

BEATRICE, NEBRASKA Downtown Revitalization Project-Phase I.



PREPARED FOR: THE CITY OF BEATRICE, NEBRASKA.

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SCHEMMER
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**BEATRICE, NEBRASKA
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT-PHASE I.**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS:	PAGE
SECTION 1 - INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE	1.1
Introduction & Purpose.....	1.1
An Overview of Planning in Beatrice, Nebraska.....	1.1
Identification of Project Area.....	1.2
Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee & Project Approach.....	1.4
Historic Overview.....	1.6
SECTION 2 - PUBLIC PARTICIPATION	2.1
Beatrice Community Downtown “Vision” Wants & Needs Survey.....	2.1
Matrix of Importance.....	2.2
Business/Property Owners Downtown “Vision” Wants & Needs Survey.....	2.4
Matrix of Importance.....	2.5
Community Open Houses.....	2.9
Prioritization of Downtown Improvement Projects.....	2.11
SECTION 3 - DOWNTOWN MARKET AREA ANALYSIS.	3.1
Identification of Primary, Secondary & Regional Market Areas.....	3.1
Population, Income & Economic Profile.....	3.3
SECTION 4 - DOWNTOWN BUILDING/PROPERTY REVIEW.	4.1
Existing Land Use Analysis.....	4.1
Building Inventory - Condition Analysis.....	4.5
Zoning Analysis.....	4.6
Example of Building Conditions.....	4.8
Historic Designation to the National Register of Historic Places.....	4.11
Combining Tax Increment Financing (TIF) & Historic Preservation Tax Credits.....	4.11
The Nebraska “Valuation Incentive Program”.....	4.12
Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as an Incentive for Redevelopment.....	4.14
Façade Improvement Program.....	4.16
Upper-Level Mixed Use and Housing Opportunity.....	4.18
Business Retention, Recruitment and Expansion.....	4.21
Community Gathering/Festival Space.....	4.22
Signage and Marketing.....	4.24
SECTION 5 - DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE REVIEW & REPORT.	5.1
Identification of Priority Projects.....	5.1
Alternative Energy Systems.....	5.6

TABLE OF CONTENTS (CONTINUED):	PAGE
SECTION 6 – DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN & PRIORITIES	6.1
Priority #1 – Façade Improvement Program & Historic Preservation.....	6.1
Priority #2 – Infrastructure Improvements/Upgrades.....	6.7
Priority #3 – Housing in Downtown Beatrice.....	6.10
Priority #4 – Urban Design, Signage & Marketing.....	6.13
Priority #5 – Alternative Energy Systems.....	6.15
Priority #6 – Business Retention, Recruitment & Expansion.....	6.16

APPENDIX I – SURVEY RESULTS.

APPENDIX II – FUNDING SOURCES.

**APPENDIX III – BEATRICE DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC
REDEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE.**

LIST OF TABLES	PAGE
Table 3.1 Population Trends and Projections Beatrice, Nebraska 2000-2026.....	3.3
Table 3.2 Population Trends and Projections Downtown Beatrice, Nebraska 2000-2026.....	3.4
Table 3.3 Tenure By Household Beatrice, Nebraska 2000-2026.....	3.5
Table 3.4 Tenure By Household Downtown Beatrice, Nebraska 2000-2026.....	3.6
Table 3.5 Household Income Trends & Projections Beatrice, Nebraska 2010-2026.....	3.7
Table 3.6 Per Capita Income Gage County, Nebraska / State of Nebraska 2000-2026.....	3.8
Table 3.7 Workforce Employment By Type Gage County, Nebraska 2016.....	3.10
Table 3.8 Net Taxable Sales Cities in Southeast Nebraska 2015.....	3.11
Table 3.9 Net Taxable Sales Counties in Southeast Nebraska 2015.....	3.12
Table 4.1 Existing Land Use Downtown Beatrice, Nebraska 2016.....	4.3

LIST OF TABLES (CONTINUED)	PAGE
Table 4.1 Downtown Property Value Data Downtown Beatrice, Nebraska 2016.....	4.4
Table 4.3 Building Characteristics Downtown Beatrice, Nebraska 2016.....	4.5
Table 6.1 Buildings with Housing Potential Downtown Beatrice, Nebraska 2016.....	6.7

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS		PAGE
Illustration 1.1	Project Area Map.....	1.3
Illustration 3.1	Primary Market Area.....	3.1
Illustration 3.2	Secondary Market Area.....	3.1
Illustration 3.3	Regional Market Area and Time of Travel Map.....	3.2
Illustration 4.1	Existing Land Use Map.....	4.2
Illustration 4.2	Downtown Jurisdictions Map.....	4.15
Illustration 5.1	Potential Street Construction Locations.....	5.2
Illustration 5.2	Potential Water Main Replacement Locations.....	5.3
Illustration 5.3	Potential Sidewalk Replacement Locations.....	5.4
Illustration 5.4	Trail Expansion Locations.....	5.5
Illustration 6.1	Façade Improvements Map.....	6.3
Illustration 6.2	Upper Level Housing Rehabilitation.....	6.8

SECTION 1: Introduction & Purpose.



SECTION 1

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE.

INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE.

The Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) provided a Community Development Block Grant (CDBG), and in participation with the City of Beatrice matching funds, financed a **Downtown Revitalization Project** for Downtown Beatrice, Nebraska. The **Project** provides both a **Phase I Planning Process** and a **Phase II Implementation Program**. This document represents the **Phase I Process**. The City of Beatrice assembled a **Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee** to direct the **Phase I Planning Process**.

The City of Beatrice applied and received funding for the **Downtown Revitalization Project**. The purpose of **Phase I** is to analyze the conditions of the built and commercial environs of Downtown Beatrice and identify **priority projects** that will ultimately lead to the redevelopment and revitalization of the Downtown. Priority projects will then be addressed in a **Phase II implementation program**, to be funded by NDED and the City of Beatrice, utilizing CDBG and local funding. The City completed its first Downtown Revitalization Project in 2011, which resulted in the completion of several improvement projects, generally focused on 5th Street, between Court and Ella Streets.

The **2016 Beatrice Downtown Revitalization Project-Phase I** was completed by Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., with the assistance of Schemmer Associates, both of Lincoln, Nebraska. The **Project** was completed during the period June, 2016 to September, 2016.

AN OVERVIEW OF PLANNING IN BEATRICE, NEBRASKA.

Beatrice, Nebraska, is a progressive community conducting modern Comprehensive Planning and redevelopment activities, as per Nebraska State Statutes and the Nebraska Community Development Law. The City completed a Blight and Substandard Determination Study and General Redevelopment Plan for Downtown Beatrice, completed in 1999 and amended in 2006. The Study/Plan provides financial incentives associated with Tax Increment Financing (TIF) for both redevelopment and community/economic development projects in the Downtown.

A **Gage County & Communities, Nebraska County-Wide Housing Study with Strategies for Affordable Housing** was completed in March, 2016. This Housing Study included an assessment of upper-level housing opportunities in Downtown Beatrice. A “Request for Proposals” process focused on seven buildings in the Downtown most suited for mixed-use development and was sent to regional housing developers to propose projects specifically for these Downtown buildings.

The **Downtown Blight and Substandard Determination Study and General Redevelopment Plan** was completed for a Redevelopment Area encompassing a large portion of Downtown Beatrice, generally between Elk and Scott Streets, from 1st to 10th Streets. Approximately 95 percent of the **2016 Downtown Revitalization Project** is located within this Redevelopment Area. The parcels not included are municipal buildings, such as the City Auditorium, Beatrice Middle School and the City of Beatrice Board of Public Works building.

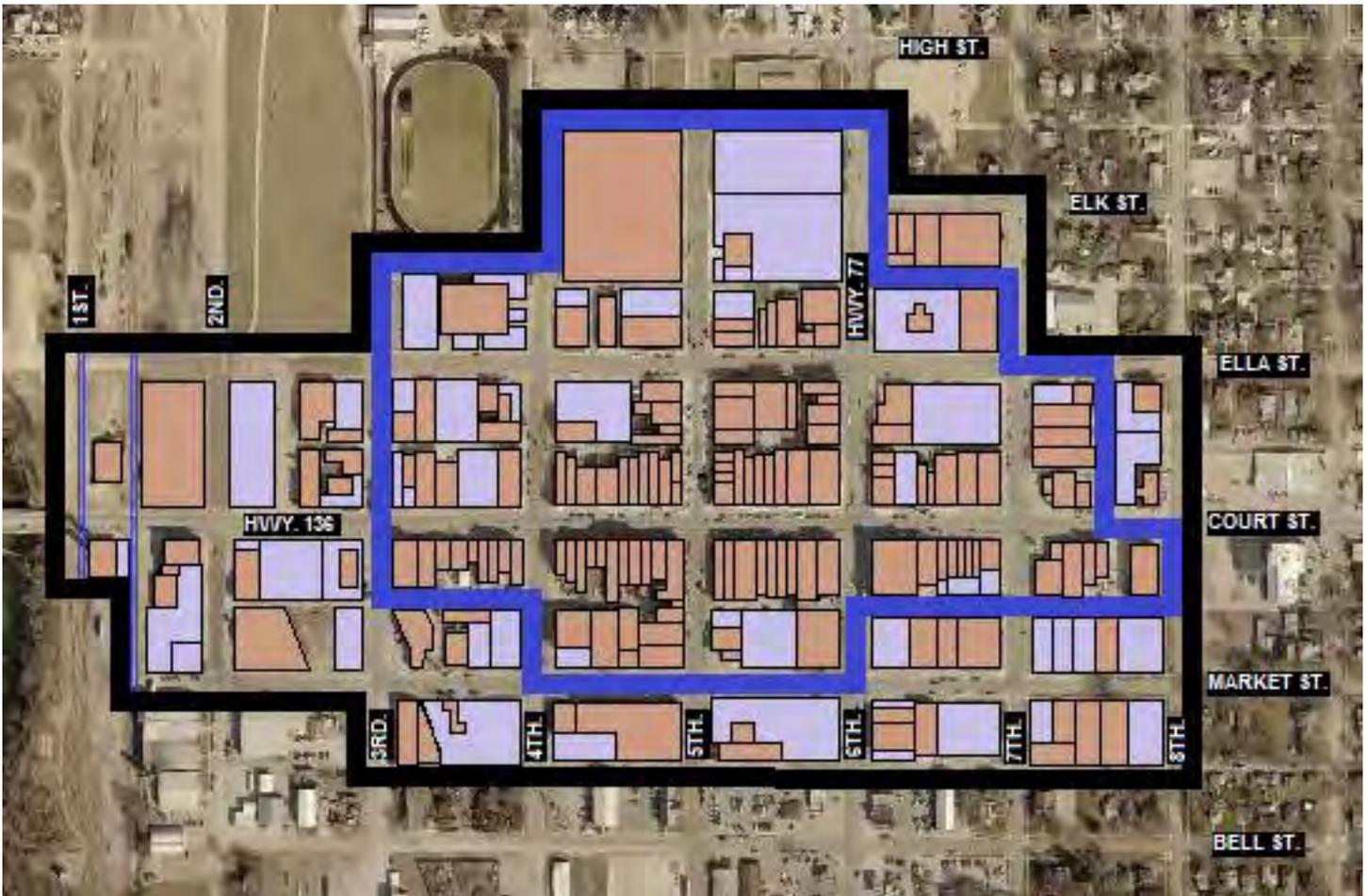
Beatrice has been a **Nebraska “Main Street” Community** since 1997 and has also been accredited as a “Certified National Main Street Program” a branch of the National Trust for Historic Preservation. This Program will stimulate Downtown economic development within the context of historic preservation. Main Street Beatrice received notification of the Downtown’s recognition as a “Historic District” by both the Nebraska State Historical Society and the National Register of Historic Places in August, 2016. This status allows structures throughout the designated District, highlighted on **Illustration 1.1, Page 1.3**, to be eligible for Historic Preservation Tax Credits. These Credits provide a tax “rebate” of up to 20 percent of the total cost of rehabilitation of a structure against personal federal income tax obligations.

IDENTIFICATION OF PROJECT AREA.

The **Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee** identified the boundary of the **Phase I Project Area**, highlighted on **Illustration 1.1, Page 1.3**. Consideration was given in regards to the 2011 Downtown Revitalization Project-Phase I Study, the Main Street Beatrice coverage area and the Downtown Historic District boundary. Committee members focused on the historic character of the Downtown, pedestrian oriented commerce and the availability of professional services, local government and entertainment.

PROJECT AREA MAP

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT AREA BEATRICE, NEBRASKA



LEGEND

-  BUILDING FOOTPRINTS
-  PARCEL / LOT
-  DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY
-  DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT BOUNDARY

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ILLUSTRATION 1.1

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DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION STEERING COMMITTEE & PROJECT APPROACH.

The **Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee** provided direction and oversight of the **Phase I Project**. The Committee was comprised of representation from Downtown businesses, property owners, Main Street Beatrice, Beatrice Public Schools, Beatrice Community Redevelopment Authority, Beatrice Board of Public Works, Beatrice Planning Commission and City and Administrative Staff. The Committee met on five occasions to discuss the stages of the **Project**.

A *qualitative research approach* included Beatrice citizen involvement. The goal of this approach was to offer the Steering Committee and the citizens of Beatrice the opportunity to give input and their opinion regarding the revitalization of the Downtown. Activities included...

- Steering Committee review of pertinent background information, including projected population, income and economic data and input into the creation of revitalization projects;
- the distribution of **Downtown Beatrice “Vision” Wants & Needs Surveys**. These Surveys were implemented to secure the opinions of property and business owners in Downtown Beatrice and local residents. These two Surveys included all aspects of the future development and character of Downtown Beatrice, including community and economic development, housing, human services, public facilities, utilities and urban design issues and opportunities; and
- the implementation of **Community Open Houses** to provide the citizens of Beatrice final consideration and comment on the **Downtown Revitalization Project-Phase I**, including priority revitalization projects.

A *quantitative research approach* evaluated the existing conditions of Downtown Beatrice, providing valuable data to the Steering Committee for the prioritization of **Beatrice Downtown Revitalization Initiatives**. Planning activities included...

- an analysis of the **primary, secondary and regional commercial market areas** for Beatrice; the evaluation of the size, use and condition of existing buildings; the condition of the existing infrastructure systems and overall quality of life amenities associated with Downtown Beatrice;
- an **inventory of buildings**, including the mapping, general age and condition and occupancy/vacancy status of all buildings in the **Phase I Project Area**. This included an in-depth analysis focused on four key buildings that are important to the future of Downtown Beatrice;
- the identification of the **development, redevelopment, or retro-fitting potential of existing buildings** utilizing alternative energy sources to reduce utility costs, along with evaluating the marketing and business development potential of Downtown Beatrice;
- a **historic assessment** associated with buildings included within the National Register District of Downtown Beatrice. There are 123 of the 136 total buildings within the District that are either “Contributing” or “Listed” as historic properties on the National Register of Historic Buildings. The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office maintains valuable records that identified important buildings in the Downtown Historic District and throughout the entire **Project Area**, and;
- an **Action Plan for Downtown Beatrice** to prioritize specific revitalization projects for consideration in a **Phase II implementation program**



Sixth Street, looking north from Market Street, circa 1900.

HISTORIC OVERVIEW.

Beatrice was officially platted as a town on July 4, 1857, at that time approximately 36 families resided in the Community. The City Plat included 329 acres situated near the intersection of the DeRoin Trail and Big Blue River. This location was known by the settlers for its proximity to water, lumber and fertile soils for the growing of crops on nearby farms and gardens. Six years later, the first claim under the Homestead Act was filed four miles west of the Community; today, the site of the Homestead National Monument.



The northeast corner of 5th and Court Streets, 1884 and today.

A Gage County Historical Society photo.





*A richly detail terra cotta tile cornice on this 1889 Commercial Building,
at 411 Court Street.*

In 1871, the Burlington and Missouri River Railroad reached Beatrice from the City of Lincoln, via Crete, Nebraska. Beatrice was designated a “City” in 1872, as the population continued to grow, reaching 2,447 persons as of 1880, the first year the City appears in the U.S. Census.

Ten years later, the Census revealed that the population had boomed during the 1880s to 13,836. By 1900, the population of Beatrice had declined to 7,875. Subsequent decennial Census periods showed a much more gradual population increase through 1980 when Beatrice reached a population of 12,891. Since the 1980 population, Beatrice has experienced a stable population, including a 2010 Census population of 12,459 and 2015 population of 12,338.

SECTION 2: Public Participation.



SECTION 2

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

BEATRICE COMMUNITY DOWNTOWN “VISION” WANTS & NEEDS SURVEY.

A “**Beatrice Community Downtown ‘Vision’ Wants & Needs Survey**” was advertised to all citizens of Beatrice on-line on various, pertinent websites. A total of **273 Surveys** were completed and returned. Complete results are available in **Appendix I** of this **Downtown Revitalization Project-Phase I** document.

Highlights of the Survey included the following:

- ◆ 76 percent of Survey respondents felt that “Pedestrian safety at crosswalks is very effective”, while 67 percent felt that Downtown Beatrice provided a safe environment for pedestrians and vehicles.
- ◆ The majority of Survey respondents felt that the **Sustainability of Downtown** can be improved with “Business Retention, Recruitment and Expansion”, “Improved Streets, Sidewalks, and Alleys” and “Increased Advertising of Vacant Storefronts/Buildings”.
- ◆ 85 percent supported the use of **Public Grants, Tax Increment Financing, Foundation dollars, etc.**, along with **Private Financing** to fund improvements and new development in Downtown Beatrice.
- ◆ 42 percent of Survey respondents reported visiting Downtown Beatrice **only once per week**.
- ◆ The majority of Survey respondents felt that the **appearance of Downtown Beatrice** can be improved with “A Façade Improvement Program”, “Special Sales, Events, and Welcome Banners”, and “A Coordinated Traffic Control Lighting System.”

The “**Downtown ‘Vision’ Wants & Needs Survey**” identified the top responses to “***If money were made available for improvements, it should be used for***”:

1. Recruiting New Businesses to Downtown Beatrice.
2. Storefront/Facade Improvements.
3. Low-Interest Loans for Business Recruitment.
4. Streetscape Enhancements or Improvements.

When asked “*What additional businesses would you like to see in Downtown Beatrice,*” Survey respondents identified:

1. Women’s Clothing Store.
2. Breweries, Pubs, and Wineries.
3. Craft/Hobby Store.
4. Men’s Clothing Store.
5. Boutiques/ Specialty Retail.
6. Art/Culture Galleries/Museums.

MATRIX OF IMPORTANCE.

The results of the Survey produced a comprehensive “**Matrix of Importance.**” The Matrix identifies the responses to general questions about the current conditions of the Downtown Beatrice and pinpoints the needed improvements for the two areas. Black squares with a score less than zero identify a “disagree” or “strongly disagree” position, while black squares with a score greater than zero identify an “agree” or “strongly agree” position.

