usage of planned unit development (PUD) concepts as a viable alternative to conventional housing development patterns to encourage greater access and mobility of elderly and senior residents.
- H 3.5 Public uses (churches, social service agencies, and retail) should be allowed to locate near the center of neighborhoods to encourage easy access of these services to elderly and senior populations.
- H 3.6 Pedestrian orientation of design should be encouraged in new developments to allow for shorter block lengths and increased access to elderly and senior populations.
- H 3.7 New residential development should be accompanied by covenants providing for maintenance of common areas serving the homes of elderly populations.

H.4: HOUSING GOAL

Work with existing property owners to rehabilitate or remove dilapidated and/or uninhabitable housing units in Ashland.

Policies

- H 4.1 Undergo a housing assessment study to determine the age, condition, and general housing needs experienced currently in Ashland.
- H 4.2 Create a map, either through the housing assessment study, or through local assessment that identifies each individual structure that meets the definition of dilapidated and/or uninhabitable.

- H 4.3 Consider formal designation of community areas for redevelopment through the commissioning of a blight and substandard determination study.
- H 4.4 Consider a series of condemnation proceedings to eliminate blighted properties that don't exist within a city-designated blighted area or for which owners have opted to forego mitigation.

Economic Development

ED.1: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL - TOURISM

The City of Ashland should promote the recreational aspects of the community to attract visitors to the area.

Policies

- ED 1.1 Encourage the growth of tourism as a sustainable provider of jobs in the region and work together with community groups and businesses to make Ashland and its surrounding parks and attractions a tourism destination.
- ED 1.2 Support and promote the natural, historical and cultural aspects of Ashland and the surrounding region as a vital part of the local economy and quality of life.
- ED 1.3 Promote local outdoor recreation opportunities, including, but not limited to, camping, biking, hiking, backpacking, and touring as well as regional opportunities such as backpacking, kayaking, boating, and horseback riding.
- ED 1.4 Promote and recognize regional attractions such as Mahoney State Park, wineries and their tasting rooms, downtown and retail businesses, Strategic Air and Space Museum, and the Wildlife Safari for their capability in bringing new money to Ashland, allowing for a multiplication of taxable revenues necessary to support local quality of life.
- ED 1.5 Promote the hosting of regional sporting events, including: fishing, hiking, biking, trail race, and running events at Mahoney State Park and golfing events at the nearby Ashland Golf Club, Country Drive Golf Course, Iron Horse Golf Club, and Quarry Oaks Golf Course for the multiplied revenues these events bring in local retail tourism sales.
- ED 1.6 Plan and support the physical infrastructure needed for new tourist attractions and tourist activities.
- ED 1.7 Support the designation of a Historic Commercial District Nomination for downtown to elevate funding and preservation priority as well as engage tourists interested in historic districts.
- ED 1.8 Develop and place way-finding signage to encourage navigability of Ashland by tourists and residents, alike.
- ED 1.9 Consider strategic placement of entrance node signage along Highway 6 on both the east and west sides of Ashland to provide a formal welcome to motorists and pedestrians passing near the community. Branded entrance node signage should also be considered for entrance from the south of the community on Highway 66.
- ED 1.10 Cooperate with regional tourism partners, including the Nebraska Tourism Commission, to develop packaged tourism experience options to maximize tourism revenue opportunities locally.
- ED 1.11 Consider billboard signage strategically placed near the south side of Gretna, Nebraska on Highway 6 and near the east side of Waverly along Highway 6 to encourage potential tourists and passerby traffic to stop and spend tourism dollars in Ashland.
- ED 1.12 Seek ideas from all age groups, locally, to gauge new ideas for tourism development concepts to ensure that all potential tourism demographics are considered in prioritizing tourism development options for local funding.
- ED 1.13 Collaborate with the Nebraska Tourism Commission to complete a TARGET report for Ashland and the surrounding area.
- ED 1.14 Prioritize regular maintenance and replacement of active recreation equipment within the city's existing parks and recreation areas.
- ED 1.15 Consider the development of a park master plan to prioritize improvements, new development, and most desired items for city funding priorities.

ED.2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL - REGIONALISM

Support cooperation and coordination at a regional level to ensure sustainable local economic development.

Policies

- ED 2.1 Promote a sustainable, strong, diverse, and healthy economy.
- ED 2.2 Capitalize on existing assets, including proximity to the two metropolitan statistical areas of Lincoln and Omaha and consideration of tourism capture opportunities.
- ED 2.3 Promote the retention and expansion of existing businesses.
- ED 2.4 Foster and develop the startup of new businesses.
- ED 2.5 Encourage the relocation of environmentally responsible businesses.
- ED 2.6 Discover primary development targets suitable for supporting both industrial and tourism-oriented businesses.
- ED 2.7 Promote income levels that are higher than the national average.
- ED 2.8 Ensure the sustainable economic use of natural resources and the safe and effective use of utility resources as well as recycled materials.
- ED 2.9 Encourage regional partnerships with the Lincoln Area Development Partnership, the Southeast Nebraska Development District (SENDD), and the Omaha Chamber of Commerce for expanded resource-sharing and exposure of Ashland to promote economic development opportunities.
- ED 2.10 Increase communication between Ashland and the greater Omaha and Lincoln metro areas to identify cooperative methods of business recruitment and area advantages.
- ED 2.11 Identify resource drivers and demands for appropriate allocation of funds to support maintenance or construction of infrastructure capable of serving economic development.
- ED 2.12 Engage the Nebraska Department of Economic Development in development of target markets, suitable sites for development and cost-effective marketing opportunities.
- ED 2.13 Involve regional utility service providers, including Omaha Public Power District economic development staff, for consideration of economic development opportunities seen as likely or important to these entities.
- ED 2.14 Continue promotion of projects that will improve area economic development opportunities such as transportation improvements.
- ED 2.15 Research and develop targeting marketing options for attracting likely economic development through cooperation with regional economic development entities.

ED.3: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 3 – BUSINESS RETENTION, EXPANSION, AND RECRUITMENT

Promote active business retention, expansion, and recruitment efforts as a means of creating a stable local economy. Create a healthy local economy by retention, expansion, and recruitment of businesses.

Policies

- ED 3.1 Encourage cooperation between Ashland’s governmental and civic organizations with regional utility providers and the Southeast Resource Network (SERN) for identification and support of bolstering local economic development.
- ED 3.2 Perform business retention/expansion surveys through the City of Ashland, in cooperation with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and the Omaha Public Power District economic development staff for every primary/industrial company within the city at a minimum of once every two years.
- ED 3.3 Prioritize visits with corporate office headquarters of local primary employers once every two years, either through local city representation or via the Nebraska Department of Economic Development or Nebraska Diplomats.
- ED 3.4 Establish multiple means for the City of Ashland to collect attitudes and business survey data from existing retail and commercial businesses to ensure that their community needs are being met.

- ED 3.5 Support the continued development of Geographic Information System (GIS) parcel data to support economic development mapping and information efforts.
- ED 3.6 Encourage job recruitment efforts towards those sectors that:
 - i. Are compatible with environmental and quality-of-life standards for Ashland;
 - ii. Provide higher wages than the national average;
 - iii. Help diversify the local economy and;
 - iv. Capitalize on strengths of the export economy (agriculture and manufacturing).
- ED 3.7 Support efforts to develop a formal process involving the City of Ashland, civic organizations, and businesses to study and develop strategies for business retention, expansion, and recruitment.
- ED 3.8 Encourage public/private partnerships for creative financing of local economic development and affiliated projects.
- ED 3.9 Promote the use of utility rate tiers to investment as incentives to development.
- ED 3.10 Explore the implementation of a revolving loan funds for local façade improvements.
- ED 3.11 Consider passage of LB 840 as a community revolving loan fund and support the eventual re-vote and passage sunset of this local-option tax.
- ED 3.12 Seek the Nebraska Certified Communities Designation through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development for the purpose of opening funding options such as CDBG Downtown Revitalization Program funding to the City of Ashland.
- ED 3.13 Investigate the development of a local loan fund for the support of entrepreneurialism.
- ED 3.14 Identify new retail businesses and services that will be needed to support Economic Development.
- ED 3.15 Consider hiring a part-time or full-time economic development professional to work for the City of Ashland with the stated goal of implementing local job retention, expansion, and recruitment activities as well as identifying the funding mechanisms necessary to these activities.

