



Palmer, Nebraska Comprehensive Development Plan 2016





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PLAN PARTICIPANTS

Village Board Members

KATHY DUBAS
JERMERY DAVIS
MICHAEL THOMPSON
BONNIE BEED
KEVIN BREMER

Planning Commission

LYNN WIEGERT
KELLY WICHMANN
DON HANNAPPEL
KEVIN OHLMAN
RICHARD OGDEN
BRIAN FRIEDRICHSEN
CHRIS STAROSTKA
GREGG FERRIS
PAT ROBINSON

Board of Adjustment

CHRIS STAROSTKA-CHAIR
RICHARD SPIEHS
BOB KELLY
LARRY MEYER-SECRETARY
MATT KING
MARVIN FISHLER-ALTERNATE

Planning Consultant



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Introduction



Location

Palmer is located in the northwestern corner of Merrick County just two miles north of Nebraska Highway 92 on State Spur 61A.

HISTORY OF PALMER

The following information was found at <http://www.casde.unl.edu/history/counties/Merrick>. Some items may have been modified in order to bring the information up to date.

PALMER

It is said that Indian Hills, located near the river not far from Palmer, was once the site of the Pawnee "Morning Star Ceremony," a sacrifice of human life to assure bountiful crops for the Indians who made their home in this part of Nebraska.

The first white settlers arrived in 1872, homesteading north and east of the present town. When the railroads pushed across the prairies in 1886, an ambitious project was designed by the Lincoln & Black Hills Railroad Company. Near the edge of Merrick County the route would divide, with one going to the Black Hills and the other to the "great Northwest."



Photograph 1.1
Historic photo of Palmer

There were great plans for the division point named for Major H.E. Palmer of Plattsmouth, one of the L&BH officials. In 1887 the Lincoln Land Company purchased 480 acres from Wes Templin, Robert Lambert, and Mrs. Samuel Lambert. In anticipation of the scope of the project, the railroad built a huge water tank, a big coal shed, several switching tracks, and "the finest depot west of the Mississippi River." A 40-stall brick roundhouse was laid out. However, adverse circumstances caused the bubble to burst, and track-laying ended at Burwell and Sargent. Only five stalls of the roundhouse were completed.

Many businesses and homes were built in 1887. Joe Hays built the first store, and Dr. Hoshaw hung out his shingle. The first newspaper was published in October of 1887, and the Christian congregation built the first church in 1888.

In 1900 brick buildings began to appear. A telephone system was installed in 1902. In 1911 Bill Heck and his father built the first light plant. About 1918 the town assumed ownership of the plant and built a larger unit at the west end of main street. City water was introduced in 1919.

Soon after the first opera house burned, Mark and Thomas Lambert built a large brick building that housed the Loup Valley State Bank and several offices on the main floor, with a larger opera house upstairs. The building was used for silent movies, school plays, home talent, traveling theatre company performances, dances, and commencement exercises. Community dinners were held in the basement. The building was used for various purposes until the 1950s.

Dr. C.S.Minnich, local doctor, dentist, oculist, and pharmacist, was also interested in astronomy. Designing a lens-grinding machine, he obtained two 12-inch glass "blanks" from Germany. After months of work and numerous trips to see Dr. Swayzee, director of the physics department at the University of Nebraska to make optical correctness checks, the instrument was pronounced perfect. The lenses, with a 19-foot focal length, was donated to UN for an observatory. While supports were cast, no structure or housing was built, and the lenses later disappeared from a safe in the administration building.

A hospital and sanitarium was built in 1916-17 on land donated by Charles Coolidge. Revisions in the law caused the status to change to "rest home" in 1957. After acquiring the assets, Darr Avenue Partnership built a new Coolidge Center in 1975-76.

A cooperative creamery opened in the 1920s with Charles Fitzpatrick as manager. It provided a market for dairy farmers within a 15-mile radius until 1964, when it closed.

A bridge over the Loup River north of Palmer provided a safe crossing for settlers wanting to get to the rail terminal. The original wooden structure was later replaced by one of steel, and now a concrete bridge links the two sides.

Introduction

School district 49 was organized in 1885, even before the town was platted. Improved roads and modern transportation provided the opportunity to consolidate small rural schools into a larger one. The present building, built in 1961, serves the entire Palmer area.

Palmer reached its peak in 1920, with nearly 600 residents and a trading population of about 1,200. The 1980 census placed the population at 487. A spur off highway 92 currently serves as a primary link to the town.

By Darlene Gee, Rte 1 Box 167, Palmer, NE 68864

PURPOSE OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Palmer Comprehensive Plan is designed to promote orderly growth and development for the community, as well as providing policy guidelines to enable citizens and elected officials to make informed decisions about the future of the community.

The Comprehensive Plan will provide a guideline for the location of future developments and uses within the planning jurisdiction of Palmer. The Comprehensive Development Plan is intended to encourage a strong economic base for the community so all goals can be achieved.

The

The Comprehensive Plan is a vision presented in text, graphics and tables representing the desires of the Village and its residents for the future.

Comprehensive Plan is intended as an information and management tool for community leaders to use in their decision-making process when considering future developments. The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document; it should evolve as changes in the land-use, population or local economy occur during the planning period.

THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Comprehensive Plan begins with the development of general goals and policies, based upon current and future issues faced by the community and its residents. These are intended to be practical guidelines for addressing existing conditions and guiding future growth.

In conjunction, the data collection phase will be occurring. Data are collected to provide a snapshot of the past and present conditions within the community. Analysis of data provides the basis for developing forecasts for future land use demands, as well as future needs regarding housing and facilities.

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

The Comprehensive Plan identifies the tools, programs, and methods necessary to carry out the recommendations. Nevertheless, the implementation of the development policies contained within the Comprehensive Plan is dependent upon the adoption of the Plan by the governing body, and the leadership exercised by the present and future elected and appointed officials of the community.

The Comprehensive Plan records where Palmer has been, where it is now, and where it likely will be in the future.

PLAN PREPARATION

The Plan was prepared under the direction of Merrick County Joint Planning Commission, with the assistance and participation of the Palmer Village Board; Village and County staff; the Plan Review Committee and citizens of Palmer. The time period for achieving the goals, programs, and developments identified in the Palmer Comprehensive Plan is 20 years. However, the community should review the Plan annually and should update the document every 10 to 20 years (2035), or when an unanticipated opportunity arises. Completing updates every ten years or so will allow the community to incorporate ideas and developments not known at the time of the present comprehensive planning process.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN COMPONENTS

Nebraska State Statutes require the inclusion of certain elements in a Comprehensive Plan. A "Comprehensive Development Plan," as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. §19-903, "shall consist of both graphic and textual material and shall be designed to accommodate anticipated long-range future growth." The Comprehensive Plan is comprised of the following chapters and sections:

- Introduction Chapter
- Public Participation Chapter
- Population Statistics Chapter
- Housing Chapter
- Economics/Economic Development Chapter
- Facilities Chapter
- Land Use Chapter
- Transportation Chapter
- Implementation Chapter
- Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

The Plan is only one of several tools within the toolbox that helps guide the community into the future.

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

The Comprehensive Plan records where Palmer has been, where it is now, and where it likely will be in the future. The Comprehensive Plan is an information and management tool for community leaders to use in their decision-making process when considering future developments. The Comprehensive Plan is not a static document; it should evolve as changes in the land-use, population or local economy occur during

the planning period. This information is the basis for Palmer's evolution as it achieves its physical, social, and economic goals.

Planned growth will make Palmer more effective in serving residents, more efficient in using resources, and able to meet the standard of living and quality of life every individual desires.

JURISDICTIONAL ORGANIZATION

The Palmer Village Board, which is a board of elected officials, performs the governmental functions for the Village.

The planning and zoning jurisdiction of Palmer, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. §19-901 through 19-932, includes all of the incorporated area of Palmer and extends up to one-mile from the corporate boundary.



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Community Engagement



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Community engagement is critical to a successful planning effort. The use of public participation makes it possible to have a clearer understanding of how the residents feel regarding different parts of the community.

TOWN HALL MEETING

During the primary public participation portion of the Comprehensive Plan, there was one Town Hall Meeting held on August 19, 2014 in the meeting room of the Palmer Village Office.

At the meeting, the attendees were engaged in a discussion on the following three topic areas:

- What needs to be addressed
- What is your vision for Palmer
- How does the community achieve this vision

WHAT NEEDS TO BE ADDRESSED

1. Bike/hike trail needed
2. Clean up sticker patches
3. Downtown buildings need to be improved
4. Fix up and demolished dilapidated houses
5. Housing has some absentee owners
6. Nuisances
7. More businesses
8. Cell phone service
9. Railroad line through town...need railroad to abandon line
10. More housing...housing shortage
11. Bedroom community Could be better image and housing
12. Investment in storm sewer
13. Clinic especially for seniors
14. Resources needed to support all levels of physical and mental health, lower income, homelessness, etc...

WHAT IS YOUR VISION FOR PALMER

1. Paved streets
2. Curb and gutter
3. A recreational draw....similar to a bike trail
4. Ball fields
5. Palmer website
6. New or improved swimming pool
7. Splash park
8. Playground near school and football field
9. Paved track
10. School still intact
11. East – west street from elevator will be paved
12. New blood in the local hardware store
13. Maintain youth

14. Up to date internet

HOW DOES THE COMMUNITY ACHIEVE THIS VISION

1. Economic development committee
2. Youth
3. County
4. Palmer Foundation
5. Village board
6. Teachers

GOALS AND POLICIES

The community engagement process is critical to soliciting public input as well as establishing goals and policies for the community. Planning for the future land uses of the community is an ongoing process of goal setting and problem solving aimed at encouraging and enhancing a better community with a better quality of life. Planning focuses upon ways of solving existing problems within the community, and providing a management tool enabling Palmer citizens to achieve their vision for the future.

Visioning is a process of evaluating present conditions, identifying problem areas, and bringing about consensus on how to overcome existing problems and manage change. By determining Palmer's vision, the community can decide where it wants to be in the future, and then develop a "roadmap" guiding decisions of the community. However, the plan cannot only be based upon this "vision" and "road map" concept. The residents of Palmer must also act or implement the necessary steps involved in achieving this "vision".

Change is continuous, therefore Palmer must decide specific criteria that will be used to judge and manage change. Instead of reacting to development pressures after the fact, the community along with their strategic vision, can better reinforce the desired changes, and discourage negative impacts that may undermine the vision. A shared vision allows Palmer to focus its diverse energies and minimize conflicts in the present, and in the future.

A key component of a Comprehensive Plan is the goals and policies. The issues and concerns of the citizens are developed into a vision. The vision statement can then be further delineated and translated into action statements and/or policies, used to guide, direct, and base decisions for future growth, development and change within Palmer. Consensus on "what is good land use?" and "how to manage change in order to provide the greatest

Community Engagement

benefit to the community and its residents?" is formed. Palmer's goals and policies attempt to address various issues, regarding the questions of "how" to plan for the future.

Goals are desires, necessities and issues to be attained in the future. A goal should be established in a manner that allows it to be accomplished. Goals are the end-state of a desired outcome. Goals also play a factor in the establishment of policies within a community. In order to attain certain goals and/or policies within city government, they may need to be modified or changed from time to time.

Policies are measurable, definable steps that lead to the eventual completion of the goal. They are specific statements of principle or actions that imply a direction that needs to be undertaken.

These policies will synthesize the information from the goals, as well as the responses from the participants of the various input processes. Policies play an important role in the Comprehensive Development Plan because they direct the different actions that will need to be taken to meet the goals.

The goals and policies assure the Comprehensive Development Plan accomplishes the desires of the residents. This section of the Plan is therefore, a compilation of local attitudes collected through public meetings and surveys. When followed, development proposals in the community should be evaluated as to their relationship with the citizens' comments. Therefore, "goals and policies" should be referred to as diligently as the Future Land Use Map or any other part of the Comprehensive Development Plan. Likewise, they should be current, in order to reflect the attitudes and desires of the Village and its residents.

It is important for communities to establish their goals and policies in a manner that allows for both long-term and short-term accomplishments. The short-term goals and policies serve several functions:

- Allow for immediate feedback and success, which fuels the desire to achieve additional goals and better policies.
- Allow for the distribution of resources over time thus assuring a balanced use of public investment.
- Establish certain policies that need to be followed before the long-term goals can be accomplished.

PALMER VISION AND THE PLAN

The Palmer Comprehensive Plan provides a broadly painted picture for the community's future. The vision statements and goals describing the desired future conditions provide guidance for land use decisions and other actions, both public and private that collectively will determine the future of Palmer.

The core promise embedded in the Palmer Plan 2015 is designed to maintain and enhance the health,

Vision without action is merely a dream

Action without vision is just passing time

Vision with action can change the world

Joel Barker

safety and welfare of the community during times of change, to promote our ideals and values as changes occur, and to meet the needs of today without sacrificing the ability of future generations to meet their needs. The plan acknowledges the importance of the connections between economic, environmental, and social components of the community. The plan is a combination of practicality and vision, and provides guidelines for sustaining the rich fabric of the Palmer community.

PALMER PLAN GOALS AND POLICIES

The goals and policies for the Palmer Comprehensive Plan will be contained throughout the following Chapters. Each chapter shall contain the pertinent goals and policies for the Chapter.

Goals are intended as a long-range desire; however, as the Plan is implemented and different things in the world around Palmer changes, then the goals need to be modified to address the new direction and factors. Therefore, goals need to be flexible to ensure success and positive outcomes.





3

Palmer Population



DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Demographics aid in understanding the past and existing conditions; while applying these to the future. It is critical for Palmer, including the decision-makers to understand where the community has been, where it is and where it appears to be going.

Population drives all of the major components making up the community including housing, local employment, and economics of the community. Historic population assists in developing projections for the future, which in turn assists in determining future housing, retail, medical, employment and educational needs within Palmer. Projections provide an estimate for the community to base future land-use and development decisions. However, population projections are only estimates and unforeseen factors may affect projections significantly.

POPULATION TRENDS AND ANALYSIS

Table 3.1 contains the historic population for Palmer, the other incorporated communities in Merrick County, and the unincorporated areas, between 1980 and 2012. The data provides a look at where Palmer has been and allows for the eventual projection of populations in the community.

The 2012 population estimates show the Palmer population at 469 people. The population estimates indicate a continued decrease in population from 1980 by 18 people or -3.7%. Palmer's population has stayed somewhat stable since 1980 with the exception of the 1990 US Census which indicated a drop to 434 people; however, looking at the other data in Table 3.1, the 1990 population may have been an error.

**TABLE 3.1: POPULATION TRENDS AND ANALYSIS
PALMER AND COMMUNITIES 1980 TO 2012**

Community	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Change 2000 to 2010	2012 est.	% Change 2000 to 2012	% Change 1980 to 2012
Central City	3,083	2,868	2,934	2,893	-1.4%	2,915	0.8%	-5.4%
Chapman	349	292	341	287	-15.8%	284	-1.0%	-18.6%
Clarks	445	379	361	369	2.2%	360	-2.4%	-19.1%
Palmer	487	434	472	472	0.0%	469	0.0%	-3.7%
Silver Creek	496	437	441	362	-17.9%	360	-17.9%	-27.4%
Incorp. Areas	4,860	4,410	4,549	4,383	-3.6%	4,388	-3.6%	-9.7%
Unincorp. Areas	4,085	3,639	3,655	3,462	-5.3%	3,392	-2.0%	-17.0%
Merrick County	8,945	8,049	8,204	7,845	-4.4%	7,780	-0.8%	-13.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 1980 - 1990, 2000, 2010, 2012 est.

Officially, between the 2000 and the 2010 US Census', Palmer saw no change in the overall population.

However, there were changes to the overall dynamics of the population.

AGE STRUCTURE ANALYSIS

Age structure is an important component of population analysis. By analyzing age structure, one can determine other dynamics affecting the population of Palmer.

Each age group affects the population in a number of different ways. For example, the existence of larger young age groups (20-44 years) means there is a greater ability to sustain future population growth compared to the larger older age groups. Understanding what is happening within the age groups of the community's population is necessary to effectively plan for the future.

**TABLE 3.2: AGE AND SEX CHARACTERISTICS
PALMER 2000 TO 2010**

Age	2000	2010	2000-2010	
	Male and Female	Male and Female	Cohort Change	% Change
0-4	21	25	25	-
5-9	35	27	27	-
10-14	37	28	7	33.3%
15-19	39	27	-8	-22.9%
20-24	20	34	-3	-8.1%
25-29	21	32	-7	-17.9%
30-34	17	30	10	50.0%
35-44	76	59	21	55.3%
45-54	58	75	-1	-1.3%
55-64	40	71	13	22.4%
65-74	44	33	-7	-17.5%
75 & older	64	31	-77	-71.3%
Total	472	472	0	0.0%

U.S. Census Bureau 2000, 2010

Table 3.2 contains the age group structure for Palmer in 2000 and 2010. The examination of population age structure allows for an understanding of where some of the population shifts are occurring. These data allow for a better understanding of what could occur in the future.

Realizing how many persons are in each age group, and at what rate the age groups are changing in size allows for informed decision-making in order to

Palmer Population Statistics

maximize the future use of resources. As shown in Table 3.2, significant changes between 2000 and 2010 occurred within a number of different age groups. A review of population by this method permits one to undertake a detailed analysis of which specific groups are moving in and out of the community. Negative changes in a group indicates out-migration or a combination of out-migration and deaths.

Palmer saw growth in six age groups. The 0 to 4 and 5 to 9 groups always indicate an increase, since these persons were not born when the 2000 Census was completed. Outside of the 2010 age groups of 0-4 and 5-9 years, the other increase were in the 10-14 (2010), the 30-34 (2010), the 35-44 (2010) and the 55-64 (2010). Overall, there was an increase of 103 persons in these six age groups. When you eliminate the first two younger populations, there were 51 people that moved in during this period. This population increase consisted primarily of family aged adults and children.