MATRIX OF IMPORTANCE

	<-60	-59 to -30	-29 to 0	1-30	31-60	61-90	91-120	121+
General Questions about Downtown Beatrice.								
▪ The Downtown is in good condition and attractive.	X							
▪ Buildings/storefronts are in good physical condition.	X							
▪ Streetscapes are appealing / attractive to visitors.	X							
▪ There is sufficient parking throughout Downtown.		X						
▪ Alleys are in good condition.	X							
▪ Public/City Buildings easily found and accessible.						X		
▪ High number of Vacant Storefronts/Buildings.								X
▪ Pedestrian safety at crosswalks is very effective						X		
▪ Streets and sidewalks are well-lit and in good condition					X			

	<-60	-59 to -30	-29 to 0	1-30	31-60	61-90	91-120	121+
The Appearance of Downtown Beatrice can be improved with...								
▪ Street and Pedestrian Lighting.						X		
▪ A Facade Improvement Program								X
▪ Crosswalk Enhancements.					X			
▪ Street Trees, Benches and Landscaping.								X
▪ Sidewalk Cafes and Pedestrian Seating Areas.								X
▪ Enhanced Vehicular Traffic Control & Safety Efforts.						X		
▪ Coordinated Traffic Control Lighting System.								X
▪ Directional Signage to Parking Lots/Municipal Bldgs.							X	

CONTINUED:

MATRIX OF IMPORTANCE (CONTINUED)

	< 60	-51 to -30	-20 to 0	1-30	31-60	61-90	91- 120	121+
The appearance of Downtown Beatrice can be improved with...								
▪ Restoration/Preservation of Historic Buildings.								X
▪ Building Upper Level Reuse for Offices & Housing.								X
▪ Gateway Entrance Signage and Advertising.							X	
▪ Design Guidelines for Existing and New Buildings.								X
▪ Special Sales, Events, and Welcome Banners.							X	
▪ Historic Themed Building Signage/Store Signage.								X
The sustainability of Downtown Beatrice can be improved with...								
▪ Water, Sewer & Utility Replacement.					X			
▪ Improved Streets, Sidewalks & Alleys.								X
▪ Additional Pedestrian Safety Measures.						X		
▪ Additional Off-Street Public Parking Areas.							X	
▪ New Community Players Theatre.							X	
▪ Business Retention, Recruitment & Expansion								X
▪ Expanded Marketing of Downtown Sales & Festivals.								X
▪ Coordinated Downtown Business Hours.								X
▪ Marketing of the Downtown Historic District.								X
▪ Increased Advertising of Vacant Storefront/Buildings.								X
▪ Development of an Incubator Business Mall/Program.							X	
▪ Creating Stronger Visual & Physical Connections between Downtown & the Big Blue River.							X	
▪ Reducing utility costs w/Alternative energy sources.								X
If Money were made available for Improvements, it should be used for...								
▪ Housing Development/Rehabilitation in Downtown.				X				
▪ Recruiting New Businesses to Downtown Beatrice.					X			
▪ Storefront/Facade Rehabilitation.					X			
▪ Streetscape Enhancement or Improvements.					X			
▪ Public Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Electric, etc).				X				
▪ Low-Interest Loans for Business Recruitment.				X				
▪ Energy Efficiency Improvements.				X				
▪ ADA/Handicap Accessibility Improvements.				X				
▪ Constructing Additional Public Parking Lots.				X				
▪ Rerouting Highway 136 around Downtown.			X					

**BUSINESS/PROPERTY OWNERS DOWNTOWN “VISION”
WANTS & NEEDS SURVEY.**

A “**Business/Property Owners Downtown ‘Vision’ Wants & Needs Survey**” was distributed to all property and business owners in Downtown Beatrice. A total of **40 surveys** were completed and returned. Complete results are available in **Appendix I** of this **Downtown Revitalization Project-Phase I** document.

Highlights of the Survey included the following:

- ◆ 83 percent of property/business owners in Downtown Beatrice supported the use of **Public Grants, Tax Increment Financing, Foundation dollars, etc.**, along with **Private Financing** to fund improvements and new development in Downtown Beatrice.
- ◆ 55 percent of Survey respondents have been property/business owners in Downtown Beatrice **for more than 20 years**.
- ◆ When asked about how the “**Appearance of Downtown Beatrice**” can be improved, the majority favored a “**Façade Improvement Program**”, “**Street Trees, Benches & Landscaping**”, and “**Directional Signage to Parking Lots/Municipal Bldgs.**”
- ◆ A majority of property/business owners in Downtown Beatrice felt that the **Sustainability of Downtown Beatrice** could be improved with “**Business Retention, Recruitment & Expansion**”, “**Increased Advertising of Vacant Storefronts/Buildings**”, and “**Expanded Marketing of Downtown Sales & Festivals**”.

The “**Downtown ‘Vision’ Wants & Needs Survey**” identified the top responses to “*If money were made available for improvements, it should be used for*”:

1. Recruiting New Businesses to Downtown Beatrice.
2. Storefront/Façade Rehabilitation.
3. Streetscape Enhancement of Improvement.
4. Low-Interest Loans for Business Recruitment.

When asked “*What additional businesses would you like to see in Downtown Beatrice,*” Survey respondents identified:

- 1. Coffee/Deli Store.
- 2. Breweries, Pubs, and Wineries.
- 3. Women’s Clothing Store.
- 4. Men’s Clothing Store.
- 5. Boutiques/ Specialty Retail.
- 6. Family Style Restaurant/Café.

MATRIX OF IMPORTANCE.

The results of the Survey produced a comprehensive “**Matrix of Importance.**” The Matrix identifies the responses to general questions about the current conditions of the Downtown Beatrice and pinpoints the needed improvements for the two areas. Black squares with a score less than zero identify a “disagree” or “strongly disagree” position, while black squares with a score greater than zero identify an “agree” or “strongly agree” position.

MATRIX OF IMPORTANCE

	<-60	-59 to -30	-29 to 0	1-30	31-60	61-90	91-120	121+
General Questions about Downtown Beatrice.								
▪ The Downtown is in good condition and attractive.			X					
▪ Buildings/storefronts are in good physical condition.			X					
▪ Streetscapes are appealing / attractive to visitors.				X				
▪ There is sufficient parking throughout Downtown.				X				
▪ Alleys are in good condition.				X				
▪ Public/City Buildings easily found and accessible.				X				
▪ High number of Vacant Storefronts/Buildings.					X			
▪ Pedestrian safety at crosswalks is very effective				X				
▪ Streets and sidewalks are well-lit and in good condition				X				

	<-60	-59 to -30	-29 to 0	1-30	31-60	61-90	91-120	121+
The Appearance of Downtown Beatrice can be improved with...								
▪ Street and Pedestrian Lighting.				X				
▪ A Facade Improvement Program					X			
▪ Crosswalk Enhancements.				X				
▪ Street Trees, Benches and Landscaping.					X			
▪ Sidewalk Cafes and Pedestrian Seating Areas.				X				
▪ Enhanced Vehicular Traffic Control & Safety Efforts.				X				
▪ Coordinated Traffic Control Lighting System.				X				
▪ Directional Signage to Parking Lots/Municipal Bldgs.					X			

CONTINUED:

MATRIX OF IMPORTANCE (CONTINUED)

	< 60	-51 to -30	-20 to 0	1-30	31-60	61-90	91- 120	121+
The appearance of Downtown Beatrice can be improved with...								
▪ Restoration/Preservation of Historic Buildings.					X			
▪ Building Upper Level Reuse for Offices & Housing.				X				
▪ Gateway Entrance Signage and Advertising.				X				
▪ Design Guidelines for Existing and New Buildings.				X				
▪ Special Sales, Events, and Welcome Banners.				X				
▪ Historic Themed Building Signage/Store Signage.				X				
The sustainability of Downtown Beatrice can be improved with...								
▪ Water, Sewer & Utility Replacement.				X				
▪ Improved Streets, Sidewalks & Alleys.				X				
▪ Additional Pedestrian Safety Measures.				X				
▪ Additional Off-Street Public Parking Areas.				X				
▪ New Community Players Theatre.				X				
▪ Business Retention, Recruitment & Expansion					X			
▪ Expanded Marketing of Downtown Sales & Festivals.				X				
▪ Coordinated Downtown Business Hours.				X				
▪ Marketing of the Downtown Historic District.				X				
▪ Increased Advertising of Vacant Storefront/Buildings.				X				
▪ Development of an Incubator Business Mall/Program.				X				
▪ Creating Stronger Visual & Physical Connections between Downtown & The Big Blue River.				X				
▪ Reducing utility costs w/Alternative energy sources.				X				
If Money were made available for Improvements, it should be used for...								
▪ Housing Development/Rehabilitation in Downtown.				X				
▪ Recruiting New Businesses to Downtown Beatrice.					X			
▪ Storefront/Facade Rehabilitation.					X			
▪ Streetscape Enhancement or Improvements.				X				
▪ Public Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Electric, etc).				X				
▪ Low-Interest Loans for Business Recruitment.				X				
▪ Energy Efficiency Improvements.				X				
▪ ADA/Handicap Accessibility Improvements.				X				
▪ Constructing Additional Public Parking Lots.				X				
▪ Rerouting Highway 136 around Downtown.			X					

The following “**consensus statements**” highlight the results of the two Downtown Surveys.

1. There is a presence of well-established, “veteran” business in Downtown Beatrice. A total of 20 Downtown business/property owners identified having been in business for more than 20 years in the Downtown. This includes, but is not limited to, professional service, medical, specialty retail and banking entities. A total of 29 established business/property owners identified planning to either increase/expand their business, or remain as they are today, during the next five years.
2. An estimated 67 percent of Community Survey respondents identified visiting Downtown Beatrice less than twice a week. This could suggest that local residents either utilize highway commercial entities and businesses more frequently, or travel to other Communities for goods and services not provided in Downtown Beatrice. However, an estimated 68 percent of Community Survey respondents identified Downtown Beatrice as providing a safe environment for pedestrians and vehicular traffic, including well-lit streets and sidewalks and effective crosswalk safety devices.
3. Overall, both residents and business/property owners felt Downtown buildings are in need of various forms of moderate or even substantial rehabilitation. This could include façade improvements, proper utilities and infrastructure, fixing bowing or sagging walls and roofs and other cosmetic and/or structural improvements.

A majority of residents and business/property owners either agree or strongly agree that “storefront/façade rehabilitation” should be a primary activity to improve the appearance of the Downtown, if money were made available.

4. Most residents and downtown business/property owners either agree or strongly agree that there is a high number of vacant storefronts and buildings in Downtown Beatrice.

A majority of residents and business/property owners either agree or strongly agree that “recruiting new businesses to Downtown Beatrice” should be a primary activity in preserving and enhancing the appearance and viability of the Downtown.

5. Several methods of improving the appearance and sustainability of the Downtown were highlighted in the two Surveys, including, but not limited to, business retention, recruitment and expansion; improved streets, sidewalks and alleys, including streetscape enhancements; restoration/ preservation of historic buildings, expanded marketing of Downtown sales and festivals and increased advertising of vacant storefronts and buildings.

A total of 225 of the 280 Community Survey respondents and 33 of the 37 Business/Property Owner Survey participants would support the design and development of a designated community festival space for concerts, farmer’s markets and other family activities.

6. To make Downtown Beatrice a “one-stop” destination for commercial and retail goods, a number of business types were identified by Survey respondents that should locate in the Downtown. These businesses included, but were not limited to men’s and women’s clothing stores, breweries, pubs and wineries; coffee shops and deli stores, and family style restaurants and cafes.
7. The utilization of Public Grants, Tax Increment Financing, Foundation dollars and private financing is highly supported. A total of 181 Community Survey and 32 Business/Property Owner Survey respondents supported the use of these and other tools of public and private financing to fund improvements and new development in Downtown Beatrice.

COMMUNITY OPEN HOUSES.

Consultants, Hanna:Keelan and Schemmer, first introduced the attendees of the Open Houses to the **Beatrice Downtown Revitalization Project – Phase I**, including the planning process, time-line and the involvement of a Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee. Consultants, then, briefly presented key Downtown population, housing and economic statistics regarding the number of current and future downtown residents and discussed the results of the Downtown “Vision” Wants & Needs Surveys completed by both Downtown Business/Property Owners and Citizens of Beatrice. In general, the top responses from both Surveys were nearly identical.



Overall, the respondents to the Surveys desired to preserve and protect the historic character of Downtown Beatrice by renovating and preserving the historically significant Downtown buildings. Secondly, a Downtown Façade Improvement Program was supported as the means to improve the appearance of Downtown buildings. These two priorities were closely followed by the need to implement a Business Retention, Recruitment and Expansion Program for Downtown Businesses.

Key Open House Discussion Issues.

- ❖ Many of the attendees of the Open Houses were business owners in the Downtown, concerned about the projected growth of Downtown residents. They appreciate the desire of citizens wanting to live in the Downtown, but the potential increase of cars parking on Downtown streets and using customer parking stalls was a concern.
- ❖ Nearly all participants agreed that an increase of vehicles in the Downtown would be good for Downtown businesses, but at the end of much discussion, recommended that minimum parking requirements should be established and enforced for new housing projects in the Downtown.
- ❖ Several attendees stated that fixing up buildings in the Downtown was needed and would result in renewed interest in locating businesses in Downtown Beatrice. However, they recommended that economic development efforts needed to be expanded to entice existing business to stay in the Downtown and to attract new businesses to occupy vacant and underutilized storefronts and upper levels of buildings for professional business.
- ❖ Break-out discussion focused on the infrastructure and façade improvement program presentations.



PRIORTIZATION OF DOWNTOWN IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS.

Attendees of the Downtown Open Houses were asked to select the top three most important priorities for the Downtown from the following list. The four most popular priorities include...

- #1 - Establish a permanent Facade Improvement Program for Downtown Beatrice buildings.
- #2 - Restoration and/or Preservation of Historic Downtown Buildings.
- #3 - A Business Retention, Recruitment and Expansion Program for Downtown Beatrice.
- #4 - Adaptive reuse of vacant upper floors of commercial buildings for housing and offices.

Other identified priorities include...

- ◆ Enhanced crosswalk safety at intersections.
- ◆ Develop a public/private sidewalk replacement program to replace “hollow” sidewalks along Court Street and 6th Street.
- ◆ Develop a permanent outdoor public plaza or special event location to conduct annual festivals, craft fairs, outdoor concerts.
- ◆ Expanded Marketing of Downtown Sales and Festivals.
- ◆ Reducing utility costs by developing Alternative Energy Sources as a pilot program for Downtown buildings.
- ◆ Establish an annual fund to finance the replacement of outmoded underground water, sanitary sewer and storm water mains through Downtown Beatrice.

SECTION 3: Downtown Market Area Analysis.

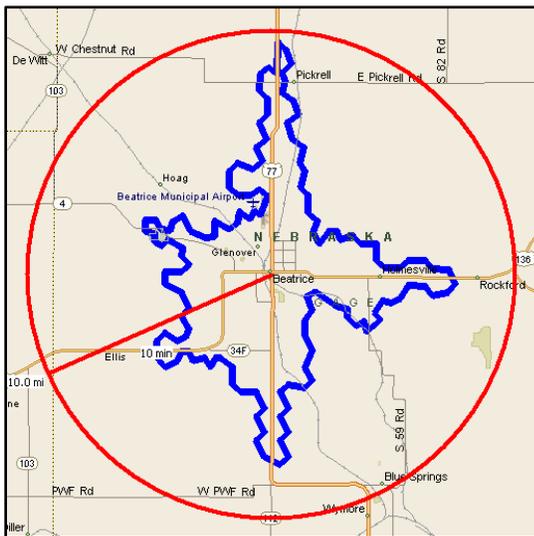


SECTION 3

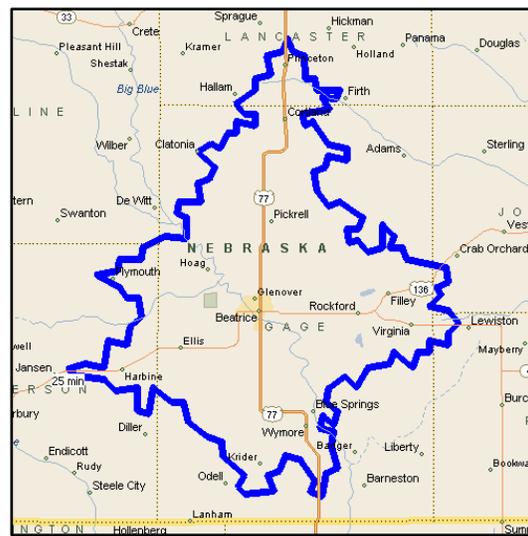
DOWNTOWN MARKET AREA ANALYSIS.

IDENTIFICATION OF PRIMARY, SECONDARY & REGIONAL MARKET AREAS.

The **Primary Market Area** for the City of Beatrice, **Illustration 3.1**, was established by extending a 10 minute “time of travel” boundary from the intersection of 6th Street (Highway 77) and Court Street (Highway 136) in Downtown Beatrice. The **Primary Market Area** is heavily influenced by the multi-lane Highway 77 Expressway and other Highway Corridors through the City.



PRIMARY MARKET AREA.
ILLUSTRATION 3.1



SECONDARY MARKET AREA.
ILLUSTRATION 3.2

A **Secondary Market Area** for Beatrice, **Illustration 3.2**, is generated by establishing a 25 minute time-of-travel boundary. At the extremities of this boundary are the Villages of Harbine, Jansen and Plymouth in Jefferson County; Firth and Hallam in Lancaster County, and the Cities of Blue Springs and Wymore in southern Gage County. These Communities are all within reasonable commute times of Downtown Beatrice. The southern extent of this travel boundary extends south of the City of Beatrice along the Highway 77 Corridor, nearly reaching the Kansas State Line.

An estimated **Regional Market Area** for Downtown Beatrice includes a 45 minute time-of-travel boundary. This boundary includes the City of Lincoln, Nebraska, as well as Marysville, Kansas, due to direct access to Downtown Beatrice via the Highway 77 Expressway. The Communities of Lincoln and Marysville could provide a large source of shoppers and visitors to Downtown Beatrice. The City of Lincoln also offers expanded access to major employers to those Beatrice residents willing to commute for employment.

**REGIONAL MARKET AREA AND TIME OF TRAVEL MAP
BEATRICE, NEBRASKA**

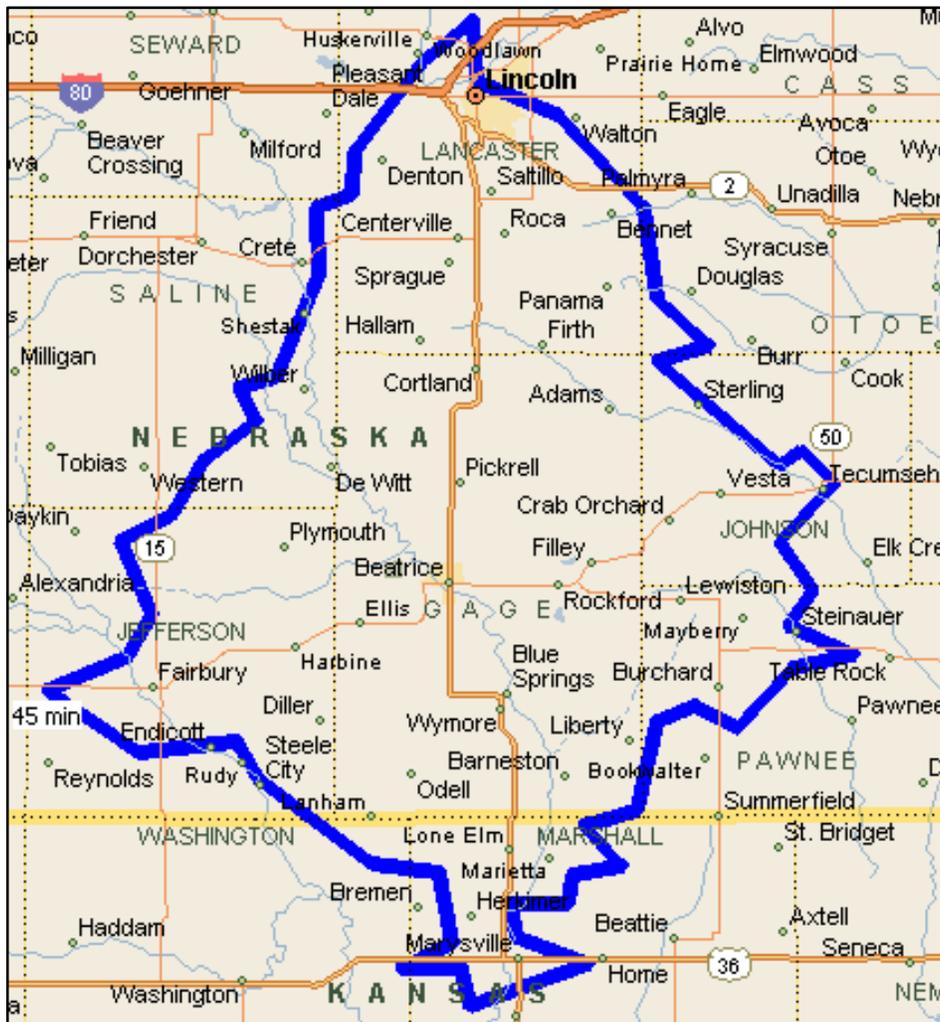


ILLUSTRATION 3.3

POPULATION, INCOME & ECONOMIC PROFILE.

Table 3.1 identifies population trends and projections for the City of Beatrice. The total population of Beatrice was 12,496 in 2000 and 12,459 in 2010. Although the population has remained fairly consistent through the years, a slight decrease has occurred since 2010, resulting in a current (2016) estimated population of 12,416.

