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INTRODUCTION

LOCATION

Red Willow County is located in the southwest region of the State of Nebraska. Red Willow County borders the State of Kansas to the south, Hitchcock County to the west, Frontier County to the north and Furnas County to the east. The county is thirty miles long east to west and twenty-four miles long north to south. The City of McCook is the County seat and is located in the west-central portion of the County along U.S. Highway 34, running north to south and U.S. Highway 6, running east to west. The Village of Indianola is located adjacent to U.S. Highway 6 and is approximately eleven miles from McCook to the northwest. The Village of Bartley, located 6 miles east and slightly north of Indianola, is also located adjacent to U.S. Highway 6. Danbury is located in the southeast corner of the County on Nebraska Highway 89 approximately two miles from the northern border of Kansas. Lebanon, additionally located in the southeastern corner of the County, is seven miles to the west and slightly north of Danbury.

CLIMATE AND TOPOGRAPHY

The climate in Red Willow County is one of considerable change and unpredictability. The Rocky Mountains to the west of the county cut off any moisture that might enter the area from the west. There are no barriers to the north or south of the county. As a result, the county is subject to sharp changes in temperature when the wind shifts from south to north or from north to south. Changes in temperature are more noticeable in winter than in summer when the region to the north is too warm to provide much cold air. In winter, cold weather generally alternates with warm periods. The temperature equally remains below freezing only a few days each month. However, cold air occasionally moves into this region and remains for a month or more. Precipitation in winter is in the form of light infrequent snows that generally stay on the ground only a few days. The amount of snowfall increases through winter with the maximum amount falling in March. In the latter part of March, temperatures generally rise so most of the precipitation falls as rain, however, heavy snows occasionally occur in April and light snows in May. April, however, can bring severe thunderstorms. These storms are most frequent in June and can bring hail and tornadoes that potentially damage crops and homes. The summer weather is hot and unfavorable for crops. In July, afternoon temperatures can exceed more than 100 degrees F, but are generally in the 90s. Autumn begins a little later in Red Willow County than in the northern part of Nebraska. Hot winds are frequent in early September and can occur as late as October. The first freeze occurs as early as late September, however, this usually occurs early in October. In November, the days are mostly mild and the nights are frosty. By December, winter blizzards, accompanied by high winds pile snow into large drifts interfering with traffic and communications. Finally, strong winds also cause considerable dust blowing during droughts.

HISTORY OF RED WILLOW COUNTY

About the year 1870, the first settlements in the Republican Valley appeared. By the next year, a settlement was planned in what is now Red Willow County. In the fall of 1871, a company was formed in Nebraska City for the purpose of making a settlement somewhere in the Republican Valley. It was intended to start a town and induce a heavy settlement to the surrounding country, and in due time to organize a county. On November 4, 1871, the Board of Directors ordered Royal Buck, the President, to organize an exploration and location party from among the directors and stockholders of the new land. The party was to proceed to Republican Valley to select a location for the new settlement and to survey the town. In their examination of the country, the party found wild game, such as buffalo, antelope and various other kinds of game common to the Western prairies.

The town party had ideas of great prosperity for their new town site. During this time, the State Legislature framed a bill recognizing an area to be known as Red Willow County. This was an era of speculation and one

of the periods in the history of Nebraska when large and numerous town sites were laid out that were believed to become great, magnificent cities. Most of these platted communities however, never became towns at all and the others grew slowly, but generally kept pace with the settlements of the area. A newspaper, designed more especially for advertising Red Willow County, was started by the town party early in 1872 and was published in Nebraska City.

Through 1872, there were several settlements that commenced in the county, on and near Coon Creek, and covering the present town site of Indianola. In the spring of 1873, quite a heavy immigration west began and communities such as Indianola and McCook continued to see settlement into the early 20th Century, giving Red Willow County and its population the definition that it has today.

THE PURPOSE OF COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING

The Red Willow County Comprehensive Development Plan is designed to promote orderly land use for the County and its communities. The Comprehensive Development Plan will provide policy guidelines to enable citizens and elected officials to make informed decisions about the future of the County.

*The Plan acts as a tool to “Develop
a road map that guides the county
through change”*

The Comprehensive Development Plan will provide a guideline for the location of future land uses within the planning jurisdiction of Red Willow County. The Comprehensive Development Plan is intended to encourage a strong economic base for the County so the goals of the County are achieved.

The Plan will assist Red Willow County in evaluating the impacts of certain land uses and encourage appropriate land use throughout the jurisdictional area of the County. The objective of planning is to provide a framework for guiding Red Willow County, toward orderly growth and use of land. The Plan assists the County in balancing the physical, social, and economic features as it responds to private sector interests.

Planning will make Red Willow County more effective in serving residents, more efficient in using resources, and able to meet the standard of living and quality of life every individual desires.

THE COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING PROCESS

The planning process begins with data collection. Data are collected that provide a snapshot of the past and present County conditions. Analyses of data provide the basis for developing forecasts for future land-use demands in the County.

Next in the planning process is the development of general goals and policies, based upon the issues facing the County. These are practical guidelines for improving existing conditions and guiding future growth. The Comprehensive Development Plan is a vision presented in text, graphics and tables representing the desires of the County for the future.

The Comprehensive Development Plan represents a blueprint designed to identify, assess, and develop actions and policies in the areas of population, land use, transportation, housing, economic development, community facilities, and utilities. The Comprehensive Development Plan contains recommendations that when implemented will be of value to the County and its residents.

The final section is the implementation of the Plan. A broad range of land use policies and programs are required to implement the Comprehensive Development Plan. The Comprehensive Development Plan identifies the tools, programs, and methods necessary to carry out the recommendations. Nevertheless, the

implementation of the land use policies contained within the Comprehensive Development Plan is dependent upon the adoption of the Plan by the governing body, and the leadership exercised by the present and future elected and appointed officials of the County.

This Plan was prepared under the direction of the Red Willow County Planning Commission with the assistance and participation of the Red Willow County Board of Commissioners, and citizens of Red Willow County. The planning period for achieving goals, programs, and developments identified in the Red Willow County Comprehensive Development Plan is twenty (20) years. However, the County should review the Plan annually and update the document every ten to fifteen years, or when a pressing need is identified. Updating the Comprehensive Development Plan allows the County to incorporate ideas and issues not known at the time of the present planning process.

COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN COMPONENTS

Nebraska State Statutes require the inclusion of certain elements in a Comprehensive Plan. A “Comprehensive Development Plan,” as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 23-114.02 (RRS 1997), “shall consist of both graphic and textual material and shall be designed to accommodate anticipated long-range future growth.” The Comprehensive Development Plan is comprised of the following components:

- § County Characteristics Profile;
- § County Facilities Profile;
- § Community Goals and Policies;
- § Environmental, Natural and Man-Made Resources;
- § Existing Land Use Analysis;
- § Future Land Use Plan
- § Transportation Plan; and
- § Plan Implementation.

Analyzing past and existing demographic, housing, economic and social trends permit the projection of likely conditions in the future. Projections and forecasts are useful tools in planning for the future; however, these tools are not always accurate and may change due to unforeseen factors. Also, past trends may be skewed or the data may be inaccurate, creating a distorted picture of past conditions. Therefore, it is important for Red Willow County to closely monitor population, housing and economic conditions that may impact the County. Through periodic monitoring, the County can adapt and adjust to changes at the local level. Having the ability to adapt to socio-economic change allows the County to maintain an effective Comprehensive Development Plan for the future, to enhance the quality of life, and to raise the standard of living for all residents.

The Comprehensive Development Plan records where Red Willow County has been, where it is now, and where it likely will be in the future. Having this record in the Comprehensive Development Plan will help County officials formulate future goals. The Comprehensive Development Plan is an information and management tool for County leaders to use in their decision-making process when considering future land use issues. The Comprehensive Development Plan is not a static document; it should evolve as changes in the land use, population or local economy occur during the planning period. This information is the basis for Red Willow County’s evolution as it achieves its physical, social, and economic goals.

GOVERNMENTAL AND JURISDICTIONAL ORGANIZATION

The Red Willow County Board of Commissioners, which is a board of elected officials, performs the governmental functions for the County. Each incorporated community in Red Willow County also has elected officials and officers that oversee the governing of their County.

The planning and zoning jurisdiction of Red Willow County, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 23-114 (RRS 1997), includes all of the unincorporated portions of the County, excluding the established extraterritorial jurisdiction of each incorporated city or village.

Pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 17-1001 (RRS 1997), the planning and zoning jurisdiction for the incorporated communities in Red Willow County that have adopted Comprehensive Development Plans and Zoning Ordinances, includes the area within one mile of their corporate limits. As these communities grow and annex land into their corporate limits, their extraterritorial jurisdictions will extend further into the County. There are five (5) communities in Red Willow County that are incorporated including Bartley, Danbury, Indianola, Lebanon, and McCook. Danbury and Lebanon have not enacted zoning, while the McCook, Bartley and Indianola have.

COUNTY CHARACTERISTICS PROFILE

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Population statistics aid decision-makers by developing a broad picture of Red Willow County. It is important for Red Willow County to understand where it has been and where it appears to be going. Population is the driving force behind housing, local employment, economic, and fiscal stability of the County. Historic population conditions assist in developing demographic projections, which assists in determining future housing, retail, medical, employment and educational needs within the County. Projections provide an estimate for the County, which is a basis for future land use decisions. However, population projections are only estimates and unforeseen factors may effect projections significantly.

POPULATION TRENDS AND ANALYSIS

Table 1 indicates the population for Red Willow County, including both the incorporated and unincorporated areas, between 1970 and 2000. This information provides Red Willow County with an understanding of past and present trends in population changes.

TABLE 1: POPULATION TRENDS, RED WILLOW COUNTY & COMMUNITIES, 1970 THROUGH 1998

Community	1970	1980	% Change 1970 to 1980	1990	% Change 1980 to 1990	2000	% Change 1990 to 1998	% Change 1970 to 1998
Bartley	283	342	20.8%	339	-0.9%	355	4.7%	25.4%
Danbury	137	143	4.4%	109	-23.8%	127	16.5%	-7.3%
Indianola	672	856	27.4%	672	-21.5%	642	-4.5%	-4.5%
Lebanon	118	102	-13.6%	75	-26.5%	70	-6.7%	-40.7%
McCook	8,285	8,404	1.4%	8,112	-3.5%	7,994	-1.5%	-3.5%
Incorporated Areas	9,495	9,847	3.7%	9,307	-5.5%	9,188	-1.3%	-3.2%
Unincorporated Areas	2,696	2,768	2.7%	2,361	-14.7%	2,260	-4.3%	-16.2%
Red Willow County	12,191	12,615	3.5%	11,668	-7.5%	11,448	-1.9%	-6.1%

Housing, STF-1A, 1970, 1980, 1990 & 2000

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and

MIGRATION ANALYSIS

By analyzing migration patterns, the County is able to understand how this specific factor of the population influences the rate of population change. Migration rates are determined by the total change in population and are shown by subtracting any changes attributed to births and deaths in the population. Therefore, migration is the portion of the population that has either moved into or out of the County.

Table 2 shows the total change and natural change in population, and the total migration for Red Willow County, by decade, from 1960 through 1999. Natural change describes the portion of the population change that occurred as a result of births or deaths. Natural change is determined by subtracting deaths from births. A negative number indicates more deaths than births occurred, and a positive number indicates more births than deaths. Once the natural change is subtracted from the total change, the County can identify the exact change due to migration. A negative number in the "Net Migration" column indicates how many more persons moved out of the County (out-migration) than in, and a positive number indicates how many more persons moved into the County (in-migration), than out.

TABLE 2: MIGRATION ANALYSIS, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1960 THROUGH 1999

Red Willow County	Total Change (Persons)	Natural Change (Persons)	Net Migration (Persons)
1960 through 1970	-749	-2,119	1,370
1970 through 1980	424	-680	1,104
1980 through 1990	-910	-644	-266
1990 through 1999 (est.)	-257	-206	-51
Total	-1,492	-3,649	2,157
Average per Decade	-373	-912	539

Sources: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, STF-1A, 1970, 1980, 1990, 1999 (estimate)
Nebraska Health and Human Services, 2001

Table 2 indicates deaths exceed births in Red Willow County for each reporting period. This is largely due to a decline in the number of births and an increase in deaths providing evidence of an aging population. Based upon the formula, the primary contributor to Red Willow County's declining population has been the natural change. The largest occurrence of out-migration was between 1980 and 1990 when Red Willow County had a total change of -910 persons, deaths exceeded births by 644 persons and the net migration equaled -266 persons. Between 1960 and 1999, Red Willow County had a net in-migration of 2,157 persons.

AGE STRUCTURE

Age structure is an important component of population analysis. Analysis of population age structure allows the County to identify significant changes in population over time. By analyzing age structure, the County can determine which age groups within the County were having the largest affect on population change. Age groups, called cohorts, affect the population in a number of ways. For instance, young cohorts (20 to 44 years old) have a greater ability to sustain future growth since females in these cohorts are able to bear children.

However, in rural areas, cohorts from 15 to 24 years old may decrease at a high rate due to these individuals leaving the County for college in larger, urban areas. Table 3 shows the age composition for Red Willow County in 1980 and 1990.

TABLE 3: AGE STRUCTURE CHARACTERISTICS, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1980 AND 1990

Age	1980		1990		1980 to 1990		1980 to 1990	
	Cohort Size	% of Total	Cohort Size	% of Total	Net Change	% Change	Cohort Change	% Change
0-4	625	5.1%	838	7.2%	213	34.1%	838	----
5-9	928	7.6%	945	8.1%	17	1.8%	945	----
10-14	876	7.2%	920	7.9%	44	5.0%	295	47.2%
15-19	1,234	10.1%	872	7.4%	-362	-29.3%	-56	-6.0%
20-24	1,066	8.7%	582	5.0%	-484	-45.4%	-294	-33.6%
25-29	931	7.6%	797	6.8%	-134	-14.4%	-437	-35.4%
30-34	826	6.7%	905	7.7%	79	9.6%	-161	-15.1%
35-44	1,205	9.8%	1,532	13.1%	327	27.1%	-225	-12.8%
45-54	1,342	11.0%	1,110	9.5%	-232	-17.3%	-95	-7.9%
55-64	1,259	10.3%	1,201	10.3%	-58	-4.6%	-141	-10.5%
65-74	1,087	8.9%	1,063	9.1%	-24	-2.2%	-196	-15.6%
75-84	654	5.3%	668	5.7%	14	2.1%	-419	-38.5%
85+	213	1.7%	275	2.3%	62	29.1%	-592	-68.3%
Total	12,246	100.0%	11,708	100.0%	-538	-4.4%	-538	-4.4%
Selected Characteristics	1980		1990		Total Change			
	Total 18 years and under		Total 18 years and under		18 and under		-579	
	% of total population		% of total population		18 and under		-15.4%	
	Total 65 years and over		Total 65 years and over		65 and over		51	
	% of total population		% of total population		65 and over		2.6%	
	Median age		Median age		Median age		3.5	
	Total Females		Total Females		Females		-428	
	Total Males		Total Males		Males		-482	
	Total Population		Total Population		Population		-538	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing.

STF-1A, 1980, 1990

Table 3 shows two different methods for analyzing age structure composition. The first method, labeled “Net Change,” compares the size of one cohort over time. This method simply subtracts the 1980 population from the 1990 population to show how a particular cohort changed. The second method, labeled “Cohort Change,” compares one group of population over time. This method takes a 1980 cohort, then tracks the same group of population ten years into the future to show how that particular group of population changed. In essence, the first method compares one group of population to a different group over time, while the second method compares one group of population to itself over time.

Net Change between 1980 and 1990

Table 3 shows there were six (6) cohorts that had a net increase in size between 1980 and 1990. These were the 5-9, 10-14, 30-34, 35-44, 75-84 and the 85 and over cohorts. All of these cohorts showed insignificant increases when compared to the cohorts that lost population.

Cohort Change between 1980 and 1990

Table 3 shows that the largest cohort decrease was in the 75 and over (1980) sector to the 85 and over (1990) sector which equaled a 592 person loss or a 24.6% total change from 1980 to 1990. The second largest cohort was the 15 to 19 (1980) sector and the 25 to 29 (1990) sector with a loss of 437 person or 18.2% of the total losses. This cohort likely changed due to the “brain drain” notion of younger persons moving to more urban areas to pursue secondary educational and employment opportunities.

These cohorts decreased in size between 1980 and 1990:

1980 Cohort	Population	1990 Cohort	Population	Change
0 to 4	994	10 to 14	920	- 74 persons
5 to 9	928	15 to 19	872	- 56 persons
10 to 14	846	20 to 24	582	- 264 persons
15 to 19	1,234	25 to 29	797	- 437 persons
25 to 34	1,757	35 to 44	1,532	- 225 persons
45 to 54	1,342	55 to 64	1,201	- 141 persons
55 to 64	1,259	65 to 74	1,063	- 196 persons
65 to 74	1,087	75 to 84	668	- 419 persons
75 and over	867	85 and over	275	- 592 persons
Total Change				-2404 persons

The above display shows the population of Red Willow County in 1980 through 1990 was continually decreasing among the cohorts. The cohorts had losses ranging from 74 to 592 persons.

According to the Migration Analysis in Table 2, population loss in Red Willow County has historically been largely due to deaths exceeding births. Migration has generally been in-migration, except for the migration of the last two decades.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections allow Red Willow County to project what the population may be in future years. Projections are based upon past and present trends; therefore, they are subject to various factors. Demographic composition, economic trends, and social issues are all examples of factors affecting population projections either positively or negatively. Presented here are five common projection methods for future population. At the time of this Comprehensive Development Plan, these projections are the best method Red Willow County has for predicting future population changes.

TREND LINE ANALYSIS

The Trend Line Analysis is a method of projecting future populations based upon changes during a specified period of time. In this analysis, three different trend lines were analyzed including: 1960 to 2000 (estimate), 1980 to 2000 (estimate), and 1990 to 2000 (estimate). The three trend lines indicate Red Willow County population will continue to decline. The reason for the difference in each trend line is that each projection is based upon a specific time period. Each time period has its own trend, exhibiting that Red Willow County's population will decline through the planning period.

Year	1960 to 2000	1980 to 2000	1990 to 2000
2000	11,118 persons	10,918 persons	10,332 persons
2010	10,798 persons	10,413 persons	10,054 persons
2020	10,486 persons	9,932 persons	8,967 persons

COHORT SURVIVAL ANALYSIS

The Cohort Survival Analysis is a method of projecting future population based upon changes within different age groups and sexes. The population of the different age groups is projected forward by decade and adjusted using survival rates for each of the age groups. This analysis includes average birth and death rates in the future projections. Based upon this analysis, the population of Red Willow County is projected to increase within the planning period and continue to increase as it moves beyond 2020.

Year	Cohort Survival Projection
2000	11,545 persons
2010	12,531 persons
2020	13,897 persons

BUREAU OF BUSINESS RESEARCH (BBR)

The Bureau of Business Research at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln has developed their own method of analyzing future population projections. Their findings are published on a yearly basis and are presented here for comparison. The BBR research indicates the population of Red Willow County will increase slightly through the year 2020.

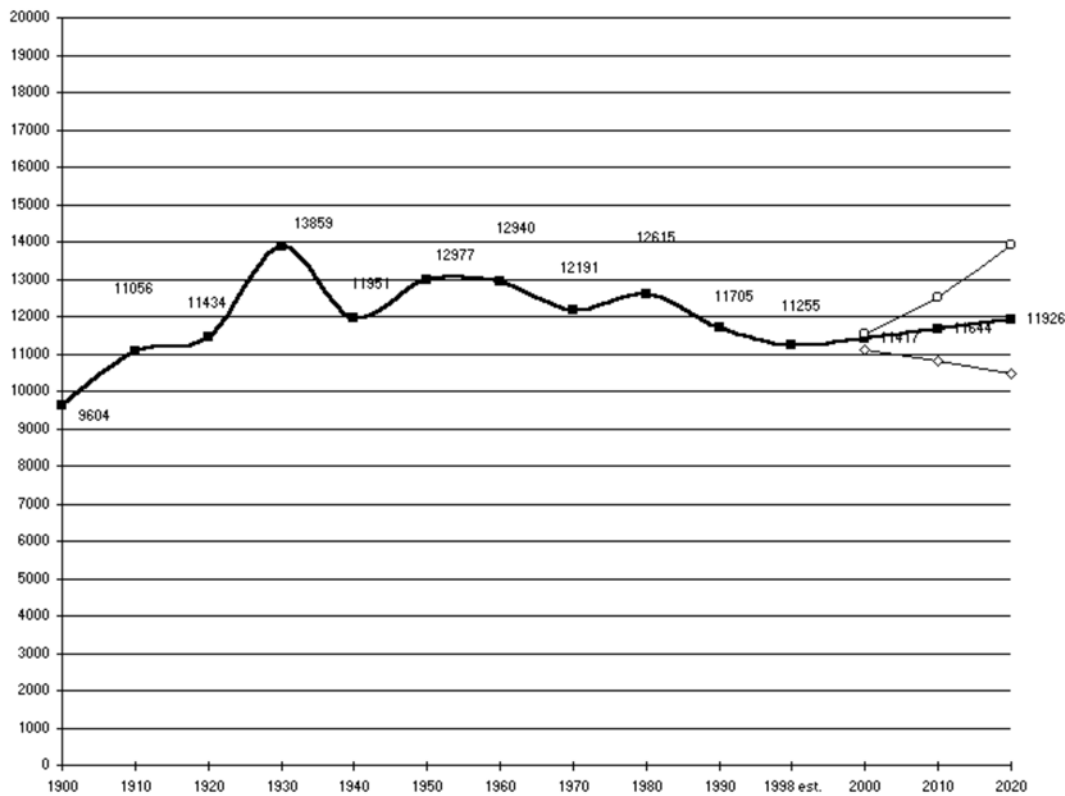
Year	BBR Projection
2000	11,417 persons
2010	11,644 persons
2020	11,926 persons

SUMMARY OF POPULATION PROJECTIONS

There are numerous methods used to project the future population of a County. Each approach attempts to account for a number of variables that impact population change. The projection scenarios presented in this Plan are commonly used methods. Figure 1 shows a summary of the main population projections presented in this Plan as well as the historical population since 1900. The three projections are labeled Low Series, Medium Series, and High Series. The summary, and the labels used, are merely for comparison and should not be used to evaluate the possibility that one method may be more accurate than another may.

