



# Dakota County Comprehensive Plan

2014



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTORS

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This document was prepared by the Siouxland Interstate Metropolitan Planning Council,  
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND CONTRIBUTORS .....	i
INTRODUCTION .....	1
DAKOTA COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS .....	6
THE VALUE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN .....	10
PLANNING CONTEXT .....	12
VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT .....	15
OVERVIEW .....	15
I.    DAKOTA COUNTY – LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION .....	16
FUTURE LAND USE .....	16
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION .....	24
II.   DAKOTA COUNTY – COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES .....	25
OVERVIEW .....	25
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES .....	36
III.  DAKOTA COUNTY – NATURAL RESOURCES .....	38
PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT .....	39
GOALS AND OBJECTIVE – NATURAL RESOURCES .....	42
IV.   DAKOTA COUNTY – HOUSING .....	44
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EXISTING HOUSING SUPPLY .....	44
HOUSING ISSUES .....	59
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - HOUSING .....	61
V.    DAKOTA COUNTY – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT .....	63
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT .....	75
VI.   DAKOTA COUNTY – ENERGY .....	77
ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES THAT BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY .....	80
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - ENERGY .....	84
PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN MAINTENANCE .....	87
Figure 1: The Planning Process .....	13
Figure 2: Dakota County NE building permits .....	57
Figure 3: Nebraska’s energy consumption 1960-2011 .....	76
Map 1: Dakota County Location Map – Cities 10,000+ .....	1
Map 2: Dakota County Map .....	2
Map 3: Future Land Use .....	17
Map 4: Dakota County - 1 and 6 year Road Improvement Map .....	18
Map 5: Dakota County Arterial Roadways .....	20

Map 6:	Dakota County Higher Volume Traffic Routes .....	21
Map 7:	Dakota County Railroads .....	22
Map 8:	Dakota County Trails.....	23
Map 9:	Dakota County Soils .....	41
Table 1:	Dakota County Population - Total change from 2000 to 2012 .....	6
Table 2:	Dakota County - Age Cohort Change .....	6
Table 3:	Occupation and Educational Attainment.....	7
Table 4:	Dakota County Poverty - Total change from 1999 to 2012 .....	9
Table 5:	Dakota County Median Household Income – 2000 - 2012 .....	9
Table 6:	Dakota County General Housing Information .....	9
Table 7:	Dakota County Transportation Improvement Projects FY 2014-2020.....	19
Table 8:	Dakota County School Districts through Grade 12 - 2012-2013 School Year .....	35
Table 9:	Dakota County, Nebraska Value of housing 2009-2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census .....	45
Table 10:	General household characteristics in Dakota County 2009-2011 American Community Survey .....	46
Table 11:	Housing year built 2009-2011.....	55
Table 12:	Local housing characteristics, 2010 .....	55
Table 13:	Vacancy rates.....	56
Table 14:	Employed persons 16 years and over by Industry and Occupation.....	65
Table 15:	Dakota County Percentage of Individuals Employed by Industry in Dakota County and the State of Nebraska .....	66
Table 16:	Average annual and weekly wage by industry in Dakota County, 2010 and 2013 .....	67
Table 17:	2012-2013 Quarterly census of employment and wages, Dakota County .....	68
Table 18:	2003 – 2013 Average weekly wages earned in Dakota County .....	69
Table 19:	2013 Total wages earned (in thousands) Dakota County .....	70
Table 20:	2013 Average annual pay in Dakota County.....	70
Table 21:	Household income range for Dakota County and State of Nebraska, 2012 and 2000 .....	71
Table 22:	Median income for the communities of Dakota County, 2011 and 2000 .....	72
Table 23:	Household income by age, Dakota County, 2010-2012 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates.....	72
Table 24:	2003 – 2013 Number of individuals employed in Dakota County .....	73
Table 25:	2003 – 2013 Number of establishments providing Dakota County employment .....	74

## INTRODUCTION

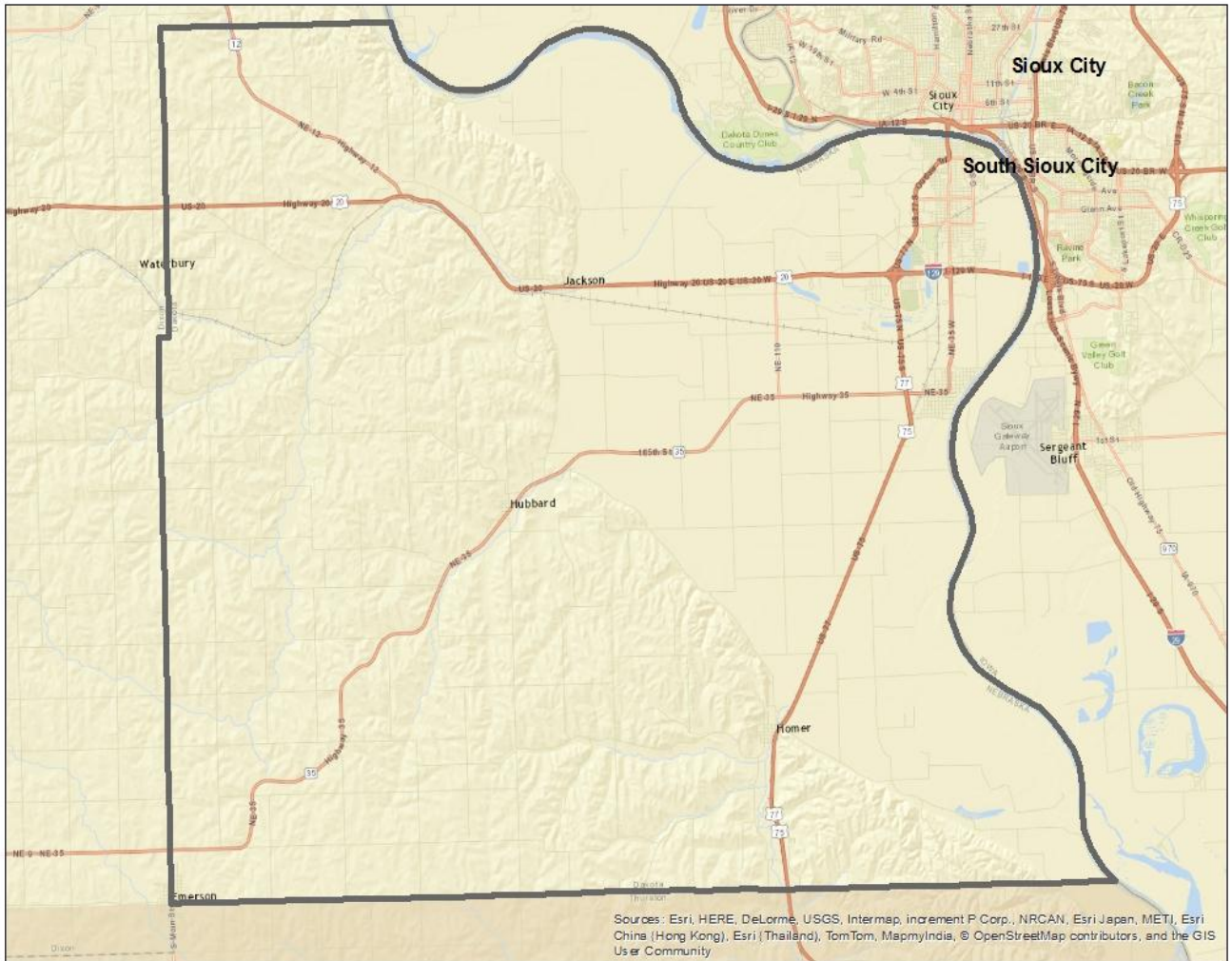
Dakota County, Nebraska is located in the very northeast corner of the state and serves as a gateway to the states of Iowa and South Dakota. The county's northern and eastern border is the Missouri River, with the western and southern edges bounded by Dixon and Thurston counties, respectively. The closest cities to Dakota County with populations of 10,000 or more are Sioux City, IA (13 miles), Vermillion, SD (42 miles), Norfolk, NE (64 miles), Fremont, NE (75 miles), Columbus, NE (105 miles), and Omaha, NE (107 miles).

**Map 1: Dakota County Location Map – Cities 10,000+**



At one time, 10 town sites were platted on the riverbanks in Dakota County. All but one of the original towns (Dakota City) is now extinct. Dakota County now has two cities - Dakota City and South Sioux City; three villages - Hubbard, Homer, and Jackson; one unincorporated village – Willis; and a portion of another village - Emerson, which lies in three counties. The county has a total population of 21,006 by the 2010 census.

**Map 2: Dakota County Map**



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## DAKOTA COUNTY HERITAGE

The first human inhabitants in the area were Native American Indians, probably the Omaha, one of the many tribes within the Sioux Nation of Indians. Fernando Cortez directed the first European exploration of the area, which later was ceded by Spain to France. The land was sold to the United States as part of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803.

Dakota County became part of the Missouri Territory and the Nebraska Territory on March 4, 1854. Dakota County was issued a charter on March 7, 1889 and included parts of Dixon and Thurston Counties. In 1889, Dixon and Thurston Counties separated and the current boundaries of Dakota County were established. Dakota County was named after the Dakotah Indians, another tribe of the Sioux Nation.

Long before the famous Lewis and Clark Expedition, the Malette brothers, two French trappers, explored the area. The trappers came down from Canada in 1739 and crossed the Missouri just below what is now Dakota City, Nebraska. In 1793, England hired



an Irishman, MacKay, to set up trading posts along the river. He left St. Louis with 33 men in August of 1795 and arrived Nov. 11, 1795 at Chief Blackbird's village east of what is now Homer, and established Fort Charles. Fort Charles later was named Blyberg.

After the Louisiana Purchase, Thomas Jefferson commissioned Lewis and Clark to chart the purchased land. In April of 1804, Lewis and Clark left St. Louis with 43 men on the well-documented expedition. The group arrived at Dakota City in August and sent a party to explore Maha (Omaha), a ruined Indian village and burial ground near Homer.

Shortly after moving on, the expedition again halted on the high bluffs above the river in what is now Iowa. At this location, the expedition suffered the only casualty when Sergeant Charles

Floyd died. The white stone obelisk erected in his honor in 1901 is the first site to be registered by the government as a National Historic Landmark.

In 1855, Father Treacy left Gerryowen, Iowa with 60 pioneers and settled north of Jackson where they established St. John City. Almost half of the settlers died during the following severe winter. Descendants of the first settlement still live in the Dakota County area. St. Patrick's Catholic Church was built at St. John in 1856 and destroyed by a tornado in 1860. Because of the unpredictable river, the church was rebuilt about one mile south. The church is now located in the town of Jackson. St. John City has since disappeared.

Willis, a small unincorporated village lying west of Jackson, sits at the crossroads of Highway 20 and Highway 12.

The Blyberg area was probably the location of the first white settlement in Dakota County. Sitting in the southeast corner of the county, the settlement originally was called Fort Charles and began as a trading outpost. Blyberg succumbed to the capricious movements of the river and now only wilderness and a few old buildings remain. The settlers moved further west to what now is called Homer.

Emerson is in the extreme southwest corner of the county and was platted in 1881 as a railroad town. Emerson has the distinction of existing in three counties. Like many other railroad towns, Emerson's fortunes took a downturn when trucks and planes began to take more of the railroad's shipping.

Hubbard is another Dakota County community, which was established by the railroad. Settlement in Hubbard began in 1885 with some of the population coming from the town just north, Jackson, to work for the railroad.

The county seat, Dakota City, is the only town of the original 10 laid out on the riverfront still in existence. Established in 1856, the prosperous frontier town boasted a hotel, store, school, churches, and a pottery works. The city used the river to export grain, pottery, and timber; and to import coal, gravel, and concrete until the railroad took over the shipping of goods. Dakota



City is the site of the oldest church built in the Nebraska Territory. Emanuel Lutheran Church was built in 1860 and on July 19, 1964, "The Little White Church on the River" was dedicated as a historical landmark.

Today, the largest city in Dakota County is also one of the youngest. South Sioux City was incorporated in 1887. The settlement has had seven names and, because of the erratic river, fire, tornadoes, and floods, almost as many sites, though always located in the extreme northeast corner of the county. The earlier names were Harney City, Newport, Stanton Places, Pacific City, Logan and Covington. Some of the earlier versions of the towns became extinct; at least one was submerged when the river changed its channel. The remaining ones combined to form South Sioux City. For many years, the communication between Sioux City, Iowa and South Sioux City, Nebraska was a ferryboat in the summer and ice in the winter. The combination bridge, erected across the Missouri in 1895, finally provided a vital link to the larger city. Later, the bridge was widened to four lanes, eventually torn down, and replaced by Veteran's Memorial Bridge, a concrete and steel four lane interstate bridge.

Throughout the early years, long-term settlements were in danger from the Missouri River. This also meant the boundary between Nebraska and Iowa also changed. However, with the construction of three dams by the Corp. of Engineers, the river is now under control and stabilized. The dams are the Oahe at Pierre, South Dakota, Ft. Randall Dam at Pickstown, SD, and Gavin's Point at Yankton, South Dakota. Until the summer of 2011, the last large flood of the Missouri River was in 1952.

Many churches in the county were established in the last half of the nineteenth century and are still active. Because of fire, floods and tornadoes, the original sites have often changed but many still have their original charters and can boast continuous memberships for 100 years or more.

## DAKOTA COUNTY DEMOGRAPHICS

Dakota County, Nebraska is home to approximately 21,000 residents and is 267 square miles in size. The cities of Dakota City, Emerson (partial), Homer, Hubbard, Jackson, and South Sioux call Dakota County “home”. Emerson, NE, has the distinction of being housed in Dakota, Dixon, and Thurston counties, respectively. The following tables encompass the changes from 2000 to 2012 in population, occupation and educational attainment, poverty, household income and housing.

**Table 1:**

<b><u>Dakota County Population - Total change from 2000 to 2012</u></b>	
	<b>Dakota County, Nebraska</b>
<b>2000</b> Total population	20,253
<b>2012</b> Total population	20,869
%Change	3.0%

Dakota County enjoyed modest population growth from 2000 to 2012. Although the growth was slight, many counties in the region declined in population during the same time period.

**Table 2:**

<b><u>Dakota County - Age Cohort Change</u></b>					
Subject	2000		2012		Difference:
	Dakota Co		Dakota Co		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
Total population	20,253		20,869		616
Male	10,111	49.9	10,404	49.9	
Female	10,142	50.1	10,465	50.1	
Under 5 years	1,772	8.7	1,709	8.2	-3.6%

Continued Subject	2000		2012		Difference:
	Dakota Co		Dakota Co		
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	
5 to 9 years	1,745	8.6	1,573	7.5	-9.9%
10 to 14 years	1,664	8.2	1,733	8.3	4.1%
15 to 19 years	1,619	8.0	1,512	7.2	-6.6%
20 to 24 years	1,425	7.0	1,461	7.0	2.5%
25 to 34 years	2,910	14.4	3,019	14.5	3.7%
35 to 44 years	3,042	15.0	2,486	11.9	-18.3%
45 to 54 years	2,483	12.3	2,737	13.1	10.2%
55 to 59 years	869	4.3	1,253	6.0	44.2%
60 to 64 years	710	3.5	1,044	5.0	47.0%
65 to 74 years	1,025	5.1	1,293	6.2	26.1%
75 to 84 years	701	3.5	821	3.9	17.1%
85 years and over	288	1.4	228	1.1	-20.8%
Median age	31.4		32.8		1.4

Dakota County lost residents (more than 10%) from 2000 to 2012 in the 35-44 and 85+ age groups, but gained population (more than 10%) in the age groups encompassing ages 55-84. This indicates an aging population.

**Table 3:**

<b>Occupation and Educational Attainment</b>							
Dakota Co	2000		2012		Difference (#):	Difference (%):	
	Dakota Co		Dakota Co				
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent			
Employed civilian population 16 years and over	14,773		10,707		-4,066		
INDUSTRY							
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	266	2.6	331	3.1	65	24.4%	
Construction	562	5.6	649	6.1	87	15.5%	
Manufacturing	2,973	29.4	3,034	28.3	61	2.1%	
Wholesale trade	476	4.7	218	2.0	-258	-54.2%	
Retail trade	918	9.1	1,044	9.8	126	13.7%	

<i>Continued</i>	2000		2012		Difference (#):	Difference (%):
	Dakota Co		Dakota Co			
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent		
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	617	6.1	601	5.6	-16	-2.6%
Information	297	2.9	68	0.6	-229	-77.1%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	692	6.9	661	6.2	-31	-4.5%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	385	3.8	512	4.8	127	33.0%
Educational, health and social services	1,464	14.5	1,691	15.8	227	15.5%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	642	6.4	968	9.0	326	50.8%
Other services (except public administration)	481	4.8	495	4.6	14	2.9%
Public administration	323	3.2	435	4.1	112	34.7%
Median household income (dollars)	43,702		44,928		\$1,226	
<b>EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT</b>						
Population 25 years and over	12,103		12,881		778	
Less than 9th grade	1,569	13.0	2,309	17.9	740	47.2%
9th to 12th grade, no diploma	1,642	13.6	1,422	11.0	-220	-13.4%
High school graduate (includes equivalency)	4,387	36.2	4,221	32.8	-166	-3.8%
Some college, no degree	2,386	19.7	2,489	19.3	103	4.3%
Associate degree	621	5.1	1,104	8.6	483	77.8%
Bachelor's degree	1,022	8.4	900	7.0	-122	-11.9%
Graduate or professional degree	476	3.9	436	3.4	-40	-8.4%
Percent high school graduate or higher		73.5		71.0		-2.5
Percent bachelor's degree or higher		12.4		10.4		-2

Occupations such as arts/entertainment/recreation/accommodation/food services, agriculture/forestry/fishing/hunting/mining, public administration, and professional/scientific/management/administrative/ waste management services saw great gains during the period. Wholesale trade and information occupations saw significant decline. Percentages of high school or higher and bachelor's degree or higher declined from 2000 to 2012.

