

# City of Minden, Nebraska



## Engaging Minden: *a roadmap to 2023*

### Office Locations

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### **City Council**

Mayor-Roger Jones  
City Administrator/Finance Director-Matthew Cederburg  
Clerk/Economic Development Director-Lisa Karnatz  
Ted Griess  
Mike Kleen  
Larry Evans  
Lathan Thompson

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## Vision for Minden

Minden residents and business owners are enormous assets to the community and their participation was essential to the planning process. EngagingMinden: a roadmap to 2023, included many public participation meetings which, in turn, gives stakeholders the opportunity to frame the goals and directions of the Plan. This Plan presents a vision for the community, from community members.

The vision for Minden is to have continuing community input of goals and ambitions for the City. The idea is to promote and grow a diverse economic base while keeping the emphasis in overall community growth and development, including a proactive approach for attracting new residents. Housing is currently an issue that needs to be addressed in order to attract and maintain residents. Gateway corridors into town and into the Downtown Square were major discussion points during the public input sessions. Residents would really love to see these areas developed with better aesthetics in order to give a grand “first impression” to visitors. Other goals for Minden are to create a variety of job options, agricultural and non-agricultural, while also maintaining infrastructure such as roads, water, and public buildings/services. The creation of this plan and the continual reference back to this and any other plans, will benefit the City on its road to reach the goals laid out in this plan.

## Introduction

EngagingMinden is a roadmap for the City’s future. It provides guidance on where and how the City will invest and change over the next ten (10) years. It contains maps, visions and goals for the future, and policies to address topics ranging from land use and demographics to transportation and community services. The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to provide long-range guidance to property owners, residents, elected and appointed officials, City staff, and others to inform decisions on land use issues, such as where and what type of future developments should occur.

### Compliance with State & Local Requirements Governmental & Jurisdictional Organization

The governmental functions of Minden, Nebraska are provided and coordinated by the City Council, comprised of five elected officials.

The planning and zoning jurisdiction for the City of Minden includes an area within one-mile of their corporate limits, pursuant to Neb. Rev. Stat. § 17-1002,

#### Nebraska Revised Statute § 17-1002.

Designation of jurisdiction; suburban development; subdivision; platting; consent required; review by County planning commission; when required.

*(1) Except as provided in section 13-327, any city of the second class or Village may designate by ordinance the portion of the territory located within one mile of the corporate limits of such city or Village and outside of any other organized city or Village within which the designating city or Village will exercise the powers and duties granted by this section and section 17-1003 or section 19-2402.*

*(2) No owner of any real property located within the area designated by a city or Village pursuant to subsection (1) of this section may subdivide, plat, or lay out such real property in building lots, streets, or other portions of the same intended to be dedicated for public use or for the use of the purchasers or owner of lots fronting thereon or adjacent thereto without first having obtained the approval of the city council or board of trustees of such municipality or its agent designated pursuant to section 19-916 and, when applicable, having complied with sections 39-1311 to 39-1311.05. The fact that such real property is located in a different County or counties than some or all portions of the municipality shall not be construed*

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as affecting the necessity of obtaining the approval of the city council or board of trustees of such municipality or its designated agent.

(3) No plat of such real property shall be recorded or have any force or effect unless approved by the city council or board of trustees of such municipality or its designated agent.

(4) In counties that have adopted a comprehensive development plan which meets the requirements of section 23-114.02 and are enforcing subdivision regulations, the County planning commission shall be provided with all available materials on any proposed subdivision plat, contemplating public streets or improvements, which is filed with a municipality in that County, when such proposed plat lies partially or totally within the extraterritorial subdivision jurisdiction being exercised by that municipality in such County. The commission shall be given four weeks to officially comment on the appropriateness of the design and improvements proposed in the plat. The review period for the commission shall run concurrently with subdivision review activities of the municipality after the commission receives all available material for a proposed subdivision plat.

The planning and zoning jurisdiction of City of Minden is governed by Neb. Rev. Stat. §17-1004. As Minden continues to grow and annex land into their corporate limits, their extraterritorial jurisdictions (ETJ) may extend further into Kearney County.

#### Nebraska Revised Statute § 17-1004

*An ordinance of a city of the second class or Village designating its jurisdiction over territory outside of the corporate limits of the city or Village under section 17-1001 or 17-1002 shall describe such territory by metes and bounds or by reference to an official map.*

The Plan has been prepared in accordance with state statutes and requirements.

#### Nebraska Revised Statute § 19-903

#### **Comprehensive development plan; requirements; regulations and restrictions made in accordance with plan; considerations.**

*The regulations and restrictions authorized by sections 19-901 to 19-915 shall be in accordance with a comprehensive development plan which shall consist of both graphic and textual material and shall be designed to accommodate anticipated long-range future growth which shall be based upon documented population and economic projections. The comprehensive development plan shall, among other possible elements, include:*

*(1) A land-use element which designates the proposed general distributions, general location, and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and lands, and other categories of public and private use of land;*

*(2) The general location, character, and extent of existing and proposed major roads, streets, and highways, and air and other transportation routes and facilities;*

*(3) The general location, type, capacity, and area served of present and projected or needed community facilities including recreation facilities, schools, libraries, other public buildings, and public utilities and services;*

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*(4) When a new Comprehensive Plan or a full update to an existing Comprehensive Plan is developed on or after July 15, 2010, but not later than January 1, 2015, an energy element which: Assesses energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors; evaluates utilization of renewable energy sources; and promotes energy conservation measures that benefit the community. This subdivision shall not apply to Villages; and*

*(5)(a) When next amended after January 1, 1995, an identification of sanitary and improvement districts, subdivisions, industrial tracts, commercial tracts, and other discrete developed areas which are or in the future may be appropriate subjects for annexation and (b) a general review of the standards and qualifications that should be met to enable the municipality to undertake annexation of such areas. Failure of the plan to identify subjects for annexation or to set out standards or qualifications for annexation shall not serve as the basis for any challenge to the validity of an annexation ordinance.*

*Regulations shall be designed to lessen congestion in the streets; to secure safety from fire, panic, and other dangers; to promote health and the general welfare; to provide adequate light and air; to prevent the overcrowding of land; to secure safety from flood; to avoid undue concentration of population; to facilitate the adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks and other public requirements; to protect property against blight and depreciation; to protect the tax base; to secure economy in governmental expenditures; and to preserve, protect, and enhance historic buildings, places, and districts.*

*Such regulations shall be made with reasonable consideration, among other things, for the character of the district and its peculiar suitability for particular uses and with a view to conserving the value of buildings and encouraging the most appropriate use of land throughout such municipality.*

It is the duty of the Commission to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality. The master plan of a community shall be an advisory document to guide land development decisions.

The Planning Commission, after a public hearing, shall make its recommendation to the City Council. The City Council, after a public hearing, shall adopt and approve the Comprehensive Plan.

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## Why a Comprehensive Plan?

EngagingMinden is the community's long-term Comprehensive Plan that establishes vision and direction for the future (to the year 2023). Its objectives are to confirm the community's vision for the future, and to set the policy framework to help guide future decisions related to development and investment. It will help the City thoughtfully address future needs for economic development, transportation, housing, services, parks and open space, and other community benefits. It will also help to ensure a sustainable and fiscally responsible future, by setting the desired direction for future development regulations, policy decisions, and community programs.

## Goals for the Comprehensive Plan

While this Plan embodies many ideas, goals, and policies that are parallel with other communities' goals in this region, there are some noteworthy new directions and slight changes in course presented in this plan. These new directions resulted from community feedback, reaction to current trends and conditions, and policy direction from elected and appointed officials. These new directions include the following list of goals:

- Improve Public Infrastructure
- Create Gateway Entrances
- Housing Improvements
- Promote Commercial Development
- New Swimming Pool
- Become a Leadership Community
- Support Minden Public School District

## Data Sources

### 2010 Census (short form)

This is the form that every household should have received in 2010. It has basic gender, age, and race population but there is not enough data reported to elaborate on Minden's demographic or economic standings.

### American Community Survey (ACS)

This survey is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in replacement of the Decennial Census Long Form. The ACS provides a lot of different data such as household income, commute time to work, year of household, etc. The survey is spread over 5 years (2006-2010) and it uses a much smaller sample population than the Long Form did. The way it works is every year a small portion of surveys are sent out to people. The Census Bureau that makes estimates based on those numbers that were gathered over the 5 year time span. The ACS reports the data as an estimate with a margin of error.

### Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI)

ESRI reports data on Nebraska's Location One Information System (LOIS) website. During the planning phases of EngagingMinden, only data for Kearney County was reported on the website. The City is currently working with LOIS to ensure data for the City is available.

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## **Building on Previous Planning Efforts**

The City of Minden has a solid record of community participation and planning for the future. EngagingMinden: a roadmap to 2023, builds on these previous planning efforts. The Plan update included review of these previous efforts and documents. Many of the goals, policies, and ideas for the future represented in the previous planning efforts are still relevant, and are carried forth in this plan. There are also some new ideas for development that were discussed during our public input sessions. Some examples of overarching themes in this plan that are carried forth from previous planning efforts include:

### Goals from the 2001-2011 Comprehensive Plan:

- Foster value of family in Minden;
- Implement appropriate community and economic developments to achieve an increase in population of Minden by an estimated .5 percent per year;
- Provide all residents with access to a variety of safe, decent, sanitary housing types;
- Stabilize and broaden the economic base in Minden to create and expand employment opportunities;
- Continue to preserve and improve the physical appearance and character of Minden;
- Maintain a current community land use plan and zoning/subdivision regulations;
- Establish a community and economic development program with a process capable of providing both job stability and growth;
- Maintain a modern utility system; and
- Include the community in the ongoing update of the Minden Comprehensive Plan.

### InVision Minden Plan 2011:

This plan looks at the most recent Blight and Substandard Study compared with development goals of the City. The plan suggests a new “gateway” through town in order to get more traffic to flow through the Downtown Square. This plan also discusses new commercial development ideas for the proposed thorough way, new ideas for facade improvements, also goals for wayfinding and signage.

### Blight and Substandard Studies:

The following is a list of Blight and Substandard Studies, and associated Redevelopment Areas as seen in **Figure .1**, that were completed for the City of Minden.

- |                               |                             |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| — Approved September 10, 2001 | Redevelopment Areas #1 & #2 |
| — Approved May 20, 2002       | Redevelopment Area #3       |
| — Approved June 2, 2003       | Redevelopment Area #4       |
| — Approved May 16, 2011       | Redevelopment Area #5       |
| — Proposed                    | Redevelopment Area #6       |

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## Planning Period

The planning period for EngagingMinden is from 2012-2023. This plan should be reviewed in 2014, 2018, and a complete update should be done in 2023. It is important to continually refer to and update this plan throughout the planning period.

Establishing an annual review process of EngagingMinden will be important to the success of this plan and to the City of Minden. This process should include public hearings to discuss whether the plan is still valid or whether updates need to be made. Actual documentation of these meetings is pertinent in providing proof of the public's continued input on this plan.

# 1 Community Profile

The Community Profile Chapter considers current characteristics of the community that will form the foundation for planning in Minden for the next ten years. This profile is a compilation of information that is derived through outside research, conversations with local residents and officials, on-site assessments, and data analysis. This Community Profile Chapter will consist of the following components:

- Description
- History
- Population
- Housing
- Economy & Capital Improvement
- Downtown Square

# Description

The City of Minden, which is approximately 1.6 square miles, is situated in the middle of Kearney County surrounded by the communities of Axtell, Heartwell, Norman, and Wilcox. According to the 2010 Census, Minden's population slightly declined to 2,923. Minden serves as the County Seat to all of the 516 square miles of Kearney County. As seen in **Figure 1.2**, Minden is located 12 miles south of Interstate-80 on a juncture of U.S. Highways 34 and 6, running east to west, and Nebraska Highway 10, running north to south. Nebraska Highway 74 runs east from town to connect Nebraska Highways 10 to 15. Kearney County is surrounded by Buffalo and Hall Counties to the north, Phelps and Harlan Counties to the west, Franklin County to the south, and Adams and Webster Counties to the east. The City of Minden is located approximately 20 miles southeast of the City of Kearney and 30 miles southwest of the City of Hastings; the residents of Minden view this as a positive and as a negative. The close proximity allows for more job and retail opportunities, however that also means more people are traveling to Kearney and/or Hastings to work and shop. As **Figure 1.1** shows below, the City of Minden is approximately 136 miles from the Capital City, Lincoln; Minden is approximately 356 miles from Denver, CO.

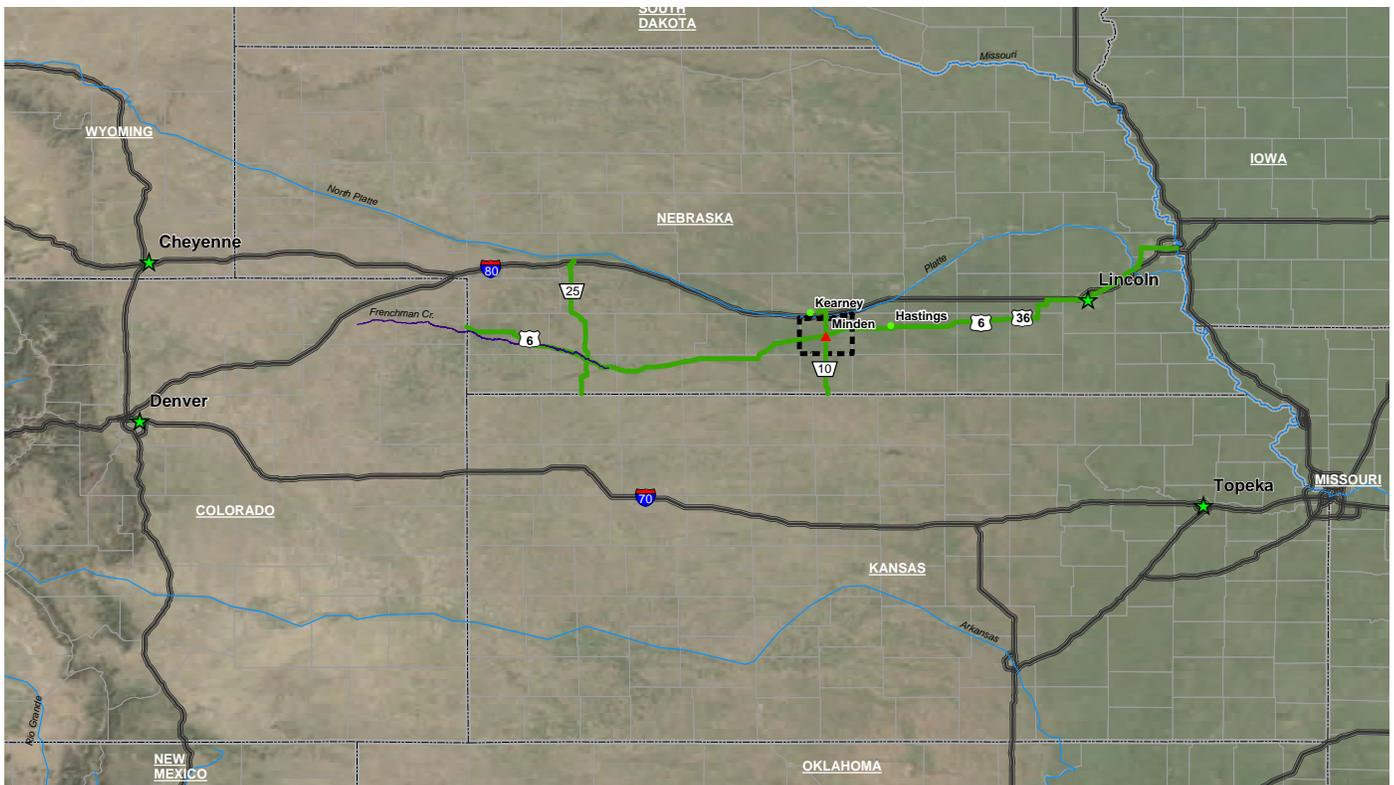
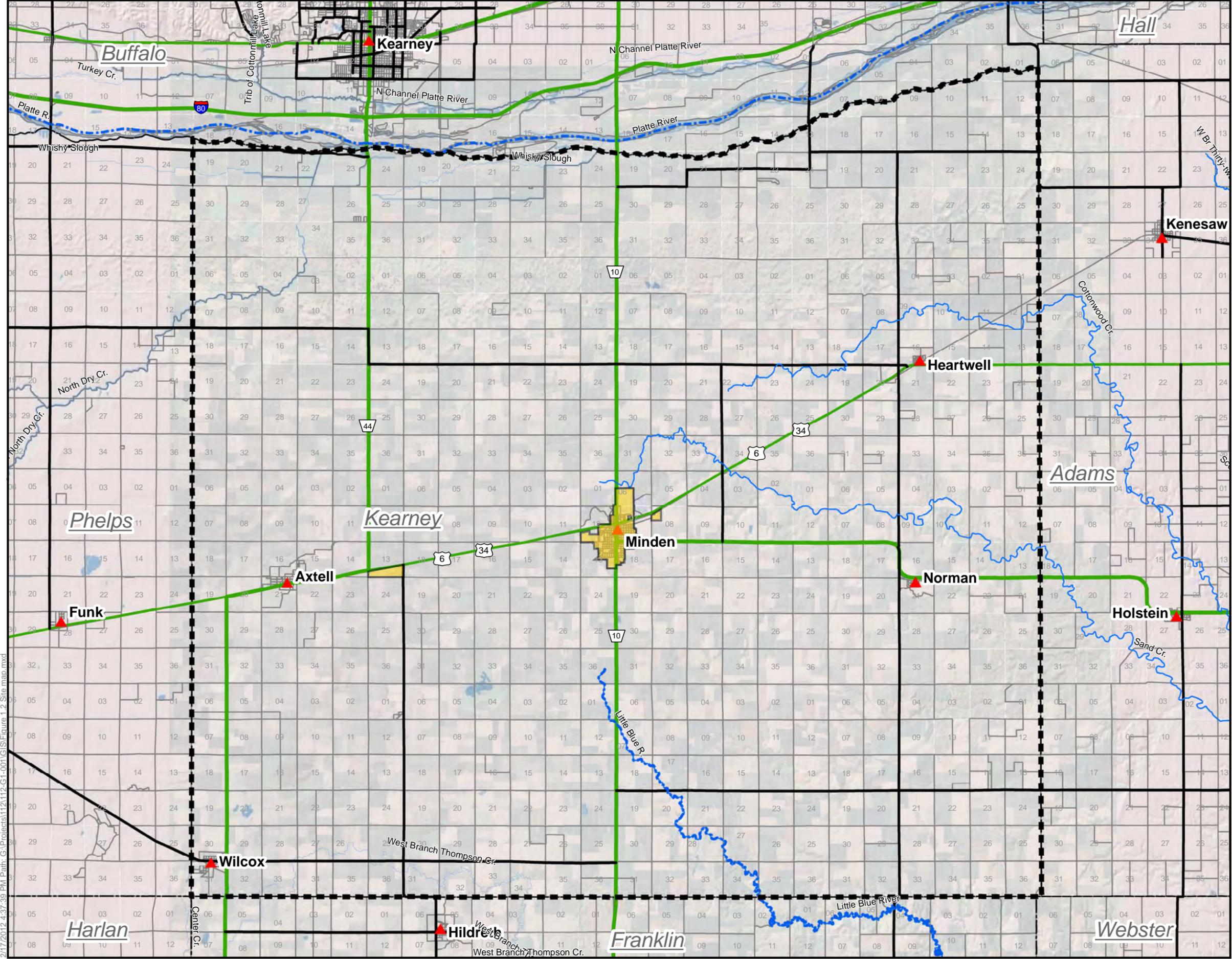
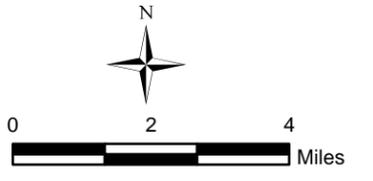


Figure 1.1 Location Map



**Legend**  
 ■ Minden Corporate Boundary

2/17/2012 4:37:39 PM Path: G:\Projects\112112-G1-001\GIS\Figure 1.2 Site map.mxd

**Figure 1.2**  
**Study Area MAP**  
 Minden, Nebraska

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# History

*Land use and development decisions must account for historical and cultural artifacts. Certain locations in the community should be preserved and promoted to create tourism opportunities as well as to ensure the story of Minden is passed onto each generation.*

The story of Minden's history is as vibrant as the community is today. In 1876, the town of Minden was only a stretch of open prairie. Early settlement in Kearney County had concentrated in the northern corner, where the Oregon Trail met the Platte River; therefore, Fort Kearny was established in 1848 to protect travelers along the route. By 1872, a community in the northeast corner of the county, known as Lowell, claimed both a railroad and a brick courthouse which served as the county seat.