Low Series (1960 to 2000)		Medium Series (BBR)		High Series (Cohort)	
Year	Projection	Year	Projection	Year	Projection
2000	11,118 persons	2000	11,417 persons	2000	11,545 persons
2010	10,798 persons	2010	11,644 persons	2010	12,531 persons
2020	10,486 persons	2020	11,926 persons	2020	13,897 persons

FIGURE 1: POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1900 THROUGH 2020



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1900 through 1990, 1998 (Census Estimate Program)

Figure 1 shows the population history of Red Willow County between 1900 and 1998 and identifies three population projection scenarios into the years 2000, 2010, and 2020. Figure 1 indicates the peak population for Red Willow County occurred in 1930 with 13,859 people. The population immediately declined slightly in 1940 and then maintained until leveling off at a small decrease in 1998. These changes are likely the result of changes in technology and agricultural markets over this duration of time.

As stated previously, these projections are based upon data from past trends and present conditions. A number of external and internal demographic, economic and social factors may affect these population forecasts. Red Willow County should monitor population trends, size and composition periodically in order to understand the direction in which the community is heading. Red Willow County's greatest population threat continues to be out-migration and strategies should be developed to further examine and prevent this trend.

HOUSING PROFILE

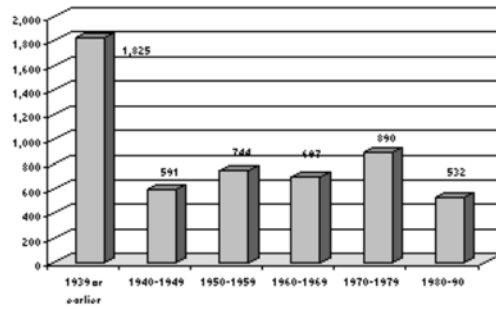
The Housing Profile in this Plan identifies existing housing characteristics and projected housing needs for residents of Red Willow County. The primary goal of a housing profile is to allow the County to determine the necessary steps to provide safe, decent, sanitary and affordable housing for every family and individual residing within Red Willow County. The housing profile for Red Willow County provides an analysis that aids in determining the composition of owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing units and the existence of vacant housing units. It is also important to evaluate information on the value of owner-occupied housing units and monthly rents for renter-occupied housing units, to determine if housing costs are a financial burden to Red Willow County residents.

To project future housing needs, several factors must be considered. These factors include: population change, household income, employment rates, land use patterns, and residents' attitudes. The following tables and figures will provide the information, which will aid in determining future housing needs and will direct policies designed to accomplish the housing goals for Red Willow County.

AGE OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

The age of Red Willow County's housing stock can reveal a great deal about population and economic conditions of the past. The age of housing stock can also indicate a need for a rehabilitation program and construction of new housing units. Examining the housing stock is important to understanding the housing quality in Red Willow County, which is a factor in the quality of life. Figure 2 displays the age of the existing housing stock in Red Willow County.

FIGURE 2: AGE OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK; RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1990



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

Figure 2 indicates 1,825 or 34.6% of Red Willow County’s 5,279 housing units were constructed prior to 1940. In addition, there were 3,160 homes, or 59.9% constructed prior to 1960. There were 890 or 16.9% constructed between 1970 and 1979, which indicates an economic boom and also relates to an increase in the county’s population. Red Willow County has predominance to older housing units (i.e., pre 1950) and this may indicate a need for a housing rehabilitation program to improve the quality and energy efficiency of older housing stock. Additionally, demolition of units that are beyond rehabilitation may be required. Where cost becomes a factor for homeowners, the county may want to become an active partner, through the sponsorship of certain grant programs, to aid in this rehabilitation. The predominance of housing units built prior to 1940 may indicate a need in Red Willow County for a rehabilitation program that improves the quality and energy efficiency of these older housing units. There may be units too dilapidated to be repaired from an economic standpoint. In these cases, it may be necessary to demolish the structure. Both of these programs could be part of a larger overall effort to support the construction of new homes in the County. The ability to provide quality housing can be an integral part of the County’s ability to pursue economic development activities.

HOUSING TRENDS

The housing stock of Red Willow County was reviewed to determine various housing trends. An analysis of housing trends reveals a great deal about different sectors of the population. Housing trends may indicate the potential demand for additional owner- and renter-occupied housing, as well as potential demand for single- and multiple-family housing. Table 4 shows housing trend information for Red Willow County through 1990.

TABLE 4: HOUSING TRENDS, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1980 THROUGH 1990

Social Characteristics	1980	1990	% Change
Persons in Households	15,295	11,511	-24.7%
Persons in Group Quarters	332	388	16.9%
Persons per Household	3.26	2.52	-22.7%
Total Population	15,627	11,899	-23.9%
Occupied Housing Units	4,795	4,723	-1.5%
Owner-occupied	3,505	3,231	-6.1%
Renter-occupied	1,290	1,432	11.0%
Vacant Housing Units	508	585	15.2%
Owner-occupied vacancy rate	10.3%	2.5%	-75.7%
Renter-occupied vacancy rate	11.1%	11.0%	-0.9%
Total Housing Units	5,303	5,308	0.1%
Single Family Units	4,035	4,027	-0.2%
Duplex/Multiple Family Units	844	714	-15.4%
Mobile Homes, Trailers, Other	424	538	26.3%
Median Contract Rent			
Red Willow County	\$176	\$215	22.2%
Nebraska	\$170	\$348	104.7%
Median Value of Owner-occupied Units			
Red Willow County	\$38,300	\$39,000	1.8%
Nebraska	\$38,000	\$50,000	31.6%

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

Table 4 shows that, between 1980 and 1990, the household population decreased by 24.7% from 15,295 to 11,511; persons residing in group quarters increased between 1980 to 1990 from 332 to 388 or 16.9%. In addition, the number of persons per household decreased by 22.7% from 3.26 to 2.52. This has been a typical trend in the Great Plains Region as well as the entire United States. Declining household size is a national trend and can be anticipated to impact Red Willow County into the future, since there is a high probability household sizes will continue to decline. However, the exact impact of this decline is yet to be determined.

In 1980, there were 4,795 occupied housing units. By 1990, there were 4,723 occupied housing units or a decrease of 72 occupied or 1.5% units from 1980. The number of vacant housing units increased from 508 to 585 units between 1980 and 1990. The change in

housing units, by type, between 1980 and 1990 displays interesting trends in which the number of single family units decreased from 4,035 to 4027 units. Duplex and multi-family units declined in Red Willow County by 15.4% from 844 in 1980 to 714 in 1990. Finally, mobile homes, trailers, and other forms of housing increased by 26.9% during this same time period. This points to a potential trend of transition from the typical single family units and duplex/multifamily units to mobile homes and trailers.

Median monthly contract rent in Red Willow County increased from \$176 in 1980 to \$215 in 1990 and represents an increase of 52.7%, while the State's median monthly contract rent increased 104.7% during the same time period. Comparing the changes in monthly rents between 1980 and 1990 with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) enables the local housing market to be compared to national economic conditions. Inflation between 1980 and 1990 totaled 60.7%, indicating Red Willow County rents increased at a lower rate than the rate of inflation. Thus, Red Willow County tenants were paying less monthly rents in 1990, in real dollars, than they were in 1980.

Median value of owner-occupied units in Red Willow County increased from \$38,300 in 1980 to \$39,000 in 1990 and represents a change of 1.8%, while the State's median value of owner-occupied housing units increased 31.6%. Between 1980 and 1990, housing values in Red Willow County increased in value by 1.8% when compared to inflation as a whole. This represents an overall housing stock that is valued in 1990 higher than it was in 1980.

Table 5 examines the housing composition by number of persons per household and age of the primary householder.

TABLE 5: TENURE OF HOUSEHOLD BY HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1980 TO 1990

Householder Characteristic	1980				1990				1980-1990 % Change	
	Owner-Occ.	% Owner-Occ.	Renter-Occ.	% Renter-Occ.	Owner-Occ.	% Owner-Occ.	Renter-Occ.	% Renter-Occ.	Owner-Occ.	Renter-Occ.
<i>Tenure by Number of Persons in Housing Unit</i>										
1 person	1,223	25.5%	550	42.6%	763	23.3%	581	40.9%	-37.6%	5.6%
2 persons	1,596	33.3%	332	25.7%	1,291	39.5%	365	25.7%	-19.1%	9.9%
3 persons	772	16.1%	169	13.1%	452	13.8%	204	14.3%	-41.5%	20.7%
4 persons	676	14.1%	147	11.4%	438	13.4%	174	12.2%	-35.2%	18.4%
5 persons	331	6.9%	59	4.6%	256	7.8%	78	5.5%	-22.7%	32.2%
6 or more person	197	4.1%	33	2.6%	69	2.1%	20	1.4%	-65.0%	-39.4%
Total	4,795	100.0%	1,290	100.0%	3,269	100.0%	1,422	100.0%	-31.8%	10.2%
<i>Tenure by Age of Householder</i>										
15 to 24 years	Data not available for 1980 U.S. Census				31	0.9%	282	19.7%		
25 to 34 years					464	14.1%	428	29.9%		
35 to 44 years					614	18.7%	262	18.3%		
45 to 54 years					463	14.1%	132	9.2%		
55 to 64 years					609	18.5%	86	6.0%		
65 to 74 years					607	18.4%	93	6.5%		
75 years and over					503	15.3%	149	10.4%		
Total					3,291	100.0%	1,432	100.0%		

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing, STF

1A, 1980, 1990

Table 5 exhibits tenure (owner-occupied and renter-occupied) of households by number and age of persons in each housing unit. Red Willow County is comprised of a majority of one- and two-person(s) households, with 62.8% of total owner-occupied and 66.6% of the total renter-occupied. These smaller household sizes are expected to continue and typically represent elderly households. Tenure (owner-occupied unit or renter-occupied unit), by age, indicates that 52.2% of owner-occupied units were more varied, with a range of ages comprising the rental market. However, the age cohorts of 25 to 44 years old occupied 48.2% of renter-occupied units.

HOUSING CONDITION

The conditions of housing units in Red Willow County were reviewed to determine the approximate number of housing units considered substandard. The U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) defines substandard housing as "housing units" that are overcrowded or lack complete plumbing facilities. Overcrowding means there was more than one person, per room, residing in a unit. Complete plumbing facilities are defined as hot and cold piped water, a bathtub or shower, and a flush toilet. Table 6 shows the percentage of substandard units for Red Willow County.

TABLE 6: HOUSING CONDITION, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1980 AND 1990

Housing Profile	Red Willow County		State of Nebraska	
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
1980 Housing Units	5,309		618,699	
1980 Occupied Housing Units	4,795	90.3%	571,400	92.4%
1990 Housing Units	5,279		660,621	
1990 Occupied Housing Units	4,723	89.5%	602,363	91.2%
Change in Number of Units 1980 to 1990				
Total Change	-30	-0.6%	41,922	6.8%
Annual Change	-3	-0.1%	4,192	0.7%
Total Change in Occupied Units	-72	-1.5%	30,963	5.4%
Annual Change in Occupied Units	-7	-0.2%	3,096	0.5%
Condition				
1980 Units Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	36	0.7%	11,737	1.9%
1980 Units with More Than One Person per Room	122	2.3%	12,052	1.9%
1990 Units Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	33	0.6%	5,242	0.8%
1990 Units with More Than One Person per Room	48	0.9%	10,512	1.6%
Substandard Units				
1980 Total	158	3.0%	23,789	3.8%
1990 Total	81	1.5%	15,754	2.4%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and

Housing, STF-3A, 1980, 1990

Table 6 indicates the changes in housing conditions and inventory of substandard housing for Red Willow County between 1980 and 1990. During this decade, Red Willow County lost 72 units over which averages a loss of 7 units per year. Housing units lacking complete plumbing or are overcrowded (more than 1.01 persons or more per room) represent the minimum amount of substandard housing units in a community. In Red Willow County for 1990, 81 housing units (1.5%) of 5,279 were considered substandard. Compared to the State of Nebraska (2.4%) and the United States (4.5%), Red Willow County had less substandard housing, as a percentage than both the state and national averages.

The data in Table 6 can assist in determining the number of housing units that could be targeted for renovation or rehabilitation. However, these data do not include housing units that are substandard due to housing code violations or other problems. Once a complete analysis has been finished, the County would be in a position to potentially develop a housing program to target these homes and assist owners in renovating and improving the substandard units. This is one example of what could be done to improve the quality of life for all Red Willow County residents.

SUMMARY OF HOUSING PROFILE

The ability to provide affordable, safe housing is an integral aspect of economic development. The housing stock in Red Willow County is generally in good condition and should be a positive factor in future economic development. Generally speaking, the number of housing units, by occupancy, is relatively close to national averages. The United States Census Bureau recently published national housing statistics in a report titled "Housing Survey 2000." While 2000 data for Red Willow County is not yet available, it can be assumed the figures for Red Willow County in 1990 will be relatively similar to 2000 figures. Based upon that assumption, Red Willow County in 1990 will be relatively similar to 2000 figures.

When comparing Red Willow County to the United States, data show Red Willow County has more housing occupied by owners than the United States as a whole. Red Willow County also has more of its housing occupied by renters. This means that Red Willow County has less vacant housing than the United States as a whole.

The standard vacancy rate used in the housing industry is 5.0%. At a 5.0% vacancy rate, a community is generally supplying enough extra housing to allow new and current residents to have a choice in the neighborhood and price range of home. However, there are too few units to allow for deterioration during long periods of non-use. Red Willow County's vacancy rate appears to be in-line with industry standards. There are not necessarily standard rates for owners and renters, or even for single- and multi-family housing due to the various social and economic factors that drive supply in these categories; these factors change from community to community.

ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

Economic data are collected in order to understand area markets, changes in economic activity and employment needs and opportunities within Red Willow County. In this section, employment by industry, household income statistics, and basic/non-basic analyses were reviewed for Red Willow County, and the State of Nebraska.

INCOME STATISTICS

Income statistics are important data in determining the earning power of households in a County. These data review household income levels in comparison to the State. In addition, these data sets were reviewed to determine whether households were exhibiting income increases at a rate comparable to that found within the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

TABLE 7: HOUSEHOLD INCOME, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1980 AND 1990

Household Income Range	1980				1990			
	Red Willow County	% of Total	Nebraska	% of Total	Red Willow County	% of Total	Nebraska	% of Total
Less than \$5,000	631	13.3%	76,353	13.3%	261	5.6%	33,706	5.6%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	855	18.0%	95,803	16.7%	556	11.9%	61,896	10.3%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	849	17.9%	96,836	16.9%	668	14.3%	64,661	10.7%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	1,287	27.1%	162,608	28.4%	1,188	25.4%	128,454	21.3%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	659	13.9%	82,658	14.4%	767	16.4%	108,560	18.0%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	332	7.0%	38,583	6.7%	716	15.3%	107,111	17.8%
\$50,000 and over	142	3.0%	19,774	3.5%	523	11.2%	98,470	16.3%
Number of Households	4,755	100.0%	572,615	100.0%	4,679	100.0%	602,858	100.0%
Median Household Income	\$15,925				\$26,016			

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing,

STF-3A, 1980, 1990

Table 7 indicates the number of households in each income range in Red Willow County for 1980 and 1990. In 1980, the household income range most commonly reported was \$15,000 to \$24,999, \$5,000 to \$9,999, and then \$10,000 to \$14,999. In 1980, household incomes between \$35,000 and \$49,999 and above \$50,000 per annum consisted of only 474 households or 10.0% combined or 7.0% and 3.0% respectively. In 1980, the median household income was \$15,925 for Red Willow County.

Household incomes in Red Willow County increased between 1980 and 1990. Most of the change was attributed to households moving into the \$35,000 to \$49,999 and \$50,000 and above income ranges, which consisted of 10.0% and 26.5% of households, respectively. This represents almost a doubling in one income range and a nearly four-fold change in the other income range. This change is important, especially at a time when the agricultural economy was in a state of fluctuation. In 1990, the median household income was \$26,016 or an increase of 61% from 1980. The CPI for the same period was 60.7%, which indicating incomes in Red Willow County only slightly exceeded inflation, therefore, households were earning slightly more in real dollars in 1990 than in 1980.

TABLE 8: HOUSEHOLD INCOME BY AGE (55 YEARS AND OLDER), RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1990

Income Categories	55 to 64 Years	65 to 74 Years	75 and Older	55 and Older Total	% 55 and Older Total	Total Households	% of 55+ to Total Households
Less than \$5,000	36	49	64	149	8.6%	261	3.2%
\$5,000 to \$9,999	52	120	168	0	0.0%	556	0.0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	120	160	102	382	22.2%	668	8.2%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	132	143	187	462	26.8%	1,188	9.9%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	144	117	52	313	18.2%	767	6.7%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	103	64	54	221	12.8%	716	4.7%
\$50,000 and over	94	50	53	197	11.4%	523	4.2%
Total	681	703	681	1,724	100.0%	4,679	36.8%

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

Table 8 indicates household income for Red Willow County householders aged 55 years and over in 1990. The purpose for this information is to determine the income level of Red Willow County's senior households. Table 8 indicates 2,673 senior households or 57% of the total senior population had incomes of less than \$25,000 per year. In Red Willow County, 1,485 senior households or 31.7% of the total senior population had incomes less than \$15,000 per year. This information indicates many senior households could be eligible or are presently on housing assistance. The number of senior households should continue to grow and fixed income households may be required to provide their entire housing needs for a longer period of time. However, fixed incomes for seniors tend to decline in real dollars at a faster rate than any other segment of the population, when compared with the rate of inflation.

The last two columns of Table 8 indicate the total number of households in each income level and the proportion of households' age 55 years and older to the total. Note that within the income levels of less than \$15,000, 11.3% of total households were over the age of 55. These data point to a younger homeowner population and variances in incomes in the county.

INCOME AND HOUSING

The relationship between income and housing is an important factor used by a County to provide safe, decent, sanitary and affordable housing for all households and individuals. Red Willow County should look at developing and implementing a set of housing goals when making decisions regarding future developments. Specifically, Red Willow County should develop a list of policies that are based on the following factors:

- § Red Willow County should assist the elderly populations by ensuring policies are developed that permit and encourage the continued support of services that aid in the quality of life for elderly residents.
- § Red Willow County should continue to play an important role in the development of affordable housing options for all residents through appropriate land-use policies.

TABLE 9: HOUSING COSTS AS A PERCENTAGE OF HOUSEHOLD INCOME, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1990

Income Categories	Owner Households	% of Owner Households	Renter Households	% of Renter Households	Total Households	% of Total Households
Less than \$10,000						
Less than 30%	136	5.5%	114	9.2%	250	6.7%
30% or more	166	6.7%	261	21.1%	427	11.5%
\$10,000 to \$19,999						
Less than 30%	469	19.0%	365	29.5%	834	22.5%
30% or more	92	3.7%	20	1.6%	112	3.0%
\$20,000 to \$34,999						
Less than 30%	713	28.9%	335	27.0%	1048	28.3%
30% or more	60	2.4%	0	0.0%	60	1.6%
\$35,000 to \$49,999						
Less than 30%	428	17.4%	121	9.8%	549	14.8%
30% or more	22	0.9%	0	0.0%	22	0.6%
\$50,000 or more						
Less than 30%	379	15.4%	23	1.9%	402	10.9%
30% or more	0	0.0%	0	0.0%	0	0.0%
Total	2465	100.0%	1239	100.0%	3704	100.0%
Overall Analysis						
Less than 30%	2125	86.2%	998	77.3%	3083	83.2%
30% or more	340	13.8%	281	22.7%	621	16.8%
Total	2465	100.0%	1239	100.0%	3704	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing,

STF-3A, 1990

Table 9 shows owner-occupied and renter-occupied housing costs as a percentage of householder income in 1990. In addition, the Table estimates the number of households experiencing a housing cost burden. A housing cost burden is defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) as the extent to which gross housing costs, including utility costs, exceeds 30% of gross household income, based on data published by the U.S. Census Bureau. Renter occupied households had 22.7% of the renters experiencing a housing cost burden in Red Willow County. However, owner-occupied households had 13.8% of the total owner units experiencing a housing cost burden. Overall, in 1990, 621 households or 16.8% of the households in Red Willow County experienced a housing cost burden.