**Table 4:**

<b>Dakota County Poverty - Total change from 1999 to 2012</b>				
	1999 Families - % below poverty level	1999 Individuals - % below poverty level	2012 Families - % below poverty level	2012 Individuals - % below poverty level
Dakota County, Nebraska	9.2%	11.4%	14.2%	16.0%

Both families and individuals living in poverty rose approximately 5% from 1999 to 2000.

**Table 5:**

<b>Dakota County Median Household Income - 2000 to 2012</b>				
	2000	2012	Difference (#):	Difference (%):
	Number	Number		
Dakota Co Median household income	\$43,702	\$44,928	\$1,226	2.8%

Median household income rose nearly 3% from 2000 to 2012.

**Table 6:**

<b>Dakota County General Housing Information</b>					
	2000		2012		Difference (#):
	Dakota Co		Dakota Co		
	Number		Number	Percent Change	
Total Housing Units	7,528		7,670	1.9%	142
Occupied Housing Units	7,095		7,253	2.2%	158
Owner-Occupied (Specified)	3,554		4,574		
Renter-Occupied (Specified)	2,262		2,679		
Median Home Value	\$81,200		\$98,300	21.1%	\$17,100
Median Gross Rent	\$516		\$696	34.9%	\$180

Dakota County increased the number of housing units available from 2000 to 2012, and also increased the median home value by \$17,000. Median gross rent increased by nearly 35%.

## THE VALUE OF A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

When thinking of places some stand out as models of natural beauty and human comfort, supported by thriving local economies. The most satisfying places to live, work, and raise families are communities that meet the needs of commerce and individual expression while protecting and conserving the natural environment and non-renewable resources.

“Ideal” communities do not grow by accident or without public debate and agreed-upon guidelines. Collaborative planning processes and comprehensive plans are the building blocks of such great counties.

Planning helps maintain and promote livable, vital communities. Local municipalities play a key role by developing and implementing comprehensive plans that reflect their own goals. The Dakota County Comprehensive Plan provides an opportunity to coordinate the efforts and create a shared community vision.

The content of the plan was developed from issues citizens identified as critical. It describes existing conditions, identifies strengths and weaknesses, and outlines strategies that can inform decision-makers at all levels of government, as well as individuals, businesses, educational institutions, and not-for-profit organizations as they plan for the future of Dakota County.

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### REGIONAL COOPERATION

A key theme in the Dakota County Comprehensive Plan is the interrelationship among the various aspects of our daily lives: housing, transportation, jobs, the environment, and neighborhoods and communities. The interrelationships often extend well beyond county lines and are regional in nature. Dakota County is part of a broader geographic area and economic market that influences everything from where we choose to shop and live to what areas we visit to hike and swim. An over-arching principle of the plan is that Dakota County will work proactively with towns, villages, the city of South Sioux City, adjoining counties and states, and state and federal agencies to address cooperatively regional issues, such as natural resources, public infrastructure, and consumer, employment, and housing markets.

The plan outlines ways the community can address regional issues that may or may not be included in local planning efforts. Often, local municipalities have a full workload simply addressing the important day-to-day issues of local concern.

Regional planning can help municipal governments address key issues of concern, such as sprawl, economic development, housing affordability, and environmental protection. It can also help residents of rural and urban areas to recognize their inter-connectedness and issues of mutual interest.

Nebraska clearly places land use authority in the hands of its towns, villages, and cities. The state also specifically recognizes that planning is needed to cooperatively address regional issues. To this end, the state encourages the development of county comprehensive plans to address development and preservation.

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#### LISTENING TO COMMUNITY VOICES

The groundwork for the Dakota County Comprehensive Plan started in 2011 and included a two-year effort to involve the communities and its citizens in planning for the future of the county.

The county recognizes the diversity of communities, lifestyles, and interests in the county and beyond and desires to provide citizens and community leaders with a planning process to articulate the vision for the future.

Public meetings were held in Dakota City, South Sioux City and Homer to gather data from residents. All meetings were advertised in the Dakota County Star newspaper and fliers were sent to the clerks in each municipality.

## PLANNING CONTEXT

The planning process offers the residents, business owners, city and county leaders a means to create a shared vision of Dakota County. Planning policies guide decisions-makers toward achieving a desired future. The planning process should be an ongoing endeavor. The plan documents the results of the county's comprehensive planning program and sets forth specific actions that must be taken by the county and others to cooperatively achieve their desired future as expressed in their vision. Dakota County will need to monitor and review the plan annually.

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### THE PLANNING PROCESS

Dakota County Board of Commissioners understands the importance of and the responsibility for planning for the future. County officials devoted a large part of their time in 2011 and 2012 to develop a comprehensive plan directing county growth. The process, as illustrated, involved three key phases: (1) County assessment of assets; (2) plan formulation; and (3) plan adoption and implementation. Extensive participation was a fundamental element of the planning process and will continue to be a key element of the county's implementation program.

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### PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Public participation has been a key focus throughout the planning process. Dakota County encouraged an open planning process, seeking public input at each step of the process.

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### ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE

Environmental justice is a social cause promoting fairness and equality for all people. Environmental justice is the fair treatment and meaningful involvement of all people regardless of race, color, national origin or income with respect to the development, implementation and enforcement of environmental laws, regulations and policies. "Environment" is considered in totality to include the ecological, physical (natural and built), social, political, aesthetic, and economic environments.



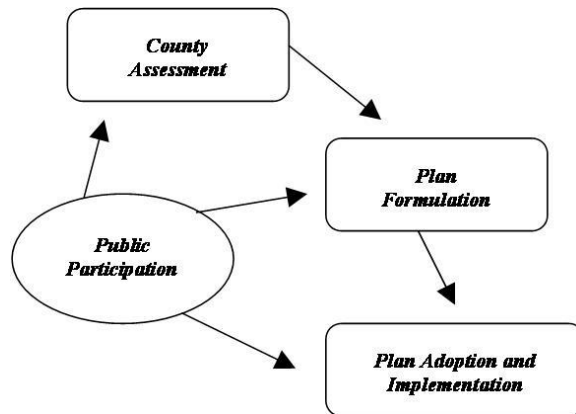
Dakota County based the goals and objectives of the plan on equality for all. The county's efforts were justified by sponsoring general public meetings and working closely with the media to invite all citizens living and/or working in the region to participate. Telephone numbers and mailing addresses were available to anyone wanting to speak confidentially to the SIMPCO planners developing the long-term plan.

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COUNTY ASSET ASSESSMENT

The planning process began with an assessment of existing conditions, trends and current needs and issues. The assessment revealed several issues establishing a framework for the plan's priorities. Among Dakota County's most valuable assets are its friendly, hard-working volunteers; educational opportunities; and a visionary county government with trusted leaders who have helped maintain the county's fiscal condition. As the area grows, the county will need to work cooperatively with adjacent counties to take advantage of regional opportunities.

**Figure 1: The Planning Process**



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## PLAN FORMULATION

The plan's goals are intended to promote a fiscally and environmentally responsible growth pattern. The goals include maintaining its focus on commercial and residential development; promoting tourism; sharing services and equipment among its cities; and providing an ample supply of housing options suitable and financially attainable for all residents, whether purchased or rented.

# VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

## OVERVIEW

The Planning Committee for the 2014 Dakota County Comprehensive Plan defined a vision statement. The committee members referred to Dakota County as a rural region with numerous opportunities for growth. The committee agreed the county residents could enhance the future by maintaining a culture of working together to solve problems and launching new initiatives to make Dakota County a better place to live.

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## MISSION STATEMENT

Dakota County is “home” to its businesses, organizations and people. Dakota County provides residents, visitors, and the business community excellent county services in a capable, economic, and considerate manner and develops quality of life through planning and visionary leadership.

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## VISION STATEMENT

Dakota County will strive to preserve its character and identity while guiding the creation of compatible new developments; protecting the environment; encouraging diversity, and offering opportunities for a safe and prosperous life.

# I. DAKOTA COUNTY – LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

## FUTURE LAND USE

Determining future land use is a key component of the Comprehensive Plan in establishing growth management plan and policies. The purpose of the Dakota County Future Land Use map is to serve as a guide in prioritizing the locations where key businesses and industries will be encouraged to locate and coordinate provisions of transportation, utilities and other support services. Dakota County's goals that should be considered when making decisions on future use of land include:

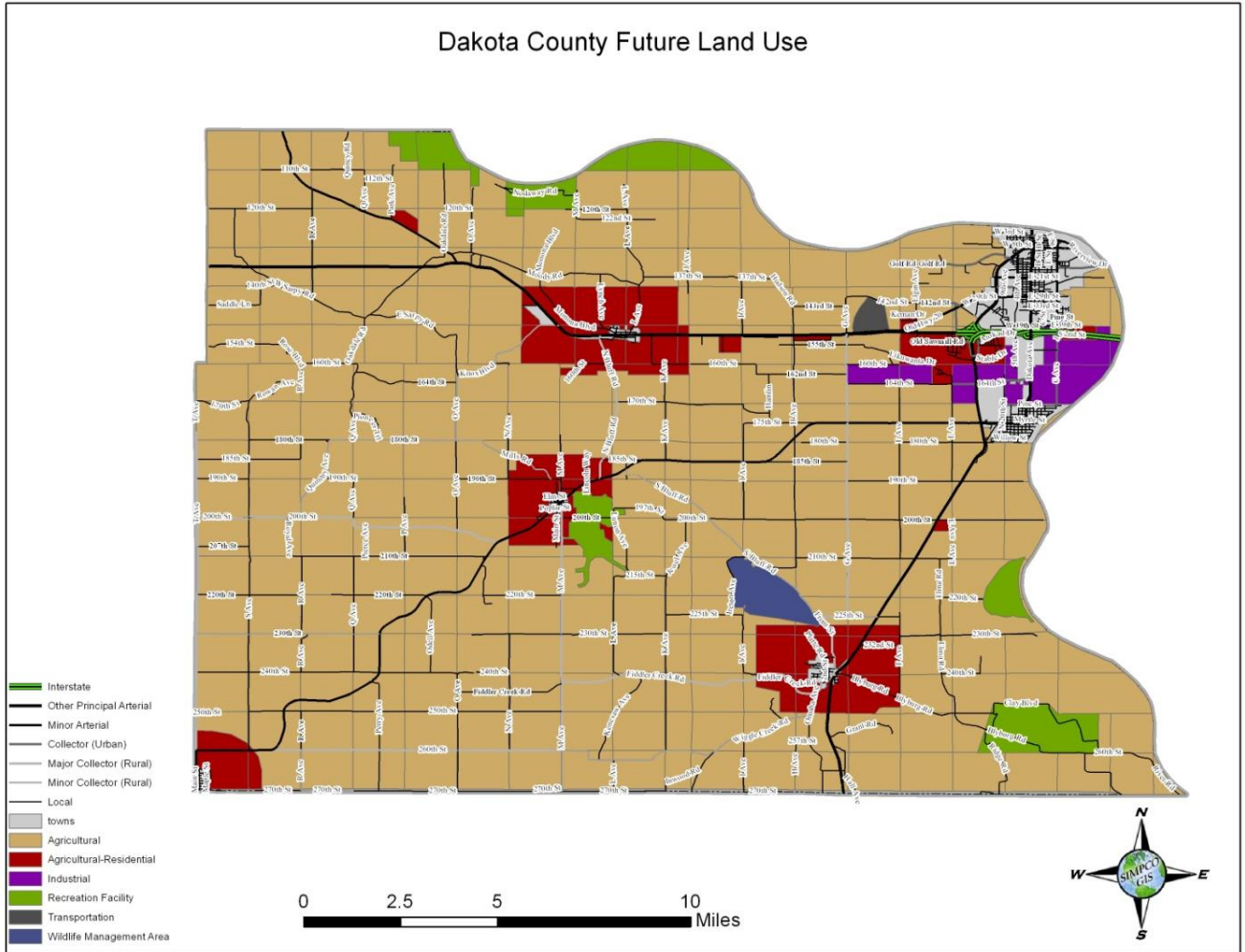
- Agricultural Preservation - preservation of the county's primary industry.
- Designate land use surrounding existing business and industry as a compliment to those industries.
- Plan for recreational and open/space areas
- Prevent land use conflicts

**Map 3** shows the future land use map for Dakota County. Much of the land use on the future land use plan is the same as the existing land use plan. However, the cities of Dakota City and South Sioux City plan to rezone the area below U.S. Highway 20 between Dakota City and the Missouri River to industrial. There are also plans to create a bypass from U.S. Highway 20 to connect to C Avenue.

Dakota City also plans to add industrial development to the west of F Avenue between 160<sup>th</sup> Street and 164<sup>th</sup> Street that will abut U.S. Highway 110, which has access to rail.

The Papio-Missouri River Natural Resource District is in the midst of creating the Hubbard Recreational Area, which lies to the south of 200<sup>th</sup> Street and east of M Avenue.

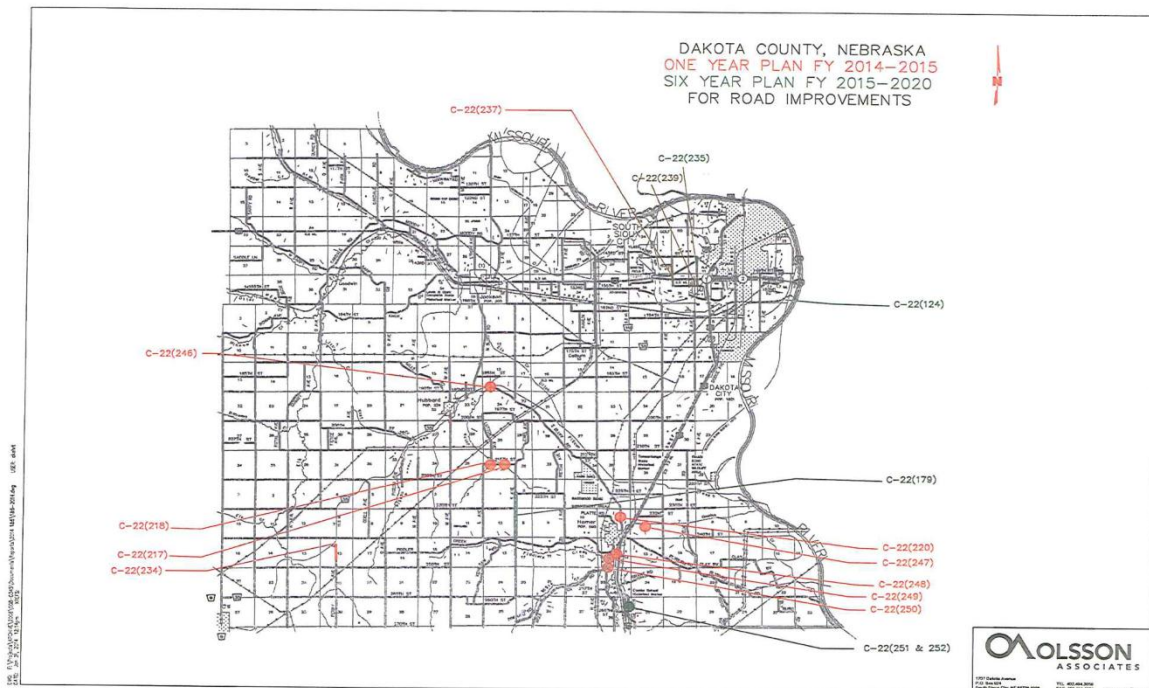
**Map 3: Future Land Use**



## TRANSPORTATION

Transportation facilities and the land uses associated with them are integral to the function of all communities. The degree to which choices of transportation modes are available to residents may have a profound effect on the quality of life locally and regionally. Transportation improvements, including road enhancements and bridge replacements, are also illustrated in **Map 4**. In addition, another long range transportation project is the completion of a four-lane U.S. Highway 20.

