



# BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - 2032.



*“An in-depth analysis of demographic, land use, community and economic development, public infrastructure and recommended planning goals and action steps for the future vitality and sustainability of the City of Benkelman, Nebraska.”*



# **BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA** **COMPREHENSIVE PLAN - 2032.**

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# SECTION 1



**THE BENKELMAN  
PLANNING PROCESS.**



# **SECTION 1** **THE BENKELMAN** **PLANNING PROCESS.**



## **INTRODUCTION.**

This **Benkelman, Nebraska Comprehensive Plan** was prepared as a tool to assist in planning for the future development and stability of Benkelman, Nebraska and the City's respective One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction. The **Comprehensive Plan** contains information about existing social and economic conditions within the City, including population, land use, public facilities, utilities and transportation. This **Plan** replaces the current **Comprehensive Plan**, prepared in 2010.

The **Benkelman Planning Process** included the development of a **General Plan**, which establishes specific and practical guidelines for improving existing conditions and controlling future growth. The **Plan** itself presents a planning program with "Goals" and "Action Steps" in the areas of "Community Growth, Land Use, & Zoning;" "Housing & Neighborhood Redevelopment;" and "Education & Community/Economic Development."

The **Comprehensive Plan** was prepared under the direction of the **Benkelman Planning Commission and City Council**, with the assistance of **City Staff and Planning Consultants Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C. of Lincoln, Nebraska.**

## **PLANNING PERIOD.**

The planning period for achieving the goals, programs, and community and economic development activities identified in this **Comprehensive Plan** is **10 years, 2022 to 2032.** The **Plan** highlights necessary, broad-based community and economic development activities to meet the City's goals. This approach allows the Community of Benkelman to focus on a long-term vision, accomplished by means of implementing specific activities to address the social and economic well-being of its citizens.

## PLANNING JURISDICTION.

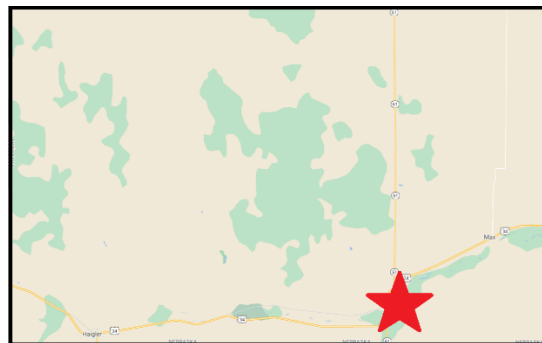
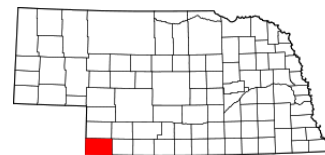
The **City of Benkelman Planning Jurisdiction** includes the land areas within the Corporate Limits and within one mile of the City. The City enforces planning, zoning and subdivision regulations in the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction, in accordance with Nebraska State Statutes.

## AUTHORITY TO PLAN.

This **Comprehensive Plan** for the City of Benkelman is prepared under the Authority of Section 19-924 to 929, Nebraska State Statutes 1943, as Amended.

## ABOUT BENKELMAN.

The City of Benkelman, the largest Community in Dundy County, is located in southwest Nebraska, approximately 50 miles west of McCook, Nebraska. The City is served by U.S. Highway 34, and State Highway 61, which bypass the Community to the north and west. Benkelman is the County-Seat of Dundy County, with an estimated 2022 population of 815.



Downtown Benkelman is located in the south central portion of the Community, along Chief Street between West 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue and Railroad Street. The Downtown consists of professional offices, specialty retail stores, banks, restaurants, the Dundy County Library, Post Office and various other public facilities. The City Offices are located at the intersection of East 7<sup>th</sup> and “A” Street, just east of the Downtown core.

The Community of Benkelman offers a variety of amenities including public schools, restaurants, governmental services, grocery and convenience stores, senior center, hospital, etc. Most of the major employers in Benkelman are scattered throughout the Community and are traditional in nature when compared to other rural Nebraska communities. Major employers include **Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools**, the **Dundy County Courthouse**, **Dundy County Hospital**, **Gavilon Grain, LLC** and **Sara Ann Hester Memorial Home**. According to the U.S. Census Center for Economic Studies, in 2019, an estimated 431 persons were employed in the City of Benkelman. This accounts for an estimated 76.8 percent of all persons employed in Dundy County, which recorded 561 employed persons in 2019.



### **RESPONSIBLE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT.**

**Responsible growth and development activities** will include the ongoing planning and implementation of needed public facilities, utilities and transportation systems in Benkelman. The Community is cognizant of its residential, commercial, industrial, social and recreational needs, but will need to continue to upgrade and develop modern, accessible public facilities and infrastructure to meet an increasing demand for these services.

**The Benkelman Comprehensive Plan promotes responsible growth and sustainability of Community services and values.** This includes an understanding of the growth potential within the existing built environs of Benkelman, as well as the support for preserving the agricultural and natural resources associated with the City. Undeveloped areas within the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction of Benkelman will be assigned land uses and zoning classifications capable of preserving the integrity of these areas, while providing for controlled, well planned growth throughout the 10-year planning period.

***The City of Benkelman is in a position to determine the community and economic development enhancements most needed and desired to better serve persons and families wanting the quality of life offered by small town living.***

## **UTILIZING THE BENKELMAN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN.**

The **Benkelman Comprehensive Plan** has been designed to **enhance both community and economic development efforts** to promote the stability of the local population and economy. To accomplish this, local leaders will need to be proactive to changing economic conditions and access both public and private financing programs available to meet and aid in financing these changes. Local decisions will need to enhance community and economic development opportunities, as well as preserve local values. *The Community's ability to utilize Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for economic development will play an important role in growth opportunities for Benkelman, especially in funding public infrastructure improvements. Citizen input will be needed to assist and enhance this political decision making process. A designated "Redevelopment Area" in Benkelman includes the Downtown, the Gavilon Grain facility, portions of the Highway 34/61 Corridor and selected residential neighborhoods throughout Benkelman.*

The Community greatly benefits from having effective community and economic development organizations, including the **Benkelman Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA)** and the "Envision Benkelman" Program, **Dundy County Community Foundation, Dundy County Chamber & Development, Southwest Nebraska Community Betterment Corporation, West Central Nebraska Economic Development District** and the **Benkelman City Council and Planning Commission**, to serve as a vehicle to plan and implement residential, commercial and industrial development and redevelopment activities in the City.

The Community of Benkelman will want to consider the use of financial incentives such as **LB840 sales taxes, TIF, Historic Tax Credits, Community Development Block Grants** and a variety of other housing and economic development funding sources, coupled with private financing.

The **Future Land Use Maps** for the City of Benkelman encourage controlled growth and expansion of the City during the 10-year planning period. The City must also continue to improve and enhance the original Town, including the Downtown. The City should establish incentives for public and private partnerships for redevelopment to coincide with community growth and expansion.

The Community of Benkelman has shown a desire to improve the local quality of life and enhance economic opportunity through a variety of planning and visioning programs and documentation. These include, but are not limited to the following:

- A **Community Housing Study**, prepared as a component of this Community-wide Comprehensive Planning Program, highlights statistics related to the local housing stock and provides “**target demand**” information for new housing development and existing housing rehabilitation, as well as a “10-Year Housing Action Plan” highlighting specific housing development programs for Benkelman.
- A recently completed **Downtown Revitalization Plan** documents local opinion on needs and wants specific to Downtown Benkelman and provides a variety of programs and initiatives with the intent of strengthening the Community’s primary commercial area.
- A 2018 **Community Attitude/Needs Assessment Survey** prioritizes community betterment objectives through public opinion.
- A 2016 **Benkelman Strategic Plan** focuses on the preservation of housing, job creation, town aesthetics and public infrastructure needs.
- The City of Benkelman routinely utilizes and updates local **Zoning and Subdivision Regulations**, including a local **Nuisance Ordinance**, to manage growth and development in the Community.
- Other public documents include results from a local **Business Survey**, a 2017-2022 **Capitol Projects Report** and community development proposals from the **Southwest Nebraska Development Network**.
- The City of Benkelman is also participating in a first-of-its-kind **Vacant Land Registry Program** to track delinquent and absentee property owners to require them to maintain their properties in the Community. A total of 16 active properties are involved in this Program.

## **ORGANIZATION OF THE PLAN.**

The creation of the **Benkelman Comprehensive Plan** included the implementation of both **qualitative** and **quantitative research activities**, in an effort to gather pertinent planning information and data. The **qualitative approach** included a comprehensive citizen participation process consisting of meetings with the Benkelman Planning Commission and City Council, in conjunction with the implementation of a “Benkelman Citizen Survey” and “Workforce Housing Needs Survey” and a “Listening Session” with Benkelman’s elected leadership professionals, in an effort to assess the needs and wants of the Benkelman citizenry, including the local workforce.

The **quantitative approach** included the analysis of the various statistical databases provided by the 2000, 2010 and (initial) 2020 Censuses, the 2019-2023 American Community Survey and information from other pertinent local, state, and federal agencies. The **quantitative approach** also included on-site field research activities to determine the present condition and profiles of local land use, housing, public infrastructure and facilities, transportation and environmental issues.

**The combined results of these two important research approaches produced this Comprehensive Plan and includes the following Sections:**

- ❖ **Population, Income & Economic Profile.**
- ❖ **Existing & Future Land Use Planning.**
- ❖ **Public Facilities, Utilities & Transportation.**
- ❖ **Community & Economic Development Profile & Plan.**
- ❖ **Energy Element.**
- ❖ **Community Planning Goals & Action Steps.**

The system embodied in this community planning framework is a process that relies upon continuous feedback, as goals change and policies become more clearly defined. Planning is an ongoing process that requires constant monitoring and revision throughout the proposed planning period. This **Comprehensive Plan** is organized into three elements as summarized on **Page 1.7**.

### **ELEMENT 1.**

The **first** element is the **Background Analysis**, which presents the research, both, quantitative and qualitative, necessary for the development of the **Planning Goals** and **Action Steps**. This research included the investigation of demographic, economic, land use, housing, transportation and public facilities and utilities in Benkelman. The careful research of past and present data allowed for the projection of future population and development needs.

### **ELEMENT 2.**

The **second** element of the **Comprehensive Plan** are the **Goals** and **Action Steps**, which represent the foundation for which planning components are designed and eventually implemented. The **Goals** and **Action Steps** identified in this **Comprehensive Plan** address each component of the **Plan** itself. Action Steps identify specific activities the Community should undertake to accomplish the **Goals**.

### **ELEMENT 3.**

The **third** and final element of the **Comprehensive Plan** are the **Planning Components**, which present general background analysis and future plans for land use, public facilities, infrastructure, transportation and energy consumption reduction.

## ***CITIZEN & LEADERSHIP PARTICIPATION.***

A **comprehensive citizen participation program** was implemented to gather the opinions of the Benkelman citizenry regarding Community planning and housing issues and needs. ***Planning for Benkelman's future is most effective when it includes opinions from as many citizens as possible.*** The methods used to gather information from the citizens of Benkelman included meetings with the **Planning Commission and City Council**, a **Comprehensive Planning "Leadership Listening Session"** and the completion of a **"Benkelman Citizen Survey"** and **"Workforce Housing Needs Survey"**.

The following highlights comments from the **"Leadership Listening Session"** regarding the strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for planning and housing development in Benkelman.



- Benkelman needs to implement aggressive **housing development and rehabilitation activities**, including the demolition of substantially deteriorated and/or dilapidated housing units for new housing development. Affordable housing was identified as “severely lacking” in Benkelman.

Local efforts have recently been implemented in the Community to support housing development and rehabilitation efforts, including the platting and ongoing development in the Collinsville Subdivision, as well as participating in the Southwest Nebraska Revolving Housing Fund, a collaborative housing development program with the nearby Communities of McCook and Cambridge and funded by the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund’s “Innovative Housing Demonstration Program”. Benkelman has also established a “Vacant Property Registry” to target absentee property owners in an effort to improve deteriorated residential properties in Benkelman.

- **Downtown Benkelman** has experienced decline over recent years with the loss of businesses and deferred maintenance of the Community’s historical structures. Increased efforts for business development, recruitment and retention, as well as encouraging property owners to clean up and maintain their buildings while providing incentives to do so would greatly **improve the local perception of the Downtown. The declaration of a “Redevelopment Area” in Downtown Benkelman will allow for the new generation of Tax Increment Financing dollars for future reinvestment in Downtown Benkelman.** Additionally, efforts to create a vibrant and economically sound central business district are also identified in the recently completed Downtown Revitalization Plan for Downtown Benkelman.
- **Enhancements to existing, as well as the creation of new health and wellness opportunities** were highlighted as a necessary improvement to the image of Benkelman. This includes walking and biking trails, swimming pool and local park improvements and improved accessibility to existing park and recreation spaces. Local leadership also identified the possibility of additional park space in northern Benkelman.
- **Job creation** is a critical aspect of the continuation of making Benkelman a place to live, work and raise a family. **Trades services** were greatly desired by members of the Benkelman City Council as many of these services are either in short supply or unavailable. It was suggested that a local partnership with a nearby Community College could encourage persons with trades experience to move to, or create a business in Benkelman.
- **Public infrastructure improvements**, including drainageways and electrical components were identified as a need throughout Benkelman. The electrical infrastructure in Benkelman is currently being reviewed to identify necessary and required system improvements.

The “**Benkelman Citizen Survey**” was made available on various local Community websites. **Survey** participants were asked to provide information regarding a variety of community-based needs, including questions relating to their current living situation, condition of their dwelling unit, and what they could afford for a monthly rent or a mortgage payment. A total of **74 Surveys** were completed. The following summarizes the results of the **Survey**. The complete results of the **Survey** are included in **Appendix II** of this **Housing Study**.

- 37.8 percent of **Survey** participants have resided in the City of Benkelman for 21+ years.
- 51.3 percent of the **Survey** participants identified residing in a single family home. **A total of 36 participants, or 48.6 percent responded as being satisfied with their current housing situation. An additional six, or 8.1 percent of all participants were not satisfied. Common housing complaints were housing units being too old, too small, or in need of moderate to substantial rehabilitation.**
- **Survey** participants identified Housing for Low- and Middle-Income Families, Single Family Housing, General Rental Housing, Housing Choices for First-Time Homebuyers and Rehabilitation of both Owner and Rental Housing Units as “**Greatly Needed**” in the City of Benkelman.
- Top-rated Community Services and Public Facilities in Benkelman included, but were not limited to the Churches, Pharmacy, Fire Protection, Library, City Hall & Offices, Parks/Recreation and Wellness/Fitness Center.
- 94.8 percent\* of the **Survey** respondents supported the Community using State or Federal grant funds to conduct an owner housing rehabilitation program.
- 79.4 percent\* of the **Survey** respondents supported Benkelman using State or Federal grant funds to conduct a rental housing rehabilitation program.
- 84.6 percent\* of the **Survey** respondents supported Benkelman establishing a local program that would purchase dilapidated houses, tear down the houses and make the lots available for a family or individual to build a house.
- 82 percent\* of the **Survey** respondents supported the Community using grant dollars to purchase, rehab and resell vacant housing in the Community.
- 84.6 percent\* of the **Survey** respondents supported Benkelman using State or Federal grant dollars to provide down payment assistance to first-time homebuyers.

*\*Does not include “No Response” Survey answers.*

***Workforce Housing Needs Survey.***

The **Benkelman Planning Commission and Benkelman Community Redevelopment Authority** conducted a **Workforce Housing Needs Survey** to determine the specific renter and owner housing needs of the Community's workforce. A total of **57 Surveys** were returned.

**Survey** participants were asked to provide information on such subjects as issues and barriers to obtaining affordable housing, place of employment, annual household income and in what Community or region participants would like to become either a homeowner or a renter. The following are highlights that were developed from the **Survey**. The complete **Survey** results are available in **Appendix II**.

- **Survey participants** included 40 homeowners and six renters. A total of **10 participants were not satisfied with their current housing situation**. Reasons included their home being too small, in need of substantial updating and being too far from their place of employment.
- The majority of **Survey respondents** could afford a home priced less than \$100,000. Renters looking to upgrade to a more suitable rental housing unit could afford a monthly rent between \$400 and \$600.
- **A total of 13 Survey participants, or 48.1 percent, identified a desire to purchase or rent a home in Benkelman. This includes both, persons living outside of the Community and those living within the current corporate limits desiring a change in housing situation.**

**Survey participants** were asked to address some of the issues or barriers they experience in obtaining affordable owner or renter housing for their families. The most common barriers identified when obtaining affordable owner housing included current housing prices, a lack of sufficient homes for sale, the cost of utilities and the condition of existing single family homes. The most common barriers faced when obtaining affordable rental housing included the high cost of rent, a lack of decent rental units at an affordable price range.

# SECTION 2



# BENKELMAN COMMUNITY PROFILE.



## **SECTION 2** **BENKELMAN** **COMMUNITY PROFILE.**



### **INTRODUCTION.**

Population, income and economic trends in Benkelman, Nebraska, and the City's One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction serve as valuable indicators for future development needs and patterns for the Community by providing a basis for the realistic projection of future population, income and economics. The population trends and projections for the years 2000 through 2032 were studied and forecasted for Benkelman, Nebraska, utilizing a process of both trend analysis and popular consent.

Benkelman is projected to decline slightly in population, but remain stable during the next 10 years with the potential to experience a population increase with the creation of additional full-time employment opportunities. To maintain a stable population base, the City will need to develop existing land within the Corporate Limits, while developing suitable land adjacent the City for future annexation. This population will also require the creation of additional housing units and related public facilities and utilities for the City.

A **Community Housing Study** was completed in 2022 for the City of Benkelman, Nebraska, and included housing data and highlighted population, income, economic and housing trends and projections, as well as identified a **10-year housing target demand for Benkelman**. The **Study** also identified important housing development projects to serve several different income levels in the Community. A target demand for up to **22 new housing units** by **2032** should be implemented. A **"10-Year Housing Action Plan"** identifies specific housing projects most needed by the local citizens of Benkelman.

**The most critical housing issues in Benkelman are to promote the rehabilitation of existing housing in a state of moderate or significant deterioration, as well as the development of housing for the local workforce population affordable to all salary income levels.** Other priority housing needs in Benkelman include providing opportunities for low- and middle-income persons and families, single-parent households, first time homebuyers, general rental housing and housing for the elderly. Housing units having three+-bedrooms are the housing types and styles most recommended.

## **POPULATION TRENDS & PROJECTIONS.**

The analysis and projection of local demographics are at the center of all planning decisions. This process assists in the understanding of important changes which have and will occur throughout the 10-year planning period.

Estimating population is critical to a community planning process. Further, projecting population growth and/or decline of a community is extremely complex. Projections are based upon various assumptions about the future, and must be carefully analyzed and continually reevaluated, due to the changing economic and social structure of a community.

### **POPULATION**

- **Table 2.1, Page 2.3, identifies population trends and projections for the City of Benkelman, Nebraska. The current (2022) estimated population for Benkelman is 815. The “medium” population projection for Benkelman estimates a slight decrease of 31 persons, or 3.8 percent, to 784 by 2032.**
- **The City of Benkelman has the potential to experience a population increase of 20, or 2.4 percent to 835 residents, by 2032 by establishing a locally-based “Community Growth Initiative (CGI)”. This can be achieved by increasing housing development and economic/community development activities including the creation of 35 to 50 full-time employment (FTE) opportunities.**

**TABLE 2.1  
POPULATION TRENDS & PROJECTIONS  
BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA  
2000-2032**

	<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Total</u>		<u>Annual</u>	
			<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u>
	2000	1,006	--	--	--	--
	2010	953	-53	-5.2%	-5.3	-0.5%
	2020	821	-132	-13.8%	-13.2	-1.4%
	<b>2022</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>-0.7%</b>	<b>-6</b>	<b>-0.7%</b>
<b>Low</b>	<b>2032</b>	<b>736</b>	<b>-79</b>	<b>-9.6%</b>	<b>-7.9</b>	<b>-1.0%</b>
<b>Medium</b>	<b>2032</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>-3.8%</b>	<b>-3.1</b>	<b>-0.4%</b>
<b>High</b>	<b>2032</b>	<b>820</b>	<b>+5</b>	<b>+0.6%</b>	<b>+0.5</b>	<b>+0.1%</b>
<b>CGI*</b>	<b>2032</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>+20</b>	<b>+2.4%</b>	<b>+2.0</b>	<b>+0.2%</b>

\*Potential estimated population increase associated with a planned “**Community Growth Initiative (CGI)**.” This **Initiative** would include an estimated increase in Full-Time Employment (FTE) positions during the next 10 years. Population increases would include 35 to 50 additional FTE positions created in Benkelman.

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

## AGE DISTRIBUTION

For planning purposes, the various cohorts of population are important indicators of the special needs of a community. The cohorts of age, sex and family structure can assist in determining potential labor force and the need for housing, public facilities and other important local services. An analysis of age characteristics can be used to identify the potential need for public school, recreational areas and short- and long-term health care facilities.

- **Table 2.2, Page 2.5**, provides **age distribution** for the City of Benkelman, from 2000 to 2010. The “55-64” and “85+” age groups experienced an increase in population from 2000 to 2010, increasing by 67 and four residents, respectively. The “65-74” and “85+” age groups are projected to experience the largest increase in population from 2022 to 2032, with an estimated increase of six persons for each age cohort.
- **All Benkelman population cohorts representing persons 55+ years of age are projected to increase by 2032. This includes retiree, elderly and frail elderly populations. This is due, in part, to two factors: expanding employment opportunities and an “aging in place” population. Housing for elderly, frail elderly and retirees that includes independent living, assisted living and long-term care are available in Benkelman.**
- The current **median age** in Benkelman is an estimated 49.7 years, an increase from the 2010 median age of 48.5. However, the median age is projected to increase to 52.1 years by 2032.



**TABLE 2.2**  
**POPULATION AGE DISTRIBUTION – TRENDS & PROJECTIONS**  
**BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA**  
**2000-2032**

<b>Age Group</b>	<b>2000-2010</b>			<b>2022-2032</b>			
	<b>2000</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>Change</b>	<b>2020*</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2032</b>	<b>Change</b>
19 and Under	226	225	-1	201	197	173	-24
20-34	117	95	-22	70	63	47	-16
35-54	285	245	-40	190	183	171	-12
55-64	79	146	+67	142	155	162	+7
65-74	108	89	-19	80	73	79	+6
75-84	133	91	-42	79	82	84	+2
85+	58	62	+4	59	62	68	+6
<b>Totals</b>	<b>1,006</b>	<b>953</b>	<b>-53</b>	<b>821</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>-31</b>
<b>Median Age</b>	<b>47.2</b>	<b>48.5</b>	<b>+1.3</b>	<b>49.5</b>	<b>49.7</b>	<b>52.1</b>	<b>+2.4</b>

\*Estimated population age distribution.  
Source: 2000, 2010 & 2020 Census.  
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

## HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS & TENURE

- **Table 2.3, Page 2.7, identifies specific household characteristics** in the City of Benkelman, from 2000 to 2032. The overall number of households in Benkelman declined between 2000 and 2010, from 458 to 445 total households. **Currently, Benkelman consists of an estimated 398 households, including 299 owner and 99 renter households.**
- **An estimated 390 households are projected to exist in Benkelman by 2032. This will equal an estimated 291 owner and 99 renter households. The CGI scenario identifies a potential for 403 total households in Benkelman by 2032, including 302 owner and 101 renter households.**
- The current number of **persons per household** in Benkelman is approximately 1.97 and is projected to decrease to 1.96 by 2032. Persons per household, as per the CGI scenario, would result in an increase to an estimated 2.00 persons per household by 2032.
- Currently (2022), an estimated 29 persons reside in **group quarters**. Group quarters consist of dormitories, correctional facilities and nursing/care centers and are not considered a household. By 2032, an estimated 21 persons will receive services in a group quarter facility.
- **Table 2.4, Page 2.7, highlights household tenure** in the City of Benkelman, from 2000 to 2032. Currently, an estimated 398 households exist in Benkelman, consisting of 299 owner households and 99 renter households. By 2032, owner households will account for an estimated 74.7 percent of the households in the Community. The number of renter households is projected to stay the same for the City of Benkelman during the next 10 years.

**TABLE 2.3**  
**SPECIFIC HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS**  
**BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA**  
**2000-2032**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Group Quarters</u>	<u>Persons in Households</u>	<u>Households</u>	<u>Persons Per Household</u>
2000	1,006	56	950	458	2.07
2010	953	32	921	445	2.07
<b>2022</b>	<b>815</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>786</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>1.97</b>
<b>2032</b>	<b>784</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>763</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>1.96</b>
<b>2032*</b>	<b>835</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>814</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>2.00</b>

\*Community Growth Initiative (CGI).

Source: 2000, 2010 Census.

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

**TABLE 2.4**  
**TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD**  
**BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA**  
**2000-2032**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Households</u>	<u>Owner</u>		<u>Renter</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
2000	458	347	75.7%	111	24.3%
2010	445	337	75.7%	108	24.3%
<b>2022</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>299</b>	<b>75.2%</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>24.8%</b>
<b>2032</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>291</b>	<b>74.7%</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>25.3%</b>
<b>2032*</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>75.0%</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>25.0%</b>

\*Community Growth Initiative (CGI).

Source: 2000, 2010 Census.

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

## ***INCOME TRENDS & PROJECTIONS.***

### **HOUSEHOLD INCOME GROUPS**

- **Table 2.5, Page 2.9, identifies household income trends and projections** for Benkelman, Nebraska, from 2010 to 2032. Household incomes in Benkelman have increased in recent years and are projected to continue this trend through 2032. From 2010 to 2019, median income in Benkelman increased from \$33,068 to \$41,667. **The median income is projected to increase, by 2032, to \$51,796, an increase of 20.3 percent from 2022.**
- The number of households in the City of Benkelman having an annual income at or above \$50,000 is expected to increase during the next 10 years, by an estimated 46.5 percent. Households with incomes less than \$35,000 are projected to experience the greatest decline in Benkelman.
- The median income of renter households in Benkelman is projected to increase by 13.3 percent during the next 10 years, from \$27,848 to \$31,551 by 2032. The number of renter households having an annual income at or above \$35,000 is expected to increase during the next 10 years. **The number of renter households with incomes of at least \$50,000 are expected to increase from 15 households in 2022, to 19 households in 2032, a 26.7 percent increase.**

### **PER-CAPITA INCOME**

- **Table 2.6, Page 2.10, identifies per capita income trends & projections** in Dundy County and the State of Nebraska, from 2010 to 2032. Current per capita income in Dundy County is an estimated \$76,660. By 2032, per capita income in the County is projected to increase by an estimated 6.1 percent, to \$81,326.
- The current and **projected per capita income** in Dundy County is above the State of Nebraska, which is expected to increase 19.5 percent by 2032, to an estimated \$67,482.