TABLE 10: INCOME BY SOURCE, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1970 TO 1997

Income Characteristics	1970	1980	1990	1997	% Change 1970 to 1997	% Annual Change
Red Willow County						
Total Personal Income	\$44,743,000	\$116,014,000	\$166,726,000	\$227,156,000	407.7%	15.1%
Non-farm Income	\$40,275,000	\$117,073,000	\$13,850,000	\$22,739,000	453.0%	16.8%
Farm Income	\$4,468,000	-\$1,059,000	\$19,436,000	\$4,417,000	-1.1%	0.0%
Red Willow County Per Capita Income	\$3,463	\$9,409	\$11,146	\$19,984	477.1%	17.7%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional

Economic Information System, 1997

INCOME SOURCE AND PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Personal income by source, for Red Willow County residents, is shown in Table 10. Between 1970 and 1997 total income and per capita income exhibited continued growth in the non-farm income sector. However, the farm sector experienced considerable fluctuation in income through this time period. Non-farm income increased from \$40,275,000 in 1970 to \$222,739,000 in 1998 or 453.0%. Farm income decreased from \$4,468,000 in 1970 to \$4,417,000 in 1998 or -1.1%.

The per capita income in the county increased from \$3,463 in 1970 to \$19,984 in 1998, an increase of 477.1%. All of the income characteristics exceeded the CPI of 313.7% for the 1970 to 1998 time period, except farm income. With the total personal income exceeding the CPI, the average person in Red Willow County was earning more in 1998 than in 1970 in real dollars.

TABLE 11: TRANSFER PAYMENTS, RED WILLOW COUNTY AND NEBRASKA, 1970 TO 1998

Payment Type	1970	1980	1990	1998	% Change 1970 to 1998	% Change per Year
Red Willow County						
Government Payments to Individuals	\$4,083	\$13,255	\$26,402	\$45,727	1019.9%	27.6%
Retirement, Disability, & Insurance	\$4,738	\$18,378	\$32,911	\$48,803	930.0%	25.1%
Medical	\$1,092	\$4,068	\$13,941	\$33,656	2982.1%	80.6%
Income Maintenance	\$158	\$1,072	\$2,804	\$5,072	3110.1%	84.1%
Unemployment Insurance	\$114	\$657	\$501	\$758	564.9%	15.3%
Veteran's Benefits	\$749	\$1,564	\$1,528	\$1,791	139.1%	3.8%
Education and Training Assistance	(L)	\$203	\$479	\$553	(A)	(A)
Payments to Nonprofit Institutions	\$452	\$1,104	\$1,432	\$2,198	386.3%	10.4%
Business Payments	\$107	\$363	\$780	\$919	665.4%	18.0%
Total	\$4,430	\$14,170	\$27,898	\$47,645	975.5%	26.4%
Per Capita Transfer Payments	\$392	\$1,236	\$2,729	\$4,460	1037.8%	28.0%
Per Capita Income	\$3,675	\$9,174	\$15,971	\$19,384	443.8%	12.0%
Per Capita Transfer Payments as % of Per Capita Income	10.7%	13.5%	17.1%	22.3%	109.2%	3.0%
Nebraska						
Total	\$536,625,000	\$1,866,193,000	\$3,719,752,000	\$5,809,270,000	982.6%	26.6%
Per Capita Transfer Payments	\$361	\$1,187	\$2,353	\$3,506	871.2%	23.5%
Per Capita Income	\$3,789	\$9,139	\$17,536	\$23,618	523.3%	14.1%
Per Capita Transfer Payments as % of Per Capita Income	9.5%	13.0%	13.4%	14.8%	55.8%	1.5%

Economic Information System, 1999

(L): Less than \$50,000, but estimates for this item are included in the totals.

(A): Absence of information

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional

Table 12 indicates Transfer Payments to individuals in Red Willow County from 1970 to 1998. Total transfer payments between 1970 and 1998 exhibited an increase between each reporting period. Specifically, government payments, retirement and disability insurance benefits and medical payments comprised the majority of total transfer payments. The trend for transfer payments per capita between 1970 and 1998 indicates payments increased significantly to individuals in Red Willow County. More importantly, transfer payments, as a proportion of per capita income, has steadily become more significant between 1970 and 1998. In 1970, transfer payments comprised 9.5% of total per capita income and in 1998 it increased to 14.8%.

EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

Analyzing employment by industry allows the County to understand which occupations are the most influential components of its labor force. This section indicates the types of industry that comprise the local surrounding economy. Table 12 indicates employment size by industry for Red Willow County and the State of Nebraska between 1980 and 1997. Between 1980 and 1997, Red Willow County had an array of changes regarding employed persons. Overall, the workforce in Red Willow County declined by 2,952 positions or -40.9% between 1980 and 1997, while the State of Nebraska had a decrease of 105,076 positions or a decrease of 12.0%.

TABLE 12: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY, RED WILLOW COUNTY AND NEBRASKA, 1980 AND 1990

Industry Category	1980	% of Total	1990	% of Total	1997	% of Total	% Change 1980 to 1997
Red Willow County							
Farm Employment	725	10.0%	571	8.2%	539	7.3%	-25.7%
Non-farm Employment	6,501	90.0%	6,408	91.8%	6,881	92.7%	5.8%
Ag, Forestry, Fishing, Mining	195	2.7%	344	4.9%	271	3.7%	39.0%
Construction	365	5.1%	264	3.8%	356	4.8%	-25%
Manufacturing	915	12.7%	515	7.4%	495	6.7%	-45.9%
Transp, Public Utilities	485	6.7%	395	5.7%	268	3.6%	-44.7%
Wholesale Trade	514	7.1%	516	7.4%	503	6.8%	-2.1%
Retail Trade	1,485	20.6%	1,560	22.4%	1,707	23.0%	14.9%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	365	5.1%	319	4.6%	447	6.0%	22.5%
Services	1,133	15.7%	1,423	20.4%	1,697	22.9%	49.8%
Government	1,781	24.6%	2,000	28.7%	3,294	44.4%	85.0%
Total	7,226	100.0%	6,979	100.0%	7,420	100.0%	2.7%
Nebraska							
Farm Employment	90,094	10.3%	72,046	7.3%	67,866	8.8%	-24.7%
Non-farm Employment	788,848	89.7%	919,722	92.7%	706,000	91.2%	-10.5%
Ag, Forestry, Fishing, Mining	9,504	1.1%	13,994	1.4%	18,698	2.4%	191.6%
Construction	42,764	4.9%	41,327	4.2%	57,265	7.4%	33.9%
Manufacturing	98,442	11.2%	102,856	10.4%	119,466	15.4%	21.4%
Transp, Public Utilities	54,604	6.2%	53,471	5.4%	62,616	8.1%	14.7%
Wholesale Trade	51,512	5.9%	55,704	5.6%	56,747	7.3%	10.2%
Retail Trade	144,163	16.4%	162,811	16.4%	196,843	25.4%	36.5%
Finance, Insurance, Real Estate	65,519	7.5%	74,292	7.5%	81,997	10.6%	25.1%
Services	171,428	19.5%	252,681	25.5%	322,471	41.7%	88.1%
Government	150,912	17.2%	162,586	16.4%	161,984	20.9%	107.3%
Total	878,942	100.0%	991,768	100.0%	773,866	100.0%	-12.0%

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 1999
(D): Data withheld to avoid disclosure of confidential information, estimates included in totals.

(L): Less than ten jobs, estimates included in totals.

(NA): Calculation is not available due to limitations in data.

Those sectors that lost employment are indicated below

- § Construction -11 jobs or -2.5%
- § Manufacturing -418 jobs or -45.9%
- § Transportation and Public Utilities -217 jobs or -44.7%
- § Wholesale Trade -11 jobs or -2.1%

The greatest number of jobs lost was within manufacturing. Manufacturing had a total change of 418 jobs or approximately one in every ten. However, the greatest percentage of jobs lost was within the transportation and public utilities sector, at -44.7%.

Increases in employment positions occurred in the following industry categories:

- § Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Mining +76 jobs or 39.0%
- § Retail Trade +222 jobs or 14.9%
- § Finance, Insurance, and Real Estate +82 jobs or 22.5%
- § Services +564 jobs or 49.8%
- § Government +1,513 jobs or 85.0%

Changes within Red Willow County are reflective of the move nationally for more service-related industries. Red Willow County, together with their economic development partners, need to identify community assets and market the County to businesses looking to relocate, establish new operations, or assist existing businesses in expanding their scope of activity. This may become more probable as telecommuting and technology continue to improve and become more assessable to rural communities.

COMMUTER TRENDS

Table 13 shows commuter characteristics for residents of Red Willow County. Table 13 indicates the commuter population of Red Willow County fluctuated between 1960 and 1990. The trend seen between 1960 and 1990 indicates the workforce employed in Red Willow County declined, while the workforce population increased. The commuter traffic out of Red Willow County was well dispersed to other counties in the same geographic area. However, the counties that saw the greatest amount of Red Willow County residents' commute were undetermined areas, Buffalo and Furnas Counties. Overall, Red Willow County saw the commuter population increase from 4.4% in 1960 to 5.1% for 1990.

TABLE 13: COMMUTER POPULATION TRENDS, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1960 TO 1990

County of Residence	Work County	1960	1970	1980	1990	Change 1960-1990	Red Willow County as % of 1960 Total	Red Willow County as % of 1990 Total
Red Willow	Decatur, KS	8	0	0	23	10	0.2%	0.4%
	Buffalo	0	0	0	23	48	0.0%	0.4%
	Red Willow	4,639	4,095	5,518	5,133	494	95.6%	94.9%
	Dundy	0	6	2	30	30	0.0%	0.6%
	Frontier	13	14	0	0	-13	0.3%	0.0%
	Furnas	36	95	58	77	41	0.7%	1.4%
	Gosper	4	8	0	0	-4	0.1%	0.0%
	Hays	14	0	0	0	-14	0.3%	0.0%
	Elsewhere	71	148	101	122	51	1.5%	2.3%
	Not reported	67	259	0	0	-67	1.4%	0.0%
	Total	4,852	4,585	5,679	5,408	576	100%	100%
Total Commuter	213	490	161	275				
% of Total Workers	4.4%	10.7%	2.8%	5.1%				
Adams	Red Willow	12	7	24	52	40	0.2%	0.9%
Buffalo		4	8	0	0	-4	0.1%	0.0%
Red Willow		4,639	4,095	5,578	5,133	494	96.1%	90.0%
Haskell		45	25	72	104	59	0.9%	1.8%
Hitchcock		62	154	264	285	223	1.3%	
Kearney		56	77	60	105	49	1.2%	1.8%
Phelps		5	5	0	0	-5	0.1%	0.0%
Webster		4	5	15	26	22	0.1%	0.5%
Total	4,827	4,376	6,013	5,705	878	100%	95%	
Total Commuter	188	281	435	572				
% of Total Workers	3.9%	6.4%	7.2%	10.0%				

Source: U.S. Bureau of Economic Analysis, Regional Economic Information System, 1999

REGIONAL BASIC/NON-BASIC ANALYSIS

Analysis of basic and non-basic occupations assists the County in determining which categories were generating revenue within the local economy. The U.S. Census Bureau has established six occupation categories that evaluate trends in local employment by occupation and the local economy. Basic and Non-Basic employment are defined as follows:

- § Basic employment is business activity providing services primarily outside the area through the sale of goods and services, the revenues of which are directed to the local area in the form of wages and payments to local suppliers.
- § Non-Basic employment is business activity providing services primarily within the area through the sale of goods and services, the revenues of which re-circulate within the community in the form of wages and expenditures by local citizens.

This analysis will assist the County in understanding which businesses are exporting goods and services outside the local area, thereby importing dollars into the local economy. The six occupation categories are:

- § Managerial and Professional
- § Technical, Sales, and Administrative
- § Services
- § Farming, Forestry, and Fishing
- § Precision, Production, Craft, and Repair
- § Operators, Fabricators, and Laborers

TABLE 14: BASIC/NON-BASIC EMPLOYMENT BY OCCUPATION, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1990

Occupation Category	Red Willow County Workforce	% of Red Willow County Workforce	% of Nebraska workforce	Red Willow County minus Nebraska	Basic	Non-Basic
Managerial and Professional	1119	20.0%	23.1%	18.5%	0.0%	20.0%
Technical, Sales, and Administrative	1483	26.6%	30.6%	25.6%	0.0%	26.6%
Service	751	13.5%	14.5%	13.2%	0.0%	13.5%
Farming, Forestry, and Fishing	544	9.7%	7.4%	8.4%	2.3%	7.4%
Precision, Craft, and Repair	638	11.4%	10.3%	10.1%	1.9%	10.3%
Operators, Fabricators, and La	1047	18.8%	14.1%	14.8%	4.7%	14.1%
Total	5582	100.0%	100.0%	90.60%	8.9%	91.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing,

STF-3A, 1990

Table 14 indicates the work sector, the percent of basic employment, the percent of non-basic employment and the percent of the State workforce percentage in each occupational area. Subtraction of the State's workforce in a particular occupation from Red Willow County's workforce percentage for the same occupation determines which occupations are basic or non-basic. The local occupations having a lower percentage than the State would be considered non-basic. Table 14 indicates the occupation(s) which are basic or non-basic in relation to the production of goods and services. In Red Willow County, technical, sales and administrative occupations had the largest basic employment, meaning goods and services from these occupations were exported to outside markets and in turn, generated an infusion of dollars into the local economy. An additional sector having high basic employment was managerial and professional occupations.

The economic base multiplier for Red Willow County is 12.3 meaning that 12.3 non-basic jobs are supported for every one (1) basic job in Red Willow County. Therefore, every time Red Willow County loses a job in a, per say, technical, sales and/or administrative sector (basic occupations), then 12.3 non-basic jobs are impacted. Ways to accentuate these basic jobs would be to diversify the employment base even more by attracting basic related jobs into the County in other occupation areas and work towards more balanced employment.

TABLE 15: REGIONAL AND STATE LABOR FORCE COMPARISONS, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1990

Location	Managerial and Professional	Technical, Sales, and Administrative	Service	Farming, Forestry, and Fishing	Precision, Craft, and Repair	Operators, Fabricators, and Laborers	Base Multiplier
Nebraska	23.1%	30.6%	14.5%	7.4%	10.3%	14.1%	NA
Red Willow County	20.0%	26.6%	13.5%	9.7%	11.4%	18.8%	12.30
Adams County	22.8%	26.9%	17.8%	5.3%	11.5%	15.8%	16.42
Webster County	16.2%	23.5%	17.0%	18.7%	11.1%	13.4%	6.85
Harlan County	15.2%	24.3%	14.0%	25.3%	9.6%	11.6%	5.57
Keamey County	22.0%	17.6%	18.0%	18.5%	9.3%	14.5%	6.65
Average	19.2%	23.8%	16.1%	15.5%	10.6%	14.8%	9.56

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Population and Housing,

STF-3A, 1990

Table 15 indicates the percentage employment by occupational categories for residents of Red Willow County, Nebraska and surrounding counties in 1990. Comparisons with surrounding counties indicates that Red Willow County has a higher labor force employed in the operators, fabricators and laborers sector of occupations (18.8%) than the surrounding counties, whom range from 11.6% to 15.8%. The farming, forestry and fishing sector as well as the service sector exhibited a slightly smaller labor force composition for Red Willow County than surrounding counties. Additionally, Red Willow County experienced similar compositions of occupations through the managerial and professional, the technical, sales and administrative and the precision, craft and repair sectors of occupations when compared with surrounding counties.

SUMMARY OF ECONOMY AND EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

The economic and employment profile of Red Willow County is similar to many Midwestern rural counties. In 1980, the median household income in Red Willow County was \$15,925, but was less than the State of Nebraska and the United States at \$27,930 and \$28,220 respectively. By 1990, Red Willow County had increased its household income to \$26,016 while the State of Nebraska had decreased to \$25,520 and the United States increased to \$30,056. The larger proportionate increase for Red Willow County was likely due to its increased reliance on non-farm employment. In 1997, employment in services and retail trade accounted for 41.7% of all jobs in Red Willow County, but the economy remains very much non-basic.

In 1990, Red Willow County had 76.3% of all households earning less than \$24,999, while only 3.0% earned greater than \$50,000. Furthermore, 21.3% of all households earning less than \$24,999 were age 55 or over and only 4.2% earning over \$50,000 were age 55 or over.

A housing cost burden affected many Red Willow County residents in 1990. A housing cost burden occurs when a household must spend more than 30% of its income on housing costs, including utilities. In 1990, 16.8% of all Red Willow County households experienced such a burden. That percentage included 13.8% of all owner-occupied households and 22.7% of all renter-occupied households. However, most of each occupancy group were in the lower income ranges.

AGRICULTURAL PROFILE

The agricultural profile enables the County to evaluate the influence the agricultural industry has on the local economy. Since most Nebraska counties were formed around agriculture, this industry has been the backbone of many local economies. The U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Agriculture, collects agricultural data every five years. Since this frequency does not coincide with the decennial census of Population and Housing, comparisons of the two censuses are difficult.

TABLE 16: AGRICULTURAL PROFILE, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1982 TO 1997

Agricultural Characteristic	1982	1987	1992	1997	% Change 1982-1997
Number of Farms	474	489	425	438	-7.6%
Land in Farms (acres)	442,051	451,724	439,475	451,724	2.2%
Average Size of Farms (acres)	922	924	1,034	996	8.0%
Total Land Area for Red Willow County (acres)	459,172	459,712	459,712	459,712	0.1%
% of Land in Farm Production	96.0%	98.2%	95.4%	98.3%	2.4%
Total Cropland (acres)	442	430	361	376	-14.9%
Harvested Cropland (acres)	431	411	340	347	-19.5%
Estimated Market Value of Farm (per farm)	\$614,112	\$330,864	\$458,269	\$578,485	-5.8%
Estimated Market Value of Farm (per acre)	\$618	\$379	\$469	\$580	-6.1%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Agriculture, 1982 to 1997

Table 16 identifies key components of Red Willow County’s agricultural profile. The table indicates the number of farms within Red Willow County have decreased from 1982 to 1997 by 36 farms, due to the constant varying nature of the agricultural economy. The average size of farms (acres) increased between 1982 and 1997 from 922 acres in 1982 to 996 acres in 1997. The average value of farms fluctuated between \$614,112 in 1982 and \$578,485 in 1997 with an eventual decrease in estimated market value of farm (per farm) values by 1997. These are the trends for rural counties in Nebraska; particularly those located along the southern tier of counties bordering

Kansas.

TABLE 17: NUMBER OF FARMS BY SIZE, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1982 TO 1997

Farm Size (acres)	1982	1987	1992	1997	% Change 1982 - 1997
1 to 9	31	48	25	28	-9.7%
10 to 49	37	34	41	49	32.4%
50 to 179	56	50	44	53	-5.4%
180 to 499	92	79	69	74	-19.6%
500 to 999	93	103	87	81	-12.9%
1,000 or more	165	175	159	153	-7.3%
Total	474	489	425	438	-7.6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Agriculture, 1982 to 1997

The sizes of farms, in acres, are indicated in Table 17 for 1982 to 1997. In general, the information suggests smaller farm sizes are declining in number, while farms are becoming more consolidated, thus showing a declining number of farms.

TABLE 18: NUMBER OF FARMS AND LIVESTOCK BY TYPE, RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1982 TO 1997

Type of Livestock	1982	1987	1992	1997	% Change 1982 to 1997
Cattle and Calves					
Farms	328	308	269	254	-22.6%
animals	64,333	70,862	67,827	71,713	11.5%
average per farm	20	229	252	282	1310.0%
Beef Cows					
Farms	259	232	215	189	-27.0%
animals	17,876	17,057	15,850	14,452	-19.2%
average per farm	69	74	74	76	10.1%
Dairy Cows					
Farms	21	19	6	6	-71.4%
animals	336	404	262	203	-39.6%
average per farm	16	21	44	34	112.5%
Hogs and Pigs					
Farms	103	100	68	39	-62.1%
animals	24,414	25,260	23,006	15,329	-37.2%
average per farm	237	253	338	393	65.8%
Sheep and Lambs					
Farms	15	9	15	16	6.7%
animals	1,415	455	1,178	353	-75.1%
average per farm	94	51	79	22	-76.6%
Chickens 13 weeks and older					
Farms	44	33	10	17	-61.4%
animals	1,776	1,115	889	1,023	-42.4%
average per farm	40	34	89	60	50.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Agriculture, 1982 to 1997

(D): Data withheld to avoid disclosure.; (NA): Calculation is not available due to limitations in data.

Table 18 indicates the number of farms and livestock by type for Red Willow County between 1982 and 1997. The predominant livestock utilized for agricultural purposes in Red Willow County were cattle and calves. Cattle operations have been the primary type of livestock operation seen in Red Willow County. Between 1982 and 1997, selected cattle ranching indicators reveal a decline in the number of farms, but an increase in number of cattle. The remaining livestock operations show a decline in the number of farms and total livestock of hogs and pigs, beef cows, dairy cows and chickens. Average livestock numbers, per farm, were calculated for each animal and the results indicate that all categories increased or stayed relatively the same as the number decreased.

**TABLE 19: NUMBER OF FARMS AND CROPS BY TYPE
RED WILLOW COUNTY, 1982 TO 1997**

Type of Crop	1982	1987	1992	1997	% Change 1982 to 1997
Corn for Grain					
Farms	221	225	194	208	-5.9%
acres	50,852	46,544	51,892	77,415	52.2%
average per farm	229	209	267	372	62.4%
Corn for Silage					
Farms	38	27	21	32	-15.8%
acres	2,028	1,511	1,376	1,961	-3.3%
average per farm	53	56	66	61	15.1%
Sorghum					
Farms	171	182	130	96	-43.9%
acres	21,190	21,221	19,911	14,714	-30.6%
average per farm	124	117	153	153	63.7%
Wheat					
Farms	320	332	271	266	-16.9%
acres	69,808	62,139	66,182	73,126	4.8%
average per farm	218	187	244	275	26.1%
Oats					
Farms	10	39	12	7	-30.0%
acres	465	1,149	779	380	-18.3%
average per farm	47	29	65	54	14.9%
Soybeans					
Farms	38	81	56	53	NA
acres	4,881	6,488	3,892	5,597	NA
average per farm	123	80	66	106	NA
Alfalfa					
Farms	201	209	182	175	-12.9%
acres	11,843	10,456	12,158	13,214	11.6%
average per farm	59	50	67	76	28.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Census of Agriculture, 1982, to 1997

(D): Data withheld to avoid disclosure; (NA): Calculation is not available due to limitations in data.