### **Map 4: Dakota County - 1 and 6 Year Road Improvements Map**



**Table 7:**

**ONE & SIX YEAR  
ROAD IMPROVEMENT PLAN  
DAKOTA COUNTY, NEBRASKA**

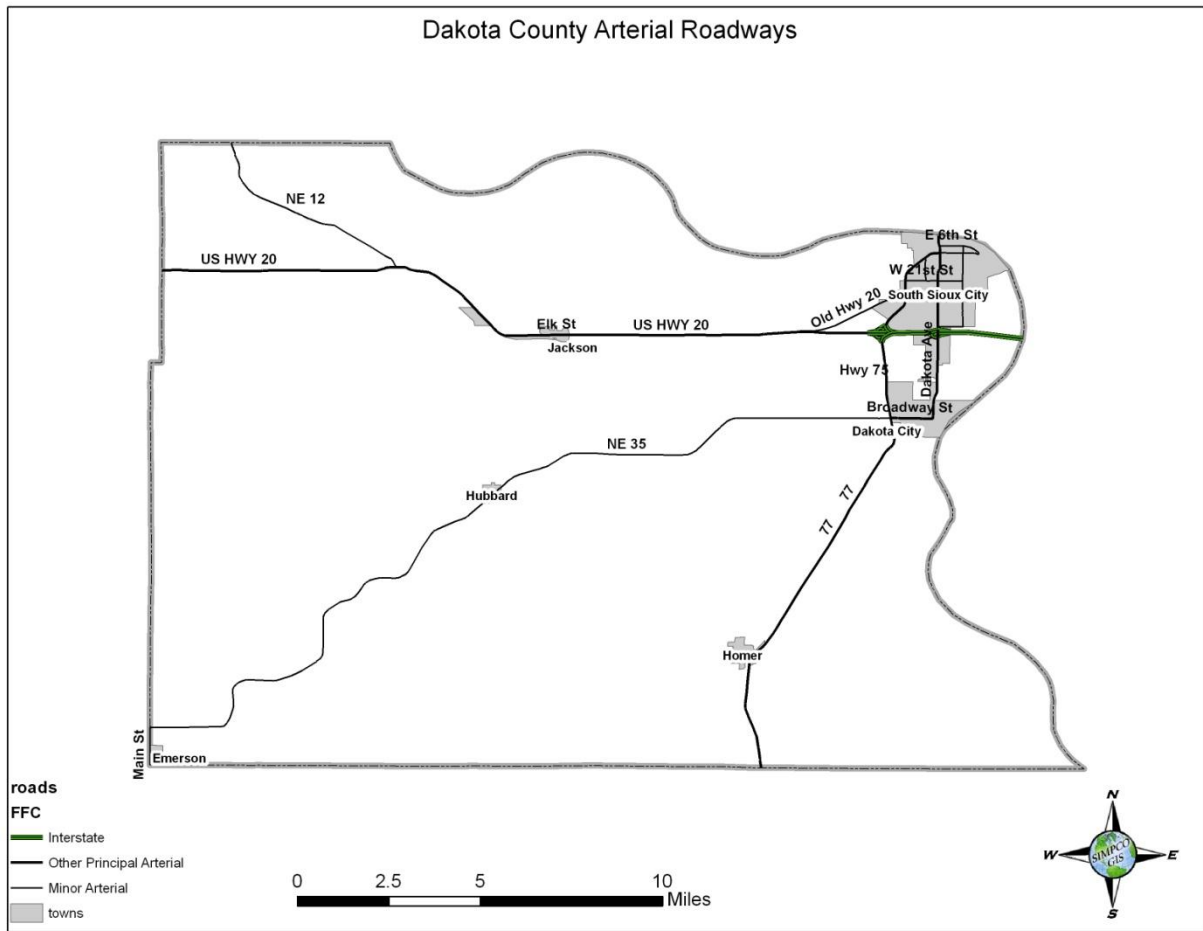
PRIORITY NO.	PROJECT NO.	FISCAL YEAR	IMPROVEMENTS	ESTIMATED COST
1	C-22(237)	2014	Asphalt existing gravel road from Elgin Avenue between Highway 20 and Old Highway 20. 0.1 miles	\$ 57,000.00
2	C-22(234)	2014	Grade and gravel Perry Avenue from Highway 35 South 0.4 miles	\$ 15,000.00
3	C-22(247)	2014	Fiddler Creek Road concrete paving Section 14 & 15, T-27-N, R-8-E 1,600ft	\$ 97,000.00
4	C-22(246)	2014	Replace Bridge #C002221715P S Bluff Rd Section 13, T-28-N, R-7-E 1,000ft	\$ 210,000.00
5	C-22(248)	2014	Overlay on Omaha Ave from Fiddler Creek Rd to Wigle Creek Rd. Section 14, T-27-N, R-8-E 0.7 miles	\$ 80,000.00
6	C-22(249)	2014	Overlay on Fiddler Creek Rd. city limits to existing pavement. Section 14, T-27-N, R-8-E 0.6 miles	\$ 75,000.00
7	C-22(250)	2014	Overlay on Wigle Creek Rd west of Omaha Ave to existing gravel. Section 14, T-27-N, R-8-E 431ft	\$ 20,000.00
8	C-22(217)	2014	This project is a road structure on 215th Street located between Jewel Avenue and Lutton Avenue. It is a cost share project between the N.R.D. and Dakota County. The N.R.D. will pay 85% of the construction cost with Dakota County paying 15% of the construction costs, all engineering, signing, graveling, and purchase of Right-of-Way. Dakota County will also be responsible for the 404 and Storm Water permits. Legal description being East 1/2 Section 36, T-29-N, R-7-E. 0.2 miles	\$ 158,000.00
9	C-22(218)	2014	This is a cost share project with the N.R.D. The N.R.D will pay 85% of the construction. Dakota County will be responsible for 15% of the construction costs, all of the engineering, signing, graveling, and all permits. The project is located on Lutton Ave between 200th and 215th Streets with a legal description of N1/2 Section 36 T-28-N, R-7-E. 0.2 miles	\$211,000.00
10	C-22(235)	2015	Asphalt overlay on Lake Avenue South of Old Highway 20. 0.7 miles	\$ 56,000.00
11	C-22(179)	2015	Reconstruct K Avenue from Fiddler Creek Road North 1.5 miles to 225th Street. Grade and gravel. "Squirt" Erickson road between Section 12, T-27-N, R-7-E and Section 8, T-27-N, R-8-E. 1.5 miles	\$ 40,000.00
12	C-22(251)	2015	Replace old drainage system with new cmp on Hall Ave Section 26, 7-27-N, R-8-E 500ft	\$ 30,000.00
13	C-22(252)	2015	Replace old drainage system with new cmp on Hall Ave Section 26, 7-27-N, R-8-E 500ft	\$ 11,000.00
14	C-22(239)	2016	Asphalt overlay on Edwards Avenue North of Old Sawmill Road. 0.2 miles	\$ 29,000.00
15	C-22(124)	2020	New Construction and Right-of-Way purchase for a new by-pass between South Sioux City and Dakota City. Beginning at the Northeast corner of the Southwest 1/4, Northeast 1/4 of Section 34, T-29-N, R-9-E. Riverfront Road, Simpco began environmental study of interchange in 1998, waiting for results of the Highway# 35 study from South Sioux City to Norfolk 2 miles	\$ 800,000.00



## HIGHWAY SYSTEM

Dakota County has a balanced road network consisting of U.S., state, and county highways, rural roads and local streets within municipalities.

### **Map 5: Dakota County Arterial Roadways**



The regional system is anchored by U.S. Highways 20 and 35 running east/west across the county and U.S. Highway 77 running north/south along the eastern side of the county. U.S. Highway 20, the longest road in the United States runs coast to coast from Boston, Mass. to Newport, Ore. In Dakota County it is a principal east – west arterial roadway that serves as the principal thoroughfare to northeast Nebraska from the region. U.S. Highway 35 is another

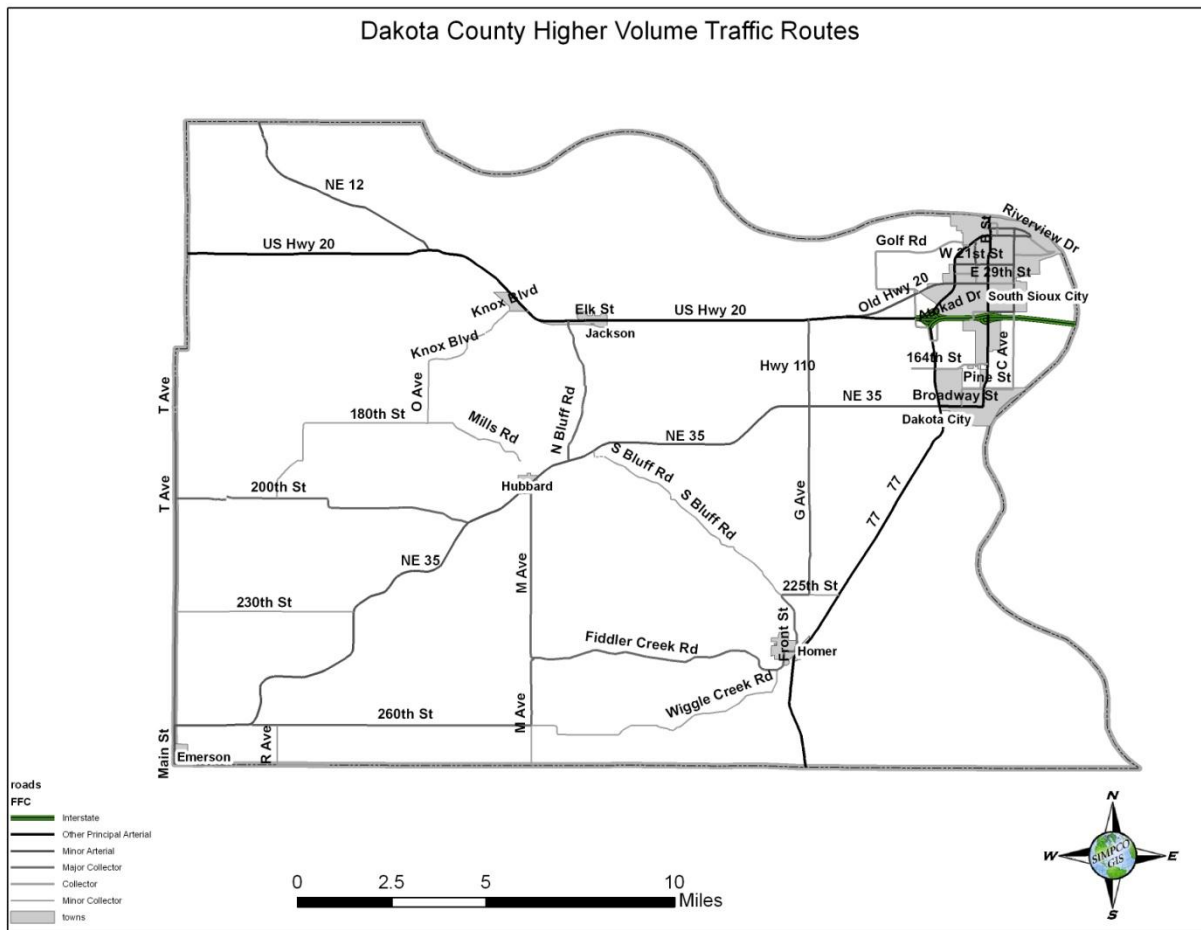


major thoroughfare that has a high volume of truck traffic between South Sioux City and Norfolk.

## RURAL ROADS

Rural roads are vital links in the regional transportation chain, providing access for smaller communities and other rural residents. The 1 and 6 Year Plan does identify specific project proposals, and supports the ongoing maintenance and improvements of rural roads as part of the overall transportation program.

### **Map 6: Dakota County Higher Volume Traffic Routes**

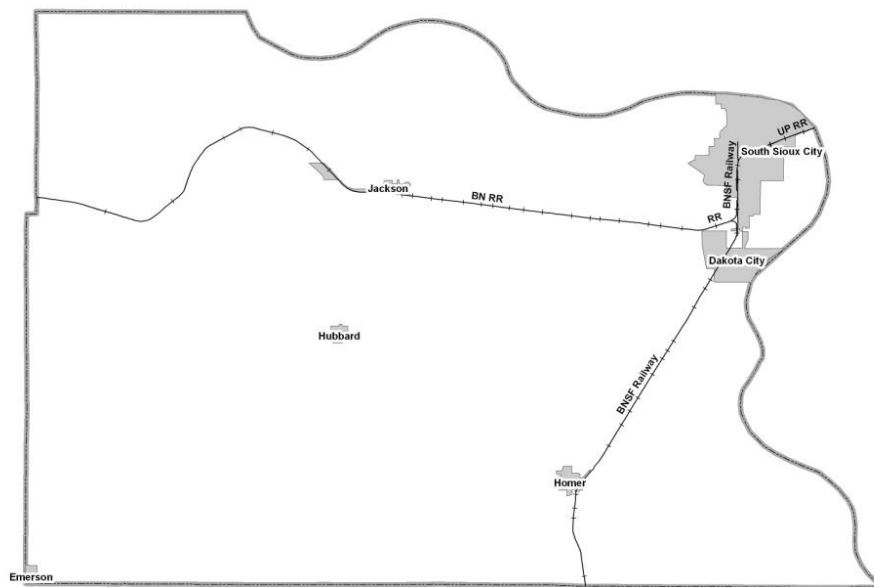


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## RAILROADS

Rail lines also connect Dakota County to the region and the nation. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe railroad serves Dakota County. The line connects west to central Nebraska, north east to Sioux City and south to the Omaha/Council Bluffs area. The primary originating traffic in Dakota County consists of grain which is shipped in many cases to barge trainload terminals, particularly on the Mississippi River or to food processing concerns. Grain products like ethanol, which is shipped to national markets, also represent a growing commodity. Destination traffic includes coal, dairy farm products, edible oils, industrial chemicals, aggregate materials and general merchandise.

### **Map 7: Dakota County Railroads**



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## AIR TRANSPORTATION

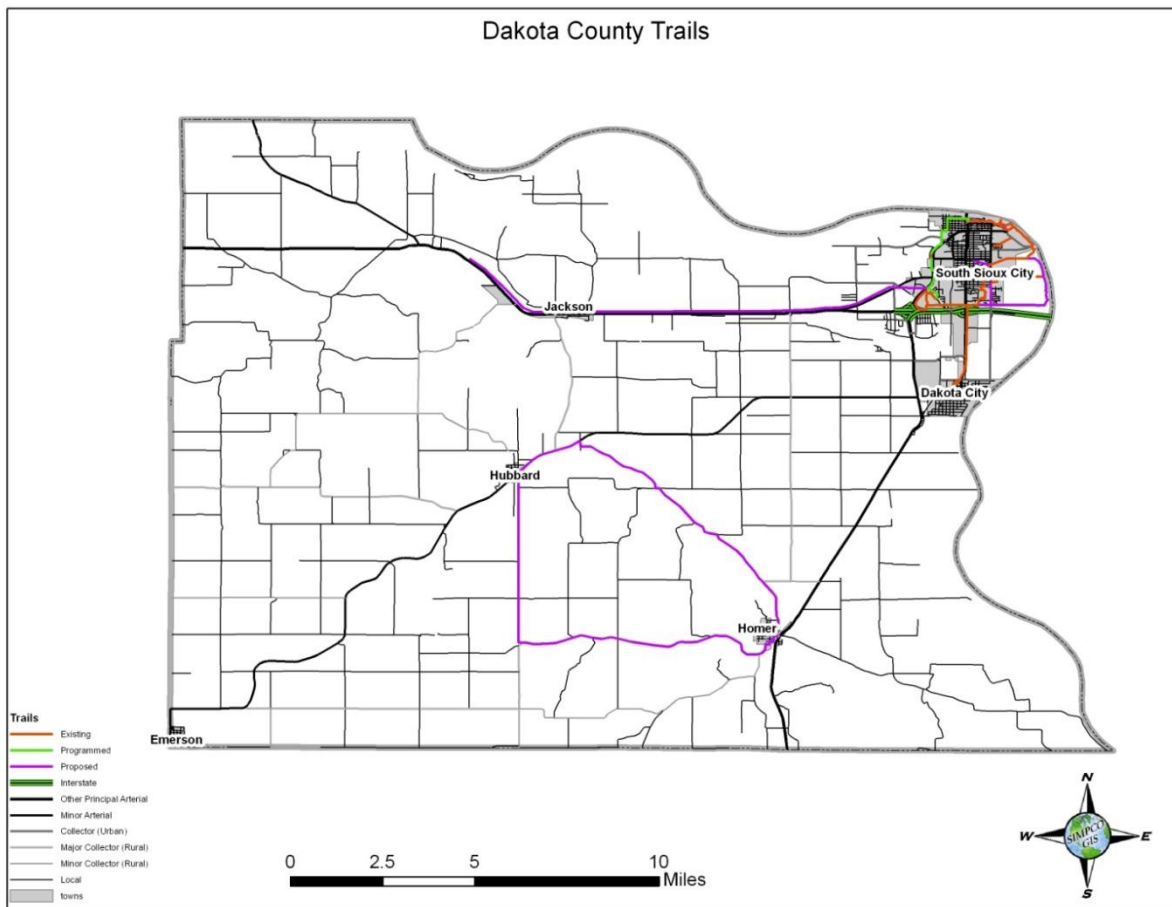
Private air traffic is served by the Martin's Field Airport located to the west of South Sioux City along Highway 20. The Basic Service Airport primarily serves light general aviation aircrafts including single engine 4 - 8 seat planes and generally only have aviation gasoline (100LL) available if fuel is available at all. They generally have limited landing aids and navigational

facilities with a rotating beacon in many cases being the extent of navigational facilities. The Sioux Gateway Airport is another facility located just across the Missouri River in Sioux City.