A 10-year forecast model, consisting of a “Low,” “Medium” and “High” population estimate for the City of Beatrice, highlights a ranging population, from a decrease of approximately 67 persons to an increase of 134 persons. The “Medium” growth model identifies an estimated 2026 population projection of 12,472. A “High” population growth is related to an “**Economic Development Boost**” of new businesses and industries in the Community.

**TABLE 3.1
POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
BEATRICE, NEBRASKA
2000-2026**

			<u>Total</u>		<u>Annual</u>	
	<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u>
	2000	12,496	--	--	--	--
	2010	12,459	-37	-0.29%	-3.7	-0.03%
	2016	12,416	-43	-0.30%	-7.2	-0.05%
Low	2026	12,349	-67	-0.50%	-6.7	-0.05%
Medium	2026	12,472	+56	+0.30%	+5.6	+0.03%
High	2026*	12,550	+134	+1.07%	+13.4	+0.1%

**Directly associated with an “Economic Boost” related to increased local employees.*

Source: 2000, 2010 Census; 2011-2015 Census Estimates

Census Estimates: 2011 – 12,447; 2012 – 12,319; 2013 – 12,349; 2014 – 12,263; 2015 – 12,388.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2016.

Table 3.2 identifies population trends and projections for Downtown Beatrice, by 2026. A current population is estimated at 155 persons, a slight increase since 2010. The 10-year forecast model identifies a population range, from a “Low” population increase of approximately eight persons to a “High” increase of 68 persons. The “Medium” growth model identifies an estimated 2026 population projection of 169 persons. A “High” population is related to an “**Economic Development Boost**” of new businesses and industries in the Downtown area of the Community would result in an estimated 2026 population of 223 in Downtown Beatrice.

**TABLE 3.2
POPULATION TRENDS AND PROJECTIONS
DOWNTOWN BEATRICE, NEBRASKA
2000-2026**

			<u>Total</u>		<u>Annual</u>	
	<u>Year</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Change</u>	<u>Percent</u>
	2000	150	--	--	--	--
	2010	153	+3	+2.0%	+0.3	+0.20%
	2016	155	+2	+1.3%	+0.3	+0.22%
Low	2026	163	+8	+5.2%	+0.8	+0.50%
Medium	2026	169	+14	+9.0%	+1.4	+0.90%
High	2026*	223	+68	+43.8%	+6.8	+4.38%

**Directly associated with a “Beatrice Downtown Economic Redevelopment Initiative”.*

Source: 2000, 2010 Census.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2016.



Table 3.3, tenure by household, evaluates the total number of owner and renter households in the City of Beatrice, from 2000 to 2026. The 2010 Census identified the City had 3,495 owner households and 2,014 renter households in Beatrice. Today, it is estimated that 5,567 households, consisting of 3,512 owner and 2,055 renter households exist in Beatrice. Both owner and renter households are projected to increase, resulting in a total increase of 65 households for the City of Beatrice, from 2016 to 2026. An “**Economic Development Boost**” in the Community would result in a total of 5,708 households, consisting of 3,590 owner and 2,118 renter households.

**TABLE 3.3
TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD
BEATRICE, NEBRASKA
2000-2026**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Households</u>	<u>Owner</u>		<u>Renter</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
2000	5,395	3,497	64.8%	1,898	35.1%
2010	5,509	3,495	63.4%	2,014	36.6%
2016	5,567	3,512	63.1%	2,055	36.9%
2026	5,632	3,531	62.7%	2,101	37.3%
2026*	5,708	3,590	62.9%	2,118	37.1%

**Directly associated with an “Economic Boost” related to increased local employees.*

Source: 2000, 2010 Census.

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2016.

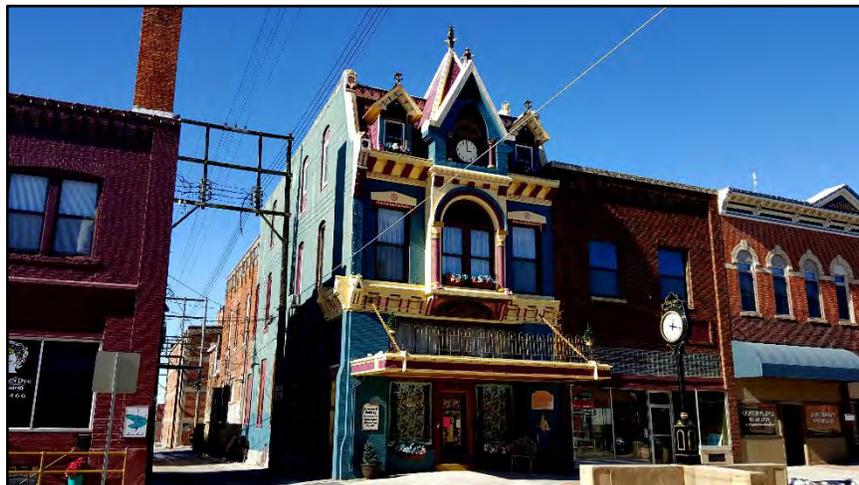


Table 3.4 identifies **tenure by household** for Downtown Beatrice, by 2026. The total number of owner and renter households in the Downtown of the City of Beatrice includes one owner household and 105 renter households. Today, it is estimated that 107 households exist in Downtown Beatrice. Both owner and renter households are projected to increase, resulting in a total increase of two households for Downtown Beatrice, from 2016 to 2026. An “**Economic development Boost**” in the Downtown Area would result in an increase of an estimated 44 households, resulting in a 2026 projection of twelve owner and 139 renter households.

**TABLE 3.4
TENURE BY HOUSEHOLD
DOWNTOWN BEATRICE, NEBRASKA
2000-2026**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Total Households</u>	<u>Owner</u>		<u>Renter</u>	
		<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
2000	104	2	1.9%	102	98.1%
2010	106	1	0.9%	105	99.1%
2016	107	1	0.9%	106	99.1%
2026	109	2	1.8%	107	98.2%
2026*	151	12	7.9%	139	92.1%

**Directly associated with a “Beatrice Downtown Economic Redevelopment Initiative”.*

Source: 2000, 2010 Census

Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2016.

Table 3.5 identifies **household income trends and projections**, for the City of Beatrice, from 2000 to 2026. Households in the “\$35,000-\$49,999” and “\$50,000 or More” category are projected to increase by an estimated 3.5 percent and 5.9 percent, respectively. By 2026, an estimated 49 percent of all households in Beatrice will have incomes of \$50,000 or more. Median income is also projected to increase during the next 10 years, by 24.8 percent, to \$51,646.

**TABLE 3.5
HOUSEHOLD INCOME*
TRENDS & PROJECTIONS
BEATRICE, NEBRASKA
2010-2026**

	<u>2010*</u>	<u>2014 Est.*</u>	<u>2016</u>	<u>2026</u>	<u>% Change 2010-2026</u>
Less than \$10,000	582	344	319	204	-36.0%
\$10,000-\$19,999	852	880	873	856	-1.9%
\$20,000-\$34,999	1,340	1,029	1,036	1,054	+1.7%
\$35,000-\$49,999	1,060	727	740	766	+3.5%
<u>\$50,000 or More</u>	<u>1,550</u>	<u>2,317</u>	<u>2,599</u>	<u>2,752</u>	<u>+5.9%</u>
Totals	5,384	5,297	5,567	5,632	+1.2%
Median Income	\$33,735	\$40,750	\$41,375	\$51,646	+24.8%

* Specified Data Used, 2014 estimate subject to margin of error.
 Source: 2010 Census, 2010, 2014 American Community Survey Estimate.
 Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2016.

Table 3.6 identifies **per capita income trends and projections** in Gage County and the State of Nebraska from 2000 to 2026. Per capita income is equal to the gross income of an area (State, County, City, Village) divided equally between the residents of the area. Per capita income in Gage County strongly reflects the trend in Beatrice.

In 2016, per capita income in Gage County is an estimated \$50,632. By 2026, per capita income in the County is projected to increase by an estimated 18.2 percent to \$59,871.

**TABLE 3.6
PER CAPITA INCOME
GAGE COUNTY, NEBRASKA / STATE OF NEBRASKA
2000-2026**

<u>Year</u>	<u>Gage County</u>		<u>State of Nebraska</u>	
	<u>Per Capita Income</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>	<u>Per Capita Income</u>	<u>Percent Change</u>
2000	\$26,637	--	\$28,978	--
2001	\$28,836	+8.36%	\$30,178	+4.1%
2002	\$28,231	-2.1%	\$30,696	+1.7%
2003	\$30,379	+7.6%	\$32,611	+6.2%
2004	\$32,265	+6.2%	\$33,768	+3.5%
2005	\$32,200	-0.2%	\$34,772	+2.9%
2006	\$33,851	+5.1%	\$35,982	+3.4%
2007	\$36,172	+6.9%	\$38,484	+6.9%
2008	\$40,162	+11.0%	\$40,626	+5.6%
2009	\$39,664	-1.2%	\$39,226	-3.4%
2010	\$39,096	-1.4%	\$40,023	+2.0%
2011	\$44,481	+13.8%	\$43,820	+9.5%
2012	\$44,551	+0.1%	\$45,578	+4.0%
2013	\$49,186	+10.4%	\$46,254	+1.5%
2014	\$47,942	-2.5%	\$47,557	+2.8%
2016	\$50,632	+5.6%	\$50,037	+5.2%
2000-2016	\$26,637-\$50,632	+90.1%	\$28,978-\$50,037	+72.6%
2016-2026	\$50,632-\$59,871	+18.2%	\$50,037-\$59,449	+18.8%

Source: Nebraska Department of Economic Development, 2016.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2016.

Workforce employment by type, Table 3.7, Page 3.10, examines the non-farm employment categories in Gage County for 2016. Overall, there were 9,737 total Non-Farm Employees in Gage County in 2016. The “Health Care and Social Assistance” sector employed the largest amount of people, with 1,750 persons. “Manufacturing”, “Retail Trade”, and “State Government” were also leading sectors in employment for Gage County.

The **Gage County & Communities, Nebraska County-Wide Housing Study**, completed in March, 2016, showed a three percent increase in Non-Farm Employment from 2013-2015 in Gage County. The “Financial Activities” and “Other Services” sectors had the largest percent increases and “Information and “State Government” sectors showed the largest decreases from 2013 to 2015. Although “State Government” showed a decrease in employment from 2013 to 2015, a drastic increase was identified for 2016.

Gage County’s largest industries include agriculture, manufacturing, and health and human service industries. Major employers in the County include, but are not limited to Beatrice State Developmental Center, Beatrice Community Hospital and Health Center, Exmark Manufacturing Company, Koch Industries, Mosaic, Store Draft Manufacturing Company, Good Samaritan Society, NEAPCO, Inc., City of Beatrice, Gage County Government and five public school districts.

TABLE 3.7
WORKFORCE EMPLOYMENT BY TYPE
GAGE COUNTY, NEBRASKA
2016

<u>Workforce</u>	
Non-Farm Employment	9,737
(Wage and Salary)	
Agriculture Forestry, Fishing & Hunting.	0
Mining, Quarrying and Oil/Gas Extraction.	*
Utilities.	*
Construction.	359
Manufacturing.	1,504
Wholesale Trade.	378
Retail Trade.	1,133
Transportation & Warehousing.	365
Information.	85
Finance & Insurance.	288
Real Estate & Rental/Leasing.	33
Professional, Scientific & Technical Services.	137
Management of Companies & Enterprises.	26
Administrative/Support/Waste.	198
Educational Services.	*
Health Care & Social Assistance.	1,750
Arts, Entertainment & Recreation.	174
Accommodation & Food Service.	680
Other Services (except Public Administration).	381
Federal Government.	92
State Government.	1,364
Local Government.	637
* Data not available because of disclosure suppression.	
Source: Nebraska Department of Labor, Labor Market Information, 2016.	
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2016.	

An analysis of **net taxable sales of eight selected First Class Cities in southeastern Nebraska** is presented in **Table 3.8**. Beatrice was ranked fourth for taxable sales per capita, compared to the average of the eight Communities. This suggests that Beatrice is moderately attractive to shoppers, when compared to other first class cities, but could do more to attract additional shoppers by providing a greater variety and volume of goods and services, along with more appealing and accessible commercial areas.

TABLE 3.8
NET TAXABLE SALES
FIRST CLASS CITIES IN SOUTHEAST NEBRASKA
2015

#	Community	Population (2015 Est.)	2015 Net Taxable Sales	Net Taxable Sales Per Capita	Taxable Sales/Cap. (Compared to Avg.)
1	Gretna	5,046	\$228,820,008	\$45,346	271.2%
2	Blair	7,975	\$133,126,894	\$16,693	99.8%
3	Fremont	26,474	\$429,218,770	\$16,220	97.0%
4	Beatrice	12,338	\$177,895,821	\$14,418	86.2%
5	Nebraska City	7,335	\$103,267,414	\$14,078	84.2%
6	Seward	7,167	\$83,342,062	\$11,628	69.5%
7	Crete	7,037	\$66,125,216	\$9,396	56.2%
8	Schuyler	6,171	\$36,942,272	\$5,986	35.8%
Average	--	9,942	\$135,105,329	\$16,720	100.0%
Total	--	79,543	\$1,080,842,636	\$13,765	100.0%

Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue
 Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C. 2016.



Net taxable sales were also examined for Counties in southeast Nebraska, as identified in Table 3.9. The results indicate that Gage County had the second highest total of net taxable sales of the seven Counties included in the analysis and the second highest percentage of taxable sales per capita at 124.9 percent.

#	County	Population (2015 Est.)	2015 Net Taxable Sales	Net Taxable Sales Per Capita	Taxable Sales/Cap. (Compared to Avg.)
1	Jefferson	7,263	\$72,157,178	\$9,935	135.9%
2	Gage	21,900	\$199,964,153	\$9,130	124.9%
3	Seward	17,110	\$107,847,762	\$8,641	118.2%
4	Otoe	15,984	\$135,586,181	\$8,482	116.0%
5	Saline	14,282	\$88,190,883	\$6,175	86.6%
6	Johnson	5,173	\$23,399,715	\$4,523	63.4%
7	Pawnee	2,659	\$11,401,829	\$4,288	58.6%
Average	--	12,053	\$91,221,100	\$7,310	100.0%
Total	--	84,371	\$638,547,701	\$51,174	100.0%

Source: Nebraska Department of Revenue
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C. 2016.

SECTION 4: Downtown Building/ Property Review.



SECTION 4

DOWNTOWN BUILDING/PROPERTY REVIEW.

EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS.

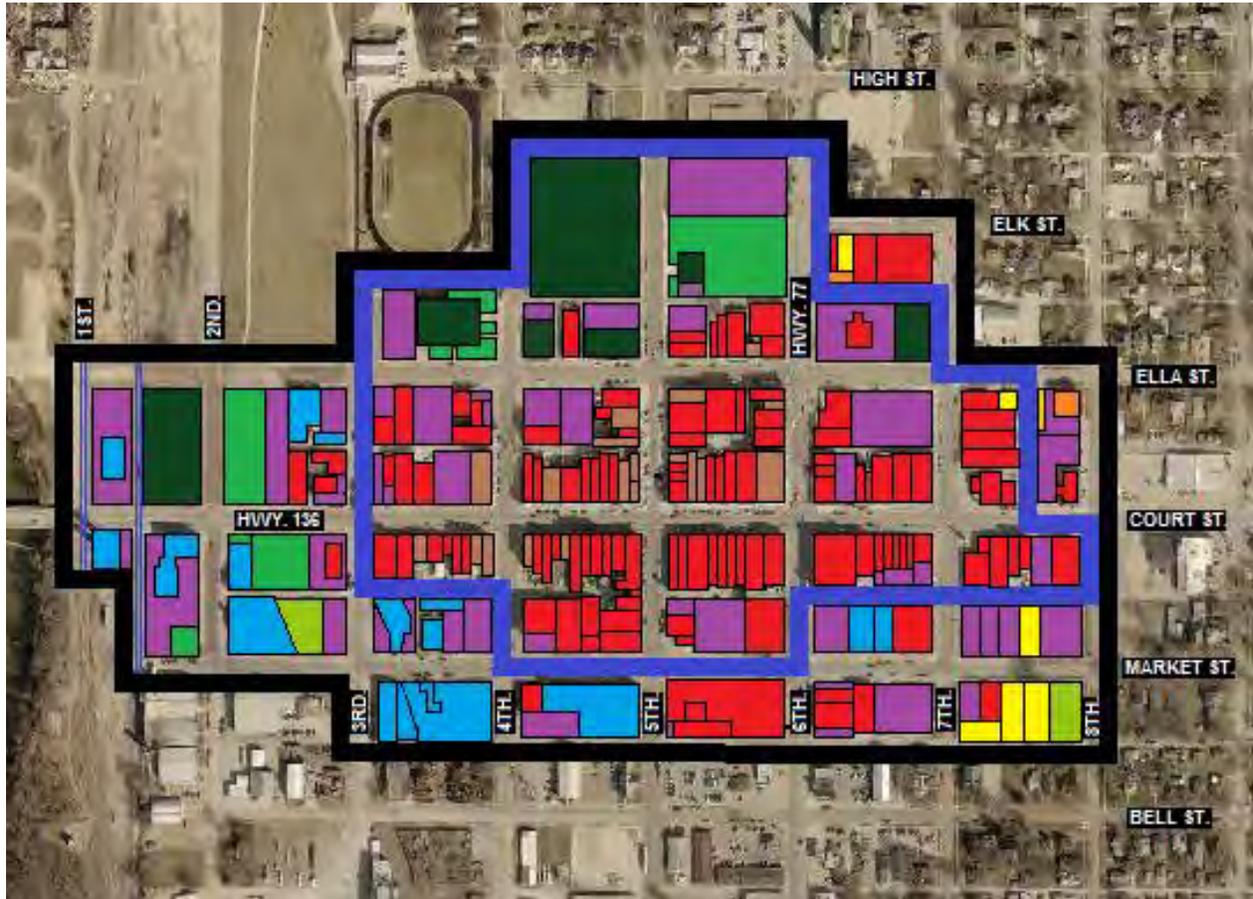
Downtown Beatrice is the focal point of retail commerce and local government for the City, as well as Gage County. The **Beatrice Downtown Revitalization Project – Phase I Area** includes the intersection of 6th Street (Highway 77) and Court Street (Highway 136), highlighted in **Illustration 4.1**. The **Downtown Revitalization Project Area** focuses on the commercial retail sector of the Downtown, including the public/quasi-public concentration of municipal buildings and churches on the northern boundary and the industrial businesses at the southern boundary.

The western edge of the **Project Area** is 1st Street, which runs north and south along the Big Blue River. The former route of the Union Pacific Railroad paralleled 2nd Street and curved southeast through the industrial area south of the Downtown. The Burlington Northern and Santa Fe Railroad still exits to the west of Downtown, along 1st Street. Downtown commercial uses begin to transition to automotive and highway commercial oriented businesses east of 8th Street, the identified eastern boundary of the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area**.

Commercial retail buildings, along with single and multi-level buildings, including mixed-use commercial/residential buildings, are concentrated along Court Street, between 3rd and 7th Streets. The first floors of these buildings are reserved for commercial uses in conformance with the “CBD” Central Business District Zoning Regulations of the City. Commercial storefronts not occupied with a retail business are either vacant and for sale, or utilized as storage. Upper floors of these Downtown commercial and mixed-use buildings historically were professional offices or apartments and are largely utilized for storage, or are vacant and closed off from the first floor. A few upper-level residential apartments exist in Downtown Beatrice.

EXISTING LAND USE MAP

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT AREA
BEATRICE, NEBRASKA



LEGEND

- VACANT
- PARKS/RECREATION
- PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC
- SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MULTIFAMILY RESIDENTIAL
- MIXED USE COMMERCIAL/RESIDENTIAL
- COMMERCIAL
- INDUSTRIAL
- OFF-STREET PARKING AREAS
- DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT BOUNDARY

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

SCHEMMER
ARCHITECTS | ENGINEERS | PLANNERS

ILLUSTRATION 4.1

Commercial uses between 3rd and 8th Streets, and adjacent Market and Ella Streets, are generally concentrated with one-story commercial buildings. Off-street parking lots serving patrons and employees are also located to the north and south of Court Street. Single family dwellings and multifamily apartment buildings are located at the northeast and southeast corners of the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area**.