Yet because much of the good land in the vicinity was already owned by the railroads, homesteading shifted to land south across the "divide," around Fredricksburg. The brothers Jens L. and Jens H. Jensen were operating a store there in 1875.

Following the election in 1876, when settlers voted 165 to 67 to authorize the relocation of the county seat, a large number of settlers from the "divide" area went to Lowell to get the county records. When they arrived they found, tied with a red ribbon to the door of the county clerk's office, a note saying that his wife was ill with a very contagious disease so it was dangerous to enter the office. "Besides," the note continued, "there is no suitable place in Minden where the records can be kept."

The warning was ignored. The records were loaded into waiting wagons and carried off to Minden. By then the new town consisted of a schoolhouse, a courthouse building, a post office, and a general store.

With the courthouse issue thus unceremoniously resolved, Minden grew rapidly. By 1882, the population was nearly 300. In addition to the usual stores for general merchandise, grocery, and such, the town boasted five physicians, and six lawyers. The Burlington & Missouri River Railroad came through in 1883, and the Kansas City & Omaha line in 1887.



Aerial Photo of Minden, 1955-Nebraska State Historical Society



Downtown Minden



Pioneer Village

The next great idea, conceived by Joel Hull in 1889, was for a canal and irrigation system. The Kearney County Canal, constructed to produce both electrical energy and water for irrigation, ultimately grew into the Central Nebraska Irrigation and Public Power District's Tri-County system. Minden's community leaders promoted the project tirelessly for nearly half a century until it was finally completed in 1941. Kingsley Dam, the project's primary component, is named for Minden banker George P. Kingsley, Sr.



Kearney County Courthouse lit-up for Christmas

Yet another instance of the vibrant history of Minden, is the fact that ever since 1915, Minden has illuminated its courthouse with over 10,000 lights, giving the community its title of "Christmas City." In 1946, Reverend Arthur Johnson and Clayton Morey produced the Minden Christmas Pageant, which is still performed annually on the courthouse lawn.



Bargain Day, Downtown Minden, 1896

Minden's sense of tradition is nowhere more evident than at the Harold Warp "Pioneer Village." This museum was established in 1952 by the son of Kearney County pioneers. The Warp Foundation has grown into a very large museum which displays historic buildings and artifacts of everyday life from the pioneer era to the present. Pioneer Village has played a leading role in Minden's growing tourist industry.

In recent years, Minden's economic base, which is still primarily agricultural, is diversified by several manufacturing businesses and a downtown square that boasts several shops, salons, and a renovated state-of-the-art Opera House. Minden's historic roots and traditional ties have shaped the community into a vibrant, "small-town America" community with a lot to offer.

Population is any community's lifeblood. The people that live, work, and visit Minden everyday are what make the community tick. Understanding the population is just as important as understanding their wants and needs in the community. Analyzing the population is also an important part to the comprehensive plan. In order to accurately plan for the growth of Minden, we first must consider the past and the current populations before we can make estimates for the future. Population projections are significant because they assist communities in seeing where they will be in five, ten, and even fifteen years. That will in turn help decision-makers plan for social, economic, and physical infrastructure with the purpose of meeting the community's future needs and demands.

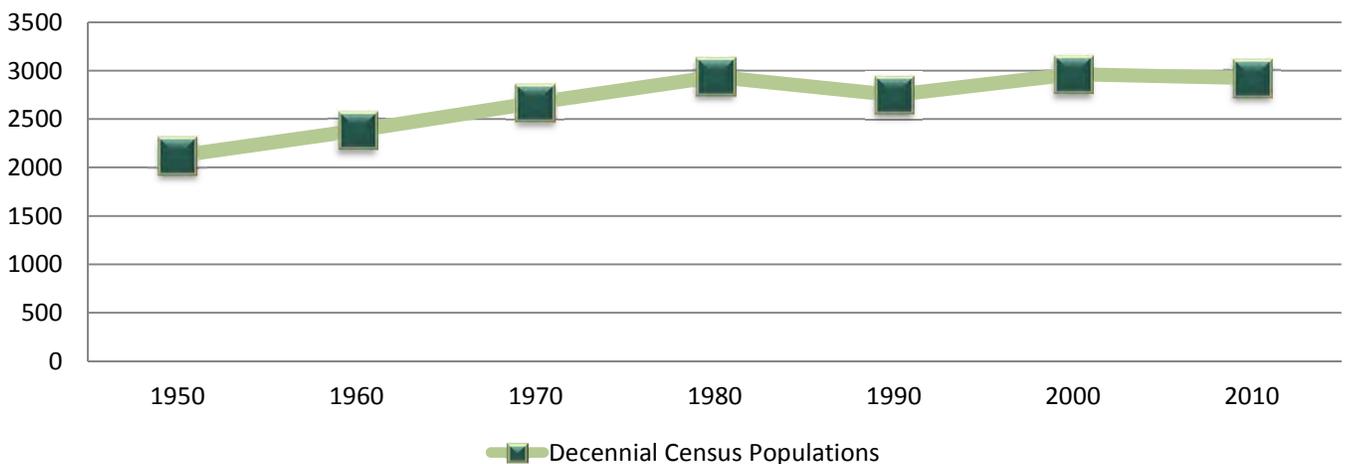
# Population



The 2010 Census data which began being released during the first few months of 2011, showed the City of Minden had an 85 percent return rate which was higher than the national and the state's averages which were 74 percent and 77 percent, respectively. Having a high participation rate means that all data including the total population, that is reported by the Census Bureau, is more likely to be accurate than a community that has a low participation rate. The 2000 Census shows Minden had a total population of 2,964 people with a participation rate of 87 percent. The total population in 2010 declined slightly to 2,923, which means, statistically, there was a decrease of 41 people over a ten-year span. However, the Census altered the way they count college students. Historically, they were counted as living at home. In 2010, the Census counted college students in the total population of the towns they live in when they go to college. So when comparing "apples to apples" Minden's population did not change much.

As seen in **Figure 1.3**, there have been population increases and decreases for the past seven decades; although, most of the staggering fluctuations have been within the past four decades. In 1970, the total population was 2,669. In 1980, the population grew to 2,939; then the population declined to 2,749 in 1990. By the year 2000, the population was back up to 2,964; but it then went back down to 2,923 in 2010. All of these numbers are from the corresponding year's Census data. There are many possible reasons for these fluctuations including new businesses moving to town, or industrial sites closing in the area. Having such a varying history of population makes it more challenging to project future populations for Minden. The challenge stems from no consistent trends that have taken place, in order to project trends for the future. Understanding why there were fluctuations between the years will help to make more accurate projections for the future of Minden.

**Figure 1.3 Decennial Census Populations**



Source: Census Bureau

Table 1.1 Population Projections 2000-2025					
	2000	2010	2015	2020	2025
<b>1.2% Annual Growth</b>	2,964	2,923	3,098	3,274	3,449
<b>1.01% Annual Growth</b>	2,964	2,923	3,071	3,218	3,366
<b>-0.65% Annual Growth</b>	2,964	2,923	2,828	2,733	2,638
<b>0.78% Annual Growth</b>	2,964	2,923	3,037	3,151	3,265
<b>-0.14% Annual Growth</b>	2,964	2,923	2,903	2,882	2,862
<b>Exponential</b>	2,964	2,923	2,983	3,045	3,108
<b>County-City Comparison</b>	2,964	2,923	3,227	3,327	3,423

Source: U.S. Census, UNL, M&A

Projecting Minden’s population is an important step in understanding the future demographic character of the community. It also helps to determine the city’s future land use and community service needs and policies. Because of Minden’s history of fluctuating populations, it made it more difficult to use that data to project Minden’s future population. **Table 1.1** shows different population growth scenarios.

**Annual Growth Percentage:** The first five, or the annual growth percentages, come from historic annual growth rate percentages for Minden. These historic trends were then projected out to future populations at the years 2015, 2020, and 2025. These scenarios all show a steady growth or a steady decline in population over the projected years. Of course, populations do not change at a constant rate every year; however, these numbers give an example of what the population could look like at these different intervals.

**Exponential Growth Formula:** The next scenario uses the exponential population projection formula which takes into consideration an annual growth rate when applied to the current year’s population. Like the annual growth percentages, the growth rate is taken from historic trends.

**County-City Comparison:** The last scenario compares Kearney County’s population with that of Minden. The University of Nebraska at Lincoln (UNL) completed population projections for counties in Nebraska. The county-city comparison was used in order to analyze another set of data. This specific population projection was determined based on the existing Kearney County projections, and Minden’s proportional make-up of Kearney County’s population. In 2010, Minden was approximately 45 percent of Kearney County’s total population. In order to determine future populations this number was used to project Minden’s population in accordance with its proportional relationship to Kearney County’s population.

There are differences between the population scenarios; some show a slight increase over the next projected timeline, while others show a slight decrease. Looking at the history of Minden, it is most likely that a combination of the increases and decreases will occur over the next 15 years. In any community, this fluctuation is typical especially in a community the size of Minden. Therefore, it is important for community leaders to be prepared for a multitude of scenarios.

Knowing the demographics, such as age, sex, and racial break-up, helps steer decision-makers in the right direction when planning for community infrastructure. This data can be used in several different ways, for example, a community could have their City Council members voting to either financially support an expansion of a local nursing home or an expansion of a local elementary school. By analyzing population trends based on age groups, this data could help decision-makers make an informed conclusion on what is best for the community. If the population trends show that there is an aging population, then supporting the nursing home would benefit those citizens, and if there were an influx of families with young children moving into town, then supporting the elementary school expansion would be more beneficial for residents. Of course there are many other factors that need to be taken into consideration, but understanding the breakdown of population has proven to be very helpful when decision-makers are trying to come to a conclusion.

The Census Bureau breaks population into five year groups called cohorts. A cohort is a set of individuals that are grouped together based on experiencing the same event within the same time interval. Each decennial Census presents population data in cohorts. These cohorts range from under five years to the last cohort which is 85 years and over. **Table 1.2** shows all of the 18 cohorts, from the 2010 Census, and the corresponding percentages of the total population for each cohort.

From the 2010 Census data, almost 23 percent of the population was 18 or under. Also, according to the 2010 Census, roughly 22 percent, or 647 people, are 65 or older; this number is important because 65 is the common age of retirement, although trends show the retirements age is starting to rise. As seen in **Table 1.2** all of the cohorts make-up almost equal percentages of the total population. This data shows that the population is stationary;

meaning that there are no real signs of growth or decline. A sign of population growth would mean that there is a larger percentage of kids under the age of ten than there are people over the age of 75. If the population were declining, then the opposite would be true.

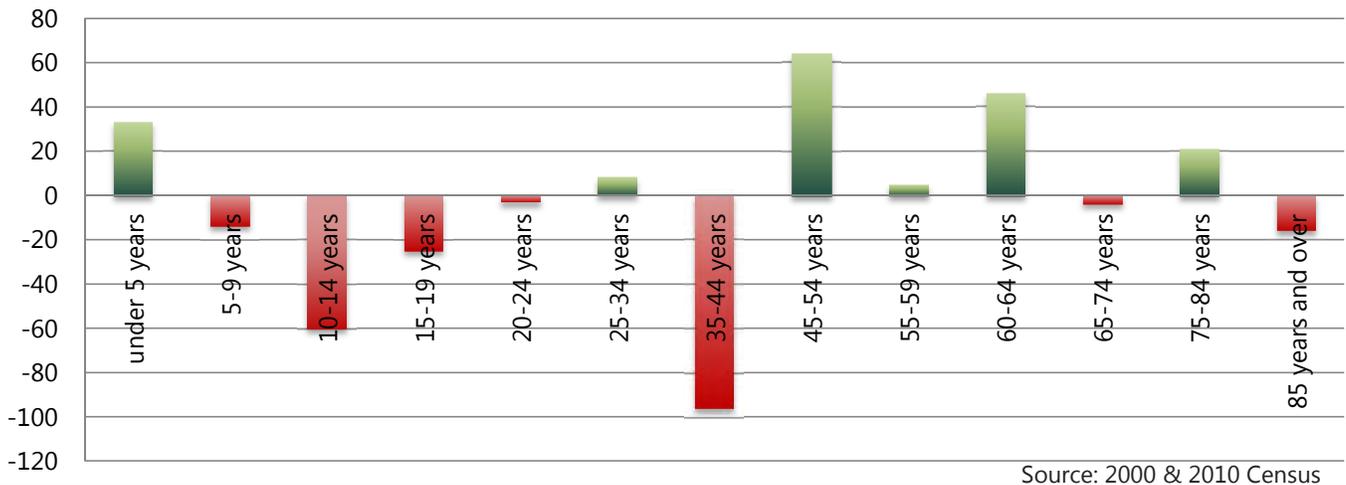
<b>Table 1.2 Population by Age Cohorts, Minden, 2010</b>		
<b>Age Cohort</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Percent</b>
<b>Total Population</b>	2,923	100.0
<b>Under 5 years</b>	200	6.8
<b>5-9 years</b>	174	6.0
<b>10-14 years</b>	178	6.1
<b>15-19 years</b>	183	6.3
<b>20-24 years</b>	129	4.4
<b>25-29 years</b>	160	5.5
<b>30-34 years</b>	180	6.2
<b>35-39 years</b>	151	5.2
<b>40-44 years</b>	176	6.0
<b>45-49 years</b>	202	6.9
<b>50-54 years</b>	208	7.1
<b>55-59 years</b>	168	5.7
<b>60-64 years</b>	167	5.7
<b>65-69 years</b>	147	5.0
<b>70-74 years</b>	107	3.7
<b>75-79 years</b>	126	4.3
<b>80-84 years</b>	114	3.9
<b>85 years and over</b>	153	5.2
<b>Median Age</b>		
	43.1	

Source: U.S. Census 2010

The median age in Minden is 43.1. That age is higher than that State and National median ages of 36.2 and 37.2, respectively. During one of the Core Group meetings, some residents discussed how the median age was seen as a strength for the community. Although members of the Core Group also believed that it is hard for residents between the ages of 20 and 30 to find things to do, especially if they were single. Attracting young professionals and families is challenging, particularly during this rough economic condition and in a smaller community. Job creation is the main pull factor for people moving into a community. If the City of Minden and its businesses can create new jobs, people will come to fill those jobs. It is also important to provide amenities for these new workers. Attracting and keeping the young “creative class” generation is imperative. The “creative class” is a socioeconomic class of workers that bring new ideas, art, science, and technology together. Being able to draw these people in and to retain them as residents is critical in growing Minden.

**Figure 1.4** shows noticeable changes in population between 2000 and 2010. One of the changes which stands out, is the cohort under five years. There were

**Figure 1.4**  
**Change in # of People by Cohorts, 2000-2010**



33 more children under the age of five living in Minden in 2010 than there were in 2000. The four cohorts for the ages 5-24 years, all showed a decrease in population. The 10-14 year cohort showed the largest change of these four cohorts with a decrease in 60 people. The cohort that showed the largest decrease overall was the 35-44 year-olds, and it is closely correlated to the decrease in population ages 5-24. This cohort lost 96 people in the past ten years. This age range is typically the parents with middle and high school aged kids; in other words the 5-24 year-olds.

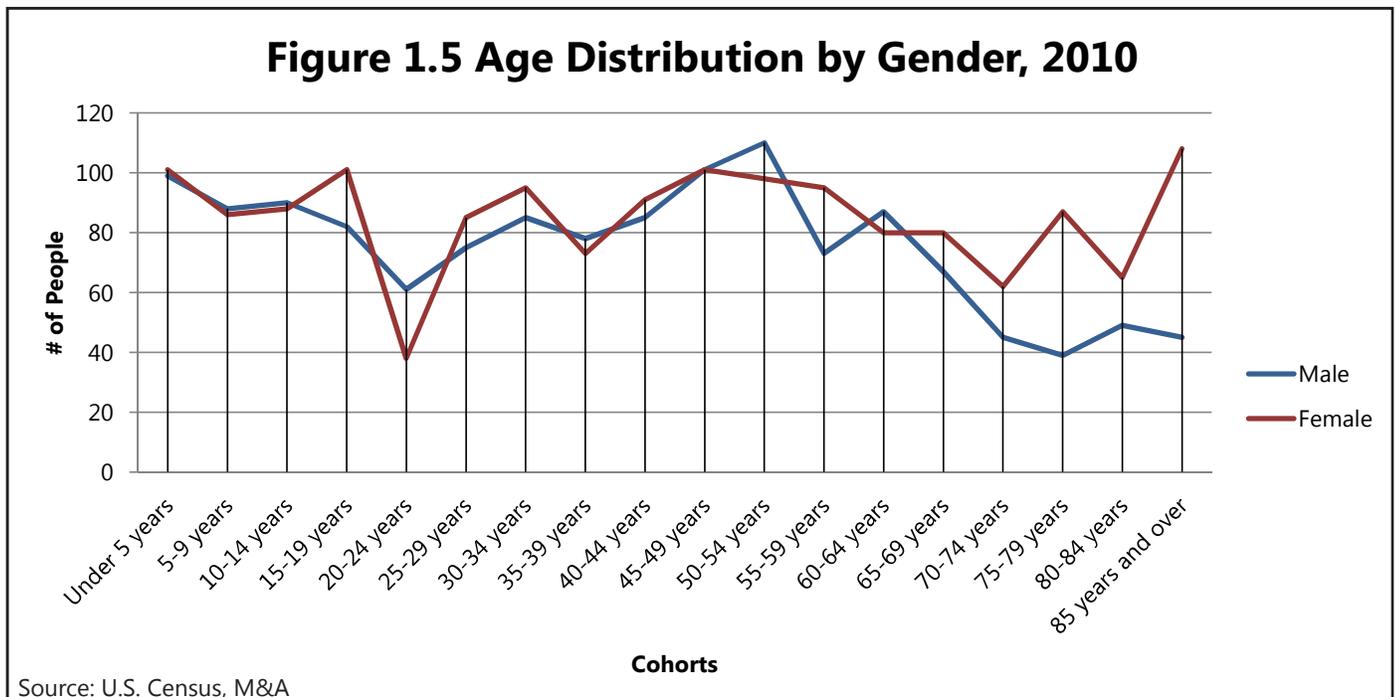


Families are an important part to the viability of any community, including Minden. A family, whether it be a one or two parent household, adds at least one worker to the workforce, children into the school system, a place that is now rented or owned, more people to buy groceries in town, another vehicle to fill with gas, etc. It adds one more set of people that have a vested interest in the welfare of the community. Families make up about 63 percent of all occupied households in Minden. Approximately 81 percent of those 791 “family households”, own their own homes. The other 19 percent rent their homes in Minden. A household is considered to be a “family household” when at least one member of the household is related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. “Non-family households,” those consisting of people living alone and households which do not have any members related to the householder, make up 37 percent of all occupied housing units in Minden. Almost 53 percent of the “non-family households” own their own homes, leaving 47 percent that rent their homes.

Gender distribution is another facet to consider when analyzing the population. 53.5 percent of Minden's population is female, which leaves the other 46.5 percent of the population to be male. The median age for women is 44.8 years-old, and that number is higher than the male median age of 41.4. These numbers show there are higher percentages of older women than men in Minden because of the difference in the median ages. Women are proven to have a longer life expectancy than men; this could be a contributing factor to the gender distribution for Minden's residents. **Figure 1.5** shows the age distribution by gender, and as seen in the figure, there are some major differences especially the cohorts above 60-64 years.

The 2010 Census states there are 1,052 males over the age of 15, and 1,289 females over 15 years-old. When considering the marital status of residents in Minden, we must only consider the residents over the age of 15 because with parental consent, that is the lowest age that anyone in the United States is allowed to get married. In Nebraska the lowest age that anyone can get married is 17, but because of the limitations of data available, we must use 15 years old as the cut-off age. From this population sector of residents, the American Community Survey (ACS) states 164 (±71) men and 223 (±82) women have never been married. It also states that 644 (±93) men and 632 (±86) women are now married, but these numbers do not include people who consider themselves separated. The ACS shows 123 (±58) men are divorced and 115 (±61) women that live in Minden are also divorced.

Educational attainment is yet another factor to analyze in order to better understand a changing population. The 2010 Census shows that there were 2,059 people living in Minden which are 25 or older. The 2000 Census shows there were 2,007 people over the age of 25. Educational attainment data for the year 2000 is from the 2000 Census-long form, and the same data for 2010 is from the ACS. The two different forms of surveys make it more challenging to compare/contrast the data. In 2000, there were 77 people that had not finished 9th grade, and by 2010 the ACS reported only 15 (±20) people that had not finished 9th grade. The percent of persons with a bachelor's degree or higher was 17.4 percent in 2000, and the ACS reported 23 (±6.9) percent of Minden's population has their bachelor's degree or higher in 2010. The change in the levels of education many American's receive today is due to the growing demand for a college education in order to make a better living. This societal change can be seen all around the country, but smaller communities are having a harder time trying to attract and retain persons with a college degree.