ED.4: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 4 - ENVIRONMENT

Recognize the importance of environmental quality in permitting economic development opportunities to maintain a safe, secure, viable and sustainable community for years to come. Acknowledge that protection of the environment will contribute to economic vitality.

Policies

- ED 4.1 Recognize that environmental quality and economic development are objectives that should be viewed in conjunction with each other.
- ED 4.2 Encourage recruitment of lower-impact, environmentally friendly businesses.
- ED 4.3 Encourage programs that promote sustainable business practices such as recycling, pollution control, and low-energy consumption.
- ED 4.4 Encourage developments that provide for limited strain on any of the utility systems serving the City of Ashland.
- ED 4.5 Optimize development of tracts for environmental impact through the encouragement of master planning to identify and promote development efficiencies.
- ED 4.6 Identify infrastructure capacities for serving new economic development opportunities and seek development options that accommodate those assets or limitations.
- ED 4.7 Review and amend zoning codes to ensure the environmental stability and protection of all uses, including primary uses.
- ED 4.8 Encourage infill and redevelopment for highest utilization and repurposing of existing infrastructure and land capacities.

ED 5: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL 5 – ORGANIZED APPROACH

Encourage an environment that offers flexibility, consistency, predictability, and clear direction to advance economic opportunities. Create a business environment that advances economic opportunities.

Policies

- ED 5.1 Enforce existing community codes for health and safety.
- ED 5.2 Consider code enforcement a full-time position and work to support the enforcement of local property and development codes.
- ED 5.3 Encourage the streamlining of permitting processes to ensure timeliness in processing of permitting and zoning application to create a competitive advantage in the attraction of new or expansion of existing businesses.
- ED 5.4 Create and grow partnerships between government, the educational community, civic organization, and businesses to deal with economic issues at all levels and particularly those that impact permitting and expediency of development.
- ED 5.5 Actively promote Ashland’s economic development goals and policies at the state and federal level to encourage legislation that supports economic development and to provide funding for economic development program, whether through direct lobbying or through combined efforts with development partners.
- ED 5.6 Encourage state legislation that will provide funds for the support of economic development site preparedness, development incentives, workforce training, and planning to local governments such as Ashland.
- ED 5.7 Conduct continual review of local development regulations to ensure applicability, clarity, consistency, predictability, and direction. Provide opportunities for citizens and businesses to initiate amendments to inconsistent, outdated, inappropriate, unnecessary, or confusing regulations. Amendments shall be consistent with the Comprehensive Plan.
- ED 5.8 Perform development review to ensure proposed developments are consistent with community vision and Ashland’s zoning codes.
- ED 5.9 Ensure timely processing of applications for development by requiring that mandatory timelines are adhered to for permitting processes.
- ED 5.10 Encourage code enforcement and city support of staff to police violations.
- ED 5.11 Allow for confidential reporting of building/property code violations to the City of Ashland.
- ED 5.12 Enforce building/property code compliance on owner-occupied and rental housing properties.
- ED 5.13 Enforce outdoor storage requirements.
- ED 5.14 Research means of developing a fast-track permitting process for expediting development.
- ED 5.15 Develop a master environmental impact statement for the purpose of identifying community assets and deficiencies in local environmental impact.
- ED 5.16 Encourage the prompt assessment of permitting and re-zoning requests from prospective developments.
- ED 5.17 Collaborate locally to educate the public and private sectors on the importance of prompt permitting consideration and its impact on economic development opportunities.

ED.6: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL – QUALITY JOBS CREATION

Encourage the pursuit of jobs through recruitment, retention, and expansion of local primary/industrial companies that provide quality jobs.

Policies

- ED 6.1 Increase the standard of living within the local community.
- ED 6.2 Pursue employers, through recruitment, retention, and expansion of local primary/ industrial companies that provide quality jobs.

- ED 6.3 Encourage the creation of jobs that provide annual incomes for all persons in Ashland above the Nebraska State average and above the national average annual income.
- ED 6.4 Encourage a regional effort to recruit and retain basic export industries that bring new money into the community and pay regionally competitive wages.
- ED 6.5 Encourage the creation of living-wage jobs that include health and retirement benefits.
- ED 6.6 Encourage the retention, expansion, and recruitment of businesses that hire local residents.
- ED 6.7 Recognize the special needs of low-income persons and address their needs by encouraging commitment of resources for, or where appropriate, planning and budgeting for, human services, community development, housing, economic development, and public infrastructure to address inequalities.
- ED 6.8 Cooperate with community agencies and civic organizations in the development of a specific plan to address disparity in income and employment opportunities. The plan should include measurable economic opportunities for low-income persons as well as opportunities for growth in the middle- and higher-income sectors of Ashland.

ED.7: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL - EDUCATION

Actively increase the standard of living within the local community by creating opportunities for labor force educational and opportunities enhancement.

Policies

- ED 7.1 Encourage constant growth, evaluation, and responsiveness of K- through 12 education.
- ED 7.2 Nurture partnerships between business and the educational community to further the process of aligning community business needs with trained workforce.
- ED 7.3 Promote a qualified labor force that is globally competitive and responds to the changing needs of the workplace.
- ED 7.4 Encourage the expansion of educational offerings in Ashland, especially those programs that provide technical training to support business needs as identified through retention and expansion survey efforts and businesses sectors identified as Ashland’s targeted industries.
 - i. Ashland does not have an individual targeted industry study and should rely upon the Nebraska Department of Economic Development for identification of their industry targets.
 - ii. Ashland does not employ a full-time economic developer and should rely on community coordination with the Southeast Development District, Omaha Public Power District economic development staff, and/or the Nebraska Department of Economic Development for development of a local business retention/expansion survey program.
- ED 7.5 Support the cooperation between the City of Ashland and the University of Nebraska Extension regarding labor and workforce training opportunities with a continued focus on entrepreneurship.
- ED 7.6 Continue support of K-through-12 education to include skills-based training and creative partnerships with businesses.
- ED 7.7 Advocate for greater partnership between the community, the Nebraska community college system, and the local school district for enhanced workforce training.
- ED 7.8 Conduct research through demographic and economic analysis as well as business retention and expansion visits to determine assets in deficiencies in the skill sets found within the local labor pool.
- ED 7.9 Encourage community college, specifically Southeast Community College, and additional regional technical school involvement to develop customized training programs to meet business needs.

- ED 7.10 Encourage the region's community colleges to offer courses that position students to be prepared for employment opportunities found in the modern, technological, and informational age.
- ED 7.11 Encourage the region's community colleges and universities to invest in providing distance-learning courses to residents of Ashland, specific to the identified labor needs of existing businesses.
- ED 7.12 Advocate for legislative change to provide a funding mechanism for technical skills training in the local high schools.
- ED 7.13 Prioritize the development of quality housing stock as a means of attracting and maintaining a qualified local labor base.

ED.8: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL – INFILL DEVELOPMENT AND REVITALIZATION

Encourage infill and redevelopment opportunities to revitalize under-utilized areas through the use of incentives and special development strategies.

Policies

- ED 8.1 Identify and designate specific areas for infill and redevelopment.
- ED 8.2 Investigate using incentives such as Tax Increment Financing (TIF), revolving loan funds, or community sales tax proceeds to support and incent re-use and infill within areas slated for redevelopment.
- ED 8.3 Allow for focused public investment, reduced parking standards, and administrative exceptions (minor variances) to the zoning code to address the difficulties of development on small and/or nonconforming lots.
- ED 8.4 Encourage utilization of sites with suspected environmental challenges through pursuit of EPA Brownfields Assessment study and dollars to support clean-up efforts.
- ED 8.5 Prioritize demolition of vacant, delinquent, and/or unsafe facilities.
- ED 8.6 Investigate cost-effective measures for demolition of vacant, delinquent, and/or unsafe facilities.
- ED 8.7 Investigate the option of developing a business improvement district (BID) to financially support infill and redevelopment.