**TABLE 2.5  
HOUSEHOLD INCOME TRENDS & PROJECTIONS  
BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA  
2010-2032**

<u>Income Group</u>	<u>2010 Est.*</u>	<u>2019 Est.*</u>	<u>2022</u>	<u>2032</u>	<u>2032* ED Boost</u>	<u>% Change 2022-2032</u>
<b><u>All Households</u></b>						
Less than \$10,000	53	21	10	6	6	-40.0%
\$10,000-\$19,999	103	98	74	65	65	-12.2%
\$20,000-\$34,999	120	65	47	34	34	-27.7%
\$35,000-\$49,999	90	87	82	77	78	-6.1%
\$50,000-\$74,999	45	109	102	108	112	+5.9%
\$75,000-\$99,999	47	16	20	24	28	+20.0%
<u>\$100,000 or More</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>66</u>	<u>63</u>	<u>76</u>	<u>80</u>	<u>+20.6%</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>484</b>	<b>462</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>390</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>-2.0%</b>
<b>Median Income</b>	<b>\$33,068</b>	<b>\$41,667</b>	<b>\$43,043</b>	<b>\$51,796</b>	<b>\$52,130</b>	<b>+20.3%</b>
<b><u>Renter</u></b>						
<b><u>Households</u></b>						
Less than \$10,000	16	13	6	3	3	-50.0%
\$10,000-\$19,999	20	40	32	28	28	-12.5%
\$20,000-\$34,999	50	20	13	12	12	-7.7%
\$35,000-\$49,999	34	35	33	37	38	+12.1%
\$50,000-\$74,999	0	12	10	11	12	+10.0%
\$75,000-\$99,999	3	0	2	3	3	+50.0%
<u>\$100,000 or More</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>+66.7%</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>99</b>	<b>101</b>	<b>+0.0%</b>
<b>Median Income</b>	<b>\$27,649</b>	<b>\$26,347</b>	<b>\$27,848</b>	<b>\$31,551</b>	<b>\$32,307</b>	<b>+13.3%</b>
<b><u>65+ Households</u></b>						
Less than \$10,000	23	12	9	4	4	-55.6%
\$10,000-\$19,999	56	40	37	28	28	-24.3%
\$20,000-\$34,999	34	47	48	48	48	+0.0%
\$35,000-\$49,999	20	44	46	52	54	+13.0%
\$50,000-\$74,999	9	25	28	32	33	+14.3%
\$75,000-\$99,999	4	16	19	25	27	+31.6%
<u>\$100,000 or More</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>+25.0%</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>203</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>214</b>	<b>+3.0%</b>
<b>Median Income</b>	<b>\$19,284</b>	<b>\$34,679</b>	<b>\$36,990</b>	<b>\$40,457</b>	<b>\$42,312</b>	<b>+9.4%</b>

\* Specified Data Used. 2010 & 2019 Estimate subject to Margin of Error.

Source: 2006-2010 & 2015-2019 American Community Survey.

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

**TABLE 2.6**  
**PER CAPITA INCOME**  
**TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS**  
**DUNDY COUNTY / STATE OF NEBRASKA**  
**2010-2032**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Dundy County</u>		<u>State of Nebraska</u>	
	<u>Income</u>	<u>% Change</u>	<u>Income</u>	<u>% Change</u>
2010	\$53,883	--	\$40,920	--
2011	\$65,734	+22.0%	\$45,429	+11.0%
2012	\$62,105	-5.5%	\$46,562	+2.5%
2013	\$72,118	+16.1%	\$46,592	+0.1%
2014	\$74,836	+3.8%	\$48,948	+5.1%
2015	\$79,695	+6.5%	\$50,588	+3.4%
2016	\$70,797	-11.2%	\$49,703	-1.8%
2017	\$61,404	-13.3%	\$50,663	+1.9%
2018	\$68,093	+10.9%	\$53,263	+5.1%
2019	\$74,921	+10.0%	\$54,515	+2.3%
<b>2022</b>	<b>\$76,660</b>	<b>+2.3%</b>	<b>\$56,450</b>	<b>+3.5%</b>
<b>2010-2022</b>	<b>\$53,883-\$76,660</b>	<b>+42.3%</b>	<b>\$40,920-\$56,450</b>	<b>+37.9%</b>
<b>2022-2032</b>	<b>\$76,660-\$81,326</b>	<b>+6.1%</b>	<b>\$56,450-\$67,482</b>	<b>+19.5%</b>

Source: Nebraska Department of Economic Development, 2022.

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

## COST BURDENED HOUSEHOLDS

- **Tables 2.7 and 2.8, Page 2.12, identify households with housing problems/cost burdened** in the City of Benkelman, from 2000 to 2032. Cost burdened households are those that spend 30 percent or more of their income on housing costs. Housing costs include any cost directly attributable to the cost of living and may include rent, mortgage, insurance, taxes, and utilities. Housing problems may include a lack of plumbing facilities or overcrowded housing conditions. Overcrowded housing conditions exist when more than 1.01 persons per room exist in a housing unit.
- **An estimated 41 owner and 24 renter households in Benkelman are currently cost burdened and/or have housing problems. Households experiencing cost burden and/or housing problems are projected to decline for both owner and renter households by 2032, where an estimated 30 owner and 16 renter cost burden households are projected to exist in Benkelman.**
- Substandard Housing, as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, considers housing units that are experiencing overcrowded conditions (1.01+ persons per room) or homes without complete plumbing. **The 2014-2018 American Community Survey estimated all homes in Benkelman had complete plumbing, but found zero homes experienced overcrowded conditions.**

**TABLE 2.7**  
**ESTIMATED OWNER HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME**  
**COST BURDENED WITH HOUSING PROBLEMS**  
**BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA**  
**2000-2032**

<b>Income Range</b>	<b>2000</b> <b># / #CB-HP</b>	<b>2017*</b> <b># / #CB-HP</b>	<b>2022</b> <b># / #CB-HP</b>	<b>2032</b> <b># / #CB-HP</b>
0%-30% AMI	35 / 16	40 / 20	27 / 16	11 / 8
31%-50% AMI	57 / 16	30 / 15	20 / 12	15 / 9
51%-80% AMI	66 / 8	75 / 10	65 / 13	72 / 13
<u>81%+ AMI</u>	<u>221 / 12</u>	<u>180 / 0</u>	<u>187 / 0</u>	<u>193 / 0</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>379 / 52</b>	<b>325 / 45</b>	<b>299 / 41</b>	<b>291 / 30</b>

\*Specified Data Used; 2017 estimate subject to margin of error.  
# = Total Households. #CB-HP = Households with Cost Burden – Housing Problems.  
Source: 2000 CHAS Tables, Huduser.org.  
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

**TABLE 2.8**  
**ESTIMATED RENTER HOUSEHOLDS BY INCOME**  
**COST BURDENED WITH HOUSING PROBLEMS**  
**BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA**  
**2000-2032**

<b>Income Range</b>	<b>2000</b> <b># / #CB-HP</b>	<b>2017*</b> <b># / #CB-HP</b>	<b>2022</b> <b># / #CB-HP</b>	<b>2032</b> <b># / #CB-HP</b>
0%-30% AMI	28 / 20	30 / 15	20 / 12	8 / 7
31%-50% AMI	36 / 16	20 / 0	10 / 0	7 / 0
51%-80% AMI	35 / 0	40 / 15	25 / 12	32 / 9
<u>81%+ AMI</u>	<u>32 / 4</u>	<u>50 / 0</u>	<u>44 / 0</u>	<u>52 / 0</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>131 / 40</b>	<b>140 / 30</b>	<b>99 / 24</b>	<b>99 / 16</b>

\*Specified Data Used; 2017 estimate subject to margin of error.  
# = Total Households. #CB-HP = Households with Cost Burden – Housing Problems.  
Source: 2000 CHAS Tables, Huduser.org.  
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.



## **EMPLOYMENT & ECONOMIC TRENDS & PROJECTIONS.**

The most recent and comprehensive employment data available for Dundy County was obtained from the Nebraska Department of Labor. Since some of these figures are only available County-Wide, a review and analysis of Dundy County labor force statistics is also highlighted to provide a general understanding of the economic activity occurring in and around the City of Benkelman.

### **EMPLOYMENT TRENDS**

- **Tables 2.9, Pages 2.14,** identifies **civilian labor force and employment data trends and projections** in Dundy County, Nebraska. The unemployment rate in Dundy County ranged from 3.1 percent to 2.2 percent, between 2010 and 2022. Since 2010, the County has experienced both moderate increases and decreases in the number of employed persons. During this time, the overall number of employed persons decreased by 57, or 3 percent, with the largest drop in employment occurring in 2014, declining by 22 employees.
- By 2032, an estimated 1,095 persons will be employed in Dundy County, with an unemployment rate of 2.1 percent. This represents a decrease of 26 employed persons in the County.
- **Table 2.10, Page 2.15,** identifies **workforce employment by type** in Dundy County, Nebraska, for 2022. Currently, an estimated 555 persons are employed in a non-farm establishment. The largest employment sectors in Dundy County are the Wholesale Trade, Retail Trade and Educational Services sectors.
- Overall, the City of Benkelman, serving as the County-Seat of Dundy County, has a good **economic outlook** for the 10-year planning period. Economic opportunities exist, primarily due to additional commercial and industrial business, as well as the expansion of existing businesses in the Benkelman area and the provision of vacant, developable land for these economic growth activities. Existing, locally-based business, including agricultural-related industries, will ensure Benkelman has a stable economic base and a bright future for increased economic development.

**TABLE 2.9**  
**LABOR FORCE STATISTICS**  
**DUNDY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**2010-2032**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Labor Force</u>	<u>Employment</u>	<u>Unemployment</u>	<u>Unemployment Rate</u>
2010	1,216	1,178	38	3.1%
2011	1,275	1,238	37	2.9%
2012	1,282	1,244	38	3.0%
2013	1,304	1,268	36	2.8%
2014	1,275	1,246	29	2.3%
2015	1,196	1,171	25	2.1%
2016	1,194	1,168	26	2.2%
2017	1,179	1,151	28	2.4%
2018	1,150	1,124	26	2.3%
2019	1,171	1,141	30	2.6%
<b>2022*</b>	<b>1,146</b>	<b>1,121</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>2.2%</b>
<b>2032</b>	<b>1,128</b>	<b>1,095</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>2.1%</b>

NOTE: Statistics based on annual average.

\*Data as of February, 2022.

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, 2022.

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

**TABLE 2.10**  
**WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE**  
**DUNDY COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**FEBRUARY, 2022**

**Workforce**

<b>Non-Farm Employment</b>	
<b>(Wage and Salary)</b>	<b>555</b>
Agriculture Forestry, Fishing & Hunting.	0
Mining, Quarrying and Oil/Gas Extraction.	0
Utilities.	*
Construction.	16
Manufacturing.	21
Wholesale Trade.	39
Retail Trade.	47
Transportation & Warehousing.	14
Information.	*
Finance & Insurance.	*
Real Estate & Rental/Leasing.	0
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services.	*
Management of Companies & Enterprises.	0
Administrative/Support/Waste.	0
Educational Services.	28
Health Care & Social Assistance.	*
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation.	*
Accommodation & Food Service.	26
Other Services (except Public Administration).	22
Federal Government.	12
State Government.	10
Local Government.	214

\*Data not available because of disclosure suppression.

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, 2022.

# SECTION 3



**EXISTING & FUTURE  
LAND USE PLANNING.**



## ***SECTION 3*** ***EXISTING & FUTURE*** ***LAND USE PLANNING.***



### ***INTRODUCTION.***

The **Existing and Future Land Use Planning** section of this **Comprehensive Plan** identifies the current and future land use development patterns in Benkelman, Nebraska. The land use component examines **development opportunities and requirements and future utilization of land** in and around the City. A discussion of the **environmental** and **physical characteristics** of Benkelman precedes a description and analyses of **existing** and **future land use** conditions in the City.

### ***PROPER LAND USE PRACTICES.***

Proper land use practices can protect the natural resources of a community and be a complement to the built environment. The natural environment of the City of Benkelman provides both opportunities and constraints for existing and future developments. As humans strive to create a sustainable living environment, they must work and live in harmony with their natural surroundings. This can occur by designing with nature, conserving unique features, protecting watersheds and using sensitive development practices.

In Benkelman, the primary development constraints are associated with steep topography in the northern and western portions of the City, as well as flooding and drainage associated with the Republican River southeast of the Community.

The proposed **Land Use Plan** concentrates on the use of land in the City of Benkelman and the Community's respective One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction during the 10-year planning period. Special attention is given to the identification of future residential, public/quasi-public, parks and recreational, commercial and industrial growth areas. The identification of undeveloped land in the Corporate Limits and One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction is imperative to support growth and development opportunities during the next 10 years.

## HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT.

Benkelman was a Village originally known as “Collinsville” and later renamed after J.G. Benkelman established a large cattle shipping operation near the town. The landscape around Benkelman was thick with buffalo grasses that made it the perfect grazing grounds for cattle and led to Benkelman becoming an important location for cattle exports, as well as grain and cream. The Burlington Railroad built a train depot north of the present-day Corridor and the town relocated soon after.

Benkelman was officially incorporated on February 8, 1887 and would become the County-Seat one year later.

**TABLE 3.1  
HISTORY OF POPULATION  
BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA  
1890-2020**

Year	PERSONS	+/- & PERCENT CHANGE
1890	357	--
1900	296	-61 / -17.1%
1910	538	+242 / +81.8%
1920	1,009	+471 / +87.5%
1930	1,154	+145 / +14.4%
1940	1,448	+294 / +25.5%
1950	1,512	+64 / +4.4%
1960	1,400	-112 / -7.1%
1970	1,349	-51 / -3.6%
1980	1,235	-114 / -8.5%
1990	1,193	-42 / -3.4%
2000	1,006	-187 / -15.7%
2010	953	-53 / -5.3%
2020	821	-132 / -13.9%

Source: U.S. Census;  
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

### HISTORIC POPULATION TRENDS

**Table 3.1** highlights **historical population trends** for the Community of Benkelman. The first U.S. Census data for Benkelman was recorded in 1890 with a population of 357. Despite a brief decline in the 1900 Census, the Community quickly flourished from 1910 to 1950, reaching a peak population of 1,512 as per the 1950 Census. There has been a steady decline in population since the 1950 Census, with Benkelman recording a population of 821 as per the 2020 Census.

## THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT.

### SOIL ASSOCIATIONS.

The soils in and around Benkelman are classified into three soil groups, or Associations, each with a broad range of characteristics. **Illustration 3.1, Page 3.8**, graphically displays the **General Soil Associations** for the City of Benkelman and the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction. The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service conducted the soil survey and developed the boundaries of the soil types found on **Illustration 3.1**.

The three Soil Association depicted in **Illustration 3.1** are the Anselmo-Keith, Bridgeport-Havre and Sandy Alluvial Land-Las Soil Associations. These Associations are closely related to the low-level flatlands of the Republican River basin, and the rolling to steep topography of these lands.

The City is situated along the upper terraces of the Republican River basin. Much of the southern portions of Benkelman, including the Downtown and the Dundy County Fairgrounds are located within the low-lying lands of the Republican River, while land to the north generally consists of steep sloping hills and rugged terrain.

#### ❖ ANSELMO-KEITH ASSOCIATION.

*Sandy and silty soils and sand-caliche soils of upland valleys and hills.*

The Anselmo-Keith Soil Association comprises a majority of the corporate limits of Benkelman, as well as rural, agricultural land north and west of the Community. Often considered a “sand-loess transitional area,” this Association is largely made up of sandy materials and silty loessal materials. Vertical drainageways are often exposed of hard sandstone and limestone.

Anselmo soils are generally deep, dark and moderately sandy with a surface layer that can be very sandy. Subsoils are brownish in color with fine sandy loam. Keith soils are silty or moderately sandy with a deep, dark and silty brownish subsoil. Limy, light-colored loess is present at an estimated two to six feet in depth.

Soils in this association are generally favorable for cultivating crops as they absorb water rapidly and have a high water-holding capacity. Despite this advantage, wind erosion has affected soil fertility and soil moisture balance. In most places, good quality well water is available for irrigation and domestic use.

❖ **BRIDGEPORT-HAVRE ASSOCIATION.**

*Loamy soils of valley-fill foot slopes and high bottom lands.*

This association comprises the bases of upland slopes and high bottom lands of the Republican River, generally located southeast and southwest of Benkelman. Soils are well drained and are either nearly level or gently sloping in nature.

Bridgeport soils are generally located along tributaries of the Republican River, are deep and medium in texture and generally light in color. Havre soils are generally carried by the Republican River and are the most extensive soil type of the high bottom lands. These soils are also layered with river sediments with a medium to loamy subsoil and contain an excess of free lime carbonate.

This association of soils is well suited for cultivation as they are porous, absorb water and have a high water-holding capacity. Most of this soil association is utilized for general farming which includes cash crops and livestock.

❖ **SANDY ALLUVIAL LAND-LAS ASSOCIATION.**

*Sandy and loamy soils of river lowlands.*

The lowlands and floodplains of the Republican River comprise this soil association. Land is nearly level to gently sloping and subject to overflow. The water table for this association is an estimated one to eight feet below the surface. These soils are also very porous, are affected by sand, salts and/or alkali and generally support the growth of prairie grasses and meadows, thus not suitable for cultivation.



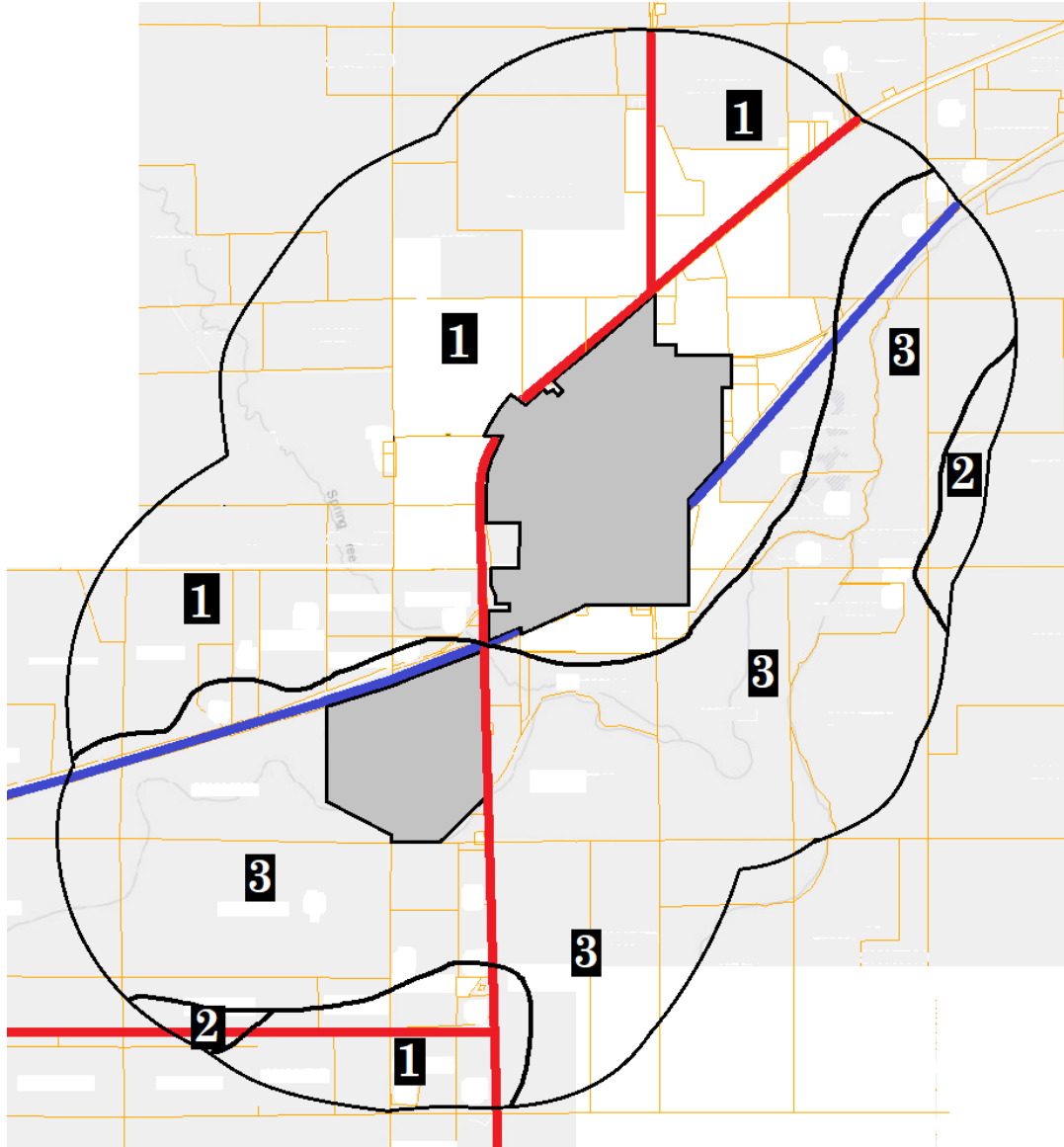


# GENERAL SOIL ASSOCIATIONS MAP

ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION

BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA

2022



**LEGEND**

- 1 - ANSELMO-KEITH ASSOCIATION
- 2 - BRIDGEPORT-HAVRE ASSOCIATION
- 3 - SANDY ALLUVIAL LAND-LAS ASSOCIATION

**HANNA:KEELAN ASSOCIATES, P.C.**  
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ILLUSTRATION 3.1

## **WATERSHEDS**

The topography and terrain of Benkelman and its associated One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction are varied. The natural landscape has been formed by wind and water erosion and deposits creating areas of nearly level lands on stream terraces. The natural topography of the Community ranges from level in the east, to steep sloping in the west.

Groundwater and groundwater-fed surface streams account for a large percentage of the water resources in the Benkelman One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction. The City of Benkelman relies upon the groundwater reserves and surface water run-off to recharge the underground water supply of the wells, located within the Corporate Limits of Benkelman.

The underground water supply is vital to the region and is the source of water for numerous rural private drinking and irrigation wells. Any endangerment to the supply threatens public health, as well as the local farm economy. This natural resource must be protected. Securing the quality of drinking water from private wells in the rural areas within the Benkelman One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction is very important.

Rural dwellings typically have septic tanks and/or leach fields. If located too close to each other, contamination could occur. Adequate residential lot sizes help ensure residents' health, safety and welfare into the future.

## **WELLHEAD PROTECTION PROGRAM**

The Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE) regulates ground water quality and quantity. To assist local municipalities with protecting their municipal drinking water supply, NDEE has developed the **Nebraska Wellhead Protection (WHP) Program**. The voluntary program intends to prevent the contamination of ground water used by public water supply wells.

The **WHP Program** provides the following in accordance with the federal laws: 1) duties of the governmental entities and utility districts, 2) determines protection area, 3) identify contamination sources, 4) develop a contaminant source management program, 5) develop an alternate drinking water plan, 6) review contaminated sources in future wellhead areas and 7) involve the public.

The purpose of **Nebraska's Wellhead Protection Program** is to prevent the location of any new contaminant sources in wellhead protection areas through planning, minimize the hazard of existing sources through management and provide early warning of existing contamination through ground water monitoring. The **Wellhead Protection Area (WHPA)** is a region with restrictive regulations on land use to prevent potential contaminants from uses located in the sensitive area. The boundaries are delineated by a time-of-travel cylindrical displacement calculation. The boundary is then mapped by NDEE so Communities can apply zoning regulations to the floating district.

**The Benkelman WHP Area is located an estimated four miles north of the Community, bound by the Highway 61 Corridor (east), Road 711 (South), Avenue 334 (west) and Road 713 (North). This WHP Area is not located in either the City of Benkelman or the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction.**

## ***THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT.***

The built environment of Benkelman is characterized by its districts, paths, edges, nodes and landmarks. The combination of these physical features creates a sense of place for the citizens and patrons of Benkelman. The natural terrain enhances the built environment by providing an aesthetic base for development. Neighborhoods are defined by specific edges or boundaries. The major transportation corridors and the physical barriers of the terrain generally create the edge for each distinct neighborhood.

Benkelman is serviced by Nebraska State Highway 61 and U.S. Highway 34. Highway 61 meets with Highway 34 in the northern portion of Benkelman. The two highways bypass the Community as a dual-listed highway to the north and west, then travel south for an estimated two miles before separating, with Highway 34 continuing west to Colorado and Highway 61 continuing south to Kansas.

The majority of Benkelman's built environs are located south of the Highway 34 and 61 Corridors and north of the Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Corridor. Property owned by Gavilon Grain, a fertilizer production operation located southwest of Benkelman, is also within the Corporate Limits of the Community. Downtown Benkelman is generally located along Chief Street, between Eighth Avenue and the Railroad Corridor with residential development to the north, east and west. New commercial and industrial uses have generally located along the Highway 34 and 61 Corridors.

**EXISTING LAND USE PROFILE.**

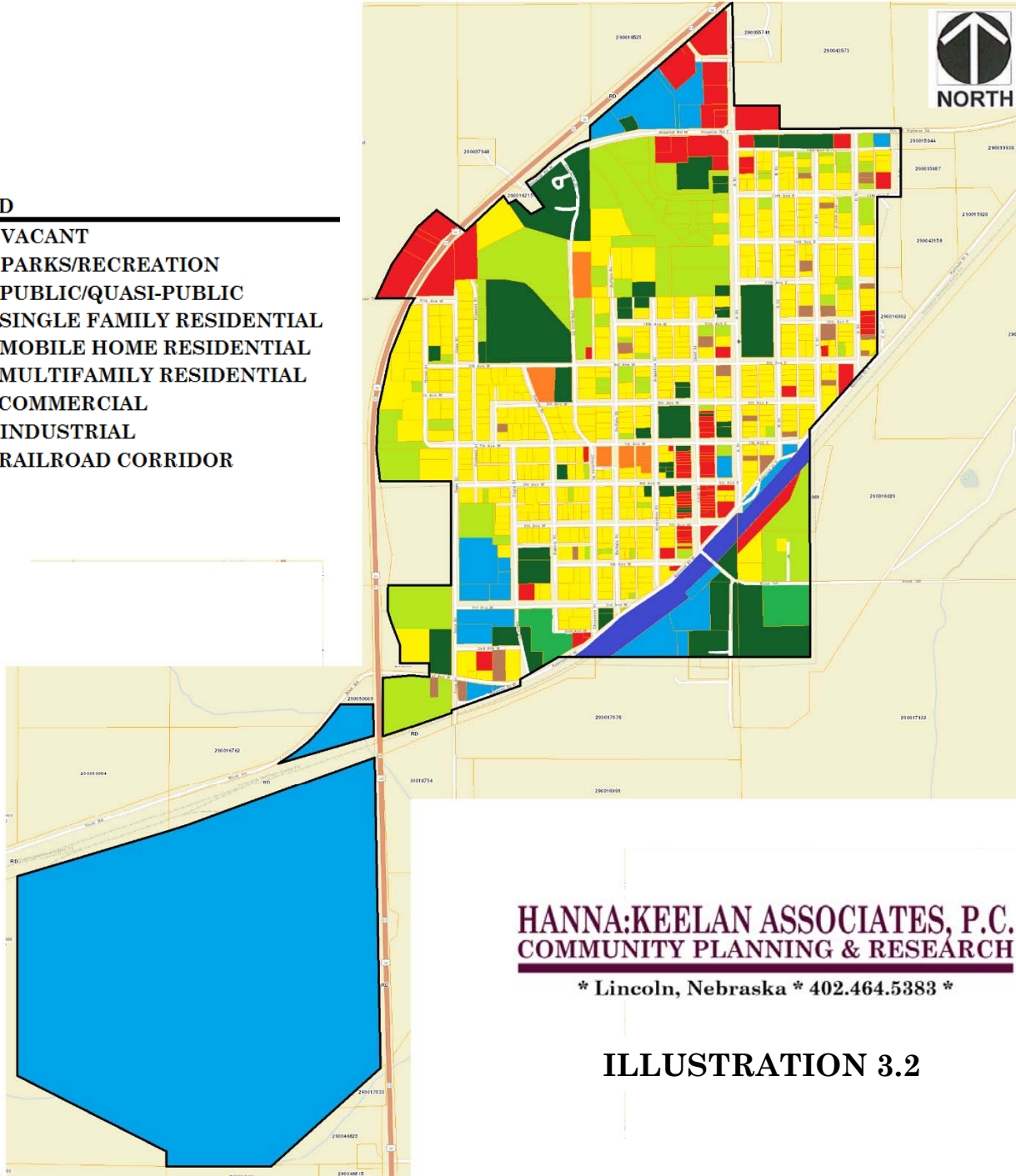
**Table 3.2**, identifies the existing land use in Benkelman as of 2022, per land use type and acres per 100 people. As a reference, the planning standard for acres per 100 people per land use category is also shown. **The total area within the City of Benkelman is currently estimated to be 680.4 acres. Existing land use in and around Benkelman is also identified in Illustrations 3.2 and 3.3.**

<b>TABLE 3.2</b>					
<b>EXISTING LAND USE CAPACITY MATRIX</b>					
<b>BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA</b>					
2022 ESTIMATED POPULATION - 815					
2032 PROJECTED (MEDIUM) POPULATION - 784					
2032 PROJECTED (CGI <sup>^</sup> ) POPULATION - 835					
	2022			BENKELMAN	NATIONAL
	ACRES	PERCENT		PLANNING	PLANNING
				STANDARD	STANDARD
<b>Parks &amp; Rec./Open Space</b>	<b>7.6</b>	<b>1.1</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>0.9</b>	<b>2.0</b>
<b>Public/Quasi-Public</b>	<b>59.1</b>	<b>8.7</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>7.3</b>	<b>2.8</b>
<b>Residential</b>	<b>147.7</b>	<b>21.7</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>18.1</b>	<b>10.0</b>
<i>Single &amp; Two-Family</i>	<i>139.3</i>	<i>20.5</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>17.1</i>	<i>7.5</i>
<i>Multifamily</i>	<i>5.1</i>	<i>0.7</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>0.6</i>	<i>2.0</i>
<i>Mobile Home</i>	<i>3.3</i>	<i>0.5</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>0.4</i>	<i>0.5</i>
<b>Commercial</b>	<b>34.9</b>	<b>5.1</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>4.3</b>	<b>2.4</b>
<b>Industrial</b>	<b>237.8</b>	<b>35.0</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>29.2</b>	<b>2.3</b>
<b>Streets/Alleys/RR Corridor</b>	<b>115.7</b>	<b>17.0</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>14.2</b>	<b>9.0</b>
<b>Total Developed</b>	<b>602.8</b>	<b>88.6</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>74.0</b>	<b>28.5</b>
<b>Total Vacant</b>	<b>77.6</b>	<b>11.4</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>9.5</b>	<b>6.5</b>
<i>Developable*</i>	<i>66.0</i>	<i>85.1</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>8.1</i>	<i>6.5</i>
<i>Not Developable</i>	<i>11.6</i>	<i>14.9</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>1.4</i>	<i>NA</i>
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>680.4</b>	<b>100.0</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>35.0</b>
<sup>^</sup> Community Growth Initiative (CGI).					
<sup>^</sup> Based on Net Area Acreage.					
Note 1: Benkelman and National Planning Standards identify number of acres per 100 persons.					
Source: Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.					