The analysis of existing land use, **Table 4.1**, revealed that commercial uses account for 17.1 acres, or 23.4 percent of the total **Area** within the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area**. Mixed-use commercial/residential uses accounted for an additional 1.9 acres. Off-street parking areas are the second largest land use category in the **Project Area**, totaling 11.2 acres, or 15.3 percent of the total **Area**. The 6.1 acres of public/quasi-public land uses account for 8.3 percent of the total **Area**, followed by industrial lands at 5.8 percent. Streets and alleys account for the largest land use, approximately 38 percent of the **Project Area**.

<u>Type</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Vacant	0.5	0.7%
Parks/Recreation	2.5	3.4%
Public/Quasi-Public	6.1	8.3%
Single Family	0.9	1.2%
Multifamily	0.4	0.6%
Mixed Use Commercial/Residential	1.9	2.6%
Commercial	17.1	23.4%
Industrial	4.2	5.8%
Off-Street Parking	11.2	15.3%
<u>Streets/Alleys</u>	<u>28.3</u>	<u>38.7%</u>
Totals	73.1	100.0%

Source: Gage County Assessor, 2016.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C. 2016.

Assessed Property Valuation

The tabulation of assessed property values throughout the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area** were sorted by land use types, as highlighted in **Table 4.2**. The total assessed valuation of property within the 73 acre **Project Area** was \$11,980,200. The land use evaluation determined that the total assessed valuation of commercial lands was \$8,765,760 and mixed-use commercial/residential had a valuation of \$1,514,330. Combined, the commercial categories equaled \$10.3 million, or 86 percent of the total assessed valuation of the **Project Area**.

**TABLE 4.2
PROPERTY VALUE DATA
DOWNTOWN BEATRICE, NEBRASKA
2016**

<u>Type</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Percentage</u>
Vacant	\$17,800	0.2%
Single Family	\$194,180	1.6%
Multifamily	\$257,190	2.2%
Commercial	\$8,765,760	73.2%
Mixed-Use Commercial/Residential	\$1,514,330	12.6%
Industrial	\$927,210	7.7%
<u>Off-Street Parking</u>	<u>\$303,730</u>	<u>2.5%</u>
Totals	\$11,980,200	100.0%

Source: Gage County Assessor, 2016.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C. 2016.

Comments by members of the Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee focused on the affordability of rent in Downtown. A Downtown “incubator business” building was identified as not necessary, due to their belief that the entire Downtown functions as an “incubator” for start-up businesses because rents within the Downtown are the most inexpensive of any commercial area in Beatrice.

Gage County Assessor and Treasurer records revealed that many of the single and multi-level commercial buildings are valued under \$70,000, even when including the assessed value of the land. The high cost of new construction and rehabilitation has resulted in the gradual deterioration of buildings throughout Downtown Beatrice.

Today, construction and engineering trade professionals generally estimate that the cost for new construction averages \$200 per square foot, including building materials and labor. This translates to rehabilitation, renovation and redevelopment efforts being so costly that the private sector alone cannot afford to redevelop or construct new buildings in Downtowns.

BUILDING INVENTORY – CONDITION ANALYSIS.

The **Building Inventory and Analysis** included a combination of field work and research of property records at the Gage County Assessor’s Office. These records include current valuation, building square footage, approximate age and related condition, and the names of current building owners.

Property Valuation.

Table 4.3 identifies **building characteristics** for the 183 buildings in the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area**. These buildings include commercial, mixed-use commercial/residential and industrial buildings, while public/quasi-public buildings were not included due to being property tax exempt. The total estimated square footage of the buildings in the **Project Area** is 1,399,385, of which an estimated 53 percent are partially or entirely vacant. The total assessed (taxable) valuation of buildings in the entire **Project Area** is an estimated **\$11,658,670**.

**TABLE 4.3
BUILDING CHARACTERISTICS
DOWNTOWN BEATRICE, NEBRASKA
2016**

<u>Building Use</u>	<u># of Buildings</u>	<u>Est. Total Sq. Ft.</u>	<u>Occupied</u>	<u>Vacant</u>	<u>Est. Assessed Valuation*</u>
Residential	8	50,328	50,238	0	\$451,370
Commercial	129	968,291	345,680	622,611	\$8,765,760
Mixed Use Comm./Resid.	21	180,197	107,617	72,580	\$1,523,900
<u>Industrial</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>146,520</u>	<u>130,460</u>	<u>16,060</u>	<u>\$927,210</u>
Totals	168	1,345,520	633,995	711,251	\$11,658,670*

*Estimate – Public/Quasi-Public buildings (including municipal buildings) were not included due to property exemption.
Source: Gage County Assessor, 2016.
Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2016.

The total square footage of commercial and mixed-use commercial/residential buildings within the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area** is estimated at 1,148,488. Approximately 61 percent of the combined commercial and mixed use square footage are partially or fully vacant. **The underutilized upper levels of these buildings were desired for rehabilitation by the majority of Survey respondents, attendees of the Downtown Revitalization Open House meetings and by the members of the Steering Committee.**

Absentee Property Owners & Landlords.

Gage County Assessor's property information revealed that properties within the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area** are almost entirely owned by residents of Beatrice. A total of 27 properties within the **Project Area** are owned by individuals or corporations residing outside of Beatrice, of which 12 properties are owned by out-of-state residents.

A total of 16 tax exempt properties exist within the Downtown, consisting of municipal and religious facilities. These public facilities serve to strengthen the role of Downtown Beatrice as the center of commerce, professional service, entertainment and socialization for the Community.

ZONING ANALYSIS.

Design Standards Overlay District.

When buildings are approved for historic preservation, rehabilitation, or adaptive reuse, the City of Beatrice is recommended to establish a Historic Overlay District pursuant to the Zoning Regulations of the City of Beatrice. As buildings within the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area** are slated for improvements to the street facing facades, design standards would establish guidelines for property owners to follow.

At a minimum, design standards would prevent the use of building materials, colors and textures not compatible to the characteristics of the existing and adjacent buildings in the Downtown. New commercial or public/quasi-public buildings would also be required to meet the design standards to ensure compatibility with the structures throughout the **Project Area**. The following is a list of the minimum requirements of the design standards:

- Brick masonry buildings with at least one additional material such as limestone, to highlight architectural details around window and door openings, as well as roof parapets and cornices.

- The use of materials such as metal or aluminum siding on street facades of buildings should be prohibited.
- All sides of a building fronting on a street shall meet a brick masonry or limestone requirement; however, side or party walls and rear facades could be composed of other standard building components.
- The use of pressed tin cornices, parapets and canvas or metal awnings are encouraged to reflect the architectural embellishments of existing late 19th through mid-20th Century commercial buildings.
- Entrances to the first floors of buildings should incorporate handicap accessibility standards within recessed storefronts, where possible. Handicap accessible entrances should not encroach into the public sidewalks, or not protrude beyond the front building line.
- New buildings with flat, sloped, hipped or gable roofs should be obscured with parapet walls to hide these roof types from public view.
- The design of first floor street facades should incorporate the appearance of transom windows, whether functional or not, as key components of late 19th and early 20th Century commercial store-front buildings.
- Multi-story, commercial and mixed-use buildings are encouraged to allow hallway connections between buildings on the upper floors for the potential shared use of one public elevator.

Acquisition/Demolition of Dilapidated Buildings.

Dilapidated buildings not cost effective for rehabilitation should be targeted for acquisition by the City, or **Beatrice Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA)**, and demolished. Comments from the Steering Committee focused on preventing the demolition of buildings within the **Project Area**. This could be done by providing incentives for repair to prevent buildings from becoming dilapidated and not cost-effective for rehabilitation.

A combination of condemning dilapidated buildings and encouraging property owners to either demolish the building or “gift” the building to the City or to the **Beatrice CRA** for demolition is preferred. Dilapidated buildings should not be utilized for storage or left vacant until they ultimately collapse.

EXAMPLES OF BUILDING CONDITIONS.



*North side of Court Street
Between 4th & 5th Streets.*



The north and south side street facades of buildings fronting on Court Street, between 4th and 5th Streets are representative of some of the most unique late 19th and early 20th Century commercial buildings in Downtown Beatrice. Several of these buildings retain historic elements that make these Italianate, Romanesque and Victorian influenced buildings contributors to the Historic Downtown. The age and associated conditions of these buildings is also illustrated by the boarded up windows on the upper floors of these buildings.





Multiple story commercial buildings on the south side of Court Street between 4th & 5th



South side of Ella Street between 4th & 5th Streets.

Examples of prominent buildings with boarded-up windows exist throughout the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area**. But with moderate effort, many of these building facades can be revitalized. A few examples exist where the historic window openings were bricked in to close off the upper levels. This was done in an attempt to reduce the cost of upkeep and maintenance to buildings now only profitable for their first level storefront facades.

Although the Court Street Plaza Building, at the southeast corner of 6th and Court Streets, appears to be an intact corner commercial building, the transom windows above the awning have been enclosed. This feature originally allowed natural light into the first floor storefront to enhance the openness of the store and reduce electricity costs.



The corner building at 123 6th Street retains its windows and, most importantly, the majority of the corner turret. These historic elements hide the fact that the first floor storefront is in need of significant rehabilitation.

West side of 6th Street at Ella Street

The two commercial buildings on the east side of 6th Street, between the alley and Court Street, illustrate the difference in the appearance of an intact storefront façade and one that has been completely bricked in and modernized.



HISTORIC DESIGNATION TO THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES.

A Gage County Historic Buildings and Reconnaissance Survey was conducted by the Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office in 1997. The conclusions of this Survey indicated that a “**Downtown Beatrice Historic District**” would be potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. **Main Street Beatrice** applied and was awarded funding from the **Nebraska State Historic Society** to complete a **National Register Nomination** for the identified Historic District. Main Street Beatrice was notified in August of 2016 that the application was approved by the National Register of Historic Places.

COMBINING TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) & HISTORIC PRESERVATION TAX CREDITS.

Federal Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

Downtown Beatrice now qualifies for the use of Historic Tax Credits (HTCs), in addition to Tax Increment Financing (TIF) that is already available to all properties in the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area**. HTCs provide a 10 to 20 percent credit on every dollar spent towards preservation or revitalization. Buildings listed, or that qualify as eligible to be listed within a “multiple property district” on the National Register, qualify for a 20 percent credit. Buildings that are a contributor to a historic district, but do not meet criteria to be individually listed for national register designation, qualify for 10 percent tax credits. **A total of 125 properties within the Beatrice Historic District qualify for the 20 percent tax credits.** These credits could be used by the owner or sold to investors to reduce individual federal income taxes. The goals of **Phase I** correlate well with the National Main Street Program’s approach of physical improvements with organizational and economic development opportunities and the City of Beatrice’s efforts throughout the past few years.

Nebraska State Historic Preservation Tax Credits.

The State of Nebraska established a State Historic Tax Credit program that provides credits towards state personal income tax liabilities. To qualify for the State Historic Tax Credit, a property must either be listed on the National Register of Historic Properties or qualify as a contributing building within an historic district. If a county, city or village within Nebraska has adopted a local preservation ordinance, approved by the State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO), individual properties can also qualify and apply for State Historic Tax Credits. Structures that qualify for the Historic Credit must submit a grant application to compete for an annual Tax Credit Pool of \$15 million in credits to the Nebraska SHPO.

THE NEBRASKA “VALUATION INCENTIVE PROGRAM.”

The **Valuation Incentive Program (VIP)** assists in the preservation of Nebraska’s historic places. The Program allows a property tax preference for a historic property that has been rehabilitated. The Program effectively establishes a temporary hold on increases in property tax assessments, for a period of eight years that result from improvements made to preserve an historic property.

Eligible Properties for VIP:

- Eligible properties are those individually listed in the National Register of Historic Places, or historic properties that contribute to a Historic District listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Under certain provisions, historic properties can be designated under a local government preservation ordinance.
- The property must be designated as a historically significant real property **before work on a project begins**. A historically significant real property is one that is listed on the National Register of Historic places and is taxable.

Project Requirements:

- The cost of the rehabilitation must be 25 percent or greater of the base-year assessed value of the property. The base-year is the last assessed value of the property at the time an application is submitted to the Nebraska State Historical Society.
- All work done to rehabilitate or improve the property must meet the *Secretary of Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation*.

- All work must be done during a two-year period. In certain circumstances this period may be extended with the approval of the Nebraska State Historical Society, such as when the size of the project is such that a good faith attempt to complete the rehabilitation in two years would not succeed or when it is economically unfeasible.
- Certain types of work are **not** eligible. These include landscaping, new construction, driveways and sidewalks. For owner-occupied single-family residences, no more than thirty percent of the dwelling space can be new construction outside the existing building.

Impact on Property Taxes:

- A certified project in a qualifying historic property will result in the property's assessed valuation being frozen for eight years at its pre-rehabilitation value.
- The valuation then rises to its market level over a period of four years.
- Taxes must still be paid under the terms of this Program. The property is not removed from the tax rolls.
- This is not a tax exemption. In certain cases, taxes may rise during the term that rehabilitation is in process.

Nebraska “Main Street” Program:

Since the mid-1970s, the National Trust has implemented the national *“Main Street”* Program. **Nebraska Main Street Network** was established in 2013 as a non-profit organization to take over the responsibilities of implementing the national “Main Street Program” in Communities throughout Nebraska. The Main Street Program in Nebraska has existed since 1994 in various forms. The **Nebraska Main Street Network** is “dedicated to educating communities across the state so they have the knowledge and skills to revitalize their traditional commercial business districts.” The Program was developed to combine historic preservation programs with a four-point approach to rejuvenate America's Downtowns.

- **Design**, which is the first point of the Program, focuses on renovating buildings, constructing compatible new buildings, improving signage, creating attractive public open spaces and ensuring planning and zoning regulations support Main Street revitalization.
- **Organization**, building collaboration between public and private sector groups is the *second point* of the Program.

- **Promotion** of the Main Street District to residents, visitors and potential investors.
- **Economic Restructuring** or strengthening the District's existing economic base are the *final points* of the Main Street Program.

The “foundation” of the Main Street Program is “time.” Successfully rejuvenated Downtowns do not happen overnight. However, the principles of "Main Street" are proven methods by which America's small Communities have revitalized their Downtowns.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING (TIF) AS AN INCENTIVE FOR REDEVELOPMENT.

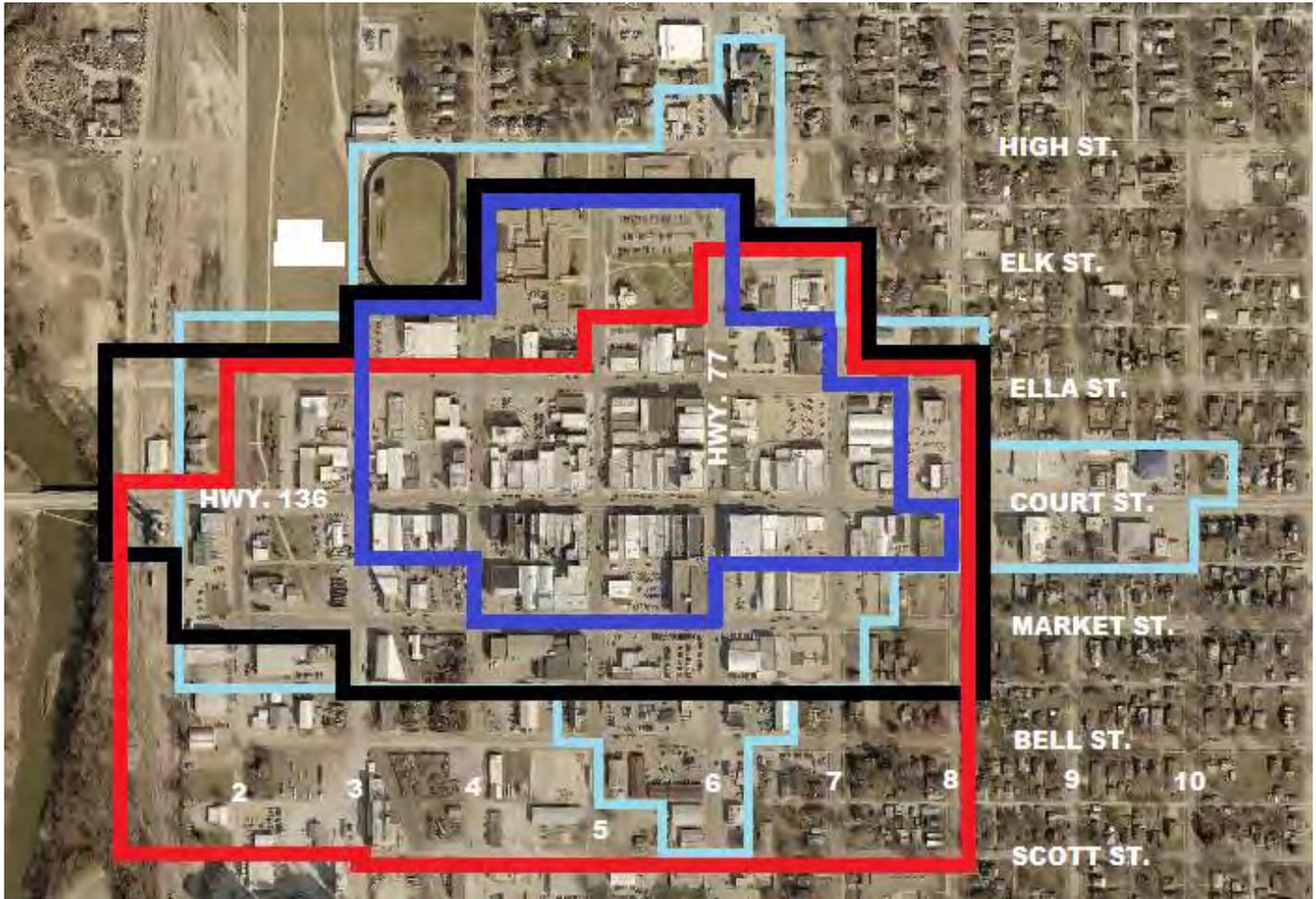
Several of these late 1800 to early 1900 single and multi-story commercial buildings in Downtown Beatrice have deteriorated to the point of needing moderate or even substantial rehabilitation. The Beatrice CRA and City Council, completed in 1999 and amended in 2006, declared the Downtown as “blighted” and “substandard” in accordance with the provisions of the **Nebraska Community Development Law**.

The provisions of the **Development Law** allow Beatrice to utilize TIF as an incentive to rehabilitate Blighted and Substandard conditions in designated areas of a Community. The **Downtown Revitalization Project Area**, with the exception of several municipal buildings along the north boundary of the **Project Area**, is located within this Redevelopment Area.

Additionally, TIF can be utilized as an incentive to demolish buildings that have deteriorated to the point of not being cost effective to rehabilitate. TIF can also be used to finance certain portions of new building developments. A new building can generate its own TIF by increasing the amount of property taxes paid on a vacant or newly vacant lot for use on public improvements for development. New construction in Downtown can use TIF on the front facade to increase its compatibility with the existing building characteristics.

DOWNTOWN JURISDICTIONS MAP

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT AREA
BEATRICE, NEBRASKA



LEGEND

- DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT-PHASE I BOUNDARY
- REDEVELOPMENT AREA BOUNDARY
- DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- MAIN STREET BEATRICE BOUNDARY

HANNA-KEELAN ASSOCIATES, P.C.
COMMUNITY PLANNING & RESEARCH

SCHEMMER
ARCHITECTS | ENGINEERS | PLANNERS

ILLUSTRATION 4.2

FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Overview:

Downtown Beatrice has a significant collection of historic buildings, as evidenced by the recent listing on the National Register of Historic Places. The Beatrice Downtown Historic District was designated by the National Park Service. Nearly all of the structures within the boundary of the District are classified as “Contributing,” which offers potential benefits to property owners who are interested in making improvements.



Court Street, south side half block, 5th Street at left.

A key concern is the current appearance of buildings located downtown. A Façade Improvement Program was identified by local citizens as a priority project for Downtown Beatrice through numerous and various outreach and public input opportunities.