ED.9: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOAL – CAPITAL INVESTMENT AND EMPLOYMENT GROWTH

Attract new capital investment and employers while allowing existing businesses to expand.

Policies

- ED 9.1 Facilitate infill and redevelopment through the use of incentives and special development strategies.
- ED 9.2 Identify and maintain a diverse inventory of industrial/primary and commercial land for growth.
- ED 9.3 Promote the identification and development of sites for development in a range of sizes with diversity in location to accommodate a variety of business end-user needs.
- ED 9.4 Provide appropriate protection of land tracts for primary development.
- ED 9.5 Ensure adequate amounts of usable industrial and commercially viable land in which new businesses may locate.
- ED 9.6 Encourage diligence assessment and master planning efforts to attract new capital investment and optimize tract functionality.
- ED 9.7 Encourage the identification of sites suitable for new primary/industrial development.
- ED 9.8 Ensure that potential industrial and commercial land has the characteristics necessary to support commerce and industry.
- ED 9.9 Maintain an inventory of identified, usable industrial and commercial land that is sufficient to meet the projected demand and encourage marketability of the region.
- ED 9.10 Perform diligence assessments to identify the assets and deficiencies of identified primary/industrial site inventory.

- ED 9.11 Identify and assess the validity of targeted industries for development in Ashland.
- ED 9.12 Pursue land options to reserve tracts for primary/industrial development opportunities.
- ED 9.13 Prioritize the identification of land assets to targeted industries to streamline the business recruitment process.
- ED 9.14 Promote known community infrastructure assets, such as access to nearby transportation routes, to increase the variety of local economic development opportunities.
- ED 9.15 Encourage the identification and master planning of primary/industrial tracts to offer flexibility while promoting optimization of community land assets.
- ED 9.16 Assess and understand permitting requirements per industrial, commercial, and retail site to expedite permit wait times for prospective end-users.
- ED 9.17 Investigate the option of developing an industrial park that has multi-jurisdictional cooperation through inter-local agreements allowing prospective users to maximize tax incentives available in multiple jurisdictions.
 - i. Both nearby Omaha and Lincoln are under-capacitated as it pertains to controlled, available land tracts for primary development opportunities. Ashland is squarely positioned to tap their labor base and provide land tracts to accommodate users that cannot identify tracts in either the Omaha or Lincoln metro markets.
- ED 9.18 Provide adequate transportation and utilities to support future industrial and commercial needs through capital improvements assessment, prioritization, and budgeting.
- ED 9.19 Consider enhanced marketing options to showcase available industrial/primary development tracts, including, but not limited to:
 - i. Comprehensive diligence reports;
 - ii. Master planning schematics;
 - iii. Rail conceptualization;
 - iv. 2-D or 3-D virtual build-out; and
 - v. Custom marketing materials creation.

Educational Goals

EDU.1: EDUCATIONAL GOAL – EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES

Quality education is a vital component of positive growth. Although the city's role is limited, objectives and policies need to be established with regard to locating development to insure cost effective use of existing facilities.

Policies

- EDU 1.1 Cooperate with Ashland-Greenwood Public Schools in expanding public uses of educational facilities.
- EDU 1.2 The school district should consider review of new housing subdivision and public facilities developments proposed within the zoning jurisdiction of Ashland so that they can accommodate for future school populations.
- EDU 1.3 Cooperate with Ashland-Greenwood Public Schools on any future expansion or the development of new joint facilities.
- EDU 1.4 Collaborate with the school district on an annual basis to identify new facilities that will be needed in the future.
- EDU 1.5 Consciously consider school district future growth needs in making any changes to land use.



Fire Protection, Law Enforcement, and Public Safety Goals

SAFE.1: SAFETY GOAL – FIRE PROTECTION

The goal of the City of Ashland is to maintain fire protection programs by exploring programs and alternative services to ensure optimum service levels and public costs.

Policies

- SAFE 1.1 Continue to work with the fire department to maintain quality equipment levels.
- SAFE 1.2 Work to expand fire safety education and prevention throughout the community.
- SAFE 1.3 Develop a strategic plan to handle population growth from a fire safety perspective.
- SAFE 1.4 Identify potential sites for satellite stations that will accommodate future growth of Ashland.
- SAFE 1.5 Develop a plan for the addition of new equipment and/or the replacement of older equipment.

SAFE.2: SAFETY GOAL - LAW ENFORCEMENT

The goal of the City of Ashland is to maintain quality law enforcement within the community.

Policies

- SAFE 2.1 Continue to identify specific ways to work cooperatively with the county and the county sheriff regarding protection within the corporate limits of Ashland.
- SAFE 2.2 Continue to support minimum standards regarding equipment used by law enforcement.
- SAFE 2.3 Monitor and participate in any master planning or engineering pertaining to traffic flow and control within Ashland's jurisdiction as a means of aiding in the reduction of vehicular accidents requiring response.
- SAFE 2.4 Assess the growth of Ashland and determine if the city and police chief should develop a strategic plan that determines the growth levels that necessitate addition of law enforcement staff.
- SAFE 2.5 Encourage community policing/neighborhood policing programs to assist in keeping neighborhoods safe and encourage cooperation between Ashland's citizens and their law enforcement entities.

SAFE.3: SAFETY GOAL – GENERAL HEALTH AND SAFETY

The goal of the City of Ashland is to maintain regulations that will protect the general health and safety of all residents.

Policies

- SAFE 3.1 Clean and regulate nuisances and poorly maintained properties. This includes continued efforts to regulate junk cars, junkyards, and dilapidated/deteriorated residences across the city.
- SAFE 3.2 Establish regulations protecting the city residents from the secondary effects of adult entertainment.
- SAFE 3.3 Encourage protective covenants for new developments that will limit nuisance uses and aid in the maintenance of a desirable community aesthetic.
- SAFE 3.4 Support code enforcement by the City of Ashland in identifying, ticketing, and working with property owner to mitigate unsafe or unsanitary conditions impacting the welfare of the property and community at-large.
- SAFE 3.5 Invite and train volunteer Firefighters and EMS staff to join the department as either full-time members or volunteers.

Public Facility Goals

PF.1: PUBLIC FACILITY GOAL – INFRASTRUCTURE

The City of Ashland must continually replace and upgrade its aging infrastructure to serve current and future population and business needs.

Policies

- PUB 1.1 Expand and upgrade the water and sanitary sewer system in a manner that will guide growth and redevelopment in a systematic and responsible manner without creating large shortfalls for the city to meet demand.
- PUB 1.2 Identify funding mechanisms to upgrade the existing system.
- PUB 1.3 Locate public facilities strategically within Ashland in order to provide for cost effective, efficient, accessible, and timely service to residents.
- PUB 1.4 Identify funding and implement proposed water system improvements, including installing radio read meters, installing new 8" main on 14th Street/ Highway 66 project, and installing new 8" main on Silver Street.
- PUB 1.5 Identify funding and implement proposed sanitary sewer system and plant improvements, including main linings, and digester.
- PUB 1.6 Ensure all future Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) recommendations are in compliance with the Ashland Comprehensive Plan Update.
- PUB 1.7 Establish a formal process to obtain property rights for future park and trail areas.
- PUB 1.8 Initiate a citywide marketing effort to increase trail and park usage and promote healthy living.
- PUB 1.9 Develop a program for neighborhood-level park 'adoption' to assist in maintenance and increased usage.
- PUB 1.10 Develop a long-term street paving plan to address all unpaved roadways in Ashland.
- PUB 1.11 Establish a safe pedestrian linkage across Highway 6 that joins Ashland and eastern Ashland.
- PUB 1.12 Initiate a pool feasibility study to determine if this public facility is a financially viable option for Ashland residents.
- PUB 1.13 Extend the existing trail system to encourage pedestrian-oriented transit options locally.