**EXISTING LAND USE MAP**  
**CORPORATE LIMITS**  
**BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA**  
**2022**

**LEGEND**

- VACANT
- PARKS/RECREATION
- PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC
- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MOBILE HOME RESIDENTIAL
- MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- RAILROAD CORRIDOR



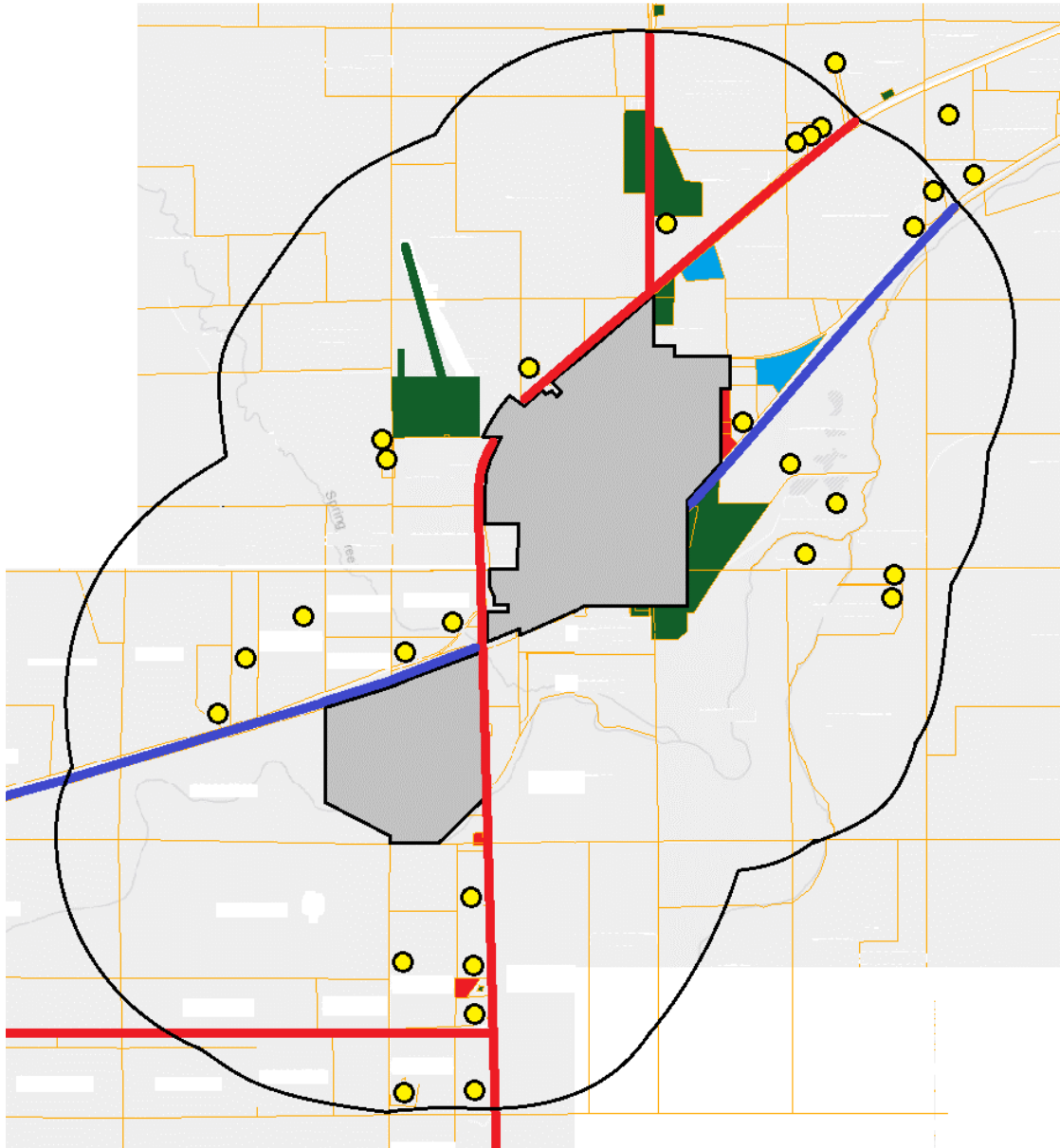
**HANNA:KEELAN ASSOCIATES, P.C.**  
**COMMUNITY PLANNING & RESEARCH**

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






**ILLUSTRATION 3.2**

**EXISTING LAND USE MAP**  
**ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION**  
**BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA**

2022



**LEGEND**

 VACANT/AGRICULTURAL	 COMMERCIAL
 PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC	 INDUSTRIAL
 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	 RAILROAD CORRIDOR
	 ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION

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**ILLUSTRATION 3.3**

The following **existing land use** discussion focuses on each of the land use types in Benkelman, utilizing **Table 3.2** in comparison to National Planning Standards.

### **PARKS/RECREATIONAL**

Land attributed to parks and recreational use accounts for approximately 1.1 percent of the total developed land in Benkelman. The 7.6 acres of park land equates to 0.9 acres per 100 people, which is approximately 45 percent less than the planning standard of two acres per 100 people. **Ward Bond Memorial Park, located along Railroad Street west of Downtown Benkelman is the only City Park in the Community. A baseball diamond is located near the Dundy County Fairgrounds.**

### **PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC**

**Public/Quasi-Public** land acreage in Benkelman totals an estimated 59.1 acres, or 8.7 percent of the total platted City area. This land classification includes Dundy County-Stratton Public School facilities, Sarah Ann Hester Memorial Home, Benkelman City Hall, Dundy County Courthouse, Fairgrounds, Library and Hospital; Churches, City and County buildings and various other public buildings. This land use classification equals an estimated 7.3 acres per 100 people, approximately 161 percent more than the recommended planning standard. As a County-Seat, this higher percentage is typical

### **RESIDENTIAL**

Single, multifamily and mobile home residential uses are the primary housing types in the Community. Residential uses occupy an estimated 147.7 acres of land, or 21.7 percent of the City's total area. The 18.1 acres of residential land per 100 persons in Benkelman is approximately 81 percent more than the planning standard of 10 acres.

- ❖ **Single Family** land usage calculates to approximately 139.3 acres, or an estimated 20.5 percent of the total City land area. The 17.1 acres of single family residential land per 100 persons is approximately 128 percent higher than the planning standard of 7.5 acres per 100 people. This is due to newer, larger single family homes being constructed on bigger than standard size lots in the Community
- ❖ **Multifamily** land usage in Benkelman is approximately 5.1 acres, or an estimated 0.7 percent of the Community's total land area. This calculates to 0.6 acres of multifamily land per 100 persons, which is 70 percent less than the recommended two acres per 100 people. Multifamily housing programs include two apartments buildings located along Cheyenne Street in northwest Benkelman, as well as apartment facilities managed by the Benkelman Housing Authority.



- ❖ **Mobile Homes** comprise approximately 3.3 acres, or an estimated 0.5 percent of the total platted land within the Benkelman Corporate Limits. The 3.3 acres of mobile home land use equals 0.4 acres per 100 persons. This total is 20 percent less than the recommended planning standard of 0.5 acres per 100 persons. Mobile homes in Benkelman are generally scattered throughout the eastern half of the Community, with a few, also, located in southwestern Benkelman.

## **COMMERCIAL**

A comparison of land use ratios from the National Planning Standards indicates that Benkelman has approximately 79 percent more **commercial** land uses than the recommended Standard of 2.4 acres per 100 persons. Commercial land uses account for 5.1 percent, or 34.9 acres of land in Benkelman.

The majority of Benkelman's new commercial development has occurred along the Highway 34/61 Corridor, including a new restaurant, Dollar General store, convenience store and agricultural sale-related businesses. The Community should pursue the development of new highway commercial businesses along the Highway Corridor, while also promoting the development of locally-based commercial operations and professional offices in the Downtown.

**A Downtown Revitalization-Phase I Plan was recently prepared for Downtown Benkelman. This Plan identifies priority projects to be undertaken in the Downtown to develop a strong commercial and entertainment core for the Community via building rehabilitation, business retention and beautification.**



## INDUSTRIAL

The total acreage of classified *industrial* land use in Benkelman is approximately 237.8 acres. Industrial acreage per 100 people is 29.2, or about 1,169 percent more than the planning standard of 2.3 acres per 100 persons. An estimated 210 acres of industrial land uses are dedicated to the Gavilon Grain fertilizer production facility, located in the extreme southwestern portion of Benkelman along the Highway 34/61 Corridor. The remaining estimated 28 industrial acres are scattered throughout the Community.



## ***FUTURE LAND USE.***

The City of Benkelman should propose a goal of implementing appropriate community and economic development initiatives to stabilize and, potentially, increase the population base and provide additional wealth to the Community. Since its founding, the City has experienced population growth, reaching a historic peak of 1,512, as per the 1950 Census. A declining population has been experienced in Benkelman since this population peak.

**The potential for a Community Growth Initiative (CGI) through the creation of 35 to 50 additional full-time employment opportunities, would result in an estimated 2032 population of 835, an increase of 20 persons, or 2.4 percent. City of Benkelman leadership, in partnership with local and regional economic development entities, will need to implement goals and policies highlighted in recently completed community planning documents with a common goal of community sustainability and resiliency throughout the 10-year planning period.**

Achieving community growth through 2032 will require the development of land within the current Corporate Limits that is supported by local public infrastructure and meets the desires of local developers and citizenry alike. Additionally, the annexation of undeveloped land and the expansion of infrastructure and utilities to support residential, commercial, and industrial development will be critical. The identification of future growth areas for all land use types adjacent and beyond the City of Benkelman Corporate Limits is necessary to support growth opportunities. **The Future Land Use Capacity Matrix (Page 3.16) identifies a sufficient amount of vacated/undeveloped land within the Benkelman Corporate Limits for development.**

**Illustration 3.4, Future Land Use Map (Page 3.17), highlights the future land use development recommendations for areas within the Corporate Limits of Benkelman. Future Land Use Map, Illustration 3.5 (Page 3.18), identifies potential residential, commercial and industrial growth areas adjacent but beyond the Benkelman Corporate Limits and within the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction.**

**TABLE 3.3  
EXISTING & FUTURE LAND USE CAPACITY MATRIX  
BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA**

2022 ESTIMATED POPULATION - 815

2032 PROJECTED (MEDIUM) POPULATION - 784

2032 PROJECTED (CGI) POPULATION - 835

	TOTAL ACRES NEEDED (Benkelman / National)			Future Land Use Map Benkelman Adjusted (Per Note 2)
	2022	2032**	2032***	
<b>Parks &amp; Rec./Open Space</b>	7.6 / 16.3	7.1 / 15.7	7.5 / 16.7	7.6 Acres
<b>Public/Quasi-Public</b>	59.1 / 22.8	57.2 / 22.0	61.0 / 23.4	65.5 Acres
<b>Residential</b>	147.7 / 81.5	141.9 / 78.4	151.1 / 83.5	157.9 Acres
<i>Single &amp; Two-Family</i>	139.3 / 61.1	134.1 / 58.8	142.8 / 62.6	149.8 Acres
<i>Multifamily</i>	5.1 / 16.3	4.7 / 15.7	5.0 / 16.7	5.1 Acres
<i>Mobile Home</i>	3.3 / 4.4	3.1 / 3.9	3.3 / 4.2	3.3 Acres
<b>Commercial</b>	34.9 / 19.6	33.7 / 18.8	35.9 / 20.0	37.9 Acres
<b>Industrial</b>	237.8 / 18.7	228.9 / 18.0	243.8 / 19.2	255.8 Acres
<b>Streets/Alleys/RR Corridor</b>	115.7 / 73.4	111.3 / 70.6	118.6 / 75.2	124.4 Acres
<b>Total Developed</b>	<b>602.8 / 232.3</b>	<b>580.1 / 223.5</b>	<b>617.9 / 238.0</b>	<b>649.1 Acres</b>
<b>Total Vacant</b>	77.6 / 53.0	74.5 / 51.0	79.3 / 54.3	31.3 Acres
<i>Developable*</i>	66.0 / 53.0	63.5 / 51.0	67.6 / 54.3	19.7 Acres
<i>Not Developable</i>	11.6 / NA	11.0 / NA	11.7 / NA	11.6 Acres
<b>Total Acreage</b>	<b>680.4 / 285.3</b>	<b>654.6 / 274.5</b>	<b>697.2 / 292.3</b>	<b>680.4 Acres</b>

Note: Designated Land Requirements (Future Needs) should include 3x 2022 to 2032 CGI Estimates presented on the Future Land Use Map.

\*Vacant Land Capable of Development.

\*\*Based on Medium Population Projection.









\*\*\*Based on Population Projection for Community Growth Initiative (CGI).

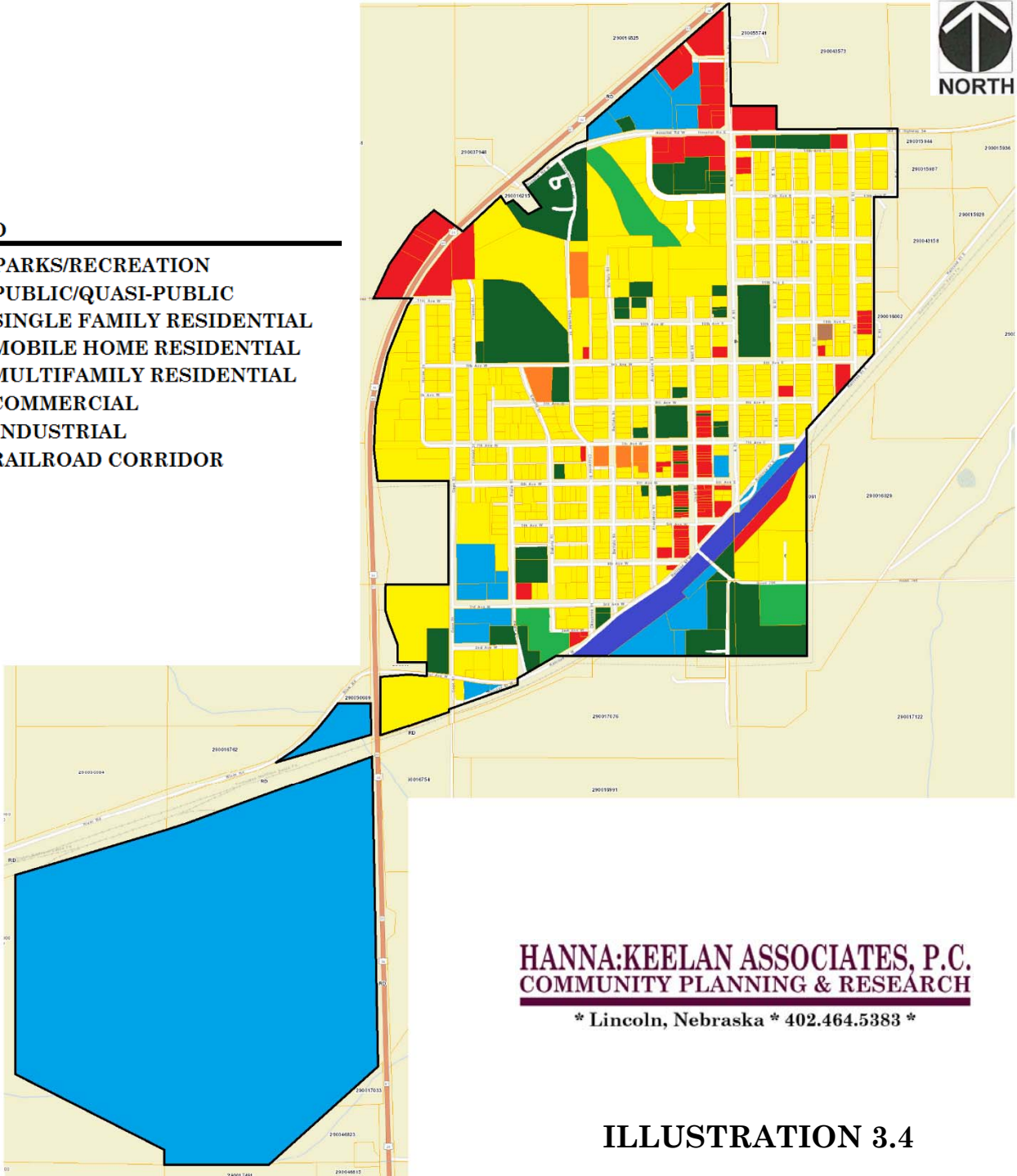
Source: Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2022.

**FUTURE LAND USE MAP**  
**CORPORATE LIMITS**  
**BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA**  
**2032**



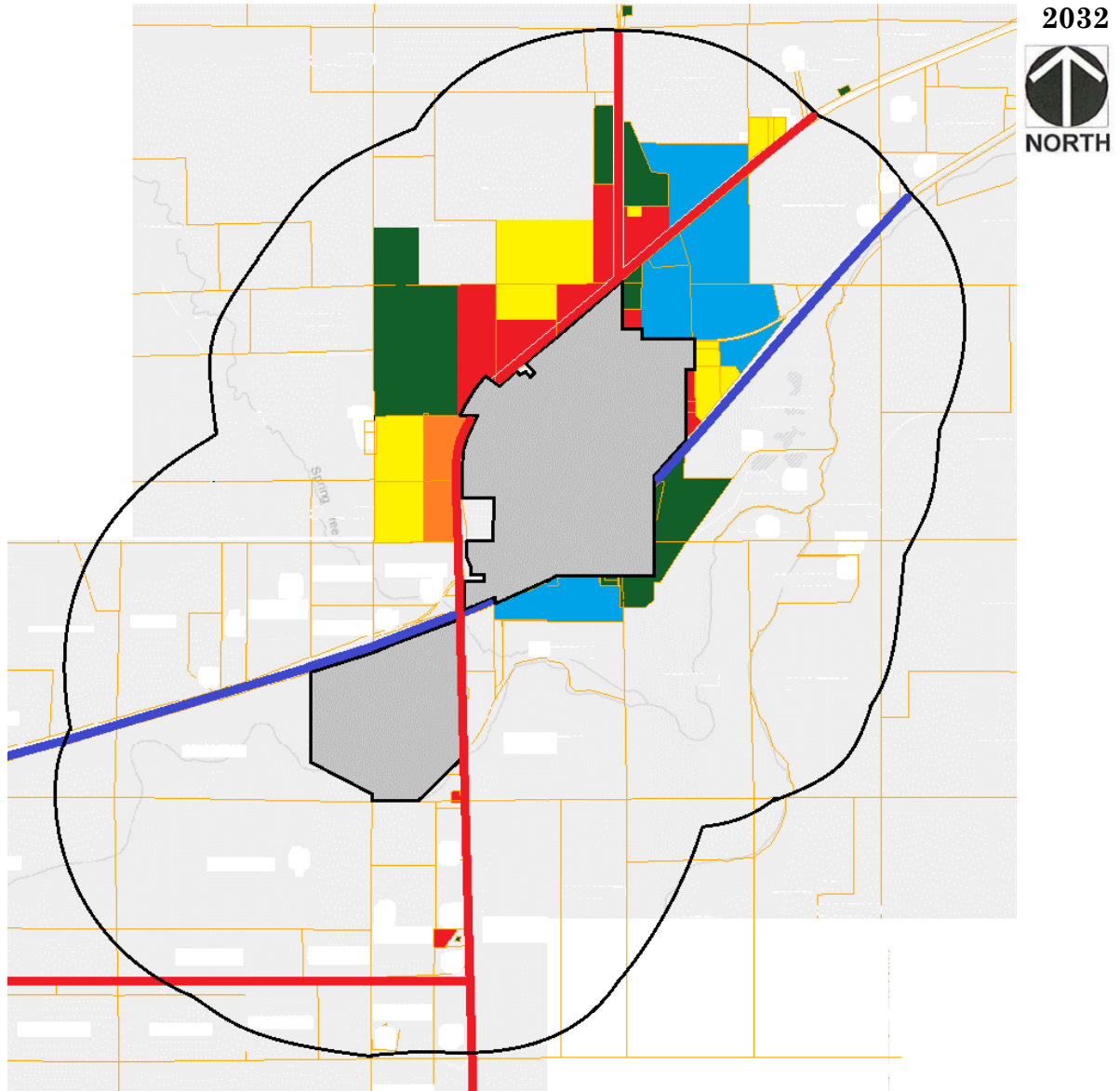
**LEGEND**

-  PARKS/RECREATION
-  PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC
-  SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
-  MOBILE HOME RESIDENTIAL
-  MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL
-  COMMERCIAL
-  INDUSTRIAL
-  RAILROAD CORRIDOR



**ILLUSTRATION 3.4**

**FUTURE LAND USE MAP**  
**ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION**  
**BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA**



**LEGEND**

 AGRICULTURAL	 COMMERCIAL
 PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC	 INDUSTRIAL
 SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL	 RAILROAD CORRIDOR
	 ONE-MILE PLANNING JURISDICTION

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

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**ILLUSTRATION 3.5**

## PARKS & RECREATION

An estimated 7.6 acres of park and recreation land currently exists in Benkelman. The City maintains the Ward Bond Memorial Park, a ball field and the local swimming pool. **The City should have between 15.7 and 16.7 total park/recreation acres designated in Benkelman by 2032, based on 10-year population projections and to achieve the national planning standard for parkland in a community.**

An increased effort to modernize and expand park equipment could be a focus during the 10-year planning period. This could also involve increasing Benkelman residents' accessibility to wellness and fitness activities. **Participants of the Benkelman Citizen Survey identified walking trails and additional park space as desired amenities for the Community.**



## PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC

Future public/quasi-public land uses in Benkelman will primarily accommodate any expansions of existing public services. **The City is in the early stages of constructing a new maintenance shop in the northern portion of the Community.** The remaining, existing facilities and land use configurations are expected to be sufficient to occupy their present land area to meet the service requirements of Benkelman through 2032.



## **RESIDENTIAL AREAS**

Future residential development in and around the City of Benkelman should be a high priority during the 10-year planning period. Based upon Benkelman's projected 2032 population and targeted housing demand, as identified in the **Community Housing Study**, the City will require an estimated **151.1 acres** of land for residential uses during the next 10 years, including both developed and undeveloped but planned residential land uses. Also highlighted in the **Community Housing Study**, the City of Benkelman should strive to provide additional housing options, both owner and rental, to all income sectors, age groups and family types/sizes in the Community.

A "**Community Growth Initiative**," in Benkelman, during the next 10 years, would require, at least, an estimated minimum of three acres of land be developed for residential purposes. The City should designate or reserve approximately 10.2 acres for future planned residential subdivisions, totaling approximately 1157.9 acres for both developed and planned residential uses.

**Single family housing** development should, first, occur within the Corporate Limits of Benkelman. Vacant parcels within established neighborhoods on lots created with the demolition of dilapidated houses, as well as in planned residential areas, including the newly-platted Collinsville Subdivision, for new residential development. Existing but vacated residential lots in Benkelman would have reasonable access to existing water and sewer utility systems. Vacated housing structures in the eastern portions of Benkelman could be part of a purchase-rehab-resale or re-rent program, which would be aimed at acquiring deteriorated properties with moderate to substantial rehabilitation potential, rehabilitated to local development codes and placed back on the market as a ready-to-occupy housing unit.

**Multifamily housing** development must be pursued during the 10-year planning period, for both independent elderly and family households. The existing land use analysis concluded that multifamily acreage in Benkelman is significantly less than recommended by National Planning Standards. The **Future Land Use Maps, Illustrations 3.5 and 3.6**, identify a potential multifamily growth/development area adjacent the Corporate Limits along the Highway 34/61 Corridor. Large tracts of vacant and/or undeveloped land within the Corporate Limits could also support multifamily housing developments.

**To further expand affordable housing options for single adults, families, retirees, the elderly and, especially, workforce households, the City should establish a priority for the development/rehabilitation of upper-story housing in Downtown commercial buildings. A Downtown Revitalization Phase I Plan has been prepared for Downtown Benkelman that highlights this important need for the Community.**



## **COMMERCIAL**

The City of Benkelman currently maintains an estimated 34.9 acres of commercially developed land in the Community. This includes both highway commercial in the northern and northwestern portions of Benkelman and general commercial operations in the Downtown. The 34.9 acres of commercial land is nearly double the recommended amount, as per the National Planning Standard. The City will need an estimated 37.9 acres for both maintaining existing and planning for future commercial land uses.

Professional services and locally-based small-scale retail stores would be best suited for the Downtown. A number of buildings were observed to be vacant and/or utilized for purposes other than commercial operations including personal storage. The rehabilitation of these structures, or, in extreme cases, demolition and replacement would make the Downtown a more desirable location for localized businesses to thrive. Partnerships with local and regional community and economic development entities would be beneficial to the vitality and marketability of Downtown Benkelman.

Current commercial uses along the Highway 34/61 Corridor include a convenience store, restaurant, Dollar General retail store and a motel. Multiple opportunities exist for undeveloped land along the Highway Corridor to be developed to expand commercial capabilities in Benkelman.