**TABLE 3.3: POSITIVE AGE GROUPS
PALMER 2000 TO 2010**

2000 Age Group	Persons	2010 Age Group	Persons	Change
NA	NA	0 - 4 years	25 persons	+ 25 persons
NA	NA	5 - 9 years	27 persons	+ 27 persons
0-4 years	21 persons	10-14 years	28 persons	+ 7 persons
20-24 years	20 persons	30-34 years	30 persons	+ 10 persons
25 - 34 years	38 persons	35 - 44 years	59 persons	+ 21 persons
45 - 54 years	58 persons	55 - 64 years	71 persons	+ 13 persons
Total Change				+ 103 persons

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, American Community Survey 2010

There were six age groups from 2000 that declined by 2010. The group with the greatest loss was the 75 years + (2010) which lost 77 persons over the period. The majority of this loss is likely attributed to two causes, 1) people moving on after 65 years to other communities and senior care facilities, or 2) a dying population base.

Overall, Palmer has had a unique population pattern occur during this past ten year period. Solid in-migration from family age groups may aid in some future growth in the community; however, the community is being negatively impacted by the out-migration of the elderly and the majority post high school youth/adults.

**TABLE 3.4: NEGATIVE AGE GROUPS
PALMER 2000 TO 2010**

2000 Age Group	Persons	2010 Age Group	Persons	Change
5 - 9 years	35 persons	15 - 19 years	27 persons	- 8 persons
10 - 14 years	37 persons	20 - 24 years	34 persons	-3 persons
15 - 19 years	39 persons	25 - 29 years	32 persons	- 7 persons
35-44 years	76 persons	45-54 years	75 persons	-1 persons
55-64 years	40 persons	65-74 years	33 persons	- 7 persons
65 years +	108 persons	75 years +	31 persons	- 77 persons
Total Change				- 103 persons

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, 2010

DEPENDENCY RATIO/MEDIAN AGE

DEPENDENCY RATIO

The dependency ratio examines the portion of a community that is spent supporting age groups that have historically been dependent upon others for survival (those under 18 years and those 65 years and more). See the box to the right for details on calculating the ratio.

Table 3.5 indicates the dependency ratios for 2000 and 2010 in Palmer. The proportion of persons less than 18 years of age decreased by 18.7% between 2000 and 2010; while those aged 65 years and older decreased by 40.7% overall.

In 2000, Palmer had a Dependency Ratio of 0.96 (49.0%/51.0%); however, by 2010 the Ratio had decreased to 0.53 (34.8%/65.2%). This is supported by the substantial decrease in the 65+ age group.

Dependency Ratio

The dependency ratio examines the portion of a community's earnings that is spent supporting age groups typically and historically dependent on the incomes of others.

- < 1: 1 Independent resident is able to support more than 1 Dependent resident
- =1: 1 Independent resident able to support 1 Dependent resident
- >1: 1 Independent resident able to support less than 1 Dependent resident

$$\frac{(\%18 \text{ years and younger} + \% 65 \text{ years} + \% \text{ of remaining population})}{\% \text{ of remaining population}}$$

MEDIAN AGE

Between 2000 and 2010 there were several shifts in the population age groups within Palmer. However, during this period the median age in Palmer also remained the same for 2000 and 2010 at 40.5 years.

**TABLE 3.5: MEDIAN AGE/DEPENDENCY RATIO
PALMER 2000 TO 2010**

2000		2010	
Under 18 years of age	123	Under 18 years of age	100
% of total population	26.1%	% of total population	21.2%
Total 65 yrs and older	108	Total 65 yrs and older	64
% of total population	22.9%	% of total population	13.6%
Median Age	40.5	Median Age	40.5
Total Females	186	Total Females	234
Total Males	163	Total Males	238
Dependency Ratio	0.96	Dependency Ratio	0.53
Total Population	472	Total Population	472

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and 2010

ETHNICITY

Palmer and during the past decade has seen a major shift in the ethnicity within the community.

Ethnicity adds to the overall population picture and in certain circumstances can be complex and can cause considerable growing pains and cultural shifts regardless of the ethnic background. The shifts seen in Palmer can be seen as dramatic considering the past. The overall Hispanic population increased by 14 people or 175.0%. These increases were in the Mexican population within the community. Besides the Hispanic population increases there were other

small amounts of in-migration by other ethnicities. Even with these increases the community is still considered nearly 96% Caucasian.

**TABLE 3.5: POPULATION BY ETHNICITY
PALMER 2000 TO 2010**

Race	2000		2010		1990-2010	
	Number	% of total	Number	% of total	Net Change	% change
White, not Hispanic	467	98.9	451	95.6	-16	-3.4
Black	0	0.0	4	0.8	4	-
Am. Indian & AK. Native	0	0.0	2	0.4	2	-
Asian & Pacific Islander	1	0.2	2	0.4	1	-
Other, not Hispanic	3	0.6	11	2.3	8	266.7
Hispanic	8	1.7	22	4.7	14	175.0
Mexican	7	1.5	22	4.7	15	214.3
Puerto Rican	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	-
Cuban	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	-
Other Hispanic	1	0.2	0	0.0	-1	-

Source: US Census 2000, and 2010

POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Population projections are estimates based upon past and present circumstances. The use of population projections allows Palmer to estimate the potential population in future years by looking at past trends. By scrutinizing population changes in this manner, the community will be able to develop a baseline of change from which future scenarios can be generated. A number of factors (demographics, economics, social, etc.) may affect projections positively or negatively.

At the present time, these projections are the best crystal ball Palmer has for predicting future population changes. There are many methods to project the future population trends; the two projection techniques used below are intended to give Palmer a broad overview of the possible population changes that could occur in the future.

TREND LINE ANALYSIS

Trend Line Analysis is a process of projecting future populations based upon changes during a specified period of time. In the analysis of Palmer, three different trend lines were reviewed: 1960 to 2010, 1990 to 2010, and 2000 to 2010. A review of these trend lines indicates Palmer will see varied levels of decreasing population between now and 2040. The following projections summarize the decennial population for Palmer through 2040.

Palmer Trend Analysis

Year 1960 to 2010

2010 472

2020 484

Palmer Population Statistics

2030 497
2040 510

Year 1990 to 2010

2010 472
2020 493
2030 514
2040 537

Year 1980 to 2010

2010 472
2020 467
2030 462
2040 458

COHORT SURVIVAL ANALYSIS

Cohort Survival Analysis reviews the population by different age groups and sex. The population age groups are then projected forward by decade using survival rates for the different age cohorts. This projection model accounts for average birth rates by sex and adds the new births into the future population.

The Cohort Survival Model projection indicates Palmer's population will decline slightly in 2020 and then begin a steady increase each decade through 2040. The following projection for Palmer is based on applying survival rates to age cohorts, but does not consider the effects of either in-migration or out-migration.

Palmer Cohort Survival Analysis

Year Cohort Survival Model

2020 438 persons
2030 474 persons
2040 506 persons

SUMMARY OF POPULATION PROJECTIONS

Using the modeling techniques discussed in the previous paragraphs, a summary of the two population projections for Palmer through the year 2040 is shown in Figure 3.1. Three population projection scenarios were selected and include (1) a Low Series; (2) a Medium Series; and, (3) a High Series. All three projections forecast a continuing decline in population for Palmer through the year 2040.

Low = 2000 to 2010

2020 242 persons
2030 203 persons
2040 171 persons

Medium = 1960 to 2010

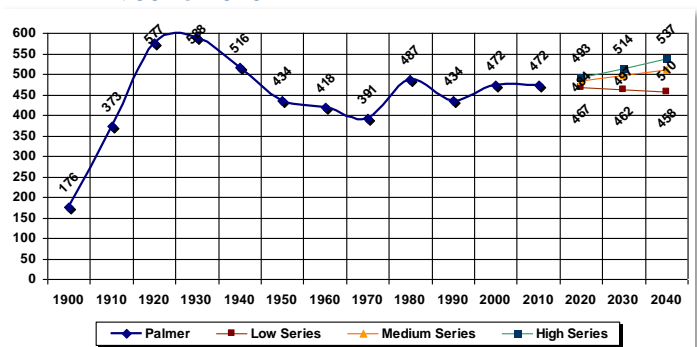
2020 284 persons
2030 281 persons
2040 278 persons

High = 1990 to 2010

2020 285 persons
2030 282 persons
2040 280 persons

Figure 3.1 reviews the population history of Palmer between 1900 and 2010, and identifies the three population projection scenarios into the years 2020, 2030 and 2040. Figure 3.1 indicates the peak population for Palmer occurred in 1930 with 588 people. Throughout the history of Palmer, the population has had several peaks and valleys.

**FIGURE 3.1: POPULATION AND PROJECTIONS
PALMER 1900 TO 2040**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, Marvin Planning Consultants

As stated previously, the projections have been developed from data and past trends, as well as present conditions. A number of external and internal demographic, economic and social factors may affect these population forecasts. Palmer should monitor population trends, size and composition periodically in order to understand in what direction their community is heading. Palmer's greatest population threats will continue to be out-migration of youth, and strategies should be developed to further examine and prevent this phenomenon.

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4

Palmer Housing Chapter



HOUSING PROFILE

The Housing Profile identifies existing housing characteristics and projected housing needs for residents of Palmer. The primary goal of the housing profile is to allow the community to examine past and present conditions; while, identifying potential needs including provisions for safe, decent, sanitary and affordable housing for every family and individual residing within the community.

The housing profile is an analysis that aids in determining the composition of owner-occupied and renter-occupied units, as well as the existence of vacant units. It is important to evaluate information on the value of owner-occupied housing units, and monthly rents for renter-occupied housing units, to determine if housing costs are a financial burden to Palmer residents.

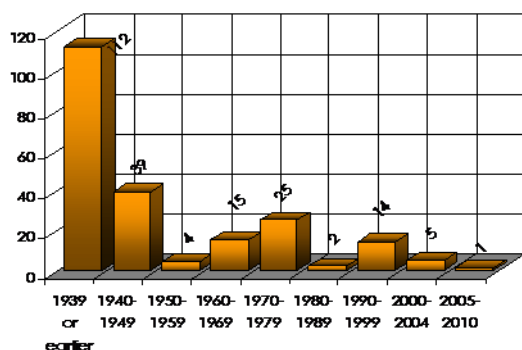
Projecting future housing needs, requires several factors to be considered. These factors include population change, household income, employment rates, land use patterns, and residents' attitudes.

The following tables and figures provide the information to aid in determining future housing needs and develop policies designed to accomplish the housing goals for Palmer.

AGE OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK

An analysis of the age of the housing stock can reveal a great deal about population and economic conditions of the past. Examining the housing stock is important in order to understand the overall quality of housing in Palmer.

**FIGURE 4.1: AGE OF EXISTING HOUSING STOCK
PALMER 2010**



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2010

Figure 4.1 indicates 112 homes or 51.6% of Palmer's

217 total housing units, were constructed prior to 1940. This likely consists of several well-kept homes as well as several homes in need of repair or demolition. Palmer saw minimal construction activity between 1950 and 2010 with 66 (30.4%) homes constructed; which is approximately one home pre year. The best period was between 1970 and 1979 when 25 new homes were constructed; over 1/3 of the 66 homes built since 1950.

Approximately 90% of all housing units in Palmer were constructed prior to 1980. Due to the age of these homes, there may be a tremendous need for special weatherization programs in the community to bring these homes up to current energy efficiency standards.

**TABLE 4.1: COMMUNITY HOUSING TRENDS
PALMER 2000 TO 2010**

Selected Characteristics	2000	2010	% Change 2000-2010
Population	472	472	0.0%
Persons in Household	448	418	-6.7%
Persons in Group Quarters	24	54	-
Persons per Household	2.37	2.44	3.0%
Total Housing Units	202	217	7.4%
Occupied Housing Units	189	214	13.2%
Owner-occupied units	148	161	8.8%
Renter-occupied units	41	53	29.3%
Vacant Housing Units	13	3	-76.9%
Owner-Occupied vacancy rate	0.0%	0.0%	-
Renter-Occupied vacancy rate	4.7%	0.0%	-
Single-family Units	177	191	7.9%
Duplex/Multiple-family units	12	8	-33.3%
Mobile Homes, trailer, other	15	18	20.0%
Median Gross Rent - 2000-2010			
Palmer	\$367	\$538	46.6%
Nebraska	\$491	\$632	28.7%
Median Value of Owner-Occupied Units - 2000-2010			
Palmer	\$43,500	\$62,500	43.7%
Nebraska	\$88,000	\$119,700	36.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, American Community Survey 2010

HOUSING TRENDS

Table 4.1 identifies several different housing trends in Palmer. The Table indicates the breakdown between owner- or renter-occupied housing as well as the number of people living in Group Quarters. Examining these type of housing trends allow for a better understanding of the overall diversity of the population and their quality of life within Palmer.

PERSONS PER HOUSEHOLD

Table 4.1 also includes the number of persons per household. The average persons per household in

Palmer Housing

Palmer increased from 2.37 to 2.44 persons. However, the trend nationally has been towards a declining household size; however, the person per household in Palmer is similar to the surrounding counties:

- Merrick County has 2.43 persons per household
- Chapman has 2.50 persons per household
- Silver Creek has 2.15 persons per household
- Central City has 2.28 persons per household
- Grand Island has 2.59 persons per household
- Clarks has 2.54 persons per household

OCCUPIED VS. VACANT HOUSING UNITS

Occupied housing units in the Palmer had a 13.2% increase from 2000 to 2010; this equaled a total of 25 newly occupied units in 2010. During this same period, vacant housing units decreased from 13 in 2000 to 3 in 2010, or -76.9%. Both owner- and renter-occupied dwellings had a 0.0% vacancy rate; this is great but does create a very tight housing market within the community. Housing conditions in Palmer are trending differently from most rural counties where occupied units are decreasing and vacancies are increasing.

MEDIAN GROSS RENT

Median gross rent in Palmer increased from \$367 per month in 2000 to \$538 per month in 2010, or 46.6%. The State's median monthly gross rent increased by 28.7%. This indicates Palmer has seen gross rent increase 1.6 times more than the state. However, the Palmer's median gross rent is still considerably less than the State.

Comparing changes in monthly rents between 2000 and 2010 with the Consumer Price Index (CPI) enables the local housing market to be compared to national economic conditions. Inflation between 2000 and 2010 increased at a rate of 28.7%, indicating Palmer's rents exceeded the rate of inflation for the 10-year period. Thus, Palmer tenants were paying more in monthly rents in 2010, in terms of real dollars, than they were in 2000, on average. Landlords were also making more on their investment.

MEDIAN VALUE OF OWNER-OCCUPIED UNITS

The median value of owner-occupied housing units in Palmer increased from \$43,500 in 2000 to \$62,500 in 2010 and represents an increase of 43.7%. The median value for owner-occupied housing units in the state showed an increase of 36.0%. Housing values in Palmer again exceeded the pace seen statewide. However, the median value of an owner occupied unit in Palmer is still nearly half of the state

median and in reality the 2010 is farther from the state median value than it was in 2000.

In comparison to the CPI, the local value of owner-occupied housing increased at a rate approximately 1.5 times higher than the CPI. This indicates housing values in the community actually were worth considerably more in 2010 compared to 2000 dollars.

TENURE OF HOUSEHOLDS BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Table 4.2 shows tenure (owner-occupied and renter-occupied) of households by number and age of persons in each housing unit. Analyzing these data gives Palmer the opportunity to determine where there may be a need for additional housing.

2000

The largest section of owner-occupied housing in Palmer in 2000, based upon number of persons, was two person households, with 55 units, or 37.2% of the total owner-occupied units. By comparison, the largest household size for rentals was the single person households which had 19 renter-occupied housing units, or 46.3% of the total renter-occupied units.

Palmer was comprised of 123 1-or 2-person households, or 65.1% of all households. Households having 5-or more persons comprised only 8.4% of the owner-occupied segment, and 9.8% of the renter-occupied segment. Communitywide, households of 5 -or more persons accounted for 17 units, or 9.0% of the total.

In 2000, the age cohorts representing the largest home ownership group was 45-54 years. Of the total residents living in owner-occupied housing units, 19.6% were between 45 and 54 years of age as well as those 75 years and older. These groups was closely followed by the 35 to 44 years of age with 18.2%. Overall, 71.0% of all owner-occupied units were owned by individuals 45 years and older.

**TABLE 4.2: HOUSEHOLD CHARACTERISTICS
PALMER 2000 TO 2010**

Householder Characteristic	2000				2010				O.O.	R.O.
	Owner- Occupied	% O.O	Renter- Occupied	% R.O	Owner- Occupied	% O.O	Renter- Occupied	% R.O	Percent Change	
Tenure by Number of Persons in Housing Unit (Occupied Housing Units)										
1 person	39	26.4%	19	46.3%	30	23.8%	17	37.8%	-23.1%	-10.5%
2 persons	55	37.2%	10	24.4%	50	39.7%	8	17.8%	-9.1%	-20.0%
3 persons	23	15.5%	4	9.8%	21	16.7%	9	20.0%	-8.7%	125.0%
4 persons	18	12.2%	4	9.8%	15	11.9%	7	15.6%	-16.7%	75.0%
5 persons	11	7.4%	2	4.9%	8	6.3%	2	4.4%	-27.3%	0.0%
6 persons or more	2	1.4%	2	4.9%	2	1.6%	2	4.4%	0.0%	0.0%
TOTAL	148	100.0%	41	100.0%	126	100.0%	45	100.0%	-14.9%	9.8%
Tenure by Age of Householder (Occupied Housing Units)										
15 to 24 years	2	1.4%	7	17.1%	2	1.6%	5	11.1%	0.0%	-28.6%
25 to 34 years	14	9.5%	9	22.0%	13	10.3%	13	28.9%	-7.1%	44.4%
35 to 44 years	27	18.2%	12	29.3%	21	16.7%	8	17.8%	-22.2%	-33.3%
45 to 54 years	29	19.6%	4	9.8%	24	19.0%	5	11.1%	-17.2%	25.0%
55 to 64 years	21	14.2%	3	7.3%	29	23.0%	5	11.1%	38.1%	66.7%
65 to 74 years	26	17.6%	1	2.4%	17	13.5%	2	4.4%	-34.6%	100.0%
75 years and over	29	19.6%	5	12.2%	20	15.9%	7	15.6%	-31.0%	40.0%
TOTAL	148	100.0%	41	100.0%	126	100.0%	45	100.0%	-14.9%	9.8%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, American Community Survey 2010

The renter occupied housing was dominated by two cohort groups; the 35 to 44 years (29.3%) and the 25 to 34 years (22.0%). These two cohorts represent 51.3% of all the renter-occupied units in 2000.