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Throughout its history, Minden has seen population changes, even in the past ten years. There has been a decrease in school-age children, however there was an increase in children five years and under. In order to serve this population growth, leaders should determine whether the community's daycare and pre-school facilities will be able to meet a larger demand. There was a slight increase in residents ages 25-34, this is the age of the "creative class" that was discussed earlier in this section. Continually developing community services and amenities will help to draw more families to Minden. The 45-65 year-old age groups also saw a large increase. Because of the nature of life, the people in these cohorts will continue to grow older. These empty-nesters tend to lead a different lifestyle than when they had children at home. Empty-nesters like to go out to eat or go for walks, they like to enjoy the freedom of being on their own schedule again. The Downtown Square, Minden Opera House, great little eateries, and the existing recreational facilities are all great amenities that many empty-nesters love to take advantage of in their community. As previously stated, 22 percent of Minden's population is 65 years and older. Not only are these people empty-nesters, most likely they are retired or at least thinking about their retirement. Community services such as an active Senior Center can promote a healthy quality of life for this cohort.

Almost 23 percent of Minden's population is under the age of 18; this is another cohort that likes to be active. Community members, of all ages, seem to be large supporters of the Whippets and this age group in general. Providing amenities for this age group is also essential in order to provide a good quality of life for families. Things such as summer sports leagues and recreational facilities are a great place for the 18 and under crowd to congregate.

Population projections are meant to help decision-makers understand where the community is headed. The scenarios presented in this Comprehensive Plan each show a steady growth or a slight decline. A combination of these two options will most likely be what leaders see happen. However, these numbers give a guide to decision-makers in order to know what to plan for and what types of facilities will be needed. In order to prepare for future population changes, leaders need to continually look at population changes. Every year leaders should, analyze school attendance data, talk with local professionals, and be aware of building permits or homes sales. Waiting every ten years for Census data to be presented will not benefit the community. Utilizing outside sources such as NPPD's Community Factbooks, or revisiting the Comprehensive Plan or other community plans will encourage leaders to stay active and up-to-date on the ever changing society that is present today.

# Housing

Housing is a crucial piece to the prosperity of Minden. Whether identifying projects to build new market rate housing or preserve decent affordable housing, Minden must work to constantly assess and improve its housing situation. In order to attract more people there has to be a supply of decent, affordable housing. Projecting for future demand is an important, but sometimes difficult task when trying to promote growth in any community.

Community growth and revitalization can be made possible through the identification of housing needs in Minden. When considered in conjunction with population data, housing information analysis will enable Minden to identify housing developments that are most appropriate for its success.

**Table 1.3** provides a picture of the overall age of the housing stock in Minden. This data came from the Kearney County Assessor; therefore, this data is for all residential parcels not just owner-occupied. In the past two years, 2010 and 2011, Minden has seen 14 new building permits. Six of those permits were for single-family homes, and the other eight were for multi-family dwellings. Housing development has declined over the last couple of decades, however there is still some development happening. If more jobs are created in Minden, new housing development or more housing sales would likely follow the increase in jobs.

Table 1.3 Year Housing Unit Built, 2010	
2000-2010	22
1990-1999	35
1980-1989	48
1970-1979	140
1960-1969	123
1950-1959	126
1940-1949	67
1939 or Earlier	542
Source: Kearney County Assessor	

In the past, housing values were reported by the long form Census. **Table 1.4** shows a variety of sources for Minden’s housing values. One thing to remember is the ACS column has a large margin-of-error for each housing value. All of the columns, except for the Kearney County Assessor, are only for owner-occupied housing units. The Kearney County Assessor’s data is for all residential parcels in Minden. Consequently, the numbers will be higher than the data that is reported exclusively for owner-occupied units. The median household value is approximately \$86,000-\$92,000. The \$50,000-\$99,999 range is where a majority of the households in Minden fit.

Table 1.4 Housing Values, 2010				
Value	ACS	ESRI	Kearney County Assessor	USA.com
< \$50,000	96 (±60)	156	324	151
\$50,000-\$99,999	405 (±98)	442	479	427
\$100,000-\$149,999	236 (±63)	198	213	205
\$150,000-\$199,999	75 (±39)	77	56	70
\$200,000-\$299,999	54 (±41)	28	27	29
≥ \$300,000	0 (±99)	10	4	0
<b>Total</b>	866	911	1103	882
<b>Median Value</b>	\$92,400 (±\$8,902)	\$86,091		\$86,700
Source: ACS 2006-2010 estimates, ESRI, Kearney County Assessor, USA.com				



From the 2010 Census, Minden had 1,339 housing units which include all single-family homes, duplexes, and apartment complexes. There was a six percent vacancy rate, or approximately 83 vacant housing units. That leaves 1,256 housing units that were occupied during the 2010 Census. As seen in **Table 1.5**, of the 83 vacant properties, there were 16 properties for rent and 19 were for sale. There were 11 homes that were sold but not occupied and 32 homes were listed as “other vacant.” It is important to have a portion of homes that are “for sale” or “for rent.” A percentage of housing units should always be on the market in order to attract new residents and to create an atmosphere for a healthy housing market. If there are no homes available, in Minden, when a family or couple is looking to move than they will have to look in other communities where there are homes available. The main goal is to ensure that the homes that are obtainable are also ones that will fit the needs and wants of the buyer.

In March of 2012, there were only 19 single-family homes for sale throughout Minden. Typically there are 40 homes for sale at any given time in the community. There was also a shortage of properties for rent in 2012. The 2010 Census paints a different picture than what is true in 2012. Community leaders should keep in contact with local realtors in order to keep track of housing needs, wants, and trends in Minden.

Something to always keep in mind when looking at vacant housing units, is whether they are still habitable or not. The Blight and Substandard Determinational Study that was completed for Minden in 2010 analyzed properties in two redevelopment areas. These areas are along Brown Avenue/Highway 10 north of the railroad tracks. Redevelopment Area 1 incorporates undeveloped corporate limits to the north, Brown Avenue to the east, U.S. Highway 6 and 34 to the south, and Tower Street to the west. Redevelopment Area 2 incorporates undeveloped land within the corporate limits to the north, Kearney Avenue to the east, U.S. Highway 6 and 34 to the south, and Brown Avenue to the west. Both of these areas have a small portion of Minden’s housing units. The Study reports there were 65 total residential units, and eight of them were major deficient or deteriorating. There were also 14 housing units that were considered minor deficient and 15 were considered dilapidated.

Some of these vacant homes may be sitting vacant because they are no longer safe for residents. Demolishing these uninhabitable homes will open up lots for potential infill development as well as to help

**Table 1.5 Vacancy Status, 2010**

<b>Total</b>	83
<b>For rent:</b>	16
<b>Rented, not occupied</b>	3
<b>For sale only</b>	19
<b>Sold, not occupied</b>	11
<b>For seasonal, recreational, occasional use</b>	1
<b>For migrant workers</b>	1
<b>Other vacant</b>	32
Source: Census Bureau, 2010	

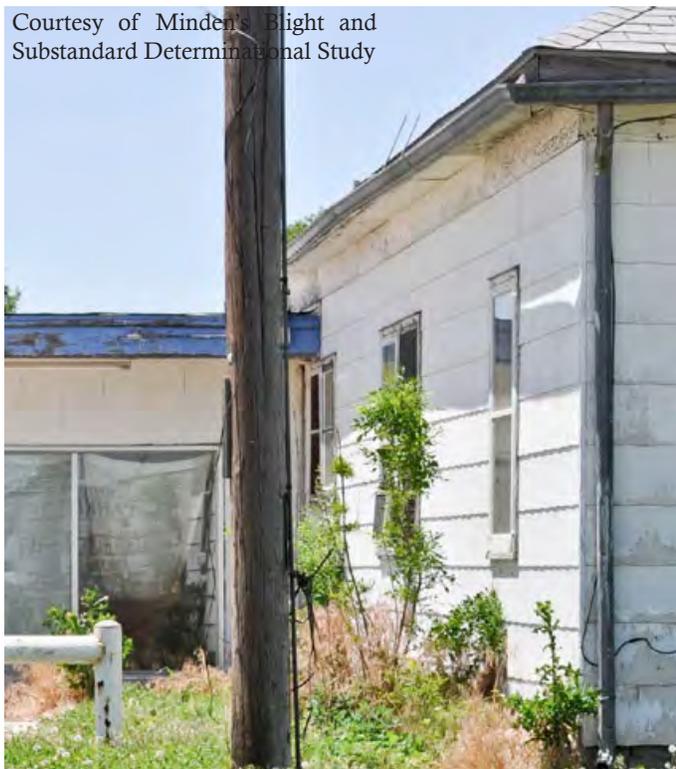
**Table 1.6 Persons per Household, 2010**

<b>Owner-Occupied Persons per Household</b>	
<b>Total:</b>	889
<b>1-person</b>	227
<b>2-person</b>	373
<b>3-person</b>	122
<b>4-person</b>	108
<b>5-person</b>	45
<b>6-person</b>	11
<b>7 or more-persons</b>	3
<b>Renter-Occupied Persons per Household</b>	
<b>Total:</b>	367
<b>1-person</b>	186
<b>2-person</b>	84
<b>3-person</b>	36
<b>4-person</b>	31
<b>5-person</b>	17
<b>6-person</b>	8
<b>7 or more-persons</b>	5
Source: 2010 Census	

clear up a few of the eye-sores around the community. Housing Rehabilitation Programs, whether they are through the City or a third party such as Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska could be an essential tool in helping residents pay for housing repairs, energy efficiency improvements, or major maintenance issues. Community leaders should continually look at ways to incorporate these programs into Minden.

There are 889 homes, of the 1,256 occupied housing units, that are owned. That equals 66 percent or two-thirds of all occupied housing units that are owned versus rented. There are 367 or 28 percent of the occupied housing units which are rented. The other six percent of the housing units are vacant. In Minden,

Courtesy of Minden's Blight and Substandard Determinational Study



the average household size of an owner-occupied unit is 2.34 people. The average household size of a renter-occupied unit is slightly less at 2.06. The overall average household size in Minden comes out to be 2.26, while the average family size is 2.86. This difference can be explained by the number of people in Minden living alone. **Table 1.6** shows the number of persons living in owner-occupied housing as well as renter-occupied homes. A majority of people that live in Minden, whether they own or rent their homes, live by themselves or with one other person. Approximately 413 people live by themselves in Minden. That equals 33 percent or one-third of Minden's occupied housing units that are filled with people that live by themselves. Out of the 413 people living by themselves in Minden, over 54 percent are 65 and older. 184 of that 54 percent, are female householders. That statistic is very distinct, and understanding those numbers and what to do with them can help community leaders make informed decisions that will benefit the majority of Minden's citizens. For example, community leaders could focus on finding developers that would be interested in developing condominiums or apartments elderly residents or empty-nesters could rent or purchase. One amenity that would make these more attractive would be the presence of an association that would take care of maintenance for the homeowners, for a fee.

The duplexes, designated for citizens that are 55 and older, at Minden West Estates are a good example of housing designed to serve the needs of a particular subset of Minden's population. As of the beginning of 2012, those duplexes were filled and there was a waiting list for interested residents. A second phase of these duplexes would help to provide more housing for those who are interested and qualify based on income levels.

As previously noted, the population that lives in occupied housing units in Minden is 2,839. There is a discrepancy between the population that occupies the 1,256 housing units and the overall population in Minden. This discrepancy is due to the 84 people that live in group quarters. Residents who live in group quarters are not counted as part of the population that lives in occupied households. The Census separates group quarters and housing units. There are two types of group quarters, institutionalized and non-institutionalized. Non-institutionalized facilities include college/university student housing and military quarters; no one resides in non-institutionalized facilities in Minden. Although there are 84 people that live in institutionalized facilities which include nursing homes, juvenile homes, and adult correctional facilities. 79 of those 84 live in a nursing home; the other five were in a correctional facility for adults at the time of the 2010 Census. Because there is such a high number of residents that live in the nursing homes in Minden, it is not surprising that 73 of the 84 people that live in the institutionalized group quarters are 65 and older. That is almost 11 percent of the total population of 65 and older lives in a nursing home in Minden.

**Table 1.7** shows a housing affordability analysis based strictly on the numbers. This table shows the comparison of the household income range and the value of housing units that are currently present in Minden. The rule-of-thumb when purchasing a home, is to take your household income and multiply it by two; homes in that range are typically what you will be able to afford. Using this idea, the table shows where there are gaps and where there is a surplus of housing units based on value. The following is a breakdown of the process:

Column 1 - Household income range for residents in Minden

Column 2 - County-City Comparison data from **Table 1.8**

Column 3 - Column 1 multiplied by 2 (i.e. \$50,000 x 2 = \$100,000)

Column 4 - ESRI data from **Table 1.4** that shows the number of owner-occupied units in Minden, based on value

Column 5 - Column 2 subtracted from Column 4 (i.e. 156 - 126 = 30)

In the \$50,000-\$200,000 range there is a gap of 339 homes. This analysis was based solely on numbers; therefore, it does not take into account people that live below their means, what value of homes are on the market, or units that are available for rent. Because of the way housing values are reported, the \$25,000-\$34,999 and \$35,000-\$49,999 household income ranges had to be consolidated in order to relate it to the number of houses available at that specific housing range. **Table 1.7** shows that there is a surplus of homes in the \$30,000-\$50,000 range. Community leaders can use this formula in the future to determine where there are shortfalls in Minden’s housing supply. Quality and availability of decent housing is one of the primary decision points for families and individuals when considering moving into an area. Minden should take steps to improve their current housing situation. Although new home construction activity has been positive, a shortage of market rate and rentable units continues to exist. In order to maintain as well as grow and diversify the population base, Minden’s officials must investigate housing development.

**Table 1.7 Housing Affordability Analysis, Owner Units, 2010**

Household Income Range	# of Households (Units Needed)	Affordable Range for Housing Units	# of Owner Available Units	Gap/Surplus of Housing Units
\$15,000-\$24,999	126	\$30,000-\$50,000	156	30
\$25,000-\$34,999	387	\$50,000-\$70,000	442	-264
\$35,000-\$49,999	319	\$70,000-\$100,000		
\$50,000-\$74,999	117	\$100,000-\$150,000	77	-40
\$75,000-\$99,999	63	\$150,000-\$200,000	28	-35
\$100,000-\$149,999	6	\$200,000-\$300,000	10	4
\$150,000-\$199,999	13	\$300,000-\$400,000	10	-3

Source: ESRI, U.S. Census, M&A



After speaking with a local realtor in March of 2012, the following information was gathered:

- There is a shortage of rental properties in Minden;
- There are only 19 single-family residential properties for sale, typically there are 40;
- NPPD needs temporary housing for their workers-workers have had to bring their RV's;
- Minden is in need of condominiums, particularly for empty-nesters;
  - 2-3 bedrooms
  - Rent and/or purchase
  - \$120,000 to \$180,000 range
  - Association present to take care of maintenance
- Many single moms and new families looking to purchase homes in Minden;
- Many people from Kearney are looking to buy and rent in Minden because of the lower prices; and
- People are looking for the \$180,000 range and 2-3 bedrooms.

This information cannot be found through the Census or online. Decision-makers need to continually engage in conversations with local professionals in order to determine what people are looking for when they are interested in moving to Minden. This information also shows Minden is attracting people from a larger community because of the “big community” amenities that it offers, and yet people can get housing at a lower cost than they could in a larger city such as Kearney. Community leaders should consider this information as well as the statistical data that was provided throughout this chapter in order to determine a plan of action that will best suit Minden.

In summary, Minden has an active housing market but there is still room for improvement. There are many areas in Minden that have good potential for infill development as well as the new lots available on the west side of town at Minden West Estates. There is a plan to double the number of duplex units, this would add 16 more income-restrictive units in Minden West Estates. There is also a plan for all of the streets in Minden West Estates to be paved. This will surely attract more home construction in the subdivision. However, more housing is still needed for Minden's residential and potential residents; this should include both owner-occupied structures and units available for rent. People looking for homes in Minden are interested in homes in the \$100,000-\$200,000 range, both the data and a conversation with a local realtor point to that data. Community leaders should consider conducting a housing study to determine what the existing housing stock is, in order to better provide for prospective residents. If people cannot find what they are looking for in Minden, then they will have to look elsewhere. In order to keep people interested in the community they need to have choices that fit their needs and wants.

Minden also has a large elderly population living within its corporate limits. Providing new housing units that would best suit their needs would inevitably open up homes for other people to move into Minden. Condominiums, apartments, and/or duplexes would all be a great addition to Minden, and it would help provide housing for residents that are looking for something different than a single-family detached home. These new options still give people the freedom of living on their own in their own space while not having to worry about yard maintenance and snow removal.

As stated earlier in this section, there are 83 vacant housing units in Minden. Some of these units are uninhabitable and will continue to get worse with lack of maintenance. Clearing the community of these uninhabitable and deteriorated homes will not only help to improve the aesthetics of Minden, but would open up lots potentially for new home construction. The positive side of using infill development for new home construction is the fact infrastructure is already present, instead of having to pay for the extension of infrastructure to a new location.

Minden is in a good place, it has room to grow and from the housing perspective it is seeing the opportunities of growth happen on a daily basis. Leaders need to continue to work to improve the existing house stock while also adding new.

The ability for Minden to predict development needs in the future relies heavily on economic trends. Therefore, a description and analysis of local economic factors is a crucial component of the city's comprehensive development plan. Another important aspect to a city's economy is annually planning a fiscal management tool called a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP). This fiscal plan should use a 5-6 year time horizon to schedule and help decide which project to fund based on following the guidelines of the Comprehensive Plan. The CIP is used to coordinate location, timing, and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period.

# Economy & Capital Improvement

A strong labor force is extremely important to a city of any size, especially during these trying economic times. Although Nebraska was not hit as hard in 2007-08 economic crisis as some of the other states it is vital for communities to be able to create jobs because then, people will follow. Analyzing a labor force requires employment figures, income levels, and understanding the economic base. Residents 16 of age and older are considered to be of working age, so in order to study the workforce population we only consider those that are 16 and older. The 2010 Census stated that there were 2,333 people age 16 and older, and the ACS reported 1,373 ( $\pm 164$ ) people to be in the labor force. The other 960 ( $\pm 164$ ) people are not considered to be a part of the labor force because they are neither employed nor officially classified as unemployed. This classification could be a variety of reasons such as full-time students, retired persons, volunteers, stay-at-home parents, persons unable to work due to disability, etc.

As stated above, the ACS estimated 1,373 ( $\pm 164$ ) of Minden's residents to be in the labor force. The ACS also reported of that 1,373 people in the labor force, 1,345 ( $\pm 156$ ) were employed while 28 ( $\pm 42$ ) people were unemployed. Based on the ACS, only 1.3 ( $\pm 2.0$ ) percent of Minden's residents were unemployed which is starkly different than the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) 2010 national unemployment rate of 9.6 percent. The BLS reported Kearney County's unemployment rate to be 3.1 percent in December 2010 and 3.7 percent for January 2011. Nebraska has weathered this recent economic downturn better than a majority of the nation, so luckily for Nebraska communities they share the same goodwill.



**Table 1.8** shows the household income analysis for Minden in 2010. Household income is defined by the Census Bureau as the following:

*“Any sum of money income received in the calendar year by all household members 15 years old and over, including household members not related to the householder, people living alone, and other nonfamily household members. Included in the total are amounts reported separately for wage or salary income; net self-employment income; interest, dividends, or net rental or royalty income or income from estates and trusts; Social Security or Railroad Retirement income; Supplemental Security Income (SSI); public assistance or welfare payments; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and all other income.”*

<b>Table 1.8 Household Income Analysis, 2010</b>				
<b>Household Income</b>	<b># of Households</b>			
	<b>ACS Estimate</b>	<b>ACS Margin of Error</b>	<b>Kearney County Forecast-2010</b>	<b>County-City Comparison</b>
<b>less than \$15,000</b>	176	±106	258	116
<b>\$15,000-\$24,999</b>	133	±58	279	126
<b>\$25,000-\$34,999</b>	93	±46	341	153
<b>\$35,000-\$49,999</b>	208	±77	522	234
<b>\$50,000-\$74,999</b>	272	±83	711	319
<b>\$75,000-\$99,999</b>	141	±61	260	117
<b>\$100,000-\$149,999</b>	92	±51	141	63
<b>\$150,000-\$199,999</b>	9	±16	13	6
<b>\$200,000 or more</b>	25	±20	21	9

Source: ACS 2006-2010 Estimates, ESRI 2010 Forecasts

Household income data is displayed in ranges based on dollar amounts and the related number of households that have an income that falls into the according range. The ACS data that was reported has high Margin of Error values; therefore, in order to make a more solid determination another set of values were used to compare the ACS data. The second source of data is from Environmental Systems Research Institute, Inc. (ESRI) which reports data on Nebraska’s Location One Information System (LOIS) website. Unfortunately at this time, only Kearney County information is reported on this website. Minden’s population, from the 2010 Census, was 2,923, which was approximately 45 percent of Kearney County’s 2010 population of 6,475. So in order to determine Minden’s household income, a comparison was done using the Kearney County 2010 Forecast from ESRI and the proportional relationship of Minden’s population with that of Kearney County.