## **INDUSTRIAL**

An estimated 237.8 acres of land are dedicated to industrial uses and operations in Benkelman, many of which are agricultural in nature. The largest industrial use, the Gavilon Grain, LLC facility, accounts for an estimated 88 percent, or nearly 210 acres of industrial land uses in Benkelman. New industrial development within the City are encouraged to become "light" industry. The reason is twofold: one, it creates a more compatible land use with adjacent commercial and residential properties; and two, it satisfies a need in the Community. The City will need to designate an estimated 18 acres of additional industrial land uses, totaling 255.8 acres of industrial land uses in Benkelman by 2032.

To provide jobs and enhance a stable population base, and to continue to attract additional business and industry to Benkelman, it is recommended that vacant lands adjacent existing industrial operations be prepared to support new industrial uses. The City must maintain enough industrial land for growth and development. Local economic development groups, organizations and property owners are encouraged to promote and continue their support for additional industrial land development. Desirable transportation corridors are adjacent the majority of present and future industrial land areas. Those areas outside the Corporate Limits (currently on vacant lands) would require an extension of appropriate infrastructure to facilitate future developments.

### **INFILL DEVELOPMENTS**

The strategic development of infill lots and other undeveloped land areas within the Corporate Limits of Benkelman would allow for managed growth and the utilization of the existing infrastructure, including streets, electrical, gas, water and sewer systems. These land areas should be designated for new residential, commercial and industrial developments, depending on the Zoning District classification and adjacent land uses.

### **INTENSIVE AGRICULTURAL USES**

The Benkelman Planning Commission and City Council recognize the importance of agricultural practices to the economy of the Community, including livestock facilities. The expansion of existing livestock confinement operations within the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction of the City should only be permitted in unique circumstances. The development of new livestock confinement operations should be prohibited in the Planning Jurisdiction of the City. Floodplains and steep topography do hinder, to a slight extent, the ability of the Community to designate developable land within the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction. Therefore, the remaining portions of the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction of the City are vital to the continued growth and development of Benkelman. **Livestock confinement operations are best suited for locations within rural Dundy County, outside the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction of the City of Benkelman.**

### **LAND USE PLAN / IMPLEMENTATION**

Various funding sources exist for the preparation and implementation of a capital improvement budget designed to meet the funding needs of proposed development activities. These include Local, State and Federal funds commonly utilized to finance street improvement funds, i.e. Community Development Block Grants, Special Assessments, General Obligation Bonds and Tax Increment Financing (TIF). The use of TIF for redevelopment projects in the areas such as the Downtown and adjacent older residential neighborhoods is deemed to be an essential and integral element of development and redevelopment planning.

## ***PLACE-BASED DEVELOPMENT COMPONENTS.***

Future development efforts within identified growth areas are encouraged to incorporate “**Place-Based**” development components, whereby development supports the Community’s quality of life and availability of resources including, but not limited to: public safety, community health, education, and cultural elements. **The four general concepts of place-based development include the following:**

### **ACCESS AND LINKAGES:**

**Access & Linkages** refers to a development’s connection to its surroundings, both visual and physical. The successful implementation of this component results in one that is easy to navigate and convenient for public transit. Questions to consider in analyzing this component include:

- Does the development area have adequate accessibility and walkability to other neighborhoods and centers in the Community?
- What are the programs proximity to local services and amenities?
- Can people utilize a variety of transportation modes, such as sidewalks, streets, automobiles, bicycles and public transit, to travel to and from the development area?
- Is the development program visible from other neighborhoods or parts of the City?
- Is public parking available for visitors to the development site?

### **COMFORT AND IMAGE:**

**Comfort & Image** describes whether a development is comfortable and presents itself well, and includes perceptions about safety and cleanliness. Maintenance of the housing development/program is crucial to keeping up its image and as such is an important factor in a development having this key quality. Questions to consider in analyzing this component include:

- Is the proposed development located in a safe neighborhood?
- Are there historic attributes to consider for the proposed development?
- Is the neighborhood of the proposed development located safe, attractive and well maintained for all residents?
- Are there any environmental impacts that could hinder the development of the proposed facility?

### **USES AND ACTIVITIES:**

The **Uses & Activities** component of place-based development considers the engagement and use of a proposed housing development/program by new and existing community members. An important consideration of this component is the longevity of the project; its ability to retain existing and attract new residents over time. Questions to consider in analyzing this component include:

- How will the proposed development be used? By young families and local workforce? By elderly or special needs populations?
- Are there amenities proposed, or existing and nearby the development that will keep residents active, including parks and recreation opportunities?
- Does the development program include a central gathering space for workers, residents and/or visitors?
- Does the housing program include a central gathering space for residents, workers and visitors to the site, as well as Community residents?

### **SOCIABILITY:**

**Sociability** can be the most difficult component to achieve, but is achieved through a housing development/project that offers residents a strong sense of place or attachment to their community. Questions to consider in analyzing this component include:

- Will the development program be developed in a way the will allow residents to socialize and interact with one another?
- Will people take pride in living at the proposed development site?
- Are diverse population encouraged to reside at the development site?
- Does the housing program present a welcoming environment for both current and future residents?

## **VOLUNTARY & INVOLUNTARY ANNEXATION.**

Future annexation activities in the City of Benkelman, both **voluntary and involuntary**, should occur in the non-agricultural land use areas identified in **Illustration 3.5, Future Land Use Map**. Land could be annexed at a point in time when in conformance with and meeting the criteria of Nebraska State Statutes, (Neb.Rev. Stat.§16-117). Specifically, if such land, lots, tracts, streets, or highways are contiguous or adjacent and are urban or suburban in character. Agricultural lands that are “rural in character” are not included under such authority. The terms “adjacent” or “contiguous” under §16-118, states that *“contiguous may be present even though a stream, embankment, strip, or parcel of land not more than 200 feet wide lies between the targeted land and the corporate limits of the city.”*

**The City of Benkelman should conduct any annexation procedures set forth in Nebraska Revised Statutes 17-405.01 to 17-405.05.**

Documenting that the character of the land proposed for annexation is **“urban or suburban in character” and not “agricultural in nature”** has no clear definitions or thresholds established by State Statutes. Although court cases have found that the use of land for agricultural purposes is not *“dispositive of the character of the land, nor does it mean it is rural in character. It is the nature of its location as well as its use which determines whether it is rural or urban in character.”*

Standard planning methodology also advocates:

1. Lands that are planned for the growth of the City are best identified in the Comprehensive Plan of the City, specifically the “Future Land Use Maps.” Lands are identified to support future growth needs for residential, commercial, industrial, parks/recreation and open space.
2. Also, planning practice dictates that if the land is bound on two sides by the Corporate Limits of a City it should be considered for annexation. If it also has municipal water, but not sewer access; or municipal sewer, but not water access, a stronger case for the land being **“urban or suburban in nature”** is made.
3. If the land is bound on three sides by the Corporate Limits of the City, and has access to municipal water and sewer service, general planning practice dictates that the land should be annexed.

The City of Benkelman **Future Land Use Map** of the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction, **Illustration 3.5**, also maintains that a certain amount of **vacant land** will be needed to provide an overall functional land use system. To develop the Community in the most efficient and orderly manner possible, the focus should be placed, first, on the development of suitable vacant land within the Corporate Limits of Benkelman. When land within the Corporate Limits is not sufficient in area to support a proposed development project, developers are recommended to identify land appropriate to the scope of the project within identified residential, commercial, industrial, public/quasi-public and parks/recreation growth areas within.

**There currently exists an estimated 77.6 acres of vacant land within the Corporate Limits.** An estimated 66 acres, or 85 percent, of the vacant land is capable of development. The remaining 14.9 percent of vacant land can be considered “not developable” due to its location within a floodplain, floodway or upon steep topography.

**Areas directly adjacent the existing Corporate Limits that are planned for residential, commercial and industrial uses should be prime areas for annexation throughout the 10-year planning period. These areas are all capable of being served by extensions of municipal infrastructure and utility systems adjacent the current incorporated areas of the City. These areas are also identified on the Future Land Use Maps, Illustrations 3.4 and 3.5.**

# SECTION 4



**PUBLIC FACILITIES,  
UTILITIES &  
TRANSPORTATION.**



## **SECTION 4** ***PUBLIC FACILITIES, UTILITIES & TRANSPORTATION.***



### ***INTRODUCTION.***

**Section 4** of the **Benkelman, Nebraska Comprehensive Plan** discusses the existing conditions and planned improvements to the public facility and utility systems in the Community. Quality public facilities, services, and parks & recreation systems are provided to ensure a high quality of life for all residents of Benkelman. All improvements to these Community components are aimed at maintaining or improving the quality of life in the City of Benkelman.

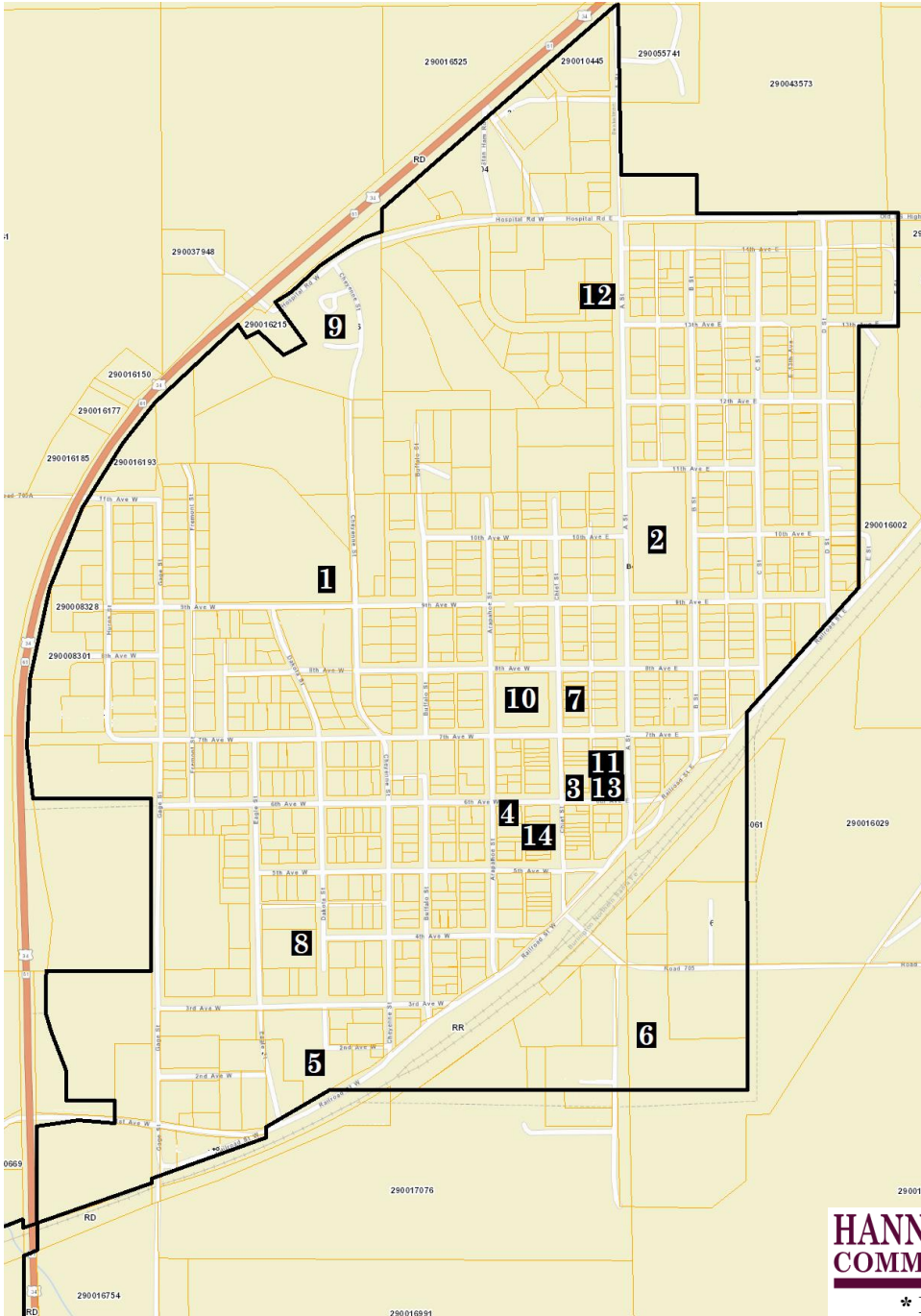
**Public Facilities** identify existing facilities in Benkelman and determine future needs and desires during the 10-year planning period. Public Facilities provide citizens with social, cultural and educational opportunities. **Unless otherwise identified, general maintenance is planned for all public facilities in Benkelman, which also implies that the identified facility is adequate and meets the needs of the Community through the 10-year planning period.** The locations of these public facilities are identified in the **Public Facilities Map, Illustration 4.1.**

**Public Utilities** address the water and wastewater utility systems in the Community, including current condition and capacity. It is the responsibility of any community to provide a sound public infrastructure for its citizens, as well as to provide for anticipated growth. Analysis of these infrastructure systems, via conversations with City maintenance and utility personnel, confirmed that the City must continue to maintain and improve these utility systems.

**Transportation** examines the systems that provide for safe travel of pedestrians and automobiles. Quality public facilities, utilities and transportation systems are provided to ensure a high quality of life for all residents of Benkelman. An adequate transportation system is required to transport goods and services to and from major travel routes and market centers outside the City, as well as provide for the circulation needs within the Community. The overall purpose of the transportation plan is to provide the necessary guidelines for the safe movement of people and vehicles throughout the Community and One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction.



**PUBLIC FACILITIES MAP**  
CORPORATE LIMITS  
BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA



**LEGEND:**

**EDUCATION**

- 1. DUNDY COUNTY-STRATTON HIGH SCHOOL
- 2. DUNDY COUNTY-STRATTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
- 3. DUNDY COUNTY LIBRARY
- 4. DUNDY COUNTY MUSEUM

**PARKS/RECREATION**

- 5. WARD BOND MEMORIAL PARK
- 6. DUNDY COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

**SENIOR/MEDICAL**

- 7. DUNDY COUNTY SENIOR CENTER
- 8. SARAH ANN HESTER MEMORIAL HOME
- 9. DUNDY COUNTY HOSPITAL

**PUBLIC SERVICE**

- 10. DUNDY COUNTY COURTHOUSE/SHERIFF
- 11. BENKELMAN VOLUNTEER FIRE DEPARTMENT
- 12. BENKELMAN EMERGENCY SERVICES (AMBULANCE)
- 13. BENKELMAN MUNICIPAL BUILDING/CITY HALL
- 14. U.S. POST OFFICE

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

\* Lincoln, Nebraska \* 402.464.5383 \*

**ILLUSTRATION 4.1**

## **EDUCATION.**

Education is becoming increasingly important as the need for a broader-based education with emphasis on technical and human relation skills increases in today's society. Standards developed by educators and planners can provide guidance in the creation of, and addition to, the School District's educational facilities. **Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools** is a major contributor to the quality of life and well-being in the Community of Benkelman and surrounding area. During the 10-year planning period, it will be important for the facilities maintained by Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools to have the ability to support a growing population, specifically youth populations.

### **DISTRICT FACILITIES**

- ❖ **Dundy County-Stratton Public School District** – All grade levels of students attending classes at Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools are located in two facilities. The elementary school is located at 900 A Street in east central Benkelman. The High School is located at 400 West 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue in west central Benkelman. An additional elementary school is located in the nearby Community of Stratton, in Hitchcock County.

According to the Nebraska Department of Education, the District covers an estimated 1,050 square miles, including the entirety of Dundy County and the western one-third of Hitchcock County. Total enrollment of the Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools District is 284 students, with an estimated 30 to 35 teachers employed.

Current projects at facilities within the District facilities include a 62'x90' learning and media center with two classrooms at the High School, which will be completed in August, 2022. A full overhaul of the HVAC system has also taken place at the High School facility. General maintenance and upkeep have been the primary activities at the Elementary School facility.



**Educational Service Unit (ESU) #15** – ESU #15 has its main offices located in the Communities of McCook and Trenton, Nebraska and serves an area of southwestern Nebraska, including the Counties of Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Hayes, Hitchcock and Red Willow. Created by the Nebraska Unicameral in 1965, “Educational Service Units” were intended to fill educational service gaps in local School District budget that did not provide for audio/visual aids, special education, school nurse services and other specialized personnel, equipment or diagnostic needs.

❖ **Other Area Education Facilities** – Several Colleges and Universities are located within a short distance of Benkelman, many of which accept high school credits from Benkelman Public Schools. These Colleges and Universities include the following:

- **Mid-Plains Community College** – North Platte, NE
- **Central Community College** – Grand Island, NE
- **Chadron State College** – Chadron, NE
- **University of Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture** – Curtis, NE
- **Union College** – Lincoln, NE
- **Southeast Community College** – Lincoln, NE
- **Nebraska Wesleyan University** – Lincoln, NE

### PROGRAM RECOMMENDATIONS

*Schools in Benkelman should meet the following standards and guidelines:*

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

The Community and Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools should support and provide a **high quality of elementary, junior and senior-level education** for residents of Benkelman and surrounding area. The District should strive to maintain an excellence in education by expanding facilities, amenities and employment opportunities, as needed, while creating new and expanding existing educational programs and activities to support a growing student and faculty population within the Public School system.

## LIBRARY

- ◆ **Dundy County Library** – Located at 102 East 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue, in Downtown Benkelman, the Dundy County Library occupies an estimated 2,750 square foot facility that was constructed in 1960 and extensively renovated in 2017 and 2018. The Library has an average annual circulation of 5,863 volumes with a total of 63,445 physical items. Amenities and programs offered include eight personal use computers, a local book club, story time and summer reading program. Additional programs are offered, but have been suspended due to the Covid-19 Pandemic.



## MUSEUM



- ◆ **Dundy County Museum** – The Dundy County Museum is located at 522 Arapahoe Street, west of Downtown and is home to the Dundy County Historical Society. Prior to the 1960s, the building was the location of the Dundy County Hospital. Several artifacts and displays highlighting the early history of Benkelman and Dundy County are on display.

## ***PARKS & RECREATION.***

The City of Benkelman provides a wide variety of park sites and amenities to residents and visitors. Benkelman also provides a variety of pocket parks, Community gardens, hiker/biker trails, and playground sites in non-designated park areas, including schools.

### **CITY PARKS**

**Ward Bond Memorial Park** – Benkelman’s only public park, Ward Bond Memorial Park, is located along Eagle Street, generally between Railroad Street and Third Avenue West. Comprised of an estimated 3.7 acres, the Park contains modern playground equipment and a picnic shelter, along with a medium-sized grass area for field play. Tennis courts and a basketball court are located in the northwest portion of the park.

This Park is also home to the Benkelman Municipal Swimming Pool. The Pool was officially opened on May 31, 1997 and features a 45’ x 84’ heated main swimming area with diving boards and pool depths ranging from four to 12 feet. A 14’ x 24’ wading pool is also available.

### **OTHER RECREATION/PUBLIC FACILITIES**

**Benkelman Golf Club** – A local, 9-hole golf course and country club are located at 33998 old Highway 34, approximately 3 miles northeast of Benkelman. Amenities include putting and chipping greens, driving range, cart rental, and a clubhouse that once served as a one-room schoolhouse.



**Dundy County Fairgrounds** – The County Fairgrounds are located south of Downtown Benkelman, along and south of Dundy County Road 705. The Fair is held annually in late July with concerts, a carnival, 4H livestock shows, a rodeo and stock car races, among a variety of other family events. Fairground facilities are available for rent for private events and to the public. Facilities include kitchen areas, display units, chair rental and are wheelchair accessible. Activities are managed by an 11-person Fair Board.





### **FUTURE PARK & RECREATION RECOMMENDATIONS**

Benkelman residents expressed interest in public trails that ultimately could extend throughout and around the City, in order to better connect all Community parks, schools, neighborhoods and the Downtown. Maintaining quality public trails provides citizens safer, healthier alternative modes of transportation, and can help attract and retain both new and current residents to the Community. A trails system could be partially funded by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission's **Recreational Trails Program (RTP) Grant**. Eligible projects for this grant include trail development, trail related support facilities, renovation and repair of trails, trail support facilities and acquisition of land for trails.

### ***SENIOR/ELDERLY & MEDICAL FACILITIES.***

A full range of medical and elderly services are available to residents of Benkelman, all within a reasonable distance of the Community. Along with Benkelman, the nearby Cities of McCook and Imperial also have necessary modern health and hospital services, including full service hospitals, nursing care facilities, clinics, and private medical offices.

- ◆ **Dundy County Senior Center** – This facility is located in the northern portion of Downtown Benkelman, at 710 Chief Street. The facility was constructed in 1983 and is generally used for noon meals for residents of Dundy County.
- ◆ **Sarah Ann Hester Memorial Home** – This nursing/long-term care facility is located at 407 Dakota Street, in west central Benkelman and is owned and operated by Rural Health Development, Inc. The facility, on average, employs 40 to 48 persons, is licensed for 56 beds and provides occupational, physical and speech therapy services. The facility was originally constructed and opened in 1959 with a large expansion taking place in 1989. A total of 21 of the 56 licensed beds are currently occupied. Administrative staff attributed the low vacancy rate to a lack of employees at the facility.



- ◆ **Dundy County Hospital** – A premier provider of healthcare in southwest Nebraska is the Dundy County Hospital (DCH), located at 1313 Cheyenne Street in northern Benkelman. A total of 88 persons are employed at DCH, making it one of the largest employers in the City and the County.

The DCH facility has an attached Rural Health Clinic for clinic visits, as well as a second Rural Health Clinic located in Stratton, Nebraska. DCH provides laboratory services include a wide variety of in-house testing including blood banking, drug screening, and microbiology identification, as well as radiological services such as X-rays, CT Scans, Mammography, Ultrasound and Dexa Scanning. MRIs are available each week and Nuclear Med once monthly. Specialty services include general surgery, neurology (offering EMGs and EEGs), cardiology, pain management, podiatry, oncology and mental health on Mondays for Medicaid patients and for other payer sources through telemedicine.

The original facility was constructed in 1967, with many updates and additions in 1999, 2004 and 2010. The most recent expansion was in 2020 with the addition of a therapies wing along with renovation of a couple inpatient hospital rooms, updating for pharmacy rooms and expansion of the rural health clinic. The new physical therapy wing has many modalities offered including general strengthening exercises, dry needling, pool therapy, unweighted walking, and cardio-pulmonary rehabilitation. Outreach specialty clinics are held some monthly and some weekly.

During the past eight months, the facility has undergone an update to the electrical system with the delivery of a new generator in March, 2022. This generator will be large enough to run the entire hospital facility with room for growth.

Future plans for DCH include enlarging patient rooms so that bathroom access is improved. Additionally, the emergency room needs to be remodeled to allow room for more than one patient at a time can be served.



## ***PUBLIC SAFETY & GOVERNMENT.***

Public administration facilities serve the citizens of the Community and conduct the business of government and carry out its operations. Therefore, it is essential these services are centrally located and convenient to the majority of the citizens in the Community.

### **PUBLIC SAFETY**

- ◆ **Police/Sheriff** – Law enforcement services are provided by the Dundy County Sheriff, with offices located inside the Dundy County Courthouse at 701 Chief Street.
- ◆ **Benkelman Volunteer Fire Department** – The facility housing the Benkelman Volunteer Fire Department is located at 709 “A” Street, east of Downtown Benkelman. The 1,600 square foot facility was constructed in 1975 and has been at its current location since 2009.



- ◆ **Ambulance/EMS Services** – Emergency medical services are provided by Dundy County EMS. A 2,400 square foot facility housing ambulance and life-saving equipment was constructed in 1990 and is located at 1305 “A” Street in north central Benkelman.
- ◆ **Civil Defense** – The present services in Benkelman are provided through Region 51 Emergency Management, with headquarters located in North Platte, Nebraska, and the Dundy County Sheriff’s office. The planning and preparation for natural disaster and man-made emergencies consist of the following: Mitigation, Preparation, Response, and Recovery. Examples of natural and man-made disasters include floods, tornadoes, winter storms, chemical spills, explosions, plane crashes, etc. Other services include weather alert of severe weather, tornado awareness week education, winter time road services, etc.



## GOVERNMENT

- ◆ **City Offices** – The City of Benkelman offices are located at 126 west 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, east of Downtown Benkelman. The facility was originally constructed in the late 1950s and was shared with the local Women’s Club Library. The building measures 4,200 square feet and includes the Benkelman Volunteer Fire Department garage. The City offices underwent a major renovation in 2019. Today, the City of Benkelman owns the entirety of the building.



**A new City maintenance shop is currently being constructed in northern Benkelman, in the Collinsville Subdivision. The total building floor space will comprise 8,515 square feet with an anticipated construction completion date in the summer of 2022.**

- ◆ **Post Office** – The U.S. Post Office of Benkelman is located at 505 Chief Street in Downtown Benkelman. The 3,600 square foot facility was constructed in 1910 and include generic postal facility amenities, with box section, retail lobby and workroom. Post Office representatives identified the building to be in good condition with no known deficiencies or issues.
- ◆ **Dundy County Courthouse** – The **Dundy County Courthouse** is located at 112 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, north of Downtown Benkelman. An annex building is located south of the current Courthouse at 117 West 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. These two buildings contain the County Offices of the Assessor, Attorney, County Clerk, Clerk of the District Court, Election Commissioner, Emergency Manager, Economic Development Corporation, UNL Extension Office, Highway Superintendent, Planning and Zoning, Register of Deeds, County Sheriff, Surveyor, Treasurer, Veterans Services Officer and Weed Superintendent. The Dundy County Courtroom and the Dundy County Board of Supervisors Room are also located in the County Courthouse.

## COMMERCE

- ◆ **Dundy County Chamber of Commerce & Development** – The Chamber of Commerce for the City of Benkelman and Dundy County promotes economic growth and development in the Community through existing businesses, while organizing various events that highlight the City’s social and cultural significance. The Chamber is also a key component in targeting prospective businesses and enticing them to locate in the Community. The Chamber is managed by a nine-member Board of Directors.

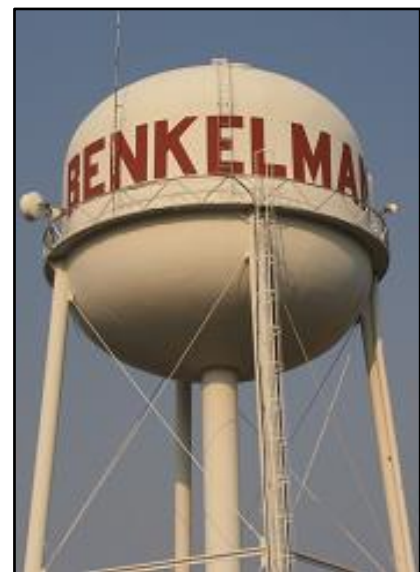
## ***PUBLIC UTILITIES & INFRASTRUCTURE.***

It is the responsibility of any community to provide sound public infrastructure for its citizens, as well as to provide for anticipated growth. Therefore, it is important that the expansion of these systems be coordinated with the growth of the City. **The following information was provided by the City of Benkelman for this Comprehensive Plan** to reflect the most up-to-date conditions of the City's public utilities.

### **WATER SYSTEM**

The City of Benkelman's water system consists of 23 total miles of water mains ranging from 2" to 12" in diameter, with two production wells having a firm capacity of 600 gallons per minute. Normal operating pressure ranges from 20 to 90 pounds per square inch. Additionally, the City's water storage capacity is an estimated 187,000 gallons and includes an elevated water tower, which is located near the intersection of 9<sup>th</sup> and Fremont Streets.

Historically, the average daily water demand in Benkelman is an estimated 165,200 gallons per day. Historic peak demand for the City was 453,400 gallons per day. Future water demand requirements will increase, should the City experience an increase in population or development.



**The City of Benkelman anticipates a future average daily demand of 180,000 gallons per day, with a maximum daily demand of 500,000 gallons.** Replacement of undersized water mains will be necessary in the future to account for an increase in water demand. Additionally, treatment for nitrates may also be necessary during the next 10 years.