Environmental Goals

ENV.1: ENVIRONMENTAL GOAL – NATURAL RESOURCES AND LAND PRESERVATION

Guide development and redevelopment in a manner that conserves and protects the natural resources; encourages compact development and redevelopment; and allows an efficient provision of services.

Objectives

- ENV 1.1 Create zoning regulations and design standards to protect the environmental and natural resources of Ashland through the encouragement of preservation and conservation practices.
- ENV 1.2 Follow federal requirements when land use regulations are being developed. Ashland's regulations should, at a minimum, be as strict as federal standards, and where necessary, may be enforced in a manner more strict than federal guidelines.
- ENV 1.3 Protect all water supplies and aquifers from development activities that may affect the quality and/or quantity of water through a wellhead program.
- ENV 1.4 Development shall demonstrate a positive or, at least, a neutral impact on surface and groundwater supplies.
- ENV 1.5 Encourage the preservation of environmentally sensitive areas such as wetlands, wooded areas, waterways (streams, ponds, lakes, rivers, etc.), landmark trees, and other amenities.

- ENV 1.6 Continue participation in the FEMA National Flood Insurance Program to prevent flood-caused loss of life and property, by applying identified mapped areas showing the floodplain and floodway.
- ENV 1.7 Restrictions on land uses within the floodplain that are open and undeveloped, including forestry, agriculture, wildlife habitat, and recreational areas should be established.
- ENV 1.8 Enforce and monitor the requirements for Stormwater Management under the NPDES Phase II program.
- ENV 1.9 Develop a recycling center to serve the growing area population.

Land Use Goals and Policies

GENLU.1: GENERAL LAND USE

Guiding future growth, development, and redevelopment in Ashland towards a compact pattern of land uses based upon the efficient and economical expansion of public infrastructure will continue to maintain and improve the quality of life for everyone in the community.

Policies

- GENLU 1.1 The cost of required improvements, both on-site and off-site, to a subdivision that are to exclusively serve the property owners of the subdivision should be borne by the developer or those property owners within said subdivision.
- GENLU 1.2 The city of Ashland, when feasible, may choose to aid a development or redevelopment with specific funding mechanisms such as Tax Increment Financing, special assessments, etc.
- GENLU 1.3 The city should designate areas in the Land Use Plan that address some future growth in Ashland.
- GENLU 1.4 The city should develop zoning and subdivision regulations that promote efficient land usage, while avoiding land use conflicts.
- GENLU 1.5 Land use policies should discourage and minimize leapfrog development outside of the corporate limits.
- GENLU 1.6 The city of Ashland should work toward strong compact development through the redevelopment of older dilapidated lots and neighborhoods.
- GENLU 1.7 The city should work toward the eventual, yet natural and voluntary, elimination of inhabitable structures.
- GENLU 1.8 The city should work with FEMA and NEMA to eliminate structures, in the floodplain, when they become damaged by flooding or other natural disasters.
- GENLU 1.9 Promote maximization of available land tracts through market-based approaches in decision-making when determining highest-and-best land use designations.
- GENLU 1.10 Encourage development in areas that are served by existing infrastructure.
- GENLU 1.11 Plan for higher density near commercial centers, potential transit stops, parks, schools, and civic centers.
- GENLU 1.12 Define design and site-orientation criteria for commercial, shopping, and business centers to encourage all-purpose activities (e.g., walking, parking, community events, etc.).
- GENLU 1.13 Develop a future land use plan that promotes a contiguous and compact development pattern with a well-defined edge.
- GENLU 1.14 Establish a process to identify potential commercial and industrial sites to 'prep' for development by providing adequate infrastructure, the removal of any land use planning regulatory issues, and the resolution of any land use control issues.
- GENLU 1.15 Collaborate with development partners in uploading available business facilities and properties to the Location One Information System (LOIS) online property database.

- GENLU 1.16 Collaborate with local developers and real estate agents in uploading available residential properties and sites to the Multiple Listing Service (MLS).
- GENLU 1.17 Update subdivision and zoning ordinances to allow for residential and commercial mixed use opportunities and to reserve tracts for industrial or primary development opportunities.
- GENLU 1.18 Amend subdivision regulations to include dedications for new park land or require fees-in-lieu of land dedication.
- GENLU 1.19 Update the zoning ordinance to reflect considerations for community services to rural residential development.
- GENLU 1.20 Update the zoning ordinance to support flexible space development.
- GENLU 1.21 Work with local utility providers, the school district, and other public agencies to create development policies that shift the cost of development to developers as they move farther from existing city service areas.
- GENLU 1.22 Place poster-size future land use maps in several locations throughout the community, including City Hall and public facilities.
- GENLU 1.23 Ensure that the comprehensive plan is available, in electronic format, and in its most current form, on the City of Ashland website for ease of reference by citizens.

COMLU.1: COMMERCIAL LAND USE

Encouraging commercial investment in Ashland allows the community's tax base to diversify and increase, leading to opportunities to fund important quality of life attributes locally. Wise allocation of resources and thoughtful consideration of development process timelines will bolster Ashland's opportunities in attracting quality commercial development.

Policies

- COMLU 1.1 Commercial and residential development should be allowed to mix together within the special land use designation "Flex".
- COMLU 1.2 Encourage the location of commercial land uses at the intersections of major transportation networks.
- COMLU 1.3 Utilize frontage roads, as possible, when locating along major roads/highways.
- COMLU 1.4 Conduct a downtown redevelopment plan to encourage an orderly redevelopment of the historic downtown commercial district focusing on sustainable uses and adequate infrastructure.
- COMLU 1.5 Appropriate transitional methods should be considered at all locations where the development or expansion of commercial land use abuts residential property (either built or zoned).
- COMLU 1.6 Commercial land use districts and uses within commercial zoning districts should be lenient yet focused in a manner that allows for new and innovative business to develop and locate within Ashland.
- COMLU 1.7 Encourage the redevelopment of commercial structures in the historic downtown, which include upper floor residential.



INDLU.1: INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

The attraction, retention, and expansion of primary (industrial) development within Ashland is vital to the continued inflow of capital to the community tax base. These companies create a multiplier impact that brings additional jobs to the retail and commercial sectors and are a large contributor to the local school district and public services. Encouragement of appropriate uses combined with succinct planning and permitting processes can lead to population and community revenue growth, both of which are important to the long-term stability of Ashland.

Policies

- INDLU 1.1 Provide guidelines and incentives that promote clean industrial uses.
- INDLU 1.2 Industrial uses should be located so that adequate buffer space is provided between incompatible land uses.
- INDLU 1.3 The city should develop appropriate performance, design, and specification standards and requirements for all existing and possible future industrial uses to guide their location or relocation in the city.
- INDLU 1.4 The city should recognize and encourage small-scale industries as viable alternatives to larger, conventional enterprises.
- INDLU 1.5 Performance standards should be implemented as a means of regulating industrial activity so as to moderate or abate objectionable features in their operation.
- INDLU 1.6 Signage used within and around industrial areas should be designed to complement the materials and scale of surrounding development.
- INDLU 1.7 Industrial districts should be located:
 - i. where urban services and infrastructure are available or planned in the near future;
 - ii. in sites supported by adequate road capacity – commercial development should be linked to the implementation of the transportation plan;
 - iii. so that they enhance entryways or public way corridors, when developing adjacent to these corridors; and
 - iv. in a manner that supports the creation and maintenance of greenspace.

RESLU.1: RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

Ashland's unique advantage of being centrally located between two metropolitan areas beckons the need to assess and plan for residential growth. Thoughtful assessment of appropriate land tracts for housing, determination of housing mix, understanding of infrastructure requirements, and understanding of density requirements are all necessary to accomplish effective housing developments within Ashland.

