

Comprehensive Plan and Regulation Essentials Webinar

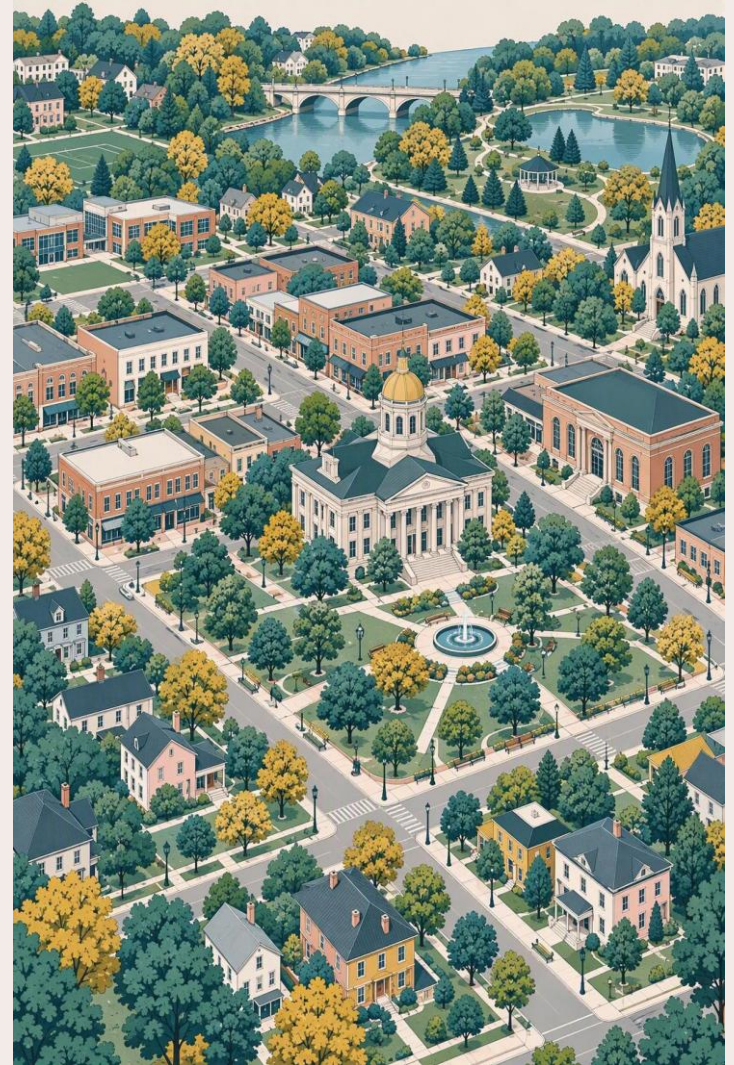
October 7, 2026

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Why communities plan

A long-term vision for community improvements

Orderly community growth and assets

Protect farmland

Prudent use of local tax revenue

Support for grant applications

Local champions and engagement

Protection of property values

Zoning that supports health, safety, morals and general welfare



What planners do

Develop comprehensive plans: Create long-range strategies (often 20–30 years) that guide land use, zoning, and development, balancing growth with preserving rural character.

Assess community needs: Conduct baseline studies to understand existing resources, infrastructure, and challenges, ensuring solutions are grounded in local realities.

Plan for sustainability: Address environmental and ag protection, conservation, and climate resilience, often working with land use, transportation, and water resource specialists.

Support economic development: Identify opportunities in agriculture, tourism, small business, and local services, and help connect communities to funding and markets.

Implement and monitor: Oversee the execution of plans, review progress, and adjust strategies as conditions change.



A living guide for land use

A comprehensive plan provides guidance and evolves over time.



A basis for land use rules

Zoning

Subdivision regulations

Design guidelines

Redevelopment plans

Not required (unless you want zoning)

Not all counties or communities have one.

What a comprehensive plan covers

Land use

Distribution and use of land

Transportation

Location, character and extent of routes and facilities

Community facilities

Location, type, capacity and area of existing and projected facilities



Comprehensive Planning in Nebraska

Neb. Rev. Stat. §23-114.02 (Reissue 1997)

A plan combines graphic and written material to accommodate anticipated long-range growth.

Required Elements

Land Use

Transportation

Energy

Public Facilities and Utilities

Planning jurisdictions

County

Areas outside a city or village's jurisdiction

City or village

Includes extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ)