### **SANITARY SEWER/WASTEWATER SYSTEM**

The sanitary sewer/wastewater system in Benkelman consists of one lift station. The collection system consist of clay tile piping ranging in size from 4" to 10" in diameter. Historically, the average daily load of Benkelman's wastewater system is an estimated 55,000 gallons per day. Maximum daily load for Benkelman is 75,000 gallons. The sewer system in Benkelman was professionally scoped from 2018 to 2020. Wastewater is managed by lagoon capacity and evaporation with no discharge.

## **TRANSPORTATION.**

The transportation network of a community includes its streets, sidewalks, and trails. Streets are only one component of a community transportation plan. Thus, non-vehicular modes of transportation for pedestrians and bicycles need to be evaluated and discussed as well.

### **EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

**Illustration 4.2, Page 4.12, State Functional Classifications, Benkelman, Nebraska,** depicts the transportation system in the City of Benkelman. The streets are primarily in a grid network, especially in older subdivisions of the City, with lower functioning streets connecting to the higher volume streets. The transportation system is comprised of U.S. Highway 34 and Nebraska State Highway 61.

**Highways 34 and 61 serve as “Major Arterial” roads. Portions of “A” Street, 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Chief Street, Railroad Street and Dundy County Road 705 serve as “Other Arterial” roads.**

All other streets within the Corporate Limits of Benkelman are classified as local streets. Local streets provide transportation throughout the City, while the State Highways and County roads provide transportation into the County, adjacent communities and areas beyond.

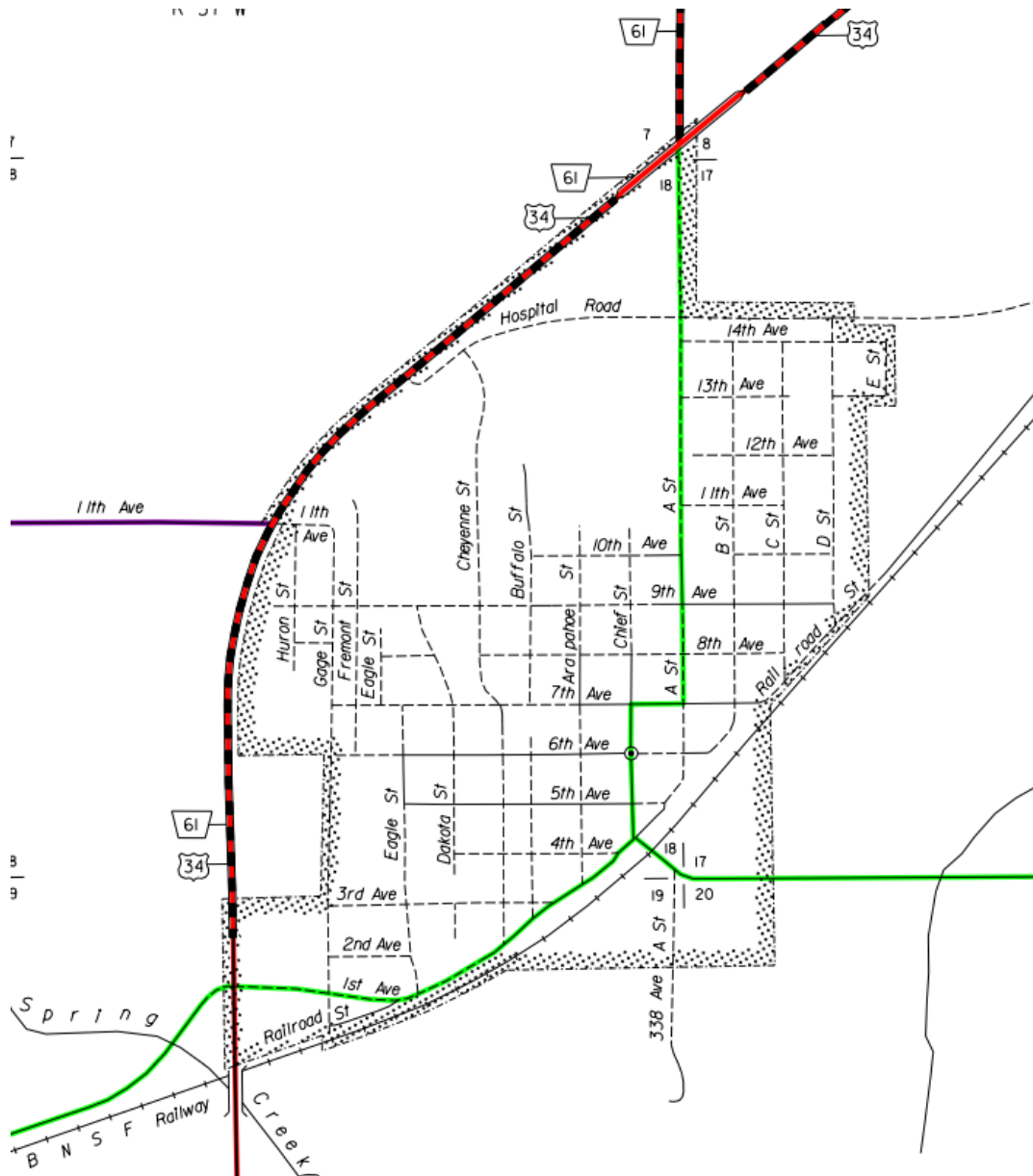
### **TRAFFIC VOLUME**

The Nebraska Department of Transportation monitors traffic volume throughout the Benkelman area, including County roads and State and Federal highways. This tabulation process is done to identify appropriate existing road classification and engineering standards.

**Illustration 4.3, Page 4.13,** identifies the **average annual daily traffic counts** for State and Federal transportation routes around Benkelman.

# STATE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATIONS

BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA



**LEGEND**

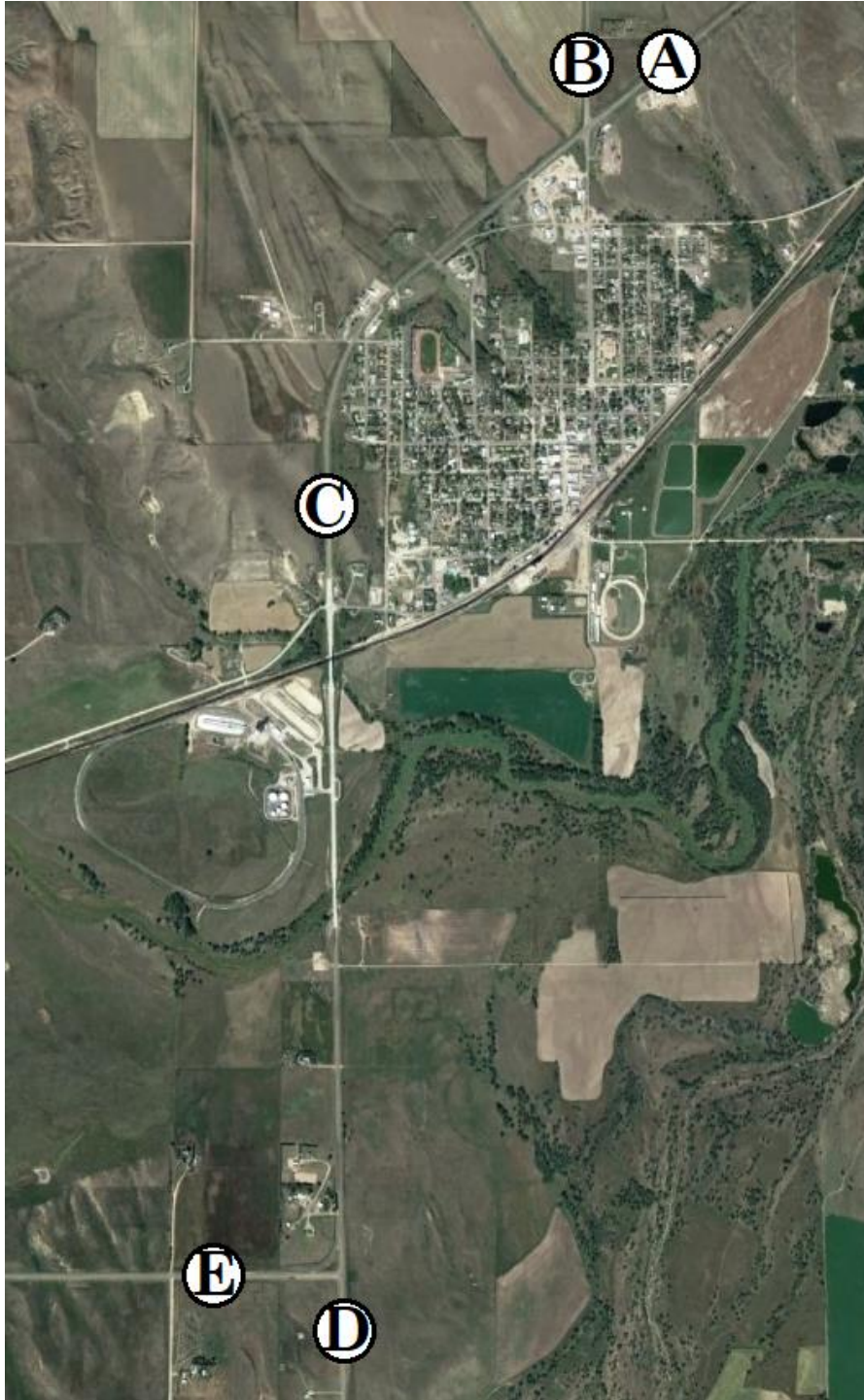
**STATE FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION**

MAJOR ARTERIAL ..... ———

OTHER ARTERIAL ..... ———

**ILLUSTRATION 4.2**

**AVERAGE ANNUAL 24-HOUR TRAFFIC**  
BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA



State Highways	
	Gravel or Crushed Rock
	Asphalt / Bituminous Surface
	Concrete / Brick Surface
City Streets & County Roads	
	Primitive or Unimproved
	Gravel or Crushed Rock
	Non-Rigid Pavement (BM or ACSC)
	Rigid Pavement (PCC, ACSC or Brick)
	Interstate Numbered Routes
	U. S. Numbered Routes
	State Numbered Routes
	State Numbered Spurs
	State Numbered Links
	Inventoried Numbered Routes
	Major Collector Routes
	Minor Collector Routes
	Urban Routes
	911 NAMED / Numbered Routes
	City Center
	Corporate Limits
Corporate Limits as of 1985 State Highways Corrected to 1995	

**AVERAGE ANNUAL DAILY TRAFFIC**

	2016	2018	2020
<b>SEGMENT A</b>			
TOTAL TRAFFIC	1,520	1,520	1,410
HEAVY COMM. TRAFFIC	230	230	140
<b>SEGMENT B</b>			
TOTAL TRAFFIC	1,075	1,065	985
HEAVY COMM. TRAFFIC	100	100	95
<b>SEGMENT C</b>			
TOTAL TRAFFIC	1,940	1,385	1,670
HEAVY COMM. TRAFFIC	245	220	265
<b>SEGMENT D</b>			
TOTAL TRAFFIC	710	610	815
HEAVY COMM. TRAFFIC	70	65	85
<b>SEGMENT E</b>			
TOTAL TRAFFIC	760	900	975
HEAVY COMM. TRAFFIC	165	195	250

**ILLUSTRATION 4.3**

## **ROAD CLASSIFICATIONS**

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

1. **Interstate:** Which shall consist of the federally designated National System of Interstate Defense Highways;
2. **Expressway:** Second in importance to the Interstate. Shall consist of a group of highways following major traffic routes in Nebraska and ultimately should be developed to multilane divided highway standards;
3. **Major Arterial:** Consists of the balance of routes which serve major statewide interests for highway transportation in Nebraska. Characterized by high speed, relatively long distances, and travel patterns;
4. **Scenic-Recreation:** Consists of highways or roads located within or which provide access to or through state parks, recreation, or wilderness areas, other areas of geological, historical, recreational, biological, or archaeological significance, or areas of scenic beauty;
5. **Other Arterial:** Which shall consist of a group of highways of less importance as through-travel routes which would serve places of smaller population and smaller recreation areas not served by the higher systems;
6. **Collector:** Which shall consist of a group of highways which pick up traffic from many local or land-service roads and carry it to community centers or to the arterial systems. They are the main school bus routes, mail routes, and farm-to-market routes;
7. **Local:** Which shall consist of all remaining rural roads, except minimum maintenance roads;

8. **Minimum Maintenance:** Which shall consist of (a) roads used occasionally by a limited number of people as alternative access roads for area served primarily by local, collector, or arterial roads, or (b) roads which are the principal access roads to agricultural lands for farm machinery and which are not primarily used by passenger or commercial vehicles.
9. The **Rural Highways Classified**, under subdivisions (1) thru (3) of this section should, combined, serve every incorporated municipality having minimum population of 100 inhabitants or sufficient commerce, a part of which will be served by stubs or spurs, and along with rural highways classified under subsection (4) of this section, should serve the major recreational areas of the State. Sufficient commerce shall mean a minimum of \$200,000 of gross receipts under the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967.

### **FUTURE BENKELMAN TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM**

The future transportation system in the City of Benkelman is outlined in the **City of Benkelman and State of Nebraska Department of Transportation's One and Six Year Road Plan**. Benkelman's most recent One-Year Plan is for projects to be undertaken in 2020. Benkelman's Six Year Plan is for projects to be undertaken through 2026, or earlier if funding becomes available.

#### **Upcoming City of Benkelman Street Projects:**

##### **ONE YEAR PLAN (Fiscal Year 2020).**

1. M-150 (182): "A" Street, from 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 13<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Asphalt/Armor Coat resurfacing (\$17,000).
2. M-150 (183): Railroad Avenue, from Cheyenne Street to Highway 61, Asphalt/Armor Coat resurfacing (\$8,000).
3. M-150 (167): Gage Street, from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Asphalt/Armor Coat resurfacing (\$2,000).
4. M-150 (168): Gage Street, from 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Asphalt/Armor Coat resurfacing (\$10,000).
5. M-150 (185): "C" Street, from 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Asphalt/Armor Coat resurfacing (\$10,000).
6. M-150 (186): From a point 50 feet west of Gage Street/Railroad Avenue intersection continuing west for 150 feet, Concrete resurfacing with curb and gutter (\$23,000).

SIX YEAR PLAN (Fiscal Year 2020 to Fiscal Year 2026).

1. M-150 (156): “C” Street from 9<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Asphalt/Armor Coat resurfacing (\$1,600).
2. M-150 (184): North Side of Cheyenne Street from 6<sup>th</sup> Avenue to 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue and continuing west on the south side of 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue for 100 feet, Concrete Curb and Gutter (\$11,500).
3. M-150 (187): Buffalo Street from 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the dead end, Asphalt/Armor Coat resurfacing (\$5,000).
4. M-150 (188): As needed throughout the Community, Asphalt/Armor Coat resurfacing (\$3,000).
5. M-150 (189): 10<sup>th</sup> Avenue from 10<sup>th</sup> Street to the alley between “A” Street and Chief Street, Asphalt/Armor Coat resurfacing (\$4,500).
6. M-150 (116): Arapahoe Street from 8<sup>th</sup> Avenue to the dead end, Asphalt/Armor Coat resurfacing (\$30,000).



# SECTION 5



**COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC  
DEVELOPMENT.**



## **SECTION 5** **COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**



### **INTRODUCTION.**

This **Section** addresses existing economic conditions through strengths, weaknesses and opportunities of the City of Benkelman, as well as local, State and Federal community and economic development entities and funding programs. “**Economic Development**” addresses the topics of *business and industrial recruitment, retention and expansion*. “**Community Development**” is a term that encompasses such varied activities as neighborhood redevelopment, urban design, public facility provisions, historic preservation and quality of life enhancements.

**Economic and Community Development Goals & Action Steps are identified in Section 7 of this Comprehensive Plan.**

### **ECONOMIC STRENGTHS, WEAKNESSES & OPPORTUNITIES.**

- **STRENGTH:** The City of Benkelman is the central location of Dundy County-Stratton (DCS) Public Schools. The District comprises the entirety of Dundy County and the nearby Community of Stratton, in Hitchcock County, with a 2021-2022 total enrollment of 284. The District is one of the largest employers in Dundy County. According to the Nebraska Department of Education, graduation and college-going rates for DCS for the 2020-2021 school year are generally at or above State averages. Additionally, the Nebraska Student-Centered Assessment System rated DCS Public Schools as “good” in English language arts and mathematics proficiency.



- **STRENGTH:** Benkelman is home to the Dundy County Hospital, which also serves Hitchcock County. The Hospital coverage area encompasses an estimated population of 4,800 people, making Benkelman a vital center for health care in southwest Nebraska.

- **STRENGTH:** Benkelman serves as the County-Seat of Dundy County, with the Courthouse located north of Downtown. Communities serving as County-Seats are typically regarded as having rich local history and are usually supported by a variety of other County services.



- **STRENGTH:** The Community has been a participant in a variety of innovative community development programs. Currently, a “Vacant Land Registry” is being implemented, by ordinance, to document and register vacant residential and commercial properties, collect fees for the public cost of property vacancy and plan for land redevelopment and occupancy. The “Envision Benkelman” program strives to improve the local quality of life by supporting economic development opportunities. The Community also participates in an “Innovative Housing Partnership” (Revolving Fund) with the Communities of McCook and Cambridge to encourage new housing development via local funders and partners. Several adult and youth community clubs and organizations also exist in Benkelman.
- **STRENGTH:** The agricultural nature of Benkelman’s economy was a key factor in Gavilon Grain, LLC locating a corn processing facility southwest of the Community. The Gavilon property was constructed utilizing Tax Increment Financing and was a significant contributor to local tax dollars being reinvested into the Community.
- **STRENGTH:** Specialized housing providers, including the Sarah Ann Hester Memorial Home and the Benkelman Housing Authority provide affordable housing, nursing and assisted living services to Benkelman and Dundy County.

- **WEAKNESS:** The 2020 Census recorded a City of Benkelman population of 821, a decline of 132 persons from the 2010 Census population of 953 and a decline of 185 persons from the 2000 Census population of 1,006. Local leadership has attributed this population loss to the lack of available housing for new and existing residents, minimal housing development and rehabilitation activities and a lack of employment opportunities.

- **WEAKNESS:** Residential neighborhoods generally located in close proximity to Downtown Benkelman, as well as in the northeastern and eastern portions of Benkelman are in a state of distress with deteriorating or dilapidated structural and property conditions. Absentee property owners, excessive rehabilitation costs, public utility conditions and topographic challenges all pose a hindrance to future redevelopment in these neighborhoods. Additionally, a lack of housing choice for existing and prospective residents places homebuyers in the situation of finding housing in other communities.



- **WEAKNESS:** Public utilities are aging and deteriorated in the Community. Some neighborhoods consist of concrete open storm drainage ditches where storm water runoff is channeled into local streets.
- **WEAKNESS:** The Community maintains one City Park, swimming pool and ballfield. While these facilities are maintained properly, they are all located in the southern portion of the Community, which could create accessibility issues for residents in northern Benkelman.

- **WEAKNESS:** Commercial building vacancies in Downtown Benkelman are high, due to a lack of general maintenance and upkeep, as well as some buildings being used for personal storage purposes instead of supporting a local business. This poses a hindrance to downtown vitality, property values and overall community commerce.
- **OPPORTUNITY:** A Downtown Revitalization Program is being implemented to restore the central business district by utilizing a variety of building rehabilitation, beautification and business recruitment and retention initiatives. A Blight and Substandard Determination Study was also completed to allow for selected public and private funding sources, including Tax Increment Financing, to be used in accelerating redevelopment and revitalization efforts in the Downtown.



- **OPPORTUNITY:** Commercial development along the Highway 34/61 Corridor has occurred in recent years. This activity could potentially continue if land adjacent the Highway Corridor is acquired by local leadership or prospective business developers.
- **OPPORTUNITY:** The Collinsville Residential Subdivision in north central Benkelman is the newest platted development to support the construction of new housing. A total of 11 lots have been platted for the purpose of residential development.
- **OPPORTUNITY:** A new City maintenance building in northern Benkelman will soon be under construction to house City vehicles and equipment.

## **LOCAL ECONOMIC/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ENTITIES.**

The existing economic conditions in Benkelman have the potential to allow for increased activities in residential and commercial development. The City has recognized the need to continue to diversify its economic base, relying on retail and highway commercial and service-oriented businesses, while continuing a deep agriculture-based economy.

A variety of organizations are working together to help bring economic development to Southwest Nebraska. These organizations include the West Central Nebraska Development District, the Dundy County Chamber of Commerce and Development, Envision Benkelman, and the Benkelman Community Redevelopment Authority. To build on successes, “tools of public intervention,” such as the National Main Street Program, Historic Preservation Tax Credits, Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and Community Development Block Grants must be used creatively and jointly to impact change.

### **West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD)**

Benkelman is a member of the West Central Nebraska Development District. The WCNDD was established in 1974 to enhance the ability of local governments, economic development areas and chambers of commerce to jointly plan, address issues, and seize opportunities that transcend individual boundaries. Members enjoy benefits like services at discounted rates, priority scheduling, access to the latest news on new funding opportunities, and the chance to contribute to the economic growth of the region. Some of the services offered include assistance with grant writing and general administration of projects.

### **Dundy County Chamber of Commerce and Development (DCCCD)**

The Dundy County Chamber of Commerce and Development dedicates time to the preservation and development of Dundy County. DCCCD is a voluntary organization of businesses, professionals, and individuals working together for a better community.

### **Benkelman Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA)**

The Benkelman Community Redevelopment Authority was established in 2011. They work on the conservation and rehabilitation of substandard or blighted areas within the city. The CRA is comprised of five members and utilizes several development tools to help developers with residential, commercial, or industrial projects. Some completed projects include Gavilon Grain, the Weight Buffet and a few residential properties have been built.

### **Envision Benkelman**

Envision Benkelman was created by the CRA to improve the quality of life of families by working together on projects and issues that will maintain and/or create safe, affordable housing, support economic opportunities for businesses, enhance the physical image of the area, and instill a sense of neighborhood pride and commitment. They are comprised of volunteer community members that are divided into three committees. The three committees are focused on jobs, housing, and aesthetics.

One program developed by Envision Benkelman is the **Business Retention and Expansion Program (BR&E)**. The BR&E is focused on identifying barriers local businesses face as they try to survive and grow. Some of the goals of BR&E include:

- Improving the business climate of the community.
- Helping to make local businesses remain competitive.
- Increasing employment.
- Stabilizing the local economy.



### COMMERCIAL VITALITY IN BENKELMAN.

In order to maintain and expand its economic enterprises, all sectors of the Benkelman retailing and production industry must work together. Through changes in technology and social behavior, buildings can become either functionally and economically viable, or obsolete. To enhance the Benkelman commercial areas, the following activities are recommended to complement the current redevelopment activities:

- ❖ *Update and enforce minimum building codes to prevent vacant buildings from deteriorating.*
- ❖ *Encourage property and business owners to utilize the provisions of Tax Increment Financing as both a development and redevelopment tool in Downtown Benkelman and along commercial highway corridors.*
- ❖ *Promote the attitude of **Benkelman First**. If a local business has the products residents need, encourage them to purchase products in the Community, rather than in larger Communities in the area.*
- ❖ *Maintain and improve the aesthetic appearance of Community, including street trees, adequate pedestrian walkways, street lighting and directional signage and pole banners.*
- ❖ *Strengthen working ties between the City of Benkelman and Dundy County through expanded marketing efforts to promote the broad range of tourism, recreational activities and special events held in the area.*
- ❖ *Encourage the development of additional retail and/or service businesses, both in the Downtown and along the Highway Corridors, so as to cater to the needs of visitors and travelers.*
- ❖ *Utilize vacant buildings in the Downtown to encourage residents to start their own businesses through entrepreneur programs supported in incubator building spaces or malls that support start-up businesses.*
- ❖ *Support successful home-based businesses that have outgrown the “home” and are in need of permanent commercial or industrial locations. The development of a “business incubator program” would provide retail space for in-home businesses.*
- ❖ *Target highway-oriented commercial business to the Highway 34/61 Corridor. Preserve the retail, commerce and professional office character of the Downtown.*



## **COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS.**

Several local, State and Federal Funding Programs are available for Benkelman to take advantage of when pursuing housing development and rehabilitation, business development and retention and neighborhood/community-wide stabilization. Selected Funding Sources are as follows:

### **Building Entrepreneurial Communities Act (BECA)**

The BECA provides grants to rural Communities to implement collaborative projects addressing issues related to chronic economic distress, unemployment, lower-than-average per capita income, and severe population loss.

Two local governments (municipal or county) must collaborate on a project with a two-year completion deadline. Eligible projects must address one of the following:

- ◆ provide education and technical assistance to energize small business development and entrepreneurship.
- ◆ provide technical assistance to facilitate small business transfer.
- ◆ build community business capacity and leadership programs.
- ◆ generate opportunities that attract and retain youth and families.
- ◆ provide education about philanthropy and intergenerational transfer of wealth.
- ◆ build community endowments to support above activities.

### **Building Façade Grant Program (CDBG)**

Via local Downtown Revitalization Project-Phase II Implementation funding, building owners in Downtown Benkelman could have the opportunity to apply for a given amount of funding, with a matched percentage, to enhance building storefronts and street facades of buildings. Enhancements could include items such as window replacement, awnings, entryway improvements, painting and structural reinforcement.

### **Business Improvement District (BID)**

A BID is a geographically defined district in which commercial property owners choose to tax themselves to achieve a specific purpose or purposes. Nebraska Revised Statutes (Section 19-4015 through 19-4038) allows for these projects to include street and road construction and maintenance, sidewalks and streetlights, parking facilities, water and sewage systems, maintenance and landscaping, park facilities and recreational areas.

### **Certified Local Government Program (CLG)**

The CLG Program is a federal program administered in Nebraska by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO), a division of the Nebraska State Historical Society. The goal of the program is to increase local preservation activities and link local governments with a national network of federal, state and local organizations. CLGs can be Cities or Counties that meet certain federal and state standards. CLG status entitles a local government to apply for yearly grants from the NeSHPO.

Besides being eligible for grants, CLGs receive technical assistance and training from the NeSHPO. CLGs, in turn, provide local expertise about community preservation issues to the NeSHPO, and proactively pursue preservation activities. The CLG Program provides a framework within which a Community may invest in existing historic assets in the context of the Community's Comprehensive Plan.

### **Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) & Community Action Agencies**

A CHDO serves a Community, County or designated region while providing housing technical assistance and conducting affordable housing programs. CHDOs were established to access HOME funds to assist in financing local housing activities.

The Community Action Agency serving a particular Community or County can provide housing and weatherization programs in its service area. A Community Action Agency also provides community social services, emergency services, family development and nutrition programs. Nebraska Communities and Counties should work with their Community Action Agency to provide safe, accessible, affordable housing to its residents.

**Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska (CAPMN)** serves as the Community Action Partnership organization for the City of Benkelman, providing housing and weatherization programs, community social services, emergency services, family development and nutrition programs.

**The Nebraska Housing Developers Association is a State-wide organization providing important housing capacity building and support for local housing development corporations.**

### **Community Development Assistance Act (CDAA)**

The CDAA empowers the Department of Economic Development to issue a 40 percent state tax credit to businesses, corporations, insurance firms or financial institutions or individuals that make eligible contributions of cash, services or materials to approved community betterment projects. Eligible projects include employment training, human and medical services, physical facility and neighborhood development services, recreational and educational activities and crime prevention.

### **Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)**

The Community Development Block Grant Program is available to local Community and County municipalities for financing housing, planning and public works projects. All Nebraska Counties and Communities are an eligible applicant for CDBG funds. Bellevue, Grand Island, Lincoln and Omaha receive an annual allocation of CDBG funds, from the Department of Housing and Urban Development, as entitlement communities. The remaining Nebraska Communities are non-entitlement Communities and can compete annually for CDBG funds for various community and economic development programs, including housing.