Table 19 displays the number of farms and crops, by type, for Red Willow County between 1982 and 1997. According to Table 19, in 1982, the prevalent use of land for crop production was corn for grain. Wheat was the second most common crop grown, while sorghum was third. These figures suggest that there is a tendency toward production to support cattle operations throughout the county. The trend between 1982 and 1997 displayed a shift from all production crops that included oats and sorghum to the production of corn, soybeans, wheat and alfalfa.

SUMMARY OF AGRICULTURE PROFILE

The number of farms and number of acres in farms in Red Willow County decreased between 1987 and 1997, but increased between 1982 and 1987. Overall, the total number of acres in farms in 1997 was more than in 1982, while the average value of farms in 1997 was over \$578,000. This was a 5.8% decrease over the 1982 values. The largest numbers of livestock produced were cattle and calves and the most grown crop was corn for grain.

COUNTY FACILITIES PROFILE

County governments provide many goods and services for their residents. Such facilities are provided to ensure the safety, well being and enjoyment of the residents. The tools used in the process of providing these goods and services are referred to as public facilities. These facilities represent a wide range of buildings, utilities and services that are built and maintained by many government agencies. These facilities and services provide the county residents with social, cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities, as well as police and fire protection. It is important for all levels of government to anticipate the future demand for their goods and services if they are to remain strong and vital. This profile is provided to help the County evaluate their ability to meet future demands and determine what the level of services to be provided.

The Facilities section of the Red Willow County Comprehensive Development Plan reviews present capacities of all public facilities and services. The section then presents an evaluation of these capacities compared to current demands and accepted standards to determine whether the capacity is adequate, and determine future adequacy of these facilities and services. Finally, recommended improvements where public facilities are not considered adequate for present or future needs are made.

The Facilities Plan for Red Willow County is divided into the following categories:

- § Recreational Facilities
- § Educational Facilities
- § Fire, Rescue and Police Protection
- § County Buildings
- § Transportation Facilities
- § Communication Facilities
- § Public Utilities
- § Health Facilities

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Overview

Red Willow County is located in the South Central (IV) Recreational Planning Region and is managed by the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission. This region encompasses 13 counties. Below is an inventory and summary of recreational facilities located in and/or near Red Willow County.

MIDDLE REPUBLICAN NATURAL RESOURCES DISTRICT

Red Willow County is located within the boundaries of the Middle Republican Natural Resource District (MRNRD) which has implemented programs in accordance with state outlined responsibilities. The Middle Republican Natural Resources District in Curtis in Frontier County, located 35 miles North of McCook. Nebraska's NRDs are assuming a greater share of the responsibility for providing fish and wildlife habitat and outdoor recreation activities. Currently the MRNRD does not own or operate any recreational facilities in Red Willow County. Recreation areas developed that are built and operated by the NRD offer opportunities for camping, biking, picnicking, boating and fishing. NRD's have the eminent domain authority and may levy a local property tax to fund their programs. By cooperating with other state, local, and federal agencies, combining and administering funds, NRD's, provide a wide variety of services which help protect and conserve Nebraska's natural resources.

Red Willow State Recreational Area (SRA) is located 11 miles north of McCook in southwest Frontier County and was completed in 1962. The Nebraska Game and Parks Commission administers the lake's recreation. This SRA covers 4,372 acres of land including 1,628 in Lake Area. Fishing is allowed for bass, crappie, northern pike, white bass, wiper and walleye. There are modern

camping and recreational facilities at the SRA, as well as hunting and boating. There is a designated swimming beach and modern restrooms.

Red Willow County contains three **Wildlife Management Areas**. These include Red Willow Diversion, Bartley Diversion Dam, and Burton.

OTHER RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES NEAR RED WILLOW COUNTY

Medicine Creek State Recreation Area encompasses 8,500 acres of public land and water in southeast Frontier County; 2 miles west and 7 miles north of Cambridge. The dam on Medicine Creek is a earth-filled structure. It is 165 feet high and 5,665 feet long. At the top of the conservation pool, the lake covers 1,850 surface acres, with 29 miles of shoreline. Completed in 1949, the dam is 30 feet wide at the top and 840 feet at the base. Water stored irrigates 16,630 acres of land near the SRA. With the long narrow configuration of the lake Medicine Creek offers plenty of recreational opportunity, plus private spots to get away from it all. Over 5,500 acres have been extensively managed for wildlife habitat. Facilities at Medicine Creek for camping and picnicking range from the most modern to just the essentials. Shady Bay Campground on Trail No. 4 on the east-side of the lake has hard-surfaced camping pads. Most are shaded, and there are electrical hookups. Shady Bay also has showers, flush toilets, boat ramps, a swimming beach, trailer dump station, water wells and barbecue grills. More camping is located on Trail No. 1, where there are a modern shower/latrine, picnic shelters, water, parking, and boat ramps. There are boat ramps on Trail No. 3 and other camping sites scattered around the lake that have trail road access. The private concession on the south side of the dam on Trail No. 1 offers a restaurant, grocery items, camping supplies, bait, tackle, boat rental, gas, modern air conditioned cabins, hunting, fishing and park entry permits.

Massacre Canyon Historical Marker & Visitor Center is located 3 miles east of Trenton on U.S. Highway 34. This monument was erected in 1931 as a memorial to the last major battle fought between Indian tribes in the United States. The battle took place on August 5th, 1873 between the Sioux and the Pawnee in the canyon just west of the Monument. The 91-ton monument is made of pink granite and stands 35 feet high. Carved at the top and facing west is the face of John Grass, a noted Sioux Indian. The visitor center was constructed in 1999 and features the history of the battle as well as stories of the early history of the early pioneers in the area. The building is handicap accessible, has modern restrooms and snack machines. There is a pavilion for picnicking and the enjoyment of a panoramic view of the canyon.

Swanson Reservoir is located two miles west of Trenton on US Highway 34. The area is approximately 6,131 acres; 1,157 acres in pasture and 4,974 acres of water. There are several cooking grills, as well as picnic shelters available. Camping is allowed and shower facilities are available. There is a 48-mile mountain bike and hiking trail system that winds around the reservoir. The area is wheelchair accessible and fishing is allowed in designated areas. Concessions are available and non-wake boating is allowed. There is a park office on site and playground equipment. The wildlife management area that is in the State Recreational Area is 2,800 acres in size. Hunting of pheasant, wild turkey, duck and deer is allowed in this area, but not in the State Recreational Area. The site is open 24 hours a day from May 5th to October 1st of each year.

Enders Dam and Recreation Area is 5 miles east and 4 ½ miles south of Imperial and was completed in 1951. The area has a 1,707-acre lake with a 26-mile shoreline. It stores water to irrigate some 21,000 acres of land. There is camping, picnic tables, fishing, boat ramps and modern restrooms at this facility. The entire area covers 5,300 acres. The Enders Wildlife Refuge covers 2,146 acres on the western side of the lake. Hunting for big game, waterfowl, and upland game is allowed on public property along the river, west of the refuge. Totally, there are about 1,500 acres of land with managed habitat, open to hunters.

Harlan County Lake is an U.S. Corps of Engineers' project covering 31,000 acres of water surface. Harlan County Lake is Nebraska's second largest lake and is located 1 mile south of Republican City, which is 50 miles east of the Red Willow County line. Harlan County Lake is about nine miles long and has 75 miles of shoreline. The Corps maintains six established campgrounds, and the entire facility is open to the public. The Lake's primary benefits include flood control and irrigation, however, the lake also provides pollution abatement, recreation, including all types of boating, fishing, wildlife habitat and hunting.

Norton Reservoir Located 3 miles southwest of Norton in Kansas on KS 383. This is a 2,230 surface acre lake known as Keith Sebelius Reservoir. Adjacent to the reservoir is the 5,500 acre Norton Wildlife Area and Prairie Dog State Park. Both of these locations offer excellent opportunities to view and photograph wildlife. More than 20 miles of roads provide a chance to see Mule, Whitetail deer, turkey, pheasant, prairie chicken, and more. During the winter, enjoy bald eagles, ducks, geese, and even the occasional glimpse of an osprey.

PRIVATE RECREATIONAL - GOLF COURSES

Heritage Hills is located in McCook and is a 6,715-yard 18-hole golf course. Tee times are accepted up to one week in advance. The facilities include: putting green, driving range, chipping green, practice bunker, lessons, club rentals, cart rental, pull carts, lockers, showers, snack bar, bar and meeting room. This facility is a member of the Nebraska Golf Association.

Broken Tee a 9-hole par three course located in McCook.

Hayes Center Golf Course is a 9-hole municipal golf course with sand greens. Yearly memberships are available for users. Restroom facilities located near the Hayes County fairgrounds are available to golfers.

Wauneta Golf Course is a public/private 9-hole course with sand greens located just north of Wauneta along U.S. Highway 6. Hall and restroom facilities are located in the clubhouse situated on the golf course.

Trenton Golf Course is located one mile north and one-half mile west of Trenton and is a 9-hole course.

Benkelman County Club is located outside of Benkelman on U.S. Highway 34 and is a 3,159-yard 9-holes golf course. Tee times are not required and it cost \$15 to play all day. Their facilities include a putting green, chipping green, driving range, cart rental and concessions. This facility is a member of the Nebraska Golf Association.

Enders Lake Golf Course is located in Enders and is a 3,296-yard 9-holes golf course. Tee times are not required. Their facilities include: putting green, driving range, rental clubs, motorized cart rentals, pull carts, snack bar, bar, meeting room, tennis, swimming, and a pro-shop. No spikes are allowed on the greens and this facility is a member of the Nebraska Golf Association.

Arrowhead Meadows is located in Curtis and is a 3,442-yard 9-holes golf course. Tee times are required one week in advance. These facilities include: putting green, chipping green, practice bunker, driving range, rental clubs, rental carts, pull carts, snack bar, restaurant, and meeting room. No spikes are allowed on the course and the facility is a member of the Nebraska Golf Association.

Educational Facilities

The public schools in Nebraska are grouped into six classes, depending upon the type of educational services provided and the size of school district. Since 1990, Class 1 districts have had the ability to "affiliate" with Class 2, 3, 4, and 5 districts in order to provide a high school education to the district's students. The six classes, as defined by the State of Nebraska, are:

Class 1 Any school district that maintains only elementary grades.

Table 21 shows the valuation and cost per student for the school districts serving Red Willow County. Facilities in the school district, at the time of the plan, were adequate and meeting the needs of the faculty and students. Buildings and learning tools should be continually updated as identified in annual review of facilities and resources. The average cost per student, as compared to the state's average, is higher. This denotes a strong commitment towards the education of the youth in Red Willow County.

PRIVATE SCHOOLS

There are two private schools in Red Willow County including Victory Christian and Saint Patrick's. Both of these Schools are located in McCook.

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE UNIT

The Public School Districts in Red Willow County are a member of Educational Service Unit Number 15, which is headquartered in Trenton and serves six (6) counties in southwest Nebraska. Services available include computer instruction, speech therapy, school nurses and Title 1 program.

SOUTHWEST AREA TRAINING SERVICE (SWATS)

"SWATS" is a trainable facility for the developmental disabled individuals and basically serves people ages 21 and older. It has supervised residential living facilities and independent living facilities.

POST SECONDARY SCHOOLS

The one post secondary educational opportunity in Red Willow County is **McCook Community College**. McCook Junior College was founded in 1926 as the first two-year post-secondary institution in Nebraska. It was established as part of the McCook Public Schools, because the residents of McCook recognized the need for post-secondary education in southwest Nebraska.

The college was renamed McCook Community College in 1973 when it became part of the Mid-Plains Community College Area. With two other campuses in North Platte, the Mid-Plains Area encompasses 18 central Nebraska counties and is governed by an 11-member elected Board of Governors.

During the 1998-99 school year, 1,280 students were served in credit classes with more than 15,166 semester hour credits earned. There were 387 full-time students and 449 part-time enrolled. The Community Services Department, which handled off-campus programs, business training, in-services, workshops, and seminars, served a total of 3,700 students in 1998-99 with more than 32,000 contact hours in continuing education and non-credit classes.

The **Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture**, with a student capacity of approximately 450 students, occupies a 78-acre campus which adjoins the town of Curtis, Nebraska, on the northeast.

The facilities on campus include Ag Hall, which houses the Agribusiness Management Systems, the Supporting Studies instructional majors, and the College's administrative offices including Financial Aid, Student Services, Academic Affairs and the Business office. Along with those offices, the bookstore is also located in Ag Hall. In January, 2000, the Learning Resource Center opened its doors. The old conservation building was renovated to the Library and the Information Systems Office now reside there. A new student computer lab is also located there. There are two residence halls on campus (1 men's and 1 woman's). The woman's residence hall houses the College cafeteria. The Horticulture Systems complex includes two greenhouses and a classroom building. Agriculture Mechanics has an instructional building and complete shop facilities. The Agriculture Production Systems/Veterinary Technology complex includes large and small animal working facilities, surgery rooms, radiology department and kennels. A new livestock Teaching

Center, which includes an indoor arena, was completed the summer of 2000. Several classrooms and offices for APS/VT instructors are also located there.

The College also owns a 392-acre farm which serves as a field laboratory. The farm includes grain storage facilities, cattle growing and finishing facilities, and a completely diversified dry land and irrigated farming operation. In addition, the land laboratory has 1100 acres of grassland for our cow/calf herd.

Other higher level educational opportunities nearest to Red Willow County residents include:

- § University of Nebraska at Kearney *Public* (Kearney)
- § Central Community College *Public* (Grand Island, Hastings, Columbus)
- § Hastings College *Private* (Hastings)
- § McCook Community College *Public* (McCook)
- § Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture (Curtis)
- § Distance learning (at the High School) From UNK, and others.
- § University of Nebraska at Lincoln *Public* (Lincoln)
- § Doane College *Private* (Crete)
- § Chadron State College *Public* (Chadron)
- § Concordia University *Private* (Seward)
- § Mid-Plains Community College *Public* (North Platte)
- § Midland College *Private* (Fremont)
- § Nebraska Wesleyan College *Private* (Lincoln)
- § Southeast Community College *Public* (Lincoln, Beatrice, Milford)
- § Union College *Private* (Lincoln)
- § Western Nebraska Community College *Private* (Scottsbluff, Sidney, Alliance)
- § York College *Private* (York)
- § Kansas State (Manhattan, Kansas)

FIRE, RESCUE AND POLICE PROTECTION

FIRE AND RESCUE PROTECTION

Fire Protection in Red Willow County is the responsibility of six (6) fire districts (See Figure 4). All six (6) fire districts are headquartered within Red Willow County. The major concerns of the fire departments are the many acres of open range, farmland, cities and villages, rural residential fires and hazardous materials storage in Red Willow County. The Fire Departments providing fire protection in Red Willow County belong to the Red Willow Mutual Aid District, which includes the Departments' of Bartley, Danbury, Indianola, Lebanon, McCook, and Red Willow Western (McCook Rural Fire Department.)

Fire protection is provided by volunteer force of approximately sixty (##) firefighters, who serve within the six (6) County based Fire Districts. Historically, the volunteers have fulfilled that capacity exceptionally well. Each of the districts provides regular training for the firefighters and continues train personnel as needed. The tools and equipment used by the firefighters is considered in good condition, while future maintenance and occasional replacement will be required to ensure the Fire District remains effective. Fire Districts that provide fire protection in Red Willow County are shown in Figure 4, and include:

- § Bartley
- § Danbury
- § Indianola
- § Lebanon
- § McCook

POLICE PROTECTION

The Red Willow County Sheriff’s Department is located in the City of McCook, at the Red Willow County Jail Facility. The Department consists of a Sheriff, 3 full-time deputies, 8 reserve deputies, and two office personnel. The City of McCook retains its own police department. The remaining communities are provided law enforcement and public safety by the Red Willow County Sheriff’s Office, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The County has a communication system that includes 911 service; this unit is located at the McCook Police Department. The County has a holding cell located in the Red Willow County Jail Facility.

Red Willow County also has an active Sheriff’s Posse that consist of 19 non-sworn volunteers.

Law enforcement services are also provided within Red Willow County by the Nebraska State Patrol. Troop D of the Nebraska State Patrol maintains an office North Platte, and covers a 23-county area. Troopers are also stationed in Holdrege and Grand Island.

TABLE 22: COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT DATA, RED WILLOW AND NEARBY COUNTIES, 1997 TO 1999

County	1997		1998		1999	
	Sworn Officers	Officers per 1,000 population	Sworn Officers	Officers per 1,000 population	Sworn Officers	Officers per 1,000 population
Red Willow	6	1.1	6	1.1	4	1.6
Frontier	8	1.6	8	1.6	5	1.6
Hitchcock	9	1.1	6	0.9	5	1.5
Gosper	5	1.9	5	1.7	4	1.7
Furnas	12	1.2	14	1.3	7	1.3
Hays	2	1.7	2	1.8	2	1.8
Average	7.0	1.4	6.8	1.4	4.5	1.6

Source: Crime in Nebraska, Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, 1996, 1997, 1998

Table 22 shows the total number of law enforcement officers and the number of law enforcement officers per 1,000 population for Red Willow County and other nearby counties for 1997, 1998, and 1999. The determination of law enforcement strength for a certain County is based on such factors as population density, size and character of the community, geographic location and other conditions that exist in the area. Red Willow County has stayed stable in the number of law enforcement officers employed, due to the reduction of four deputies over the past three years. The County has also stayed slightly below law enforcement levels per 1,000 when compared with surrounding counties. One more deputy has been approved for the 2001 budget year bringing the count up to 3 full time deputies.

County Buildings

The County maintains several buildings in its effort to provide services to its residents. This section will provide a brief overview of those buildings and their condition.

The **Red Willow County Courthouse** is located in the City of McCook. This building houses the County Clerk, County District Court, county court, driver’s examination office, probation, County Treasurer, County Attorney, Register of Deeds, County Assessor, and the County Commissioners meeting room. The Sheriff’s Department is located in a building directly attached to the courthouse. The building is in good condition and is adequate for present needs for all of the services housed within. There are no plans for any major construction during the planning period. Modifications have occurred in the past to bring the building into

compliance with ADA regulations.

The **Red Willow County Fairgrounds** are located in McCook. The facilities are in good condition. The County Fair Board manages the fairgrounds. The Health Department and the County Extension are located within the County Fairgrounds within the Agricultural Complex. The Fair Manager is located within the Community Building.

The three maintenance shops are located in the following communities; McCook, Bartley, and Danbury. They are used primarily for storage of equipment of the maintenance crews of the county. The County Roads Department is located in the McCook shop.

TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

TRUCK LINE SERVICE

Several truck companies transport livestock and agricultural produce within and out of the County. These include:

<u>Nearest Terminal</u>	<u>Company</u>
Arapahoe, Nebraska	Coffman Trucking
Arapahoe, Nebraska	Carpenter Trucking
Benkelman, Nebraska	Oarman Trucking
Culbertson, Nebraska	Hagan Trucking
Denver Colorado	Swift Trucking
Lincoln, Nebraska	Crete Carrier Corporation
McCook, Nebraska	Fritz Trucking
McCook, Nebraska	Sis Trucking
McCook, Nebraska	Consolidated Motor Freight
North Platte, Nebraska	Brown Transport
North Platte, Nebraska	Nebraska Transport
Omaha, Nebraska	Warner Trucking

The United Parcel Service, Federal Express and U.S. Postal Service provide package delivery service in Red Willow County.

RAILROAD SERVICE

The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad line runs through the approximate middle of Red Willow County, with another line running through the southern portion of the county operated by NKC Railroad. There are several loading/unloading terminals in Red Willow County for grain, which has a limited service. These lines run approximately 13 freight trains daily. Amtrak has a terminal in McCook for passenger service on the Super-line California Zephyr running east to Chicago and west to Denver, Salt Lake City, and San Francisco. The other closest passenger service are located in Holdrege and Hastings.

BUS SERVICE

The local bus service in Red Willow County, running service from McCook and Lincoln is the Road Dashabout Roadrunner. Another bus service in the area is the Hitch & Hay sponsored by Hitchcock and Hayes County. This service is fee based and pick up is available at homes of users. In addition to the Hitch & Hay bus service there is the McCook Handi-Bus, funded by federal, state, and local funds, is designed to provide public transportation with priority to senior citizens and/or disabled people. For travel outside of Nebraska residents rely on Greyhound bus service that has locations in North Platte and Kearney.

TAXI SERVICE

The only taxi service in the county is provided by High Plains Cab Service.

AIRPORTS

The following are public airports located in the area:

McCook Municipal Airport is a commercial service airport, and currently has 24 single engine and 1 multi engine aircraft based at the airport. The airport experiences approximately 17,800 annual operations. The main runway surface is 75' x 4,000' concrete and is rated in good condition, the second runway is 6,448 x 100' with a concrete surface, and the third runway is 1,350 x 200' with a turf surface. The airport is owned and operated by the City of McCook.

North Platte's Lee Bird Field is a commercial service airport, and currently has 45 single engine, 8 multi engine, and 2 business jet aircraft based at the airport. The airport experiences approximately 31,772 annual operations. The main runway surface is 150' x 8,000' concrete and is rated in good condition. The airport offers passenger service through the Mid-West. Other services such as medical services benefit greatly from this airport.