ETJ distances

3 miles

Primary and metropolitan class cities

2 miles

First class cities

1 mile

Second class cities and villages

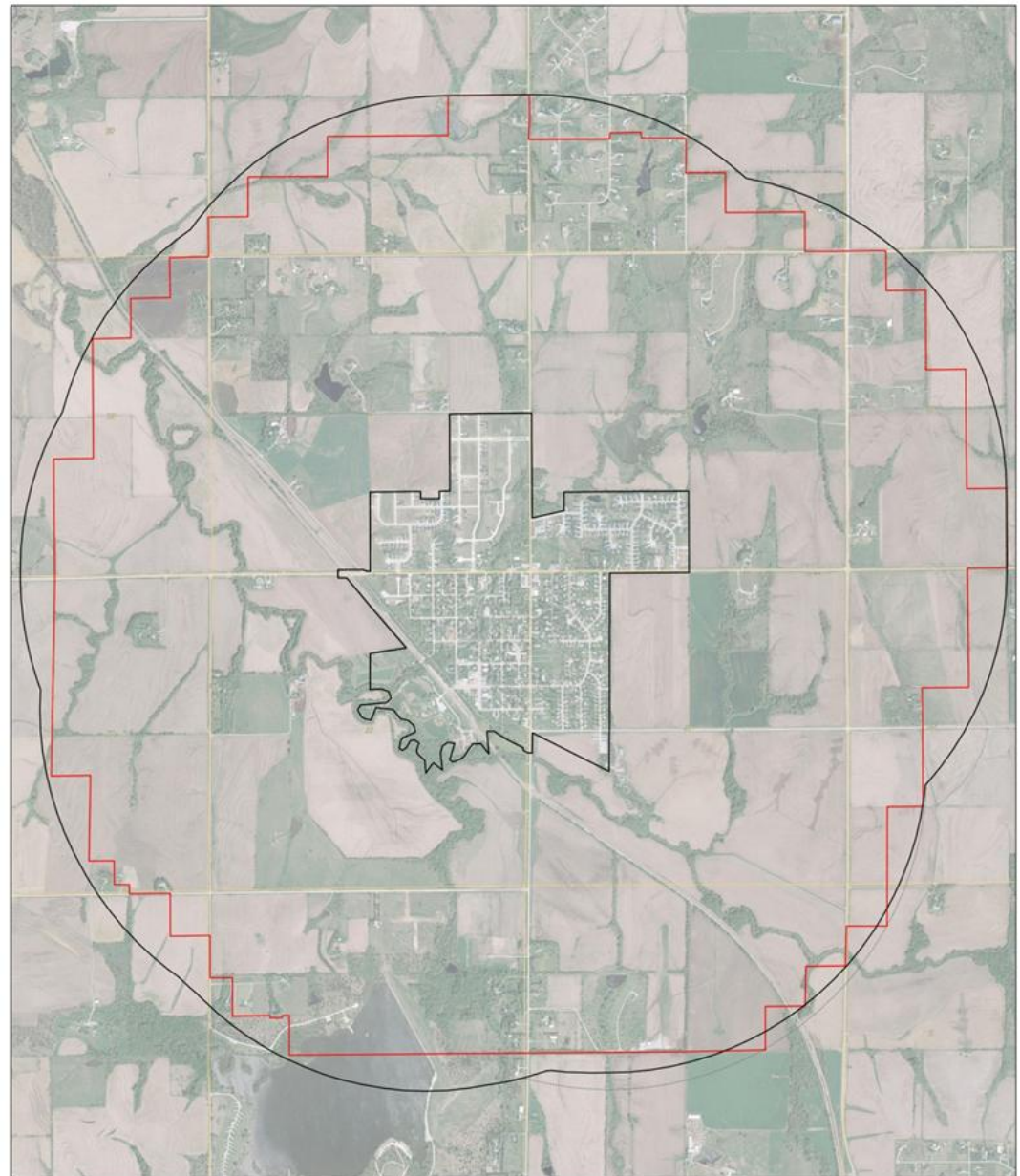
Jurisdiction boundaries may be rounded or squared off.

Extraterritorial jurisdiction

Two boundary forms

Rounded

Squared off



The typical planning process

01

Project kick-off

Launch the planning effort.

02

Profile

Document historical context, population, demographics, economics and environmental conditions.

03

Envision

Develop goals and objectives from community input.

04

Achieve

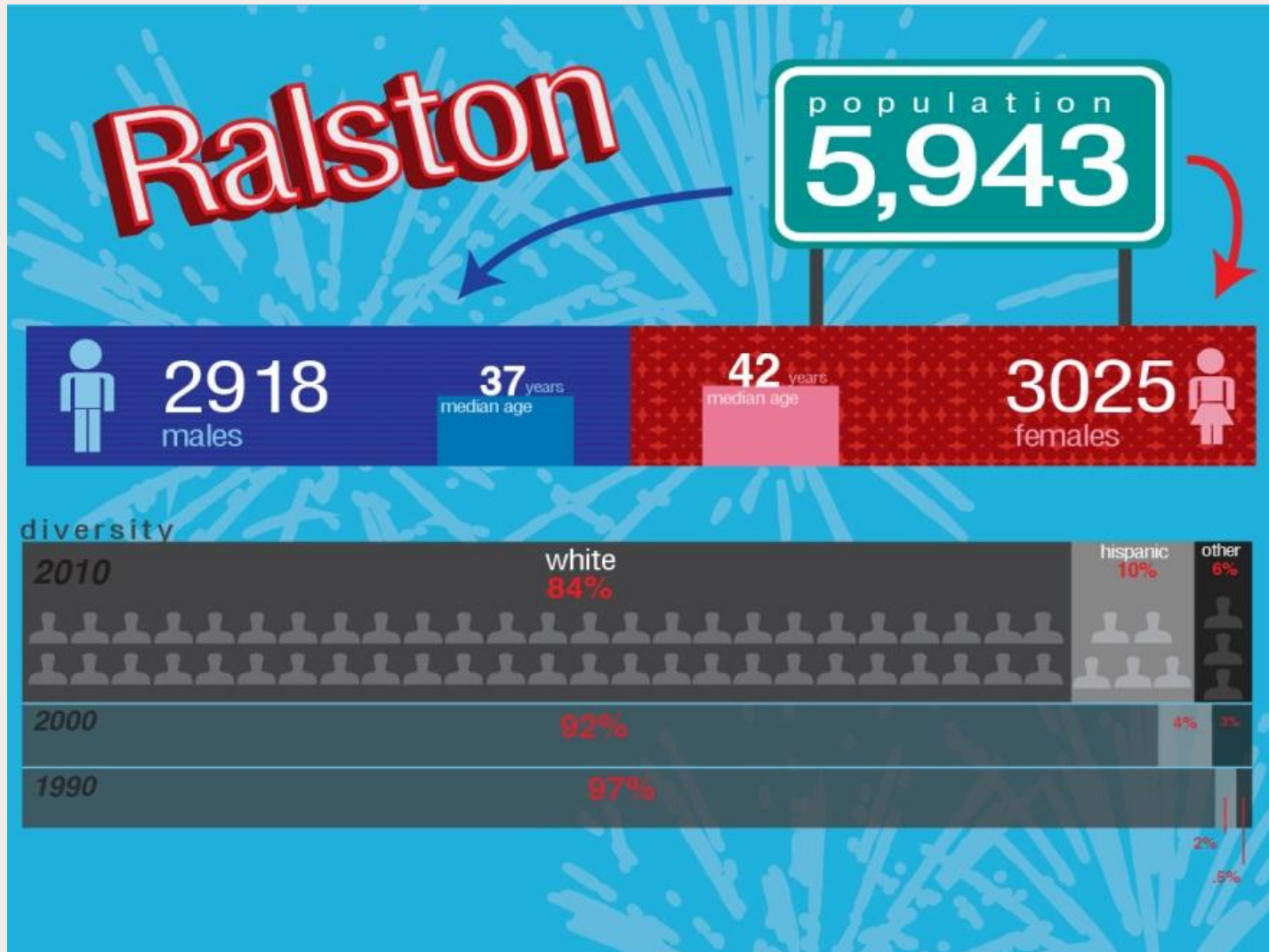
Create a future land use plan that reflects the findings of the earlier stages.