◆ ***Community Development Block Grant –***

***Downtown Revitalization Program, Phase I and Phase II***

The objective of the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Downtown Revitalization Funding Category is to encourage reinvestment in Nebraska communities that will contribute to the revitalization or redevelopment of downtown infrastructure, address health and safety concerns, and develop a capacity for greater growth. A comprehensive Downtown Revitalization Plan needs to be completed to stabilize and enhance clearly defined Downtown areas.

◆ ***Community Development Block Grant –  
Comprehensive Revitalization Category***

The state CDBG objective of the Comprehensive Revitalization Category is to provide flexible investments in housing and infrastructure to carry out a comprehensive strategy of revitalization to stabilize and enhance clearly defined residential neighborhoods with concentrations of persons with lower incomes. The primary national objective of the CDBG Program is the “development of viable urban communities by providing decent housing and a suitable living environment, particularly for low and moderate-income persons.” All project activities submitted for funding with Comprehensive Revitalization funds must meet the national objective of benefit to low and moderate income.

◆ ***Community Development Block Grant –  
Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund***

The CDBG Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund is a locally-administered, flexible financing tools for Communities to provide loans to local businesses, which in turn, create jobs and leverage other private investment while assisting a Community diversify and stabilize its economy.

The assistance will be in the form of a loan from the applicant governmental unit to the business. Such loans may be used by the business for almost any legitimate business purpose. Examples of permitted uses include: purchasing land; constructing a building; renovating an existing building; purchasing machinery and equipment; purchasing inventory; and meeting working capital needs.

◆ ***Community Development Block Grant - Tourism Development Initiative***

The Tourism Development Initiative provides financing to offset the cost of projects that are, or will be, a tourism attraction. Tourism attractions are sites and facilities that draw visitors because of their scenic, historic, cultural, scientific and/or recreational attributes. Examples of projects are: historic restorations, museums, participatory sports facilities and convention centers.

**Community Development Resources –  
New Markets Tax Credit (NMTC) Business Loan**

The NMTC Business Loan Program offers qualifying borrowers yet another business financing option that may be the best financial choice. Eligible borrowers can obtain loans with lower interest rates and terms up to 25 years, creating a lower monthly payment and allowing borrowers to keep more cash in their businesses. The NMTC Program enables borrowers to expand and renovate their existing properties, buy the properties outright, or purchase additional property for business expansion.

The NMTC Program helps revitalize targeted urban and rural geographic areas through the retention and creation of jobs, the renovation and expansion of vacant business properties, community facilities, and the purchase of major equipment for business expansion

To be considered under this Program, a business must also meet guidelines that demonstrate it serves the Community. Community impact must be significant, yielding results that:

- Create jobs, job retention or increased wages for workers.
- Assist businesses owned by lower-income persons or residents of lower-income Communities, or that are committed to remain in such Communities.
- Assist minority- or women-owned businesses.
- Assist businesses and non-profit organizations or real estate projects that provide childcare, health care, educational or other benefits.
- Facilitate wealth creation or asset accumulation such as home ownership
- Provide goods and services to low-income Communities.

Borrowers will be required to certify that they will comply with the NMTC Program requirements and will be required to submit periodic reports for the full term of the loan in support of these requirements.

### **Federal COVID-19 Supplemental Appropriations**

The State of Nebraska received approximately \$10.8 Billion of assistance for combatting economic distressed caused by the Coronavirus Pandemic. In June, 2020, a plan for the expenditure of these funds was announced, including the following:

- Community CARES program administered through the Department of Health and Human Services to provide food security, housing, and behavioral health care: \$85 million.
- Reimbursements to state and local government for coronavirus-related expenses: \$180 million.
- Agriculture & businesses: \$392 million.
- Small business stabilization: \$230 million
- Livestock producers stabilization: \$100 million
- Rural broadband remote access grant program: \$40 million
- Workforce retraining initiative: \$16 million
- Admin support to all business programs: \$5 million
- Gallup business stabilization and growth training: \$1 million
- Unemployment Trust Fund and potential General Fund Budget Flexibility: \$427 million

### **Federal Home Loan Bank (FHLB)**

The FHLB provides low-interest loans to finance home ownership for families with incomes at or below 80 percent of the median income for the area. The FHLB can also finance the purchase, construction or rehabilitation of rental housing in which 20 percent of the units are occupied by and affordable to very low-income households. These funds are available through the FHLB member institutions in Nebraska and are loaned on a competitive basis, with semi-annual application dates. FHLB can be combined with other housing programs (i.e., State CDBG, HOME, Low-Income Housing Tax Credit, etc.) to absorb the development subsidy requirements for both rental and owner occupied housing projects in the Downtown.

### **Estate Taxes**

Nebraska’s “Estate Tax” allows County entities to collect and use monies to finance gateway and corridor enhancement programs.

### **General Revenue & Obligation Bonds**

Revenue Bonds allow for monies generated by new development projects to repay any debt incurred, all or in part. These bonds are typically not secured by Community credit.

General Obligation Bonds are backed by property taxes, and are issued by the City for a wide array of community betterment projects. See Section 16-6, 108 of the Nebraska Revised Statutes.

### **Nebraska Main Street Network**

The Nebraska Main Street Network is an umbrella organization for Main Street; a Nebraska Preservation Fund within the National Trust for Historic Preservation. Main Street assists Communities in organizing, promoting, and strengthening the economic base and improving the appearance of the Downtown.

### **Historic Preservation Tax Credits**

The preservation of these buildings is key to retaining the architectural integrity and heritage of the Community. To assist in the reuse and renovation of these historic resources, the City should develop historic preservation guidelines and an implementation policy, thus creating a coordinated effort to “recycle” the Community's infrastructure and to set a standard which retains the architectural integrity and heritage of structures.

The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (NeSHPO) maintains a historic building database of each of the Counties in Nebraska and their associated communities. Individual buildings that can qualify to be listed on the National Register would be eligible for a 20 percent Historic Preservation Tax Credit to be deducted against personal federal income taxes of building owners, or investors. Buildings that are designated as “contributors” to the historic district are eligible for a 10 percent credit. For every dollar spent on restoration or renovation of a building, 10 or 20 percent can be deducted. This Federal program has been successful in providing incentives for downtown rehabilitation projects in Communities of all sizes, throughout the nation.

### **Land Sale Proceeds**

Proceeds generated from land sales for a variety of development projects could be used for Downtown improvements, or the acquisition of other existing properties for redevelopment purposes.

### **Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act (LB840)**

The Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act (LB 840, 1991) authorizes incorporated cities and villages to collect and appropriate local tax dollars (sales and/or property tax) if approved by the local voters, for economic development purposes. The Act went into effect on September 6, 1991.

The Act has been modified by LB719A in 1992, LB732 in 1993, LB 1188 in 1994, LB207/LB490 in 1995, LB989 in 1998, LB87 in 1999, LB LB1116/LB1258 in 2000, and LB827/LB362/LB362 in 2001. The Act involves the formulation of the local Economic Development Program Plan. The Plan is the foundation for the collection and expenditure of local tax revenues for economic development and, if the voters approve the Plan, the provisions of the local Plan become the basis under which the municipality's program operates.

Activities eligible for local funds collected for the Economic Development Program would include any project for the purpose of providing direct or indirect financial assistance to a qualifying business, or for the payment of related costs and expenses.

**An Economic Development Program may include, but not be limited to, the following activities:**

- ◆ Direct loans or grants to qualifying businesses for fixed assets and/or working capital;
- ◆ Loan guarantees for qualifying businesses;
- ◆ Grants for public works improvements which are essential for the location or expansion of a qualifying business;
- ◆ Grants or loans for job training;
- ◆ The purchase of real estate, options for such purchases, and the renewal or extension of such options;
- ◆ Payments for salaries and support of city staff or the contracting of an outside entity to implement the economic development program; and
- ◆ Bonding used to carry out program activities.

### **Local Agencies & Organizations**

#### ◆ ***Public Housing Authorities***

Public Housing Authorities or Agencies can sponsor affordable housing programs. The Housing Authority is empowered by existing legislation to become involved in all aspects of affordable housing in the Community. The Housing Authority has access to a variety of sources of funding, as well as the ability to secure tax exempt bond financing for local based housing projects. **The City of Benkelman has an established Public Housing Authority.**

#### ◆ ***Employers/Community Foundation Assistance***

Major local employers and community foundations are directly involved in housing developments and improvements. These Foundations and/or major Employers are capable of providing the following:

- Direct grants;
- Low interest loans;
- Letter of Credit, for all or a percentage of loans;
- GAP Financing – provides financing to cover the unfunded portion of development costs, as a deferred or less than market rate loan to the development;
- Mortgage Interest Rate Subsidy – provides buy down of a conventional loan;
- Purchase Bonds/Tax Credits – make a commitment to purchase either/both taxable/tax exempt bonds and/or low-income tax credits utilized to finance housing development.



◆ **Local Lender Participation**

Local and regional lending institutions serving Benkelman and Dundy County should create a partnership to provide technical assistance to housing developers and share bridge- and permanent financing of local Downtown housing programs.

The previously described local funding options could be used separately or “pooled” together and utilized in equal proportions for the implementation of Downtown housing programs.

**National Trust Main Street Program & Loan Fund**

Established in the 1970s, the National Trust Main Street Program addressed the needs of downtown centers by combining historic preservation with neighborhood revitalization and economic growth and development opportunities. This Program could provide financial and technical resources to revitalize under-served and distressed neighborhoods. Tax incentives for this Program may be available through the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office. Eligible borrowers could include not-for-profit organizations, real estate developers; local, state or regional governments, and for-profit developers of older, historic buildings.

**Nebraska Advantage Microenterprise Tax Credit Act**

Administered by the Nebraska Department of Revenue, this Program provides investment tax credits (equal to 20 percent of the investment) to applicants for creating or expanding businesses with 5 or fewer employees. The business must contribute to the revitalization of economically depressed areas through the creation of new or improved income, self-employment, or other new jobs in the area.

**Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (NDEE)–  
Dollar and Energy Savings Loan Program**

NDEE announced the availability of 2.5 percent Dollar and Energy Saving Loans of up to \$750,000 for commercial and industrial – including educational – sector energy efficiency building improvements. The \$11 million in funds for these loans comes from a portion of the \$30.9 million received by Nebraska under the State Energy Program in the *American Recovery and Reinvestment Act*.

Eligible entities include Nebraska commercial businesses, non-profits, institutions such as private schools and hospitals, manufacturers, and other industrial operations; Nebraska political subdivisions below the state level, including public school districts; and federal Energy Star® partners.

Eligible energy efficiency building improvements are the same as those currently eligible for Dollar and Energy Saving Loans and are listed on project applications at <http://www.ndee.ne.gov/loan/index.html>.

### **Nebraska Enhancing, Developing and Growing Entrepreneurs**

The Nebraska Enhancing, Developing and Growing Entrepreneurs (EDGE) is the umbrella organization for rural entrepreneurial training programs hosted by local communities, organizations and associations. The EDGE program is primarily for existing businesses or potential start-up businesses.

### **Nebraska Historic Tax Credit (NHTC).**

On April 16, 2014, Legislative Bill 191 was signed into law, which created the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit. This new historic tax credit will serve as a valuable incentive to allow Nebraska real property owners to offset Nebraska income, deposit or premium tax amounts equal to twenty percent of "eligible expenditures" on "improvements" made to "historically significant real property." Nebraska became the 36th state to provide a historic tax credit at the state level, which is a tax credit that is separate and distinct from the federal historic tax credit.

The Nebraska State Historic Tax Credit establishes a \$15,000,000 tax credit pool, and the Nebraska State Historical Society (NeSHPO) will handles the annual allocation of the credits.

### **The program encourages the preservation of the State's historic buildings for the following important outcomes:**

- ◆ Incentives for redevelopment of historic properties and districts across the State.
- ◆ Private investment in historic buildings, downtowns and neighborhoods.
- ◆ New uses for underutilized and substandard buildings.
- ◆ Jobs and economic development in Nebraska communities, both rural and urban.
- ◆ Creation of housing units.
- ◆ Revitalized communities through preservation of historically significant buildings and districts.
- ◆ More heritage tourism in communities.

**Basic provisions of the NHTC:**

- ◆ Twenty percent (20%) Nebraska tax credit for eligible expenditures made to rehabilitate, restore or preserve historic buildings.
- ◆ Maximum of \$1 million in credits for a project, a dollar-for-dollar reduction in state tax liability.
- ◆ Tax credits can be transferred with limitations.
- ◆ Rehabilitation work must meet generally accepted preservation standards.
- ◆ Detached, single-family residences do not qualify.

**To qualify, a historic property must be:**

- ◆ Listed individually in the National Register of Historic Places or
- ◆ Located within a district listed in the National Register of Historic Places or
- ◆ Listed individually under a certified local preservation ordinance or
- ◆ Located within a historic district designated under a certified local preservation ordinance.

**The minimum project investment must equal or exceed:**

- ◆ The greater of \$25,000 or 25% of the property's assessed value (for properties in Omaha and Lincoln). \$25,000 (for properties located elsewhere).

**LB 518-Rural Workforce Housing Investment Act/Rural Workforce Housing Fund (RWHF).**

In 2017, the “**Rural Workforce Housing Investment Act**” (Legislative Bill 518) was adopted to allow non-profit housing developers to allocate funds from the NAHTF into a **Rural Workforce Housing Fund (RWHF)**. This allows the non-profit developer to apply for grant dollars for housing development and/or rehabilitation for the purpose of creating housing opportunities for workforce populations. Projects must be within municipalities in Counties with populations less than 100,000. An amount of up to \$1 Million can be applied for by rural Communities throughout Nebraska. Grants must document a “one-to-one” match fund.

**Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA).**

NIFA is a major provider of funding for affordable housing development in Nebraska. The primary program is the **Section 42 Low Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC)** utilized to help finance both new construction and rehabilitation of existing rental projects.

**LB 884-State Low-Income Housing Tax Credit** is another source of funding for affordable housing.

A popular LIHTC Program is CROWN (Credit-to-Own). CROWN is a lease-to-own housing program developed to bring home ownership within reach of very low-income households while assisting local governments in revitalizing their neighborhoods. The objectives of the program are to:

- Construct housing that is decent, safe and permanently affordable for low-income residents;
- Develop strong public/private partnerships to solve housing problems;
- Offer renters a real plan to own a home; and
- Restore unused, vacant in-fill lots to become a neighborhood asset.

**CROWN** utilizes the LIHTC program as one financing tool. Other sources of financing may be HOME funds, NAHTF, Federal Home Loan Bank funding, local government grants and loans and traditional development financing sources.

**CRANE** (Collaborative Resources Alliance for Nebraska) is a LIHTC set-a-side program for targeted resources, for community development and housing programs.

**NIFA** also provides the Single Family Mortgage Program – This program provides a less than current market interest rate for First-time Homebuyers in Nebraska. Local lender participation is encouraged in this Program.

**NIFA** is also a funding participant in the Nebraska **Rural Workforce Housing Investment Act**.

**NIFA** provides funding for the **Housing Study Grant Program** to assist in financing community, county and regional housing studies and related planning projects.

### **Nebraska Workforce Development- Worker Training Program**

Nebraska, Workforce Development assists many businesses and organizations to supplement their training dollars and improve their workforce. According to the NE Workforce Development website:

*The Worker Training Program is a business incentive program to support the retraining and upgrading of Nebraska's current workforce. All established, Nebraska, for-profit businesses and non-profits organizations that contribute to the State Unemployment Insurance Trust (SUIT) fund are eligible. Reimbursable employers to the state Unemployment System may participate if partnered in a consortium with contributory employers, with a significant percentage of those being trained coming from contributory employers.*

### **Neighborhood Stabilization Program**

Authorized under Title III of the Housing and Economic Recovery Act of 2008, this Program can assist in the acquisition and rehabilitation of foreclosed, vacant properties to prevent them from deteriorating into blight conditions. Buildings can be purchased, rehabilitated and sold back to prospective buyers to prevent decline of property values.

### **West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD).**

WCNDD is a voluntary association of counties and municipalities formed under the Interlocal Cooperation Act to identify common problems, their solutions and support for efficient and effective government among its members. **WCNDD serves an 18-county area in west central and southwest Nebraska, which includes Dundy County and the City of Benkelman.** Services provided include grant writing and administration, housing rehabilitation management, business and industry financing and financial packaging.

### **Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP)**

Rural Enterprise Assistance Program is a program that provides individuals with business management training, technical assistance, lending capital, loan packaging, and networking opportunities for starting and growing a business. The REAP program operates on a statewide rural basis through regionally based Business Specialists.

REAP's revolving loan program is a step-up borrowing process where loans of between \$100 and \$10,000 are made. REAP also operates Nebraska's only Small Business Administration funded Women's Business Center with the goal to help meet the business assistance needs of today's start-up and existing rural Nebraska women entrepreneurs.

### **Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)**

Rural LISC works with local Community Development Corporations on assisting neighborhoods and residents in revitalizing distressed neighborhoods by creating sustainable, healthy living environments. This is achieved through the collaboration of local governments, corporations and persons interested in investing in community growth. Rural LISC can be utilized towards the investment of housing and real estate improvements in a given community.

### **Small Business Administration (SBA)**

Businesses that meet SBA size standards and program requirements can apply for SBA guaranteed loans through participating lenders. These loans are intended to assist businesses not successful in obtaining funds through commercial lenders. SBA Programs include:

- ◆ ***SBA 7(a) Program***

The 7(a) loan program is the SBA's general business loan program. The SBA is authorized to guarantee between 75 percent and 80 percent of a loan, up to a maximum of \$750,000, for small businesses that cannot obtain financing on reasonable terms through normal lending opportunities, including acquisition of real estate, business expansion, machinery and equipment purchases, furniture and fixture purchases, working capital, and inventory purchases.

- ◆ ***Small Business Administration 504 Loan Program***

The SBA 504 program provides businesses with opportunities to start or expand their operations by offering long-term and fixed-rate financing. Businesses can seek 504 Loan counseling and financing through the Nebraska Economic Development Corporation (NEDCO).

- ◆ ***Micro-loan Demonstration Program***

Through the Micro-loan Demonstration Program, the SBA makes loans to private, non-profit, and quasi-governmental organizations who will make short-term, fixed interest rate micro-loans (up to \$25,000) to start-up, newly established, and growing small business concerns. Micro-loans can be used to purchase machinery and equipment, furniture and fixtures, inventory, supplies, and working capital.

◆ ***CAP Lines***

CAP Lines is used by SBA to help small businesses meet short-term and cyclical working-capital needs. Loans can be used for finance of seasonal working-capital needs, direct costs needed to perform construction, service, and supply contracts, direct costs associated with commercial and residential building, construction without a firm commitment for purchase, finance operating capital by obtaining advances against existing inventory and accounts receivable and consolidation of short-term debt.

◆ ***Low Documentation Loan Program (LowDoc)***

Business start-ups and businesses with fewer than 100 employees with average annual sales of less than \$5 million during the past three years are eligible for LowDoc. Consisting of only one page applications, LowDoc can allow for loans of up to \$100,000 for business start-ups.

◆ ***FA\$TRAK***

FA\$TRAK makes loans of up to \$100,000 available without requiring lenders to use the SBA process. Approved lenders use existing documentation and procedures to make and service loans, and the SBA guarantees up to 50 percent of the loan. Maturities are 5-7 years for working capital and up to 25 years for real estate or equipment.

◆ ***Patriot Express***

The U.S. Small Business Administration sponsored the SBA's Patriot Express Initiative for veterans and members of the military community wanting to establish or expand small businesses. The Patriot Express loan can be used for most business purposes, including start-up, expansion, equipment purchases, working capital, inventory or business-occupied real-estate purchases.

**Upper Republican Natural Resource District (URNRD)**

URNRD provides information on natural resources, as well as economic and recreational information to Communities and Counties in Southwest Nebraska, including the City of Benkelman and Dundy County.

**Special Assessment Districts**

Certain improvements, such as parking lots and sidewalk improvements can be financed by special assessments. This method of financing is a tax upon a property owner for a portion of the costs incurred by the City for a particular improvement. See Section 17-522 of the Nebraska Revised Statutes.

### **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

**Tax Increment Financing** can use added property tax revenues, created by growth and development in a specific area, to finance improvements within the boundaries of a designated Redevelopment Area. Utilizing the Nebraska Community Development Law, each Community in Nebraska has the authority to create a Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) or Community Development Agency (CDA).

A City or Village with a CRA or CDA has the authority to use TIF for commercial, industrial and residential redevelopment activities. The CRA/CDA can utilize TIF for public improvements and gain the revenue associated with these improvements. The tax increment is the difference between the taxes generated on an existing piece of property and the taxes generated after the redevelopment occurs. One hundred percent (100%) of the increment can be captured for up to 15 years, by the CRA, and used for public improvements in a designated Redevelopment Area.

Every Community in Nebraska is eligible to utilize TIF, after a CRA or CDA has been established and a Blight and Substandard Determination Study has been completed by the Community. TIF may be used for infrastructure improvements, public façade improvements in the Downtown and to purchase land for commercial or industrial development.

**The City of Benkelman has a CRA and designated “Redevelopment Areas” including the Downtown Revitalization Project Area.** The Benkelman CRA will need to be actively involved in providing TIF for new development projects.

### **United States Department of Housing and Urban Development**

Housing programs provided by HUD are available for both profit and non-profit developers. Funds from these programs are commonly mixed or pooled with other public funding sources, as well as conventional financing.

- ◆ ***Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation SRO’s***  
Funding for Single Room Occupancy (SRO) developments are available to Public Housing Authorities to provide rental assistance for homeless individuals in rehabilitated single-room occupancy housing.
- ◆ ***Shelter Plus Care***  
Shelter Plus Care provides rental assistance and supportive services on a long-term basis for homeless individuals with disabilities.



◆ ***Mortgage Insurance***

The HUD 221(d)(3) provides up to 100 percent mortgage insurance for non-profit developers and 90 percent mortgage insurance coverage for profit-motivated developers 221(d)(4). Permanent financing can be provided via the public funds (i.e., CDBG, HOME) and/or conventional financing.

**United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development (USDA-RD)**

◆ ***Community Facility Loan Program***

This program provides grants to assist in the development of essential community facilities in rural areas and towns of up to 20,000 people. Program monies can be used for constructing, enlarging or improving community facilities for healthcare, public safety, or public and community services (such as the physical construction of a new building to house and display museum items and artifacts).

◆ ***Guaranteed Community Facility Loan Program***

The purpose of the Guaranteed Community Facilities Loan Program is to work with local lenders - including banks, savings and loan associations, mortgage companies, and Farm Credit System banks to offer loan guarantees to help build essential community facilities, such as fire and rescue buildings and/or equipment, streets, utilities, community buildings, libraries, senior citizen centers, day care centers, airports, industrial parks, hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, assisted living facilities, etc.

◆ ***Rural Business Enterprise Grants***

The USDA-RD Office provides grant funding to finance the development of small businesses in rural communities with populations less than 50,000. The grant program stimulates capital investment by providing grants to third party lenders to establish a revolving loan program. These funds can be used for acquisition/development of land; construction of buildings, plants, equipment; access streets and roads; parking areas; utility and service extensions; refinancing, fees; technical assistance; start-up operating costs and working capital.

◆ ***Rural Business Opportunity Grant (RBOG)***

The Rural Business Opportunity Grant promotes sustainable economic development in rural communities with exceptional needs by focusing on communities that have experienced trauma due to natural disasters or fundamental structural change, persistently poor, long-term population decline or job deterioration.

- ◆ RBOG provides matching grant monies for technical assistance, training, and planning activities, in an effort to improve economic conditions in rural areas. Eligible projects include: identify and analyze business opportunities; identify, train, and assist existing or prospective rural entrepreneurs; establish business support centers; conduct community or multi-county economic development planning; establish centers for training, technology, and trade; and conduct leadership development training.

**Housing programs available with USDA-RD include the following:**

- ◆ ***Section 515 Program***  
This Program provides a direct interest subsidized loan for the development of family and elderly housing, including congregate and rental housing for persons with a disability. A Section 538 mortgage insurance program is also available.
- ◆ ***Section 502 Program***  
Mortgage guarantee or direct loans for single family homeownerships for low- and moderate-income persons/families, including persons with a disability are provided. In conjunction with this Program, Section 504 provides for the rehabilitation of homes.
- ◆ ***Community Facilities Program***  
This Program allows for a direct, interest subsidized loan for a variety of projects specific, community facility improvement programs including new construction or housing rehabilitation for “special populations.”
- ◆ ***Preservation Program***  
The Preservation Program is administered by qualified local and regional organizations/agencies to assist in housing rehabilitation programs in Nebraska Communities. This could include a local based, planned program of home modification income eligible to low/moderate-income persons and families.
- ◆ ***Business & Industry Program***  
The RD Business and Industry Program allows for loan mortgage guarantee for commercial projects, including retirement/assisted care housing.

**Valuation Incentive Program (VIP)**

The Valuation Incentive Program assists in the preservation of Nebraska's historic places. The program allows a property tax "preference" for a historic property that has been rehabilitated. Properties participating in the Valuation Incentive Program must be designated as a "historically significant real property" before work on a project, listed on the National Register of Historic places and taxable.

# SECTION 6



## ENERGY CONSUMPTION & POLICIES.



## ***SECTION 6*** ***ENERGY CONSUMPTION*** ***& POLICIES.***



### ***INTRODUCTION.***

This **Section** of the **Benkelman Comprehensive Plan** complies with a July, 2010 amendment to Nebraska State Statutes 23-114.02, requiring an “**Energy Element**” with a Community Comprehensive Plan. This component of the **Plan** assesses the energy infrastructure and energy use in Benkelman. This **Section** is also intended to evaluate the utilization of renewable energy sources and promote energy conservation measures.

### ***PUBLIC POWER DISTRIBUTION.***

The City of Benkelman is a member of the **Southwest Public Power District (SWPPD)**. Created in 1945 as the Southwest Electric Membership Corporation, it was re-named as the SWPPD 1954 when the State of Nebraska officially recognized the District. In 1949, the average farm located within the SWPPD used approximately 184 kilowatt hours per month. Today, farms consume an average of 1,300 kilowatt hours. The District currently serves more than 6,170 meters, including approximately 3,000 residential meters. SWPPD provides power to more than 89,000 horsepower of irrigation load through 2,471 miles of power lines from the Colorado State Line to the western portion of Red Willow County, serving 10 towns and villages. **SWPPD purchases 100 percent of its electricity from the Nebraska Public Power District.**

The passage of legislation in 1981 allowed the formation of the **Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska (MEAN)**, a wholesale electric supply organization. This organization is a program operated by Nebraska Municipal Power Pool. Since its inception, MEAN has relied upon member generation as part of its power supply and, with its growth, has secured additional sources of electric generation from other organizations. Today, MEAN supplies wholesale electricity to 69 Communities in Colorado, Iowa, Nebraska and Wyoming, including the City of Benkelman. Collectively, these Communities benefit from local control over power supply options. MEAN Community members have a voting representation and work together to provide the lowest possible rates and achieve reliable, high-quality and economically-efficient electricity and related services.