ACS reported Minden’s median household income to be \$47,194 (±\$6,870). The ACS also reported the state of Nebraska’s median household income to be \$49,342 (±\$293), and Kearney County’s median household income was reported at \$54,518 (±\$4,121). Although we have data for these three relative locations, there is still large margins of error for all of the data reported which makes it difficult to determine Minden’s exact median income for 2010.



Retail Market Power (RMP) - Opportunity Gap is as beneficial as it is interesting for communities and counties to review. It is an analysis that allows you to compare supply and demand to determine potential sources of revenue growth. An opportunity gap appears when household spending levels for a specific geography are higher than the corresponding retail sales estimates. This difference signifies that resident households are meeting the available supply and supplementing their additional demand potential by going outside of their own community. The opposite is true in the event of an opportunity surplus. That is, when the levels of household expenditures are lower than the retail sales estimates. In this case, local retailers are attracting residents of other areas in to their stores.



**Table 1.9 RMP - Opportunity Gap Analysis, 2011**

<b>Retail Stores</b>	<b>2011 Demand (Consumer Expenditures)</b>	<b>2011 Supply (Retail Sales)</b>	<b>Opportunity Gap/Surplus</b>
Total Retail Sales Incl. Eating and Drinking Places	40,513,430	23,336,746	17,176,684
Motor Vehicle and Parts Dealers	7,118,268	7,499,571	381,303
Automotive Parts/Accsrs, Tire Stores	512,972	1,742,726	1,229,754
Furniture and Home Furnishings Stores	734,469	0	734,469
Electronics and Appliance Stores	809,874	58,406	751,468
Building Material, Garden Equipment Stores	3,652,077	1,414,793	2,237,284
Building Material and Supply Dealers	3,295,068	23,902	3,271,166
Nursery and Garden Centers	290,837	1,390,891	1,100,054
Food and Beverage Stores	5,635,121	6,261,685	626,564
Grocery Stores	5,115,522	5,803,249	687,727
Supermarkets, Grocery Stores	4,846,615	5,689,346	842,731
Health and Personal Care Stores	2,780,461	292,098	2,488,363
Gasoline Stations	4,096,700	4,535,249	438,549
Clothing and Clothing Accessories Stores	1,585,592	101,167	1,484,425
Sporting Good, Hobby, Book, Music Stores	716,325	0	716,325
General Merchandise Stores	5,266,078	214,077	5,052,001
Miscellaneous Retailers	1,086,791	185,809	900,982
Non-Store Retailers	3,034,588	0	3,034,588
Foodservice and Drinking Places	3,997,086	2,773,891	1,223,195
<b>GAFO*</b>	<b>9,512,660</b>	<b>461,828</b>	<b>9,050,832</b>

\* General Merchandise, Apparel, Furniture, and Other-represents sales at stores that sell merchandise normally sold in department stores. This is a separate analysis, do not include in Total Retail Sales Incl. Eating and Drinking Places

Source: Nielson Site Reports

**Table 1.9** shows an abundance of information. The first column shows a list of retail store categories. Most of these are big groups that are then broken down further. The full list is shown in the Appendix. The second column shows what consumers in Minden spent on each category in 2011. The third column shows the total retail sales, by each retail market, of stores found within Minden. The fourth, and last column, shows an opportunity gap or surplus that exists for each retail sector. In the fourth column, if the number is red, that means there is a surplus of supply in Minden for the sector. In this case, a surplus is not bad. It means not only are these retail stores meeting the needs of consumers in Minden, they are also meeting the needs of residents that live outside of Minden. Maybe they are traveling from the country, or maybe they are coming from a different town in order to fill some of their needs. The numbers in black, in the fourth column, show that there is an opportunity gap for that particular retail sector. These numbers show there is a demand for these economic sectors in Minden, however there may not be stores to fulfill the consumers' needs. Therefore, they are leaving the City of Minden to spend their money someplace else. These black numbers should be viewed as an opportunity; they are areas where the City can improve. The very last retail store, GAFO, stands for General Merchandise, Apparel, Furniture, and Other. This represents sales at stores which sell merchandise typically sold in department or "big box" stores. All of these retail sectors can be found in the list above, such as, furniture and home furnishings or apparel and accessories stores. The 9,050,832 dollars is a separate number that should not be added into the Total Retail Sales Incl. Eating and Drinking Places at the top of **Table 1.9** because those totals are already figured into the final total.



**Table 1.9** shows a summary of Minden’s RMP analysis, the full version can be found in the Appendix. This analysis estimates that over 17 million dollars are leaving Minden and being spent in other communities. There are a few retail sectors missing from the streets of Minden, however that leaves opportunities for more economic growth. If Minden had everything, then there would be no room to improve. Also, there are some retail businesses that Minden would not be able to viably support for a few reasons. One of those reasons being its close proximity to Kearney, Hastings, and even Grand Island. Some of the retail markets that Minden is losing out on, taking only dollars into account, are building materials and supply dealers, clothing and accessories stores, general merchandise stores, health and personal care stores, and the food service market. Competing with larger towns that can easily support a variety of “big box” stores such as Wal-Mart, Target, and Menards is not easy for any community. These numbers do not mean the retail operations that are present in Minden are bad businesses or that they are lacking in any way. It simply means there is opportunity to improve. Business expansion or new inventory are a few ways that these businesses could progress. We would not recommend the addition of “big box” retailers to Minden’s scene because it would not benefit the whole community. Instead, it would detract from the Downtown Square and the other small businesses in town. It would make it even harder for these locally run businesses to stay in Minden if they had to compete with “big box” store names. It would also detract from the overall atmosphere of Minden.



There are many businesses that are not only meeting the needs of Minden’s residents, they are also attracting customers from outside of Minden. Some of the retail sectors that are helping to draw in residents from outside of Minden are the nursery and garden centers, grocery stores, gas stations, and automotive parts, accessories, and tire stores. These markets brought in a total of 6.9 million dollars from residents that live outside of Minden in 2011. Having an established retail base is a hard thing to do, but Minden has it. The fact people are already traveling to Minden to purchase gas and groceries will be beneficial when trying to promote other economic ventures. It is challenging for small communities to attract consumers. However Minden has already been drawing in some outsiders, but there is always room for improvement. Adding new or growing existing economic sectors may not seem as daunting knowing Minden is already attracting consumers from other communities.



The economic base analysis is a great technique to use when describing any local economy. Basic sectors are companies that produce goods/services for export, which in turn brings money into the community from outside sources. These industries rely heavily on external factors and they usually export their goods. Non-basic sectors are companies that directly serve its community's residents. There are many non-basic sector companies, but they are not viewed to be as important to the local economy because they do not bring in as many outside dollars. Non-basic sectors are important for communities because they support residents' needs and they help to improve the quality of life in Minden.

Some of the non-basic sector industries include construction; retail trade; finance and real estate; educational services and health/social care assistance; and arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services. These industries serve the local economy and local residents; although they will help to bring people to Minden from surrounding communities. There are a few industries that are always considered to be non-basic sector regardless of the comparison calculations. A few of these sectors are construction, retail trade, and educational services because the purpose of these industries is to serve the local economy.



In order to establish which industries are base sectors of the local economy a simple comparison calculation is done to determine an industry's impact over the local economy versus that same industry's impact in the regional area. The calculations were computed based on ACS data for Minden and the state of Nebraska. The industries that are considered basic sectors for Minden are as follows:

- Agriculture
- Manufacturing
- Transportation & Warehousing
- Information\*

Another aspect to consider when comparing the basic and non-basic sectors of Minden's economy is the job creation ratio. The analysis concluded, for Minden, every basic sector job that is created, an additional 2.17 non-basic sector jobs will also be created. That relationship shows the impact of creating basic jobs in a local economy. An example situation, for every job created at Royal Engineered Composites, a job may be created in an office that has Royal Engineered Composites as a client. Perhaps a job in personal services such as a restaurant, grocery store, or a local retail shop may also be created in order to better serve the other jobs that were created. Now these jobs are not directly tied to that one specific Royal Engineered Composites job in that if that job were phased out one day the other jobs will not exist the next day. But, ultimately, Royal Engineered Composites employment is a major factor in the number of businesses and personal services offered in the area. If Royal Engineered Composites, or any other large company in Minden, were to cut its workforce by a large amount, the local economy will likely lose a far greater number of jobs, on the order of two for every one of Royal Engineered Composites.

\* Information sector of the economy is any business that produces and distributes information and cultural products. They provide the means to transmit or distribute these products as well as data and communications.

**Table 1.10 Major Employers in Minden, 2012**

Company Name	Full-time	Part-time and/or seasonal	Total Employees
Kearney County Health Services	90	60	150
Minden Public Schools	117	20	137
Royal Engineered Composites	144	7	151
Bethany Home Inc.	95	21	116
Kearney County Government	60	8	68
Cooperative Producers, Inc.	39	8	47
CSS Farms	10	30	40
Wardcraft Homes	47	2	49
CSS Farms	10	30	40
KAAPA Ethanol LLC	38	1	39
Minden Machine Shop	56	0	56

Source: NPPD & Minden Economic Development Director

The Minden Economic Development Advisory Council adopted an updated Target Industry Study in 2009. The top three targets are as follows; Manufacturing Retention and Expansion, Workforce Attraction, Hotel/Motel Development and Housing. Recruitment of new businesses is to be based on the current target study as well as the feasible sustainability of the business in the region and its resources such as agriculture. **Table 1.10** shows Minden employers that employ 35 or more employees. If any of these companies were to downsize or leave Minden, it would greatly affect the community and its economic status. All of these companies have a large impact, however there are many other businesses in Minden that employ fewer than 35 people that still have an affect on the local economy. Communities need all types of businesses, whether they are large or small, in order to be successful. Economic growth is a challenging task, but it becomes an extremely important one in order to maintain the vitality of Minden. The community is taking the right steps forward by having an active Economic Development Director and Advisory Council. Minden is also in the planning stages of becoming a Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NEDED) Leadership Community. Being a Leadership Community would help to open up many more doors for Minden in terms of growth and economic development. Minden and Kearney County have a low unemployment rate, and they also have great companies already present in the area, and those companies are continually growing. It is important that Minden not only continue to try to attract new businesses to the community, but also support the existing businesses.





Minden's Economic Development Department continually works hard to provide assistance to existing and potential businesses. Kearney County Economic Development Agency (KCEDA) is also a great local resource for businesses in Minden. Between the two Economic Development offices, there are many resources available to businesses in Minden. The following is list of the current programs available:

PK EDGE Classes (Enhancing, Development & Growing Entrepreneurs)-an arm of the PK Partnership offers a 12-week course covering all aspects of business ownership including structure, financing, marketing, and accounting.

REAP Business Loans (Rural Enterprise Assistance Microenterprise Program)-this program provides counseling, technical assistance and training for small business owners as well as offers low interest loans to small businesses with five employees or less.

KCEDA Small Business Funds-this funding source is available to anyone with a business or beginning a business in Kearney County. Funds can be used for a variety of options such as business start-up, building improvements, facade remodeling, equipment, expansion, and other items needed for your business.

City and County Revolving Loan Funds (RLF)-these funds are used to assist businesses and developers by providing low interest loans for business start-ups, business expansion, building rehabilitation, and other designated uses.

Facade Improvement Fund (FIFund)-the purpose of this resource is to restore, improve, or create historic architectural features to facades of commercial buildings.

Tax Increment Financing (TIF)-TIF is primarily designed to finance the public costs associated with private development projects. Property tax increases resulting from a new development are targeted to repay the public investment required by the project. Minden has successfully implemented TIF projects over the past several years. The City of Minden currently maintains updated blight and substandard areas so that TIF may be offered as a development incentive.

These programs should continually be supported by the City and its residents, because it is a great way to support local businesses while trying to expand the local economy. It is also important to maintain the County-City relationship so that local businesses may benefit from County resources. Relationships and education will continually be a beneficial aspect for economic development in Minden. It will be crucial for community leaders and Economic Development personnel to stay up-to-date with the ever-changing economic world. The State also offers many resources that are worth taking a look at including Community Development Grants and educational sessions on community and economic development. Thus far, Minden and the Minden Economic Development Office has done a fantastic job by offering informational/educational sessions as well as funding assistance for local businesses. This shows true support for the local economy.

Minden's downtown is a vibrant example of "small-town" America. The Downtown Square is two blocks off of Highway 10 that runs north to south through town and is the main thoroughfare for travelers. It is an important, yet challenging,

# Downtown Square

task to attract passers-by and visitors to travel the two blocks to the Downtown Square to showcase many of Minden's amenities. There are a few vacancies around the Square that are available to rent or own for office space and/or business ventures. The City offices and the Fire and Police Departments are also located Downtown, right off of the Square.

The Downtown Square's defining characteristics include the unique two-way traffic, divided by landscaped medians, around all sides of the Courthouse. The Kearney County Courthouse itself is a defining characteristic of Minden; this building is on the State's list of historical buildings. This building stands as a focal point of the Square. Minden's Square is surrounded by active businesses including a great mix of eating establishments, retail shops, services, entertainment, and general merchandise stores. These businesses play an important role in the sustainability of Minden, and most communities with Minden's attributes do not have a Downtown as active and well-maintained as Minden's.

Businesses down and around the Square include Joy's Floral, Daylight Donuts, Dollar General, Hardware Hank, SourceGas, Century Link, Brewer's Coffee House, Wakefield Chiropractic, Treasure Chest, Vital Link, Valerie's Interiors, Mookies, Minden Courier, NPPD, Miller Abstract, Jensen Memorial Library, Lt. Pedley Drug, Fit Zone, The Closet, McBride Reality, Hair on the Square, First National Bank, Chamber of Commerce, Lieske Law Firm, and many, many more. There truly is a great mix of uses in Downtown Minden. The Square is already attracting people to shop and do business in Minden, this allows for an ease of entry for new businesses to fill the vacancies and start attracting customers almost immediately. The hardest task for any downtown in any community is to attract the people; Minden is already doing that.

There are a few issues that are present within the Downtown Square including some factors that cannot be changed, but must be dealt with creatively. One issue that cannot be changed is the fact that the Downtown Square is two blocks off of the main thoroughfare through town. Someone driving through Minden on Highway 10 could pass by the Square several times and not even know what a great little "neighborhood" it is. Creating a gateway or entrance to the Square on the corner of 5th Street and Highway 10 (Brown Avenue) would be a way to attract travelers' attention. This entrance would make people aware of the Square and all that it has to offer. One way to "grab" people's attention would be to create a gateway park. The most ideal place for this park would be at the corner of the main arterial road, Highway 10, and Fifth Street which has the potential to be a connector street. Currently, at the corner of Fifth Street and Highway 10 is a yellow, single-family home that was constructed around 1960. This area would be the perfect place for an entrance park because of its location. If this home was to ever to be relocated or there was a change in hands of owners, the City could take advantage of this location and create a gateway entrance into the Square. This location would allow for the greatest impact and connection to Downtown.



Corner of 5th Street and Highway 10 - Existing



Corner of 5th Street and Highway 10 - Proposed Park



The addition of an entrance sign to the Downtown Square would be a start to resolving the issue of a lack of wayfinding. Visitors, even frequent ones, may not know where the Opera House, City Offices, or Café are located. The addition of wayfinding signage leading to the Square and then throughout Downtown would be very beneficial for Minden’s visitors. There are many different signage options, including digital kiosks and traditional standalone signs. The “Invision Minden” plan has great examples of signage and way-finding that Minden could implement. Picking signage that fits with the “feel” of Minden’s Square is important when trying to create a memorable space.

Wayfinding signage benefits vehicular and pedestrian traffic. At this point, the Square is oriented more towards vehicular traffic which makes it more cumbersome for pedestrians to walk from store to store. Creating crosswalks or walkways at each corner of the Square would provide a more pedestrian-friendly environment. Crosswalks or walkways could also be created from each center median to the store-front sidewalks. Building out the sidewalks and adding crosswalks will also act as a traffic calming method which also makes it safer for pedestrians, because cars will not be traveling as fast through the intersections. These two additions are not only created for safety issues, they also help add to the cohesive aesthetic that is needed in Downtown areas.

The last physical issues that are present in the Square are with the buildings. Some of the structures are in need of repairs and updates. Most of these buildings were constructed around the turn of the 20th century; so this is to be expected due to the age of the buildings, but regardless, in order to keep the Downtown Square a vital part of Minden the buildings will need to be kept up to par. Also many of the buildings are underutilized in the fact that the second stories of most of the buildings are vacant. This space could be used for offices or housing. Currently there is a housing shortage in Minden; this includes a shortage of rental units. These second stories could be renovated and rehabilitated into apartment units. Creating rental units on the second stories of the business in the Square would not be an easy feat. The revitalization effort would require large funds and many interested persons to make it happen. There are also many factors to consider before creating these rental units. City codes need to be analyzed, a parking analysis would need to be done in order to ensure that there would still be enough parking for Downtown shoppers as well as potential apartment residents, and funding sources would need to be secured in order to help property owners make this idea into a reality. The addition of rental units would provide extra income for property owners; therefore, this would hopefully make their upfront investments worthwhile.

Minden’s Downtown Square is a great place to work, shop, and do business. In order to expand Minden’s self-sustainability and identity, improvements could be made to the Square. Creating a brand that is identifiable with an experience is the best way to do this in a Downtown. It is recommended that a Downtown Revitalization Plan be completed for Minden in order to provide decision-makers with more ideas about possible improvements in the area.

The following is a list of implementation steps to follow for making improvements in the Square. These would typically be the steps to take after a community adopts a Downtown Revitalization Plan. A plan would not be required in order to move forward with these steps; however, if a plan is not in place then there is no end goal in sight. It would be very challenging for stakeholders to move forward if there is no overall vision in place. The plan is used to create options, goals, visuals, aesthetic guidelines, and essentially a strategy to create the atmosphere that the City desires.



Establish an implementation committee. A relatively standard procedure is to convert the planning project's steering committee, if one existed, into the implementation committee. The committee should be made-up of stakeholders, including business owners, property owners, residents, Economic Development board members, and City officials.

Get all of the implementers on board. It should be a primary objective of the planning process to achieve buy-in from all key players who will be critical to the plan's implementation. Although that goal will hopefully be reached before the plan is completed, it may be necessary to revisit some of those groups and individuals to reconfirm their commitment to the plan.

Start with the plan's "low-hanging fruit." Given the wide range of recommendations contained in the typical downtown plan, some are much easier to accomplish than others. Public policy amendments, such as zoning revisions not calling for major code rewrites, often require little funding or manpower. There are also some high-impact but low-cost aesthetic improvements that can enhance the downtown's appearance, such as adding decorative planters to streetscapes and colorful new awnings for storefronts. Starting with these projects really help to get the ball rolling, showing that leaders are serious about implementing the objectives outlined in the plan.

Prioritize the plan's organizational recommendations. To accomplish the plan's more challenging ideas, a high level of organization will be needed. Depending upon the specific recommendations of the plan, if a downtown committee does not already exist it will likely need to be established. Most likely, the Downtown Revitalization Plan will recommend some large projects in order to reach the end goal. Those large tasks will be a lot easier to implement with a committee spearheading the project. That committee can then develop a schedule based on priorities, some plans may even start that task.