05

Implement

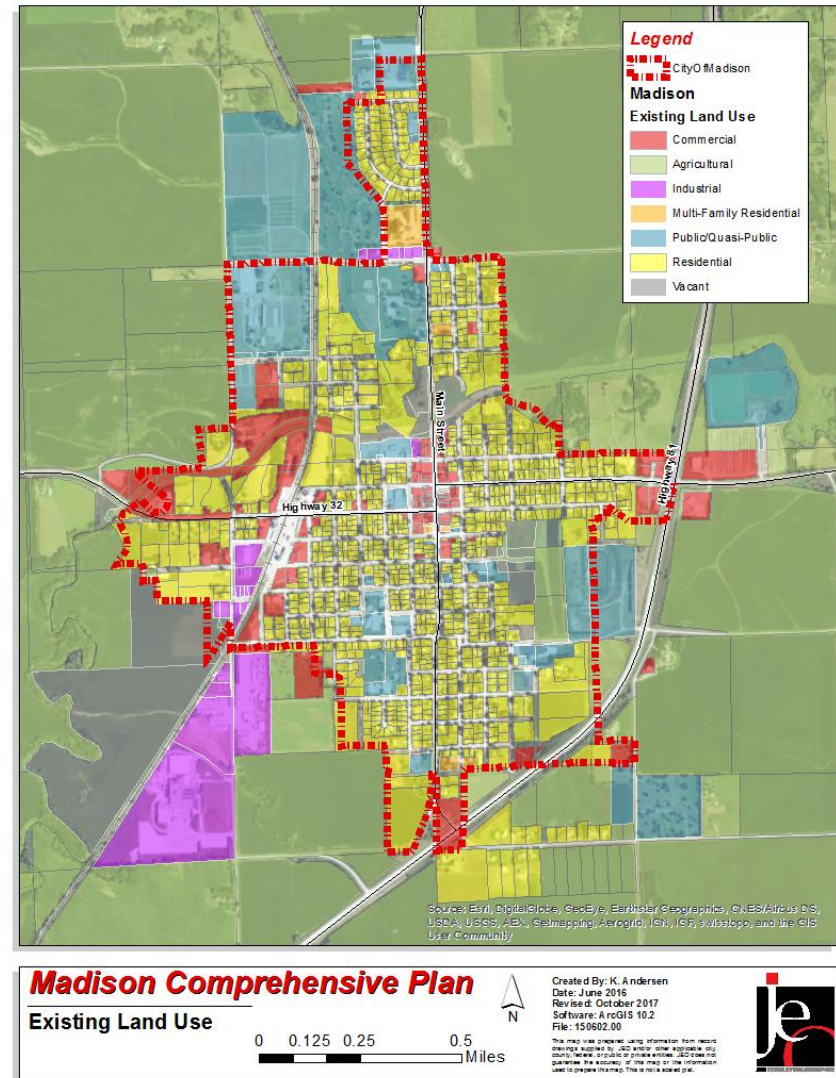
Set actions, objectives and policies to guide long-term growth and development.