## **NEBRASKA PUBLIC POWER DISTRICT.**

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

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

## **GENERATING RESOURCES**

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

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

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

**MORE THAN 65% OF NPPD'S GENERATION SOURCES ARE CARBON-FREE.**

## ***NPPD SOURCES OF ENERGY PRODUCTION.***

### **NPPD RENEWABLE ENERGY CAPABILITIES:**

#### **1.) Hydroelectric Facilities**

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

#### **2.) Wind Turbine Generators**

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

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

#### **3.) Solar Energy**

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

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

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

### **NPPD TRADITIONAL PRODUCTION FACILITIES:**

#### **Coal-Fired Generators**

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

#### **Natural Gas & Oil-Fired Generators**

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

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

### **NPPD EMISSION FREE ELECTRICITY**

#### **Nuclear Facilities**

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

**“NET METERING”**

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

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

**ENERGY CONSUMPTION & REVENUE.**

The City of Benkelman provided local electric consumption data, highlighted in **Table 6.1**, including residential, commercial and municipal electrical revenues and quantity of kilowatt hours billed, from 2017 to 2021. Total residential charges, within the five year period, fluctuated from a high of \$519,924 in 2018 and a low of \$501,778 in 2020. Commercial revenues increased from \$567,994 in 2017 to \$612,743 in 2019, before declining to \$587,562 in 2021. Municipal revenues have generally increased from 2017 to 2021, reaching a five-year peak of \$26,559 in 2021. Kilowatt hours have also risen and fallen from 2017 to 2021, with a peak of 13,176,116 kilowatt hours in 2018.

**TABLE 6.1**  
**ENERGY CONSUMPTION AND REVENUE**  
**BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA**  
**2017-2021**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Revenue</u>			<u>KW/h Quantity Billed</u>
	<u>Residential</u>	<u>Commercial</u>	<u>Municipal</u>	
2017	\$513,653.60	\$567,994.29	\$20,593.38	12,475,454
2018	\$519,924.00	\$606,115.68	\$17,152.16	13,176,116
2019	\$503,406.76	\$612,743.40	\$25,872.71	13,093,399
2020	\$501,778.67	\$604,218.97	\$24,930.24	10,108,418
2021	\$515,417.62	\$587,562.55	\$26,559.24	12,826,798

Source: City of Benkelman, 2022.



## STATE-WIDE TRENDS IN ENERGY CONSUMPTION

During the last 40+ years, the State of Nebraska, as a whole, has vastly increased energy consumption. However, percentage share of personal income has remained constant, although it has declined in recent years. In 1970, 11.5 percent of the percentage share of personal income was spent on energy. As of 2015, 8.9 percent was spent on energy usage. The peak percentage occurred in 1980 at 16.6 percent.

Trends in the Total Energy Consumption for the State of Nebraska, published in the *“2020 Annual State Energy Report”* of the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy, is mirrored in each of the individual energy categories, coal, natural gas, gasoline and distillate fuel oil (primarily diesel fuel), nuclear power, and hydroelectric production. Each energy type is detailed between 1960 and 2018, as follows:

**Coal** consumption has increased from 20 trillion British Thermal Units (BTUs) in 1960 to 264.1 trillion BTUs in 2018. Peak use of coal was reached in 2013, surpassing the previous high set in 2011. The increase through 2013 was attributable to coal energy used to generate electricity.

- ◆ **Natural Gas** consumption has risen and fallen during the 58-year period between 1960 and 2018, beginning at 140.4 trillion BTUs, peaking in 1973 at 230.8 trillion BTUs and, by 2016, declining to 172.9 trillion BTUs.
- ◆ **Gasoline and Diesel Fuel** consumption nearly doubled in Nebraska between 1960 and 2018. Gasoline consumption increased by nearly 29 percent, from 78.8 to 102.4 trillion BTUs, as of 2018, and peaked in 1978 at 116 trillion BTUs. Diesel fuel consumption more than quadrupled from 24.2 trillion BTUs to 111.4 trillion BTUs, primarily due to an increase in trucking and agricultural use. Petroleum consumption, overall, peaked in 1978 at 246.7 trillion BTUs.
- ◆ **Nuclear** power generation began in Nebraska in 1973 at 6.5 trillion BTUs. Usage has since increased to 97.8 trillion BTUs as of 2018. The peak use of nuclear power was in 2007 at 115.8 trillion BTUs.

**Renewable energy** consumption has grown, beginning in 1960 at 13.4, and peaking in 2018 at 193.6 trillion BTUs. Hydropower was the primary renewable energy source from 1960 to 1994. Biofuels, or ethanol production, began equaling hydropower in 1995. As of 2018, 63.3 percent of all renewable energy produced came from biofuels, 6.6 percent from hydroelectric, 26.5 percent from wind, and 2.1 percent from wood products. Minor amounts came from geothermal and solar energy.

## NEBRASKA ENERGY CONSUMPTION BY SECTOR.

- ◆ **Commercial Sector:** The commercial sector includes non-manufacturing business establishments, including energy use by local, state and federal governments. Energy use in the commercial sector closely parallels consumer energy use and economic activity in the State of Nebraska. More than 90 percent of all fuel used in the commercial sector was supplied by natural gas and electricity. Although natural gas has historically been the dominant fuel type, recent trends suggest a period of near parity between the two fuel types is likely into the near future. In 2018, a total of 147.5 trillion BTUs were consumed in the commercial sector.
- ◆ **Residential Sector:** The residential sector consumed 167.8 trillion BTUs in 2018. Natural gas and electricity accounted for 90.7 percent of the total energy use in the residential sector.
- ◆ **Industrial Sector:** The industrial sector includes manufacturing, construction, mining, forestry and agricultural operations. Energy use in the industrial is more diverse, with natural gas, renewable energy, electricity, coal and a variety of petroleum products all being utilized. The industrial sector consumes more energy than any other sector in the State. In 2018, it accounted for 386.9 trillion BTUs of the State's total energy consumption.
- ◆ **Transportation Sector:** Public and private vehicles, railroads, aircraft and boats are all included in the transportation sector. Motor gasoline and diesel fuel products accounted for 86 percent of the energy use in the transportation sector in 2018. Approximately 195 trillion BTUs were used in the transportation sector in 2018.
- ◆ **Agricultural Sector:** As per the U.S. Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service, there were 47,400 farms and ranches on 45.2 million acres in Nebraska in 2017, encompassing 91 percent of the State's total land area. Energy demand information in this sector is not available on a consistent or annual basis.

## ***ENERGY COSTS & CONSERVATION.***

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

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

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

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

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

### ***ENERGY CONSERVATION POLICIES.***

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

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

- ◆ **Promote the use of “Net Metering” or the use of one or more combinations of the five alternative energy sources to reduce residential, commercial and industrial facilities consumption of energy.**
  - Utilize the Benkelman Zoning Regulations to control the placement and operation of alternative energy systems.
  - Require compliance with the Conditional Use permit process so that established conditions are met by the applicant.
  - Utilize the NPPD net metering service it established to assist the City in complying with Nebraska's Net Metering Law.

- Promote the development of vocational education opportunities in the Benkelman Public/Private Schools, trade schools, Community and State Colleges, and universities to educate the current and future workforce in alternative energy design, fabrication of equipment, and maintenance.
- ◆ **Assist Dundy County in providing for the use and placement of large scale Commercial Wind Energy Conversion Systems, commonly referred to as “Wind Farms” in locations throughout the County.**
  - The placement of large scale wind towers is not compatible with uses in the limited development areas of the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction of the City of Benkelman.
- ◆ **As other sources of Alternative Energy Systems are developed or become cost-effective for use in Nebraska, amend planning documents of the City to locate and control their operation.**
- ◆ **Promote the use of conservation methods to reduce the consumption of energy usage in each of the individual sectors including residential, commercial, and industrial (which includes agricultural and public uses).**
  - Promote the expanded use of solar and geothermal exchange energy systems for applications throughout the City of Benkelman One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction. Subareas of the Community, such as the Downtown, a residential neighborhood, or individual subdivisions, are encouraged to collectively pursue an alternate energy source or combination of sources to lower energy consumption and to make energy more affordable.
  - Promote the rehabilitation of agricultural, residential, commercial, industrial, and public/quasi-public buildings utilizing weatherization methods and energy efficient or “green building” materials in conformance to the “LEED” Certified Building techniques.
  - Implement conservation programs supported by NPPD for its member communities. For example, the ENERGYSMART Commercial Lighting Program provides cash incentives to businesses that replace old lighting fixtures with high-efficient light fixtures such as LED to reduce energy costs.

- The City of Benkelman could also access grant and loan programs to replace street light fixtures with LED fixtures that reduce consumption and are more energy efficient.

◆ **Increase Building Efficiency.**

- Lighting — transition City street lighting to a Light Emitting Diode (LED) system.
- Retrofit Residential Buildings — provide incentives and construction advice to the public to expand the restoration of homes including windows, doors, attic ventilation, insulation, and alternative energy systems such as solar panels.
- Retrofit Old Public and Commercial Buildings — provide incentives and construction advice to the public for Restoration Best Management Practices for windows, doors, attic ventilation, insulation, solar panels, lighting.
- New Construction Codes Implement Best Management Practices (BMPs) to city codes and educate homeowners and realtors.
- Include financial incentives within the annual City Budget to encourage residents of Benkelman to plant new trees and replace damaged trees to maintain and expand the urban forest. Shade from trees reduce peak electric demands during the summer and provide wind breaks during the winter.

◆ **Increase Transportation Efficiency.**

- Seek out funding sources to establish an “Electric / Natural Gas” City Fleet of Vehicles.
- Promote Pedestrian Uses — sidewalks, crossing guards.
- Increase and encourage bicycling; carpooling.
- Increase residential development density- with parking requirements.
- Redevelop older existing neighborhoods by establishing architectural design standards as an overlay district within residential districts of the Benkelman Zoning Regulations.

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

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

◆ **Plant Urban Forests.**

- Trees / Urban Forests — provide incentives for city rebate programs to replant new trees.
- Compost brush and trimmings — utilize the Best Management Practices utilized by other communities to provide a public deposit site to compost brush and trimmings.
- Create a waste wood recycling/composting/energy generation program.
- Establish and maintain a dead-tree wood recovery and re-use program.

◆ **Create a Zero Waste Community.**

- Reduce waste disposal with a 10-year Zero Waste strategy in support of achieving 90% resource recovery (recycling, reuse, repair, composting, redesign).

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



# SECTION 7



**COMMUNITY PLANNING  
GOALS & ACTION STEPS.**



## **SECTION 7** **COMMUNITY PLANNING GOALS & ACTION STEPS.**



### ***INTRODUCTION.***

The **Benkelman Comprehensive Plan** is an essential and most appropriate tool to provide a “**Vision**” and properly guide the development of the City. The **Community Planning Goals and Action Steps**, an important aspect of the **Plan**, provides local leaders direction in the administration and overall implementation of the **Comprehensive Plan**. In essence, the goals and action steps are the **most fundamental elements of the Plan**; the premises upon which all other elements of the **Plan** must relate.

“**Goals**” are long-term in nature and, in the case of those identified for the **Benkelman Comprehensive Plan**, will be active throughout the 10-year planning period. The Goals involve identifying the state or condition the citizenry wishes the primary components of the planning area to be or evolve into within a given length of time. These primary components include:

- **Community Growth & Land Use/ Zoning.**
- **Housing & Neighborhood Redevelopment.**
- **Community Health & Wellness.**
- **Education & Community/Economic Development.**
- **Public Facilities, Energy & Transportation.**



“**Action Steps**” help to further define the meaning of goals and represent very specific activities to accomplish a specific Goal and are the most measurable component of this **Comprehensive Plan**.

## COMMUNITY GROWTH, LAND USE & ZONING.

**Goal 1: Population Growth.** Identify strategies to stabilize and, ultimately, increase the population of Benkelman. Encourage residential, commercial and industrial developments to correlate with future population growth projections.

- **Action Step 1: Promote and maximize development in existing land areas** served by municipal infrastructure, including the development/infill of vacant parcels within the Corporate Limits of Benkelman, as well as the demolition of dilapidated housing units in an effort to create new land areas for the development of safer and more affordable housing units.

Currently, the City has a surplus of land acres designated for single family use and a shortage of land areas designated for multifamily and mobile home use, when compared to the requirements set forth in the National Planning Standard. Residential land uses should be increased through infill development of vacant land throughout the City, as well as the incorporation of multifamily land uses within and near the Downtown. Approximately 66 acres of vacant, developable land exists within the Corporate Limits of the City of Benkelman.

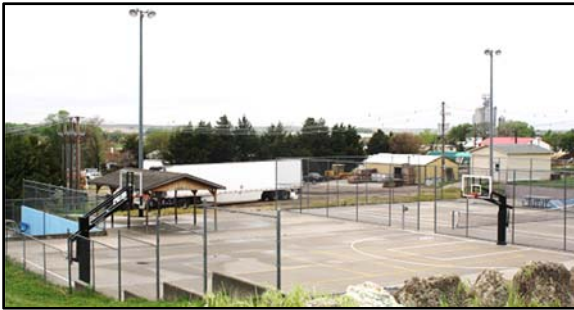
*The City of Benkelman overall population is projected to decline, slightly, through 2032, from the current (2022) population of 815, a decrease of 31 residents, or 3.8 percent, to 784 is projected for Benkelman. The Community, through more aggressive planning and development activities and the creation of an estimated 35 to 50 additional full-time employment opportunities, could reach a “high” population of 820, or a “Community Growth Initiative” population of 835 within the next 10 years, an increase of 0.6 percent and 2.4 percent, respectively.*



- **Action Step 2: Identify residential growth areas for Benkelman,** beyond the current Corporate Limits. Future residential growth areas beyond the current Corporate Limits, Identified in the **Future Land use Map, Illustrations 7.1 and 7.2, Pages 7.6 and 7.7** are recommended to be concentrated primarily to the north and east of the Community. Undeveloped land to the east and south of the Community are mostly unfavorable due to the floodplain associated with the Republican River, as well as established land uses that are not
- **Action Step 3: Continue the development of Commercial and Industrial Land in Benkelman.** Although both commercial and industrial land in the Community exceed the National Planning Standard, it is likely due to newer operations utilizing larger tracts of land; in some cases, more than what is required of that operation. Additionally, the Gavilon Grain facility comprises an estimated 210 of the total 237.8 industrial acres of land in Benkelman.



Future professional services, specialty retail outlets and other pedestrian-oriented businesses should be targeted to Downtown Benkelman, while automotive oriented businesses or other larger commercial uses should develop along the Highway Corridors in the northern and northwestern portions of the City. Light industrial uses and manufacturing companies within the Corporate Limits should remain in their current locations in designated industrial zoned areas, located in the southern portion of Benkelman and beyond the Corporate Limits along the Highway 34/61 Corridor and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad Corridor.



- **Action Step 4: Address parks, open space land uses in Benkelman.** Currently, the Community has less than the recommended two acres per 100 persons of park and recreation space within the Corporate Limits of Benkelman. To accommodate the targeted population growth, the City should reserve an estimated additional **nine acres of parks, recreation, or open space land uses.** This need should largely focus on the expansion of existing or creation of new public park and recreation facilities, including existing City parks, athletic fields and other public amenities. **A large tract of land exists in the northern portion of Benkelman that City leadership has suggested could be converted into a park and recreation use.**

**Goal 2 – Land Use Plan.** Adopt and maintain a **Land Use Plan** capable of fulfilling the residential, employment, recreational and entertainment needs of the Community of Benkelman. The **Plan** should encourage the preservation and protection of environmental resources, while supporting light density development in the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction of Benkelman.

- **Action Step 1:** Create solutions to **correct development barriers** in Benkelman, including the prohibition of intensive agricultural uses, such as feedlot operations, from expanding or developing within the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction.
- **Action Step 2:** Promote **residential, commercial and industrial growth areas** that are not located within designated floodplains and sensitive soil areas.
- **Action Step 3:** All future development in Benkelman should be accompanied with a **modern utility and infrastructure system** of public and/or private utilities and a storm water drainage plan.
- **Action Step 4:** Maintain a program of **sufficient open spaces**, as is necessary, in order to provide outdoor recreation, conserve natural resources and preserve historical sites as a means of giving the Community a sense of identity. Encourage the creation of new trail systems and sidewalks throughout and around the City. Construct connecting trails and sidewalks as new subdivisions and other growth areas develop.

**Goal 3: Ordinances and Regulations.** Maintain proper **land use development ordinances** and **regulations** in Benkelman. Utilize the City Zoning and Subdivision Regulations to implement the development provisions in the Land Use Plan.

- **Action Step 1:** Maintain the current **Zoning and Subdivision Regulations** and appropriate **Building Codes**, which support the appropriate, efficient implementation of the **Land Use Plan**. Establish new provisions within these regulations and codes that support mixed land use developments and promote sustainable development principles, smart growth and green building practices. Subdivision requirements should include modern infrastructure standards and the incorporation of storm water management and alternative energy systems.
- **Action Step 2:** Utilize both **voluntary and involuntary annexation policies** in conformance with Nebraska State Statutes. These policies should serve as a guide to integrate residential, commercial and industrial growth areas adjacent the current Corporate Limits of the City of Benkelman. Future development should be encouraged to locate in areas free of environmental problems related to ground and surface water features, soil and topographic slope. **Floodplain Regulations** should be strictly enforced for all proposed developments in the City.
- **Action Step 3: Continue to enforce modern construction and property standards.** All development and redevelopment activities should include a safe and sanitary environment, free of air, water and noise pollution. Such action ensures that the residents of the City of Benkelman can live and work safely in structures that are built and maintained to modern safety standards.

## **HOUSING DEVELOPMENT & REHABILITATION.**

**Goal 1:1** – Establish a process of creating a grassroots-based **Housing Advisory Board (HAB)** in **Benkelman**, consisting of both local public and private sector entities, to actively monitor the progress of priority housing programs and assist in meeting the housing needs and demands of all income and family sector types in the **City of Benkelman**.

**Collaboration efforts by a HAB, City leadership and appropriate housing-based “partnerships” will maximize the opportunity to safely house all individuals and families in necessary and affordable owner and rental housing types, secure funding for selected housing development and preservation programs and be actively involved with the implementation of such housing programs in the City of Benkelman.**

- **Action Step 1.** The **City should extend an offer to local and State housing partners/funders** to receive help and aid in meeting the City’s housing needs. These groups/organizations could include, but not limited to the local Community Foundations, Southwest Nebraska Community Betterment Corporation, West Central Nebraska Development District, Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska, Southwest Nebraska Public Health, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, USDA Rural Development, Midwest Equity Group/Midwest Housing Development Fund, as well as local major employers, homebuilders/remodelers, realtors, local banks, credit unions, insurance companies and other regional foundations.
- **Action Step 2.** A **HAB** could serve as the main operation in implementing housing programs of greatest need in the **Community of Benkelman**, as identified in the **10-Year Action Plan**. This would include meeting the housing needs and demands of the following priority *household sectors/types*:
  - *Owner and rental housing for specific income ranges and all family types.*
  - *Both new and owner and rental housing and housing rehabilitation programs for elderly households, 55+ years of age, primarily independent housing types.*
  - *Owner and rental housing development for the local workforce employees.*
  - *Housing redevelopment, rehabilitation and preservation for all household types.*

In addition, promote and enhance the “**housing intelligence**” of local elected leadership by providing the appropriate learning systems for learning the processes of housing financing and development, including appropriate methods for prioritizing both new construction and housing rehabilitation programs in the City.

- **Action Step 3:** A **HAB** would need to secure **housing funding sources** to ensure that affordable housing development and rehabilitation goals are met in **Benkelman**. For-profit, non-profit and philanthropic organizations, as well as funding from State and Federal Housing Agencies/Departments and financial commitments from major employers and local and regional Foundations should be pursued.
- **Action Step 4:** A **HAB** should collaborate with the **Benkelman Community Redevelopment Authority (BCRA)**, in creating a local **Land Trust/Land Bank Program**. The Land Trust/Land Bank program would be in the position to acquire developed or developable properties, via foreclosure or donation, to be repurposed and/or reutilized for new housing developments in **Benkelman**.

**The BCRA has experience in acquiring and developing properties for residential purposes in Benkelman. Most recently, BCRA purchased a tract of land along “A” Street, north of East 11<sup>th</sup> Avenue and constructed a single family home. The home is currently for sale. More housing for the future is being planned.**

**Goal 2.1: - General Housing Development.** Address the overall housing development needs of both owner and renter households, of all ages, specific income sectors and varied price points/products. The **Housing Unit Target Demand** for the **City of Benkelman**, by **2032**, is an estimated **22 housing units**, consisting of **12 owner** and **10 rental units with an estimated required budget of \$5.3 Million.**

A **Community Growth Initiative** of up to **45 additional Full-Time Employment Positions** in Benkelman, during the next 10 years, would increase the housing demand to **35 units**, by 2032. This includes **18 owner** and **20 rental housing units.**

- **Action Step 1:** Create “**incentive plans**” for local developers, contractors and buyers to utilize in the development of both owner and rental housing in **Benkelman**. This could include incentives such as down payment assistance, gap financing, reduced lot costs, materials purchase assistance, etc.

**Action Step 2:** New housing development projects in the **City of Benkelman** should utilize **place-based development components**, whereby development supports the Community’s quality of life and availability of resources including, but not limited to: public safety, community health, education and cultural elements.



- **Action Step 3:** Identify an estimated six to 10 acres of developable land to accommodate future housing development activities in **Benkelman**. This is in addition to the proposed **Collinsville Residential Subdivision** in the northern portion of the Community.

Residential growth areas for the City of Benkelman are identified on the Future Land Use Maps in the Benkelman Comprehensive Plan. The main focus should be on developing existing lots within the Community's Corporate Limits, where an estimated 66 acres of developable vacant land exists that could support residential development. Growth areas within the one-mile planning jurisdiction are identified north of the Highway 34 Corridor, in conjunction with commercial growth areas.



- **Action Step 4:** A total of **16 housing units**, including **12 owner and four rental units**, for persons of moderate income (**61 and 125 percent AMI**) should be the main focus of future housing construction in **Benkelman**. This income bracket represents much of the housing development product in the highest demand among young professionals and workforce populations, but also in the smallest supply due to a lack of supportive funding availability, land and development costs, etc. **Housing development costs for persons within this income category would include new owner housing at \$200,000 to \$350,000 and rental housing at \$420 to \$825 a month.**
- **Action Step 5:** Develop a partnership with major employers in the Dundy County area to implement a **Workforce Housing Initiative** in the **Benkelman** area. The **HAB, BCRA and City leadership** should strive to promote **Benkelman** to major employers as a Community to live, work and raise a family. A HAB and major employers could become directly involved with assisting employees in securing appropriate and affordable housing, with the eventual goal of becoming a homeowner in **Benkelman**.
- **Action Step 6:** Develop up to **four units of rental housing for elderly persons and two rental housing units for persons with special needs**. This would include duplex or tri-plex buildings, built with all current, modern amenities, including grade level entry and handicapped accessible rooms. Units should be developed for those with incomes between 31 and 80 percent AMI.

- **Action Step 7:** Implement and promote housing rehabilitation and preservation programs for **Benkelman**, including the demolition and replacement of dilapidated housing units. An estimated 112 housing units in the City could receive some level of moderate- to substantial rehabilitation, with an additional 10 to 15 units needing to be demolished due to the condition of the units being beyond repair.

*A **HAB** would need to target housing units that are in greatest need of **both moderate-and substantial rehabilitation in Benkelman**, with moderate rehabilitation including homes in need of “cosmetic” and minor “structural” improvements such as new siding, windows, paint, roof surface, doors, etc. and substantial rehabilitation including housing units in need of the improvements previously identified, but also repairs to structural and infrastructure elements of the house, such as foundation, bowing walls and roof lines/ structural repairs and plumbing/electrical upgrades. **Housing that is not cost effective for rehabilitation should be demolished and, eventually, replaced with sound, safe and affordable housing to take advantage of existing infrastructure.***



**Action Step 8:** Consider and encourage the development of unique and creative housing models as a means of enhancing the visual aesthetics of the local housing stock and providing “**choice**” of housing in the Community. This could include container housing units, accessory dwelling units, row housing or the renovation of upper floors in existing buildings in the Downtown (as per recommendations in the **Benkelman Downtown Revitalization Plan**).

**Goal 3.1: - Housing Funding Source Identification.** To accomplish meeting the goal of the estimated Housing Unit Target Demand in **Benkelman**, the City will need to secure both public and private funding sources when constructing new housing stock.

- **Action Step 1:** Housing developers should be encouraged to secure any and all available tools of financing assistance for both the development and preservation of housing in Benkelman. This assistance is available from the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Midwest Housing Equity Group/Midwest Housing Development Fund, USDA Rural Development, Federal Home Loan Bank, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and Federal Emergency Management Agency, in the form of grants, tax credits and mortgage insurance programs.

**Participants of the Benkelman Community Housing Survey expressed “high” support for the Community to utilize State and/or Federal grant funds to implement housing rehabilitation, purchase/rehab/resale, demolition/ replacement and down payment assistance programs.**

- **Action Step 2:** Continue the use of **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**, via the **BCRA** to assist developers in financing new housing developments, specifically for land purchase and preparation and needed public facility and utility requirements.

**The City of Benkelman has a designated “Redevelopment Area” where TIF monies can be generated and reinvested into existing neighborhoods. This Area generally includes the Community’s most distressed neighborhoods in the eastern portions of the City, as well as the Downtown. The Area also includes land along the Highway 34 Corridor in the western and norther portions of Benkelman for the development of new residential, commercial and industrial opportunities.**

- **Action Step 3:** Secure monies from the **Rural Workforce Housing Fund** that would allow a non-profit developer(s) to apply for grant dollars for housing development and/or rehabilitation for the purpose of creating housing opportunities for workforce populations.

*The State of Nebraska has also received \$10.8 Billion for distress relief caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic. Approximately \$85 Million will be utilized by the Community CARES program administered through the Department of Health and Human Services to provide food security, housing and behavioral health care.*

## COMMUNITY HEALTH & WELLNESS.

**Goal 1:** Create accessible and visible health and wellness opportunities in Benkelman that enhance the Community quality of life. Promote the Community as a place to live, work, raise a family and retire. Continuing a “sense of community” image in Benkelman, through the local public education system and close-knit neighborhoods, is important to the long-term viability of the Community.

- **Action Step 1:** Create a sustainable, healthy Community for residents currently living in, or families planning to move to Benkelman. **Citizen Survey participants strongly agreed with Nuisance Enforcement/Property Clean-Up, Improved Streets, Sidewalks and Alleys and Business Retention, Recruitment & Expansion as methods to improve the sustainability of the Community.** Local banks, schools, churches, fire protection and the library were identified as high-quality community services/facilities in Benkelman.



*Property clean-up, public infrastructure rehabilitation and nuisance abatement should be a top activity of the City and its residents, including building façade improvements, housing rehabilitation, junk vehicle removal and aesthetic improvements along major corridors (benches, street trees, street lighting, curb cuts, etc.). This will improve the overall quality of life of local citizens and enhance Community sustainability. Tax Increment Financing should be considered, in the designated **Redevelopment Areas, including the Downtown,** for public infrastructure improvements, including sidewalks, streets and public utility replacement.*

- **Action Step 2:** Incorporate **beautification projects** that improve the appearance of Benkelman. Target areas should include, but not be limited to, the Downtown, highway corridors, City parks and historically significant residential neighborhoods. **Citizen Survey participants agreed with improving the appearance of the Community with Nuisance Enforcement/Property Clean-Up, Housing Development/Rehabilitation and Restoration/Preservation of Historic Buildings/Housing.** Additionally, a “Downtown Revitalization Plan” was recently completed for Downtown Benkelman, focusing on economic development and beautification efforts for the Community’s Central Business District.
- **Action Step 3:** Encourage and promote **Community volunteer programs** to clean up and beautify local park and recreation facilities, as well as personal properties.

**Goal 2: Enhance and expand park and recreation facilities** in Benkelman and be proactive in the protection of local natural resources.