Central Nebraska Regional Airport located in Grand Island is under public ownership and operated by the Hall County Airport authority. Currently there are 35 single engine aircraft and 23 multi-engine aircraft based at this airport. Annually there are approximately 48,765 aircraft operations that include air carrier, commuter, air taxi, local, and military air traffic. The runway itself is 7,188 feet long with a width of 150 feet with an asphalt surface.

The following are private airports located in the area:

Lee Field is a private airstrip located near Bartley, Nebraska. The main and only runway is 2,100' by 125' with a turf surface. There are currently 7 single engine aircraft based out of this airport.

Hoyt is a private airstrip located near McCook, Nebraska. The main and only runway is 4,000' x 500' with a turf surface. There are currently no aircraft based at this airport.

COMMUNICATION FACILITIES

TELEPHONE SERVICES

Great Plains Communications, Quest, and Heartman Telephone are the local telephone carriers for Red Willow County. The County is covered by different telephone exchanges. Long distance carriers in the area include Sprint, MCI, and AT&T.

INTERNET SERVICES

Internet Service Providers located in McCook are Pinpoint Communications, McCook Net, and Net Quest-Office Computer Systems. Alltel Internet Service-Alltel of Lincoln also provides Internet service.

RADIO AND TELEVISION

Presently there are six radio stations located in Red Willow County all located in McCook; KSWIN-FM (93.9), KICX-FM (96.1), KRKU-FM (98.5), KIOD-FM (105.3), KBRL-AM (1300), KNGN-AM (1360). There are several local FM and AM radio stations broadcasting out of Holdrege, Lexington, Oberlin, Kansas, and Phillipsburg, Kansas. The stations broadcasting from Holdrege are KUVR-FM (97.7) and KUVR-AM (1380). Stations broadcasting out of Lexington include KRVN-FM (93.1), KRVN-AM (880), KFNF-FM (101.1) out of Oberlin, and KKAN-AM (1490) out of Phillipsburg, Kansas.

Rural residents of Red Willow County must rely on satellite television for a complete signal, in various areas the three national networks are available with the use of a satellite from the nearby communities of Axtell and Overland, Kansas.

NEWSPAPERS

There are two communities in Red Willow County that have newspapers. These include the *Indianola News* and the *McCook Gazette* which is the County's legal newspaper. Other newspapers subscribed to in the county include the *Hastings Tribune*, the *Kearney Hub*, *Omaha World Herald*, *Lincoln Journal Star*, and the *Denver Post*.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

ELECTRICAL SERVICE

Electrical service in Red Willow County is provided by four Public Power Districts; Nebraska Public Power District, McCook Public Power District, Twin Valley Public Power District, South Western Public Power District. Within each of these districts there are further divisions which serve the county.

NATURAL GAS AND PROPANE SERVICE

K & N Energy provides Natural Gas to county residents and propane is provided by private dealers.

REFUSE COLLECTION

Dan's Sanitation, DF-R Inc, and Schaben provide refuse collection in rural Red Willow County. Household hazardous waste is collected by Red Willow County.

HEALTH FACILITIES

MEDICAL CLINICS

The ***McCook Clinic*** is connected to both the hospital and the Medical Specialist Center. The building is owned by the hospital and leased by the McCook Clinic Corporation. The clinic has seven full time physicians and four physician assistants. The waiting room accommodates 58 people along with a children's seating area. The clinic has nurses stations, procedure rooms, physician consultation rooms, and 21 exam rooms. Each physician's office is grouped with a set of exam rooms for efficiency and convenience. The clinic also contains a full-sized laboratory, x-ray department and ultrasound suite along with a sub-waiting room for patients who are utilizing these services. The McCook Clinic is currently working in conjunction with the hospital on plans to expand the clinic facility.

Tri Valley Medical Clinics. Indianola served by Tri Valley Health Systems and provides 5 day per week 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. serve. The total of nine medical providers rotate through this clinic and this clinic is fully staffed by support personnel to meet the needs of the community.

HealthCare Services Medical Clinic. The clinic was established in 1992 and is served by two full-time medical doctors, one part-time doctor, one full-time physician's assistant and a support staff of nurses. Quality HealthCare also has a clinic in Stratton.

Trenton Regional Medical Clinic is located at 406 East 1st Street in Trenton. This facility is a satellite clinic of the Community Hospital in McCook, Nebraska. The building was constructed in 1995 and is in excellent condition. This facility is has one full-time physician's assistant and one medical doctor who works once a week at the facility. There are two other employees that work at the clinic; one secretary and a RT x-ray technician/nurse. These two employees are full-time. There are no special programs offered and if a patient needs special care, the clinic refers them to the hospital in McCook. The facility does have an EKG machine and does x-rays as well. The building is adequate for the present and future needs of the community. There are no plans to expand the facility or services in the near future.

Stratton Medical Center is located at 903 Bailey Street in Stratton and constructed in 1968. This facility is connected to the Grandview Manor Retirement Village. At the clinic, there is one physician, one physician's assistant, one RN, one LPN and one helper that works with the physician's assistant. The facility is in very good condition and there is room for expansion. There is an Every Woman Matters program at this clinic, but all other programs are out of the hospital in Benkelman. There are no specialists that are in Stratton, they are referred over to Dundy County Hospital in Benkelman or Community Hospital in McCook. The clinic does have an EKG machine at the facility, but any other special equipment is located in Benkelman. There are special arrangements with the hospital in Benkelman and all of the employees that work in Stratton also work at the Dundy County Hospital. The physician's assistant handles Mondays and Thursdays, while the physician handles Tuesdays and Wednesday mornings.

SPECIALIST CENTER

The Medical Specialist Center, owned and operated by the McCook Community Hospital, opened in 1994. The building is leased to six specialists who provide services for ear, nose, and throat; orthopedics; obstetrics/gynecology; general surgery; and urology.

HOSPITALS

Community Hospital is a 44-bed, not-for-profit hospital located in McCook that was constructed in 1974. In 1989, there was a large remodeling of the facility and in 1996, another building was added to expand services in CT scanning, cardiac and pulmonary rehabilitation and administrative offices. There are five family practice physicians, a general surgeon, an anesthesiologist and two general orthopedic surgeons. A pediatrician/internist and an additional anesthesiologist joined the medical staff in 1996. In addition to the regular staff, nearly 30 medical specialists travel to McCook to provide specialists clinics for area residents. Full ranges of diagnostic and rehabilitative services are offered including cardiac rehabilitation, pulmonary rehabilitation, physical rehabilitation, respiratory care and home health care. Emergency services, an outpatient surgery department, and community and patient education services are also offered at the hospital.

Dundy County Hospital is located in Benkelman, Nebraska. This is a 14 bed acute facility. At this point the facilities are not large enough and expansion is taking place. This hospital serves Benkelman, Haigler, Max, Parks and Stratton in Nebraska, as well as Bird City and McDonald in Kansas. The building was constructed in 1968 and financed through bonds. Medical services are available 24 hours a day through the hospital's emergency room. The Hospital has the following specialty services available: anesthesiology, cardiology, ENT, general surgery, oncologist, ophthalmology, orthopedics, pediatrics, pharmacology, podiatry and pulmonology. There is a full-service laboratory, radiology department, respiratory and physical therapy supports the nursing staff.

In addition, the hospital has a computerized coronary monitoring system, ICU, labor and delivery suites, surgical suite, isolation and combination telemedicine/endoscopy suite. The nursing staff consists of all classifications of nurses and the number is adequate for the facility. There are several specialists who come into the facility to assist the staff.

Cambridge Memorial Hospital effective June 1, 2001. Cambridge Memorial Hospital will enjoy Critical Access Hospital designation and consequently will have 15 acute care beds and 10 swing capacity. Cambridge Memorial Hospital is an aggregate component of Tri Valley Health Systems. The system also provides independent living, skilled living, and soon will provide assisted living. In addition, Tri Valley Health System also provides Home Health, Physical Therapy, Retail Pharmacy and Medical Clinics.

SENIOR FACILITIES

Hillcrest is a 120-bed dual certified Medicare/Medicaid facility. The home offers several levels of care which are: Medicare skilled care, long-term care, a special care unit for dementia and Alzheimer's, adult day care, and Little Folks Childcare Center. An Assisted Living Residence, Hidden Pines, on the lower level of Hillcrest offers six private suites and four companion suites. The suites feature full showers, kitchenettes, and dining and sleeping areas. Housekeeping, laundry, activities, meals, and light nursing care are services that are offered. Amenities include two lounge areas, a great room, a lookout patio and a winding pathway through the beautiful flower gardens.

Willow Ridge Retirement Community is specially designed to meet the needs of adults, age 55 and over. Our modern, well-appointed community with beautiful spacious landscaped grounds and friendly, capable staff provides a home that gives you the independence, peace of mind, and the security you have looked forward to in your retirement years.

This growing community provides transportation services, fine dining and weekly housekeeping and maintenance. The community amenities feature Fitness Center, Dining Room, Activity Center, Ice Cream parlors, Computer Lab, Organ, Pianos, Clavinova Library, Den, Conservatory, Sun Room, Game Room, and Storm Shelters. The courtyards feature sidewalks that twine around the flowerbeds. Sitting benches and a gazebo invite you to come out and enjoy.

The Willow Ridge Independent Apartments feature spacious one or two bedrooms with a wide range of services including weekly housekeeping, maintenance, and meals, and in-house security system.

The Willow Ridge Assisted-Living features eight different size apartments. The 24-staff provides the help you need, when you need it, which includes medication management and assistance with activities of daily living, all meals, social and wellness programs.

GOALS AND POLICIES

INTRODUCTION

Planning for future land uses of the County is an ongoing process of goal setting and problem solving. The focus of the process is to enhance communities and create a higher quality of life. Planning focuses on ways to solve existing problems within the County, and provides a management tool to help Red Willow County residents achieve a desired future vision.

Developing a future vision, or visioning, is a process of evaluating present conditions, identifying problem areas, and building a consensus among the County for how to overcome existing problems and manage change. This is a process that results in a picture of Red Willow County, as its residents would like to see it in the next twenty to fifty years. Then, by determining Red Willow County's strengths and weaknesses, the County can develop a "roadmap" to get where it wants to be. This roadmap includes specific changes that must occur for the County to reach its future vision.

Change is a continuous process. Making a change in one aspect of a county will surely cause a change in another. Because of this dynamic feature of change, Red Willow County should develop specific benchmark criteria against which change can be measured and evaluated. There should be a common understanding among the County regarding the value of one change over another. Working from a pre-set series of benchmarks, the County as a whole can evaluate change, and its affects, in a shared manner. This shared evaluation can help keep the process of change moving towards the shared vision, instead of moving against it.

This section of the Red Willow County Comprehensive Development Plan can help develop that future vision. Presented here are the goals and policies established very early in the process and have been used during the creation of this Plan. Policies can be further delineated into action statements used to guide, direct, and support decisions for future growth, development, and change. These action statements answer the question of "how" to plan and manage change in Red Willow County.

Goals are the wants, desires, and necessities of the County. These are items the residents want to accomplish to create their future. Goals should be developed in such a way that they can be accomplished. Goals play a part in developing policies around certain issues, such as managing growth, and land use districts. Goals should be rigid enough to withstand unforeseen changes, but flexible enough to adapt to new circumstances.

Policies are used to define and implement goals. Policies are specific statements of principle or action that imply a clear commitment, but they are not mandatory. Policies link goals with actions. There are three elements to a policy:

1. An **end** that needs to be achieved,
2. A **means** by which to achieve the end, and
3. An **administrative mechanism** by which the means are carried out.

Policies synthesize information. Policies are based upon responses from citizen participation during the Comprehensive Plan process. These responses help create principles to define actions taken to achieve a future vision.

Goals and policies assure the Plan will accomplish the desires of the residents of Red Willow County, by setting forth specific visions of the future, underlying principles guiding change, and support for principled decision-making. When these goals and policies are followed, future development proposals in the County

will be evaluated according to their adherence to the established desires of the County. Therefore, goals and policies should be referred to diligently so that a rational, legitimate decision-making process based upon County values support County action.

This also means the goals and policies should be kept current and adapt to changing public desire. Goals and policies should be developed in a manner that allows for both short- and long-term accomplishments. Short-term goals and policies serve three main functions:

1. Allow for immediate feedback, which creates desire to achieve additional goals and stronger policies,
2. Allow for distribution of resources over time, thus assuring a balanced use of public investment, and
3. Establish certain policies that need to become building blocks for other, long-term policies.

RED WILLOW COUNTY WORKSHOP

An initial workshop for Red Willow County Planning Commissioners and Supervisors was conducted on April 30, 2001 at the Red Willow County Courthouse. The purpose of the meeting was to gather input (both positive and negative), on issues facing residents of the County. Participants were asked four basic questions:

1. What are negative aspects or weaknesses of Red Willow County?
2. What are positive aspects or strengths of Red Willow County?
3. What issues are facing Red Willow County that need to be acted upon?
4. What specific projects would you like to see completed in the next 5, 10 or 20 years?

After each question was posed, a brainstorming session followed. Participants were asked to generate as many ideas as possible. Once all of the lists were completed to the satisfaction of the participants, the participants were asked to rank the three entries from each list that were most important to them.

The point totals were tabulated and added to determine which issues were most important to the participants as a whole. The following tables display the results. Note the number of points for each question may differ as participants may have voted for less than three issues per question.

A number of planning and land use issues were generated through the workshop. A diverse range of topics was discussed and where possible these issues were grouped into similar categories to reduce duplication. A number of non land-use issues were also discussed, and while significant, do not directly impact the formulation of goals and objectives for the Comprehensive Plan. The following information summarizes the workshop findings and indicates the relative score and importance each issue was afforded.

“WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE ASPECTS OR WEAKNESSES OF RED WILLOW COUNTY?”

Participants responded to this question with 16 entries. Seven entries did not receive points for ranking purposes. The response that received the most points was “Large Livestock Operations.” This issue was identified due to the concern over the negative perceptions that accompany livestock operations. Table 23 presents the responses, rank and total point value.

TABLE 23: NEGATIVE ASPECTS OF RED WILLOW COUNTY

Negative Aspect		Point Value	Percentage of Total
1.	Large Livestock Operations	66	36.7%
2.	Air Quality	30	16.7%
3.	Water Quality	30	16.7%
4.	Young Population Leaving County	20	11.1%
5.	Rural Non-farm developments	9	5.0%
6.	Consolidation (Schools)	8	4.4%
7.	Emergency Response System	7	3.9%
8.	Drawing Lakes Down	5	2.8%
9.	Development Around McCook	5	2.8%
Total		180	100.0%

Source: Community Workshop, April 30, 2001.

“WHAT ARE THE POSITIVE ASPECTS OR STRENGTHS OF RED WILLOW COUNTY?”

This question generated 18 responses. Twelve responses did not receive points for ranking. The response that received the most points was “quality of life.” The perception that the factors, which contribute to quality of life exist in Red Willow County. Table 24 presents the responses, rank and total point value.

TABLE 24: POSITIVE ASPECTS OF RED WILLOW COUNTY

Positive Aspect		Point Value	Percentage of Total
1.	Quality of Life	62	34.3%
2.	Air Quality	22	12.2%
3.	Water Quality	22	12.2%
4.	Good Schools	21	11.6%
5.	Recreational Opportunities	12	6.6%
6.	Small Community Atmosphere	11	6.1%
7.	Low Traffic Levels	10	5.5%
8.	Low Crime Rate	9	5.0%
9.	County Residents	5	2.8%
10.	Health Care Facilities	3	1.7%
11.	Good Churches	2	1.1%
12.	Low Unemployment Rate	2	1.1%
13.	Location of County	0	0.0%
Total		181	100.0%

Source: Community Workshop, April 30, 2001.

“WHAT ISSUES ARE FACING RED WILLOW COUNTY THAT NEED TO BE ACTED UPON?”

There were 6 responses to this question; two did not receive points for ranking. The issues that participants were asked to think about were anything from past experiences to present concerns and specific problems that are or have been occurring within Red Willow County. Two issues came to the forefront of the discussion with a similar number of votes. These issues were “property taxes,” and “farm income.” The next closest issue, which received a number of points, was “job creation and retention.” Table 25 shows all of the responses, rank and total point value on issues facing Red Willow County.

TABLE 25: ISSUES FACING RED WILLOW COUNTY

Identified Issue		Point Value	Percentage of Total
1.	Corporate Farming (Livestock Feeding Operations)	54	26.9%
2.	Protection of Rural Atmosphere & Quality of Life	41	20.4%
3.	Air Quality	29	14.4%
4.	Water Quality	24	11.9%
5.	Economic Development	9	4.5%
6.	Water Quantity	9	4.5%
7.	County Support for School Building Rehabilitation	8	4.0%
8.	Declining Population and Tax Base	7	3.5%
9.	Employment Opportunities	7	3.5%
10.	School Consolidation	7	3.5%
11.	Government Cooperation	6	3.0%
Total		201	100.0%

Source: Community Workshop, April 30, 2001.

“WHAT SPECIFIC PROJECTS WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE COMPLETED IN THE NEXT 5, 10 OR 20 YEARS?”

This question asked participants to focus on projects they believe should be completed during the planning period. These projects may be anything the participants want to see changed in the County. There were 5 responses to this question; 3 did not receive points for ranking. Table 26 lists the responses, rank and total point value.

TABLE 26: FUTURE PROJECTS FOR RED WILLOW COUNTY

Identified Project		Point Value	Percent of Total
1.	Zoning	49	39.8%
2.	Water Quality Protection	47	38.2%
3.	Emergency Services	16	13.0%
4.	County Road Signage and Addressing	11	8.9%
Total		123	100.0%

Source: Community Workshop, April 30, 2001.

This exercise is an important factor in the creation of this Plan. The workshop allowed the public to have an opportunity to express specific concerns about the present and future conditions in their county. The data they presented was organized into general categories, then goals and policies were developed to guide the implementation of each category. As time and circumstances change, this Plan will need to be revised and updated. As goals are met and policies are fulfilled, new goals will need to replace the previous ones. Future workshops should be undertaken to gather information on how this Plan has worked for the residents of the County, and how it should be changed to address the issues of the day.

GOALS AND POLICIES FOR RED WILLOW COUNTY

The goals and policies that have been generated for Red Willow County are organized into general categories. The categories are broad enough to allow many issues to fall within them, but narrow enough to allow a fairly clear distinction and separation. These categories are used for a logical organization of goals and policies. The categories are:

- § General Land Use
- § Residential Land Use
- § Agricultural Land Use
- § Population

- § Environment and Natural Resources
- § Economic Development
- § Public Facilities and Taxes
- § Transportation
- § Education
- § Parks and Recreation

When considering the following goals and policies, it may become evident that they may conflict with one another. In such cases, these conflicts should be discussed and the relative importance of one policy be weighed against another to determine the best course of action.

GENERAL LAND USE

This category is concerned with the overall management of the land in Red Willow County.

GOAL 1

Red Willow County should manage the land in a cost-effective and efficient manner while protecting the environment and natural resources, as well as maintaining and increasing land values.

POLICY 1.1

Create Zoning Regulations that implement components of the Comprehensive Development Plan.

POLICY 1.2

Rural development should be allowed to occur on a limited scale. Rural development should be placed in areas such that it is located near existing roads and County services. Rural development should not be allowed to become urban in nature so that the County can manage demands upon its resources more efficiently.

POLICY 1.3

A review and comment process will be required for any proposed activity that should occur within County zoning jurisdiction, which includes the unincorporated communities in the County.

POLICY 1.4

Any zoning regulations developed in Red Willow County should be sensitive to the protection and improvement of environmental conditions and needs of the County. These conditions should include, but not be limited to, soil types and suitability, groundwater quality and quantity, surface water quality and quantity, watersheds, and air quality.

POLICY 1.5

The land use area should identify the highest and best use of the land. The creation and designation of this land use area should conform to the same requirements that all other zoning regulations must conform to.

POLICY 1.6

Consult specialized agencies (Extension Office, NRD, NRCS, etc) in review and approval of land use issues.

POLICY 1.7

The cost of required improvements, both on-site and off-site, to a subdivision that are to exclusively serve the property owners of the subdivision shall be borne by the developer or those property owners within said subdivision.

POLICY 1.8

Require the coordination and review of all planning and zoning activities as they relate to

extraterritorial jurisdictions and the unincorporated portions of the County. This policy would require a joint review and comment on the proposed activity by the adjacent communities and/or county before the activity proceeds to the next step in the process.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

This category assumes compliance with the General Land Use category, but also provides for further policy considerations aimed at managing residential growth specifically.

GOAL 1

Red Willow County should manage residential development by preserving and enhancing existing residential neighborhoods and providing affordable housing types for the present and future populations of Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.1

Residential development should be separated from more intensive uses, such as agriculture, by the use of setbacks, buffer zones, or impact easements.

POLICY 1.2

The right of Red Willow County landowners to the exclusive, uninterrupted use of their land should be protected through regulations that are sensitive to the effects of activities that are nuisance in nature.

POLICY 1.3

Red Willow County should actively recruit assisted living centers in order to meet the increasing health and human service needs of the County's senior population.

POLICY 1.4

The County Board of Commissioners should develop and undertake programs that support local efforts to rehabilitate and improve the existing housing stock of Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.5

Encourage residential development in and around the perimeter of McCook, Indianola, Danbury, Bartley, and Lebanon.

POLICY 1.6

Support housing options for all incomes and physical capabilities of Red Willow County's residents.