## BICYCLE/PEDESTRIAN TRAILS

The discussion of bicycle and pedestrian trails are an important element in the land use plan and are also an important part of the transportation network. It is proven to be beneficial for the development of future bicycle/pedestrian trails to be constructed within the transitional agricultural districts. Many of the communities within Dakota County have constructed or are seeking funds to construct bicycle/pedestrian trails. County bicycle/pedestrian trails that follow the main roadways would provide extensive recreational opportunities for cyclists and would connect most of the communities in Dakota County creating a regional network.

**Map 8: Dakota County Trails**



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – LAND USE AND TRANSPORTATION

### **Goal 1: Practice agricultural preservation**

Objective 1: Preserve productive farmland for continued agricultural use.

Objective 2: Protect farm operations from incompatible land uses and activities that may adversely affect capital investment in agricultural land, improvements, equipment, and livestock.

### **Goal 2: Designate land use surrounding existing business and industry as compliant to those industries**

Objective 1: Maintain Dakota County towns' rural character.

Objective 2: Protect and maintain public health, safety, and general welfare.

Objective 3: Reduce and prevent land use conflicts with residents and other land users.

### **Goal 3: Plan for recreational and open space areas**

Objective 1: Increase the use of existing facilities and new facilities that may be developed in the future.

Objective 2: Support cooperative planning to maintain area recreational opportunities for persons of all ages.

Additional objectives and strategies to achieve the goals may be developed among the Dakota County Commissioners, county staff and the economic development leaders.

## II. DAKOTA COUNTY – COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

### OVERVIEW

Well built, relevant and sustainable community facilities and infrastructure are necessary to support the provision of high quality education, fire protection and safety, recreational, cultural, health and other social services.

During the comprehensive planning process, government officials and residents need to agree on future growth areas for each category of land (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial). Once those officials and residents have agreed upon decisions concerning future growth areas, planning for phased improvements to the existing utility systems can proceed and development can be restricted to areas along existing or proposed utility lines in an orderly and efficient manner. The Community Facilities and Services chapter describes current public facilities, resources and opportunities and addresses future planning needs.

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### UTILITIES

Electric power and natural gas are distributed to the communities and rural areas of the county by the following companies: MidAmerican Energy, Northeast Nebraska Public Power District and Nebraska Public Power District. Phone services come from such companies as Long Lines, Verizon, and Qwest. Internet and cable services are provided by Everttek, Cable One, and Long Lines. Northeast Nebraska Telephone Company serves the villages of Jackson and Hubbard and a large rural area. They also provide internet and cable.

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### WATER AND INTER-MODAL FACILITIES

Both barge and inter-modal facilities are available in Sioux City, just across the Missouri River from South Sioux City.

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## COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Dakota County Government is managed by an elected Board of Commissioners. The Dakota County Courthouse is located in Dakota City. County elective offices include: County Assessor, County Clerk/Register of Deeds/Election Commissioner, Clerk of District Court, County Sheriff, County Attorney, Public Defender and County Treasurer. Other offices are Road Department, Health Department, Veterans Service, Extension, Jail, Building and Grounds, and Planning and Zoning.

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## EMERGENCY SERVICES/FIRE DEPARTMENT

Dakota County is protected by the Dakota County Sheriff's Department and Dakota County Emergency Management. The Sheriff's Department houses one Sheriff, 13 highly trained deputies, and two K-9 units plus an investigator.

All cities located in Dakota County have their own volunteer fire departments, except for South Sioux City, which employs two fulltime fire fighters. Each department has their own staff of firemen and firefighting vehicles. The county has contracted with Sioux City Fire Department Emergency Management effective January, 2014, to provide a HAZMAT team, should the need arise.

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## HEALTH SERVICES

Professional health care is widely available throughout the county. The following medical facilities are located in or near Dakota County:

- Mercy Medical Center and Unity Point St. Luke's Hospital are both located in Sioux City. Both hospitals offer a variety of services that include ambulance, bone densitometry, cardiac/pulmonary rehabilitation, CT scan, chemotherapy, echocardiogram, event monitoring, holter monitoring, IV therapy, laboratory, lifeline, mammography, Meals on Wheels, MRI, nuclear medicine, nutritional, pathology, pharmacy, pulmonary function testing, radiology, respiratory therapy, sleep studies, stress testing, therapy services, ultrasound and wound care.

Levels of care available include: adult/pediatric acute care, emergency care, outpatient care, family birthing center, home health care, Hospice care, inn (custodial) care, same day surgery and skilled care. Specialty clinics available include: cardiac clinic, ear, nose, throat clinic/surgery, nephrology clinic, OB/GYN clinic, oncology/hematology clinic, ophthalmology clinic/surgery, podiatry clinic/surgery, psychiatric, pulmonary clinic, urology clinic/surgery and vascular clinic. Educational opportunities available include: babysitting classes, childbirth education classes, community education classes, continuing education of nurses, CPR classes, diabetic education programs, farm safety, first aid classes, growth after loss, Hospice volunteers, patient education, tobacco cessation classes, Reach-to-Recovery and stroke club. Mercy Air Care, is housed in Mercy Medical Center, and provides critically ill and injured patients who need acute care with the fastest possible transportation. Since the service was founded in May 1987, Mercy Air Care has logged more than 8,300 medical flights.

- Family Health Care of Siouxland is located in South Sioux City. Services include General Medical Care, Preventative Health Care, Adult and Geriatric Care, Gynecological Services, Obstetric Care, Newborn, Pediatric and Adolescent Care, Minor Emergencies, Minor Procedures, Vasectomy, Endoscopy (offered as an outpatient procedure at the hospital), Laboratory Services, Radiology services, School Physicals, Inpatient Hospital Care, EKG Services, Hospice Care, Treadmill, Orthopedic Care, Emotional Health, DEXA Bone Density Study, Ultrasound, Open MRI, CT, and Sleep Studies.
- Mercy Medical Clinic has locations in South Sioux City and Emerson. Services include general family practice medical care, well child exams/immunizations, pediatrics, geriatrics, gynecology, obstetrics, minor surgery procedures, fracture care, radiology, and laboratory services.
- The Dakota County Health Department has two Registered Nurses that are able to assist the community with Child and Adult Vaccination clinics weekly. The Department also provides Home Healthcare Services to the older residents of Dakota County that strive

to remain within their homes. Educational material is offered on a variety of health topics, including diabetes, hypertension, and nutrition/cholesterol is available.

Chiropractic services are also available throughout the county. Offices are located in South Sioux City and Dakota City. Dakota County residents also have access to chiropractic services in Sioux City and Wayne.

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## RETIREMENT/CARE FACILITIES

Dakota County is home to several senior care and assisted living facilities. These housing options enable seniors to live in the communities they have called home, while still receiving expert care and services for a long and healthy life.

The following are retirement/care facilities in Dakota County: Regency Square Senior Living, South Sioux City; Matney's Colonial Manor, South Sioux City; Heritage of Emerson, Emerson.

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## SOCIAL SERVICES

The citizens of Dakota County also have access to several social services in Sioux City, Iowa, including: Siouxland Regional Transit System (SRTS), Jackson Recovery Centers, the Council on Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence (CSADV) (a branch of the Mid-Sioux Opportunity and a Community Action Agency). Daycare facilities are located in Dakota City and South Sioux City, with other childcare services located in private homes throughout the county.

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## RECREATIONAL AND CULTURAL SERVICES

The communities of Dakota County offer a myriad of recreational and cultural opportunities including parks and nature areas, community events, theatre, and fairs. Some of those are:

- *Norm Waitt, Sr. YMCA*

The Norm Waitt, Sr. YMCA was built in 2008 on the banks of the Missouri River in South Sioux City. The facility houses a lap pool, family pool, gymnasium, fitness center, weight room, and daycare for children of members.



- *South Sioux City Aquaplex*

The South Sioux City Aquaplex is home to a 109-foot figure-8 water slide. The Aquaplex features a 50-meter, 8-lane competition style swimming pool with two diving boards as well as a 40-foot by 40-foot wading pool with fountain.

- *Scenic Park*

Located along the Missouri River, Scenic Park in South Sioux City is a full service, year-round campground with 135 R.V. sites, four cabins, and tent sites. The 133 acre park has a YMCA, tennis court, swimming pool, 5 softball/baseball fields, 15 soccer fields, and miles of walking trails.

- *Combs School*

The Combs School was built in 1857 and closed in 1964. The old frame schoolhouse is part of Nebraska's pioneer heritage. Originally erected in the spring of 1857 at Omadi, 4 miles south of Dakota City, the school shared the town site's peril when the Missouri River began to undermine the area. Since the school faced destruction, it was moved to Thomas Smith's claim, about 2 miles south of Homer. Here, a new school district was organized.

When construction on the Burlington Railroad from Sioux City to Lincoln began, the school was found to be on railroad property. The building was then shifted to its present site near the old Combs mill. School redistricting eliminated the need for the old Combs School, and its doors closed for the last time May 22, 1964.

The board of education of the newly-formed district donated the building to the Dakota County Historical Society, who has set it aside as a monument to the pioneer fathers' belief that, "MEN ARE ENNOBLED BY UNDERSTANDING." Dakota County Historical Society, Historical Landmark Council.

Each May, students and teachers from area schools hold a regular day of school, using a curriculum of the late 1800s. They come dressed, as they would have years ago, bringing their noon lunch in a dinner bucket.

- *O'Connor House*

The O'Connor House is a 14-room mansion located 2 miles east of Homer. Constructed over a 10-year period from 1865-1875, the 14-room mansion was literally built on a rock and was home to Captain Cornelius O'Connor, his wife and 10 children. Stone slabs were shaved and fitted together to form the foundation and then topped with brick. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, it is run by the Dakota County Historical Society. The first two weekends in November, the society hosts an open house and area businesses decorate the house for Christmas.

- *Dakota City Train Depot*

The city of Dakota City was awarded almost \$130,000 for the renovation of the exterior of the former Chicago and Northwestern Railroad Depot. Constructed in 1922, this one-story brick depot building is eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places. This facility was a key link in the Omaha to Minneapolis rail corridor from 1922 until 1957 when it was abandoned. The rails and ties are still located immediately north of the building. It is located one block from the Dakota City Public School and 125 feet from the end of the Dakota City Trail.

- *Dakota County Fair*

The Dakota County Fair is held every year at the end of July. Activities include numerous livestock exhibits, food and beverage vendors, drawings and raffles, and bands. Other entertainments are mud hog wrestling, a queen contest, tractor pull, a demolition derby, talent show, and volleyball tournaments. Residents from all over the county come to enjoy food, entertainment, and each other.

- *Tonwantonga Wayside Exhibit*

The Tonwantonga Marker is located on U.S. Highway 77. Two miles north of Homer, the interpretive site marks the location of the Omaha Indian town of Tonwantonga.

- *Lewis and Clark Wayside*

Located on the bluffs of the Missouri River, about three miles from where the expedition had their longest encampment, and about 4 miles from where they caught over 1,300 fish in one day. This outlook commemorates the historic discovery and provides a breathtaking view of the beautiful Missouri River.

- *Al Bengston Bike Trail*

Al Bengston Bike Trail connects South Sioux City to the Tri-State Trail, which connects Iowa, South Dakota and Nebraska. It runs from Veterans' Bridge through Scenic Park, residential areas, Cardinal Park and Crystal Cove. The most recent addition includes 2.5 miles along Dakota Avenue to Dakota City, and 1 mile heading east on 29th St. toward the Missouri River.

- *Cottonwood Cove Park*

A 4.5-acre park located on the banks of the Missouri River in Dakota City, Cottonwood Cove Park features a public boat ramp, camping, and shelter.

- *Crystal Cove Park*

A beautiful park located on the southwest corner of South Sioux, Crystal Cove is a 60-acre park with lake, 1.5-mile bike/hike trail, nature trails, fishing and shelter for rent. The park is home to over 200 species of birds and wildlife. Bird watching is a favorite activity of visitors to this park. The lake is stocked three times yearly with fish for summer and ice fishing.

- *Cobra Sports Dome*

The Cobra Sports Dome is a multi-purpose sport facility for families, business travelers and golfers of all levels. Over 44,000 square feet of space accommodates an indoor driving range or can be used for exhibits and sporting events such as soccer, football, volleyball, softball and baseball. Enjoy indoor climate controlled golfing on a realistic “fiberbuilt” hitting surface, 32 tees, a complimentary putting green and a full range of club selection for your practice needs.

- *Riverview Complex*

Riverview Complex is home to five baseball/softball fields, 2- 300-foot fields & 3- 200-foot fields, batting cage facilities, press box with concessions, and restrooms. Home to Cardinal Little League, SSC girls softball and have hosted many State and regional softball and baseball tournaments. All fields are agri-lime and 3 fields are lit, two- 200-foot and one 300-foot.

- *Jeffery C. Dible Soccer Fields*

Home Complex is home to the Siouxland Soccer Foundation. It has 15 full-size fields that can be converted to varying sizes. The soccer complex sits right along the bank of the Missouri River and Al Bengston Trail.

- *Kramper Lake/Danish Alps State Recreation Area, Hubbard*

The projected park opening is Summer, 2015. The site will be managed by the Nebraska Games & Parks Commission. The recreation area includes 226 surface-acres of water and 520 acres of park land. Recreational opportunities will include “no wake” boating, 5 miles of hiking and biking trails, 10 miles of equestrian trails and separate RV campgrounds, equestrian campgrounds and tent campgrounds as well as 3 day-use picnic areas. There will be great fishing, including a handicap accessible fishing pier, jetties and off-shore breakwaters to protect the shoreline and improve angler access. The site is uniquely suited to mountain biking. Coordination with regional mountain

biking associations resulted in the incorporation of two single-track mountain biking trails. The final trail design will be coordinated with the associations who are hoping to hold yearly sanctioned meets at the site.

- *Freedom Park*

Freedom Park features a 250-foot black granite Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall which is the only replica that duplicates the original design in Washington, D.C. The granite for it came from the same quarry in India as that used for the original memorial.

The wall's completion opens the first phase of the \$4 million, 55-acre park—dedicated to those who have served and died for their country. Organizers hope to break ground the summer of 2014 on a 12,000-square-foot interpretive center.

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## CHURCHES

Dakota County is home to many churches and religious associations. These centers of faith serve as spiritual and social hubs for these small Iowa cities, helping to preserve and maintain the caring and helpful Midwestern approach to life.

Each city in Dakota County has at least one church. South Sioux City Churches include: Eastside Baptist Church, The Evangelical Church, First Lutheran Church, First Presbyterian Church, Glad Tidings Lighthouse, Hope Lutheran Church, Living Waters EFC, River Hills Church Assembly of God, St. Michael's Catholic Church, St. Paul United Methodist Church, Siouxland Community Bible Church, Tri-State Christian Church, Centro Cristiano Nueva Esperanza, Iglesia Pentecostas Jesuscristo el Buen Pastor, Oblate Apostles of the Two Hearts and Primera Iglesia Bautista Hispana. Dakota City houses the United Methodist Church. Salem Lutheran Church is located in rural Dakota County at the intersection of Highways 110 and 35. St. Luke's Lutheran Church, Sacred Heart Catholic Church and St. Paul's Lutheran Church are located in Emerson. Homer is home to St. Cornelius Catholic Church, United Methodist Church and St. Paul's Lutheran Church. Hubbard has Trinity Lutheran Church and St. Mary's Catholic Church. Jackson is home to St. Patrick's Catholic Church.

Emmanuel Lutheran Church is one of the oldest churches in Dakota County. Built in 1860, this is the first Lutheran church in the Nebraska Territory. The Vespers Service is held annually in August at the church in Dakota City.

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#### SOCIAL AND BUSINESS CLUBS

Many national social and business clubs have active chapters in Dakota County. These club and organizations provide the county with entertaining and useful social activities, including fundraising, entertainment for all ages, and opportunities to interact with residents from all over the county. Such organizations include: American Business Women c/o Regency Square Care Center, American Legion, 4-H Clubs, International Order of Rainbow Girls, Kiwanis, Rotary Club, Chamberettes, Friends of the Library, Eagles, Eastern Star, Masonic Lodge, Moose, Firemen’s Auxiliary, Library Board, Music Boosters, Optimists, Athletic Boosters, Dolphins, and Veterans of Foreign War.

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#### ANNUAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

Annual activities and events include the Cardinal Days, Cottonwood Days, Homer Days, Hubbard Days, Cinco de Mayo, and Mighty Mo 8K Run/Walk.

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#### LIBRARIES

Three cities in Dakota County have a library and library services. Libraries include: the South Sioux City Public Library, the Dakota City Public Library, and Emerson Public Library. Each library is amply stocked with older and modern literature. Most of the libraries contain records and items of historical and cultural significance to the cities and the county. Several of the libraries have their own website. All facilities give citizens access to educational resources and the internet.

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#### EDUCATION

Several quality school districts serve the residents of Dakota County. Exhibit A lists Dakota County School Districts (schools, grades served, location, and number of students).