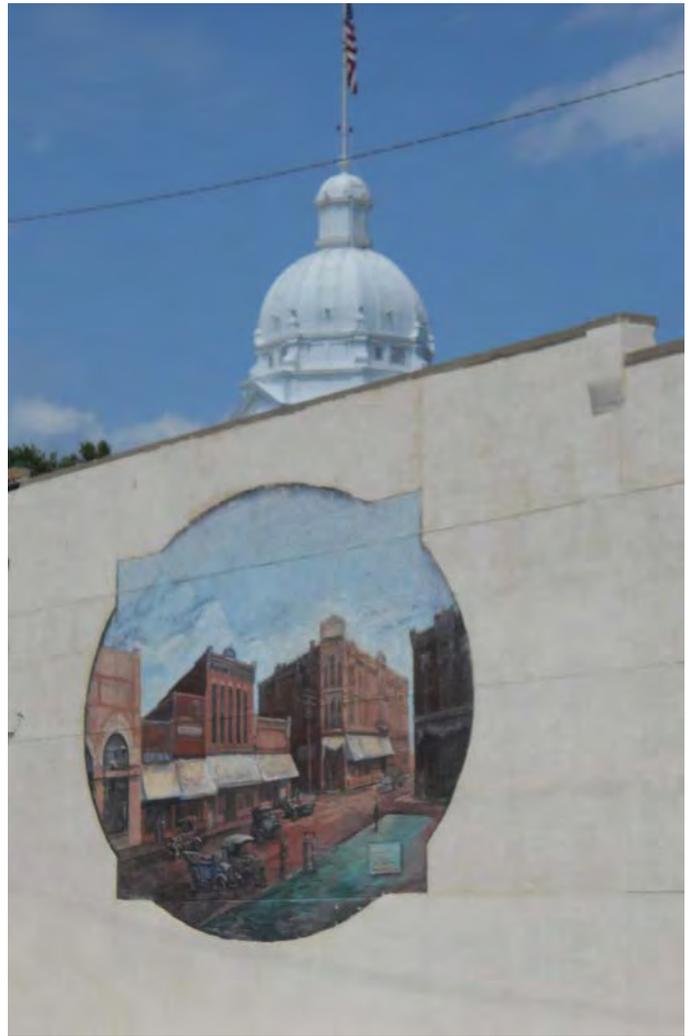


Do something visible. Although it may go by some other name, many downtown plans include a “quick victory” project within the implementation section of the document. This project is one with high odds for success and high visibility, and the intent is to help jump-start the plan’s implementation. An early success sends out a clear message that the community is serious about implementing the new plan, and it can help to build needed support and momentum.

Pressure, entice, and partner with the private sector. Once the local government or downtown organization has done its part to create a plan, it is time for the private sector to follow.

Pursue grant funding. Despite the commonly heard mantra, “We’ll just get a grant to do that,” grant funding is not nearly as available as many would believe. While there are numerous grants available through most levels of government, as well as private foundations, pursuing them is a competitive endeavor.

Celebrate and publicize the victories. Every downtown achievement, no matter how large or small, should be treated as a precious jewel that cannot be wasted. For the most challenged downtowns, successes can be few and far between, particularly in the early stages of revitalization when momentum may not exist. Communities should reward themselves for their hard work and celebrate even the smallest downtown victories. They should also publicize them through newsletters and press releases.



# 2 Facilities & Infrastructure

The Facilities & Infrastructure section acts as an inventory of current amenities available to the public because of the county. This is a good section to review and hopefully add upon in the future with growing facilities and a growing population. This section is also helpful for others to read to see what the community has to offer. This Facilities & Infrastructure section will cover the following components:

- Recreational Facilities
- Education System
- Transportation
- Community Events
- Community Services
- Energy
- Utilities

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# Recreational Facilities

The community of Minden is homes to several different parks and recreational opportunities from ball fields and playground equipment to the swimming pool and miniature golf course. There are eight parks in Minden. The following are the facility names and short descriptions of amenities provided at each park.

## American Legion Ball Field

This ball field hosts Legion ball games and is located on the north edge of town next to the Kearney County Fairgrounds. There is also a batting cage, a concession stand, and restroom facilities.

## American Legion Park

The American Legion Park is located in the northeast part of Minden. It is home to the community's swimming pool and tennis courts as well as a new picnic shelter. This park also offers recreational amenities such as horseshoe pits, playground equipment, and restroom facilities. The Minden Municipal Swimming Pool opens every year on Memorial Day. The Olympic-sized pool is home to the Minden Swim team which adults and youngsters are welcome to join. American Red Cross swim lessons are also offered during the summer.

## Augie Nelson Optimist Park

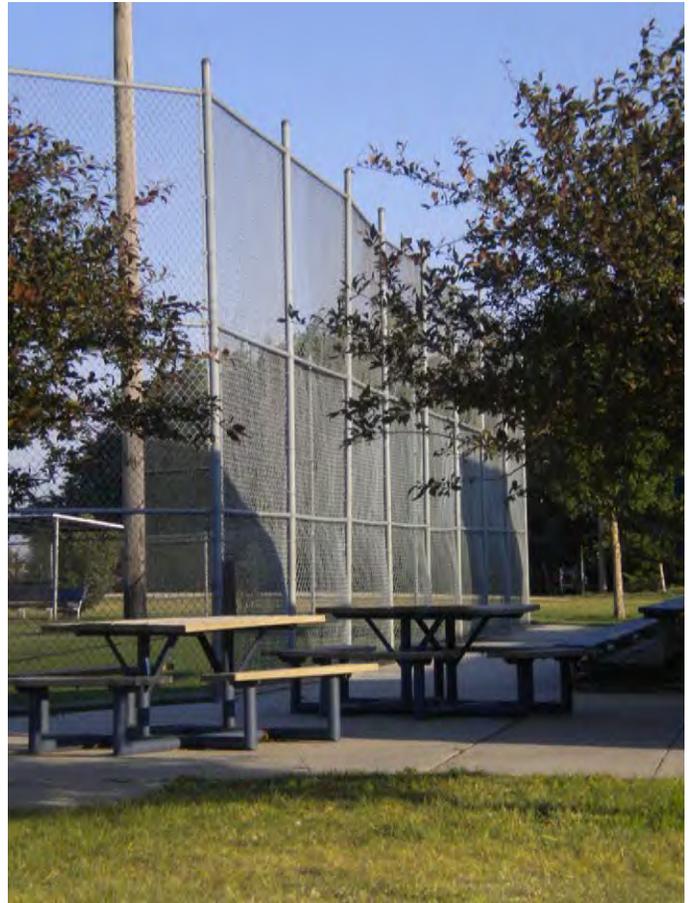
The Augie Nelson Optimist Park is located in the northeast park of Minden. It lies adjacent to the American Legion Park which hosts the swimming pool. The Augie Nelson Optimist Park has the following amenities: ball field, concession stand, restroom facilities, and a soccer field.

## Chautauqua Park

Chautauqua Park is located a couple of blocks north of the downtown square and Kearney County Courthouse. It sports a rose garden, playground equipment, picnic tables, open air amphitheater, and restroom facilities. Summer plays and concerts are held in the Chautauqua Band Shell.

## Jaycee Park

Jaycee Park is located in the south part of Minden, adjacent to Highway 10. The park is home to many youth ball games and has a large cement court with four basketball hoops. The park also has picnic tables, a picnic shelter, playground equipment, and restroom facilities.



### Minden Miniature Golf Course

The Minden Miniature Golf Course is located northeast of Pioneer Village. This park is home to a miniature golf course, a sand volleyball court, and horseshoe pits. Summer passes are available for this park, and there is a combination summer pass available for both the pool and miniature golf course.

### Outdoor Classroom

The Outdoor Classroom is located just west of CL Jones Middle School on the west side of town. The amenities include a pond encircled by a hike/bike trail, lookout deck, several picnic tables and benches, Frisbee golf course, fishing, and garden beds.

### Sarah's Field

Sarah's Field is the newest ball field in Minden; it is located on the south side of town. Sarah's Field is named in memory for a late Minden youth, Sarah Kovacs. The site consists of two ball fields where many T-ball and baseball games are played.



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## Golf

The Minden Country Club is a nine-hole golf course located in northern Minden. The Country Club House also has a banquet room which seats up to 120 people. The Minden Country Club operates under seasonal hours.

## Camping/Outdoor Recreation

There are camping opportunities available in Minden at the Pioneer Village RV Park as well as outside of Minden at Fort Kearny State Recreation Area. The Pioneer Village RV Park is located directly behind Heritage Hall on Highway 6. The park provides electrical hookups as well as a camping area without hookups. This park is within walking distance from the Downtown Square as well as several dining establishments, the bowling alley, and the laundry mat.

Fort Kearny State Recreation Area is located three-fourths of a mile east and one mile north of Fort Kearny State Historical Park. It is less than 15 miles from the City of Minden. The State Recreation Area is 152-acre area that features 75 camping pads with electrical hookups, 110 camping pads without electricity, and 35 non-pad sites without electricity. There are also several picnic shelters, picnic tables, grills, restroom facilities including showers, a visitor center, and an office on site. Boating and fishing are allowed at the park and there is river access. A hike/bike trail crosses two channels of the Platte River and extends almost five miles. A state park permit is required and can be purchased at the campsite.

Harlan County Lake is located southwest of Minden between Republican City and Alma. Harlan County Lake is a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers' project that covers over 31,000 acres with 13,250 acres of water surface. It is Nebraska's second largest lake, and it boasts several outdoor activities such as water sports, fishing, hunting, camping, picnicking, horseback riding, four-wheeling, and tubing below the dam. There are six boat ramps around Harlan County Lake. The Corps maintains six established campgrounds with 542 designated camping pads. Public access is permitted on federal property, including hunting and some primitive camping areas. Fishing tournaments are held all-summer long and the Corps Facilities, except the restrooms, are open year-round.

## Bowling

The Auto Way Bowl is a bowling alley located on Highway 6 in Minden. It is an eight-lane center that has been in operation since 1956. They offer youth bowling programs, bowling parties, tournaments, and leagues. This bowling alley serves food and they have a game room, pool table, air hockey table, and video games.

## Hike/Bike Trail

A hike/bike trail is an amenity that many communities of Minden's size simply cannot offer for their residents, due to the cost. It is something that people of all ages can enjoy and depending on where the trail runs, it can provide safe travels for kids going to and from school. Trails are best utilized when they link together important parts in town such as the school, library, and parks. It is also important to choose routes that will minimize the need to cross a street because of the safety hazard. There are funding opportunities available for the design and construction of hike/bike trails. Trails could be added to connect all of the parks, in town, together. As well as creating a loop for people to use when exercising and for ease of use because it would be a continuous loop.



Below is a list of potential recreational improvements or enhancements. There are many other potential recreational improvements that may be needed or desired over the years, but at this time these are goals desired by residents.

Minden's Public Swimming Pool will continually need repairs and updates in order to keep it functioning and up to par with State and Federal regulations. At some point, in the future, a Pool Study should be completed to help determine any existing issues. A cost analysis could be completed to determine the benefits of repairing or rehabilitating the existing pool versus constructing a new public swimming pool.



Another amenity that is becoming more popular in Nebraska's communities is a splash pad. A splash pad would be a great addition to Minden's long list of amenities. Splash pads can be designed to attract children at a variety of ages. They should be designed to have special areas that best suit each age group. These specified bay areas allow for a safe play environment for everyone. Splash pads are a way to provide community enhancement as well as a healthy way for families to play safely. A couple of positive functional attributes to a splash pad are that they do not require lifeguards and they are designed to have the ability to regulate when features are able to be used.



Splash Pad in Pleasanton, Nebraska

Minden has a variety of playground equipment to suit children at a variety of ages. Minden has recently purchased new playground equipment for three of the parks. This equipment, along with any existing equipment should be periodically monitored to determine times for improvement or replacement to ensure that Minden's parks are a safe environment for children to play.

Another option for an added recreational amenity would be the creation of a dog park. This area should be fenced in to provide a space where dogs can be let of their leashes and run around. A possible location for a dog park/dog run could be on one of the industrial tracts of land by Minden West Estates which could easily be turned back into an industrial lot when needed. This amenity is not only beneficial for Minden's citizens, but also for all of the four-legged residents in town.

In the recent past, all of the picnic tables in Minden were replaced with new ones. One way to ensure that these tables stay in good condition is to have a plan for maintenance or replacement of the tables on a rotating schedule in order to ensure that the picnic tables are being maintained and then replaced when needed in the future.

All public restroom facilities should comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure accessibility by all of Minden's residents and visitors. An ADA study could be completed to determine any physical barriers as well as options for improvements to guarantee compliance. These updates require lots of planning to ensure funds are in order to complete these tasks. The City is aware of these regulations and they are working hard to solve any issues.

Vibrant, colorful landscaping helps draw people to an area. New landscaping would be a different way to add something new to the park. Not only would it make the park areas more aesthetically pleasing, but it would be a way for residents to volunteer at the parks to help keep them beautiful. A master landscaping plan should be made before doing any new planting. This will ensure that the idea is thoroughly thought-out before any planting begins.

A great school system is a leading amenity for communities of any size. Minden has a strong educational system as well as a strong tradition for their athletic programs. Community members seem to continually be supporters of their great school district, and leaders should continue to promote a strong relationship between the community and the school. Great school districts are one of the leading factors when looking at population growth; new families with young children want to live near a great school where their children can attend. The following section explores Minden Public Schools and its existing presence in the community.

# Education System

Many rural Nebraska communities and counties put a high value on maintaining and protecting their local schools. Local schools are vital in preserving community pride as well as supporting local residents and businesses. The following section analyzes educational trends within Minden as a way to better understand where Minden is going in the future. Nebraska state statutes group schools into six different classifications.

These classifications are defined by the following law:  
2009 Nebraska Code, Chapter 79 SCHOOLS - § 79-102.

- (1) Class I includes any school district that maintains only elementary grades under the direction of a single school board;
- (2) Class II includes any school district embracing territory having a population of one thousand inhabitants or less that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board;
- (3) Class III includes any school district embracing territory having a population of more than one thousand and less than one hundred fifty thousand inhabitants that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board;
- (4) Class IV includes any school district embracing territory having a population of one hundred thousand or more inhabitants with a city of the primary class within the territory of the district that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board;
- (5) Class V includes any school district whose employees participate in a retirement system established pursuant to the Class V School Employees Retirement Act and which embraces territory having a city of the metropolitan class within the territory of the district that maintains both elementary grades and high school grades under the direction of a single school board and any school district with territory in a city of the metropolitan class created pursuant to the Learning Community Reorganization Act and designated as a Class V school district in the reorganization plan; and
- (6) Class VI includes any school district in this state that maintains only a high school, or a high school and grades seven and eight or six through eight as provided in section 79-411, under the direction of a single school board.



Minden Public School District (50-0503-00) is classified as a Class III School because it maintains both elementary and high school grades, and because Minden is a community that has a population of more than 1,000 and less than 100,000. **Figure 2.1** shows Minden Public Schools' District Boundaries. Minden Public Schools are a part of the Educational Service Unit 11 (ESU 11). ESU 11 contains school districts in Franklin, Furnas, Gosper, Harlan, Kearney, and Phelps Counties. Their headquarters are located in Holdrege.

Children that live in Minden attend Minden Public School District. This District consists of three different schools, Minden East Elementary School for students in Kindergarten through Third Grade, CL Jones Middle School for students in Fourth through Eighth Grade, and the Minden High School for students in Ninth through Twelfth Grade.

**Table 2.1** shows school enrollment for all Minden Public Schools. The table shows enrollment for each grade since the 2000-2001 school year. The 2000-2001 school year had the largest enrollment numbers for the past 12 years. The 2010-2011 Kindergarten class was the largest Kindergarten class reported for all of the years in this table. The 2010-2011 Senior class was the smallest of all senior classes shown in this table; although, it is typical for class sizes to vary from year to year.

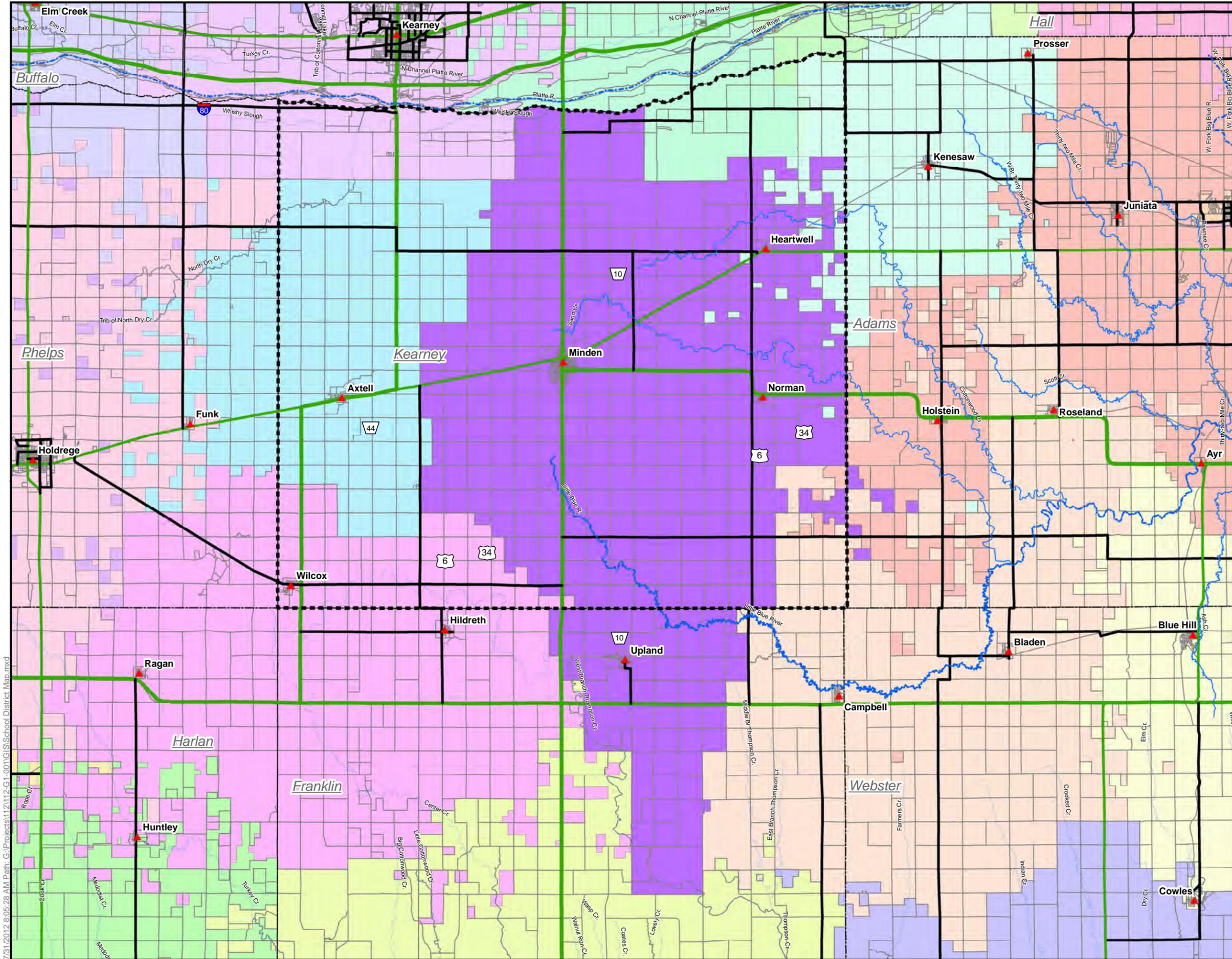
**Table 2.1** depicts the adjusted general funding operating expenditures per formula student. Formula students are based on the 2010/2011 average daily membership and the 2010/2011 contracted students. The table highlights Minden Public Schools and other districts in surrounding counties.

<b>Table 2.1 2011/2012 TEEOSA Formula Students Nebraska Department of Education</b>					
<b>County</b>	<b>County/ District Number</b>	<b>District/System Name</b>	<b>Formula Students</b>	<b>Adjusted General Fund Operating Expenditures (\$)</b>	<b>Adjusted General Fund Operating Expenditures per Formula Student (\$)</b>
Webster	91-0002-000	Red Cloud Community Schools	233.76	2,535,196.78	10,845.22
Phelps	69-0054-000	Bertrand Public Schools	247.69	2,299,321.78	9,282.93
Adams	01-0003-000	Kenesaw Public Schools	267.40	2,083,343.30	7,791.08
Kearney	50-0501-000	Axtell Community Schools	274.40	2,573,959.35	9,380.37
Buffalo	10-0019-000	Shelton Public schools	286.69	2,559,996.18	8,929.39
Harlan	42-0002-000	Alma Public Schools	295.04	2,595,443.74	8,797.03
Buffalo	10-0009-000	Elm Creek Public Schools	321.22	2,846,985.31	8,862.92
Webster	91-0074-000	Blue Hill Public Schools	380.19	2,547,703.49	6,701.19
Buffalo	10-0069-000	Ravenna Public Schools	414.23	3,832,009.42	9,250.99
Hall	40-0126-000	Doniphan-Trumbull Public Schools	454.20	4,315,737.83	9,501.77
Hall	40-0083-000	Wood River Rural Schools	551.02	4,533,456.93	8,227.35
Buffalo	10-0002-000	Gibbon Public Schools	573.07	4,059,728.44	7,084.20
Kearney	50-0503-000	Minden Public Schools	773.72	5,738,262.67	7,416.42
Kearney	50-0001-000	Wilcox-Hildreth Public Schools	205.09	2,918,201.55	14,228.84

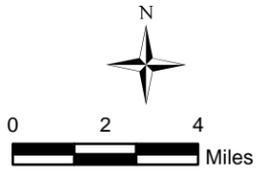
Source: Nebraska Department of Education

The Minden Whippets are classified as a C1 school for athletics. They offer the following sports: football, boys and girls basketball, cheer/dance, cross country, boy and girls golf, boys and girls track/field, volleyball, softball, and wrestling. The Whippets have long traditions of successful athletics and the community residents and businesses are proud supporters of the Whippets.