POLICY 1.7

Enforce regulations and ordinances protecting the rights of Red Willow County's residents.

POLICY 1.8

New residential developments should be accompanied by covenants when appropriate, which provide for the maintenance of common areas, easements and drainage.

POLICY 1.9

Consider soils, floodplain, road and bridge development or maintenance when identifying areas for development.

POLICY 1.10

Encourage the establishment of a rehabilitation program to maintain and improve the existing housing

stock.

POLICY 1.11

Develop relationships and partnerships with housing professions in the public and private sector to establish a range of affordable housing options, ranging from a First Time Homebuyer program to rental assistance.

POLICY 1.12

Promote low to zero non-farm densities in agricultural districts by providing proper distances between residential and agricultural uses.

AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

This category assumes compliance with the General Land Use category, but also provides for further policy considerations aimed at managing development in agricultural areas specifically.

GOAL 1

Red Willow County should allow agricultural production in all areas in which agricultural uses are appropriate, and non-agricultural development in agricultural areas should be allowed in specifically designated areas which does not negatively impact the agricultural uses.

POLICY 1.1

Large confined livestock operations in Red Willow County should be regulated to ensure compliance with construction and operation regulations, as well as with environmental regulations. These operations should be located in areas of Red Willow County such that their presence and operational impacts on neighboring land uses are as minimal as possible.

POLICY 1.2

Regulations should be established and implemented that create setback and buffer requirements, as well as, regulatory controls over solid, liquid, and gas emissions from livestock operations.

POLICY 1.3

Criteria should be developed to designate areas of Red Willow County identified as “Prime Farmland”. Special consideration through the use of preservation land use practices should assist in the protection of these lands for traditional agricultural purposes.

POLICY 1.4

Uses that promote the diversification of agricultural production by generating additional value to existing products should be encouraged to locate or expand within Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.5

Protect prime agricultural land and maintain the quality of groundwater.

POLICY 1.6

Support livestock production and related agricultural businesses designed, operated and located consistent with maintaining the health, safety, welfare and natural resources of the county and its residents.

POLICY 1.7

Protect the Natural Resources, including soils, water and air within Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.8

Provide separation between livestock and urban/community development.

POLICY 1.9

Work with Livestock Producers on a continual basis in evaluating regulations.

POPULATION

This category involves the general population of Red Willow County not aimed at just one particular area of the Population. This area deals directly with the existing population in the county and the potential population that could be brought into Red Willow County.

GOAL

Red Willow County must address the primary factor impacting their declining population, that is, persons migrating or leaving the County.

POLICY 1.1

Maintain the number of existing residents through developing and marketing programs that encourage persons to remain, relocate and establish in Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.2

Develop and partner with area businesses and educational providers to identify and provide greater employment opportunities to retain the young persons of Red Willow County.

ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

This category assumes compliance with the General Land Use category, but also provides for further policy considerations aimed at managing, conserving, and preserving the environmental and natural resources in Red Willow County.

GOAL 1

The natural resources (soils, groundwater, surface water and air) and environment of Red Willow County shall be protected and managed to insure long term quality, availability and sustainability for the current and future residents and industries of Red Willow County. The goal of Red Willow County is to guide development in a manner that conserves and protects the natural resources; minimizes potential conflicts between rural/urban residents; promotes compatible land uses; encourages compact development and an efficient provision of services.

POLICY 1.1

Zoning regulations and design standards should be created to protect the environmental and natural resources of Red Willow County through the encouragement of preservation and conservation practices.

POLICY 1.2

A Surface Water Protection Area should be established to protect the unique character and environmental quality of the area surrounding the Republican River, Beaver Creek, Red Willow State Recreational Area, Red Willow Diversion Dam, Bartley Diversion Dam, and Burton Diversion Dam.

POLICY 1.3

General land use regulations should require all development in the jurisdiction of Red Willow County to demonstrate a positive, or at least neutral, impact upon the soil, groundwater, surface water, and air.

POLICY 1.4

Federal requirements and regulations should be followed when land use regulations are being developed. Red Willow

County regulations should at a minimum be as strict as federal standards, and where necessary, may be enforced in a manner stricter than federal regulations.

POLICY 1.5

Protect all water supplies and aquifers, from development activities that may affect the quality and/or quantity of water. Development shall demonstrate a positive or, at least, a neutral impact on ground water supplies.

POLICY 1.6

Identify with Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, Farm Service Agency, United State Department of Agriculture, Middle Republican Natural Resource District, and Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality for possible sediment control regulations to minimize potential soil loss and/or contamination problems in specific areas of Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.7

Develop zoning regulations and environmental regulations that will aid in maintaining the existing clean air of Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.8

Encourage preservation and conservation of the natural range and canyon areas of the county.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

This category assumes compliance with the General Land Use category, but also provides for further policy considerations aimed at promoting and balancing the needs of retail, wholesale, commercial, agricultural, and manufacturing industries in Red Willow County.

GOAL 1

Red Willow County should promote and encourage economic development necessary to support the needs of present and future Red Willow County residents such that the Red Willow County economy is stable and diverse.

POLICY 1.1

Agriculture and agricultural employment, including value-added agricultural businesses, should be promoted throughout Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.2

The recreational assets of Red Willow County should be expanded and improved such that they may be promoted through tourism based endeavors, including hunting, fishing, and camping.

POLICY 1.3

The youth of Red Willow County should be encouraged to remain in Red Willow County or return to Red Willow County after completion of their post-secondary education. Economic development projects should be established to provide such encouragement. The youth of Red Willow County should be involved in the identification and development of these projects.

POLICY 1.4

Encourage, promote and develop economic development partnerships between local entities and private companies to assist existing and expanding business enterprises.

POLICY 1.5

Support area historical, cultural and recreational activities. Red Willow County should continue to build upon the historical structures, cultural heritage and recreational assets located throughout the County and within the incorporated and unincorporated settlements to encourage a sense of community through tourism based endeavors.

POLICY 1.6

Expand tax base with diversified industries.

POLICY 1.7

Encourage and promote the development of home-based businesses and telecommuting based upon high technology communication infrastructure.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND TAXES

This category assumes compliance with the General Land Use category, but also provides for further policy considerations aimed at managing the development of public facilities.

GOAL 1

Red Willow County should provide an adequate amount of governmental and public facilities in appropriate locations throughout Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.1

The availability and opportunity for grants should be investigated and analyzed. Grants should be utilized whenever appropriate to fund the development and improvement of the infrastructure in Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.2

Public facilities should be strategically located within Red Willow County so as to provide cost-effective, efficient, and timely service to all residents.

POLICY 1.3

The Red Willow County Board of Commissioners should investigate the possibility of Red Willow County adopting the provisions of Nebraska's "Greenbelt" laws as a tool to ease property tax burden on agricultural uses and producers.

POLICY 1.4

Encourage the location of public and semi-public facilities in a manner consistent with the sector of the County, which they are intended to serve.

POLICY 1.5

Public facilities such as schools or churches should be located in areas near populated areas.

POLICY 1.6

Public facilities such as County yards and maintenance buildings shall be located in key areas of the County, which efficiently serves the public.

TRANSPORTATION

This category assumes compliance with the General Land Use category, but also provides for further policy considerations aimed at promoting improved access and circulation within Red Willow County.

GOAL 1

Red Willow County should provide a transportation system that improves access and circulation for vehicular traffic within Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.1

The interaction of existing transportation routes and drainage ways should be studied to determine the need for bridge and road improvements.

POLICY 1.2

When new development is contemplated, due consideration must be given to the carrying capacity of the existing road system in the area, and development should be discouraged from occurring in areas where the road system is insufficient

to handle any additional traffic load. Infrastructure financing tools should be established that allow Red Willow County to assign portions of future infrastructure needs to the new developments that will benefit from such future infrastructure improvements.

POLICY 1.3

Continue updating county equipment and road programs as needed.

POLICY 1.4

Improve, develop, and maintain well-traveled roads with hard surfacing as identified in the County's One- and Six-Year Plan.

POLICY 1.5

Encourage the on-going replacement of older, dilapidating bridges throughout the County.

POLICY 1.6

Investigate the paving of several County roads to improve the connectivity of the County.

POLICY 1.7

Right-of-way and pavements shall be sufficiently wide and of sufficient strength to accommodate anticipated future traffic loads.

POLICY 1.8

Commercial signing along major arterials shall be kept to a minimum.

EDUCATION

GOAL

Quality education is a vital component of a community and/or county. Although the county's role is limited, policies will be followed to retain the countywide school system. Above all, the main goal is to encourage and maintain a viable school and distance learning system, excellence in the public school curriculum and quality of school facilities to further the educational opportunities for all residents of Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.1

Cooperate with the school systems in expanding public uses of educational facilities.

POLICY 1.2

Establish entrepreneurship training and mentoring program in Red Willow County Schools to encourage and promote business development opportunities for area students and residents, specifically targeting youth.

POLICY 1.3

Utilize schools in Red Willow County as a community learning center for all age groups.

PARKS AND RECREATION

This category assumes compliance with the General Land Use category, but also provides for further policy considerations aimed at promoting the development and improvement of the parks and recreational areas in Red Willow County.

GOAL

Red Willow County should provide adequate, park and recreation opportunities for the residents of Red Willow County and the State of Nebraska.

POLICY 1.1

Areas of Red Willow County that meet the requirements of the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission should be identified and should be recommended for inclusion in the Nebraska Game and Parks Commission recreation system.

POLICY 1.2

Park and recreation facilities should be designed to accommodate the particular needs and interests of area residents while protecting, preserving, and conserving the environmental character and quality of the area.

POLICY 1.3

An open-space system should be established that identifies and includes areas of significant tree stands, wetlands, wildlife habitat and environmentally sensitive areas.

POLICY 1.4

Provide parks and recreational facilities that are reasonably accessible to residents of Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.5

Parks and recreational facilities should be designed to match the particular recreational desires of area residents as closely as possible.

POLICY 1.6

The parks and recreation section of the Comprehensive Plan shall be referred to when reviewing new park plans or expansion or redevelopment plans.

POLICY 1.7

Promote recreation as a continuing economic development tool for Red Willow County.

POLICY 1.8

Set standards that require or promote dedication of parks and open space.

POLICY 1.9

Encourage recreational amenities offering year round enjoyment.

ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL AND MAN-MADE RESOURCES

INTRODUCTION

In order to formulate a truly valid and “comprehensive” plan for the future development of Red Willow County, it is first necessary to evaluate the environment and man-made conditions which currently exist to determine the impacts that these factors may have on limiting future land uses in the County. This component of the Red Willow County Comprehensive Development Plan provides a general summary of the environmental and man-made conditions which are present in the County and identifies and qualifies the characteristics of each which will directly or indirectly impact future land uses in the County. For clarity, the evaluations are presented in two separate analyses.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

- § Parent Material
- § Soil Associations
- § Prime Crop Land
- § Dryland Capability Classification
- § Soil Limitations
- § Water Supply
- § Physiography / Relief / Drainage

MAN-MADE CONDITIONS

- § Urban Development
- § Transportation System Impacts
- § Public Facility Impacts

NATURAL ENVIRONMENTAL CONDITIONS

Parent Material

The soils of Red Willow County have developed from three kinds of parent material. There are (1) windblown silt (Peorian loess); (2) colluvium; and (3) alluvium. The most extensive of these are the soils formed in windblown silt. All of the materials were deposited in late geologic time, during the Pleistocene epoch. There are outcrops of rocks from the Ogallala formation also within the County.

WINDBLOWN SILT

Silt laid down by wind forms a mantle over all but the river channels in the County. Some of the most fertile soils in the County, mainly the Keith, Colby, Holdrege, and Ulysses silt loams, formed in it.

COLLUVIUM

Colluvium consists of mixed deposits of soil material near the base of slopes. In this County it is made up mainly of recent, deep deposits of loamy material near the base of hills that border major streams. The deposits have accumulated through soil creep, slides, and local wash. Colluvium is not a major source of parent material in the County, but it is the parent material of the Bridgeport and Bayard soils.

ALLUVIUM

Alluvium consists of silt, clay, sand, gravel, and soil material washed from higher areas and deposited by rivers and streams. In this County this material is on the flood plains of the Republican River and its main tributaries. Many areas that are already covered by alluvium receive fresh deposits of material from time to time. Most of the soils formed in alluvium area young and lack clearly expressed horizons. They vary because of differences in the source of parent material. The soils formed in alluvium in the County are the Bankard, Barney, Glenberg, Haverson, Las and McCook.

SOIL ASSOCIATIONS

The general soils map, Figure 5, indicates the soil associations within Red Willow County. A soil association is a landscape that has a distinctive proportional pattern of soils. It normally consists of one or more major soils and at least one minor soil, and it is named for the major soils. The soils in one association may occur in another, but in a different pattern.

A map showing soil associations is useful to people who want a general idea of the soils in the County, who want to compare different parts of the County, or who want to know the location of large tracts that are suitable for a certain kind of farming or other land use.

There are four soil associations in Red Willow County. Almost half of the County consists of moderately sloping loess plains in the uplands and of sloping to steep canyons. The rest consists of loamy soils on stream terraces, bottom lands, and foot slopes in the uplands, of sandy and loamy soils along the Republican River, and of silty soils on steep loess hills and in canyons.

HOLDREGE-KEITH ASSOCIATION

The soils in this association are on nearly level to moderately sloping loess plains in the uplands and in sloping to steep canyons. The area of this association is 263,600 acres, or about 58% of the County. Holdrege and Keith soils make up about 75% of this association, and Ulysses soils, 12%. Colby and Hord soils make up the rest of the association.

Holdrege and Keith soils are deep, silty soils on nearly level and gently sloping loess plains. The most extensive areas of Holdrege soils are in the eastern part of the County, but Keith soils are mostly in the western part.

The Ulysses soils are mostly in moderately sloping areas in the loess uplands. Their profile is intermediate in development between that of the Holdrege and Keith soils and that of the Colby soils. Colby soils are deep and silty and are in sloping to steep canyons. Hord soils are in nearly level and concave areas in the uplands, and they receive extra moisture because of runoff from surrounding areas.

FIGURE 5 Soil Associations

The Holdrege, Keith and Hord soils and some areas of the Ulysses and Colby soils are cultivated, but the rest of the soils in this association are typically pastured. Cultivated areas are used mostly for wheat, grain sorghum and corn production.

The main problems in this association with regard to retaining the soils are controlling wind and water erosion, conserving moisture and maintaining a balance between the supply of plant nutrients and the supply of moisture.

HORD, TERRACE-MCCOOK-BRIDGEPORT ASSOCIATION

The soils in this association are on nearly level to gently sloping stream terraces, bottom lands and foot slopes. There are 56,050 acres in this association, or approximately 12% of the County. Hord, terrace, soils occupy 39% of the association; McCook soils, 36%; and Bridgeport soils, 22%. The rest consists of small areas of Haverson, Glenberg and Bayard soils.

Hord, terrace, soils are on nearly level to very gently sloping stream terraces along the Republican River, Beaver Creek, and the main tributaries of these streams. They are deep, silty soils, and they formed in alluvium that contains lime.

McCook soils, on nearly level bottom lands of streams, are deep and silty, and are moderately dark and limy. Areas of these soils along Beaver and Red Willow Creeks are flooded after heavy rains by overflow from the streams.

Bridgeport soils are on nearly level to gently sloping colluvial fans and foot slopes in the uplands. These soils are deep, moderately dark and silty.

The silty Haverson soils and the moderately sandy Glenberg soils are on bottom lands. The moderately sandy Bayard soils are on colluvial slopes.

The soils in this association are well suited to irrigation, and most areas are irrigated. Corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, wheat, and alfalfa are the main crops produced on this association.

The main problems on the more sandy soils are maintaining fertility and controlling erosion. Land leveling is needed in most irrigated areas before water can be distributed properly.

SANDY ALLUVIAL LAN-LAS-GLENBERG ASSOCIATION

The soils in this association are on the low flood plains along the Republican River. The total area is 13,590 acres, or about 3% of the County. Sandy alluvial land makes up about 32% of the association, Las soils 19% of the association, and Glenberg soils 17%. The rest of the association is made up of Bankard and Barney soils. All of these soils are subject to overflow from the river. The areas are nearly level to gently undulating and consist of material laid down by floodwaters. The water table is at a depth of 1 to 6 feet.

Sandy alluvial land consists mostly of very sandy material, but some layers range from silty clay loam to sand and gravel. Las soils consist of light-colored, loamy material that is covered by sand and contains variable amounts of salts or alkali. Glenberg fine sandy loam, slightly wet, is moderately sandy. In this soil, depth to the water table ranges from 2 to 6 feet. The very sandy Bankard soils are on lowlands along the Republican River, and the poorly drained Barney soils are in old stream channels.

Soils of this association are generally not suited to cultivation, because they are sandy, poorly drained, or severely affected by salts or alkali.

COLBY ASSOCIATION

The soils in this association are on steep loess hills and in canyons that form the valley slopes of most drainageways in the County. The total area is 125,000 acres, or approximately 27% of the County. Colby soils make up 85% of the area, and Ulysses soils 5%. Rough broken land, loess, and Rough broken land, caliche, on the sides of canyons, and Broken alluvial land, along the narrow valleys, make up the rest of the area.

The moderately sloping to steep Colby soils are deep and silty and have a thin, slightly darkened surface layer. The Ulysses soils are mostly in the moderately sloping loess hills. The profile of these soils is intermediate in development between that of the Holdrege and Keith soils and the Colby soils.

The slopes make the soils in this association better suited to pasture than to crop production, and the Colby soils are generally used for pasture, though a few small areas are cultivated.

PRIME CROPLAND

THE PRESERVATION OF SOILS THAT ARE MOST PRODUCTIVE IN TERMS OF CROP PRODUCTION IS AN

IMPORTANT ISSUE IN ANY COUNTY PLANNING EFFORT. IN NEBRASKA, AND OTHER STATES, WHERE THE MAJOR COMPONENT IN THE ECONOMY IS AGRICULTURAL PRODUCTION, THE ISSUE OF PRESERVING PRIME CROP LAND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS IS A KEY COMPONENT IN PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE OF ANY RURAL AREA.

Prime crop land soils, as defined by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, are soils that are best suited to producing food, feed, forage, fiber and oilseed crops. Such soils have properties that are favorable for the economic production of sustained high yields of crops. The soils need only to be treated and managed using acceptable farming methods. The moisture supply, of course, must be adequate and the growing season has to be sufficiently long. Prime crop land soils produce the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and economic resources and farming these soils results in the least damage to the environment.

Farming has been the most important enterprise in Red Willow County since the County was settled. In the early years, crops were used only for local consumption. When grain elevators and railroads made other markets available, production of crops and livestock increased. Figure 6 details the location of prime crop land soils within Red Willow County, Nebraska.

It is important to note that a significantly small percentage of the County is considered to be prime crop land and that these areas are located in small, separate locations in the County. Crop production is vital to the local economy of the County and the loss of this limited prime crop land could negatively impact the economy in the County. If these soils are to be preserved for agricultural production, it would indicate that loss of such prime productive areas through development of non-agricultural uses; including industrial, commercial, non-farm residential and other non-agricultural developments; be avoided by providing other more appropriate locations for such uses. In addition, development of large scale livestock feeding operations in areas where these prime soils occur would also result in the loss of notable quantities of this productive crop land and should be permitted to occur only when the long term economic gain is determined to be greater than the long term economic loss of the prime crop land soils. This same determination; weighing the long term economic gain of development of prime crop land against the economic loss if the prime crop land lost to such development; should be made when other uses, including rural residential, commercial and industrial uses, are proposed to be constructed in the rural portions of Red Willow County.

DRYLAND CAPABILITY CLASSIFICATION

The soil suitability for dryland farm production is indicated on Figure 7. Typically, soils with characteristics that place them in Classes 1 – 3 are suitable for crop production in dryfarmed areas. Those soils with characteristics that place them in Class 4 or higher, typically require substantial input of human energy or other resources to be productive.

The dryland capability classification of the soils within the County and soil suitability as prime crop land, Figure 6, should both be utilized Planning Commission and County Officials when dealing with situations of non-agricultural development within the County. Those soils exhibiting prime crop land characteristics, especially those areas where irrigation is possible, should, in almost all instances, be retained to prevent any loss of such crop production areas within the County. Those soils exhibiting dryland capability classifications between 1 and 3 should also be retained as these areas are the most suitable for dryland crop production.

The inclusion of Figure 6 in this component of the Red Willow County Comprehensive Development Plan does not eliminate the need for on-site investigation of the soil properties and suitability when dealing with future land use developments, especially larger-scale development projects.

SOIL LIMITATIONS

As indicated in Table 27, there are numerous soils which are located in Red Willow County which should be avoided by non-agricultural development and large livestock operations due to the potential for environmental damage and the incompatibility with the soils. These limitations include possible property damage and environmental degradation due to the potential flooding of some areas, as well as, additional factors that increase the potential for pollution of surface and groundwater through run-off and / or seepage into high water tables.

The environmental hazard factors indicated in Table 27 are designed to provide the Red Willow County Planning Commission and other County Officials with an indication of potential environmental problems associated with various land uses which may be proposed in different areas of the County. Table 27 should be examined in detail prior to a determination of whether a specific use is appropriate in a given area. In addition, reference should be made to the Soil Survey of Red Willow County, Nebraska when determining the appropriateness of site specific projects that may occur in the rural areas of the County.