**Table 8: Dakota County School Districts through Grade 12 - 2012-2013 School Year**

<b>South Sioux City Community School District</b>			
<b>School</b>	<b>Grades</b>	<b>Address</b>	<b>Students</b>
SSC Preschool	Pre	SSC	251
SSC Elementary	K-5th	SSC	1,554
<i>--Cardinal (391)</i>			
<i>--Covington (391)</i>			
<i>--Dakota City (200)</i>			
<i>--Harney (341)</i>			
<i>--Lewis &amp; Clark (231)</i>			
SSC Middle	6-8th	SSC	825
SSC High	9-12th	SSC	1,174
Total			3,804
<b>Homer Community School District</b>			
Homer School	Pre-12th	Homer	419
<b>Emerson-Hubbard Community School District</b>			
E-H School	PK-12th	Emerson	230

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

**Goal 1: Efficiently provide and fund equitable, adequate public services necessary to satisfy the needs of current and future populations.**

Objective 1: Provide police and fire department training, and apply for funding such as FEMA grants to help offset the cost of needed equipment, training and vehicles.

Objective 2: Target unstable or declining neighborhoods, unincorporated areas, and business areas for revitalization through partnerships between the city, housing and economic development groups and private property owners. Seek funding where available.

Objective 3: Adequately plan for both natural and man-made hazardous events, and utilize the applicable Hazard Mitigation Plan to help prioritize necessary improvements.

**Goal 2: Maintain or expand public facilities.**

Objective 1: Research ways to find funding for affordable transportation. Explore public transit to Dakota City, including Tyson and BPI.

Objective 2: Open a public library in every community.

Objective 3: Provide free Internet capabilities in public facilities.

**Goal 3: Guide growth in the most efficient and cost effective manner possible.**

Objective 1: Encourage residential designs that facilitate walking and bicycling rather than increasing reliance on automobiles.



Objective 2: Reserve sufficient land to accommodate projected residential and non-residential development in unincorporated areas that have or can readily be provided with adequate services.

Objective 3: Implement purchase options on areas of land available for industrial use.

Objective 4: Research and implement more involved and encompassing county wide recycling, reduction and reuse programs.

### III. DAKOTA COUNTY – NATURAL RESOURCES

The Natural Resources chapter highlights the unique features, which define Dakota County's landscape and culture. The natural features are important assets to the community and are valued by residents. As Dakota County continues to develop, it is important to recognize and preserve the natural resources by finding a useful and appropriate balance between fabricated and natural environments.

To ensure Dakota County's natural resources are protected, the comprehensive plan addresses a number of land use and environmental standards that should be maintained to prevent destruction of these resources. In developing additional regulations, the county should take flood control and storm water management into consideration while planning for development. The county plans to protect its natural resources by following the following broad strategies:

1. Promote conservation of key natural resources and open space areas.
2. Establish a balance between the protection of natural resources and future residential, commercial and industrial development.
3. Facilitate development in areas with environmental resources to use site and building designs that embrace sustainable practices.
4. Facilitate development of river areas utilizing environmentally friendly and sustainable design and practice.
5. Promote strategies and best practices for energy conservation and preventing pollution of the land, water and air.
6. Partner with and support environmental organizations that promote green building practices and standards.

Dakota County anticipates the eventual development of the river area and unincorporated land for tourism, housing, and business. The development plans will utilize environmentally friendly

methods that will protect the natural resource and provide the county a source for recreation, tourism and economic development. The county also plans to protect other natural resources, including protecting the community from flooding and implementing wastewater management planning.

## PHYSICAL ASSESSMENT

The natural environment is one of the community's most viable and valuable resources. Decisions affecting growth and development will have long-term impacts on the condition of these resources for future generations. The county's over-riding challenge is to provide for the needs of residents and businesses as the community grows, while protecting these valuable natural assets. Key natural resource concerns addressed in the comprehensive plan are:

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### WATER QUALITY

Dakota County has an abundance of water; however, this resource is threatened by potential contamination resulting from agricultural runoff.

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### WILDLIFE CONSERVATION AREAS

While farmland dominates the landscape around Dakota County, there are numerous natural set-aside areas that provide recreational, environmental and aesthetic benefits.

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### AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION

Dakota County is surrounded by valuable farmland. Federal and state recommendations indicate municipalities should reduce conversion of valuable farmland. Small towns, however, can find such recommendations challenging, as the communities have no infill areas. Dakota County does plan to expand in the future and has no other choice than to convert farmland to accommodate residential, commercial and industrial growth, all factors in economic development and sustainability. The county does plan to convert as little farmland as possible to accommodate such growth.

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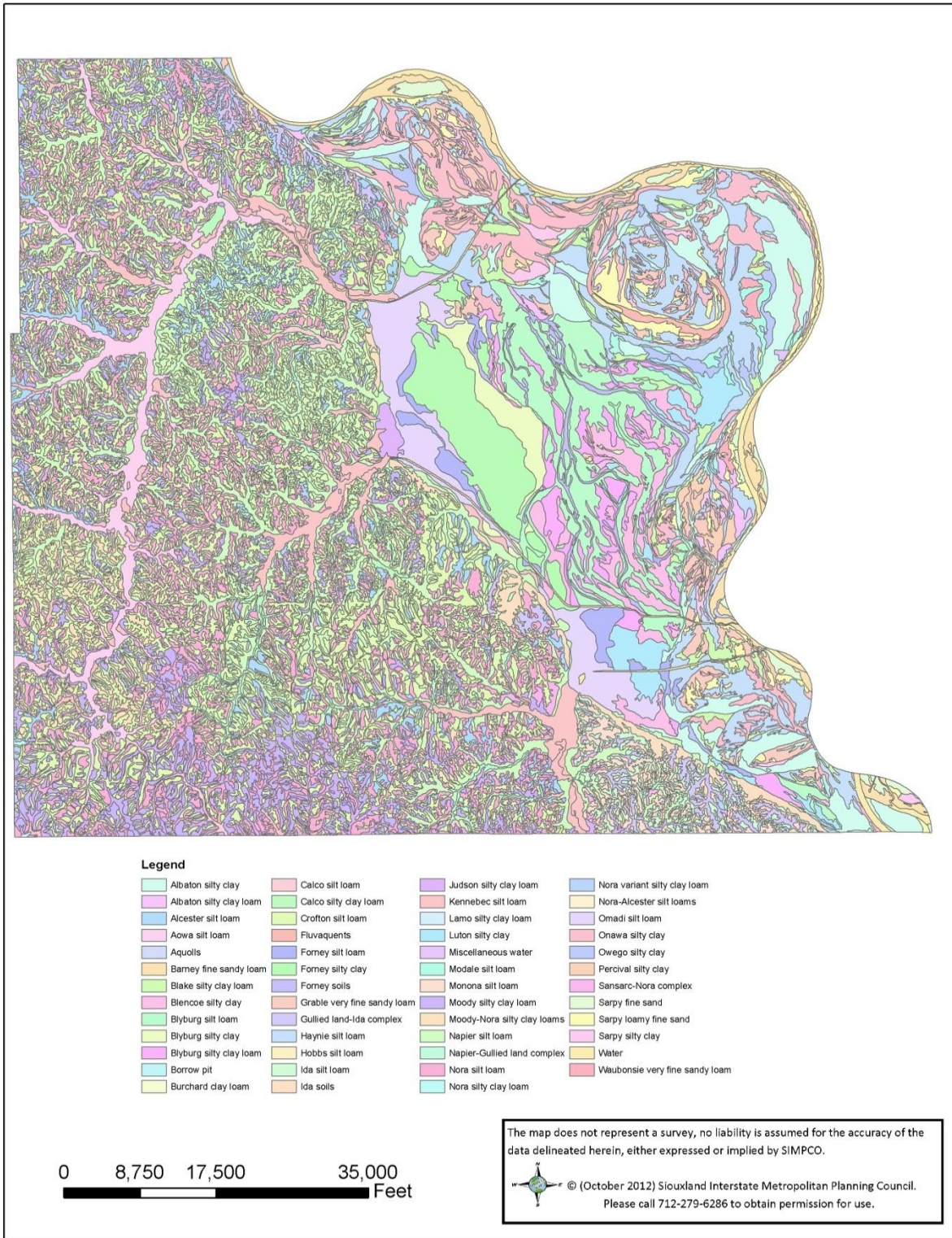
## TOPOGRAPHY AND SOILS

Most of the soils in Dakota County formed under grass, though some of the soils on uplands along bluffs formed partly under deciduous trees. The most common parent material of the uplands is Peoria loess. Sedimentary bedrock outcrops in the bluff area. Soils on the bottom lands that formed in alluvium make up about 45 percent of the county. The suitability of a soil for crops depends primarily on texture, structure, slope, content of organic matter, and drainage. Range of use is more limited on sandy soils or on the steep silty soils that erode easily if cultivated. Poorly drained soils cannot be used satisfactorily for cultivated crops until drainage is improved. The first soil survey of Dakota County was made in 1919.

The soils associations in Dakota are:

1. *Nora-Crofton-Moody Association* Well drained, gently sloping to steep, silty on uplands.
2. *Moody-Judson-Crofton Association* Well-drained, gently sloping to moderately sloping, silty soils on uplands and foot slopes.
3. *Crofton-Nora-Napier Association* Well drained, gently sloping to steep, silty soils on bluffs, uplands, and foot slopes.
4. *Omadi-Kennebec-Napier Association* Moderately well drained and well drained, nearly level to gently sloping, silty soils on bottom lands and foot slopes.
5. *Forney Association* Poorly drained, nearly level, clayey soils on bottomlands.
6. *Blyburg-Blencoe-Luton Association* Moderately well drained to poorly drained, nearly level, silty and clayey soils on high bottomlands.
7. *Haynie-Albaton-Onawa Association* Moderately well drained to poorly drained, nearly level, silty and clayey soils on low bottom lands adjacent to the Missouri River.
8. *Ida-Monona Association* Well drained, moderately sloping to very steep, silty soils on bluffs and uplands.

**Map 9: Dakota County Soils**



Source: Natural Resources Conservation Service

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – NATURAL RESOURCES

### **Goal 1: Protect and restore natural resources such as woodlands, woodland interiors, wetlands, waterways, wildlife habitat, meadows and ground water.**

Objective 1: Develop a plan to identify and ensure long-range protection of natural resources and environmentally sensitive areas through effective development regulations and ordinances

Objective 2: Preserve natural resources to enhance water quality, air quality and quality of life.

Objective 3: Continue to promote zoning and land development ordinances that place a high priority on preserving the natural resources of the County, such that the identification of the type, extent, and location of specific environmental features should guide where development occurs within the County.

### **Goal 2: Preserve Active Farmlands**

Objective 1: Protect existing farmland from development pressures for as long as the farmer wants to maintain use.

Objective 2: Explore programs, such as the Conservation Reserve Program, that seek to maintain prime soils and cropland.

Objective 3: Encourage development to occur in areas that are easily served with utilities and public services.

**Goal 3: Continue to Promote and Support the Hubbard Recreational Area Project.**

Objective 1: Meet annually with Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) on Hubbard Lake progress.

Objective 2: Work with NRCS on project plans and implementation.

**Goal 4: Continue to Promote and Support Keep Northeast Nebraska Beautiful (KNNB).**

Objective 1: Continue to have a commissioner serve as a board member of KNNB.

Objective 2: Support KNNB financially, as needed.

## IV. DAKOTA COUNTY – HOUSING

Housing is a dominant form of development in Dakota County. An estimated 72 percent of Dakota County’s current housing is residential. The housing supply plays an important role in shaping the communities and the county. To a large degree, the size, form and type of housing units determines who lives in Dakota County. The quality and character of Dakota County neighborhoods play an important role in shaping the identity of the community and its stature as a place to live in the Siouxland area.

Including housing policies and initiatives in the comprehensive plan is appropriate. The housing needs of a county are not completely met by private market forces, land use planning and land use controls. County plans and ordinance controls create the framework for private land development; land development is almost universally profit driven. Private market forces need to be supplemented by programs and funding sources bridging the financial gaps of providing housing for segments of the community that cannot afford market-rate housing. Accordingly, the plan can assist in identifying housing needs and providing a foundation for local decision making to guide residential development and redevelopment efforts in Dakota County.

### CHARACTERISTICS OF THE EXISTING HOUSING SUPPLY

#### GENERAL HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS

Three trends are taking place in Nebraska, as well as in other states: an increase in the number of householders 65 years old and older, female head of household families, and non-family households. Dakota County follows the trends, although the rate of growth in these sectors is minimal. The following principles should guide the county in its effort to strengthen, expand and improve Dakota County’s housing stock.

In Dakota County, owner-occupied housing units comprise 63.9 percent of the total occupied units. The percentage is lower than Woodbury County’s 68.4 and Nebraska’s 72.9 percent. The national rate is 66.9 percent for owner-occupied housing units.



The vacancy rate in Dakota County was 5.4 percent according to the 2010 American Community Survey (U.S. Census). A 5.0 percent vacancy rate is considered desirable to ensure housing is always available and Dakota County has an adequate number of vacant housing units. Dakota County should be aware that continued development of housing should be addressed to attract new families to move into the communities.

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VALUE

Table 1 shows the value of owner-occupied residential properties in Dakota County according to the 2009-2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census data. Over 50 percent of Dakota County’s owner-occupied housing stock has a value between \$150,000 and \$499,999

**Table 9: Dakota County, Nebraska Value of housing 2009-2011 American Community Survey, U.S. Census**

Value	Units	Percent
Total:	4,775	
Less than \$10,000	84	1.76%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	13	0.27%
\$15,000 to \$19,999	77	1.61%
\$20,000 to \$24,999	68	1.42%
\$25,000 to \$29,999	34	0.71%
\$30,000 to \$34,999	36	0.75%
\$35,000 to \$39,999	43	0.90%
\$40,000 to \$49,999	181	3.79%
\$50,000 to \$59,999	73	1.53%
\$60,000 to \$69,999	271	5.68%
\$70,000 to \$79,999	480	10.05%
\$80,000 to \$89,999	453	9.49%

Value	Units	Percent
\$90,000 to \$99,999	409	8.57%
\$100,000 to \$124,999	747	15.64%
\$125,000 to \$149,999	491	10.28%
\$150,000 to \$174,999	485	10.16%
\$175,000 to \$199,999	230	4.82%
\$200,000 to \$249,999	303	6.35%
\$250,000 to \$299,999	139	2.91%
\$300,000 to \$399,999	120	2.51%
\$400,000 to \$499,999	20	0.42%
\$500,000 to \$749,999	4	0.08%
\$750,000 to \$999,999	0	0.00%
\$1,000,000 or more	14	0.29%

Source: U.S. Census American Factfinder 2009-2011  
American Community Survey

**Table 10: General household characteristics in Dakota County 2009-2011 American Community Survey**

Subject	Dakota County, Nebraska			
	Estimate	Margin of Error	Percent	Percent Margin of Error
HOUSING OCCUPANCY				
Total housing units	7,652	+/-61	7,652	(X)
Occupied housing units	7,301	+/-139	95.4%	+/-1.7
Vacant housing units	351	+/-126	4.6%	+/-1.7

<i>Subject Continued</i>				
<i>HOUSING OCCUPANCY</i>	Estimate	Margin of Error	Percent	Percent Margin of Error
Homeowner vacancy rate	1.9	+/-1.3	(X)	(X)
Rental vacancy rate	3.8	+/-3.3	(X)	(X)
UNITS IN STRUCTURE				
Total housing units	7,652	+/-61	7,652	(X)
1-unit, detached	5,334	+/-278	69.7%	+/-3.5
1-unit, attached	135	+/-76	1.8%	+/-1.0
2 units	154	+/-84	2.0%	+/-1.1
3 or 4 units	341	+/-140	4.5%	+/-1.8
5 to 9 units	202	+/-93	2.6%	+/-1.2
10 to 19 units	404	+/-194	5.3%	+/-2.5
20 or more units	357	+/-116	4.7%	+/-1.5
Mobile home	725	+/-173	9.5%	+/-2.3
Boat, RV, van, etc.	0	+/-74	0.0%	+/-0.3
YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT				
Total housing units	7,652	+/-61	7,652	(X)
Built 2005 or later	199	+/-100	2.6%	+/-1.3
Built 2000 to 2004	199	+/-78	2.6%	+/-1.0
Built 1990 to 1999	1,283	+/-206	16.8%	+/-2.7
Built 1980 to 1989	720	+/-159	9.4%	+/-2.1
Built 1970 to 1979	1,809	+/-230	23.6%	+/-3.0
Built 1960 to 1969	908	+/-190	11.9%	+/-2.5

<i>Subject Continued –</i>				
<i>YEAR STRUCTURE BUILT</i>	Estimate	Margin of Error	Percent	Percent Margin of Error
Built 1950 to 1959	759	+/-171	9.9%	+/-2.2
Built 1940 to 1949	426	+/-128	5.6%	+/-1.7
Built 1939 or earlier	1,349	+/-216	17.6%	+/-2.8
<b>ROOMS</b>				
Total housing units	7,652	+/-61	7,652	(X)
1 room	62	+/-41	0.8%	+/-0.5
2 rooms	240	+/-137	3.1%	+/-1.8
3 rooms	471	+/-145	6.2%	+/-1.9
4 rooms	1,603	+/-250	20.9%	+/-3.2
5 rooms	1,509	+/-216	19.7%	+/-2.8
6 rooms	1,306	+/-233	17.1%	+/-3.0
7 rooms	740	+/-156	9.7%	+/-2.1
8 rooms	845	+/-156	11.0%	+/-2.0
9 rooms or more	876	+/-146	11.4%	+/-1.9
Median rooms	5.5	+/-0.2	(X)	(X)
<b>BEDROOMS</b>				
Total housing units	7,652	+/-61	7,652	(X)
No bedroom	62	+/-41	0.8%	+/-0.5
1 bedroom	656	+/-207	8.6%	+/-2.7
2 bedrooms	2,497	+/-275	32.6%	+/-3.6
3 bedrooms	2,814	+/-282	36.8%	+/-3.7
4 bedrooms	1,173	+/-175	15.3%	+/-2.3
5 or more bedrooms	450	+/-112	5.9%	+/-1.5