Prepared By:  
**M&A**  
**Miller & Associates**  
 CONSULTING ENGINEERS, P.C.  
 Kearney, NE - (308) 234-6456



- Legend**
- Adams Central Public Schools
  - Alma Public Schools
  - Amherst Public Schools
  - Axtell Community Schools
  - Blue Hill Public Schools
  - Doniphan-Trumbull Public Schools
  - Elm Creek Public Schools
  - Franklin Public Schools
  - Gibbon Public Schools
  - Hastings Public Schools
  - Holdrege Public Schools
  - Kearney Public Schools
  - Kenesaw Public Schools
  - Loomis Public Schools
  - Minden Public Schools
  - Overton Public Schools
  - Red Cloud Community Schools
  - Shelton Public Schools
  - Silver Lake Public Schools
  - Southern Valley Schools
  - Wilcox-Hildreth Public Schools
  - Wood River Rural Schools

Source:  
 US Census Bureau,  
 Geography Division - 2011

**Figure 2.1**  
**School District Map**  
 Minden, Nebraska

7/31/2012 8:05:28 AM Path: G:\Projects\112112-G1-001\GIS\School Districts Map.mxd

**Table 2.2** shows the size of each class from Kindergarten to 12th grade. This data goes back to the 2000-2001 school year. Over the past ten school-years, the total student enrollment has decreased. Of course, there were some years with larger or smaller graduating classes than normal, but each class size seems to be around 55-65 students. The 2010-2011 school year had the smallest graduating class, but the largest Kindergarten class for the past decade. It is important to maintain and try to expand these numbers to keep a healthy, viable school in Minden. One way to do that, is to ensure there is a healthy connection between the community and the school. Most communities thrive because of their school systems, which also seems to be the case for Minden.



**Table 2.2 School Enrollment, Minden, 2000-2012**

	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total Enrollment
2000-2001	58	59	65	66	81	57	62	56	85	68	68	78	80	883
2001-2002	64	49	56	50	69	66	75	57	60	61	85	60	71	824
2002-2003	52	62	49	59	51	67	59	77	59	51	56	82	55	799
2003-2004	55	54	61	54	59	53	72	72	77	59	64	56	81	819
2004-2005	64	59	52	67	57	60	53	71	68	76	59	61	60	814
2005-2006	54	51	58	52	68	56	65	54	69	73	80	62	68	812
2006-2007	46	51	55	63	53	67	57	65	54	74	70	75	56	807
2007-2008	63	47	52	52	68	49	66	59	62	51	75	70	82	825
2008-2009	53	46	48	47	50	65	46	65	56	64	56	76	78	783
2009-2010	70	51	45	49	50	50	69	44	64	60	65	58	79	780
2010-2011	73	65	45	50	57	57	49	76	53	65	63	63	53	793
2011-2012	60	64	64	46	52	51	52	48	68	54	63	56	68	746

Source: Nebraska Department of Education & Minden Public Schools



Transportation systems are important in any community because this system controls interactions, or lack of interactions, between places. These links help people get to work, school, the store, and back home again. In order for other aspects of the community to be successful there needs to be roads, sidewalks, and bridges to connect all of these areas with each other.

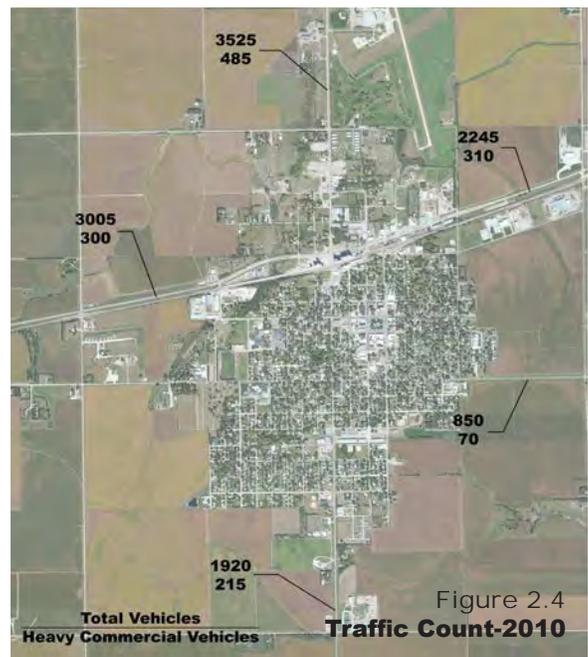
# Transportation

A positive aspect for Minden is its transportation system. There are three highways that connect many surrounding communities to Minden. Highway 10 runs north to south through town, Highway 6/34 runs east to west and Highway 74 starts in Minden and heads east and then south out of town. These highway corridors create important access points for the community; these entrances into town are also a “first impression” for visitors. It is important, when talking about community images, to maintain these corridors to provide impressive gateways into the City. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad also runs through Minden. The railroad runs parallel to Highway 6/34 through town. The airport in town, Pioneer Village Airport, is located on the north side of town; adjacent to the American Legion ball Field and the Kearney County Fairgrounds. The final form of common transportation is pedestrian foot traffic. There is sidewalk circulation throughout the community. However, some locations in town are lacking sidewalks. Also, there is a hike/bike trail existing near the Middle and High Schools, and another trail is in the design process. This planned trail will connect the Outdoor Classroom with the Public Swimming Pool on the east side of town.

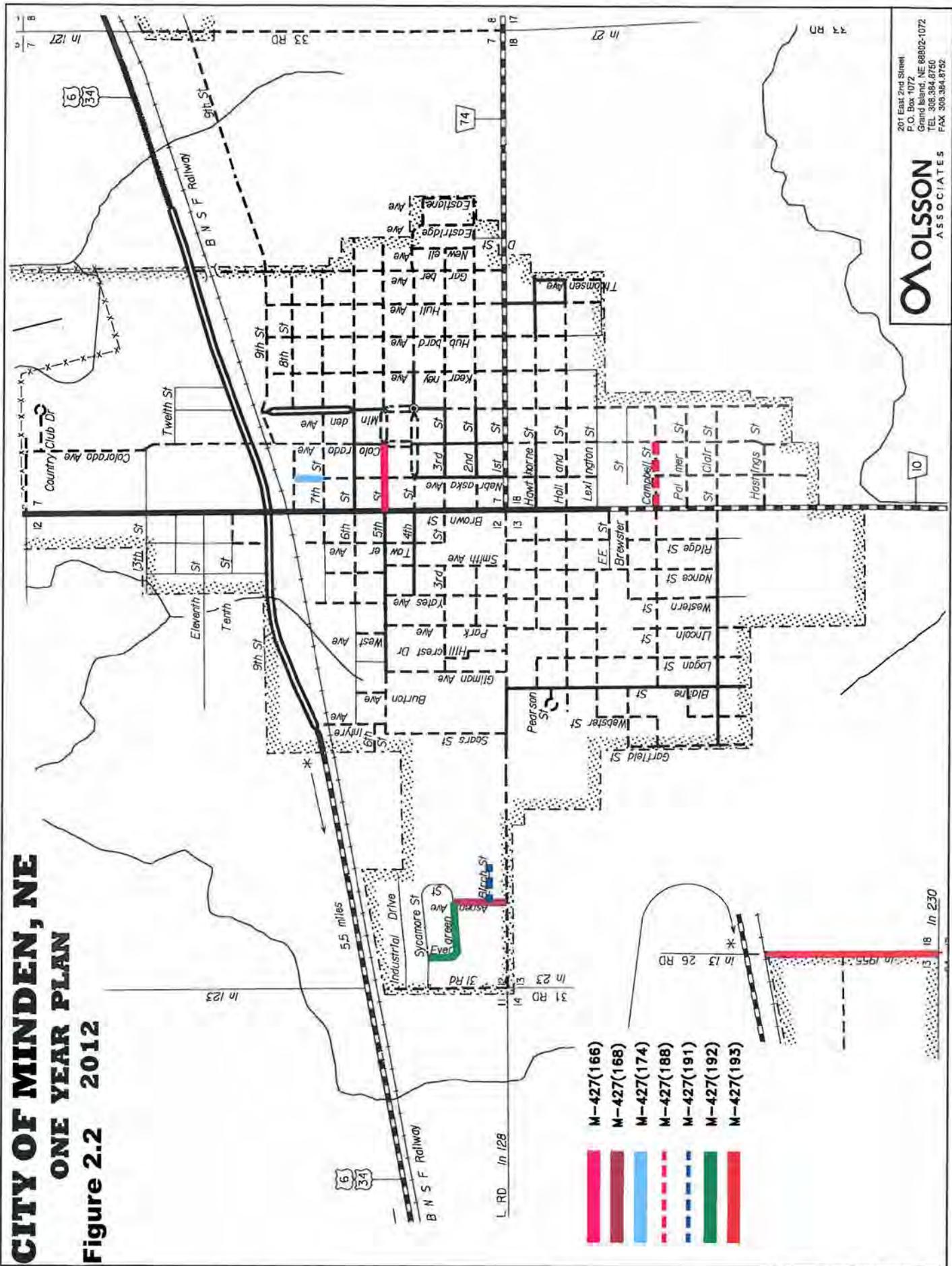
## Roads

As stated above, transportation systems are vital to the sustainability of the community. Especially with an automobile dependent society, roadways are how people get around in your community. Minden has the existing infrastructure. Minden completed its 1 & 6 Year Road Plan in February of 2012. This plan is in place to help guide achievable transportation development for the first year and development goals for the remaining five years. As seen in **Figure 2.2** has seven improvements slated for 2012. Some of these improvements include curb and gutter replacement, new pavement where there are existing gravel roads, and road repair as needed for the highlighted areas. The total cost for improvements for the 2012 plan are 785,000 dollars. As seen in **Figure 2.3** Minden’s Six Year Road Plan proposes ten separate transportation improvement projects. These projects are a little larger in size, average 100,000 dollars for each project, requiring more time and planning in order to accomplish them. The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) annually reports surface aggregates for all of the roads in Minden. The 2012 road types include concrete, asphalt, gravel, bituminous, and brick surfaces. When the 2012 report was generated, there are 9.95 miles of concrete, 17.86 miles of asphalt, 5.59 miles of gravel, .89 miles of bituminous, and .12 miles of brick roads in Minden.

**Figure 2.4** shows traffic counts for the State Highways that run through Minden. The traffic counts are from 2010, and they were all taken approximately one mile outside of Minden’s City limits. The top number represents the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) for all vehicles; the bottom number characterizes the number of heavy commercial vehicles. These traffic counts represents traffic going in both directions, meaning that all of these numbers are for traffic that is going to and coming from Minden. The highway that gets the most usage is the north part of Highway 10; this road connects travelers from I-80 to Minden and vice versa. The highway with the second highest ADT is Highway 6/34, with a majority of that traffic on the west side of town. When new commercial businesses are looking at locating in any community, they look at traffic counts. These numbers are important, because businesses want locations with high visibility. Annual State traffic counts are available online at NDOR’s website.



# CITY OF MINDEN, NE ONE YEAR PLAN Figure 2.2 2012



201 East 2nd Street  
P.O. Box 1077  
Minden, NE 68902-1072  
TEL 306.384.8760  
FAX 306.384.8752

**MOLSSON**  
ASSOCIATES



### Airport

The Pioneer Village Field Airport is located approximately one mile north of Minden. The airport has a 3,900 foot lighted, concrete runway and a 2,175 foot turf runway. Facilities include a beacon, free parking lots, fuel pumps, hangars, maintenance facility, and tie-downs. The Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) records show that there are 24 aircraft based on the field. Of those 24 aircraft, 19 of them are single-engine airplanes, one is a multi-engine airplane, and four of them are ultralights. The average weekly aircraft operations for 2011, were 134 with 67 percent of those flights as local, general aviation and the other 33 percent was for transient general aviation flights.



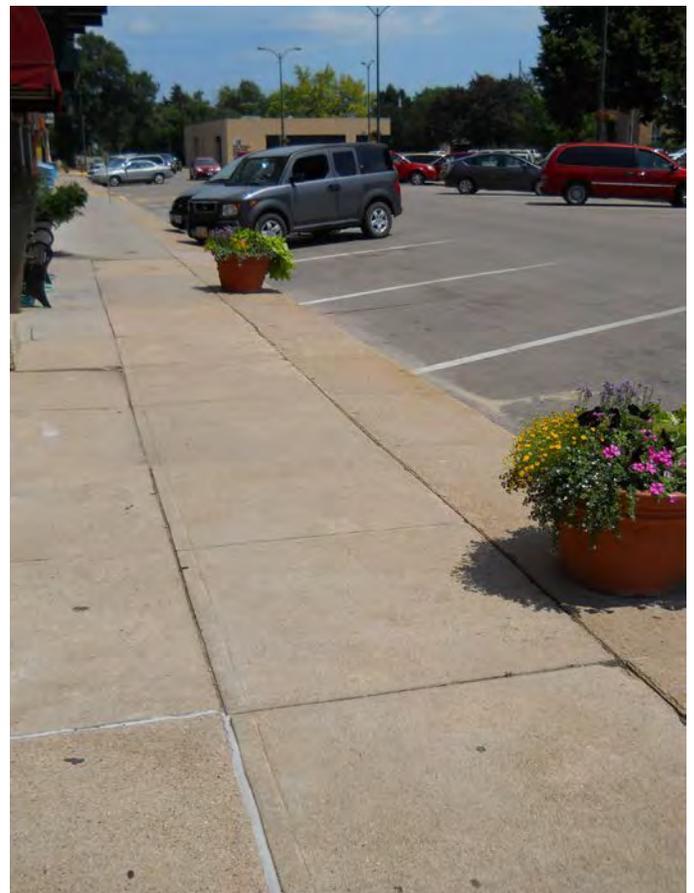
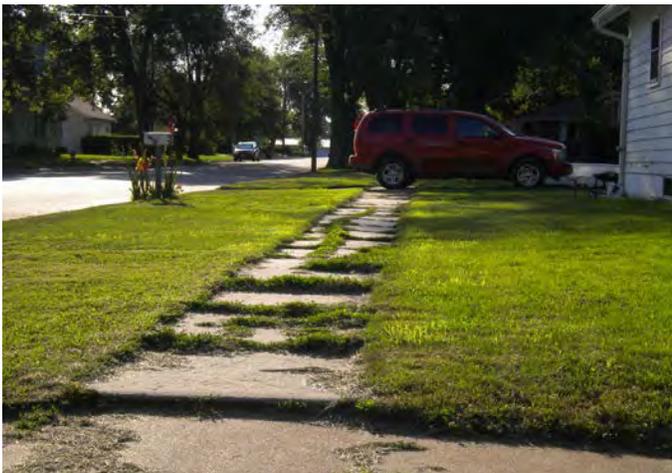
### Railroad

There are two at-grade crossings in Minden. One is along Highway 10 and the other is on Colorado Avenue. On Garber Avenue there is an underpass that passes under the railroad. Having these three options allows for easier access through town from the north side to the south side, and vice versa. BNSF operates in 28 states and two Canadian provinces; this company employees over 40,000 people. This railway carries almost everything from automotive parts to solid waste and refuse. The railroad offers great commerce opportunities to Minden that would not be available without the presence of BNSF.



### Sidewalks

Sidewalks are a way to walk to the neighbor's house, kids to ride their bikes to school, and for families to walk to the park. Minden's community is linked by many sidewalks, they tend to be more prevalent and in better conditions the closer one gets to Downtown. Sidewalks promote foot traffic and allow for a safe place for children to travel alone. They are another form of public infrastructure that require maintenance, updates, and sometimes replaced.



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# Community Events

Minden holds many community events throughout the year. These events are important to the City itself as well as residents and visitors of Minden. These festivals, carnivals, and fairs are a great way to attract people to Minden. It is also a way for community members to come together and celebrate living in Minden. These events help community spirit as well as boasting local business. Minden is known for some special events such as the Christmas Pageant on the Downtown Square which has led to Minden being proclaimed the “Christmas City” by former the Governor of the State of Nebraska, Ben Nelson. Below is a list of Minden’s annual community events. A more detailed list can be found on the City’s website.

Cranefest in **March**

Pioneer Village Days in **June**

FACES Rally in **June**

City Wide Garage Sales in **June**

Echoes of Independence in **July**

Kearney County Fair in **July**

DAWG Days in **July**

Antique Airplane Fly In in **August**

Homecoming Parade in **September**

Bandfest and Children’s Halloween Parade in **October**

Christmas Traditions in **November**

“Light of the World” Pageant and Christmas Lights in **December**



Community services, or the amenities that a community offers to its residents, are ways to set Minden apart from surrounding communities. Minden offers many services to its residents. Below is a list of those community amenities.

# Community Services



## Library

Jensen Memorial Library is located at 443 N. Minden Avenue. The Library is open Monday through Wednesday 10 a.m. to 8 p.m., Thursday and Friday 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., and Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. The Library is closed on Sundays and all Holidays. Jensen Memorial Library offers Summer Reading Programs and E-books for check-out among many other amenities. The Library was built in 1953 by the Andrew Jensen family and it was remodeled and expanded in 1989. As recent as 2011, the Library has seen a facelift including new furniture, an efficient layout, and a splash of color.



## Post Office

The Minden Post Office is located at 410 N. Minden Avenue. The Post Office is open Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and then from 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. The Post Office is also open on Saturdays from 8:30 to 10 a.m.

## Minden Courier

The Minden Courier is published every Wednesday. Their offices are located at 429 N. Colorado Avenue. This local newspaper is a great resource and amenity for local residents. The newspaper publishes job opportunities, available housing, garage sales, local events and happenings including high school sports.



## Fire Department

The Minden Volunteer Fire Department is located at 325 N. Colorado Avenue. The Fire Department responds to a coverage area of 360 square miles, including the Villages of Heartwell and Norman. Craig Space is the Fire Chief for Minden, and the Department consists of 30 volunteer firefighters, 18 of which are also emergency medical technicians (EMTs). The firefighters host an annual pancake feed in the spring.

### Police Station

The Minden Police Department consists of five sworn offices and five patrol units. They provide 24-hour emergency response service. James Huff is the Police Chief for the Police Department, and their offices are located at 246 N. Colorado Avenue.

### Public Works Department

Minden's Public Works Department consists of the following divisions: recycling, sanitation, and streets. Chris Klahn is the Street Superintendent for Minden. Their offices are located at 325 N. Colorado Avenue, and they are open Monday through Friday from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Recycling services are provided to Minden's residents free of charge. Recycling bins are picked up every other week. All residents and businesses are required by Resolution to have garbage collection unless one of the exceptions applies. Garbage collection begins at 7:00 am each day and the sanitation truck follows a specific schedule of pick-ups each day. The Street Division is responsible for all of the alleys, stormwater drainage systems, bridges, culverts, and public right-of-ways. Additionally, they oversee more than 165 miles of street throughout Minden, as well as the city dump east of town.

### Utilities

Mike Kleen is the Utilities Superintendent for the City of Minden. This Utilities Department operates the electrical distribution, sanitary sewer, solid waste collection, and water distribution systems in Minden. The office is located in the same building as the Public Works Department at 325 N. Colorado Avenue. They also have operating hours of Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### Parks and Recreation

The Parks and Recreation Department is also located at 325 N. Colorado Avenue, and the Parks and Recreation Superintendent is Alan Eschliman. This department oversees area parks, and youth programs and activities, and the public swimming pool. The swimming pool is open every day between Memorial Day and mid-to-late August (weather permitting) from 1:00 to 7:30 p.m. Jeffrey Horner is the Pool Manager. The swimming pool is also home to the Minden Swim Team and American Red Cross swimming lessons.



### Cemetery

Minden Prairie Cemetery is located in the southwest corner of town adjacent to West First Street. The address for the Cemetery is 801 W. First Street. Ralph Layton is the Cemetery Director; flower and decoration regulations can be found online at the City's website.

### Code Enforcement

The Code Enforcement is responsible for conducting inspections of area construction sites; informing citizens of city codes and enforcing them as necessary; and issuing building permits for signs, decks, garages/sheds, fences, concrete, curbs/sidewalks, additions and new homes. The Code Enforcement office is located at 325 N. Colorado Avenue, and their operating hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

### Economic Development

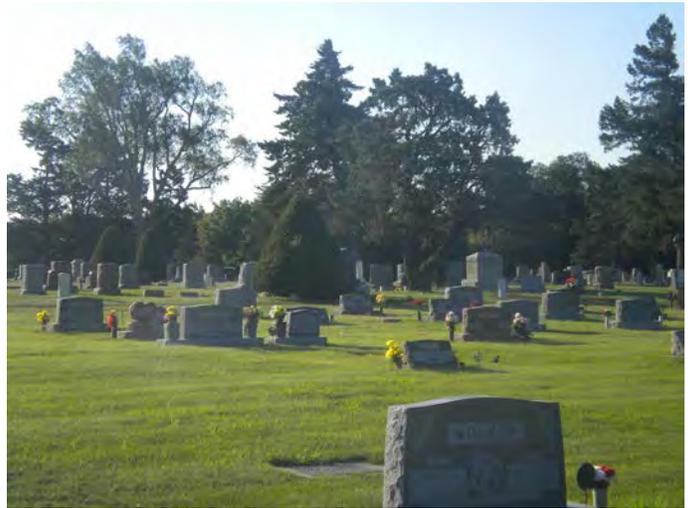
Lisa Karnatz is the Economic Development Director; her office is also located at 325 N. Colorado Avenue with office hours Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Services offered by the Economic Development Office include business assistance geared to serve new start-up companies, corporate relocations, and business incentives and support for existing companies. This department is a great asset for the Minden community, to have someone fully supporting and promoting the community.