Policies

- RESLU 1.1 Residential development should be separated from more intensive uses, such as agriculture, commercial, and industrial development, by the use of setbacks, buffer zones, or impact easements, when possible.
- RESLU 1.2 The city should promote the development of housing that varies in size, density, and location.
- RESLU 1.3 The city should develop subdivision regulations that provide for a quality living environment while avoiding inefficient and expensive public infrastructure expansions.
- RESLU 1.4 The city should support housing options for all incomes and physical capabilities of Ashland's residents.
- RESLU 1.5 New residential developments should be accompanied by covenants, when appropriate, which provide for the maintenance of common areas, easements, and drainage.
- RESLU 1.6 The establishment of a rehabilitation program should be undertaken to maintain and improve the existing housing stock.

- RESLU 1.7 The city should develop relationships and partnerships with housing professions in the public and private sector to establish a range of affordable housing options, ranging from a First Time Homebuyer program to rental assistance.
- RESLU 1.8 The city should promote low to zero non-farm densities in agricultural districts by providing proper distances between residential and agricultural uses.
- RESLU 1.9 The city should work with the owner of existing dilapidated properties to eliminate the inadequate structure(s) from the property and open it up for redevelopment.
- RESLU 1.10 Ashland should work on redevelopment of deteriorated/dilapidated properties in order to address the demand for new housing in the community. This allows for new housing to take advantage of existing street and utility systems without creating a greater demand for maintenance of the existing system.
- RESLU 1.11 Residential and commercial development should be allowed to mix together within the special land use designation "Flex".

COMMUNITY CHARACTER GOAL 1

The City should strive to protect existing parts of the community that are considered to meet these standards; while working to enhance those areas and those transportation corridors needing to be upgraded. Enhancing the aesthetic appearance of the community will improve community image and protect property values.

Policies

- CC 1.1 The city should conduct a planning study in order to identify specific areas and corridors for enhancement.
- CC 1.2 The city should within the planning study, identify acceptable design criteria for the identified areas and corridors.
- CC 1.3 The city should require special signage requirements within these areas and corridors.
- CC 1.4 The city and other groups should work to maintain quality landscaping along the major highway corridors and entrances to downtown.
- CC 1.5 The city and other groups should work on identifying older diseased trees and begin the process of under-planting.
- CC 1.6 Improve the physical appearance of gateway entrances.
- CC 1.7 Improve the physical appearance of key transportation corridors.
- CC 1.8 Promote improved community beautification that incorporates distinctive lighting, landscaping such as street trees, and unique architectural character.
- CC 1.9 Establish enhanced design guidelines for new construction in areas of civic and commercial importance.
- CC 1.10 Initiate a gateway redevelopment plan for both primary gateways (i.e. intersection of Highway 6 and Silver Street, as well as the intersection of Highway 66 and Highway 6).
- CC 1.11 Establish a wayfinding signage program that promotes the central business district, the recreation trail, and other community activity centers and attractions.
- CC 1.12 Strategically position wayfinding signage around gateways to promote 'stop-and-stay' image for visitors rather than a 'drive-through' image.
- CC 1.13 Establish commercial and signage design standards for all gateway areas through an overlay district.
- CC 1.14 Improve pedestrian crossing options across BNSF Railroad and Highway 6.
- CC 1.15 Establish a street tree program.
- CC 1.16 Establish unrestrictive design standards for the Highway 6 and Highway 66 corridors.
- CC 1.17 Establish a comprehensive planting and landscaping plan for public sites, rights-of-way, and schools.

HISTORIC PRESERVATION GOAL 1

The City will strive to maintain its rich history through the various architecturally significant structures found in the community.

Policies

- HP 1.1 Continue to maintain the historic district designation that exists over downtown Ashland.
- HP 1.2 Encourage the maintenance and preservation of all architecturally significant buildings, including the homes.
- HP 1.3 Promote establishment of funding programs focused on historic preservation and continually look to promote additional ones as they become available.
- HP 1.4 Serious consideration to preservation versus demolition should be given when a building falls into extreme disrepair.
- HP 1.5 The City of Ashland will maintain and preserve the large quantity of brick paving that is found throughout the entire community.
- HP 1.6 The updated zoning codes should provide better protection for the historic areas of Ashland.
- HP 1.7 Establish unrestrictive building design standards.



TRANSPORTATION AND TRAIL GOAL 1

Ashland will maintain its existing road network and enhance it as future development and vehicle counts justify. The city will provide and encourage an efficient, safe, convenient transportation and communication system.

Policies

- TT 1.1 Encourage bicycle and pedestrian access to and within existing and future commercial areas.
- TT 1.2 When new development is contemplated, due consideration must be given to the carrying capacity of the existing road system in the area, and development should be discouraged from occurring in areas where the road system is insufficient to handle any additional traffic load.
- TT 1.3 The City of Ashland should maintain, in both the short-term, and long-term the brick streets found throughout the community.
- TT 1.4 Improve, develop, and maintain well-traveled roads with hard surfacing, including brick and concrete.
- TT 1.5 Right-of-way and pavements shall be sufficiently wide and of sufficient strength to accommodate anticipated future traffic loads.
- TT 1.6 Commercial signing along major arterials shall be kept to a minimum and shall be low profile.
- TT 1.7 When new or reconstructed streets are built, there should be provisions made in the design documents that provide for additional space along a wider shoulder or path within the R.O.W. for pedestrian/bicycle access.
- TT 1.8 The City of Ashland will encourage bicycle and pedestrian traffic as an element of the street transportation system.
- TT 1.9 The city should develop a separate Master Trails Plan that addresses potential trail locations, designs, and opinions of cost.
- TT 1.10 Identify funding and implement proposed transportation improvements including 14th Street/ Highway 66 project, Silver Street Bridge, east side paving, Elm Street, sidewalks on city-owned property, sidewalks on private property, and downtown parking lots.
- TT 1.11 Identify funding and implement proposed parks and recreation improvements, including trail connections, playground improvements, Jack Anderson Ball Park, and pool/ bathhouse construction.
- TT 1.12 The city should strive to improve the energy efficiency of city infrastructure when roads or utilities are either repaired, expanded, or constructed.
- TT 1.13 The city should encourage the development of enhanced signage at the entrances to the community, with particular attention paid along the Hwy 6 and Hwy 66 corridors.

Land Use Plan

EXISTING LAND USE

In order to develop a quality plan for the future, an understanding of the existing land use is necessary. A visual survey of the community was used to develop the following categories based on the type of use:

- Residential (single-family, medium-density, high-density, estate residential, and mobile homes)
- Commercial (General Commercial and Highway Commercial)
- Industrial
- Public Right-of-Way
- Public/Semi-public
- Park, and Recreation
- Open Space
- Vacant and Agriculture

2013 EXISTING LAND USE ACREAGE

	ACREAGE FIGURES WITHIN CITY LIMITS			ACREAGE FIGURES WITHIN ETJ, OUTSIDE CITY LIMITS	
	ACRES	% OF TOTAL	*ACRES PER 100 PERSONS	ACRES	% OF TOTAL
Single Family Residential	221.94	30.5%	9.05	41.04	0.7%
Medium Family Residential	7.23	1.0%	0.29	0.93	0.0%
High Density Residential	6.88	0.9%	0.28	0.00	0.0%
Estate Residential	0.00	0.0%	0.00	477.99	8.7%
Mobile Home Residential	7.71	1.1%	0.31	25.31	0.5%
General Commercial	21.70	3.0%	0.88	6.68	0.1%
Highway Commercial	14.50	2.0%	0.59	0.00	0.0%
Light Industrial	9.70	1.3%	0.40	20.55	0.4%
Park & Recreation	97.09	13.3%	3.96	171.38	3.1%
Semi-Public Use	9.86	1.4%	0.40	0.16	0.0%
Public Use	55.11	7.6%	2.25	53.31	1.0%
Vacant	20.95	2.9%	0.85	95.35	1.7%
Road ROW	185.09	25.4%	7.55	100.85	1.8%
Railroad ROW	22.79	3.1%	0.93	61.03	1.1%
Total Developed Land	680.55	93.4%	27.74	1,054.58	19.2%
Open Space	40.51	5.6%	1.65	479.75	8.7%
Agriculture	7.28	1.0%	0.30	3,967.61	72.1%
Total	728.34	100.0%	29.69	5,501.94	100.0%