<i>Subject</i>				
<i>HOUSING TENURE</i>	Estimate	Margin of Error	Percent	Percent Margin of Error
Occupied housing units	7,301	+/-139	7,301	(X)
Owner-occupied	4,699	+/-283	64.4%	+/-3.8
Renter-occupied	2,602	+/-283	35.6%	+/-3.8
Average household size of owner-occupied unit	3.02	+/-0.12	(X)	(X)
Average household size of renter-occupied unit	2.42	+/-0.18	(X)	(X)
<i>YEAR HOUSEHOLDER MOVED INTO UNIT</i>				
Occupied housing units	7,301	+/-139	7,301	(X)
Moved in 2005 or later	2,962	+/-265	40.6%	+/-3.5
Moved in 2000 to 2004	1,437	+/-225	19.7%	+/-3.1
Moved in 1990 to 1999	1,526	+/-195	20.9%	+/-2.6
Moved in 1980 to 1989	550	+/-106	7.5%	+/-1.4
Moved in 1970 to 1979	535	+/-112	7.3%	+/-1.6
Moved in 1969 or earlier	291	+/-81	4.0%	+/-1.1
<i>VEHICLES AVAILABLE</i>				
Occupied housing units	7,301	+/-139	7,301	(X)
No vehicles available	565	+/-203	7.7%	+/-2.8
1 vehicle available	2,259	+/-246	30.9%	+/-3.3
2 vehicles available	2,572	+/-302	35.2%	+/-4.1
3 or more vehicles available	1,905	+/-191	26.1%	+/-2.6

<i>Subject</i>				Percent Margin of Error
<b>HOUSE HEATING FUEL</b>	Estimate	Margin of Error	Percent	
Occupied housing units	7,301	+/-139	7,301	(X)
Utility gas	3,609	+/-301	49.4%	+/-4.1
Bottled, tank, or LP gas	477	+/-80	6.5%	+/-1.1
Electricity	2,958	+/-311	40.5%	+/-4.1
Fuel oil, kerosene, etc.	50	+/-26	0.7%	+/-0.4
Coal or coke	0	+/-74	0.0%	+/-0.3
Wood	76	+/-25	1.0%	+/-0.3
Solar energy	0	+/-74	0.0%	+/-0.3
Other fuel	69	+/-33	0.9%	+/-0.4
No fuel used	62	+/-68	0.8%	+/-0.9
<b>SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS</b>				
Occupied housing units	7,301	+/-139	7,301	(X)
Lacking complete plumbing facilities	57	+/-54	0.8%	+/-0.7
Lacking complete kitchen facilities	55	+/-55	0.8%	+/-0.8
No telephone service available	329	+/-169	4.5%	+/-2.3
<b>OCCUPANTS PER ROOM</b>				
Occupied housing units	7,301	+/-139	7,301	(X)
1.00 or less	6,945	+/-197	95.1%	+/-2.0
1.01 to 1.50	324	+/-142	4.4%	+/-2.0
1.51 or more	32	+/-24	0.4%	+/-0.3
<b>VALUE</b>				
Owner-occupied units	4,699	+/-283	4,699	(X)
Less than \$50,000	614	+/-168	13.1%	+/-3.3

<i>Subject Continued</i>				
VALUE	Estimate	Margin of Error	Percent	Percent Margin of Error
\$50,000 to \$99,999	1,747	+/-195	37.2%	+/-3.5
\$100,000 to \$149,999	1,115	+/-140	23.7%	+/-3.3
\$150,000 to \$199,999	607	+/-135	12.9%	+/-2.8
\$200,000 to \$299,999	476	+/-131	10.1%	+/-2.7
\$300,000 to \$499,999	127	+/-77	2.7%	+/-1.6
\$500,000 to \$999,999	6	+/-7	0.1%	+/-0.1
\$1,000,000 or more	7	+/-7	0.1%	+/-0.1
Median (dollars)	99,700	+/-4,571	(X)	(X)
MORTGAGE STATUS				
Owner-occupied units	4,699	+/-283	4,699	(X)
Housing units with a mortgage	2,879	+/-254	61.3%	+/-4.0
Housing units without a mortgage	1,820	+/-222	38.7%	+/-4.0
SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS (SMOC)				
Housing units with a mortgage	2,879	+/-254	2,879	(X)
Less than \$300	0	+/-74	0.0%	+/-0.8
\$300 to \$499	11	+/-13	0.4%	+/-0.5
\$500 to \$699	205	+/-79	7.1%	+/-2.6
\$700 to \$999	710	+/-184	24.7%	+/-5.4
\$1,000 to \$1,499	1,303	+/-164	45.3%	+/-5.3
\$1,500 to \$1,999	454	+/-122	15.8%	+/-4.1
\$2,000 or more	196	+/-81	6.8%	+/-2.8
Median (dollars)	1,160	+/-45	(X)	(X)

<i>Subject Continued</i>				
<i>SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS (SMOC)</i>	Estimate	Margin of Error	Percent	Percent Margin of Error
Housing units without a mortgage	1,820	+/-222	1,820	(X)
Less than \$100	0	+/-74	0.0%	+/-1.2
\$100 to \$199	45	+/-36	2.5%	+/-2.0
\$200 to \$299	133	+/-48	7.3%	+/-2.8
\$300 to \$399	568	+/-143	31.2%	+/-6.4
\$400 or more	1,074	+/-178	59.0%	+/-6.5
Median (dollars)	451	+/-35	(X)	(X)
<i>SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME (SMOCAPI)</i>				
Housing units with a mortgage (excluding units where SMOCAPI cannot be computed)	2,879	+/-254	2,879	(X)
Less than 20.0 percent	1,293	+/-176	44.9%	+/-4.6
20.0 to 24.9 percent	585	+/-156	20.3%	+/-5.3
25.0 to 29.9 percent	216	+/-76	7.5%	+/-2.5
30.0 to 34.9 percent	168	+/-76	5.8%	+/-2.6
35.0 percent or more	617	+/-148	21.4%	+/-4.6
Not computed	0	+/-74	(X)	(X)



<i>Subject Continued</i>				
<i>SELECTED MONTHLY OWNER COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME (SMOCAPI)</i>	Estimate	Margin of Error	Percent	Percent Margin of Error
Housing unit without a mortgage (excluding units where SMOCAPI cannot be computed)	1,820	+/-222	1,820	(X)
Less than 10.0 percent	510	+/-125	28.0%	+/-6.5
10.0 to 14.9 percent	683	+/-173	37.5%	+/-7.1
15.0 to 19.9 percent	215	+/-90	11.8%	+/-4.9
20.0 to 24.9 percent	207	+/-94	11.4%	+/-5.0
25.0 to 29.9 percent	115	+/-55	6.3%	+/-3.1
30.0 to 34.9 percent	11	+/-9	0.6%	+/-0.5
35.0 percent or more	79	+/-39	4.3%	+/-2.1
Not computed	0	+/-74	(X)	(X)
GROSS RENT				
Occupied units paying rent	2,429	+/-291	2,429	(X)
Less than \$200	94	+/-78	3.9%	+/-3.2
\$200 to \$299	115	+/-65	4.7%	+/-2.7
\$300 to \$499	485	+/-212	20.0%	+/-7.8
\$500 to \$749	1,109	+/-238	45.7%	+/-8.9
\$750 to \$999	441	+/-148	18.2%	+/-5.8
\$1,000 to \$1,499	173	+/-86	7.1%	+/-3.5
\$1,500 or more	12	+/-18	0.5%	+/-0.8
Median (dollars)	651	+/-31	(X)	(X)
No rent paid	173	+/-73	(X)	(X)

<i>Subject Continued</i>				
<i>GROSS RENT</i>	Estimate	Margin of Error	Percent	Percent Margin of Error
GROSS RENT AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME (GRAPI)				
Occupied units paying rent (excluding units where GRAPI cannot be computed)	2,426	+/-290	2,426	(X)
Less than 15.0 percent	314	+/-111	12.9%	+/-4.6
15.0 to 19.9 percent	410	+/-143	16.9%	+/-5.8
20.0 to 24.9 percent	195	+/-85	8.0%	+/-3.5
25.0 to 29.9 percent	253	+/-119	10.4%	+/-4.6
30.0 to 34.9 percent	412	+/-163	17.0%	+/-5.9
35.0 percent or more	842	+/-205	34.7%	+/-7.5
Not computed	176	+/-73	(X)	(X)

Source: U.S. Census

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**YEAR BUILT**

Dakota County's housing stock is relatively new with approximately 33 percent of the total units being constructed since 1980. Nearly half of the housing stock was built prior to 1960. Homes constructed after 1969 are vintage units and require increasing amounts of maintenance. The county will need to monitor overall housing quality to ensure the long-term integrity of neighborhood areas.

**Table 11: Housing year built 2009-2011**

Year built	Units	Percentage
Total	7,618	
2005 or later	276	3.62%
2000 to 2004	218	2.86%
1990 to 1999	1,275	16.74%
1980 to 1989	721	9.46%
1970 to 1979	1,602	21.03%
1960 to 1969	1,153	15.14%
1950 to 1959	562	7.38%
1940 to 1949	464	6.09%
1939 or earlier	1,347	17.68%

*Source: U.S. Census 2009-2011 American Community Survey*

**Table 12: Local housing characteristics, 2010**

	Total Units	Occupied	Owner	Renter	Owner Med. Value	Vacant
Dakota County	7,652	7,301	4,699	2,602	\$99,700	351
Dakota City	774	731	582	149	\$97,400	43
Emerson	401	357	357	91	\$57,600	44

	Total Units	Occupied	Owner	Renter	Owner Med. Value	Vacant
Homer	214	214	214	52	\$97,700	0
Hubbard	84	73	50	23	\$76,000	11
Jackson	79	79	63	16	\$105,400	0
South Sioux City	4,699	4,554	2544	2010	\$94,600	145

Source: U.S. Census Profile of General Population and Housing Characteristics 2007-2011

In the summer of 2013, there were approximately 85 houses for sale. Comments from area real estate agents and bankers indicate a continuing need for adequate, affordable housing in Dakota County. Affordable housing is defined as housing that is a decent, safe and sanitary accommodation costing no more than 25 percent of gross household income after taxes. Affordable rental housing is defined as rents that are affordable to households whose annual income is 80 percent or less of the income range for the county in which the property is located.

Rehabilitation of existing Dakota County homes is a great need. Out of an estimated 7,652 existing housing units, 7,301 are occupied. Of those units, occupied 70 percent are single unit detached dwellings leaving 30 percent as apartments or mobile homes. The owner occupied units are 4,699 with 2,602 being rental units.

**Table 13: Vacancy rates**

	Dakota County	Dakota City	Emerson	Homer	Hubbard	Jackson	South Sioux City
<b>Total:</b>	351	43	44	0	11	0	145
<b>For rent</b>	104	0	0	0	6	0	98
<b>Rented, not occupied</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>For sale only</b>	93	28	0	0	0	0	21

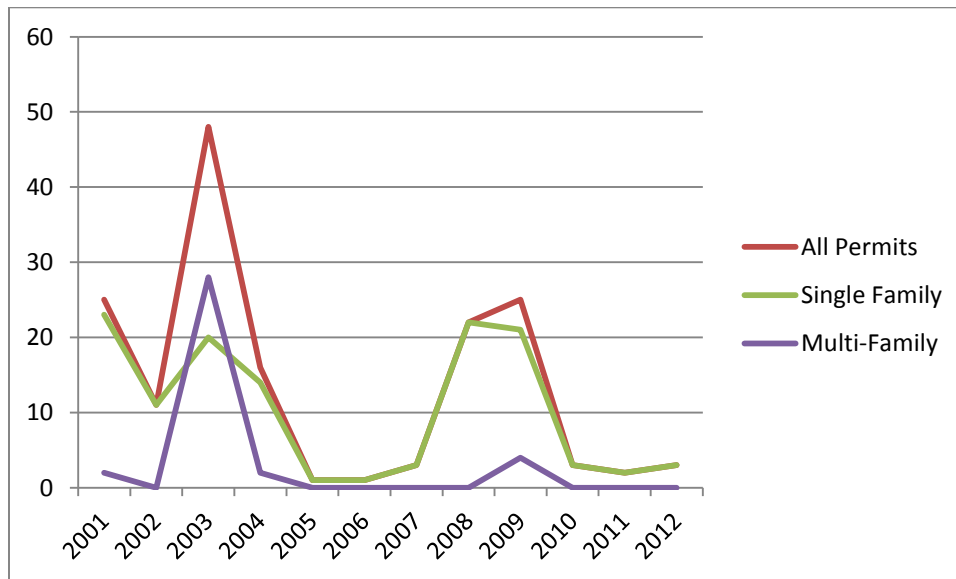
	Dakota County	Dakota City	Emerson	Homer	Hubbard	Jackson	South Sioux City
<b>Sold, not occupied</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>For seasonal, recreational, or occasional use</b>	30	15	0	0	4	0	0
<b>For migrant workers</b>	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Other vacant</b>	124	0	38	0	1	0	26

Source: The U.S. Census American Factfinder, 2011 ACS 5-year estimates

## RECENT HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

In Dakota County building permits average per year since 2001 is 13. In 2003, Dakota County realized a high of permits with 48 recorded and a low number of building permits in 2005 of one. One hundred percent of the 25 building permits in 2012 were for Single Family housing with a total building construction cost of \$4,171,122.00.

**Figure 2: Dakota County NE building permits**



Dakota County business / industry development is encouraging the housing industry to investigate new construction as well as older home rehabilitation. South Sioux City has instigated new low to moderate-income ownership construction in partnership with Habitat for Humanity.

Several communities within Dakota County have down payment assistance. In 2013, South Sioux City began the New Neighborhoods Initiative Program providing up to 20 percent of the purchase price in down payment assistance plus up to \$2,500 for closing costs toward a home purchase to eligible applicants.

Future housing development for Dakota County depends on proper zoning for residential dwellings, understanding of the aging demographic and underserved populations within the county. Construction of rental units for households of 55 years of age and older, new homeownership opportunities for older adults consisting of single family homes, patio home or townhome units, and development of rental units for families with disabled members should be considered.

Providing two and three bedroom affordable rental housing for families of varied middle- to upper-income levels as well as low- to moderate-income households should be priority. The county can work with large employers to assist in providing housing of this type.

In addition, a priority is rehabilitating existing housing stock. As seen in the tables above, over 45 percent of the housing stock is over 50 years old. Housing rehabilitation provides opportunities for low to moderate-income households.

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## HOUSING FORECAST

Dakota County's location, amenities, and vigorous economic development policies make a desirable place to live. The county should expect to see a modest but continuous growth in the next 20 years. The county's low vacancy rate further illustrates the high demand for housing.

## HOUSING ISSUES

### HOUSING DEMAND

Average Household Size increased from 2.58 in 2005 to 2.83 in 2011. The state of Nebraska Average Household Size in 2011 is 2.46, which conforms to the trend in the state of lower household size as the population ages. Dakota County's household size demonstrates a vigorous population.

The first detailed analysis of the 2012 U. S. Census Bureau estimated the nation's median age to be 37.1. The median age of the population in Dakota County is 32.1 and 11.38 percent of the population is over the age of 65. For a rural county in Nebraska this is positive data. Most rural counties in northeast Nebraska and northwest Iowa are demonstrating aging populations. For example according to the 2011 U.S. Census, Monona County, Iowa has 23.5 percent of the population are over 65 and the median age is 47 years of age and in Dixon County, Nebraska 17 percent of the population is over 65 and the median age is 47 years of age.

### SENIOR CITIZENS (65+ YEARS OLD) HOUSING NEEDS

There are 2,391 residents in Dakota County who are currently in the "Ages 65 and Over" cohort.

The U. S. Census Bureau 2009 to 2011 American Community Survey indicates there are 406 Owner-occupied Householders over the age of 65 living alone. Of the number, 360 are women living alone. It can be noted many times individuals who are Owner-occupied Householders 65 and older living alone find the homes become far too big for to adequately maintain. Young families desire to buy these larger, older houses to rehabilitate. When older homes become available for purchase, the dwellings require updating and rehabilitation. Providing Owner-occupied Low Income Rehabilitation Programs and/or affordable housing options for individuals 65 and older is key to maintaining a strong housing stock for all demographic categories.

Interviews have shown senior citizens would move into independent senior apartments if available. Barrier-free houses and apartments designed for independent living are important to

meet current and future needs of citizens with special needs and mobility limitations. Housing providing basic services such as meals, transportation and housekeeping will become more necessary as the population ages. If additional barrier-free housing is not constructed in Dakota County, these residents will move to neighboring counties that provide barrier-free housing to maintain a decent quality of life.