### Kearney County-UNL Extension Office

The University of Nebraska at Lincoln (UNL) Extension Office for Kearney County is located in Minden at 424 North Colorado Avenue. This office brings reliable, research-based information in agriculture and natural resources, consumer and family economic, community and economic development, and 4-H/youth development.

### Senior Center

The Minden Senior Center is located at 403 N. Colorado Avenue. The Senior Center provides noon meals Monday through Friday from noon to 1:00 p.m. The Center provides educational programs, plus hearing and foot care sessions, and blood pressure clinics. Different entertainment includes TV, travelogues, music events, cards, pool, quilting, puzzles, and special events.



\*All of these services are located in one campus called Kearney County Health Services. This facility is currently going through a renovation and expansion consisting of three phases. Phase One will add ten new private inpatient rooms; a new cardiac rehabilitation area; a new entrance, reception and waiting room area; and additional parking while also renovating existing rooms within the hospital. Phases Two and Three include renovation of existing rooms as well as reconfiguration and expansion of other facilities within the hospital. The final phase is scheduled to be completed by the Fall of 2013. This renovation and addition is a great benefit for the community. It is important to see businesses and services growing and expanding especially with full support from the City.



### Minden Medical Clinic\*

The Minden Medical Clinic is located at 727 E. First Street. They are open between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday and from 8 a.m. to noon on Saturdays. Walk-ins are always welcome at the clinic. There are three family practice physicians, one physician assistant, and two advanced practice nurse practitioners. Minden Medical Clinic provides healthcare services suitable for the entire family. They also provide on-site diagnostic laboratory and radiology services and can perform many minor surgical procedures.

### Kearney County Community Hospital\*

Kearney County Community Hospital was organized by the County Board in 1948. In 1994, with the purchase of the medical clinic, the Board of Trustees changed the facilities name to Kearney County Health Services (KCHS) This facility is located at 727 E. First Street. This building houses the Hospital, Minden Medical Clinic, HinterLong Living, and Longterm Care. The Kearney County Community Hospital provides a 24/7 Emergency Room, inpatient and outpatient surgery, and skilled swing bed.

### HinterLong Living\*

HinterLong Living is designed to bridge the gap between independent living and nursing homes. They help with activities of daily living such a seating, bathing, dressing, laundry, housekeeping, and assistance with medications. Because HinterLong Living is on the same campus as Kearney County Health Services there are many added benefits for providing ease of access to healthcare such as inpatient and outpatient treatments, specialty clinics, and the emergency room. Different levels of care are offered for residents: basic, intermediate, and comprehensive.

### Longterm Care\*

Longterm Care is a short and long-term residential health care facility that is part of the Kearney County Health Services campus. They provide nursing care for residents in 34 private and semi-private rooms. Emergency services are immediately available because of its location on the KCHS campus. Any age of patient is eligible for this facility and their services that include physical, occupational, and speech therapy; social services, and recreational programs and events.



### Bethany Home

Bethany Home is located at 515 W. First Street. This facility has 53 beds for skilled-licensed nurses and 53 assisted living units. Many of the assisted living units have dual occupancy; therefore, allowing for 93 licensed rooms to be filled. The skilled nursing beds typically run at a 92 percent occupancy rate, while the 93 assisted living rooms run at 79-80 percent occupancy.

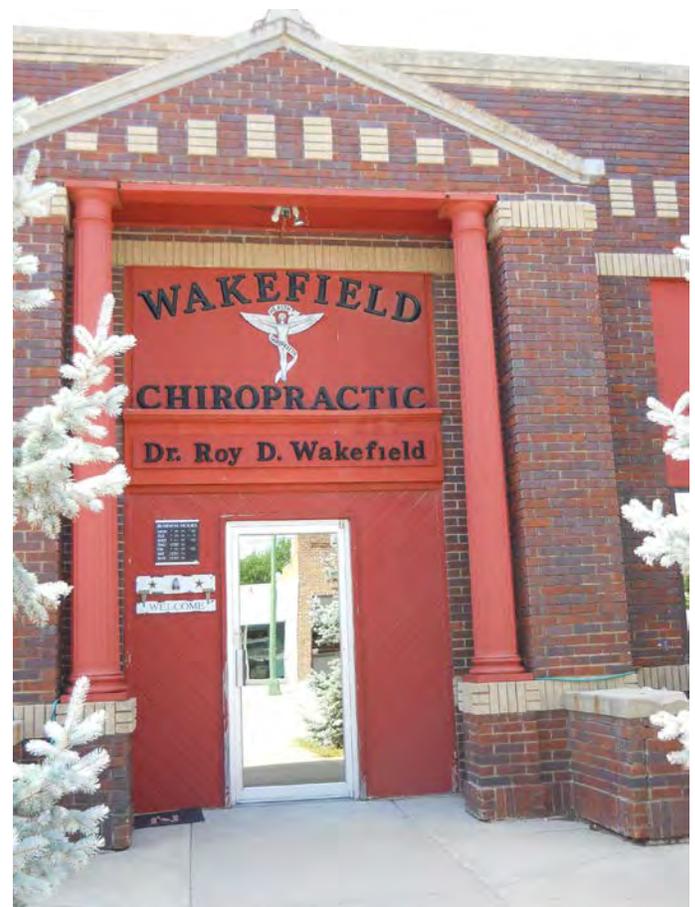
### Specialty Doctors

Minden is home to many specialty clinics beyond the family practice, such as a dentist, chiropractor, physical therapist, and optometrist. Most of their offices are located near the Downtown Square, and their contact information can be found on the City's website.



### RYDE Transit

Reach Your Destination Easily (RYDE) Transit is a public transit system that is open to everyone. Rhonda Nokes is the contact person for the Minden area. RYDE Transit operates Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Their offices are located at 403 N. Colorado Avenue. They have two vans in Minden; one is a nine-passenger with lift-equipped and the other is a six-passenger mini-van with no lift.



# Energy

One important update for this Comprehensive Plan was to include an energy section. This was a Legislative Bill (LB 997) signed into law by Governor Heineman in April 2010. This bill requires all Nebraska Cities and Counties to include an energy element in their new Comprehensive Plan or a full update to the existing Comprehensive Plan by January 1, 2015. The energy element must assess energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors; evaluate utilization of renewable energy sources; and promote energy conservation measures that benefit the City or County. In order to make decisions for the future, we must be informed and understand where the City is standing today. Energy consumption for 2011 for each sector (residential and commercial) for Minden is shown in the **Table 2.3** below. Nebraska Public Power District (NPPD) sells the power to the City of Minden who, in turn, bills the consumers in town. This data came from the City of Minden. In 2011, Minden purchased 29,883,024 kWh's from NPPD.

**Table 2.3 Current Electrical Power Consumption, Minden 2011**

Residential	Commercial-Large	Public Street & Highway Lighting	Wholesale
13,127,793 kWh	10,015,584 kWh	334,985 kWh	683,221
Source: City of Minden			

## Oil

Oil production has always been discussed in Nebraska because of advantages it offers to small-midsize oil companies, especially the western half. Currently, there are a few wells present in Kearney County. However, there are no oil wells present within Minden or the one-mile Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). Once a well is dug it will always stay as a registered well, even if it was dug simply for a test. This is why it can appear to be more oil wells than what are actually used.

## Water

Nebraska, including Kearney County, has an abundance of groundwater supply from the Ogallala Aquifer. Residents within Kearney County get their drinking and agricultural water from wells. It is a great natural resource for the County and in turn for Minden, but conservation and contamination need to be considered. Water also has the power to be used as a renewable energy source, hydroelectric power. The State of Nebraska does produce some hydroelectric power, but in order to accomplish that, Kearney County would have to have waterfalls or rivers. Hydroelectric power is formed from the generation of energy in water as it moves or falls. A hydroelectric power plant consists of a high dam that is built across a large river to create a reservoir, and a station where the process of energy conversion to electricity takes place. **Figure 2.5** shows all of the registered wells in Kearney County.

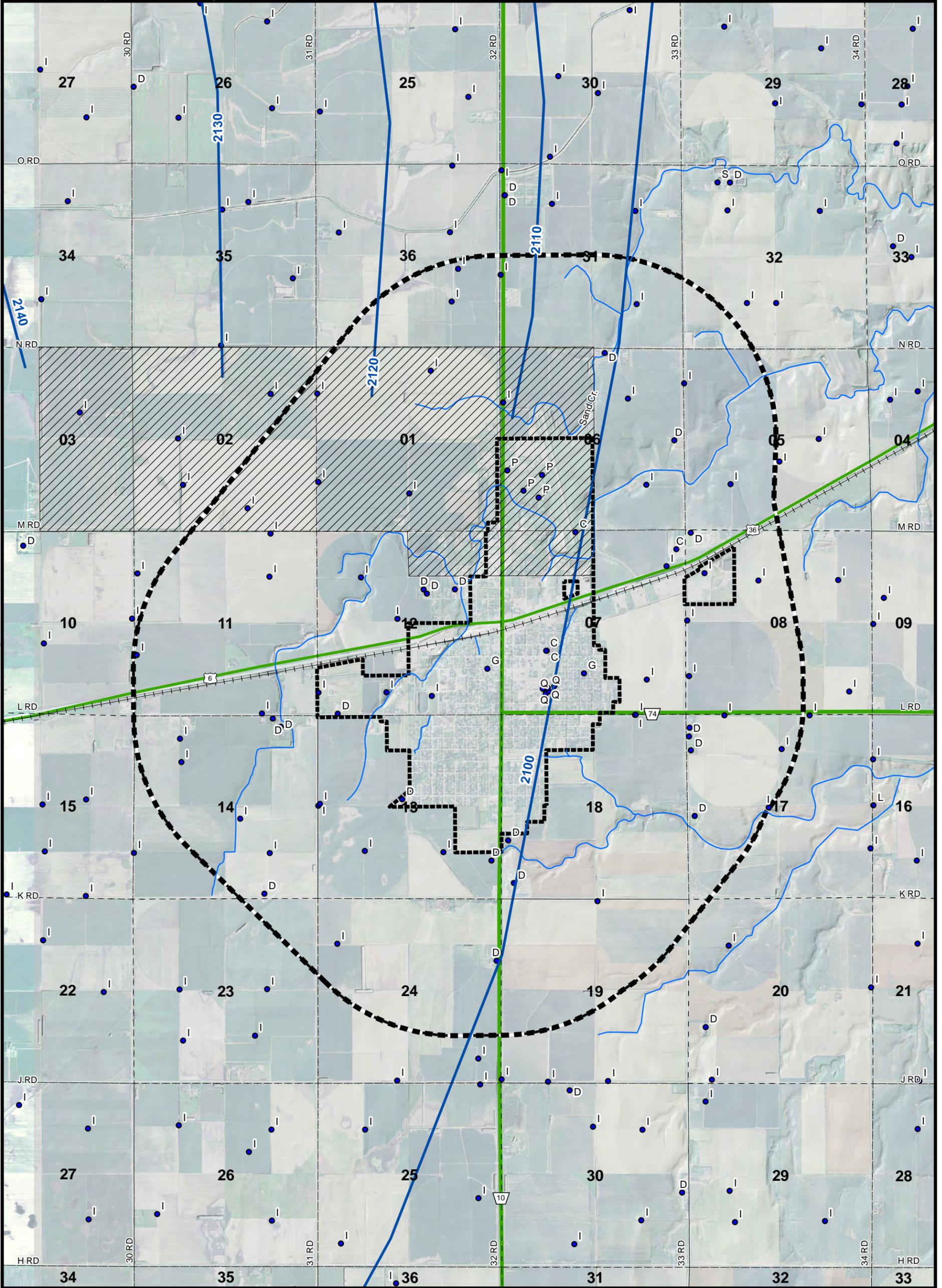
## Wind

Wind power is a form of renewable energy source. The wind is used to generate mechanical power or electricity. Wind turbines convert the kinetic energy, or wind power, into mechanical power, or electricity. In general a wind turbine is the opposite of a fan; instead of using electricity to make wind it uses wind to make electricity. There are many different types of wind turbines based on turbine size and power ratings. Currently Minden does not have any wind turbines, small or large. Nebraska has reasonably cheap electricity rates, and the high costs of installation and maintenance of wind turbines makes this renewable energy option not as attractive as it could be in other states.

## Solar

Solar energy is a renewable energy source that involves harnessing the light from the sun and converting it into heat and electricity. Sunlight is captured using either concentrating photovoltaic (PV) collectors or flat plate PV collectors. Nebraska has useful resources all over the state for flat plate collectors, and the western half of the state has good resources for concentrated collectors. Kearney County sits about in the middle for potential of sunlight for solar energy. Currently there is only one apparent solar energy system in Minden and it is for residential use.





0 1,250 2,500 Feet

Prepared By:

**Miller & Associates**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS, P.C.  
Kearney, NE - (308) 234-6456

- Legend**
- Groundwater Contour
  - Reg. Well (Use Type)
  - BNSF Rail Road
  - Streams
  - ETJ
  - Minden Corporate Boundary
  - Wellhead Protection Area Boundary

**Note:**

1. 1995 groundwater contours were digitized by the Conservation and Survey Division, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, from Maps developed by the U.S. Geological Survey.
2. Registered well information provided by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources - August, 2011.
3. Registered well locations are positioned from well registration forms. Some errors may exist due to data input and inaccuracies within well registration records.

**Figure 2.5**  
**Registered Well & Wellhead Protection Area Map**  
Minden, Nebraska

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# Utilities

## Electricity

The Minden Water and Light Department operates a municipally owned 4.16 kV distribution system. As discussed in the previous section, the City of Minden is a wholesale power customer of NPPD. The City takes 34,500 volt power from the 115 kV substation located northeast of Minden. Revenue bonds in 1999, helped to pay for the upgrading of the substation north of Minden. The City distribution system includes two substations with a total capacity of 14,811 kVA. The substation is connected to the statewide grid system by means of 115,000 volt transmission lines and can be fed from two directions. The distribution system is operated and maintained by NPPD under an agreement with the City of Minden.

## Water

The municipal water system in Minden is supplied by four wells, which have an average depth of 190 feet. The system, serving 100 percent of the City's population, has a combined pumping capacity of 3,400 gallons per minutes and an overhead storage capacity of 750,000 gallons. The average daily demand is 639,400 gallons, and the historic peak daily demand is 1,850,000 gallons. The system has a maximum capacity of 5,646,000 gallons per day. The static pressure is 45 pounds per square inch. Groundwater is available for industrial uses. The 130-foot deep well provides 1,000 gallons of water per minutes. The filtration water treatment plant has a capacity of 2,880,000 gallons. Revenue bonds in 1999, also helped to pay for the renovation of the water plant and a new trunk line to the new water tower. The new water tower was erected in 2000. This new tower provides better fire protection and water pressure to the west part of the City.

Currently there are water issues that need to be dealt with. Water infrastructure issues include the following: the water mains are decaying; many of the valves are in operable and thus prohibits proper maintenance; and a buildup of corrosion, due to age and lack of proper maintenance, which leads to discoloration of the water during high usage times. The City is tracking and documenting all reported main breaks and water complaints as they work with Engineers towards resolutions.

## Sanitary Sewer

Minden has a municipal sanitary sewer system. The activated sludge treatment plan has a daily capacity of 1,600,000 gallons, an average daily flow of 250,000 gallons, and a historic peak daily discharge of 500,000 gallons. Revenue bonds in 1999, helped to pay for the renovation of the sewer treatment plant.

## Natural Gas

Natural gas is supplied to Minden by SourceGas Distribution, LLC, through two feeds coming off a 12-inch Kinder Morgan transmission pipeline with an operating pressure of approximately 500-800 pounds per square inch. One feed to Minden is a four-inch line and the second feed is a one and one-quarter-inch line. Natural gas is available for residential and commercial uses. Availability of natural gas for industrial uses is subject to individual situations.

## Liquid Propane Gas & Oil

Liquid propane gas and oil is available for residential, commercial, and industrial uses in Minden from Cooperative Producers, Inc.

## Trash & Recycling

Municipally owned waste removal services are available in Minden. The disposal site, 26 miles west of Minden, is owned by the City of Holdrege. The City of Minden also operates a curbside recycling program for residential customers. The recycling center expanded to a new 10,500 square foot building in 2004 and has one horizontal and two vertical balers. A portion of this project was funded by a Waste Reduction Grant from the Department of Environmental Quality.

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### Telecommunications

Telephone services, in Minden, are provided by Allo Communications, Charter Communications, and Qwest Communications. Local internet service is provided by Charter Communications, Glenwood Telecommunications, KDSI Internet, and RCom LLC. A new technology that the City of Minden is working on bringing to its residents and business is Fiber-to-the-Home (FTTH). This technology is a fiber optic cable connection right to individual homes. These cable connections deliver a multitude of digital information including telephone, video, internet, data, etc. FTTH provides faster connection speeds and carrying capacity than traditional cables, and it requires a single fiber pair cable instead of individual cables for each TV, phone, and computer. Experts call FTTH “future-safe” because of the virtually unlimited bandwidth and the long reach of the technology. FTTH has quick operating speeds which, in turn, would offer more opportunities for businesses in Minden including the ability to “telecommute” to work because of the presence of FTTH. This technology would allow people to move to Minden and enjoy the low cost of living while being able to work for companies outside of the City or even the State. The City is very interested in bringing FTTH to their residents and commercial businesses because of the wide-ranging benefits it can provide. Currently, fiber runs through the community along the north side of the railroad tracks. Minden officials are researching ways to bring fiber to the whole community. It is possible for the City to bore under the railroad, and there would be a few options for them to consider bringing it across the industrial sites that are situated along the south side of the railroad. This would be a great asset for Minden to promote because many other communities, especially larger cities, do not have FTTH available to them. FTTH could open many doors for potential businesses, including in-home work, that new or existing residents would benefit from.