The environmental limitations of the soils listed in Table 27 are mapped on Figures 8 through 11. Figure 8 details the soils suitability for septic tank disposal systems, which are commonly associated with residential dwellings and other non-agricultural land uses. Figure 9 details the soils suitability for sewage lagoons and confined livestock feeding operations. This Figure has been included to show the soils limitations for the development of larger livestock operations within the County and should be used in conjunction with on-site investigations, as well as, use of the Soil Survey of Red Willow County, Nebraska to determine the appropriateness of such uses in select areas of the County when and if they are proposed to be constructed in the future.

TABLE 27: USE LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING SOILS WITHIN RED WILLOW COUNTY, NEBRASKA

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD CODE

- 1 ----- FLOODING
- 2 ----- HIGH WATER TABLE (LESS THAN 6 FEET)
- 3 ----- DEGREE OF SLOPE
- 4 ----- EXCESSIVE SEEPAGE
- 5 ----- WETNESS / PONDING
- 6 ----- SLOW PERMEABILITY
- 7 ----- POOR FILTER
- 8 ----- DEPTH TO ROCK

POINT OF REFERENCE

ENV. FACTORS ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT LIMIT DEVELOPMENT OF VARIOUS LAND USES
(INDICATED AS A NUMBER IN ACCORDANCE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD CODE PROVIDED)

LIMIT LEVEL LEVEL OF LIMITATION THAT SUCH ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS HAVE ON THE VARIOUS LAND USES

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS FOR VARIOUS LAND USES

SOIL SERIES	DWELLINGS (FOUNDATIONS)	SEPTIC TANK ABSORPTION FIELDS	SEWAGE LAGOONS	CONFINED LIVESTOCK FEEDING OPERATIONS*
<i>BANKARD</i> ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Good to fair bearing capacity; slight piping hazard in	SLIGHT	4 SEVERE	4 SEVERE

	places				
<i>BARNEY</i> ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Good bearing strength but has high water table	2,6 SEVERE	4 SEVERE	2,4,6 SEVERE	
<i>BAYARD</i> ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Good to poor bearing capacity, depending on density; moderate to high piping hazard	SLIGHT	4 SEVERE	4 SEVERE	
<i>BRIDGEPORT</i> ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Fair to poor bearing capacity; moderate piping hazard	SLIGHT	4 MODERATE	4 MODERATE	
<i>BROKEN ALLUVIAL LAND & COLBY</i> ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Fair to poor bearing capacity; high to moderate piping hazard	3 MODERATE	3 MODERATE	3 MODERATE	
<i>GLENBERG</i> ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Good to poor bearing capacity depending on density; subject to piping in places	2 MODERATE	4 SEVERE	2,4 SEVERE	
<i>HAVERSON</i> ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Fair to poor bearing capacity; moderate to high piping hazard	1 MODERATE	4 MODERATE	4 MODERATE	
<i>HOLDREGE & KEITH</i> ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Good to fair bearing capacity; moderate piping hazard	SLIGHT	3,4 MODERATE	3,4 MODERATE	
<i>HORD</i> ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Fair to poor bearing capacity; moderate piping hazard	SLIGHT	MODERATE	MODERATE	
<i>HORD – SLICKSPOT & LAS</i> ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Good to poor bearing capacity; subject to piping if sand is silty	2 MODERATE	4 MODERATE	2,4 MODERATE	
<i>MCCOOK</i> ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Fair to poor bearing capacity; moderate to high piping hazard	1 MODERATE	4 MODERATE	4 MODERATE	

TABLE 27: USE LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING SOILS WITHIN RED WILLOW COUNTY, NEBRASKA (CONT.)

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD CODE

- 1 ----- FLOODING
- 2 ----- HIGH WATER TABLE (LESS THAN 6 FEET)
- 3 ----- DEGREE OF SLOPE
- 4 ----- EXCESSIVE SEEPAGE
- 5 ----- WETNESS / PONDING
- 6 ----- SLOW PERMEABILITY
- 7 ----- POOR FILTER
- 8 ----- DEPTH TO ROCK

POINT OF REFERENCE

ENV. FACTORS ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS THAT LIMIT DEVELOPMENT OF VARIOUS LAND USES
 (INDICATED AS A NUMBER IN ACCORDANCE TO THE ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARD CODE PROVIDED)

LIMIT LEVEL LEVEL OF LIMITATION THAT SUCH ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS HAVE ON THE VARIOUS LAND USES

ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS FOR VARIOUS LAND USES

SOIL SERIES	DWELLINGS (FOUNDATIONS)	SEPTIC TANK ABSORPTION FIELDS	SEWAGE LAGOONS	CONFINED LIVESTOCK FEEDING OPERATIONS*
SANDY ALLUVIAL LAND ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Fair to poor bearing capacity; piping hazard if sand is silty	1,2 MODERATE	1,2 MODERATE	1,2 MODERATE
<i>ULYSSES</i> ENV FACTORS LIMIT LEVEL	Good to poor bearing capacity; silt causes a piping hazard	SLIGHT	3,4 MODERATE	3,4 MODERATE

* DATA INTERPOLATED BY STAHR & ASSOCIATES, INC., 2001
 SOURCE: SOIL SURVEY OF RED WILLOW COUNTY, NEBRASKA – UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

WATER SUPPLY

Water supplies are adequate throughout most of the County. On the uplands a sandy deposit underlying the deposits of loess is the chief source of water. Excellent water is also obtained from wells that tap this source at a depth of 100 to 300 feet. The wells average from 140 to 160 feet in depth. On the bottom lands the underlying material is alluvial sand, and it provides an excellent source of water. Wells on the flood plains range from 8 to 15 feet deep in Red Willow Creek valley and from 15 to 30 feet deep in the Republican River valley. The wells on the terraces range from 20 to 30 feet deep.

Water for some crops is provided by irrigation. The first irrigation district in Red Willow County was organized in 1912 and irrigated 2,930 acres from the Meeker Canal for about 45 years. Since that time, the construction of irrigation districts and the development of new wells have increased the amount of land that can be irrigated. Recent numbers indicate that now over 67,000 acres are irrigated within the County. Recent numbers also indicate that there are now over 930 wells within the County.

PHYSIOGRAPHY, RELIEF AND DRAINAGE

Red Willow County is in the western part of the Loess Plains, a part of the Great Plains. It consists of nearly level to gently sloping tablelands, the fringes of which are dissected by the valleys of the Republican River and by those of Driftwood, Red Willow and Beaver Creeks and a few smaller streams. Figure 10 details a breakdown of the many different degrees of slopes, by soil association, within the County.

The larger area of the uplands lies across the south-central part of the County, south of the Republican River valley and north of Beaver Creek. The tablelands here are very gently sloping but drop abruptly to the stream valleys and deeply entrenched ravines. The channels at the heads of many of the tributary drainageways are steep sided but shallow and in their lower courses break into ravines that are deep and gullied.

The valley of the Republican River is deeply entrenched. It is about 2 to 2 ½ miles wide. The bottom land lies

only 5 to 10 feet above the normal water level. Bordering the river are extensive alluvial terraces. These terraces are high above overflow from the river and are as much as 1 ½ to 2 miles wide in places.

Most of the County is drained by the Republican River, which flows through the central part of the County from west to east. It drains about 500 square miles of the County, and Beaver Creek drains much of the rest. About 8 square miles in the northeastern corner of the County, however, are drained by Medicine Creek, and about 3 square miles in the southeastern corner is drained by tributaries of Sappa Creek.

Because of the many streams that drain the County, drainage is good in most areas. An area about 8 miles northwest of McCook, however, is not drained by any stream. This area covers about 4 square miles. The surface is nearly level but has a few depressions.

During periods of heavy rainfall or during uncommonly “wet” seasons, areas within Red Willow County are prone to flooding. Figure 11 details the locations within Red Willow County where both frequent and occasional flooding occurs. It is important to note such locations when dealing with any proposed future land use developments, including larger livestock developments, so that development of improper uses do not occur in these areas that would result in either property damage or environmental degradation.

MAN-MADE CONDITIONS

URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Future development in the County may be affected by the presence of man-made features such as the geographic locations of the urban communities in the County, the location of county roads and highways, recreational facilities and current farmstead development.

The rural areas of the County have had limited development beyond the crop land, range land and related agricultural uses currently in place. This indicates that there is not a substantial market demand for rural non-agricultural housing, commercial or industrial uses in areas other than those in and around the urban centers within the County.

The City of McCook, the County Seat, is located in the west-central portion of the County and has a year 2000 population of 7,994 persons. The City of Indianola is located in the north-central portion of the County and has a population of 642 persons. The Village of Bartley is located in the northeastern portion of the County and has a population of 355 persons. The Village of Danbury is located in the southeastern portion of the County and has a population of 127 persons; and the Village of Lebanon is located in the southeastern portion of the County and has a population of 70 persons.

The presence of multiple urban areas within the County creates increased potential of expansion of urban uses into rural area, specifically in areas surrounding these communities. It is important to note that this potential exists within the County to properly plan for future land use within the County.

TRANSPORTATION AND MARKETS

Railroad transportation for the County is provided by the Sante Fe Burlington Northern Railroad and the NKC Railroad. Two lines traverse the County, the main line follows the valley of the Republican River and provides rail access to the cities of Lincoln, Nebraska, Chicago, Illinois and Denver, Colorado. The Cities of McCook, Indianola and the Village of Bartley are located along this line. A branch line of the same railroad passes through Beaver Creek valley, in the southeastern part of the County, and connects the towns of Lebanon, Danbury and Marion. Most areas in the County are less than 10 miles from a shipping point.

U.S. Highways 6 and 34 cross the County by way of the valley of the Republican River. U.S. Highway 83 crosses the County from north to south through the City of McCook.

PUBLIC FACILITY IMPACTS

The Republican River and many creeks within the County provide water for recreation within Red Willow County. In addition, the large number of farm ponds provide hunting of migratory waterfowl and fishing for sportsmen.

Due to the environmental sensitivity of the Republican River corridor, the development of confined livestock feeding operations or other uses which have the potential to degrade the River environment or scenic quality should be avoided. The Republican River will also encourage the development of additional recreational and tourist oriented uses as more and more persons outside of the County come to recognize the scenic quality of Red Willow County, Nebraska.

EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS

INTRODUCTION

An evaluation of the land uses that presently exist within Red Willow County, Nebraska is critical to the formulation of its Comprehensive Development Plan. It is the type and location of the existing land uses which provides the starting point for this 'Plan' and the basis for the formulation of workable zoning regulations to protect such existing uses. In addition, the identification and examination of the existing land uses and corresponding development of zoning regulations also serves to encourage additional economic expansion within the County through development of future land uses which are compatible with such regulations.

PHYSICAL CHARACTER OF RED WILLOW COUNTY, NEBRASKA

In order to properly understand the impact of the existing land uses within the County and the overall trends in the location and extent of the existing land uses it is important to review to physical character of the County. An examination of the physical character of the County provides an indication of why certain land use trends have occurred and, in turn, details limitations of why development has not occurred in select areas. The following is a brief synopsis of the physical character of Red Willow County.

Red Willow County is in southwestern Nebraska. It is 716 square miles and has a total area of 458,240 acres. Urban development within the County has occurred in limited locations and the size and extent of this urban development has been limited with regard to total population base, with the exception of the City of McCook. The largest urban area within the County is McCook, located in the west-central portion of the County. The only other communities within the County are Bartley, located in the northeastern portion of the County, Danbury, located in the southeastern portion of the County, Indianola, located in the north-central portion of the County and Lebanon, also located in the southeastern portion of the County.

The goods and services provided and produced in Red Willow County revolve around the industry of agriculture. Over 95% of the County is utilized for agricultural production, mainly a combination of livestock and crop production. As can be seen, agriculture is vital to the economy of the County and will continue to be throughout the planning period. Over 95% of the County being utilized for agricultural purposes reveals that a total of approximately 436,360 acres of the County are involved in agriculture. The remaining 5%, or approximately 21,880 acres, are divided between non-agricultural uses, urban areas, local roads, waterways, and highways and public / recreational facilities within the County.

Development within the rural areas of Red Willow County has mainly been agricultural in character, including development of farmsteads. The only exception within the County is the limited expansion of urban development that has occurred in close proximity to the urban areas, mainly surrounding the City of McCook. Although not as extensive as urban sprawl in larger communities, such as in the cities of Lincoln and Omaha, development has occurred in areas in and around the communities within the County. This trend is very common across the State of Nebraska and will continue to be a land use demand throughout the planning period.

The major transportation routes within the County are significantly important in both existing land use and future land use development within the County. Aside from the fact that these major highways provide intra-county access to the urban areas, as well as, provide further access to major transportation routes and urban areas outside of the County, they provide ideal locations for commercial business and industry within the County. Existing commercial and industrial development has been primarily located in close proximity to the

major highways within the County generally in or near an urban area within the County. This trend will continue to occur throughout the planning period and will be significantly influenced by any improvements made to the major transportation routes within the County. The major highways within Red Willow County include U.S. Highways 6, 34 and 83.

It is important to note these characteristics of the County to gain a better understanding of why land use has developed the way it has. In understanding these trends it paves the way for proper planning for the future. Such planning should continue upon the land use trends that have been positive in nature and stray away from such trends that may have had a negative impact in the County. In order to more fully understand land use development within Red Willow County a breakdown of land use development within the rural portions of the County is as follows:

Rural Residential Development

Figure 12 details the existing land uses present within Red Willow County. From Figure 12 it can be seen that rural farmstead development is one of the predominant land uses involving buildings within the County.

Farmsteads and non-farm dwellings within Red Willow County are located throughout the County with higher densities of such development being located in the western portion of the County, particularly in areas surrounding the City of McCook. In most instances the location of farms within the County has occurred on or near to where the soils are the most conducive to crop production.

In 1997 the total number of operational farms within Red Willow County was 438. This number has significantly decreased over the past decades. From a statewide perspective, Red Willow County has approximately .85% of all farms located within the State. Out of all 93 counties within the State of Nebraska, Red Willow County ranks 57th in total number of farms.

The average size of farms, in terms of acres, within Red Willow County totals 996 acres per farm. The average size of farms within the State of Nebraska totals 885 acres per farm, some 110 acres less per farm. This ranks Red Willow County 36th in the State in overall farm size. In Red Willow County farmsteads are developed at an average of .61 farmsteads per square mile.

Rural Commercial Development

Rural commercial development within Red Willow County is quite minimal. As indicated on Figure 12, commercial development is primarily located surrounding the urban areas of the County, specifically surrounding McCook. Commercial development within the strongly rural areas of the County is minimal.

This indicates that the majority of commercial businesses and services are located within the urban areas within the County. This trend is very common throughout Nebraska and primarily occurs in these areas due to the higher volumes of local consumer traffic in the urban areas and due to the close location of additional goods and services offered by other local businesses.

It is important to note that this trend may slightly shift with the proposal of any improvements to the major highways located within the County. Commercial development, specifically those businesses oriented towards the highway traveler, may spawn in areas along these major thoroughfares. Acknowledging the impacts and potentials for development along the major transportation routes will be covered in the Future Land Use component of this Comprehensive Development Plan.

Rural Industrial Development

Industrial development, aside from that that is agricultural in character, is significantly minimal in the rural portions of Red Willow County. In fact, Figure 12 indicates that there are no industrial facilities located in the County. Again, this indicates that non-agricultural industrial development is located in and around the urban areas of the County. The majority of industry in the County is centered in and around McCook with other smaller scale industrial operations, including grain storage and related crop production supply uses, being located in the remaining urban areas of the County.

Rural Public / Quasi-Public / Recreational Development

A variety of public / quasi-public / recreational uses ranging from State recreational land to local churches, cemeteries, rural schools and historical markers occur in the rural areas of the County. An examination of the location of these public, quasi-public and related uses reveals that, for the most part, these uses are situated near the major highways in the County and in somewhat of a close proximity to an urban area within the County (see Figure **). In many instances throughout the County these uses were developed during the settlement of the County and have since become significantly aged and, in some cases, obsolete.

Recreational development within the rural areas of the County are detailed in the County Profile component of this Comprehensive Development Plan.

Agricultural Livestock Production

Livestock production operations are located across portions of Red Willow County. These operations range from independently owned livestock feedlots, not indicated on Figure 12, to larger scale confined livestock feeding operations, indicated as commercial agriculture on Figure 12. When examining the existing land uses surrounding these commercial agricultural facilities, it can be seen that these uses are located in areas where many rural farmsteads exist. This is fortunate because farmers are typically used to agricultural production activities and the odors, dust and noises produced, at the same time, this is unfortunate because these types of large scale livestock production uses typically produce large quantities of odor, dust, flies, as well as, create potential environmental hazards for adjoining land uses resulting in land use conflicts, particularly between such uses and neighboring farm dwellings, that are difficult to resolve.

The development of these livestock operations in areas in and around the many farmsteads in the County has occurred for the same reasons that the original farmsteads were constructed, that is the availability of adequate water supplies, higher crop production potentials and the desire on the part of these producers to have their livestock located near their farming or ranching operations.

By acknowledging the location of these facilities in Red Willow County, proper planning can occur and valid zoning regulations can be developed to limit the negative effects of such uses, as well as, prevent development near such uses that would potentially be detrimental to the livestock producer and the home buyer. In addition, by noting the location of farmsteads and other non-agricultural developments within the rural portions of the County, sites can be identified for the future location of such larger livestock operations. By properly locating such uses the negative effects commonly associated with larger livestock operations would not strongly effect or damage any neighboring property.

Existing Land Uses Within The Rural Portions Red Willow County, Nebraska

The existing rural development density pattern within the County is subject to expected change during the planning period, primarily due to continuing pressure for rural non-agricultural development. The objective of this Comprehensive Development Plan and the associated zoning regulations should thus be to prevent land use conflicts and provide liability protection for those uses which now exist by avoiding the placement of new land uses, including larger livestock operations, in areas where land use conflicts would result and where avoidance of conflicts cannot be achieved, by establishing standard to minimize such conflicts.

The existing land use pattern in the rural portions of the County will have implications with regard to development of future land use development, including confined livestock feeding operations, as is noted in the Environment, Natural and Man-Made Resources component of this Comprehensive Development Plan. If Red Willow County is to encourage development within the rural areas of the County, it will be imperative to formulate a Future Land Use Plan and zoning standards which can overcome or at minimize the land use conflicts which can result, as well as, minimize or eliminate the potential of environmental degradation from the construction of new land uses.

The existing land use pattern in the rural portions of the County has and should continue to be influenced by the location of soil types which are the most productive with regard to agricultural production. In 1997, over 95% of all land located within Red Willow County was utilized for agricultural purposes, thus showing how significantly important retention of quality agricultural ground is to the County's economy. If quality agricultural lands are to be preserved in order to maintain and maximize overall crop and livestock production in the County, a critical component of the local agricultural based economy, the issue of how to avoid the use of the quality agricultural land for other uses will need to be effectively addressed in the Future Land Use Plan and the corresponding zoning regulations.

The overall existing land use pattern in Red Willow County is one of moderate density which is, for the most part, consistent with the environmental capacities of the land. A primary objective of the Future Land Use Plan and zoning regulations should thus be to assure that new land uses, which may be developed, be located and constructed in a manner which is compatible, not only with adjoining land uses, but with the environmental capacity of the soils and geologic characteristics of the land on which such additional

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

INTRODUCTION

In any planning area, be it a large urban area which is expanding in population or a small rural county which is declining in population, there will be changes in land uses through time. The purpose of a Future Land Use Plan is to provide a general guide for these changes in land use so that the resulting land uses can coexist with a minimum number of conflicts. A Future Land Use Plan for any planning area must reflect the land uses which already exist and must be considered flexible in nature in order to meet the changing needs of its citizens and to encourage expansion of the local economy whenever possible.

A Future Land Use Plan also provides the legal basis for the formulation of land use (zoning) regulations and the application of zoning districts. For this reason it is imperative to formulate a Future Land Use Plan that is tailored to the needs, desires and environmental limitations of each planning area.

In order to accomplish these purposes, the Future Land Use Plan for Red Willow County is based upon the land uses already existing in the rural areas of the County and the citizen's desire and need to protect these land uses, the environment, local property values and their lifestyles and customs while, at the same time, promoting improvements in all components of the local economy with particular emphasis on agricultural growth, as the predominant component of the local economy. The following principles and concepts have thus been selected to guide the development of the Red Willow County Future Land Use Plan:

PRINCIPLES AND CONCEPTS OF THE RED WILLOW COUNTY, NEBRASKA FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

- Private ownership of land is essential to the freedom of individuals, families and communities and to the economic interest of the citizens of the County.
- Existing agricultural uses, methods of agricultural production, property values and the lifestyle and quality of life of the citizens of the County should be protected and preserved while allowing for changes in methods and scale of agricultural production in a manner and in locations which will not be incompatible with such existing uses, which will not damage the environment, which will not negatively impact the infrastructure of the County and which will not negatively impact property values or the quality of life in the rural areas of the County.
- Land use regulations, which are to be used to implement this Future Land Use Plan, should be minimized to preserve the freedoms and property rights enjoyed by the citizens of the County while effectively addressing the needs to basic protection of the existing land uses, property values, the local

environment and quality of life from development of future land uses which would be inconsistent with these needs.

LAND USE COMPONENT CONCEPTS

Agricultural Uses: In order to abide by the principles and general land use planning concepts presented above, the future land uses in the unincorporated areas of Red Willow County should continue to be dominated by agricultural production.

The use of land for crop production should be encouraged as a means of strengthening the local economy, but such development should be limited to those soil types which have crop production capacities.

Residential uses associated with such agricultural production uses should continue to be supported as accessory uses to such agricultural production through continuation in improvements in roadway systems and public and quasi-public facilities and services.