2010

In 2010, the largest section of owner-occupied housing in Palmer remained with the two-person household, with 50 units, or 39.7% of the total owner-occupied units; however a decrease of 9.1% from 2000. By comparison, the largest household size for rentals was the single person households with 17 renter-occupied housing units, or 37.8% of the total renter-occupied units; a change of -10.5% from 2000. The renter-occupied group having the largest percentage increase was the 3-person household.

In 2010, the age cohorts representing the largest home ownership group was those 55 to 64 years. Of the total residents living in owner-occupied housing units, 23.0% were between 55 and 64 years of age. The 45 to 54 years cohort was a close second with 19.0% of the total owner-occupied units.

Palmer was comprised of 105 1-or 2-person

households, or 61.4% of all households. Households having 5-or more persons comprised 7.9% of the owner-occupied segment, and 8.8% of the renter-occupied segment. Communitywide, households with 5-or more persons accounted for 14 units, or 8.2% of the total. The total number of units decreased by three units.

The renter occupied housing was again dominated by the two different cohort groups; the 25 to 34 years (28.9%) and the 35 to 44 years (17.8%). These two cohorts represent 46.7% of all the renter-occupied units in 2010.

Palmer Housing

**TABLE 4.3: SUBSTANDARD HOUSING CONDITIONS
PALMER 2000 TO 2010**

Substandard Units	Palmer		State of Nebraska	
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total
Characteristics				
2000 Units Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	0	0.0%	6,398	0.9%
2000 Units with More Than One Person per Room	0	0.0%	17,963	2.5%
2010 Units Lacking Complete Plumbing Facilities	0	0.0%	2,540	0.3%
2010 Units with More Than One Person per Room	2	0.1%	12,201	1.5%
Substandard Units				
2000 Total	0	0.0%	24,361	3.1%
2010 Total	2	0.1%	14,741	1.9%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000, American Community Survey 2010

SUBSTANDARD HOUSING

According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines, housing units lacking complete plumbing or are overcrowded are considered substandard housing units. HUD defines a complete plumbing facility as hot and cold-piped water, a bathtub or shower, and a flush toilet; overcrowding is more than one person per room. In addition, anytime there is more than 1.0 persons per room, the housing unit is considered overcrowded, thus substandard.

These criteria when applied to Palmer indicate no housing units, or 0.0% of the total units, were substandard in 2000. This figure was reached by adding the number of housing units meeting one criterion to the number of housing units meeting the other criterion.

In 2010 the total number of substandard housing units increased to two units. However, the primary contributing factor was overcrowding which accounted for 100.0% of substandard problem. Comparing Palmer to the state of Nebraska as a whole, the percent of substandard housing units in Palmer was considerably less than the state as a whole for both time periods.

HOUSING GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

Housing Goal H-1:

The community of Palmer, either alone or in conjunction with the other villages in the Merrick County should complete a Housing Needs Assessment.

Objectives and Policies

H-1.1 The Housing Needs Assessment should examine specific levels of substandard housing as well as needs in owner- and renter-occupied units.

H-1.2 The Housing Needs Assessment may be eligible for special funding through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) and/or Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA)

Housing Goal H-2

Work jointly with public and private sectors, as well as the South Central Nebraska Development District (SCENDDD), the Village of Palmer should implement a housing development initiative as a primary economic development activity.

Objectives and Policies

H-2.1 The Community should create partnerships with local housing developers and local and state funding sources, in an effort to create new housing in the community.

H-2.2 Plan and implement an Employer's Housing Assistance Program, to encourage major employers in the Palmer area to become directly involved with assisting their employees in becoming residents of the community.

Housing Goal H-3

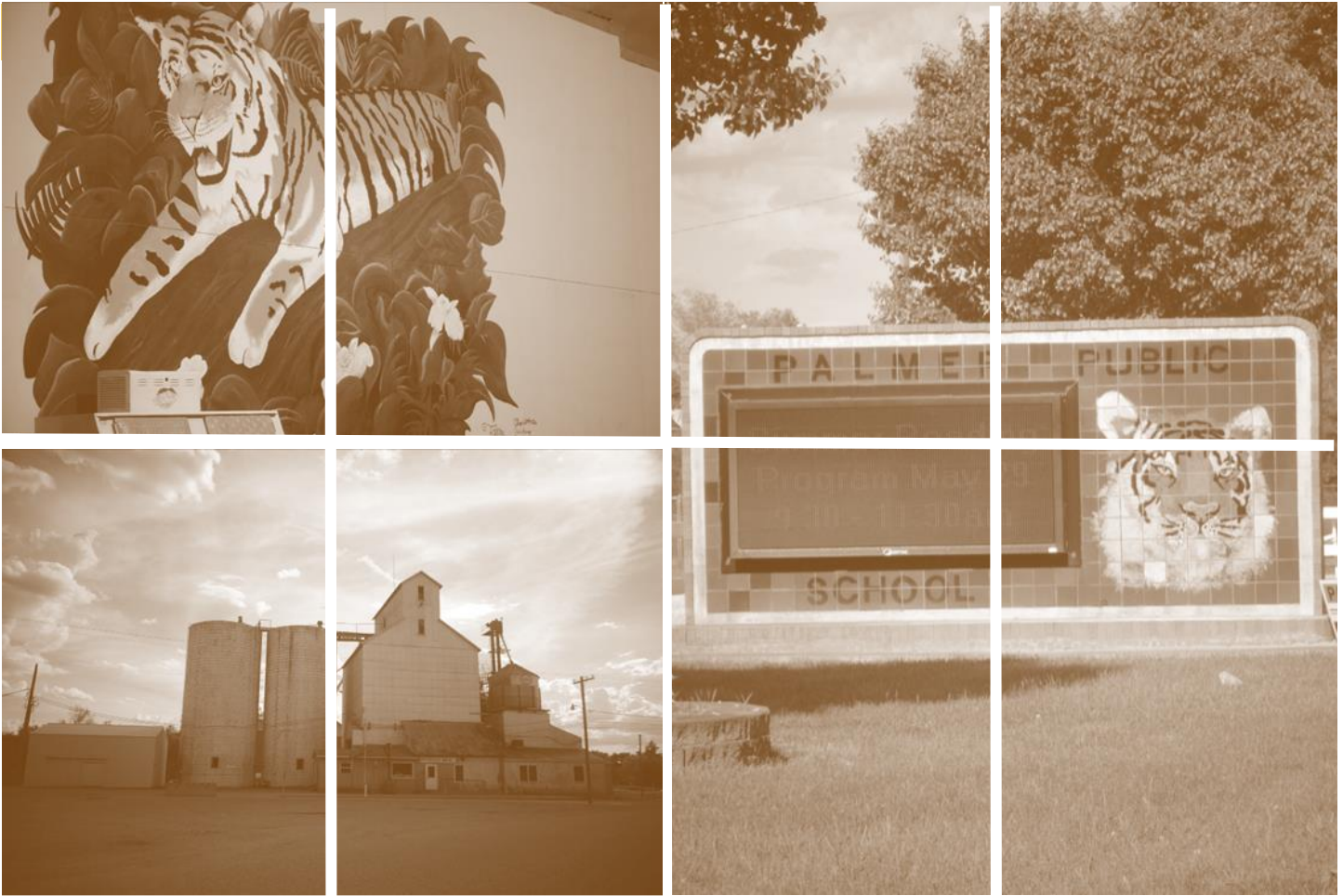
Housing rehabilitation programs and activities in the Village of Palmer should strive to protect and preserve the existing housing stock of the community.

Objectives and Policies

H-3.1 Create a housing rehabilitation program, for both owner and rental housing units with emphasis on meeting the housing needs of the elderly, low income families and housing for persons with special needs.

H-3.2 Palmer should work with South Central Nebraska Development District on a housing nuisance abatement program.

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5

Economy and Economic Development



ECONOMIC/EMPLOYMENT PROFILE

Economic data are collected in order to understand local changes in economic activity and employment needs and opportunities within Palmer. In this section, employment by industry, household income statistics, commuter analyses, and agricultural data were reviewed for Palmer and Nebraska.

INCOME STATISTICS

Income statistics for households are important for determining the earning power of households in a community. The data presented here show household income levels for Palmer in comparison to the state. These data were reviewed to determine whether households experienced income increases at a rate comparable to the state of Nebraska and the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Table 5.1 indicates the number of households in each income range for Palmer for 2000 and 2010. In 2000, the household income range most commonly reported was \$35,000 to 49,999, which accounted for 21.2% of all households. Within the state of Nebraska the income range most reported statewide was the \$50,000 to \$74,999.

**TABLE 5.1: HOUSEHOLD INCOME
PALMER 2000 TO 2010**

Household Income Ranges	2000				2010			
	Palmer	% of Total	State of Nebraska	% of Total	Palmer	% of Total	State of Nebraska	% of Total
Less than \$10,000	11	5.6%	55,340	8.3%	8	3.7%	47,902	6.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	21	10.6%	43,915	6.6%	22	10.3%	41,039	5.8%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	35	17.7%	98,663	14.8%	39	18.2%	82,906	11.8%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	41	20.7%	97,932	14.7%	46	21.5%	83,822	11.9%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	42	21.2%	122,654	18.4%	39	18.2%	109,525	15.6%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	34	17.2%	136,141	20.4%	35	16.4%	146,852	20.9%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	10	5.1%	58,361	8.7%	20	9.3%	87,734	12.5%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	2	1.0%	36,565	5.5%	0	0.0%	69,882	9.9%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	0	0.0%	8,551	1.3%	3	1.4%	17,498	2.5%
\$200,000 or more	2	1.0%	8,873	1.3%	2	0.9%	15,477	2.2%
Total	198	100.0%	666,995	100.0%	214	100.0%	702,637	100.0%
Median Household Income	\$33,676		\$39,250		\$29,219		\$47,995	
Number of Households	198		666,995		214		702,637	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, American Community Survey 2006-2010

By 2010, the income range reported most was still the \$25,000 to 34,999 which accounted for 24.5% of the total. This is a significant step backwards with regard to the economic strength of Palmer. The statewide income range was still the \$50,000 to \$74,999 range. There was minimal growth in the middle range of incomes.

Those households earning less than \$15,000 decreased from 16.2% in 2000 to 14.0% in 2010; this decrease is not considered very significant. In addition, those earning between \$10,000 and \$14,999 actually increased. These household groups account for the poorest of the poor in the community. The decrease between 2000 and 2010 was 13.6%, which indicates minimal improvement.

The median household income for Palmer was \$33,676 in 2000, which was 85.8% of the State median income. By 2010, the median household income actually decreased to \$29,219 or -13.2% and was 60.9% of the state median household income.

The CPI for this period was 23.6%, indicating household incomes in Palmer were growing at a considerably slower rate than the nation. Households were actually earning less in real dollars in 2010 than in 2000.

INDUSTRY EMPLOYMENT

Employment by industry shows what types of jobs the residents of Palmer are engaged. The data in Table 5.2 do not represent, completely the types and numbers of jobs within Palmer. Table 5.2 indicates employment size by industry for Palmer and the State of Nebraska for 2000 and 2010.

**TABLE 5.2: EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY
PALMER 2000 TO 2010**

Industry Categories	Palmer			
	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing and Hunting and Mining	34	13.5%	13	5.2%
Construction	15	6.0%	7	2.8%
Manufacturing	41	16.3%	30	12.0%
Wholesale Trade	2	0.8%	-	0.0%
Retail Trade	49	19.4%	33	13.3%
Transportation and warehousing and utilities	23	9.1%	39	15.7%
Information	7	2.8%	8	3.2%
Finance, insurance, real estate, and rental and leasing	11	4.4%	5	2.0%
Professional, scientific, management, administrative, and waste management	3	1.2%	6	2.4%
Educational, health, and social services	46	18.3%	54	21.7%
Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services	7	2.8%	27	10.8%
Other services (except public administration)	8	3.2%	18	7.2%
Public Administration	6	2.4%	9	3.6%
Total Employed Persons	252	100.0%	249	100.0%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and ACS 2005-2010

Table 5.2 shows the employment sector with the greatest number of employees was Retail Trade with 49 or 19.4% people employed in this sector. Educational, health and social services was a close second with 46 or 18.3% people employed in this industry.

By 2010, Educational, health and social services had increased to 54 employees or 21.7% of the total workforce. Retail Trade declined to 33 employees or 13.3% and fell into third place.

Overall the top five industries in Palmer in 2000 were:

1. Retail Trade
2. Educational, health, and social services
3. Manufacturing
4. Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting and mining
5. Transportation and warehousing and utilities

Overall the top five industries in Palmer in 2010 were:

1. Educational, health, and social services
2. Transportation and warehousing and utilities
3. Retail Trade
4. Manufacturing
5. Arts, entertainment, recreation, accommodation and food services

COMMUTER TRENDS

Table 5.3 show the commuter characteristics for Palmer in 2000 and 2010. Travel time to work is another factor used to gauge where Palmer's workforce is employed. Table 5.3 shows how many residents of Palmer travel to work in each of several time categories.

**TABLE 5.3: TRAVEL TIME TO WORK
PALMER 2000 TO 2010**

Travel Time Categories	2000	% of Total	2010	% of Total	% Change
Less than 10 minutes	104	41.8%	60	59.3%	-42.3%
10 to 14 minutes	8	3.2%	7	14.1%	-12.5%
15 to 19 minutes	4	1.6%	18	2.4%	350.0%
20 to 29 minutes	29	11.6%	29	3.0%	0.0%
30 to 44 minutes	65	26.1%	88	12.0%	35.4%
45 to 59 minutes	13	5.2%	26	3.4%	100.0%
60 minutes or more	24	9.6%	1	5.8%	-95.8%
Worked at home	2	0.8%	18	7.3%	800.0%
Total	249	100.0%	247	100.0%	-0.8%
Mean Travel Time (minutes)	24.8		24.0		-3.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau 2000 and ACS 2005-2010

Table 5.3 indicates there was an overall decrease in the number of people from Palmer working in 2010 compared to 2000. The number of people working decreased from 249 in 2000 to 247 in 2010 or a change of -0.8%. The -0.8% change in persons working compared to an overall population change of 0.0% would suggest the overall population change saw some of the working age/employed individuals move away or potentially retire or both.

Table 5.3 indicates the workforce in 2010 spent slightly less time traveling to work than in 2000. The average travel time decreased from 24.8 minutes in 2000 to 24.0 minutes in 2010. The largest decrease occurred

with those traveling 60 minutes or more which decreased by 23 people or -95.8%. The second largest decrease was in the less than 10 minutes group which had 44 fewer commuters or -42.3%.

The largest increase, for commuters, came in the 15 to 19 minute travel time with an increase of 14 people or 350.0%. The second largest increase was in the 45 to 59 minute timeframe with 13 new commuters or a 100% increase.

Overall, the area with the largest change was in those that worked from home. The people working from home increased by 16 persons from 2000 to 2010 or an 800% increase.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The economy plays a key role in sustaining quality of life within a community. The benefits of a healthy economy reach far beyond the business sector. Local capital investment and job creation leads to quality schools, infrastructure, fire and police protection, parks and the support of countless additional community facilities and services.

The importance of economic development is apparent in Palmer's development of various programs to support economic survival and growth. The purpose of the Economic Development section of this Comprehensive Plan is to present simple goals and policies that will lead to and support a strong and vibrant future.

This chapter focuses primarily on entrepreneurialism, business retention and expansion, tools and strategies, labor and workforce training, infill and redevelopment, and infrastructure and land supply. The goals and objectives stated within this chapter are to be considered a community-directed guide for future economic development activities.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN PALMER

The primary local advocate of economic development in Palmer is the Village Board and the Palmer Foundation. However, there can be assistance as needed from South Central Nebraska Economic Development District (Holdrege), Nebraska Public Power District (public utility) and Nebraska Department of Economic Development (state agency). The Village needs to continue to use these partners to their fullest in order to maximize future needs and economic development efforts.

Economic development activity does not require a constant attempt to lure the "one big" manufacturing company to community. In Palmer, economic development becomes about survival in both the short- and long-term. The community has plenty of ground to lure a big manufacturing company to town but there is typically a limited workforce available to supply the necessary labor pool.

The future of Palmer and its economic viability rely on a few key elements. These elements include:

- The retention of youth within the community
- The retention of the school system locally.
- A strong agricultural economy
- Entrepreneurship by locals
- Supplying basic goods and services locally
- Quality infrastructure
- Quality housing stock

RETENTION OF YOUTH

The survival of any community is dependent upon maintaining its population base. As Palmer goes through this planning period, the population base of the community may be greatly challenged. As the residents from the "Greatest Generation" and the "Baby Boomers" age and begin to move into nursing facilities and die off, the need for a replacement population will be critical. There are fewer people in the remaining population groups such as the "Gen X", "Gen Y", and "Gen Z" to replace those in the prior groups.