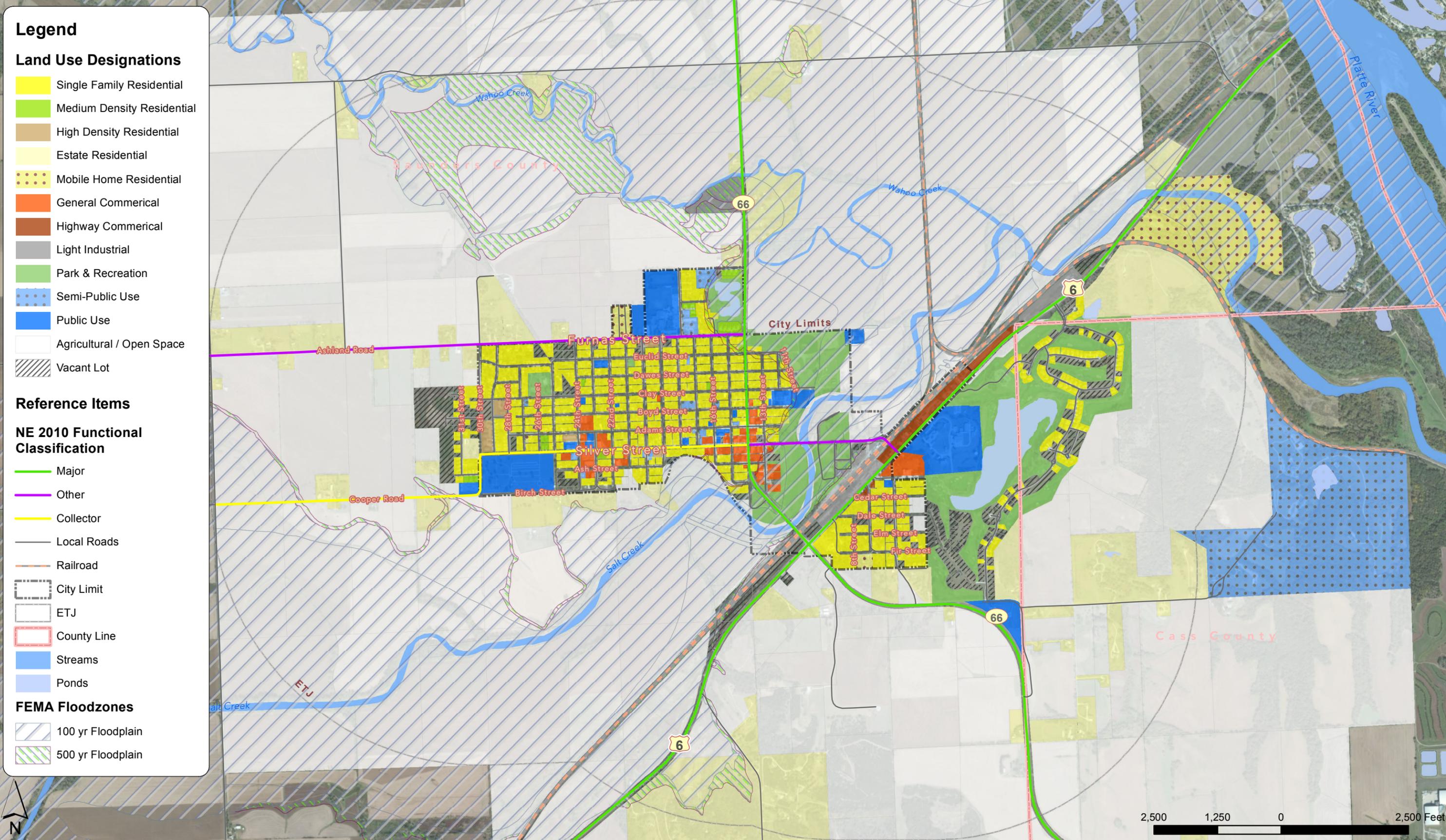
Source: 2013 Olsson Associates Field Survey | * based upon 2010 US Census Population for Ashland, NE

The Existing Land Use Acreage Table is useful to understand how the community is divided among different land uses. These land uses are organized into those uses that have been urbanized into developed parts of the community and those uses that are still primarily natural or used for agricultural purposes. For the purpose of this table, those land uses that are residential in nature include the Single Family Residential, Medium Density Residential, High Density Residential, Estate Residential, and Mobile Home Residential. Commercial uses include General Commercial and Highway Commercial. Light Industrial is the only Industrial land use type. Both Semi-Public and Public uses generally include city services. Parks and Recreation include all parks and open spaces maintained by the city. Vacant land uses are those for which the majority of infrastructure has already been provided (i.e. streets, sewer, and water) and has not yet experienced construction.



The land uses that are not a part of the developed portions of Ashland include the Open Space category, which contains land that is primarily in a natural or native state. Lastly, the Agriculture designation is meant for all areas currently engaged in farming activities. The Existing Land Use Acreage Table provides three series of data pertaining to this feature. The first is the raw acreage of each use. The second is the percentage of the total acreage for which each land use occupies. This measure provides a further indication of how much of the city land each land use is comprised of. The third measure is a division of each land use acreage for every 100 residents of Ashland. This land measure allows for an analysis of a land use based upon a ratio of people in the community. Acres per 100 persons is another way to project future land use requirements.

The largest land use within Ashland, in terms of acreage, is Single-Family Residential. As of Winter 2013, there were 221.94 acres of Ashland devoted to this land use. As a percent of total land use, Single Family Residential represents approximately 30.5% of total area within Ashland. All other residential categories combined represent only 3.0% of total land area. Commercial land use comprises 5.0% of



Existing Land Use Map
 ASHLAND, NEBRASKA

total land use. Light Industrial land use comprises 1.3% of total land use. Park & Recreation comprises 13.3% of total land use. Semi-Public and Public land uses make up 8.9 % of total land use. Vacant land use comprises 2.9% of total land use. The second largest land use designation within Ashland city limits is Roadway Right Of Way (25.4% of total land use). Of all the area within Ashland city limits, 93.4% has been developed into one of the developed land use designations. The remaining 6.6% of land area is comprised of either Open Space or Agricultural uses.

As of 2013, approximately 162.21 acres of land within Ashland city limits is also within the FEMA 100-year Floodplain. This area is comprised mostly of either Park & Recreation, Open Space, and/or Agriculture land uses. This is significant since the floodway is unbuildable land; thus, this land is not available to accommodate future growth of any land use other than Park & Recreation, Open Space, and/or Agricultural Use.

With the establishment of the existing acres of each land use, the community can begin establishing future goals for land use development. The existing land use acres and percent of total figures provide a baseline for future development decisions to be made by the citizens of Ashland.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

Public facilities are provided to insure the safety and well-being of the residents of Ashland. Public 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 Ashland.

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

Schools

Ashland has a combined school district with Greenwood. The Ashland-Greenwood school district is comprised of portions of Cass, Sarpy, and Saunders Counties covering an area of nearly 60 square miles. The communities that are served by our district are Ashland, Greenwood, and Memphis. The total enrollment for the Ashland-Greenwood elementary school during the 2013 – 2014 school year was 390 students. The total enrollment for the Ashland-Greenwood middle-high schools during the 2013 – 2014 school year was 439 students. The Ashland-Greenwood School District is housed at 1842 Furnas Street. The schools are located in separate buildings with the K-5 together and the 6-12 together. The 6-12 building has separate areas, one for grades 6-8 and another for grades 9-12. This facility was originally constructed in 1966. In 1994 the community passed a revenue bond which provided funds for the schools which resulted in general renovation of the facility. Again in 2009 the community based another bond. In 2011 the school district completed a renovation and addition to the school building using the 2009 bond funds. This construction project included a new cafeteria, counseling center, music rooms, a new computer lab, and a new entrance to the building.