Agricultural uses, including livestock production, should be encouraged in the rural areas of the County. Confined livestock feeding uses and associated waste handling facilities should be carefully sited with regard to neighboring land uses and such uses should avoid locations near municipalities within the County or near the Republican River and major creeks within the County to avoid the potential for contamination of surface and groundwater.

River and wetland protection and maintenance are critical to protecting and preserving the wildlife and water quality in the County. Confined livestock feeding and development of other commercial or industrial uses in these environmentally sensitive areas should be closely monitored, if not prohibited in these areas, to substantially decrease the potential risk of contaminating surface water and these wetland areas.

Non-Agricultural Residential Uses: Development of residential uses, not associated with farmstead operations, should be permitted as a method of encouraging economic and population growth and to provide expanded choices for existing and future citizens regarding where they may wish to live.

Non-agricultural rural residential uses can be developed either as individual housing sites or as residential subdivisions. Such development, when and if proposed, should be weighed against environmental limitations, potential loss of prime crop land areas, marketability and conflicts with existing agricultural land livestock production uses. Such uses, whether they occur as individual housing sites or as residential subdivisions, should generally be limited to locations on or near one of the major highways within the County or along the County road corridors which are in close proximity to the urban areas within the County.

It is important to note that if municipal zoning, as well as, jurisdictional zoning is adopted and enforced by the communities, such decisions shall be dealt with by the community itself. In the instances where such communities do not enforce zoning, or have zoning but choose not to utilize their extraterritorial jurisdiction authority, decisions regarding land use shall be made by County Officials in areas up to the corporate limits of such urban area.

This land use policy will avoid the need for unnecessary demands for expansion of the County road and services infrastructure while enhancing the populations and local economies of the urban areas within the County. An exception to this location limitation would be the potential for development of non-agricultural housing around scenic areas in the County and along the Republican River where major roadway access

already exists.

Commercial and Industrial Uses: Future additional commercial and industrial uses, not desiring a location within or near the urban areas of the County, should be encouraged to locate in the rural portions of the County, but siting of these types of uses should be carefully considered. Those uses which would generate or attract substantial amounts of vehicular traffic, particularly heavy truck traffic, should be encouraged to locate along the major highway corridors in the County as opposed to more rural locations which would require extensive use and higher maintenance levels on County roads.

Recreational Development: Future recreational use within throughout the County should be not only encouraged, but actively pursued. Although there are State owned and operated wildlife management areas within the County, it is important to add to these existing recreational areas to increase the overall “image” of the County and, as a result, work to enhance the quality of life for the citizens of the County and to increase the potential for tourists within the County.

Development of, as well as, improvements upon the recreational areas within the County should be an active land use goal throughout the planning period. Future development of recreational uses should take into consideration the need for proper access to such areas, as well as, proper advertisement to ensure such areas are utilized frequently.

THE FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

Based upon the above noted land use concepts, the Future Land Use Plan for Red Willow County, Nebraska, envisions three primary land use categories for the expansion or future development of various land uses. As described below, these land use areas are:

- § Preservation of the majority of the land in the unincorporated areas of the County for farming which is now exercised, and typical throughout the County.
- § Delineation of land near the urban areas of the County as transitional agricultural areas which would encourage continued agricultural and commercial activities, but which would also serve to protect the communities and its citizens from development of land uses in close proximity which would be incompatible with this area.
- § Delineation of land near the Republican River, which has fair to good fish production capacity as a surface water protection area. This area would encourage continued agricultural activities, but would serve to limit development of agri-business uses and other uses which may have the potential for contamination of these waters. In addition, recreational improvements or future construction of recreational uses in this area should be actively encouraged.

The basic premise for this Plan is the preservation and protection of existing land uses and environment in the County, including the protection of the urban areas, while encouraging economic expansion in the agricultural and non-agricultural sectors of the local economy through development of new or expanded land uses which are compatible with existing uses; are environmentally acceptable; and which respect and support quality of life of the citizens of Red Willow County.

General Agricultural Use - As depicted on Figure 13, the plan for the majority of land in the rural portions of the County is that of continuation of, protection for and enhancement of general production agriculture represented by the farm activities that now exist in the area.

As stated in the Environment, Natural and Man-Made Resources component of this Comprehensive Plan, there are many areas within Red Willow County where the characteristics of the geology, hydrology, topography and soils are more sensitive to high intensity uses such as confined feeding of livestock and where contamination of the local environment could occur even with good quality livestock management practices. The best way of avoiding environmental degradation problems is to carefully monitor the development of uses which present such potential problems.

In Red Willow County there is limited areas which are reasonable suited to confined livestock feeding uses because the concentrations of livestock waste and / or the establishment of livestock waste holding basins or lagoons could result in environmental contamination. The use of land for open lot feeding of cattle also has the potential for environmental degradation due to wind and water erosion of soils in the lots, unless effectively controlled. Application of the manure to crop land should also be carefully managed to avoid potentials of both surface water and groundwater contamination.

Transitional Development - Throughout the planning period there will be additional non-farm residential uses and additional commercial uses which may be added to the land use pattern in the County. These non-agricultural uses can be best situated in the transitional area around the urban areas of the County so that the occupants of these uses can have easy access to the goods and services provided within the communities and so that the public services such as fire protection, police protection and rescue service can be provided at minimum expense.

As noted in this Future Land Use Plan, the urban areas within the County should be protected from development of uses which could be incompatible with urban land uses in the community through delineation of a transitional use area which relates to prevailing wind directions thus extending from one mile (east-west) and two miles (north-south) beyond the corporate limits of the urban areas.

River Corridor Protection Area - As noted on Figure 13, select areas within the County have been set aside for the purposes of surface water protection. The Republican River is an asset to the County and has thus been identified as a surface water protection area. This River is the predominant surface water source within the County and is the most predominant, scenic and aesthetic environmental feature within the County. Degradation of this area; through either improper land use development, uncontrolled chemical applications to nearby crop land areas, unmonitored livestock production in close proximity in a corridor approximately $\frac{1}{4}$ mile on each side of the River; should be avoided. This will require adherence to the regulations established for this area, as well as, cooperation between the citizens of the County to keep the area free of contamination and other potential hazards.

It is important to note that many of the smaller waterways within the County serve to be tributaries of the Republican River. Therefore, careful consideration in maintaining these smaller waterways must occur. Development of larger livestock feeding facilities and related agri-business operations in areas of these smaller creeks must be closely monitored to assure that environmental degradation does not occur. Non-agricultural development with potentials for environmental degradation should also be closely monitored within the rural portions of the County, especially near the many local waterways.

FUTURE LAND USE SUMMARY

Utilization of these future land use areas as a guide to future land development in the County will result in protection of the existing land uses in the rural areas, as well as, protection for the community citizens in and around the urban areas of the County. Adherence to the land use areas depicted on the Future Land Use Plan will also assist the County in avoiding development of land

uses in areas where it is not environmentally sound to do so and adherence to the concept of limiting the impact on the public infrastructure in the County, particularly the impact on the County road system, will assist in preserving the financial capacity of the County for years to come.

It is important to note that the Future Land Use Plan represents a generalized “County-wide” view of where future development should be. It is important to utilize the graphic information provided in the Environment, Natural and Man-Made Resources component of this Comprehensive Development Plan (Figure 8 through 11) in conjunction with this Future Land Use Plan to properly locate future land uses. Further, in many instances the need for on-site investigation will be necessary, especially when larger land use developments are scheduled for the rural areas of the County.

TRANSPORTATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

The Transportation Plan identifies the current and future improvements to the transportation system for Red Willow County. The implementation of this Plan during the planning period will result in the continued safe movement of people and vehicles within Red Willow County. Across the country, communities are becoming actively involved in enhancing the connections between transit and local quality of life.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND LAND USE

Land use and transportation create the pattern for future development. An improved or new transportation route generates a greater level of accessibility and determines how adjacent land may be utilized in the future. In the short term, land use shapes the demand for transportation. However, new or improved roads or county and state highways may change land values, thus altering the intensity of which land is utilized.

The adequacy of a community's transportation and circulation system will have a substantial impact on the rate and pattern of its future growth and development. To ensure the circulation system is able to expand efficiently and remain consistent with the Future Land Use Plan careful, long-range planning efforts are required. The transportation and circulation needs depend upon how closely the County road network can be matched to the existing land use pattern.

In general, the greater the transportation demands for a particular land use, the greater the need for a site near major transportation facilities. Commercial activities are most sensitive to accessibility since their survival often depends upon the ease potential buyers have traveling to the location. In this case, accessibility refers not only to the distance, which must be driven but also to the ease with which the particular site can be found and convenient parking. Thus, commercial land uses are generally located near the center of their market area along highways or at the intersection of arterial streets. The clustering of commercial uses is also an advantage because it creates an image, which is more easily remembered and because it allows the joint use of parking facilities.

Industrial uses are also highly dependent on transportation access, but in a different way. For example, visibility is not a great concern for an industry compared to a retail store. Industrial uses often need access to more specialized transportation facilities, such as railroad lines or highways.

The primary sources of information utilized in the development of the Transportation Plan were Red Willow County's One and Six Year Plan, and the State of Nebraska Highway Program One and Five Year Plan.

The One and Six Year Plan for Red Willow County is reviewed and adopted by the County Board of Commissioners to address the issues of proposed road and street system improvements and development. Upon approval of these plans by the Nebraska Board of Public Road Classifications and Standards, Red Willow County is eligible to receive highway-user revenue from the State Highway Department.

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

Both sources of information listed above are developed as a guide for governmental units to use when

making decisions on future transportation projects.

STREET AND ROAD CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

All of the public highways, roads, and streets in Nebraska are divided into two broad categories, and each category is divided into multiple functional classifications. The two broad categories are Rural Highways and Municipal Streets. State statute defines Rural Highways as “all public highways and roads outside the limits of any incorporated municipality,” and Municipal Streets as “all public streets within the limits of any incorporated municipality.” Neb. Rev. Stat. § 39-2102 (RRS 1997)

The functional classifications are used to define typical traffic patterns and jurisdictional responsibility. The functional classifications for Rural Highways are defined by state statute as follows:

- § **Interstate**, which shall consist of the federally designated National System of Interstate and Defense Highways;
 - § **Expressway**, which shall consist of a group of highways following major traffic desires in Nebraska which rank next in importance to the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways. The expressway system is one which ultimately should be developed to multilane divided highway standards;
 - § **Major Arterial**, which shall consist of the balance of routes which serve major statewide interests for highway transportation. This system is characterized by high-speed, relatively long distance travel patterns;
 - § **Scenic-Recreation**, which shall consist of highways or roads located within or which provide access to or through state parks, recreation or wilderness areas, other areas of geographical, historical, geological, recreational, biological, or archaeological significance, or areas of scenic beauty;
 - § **Other Arterial**, which shall consist of a group of highways of less importance as through-travel routes which would serve places of smaller population and smaller recreation areas not served by the higher systems;
 - § **Collector**, which shall consist of a group of highways which pick up traffic from many local or land-service roads and carry it to community centers or to the arterial systems. They are the main school bus routes, mail routes, and farm-to-market routes;
 - § **Local**, which shall consist of all remaining rural roads, except minimum maintenance roads; and
 - § **Minimum Maintenance**, which shall consist of (a) roads used occasionally by a limited number of people as alternative access roads for areas served primarily by local, collector, or arterial roads, or (b) roads which are the principal access roads to agricultural lands for farm machinery and which are not primarily used by passenger or commercial vehicles.
- Neb. Rev. Stat. § 39-2103 (RRS 1997) (emphasis added).

The statute goes further by stating that certain rural highways classified under subdivisions (1) to (3) of section 39-2103 “should, combined, serve every incorporated municipality having a minimum population of one hundred inhabitants or sufficient commerce, a part of which will be served by stubs or spurs, and along with rural highways classified under subdivision (4) of this section, should serve the major recreational areas of the state.” Sufficient commerce is defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. § 39-2103 as “a minimum of two hundred thousand dollars of gross receipts under the Nebraska Revenue Act of 1967.” In other words, every incorporated municipality with a population of 100 or greater, or one that has sufficient commerce, should be served by either (1) an Interstate, (2) an Expressway, or (3) a Major Arterial. All major recreation areas of the state should be served by any of these three rural highways, or by a Scenic-Recreation highway.

The functional classifications for Municipal Streets are defined by state statute as follows:

- § **Interstate**, which shall consist of the federally designated national system of interstate and defense highways;

- § **Expressway**, which shall consist of two categories: *Extensions of Rural Expressways* and some *Additional Routes* which serve very high volumes of local traffic within urban areas;
 - § **Major Arterial**, which shall generally consist of extensions of the rural major arterials which provide continuous service through municipalities for long-distance rural travel. They are the arterial streets used to transport products into and out of municipalities;
 - § **Other Arterial**, which shall consist of two categories: *Municipal Extensions of Rural Other Arterials*, and *Arterial Movements Peculiar to a Municipality's Own Complex*, that is streets which interconnect major areas of activity within a municipality, such as shopping centers, the central business district, manufacturing centers, and industrial parks;
 - § **Collector**, which shall consist of a group of streets which collect traffic from residential streets and move it to smaller commercial centers or to higher arterial systems; and
 - § **Local**, which shall consist of the balance of streets in each municipality, principally residential access service streets and local business streets. They are characterized by very short trip lengths, almost exclusively limited to vehicles desiring to go to or from an adjacent property.
- Neb. Rev. Stat. § 39-2104 (RRS 1997) (emphasis added).

The State of Nebraska has jurisdictional responsibility for all roads classified as interstate, expressway, and major arterial under the Rural Highway classification, and all roads classified as interstate under the Municipal Streets system. The state also has jurisdictional responsibility over any connecting links that connect interstate roads with the nearest existing state highway.

Scenic-Recreation roads remain under jurisdiction of the governmental subdivision that had jurisdiction prior to the time the road was designated as Scenic-Recreation. Neb. Rev. Stat. § 39-2105 (4) (RRS 1997).

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

The primary transportation system in Red Willow County is U.S. Highway 6/34 (Major Arterial) which runs east west through the middle portion of the county. The other east west connector in Red Willow County is Nebraska State Highway 89 located in the southeast portion of the county. U.S. Highway 83 runs north south through the western edge of the county connecting Interstate 80 to the north and Kansas to the south. There are various other transportation routes utilized within the county either paved or gravel roads. The transportation network is adequate for communities and residents of the County, as well as, individuals traveling through Red Willow County.

The Transportation Classification Map (Figure 14) for Red Willow County has been reproduced for use in this Comprehensive Development Plan for transportation planning purposes and to assist in locating land uses where adequate transit infrastructure is accessible. Figure 14 identifies all categories of the classification system that are evident in Red Willow County. All communities and rural areas within the County are serviced by a combination of roads and highways that are identified as Major Arterial or Minimum Maintenance.

RED WILLOW COUNTY TRANSPORTATION IMPROVEMENTS

The County's "One and Six-Year Plan" outline projects the County has targeted for completion in the next six years. The tentative timeline for the One-Year Plan will end on February 15, 2002 and the Six-Year Plan projects will end February 15, 2007. In the One-Year Plan, 12 projects were identified. The Six-Year Plan identified 17 projects, 12 of which are identified in the One-Year Plan. This Plan was developed during 2001 and new transportation improvement projects will be added as the need is identified. Annual examination of this section should occur and amendments to the Plan may be required. Figure 15 illustrates these projects in detail.

**TABLE 28: ONE AND SIX YEAR TRANSPORTATION PLAN
RED WILLOW COUNTY, 2000**

Project Number	Project(s) Length	Estimated Cost
<i>One Year Plan</i>	17.9	\$1,919,000
<i>Six Year Plan</i>	21.1	\$1,010,000
Total	39	\$2,929,000

Source: Red Willow County, Form 8, Form 9, 2001

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ROADS IMPROVEMENTS

The Nebraska Department of Roads publishes an annual list of proposed projects for the current fiscal year, for fiscal years one to five years from the present, and six years and beyond. Red Willow County is located in the Department of Roads' District 7 Highway Program area.

At the time this Plan was completed, the Nebraska Department of Roads had several projects identified for Red Willow County. There are three projects scheduled in the One to Five-Year Program and five projects scheduled for the 6 years and beyond. The one to five projects include urban road upgrades and a bridge deck overlay. The 6 years and beyond projects include roadway resurfacing, bridge deck overlay, and bridge widening.

PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

ACHIEVING RED WILLOW COUNTY'S VISION OF THE FUTURE

INTRODUCTION

Successful county plans have the same key ingredients: "2% inspiration and 98% perspiration." This section of the Comprehensive Development Plan contains the inspiration of the County officials and residents who have participated in the planning process. However, the ultimate success of this Plan remains with the dedication of the current and future elected officials, employees and citizens of Red Willow County.

There are numerous goals and policies contained in this Plan. The Red Willow County Planning Commission should review Red Willow County's goals and policies during regular planning and budget sessions and during the decision making process for proposed changes in land use located in the County.

ACTION PLAN

Red Willow County should identify and select three goals of the Plan for immediate action and implementation. These goals may include projects to overcome negatives in the county; or projects that protect and enhance the positive aspects of the County; or issues or barriers which may prevent or limit the implementation of the Plan.

The Action Plan is a combination of the following:

- § Goals,
- § Growth Policies,
- § Land Use Policies, and
- § Support programs for the above items.

The creation of the action plan should be the result of public sessions that allow residents input into the process of implementing their Plan. Goals and Policies have been defined through public participation during the process of developing this Plan. Future public sessions could focus on prioritizing necessary projects into a process of phased development. It will be critical to earmark the specific funds to be used and the individuals responsible for implementing the goals and policies in Red Willow County.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS FOR THE ACTION PLAN

Four programs will play a vital role in the success of Red Willow County's Plan. These programs may include:

1. **Capital Improvements Financing**--an annual predictable investment plan that uses a six-year planning horizon to schedule and fund projects integral to the Plan's implementation.
2. **Zoning Regulations**--updated land use districts can allow the County to provide direction for future growth.
3. **Subdivision Regulations**--establish criteria for dividing land into building areas, utility easements, and streets.
4. **Comprehensive Plan Maintenance**--an annual and five-year review program will permit flexibility in responding to County growth or decline, and development pressures and trends through a continuous maintenance schedule. Such updating will ensure the viability of the Red Willow County Comprehensive Development Plan.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAINTENANCE

ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE COMPREHENSIVE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

A Comprehensive Development Plan, which is current and relevant to the policies of Red Willow County, is critical to successful planning. The Plan must be kept current if it is expected to maintain the confidence of both public and private sectors, enable the effectiveness of planning activities, and most importantly, ensure appropriate use of land within the County. The Annual Review of the Plan should occur annually during the meeting of the Planning Commission in the month of January.

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

- § Whether the plan is current in respect to population and economic changes.
- § Whether the land use goals, objectives and policies still validly apply to the County's long-term growth goals.

The Planning Commission should hold a public hearing and oversee the development of a report in order to:

- § Provide citizens or developers with an opportunity to identify and present possible changes to the Comprehensive Development Plan,
- § Identify any changes in the status of projects called for in the Comprehensive Development Plan, and
- § Bring forth any issues, or identify any changes in conditions that may impact the validity of the Comprehensive Development Plan.

When the Planning Commission discovers any major policy issues or changes in assumptions or conditions that have arisen within

the past year that could necessitate revisions to the Plan, they should recommend further study of these impacts to determine if changes in the Plan are necessary. When they have identified necessary amendments, they should follow the procedures detailed in the next section.

PLAN AMENDMENT PROCEDURES

It is anticipated that each year individuals or groups may come before the Planning Commission with proposals to amend the Comprehensive Development Plan. All proposals to amend the Plan should be made at one special annual meeting, typically in January, dedicated to the review of the Comprehensive Development Plan. A review of all proposed amendments to the Plan at one time allows for a determination as to the impact each proposal will likely have on another, as well as the overall impact on the surrounding land uses.

County planning personnel should compile a list of all proposed amendments received during the year, as well as a report providing basic and detailed information about the proposal. County personnel should also make a recommendation to the Planning Commission based upon their own analysis of the proposals. The Comprehensive Development Plan amendment process should adhere to Nebraska state statutes and should also provide for organized participation and involvement by interested citizens.

UNANTICIPATED OPPORTUNITY

If major, new, innovative development opportunities arise which impact several elements of the Plan and are determined to be of importance to the County, it is recommended that a Plan amendment be proposed and reviewed for the betterment of the County. Such a review of an unanticipated opportunity may occur at a meeting other than the special annual meeting used for Plan review. This will allow the County to take advantage of opportunities that may be too time sensitive to wait for the regular special meeting.

METHODS FOR EVALUATING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The interpretation of the Comprehensive Development Plan should be composed of a continuous and related series of analyses, with references to the goals and policies, the land use plan, and specific land use policies. Moreover, when considering specific proposed developments, interpretation of the Plan should include a thorough review of all sections of the Plan. If a development proposal is not consistent with the Plan, consideration should be given to modifying the proposal or the Planning Commission may utilize the following criteria to determine whether a Comprehensive Development Plan amendment is justified:

- § The character of the adjacent neighborhood or land use,
- § The zoning and uses on nearby properties,
- § The suitability of the property for the uses allowed under the current zoning designation,
- § The type and extent of positive or detrimental impact that may affect adjacent properties, or the county at large, if the request is approved,
- § The impact of the proposal on public utilities and facilities,
- § The length of time that the subject and adjacent properties have been utilized for their current uses,
- § The benefits of the proposal to the public health, safety, and welfare compared to the hardship imposed on the applicant if the request is not approved,
- § A comparison between existing land use and the proposed change regarding conformance to community goals and policies, and
- § The recommendation from the County Planning Staff concerning the proposed amendment.