Community profile

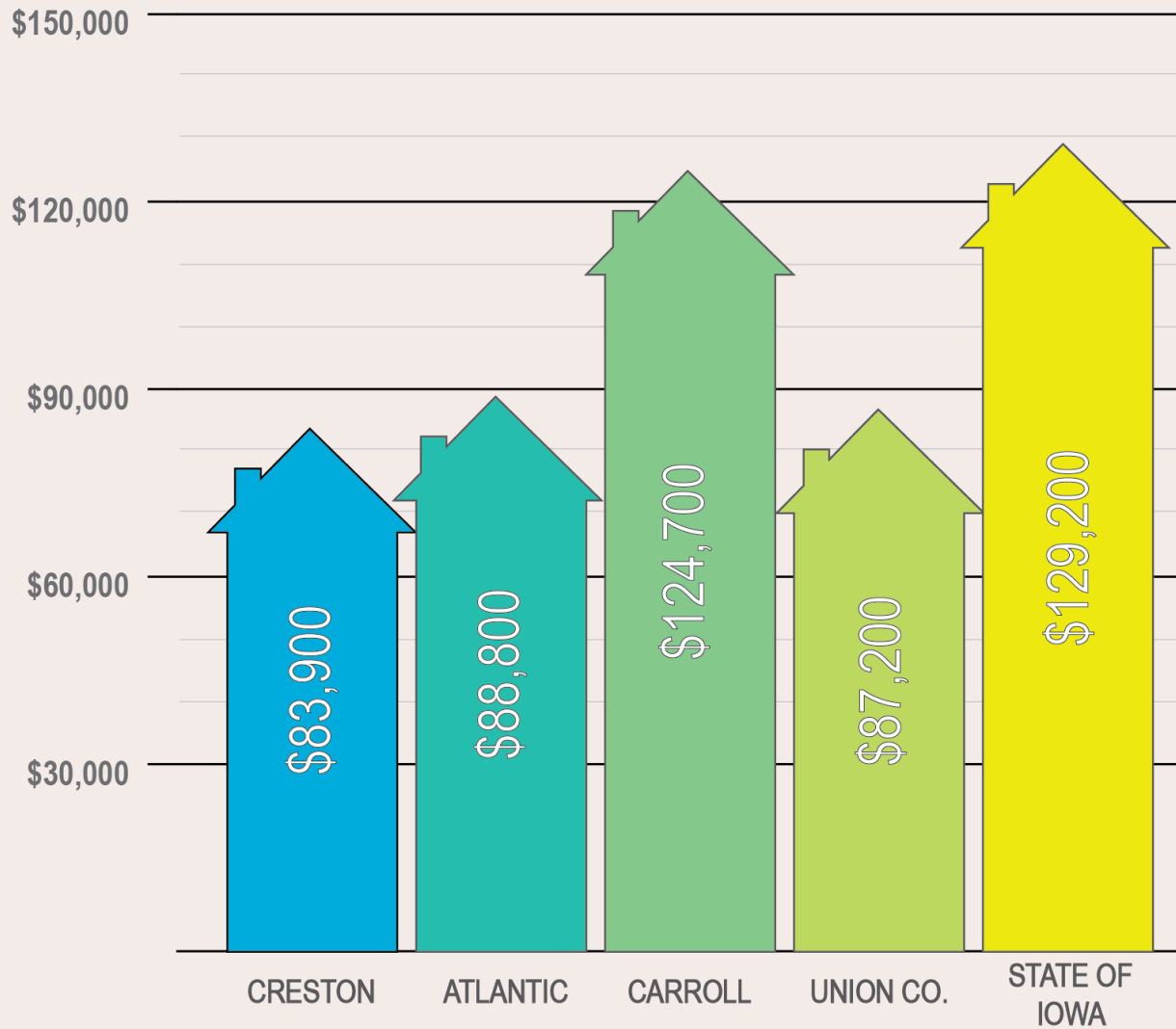


Land use mapping

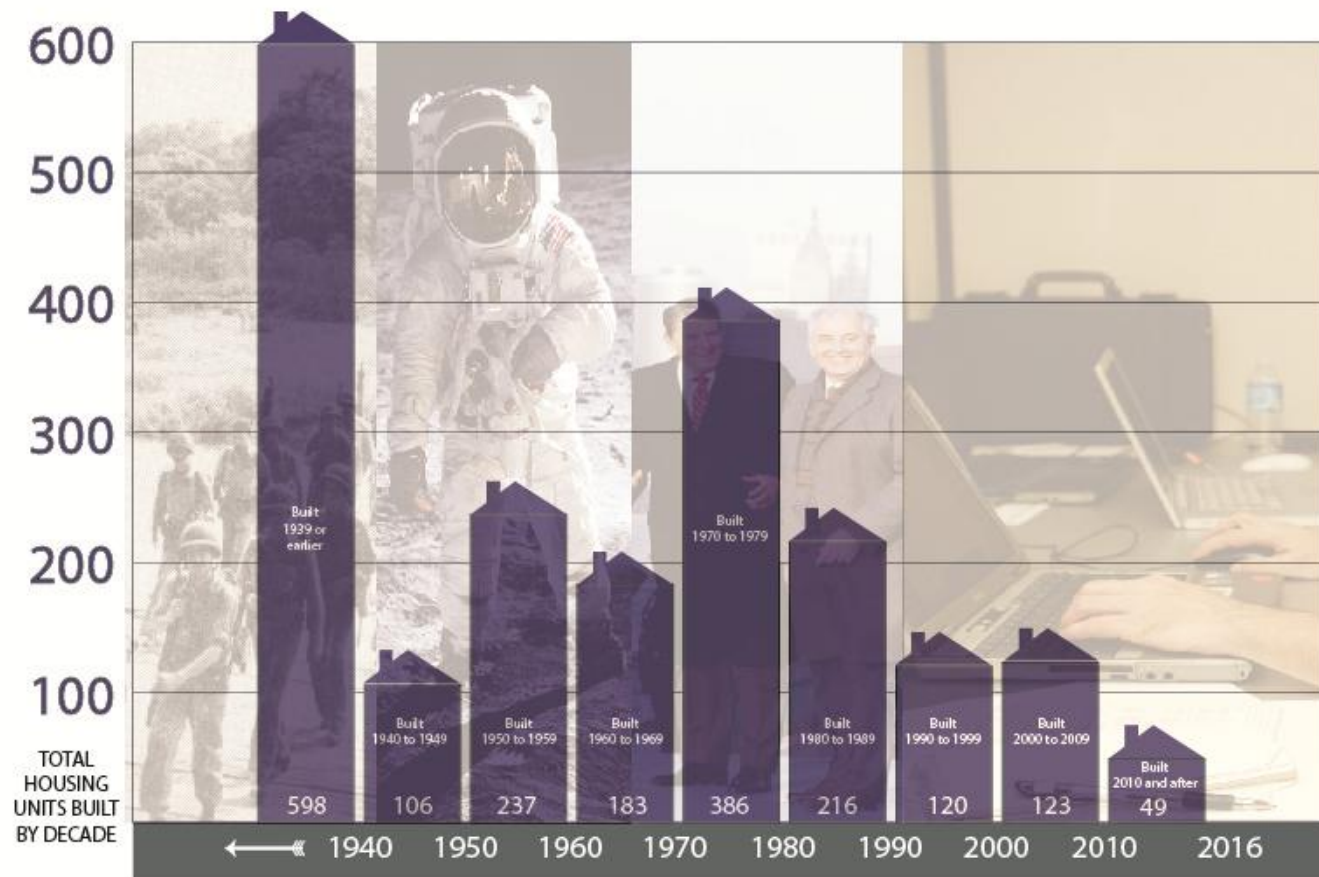
Each parcel is identified by its land use.