The highest number of survey respondents felt that if money is available, it should be spent on restoration and/or preservation of historic Downtown buildings. These objectives are complimentary. If the outward appearance of the Downtown is improved, then one should expect an increase in businesses interested in the location, as well as long-term business retention. A Façade Improvement Program also has the benefit of impacting the whole Downtown over time, in a multi-phase, methodical process of improvement.

Facade Design Standards:

The majority of buildings in the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area** are also within the Historic District. For those buildings, which are designated as “Contributing” to the Historic District and willing to participate in a Façade Improvement program, they must adhere to the National Park Service’s guidelines for rehabilitation, restoration, or preservation for proposed improvements, when federal or state funds are sought.

Improvements to buildings which are outside the Historic District but within the **Project Area**, may take greater liberties in design, as they would be governed only by local zoning and building codes. These buildings are not likely to be prioritized for funding in a Façade Improvement Program.

Funding:

If the city embarks on a Façade Improvement Program for **Phase II** of the **Beatrice Downtown Revitalization Project**, the criteria for selection, application and guidelines will be determined and owners who apply and are successful will receive some amount of matching funds for their project (specifics are not germane to **Phase I**, or this report). In addition to this funding, building owners should consider and be encouraged to apply for both federal and state historic tax incentive programs. The city may also find it advantageous to implement a Tax Increment Financing plan for downtown facades.

Downtown businesses located within the boundary of the Beatrice Historic District also have the potential of accessing Historic Preservation Tax Credits (HPTC) to assist in façade improvements or the restoration of the entire building. TIF, HPTC and **Phase II** CDBG funding through the **Downtown Revitalization Project** also have the potential of being combined to greatly assist building owners to revitalize their buildings.

The completed National Register of Historic Places Registration Form that was used to nominate the Beatrice Downtown Historic District is a resource for building owners seeking either the 20 percent Federal Historic Tax Credit or the Nebraska Historic Tax Credit. Information regarding these programs is noted below.

NPS Tax Incentives for Preserving Historic Properties:

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/tax-incentives.htm>

Secretary's Standards for Rehabilitation:

<https://www.nps.gov/tps/standards/rehabilitation.htm>

Nebraska Historic Tax Credit:

<http://www.nebraskahistory.org/histpres/nhtc.htm>

UPPER-LEVEL MIXED USE AND HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Increasing the amount of available housing types throughout the entire **Downtown Revitalization Project Area** is vitally important in making the Downtown a “living commercial center.” Attendees of the Open House Meetings and members of the Revitalization Steering Committee focused on tendency of retail businesses to close after 5:00 p.m. and the resulting lack of activity in the Downtown during the evening hours. The potential of having more residents Downtown, coupled with the expansion of business hours was suggested as a means to expand “nightlife” of activity in the Downtown.

The recently completed *Gage County & Communities, Nebraska County-Wide Housing Study with Strategies for Affordable Housing* identified a need for 223 total housing units in the City of Beatrice by 2021. This includes 108 owner and 115 rental housing units. Living in Downtown Beatrice would be a popular housing option for young professionals and families in Beatrice. This trend is projected to continue to remain true during the next 10 years.

An “**Economic Redevelopment Initiative**” for Downtown Beatrice is included with this **Downtown Revitalization Project-Phase I**. Of the 223 total housing units needed for Beatrice in the next five years, an estimated 34 units should be designated for the Downtown. This includes 10 owner and 24 rental housing units, or an estimated 15.2 percent of the total City housing demand. An estimated development cost of \$8.6 Million is needed to achieve this housing development goal. Creating housing opportunities in the Downtown not only boosts the existing tax base of the City as a whole, but also create a dense, more thriving environment with greater utilization of local businesses and the potential to reduce vehicular traffic in the Downtown.

The 34 total units would comprise an estimated 44,000 square feet that could be utilized for both, the development of new owner and rental housing or the rehabilitation of existing residential housing units, specifically those located in the upper levels of existing commercial buildings. The creation of housing in Downtown would have an impact on the development of local economics, including the creation of additional commercial entities, including retail shops, specialized services, restaurants, entertainment venues and municipal entities. An estimated additional 13,000 square feet of commercial space could be created as part of a residential/commercial mixed use development project in Downtown Beatrice.

Additional information regarding an “**Economic Redevelopment Initiative**” for Downtown Beatrice is included in **Appendix III** of this **Downtown Revitalization Project-Phase I**.

Several funding and development opportunities are available in Downtown Beatrice. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is available throughout the Downtown and would greatly benefit the upgrade of existing public infrastructure and utilities, as well as building façade improvement projects in an effort to create an efficiently functioning environment.

Beatrice Main Street estimates that 90,000 square feet of potential residential and commercial space is available for purchase in 19 properties in Downtown. Additionally, an estimated nine vacant properties are not for sale or not marketable in the Downtown and remain, today, as underutilized and economically obsolescent properties in need of moderate to substantial rehabilitation.

Gage Area Growth Enterprise, the local economic development corporation, is in the process of submitting and collecting proposals for the rehabilitation of seven Downtown buildings including the creation of new housing opportunities. These buildings were selected for their potential to readily support the development of mixed-use commercial/residential with first floors.



NW Corner of 4th & Court Streets.



SE Corner of 6th & Court Streets.



South Side Ella Street, between 5th & 6th.



SW Corner of 6th and Ella Streets.



SE Corner of 3rd and Court Streets.



SW Corner of 4th and Court Streets.



SW Corner of 5th and Court Streets.

BUSINESS RETENTION, RECRUITMENT & EXPANSION.

The need for business retention, recruitment and expansion evolved from **Phase I** planning activities. Ideas included business development and assistance in acquiring Local, State and Federal sources of funding for business retention and expansion. Programs such as conventional financing from local banks, membership in local organizations such as Chamber of Commerce, Service Clubs, CDBG Economic Development Program Funds and/or CDBG reuse funds from previous local projects that repaid low-interest loans, TIF, USDA-RD Grants and Low Interest Loans, as well as the Rural Enterprise Assistance Project Loans are a few funding sources available to assist in new and improved business ventures in Beatrice.

The **Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP)** is a program designed to strengthen rural communities through small, self-employed business development. The program is based upon four essential services, including the financing of micro loans, business training, technical assistance and networking. REAP provides assistance to create a business plan, research potential markets and marketing ideas, discuss management issues with experienced business specialists, and to apply for a small business loan.

Business development, retention and expansion are important issues to the leadership of Beatrice and the overall sustainability of the Community. Downtown Beatrice should be targeted for activities, including funding for a job training and business owner development program to assist with enhancing the local workforce and the expansion of both facility and capital assets for targeted businesses.

COMMUNITY GATHERING / FESTIVAL SPACE.

Phase I Planning participants focused on the historical significance of the Downtown and the need to make it a desired destination by both residents and visitors. The importance of Downtown to the Community could be expanded with the development of a permanent “Community festival space,” for special events (craft or art shows), outdoor farmer’s market or concerts. The **2011 Downtown Revitalization Project** focused redevelopment efforts on the one block area of 5th Street, between Court and Ella Streets.



New color-tinted sidewalks and streets, planters, light poles, pedestal clock and brick sculpture/seating fixtures were all components of the block improvement. Several Communities in Nebraska have also created “themes” to attract travelers and visitors. Annual festivals and cultural events, designation as “Nebraska’s Fourth of July, Christmas or Easter City” have proven to be successful attractions for other Nebraska Communities. However, instead of one-time annual events, the **Beatrice Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee** suggested that the Community needs a designated gathering or festival space to repeatedly attract visitors to the Downtown, especially after 5:00 pm and throughout the early evening hours.

The core of the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area** exists today as the center of retail commerce and entertainment. Suggestions for Community event space in the Downtown included:

- An outdoor event/festival space should be centrally located within the Downtown commercial area to benefit evening hour business.
- Increased pedestrian foot traffic is needed to support existing and new businesses in the Downtown including night clubs, brew pubs and restaurants.

The potential of temporarily or permanently converting a parking lot to an event space or a public plaza was discussed by the Steering Committee. Existing parking areas behind the Court Street Corridor were considered too small and would also would quickly be outgrown.

- Two different event spaces could be utilized. The public parking lot at the southeast corner of the intersection of 4th and Ella Street, for example, could be utilized as a flexible parking / event space. Monthly, or even weekly smaller scale events could be held in the evening, while during day-time hours parking could still be located in the lot. This location is reasonable for its proximity to Downtown businesses and to the City Auditorium and vacant area to the west that is proposed as a large Community festival space. These two locations are also within line-of-sight of one another.
- The large grass covered vacant tract of land located on the north side of Ella Street, west of the City Auditorium and Middle School track and football field was identified by the Revitalization Steering Committee as a potential large scale Community Festival Space. The Homestead Trail runs along the west side of this tract of land, providing hiker/biker access to the site.



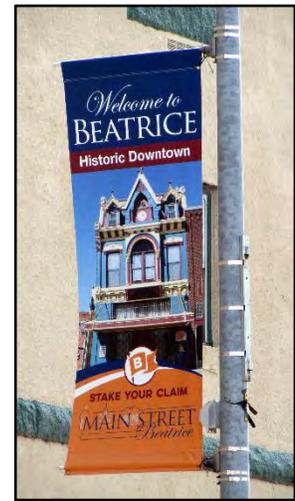
SIGNAGE AND MARKETING.

Locational, or Wayfinding Signage.

Arrival and welcome signage to Beatrice at the five entry points to the City, along the Highway 4, 77 and 136 Corridors, are recommended to create a sense of place and arrival. Secondly, Downtown Beatrice is in need of smaller scale welcoming signage, similar to the style established by current pole banner signs.

Street/pedestrian lighting.

A historically accurate “cast-iron” combination street/pedestrian lighting and signage plaques would visually increase interest to the center of the City. The existing cast-iron street lights serve as a model for additional directional and welcoming signage, such as those designed for the City of Raleigh, North Carolina, identified below.



Existing historic pedestrian light pole in Downtown Beatrice.

Examples of cast-iron street signage poles and directional signage from Raleigh, North Carolina are recommended to be utilized as models for wayfinding signage with Downtown Beatrice.

SECTION 5: Downtown Infrastructure Review & Report.



SECTION 5

DOWNTOWN INFRASTRUCTURE

REVIEW & REPORT.

IDENTIFICATION OF PRIORITY PROJECTS.

The City of Beatrice continues to improve public works infrastructure in the Downtown. Multiple projects are in various stages of development including restoration of the brick street along North 2nd Street between Court and Ella Streets. In addition, the City is intending to improve North 2nd Street, north of Ella Street. The City has also invested in the trail system in the Downtown, having constructed a trailhead along North 2nd Street north of Court Street in recent years.

The City of Beatrice recently upgraded North 5th Street from Court Street to Ella Street. This street project provided improved pedestrian access, reconstructed parking and streetscape enhancements to the Downtown. The project has also attracted street vendors and improved retail opportunities in this portion of the Downtown.

In July 2016, Schemmer conducted a visual inspection of the Downtown streets, sidewalks and alley pavement conditions. Various Board of Public Works Employees provided understanding to the condition of the below ground infrastructure in the Downtown. Based on that research, Schemmer identified the following infrastructure improvement needs for the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area**.

Streets: Based on visual inspection the following street segments appear to be in greatest need of rehabilitation. **Illustration 5.1** highlights these street segments. **Phase II funding** could potentially address the rehabilitation of these identified streets.

Ella Street, North 2nd Street to North 4th Street:

A portion of Ella Street, from North 2nd Street to North 3rd Street, is partially barricaded to through traffic, should the City decide to open the street and provide greater access to the improved 2nd Street corridor, street improvements would be required. The portion of Ella Street from North 3rd Street to North 4th Street is showing significant cracking and will require resurfacing in the near future. This section also serves as the westbound truck route causing it to deteriorate more quickly than other segments. **Estimated Project Cost: \$100,000.**

South 4th Street from Court Street to Market Street:

This portion of 4th Street is showing significant deterioration and is in need of resurfacing. **Estimated Project Cost: \$60,000.**

Market Street from South 4th Street to South 5th Street:

This portion of Market Street is showing significant deterioration and is in need of resurfacing. This stretch of Market Street serves as the truck route for a portion of Highway 77, as well as Highways 4 and 136 and may deteriorate more quickly than the other street segments that do not carry the marked truck route. **Estimated Project Cost: \$60,000.**

South 5th Street from Court Street to Market Street:

This portion of 5th Street is showing significant deterioration and is in need of resurfacing. **Estimated Project Cost: \$60,000.**

8th Street from Ella Street to Market Street:

This portion of 8th Street is showing significant deterioration and is in need of resurfacing. **Estimated Project Cost: \$100,000.**

**POTENTIAL STREET CONSTRUCTION LOCATIONS
BEATRICE, NEBRASKA
2026**

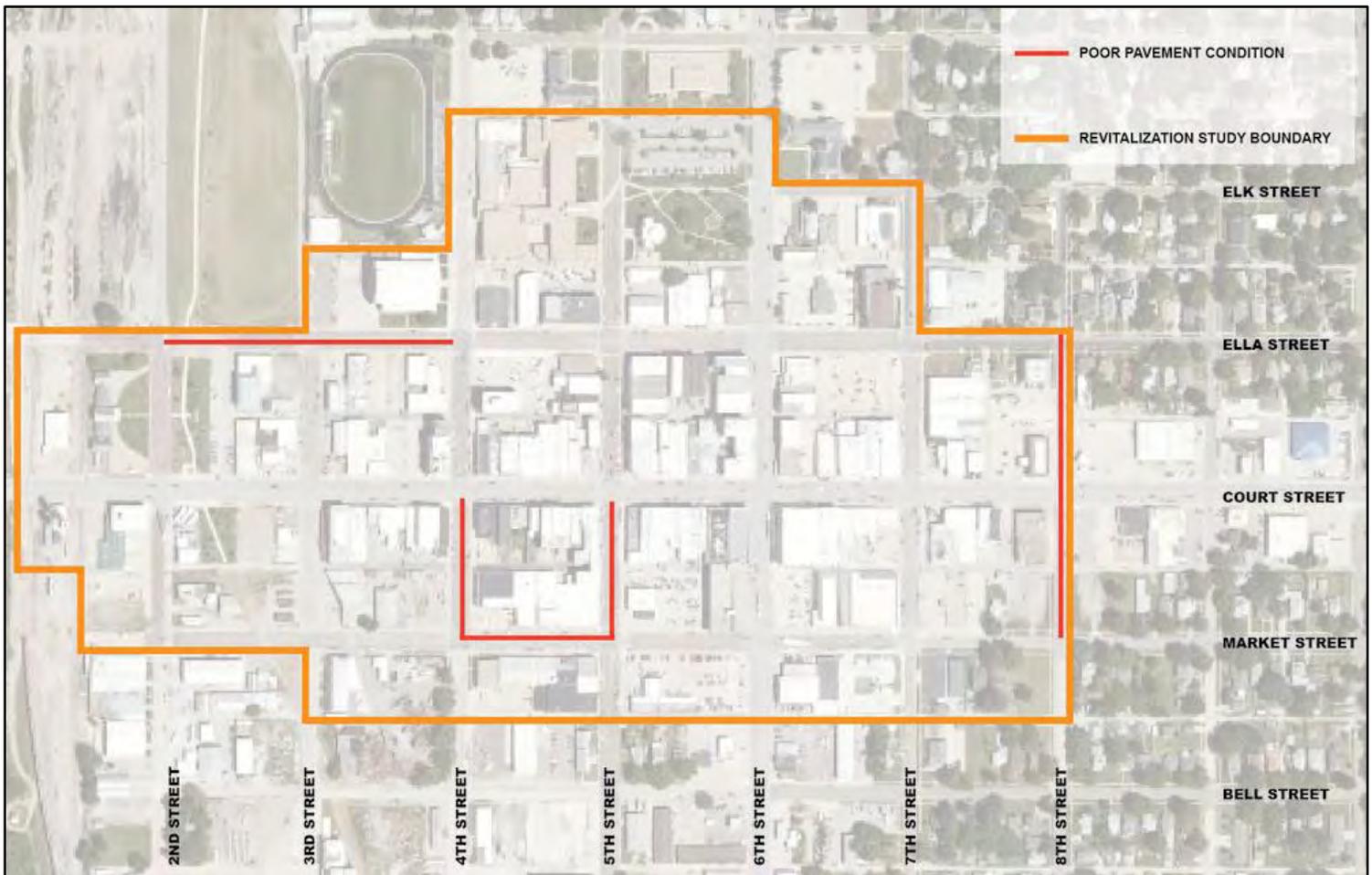


ILLUSTRATION 5.1

Alleys: The City has been proactive in repairing the alleys in the Downtown over the last 10 years. Within the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area**, only two alleys were identified to be considered for new pavement. The two alleys include 5th to 6th Streets between Court Street and Market Street, as well as the alley from 2nd to 3rd Streets between Court and Market Streets. **Phase II funding** could potentially address the improvement of these two alleys.

Water mains: Based on conversations with Board of Public Works employees, there are numerous water mains in the Downtown that are near 100 years old and should be replaced. **Illustration 5.2** highlights the water main segments for replacement. **Phase II funding** could potentially address the rehabilitation of these water mains. A listing of the water main segments and associated costs are as follows:

- ◆ South 2nd Street from Court to Bell Streets (**\$118,000**) *already budgeted by City.*
- ◆ Ella Street from North 2nd Street to North 4th Street (**\$160,000**).
- ◆ Market Street from South 2nd Street to South 6th Street (**\$320,000**).
- ◆ 4th Street from Ella Street to Market Street (**\$160,000**).
- ◆ Court Street from 4th Street to 10th Street (**\$480,000**).

**POTENTIAL WATER MAIN REPLACEMENT LOCATIONS
BEATRICE, NEBRASKA
2026**

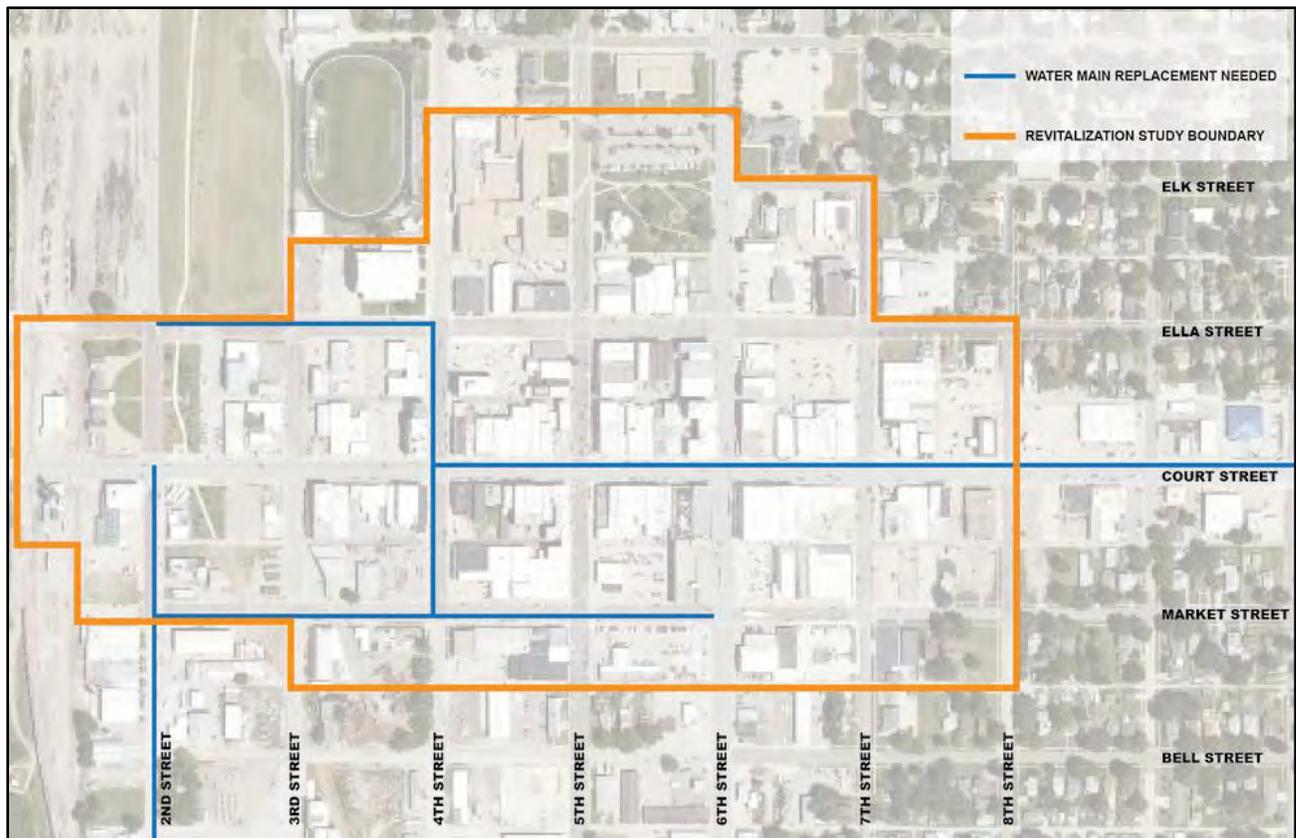


ILLUSTRATION 5.2

Sidewalks: The condition of sidewalks in Downtown Beatrice are variable. In many locations, the building basements extend into the street right-of-way beneath the sidewalks, causing significant settlement of the sidewalks. A visual inspection was conducted on the sidewalks in the Project Area. **Illustration 5.3** highlights the sidewalks in greatest need of replacement. Developing cost estimates for replacing these sidewalks would require more in-depth study on a case-by-case basis, due to the potential structural improvements that may be needed in the basements of the buildings. It is recommended that the City develop a GIS map of the Downtown documenting the locations where the basements extend into the street right-of-way. This information would assist the City in estimating future infrastructure costs for sidewalk replacement, as well as identify potential conflicts with other proposed subsurface utility projects by either the City or private utility companies. **Phase II funding** could potentially replace a portion of the sidewalks identified, with specific focus on the locations where structural support is already present.