The retention of the youth and/or the attraction of younger couples with children will be critical to the future of Palmer. This will require the community to be perceived and act in a manner that has a quality of life desired by these groups. The best way to start is to ask the youth in the community what is and will be important to them in the future. What will it take to get them to move back to Palmer? The younger population are the future leaders of the community, they need to provide the insight necessary to make Palmer a population survivor.

Retention of the local school system

A critical component to the previous paragraphs is the continuation of Palmer Public Schools. The local school system is a critical component to the quality of life in the community. In today's economic and political climates it is extremely difficult for small districts such as Palmer to provide all of the necessities needed and demanded.

Palmer Economy/Economic Development

A STRONG AGRICULTURAL ECONOMY

Unfortunately, a lot of Palmer's fortunes and misfortunes ride a lot on the agricultural economy; this is not uncommon in rural areas of Nebraska and the Great Plains. Through an economic development process, the village needs to find other areas of economic stability even if they are smaller in nature.

ENTREPRENEURSHIP BY LOCALS

One of the best and safest means to grow a community's economy is through the entrepreneurial spirit. Most communities are looking for the next big business or industry to relocate to their community. In today's economy these type of economic development wins are fewer and fewer apart.

Local entrepreneurs can be the biggest windfall a community can see in their town. These people are typically loyal to the local area and likely will give back to the community. However, the biggest mistake that occurs with local entrepreneurs is that the locals do not support the business for some reason or another. Locals either:

- Don't want a local to succeed due to jealousy
- Can find what their selling cheaper in the town 20 to 30 miles down the road
- Don't like the individual for one reason or another.

Local entrepreneurs are more likely to:

- Give back and support the community as opposed to the out of town operation
- Pay local property taxes
- Support the local school activities in physical and monetary support

It is ironic that when communities similar to Palmer were founded, the entire commercial aspects of the community were likely entrepreneurs. Again, in the 21st Century, the future of these communities may rely on locally grown and nurtured individuals.

Finally, there is one additional factor weighing heavily on the success of the entrepreneur, financial backing. New business start-ups have difficulty finding the proper financial support to be successful. There is a listing of potential business assistance programs at the end of this chapter, but one of the most critical can come from local investment clubs and individuals that believe in the entrepreneur and the entrepreneurial process.

SUPPLYING BASIC GOODS AND SERVICES LOCALLY

The more the local economy can support itself

through key goods and services such as grocery, fuel, pharmacies, hardware, restaurants/bars, etc. the more it has to offer its residents. One key factor to this issue is the critical mass required to support businesses. When examining communities that have been successful one major item stands out, the ability for a local business to supply more than one specialty; for example the pharmacy that not only contains over the counter drugs and other toiletries but also has some clothing, gifts, etc. the business is not dependent on making it on only one item.

QUALITY INFRASTRUCTURE

Quality infrastructure is critical to attracting and keeping residents. Quality water systems and waste systems need to be in place and maintained in order to make the community attractive as a place to live.

Communities such as Palmer will be faced with additional improvements as the older water mains and sanitary collection system continue to age. Staying on top of these improvements will allow the community to stay attractive to new and existing residents.

Maintaining the infrastructure, most of which is underground and unseen, is critical to a healthy community image.

QUALITY HOUSING STOCK

Palmer is currently a "bedroom community" to several area communities including St. Paul, Central City and Grand Island. Bedroom communities, like Palmer, have a great role to play in rural Nebraska, they offer a different and typically a better quality of life. The key quality of life components include:

- A quieter place to live without the "white noise" found in more urban areas
- Cleaner, prouder residents
- A safe environment with minimal levels of crime
- An environment where people look out for their neighbors and friends

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GOALS AND POLICIES

TOOLS AND STRATEGIES

Business retention, expansion and recruitment efforts work toward maintaining a stable economy. Business retention and expansion programs address the issues that might affect decisions by established businesses and industries to remain or expand. Such issues might include availability of public services and facilities,

permitting procedures, property taxes and training programs. Recruitment programs largely focus on attracting industrial/primary users as a major economic development strategy. Retaining, expanding and attracting industrial businesses is important because these companies generally provide higher-paying jobs and do not sell directly to the end-user, creating an economic multiplier effect throughout the local economy.

Economic Development Goal 1

Create a healthy and stable local economy by retention, expansion and recruitment of businesses.

Policies

- ED-1.1 Encourage continued cooperation between Palmer's governmental and civic organizations for identification and support of bolstering local economic development.
- ED-1.2 Perform business retention/expansion surveys with assistance from SCNEDD and NEDED for every primary/industrial company within the village at a minimum of once every two years.
- ED-1.3 Prioritize visits with corporate office headquarters of local primary employers once every two years.
- ED-1.4 Encourage public/private partnerships for creative financing of local economic development and affiliated projects.
- ED-1.5 Investigate the development of a local loan fund for the support of entrepreneurialism.
- ED-1.6 Develop policies on the use of Tax Increment Financing regarding business retention and expansion.
- ED-1.7 Work cooperatively with local businesses to develop business transition plans so retirements do not also mean a loss of a business in the community.

ENVIRONMENT

Palmer's citizens recognize that economic development should not come at the expense of environmental quality, which itself is recognized as an important component of community. A balanced approach to environmental sustainability advocates a balance between utilization of area resources and economic growth. Economic growth should not exceed the ability of the natural or built environment to sustain growth over the long term.

Economic Development Goal 2

Recognize the importance of environmental quality and acknowledge protection of the environment will contribute to economic vitality.

Policies

- ED-2.1 Recognize environmental quality and economic development are objectives.
- ED-2.2 Encourage recruitment of lower-impact, environmentally friendly businesses.
- ED-2.3 Encourage programs that promote sustainable business practices such as recycling, pollution control and low-energy consumption.
- ED-2.4 Review and amend zoning regulations to ensure the environmental stability and protection of all uses, including primary uses.

Regulation

Palmer encourages an environment that offers flexibility, consistency, predictability and clear direction to advance economic opportunities.

Economic Development Goal 3

Provide consistent, fair and timely regulations that are flexible, responsive and effective in promoting local economic development.

Policies

- ED-3.1 Contract with SCNEDD to enforce nuisance codes.
- ED-3.2 Encourage the streamlining of the permitting processes to ensure timeliness in processing of permitting and zoning application to create a competitive advantage in the attraction of new or expansion of existing businesses.
- ED-3.3 Perform development review to ensure proposed developments are consistent with community vision and Palmer's zoning code.
- ED-3.4 Ensure timely processing of applications for development by requiring that mandatory timelines are adhered to for permitting processes.

QUALIFIED LABOR FORCE

Qualified labor is essential to recruit and retain business locally. The basic cornerstone in the development qualified labor force is educational opportunity. Palmer citizens should encourage the constant evaluation, growth and responsiveness of K-12 education. Partnerships between business and the educational community should be nurtured to further the process of aligning community business needs with trained workforce.

Economic Development Goal 4

Promote a qualified labor force that is globally competitive and responds to the changing needs of the workplace.

Palmer Economy/Economic Development

Policies

- ED-4.1 Support the cooperation between Palmer and the University of Nebraska Extension regarding labor and workforce training opportunities with a continued focus on entrepreneurship.
- ED-4.2 Continue support of K-12 education to include skills-based training and creative partnerships with businesses.
- ED-4.3 Advocate for greater partnership between community, community college and local school district for enhanced workforce training.
- ED-4.4 Conduct research through demographic and economic analysis as well as business retention and expansion visits to determine assets in deficiencies in the skill sets found within the local labor pool.
- ED-4.5 Work with Central Community College to develop customized training programs to meet business needs.
- ED-4.6 Encourage the region's community colleges to continue offering courses that position students to be prepared for employment opportunities found in the modern, technology and information age.
- ED-4.7 Advocate for legislative change to provide a funding mechanism for technical skills training in the local high schools.
- ED-4.8 Prioritize the development of quality housing stock as a means of attracting and maintaining a qualified local labor base.

INFILL AND REDEVELOPMENT

Encourage infill and redevelopment as an economic development tool to revitalize under-utilized areas. Infill development is the process of developing or redeveloping vacant land or under used parcels of land within the community that are already provided with urban infrastructure services. Infill development policies help utilize existing utilities and services before considering costly service extensions. The policies relating to infill and redevelopment encourage infill development in areas that are already provided with services.

Economic Development Goal 5

Facilitate infill and redevelopment through the use of incentives and special development strategies.

Policies

- ED-5.1 Identify and designate specific areas for infill and redevelopment.
- ED-5.2 Investigate using incentives such as Tax

Increment Financing (TIF), revolving loan funds or community sales tax proceeds to support and incent re-use and infill within areas slated for redevelopment.

- ED-5.3 Allow for focused public investment to address the difficulties of development on small and/or nonconforming lots.
- ED-5.4 Encourage utilization of sites with suspected environmental challenges through pursuit of EPA Brownfields Assessment study and dollars to support clean-up efforts.
- ED-5.5 Prioritize demolition of vacant, delinquent and/or unsafe facilities.
- ED-5.6 Investigate cost-effective measures for demolition of vacant, delinquent and/or unsafe facilities.

ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND LAND SUPPLY

Infrastructure availability is one of the most critical factors in economic development. Sewer, water, transportation, electric, natural gas, and communications facilities must be available or easily obtained. For attracting industrial/primary uses, an adequate supply of usable industrial land unencumbered by conflicting land uses and/or environmental constraints is important.

Economic Development Goal 6

Ensure adequate amounts of usable industrial and commercially viable land in which new businesses may locate.

Policies

- ED-6.1 Encourage the identification of sites suitable for new primary/industrial development.
- ED-6.2 Ensure potential industrial and commercial land has the characteristics necessary to support commerce and industry.
- ED-6.3 Maintain an inventory of identified, usable industrial and commercial land that is sufficient to meet the projected demand and encourage marketability of the region.
- ED-6.4 Create and grow partnerships between government, the educational community, civic organizations and businesses to deal with economic issues at all levels and particularly those that impact permitting and expediency of development.

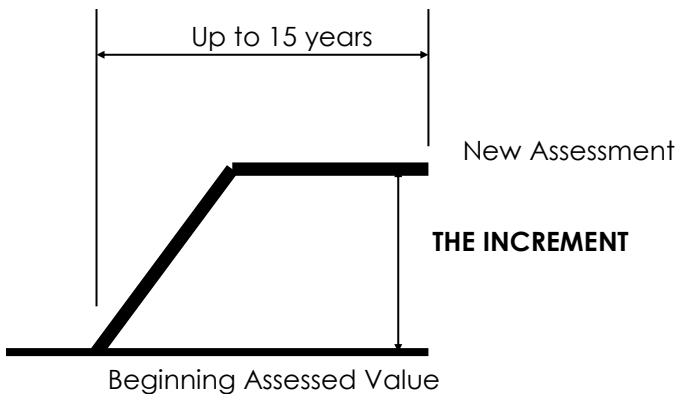
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT RESOURCES

The Village of Palmer has several tools at their disposal with regard to economic development. One of the best tools is the membership in South Central

Nebraska Development District. The District can be a major asset in the development of grant applications through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development and other sources.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCING

Another tool that is available to the Village is the use of Tax Increment Financing (TIF). In order for the Village to use TIF the Village Board would need to have a Blight and Substandard Study completed. The Village would be able to declare up to 100% of the corporate limits as blighted and substandard.



Tax Increment Financing (TIF) in Nebraska is authorized within the State Statutes under the Community Redevelopment Act. The use of TIF has been established for the purpose of the public sector being capable to partner with the private sector on redevelopment/development activities. TIF is a means where a municipality may capture new tax revenues that are generated by a specific project, specifically, within the corporate limits. The "Increment" is the difference between the current taxes generated and the anticipated or new taxes that will be created from said project.

Funding under TIF projects is limited however to being used for activities deemed to be public infrastructure or in the public's best interest. Prior to a community using TIF as a funding mechanism, the governing body must complete a number of statutory requirements. These requirements include the authorization of a blight and substandard study to be conducted, findings that specific statutory conditions exist, and a declaration of blight and substandard conditions by the governing body.

Upon a declaration of blight and substandard conditions, the governing body must have a general redevelopment plan generated that discusses how the blight and substandard conditions will be

addressed. However, once a redevelopment/development project is proposed and the governing body expresses interest, the general redevelopment plan must be amended to deal with specifics associated with the proposed project. The specific redevelopment plan is basically a contract between the municipality and the developer. The contract spells out what will be paid for by the municipality, what means of upfront financing will be used on the project, the terms of the agreement, not to exceed 15 years, and others as deemed appropriate. At this point, TIF funds can be authorized and the project started.

OTHER POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

Merrick Foundation, Inc.

www.merrick-foundation.org

USDA Rural Development – Nebraska

Web: <http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/ne/>

UNK Entrepreneurship and Innovation Program

Web: http://www.unk.edu/academics/crrd/Entrepreneurship_program.php

SCC Entrepreneurship Center

Web: <https://www.southeast.edu/Entrepreneurship/>

Nebraska Business Development Center (NBDC)

Web: <http://www.nbdc.unomaha.edu/>

Center for Rural Affairs – Rural Enterprise Assistance Project

Web: <http://www.cfra.org/reap/home>

Community Development Resources

Web: <http://cdr-nebraska.org>

The Food Processing Center – University of Nebraska Lincoln

Web: <http://fpc.unl.edu>

Nebraska Enterprise Fund

Web: <http://www.nebbiz.org>

Buy Fresh, Buy Local Nebraska

Web: <http://www.buylocalnebraska.org>



6

Community Facilities



COMMUNITY FACILITIES

State and local governments provide a number of services to their citizens. The people, buildings, equipment and land utilized in the process of providing these goods and services are referred to as public facilities.

Public facilities represent a wide range of buildings, utilities, and services that are built and maintained by the different levels of government. Such facilities are provided to insure the safety, wellbeing and enjoyment of the residents of Palmer. These facilities and services provide residents with social, cultural, educational, and recreational opportunities, as well as law enforcement and fire protection services designed to meet area needs.

It is important for all levels of government to anticipate the future demand for their services if they are to remain strong and vital. The analysis of existing facilities and future services are contained in the Facilities Plan. Alternatively, in some instances, there are a number of services not provided by the local or state governmental body and are provided by non-governmental private or non-profit organizations for the community as a whole. These organizations are important providers of services and are in integral part of the community.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES PLAN

The Facilities Plan component of a Comprehensive Development Plan reviews present capacities of all public and private facilities and services.

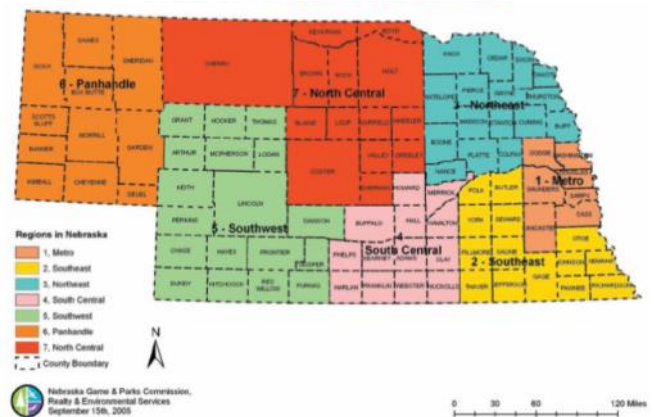
The Facilities Plan for Palmer is divided into the following categories:

- Recreation
- Education
- Fire/Law Enforcement
- Community Buildings
- Historic Sites and Places
- Communication and Utilities
- Health Care

RECREATION

Palmer is located in Nebraska's South Central Recreation Planning, Region 4, and a region within the Nebraska Department of Game and Parks system. The Region includes 13 counties in South Central Nebraska.

**FIGURE 6.1: NEBRASKA GAME AND PARKS REGIONS
COMMUNITY PARKS AND FACILITIES**



Palmer Parks

The Village of Palmer has a swimming pool, two ballfields, and a basketball court. These facilities all are located near the Palmer School facilities.



Photograph 6.1
Park facilities in Palmer
Source: Google Earth

In addition to the park area discussed above, Palmer also has the Veterans Memorial Park in downtown. The memorial park is located at the intersection of Commercial Street and Rollins Street.



Photograph 6.2
Photo inside the Palmer Veterans Memorial Park

Palmer Community Facilities

REGIONAL RECREATION

BADER MEMORIAL PARK

Bader Memorial Park is a county park containing 270 acres of ground. The park was established in 1973. The park is located approximately 10 miles east of Grand Island and 2 1/2 miles south of Chapman. The park offers fishing, camping, swimming, hiking and picnicking.



Photograph 6.3
Scene from Bader Park
Source: www.baderpark.com

The 270 acres lie between the Platte River and the Wood River. The park has been described as a microcosm of the Platte River and includes floodplain, woodlands, sandpits, and tall grass prairie. The river and ponds are used by migrating ducks and geese in February and March.

Trails have been developed around and through all of the major habitat types.

Source: www.baderpark.com/baderparkamenities.htm

DR. BRUCE COWGILL WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA

This WMA contains 216.67 acres northeast of Silver Creek in Merrick County and is along the Platte River. Hunting is allowed for deer, quail, turkey and water fowl.

(Source: <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov/gisapps/default.asp>)

GOLF COURSES

The following is a brief description of the local golf courses in and around Merrick County.

RIVERSIDE GOLF CLUB

The Riverside Golf Club is located two miles from Central City. The course is a nine-hole course and is open to the public. The course opened in 1955.