Housing stock



Age of the housing stock



Park inventory



Harmon Park

Regional Park (28.6 acres)

Park Component	Condition	Capacity	Notes
Vegetation	X	X	Unique garden next to the Harmon Park Activity Center, a variety of vegetation throughout the park
Play Areas	X	X	Three larger passive and open spaces south of the Activity Center, sloping hill south of the pool, and space available between tennis courts, baseball, and sand volleyball courts
Sports Fields	X	X	Harmon Field (softball w/ bleacher and dugouts, 1 sand volleyball court, 4 baseball fields)
Sports Courts	X	X	4 tennis courts (with lights)
Walks/Trails	X	X	Multiple direction walkways throughout the park
Play Equipment	X	X	Very large splash play system, climbing "rocks," regular swings, infant swings, tire swings, large playground system, interactive play equipment, shopping/balancing path, letter tower, sand box area w/ 10 diggers, spinning (rocking) playground equipment
Recreation	X	X	Harmon Park Pool (with shallow & deep areas, 6 lanes, large water slide, baby pool), Harmon Park Activity Center, The Harmon Recreation Stage, stone tower in rock garden area, Restroom and concession facility near tennis courts
Picnic Facilities	X	X	1 shelter near tennis courts, 1 shelter near playground, 1 shelter in active site of Harmon Recreation Stage, other picnic tables throughout the park; grill needs to be replaced
Drinking Water	X	X	1 near playground and 2 near tennis courts (1 which does not work)
Restrooms	X	X	Restroom within pool facility, restroom near tennis courts
Parking	X	X	Angled parking along 9th Ave, 9th Ave, 9th Ave
Lighting	X	X	Lighting throughout the entire park, tennis courts and softball field are more lights as well for night play
Bleachers	X	X	Seating areas throughout park
Signage	X	X	"Harmon Park" signs in northwest and southeast corners, "Welcome to the Playground" sign near playground
Recommended Park Component			Harmon needs a connection to trail system, the importance of this park to the City makes it the perfect candidate for a trail head, upgrading the lighting, tennis board, reconfiguring Softball with upgrades for performers, pool and ball field improvements
Miscellaneous			Harmon is a unique park in many ways. Some of the land was donated in 1906 before receiving money from the Harmon Foundation for playground and fields. It wasn't until 1924 when it was established as a park. Harmon's rock garden with the stone structure, the Softball, Pool, and play equipment provides a great venue for all to enjoy. Regardless of the acres, the amount of activities available in Harmon makes it stand out as a Regional Park.