**POTENTIAL SIDEWALK REPLACEMENT LOCATIONS
BEATRICE, NEBRASKA
2026**

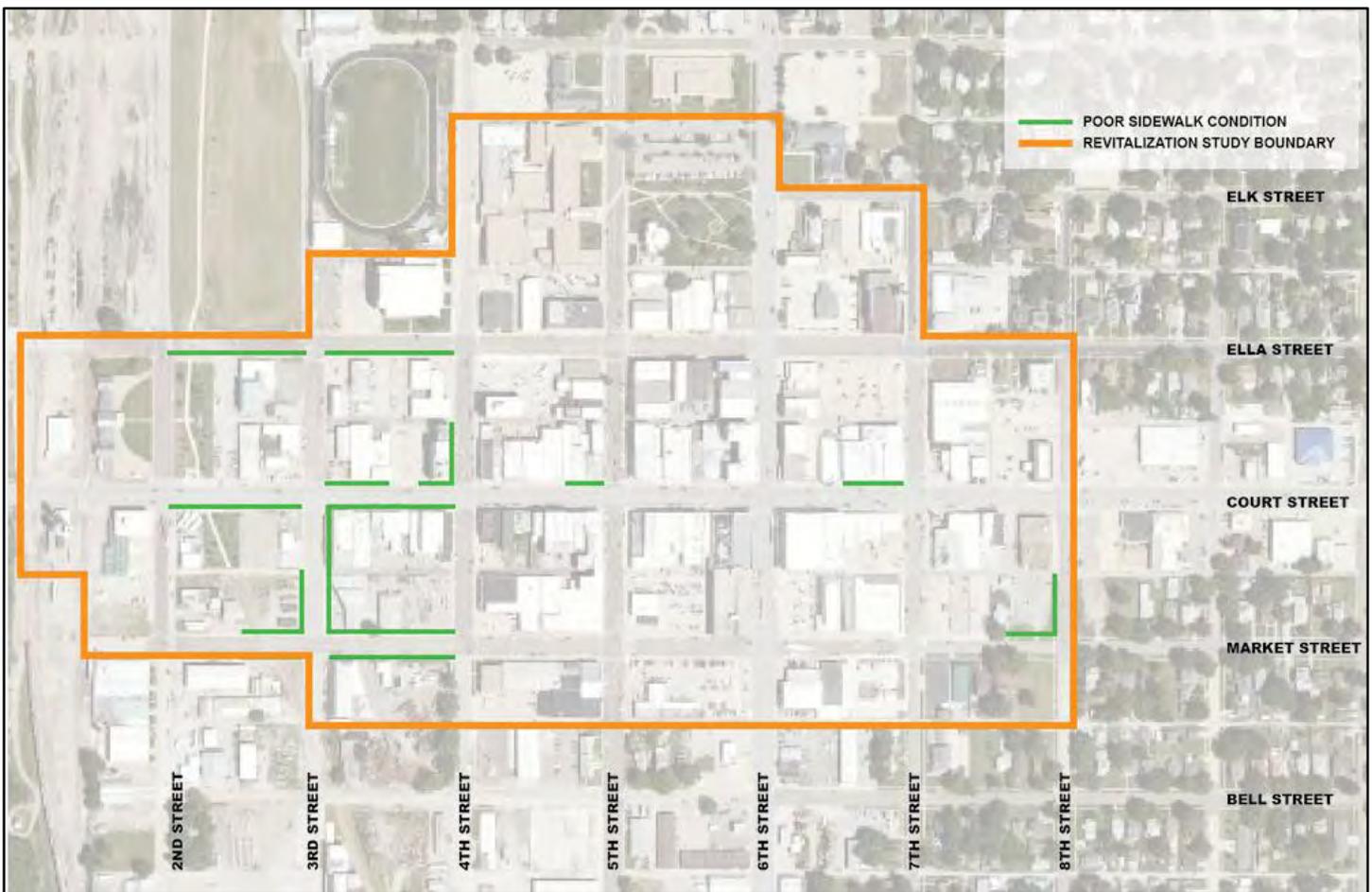


ILLUSTRATION 5.3

Trails: The City of Beatrice is in the process of developing a loop trail around the City. One strategic piece of the trail that would benefit the Downtown is the connection of the trail from just south of the intersection of Highway 77 and Perkins Street, northwest to just east of the intersection of 2nd and Court Streets. This will provide a vital link in the trail system and provide greater access for pedestrians and bicyclists to access existing and future attractions in downtown Beatrice. The City currently has \$264,000 budgeted for this project. **Phase II funding** could be used to assist in the construction of a portion of this trail. **Illustration 5.4** highlights the location of the proposed trail extension.

TRAIL EXPANSION LOCATIONS BEATRICE, NEBRASKA 2026

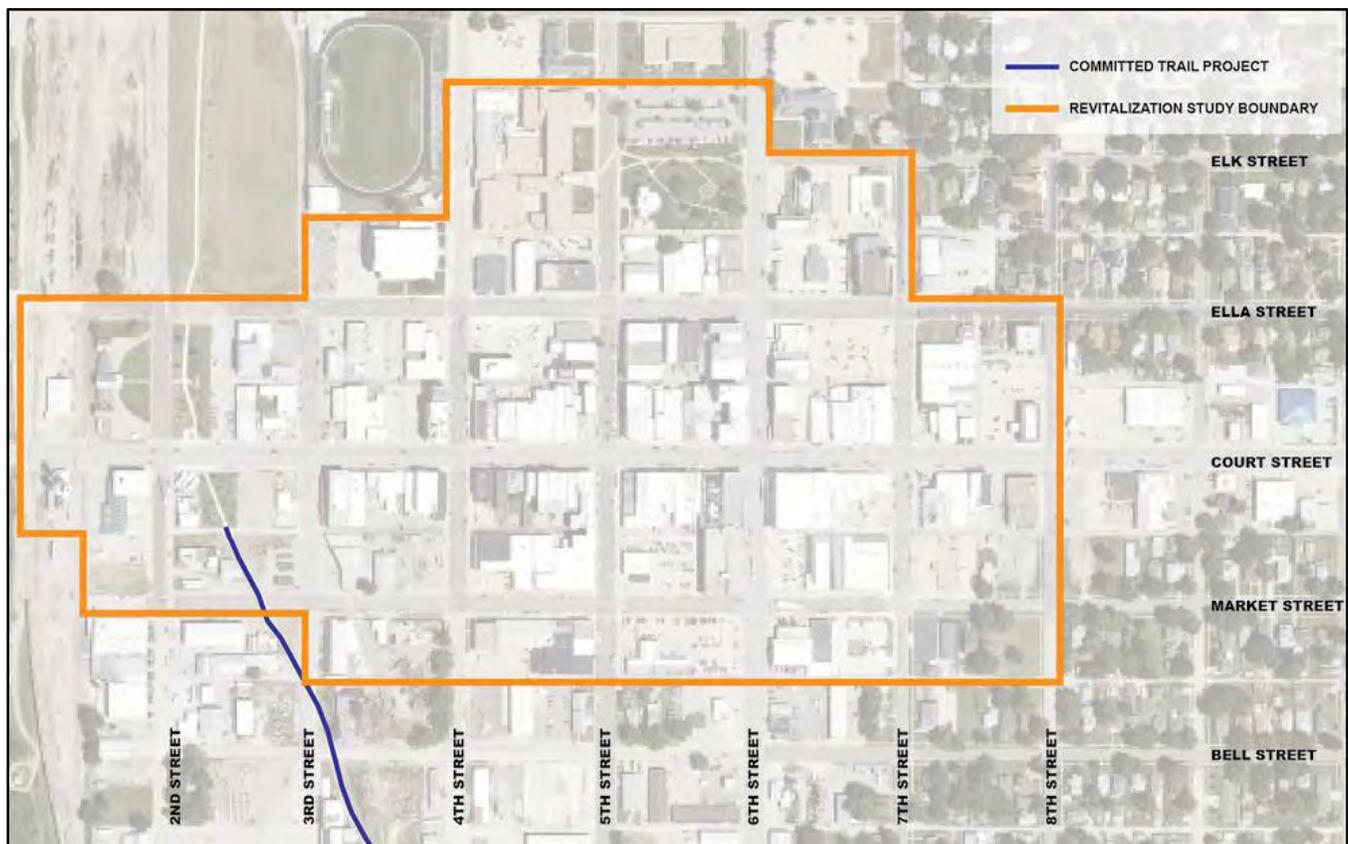


ILLUSTRATION 5.4

Parking: In the **2011 Downtown Revitalization Study** prepared for the City of Beatrice, analysis indicated a demand for additional parking spaces in the Downtown. In discussions with the Steering Committee, along with observation of existing on- and off-street parking during a mid-week noon hour, significant open parking stalls are available in the Downtown. During discussion with business owners during the public meeting, it was discussed that business owners should require their employees to park away from the businesses to allow customers greater opportunity to park adjacent to the business. It is not recommended to construct additional parking at this time.

ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SYSTEMS.

The potential of utilizing “Net Metering” as a means of lowering the cost of utility rates to individual buildings and businesses throughout the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area** was seen as having potential. Nebraska State Statutes §70-2001 to §70-2005 referring to Net Metering require local electricity providers to purchase any extra electricity generated by the individual property owner exceeding their usage need. Reducing energy costs by utilizing alternative energy sources is one of the popular responses of the **Downtown Beatrice “Vision” Wants and Needs Surveys** by both the **Business/Property Owners** and the **Beatrice Citizens**.



“Net Metering” allows individual residential and businesses owners the ability to utilize one or any combination of six alternative energy sources to lower, or even eliminate their reliance on publicly provided electrical service. The six energy sources include Wind, Solar, Biomass, Hydropower, Geothermal and Methane. If the individual owner is capable of producing more electricity than they can use, the public electrical service provider must purchase the extra generated amount of electricity from the individual.

The **Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee** had discussions in regard to applications that are compatible for use in commercial areas. Wind applications centered on recently developed variations of helix wind turbines that spin on a vertical axis, as opposed to the traditional horizontal axis windmill turbines. This was due to the potential of placing several smaller helix wind turbines on rooftops of commercial and public buildings.

The same rationale was used in discussions of utilizing solar array panels singularly and in combination with helix wind turbines, again in rooftop applications.



Joint or District Specific Alternative Energy System - The United States Department of Agriculture provides Energy Grants to rural businesses (in Communities of less than 50,000 population), up to a maximum of \$500,000, for renewable energy projects. The Nebraska Office of the USDA provides funding for-profit corporations, represented by Downtown businesses. For example, funding for a single geothermal exchange project providing heating and cooling to area businesses. The Nebraska Energy Office also provides low interest loans for individual business applications of alternative energy wind and solar systems. An additional funding source could potentially be the Rural Energy for America Program.

Many individual examples exist of residential and commercial property application of alternative energy developments. Several Communities have recently developed systems to be utilized in Downtown settings to benefit all businesses by reducing electric utility costs.

Case Studies in Reduction of Energy Consumption - The Communities of Woodbine and West Union, Iowa, serve as case studies of “Main Street” towns that were designated as pilot Communities by the Iowa Economic Development Authority for a “Green Streets Initiative”. This award was made through the Community Development Block Grant’s Downtown Revitalization Fund and Community Sustainability Program. Each Town experimented with measures to achieve sustainability and serve as models for other Communities of Iowa.

Woodbine, Iowa developed a sustainable master plan, to incorporate energy-efficiency improvements, Downtown revitalization, and beautification and streetscape improvements. Energy audits were conducted of all the Downtown commercial businesses and provided incentives to reduce utility bills by completing weatherization improvements, programmable thermostats, motion sensor lighting in different areas of the stores, and improved HVAC maintenance, operation and procedures.

Woodbine will also be replacing aging infrastructure (water, storm and sanitary sewers, streets and sidewalks) using environmentally friendly materials. Techniques including porous pavement, rainwater harvesting and reuse, storm water retention techniques such as bio-swales and geothermal exchange project utilizing renewable energy sources for radiant snow melt infrastructure.

West Union, Iowa will be utilizing a shared Geothermal Exchange project to provide affordable heating and cooling to all businesses. All buildings received a “stub line” accessing the new system at no cost for the infrastructure and then can participate in the program for greatly reduced heating and cooling costs.

Additionally, similar to Woodbine, West Union performed energy audits throughout the Downtown and 70 businesses took advantage of the opportunity to implement energy-efficient replacements of old doors and windows, and replacing outdated appliances, such as walk in coolers and refrigerators with energy star efficient ones. A rain garden and bio retention cell demonstration site in Downtown West Union was also created to serve as a “hands-on” lab for area students.

To date, West Union has secured more than \$5 million in grants to partially fund the \$8.6 million project.

**SECTION 6:
Downtown Action Plan &
Priorities.**



SECTION 6

DOWNTOWN ACTION PLAN & PRIORITIES.

PRIORITY #1: FACADE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM & HISTORIC PRESERVATION.

Facade Materials, Aesthetics, Conditions & Needs.

The building façades of Downtown Beatrice are largely masonry, most of which are brick and stone. There is an abundance of original, ornate detailing, especially above the street level. The ornamentation materials include terra cotta, stone and concrete and is found at cornices and window surrounds. These extant architectural elements provide a visual reference to the era of construction of most buildings and are of great visual interest and appeal. They create character and reflect the historic nature of the Downtown as a whole.



Court Street, north side half block, 5th Street at right

Ground level storefronts are rarely original nor are they designed to be respectful of the building's age and architecture. Similarly, a sensitivity to awnings and signage that is compatible with historic architecture is lacking and largely nonexistent. While original ornamentation is intact, the windows that it often surrounds are boarded or infilled in some manner, reflecting vacant space and inactivity above street level.

A Facade Improvement Program should have a goal of addressing and correcting the identified issues. It will identify appropriate and reasonable responses to materials, color, windows and storefronts, ornamentation, awnings and signage. It should prioritize projects that are historically significant and contributing to the Historic District and it should ensure funding is allocated to structures that are sound and do not have greater underlying problems such as a lack of structural integrity. Projects with a long term approach to improvements should be encouraged to ensure public trust in the process and results, and that the limited resources are wisely allocated.

A successful Program includes the following key factors:

- **Communication:** public outreach and education of the Program must be clear, accessible, and on-going.
- **Simplicity:** the application and review process should be simple so that property owners are interested in participating and encouraged to do so.
- **Design:** requirements need to offer options to approach so that they can be reasonably accomplished with limited funds, which will also enable more projects to be funded.
- **Flexibility & Fairness:** each property will have unique issues and attributes and the Program should be flexible enough to address each case, while also judging each within the parameters of the requirements to ensure a fair process and outcome.
- **Limited:** this is a Façade Improvement Program, not a code or structural improvement or roof replacement program.
- **Success:** ultimately, projects need to be selected that have the greatest chance of success in all respects.

Page 6.3 highlights a series of illustrations of the building at 502 Court Street. The images depict a historic photograph (obtained from the Gage County Historical Society), a current photo of the building and a depiction of completed facade improvements. The Court Street facade of this dual frontage corner building has been enhanced with new second level windows and a new first floor commercial storefront including clerestory windows and first level entryway. The 5th Street façade reflects current conditions to depict the contrast between completed improvement on the Court Street façade. Overall façade improvement analysis should also include the following:

- Structural analysis of the integrity the building.
- Masonry tuck pointing to prevent water and moisture intrusion.
- Limestone cleaning to return the stone façade to its original appearance.
- Cornice repair and painting.
- Canopy repair and painting.
- Analysis of the integrity of the hollow sidewalks.

Estimated costs of the façade improvement process: \$95 to \$110/square foot. This includes potential cost of new energy efficient windows that replicate the original window and door configurations.



Past.

Present.



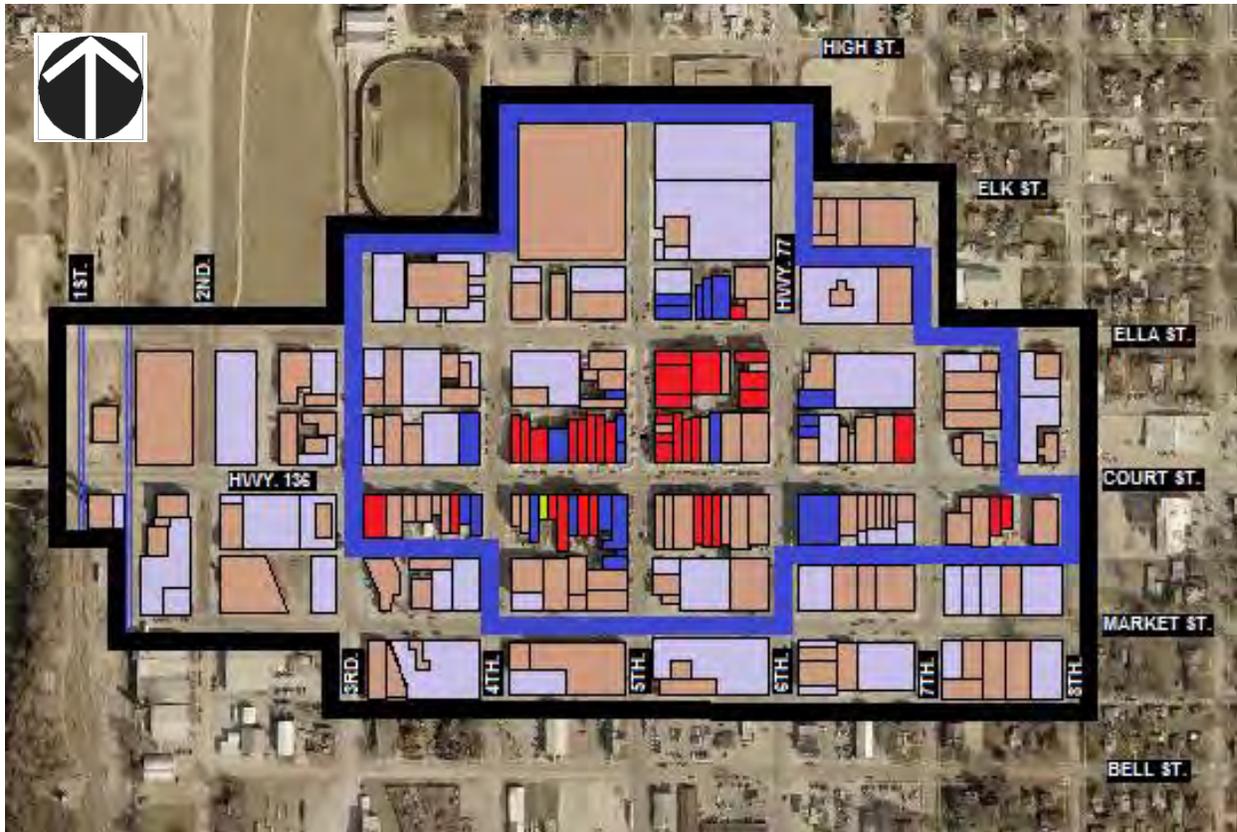
Future.