The Ashland-Greenwood School District has a long history of educational excellence. In 1911, Ashland Schools became an accredited educational institution. The State of Nebraska is home to 17 Educational Service Units (ESU). Ashland is a member of ESU2. Nebraska educational service units were created as political subdivisions by the Nebraska Legislature in 1965. All Nebraska education service units provide similar core services, as well as individualized services, to their affiliated schools. It is typical for each unit to provide services, support and training with respect to technology, professional staff development, and special education. The Ashland-Greenwood middle and high schools has an Advanced Education Accreditation. The Ashland-Greenwood district is provided with speech therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy and psychological counseling.

The Ashland-Greenwood School District was one of the first members of the Nebraska Schools Activities Association (NSAA). This is a voluntary organization of member schools for which the public and non-public high schools of Nebraska. The mission statement of this organization includes the following statement:

- *"Formulate and make policies which will cultivate high ideals of citizenship, fair competition, sportsmanship and teamwork which will complement the member schools' curriculum programs;*
- *"Foster uniformity of standards in interscholastic activity competition;*
- *"Organize, develop, direct and regulate an interscholastic activity program which is equitable and will protect and promote the health and physical welfare of all participants."*

The NSAA is responsible for the organization of its members schools into general classifications based upon high school enrollment. The NSAA reports that the 2013-2014 high school enrollment for Ashland-Greenwood is 191 students. By this measure the majority of Ashland-Greenwood sports teams are classified as a 'C-1' school for the purpose of interscholastic activities. Additionally, the girls softball team is classified as 'Class C', the wrestling team is classified as 'Class B', and the boys and girls track and field is classified as 'Class B'. A complete list of the sports and physical education opportunities in the school system include football, basketball, volleyball, wrestling, baseball, softball, cross country, track and field, and golf.

The Ashland-Greenwood Public School's mission statement is, "Our school, with family and community cooperation promotes life-long learning to awaken, develop and enhance individual potential." This is a mission all staff members in the school system work to attain. The district prides itself in up-to-date technology, first class curriculum, outstanding student academic performances and the involvement of its parents and patrons.

Health Care

Hospital

The community of Ashland and greater Saunders County are served by the Saunders Medical Center (SMC). SMC has been serving this region for over 90 years, as a county-owner health care facility. The SMC facility consists of a critical access hospital, a rural health clinic and a long-term care facility. Of the SMC facilities both the Hospital and long-term care facility are located in Wahoo, NE. The rural health clinic is located within Ashland. The Ashland Family Clinic is referenced in the following section of this document called; "Clinics". SMC is owned and operated by Saunders County, a political subdivision of the State of Nebraska. SMC offers 19 medical specialties delivered by board-certified physicians, as well as a highly-skilled staff of medical professionals and support staff. Emergency care is provided 24 hours/ 7 days a week. The current SMC facility was constructed in 2007 and the medical staff includes four (4) Medical Doctors and four (4) Physician Assistants

The close proximity of Ashland to both the Omaha and Lincoln metro areas provide numerous health care facilities all within 35 mile driving distance. These nearby hospitals which serve Ashland and the surrounding areas include facilities located in neighboring cities including 12 facilities in Omaha, four (4) in Lincoln, and one (1) in Fremont.

Clinics

The aforementioned Ashland Family Clinic is located within a newly remodeled facility at 705 N 17th Avenue in Ashland. This facility is operated in association with the Saunders Medical Clinic (SMC). Of the four (4) Medical Doctors and four (4) physician assistants employed by SMC, one MDs and one PAs are assigned to the Ashland Family Clinic. The Ashland Family Clinic offers same day appointments, after-hour and emergency calls, laboratory services, and X-Ray services. The clinic is open from 8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Care Facility

Ashland is home to two care facilities. The first, Ashland Care Center is located at 1700 Furnas Street, and has accommodations for 97 residents. The Center was constructed in 1964, with major addition completed in 1971. The Oxbow Living Center is the second care facility in Ashland. Oxbow Living Center is a new assisted and independent living center that opened in 2009. Located at 1617 Bills Drive, it provides 14 assisted living apartments, 36 independent living apartments, a beauty shop, craft area, library/lounge, chapel, exercise room, dining and laundry facilities.

Public Safety

Police Protection

Ashland has four full-time and several part-time police officers, which provide 24-hour police protection, 7 days per week to the city. The police station is located adjacent to City Hall at 2304 Silver Street. It is recommended that the city make all efforts to retain the current level of officer staffing in order to provide the 24-hour, 7 day per week protection.

The police department has two cruisers, one patrol bicycle, and one K9 truck. The police station has no holding cells and all suspects are transferred to the Saunders County Law Enforcement Center in Wahoo. All emergency communications are handled through the Saunders County 911 center.

Public Services

City Library

A city library in Ashland was initially organized by The Ashland Women's Club in 1895. The first library in Ashland was opened in 1904 in the second floor room above 'Fowler's Barber Shop' located on the south side of Silver Street, between 14th and 15th Streets. The current Ashland Public Library is located at 207 North 15th Street. Originally opened in March of 1912, the Ashland Public Library was funded in part by the philanthropic efforts of Andrew Carnegie. The land upon which the structure is built was donated by Ernest A. Wiggenghorn, Jr; a local resident. Numerous other citizens donated various sums to aid in the construction. Initially the library was operated by volunteers. Once opened the building was open two afternoons and evenings per week. The library holdings have grown from 288 volumes in 1904 to more than 10,000 in 1980. As of the production of this document a new library is currently under construction at 1324 Silver Street. Estimated completion date is December 2014. The new library will be open approximately fifth-three hours a week. The library will contain approximately 17,000 volumes (48,000 with e-book collection) with an average annual circulation of 20,000. The library will be staffed by two full-time and two part-time librarians. The library is part of the inter-library loan system and is handicap accessible. The library will also have a computer lab with 25 computers. There will be approximately 9,800 square feet dedicated to the library within the center which will be around 14,000 square feet.

Ashland Historical Society

In October of 1996 a group of Ashland residents interested in Ashland's history gathered to form an organization. They chose the name The Saline Ford Historical Preservation Society. The organization was later changed to the Ashland Historical Society. The organization's purpose was to stimulate the interest of Ashland citizens in our rich heritage, to collect, record, care for, and exhibit items that would serve to illustrate the history of the Ashland area. They also strive to acquire appropriate space to preserve and display these items in a manner that would encourage donations and participation.

Fire Protection

Fire and emergency services in Ashland are provided by the Ashland Volunteer Fire Department. The Department's approximately 30 firefighters and 25 EMT's serve the City and the surrounding Rural Fire Protection District, which generally covers the area within a ten mile radius surrounding the City. The fire station, constructed in 1970, is located at 2402 Silver Street. An addition was constructed in 2010, which included 2 new bays for additional fire equipment. The Department participates in mutual aid agreements with surrounding fire districts. The Department's equipment includes the following:

- One pumper truck, owned by the Rural District.
- One aerial truck/pumper truck owned by the Nebraska Forestry Service/City of Ashland
- One 2,000 gallon tanker truck, owned by the Rural District.
- One 3,000 gallon tanker truck, owned by the Rural District.
- Three light duty grass fire truck owned by the Rural District.
- One command center used to transport equipment and personnel owned by the city.

In October of 2010, the Ashland Library Committee and the City of Ashland reached an agreement for the Ashland Historical Society to accept the 'old' Ashland Public Library for use as a museum upon the completion of the new library, in 2014-2015. The future site for the Ashland Historical Society within the current Ashland Public Library is located at 207 North 15th Street.

Current efforts by this group and other community residents, to further commemorate local history are a part of the 'Towers of History' memorial. This memorial will be erected where many pioneers crossed on the 1846 Oxbow Trail, where local Otoe and Missourian Indians lived, and where the Lewis and Clark Expedition journeyed by the Platte River. The project has been approved by the City of Ashland as well as other state and local political entities. Funding for the memorial continues.

