

SECTION 1
THE KEARNEY COUNTY/COMMUNITY PLANNING PROCESS

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This Comprehensive Plan was prepared under the direction of the **Kearney County Planning Commission** as a guide for future development of the County. The Commission is represented by residents of the rural, unincorporated areas of the County and the Villages of Norman and Heartwell.

The **Kearney County Comprehensive Plan** is designed to provide policy guidance which will enable the citizens and elected officials of the County and Villages of Norman and Heartwell to make informed judgments and decisions about the future of the County and the two communities. Many issues regarding the future of the County and each community are addressed in this Plan.

This Comprehensive Plan is intended to identify goals, policies and procedures leading to the attainment of quality of life in Kearney County and the communities of Norman and Heartwell and provide a general guide for future decisions and developments concepts. The Comprehensive Plan is also intended to encourage a strong economic base for the County and each community.

data collection.....

Planning begins with the **collection of data** to provide a comprehensive picture of the areas being studied. Analysis of the data provides a basis for the development of forecasts into what the future will be within the County and community planning areas.

plan development

Secondly, planning is the **development of a general plan** which establishes specific and practical guidelines for improving existing conditions and controlling future growth. The Comprehensive Plan is presented in narrative, maps and charts, describing what residents want their County and community to become.

The Comprehensive Plan presents a program designed to identify, assess and develop goals and policies in the areas of land use, housing, public facilities, transportation and plan maintenance and implementation. The Plan contains proposals and recommendations which need to be implemented in order to be of value to the residents of the County and each community.

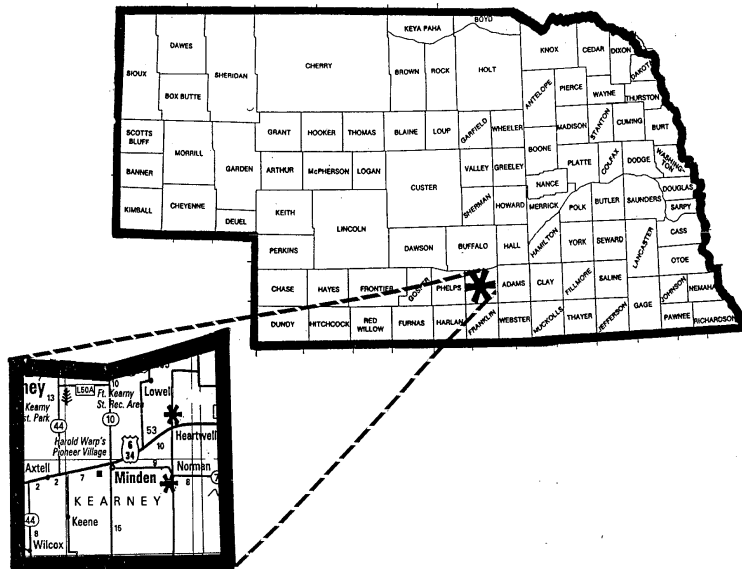
implementation

Implementation is the **third phase** of the comprehensive planning process. A broad range of development policies and programs is needed to implement the Plan. The Plan identifies the goals, programs and methods of implementing proposals and recommendations and providing a framework for protecting the overall health, safety and general welfare of the Kearney County citizenry and the residents of Norman and Heartwell, as well as the natural environment. Both Kearney County and each community faces many of the needs associated with the implementation of a comprehensive plan. These include the need to plan, design, finance and implement public improvements, and the need to establish and enforce standards for the use of land.

Implementation methods include incentive measures to stimulate private actions consistent with the Comprehensive Plan and the use of federal and state aid programs for community and economic development activities.

Each implementation method has its role in helping to achieve the purpose of the Comprehensive Plan. No one method can accomplish all the goals and policies stated in the Plan. Results are best achieved when using several or all for each element of the Comprehensive Plan.