B4 | KEARNEY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Draft 2/9/2016



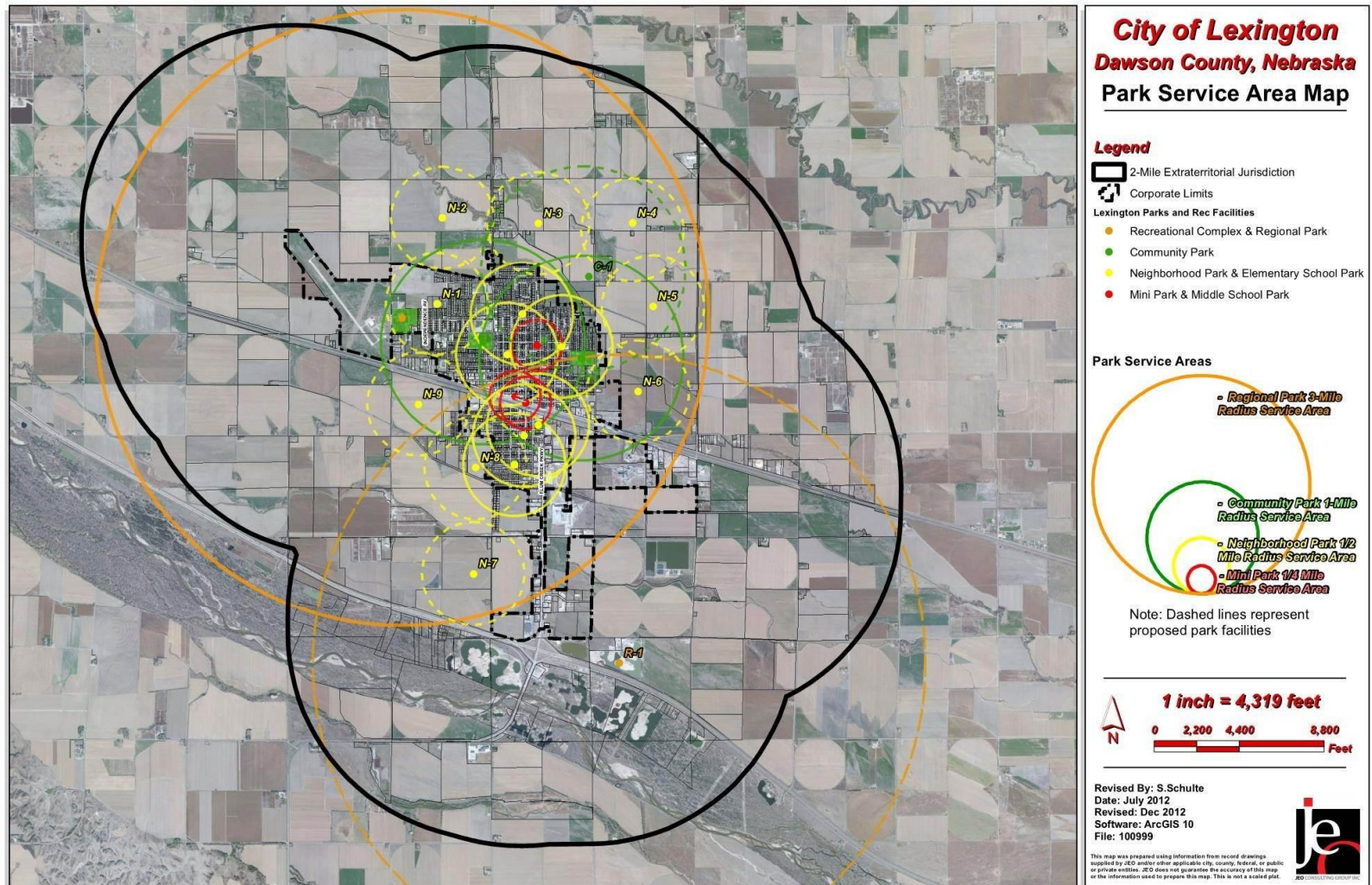
- Unique Landscapes/ Gardens
- Water Fountain
- Swimming Pool
- Tennis Courts
- Picnic Shelter
- Restrooms
- Concessions
- Picnic Area
- Baseball/ Softball Field
- Playground Area
- Splash Pad
- Amphitheater
- Sand Volleyball
- Parking
- Small Soccer Field
- Horseshoe Pit