City Hall

The functions of City Hall are housed in a building located at 2304 Silver Street, which was purchased in 1987. The building is reported to meet the current and projected future needs of the city personnel, although future improvement plans include the remodeling of the Council Chambers. The building meets current ADA Standards and the property has space for expansion to the north if needed in the future. The City Council and other municipal boards meet in the City Hall.

City Maintenance Facility

The city maintenance facility located at 18th and Silver Streets, was constructed in the 1940s and was formerly used as the City Hall and Police Department. The facility is currently used to store equipment, salt and sand. The city reports that the building and site are not adequate for its needs. It is also noted that the site will not allow for expansion.

Refuse Collection

The refuse generated by the residents of Ashland is collected by two independent waste contractors, Ashland Disposal Service and Platte Valley Sanitation. The Elk Creek Landfill is located in Douglas County. In addition to trash, both of these companies also pick-up recycling curbside. The level of service is considered adequate. The community also participates in a recycling program ran by the city, which collects newspaper, glass, and plastic.

Senior Citizens Center and Services

The Senior Citizens Center will now be a part of the new Community Resource Center located at 1324 Silver Street. The Center will be owned by the city and will available to persons 60 years of age or older and operates educational and health programs. The Center will provide medical referral services and will also function as a congregate dining site. The building will be in compliance with ADA requirements. The facility will be adequate for future needs.

Ashland also offers an apartment complex for the elderly. The Golden Manor Apartments, located at 2401 Adams, has 28 one-bedroom units. Three of these units are handicapped accessible. The apartment complex was constructed in 1979 and also offers a community room, storage facility, public restrooms, and a full service kitchen. The complex currently has full occupancy and a waiting list. The Golden Manor Apartments are managed by the Ashland Housing Authority and are subsidized by Section 8 rental assistance certificates.

Public Utilities

Municipal Water System

The City of Ashland currently has four (4) wells in service. All wells are located within the corporate limits of the city.

The water distribution system is composed of 4, 6, 8, 10, and 12-inch lines. The age of the distribution system varies throughout the city and the primary materials of construction include cast iron, polyvinyl chloride (PVC), and ductile iron. In addition, there are some residents served by 2-inch and smaller lines within the community. There are also a number of dead ends on the distribution within the community. The existing water tower was built in 1978 and has a storage capacity of 300,000 gallons. The newest water tower was built in 2007 and has a storage capacity of 300,000 gallons. Currently, the City of Ashland adds approximately .65 parts per million of fluoride to the water prior to the distribution of the water to consumers.

There are approximately 960 metered residential connections, 102 light commercial connections, and zero (0)

heavy commercial connections. In 2013, the average daily water consumption was 374,172 gallons. The peak water consumption occurred during the summer months. For June-August 2013, the water consumption was 52,104,000 gallons (566,347 gallons/day). Total water consumption in 2013 was 136,037,000 gallons.

Sanitary Sewer System

The City of Ashland has a municipality operated sanitary sewer system. The sanitary sewer system has approximately 848 residential connections, and 88 light commercial connections. The collection system utilizes 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, and 15-inch sewer lines. The age of the collection system varies throughout the city, and the primary material of construction is clay tile. Sewer mains installed in recent years were constructed with a combination of VCP and PVC pipe.

The wastewater treatment facility (WWTF), located at 8th and Euclid, originally built in 1963, was entirely replaced in 2007 with a Vertical Loop Reactor and a Cannibal Solids Reduction Process. Currently, the facility meets the requirements of the NPDES permit established by State and Federal Regulatory Agencies. This treatment system is designed to treat the wastewater flow of 360,000 gallons per day average of normal domestic strength wastewater.

Other Utilities

Natural Gas and Propane

Natural gas is supplied and distributed in Ashland by Black Hills Energy. The service lines to the area vary from two inches to four inches. Propane is locally supplied by Great Plains Sales and Service.

Electrical Services

The Omaha Public Power District (OPPD) supplies electricity to Ashland. Ashland is served by a two 69 Kv transmission lines to a 13.8 Kv substation located immediately northeast of town. This service is considered adequate by OPPD for future anticipated growth.

Parks and Recreation

Municipal Parks

Ashland has a total of 27 acres of parkland. Wiggenhorn Memorial Park, located in northwest Ashland, encompasses 4.4 acres and includes a picnic area, shelters, playground, tennis and basketball courts, grills, and restrooms. Wiggenhorn Park received new playground equipment in August of 1997. The City Pool, located at Wiggenhorn Memorial Park, is 3,382 square feet and is open from May through Labor Day.

Eastside Park is located at the corner of Sixth and Birch Streets. This neighborhood park is approximately one-half acre in size and is primarily used by community residents east of Highway 6. The park offers restrooms, a picnic area, and a children's playground.

A second neighborhood park is located at the corner of 21st and Euclid Streets. This park is also approximately one-half acre in size and primarily serves residents in the surrounding area. The park has playground equipment but no restrooms.

Golf Course

The community is served by four nearby golf courses. Ashland Golf Club is located three miles south of Ashland. The course is semi-private and is an 18-hole grass-green course and is approximately 100 acres in size. The Golf Club also has an Olympic size pool.

Additionally, Iron Horse Golf Club is located between Ashland and Mahoney State Park at 900 Clubhouse Drive. This is an 18-hole course which surrounds a 40-acre spring fed lake and is adjacent to single-family residential lots. These residential properties are currently being developed not yet built-out.

Quarry Oaks Golf Course is located east of the Mahoney State Park Interchange. Quarry Oaks is an 18-hole course built on the grounds of an old limestone quarry.

The Country Drive Golf Course is a 9-hole public course located six miles north of Ashland.

State Parks

The Mahoney State Park is located in northwest Cass County, approximately three miles east of Ashland. The park is 690 acres in size and was opened in 1989. The park attracts visitors from Lincoln and Omaha and is located 25 to 30 miles from both Lincoln and Omaha. Access from 1-80 is available. Some of the park's features include, 149 camping pads, a 40-room lodge and restaurant, 54 air-conditioned and heated cabins, a four-acre lake with marina, a stable and horseback riding, an arboretum and greenhouse, aquatic center with water slide and wave pool, a ski, sled and toboggan area, as well as hiking trails and tent camping areas.

Baseball Field

The four community baseball fields are housed within the Jack Anderson Ball Park, located at 10th and Clay Streets and are owned and maintained by the City. The ball fields are located north of the Ashland-Greenwood High School football field and are approximately three acres in size. The ball fields serve American Legion, Little League and men's softball and serve as host for several tournaments during the season. The ball fields are also home to the Ashland-Greenwood School District's softball team and the Ashland-Greenwood/Yutan Cooperative baseball team. A concession stand is operated by the Ashland Youth Ball Association. As of 2014, the ball fields are under renovation, with the regulation baseball and softball fields being completed.

Football Field

Memorial Stadium is located directly east of the elementary school. The property and facility is owned by the Ashland-Greenwood School District and is approximately two acres in size. The senior high school has a practice field, but plays their games on this field.

The football and baseball fields are located in the floodplain of Salt Creek. This area is in the 100-year floodplain which means there is a one percent chance of this area flooding each year. In the event of a flood, these facilities would sustain minimal damage.

Other Facilities

Linoma Beach is located just northeast of Ashland on U. S. Highway 6. Platte River State Park is located twelve miles east, and Memphis State Park is located seven miles north. The relocated Strategic Air and Space Museum or SAS Museum is located just three miles east of Ashland, and the Henry Doorly Zoo Nature Center is located four miles to the east. These areas have, and will continue to be, a regional, and in some cases, national visitor attraction.

Future Needs

Education Recommendations

Education is becoming increasingly important, and the need for a broad-based education with emphasis on technical and human relations skills is apparent in our society. Standards developed by educators and planners can provide guidance in creating and adding to the community's education facilities.

Schools in Ashland should plan for the future based on the following standards/guidelines:

1. *Schools should be centrally located;*
2. *Schools should not be located near high traffic or heavily concentrated areas with high noise levels;*
3. *Land acquisition should be made with future expansion in mind;*
4. *Adequate open space should be available to students.*