Other golf courses serving the Merrick County area include:

Course

Valley View Country Club
Fonner View Golf Course
Indianhead Golf Club
Riverside Country Club
Jackrabbit Run Golf Course
Poco Creek Golf Course
St. Paul Country Club
Dannebrog Golf Course
York Golf Course
Kemp Country Club
Pawnee Hills Golf Course

Community

Rural Hamilton County
Grand Island
Grand Island
Grand Island
Grand Island
Aurora
St. Paul
Dannebrog
York
Fullerton
Fullerton

EDUCATION

PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The public schools in Nebraska are grouped into six classes, depending upon the type of educational services provided and the size of the school district. The six classes, as defined by the State of Nebraska, are:

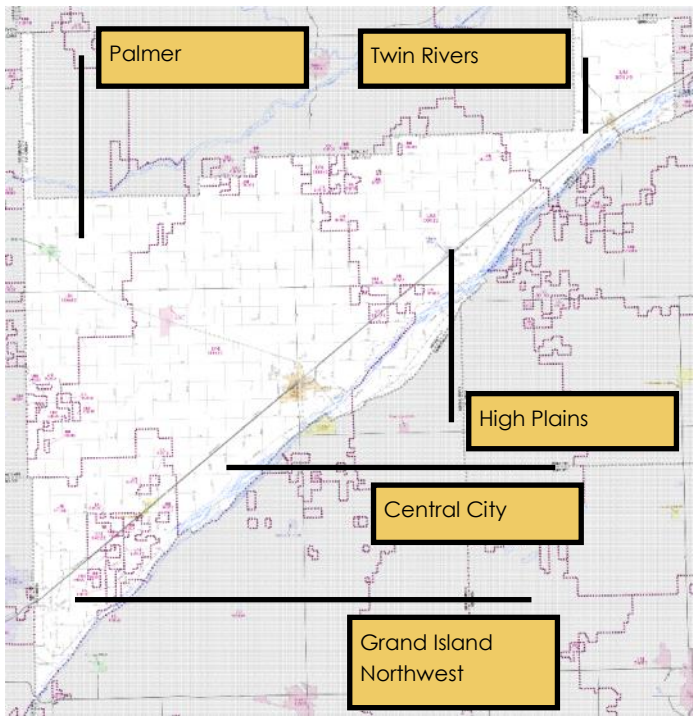
Class 1	<i>Dissolved by Legislative action</i>
Class 2	Any school district with territory having a population of 1,000 inhabitants or less that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.
Class 3	Any school district with territory having a population of more than 1,000 and less than 100,000 that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.
Class 4	Any school district with territory having a population of 100,000 or more and less than 200,000 inhabitants that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.
Class 5	Any school district with territory having a population of 200,000 or more that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board.
Class 6	Any school district that maintains only a high school under the direction of a single school board. The territory of Class 6 district is made up entirely of Class 1 districts (or portions thereof) that have joined the Class 6.

PALMER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Education in northwest Merrick County is provided to the public by the Palmer Public Schools. PPS is accredited by the State of Nebraska. The district is a Class 3 school district. The District operates three facilities:

- Palmer Elementary School
- Palmer Middle School
- Palmer High School
- All three facilities are at the same campus in Palmer at 202 Commercial Street in Palmer

FIGURE 6.2: SCHOOL DISTRICT MAP



Source: US Census 2010

OTHER SCHOOLS SERVING THE PALMER AREA

Besides the four public school districts serving Merrick County, there are several parochial schools in the area. These include:

- Nebraska Christian Schools located near Central City
- Zion Lutheran Elementary located in Worms
- Grand Island Central Catholic located in Grand Island

POST-SECONDARY EDUCATION

There are no post-secondary educational facility located in Merrick County.

The residents of Merrick County and the surrounding area have a large selection of in-state post-secondary schools to select. Some of these include:

Central Community College
University of Nebraska-Lincoln
University of Nebraska-Omaha
University of Nebraska-Kearney
Nebraska Wesleyan
Union College
Kaplan University
Doane College
Concordia University
Creighton University



Photograph 6.5
Palmer Fire Hall



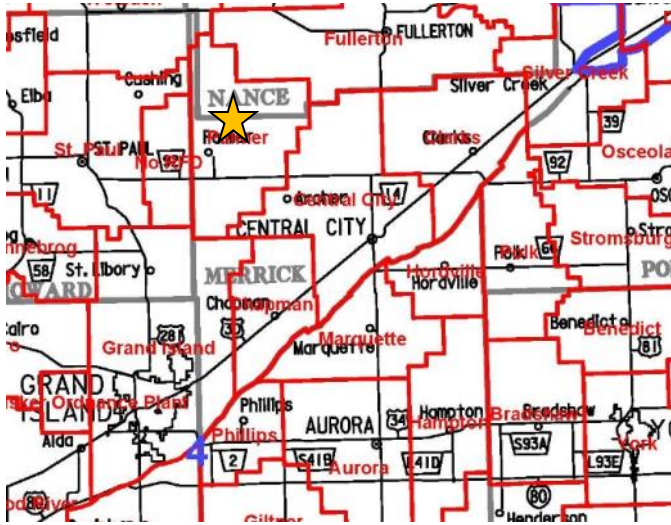
Photograph 6.4
Palmer Public Schools

Palmer Community Facilities

FIRE AND POLICE PROTECTION

Fire and rescue in Palmer is handled through a volunteer department. The fire hall is located in the downtown area of Palmer.

FIGURE 6.3: FIRE DISTRICT MAP



Source: Nebraska Department of Roads

LAW ENFORCEMENT

MERRICK COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT

Law enforcement in Palmer is the responsibility of the Merrick County Sheriff. The office of the Merrick County Sheriff is located at 1821 16th Avenue in Central City. In addition to the Sheriff's office, the facility also contains a county detention center.

Based upon data from the Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice, Merrick County had seven full-time and two part-time sworn officers in 2013. The past three years can be seen in Table 6.1.

TABLE 6.1: SWORN OFFICER COMPARISON

County	2011		2012		2013	
	Sworn Officers FT/PT	Officers per 1,000 Population	Sworn Officers FT/PT	Officers per 1,000 Population	Sworn Officers FT/PT	Officers per 1,000 Population
Merrick	6/1	1.2	6/2	1.2	7/2	1.4
Nance	7/0	1.9	6/0	1.9	7/0	1.9
Hall	27/0	2.8	28/0	2.9	28/0	3.0

Source: Nebraska Commission on Law Enforcement and Criminal Justice 2013

The ratio of law enforcement officers per 1,000 persons in the population for any given area is influenced by many factors. The determination of law enforcement strength for a certain area is based on such factors as population density, size and character of the community, geographic location and other conditions existing in the area. The data indicate Merrick County has been maintaining a ratio of approximately 1.3 sworn officers per 1,000 people over a period of time; apparently this is a good balance for Merrick County.

COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

VILLAGE OFFICE

The Village Office is located at 802 Commercial Street in Palmer. The building is home to the Village Clerk/Treasurer and Village Board of Trustees.

COMMUNICATION

TELEPHONE SERVICES

There are numerous telephone providers serving Palmer with landline and cellular services.

RADIO STATIONS

Several radio stations serve the Palmer area. The nearest stations are based and broadcast from Grand Island which is approximately 20 miles southwest of Palmer.

TELEVISION STATIONS

Presently there are no local television stations located in Merrick County. The over the air stations that serve the area originate out of Lincoln, Grand Island, Hastings and Omaha in Nebraska.

Besides over the air television, there are a number of cable television suppliers as well as satellite providers.

INTERNET/WORLD WIDE WEB SERVICE PROVIDERS (ISP)

High speed Internet service is provided in Merrick County by numerous companies.

NEWSPAPERS

The residents of Merrick County are served locally by the Republican-Nonpareil in Central City and the Palmer Journal in Palmer. Listed below are newspapers with daily circulation within the Merrick County area:

- Grand Island Independent
- Columbus Telegram
- Lincoln Journal Star
- Omaha World-Herald
- Omaha World-Herald

PUBLIC UTILITIES

ELECTRICITY

Southern Power District supplies and operates the electric system in Palmer.

NATURAL GAS

Natural gas is supplied to Palmer by Kinder Morgan.

SOLID WASTE

Sanitation collection in Merrick County is provided by private haulers.

HEALTH CARE

HOWARD COUNTY MEDICAL CENTER- ST. PAUL

Howard County Medical Center has come a long way since opening its doors in 1955. The Hospital was built from the ground up, and has had five new additions to date.

In 1998, bonds were initially passed for the construction of new Hospital patient rooms, a new admissions area, and a new Hospital entry. Construction started that same year, and staff moved into the new building in June of 2000.

In October of 2000, Howard County Community Hospital became a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital. In March of 2001, the Medical Clinic merged with the Hospital and both entities were up and successfully running in May of 2001.

As Clinic business and the amount of Providers increased, the need for a new Clinic became more evident. Construction started on the new Clinic and general reception area in 2005, and was completed in 2008. The first official day it was open for business was February 4, 2008.

HCMC is owned by Howard County, and is supported solely from patient revenue and philanthropy. HCMC employs approximately 175 employees.

Source: <http://www.hcmc.us.com/about/history.html>

LITZENBERG MEMORIAL COUNTY HOSPITAL- CENTRAL CITY

Litzenberg was designated a Critical Access Hospital in June 2000, and, as such, is licensed for 20 beds in acute care. Many changes have occurred inside the facility to meet the demands for changing technology and equipment, as well as adequate care space. With the foresight of an aggressive Board of Trustees and County Board of Supervisors, and the generosity and support of caring employees and friends of the hospital, Litzenberg completed a five-year, \$1.5 million capital campaign project that

began in 2000.

Source: <http://www.lmchealth.com/getpage.php?name=history&sub=Our+History>

COMMUNITY FACILITIES GOALS AND POLICIES

PARKS AND RECREATIONAL GOALS

Parks and Recreation Goal 1

Development of a community-wide trails system will aid in the long-term recreational and walkability needs of the residents as well as the overall health of the community

Policies

- PR-1.1 The Village should develop a community-wide trails plan that examines possible routes and costs to construct the projects.
- PR-1.2 The Village of Palmer should work towards an achievable number of feet/miles that can be constructed annually and budget for the project.

Parks and Recreation Goal 2

Palmer will continue to provide adequate recreational facilities for the youth of the community.

Policies

- PR-2.1 The Village should continually approach school age kids and their parents regarding the needs in the community regarding recreational facilities.
- PR-2.2 The Village should continue to work with the school system to cooperate on the use and development of special recreational facilities within the community, including updates to the existing swimming pool, a splash pad, and/or a all weather track.

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

Educational Goal 1

Quality education is a vital component of positive growth. Although the Village's role is limited, objectives and policies need to be established with regard to locating development to insure cost effective use of existing facilities.

Policies

- EDU-1.1 Cooperate with Palmer Public Schools in expanding public uses of educational facilities.
- EDU-1.2 The school districts should review all new development proposed within the zoning jurisdiction of Palmer so they can accommodate future school populations.

Palmer Community Facilities

Educational Goal 2

Palmer, in order to maintain a stable or growing population, needs to maintain a locally owned and operated school system.

Policies

- EDU-2.1 The Village should work with the school district and residents to develop a short- and long-term strategic plan that ensures the continuation of a local attendance center in the community.
- EDU-2.2 The Village should identify specific economic development actions to be undertaken to assist with survival of the school system.

PUBLIC SAFETY GOALS

Public Safety Goal 1

The goal of the Village of Palmer is to maintain fire protection, rescue and ambulance programs by exploring programs and alternative services to insure optimum service levels and public costs.

Policies

- PS -1.1 The Village should continue to work with the fire department to maintain quality equipment levels.
- PS-1.2 The Fire Department should continue to expand fire safety education and prevention throughout the community.

Public Safety Goal 2

The goal of the Village of Palmer is to maintain quality law enforcement within the community.

Policies

- PS -2.1 Continue to identify specific ways to work cooperatively with the County Sheriff regarding protection within the corporate limits of Palmer.
- PS-2.2 Continue to support minimum standards regarding equipment used by law enforcement.

Public Safety Goal 3

The goal of the Village of Palmer is to maintain regulations to protect the general health and safety of all residents.

Policies

- PS-3.1 The Village should regulate nuisances and poorly maintained properties. This includes continued efforts to regulate junk cars, junkyards and dilapidated/deteriorated residences across the Village.

- PS-3.2 Establish regulations protecting the Village residents from the secondary effects of adult entertainment.

PUBLIC FACILITY GOALS

Public Facility Goal 1

The Village of Palmer must continually replace and upgrade its aging infrastructure.

Policies

- PUB-1.1 The Village should continue to expand and upgrade the water and sanitary sewer system in a manner that will guide growth and redevelopment in a systematic and responsible manner without creating large shortfalls for the Village to meet demand.
- PUB-1.2 A funding mechanism needs to be put into place in order to upgrade the existing system.

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7

Land Use



INTRODUCTION

Any planning jurisdiction, whether a large growing urban area or a small declining rural county, there will be changes in land uses throughout the planning period. The purpose of the Palmer Land Use Chapter is to provide a general guide to direct changes in land use over time. The resulting changes in land uses should be capable of coexisting with a minimum number of conflicts. This Chapter must reflect the existing conditions and be flexible in order to meet the needs of its citizens as well as their vision for the community's future.

The Palmer Land Use Chapter provides the basis for the formulation of land use and the zoning regulations. For this reason, it is imperative to formulate a plan tailored to the needs, desires and environmental limitations of the planning area. The Chapter should promote improvements in all the components of the local economy.

PALMER LAND USE ELEMENTS

The elements of the Palmer Land Use Chapter include:

- Existing Land Use, and
- Future Land Use Plan

All of these elements are integrated in some manner. Effective evaluations and decisions regarding development decisions require a substantial amount of information to be utilized.

EXISTING LAND USE

The term "Existing Land Use" refers to the developed uses in place within a building or on a specific parcel of land. The number and type of uses are constantly changing within a community, and produce a number of impacts that either benefit or detract from the community. Because of this, the short and long-term success and sustainability of the community is directly contingent upon available resources utilized in the best manner given the constraints the village faces during the course of the planning period.

Existing patterns of land use are often fixed in older communities or at least in established sections, while development in newer areas is often reflective of current development practices. Overall, development patterns in and around Palmer have been influenced by topography and manmade features such as railroad lines and one State Highway. These items will likely continue to influence development patterns throughout the course of the

planning period.

EXISTING LAND USE CATEGORIES

The utilization of land is best described in specific categories that provide broad descriptions where numerous businesses, institutions, and structures can be grouped. For the purposes of the Comprehensive Plan, the following land use classifications

are used:

- Single Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential (includes Duplexes and Apartments)
- Manufactured Housing (including Trailers and Mobile Homes)
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public (including City facilities and schools)
- Parks & Recreation (including Open Space)
- Vacant/Agricultural

These land use classifications are used throughout both the existing land use analysis as well as the future land use plan to ensure continuity and methodology.

EXISTING LAND USES WITHIN CORPORATE LIMITS

As part of the planning process, a survey was conducted using the Merrick County Assessors GIS system and as well as through field verifications via a windshield survey. This survey noted the use of each parcel of land within the village of Palmer. The data from the survey is analyzed in the following paragraphs.

Table 7.1 includes the different types of data. The first set of data are the total acres determined per land use from the survey; next is the percentage of those areas compared to the total developed land; the third set of data compare the all land uses to the total area within the corporate limits of Palmer; finally, the last column examines the data in terms of acres per 100 persons.

The persons per 100 acre establishes a baseline from which land use numbers can be equally compared from one community to another as well as to project future land use needs due to population. The results of the land use survey are presented graphically on Figure 7.1.

Palmer Land Use

**TABLE 7.1: EXISTING LAND USES
PALMER 2014**

Type of Use	Acres	Percent of Developed Area	Percent of Total Area	Acres per 100 persons
Residential	96.21	36.0%	28.5%	20.38
Single-family	95.46	35.8%	28.3%	20.22
Multi-family	0.75	0.3%	0.2%	0.16
Mobile Homes	-	0.0%	0.0%	0.00
Commercial	21.99	8.2%	6.5%	4.66
Industrial	22.62	8.5%	6.7%	4.79
Quasi-Public/Public	60.94	22.8%	18.1%	12.91
Parks/Recreation	4.89	1.8%	1.5%	1.04
Transportation	60.36	22.6%	17.9%	12.79
Total Developed Land	267.01	100.0%	79.2%	56.57
Vacant/Agriculture	69.99	-	20.8%	14.83
Total Area	337.00	-	100.0%	71.40

Source: Merrick County Assessor's Office

Note: Acres per 100 is based upon the 2010 population

Table 7.1 indicates 36.0% of the develop area within Palmer is residential, this similar to the other communities in Merrick County. Commercial uses accounted for 8.2% of the total developed area; while industrial uses made up 8.5% of the developed area. Transportation, platted streets and their corresponding right-of-way, made up 22.6% of the developed area of Palmer. Overall, residential and transportation uses accounted for 58.6% of the developed area of Palmer.

**TABLE 7.2: LAND USE COMPARISONS (IN ACRES)
PALMER, NEBRASKA**

Type of Use	Palmer (1)	Percent of Total Area	Silver Creek (2)	Percent of Total Area	Henderson (3)	Percent of Total Area	Chapman (4)	Percent of Total Area
Residential	96.21	36.9%	62.31	23.9%	125.73	32.5%	81.91	31.4%
Single-family	95.46	36.6%	59.87	22.9%	120.09	31.1%	68.01	26.1%
Multi-family	0.75	0.3%	2.26	0.9%	4.89	1.3%	0	0.0%
Mobile Homes	0.00	0.0%	0.18	0.1%	0.75	0.2%	13.9	5.3%
Commercial	21.99	8.4%	7.00	2.7%	5.58	1.4%	12.81	4.9%
Industrial	22.62	8.7%	22.35	8.6%	40.92	10.6%	24.74	9.5%
Quasi-Public/Public	60.94	23.3%	0.59	0.2%	11.69	3.0%	3.44	1.3%
Parks/Recreation	4.89	1.9%	22.28	8.5%	88.61	22.9%	3.99	1.5%
Transportation	60.36	23.1%	57.06	21.9%	97.40	25.2%	70.55	27.0%
Total Developed Land	267.01	139.1%	171.59	89.4%	369.93	95.7%	197.44	75.6%
Vacant/Agriculture	69.99	26.8%	20.41	7.8%	16.79	4.3%	63.56	24.4%
Total Area	337.00	100.0%	192.00	100.0%	386.72	100.0%	261.00	100.0%

Source: (1) 2014 Comprehensive Development Plan – Merrick County

(2) 2014 Comprehensive Development Plan – Merrick County

(3) 2010 Comprehensive Development Plan – MPC Field Survey

(4) 2002 Comprehensive Development Plan - Merrick County

The developed area of a community is usually less than the total area of the corporate limits of the village. In the case of Palmer, there is 69.99 acres considered as vacant or agricultural or 20.8% of the corporate limits.