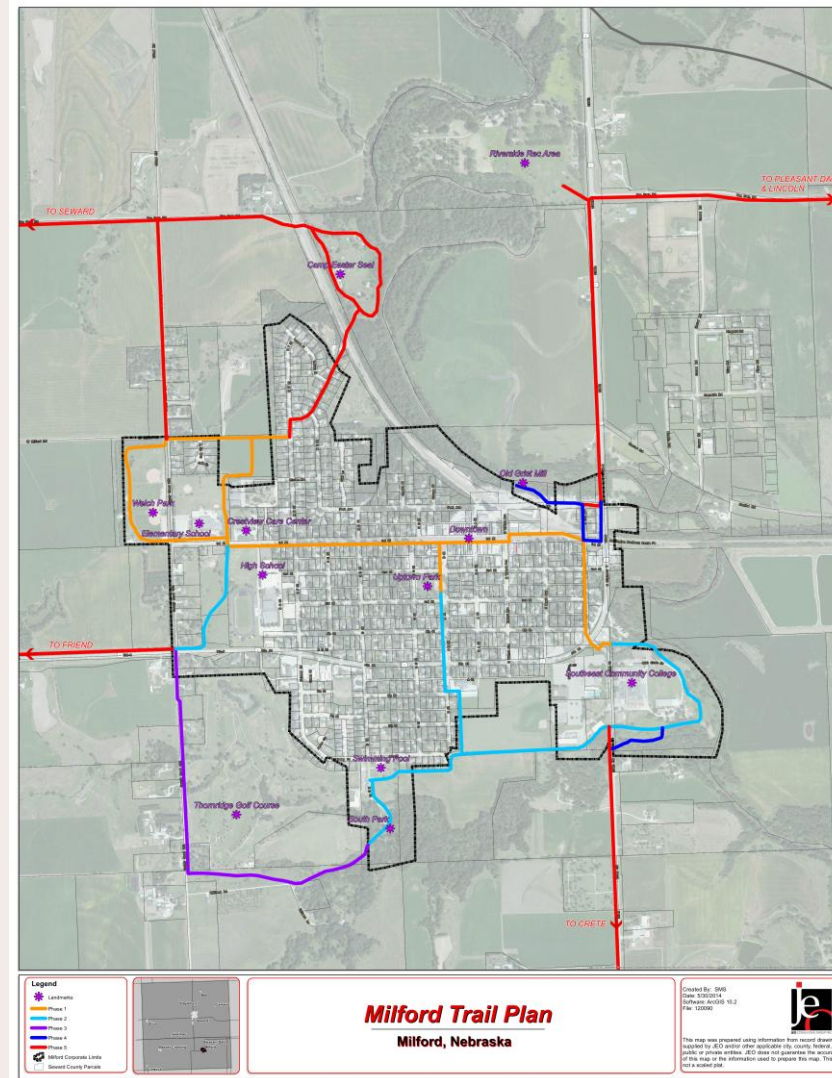
PROFILE

KEARNEY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN Draft 2/9/2016 | B5

Parks and trails master plan



Future trails plan



Design visualization



The plan guides zoning decisions

Zoning regulations must conform with the comprehensive plan.

Legal basis

Nebraska Revised Statutes **§23-114.03**

Weber v. City of Grand Island, 165 Neb. 827, 87 N.W.2d 575 (1958)

Decision-making

The plan supports “yes” or “no” decisions on zoning requests. Its components provide findings of fact to support those decisions.

A clear plan connects policy with individual zoning decisions.

County Zoning in Nebraska

Neb. Rev. Stat. §23-114.03 (Reissue 1997)

1. Developing both urban and nonurban areas
2. Lessening congestion in the streets or roads
3. Reducing the waste of excessive amounts of roads
4. Securing safety from fire and other dangers
5. Lessening or avoiding hazards to persons and damage to property from storm or flood waters
6. Providing adequate light and air
7. Preventing excessive concentration or wasteful scattering of population
8. Promoting distribution of population and land uses to assure adequate transportation, water, drainage, sanitation, recreation, and other public requirements
9. Protecting the tax base
10. Protecting property against blight and depreciation
11. Securing economy in governmental expenditures
12. Fostering the state's agriculture, recreation, and other industries
13. Encouraging the most appropriate use of land in the county
14. Preserving, protecting, and enhancing historic buildings, places, and districts

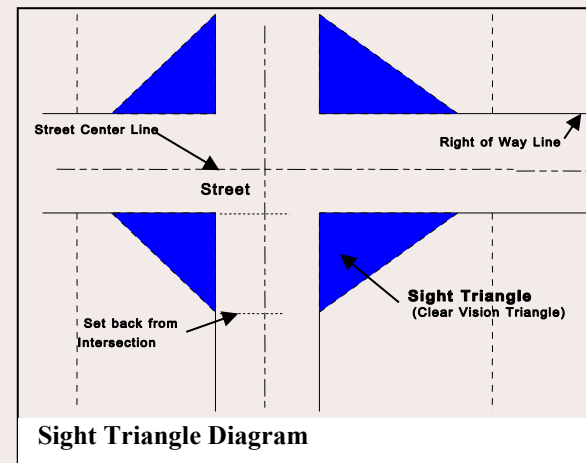
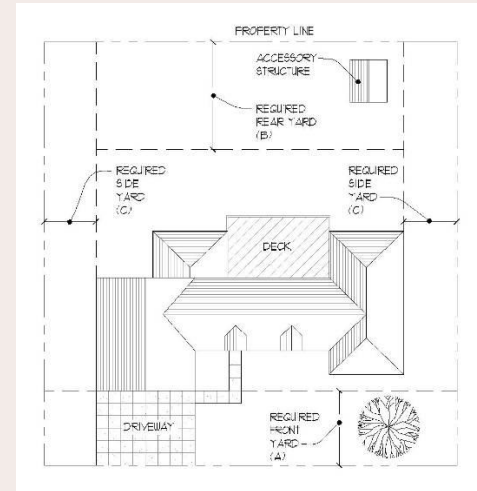
Land use regulations