According to NEDI (Nebraska Economic Development Information) Community GIS Information, the estimated population of Dakota County by 2016 will be 22,614 with a median family size of 3.3. The estimated 2016 number of owner occupied housing unit required is 4,786 and rental occupied housing units is 2,149. The U.S. Census reports the 2011 owner occupied housing units is 4,699 and renter occupied housing units is 2,602. Dakota County should promote the building of approximately 87 owner occupied housing units.

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#### BLIGHT

The county is concerned with aging housing throughout both the rural and urban areas. Blighting conditions can be found in all areas of the county, and maintenance and upgrades are needed to prevent the spread of blight and keep homes attractive for future buyers. The city of South Sioux City has recently instigated owner-occupied housing rehabilitation projects and other Dakota County communities are investigating similar programming.



## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - HOUSING

The following goals were written for the comprehensive plan based on the issues voiced by the general public and the county leaders. Objectives were formed as a guide to develop strategies to meet these goals.

### **Goal 1: Promote economic development.**

Objective 1: Build single-family housing.

Objective 2: New housing developments are preferred to be adjacent to or near linear parks (recreational trails – not strictly bicycle or walking trails).

Objective 3: Build multi-family housing developments.

### **Goal 2: Provide an ample supply of all housing products to offer safe, attainable units for rent or purchase by all residents.**

Objective 1: Construct energy-efficient, affordable, single-family housing.

Objective 2: Rehabilitate existing housing stock.

Objective 3: Provide incentives for construction of high quality, affordable housing.

Objective 4: Educate the public on the benefits of home maintenance and the resources available to assist homeowners.

Objective 5: Implement down payment assistance programs and first-time buyers programs.

Objective 6: Provide incentives such as residential tax abatements for owner-occupied housing and rental units in targeted areas to encourage repairs and upgrades.

### **Goal 3: Ensure adequate opportunities are provided for the development of housing for populations with special needs.**

Objective 1: Construction of barrier-free and/or assisted-living housing for the elderly based on established needs.

Objective 2: Convert existing housing units into barrier-free housing, where appropriate.

Objective 3: Consider housing units for all special populations, including seniors.

**Goal 4: Attract new families to Dakota County.**

Objective 1: Support a Dakota County Housing Committee to meet regularly to annually review the Housing Needs Study and pursue implementation of goals. Update Housing Needs Study/Comprehensive Plan every five years.

Objective 2: Encourage public input at housing meetings.

Objective 3: Support the Community Development Corporation (CDC) with its focus on housing.

**Goal 5: Improve quality of life.**

Objective 1: Expand on and improve enforcement of ordinances relating to the appearance of neighborhoods.

Objective 2: Develop strategies for promoting well-maintained neighborhoods.

Objective 3: Enforce housing codes concerning safety and health.

Objective 4: Continue inspection services with the building inspector.

Objective 5: Continue to evaluate and update building permit process and enforcement.

## V. DAKOTA COUNTY – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### OVERVIEW

The goal of the economic development chapter is to assist in bringing about a positive and lasting change in Dakota County, Nebraska economic development and gather the current economic information. The chapter provides the opportunity to inventory and assess the community's economic base, labor force characteristics, and local economic development opportunities and resources, to determine economic needs and goals. The chapter assists in developing strategies for the economic well-being of the community and provides a resource when creating policies and programs leading to steady long-term growth.

A positive and stimulated economic development base must be present for urban and rural communities to thrive. An economically vibrant county is attractive to prospective residents and entrepreneurs and engages current residents. The vision of Dakota is to provide for economic development opportunities for all businesses, organizations and residents

### ECONOMIC BASE

Dakota County's economic base refers to the industries or economic sectors serving the region and individuals residing in the surrounding area. The main theme of economic base theory is the economic growth of an area and is dependent on outside demand. An area's growth depends on the ability to export goods and services outside of the territorial boundaries. The economic base, or basic sector, is composed of the export industries of the community and the non-basic, or local service sector, is composed of industries serving the community and county residents and works.

The economic base includes data on employment and earnings rates, economic sectors, wage levels, unique local economic activities, and sources of income. Utilizing the information facilitates access to the local economy's viability and the adequacy of the economic development tools and programs currently in use.

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## EMPLOYMENT AND EARNINGS

Employment and earnings figures help identify growing and declining job markets, as well as assess the types of wages paid in various sectors. Identifying trends in the sectors are important in order for Dakota County and area economic developers to strive for a healthy, balanced economy and provide quality employment and excellent wage opportunities.

The total employment of those individuals 16 years and over in Dakota County has been identified for 2000 and 2011 (U.S. Census Community Survey; 2007-2011). The total number of persons employed over age 16 in Dakota County had an increase of 7.9 percent from 2000 to 2011.

Many of the sectors have remained fairly even with marked increase of 74 percent in the Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation, and Accommodation, and Food Services sector. The largest decrease of employment by industry occurred in the Information industry sector with a decrease of 66 percent. These county-wide figures are consistent with regional figures.

Employment and earnings figures help identify growing and declining job markets, as well as assess the types of wages paid in various sectors. Identifying trends in the sectors are important in order for Dakota County and area economic developers to strive for a healthy, balanced economy and provide quality employment and excellent wage opportunities.

**Table 14: Employed persons 16 years and over by Industry and Occupation**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2011</b>
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	266	320
Construction	562	645
Manufacturing	2,973	2,917
Wholesale trade	476	374
Retail trade	918	1,090
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	617	565
Information	297	100
Finance and insurance, and real estate and rental and leasing	692	553
Professional, scientific, and management, and administrative and waste management services	385	510
Educational services, and health care and social assistance	1,464	1,859
Arts, entertainment, and recreation, and accommodation, and food services	642	1,118
Other services, except public administration	481	519
Public administration	323	324
<b>Total civilian employed 16 years and older</b>	<b>10,096</b>	<b>10,894</b>
<b>Occupation</b>	2,000	2007-2011
Management, Professional, and related occupations	2,279	2,084
Service occupations	1,298	1,919
Sales and office occupations	2,488	2,607
Farming, fishing, and forestry occupations	127	N/A
Construction, extraction, and maintenance occupations	927	1,331
Production, transportation, and material moving occupations	2,977	2,953
Total civilian employed population 16 years and older	10,096	10,894

*U.S. Census 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates; 2000 American Community Survey*

Dakota County is reasonably consistent with the state of Nebraska in percentage of individuals employed by industry as is indicated in table below. Dakota County lags behind the state’s individuals employed by industry in the Finance, Insurance, Real Estate, and Rental and Leasing; Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative, and Waste Management services; and Educational, Health and Social Services. However, the county ranks significantly higher than the state’s individuals employed by industry in Manufacturing and Arts, Entertainment, Recreation, Accommodation and Food Services. It should be noted the strength of the Manufacturing Industry sector will continue strong if local education emphasizes skilled labor training.

**Table 15: Dakota County Percentage of Individuals Employed by Industry in Dakota County and the State of Nebraska**

Industry	Dakota County	Nebraska
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining	2.9%	4.8%
Construction	5.9%	6.5%
Manufacturing	26.8%	10.7%
Wholesale trade	3.4%	3.0%
Retail trade	10.0%	11.6%
Transportation and warehousing, and utilities	5.2%	6.0%
Information	3.0%	2.1%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	5.1%	7.6%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management services	4.7%	8.1%
Educational, health and social services	17.1%	23.3%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	10.3%	7.6%
Other services (except public administration)	4.8%	4.5%
Public administration	3.0%	4.1%

*U.S. Census 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates*

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**WAGES**

Data on average weekly and annual wages for employment within Dakota County assists in directing community economic development and labor force development goals. Data on wages by employment sector can provide insight into what segments of the employment base are providing the economic benefit to workers in the community.

The following table demonstrates the average weekly wages for Dakota County in 2010 and 2013. Comparing 2010 to 2013 weekly wages indicates growth in most industries, with the most growth occurring in Construction and Other Services sectors. The Retail Trade and Finance and Insurance sectors had the most significant drop in wages.

**Table 16: Average annual and weekly wage by industry in Dakota County, 2010 and 2013**

<b>Industry</b>	<b>2010 Weekly Wage</b>	<b>2013 Weekly Wage</b>	<b>Percent of Change</b>
Total, all industries	\$674	\$700	3.80%
Accommodation and Food Services	\$259	\$277	6.90%
Administrative and Waste Services <small>(see note)</small>	\$548	\$915	67.0%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing, and Hunting	\$583	\$580	-0.50%
Construction	\$848	\$966	13.90%
Finance and Insurance	\$1,201	\$1,097	-8.70%
Health Care and Social Assistance	\$460	\$467	1.50%
Information	\$793	\$801	1.00%
Manufacturing	\$704	\$725	3.00%
Other Services (excl, public admin)	\$584	\$649	11.13%
Professional and Technical Svcs	\$780	\$760	-2.56%
Public Administration	\$705	\$715	1.42%
Real Estate, Rental, and Leasing	\$451	\$468	3.77%

Industry	2010 Weekly Wage	2013 Weekly Wage	Percent of Change
Retail Trade	\$415	\$397	-4.34%
Transportation and Warehousing	\$715	\$719	0.56%
Wholesale Trade	\$670	\$700	4.48%
<b>Average</b>	<b>\$649</b>	<b>\$684</b>	<b>5.39%</b>

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages, excluding industry with confidential information

Note: It is assumed that the definition of "Administrative and Waste Services" changed from 2010-2013

The following tables demonstrate quarterly census of employment and wages in Dakota County. The weekly wage has risen by 12 percent from the first quarter of 2007 to the first quarter of 2013. The number of establishments and individuals employed has stayed consistent over the five year period. The state of Nebraska Average Weekly Wage was \$777 for the first quarter of 2013, which is 15 percent higher than the same time period for Dakota County. As stated previously, Dakota County's largest employing segment is manufacturing, and these types of jobs frequently are unskilled or low skilled positions with lower wages.

**Table 17: 2012-2013 Quarterly census of employment and wages, Dakota County**

Year	Period	Industry	Average Establishments	Emp. Month 1	Emp. Month 2	Emp. Month 3	Average Employment	Total Wage	Average Weekly Wage
2013	1st Qtr.	Total, All Industries	567	11,611	11,620	11,670	11,633	\$101,790,160	\$673
2012	4th Qtr.	Total, All Industries	555	11,803	11,707	11,802	11,771	\$109,907,566	\$718
2012	3rd Qtr.	Total, All Industries	551	11,616	11,772	11,909	11,766	\$102,165,978	\$668
2012	2nd Qtr.	Total, All Industries	547	11,748	11,845	11,788	11,794	\$103,630,343	\$676

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor



The table below illustrates the Dakota County average weekly wage for ten years; 2003 to 2013. Over the period, the weekly wage has increased approximately 25 percent.

**Table 18: 2003 – 2013 Average weekly wages earned in Dakota County**

Year	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Annual
2003	\$507	\$556	\$561	\$571	\$549
2004	\$486	\$541	\$573	\$598	\$549
2005	\$523	\$580	\$609	\$614	\$581
2006	\$590	\$617	\$605	\$642	\$614
2007	\$593	\$632	\$642	\$658	\$632
2008	\$604	\$644	\$639	\$657	\$636
2009	\$576	\$626	\$632	\$689	\$631
2010	\$605	\$662	\$682	\$747	\$674
2011	\$636	\$654	\$707	\$690	\$672
2012	\$643	\$676	\$668	\$718	\$676
2013	\$673				

*Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Office of Labor Market Information, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program*

The table below illustrates the total wages earned in the last ten years in Dakota County. Because Dakota County is part of the Sioux City Metropolitan Statistical Area, wages earned in the county are many times commuted to other states and adjoining counties. The commuting patterns for Dakota County will be discussed further in the Commuting section of the Economic Development Chapter.

**Table 19: 2013 Total wages earned (in thousands) Dakota County**

Year	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Annual
2003	\$71,855	\$80,337	\$81,021	\$82,623	\$315,836
2004	\$68,130	\$74,796	\$78,616	\$83,722	\$305,264
2005	\$73,008	\$81,636	\$84,596	\$84,715	\$323,955
2006	\$82,036	\$90,157	\$87,719	\$92,889	\$352,801
2007	\$84,829	\$91,515	\$93,003	\$96,527	\$365,874
2008	\$88,630	\$97,415	\$95,946	\$100,052	\$382,043
2009	\$86,458	\$94,322	\$95,102	\$103,401	\$379,283
2010	\$89,567	\$99,523	\$102,337	\$112,188	\$403,616
2011	\$95,027	\$99,485	\$107,482	\$106,293	\$408,287
2012	\$98,300	\$103,630	\$102,166	\$109,908	\$414,004
2013	\$101,787				

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Office of Labor Market Information, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program

**Table 20: 2013 Average annual pay in Dakota County**

Year	Annual
2003	\$28,556
2004	\$28,569
2005	\$30,227
2006	\$31,914
2007	\$32,843
2008	\$33,074
2009	\$32,806
2010	\$35,062
2011	\$34,940
2012	\$35,171

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Office of Labor Market Information, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages Program

## INCOME

Income statistics for households are important for determining the earning power of family units in the county. The data in Table 21 below indicates the number of households in each income range for 2000 and 2012 within Dakota County and the state of Nebraska. In the past 12 years, income in the higher ranges has grown with the largest increase in the \$100,000 to \$149,999 category. In comparison with the state of Nebraska, Dakota County is in step with the state of Nebraska although the state has slightly higher percentages in the upper income categories. The median income for Dakota County escalated 18 percent over the 12-year period while the state experienced a 23 percent growth over the same period.

**Table 21: Household income range for Dakota County and State of Nebraska, 2012 and 2000**

Household Income Range	2012				2000			
	Dakota County	Percent of Total	State of Nebraska	Percent of total	Dakota County	Percent of Total	State of Nebraska	Percent of Total
Less than \$10,000	430	5.9%	44,891	6.2%	594	8%	55,340	8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	465	6.4%	40,733	5.6%	427	8%	43,915	7%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	818	11.2%	80,724	11.1%	1,119	16%	98,663	15%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	825	11.3%	82,668	11.4%	1,078	15%	97,932	15%
\$35,000 to 49,999	1,253	17.0%	107,411	14.8%	1,372	19%	122,654	18%
\$50,000 to 74,999	1,688	23.1%	145,407	20.0%	1,427	20%	136,141	20%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	869	11.9%	95,306	13.1%	643	9%	58,361	9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	691	9.5%	83,933	11.6%	333	5%	36,565	6%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	184	2.5%	24,114	3.3%	42	0%	8,551	1%
\$200,000 or more	85	1.2%	21,235	2.9%	48	0%	8,873	1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,308</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>726,422</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>7,083</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>666,995</b>	<b>100%</b>
Median Household Income	\$47,389		\$50,957		38,834		\$39,250	

Source: U.S. Census, Selected Economic Characteristics, 2010-2012 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates

The following table shows the income ranges for the communities within Dakota County. Emerson has experienced the most growth and four communities in the county have a greater median income than the state median income.

**Table 22: Median income for the communities of Dakota County, 2011 and 2000**

Dakota County Communities	2011	2000	Percentage of growth
Dakota City	\$56,518	\$43,438	23%
Emerson	\$42,946	\$27,411	36%
Homer	\$52,000	\$44,500	14%
Hubbard	\$50,250	\$40,938	19%
Jackson	\$52,500	\$50,833	3%
South Sioux City	\$39,623	\$36,493	8%

Source: U.S. Census2000 Census 2000 Summary File 3; 2007-2011 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 23 shows household income (2010-2012 3 year estimates) for Dakota County householders by age. The purpose of the information is to show the earning potential of Dakota County age demographics. The \$75,000 to \$99,999 income category comprised the highest number of residents with 8 percent of the total households. The 35 to 44 years category had the largest amount of households present at 28 percent and the second highest was the 75 and over category at 21 percent.