- **Action Step 1:** Monitor the condition of existing park and recreation facilities, including shelters, playground equipment, swimming pool and athletic courts. Secure local and State grant funding, as needed, for any local improvements.
- **Action Step 2:** Create and expand trails/accessibility to parks and points of interest around the Community of Benkelman. Top responses to recreational amenity needs in Benkelman, as per the Citizen Survey, included the addition and expansion of local hiking and biking trails, as well as a new swimming pool/splash pad.
- **Action Step 3:** Protect and manage local natural resources within the Corporate Limits and One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction of Benkelman. This includes waterways, sensitive soil areas and wildlife management areas.

**Goal 3: Provide accessible health care** to Benkelman residents.

- **Action Step 1:** Continue to promote the health care and medical services offered by Dundy County Hospital. This Hospital offers a variety of services including therapy, dietary, radiology and respiratory services to southwest Nebraska and northwestern Kansas, making this a critical amenity for the Community.



- **Action Step 2:** Maintain current and support new medical facilities and senior housing facilities, while supporting the creation of new health-related programs and facilities in Benkelman for persons and families of all ages. Participants of the Citizen Survey identified dental and vision clinics and an assisted living as top needs for the Community.
- **Action Step 3:** Support the utilization of in-home care services to Benkelman's senior population. The West Central Nebraska Area Agency on Aging office maintains a variety of services for seniors desiring to remain independent in their current home, including light housekeeping services, personal care tasks, home-delivered meals and health promotion activities.

## **EDUCATION & COMMUNITY/ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.**

**Goal 1: Educational Quality.** Continue to provide a **high quality of public and private elementary, junior, senior and college-level education** for the residents of Benkelman. Maintain an excellence in education by expanding facilities, amenities, and employment opportunities, as needed, while creating new and expanding existing educational programs and activities to support a growing student and faculty population for Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools. **Approximately 69 percent of Citizen Survey participants would recommend Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools to parents.**

- **Action Step 1:** Support both internal and community-wide efforts that would **sustain or potentially increase enrollment** at Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools. In the event of a substantial increase in enrollment, educational facilities should be prepared with appropriate amenities, facilities and necessary staff to meet increased demands.
- **Action Step 2: Extra-Curricular Activities,** such as homework assistance, athletics and student clubs, should continue to be an important role in the development of education in all school children.
- **Action Step 3: Support student leadership programs.** Programs of this nature will provide school children of all ages with the necessary knowledge and potential to be successful, post-graduation.
- **Action Step 4:** Reinforce and develop **continuing education programs** to address current and future needs of youths, new families, adults and senior citizens.
- **Action Step 5:** Support the efforts of the **Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools Foundation** in providing scholarships and grant opportunities to current students and alumni.



**Goal 2: Economic Development.** Utilize the **Benkelman Comprehensive Plan** as an **economic development resource and guide** to maximize economic opportunities for all residents. Foster an increase in diversified employment and business types in Benkelman.

- **Action Step 1:** Focus efforts of **diversified businesses and employment opportunities** to expand existing and attract new companies. Expand the availability of retail commerce development sites and available storefronts for rent or purchase to attract non-local businesses. Maintain and improve both public and private services, businesses and industries in Benkelman, to increase and diversify employment opportunities. **West Central Nebraska Development District and the Southwest Nebraska Community Betterment Corporation (SWNCBC) provide grant funding opportunities to assist communities in southwest Nebraska, including Benkelman, in establishing, growing and developing businesses.**
- **Action Step 2:** The City's Community & Economic Development Program should consider the funding opportunities of LB840 to maximize use of local tax dollars for economic development on an annual basis.
- **Action Step 3:** Continue to support **business retention and expansion programs** to ensure the continuation of well established businesses. Business transition services should be offered to support the transfer of businesses to new generation owners, as current owners retire. These Programs could assist in recruiting both High School and College students/graduates to train in selective career paths to become business owners. The Community should create and maintain a listing of "Home-Based Businesses," as well as support the creation of a **Business Incubator Program**, so that as businesses outgrow a home (or farm) location, appropriate space in commercial or industrial areas of the Community can be occupied with a local base, home-grown businesses.



- **Action Step 4: Housing initiatives** in Benkelman should be paired with **job creation activities**. A high percentage of persons employed in Benkelman live in other Communities. This is primarily due to the lack of available or suitable housing. Programs supported by the SWNCBC, Benkelman Community Redevelopment Authority, Chamber of Commerce, Planning Commission and City Council, through the provision of housing development partners, should focus on addressing the need for housing development and redevelopment in older neighborhoods, combined with promoting new housing development in new residential subdivisions.
- **Action Step 5: Community residents want more entertainment, employment and retail opportunities in Benkelman**, in an effort to be more economically competitive with surrounding Communities. The City needs to consider the development of new, and rehabilitation of existing commercial structures, including those located in the Downtown, for expanded commercial retail and professional office utilization.

**Goal 3: Community Development & Redevelopment Implementation.** Community Development practices should strive to both **stabilize and improve the local Benkelman economy and quality of life**. Proper renovation, adaptive reuse and additions of existing buildings, as well as new construction activities should be components of locally available incentives to attract residents, businesses, and industries.

- **Action Step 1:** Encourage local reinvestment in Benkelman by both the public and private sectors. Provide infrastructure and needed amenities to support future growth of commercial, industrial and residential areas. Remove dilapidated buildings and promote building rehabilitation on structures that are considered cost-effective for such activity.
- **Action Step 2:** Enhance the attractiveness of the business and industrial areas in Benkelman, including a **building repair and modification program** for deteriorating structures, such as commercial buildings with upper-story housing and homes adjacent Downtown Benkelman through the utilization of recommendations in the **Benkelman Downtown Revitalization Plan**.
- **Action Step 3:** Continue the promotion of the development of highway-oriented commercial businesses along the Highway 34/61 Corridor, including but not limited to convenience stores, restaurants, hotels and retail stores.





- **Action Step 4:** Support local, regional and State initiatives to **improve rural broadband and telecommunications utilities** for fast informational access to businesses, industries and public entities. A “Public-Private Partnership” has been created in Southwest Nebraska, among public power districts and telecommunication providers, to bring enhanced E-Connectivity to the region, which would benefit all facets of economic development and business/industry creation and retention in communities like Benkelman. The 2015-2019 American Community Survey estimates 80.2 percent of Dundy County’s population is connected with a broadband subscription, which is below the State of Nebraska’s 88.1 percent estimate.
- **Action Step 5:** Utilize all available **public programs of financing** in funding development and redevelopment programs. These programs include, but are not limited to HOME Funds, Community Development Block Grants, SAFETEA-LU (Transportation Enhancement Act), The Nebraska Transportation Innovation Act, Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund, State and Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits and locally based **TIF**.
- **Action Step 6:** Utilize **TIF** as a financial incentive for redevelopment projects in Downtown Benkelman and other areas of the Community that are designated as “**Redevelopment Areas**”. Identified improvements include, but are not limited to, structurally securing Downtown buildings, façade and landscaping improvements, public parking improvements and **Gateway Entry** improvements along the Highway 34/61 Corridor.
- **Action Step 7:** Enhance the potential of **Community agency connections**, including Dundy County Chamber of Commerce, SWNCBC, West Central Nebraska Development District, Benkelman Community Redevelopment Authority, Community Action partnership of Mid-Nebraska, Nebraska Public Power District and other existing organizations or special committees for technical and financial assistance for securing new community and economic development activities. Utilize Local, State, and Federal funding sources to strengthen existing and assist in the creation of new business/industry.
- **Action Step 8:** Focus on improving structures, utility mains and public facilities throughout Benkelman. Utilize various local, State and Federal funding sources to achieve various redevelopment goals in Benkelman. Continue to support the efforts of the **Benkelman Community Redevelopment Authority** the use of **TIF** for Community development activities involving the improvement of neighborhood and public utilities, facilities, public utilities, streets, sidewalks and trails.

## ***PUBLIC FACILITIES, ENERGY & TRANSPORTATION.***

**Goal 1: Public Facilities & Utilities.** Maintain and improve the existing public facilities and utilities in Benkelman. Develop, as needed, new facilities and services to reflect the Community's needs and demands during the 10-year planning period. Provide modern water and sewage treatment mains, public utility facilities, flood control and similar environmental control processes.

- **Action Step 1: Upgrade and expand public services** to keep pace with population changes and associated commercial, industrial and residential developments. Provide public services in an efficient and economic manner to protect and enhance the safety and welfare of Benkelman residents. Provide modern sewage treatment facilities, refuse collection and disposal, street cleaning, flood control and similar environmental control processes.



- **Action Step 2:** Continue to provide **adequate law enforcement, fire and ambulance protection/services**, with increased emphasis on community relations, as well as adequate civil defense and emergency services. Ensure that facilities necessary to support such services are available throughout the Community. Promote the coordination of these services among the various governmental and quasi-governmental entities.
- **Action Step 3:** Maintain an **adequate supply of potable water** and an **expanded distribution system** suitable for both present and future consumption and fire protection in Benkelman. Continue to maintain the water distribution system to supply a sufficient quantity and quality of water for residents. **The City of Benkelman Fire Services was ranked as one of the best Public Services in the Community by the residents that completed the Citizen Survey.**
- **Action Step 4:** Continue efforts to upgrade and expand segments of the Benkelman municipal sanitary sewer collection system within the 10-year planning period.

**Goal 2: Energy.** Access available programs and funding sources to reduce energy consumptions and promote the use of alternative energy systems in Benkelman.

- **Action Step 1:** Promote the use of **alternate energy systems** within Benkelman and the One-Mile Planning Jurisdiction, available through the provisions of the Nebraska Net Metering, State Statutes §70-2001. A variety of wind, solar, geothermal, biomass and methane energy sources are available in association with “green building” methods to significantly reduce energy costs for heating and cooling.

*Net Metering is also encouraged to be supplemented with “green building” techniques to enhance energy efficiency by all sectors of the City of Benkelman. **Tax Increment Financing**, in combination with low-interest or no-interest loans through programs available from the United States Department of Agriculture and Nebraska Public Power District, can greatly reduce the cost of implementing these alternative energy systems.*

- **Action Step 2:** Assist public and private property owners in Benkelman to access available funding sources through utility districts such as Nebraska Public Power District and the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy for modern heating, cooling and lighting systems to reduce consumption rates by commercial, industrial, residential and public/quasi-public building owners.
- **Action Step 3:** Strive to establish a “**pilot project**” in Benkelman that utilizes alternative energy systems to provide electric energy to multiple stores within a strip-mail setting or within Downtown Benkelman at a reduced rate or “no cost.” This would reduce overhead costs and achieve profitability.
- **Action Step 4:** Promote the development of vocational **education opportunities** at local Public School Districts in the City of Benkelman to educate the current and future workforce in alternative energy design, fabrication of equipment and maintenance.
- **Action Step 3:** Promote the **rehabilitation of residential and commercial buildings utilizing weatherization methods and energy efficient or “green building” materials** in Benkelman.
- **Action Step 4:** Utilize **Benkelman zoning ordinances and development and building codes** to control the placement and operation of alternative energy systems. Local zoning ordinances should be able to control the placement of individual energy systems to limit their impact on adjacent property and the visual character of residential, commercial and industrial areas.

- **Action Step 5:** Implement a “**pilot**” **alternative energy program** at a developing residential subdivision. An alternative energy source(s) could generate 100 percent of the energy needs for heating and cooling, as an example, promoting affordable development.
- **Action Step 6:** Expand awareness of available incentives that could assist in replacing old lighting fixtures, or heating and cooling systems with new energy efficient systems that reduce consumption and energy costs. **The electrical system throughout the Community of Benkelman is undergoing a review to determine necessary improvements for the enhanced provision of electricity.**

**Goal 3: Transportation.** Provide an **efficient transportation system** throughout Benkelman for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and services.

- **Action Step 1:** Continue to annually update the coordinated **One- and Six-Year Road Plan** for maintenance and improvement of existing and future streets, roads, and highways in the Community. This includes paving, curbs, gutters, street lighting and curb cuts, all in an effort to reduce excessive travel delays.
- **Action Step 2:** Maintain design standards and policies for various classes of streets, roads and highways to enhance the function and safety of the street system in Benkelman.
- **Action Step 3:** Coordinate the **Benkelman Land Use Plan** and the **One- and Six-Year Road Plan** to maintain and improve existing road conditions in Benkelman. New developments in Benkelman should have appropriate and adequate streets, curbs, gutters and sidewalks.
- **Action Step 4:** Plan and Implement a “**Safe Routes to School**” initiative in Benkelman. Create a collaborative partnership including, but not limited to, educators, parents, students, community leaders, health officials and administrators to encourage school-age children to walk or bike to school through the construction of bike lanes and pedestrian walkways. Specifically address the desire of Benkelman residents for the need for sidewalks and or hiking and biking trails.
- **Action Step 5:** Address transportation issues identified in the **Benkelman Citizen Survey**. These include, but are not limited to **improved pedestrian and trails connections, safe railroad crossing for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic, Highway Corridor enhancements and the repair and replacement of street surfaces in poor condition.**

**Goal 7: Comprehensive Plan Implementation and Review.** Maintain and regularly review this **Comprehensive Plan**, in an effort to continue efficient, sustainable community development.

- **Action Step 1:** The City of Benkelman, Benkelman Community Redevelopment Authority and Dundy County Chamber of Commerce should collaboratively establish an **annual review process of the Comprehensive Plan**. The **Housing Partnership**, local elected officials, governmental volunteers, community and economic development groups and local housing stakeholders and funders should be involved in this review.
- **Action Step 2:** The **Comprehensive Plan** review should coincide with an annual review of the recently completed **Benkelman, Nebraska Community Housing Study**. Both documents are imperative to future development and qualities of life offered in the City of Benkelman.
- **Action Step 3:** The **Comprehensive Plan** should be made available to allow for public and private sector review and input. Encourage public participation and involvement in the review process.



# APPENDIX



## BENKELMAN CITIZEN SURVEY RESULTS.



## Constant Contact Survey Results

**Survey Name:** Benkelman Citizen Survey

**Response Status:** Partial & Completed

**Filter:** None

4/13/2021 9:32 AM CDT

**TextBlock:**

The City of Benkelman Planning Commission and Benkelman Community Redevelopment Authority (BCRA) are currently conducting a Comprehensive Planning Program, to determine both the present and future needs of the Community for the next 10 years. The Program is funded by the Nebraska Investment Finance Authority-Housing Study Grant Program, with matching funds from the City and BCRA. An important activity of this Planning Program is to ask you about the needs and wants of the Community. Please take a few minutes to complete the following Citizen Survey. SURVEYS MUST BE COMPLETED BY FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26th, 2021.

**TextBlock:**

POPULATION CHARACTERISTICS

### How long have you lived in Benkelman?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Less Than 1 Year			2	2.7 %
1 to 5 Years			14	18.9 %
6 to 10 Years			13	17.5 %
11 to 20 Years			8	10.8 %
21+ Years			28	37.8 %
I do not live in Benkelman			3	4.0 %
No Response(s)			6	8.1 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

Including yourself, how many persons are there in your family/household?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
One			7	9.4 %
Two			27	36.4 %
Three			13	17.5 %
Four			10	13.5 %
Five			7	9.4 %
Six or More			4	5.4 %
No Response(s)			6	8.1 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

How many persons in your family are in each of the following age groups?

1 = 1, 2 = 2, 3 = 3, 4 = 4, 5 = 5+

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Less Than 18 Years						27	2.2
18 to 24 Years						18	1.5
25 to 34 Years						16	1.6
35 to 44 Years						17	1.6
45 to 54 Years						17	1.3
55 to 64 Years						25	1.5
65 to 74 Years						7	1.1
75 to 81 Years						3	1.7
82+ Years						1	1.0

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

**TextBlock:**

EDUCATION

Check all that apply.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
I am a graduate of Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools.			25	56.8 %
I have children attending Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools.			19	43.1 %
Public Schools were a factor in my decision to locate in Benkelman.			8	18.1 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>44</b>	<b>100%</b>



Are there sufficient and safe routes to School for children?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			46	62.1 %
No			15	20.2 %
No Response(s)			13	17.5 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

If No to Question #5, what could be done to improve the safety of children commuting to and from school?

16 Response(s)

Would you recommend Dundy County-Stratton Public Schools to parents?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			51	68.9 %
No			13	17.5 %
No Response(s)			10	13.5 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TextBlock:**

PUBLIC FACILITIES & COMMUNITY & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

What new public recreational opportunities should be considered for Benkelman?

31 Response(s)

What three new businesses would you like to see in Benkelman?

35 Response(s)

What three public services would you like to see offered in the City of Benkelman that are currently not available?

17 Response(s)

Please rate the quality of the following Community Services and Public Facilities in or around your Town.  
1 = Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Fair, 4 = Poor

Answer	1	2	3	4	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Churches					47	1.8
Grocery Store					49	2.8
Pharmacy					49	1.6
Fire Protection					49	1.4
City Hall & Offices					50	1.9
Parks/Recreation					49	2.5
Wellness/Fitness Center					50	1.7
Garbage Collection					50	2.0
Local Government					48	2.6
Cable TV					44	2.5

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

CONTINUED: Please rate the quality of the following Community Services and Public Facilities in or around your Town.

1 = Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Fair, 4 = Poor

Answer	1	2	3	4	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Public Transit					47	2.8
Discount/Variety Store					45	3.5
Downtown Businesses					48	2.8
Senior Center					48	2.2
Post Office					50	2.0
Restaurants/Cafes					50	2.5
Convenience Stores					48	2.5
Streets/Sidewalks					50	3.2
Utilities					49	2.4
Retail Goods/Services					49	2.8

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

CONTINUED: Please rate the quality of the following Community Services and Public Facilities in or around your Town.

1 = Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Fair, 4 = Poor

Answer	1	2	3	4	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Employment Opportunities					49	3.2
Recycling/Garbage Service					50	2.7
Repair Services					50	2.5
Entertainment/Theater					50	2.2
Library					50	1.8

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

CONTINUED: Please rate the quality of the following Community Services and Public Facilities in or around your Town.

1 = Excellent, 2 = Good, 3 = Fair, 4 = Poor

Answer	1	2	3	4	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Medical Clinic					49	2.3
Police Protection					49	2.1
Banks					50	1.8
Schools					50	2.1
Child Care opportunities					45	3.0
Internet/ Telecommunications					49	2.1
Other (Please Identify)					1	1.0

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

Please select the top three (3) most important business/industry sectors to the City of Benkelman.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Farming/Agriculture			36	72.0 %
Food Processing			3	6.0 %
Utilities			7	14.0 %
Information			0	0.0 %
Health			21	42.0 %
Leisure/Hospitality/ Tourism			3	6.0 %
Government			3	6.0 %
Medical/Emergency			17	34.0 %
Automotive			1	2.0 %
Retail			3	6.0 %
Entertainment			0	0.0 %
Financial Activities			1	2.0 %
Professional & Business			5	10.0 %
Education			24	48.0 %
Home-Based Businesses			0	0.0 %
Law Enforcement/ Protection			10	20.0 %
Fire Protection			14	28.0 %
Other			1	2.0 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>50</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TextBlock:**

TRANSPORTATION

Which transportation items need to be addressed in Benkelman?

1 = Greatly Needed, 2 = Somewhat Needed, 3 = Not Needed

Answer	1	2	3	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Traffic Safety Improvements				42	2.4
Railroad Crossing Improvements				42	2.3
Pedestrian/Trails Connections				43	1.7
School Traffic Circulation				41	2.1
Improved Traffic Control				40	2.6
Improved Truck Routes				42	2.1

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

**CONTINUED: Which transportation items need to be addressed in Benkelman?**

1 = Greatly Needed, 2 = Somewhat Needed, 3 = Not Needed

Answer	1	2	3	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Highway Corridor Enhancements				42	2.3
Access Management/ Frontage Roads				41	2.5
More Parking				41	2.5
Congestion Reduction				40	2.7
Public Transit				41	1.9

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

**TextBlock:**

COMMUNITY GROWTH, LAND USE & ZONING

**The Appearance of the City of Benkelman can be improved with...**

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = No Opinion, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Street & Pedestrian Lighting						42	2.5
Special Sales, Events and Welcome Banners						42	2.5
Crosswalk Enhancements						40	2.6
Street Trees, Benches and Landscaping						40	2.0
Pedestrian Seating Areas and Sidewalk Cafes						42	2.2
Vehicular Traffic Safety						41	3.1
Coordinated Traffic Control Lighting.						41	3.5

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

**CONTINUED: The Appearance of the City of Benkelman can be improved with...**

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = No Opinion, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Directional Signage						40	2.7
Restoration/Preservation of Historic Buildings/Housing						42	2.1
Gateway Entrance Signage and Advertising						41	2.7
Design Guidelines for Facades, Awnings, etc.						41	2.8
Nuisance Enforcement/Property Clean-Up						42	2.0
Housing Development/ Rehabilitation						43	1.7
Other (Specify):						5	2.2

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

**The Sustainability of the City of Benkelman can be improved with...**

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = No Opinion, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Water, Sewer & Utility Replacement						41	2.2
Improved Streets, Sidewalks & Alleys						41	1.5
Additional Pedestrian Safety Measures						41	2.6
Additional Parking for Businesses/ in Downtown						41	3.0
Burying Overhead Utility Lines						41	2.7
Business Retention, Recruitment & Expansion						42	1.7
Marketing of Sales & Festivals						42	2.1

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

**CONTINUED: The sustainability of the City of Benkelman can be improved with...**

1 = Strongly Agree, 2 = Agree, 3 = No Opinion, 4 = Disagree, 5 = Strongly Disagree

Answer	1	2	3	4	5	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Coordinated Business Hours						41	2.0
Designation of a "Historic District"						41	2.7
Increased Marketing of Vacant Buildings						43	2.0
Development of an Incubator Business Program						42	2.4
Reducing Utility Costs with Alternative Energy Sources						41	2.4
New/Improved Parks/Rec/Trails						43	1.8
Nuisance Enforcement/Property clean-up						43	2.1
Update of City Equipment and Vehicles						41	3.0
Infrastructure Improvements (Hydrants, Water Meters, Water Wells, Sewer Scoping, Street Replacement, etc.)						42	1.9
Other (Specify):						4	2.5

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

**Where should future residential growth in Benkelman take place? Check all that apply.**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
North			22	62.8 %
South			12	34.2 %
East			19	54.2 %
West			18	51.4 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>35</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Should the Community of Benkelman expand to include new commercial and entertainment facilities?**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			31	41.8 %
No			9	12.1 %
No Response(s)			34	45.9 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

If Yes, where should future commercial and entertainment facilities be developed?

18 Response(s)

Do you support stricter enforcement of City ordinances regarding parking, junk vehicles and property maintenance?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			31	41.8 %
No			11	14.8 %
No Response(s)			32	43.2 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

**TextBlock:**

HOUSING & RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT

Do you rent or own your place of residence?


Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Own			37	50.0 %
Rent			4	5.4 %
No Response(s)			33	44.5 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

Describe the type of housing you currently reside in.






Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
House			38	51.3 %
Mobile Home			0	0.0 %
Apartment			1	1.3 %
Town Home/Duplex			1	1.3 %
No Response(s)			34	45.9 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>



Are you satisfied with your current place of residence? If No, why not?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			36	48.6 %
No			6	8.1 %
No Response(s)			32	43.2 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

How would you rate the condition of your home or place of residence? If minor or major repair is needed to your home, please describe the type of repair needed.

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Excellent			9	12.1 %
Good			20	27.0 %
Fair - Needs Minor Rehabilitation			10	13.5 %
Poor - Needs Major Rehabilitation			3	4.0 %
No Response(s)			32	43.2 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

Which of the following housing types are needed in Benkelman?\*Family Income: 2.5 persons per household income.

1 = Greatly Needed, 2 = Somewhat Needed, 3 = Not Needed

Answer	1	2	3	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Housing for Low-Income Families 0%-60% Area Median Income (\$0-\$31,950)*				34	1.5
Housing for Middle-Income Families 61%-100% Area Median Income (\$32,000-\$53,250)*				38	1.3
Housing for Upper-Income Families 101%+ Area Median Income (\$53,251+)*				34	2.0
Housing for Single Parent Families				33	1.4
Housing for Existing/New Employees				37	1.2
Single Family Housing				37	1.4
General Rental Housing				39	1.2
Manufactured Homes				33	2.2
Mobile Homes				33	2.6
Condominiums and/or Townhomes				35	2.2

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

**CONTINUED: Which of the following housing types are needed in Benkelman?**

1 = Greatly Needed, 2 = Somewhat Needed, 3 = Not Needed

Answer	1	2	3	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Duplex Housing				37	2.0
Apartment Complex (3 to 12 Units)				35	2.1
Rehabilitation of Owner-Occupied Housing				37	1.4
Rehabilitation of Renter-Occupied Housing				35	1.7
Housing Choices for First-Time Homebuyers				39	1.3
Short-Term Single Family Rent-To-Own (3 to 5 Years)				37	1.8
Long-Term Single Family Rent-To-Own (6 to 15 Years)				37	1.8
Short-Term Duplex/Townhouse Rent-To-Own (3 to 5 Years)				36	2.1
Long-Term Duplex/Townhouse Rent-To-Own (6 to 15 Years)				37	2.2

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

**CONTINUED: Which of the following housing types are needed in Benkelman?**

1 = Greatly Needed, 2 = Somewhat Needed, 3 = Not Needed

Answer	1	2	3	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
One Bedroom Apartment or House				32	1.9
Two Bedroom Apartment or House				37	1.6
Three Bedroom Apartment or House				36	1.2
Independent Living Housing for persons with a Mental/Physical Disability				36	1.9
Group Home Housing for persons with a Mental/Physical Disability				37	2.1
Retirement Housing (Rental)				38	1.7
Retirement Housing (Owner)				36	1.7

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.

**CONTINUED: Which of the following housing types are needed in Benkelman?**

1 = Greatly Needed, 2 = Somewhat Needed, 3 = Not Needed

Answer	1	2	3	Number of Response(s)	Rating Score*
Retirement Housing for Low-Income Elderly Persons				34	1.5
Retirement Housing for Middle-Income Elderly Persons				36	1.6
Retirement Housing for Upper-Income Elderly Persons				34	1.9
Licensed Assisted Living Facility with Specialized Services				35	1.7
Single Room Occupancy Housing (Boarding Homes)				34	2.3
Short-Term Emergency Shelters (30 Days or Less)				34	2.4
Long-Term Shelters (30-90 Days)				33	2.6
Transitional/ Temporary Housing				35	2.5
Other (Specify):				5	2.6

\*The Rating Score is the weighted average calculated by dividing the sum of all weighted ratings by the number of total responses.




**Would you support the City of Benkelman using State or Federal grant funds to conduct an Owner Housing Rehabilitation Program?**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			37	50.0 %
No			2	2.7 %
No Response(s)			35	47.2 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>




**Would you support the City of Benkelman using State or Federal grant funds to conduct a Renter Housing Rehabilitation Program?**

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			31	41.8 %
No			8	10.8 %
No Response(s)			35	47.2 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>




Would you support the City of Benkelman establishing a local program that would purchase dilapidated houses, tear down the houses and make the lots available for a family or individual to build a house?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			33	44.5 %
No			6	8.1 %
No Response(s)			35	47.2 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>




Would you support the City of Benkelman using grant dollars to purchase, rehabilitate and resell vacant housing in the Community?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			32	43.2 %
No			7	9.4 %
No Response(s)			35	47.2 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

Would you support the City of Benkelman using State or Federal grant dollars to provide down payment assistance to first-time home buyers?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			33	44.5 %
No			6	8.1 %
No Response(s)			35	47.2 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

As a Benkelman resident, would you be willing to contribute or donate money to support a local Community, Economic or Housing development activity?

Answer	0%	100%	Number of Response(s)	Response Ratio
Yes			21	28.3 %
No			15	20.2 %
No Response(s)			38	51.3 %
<b>Totals</b>			<b>74</b>	<b>100%</b>

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Please provide any additional comments regarding the future of Benkelman, Nebraska.

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15 Response(s)