LOCATION MAP
Illustration 1.1



The Kearney County Comprehensive Plan is comprised of the following six elements:

- x Kearney County Planning Process**
- x Population, Economics and Housing**
- x Land Use Profile and Plan**
- x Public Facilities**
- x Transportation**
- x Plan Maintenance and Implementation**

Each of these elements are interrelated and dependent upon the others. This relationship provides a framework which will translate these elements into workable programs to assist in achieving the physical, social and economic goals and policies of County and community residents.

The system embodied in this framework is a process which relies upon continuous feedback as goals change and objectives become more clearly defined. Planning is an ongoing process that requires monitoring and revision throughout the planning period.

Planning Period

The planning time period for achieving the goals, programs and developments identified in the **Kearney County Comprehensive Plan is 10 years, 2000 through 2010.**

Authority to Plan

The Comprehensive Plan for Kearney County is prepared under the Authority of Section 23-114, Nebraska State Statutes, 1943, as amended, and for the Villages of Norman and Heartwell, Section 19-924-929, Nebraska State Statutes, 1943, as amended.

Amendment

The Comprehensive Plan may be amended or updated as the need arises as provided in Nebraska Statutes.

Goals and Policies

A Comprehensive Plan plays a major role in the future growth and sustainability of a county. Important components of this plan are specific **planning goals and policies**. Goals and policies provide local planners direction in the administration and overall implementation of the Plan. In essence, **Goals** and

Policies are the most fundamental elements of the Plan; the premises upon which all other elements of the Plan must relate. The following Goals and Policies are to be in effect for the period of the **Kearney County Comprehensive Plan; 2000 to 2010**, pending annual review.

Goals.....

Goals are broad statements, identifying the present state or condition of the planning area and what the area could or should evolve into during the planning period. Goals are established for the primary components of the Comprehensive Plan, including **land use, housing, economic development, public infrastructure, facilities and transportation and plan maintenance and implementation**. Goals are long-term in nature and, in the case of those identified for this Comprehensive Plan, will be active throughout the 10-year planning period.

Policies

Policies help to further define the meaning of goals. In essence, Policies are recommendations for means by which goals can be accomplished. Policies, or often referred to as objectives, are sub-parts of a Goal and are accomplished in a much shorter time space.

The Goals and Policies presented throughout this Comprehensive Plan are the result of both qualitative and quantitative research conducted in association with the Comprehensive Plan. The **qualitative research** has included input received from the Kearney County Planning Commission and Planning Steering Committee.

**General County/
Community Goals**

The first step in developing Goals and Policies for this Plan is the creation of **general county/community goals**. These general goals "highlight" **important** elements of the Kearney County and Villages of Norman and Heartwell comprehensive planning process, as determined via the identification of "key" issues.

The following represents the general goals associated with the rural, unincorporated areas of Kearney County and the communities of Norman and Heartwell.

The future of Kearney County will greatly depend on the willingness of residents to accept changes in the population and economic structure and their willingness to be a part of the ongoing planning and implementation process of the County. **goals continued.....**

- Promote the **preservation of the agricultural industry**, including the diversification of crop developments. Historically, agriculture has been the primary income producing activity for rural Kearney County, and this is anticipated to remain as such through the 10-year planning period and beyond.
- Protect the natural resources and living environs of Kearney County by controlling, and prohibiting in specific regions, large scale livestock/confinement facilities in areas deemed inappropriate for such activities.
- Programs of citizen participation should be fostered in rural Kearney County and the Villages of Norman and Heartwell, to maintain and improve the economic and social quality of life of each community and the County as a whole.
- **Preserve and protect agriculture lands for agricultural use** and encourage future (non-agricultural) developments to locate in close proximity to all Kearney County communities or at appropriate locations along transportation and river corridors. Corridor development is considered adjacent to hard surfaced roads. **(5/4/04)**
- Maintain and enforce zoning and subdivision regulations and the appropriate planning and zoning administration procedures to insure the proper implementation of the Kearney County and Norman and Heartwell land use plans.

Maintain and strengthen relationships between the County and each community, to produce planning practices supportive of proper land usage, economic growth, housing, public facilities and services, transportation and recreation opportunities.