**Table 23: Household income by age, Dakota County, 2010-2012 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimates**

Income Categories	Under 25 years	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 and Older	Total
Less than \$10,000	173	152	22	83	430
\$10,000 to \$14,999	0	152	121	192	465
\$15,000 to \$19,999	0	213	101	124	438

Income Categories	Under 25 years	25 to 44	45 to 64	65 and Older	Total
\$20,000 to \$24,999	77	136	65	102	380
\$25,000 to \$29,999	36	157	123	64	380
\$30,000 to \$34,999	146	150	92	57	445
\$35,000 to \$39,999	0	196	204	110	510
\$40,000 to \$44,999	85	167	169	33	454
\$45,000 to \$49,999	5	130	89	70	294
\$50,000 to \$59,999	78	341	288	145	852
\$60,000 to \$74,999	0	255	493	83	831
\$75,000 to \$99,999	0	247	524	98	869
\$100,000 to \$124,999	0	38	236	159	433
\$125,000 to \$149,999	0	43	182	33	258
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0	38	145	1	184
\$200,000 or more	0	14	38	33	85
<b>Total</b>	600	2,429	2,892	1,387	

Source: 2010-2012 American Community Survey 3-Year Estimate

**Table 24: 2003 – 2013 Number of individuals employed in Dakota County**

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
<b>2003</b>	10,886	10,919	10,895	11,103	11,036	11,181	11,140	11,053	11,117	11,136	11,103	11,156	11,060
<b>2004</b>	10,886	10,845	10,619	10,543	10,637	10,721	10,580	10,482	10,594	10,670	10,742	10,904	10,685
<b>2005</b>	9,906	11,063	11,222	10,815	10,830	10,863	10,677	10,687	10,695	10,670	10,613	10,569	10,718
<b>2006</b>	10,593	10,645	10,830	11,125	11,216	11,404	11,220	11,087	11,156	11,072	11,239	11,070	11,055
<b>2007</b>	10,969	11,029	10,993	11,060	11,202	11,128	11,057	11,207	11,172	11,292	11,344	11,228	11,140
<b>2008</b>	11,327	11,333	11,224	11,606	11,726	11,600	11,594	11,592	11,478	11,714	11,701	11,719	11,551
<b>2009</b>	11,547	11,534	11,533	11,564	11,579	11,607	11,564	11,520	11,657	11,636	11,614	11,383	11,562
<b>2010</b>	11,333	11,375	11,438	11,575	11,611	11,521	11,464	11,511	11,640	11,602	11,581	11,485	11,511

Year	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Annual
<b>2011</b>	11,619	11,294	11,592	11,674	11,777	11,645	11,594	11,633	11,860	11,868	11,838	11,829	11,685
<b>2012</b>	11,714	11,749	11,803	11,748	11,845	11,788	11,616	11,772	11,909	11,803	11,707	11,802	11,771
<b>2013</b>	11,611	11,619	11,669										

**Table 25: 2003 – 2013 Number of establishments providing Dakota County employment**

Year	Qtr1	Qtr2	Qtr3	Qtr4	Annual
<b>2003</b>	507	506	508	500	505
<b>2004</b>	494	492	495	487	492
<b>2005</b>	498	501	503	504	502
<b>2006</b>	498	499	515	518	508
<b>2007</b>	510	514	522	503	512
<b>2008</b>	504	511	511	508	509
<b>2009</b>	509	506	503	496	504
<b>2010</b>	494	496	499	498	497
<b>2011</b>	496	499	497	491	496
<b>2012</b>	538	547	551	555	548
<b>2013</b>	567				

*Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Office of Labor Market Information, Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages*

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES – ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### **Goal 1: Encourage the expansion of existing business/industry and the location of new business/industry to Dakota County.**

Objective 1: Work with regional economic development interests to attract and respond to new business inquiries.

Objective 2: Provide a leadership training program for local entrepreneurs and help with start-up information

### **Goal 2: Attract higher paying jobs to Dakota County.**

Objective 1: Recruit businesses that meet targeted community needs and desires.

### **Goal 3: Assist in revitalizing the business districts and main streets in the communities.**

Objective 1: Assist business owners in creating organizations and funding mechanisms to improve their districts.

Objective 2: Respond to the needs of area entrepreneurs.

### **Goal 4: Promote and expand the industrial, commercial and residential uses.**

Objective 1: Provide industrial, commercial and residential developers more land options that, in turn, encourage growth.

Objective 2: Work with county communities to market Dakota County and surrounding areas in a collaborative effort to acquire and retain new commercial and industrial companies.

**Goal 5: Explore benefits and implementation of value-added agriculture to Dakota County to compliment and stimulate current business and industry.**

Objective 1: Develop strategies to identify and develop business opportunities addressing regional agri-business processing gaps.

Objective 2: Maintain county-wide land use ordinances that protect prime agricultural land and accommodate the accompanying uses.

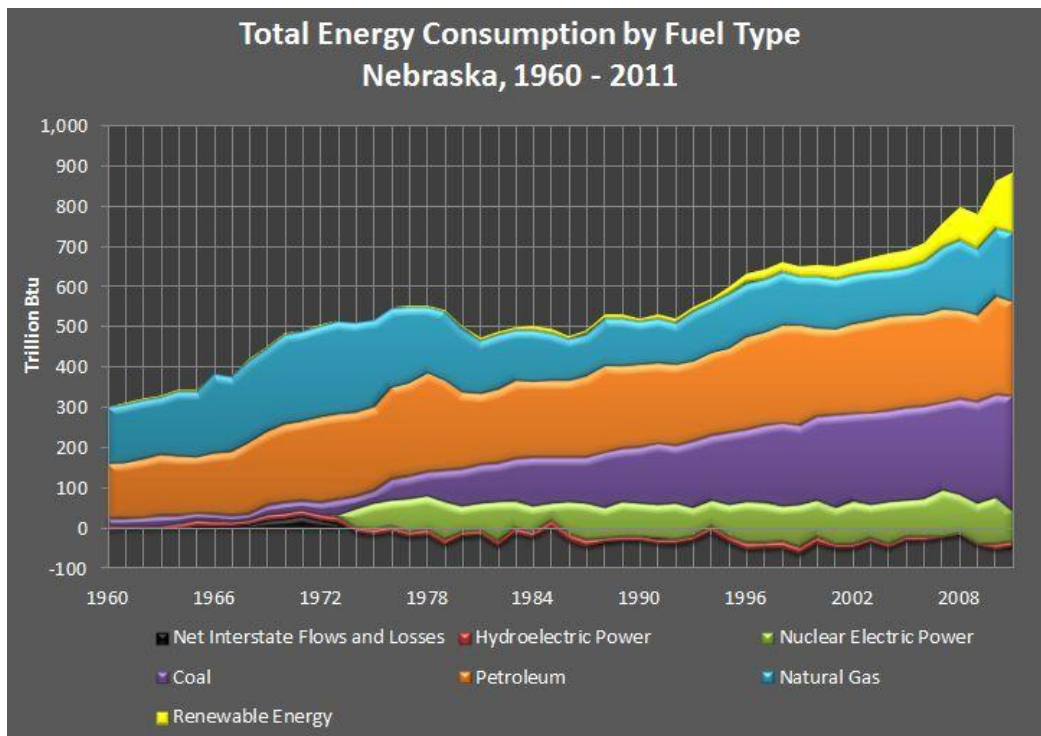
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## VI. DAKOTA COUNTY – ENERGY

In 2011, Nebraska consumed 915.54 trillion Btu of primary energy, which included 149.18 trillion Btu of energy from renewable energy resources. Renewable resources met 16.29 percent of Nebraska's energy consumption. Renewable resources include biofuels, biomass, geothermic energy, hydroelectric power (conventional), photovoltaic and solar thermal energy, and wind energy.

**Figure 3: Nebraska's energy consumption 1960-2011**



Source: Nebraska Energy Office

From 1960 to 1980, renewable energy in Nebraska consisted of conventional hydroelectric power and biomass. Ethanol entered the picture in the early 1980s. Geothermal energy and photovoltaic and solar thermal energy projects were reported in the late 1980s. Wind energy projects came on line in the late 1990s.

The following statistics of renewable energy resources are from the Nebraska Energy Office. Wind energy information is from Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD).

*Biomass.* In 2011 wood and wood waste accounted for nearly 5 percent of the generation in the renewable energy category.

*Biodiesel.* Commercial scale biodiesel production began in Nebraska in 2006 and production was estimated to be around 2.4 million gallons in 2008. However, the price of soybeans used for feedstock seriously damaged this budding industry in the state in 2008 and both commercial scale plants in Arlington and Scribner are closed. If both plants would reopen, production capacity is estimated at 5.4 million gallons a year.

*Ethanol.* The growing biomass energy resource in Nebraska continues to be ethanol that is produced from corn and grain sorghum. Ethanol production began in Nebraska in 1985 when 8.5 million gallons were produced at the state's first ethanol facility in Hastings. According to the Renewable Fuels Association as of December 2010, Nebraska has the second largest ethanol nameplate capacity (1.764 billion gallons) and the second largest ethanol operating production (1.739 billion gallons) in the nation. Approximately 13 percent of the nation's ethanol capacity is in Nebraska. In 2010 the state firmly asserted its national ranking in ethanol production. In January while the state ranked second nationally in nameplate capacity, Nebraska was third in operating production after Iowa and Illinois. Iowa, the long-time leader, had operational capacity of 3.183 billion gallons a year in January 2010 followed by Illinois at 1.383 billion gallons, with Nebraska at third with 1.311 billion gallons. By February, Nebraska had new capacity coming on line and overtook Illinois; Nebraska rose to 1.674 billion gallons a year followed by Illinois at 1.226 billion gallons. By December 2010, Nebraska added even more operational production, reaching 1.739 billion gallons a year.

The state's Ethanol Board estimated that nearly one-third of Nebraska's corn crop and the equivalent of three-quarters of the state's grain sorghum crop are used in the production of ethanol. Ethanol consumption in the state comes mainly in the form of E10 blended gasoline – 10 percent ethanol and 90 percent gasoline. Smaller quantities of E85 – 85 percent ethanol and

15 percent gasoline – are also sold. Ethanol-blended fuel consumption in 2009 was 556.77 million gallons, out of a total of 817.99 million gallons. Ethanol’s share of the fuel market in 2009 declined from the peak in 2008; 68.1 percent of all fuel sold in 2009 was an ethanol blend. The previous high of more than 73.2 percent was set in 2008.

*Local Ethanol.* Siouxland Ethanol located in Jackson was opened in 2007. The plant produces 55 million gallons of ethanol annually and produces byproducts 200,000 to 300,000 tons of dried and wet distillers and corn oil by 36 employees. The plant is located next to the Burlington Northern-Sante Fe Railroad. Plainview and Norfolk are the next closest ethanol plants.

## ENERGY CONSERVATION MEASURES THAT BENEFIT THE COMMUNITY

### ENERGY CODE

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

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

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

The Code applies to all new buildings, or renovations of or additions to any existing buildings. Only those renovations that will cost more than 50 percent of the replacement cost of the building must comply with the Code.

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## ENERGY EFFICIENCY PROGRAMS

In 2009 Congress passed the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act providing the largest single increase for energy efficiency programs. Funding under the Recovery Act totaled \$84,222,593.

Funds received are used to provide energy efficiency services to consumers and other small energy users, and include the publication of this Annual Report and the Nebraska Energy Quarterly as well as maintenance of the state's energy database [www.neo.ne.gov/statshtml/index3c.html](http://www.neo.ne.gov/statshtml/index3c.html) and agency website [www.neo.ne.gov](http://www.neo.ne.gov). These funds also provide program support for a wide array of activities that include energy shortage tracking and management and emergency preparedness, education and information, Dollar and Energy Saving Loan operations, support of renewable energy activities and residential and commercial building energy efficiency. The Energy Office also reviews state-financed affordable housing plans to ensure compliance with the Nebraska Energy Code. Periodically, the agency performs on-site inspections of completed homes, to verify compliance as a stipulation of the funding source.

Cities and their residents can save and reduce energy usage by constructing new buildings with energy efficient materials and update existing facilities by implementing energy efficient rehabilitations, such as windows, insulation and weatherization. The cities market such energy efficiency improvements and measures to residents. City codes are updated to reflect modern energy efficiency practices and implement energy saving measures on municipality controlled large energy uses, such as street lighting, water transfer pumps and heating and cooling of municipal buildings. At this time, Dakota County does not have certain energy criteria for when they issue building permits.

The cities in Dakota County work with utility companies that supply energy to its residents and businesses to promote and implement energy efficiency programs. These programs are used to improve conservation and utilization of electricity, natural gas and other energy sources.

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## ENERGY SAVING TIPS

The Nebraska Energy Office has a number of ways to save pennies to dollars on energy bills. It focuses on new construction, home, vehicle, and agriculture. A complete listing can be found at [www.neo.ne.gov/tips/tips.htm](http://www.neo.ne.gov/tips/tips.htm). The cities and their residents and businesses are encouraged to take advantage of these conservation measures.

As previously mentioned, Dakota County receives electricity from NPPD and NNPPD. The NPPD website [www.nppd.com](http://www.nppd.com) offers an online home energy audit, where NPPD users can enter household information and be provided with a report showing energy consumption and reduction tips. Dakota County cities plan on continually marketing energy savings and reduction to its residents.

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## ENVIRONMENTAL EFFORTS

Dakota County promotes environmentally friendly activities, such as river cleanup and planting trees through Keep Northeast Nebraska Beautiful and the Community Club. The cities and villages of Dakota County work with NPPD and Northern Natural Gas to obtain information about energy conservation and energy efficiency to provide to the residents of Dakota County. It promotes NPPD's Green Campaign and works with area schools to ensure school children and faculty are learning about energy conservation and efficiency. NPPD offers National Energy Education Development (NEED) Project booklets to educators teaching grades K through 12.

The state of Nebraska writes that education concerning energy is an important aspect of every community. The state plans to "Facilitate resource sharing, communications and implementation of results-oriented activities to achieve a greater level of understanding and responsibility regarding energy production, use and environmental impact." The state lists many points about educating the residents of Nebraska. Dakota County already incorporates many of the state's points, including:

- Provides energy education for all ages, including public and private entities.
- Makes energy conservation methods available to the public.

The state of Nebraska believes educating the population about energy reduction and efficiency are key factors to achieving such goals.

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#### UTILITY PLANNING

Utility planning is an important aspect of energy conservation, as proper planning leads to the most efficient and effective facilitation of utilities.

Storm sewers can often be renovated to store rainwater, and the rainwater can be used to irrigate municipally owned parks, gardens and other public places.

- Rain Gardens
- Reducing and Conserving Water

The state of Nebraska addresses economic development in its 2011 Energy Plan and lists several goals. The county planners and leaders agree with many of the goals in the state plan. The county recognizes the connection between energy and economic development.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES - ENERGY

The vision of the Nebraska Energy Office is for Nebraskans to have reliable and affordable sources of energy that support a cleaner environment and a more secure energy future. The mission of the Nebraska Energy Office is to promote the efficient, economic and environmentally responsible use of energy. The agency's principles are "we value teamwork, are customer oriented, and are committed to excellence, creativity and innovation". In support of the agency mission, the following state objectives have been approved:

Ensure access to affordable and reliable energy for Nebraskans to use responsibly.

1. Advance implementation and innovation of renewable energy in the state.
2. Reduce petroleum consumption in Nebraska's transportation sector.

The complete 2011 Nebraska Energy Plan can be found on the Nebraska Energy Office's website: <http://www.neo.ne.gov/Energyplan2011.pdf>. The current energy issues and concerns for the cities in Dakota County are as follows since the county has no utility systems or departments the County Board oversees.

### Issues and Concerns

1. The requirement for better monitoring of utility systems.
2. Improvements needed in accuracy and efficiency of all utility departments.
3. Energy efficiency and conservation education is necessary throughout the community.
4. Many residents commute to work and do not participate in carpooling or other energy saving measures.
5. Adoption of the International Energy Code.



**Goal 1: Incorporate green beautification projects throughout the cities and villages of Dakota County.**

Objective 1: Utilize organizations, such as Keep Northeast Nebraska Beautiful, to continue to create and construct green beautification projects, such as rain gardens and tree plantings, which will both beautify the community and support a clean environment.

**Goal 2: Explore Dakota County’s alternative energy resources.**

Objective 1: Conduct an alternative energy study for Dakota County, as requested.

**Goal 3: Update county codes to include energy saving goals.**

Objective 1: Review and update county building codes to coincide with measures and goals in the state building plan.

Objective 2: Keep county code officials and building inspectors trained and updated in the Nebraska Energy Code.

Objective 3: Adopt the International Energy Code.

**Goal 4: Conserve transportation fuels.**

Objective 1: Encourage residents to carpool during daily commutes to work.

**Goal 5: Provide energy education.**

Objective 1: Continue to work with all public schools in Dakota County to teach methods and meaning of energy conservation and efficiency.

Objective 2: Organizations, such as Keep Northeast Nebraska Beautiful, will provide information to residents and businesses concerning energy efficiency and reduction in the form of flyers and brochures mailed and available in the county courthouse, city halls, and other public buildings.

Objective 3: Work with power companies to host events concerning energy education.

**Goal 6: Promote energy planning and energy reduction planning to local businesses**

Objective 1: Seek out funding sources which can provide energy planning funds to local businesses in the form of grants or grant / loan combinations.

Objective 2: Work with Northeast Nebraska Public Power or NPPD to promote energy auditing to local businesses.

## PLAN IMPLEMENTATION AND PLAN MAINTENANCE

Once a community approves a comprehensive plan, the real work of implementing the plan begins. The county currently utilizes many tools to effectively implement the comprehensive plan, and therefore may only need to update the procedures and priorities of current tools to mirror the goals and objectives of the comprehensive plan. Administrative actions and decisions of the County should also be based on implementing the goals and objectives of the plan.

As further explained in the Nebraska Planning Handbook [www.npza.org/docs/NebrPlanningHandbk.pdf](http://www.npza.org/docs/NebrPlanningHandbk.pdf), land use regulations, specifically zoning and subdivision regulations, are key tools for implementing the comprehensive plan. It is important for local elected officials and planning commissioners to realize that the comprehensive planning process is ongoing. Scheduled periodic reviews and updates of the plan will ensure that it remains a living, viable document that drives current and future choices that will serve Dakota County well into the future.

Some of the ways the plan proposes to achieve the stated goals are as follows:

- developing agreements with adjacent communities and counties to address regional issues
- developing infrastructure funding strategies that encourage infill development
- directing new development to areas having access to adequate public facilities (e.g., roads, water, sanitary sewers)
- Maintaining a relationship with SIMPCO for regional planning needs and projects

Achieving the goals will require an ongoing commitment from county citizens, businesses, and government.