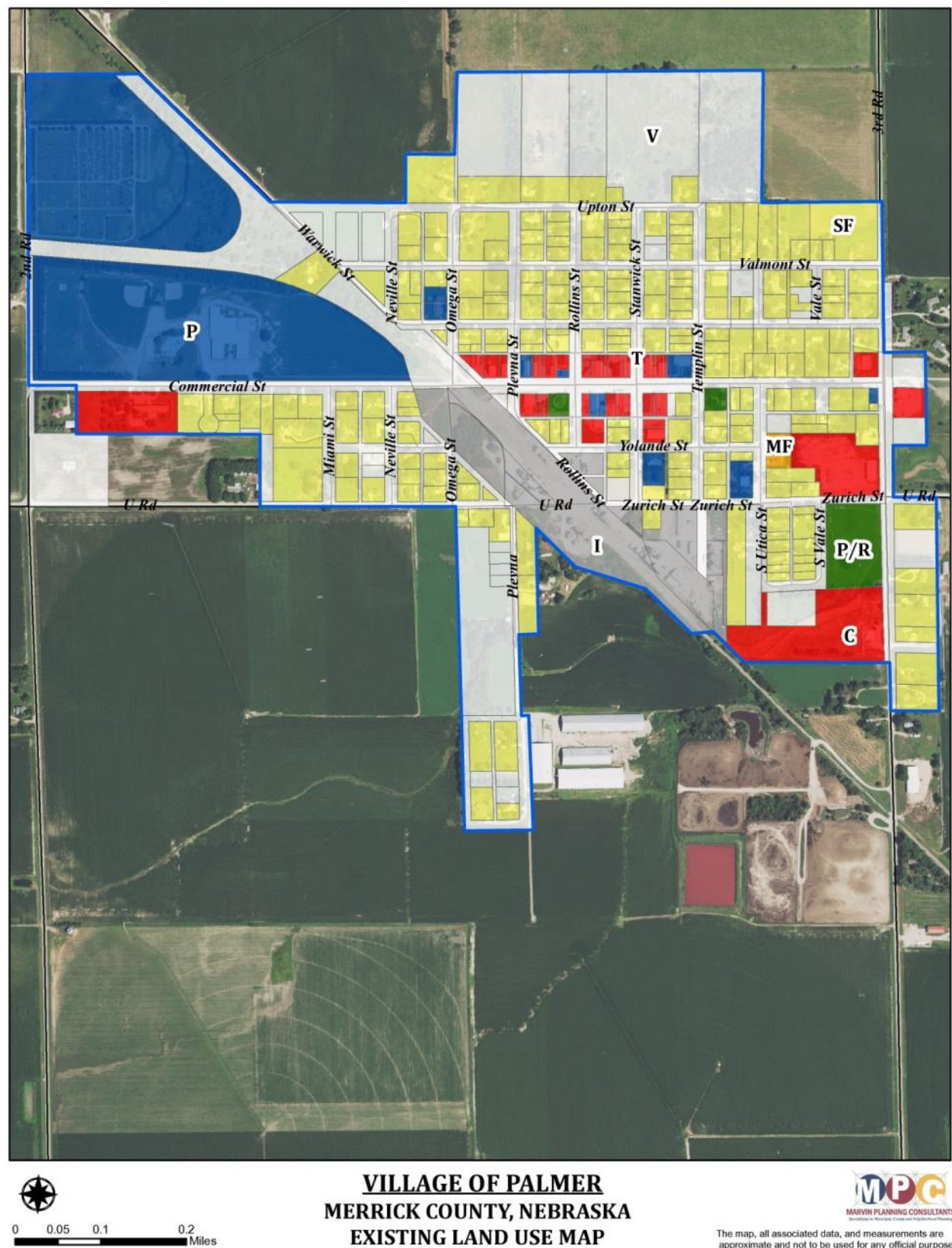
LAND USE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Table 7.2 compares the land use make-up of Palmer to three similar communities. The table shows there are varying levels of uses in each community. The table is purely for comparison purposes and does not indicate one community's make-up is better than another.

EXISTING LAND USE ANALYSIS WITHIN THE ETJ

During the course of the land use survey, land uses in the one-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction of Palmer were reviewed. The predominate land use within the outlying areas is agriculture, including farmsteads and acreage developments.

FIGURE 7.1:
EXISTING LAND USE MAP
PALMER 2014



FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

The Future Land Use Plan provides the basis for the formulation of land use policy and zoning regulations. For this reason, it is imperative to formulate a plan tailored to the needs, desires and environmental limitations of the planning area. The Future Land Use Plan should promote improvements in all components of the local economy. The following common principles and land use concepts have been formed to guide future development and redevelopment activities within Palmer's planning and zoning jurisdiction.

The plan is based upon existing conditions and projected future conditions for the community. The Land Use Plan also assists the community in determining the type, direction and timing of future community growth, development and redevelopment activities. The criteria used in this Plan reflect several elements, including:

- the current use of land within and around the community
- future development activities
- future redevelopment needs and desires
- physical characteristics, opportunities and constraints of future growth areas
- current population and economic trends affecting the community

The Palmer Future Land Use section of the comprehensive development plan typically identifies more land for development and redevelopment than forecasted for the planning period. The process of identifying more land area allows for several development/redevelopment activities and opportunities without giving one or even two property owners an unfair advantage. Typically, the value of land can increase merely as a result of the plan designating an area as one use or another. However, value should be added to land by the real and substantial investments in roads, water, sewer or parks, not by the designation of land in the Plan.

Efficient allocation of land recognizes the forces of the private market and the limitations of the capital improvement budget. This Plan acknowledges that these factors play an important role in the growth, development, and redevelopment of Palmer. A Future Land Use Plan is intended to be a general guide to future land use that balances private sector development (the critical growth element in any community) with the concerns, interests, and

demands of the overall local economy.

LAND USE CATEGORIES

The future land uses for Palmer are separated into 10 categories. The following list shows the land uses within this plan:

- Transitional Agriculture
- Low Density Residential
- Medium/High Density Residential
- Mobile Home Residential
- Downtown Commercial
- General Commercial
- Highway Commercial
- Industrial
- Public
- Parks/Recreation

TRANSITIONAL AGRICULTURE LAND USE

GENERAL PURPOSE

This land use designation provides for the continuation of existing cropland, farmsteads, limited livestock, animal services, crop services, horticulture, and community supported agriculture.

In specific cases, where the design criteria are met, mobile home residential development may be allowed in any of these areas. These criteria are intended to provide for an area having livable lot sizes, landscaping, streets and safe and clean storm shelters.

These areas may also contain commercial and industrial uses; these uses will typically serve the local rural area in some fashion. At some point in the future this land area may transition into a more urbanized area depending upon specific growth patterns.

TYPICAL USES

1. Crop production, including grazing lands
2. Private grain storage
3. Commercial grain storage
4. Manure/fertilizer applications
5. Public recreational, wildlife and historical areas
6. Renewable energy equipment
7. Tourism activities such as: hunting preserves, fishing etc.
8. Religious uses and structures
9. Educational uses and structures
10. Community/Recreational Center

POTENTIAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER

1. Slopes
2. Topography
3. Natural amenities such as trees, ponds, and streams
4. Site drainage
5. Flooding hazard.
6. Minimum residential densities
7. Groundwater contamination
8. Minimum lot sizes
9. Wetlands

BUILDABLE LOT POLICIES

1. Minimum residential lot sizes should be kept at the lowest possible size that will accommodate both private water and sanitary sewer.

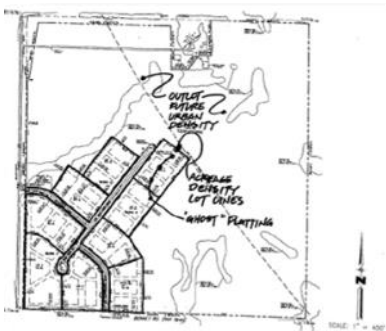
RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES

1. Residential densities within this land use category should be no more than four dwelling units per 1/4 section.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES TO CONSIDER

1. Cluster developments should be considered and used whenever soils, topography, natural amenities warrant.
2. Ghost platting should be considered on any proposed subdivision within 1-mile of the corporate limits of Palmer. **See subsection on "Ghost Platting".**





An example of a "ghost" plat done, initially, as a clustered subdivision.

LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

GENERAL PURPOSE

The recommended density for this land use designation is a minimum of 1/4 acre per unit. This type of land use is not recommended in prime developable areas in or near Palmer due to the amount of land consumed.

An example of a typical low density residential/estate development area would be a clustered development incorporating the natural amenities of the area. A portion of the development site should allow single family residential and the remaining area of the site would be left undeveloped. Village services could either be or not be provided within this land use designation.

In specific cases, where the design criteria are met, mobile home residential development may be allowed in any of these areas. These criteria are intended to provide for an area that has livable lot sizes, landscaping, streets and storm shelters that are safe and clean.

TYPICAL USES

1. Single-family residential dwelling units and associated accessory uses
2. Religious uses and structures
3. Educational uses and structures
4. Community/Recreational Center
5. Public facilities such as police, fire and rescue, libraries, Village/county/state/federal offices
6. Public recreational, wildlife, and historical areas
7. Renewable energy equipment

POTENTIAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER

1. Slopes
2. Topography
3. Natural amenities such as trees, ponds, and streams
4. Site drainage
5. Flooding hazard.
6. Minimum lot sizes and residential densities
7. Wetlands

BUILDABLE LOT POLICIES

1. Minimum residential lot sizes should be kept at the lowest possible size that will accommodate both private water and sanitary sewer or public water and sanitary sewer.

RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES

1. Residential densities within this land use category should be approximately one dwelling unit per every 1/4 acres.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES TO CONSIDER

1. Cluster developments should be considered and used whenever soils, topography, natural amenities warrant. **See subsection of clustered developments.**
2. Ghost platting should be considered on any proposed subdivision within 1-mile of the corporate limits of Palmer. **See subsection on "Ghost Platting".**

MEDIUM/HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

GENERAL PURPOSE

This designation is the next highest area in terms of residential density. This district is intended to be similar to the typical residential area that covers most communities like Palmer. Village services such as water and sewer would be provided.

It is intended for this district to encourage variations to the standard detached single-family environment. The area should include single-family detached dwellings, with an occasional townhouse, condominium, and small multi-family apartment developments.

In specific cases, where the design criteria are met, mobile home residential development may be allowed in any of these areas. These criteria are intended to provide for an area that has livable lot sizes, landscaping, streets and storm shelters that are safe and clean.

TYPICAL USES

1. Single-family residential dwelling units and associated accessory uses
2. Townhouses, condominiums and duplexes
3. Small multi-family complexes
4. Parks and Recreational facilities
5. Public facilities such as police, fire and rescue, libraries, Village/county/state/federal offices
6. Educational uses and structures
7. Community/Recreational Center
8. Religious uses and structures
9. Health care facilities
10. Renewable energy equipment

POTENTIAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER

1. Slopes
2. Topography
3. Natural amenities such as trees, ponds, and streams
4. Site drainage
5. Flooding hazard.
6. Minimum residential densities
7. Minimum lot sizes
8. Wetlands

BUILDABLE LOT POLICIES

1. Minimum lot sizes should be in the 6,000 to 10,000 square foot range with some allowances for larger lots being as large as 1/4 acre.

RESIDENTIAL DENSITIES

1. The proposed density for this land use district ranges from four to eight units per acre (a typical Village block is approximately two acres). This density would allow lots for single family dwellings ranging from approximately 14,500 square feet to 5,000 square feet.





MOBILE HOME RESIDENTIAL LAND USE

GENERAL PURPOSE

These areas are focused on allowing mobile homes as primary dwelling units. However, standard stick-built single-family dwellings units are also allowed.

The mobile home residential use districts may be allowed within other land use districts, if all of the special design requirements are able to be met.

TYPICAL USES

1. Mobile homes as the primary dwelling unit
2. Standard stick built homes as a primary dwelling unit
3. Public facilities such as police, fire and rescue, libraries, Village/county/state/federal offices
4. Religious uses and structures
5. Educational uses and structures
6. Community/Recreational Center
7. Accessory uses as desired or required

POTENTIAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER

1. Traffic control
2. Parking, especially on-street
3. Safety of residents living in the mobile homes from strong winds
4. Distances of homes from storm shelters

BUILDABLE LOT POLICIES

1. Building lots in this district should vary throughout depending upon the use. The typical lot widths should be a minimum of 25 to 50 feet depending upon off-street parking locations.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES TO CONSIDER

1. Storm shelters should be required in order to provide adequate safety from wind storms and tornadoes.
2. Storm shelters should meet all FEMA guidelines at the time of construction.
3. Storm shelters should be sized to hold an average of two persons per home site in the park.
4. All homes should be strapped down according to all manufacture guidelines.
5. All home site should have adequate hard-surfaced off-street parking.
6. The mobile home park should have a community building providing laundry services, storm shelter, if desired, etc.
7. Streets within the mobile home park should be hard-surfaced.

DOWNTOWN COMMERCIAL LAND USE

GENERAL PURPOSE

This area is focused on the heart of Palmer's commercial activities, as well as the historic heart of the community. This area should continue to promote basic retail, service, and office uses. With new development and redevelopment, new construction may include multiple stories with upper level housing in this area.

In addition, this area typically will not have any setbacks and new buildings can be constructed right to the property line.

TYPICAL USES

1. General retail businesses on all floors
2. General offices on all floors
3. Restaurants without drive-thru
4. Drinking establishments
5. Public facilities
6. Single-family residential dwellings on upper floors
7. Religious uses and structures
8. Educational uses and structures
9. Community/Recreational Center

POTENTIAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER

1. Traffic control
2. Parking, especially on-street
3. Character of the area
4. Potential design modifications

BUILDABLE LOT POLICIES

1. Building lots in this district should vary throughout depending upon the use. The typical downtown lot widths range from 25 lineal feet to between 50 and 100 feet.

SPECIFIC USE NOT RECOMMENDED

1. Apartments
2. Storage within existing buildings





GENERAL COMMERCIAL LAND USE

GENERAL PURPOSE

This land use category is intended to provide a location for commercial uses that may be similar to those found in the Downtown Commercial area and are on limited lots/pad sites throughout the community.

A major difference between the General Commercial and the Downtown Commercial Districts is that uses locating within this particular area will be required to meet established setbacks as well as other minimal design criteria.

TYPICAL USES

1. General retail businesses
2. General offices
3. Restaurants with or without a drive-thru
4. Drinking establishments
5. Public facilities such as police, fire and rescue, libraries, Village/county/state/federal offices
6. Religious uses and structures
7. Educational uses and structures
8. Community/Recreational Center

POTENTIAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER

1. Traffic control
2. Parking
3. Potential design modifications

BUILDABLE LOT POLICIES

1. Developments in this district should have a minimum of 7,000 square feet since there will be requirements for parking and internal trafficways.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES TO CONSIDER

1. These developments should minimize the impact on adjacent uses such as parks and residential developments.
2. All loading and unloading facilities should be screened from adjacent uses and the general public.
3. Screening should be used between these uses and other uses such as parks and residential developments.

HIGHWAY COMMERCIAL LAND USE

GENERAL PURPOSE

This land use category is intended to provide a location for commercial uses traveler oriented or more intensive than uses typically found in other commercial districts. This district should typically be placed along a major highway within the community.

A major difference between the General Commercial and the Highway Commercial Districts is that uses locating within this particular area may have limited access off the highways and the lots within this district. In addition, uses locating adjacent to one another should be connected by a service road as opposed to requiring shoppers to move on and off the highway.

TYPICAL USES

1. General retail businesses
2. Restaurants with or without a drive-thru
3. Public facilities such as police, fire and rescue, libraries, Village/county/state/federal offices
4. Religious uses and structures
5. Educational uses and structures
6. Community/Recreational Center
7. Convenience stores with or without fuel sales

POTENTIAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER

1. Traffic control
2. Parking
3. Potential design modifications

BUILDABLE LOT POLICIES

1. Developments in this district should have a minimum of 10,000 square feet since there will be requirements for parking and internal trafficways.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES TO CONSIDER

1. These developments should minimize the impact on adjacent uses such as parks and residential developments.
2. All loading and unloading facilities should be screened from adjacent uses and the general public.
3. Screening should be used between these uses and other uses such as parks and residential developments.





INDUSTRIAL LAND USE

GENERAL PURPOSE

Industrial land uses are important in order to accommodate the manufacturing base of the community. These typically need require large tracts of ground in order to deal with the buildings required for manufacturing. In addition, the location of industrial uses needs to be sensitive to other uses which are not compatible such as residential uses.