Target Areas/Building Facade Improvements.

Illustration 6.1 identifies example **Target Areas and Buildings** in Downtown Beatrice for implementation of a **Facade Improvement Program**. Primary and Secondary buildings are identified for their historic and visual importance to the character of Downtown Beatrice. **Red** highlighted buildings are of “**Primary**” importance for the high degree of architectural building components that still exist in these structures. Tin cornices, pediment roof lines of false-front buildings, boarded up window openings that retain their original sills and headers. These building components are also accentuated with late 18th and early 19th Century architectural styles such as Italianate, Richardsonian Romanesque and Victorian to name a few.

“**Secondary**” buildings, highlighted in **blue**, are multi-level buildings that have lost the majority of their original architectural elements. Retrofitted reduced height windows and facades lacking any embellishments beyond masonry or stucco facades. A few of these buildings have 1950s and 1960s era metal panels covering the original facades in an effort to “modernize” and streamline the original facade. Façade improvements to these buildings would make dramatic transformations, but would also be significantly more expensive to return them to their original appearance, more similar of the primary identified buildings.

FACADE IMPROVEMENTS MAP
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT AREA
 BEATRICE, NEBRASKA



LEGEND

- BUILDING FOOTPRINTS
- PARCEL / LOT
- PRIMARY IMPORTANT BUILDINGS
- SECONDARY IMPORTANT BUILDINGS
- IDENTIFIED FOR DEMOLITION/REPLACEMENT
- DOWNTOWN HISTORIC DISTRICT BOUNDARY
- DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT BOUNDARY

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

SCHEMMER
 ARCHITECTS | ENGINEERS | PLANNERS

ILLUSTRATION 6.1

Downtown Entrance Orientation & Signage Recommendations.

The State of Nebraska adheres to the Highway Beautification Act. Since the highway right-of-way in Downtown Beatrice extends in general to the face of the buildings, any physical structure (i.e. sign, awning, planter, bench, etc.) that extends beyond the building face would require coordination with the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR). The permits officer for NDOR District 1 must approve an encroachment permit for any structure within NDOR highway right-of-way. Therefore, businesses that front U.S. Highway 136 and U.S. Highway 77 in the Downtown would require coordination with NDOR District 1 permits officer when proposing to modify or add a physical object in the highway right-of-way. According to the District 1 permits officer, the signed highway truck routes along Market Street, Ella Street, 2nd Street, 3rd Street and 7th Street would not require an encroachment permit from NDOR.

General guidance for the physical objects does not allow interference with movement of pedestrians and vehicles using the highway right-of-way. In general, signs and awnings cannot overhang past the roadway curb and require adequate vertical clearance to allow pedestrians to walk beneath them. In addition, NDOR discourages the use of electronic signs that may interfere with the driver. All signs must advertise only goods and services for the business it is assigned to.

PRIORITY #2: INFRASTRUCTURE IMPROVEMENTS/UPGRADES.

In July, 2016, Schemmer Associates conducted a visual inspection of the Downtown streets, sidewalks and alley pavement conditions. Meetings with various Board of Public Works employees were conducted to gain an understanding of the condition of the below ground infrastructure in the Downtown. Schemmer identified the following infrastructure improvements needs for the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area**.

Streets:

Phase II funding could potentially address the rehabilitation of these identified streets.

Ella Street:

- 2nd Street to 3rd Street.
- 3rd Street to 4th Street. Estimated Project Cost: \$100,000

4th Street:

- Court to Market Streets. Estimated Project Cost: \$60,000

Market Street:

- 4th Street to 5th Street. Estimated Project Cost: \$60,000

5th Street from Court Street to Market Street:

- Court to Market Streets. Estimated Project Cost: \$60,000

8th Street from Ella Street to Market Street:

- Ella to Market Streets. Estimated Project Cost: \$100,000



Sidewalks: The condition of the sidewalks in Downtown Beatrice are variable throughout the area. In many locations, the building basements extend into the street right-of-way beneath the sidewalks causing significant settlement of the sidewalks. **Developing cost estimates for replacing these sidewalks would require more in-depth study on a case-by-case basis due to the potential structural improvements that may be needed in the basements of the buildings.**

It is recommended that the City develop a GIS map of the Downtown area documenting the locations where the basements extend under sidewalks, into the street right-of-way. **Phase II** funding could potentially assist in the cost to replace sidewalks, however the total cost to address sidewalks throughout the Downtown substantially exceeds this funding source.



Water mains: Numerous water mains in the Downtown are near 100 years old and should be replaced. **Phase II** funding could potentially address the rehabilitation of the following water mains:

- 2nd Street: from Court to Bell Streets (\$118,000) *city budgeted*
- Ella Street from 2nd Street to 4th Street (\$160,000)
- Market Street from 2nd Street to 6th Street (\$320,000)
- 4th Street from Ella Street to Market Street (\$160,000)
- Court Street from 4th Street to 10th Street (\$480,000)

Trails: Connect the Trail that ends at the intersection of Highway 77 and Perkins Street to the end of the Homestead Trail at the intersection of 2nd and Court Streets. The City currently has \$264,000 budgeted for this project. **Phase II funding could be used to assist in the construction of a portion of this trail.**

Parking: The 2011 Downtown Revitalization Study, prepared for the City of Beatrice, indicated a demand for additional parking spaces in the Downtown area. Discussions with the **Steering Committee** for the current study, along with parking observation analysis, indicated that significant open parking stalls are available in the Downtown. At certain times of the day, customers may need to walk a block or two from the parking stall to the destination.

During discussion with business owners during the Downtown Open House meetings, attendees indicated employees need to park in off-street parking lots. On street parking spaces should be reserved for customers providing better access to business. **It is not recommended to construct additional parking at this time.**

PRIORITY #3: HOUSING IN DOWNTOWN BEATRICE.

The core of Downtown Beatrice is the center for local and regional business, commerce, social entertainment and City government. **Phase I** planning activities in Beatrice have advocated and recommended the expansion of housing opportunities.

High density living can be made available in the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area** and can be attractive to singles and older adults. Housing developed close to shopping and services fits the lifestyle of many small town residents.

Living in Downtown Beatrice is a popular housing option for young professionals and families in Beatrice. This trend is projected to continue to remain true during the next five years.

- **34 units of additional housing should be targeted in the Downtown.** This includes **10 owner** and **24 rental housing units**.
- The **34 total units** would comprise an estimated **44,000 square feet** that could be utilized for both, the development of new owner and rental housing or the rehabilitation of existing residential housing units, specifically those located in the upper levels of existing commercial buildings.
- An estimated additional 13,000 square feet of commercial space could be created as part of a residential/commercial mixed use development project in Downtown Beatrice.

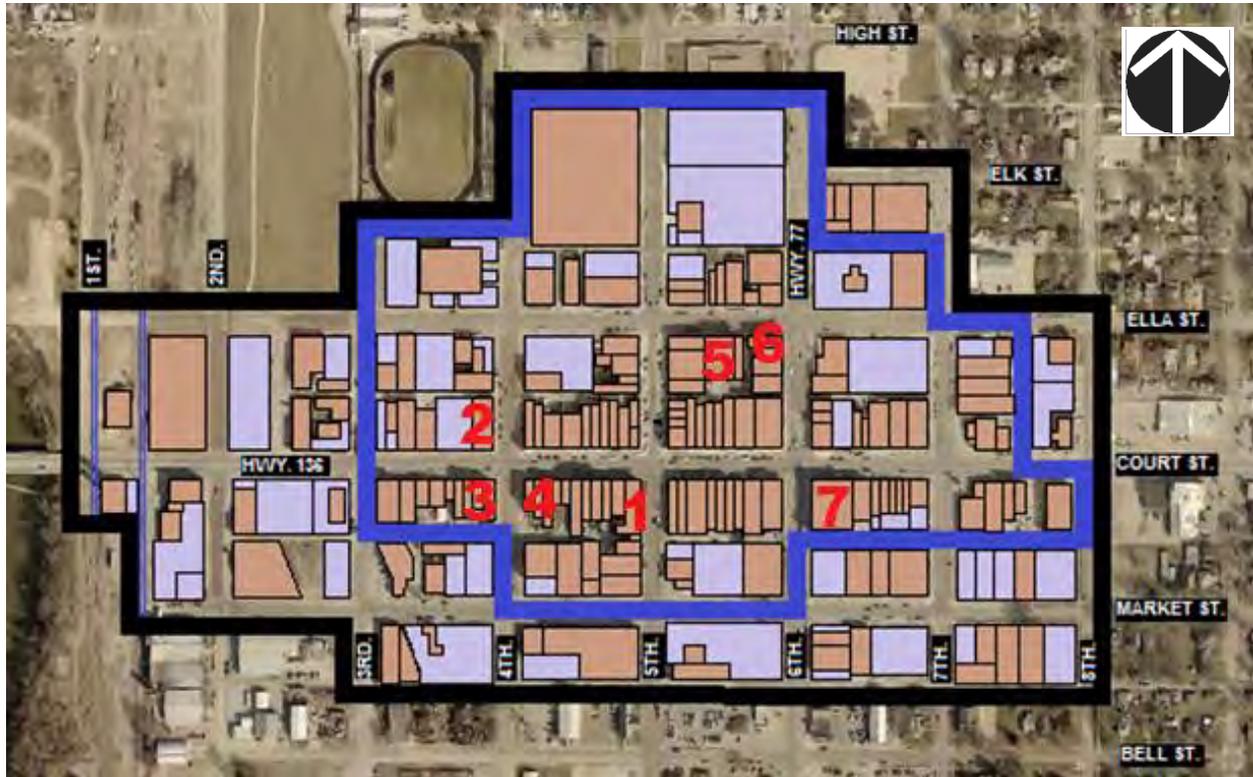
This **Downtown Revitalization Project-Phase I** identifies the potential for converting underutilized spaces, primarily in the upper levels of existing commercial buildings, to a variety of housing options. The first floor levels would be utilized for service and retail use. **Phase I** also recommends the moderate- to substantial rehabilitation of existing rental housing. Projects associated with residential development are detailed in **Table 6.1** and located in **Illustration 6.2**. Any housing conversions, developments or rehabilitation projects in the **Project Area** would need local, State and/or Federal financial assistance, other than commercial funding, so as to produce affordable living opportunities for Beatrice's residents.

In addition to TIF, private equity and commercial funding could assist in funding new and improved housing in the **Project Area**. **Appendix II** of this document identifies various State and Federal Housing Programs to assist with housing developments and rehabilitation projects. This includes funding programs available with the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Nebraska Investment Finance Authority, The Department of Housing and Urban Development and United States Department of Agricultural – Rural Development.

**TABLE 6.1
BUILDINGS WITH HOUSING POTENTIAL
DOWNTOWN BEATRICE, NEBRASKA
2016**

Building Location	Address	Potential Units/ Total Sq. Feet	Description of Rehabilitation	Est. Cost
<i>MAJOR PROJECTS</i>				
1. Southwest corner of 5 th and Court Streets	101-111 S. 5 th Street	14 / 16,000	3-story mixed use commercial/residential	\$2,560,000
2. Knowles Piano & Organ Co.	322 Court Street	14 / 23,952	2 nd Floor Residential	\$3,832,320
3. Southwest corner of 4 th and Court Street	323 Court Street	3 / 2,500	2 nd Floor Residential	\$400,000
4. Southeast corner of 3 rd and Court Street	301 Court Street	8 / 7,000	2 nd Floor Residential	\$1,120,000
5. South Side Ella bet. 5 th & 6 th	513 Ella Street	12 / 15,000	2 nd & 3 rd Floor Resid.	\$2,400,000
6. Southwest corner of 6 th and Ella	123 6 th Street	4 / 4,500	2 nd & 3 rd Floor Resid.	\$720,000
7. Court Street Plaza, SEC 6 th Court.	601 Court Street	12 / 14,000	2 nd Floor Conversion	\$2,240,000
Source: Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2016.				

UPPER LEVEL HOUSING REHABILITATION
DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT AREA
BEATRICE, NEBRASKA



#1



#2



#3



#4



#5



#6



#7

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

SCHEMMER
ARCHITECTS | ENGINEERS | PLANNERS

ILLUSTRATION 6.2

PRIORITY #4: URBAN DESIGN, SIGNAGE & MARKETING.

Protecting, enhancing and promoting the urban fabric of Downtown Beatrice encompass several concepts under the title of Urban Design, Signage and Marketing.

Modifications to Beatrice Zoning Regulations.

A majority of buildings within the Downtown are approaching or have exceeded 100 years of age. The Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee believe that renovations to existing and construction of new buildings should be guided by design standards. The Beatrice Zoning Regulations allow for the use of a Historic District Overlay Zone, which is the logical next step for the recently designated **Downtown Beatrice Historic District**. The process for approving the overlay zone includes the provision to submit a set of design standards appropriate for the area to be designated.

- Standards will ensure that current and future buildings are compatible with adjacent buildings and contribute to the character of Beatrice’s residential, commercial and industrial areas.
- Design standards should be basic in nature and focused on construction materials, color, texture and architectural design/style.

It is recommended that Main Street Beatrice work with the property owners of the Downtown and City Administration to create reasonable design standards for both the **Project Area** and the Historic District. The development of a Façade Improvement Program will also be supported by standards to guide appropriate improvements to Downtown buildings.

Buildings in Need of Demolition.

There are buildings within the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area** that are dilapidated and potentially not cost-effective to renovate. One example is the two-story commercial building at 407 Court Street, which has barricades on the sidewalk to prevent falling debris from striking pedestrians. Design standards and enforcement of building and housing codes will assist the Community to prevent other buildings in the Downtown from deteriorating to the point of requiring demolition.

Marketing the History of Downtown Beatrice.

The unique character and “identity” of the **Downtown Revitalization Area** have a history that could generate a marketing program to bring more people to Downtown Beatrice and its businesses. Steering Committee members also suggested way-finding directional signage, Downtown welcoming signage as the link between the core of the **Downtown Revitalization Area** and the gateway entrances to the City.

Community Festival Space.

Redevelopment of vacant property located between the Homestead Trail and the City Auditorium, is proposed to as a Community Festival Space. Parking lots throughout the Downtown and within/adjacent the vacant property could be utilized during functions. The plaza is planned to be established as the outdoor event center in Beatrice where festivals, craft fairs and farmer’s markets could be the center of activity.

Downtown Marketing Campaign.

Steering Committee members also suggested that the history of Downtown Beatrice should evolve into a marketing campaign that promotes the Community. Gateway entrance signs and banners from the north, south, east and west highway corridors would serve to pull travelers into the Community. Promotional brochures and pamphlets distributed in tourist centers throughout Nebraska as well as on City and State tourism websites, could promote the City and make Beatrice a destination for travelers and residents.

PRIORITY #5: ALTERNATIVE ENERGY SYSTEMS.

Accessing alternative energy systems as a means of lowering or potentially eliminating heating and cooling expenses for Downtown Beatrice businesses is seen as important by Downtown Revitalization Steering Committee members.

The use of alternative energy sources was greatly enhanced when the Nebraska State Legislature approved “Net Metering” for individual home and business owners. Net metering allows the use of one or any combination of six approved alternative energy systems: Wind, Solar, Biomass, Hydropower, Geothermal or Methane. Discussions with Steering Committee members, the results of the Downtown “Vision” Wants and Needs Surveys and the Open House meetings indicated that the implementation of alternative energy sources for the Downtown is supported by the Community.

The Nebraska Energy Office, in conjunction with public utility districts, including the Nebraska Public Power District, have access to low interest loans for the purchase and installation of alternative energy systems.

**PRIORITY #6: BUSINESS RETENTION,
RECRUITMENT & EXPANSION.**

The attraction of new businesses to the City of Beatrice and into the **Downtown Revitalization Project Area** to diversify the commercial retail market, has been discussed throughout the citizen participation activities during this **Phase I** process. Equally important is retaining the existing businesses and to provide assistance when a business has the opportunity to expand.

Establish a local campaign of “Beatrice First.” When products and merchandise are locally available from Beatrice businesses, residents need to make the commitment to support local merchants. With the City of Lincoln located 45 miles north, residents of the Community should be cognizant to buy only products not locally available in Beatrice. This will also require the local businesses of Beatrice to make a commitment to change or expand the quality of goods and services they provide.

Beatrice’s successful home based businesses should be recruited to the Downtown by expanding knowledge of available financial incentives (such as TIF and Historic Preservation Tax Credits) for the renovation of existing vacant buildings and storefronts.

The recruitment of businesses and industries to the City of Beatrice is a function of the Beatrice Area Chamber of Commerce, Gage Area Growth Enterprise, Beatrice City Council and Regional and State organizations such as the Southeast Nebraska Economic Development District and the Nebraska Department of Economic Development. The City of Beatrice is also responsible for providing industrial development sites or locations within Downtown Beatrice and access to modern utilities and technology, such as high speed phone and fiber optic cable connections.

Appendix II of this document identifies various State and Federal economic and business development programs to assist businesses in need of expansion or development of new locations.

APPENDIX I: Survey Results.



BEATRICE, NEBRASKA

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT – PHASE I

“Community Downtown “Vision” Wants & Needs Survey.”

IMPORTANT!!!
COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS SURVEY TO MAIN STREET BEATRICE, BY AUGUST 15TH.

The City of Beatrice is currently conducting an important Downtown Revitalization Planning Project. Please take a few minutes and complete the following Survey. Your input will be vital in determining both present and future needs and wants of Downtown Beatrice.

(Check [✓] the appropriate answers.)

Place of Residence? (Town, Rural County, etc.) **Beatrice (216)** Rural Gage (36) Other Community in Gage (5) Other (16)

How often do you visit Downtown Beatrice?

119 Less than once a week **69** Once or Twice per Week **29** 3 to 4 Times per Week **56** 5+ Times per Week

Does Downtown Beatrice provide a safe environment for pedestrians and vehicles?