Zoning ordinances address

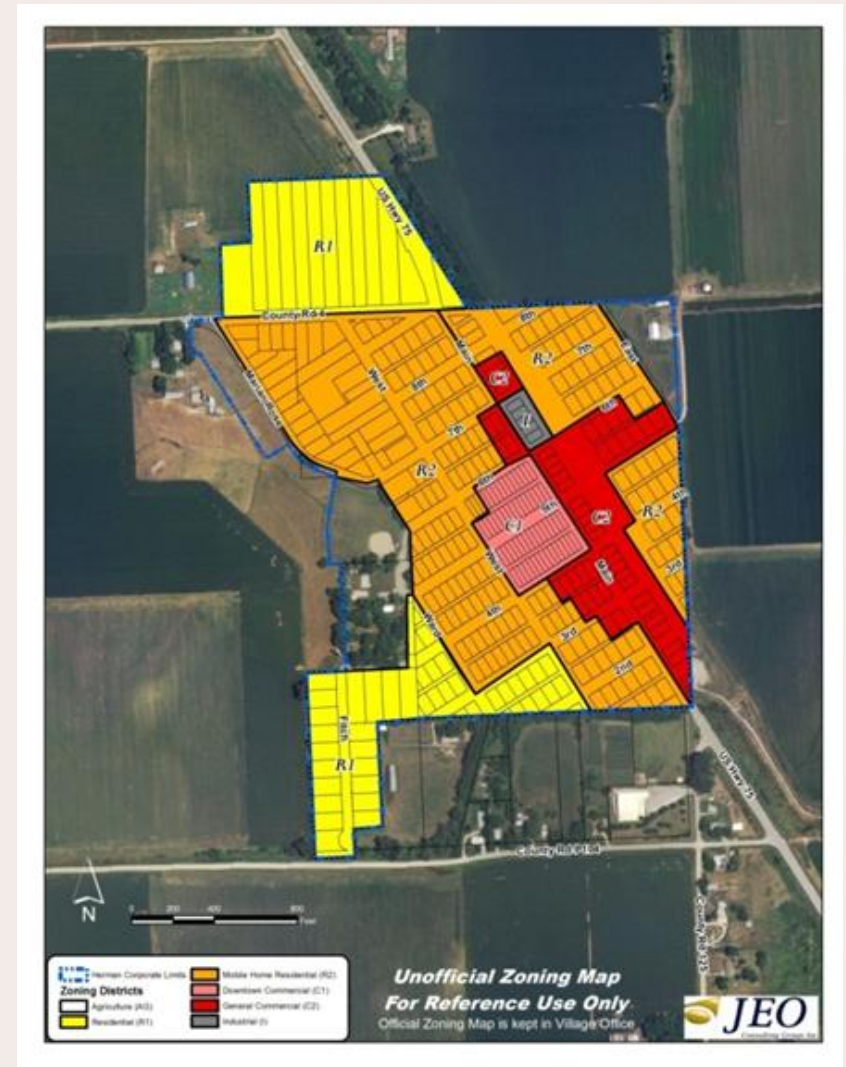
Floodplain, airport, wellhead and related rules

Design guidelines

Subdivision regulations



Zoning map examples



Zoning and subdivision trends

Clearer definitions

Add graphics and pictures. Fill gaps and clarify ambiguous definitions.

Address Land Use Impacts

Data Centers, CAFOs, Event Venues, Renewable Energy Uses, Pipelines...

Subdivision standards

Include stormwater regulations to reduce erosion.

More useful maps

Use squared-off jurisdiction boundaries and aerial photography to identify features.



NACO Land Use Toolkit



2026 NACO Resource

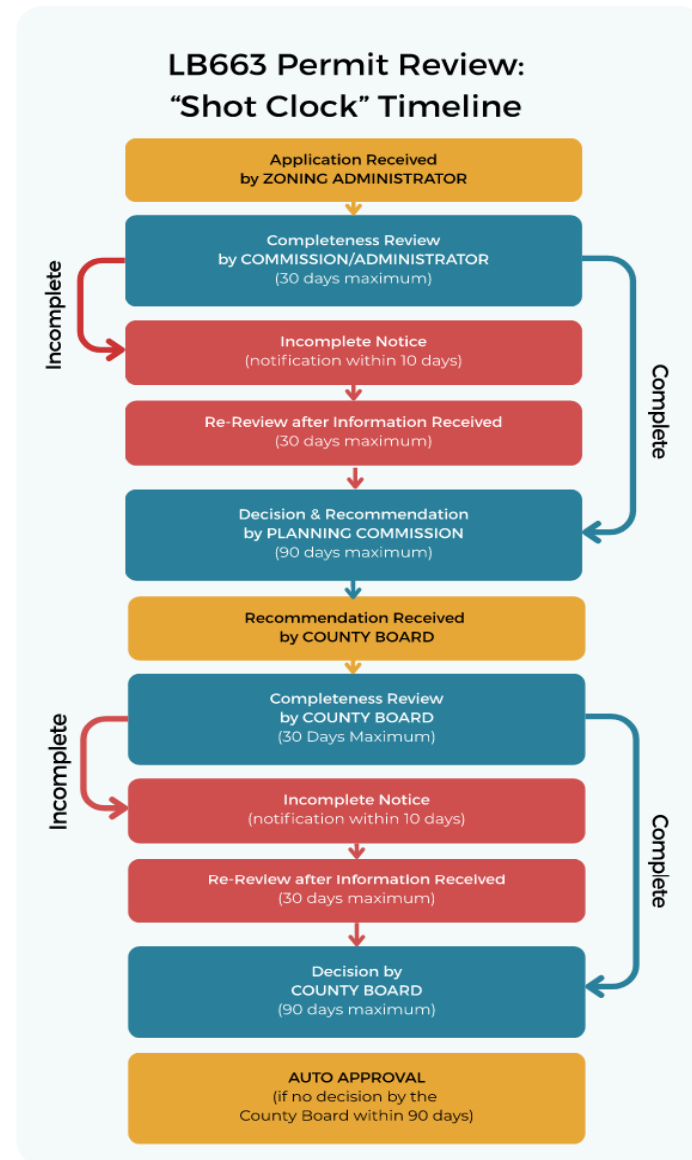
Land Use Permit Toolkit

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LB663 Timelines

Appendix F: LB663 Permit Review Timeline Graphic



BIG 3 Take-Aways

- Comprehensive development plans provide the foundation for county land use decisions and establish a long-term vision for growth and development.
- Zoning is the primary tool for implementing a comprehensive plan; zoning regulations must be grounded in a rational nexus—a reasonable connection to a legitimate public purpose and the impacts of the development being regulated.
- Planning is a continuous process requiring periodic updates (including annual review), broad public participation, and legal diligence to remain effective and defensible.

Questions and discussion

Other thoughts?