TYPICAL USES

1. Warehousing and storage
2. Self-service storage facilities
3. Adult entertainment when the required guidelines are met
4. Light manufacturing
5. Necessary accessory uses and structures that are subordinate to the primary structure
6. Religious uses and structures
7. Public facilities such as police, fire and rescue, libraries, Village/county/state/federal offices
8. Educational uses and structures
9. Community/Recreational Center

POTENTIAL ISSUES TO CONSIDER

1. Traffic control
2. Parking
3. Potential design modifications
4. Secondary effects of adult entertainment uses

BUILDABLE LOT POLICIES

1. Lot size and setbacks should be adjusted to fit the specific area. Some of these areas may be included in Planned Unit Developments (PUD) and the overall scheme of the development may dictate these items.
2. When lots are not part of a PUD then lot sizes should be adequate to handle the required setbacks of the zoning district and all other pertinent requirements such as parking and screening.
3. Setbacks within developments not done as a PUD should follow the appropriate zoning district.

DEVELOPMENT POLICIES TO CONSIDER

1. Cluster developments should be considered and used whenever the soils, topography and natural amenities warrant
2. Signage should be minimal and be aesthetically tied to the overall development or structure.
3. Security fencing should be used in most cases.

PUBLIC LAND USE

GENERAL PURPOSE

Public land uses are those uses specifically owned and operated by a public entity such as the Village of Palmer, Merrick County, Palmer Public Schools as well as state and federal agencies. The public land use areas are only delineated when there are larger parcels of land associated with the use. Smaller areas such as Village Hall and the Post Office are not singled out due to this reason.

TYPICAL USES

1. Public facilities such as police, fire and rescue, libraries, Village/county/state/federal offices
2. Religious uses and structures
3. Educational uses and structures
4. Community/Recreational Center
5. Public utilities

PARK AND RECREATIONAL LAND USE

GENERAL PURPOSE

This land use district is intended for parks, green space, trails, recreational areas, and areas for environmental protection. Some of these areas may or may not be used as an extension of the Village's existing park system. One issue to note is not all areas suitable for future parks and open space are indicated on the Future Land Use Map, this is done for the purpose of not artificially or prematurely inflating land values.

In addition, as new development or future redevelopment activities occur, the Village should be working to ensure new park space is incorporated into the project where needed.

Open space areas can work excellently as a buffer area between different developments and uses. In addition, these areas can be used to preserve natural features. To encourage the appropriate use of open space in this manner, the Village should work with developers to identify areas worthy of protection rather than allow individual developers identifying these areas.

TYPICAL USES

1. Park facilities including Village/county/state/federal facilities
2. Parks
3. Trails
4. Community/Recreational Center
5. Recreational facilities such as ballfields, volleyball and basketball courts, horseshoes, splash parks, etc.



EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION (ETJ)

Planning within the extraterritorial jurisdiction of Palmer should be focused more on agricultural uses and less on large lot residential. New residential development should be encouraged to locate either adjacent to the community or within the existing corporate limits as a redevelopment project.

Developments requesting to be within the ETJ should be required to provide either large enough lots to adequately handle individual wells and septic systems or they should be designed with a centralized water and/or sanitary sewer collection system that meets State and Federal standards.

Development within the ETJ should also work in a manner to conserve environmentally sensitive areas as well as natural resources such as tree groves, ponds, lakes, streams, etc. In order to accomplish these protections, the Village and the developer should work to use creative subdivision designs including clustered subdivisions and planned unit developments, both are very similar in their approach.

CLUSTERED OR CONSERVATION SUBDIVISIONS/PLANNED UNIT DEVELOPMENTS

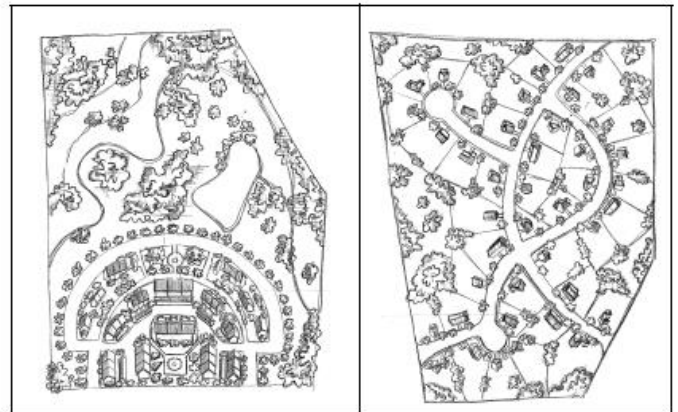
The Cluster Subdivision is a different type of subdivision that has not been used in the past in Palmer. These Subdivisions are designed to “cluster” building lots into certain pockets of the site. Generally, these pockets are located where the least amount of negative impact will be made to the natural environment. In addition, the Cluster Subdivision provides a means to create new neighborhoods that include mature trees, steep slopes, streams and buffers and other natural amenities. The Cluster Subdivision will be one of the most powerful tools the Village and Developer have to preserve parts of the existing natural environment.

Subdivisions should be designed using principles of environmental conservation and clustering. When clustering is used in subdivision design, the same number of dwelling units can be realized while natural features are preserved. The areas preserved can be used as natural open spaces, linear parks, or trails. This can have the effect of increasing property values as people are drawn to live in areas with environmental amenities.

Another beneficial effect often accompanying cluster development is that as developers utilize this

technique, Palmer can recognize an overall increase in open space without having to increase the park system.

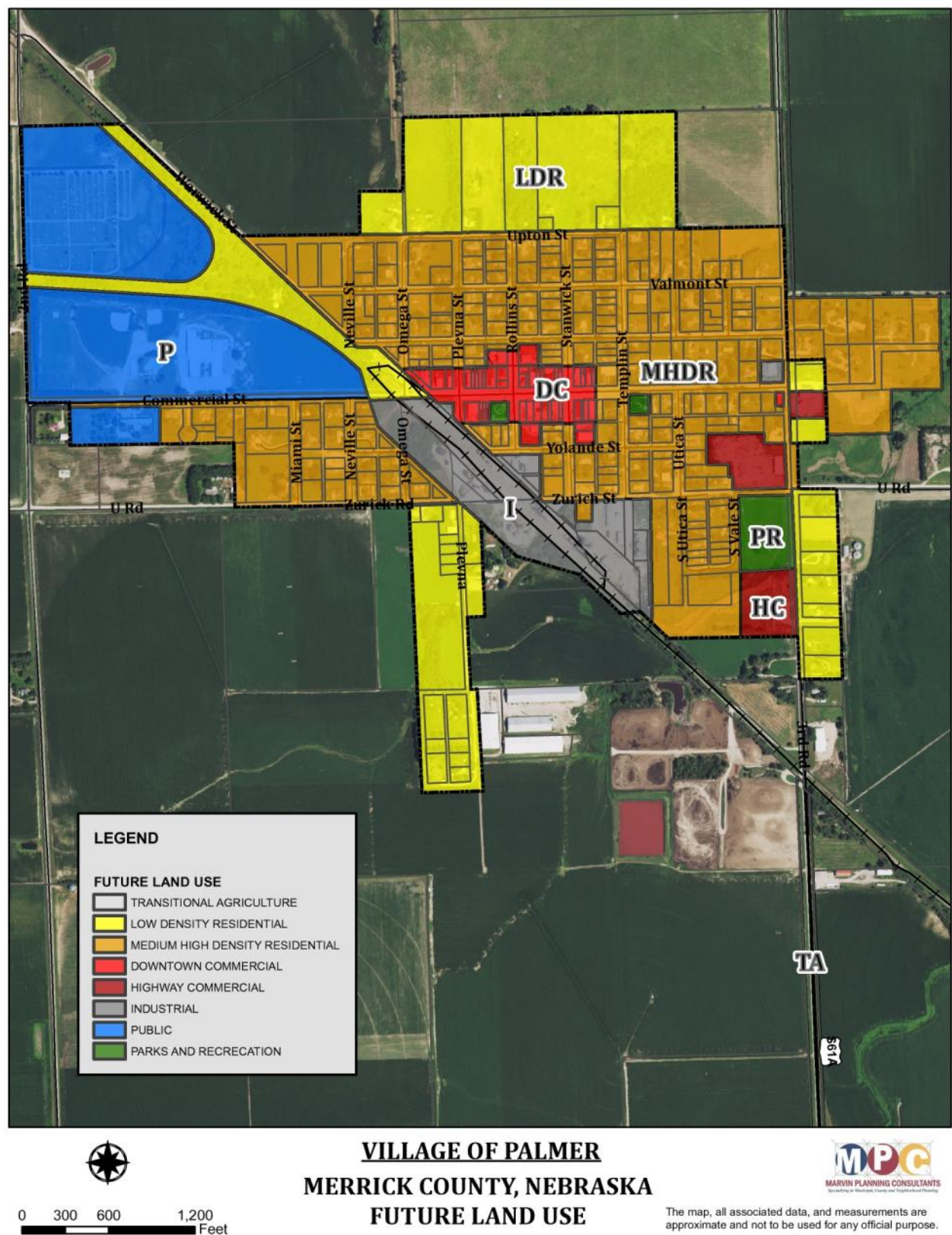
Density bonuses can be used to encourage developers to preserve natural space within their developments, while still developing approximately the same number of lots can do this. The following two diagrams show how clustering concepts can be used to develop the same number of lots in a smaller area, thereby preserving natural features such as tree clusters.



Conservation subdivisions (left) feature smaller lots with a high percentage of open space. Conventional subdivisions (right) feature large lots with little common open space. A conventional subdivision is subject to all of the base zoning district standards, such as minimum lot size, front setbacks, landscaping, and adequacy of public facilities.

Source: 21st Century Land Development Code; Freilich, Robert H., White, S. Mark; APA Planners Press 2008

FIGURE 7.2:
FUTURE LAND USE MAP
PALMER 2015



FUTURE LAND USE GOALS

LAND USE GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

Guiding future growth, development, and redevelopment in Palmer towards a compact pattern of land uses based upon the efficient and economical expansion of public infrastructure will continue to maintain and improve the quality of life for everyone in the community.

Objectives

- GENLU-1.1 The cost of required improvements, both on-site and off-site, to a subdivision exclusively serving the property owners of the subdivision should be borne by the developer or those property owners within said subdivision.
- GENLU-1.2 The Village of Palmer, when feasible, may choose to aid a development or redevelopment with specific funding mechanisms such as Tax Increment Financing, special assessments, etc.
- GENLU-1.3 The Village should designate areas in the Land Use Plan that address some future growth in Palmer.
- GENLU-1.4 The Village should develop zoning and subdivision regulations promoting efficient land usage, while avoiding land use conflicts.
- GENLU-1.5 Land use policies should discourage and minimize leapfrog development outside of the corporate limits.
- GENLU-1.6 The village of Palmer should work toward strong compact development through the redevelopment of older dilapidated lots and neighborhoods.

Commercial Land Use Objectives

- COMLU-2.1 Encourage the redevelopment of the downtown commercial district
- COMLU-2.2 Appropriate transitional methods should be considered at all locations where the development or expansion of commercial land use abuts residential property (either built or zoned).
- COMLU-2.3 Commercial land use districts and uses within commercial zoning districts should be lenient yet focused in a manner that allows for new and innovative business to develop and locate within Palmer.

Industrial Land Use Objectives

- INDLU-3.1 Provide guidelines and incentives

- INDLU-3.2 Industrial uses should be located so adequate buffer space is provided between incompatible land uses.
- INDLU-3.3 The Village should develop appropriate performance, design and specification standards and requirements for all existing and possible future industrial uses to guide their location or relocation in the Village.
- INDLU-3.4 The Village should recognize and encourage small-scale industries as viable alternatives to larger, conventional enterprises.
- INDLU-3.5 Signage used within and around industrial areas should be designed to compliment the materials and scale of surrounding development.
- INDLU-3.6 Industrial districts should be located:
 - i. where urban services and infrastructure are available or planned in the near future;
 - ii. in sites supported by adequate road capacity – commercial development should be linked to the implementation of the transportation plan;
 - iii. so they enhance entryways or public way corridors, when developing adjacent to these corridors; and
 - iv. in a manner supporting the creation and maintenance of greenspace.

Residential Land Use Objectives

- RESLU-4.1 Residential development should be separated from more intensive uses, such as agriculture, commercial, and industrial development, by the use of setbacks, buffer zones, or impact easements, when possible.
- RESLU-4.2 The Village should promote the development of housing that varies in size, density, and location.
- RESLU-4.3 The Village should develop subdivision regulations providing for a quality living environment while avoiding inefficient and expensive public infrastructure expansions.
- RESLU-4.4 The Village should support housing options for all incomes and physical capabilities of Palmer's residents.
- RESLU-4.5 New residential developments should be accompanied by covenants, when appropriate, which provide for the

- maintenance of common areas, easements and drainage.
- RESLU-4.6 The establishment of a rehabilitation program should be undertaken to maintain and improve the existing housing stock.
- RESLU-4.7 The Village should develop relationships and partnerships with housing professions in the public and private sector to establish a range of affordable housing options, ranging from a First Time Homebuyer program to rental assistance.
- RESLU-4.8 The Village should promote low to zero non-farm densities in agricultural districts by providing proper distances between residential and agricultural uses.
- RESLU-4.9 The Village should work with the owner of existing dilapidated properties to eliminate the inadequate structure(s) from the property and open it up for redevelopment.
- RESLU-4.10 Palmer should work on redevelopment of deteriorated/dilapidated properties in order to address the demand for new housing in the community. This allows for new housing to take advantage of existing street and utility systems without creating a greater demand for maintenance of the existing system.



8

Annexation



ANNEXATION

ANNEXATION

As municipalities grow in size the borders must be extended in order to provide a higher quality of life for its residents. The State of Nebraska has established a process for communities to extend their corporate limits into urban or suburban areas situated contiguous to an existing community, provided the criteria for such action is justified. This power should be used, as development becomes urban in nature rather than rural. An important restriction must be followed before contiguous lands are considered for annexation, that is, the land may not be further than 500 feet from the corporate limits of the municipality. There are two means for annexing land into the corporate limits:

- Land that has been requested to be annexed by the property owner(s), or
- Any contiguous or adjacent lands, lots, tracts, streets, or highways which are urban or suburban in character.

Landowners that desire annexation of land must submit a plat, by a licensed surveyor. This plat must be approved by the Village Engineer and filed with the Clerk along with a written request signed by all owner(s) of record within the proposed annexed area.

Following three separate readings of the ordinance (waiver of the three readings is not allowed by State Law under this process), a majority of affirmative votes by the Village Council in favor of an annexation is required at each reading, to pass the annexation. The certified map is then filed with the Register of Deeds, County Clerk and County Assessor, together with a certified copy of the annexation ordinance. The Village has one year to develop a plan that addresses the providing of services to residents of the annexed area.

With regard to annexation, the Village should establish subdivision improvement agreements and non-contested annexation agreements with future Sanitary Improvement Districts (SID's). This agreement gives the SID a possible financing vehicle, the Village gets an agreement stating the SID can be annexed, at the discretion of the Village, and the SID will not contest the annexation action.

ANNEXATIONS POLICY

The Village of Palmer has established an annexation policy. The policy is consistent with the provisions

allowed by the State of Nebraska. This policy is as follows:

1. All areas deemed to be urban and suburban in character adjacent to the Corporate Limits of Palmer shall be considered eligible for annexation and annexed according to the Revised Nebraska State Statutes.
2. The Village of Palmer shall discourage the use of Sanitary Improvement Districts (SID) within the extraterritorial jurisdiction of Palmer.
3. If SID's are approved within the extraterritorial jurisdiction, then there needs to be an agreement as part of the subdivision agreement that the SID will not protest any future annexations undertaken by the Village of Palmer upon that SID.
4. The Village of Palmer shall require the owner of any and all properties adjacent to the Corporate Limits of the Village of Palmer to file subdivision plats on such properties as additions to the Village of Palmer.
5. All sand and gravel operations within the extraterritorial jurisdiction of Palmer shall be considered to be urban and suburban in character.
6. The Village of Palmer shall consider extension of the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the Village along with all approved annexations.
7. All areas encompassed by the Corporate Limits of Palmer should be considered for annexation.
8. County Industrial Tracts should periodically be reviewed as allowed by Revised Nebraska State Statutes for consideration of annexation.

POTENTIAL FUTURE ANNEXATIONS

There are four smaller areas as of this plan which could meet the statutory criteria for annexation. One area is located on the western edge of Palmer; while, the others are on the eastern edge along the State Spur into the community. See Figure 8.1 for details.

At the time of this plan, there were no Sanitary Improvement Districts within Palmer's zoning jurisdiction.

Palmer Annexation

FIGURE 8.1:
POTENTIAL ANNEXATION AREAS



0 0.05 0.1 0.2
Miles

VILLAGE OF PALMER MERRICK COUNTY, NEBRASKA FUTURE ANNEXATION MAP



The map, all associated data, and measurements are approximate and not to be used for any official purpose.

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9

Transportation



TRANSPORTATION PLAN

INTRODUCTION

Transportation networks tie communities together as well as providing a link to the outside world. Adequate circulation systems are essential for the safe and efficient flow of vehicles and pedestrians, and accessibility to all parts of the community. The Transportation Plan will identify existing systems and any major improvements planned for the future and those necessary to provide safe and efficient circulation of vehicles within Palmer and Merrick County, including major projects that ensure implementation of the Land Use Plan.

EXISTING TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND FACILITIES

Residents within a community have specific transportation needs. These include rail service, bus service, air transportation, as well as vehicular transportation. All of the transportation facilities are not available within the community or county and require residents to travel to the nearest location. This portion of the Comprehensive Development Plan examines those services with regard to the closest proximity for residents of Palmer.

Railroad Service

The closest rail freight service to Palmer is in Grand Island, Columbus or Lincoln. However, the Union Pacific Railroad does have a rail line through Merrick County and they operate approximately 64 trains per day on this line. The nearest passenger service is located in Hastings or Lincoln through Amtrak.

Bus Service

The nearest commercial bus service with ticketing services is available in Grand Island or Columbus via Arrow Stage Lines and Burlington Trailways.