189 Yes **79** No

If No, please explain. See Comments

Would you support the design and development of a designated Community Festival Space for concerts, farmer’s markets and other family activities? **225** Yes **44** No

Please give your opinion regarding the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
General Questions about Downtown Beatrice.					
▪ The Downtown is in good condition and attractive.	2	39	13	119	43
▪ Buildings/Storefronts are in good physical condition.	0	30	28	119	39
▪ Streetscapes are appealing / attractive to visitors.	2	51	28	102	31
▪ There is sufficient parking throughout Downtown.	15	73	16	80	32
▪ Alleys are in good condition.	8	50	43	91	24
▪ Public/City Buildings easily found and accessible.	18	110	30	47	10
▪ High number of Vacant Storefronts/Buildings.	117	78	9	8	4
▪ Pedestrian safety at crosswalks is very effective.	18	104	52	30	10
▪ Streets/Sidewalks are well-lit and in good condition.	18	93	32	55	18
The Appearance of Downtown Beatrice can be improved with...					
▪ Street & Pedestrian Lighting.	20	93	59	35	5
▪ A Facade Improvement Program.	52	117	22	15	9
▪ Crosswalk Enhancements.	17	77	61	46	9
▪ Street Trees, Benches & Landscaping.	57	110	15	25	6
▪ Sidewalk Cafes and Pedestrian Seating Areas.	63	99	16	18	14
▪ Enhanced Vehicular Traffic Control & Safety Efforts.	36	71	58	36	12
▪ Coordinated Traffic Control Lighting System.	54	77	49	16	18
▪ Directional Signage to Parking Lots/Municipal Bldgs.	27	94	49	32	11

OVER

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
▪ Restoration/Preservation of Historic Buildings.	70	101	19	11	12
▪ Building Upper Level Reuse for Offices & Housing.	63	102	23	11	14
▪ Gateway Entrance Signage and Advertising.	34	86	49	33	11
▪ Design Guidelines for Existing and New Buildings.	32	97	44	22	18
▪ Special Sales, Events and Welcome Banners.	31	102	37	29	15
▪ Historic Themed Building Signage/Store Signage.	43	96	40	19	13
The Sustainability of Downtown Beatrice can be improved with...					
▪ Water, Sewer & Utility Replacement.	11	61	112	23	7
▪ Improved Streets, Sidewalks & Alleys.	33	110	52	14	5
▪ Additional Pedestrian Safety Measures.	26	64	78	35	7
▪ Additional Off-Street Public Parking Areas.	34	104	33	24	17
▪ New Community Players Theater.	69	50	55	23	20
▪ Business Retention, Recruitment & Expansion.	101	91	16	1	5
▪ Expanded Marketing of Downtown Sales & Festivals.	68	97	23	12	11
▪ Coordinated Downtown Business Hours.	41	113	29	26	5
▪ Marketing of the Downtown Historic District.	51	96	40	14	12
▪ Increased Advertising of Vacant Storefronts/Building.	42	106	43	15	8
▪ Development of an Incubator Business Mall/Program.	31	76	77	15	14
▪ Creating Stronger Visual & Physical Connections between Downtown & The Big Blue River.	44	76	49	30	14
▪ Reducing Utility Costs w/ Alternative Energy Sources.	57	67	64	14	12
If Money were made available for Improvements, it should be used for...					
▪ Housing Development/Rehabilitation in Downtown.	32	88	45	22	24
▪ Recruiting New Businesses to Downtown Beatrice.	94	98	10	4	7
▪ Storefront/Facade Rehabilitation.	65	101	22	11	14
▪ Streetscape Enhancement or Improvements.	42	98	41	24	6
▪ Public Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Electric, etc).	20	70	88	26	7
▪ Low-Interest Loans for Business Recruitment.	49	104	37	16	6
▪ Energy Efficiency Improvements.	41	78	48	33	12
▪ ADA/Handicap Accessibility Improvements.	31	81	62	24	13
▪ Constructing Additional Public Parking Lots.	28	65	43	40	34
▪ Rerouting Highway 136 around Downtown.	46	43	28	39	56
What Additional Businesses would you like to see in Downtown Beatrice?					
35	Hardware Store.	61	Florist/Crafts Store.	59	Art Supply/Framing Stores.
24	Barber/Hair Stylist.	11	Bank/Financial Services.	65	Antique Stores.
55	Grocery Store.	110	Books/Music New & Used.	12	Appliance Store.
118	Men's Clothing/Shoes.	114	Art/Culture Galleries/Museums.	127	Bakery, Candy, Soda/Ice Cream.
132	Women's Clothing/Shoes.	129	Breweries, Pubs & Wineries.	113	Farmer's Market Space.
122	Craft/Hobby Store.	28	Fast Food Restaurant.	13	Pharmacy.
68	Day Spa/Personal Services.	152	Family Style Restaurant/Café.	54	Variety/Discount Store.
71	Home Décor & Furnishings.	145	Coffee/Deli Store.	52	Sporting Goods.
116	Boutiques/Specialty Retail.	89	Gift Shop.	73	Children's Clothing/Shoes.
25	Computer Learning/Sales.	12	Medical Clinic/Doctor Office.	21	Other (Explain Below).

Would you support the use of Public Grants, Tax Increment Financing, Foundation dollars, etc., along with Private Financing to fund improvements and new development in Downtown Beatrice? **181 Yes** ___35 No

THANK YOU!

BEATRICE, NEBRASKA

DOWNTOWN REVITALIZATION PROJECT – PHASE I

“Property/Business Owners Downtown “Vision” Wants & Needs Survey.”

IMPORTANT!!!
COMPLETE AND RETURN THIS SURVEY TO MAIN STREET BEATRICE, BY AUGUST 15TH.

The City of Beatrice is currently conducting an important Downtown Revitalization Planning Project. Please take a few minutes and complete the following Survey. Your input will be vital in determining both present and future needs and wants of Downtown Beatrice.

(Check [✓] the appropriate answers.)

TOTAL SURVEYS: 40

Are you a....? 13 Business Owner 3 Property Owner 23 Both

What is your Rent Rate per Square Foot? 8 Less than \$1 2 \$1-\$1.50 1 \$1.51-\$1.99 2 \$2.00+

Type of Business?

7 Professional Service 12 Retail 2 Food/Restaurant 1 Housing 2 Specialty
 1 Entertainment 0 Automotive 3 Banking 2 Medical 1 Government
 7 Other (Please Identify) _____

How many years have you been a business/property owner in Downtown Beatrice?

5 0-5 Years 3 5-10 Years 6 10-15 Years 4 15-20 Years 22 More than 20 Years

If a Business Owner, how many paid employees, besides yourself?

16 0-2 Persons 6 3-5 Persons 1 6-8 Persons 2 9-10 Persons 9 10+ Persons

Also, if a Business Owner, do you plan to....during the next five years?

12 Increase/Expand your Business 20 Remain about the same 3 Decrease your Business

Have you considered adding upper-level residential to your property? 2 Yes 17 No

19 No Upper-Level Available 3 Already Exists

Please give your opinion regarding the following:	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
General Questions about Downtown Beatrice.					
▪ The Downtown is in good condition and attractive.	1	11	2	21	2
▪ Buildings/Storefronts are in good physical condition.	0	6	3	27	1
▪ Streetscapes are appealing / attractive to visitors.	1	19	2	13	3
▪ There is sufficient parking throughout Downtown.	3	21	3	10	1
▪ Alleys are in good condition.	1	24	6	7	0
▪ Public/City Buildings easily found and accessible.	4	25	5	5	0
▪ High number of Vacant Storefronts/Buildings.	16	20	3	1	0
▪ Pedestrian safety at crosswalks is very effective.	7	20	6	5	1
▪ Streets/Sidewalks are well-lit and in good condition.	2	22	5	9	0
The Appearance of Downtown Beatrice can be improved with...					
▪ Street & Pedestrian Lighting.	5	12	12	8	0
▪ A Facade Improvement Program.	15	16	5	2	1
▪ Crosswalk Enhancements.	5	10	12	9	0
▪ Street Trees, Benches & Landscaping.	13	17	4	4	0
▪ Sidewalk Cafes and Pedestrian Seating Areas.	11	11	7	6	2
▪ Enhanced Vehicular Traffic Control & Safety Efforts.	8	8	10	12	0
▪ Coordinated Traffic Control Lighting System.	9	12	9	6	2
▪ Directional Signage to Parking Lots/Municipal Bldgs.	11	16	7	3	1

OVER

	Strongly Agree	Agree	No Opinion	Disagree	Strongly Disagree
▪ Restoration/Preservation of Historic Buildings.	10	25	0	1	1
▪ Building Upper Level Reuse for Offices & Housing.	10	14	10	2	1
▪ Gateway Entrance Signage and Advertising.	7	12	13	5	0
▪ Design Guidelines for Existing and New Buildings.	7	9	11	6	2
▪ Special Sales, Events and Welcome Banners.	5	18	9	3	2
▪ Historic Themed Building Signage/Store Signage.	8	16	7	6	0
The Sustainability of Downtown Beatrice can be improved with...					
▪ Water, Sewer & Utility Replacement.	1	11	21	3	1
▪ Improved Streets, Sidewalks & Alleys.	5	21	11	1	0
▪ Additional Pedestrian Safety Measures.	4	7	18	7	2
▪ Additional Off-Street Public Parking Areas.	4	12	15	6	1
▪ New Community Players Theater.	6	7	17	6	2
▪ Business Retention, Recruitment & Expansion.	11	20	5	1	1
▪ Expanded Marketing of Downtown Sales & Festivals.	6	21	7	3	1
▪ Coordinated Downtown Business Hours.	5	15	12	5	1
▪ Marketing of the Downtown Historic District.	5	22	8	3	0
▪ Increased Advertising of Vacant Storefronts/Building.	5	21	10	1	1
▪ Development of an Incubator Business Mall/Program.	7	11	18	2	0
▪ Creating Stronger Visual & Physical Connections between Downtown & The Big Blue River.	7	10	15	5	1
▪ Reducing Utility Costs w/ Alternative Energy Sources.	6	13	12	1	2
If Money were made available for Improvements, it should be used for...					
▪ Housing Development/Rehabilitation in Downtown.	13	9	7	6	2
▪ Recruiting New Businesses to Downtown Beatrice.	16	19	2	1	1
▪ Storefront/Facade Rehabilitation.	18	16	1	2	1
▪ Streetscape Enhancement or Improvements.	9	17	7	3	0
▪ Public Infrastructure (Water, Sewer, Electric, etc).	4	11	17	4	1
▪ Low-Interest Loans for Business Recruitment.	9	17	8	2	2
▪ Energy Efficiency Improvements.	6	12	12	6	1
▪ ADA/Handicap Accessibility Improvements.	5	10	12	7	3
▪ Constructing Additional Public Parking Lots.	5	7	13	9	2
▪ Rerouting Highway 136 around Downtown.	4	10	3	6	14
What Additional Businesses would you like to see in Downtown Beatrice?					
6	Hardware Store.	14	Florist/Crafts Store.	7	Art Supply/Framing Stores.
3	Barber/Hair Stylist.	3	Bank/Financial Services.	13	Antique Stores.
7	Grocery Store.	13	Books/Music New & Used.	3	Appliance Store.
23	Men's Clothing/Shoes.	17	Art/Culture Galleries/Museums.	15	Bakery, Candy, Soda/Ice Cream.
23	Women's Clothing/Shoes.	24	Breweries, Pubs & Wineries.	15	Farmer's Market Space.
10	Craft/Hobby Store.	5	Fast Food Restaurant.	5	Pharmacy.
10	Day Spa/Personal Services.	19	Family Style Restaurant/Café.	8	Variety/Discount Store.
9	Home Décor & Furnishings.	26	Coffee/Deli Store.	5	Sporting Goods.
19	Boutiques/Specialty Retail.	12	Gift Shop.	10	Children's Clothing/Shoes.
4	Computer Learning/Sales.	3	Medical Clinic/Doctor Office.		Other (Explain Below).

Would you support the design and development of a designated "Community Festival Space" in Downtown Beatrice, for concerts, farmer's markets and other family activities?

34 Yes **3 No**

As a Business/Property Owner in Downtown, would you support the use of Public Grants, Tax Increment Financing, Foundation dollars, etc., along with Private Financing to fund improvements and new development in Downtown Beatrice? **33 Yes** **1 No**

THANK YOU!

APPENDIX II: Funding Sources.



APPENDIX II - FUNDING SOURCES.

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

Building Entrepreneurial Communities Act (BECA)

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

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

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

Building Façade Grant Program

Building owners in Downtown Beatrice could have the opportunity to apply for a given amount of funding, with a matched percentage, to enhance building storefronts and street facades of buildings. Enhancements could include items such as window replacement, awnings, entryway improvements, painting and structural reinforcement.

Business Improvement District (BID)

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

Certified Local Government Program (CLG)

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

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

Community Housing Development Organizations (CHDOs) & Community Action Agencies

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

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

Two Community Action Agency/CHDOs serve the City of Beatrice: Blue Valley Community Action Partnership and Southeast Nebraska Affordable Housing Council. Southeast Nebraska Development District (SENDD) can provide grant writing and administration services to the City of Beatrice.

Community Development Assistance Act (CDAA)

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

Community Development Block Grant Program (CDBG)

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

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

Downtown Revitalization Program, Phase I and Phase II

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

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

Comprehensive Revitalization Category

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

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

Economic Development Revolving Loan Fund

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

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

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

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

NEBRASKA NEW MARKET RESOURCES, LLC

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

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

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

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

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

Federal Home Loan Bank

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

Estate Taxes

Nebraska's "Estate Tax" allows County entities to collect and use monies to finance gateway and corridor enhancement programs.

General Revenues & Obligation Bonds

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

Nebraska Main Street Network

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

Historic Preservation Tax Credits

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

The Nebraska State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) maintains an historic building database of each of the Counties in Nebraska and their associated communities. Downtown Beatrice Historic District was approved by the National Park Service in August of 2016. Buildings in the Downtown Beatrice District can qualify as at least “contributors” to the District, if not individually eligible as an historic property. Individual buildings that can qualify to be listed on the National Register would be eligible for a 20 percent Historic Preservation Tax Credit to be deducted against personal federal income taxes of building owners, or investors. Buildings that are designated as “contributors” to the historic district are eligible for a 10 percent credit. For every dollar spent on restoration or renovation of a building, 10 or 20 percent can be deducted. This Federal program has been successful in providing incentives for downtown rehabilitation projects in Communities of all sizes, throughout the nation.

Land Sale Proceeds

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

Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act (LB840)

The Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act (LB 840, 1991) authorizes incorporated cities and villages to collect and appropriate local tax dollars (sales and/or property tax) if approved by the local voters, for economic development purposes. The Act went into effect on September 6, 1991. The Act has been modified by LB719A in 1992, LB732 in 1993, LB 1188 in 1994, LB207/LB490 in 1995, LB989 in 1998, LB87 in 1999, LB LB1116/LB1258 in 2000, and LB827/LB362/LB362 in 2001. The Act involves the formulation of the local Economic Development Program Plan. The Plan is the foundation for the collection and expenditure of local tax revenues for economic development and, if the voters approve the Plan, the provisions of the local Plan becomes the basis under which the municipality's program operates.

Activities eligible for local funds collected for the Economic Development Program would include any project for the purpose of providing direct or indirect financial assistance to a qualifying business, or for the payment of related costs and expenses. **The residents of the City of Beatrice have approved, by an election, the use of a City sales tax for LB840. An Economic Development Program may include, but not limited to, the following activities:**

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

Local Agencies & Organizations

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

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

Major local employers and community foundations are directly involved in housing developments and improvements. **The two primary Community Foundations in Beatrice and Gage County, that have an affiliation with the City of Beatrice are the Beatrice Educational Foundation, the Beatrice Community Hospital Foundation and the Gage County Foundation.** These Foundations and/or major Employers are capable of providing the following:

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

◆ ***Local Lender Participation***

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

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

National Trust Main Street Program & Loan Fund

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

Nebraska Advantage Microenterprise Tax Credit Act

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

Nebraska Energy Office - Dollar and Energy Savings Loan Program

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

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

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

Nebraska Enhancing, Developing and Growing Entrepreneurs

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

Nebraska Workforce Development- Worker Training Program

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

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

Neighborhood Stabilization Program

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

Southeast Nebraska Development District (SENDD).

SENDD is a voluntary association of counties and municipalities formed under the Interlocal Cooperation Act to identify common problems, their solutions and support for efficient and effective government among its members. **SENDD serves a 15-county area in southeast Nebraska, which includes Gage County and the City of Beatrice.** Services provided include grant writing and administration, housing rehabilitation management, business and industry financing and financial packaging.

Revenue Bonds

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

Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP)

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

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

Rural Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC)

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

Small Business Administration (SBA)

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

- ◆ ***SBA 7(a) Program***

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

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

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

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

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

◆ ***CAP Lines***

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

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

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

◆ ***FA\$TRAK***

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

◆ ***Patriot Express***

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

Lower Big Blue Natural Resource District (LBBNRD)

LBBNRD provides information on natural resources, as well as economic and recreational information to Communities and Counties in Southeast Nebraska, including the City of Beatrice and portions of Gage, Jefferson and Saline Counties.

Special Assessment Districts

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

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

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

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

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

The City of Beatrice has a CRA and six, soon to be seven designated “Redevelopment Areas” including the Downtown Beatrice Revitalization Project Area. The Beatrice CRA is actively involved in providing TIF for new development projects.

United States Department of Housing and Urban Development

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

- ◆ ***Section 8 Moderate Rehabilitation SRO's***
Funding for Single Room Occupancy (SRO) developments are available to Public Housing Authorities to provide rental assistance for homeless individuals in rehabilitated single-room occupancy housing.
- ◆ ***Shelter Plus Care***
Shelter Plus Care provides rental assistance and supportive services on a long-term basis for homeless individuals with disabilities.
- ◆ ***HUD Section 202 Program***
A capital advance to non-profit developers for development of elderly housing for either independent living or congregate living for frail elderly persons is provided by this Program. The program provides 100 percent financing, with a capital advance, no repayment loan and operational subsidy.
- ◆ ***HUD Section 811 Program***
A capital advance to non-profit developers for development of housing for persons with a disability(ies) is provided by this Program. The program provides 100 percent financing with an operational subsidy.
- ◆ ***Mortgage Insurance***
The HUD 221(d)(3) provides up to 100 percent mortgage insurance for non-profit developers and 90 percent mortgage insurance coverage for profit-motivated developers 221(d)(4). Permanent financing can be provided via the public funds (i.e., CDBG, HOME) and/or conventional financing.

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

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

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

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

◆ ***Rural Business Enterprise Grants***

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

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

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

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

Housing programs available with USDA-RD include the following:

◆ ***Section 515 Program***

This Program provides a direct interest subsidized loan for the development of family and elderly housing, including congregate and rental housing for persons with a disability. A Section 538 mortgage insurance program is also available.

◆ ***Section 502 Program***

Mortgage guarantee or direct loans for single family homeownerships for low- and moderate-income persons/families, including persons with a disability are provided. In conjunction with this Program, Section 504 provides for the rehabilitation of homes.

◆ ***Community Facilities Program***

This Program allows for a direct, interest subsidized loan for a variety of projects specific, community facility improvement programs including new construction or housing rehabilitation for “special populations.”

◆ ***Preservation Program***

The Preservation Program is administered by qualified local and regional organizations/agencies to assist in housing rehabilitation programs in Nebraska Communities. This could include a local based, planned program of home modification income eligible to low/moderate-income persons and families.

◆ ***Business & Industry Program***

The RD Business and Industry Program allows for loan mortgage guarantee for commercial projects, including retirement/assisted care housing.

Valuation Incentive Program (VIP)

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

**APPENDIX III:
Beatrice Downtown
Economic Redevelopment
Initiative.**



APPENDIX III – BEATRICE DOWNTOWN ECONOMIC REDEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE.

1. Housing Development.

A. Housing Target Demand - 2021:

City-Wide:

2021 – 223 Units (Owner = 108; Renter = 115).

Downtown:

2021 – 34 Units (Owner = 10; Renter = 24) (15.2% of City Housing Demand).

B. Downtown Housing Target Demand = 34 Units:

Estimated Square Feet = 44,000.

Estimated Development Cost = \$8,625,000.

Estimated Additional Real Estate Tax Requirement,
or Increment = \$207,000 (15yr Mid-Term).

Housing Tax Increment Financing Opportunity:

\$2,225,000 (\$207,000 @ 15yrs @ 4.5%).

2. Commercial/Retail Development.

A. Economic Impact of Housing, i.e. Retail, Services, Food, Entertainment, etc.:

Estimated Square Feet = 13,000.

Estimated Development Cost = \$2,570,000.

Estimated Added Real Estate Tax Requirement,
or Increment = \$59,740 (15yr Mid-Term).

Economic Impact Tax Increment Financing Opportunity:

\$640,000 (\$59,740 @ 15yrs @ 4.5%).

3. Downtown Tax Increment Financing Opportunity

(“Area-Wide” TIF Example, Excluding “1B” & “2A”):

Estimated Current Assessment = \$11,980,200.

Estimated Current As-Is Tax Requirement = \$221,144.

Estimated Year One Value = \$221,144; Year 15 Value = \$297,630.

Estimated Annual Available Tax Investment = \$5,099.

Estimated Tax Increment Financing Opportunity:

\$54,760 (\$5,099 @ 15yrs @ 4.5%).

4. Beatrice CRA Assessment (City-Wide):

Estimated Mid 15yr Term Annual Assessment = \$97,400.

**Estimated Assessment Financing Opportunity:
\$1,050,000 (\$97,400 @ 15yrs @ 4.5%).**

**5. Total Estimate Downtown Redevelopment Tax Increment Financing
& Assessment Cash Value = \$5,538,585 = Loan Value = \$3,994,760.**

**6. Total Estimated Development Cost – Beatrice Downtown Redevelopment
Initiative = \$15,673,000.**

Housing = \$8,625,000.

Commercial/Retail = \$2,570,000.

Associated Infrastructure/Soft Costs = \$4,478,000.

**7. Total Estimated Funds Available for Beatrice Downtown
Redevelopment Initiative = \$14,031,300.**

\$3,994,760 (TIF/Assessment Loan 25.5%).

\$5,565,700 (Other Local, State, Federal Funding 35.5%) &

\$6,112,470 (Private Financing 39%).