Commercial Airport Service

Central Nebraska Regional Airport in Grand Island is the nearest commercial facility to residents in Palmer and Merrick County. However, arrivals and departures are limited to major airlines. Currently, the airport and commercial service connects people to Phoenix and Las Vegas through Allegiant Airlines and points across the U.S. through Dallas-Ft. Worth via American Airlines.

Lincoln Municipal Airport in Lincoln is the next closest point for commercial service. However, airlines and flight schedules are limited. The airport is served by Delta and United Airlines.

Small craft Public Airports

The Central City Municipal Airport is the nearest small aircraft facility. The primary runway #1634 is 3700 feet by 60 feet with concrete surfacing. The fixed based operator (FBO) for this facility is Central Nebraska Aeronautics. Elevation is listed at 1715 feet.

Surface Transportation

The surface transportation system for Palmer is based primarily upon the system of local streets which are in directly connected to Nebraska Highway 92 and the Merrick County road system, which allows the community access to the surrounding region. These roadways are an essential aspect of community development for the residents of Palmer as they provide for movement of goods and services into and through the Village.

State and Federal Highways

The Village of Palmer is connected to Nebraska Highway 92 via Nebraska Highway 61A.

TRANSPORTATION PLANNING AND LAND USE

Land use and transportation create the pattern for future development and are extremely interdependent upon one another in order to effectively shape a community. An improved or new transportation route generates a greater level of accessibility and will likely determine how adjacent land will be utilized in the future.

In the short term, land use shapes the demand for transportation and vice versa; one key to good land use planning is to balance land use and transportation. However, new or improved roads, as well as, county and state/federal highways may change land values, thus altering the intensity of which land is utilized.

In general, the greater the transportation needs of a particular land use, the greater its preference for a site near major transportation facilities. Commercial activities are most sensitive to accessibility since their survival often depends upon how easy a consumer can get to the business. Thus, commercial land uses are generally located near the center of their market area and along highways or at the intersection of arterial streets.

Industrial uses are also highly dependent on transportation access, but in a different way. For example, visibility is not as critical for an industry as it is for a retail store. Industrial uses often need access to more specialized transportation facilities, which is why

Palmer Transportation

industrial sites tend to be located near railroad lines or highways to suit individual industrial uses.

STREET AND ROAD CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

All of the public highways, roads, and streets in Nebraska are divided into two broad categories, and each category is divided into multiple functional classifications. The two broad categories are Rural Highways and Municipal Streets. State statute defines Rural Highways as "all public highways and roads outside the limits of any incorporated municipality," and Municipal Streets as "all public streets within the limits of any incorporated municipality." Neb. Rev. Stat. § 39-2102 (RRS 1998)

Nebraska Highway Law (Chapter 39, Article 21, Revised Reissue Statutes of Nebraska 1943) proposes the functional classification of both rural and municipal roads and streets and public highways. Chapter 39, Article 21.03 lists rural highway classifications as:

1. Interstate: federally-designed National System of Interstate and defense highways;
2. Expressway: second in importance to Interstate. Consists of a group of highways following major traffic desires in Nebraska and ultimately should be developed to multiple divided highway standards;
3. Major Arterial: consists of the balance of routes that serve major statewide interests for highway transportation in Nebraska. Characterized by high speed, relatively long distances, travel patterns;
4. Other Arterial: consists of a group of highways of less importance as through-travel routes.
5. Collector: consists of a group of highways that pick up traffic from the local or land-service roads and transport community centers or to the arterial systems. Main school bus routes, mail routes, and farm-to-market routes;
6. Local: consists of all remaining rural roads, generally described as land-access roads providing service to adjacent land and dwellings; and
7. Bridges: structures crossing a stream three hundred feet or more in width or channels of such a stream having a combined width of three hundred feet or more.

It is noted in article 39-2103, the combined rural highways classified under subdivisions (1) and (3) should serve every incorporated municipality having a minimum population of at least one hundred inhabitants or sufficient commerce, a part of that will

be served by stubs or spurs, and the major recreational areas of the state. Street and road classifications for the circulation system within the Village of Palmer are outlined below:

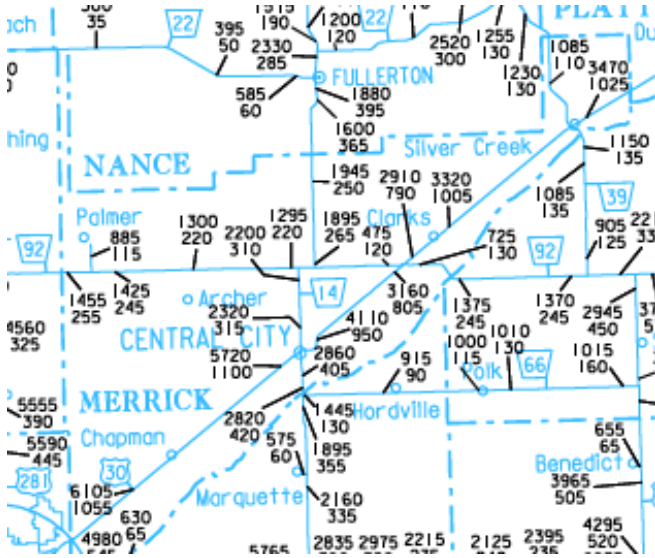
1. Arterial streets - public ways where large volumes of high-speed, through traffic are carried, and may serve as primary circulation routes for local traffic. These streets also provide access to abutting property.
2. Collector streets - are connecting links between Arterials and various sectors of the Village, over which local residential traffic moves in routine daily trips to centers of activity.
3. Local streets - function primarily to provide access to properties. They are characterized by short trip length and low traffic volumes.
4. Marginal access streets - parallel and adjacent to arterial streets and/or provides access to abutting property. They increase the safety and efficiency of thoroughfares by separating the property access function from the traffic flow function.
5. Alleys - provide secondary access to properties. They provide service access in the case of commercial and industrial properties. Alleys should be provided for residential properties only when necessary for safe access, due to the fronting of the property on a major thoroughfare.

TRAFFIC COUNTS NEAR PALMER

Palmer sits north of Nebraska Highway 92 and is connected by Nebraska 61A Spur. Nebraska 61A Spur sees nearly 885 cars and over 115 trucks on a daily basis, based upon traffic flow studies conducted in 2012.

Nebraska Highway 92 near Palmer sees between 1,455 and 1,425 cars and 255 and 245 trucks daily.

FIGURE 9.1: TRAFFIC FLOW MAP



Source: Nebraska Department of Roads

NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ROADS' IMPROVEMENTS

The Nebraska Department of Roads publishes an annual list of proposed projects for the current fiscal year, for fiscal years one to five years from the present, and six years and beyond. Palmer is in the Department of Road's District 4. There is only one project schedule in the Palmer area which is a resurfacing project on Nebraska Highway 92.

FIGURE 9.2:
NDOR SIX-YEAR HIGHWAY PROGRAM
MERRICK COUNTY



Source: Nebraska Department of Roads

TRAILS DEVELOPMENT

Trails are becoming a larger part of people's lives. Trails are being used as a means of relaxation and physical fitness. Development of a trails system in and around Palmer will be a key to future transportation demands.

The trails system needs to cover all parts of the community.

One key way of developing this expanded system is to make trails a component of any future street reconstruction project or new street project as new developments are constructed. Trails can even be a part of an existing or new sidewalk system; however, the sidewalks will need to meet state and federal standards for width in order to be called an official trail.

Trails development can be accomplished as a means of transportation for the community. In addition, trails have been successful as an economic development tool since they add to the overall quality of life within the community and the surrounding area.

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAIL GOALS

TRANSPORTATION AND TRAIL GOAL 1

Palmer will maintain its existing road network and enhance it as future development and vehicle counts justify. The Village will provide and encourage an efficient, safe, convenient transportation and communication system.

Objectives

- TRAN-1.1 Encourage bicycle and pedestrian access to and within existing and future commercial areas.
- TRAN-1.2 When new development is contemplated, due consideration should be given to the carrying capacity of the existing road system in the area, and development should be discouraged from occurring in areas where the road system is insufficient to handle any additional traffic load.
- TRAN-1.3 Improve, develop, and maintain well-traveled roads with hard surfacing including asphalt and concrete.
- TRAN-1.4 Right-of-way and pavements shall be sufficiently wide and of sufficient strength to accommodate anticipated future traffic loads.
- TRAN-1.5 Commercial signing along major arterials

Palmer Transportation

shall be kept to a minimum and shall be low profile.

- TRAN-1.6 When new or reconstructed streets are built, there should provisions made in the design documents that provide for additional space along a wider shoulder or path within the R.O.W. for pedestrian/ bicycle access.
- TRAN-1.7 The Village of Palmer will encourage bicycle and pedestrian traffic as an element of the street transportation system.
- TRAN-1.8 The Village should develop a separate Master Trails Plan addressing potential trail locations, designs, opinions of cost.

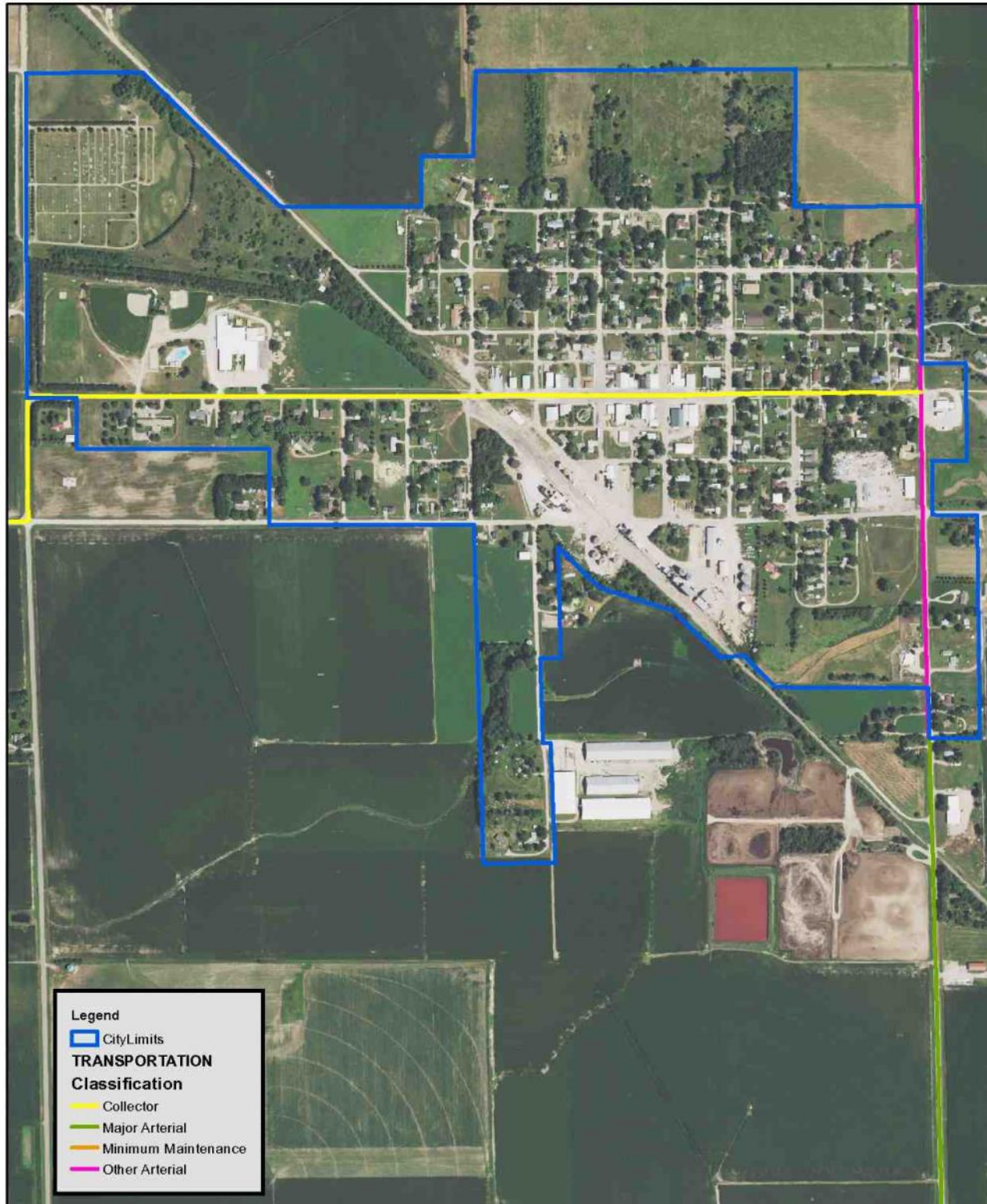
TRANSPORTATION FINANCING ISSUES

The primary sources of information utilized in the maintenance and development of the transportation and circulation system are (1) Village "One and Six Year Road Plan" and (2) the State of Nebraska "One and Five Year Highway Program." These state and local improvement plans should only be viewed as a planning tool, which are subject to change depending on financing capabilities of the governmental unit.

The Village's "One and Six Year Road Plan" is reviewed and adopted by the local unit of government to address the issues of proposed road and street system improvements and development. Upon approval of these plans by the Board of Public Road Classifications and Standards, the governmental units are eligible to receive revenue from the Nebraska Department of Roads and the State Treasurer's Office, which must be allocated to county road improvement projects.

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

FIGURE 9.3:
TRANSPORTATION PLAN MAP



VILLAGE OF PALMER
MERRICK COUNTY, NEBRASKA
TRANSPORTATION MAP



The map, all associated data, and measurements are approximate and not to be used for any official purpose.



10

Implementation



ACHIEVING PALMER'S FUTURE

Successful community plans have the same key ingredients: "2% inspiration and 98% perspiration." This section of the plan contains the inspiration of the many village officials and residents who have participated in the planning process. However, the ultimate success of this plan remains in the dedication offered by each and every resident.

There are numerous goals and objectives in this plan. We recommend reviewing the relevant goals during planning and budget setting sessions to determine what projects may need to be undertaken during the course of the fiscal year.

ACTION AGENDA

The Action Agenda is a combination of the following:

- Goals and Objectives
- Land Use Policies
- Support programs for the above items

It will be critical to earmark the specific funds to be used and the individuals primarily responsible for implementing the goals and objectives in Palmer.

Support Programs for the Action Agenda

Six programs will play a vital role in the success of Palmer's plan. These programs are:

1. **Zoning Regulations** - updated land use districts can allow the community to provide direction for future growth.
2. **Subdivision Regulations** - establish criteria for dividing land into building areas, utility easements, and streets. Implementing the Transportation Plan is a primary function of subdivision regulations.
3. **Plan Maintenance** - an annual and five-year review program will allow the community flexibility in responding to growth and a continuous program of maintaining the plan's viability.
4. **Housing Study** - A Housing Study will be critical to use in direct relationship to the Comprehensive Plan due to the need for housing issues in the community. The study will help guide the community in the redevelopment and future development of housing throughout the corporate limits.
5. **The Blight and Substandard Study and General Redevelopment Plan** - these documents will help guide the community through the overall redevelopment efforts within Palmer. These documents also provide the basis for the use of tax Increment financing now and in the future.
6. **Strategic Plan** - A Strategic Plan will assist in

identifying future economic development strategies that will tie into the overall planning effort of the community. It will be critical to work with this document and the Plan in unison.

PLAN FINANCING

The Implementation Plan is a reiteration of the goals and objectives; however, the goals and policies have been prioritized by the importance to the community. This prioritization was undertaken during the comprehensive planning process with the Planning Commission and the Plan Review Committee.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN MAINTENANCE

ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE PLAN

A relevant, up to date plan is critical to the on-going planning success. To maintain both public and private sector confidence; evaluate the effectiveness of planning activities; and, most importantly, make mid-plan corrections on the use of community resources, the plan must be current. The annual review should occur during the month of January.

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

- whether the plan is current in respect to population and economic changes; and
- The recommended goals, objectives, and/or policies are still valid for the Village and its long-term growth.

The Planning Commission should hold a public hearing on this report in order to:

1. Provide citizens or developers with an opportunity to present possible changes to the plan,
2. Identify any changes in the status of projects called for in the plan, and
3. Bring forth any issues, or identify any changes in conditions, which may impact the validity of the plan.

If the Planning Commission finds major policy issues or major changes in basic assumptions or conditions have arisen which could necessitate revisions to the Comprehensive Plan, they should recommend

Palmer Implementation

changes or further study of those changes. This process may lead to identification of amendments to the Comprehensive Plan and would be processed as per the procedures in the next section.

UNANTICIPATED OPPORTUNITIES

If major new, innovative development and/or redevelopment opportunities arise which impact any number of elements of the plan and which are determined to be of importance, a plan amendment may be proposed and considered separate from the Annual Review and other proposed Comprehensive Plan amendments. The Comprehensive Plan amendment process should adhere to the adoption process specified by Nebraska law and provide for the organized participation and involvement of citizens.

METHODS FOR EVALUATING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS

The interpretation of the Comprehensive Plan should be composed of a continuous and related series of analyses, with references to the goals and policies, the land use plan, and specific land use policies. Moreover, when considering specific proposed developments, interpretation of the Comprehensive Plan should include a thorough review of all sections of the Comprehensive Plan.

If a development proposal is not in conformance or consistent with the policies developed in the Comprehensive Plan, serious consideration should be given to making modifications to the proposal or the following criteria should be used to determine if a Comprehensive Plan amendment would be justified:

- the character of the adjacent neighborhood
- the zoning and uses on nearby properties
- the suitability of the property for the uses allowed under the current zoning designation
- the type and extent of positive or detrimental impact that may affect adjacent
- properties, or the community at large, if the request is approved
- the impact of the proposal on public utilities and facilities
- the length of time that the subject and adjacent properties have been utilized for their current uses
- the benefits of the proposal to the public health, safety, and welfare compared to
- the hardship imposed on the applicant if the request is not approved
- comparison between the existing land use plan and the proposed change regarding the relative

- conformance to the goals and policies
- consideration of Village staff recommendations