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# Land Use & Annexation 3

The Land Use & Annexation section analyzes current land uses within Minden and then looks at possibilities and options for future land uses and areas for potential annexation. This section has the following two components:

- Existing & Future Land Use
- Annexation Plan

---

# Existing & Future Land Use

*Land use is an important aspect in the Comprehensive Plan because it allows community members to visualize where existing uses are, and how there are many options for potential growth. Land use is part of every aspect of a community, and it needs to be planned for and thought out. This section will give decision-makers options on how the community can grow.*

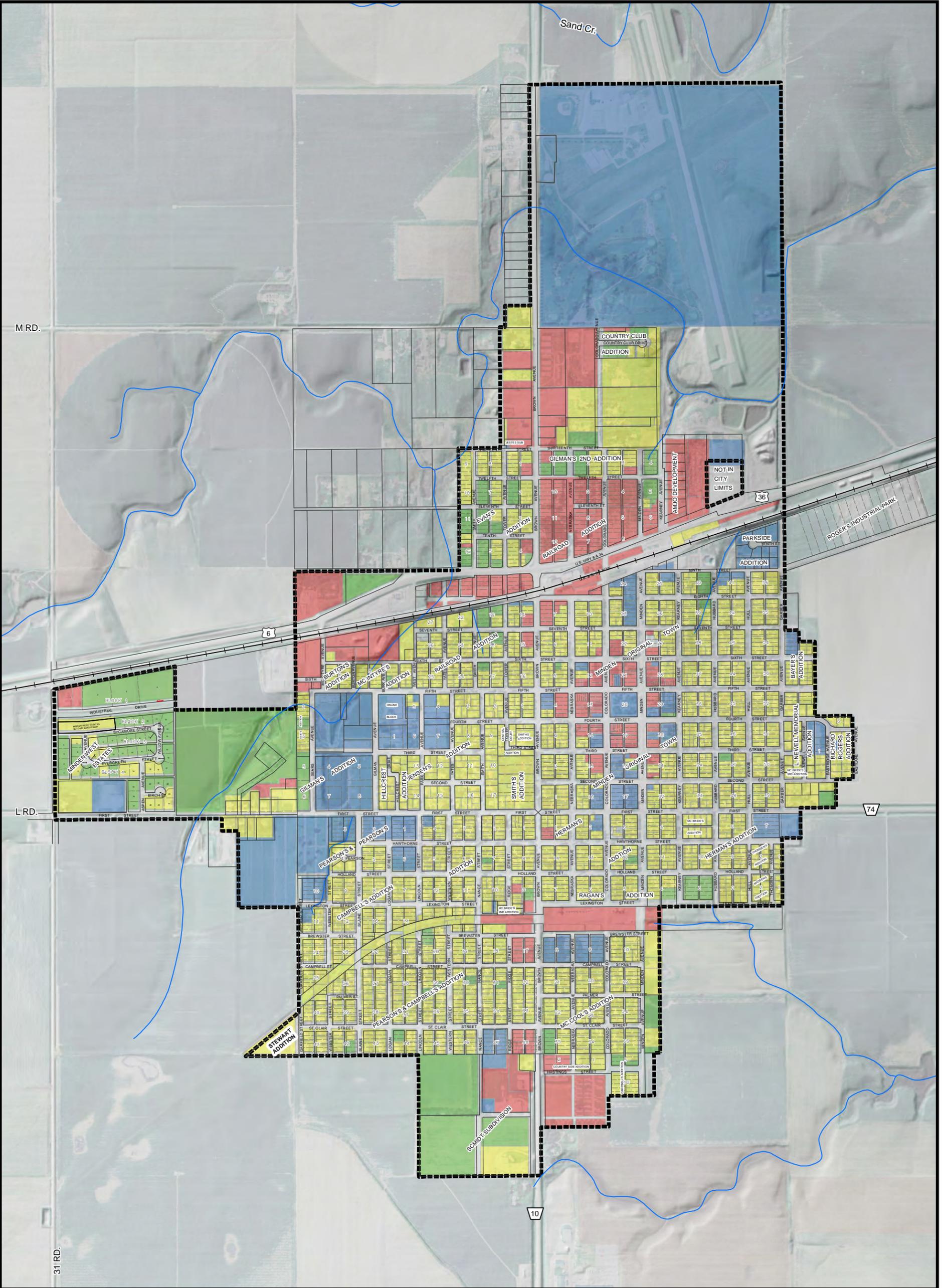
## Existing

**Figure 3.1**, the Existing Land Use Map, shows the current land uses in Minden. Minden has four primary different land uses which are residential, commercial, public/quasi-public, and agricultural/vacant. A majority of Minden's commercial land uses are located in the Downtown Square or along the highway corridors and railroad. Commercial properties are typically located in these two areas in any size community. These two commercial areas tend to attract different types of businesses and they also tend to look and feel dramatically different. Many communities have separate zoning regulations for the Highway Corridor Commercial District and the Central Commercial District. Minden currently has these two separate districts within their zoning regulations. The reasoning for separate districts is because of the different setbacks, height restrictions, parking needs, and aesthetic desires for each of the areas.

Public/quasi-public land uses include parks, City offices, school buildings, the County Courthouse, etc. These existing land uses are spread throughout town, and rightfully so. These public services need to be available and accessible by every resident in Minden. A majority of the land that is deemed agricultural/vacant is around the edge of the corporate limits. Some of the smaller vacant lots are spread throughout town, and these could be used for infill development. The rest of the land in Minden is residential. There are mixes of duplexes and apartments with single-family homes as a majority of the land. Most of the residential land use is south of the Railroad tracks with the newest developments on the west side of town.







31 RD.

MRD.

LRD.

0 500 1,000 Feet

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**Legend**

- +— BNSF Rail Road
- ▬▬▬▬ Minden Corporate Boundary
- LandUse-CorpLimits**
- Existing Land Use**
- Residential
- Commercial
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Agricultural/Vacant

**Figure 3.1**  
**Existing Land Use**  
 Minden, Nebraska

---

## Future

Planning and preparing for future land use options is a vital part of the EngagingMinden, Comprehensive Plan. Whether the community is growing or shrinking, there will still be changes in land use patterns; therefore, the purpose of this section is to provide a general guide for changes in land use. The idea is to avoid or minimize conflicts between land uses and the environment. The Future Land Use Plan must reflect existing land uses and options for changing land use needs. This plan should be flexible in nature in order to be able to change as the community changes. Also, this plan should be molded to fit the needs, desires, and limitations of Minden and its residents. Part of the preparation for the Comprehensive Plan was to hold a series of Core Group/Public Input meetings. The input from those meetings was vital to planning for future land uses. Having an understanding of what residents want and need within the community is important for gaining support and assistance in bettering Minden. A summary of the input from the Core Group meetings can be found in the following chapter, but for the Future Land Use Plan we used information gathered at that meeting as well as existing land use and data from primary and secondary sources. A Future Land Use Plan should be a vision of what you want the community to look like; a vision of different goals with different land uses than what is currently in the community. This vision should be an outlook and a guide for the next ten years.

In order to prepare and plan for the future of Minden, decision-makers need to have ambitions and goals. Realistically, what is the future of Minden going to look like, or what do you want it to look like? The main focus should be on keeping the strong community ties and progressive drive while diversifying amenities in order to provide for residents. The types of land uses should vary within the community from single and multi-family homes, commercial ventures of different sizes, public areas, some vacant land, etc. The homes should vary based on location, size, and price in order to attract a variety of residents. Having compatible housing is important when trying to appeal to new faces in the community. The housing stock versus income ranges analysis is an important way to find what types of housing stock should be available to best suit the needs and desires of residents. Improving the commercial sector should involve diversifying what is available to Minden's residents. Commercial development should be promoted and should be developed depending on available resources. Envisioning goals as realities is important for the success of Minden. Ideas need to become actions in order to make them into realities.

Minden currently has a housing shortage, there are some vacant lots “sprinkled” throughout town that could be used for infill residential development. Another area that could become infill residential development is in the current Elementary School location. The idea of having one K-12 campus has previously been discussed in Minden, and if that were to ever happen the main building, on the east edge of the lot, of the existing Elementary School could be rehabilitated into an apartment complex. The existing playground could also be kept intact and would be beneficial for families that live in the apartment complex as well as to other residents in Minden. The northwest corner of the block could be kept as the parking lot for the apartment complex, or the lot could be re-configured and that northwest corner could be the location of a new swimming pool. There are many options for new development in and around the City. It is important to analyze all options to ensure the best, most informed and educated decisions are being made. During the Core Group/public input meetings many ideas were discussed. Some of the ideas seem impractical or unreasonable at this time; however, it is impossible to determine what will happen over the next ten years. That is why it is important to look at every option possible during the planning phases to be prepared for anything and to ensure that growth and development is happening where the City sees best fit. **Figure 3.2** shows potential areas of new development in and around Minden. These areas will be discussed in detail throughout this section.

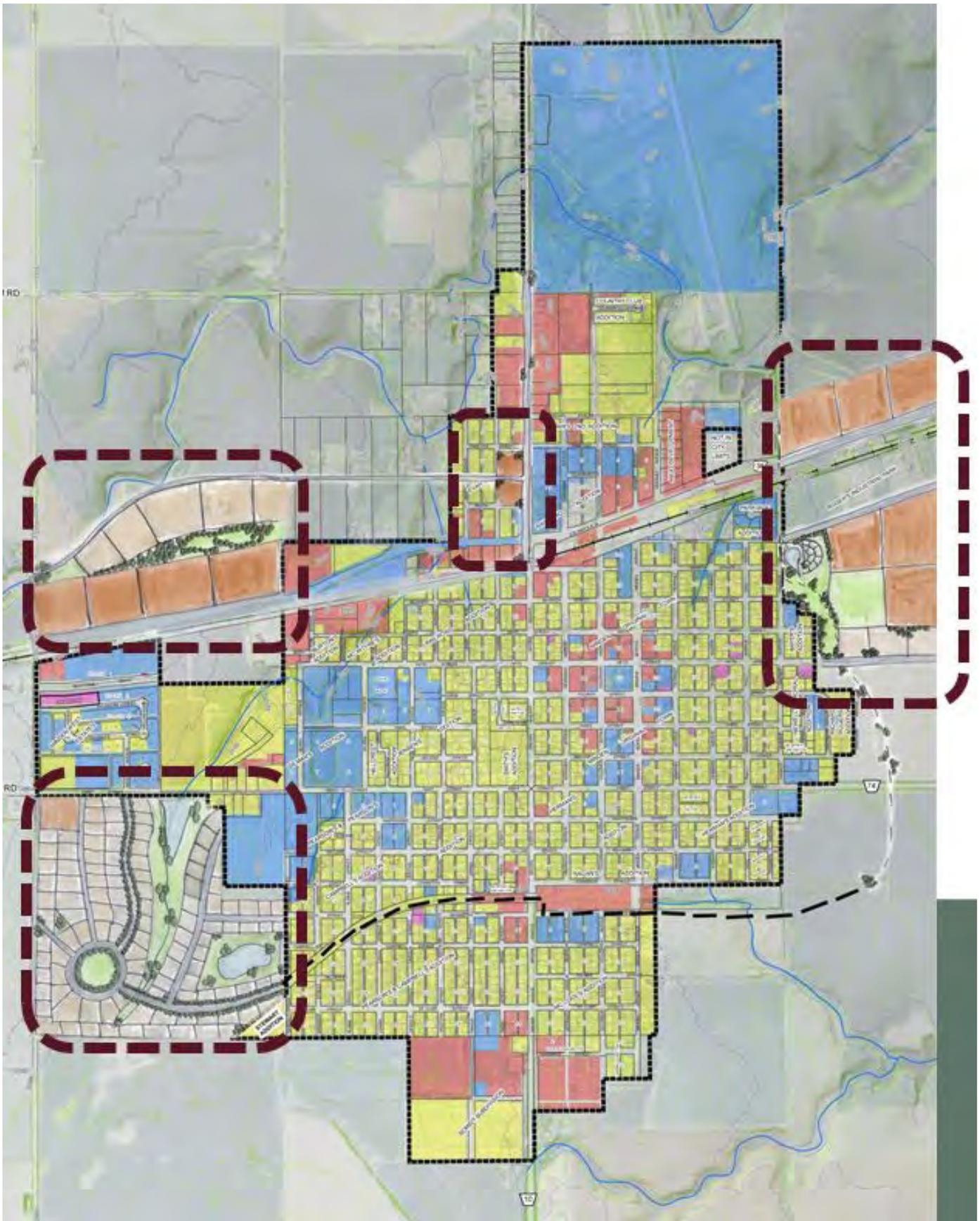
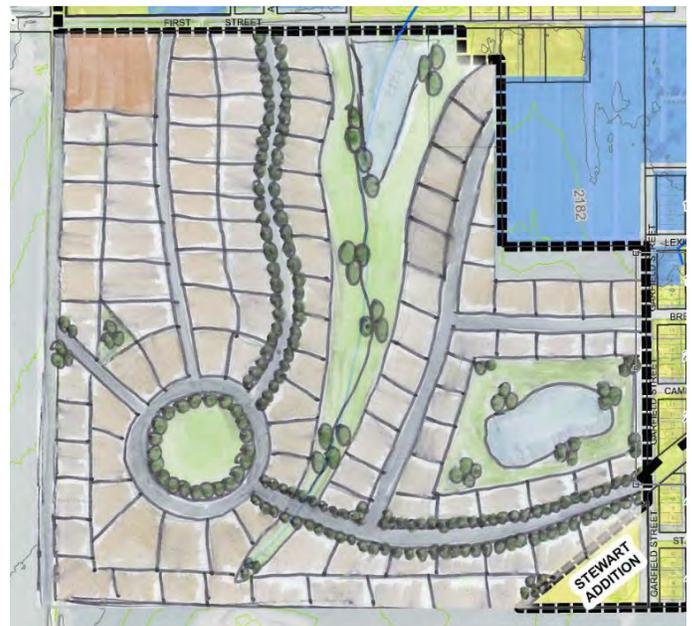


Figure 3.2  
**Potential Areas of New Development**

There is also vacant land available on the edge of the City's corporate limits. This land is ideal for residential developments, both single- and multi-family. As shown in **Figure 3.3**, the Future Land Use Map, there is space for new housing developments on the west side of town, like Minden West Estates, to be constructed on vacant land that is adjacent to Minden's corporate limits. The Future Land Use Map shows suggested areas for new residential, single- and multi-family, commercial, light industrial, and recreational developments. The map also shows proposed traffic flow by designating certain areas for arterial and/or collector roads that will connect to existing roads in the community. Areas for residential developments are on the south and west sides of town and they would tie in well with the community's existing public infrastructure and with the new, proposed subdivision directly west of Sarah's Field and with Minden West Estates. Housing developments should be created based on housing needs. Having some excess housing is a way to attract new residents, but there is a balance that needs to be struck because too much extra housing sitting in a community can slow the housing turnover and the market. These potential residential subdivisions could have greenspace, water features, and landscaping tied in with the design to add to the appeal of the space. A proposed hike/bike trail could even connect new residential developments with existing parks and the schools in town. The proposed residential area in the southwest corner of town is very large, incorporating many single-family lots with the potential to include multi-family homes with a transitional zoning method. This method acts as a buffer between different land uses. This subdivision could be laid out in any fashion but greenspace, traffic flow, lot sizes, and stormwater drainage all need to be taken into account when being designed. A planned subdivision, such as this one, works well as a phased plan. The important thing to remember, the whole subdivision should be planned; however, it should be constructed in phases. When planning for the entire subdivision, City officials and developers can plan out each phase. The reasoning behind planning the entire subdivision is to have a future goal in mind, to understand what the big picture looks like. This is the most effective and efficient method when planning for anything new in a community.

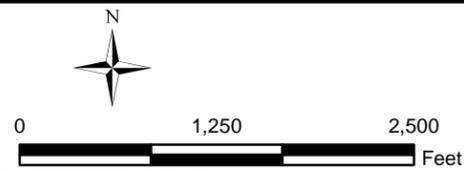
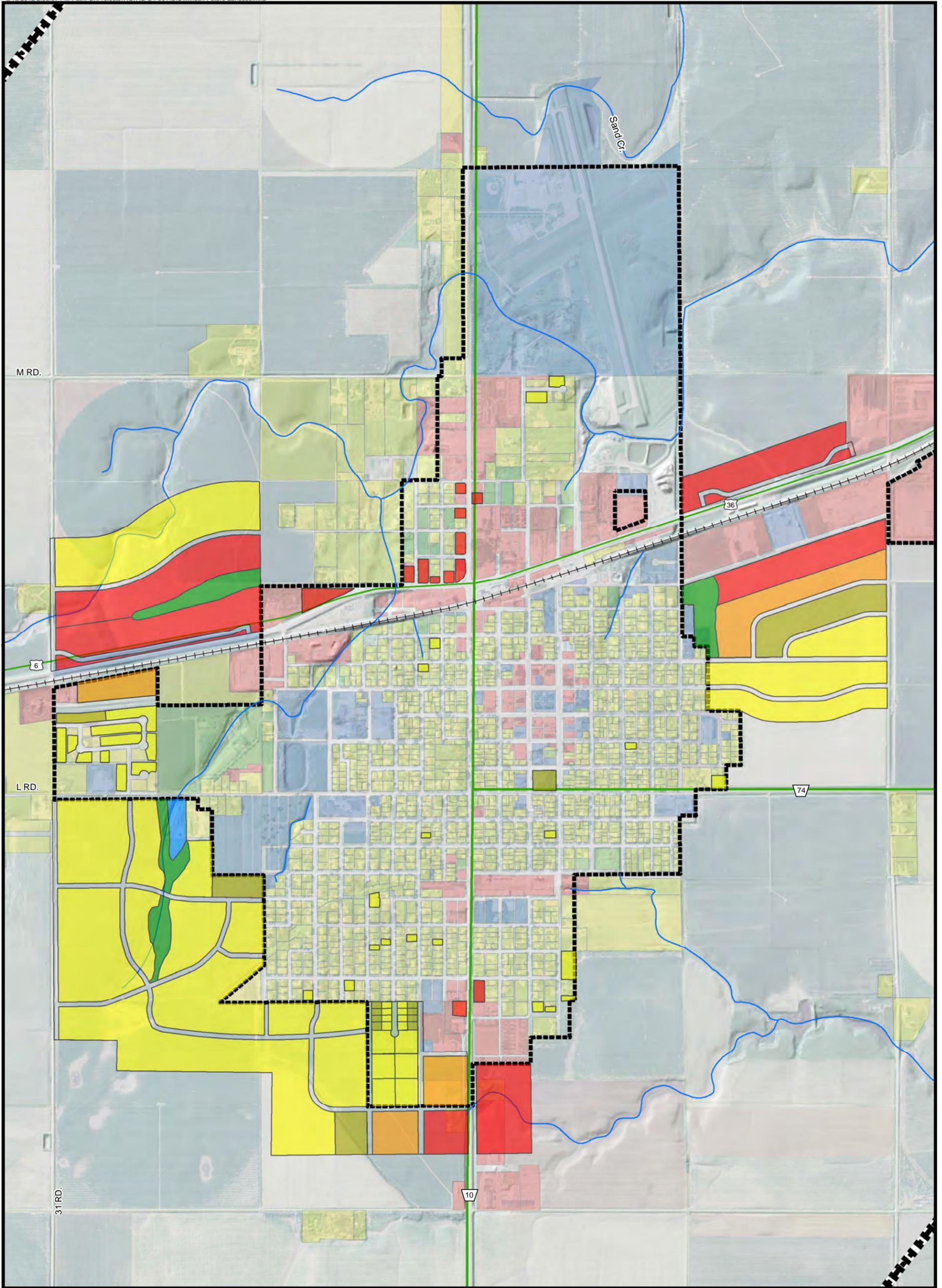


Southwest Corner-Residential Subdivision



Northwest Corner-Commercial and Large Lot Residential Development

The third suggested area for new residential development, with the first being infill and the second area would be the proposed subdivision on the southwest side of town, is north of Highway 6/34 on the west side of town. As seen in the Future Land Use Map, commercial development is suggested adjacent to the Highway itself. New residential lots are proposed north of the commercial development with a buffer in between the two separate land uses. These lots could be one-two acres each which is ideal for someone who wants the acreage feel yet they still are close to the City's amenities. Eleventh Street could be extended from Highway 10, Brown Avenue, to the west to connect with 31 RD on the north edge of the proposed residential lots. As stated above, this new proposed area could have commercial lots along the Highway 6/34 corridor. This land could be subdivided into different lot sizes depending on the needs of each commercial venture. There is great visibility in this location which is ideal for many different companies.



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**Legend**

**Future Land Use**

- Green Space
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Water

**Existing Land Use**

- Residential
- Commercial
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Agricultural/Vacant

- BNSF Rail Road
- Streams
- ETJ
- Minden Corporate Boundary

**Figure 3.3**  
**Future Land Use Map**  
Minden, Nebraska

Along the north and south sides of Eleventh Street and on both sides of Highway 10 are empty lots. There is also a triangular parcel of land along Highway 6/34 that could be developed into commercial businesses or services. The images to the right shows what this commercial development could look like. This land is ideal for infill commercial development because of the Highway access, great visibility, existing infrastructure, size of parcel, and proximity to other amenities in town. Using vacant land for infill development is a way to avoid spending public funds for new developments because of the existing public infrastructure. Another area for proposed commercial development that is also adjacent to the Highway and existing public infrastructure is on the east side of town along the Highway 6/34 corridor. These lots could be larger than the existing parcels along Eleventh Street which could support a different type of commercial business than ones that would be drawn to the lots on Eleventh Street.

Another area of potential development along the corporate limit boundaries is on the east side of town, south of Highway 6/34 and the existing commercial businesses and County shop. This land could be used for commercial and/or light industrial development and on the south edge, along Fifth Street the land could be developed into office space. Because this land is in close proximity to existing single-family homes and recreational amenities, it is suggested that there is a large buffer between those existing land uses and any new commercial or light industrial developments. The suggested buffer for this area would be new recreational amenities coupled with greenspace. As seen in the image to the right. An RV Park could be placed on the west edge with a stormwater detention cell near the RV parking pads. A proposed hike/bike trail could wrap around the east edge of town, down past Kearney County Health Services' facility, through Jaycees park, along the old railroad right-of-way, connecting into a proposed subdivision on the west edge of town, and then finally to the existing hike/bike trail in the outdoor campus by the High School. This hike/bike trail loop is ideal for residents of all ages, and provides an ease of access for pedestrians between major amenities in Minden. This trail would not have to be constructed at one time; it could be broken into phases. However, it is important to have the big picture in mind from the beginning to help with the planning of the trail.



West Highway 6/34-North Parcel-Existing



West Highway 6/34-North Parcel - Proposed Commercial Infill Development



Northeast Corner-Commercial and Recreational Development



Highway 10 North Gateway Entrance-Existing



Highway 10 North Gateway Entrance-Proposed



Highway 6/34 West Gateway Entrance-Existing



Highway 6/34 West Gateway Entrance-Proposed

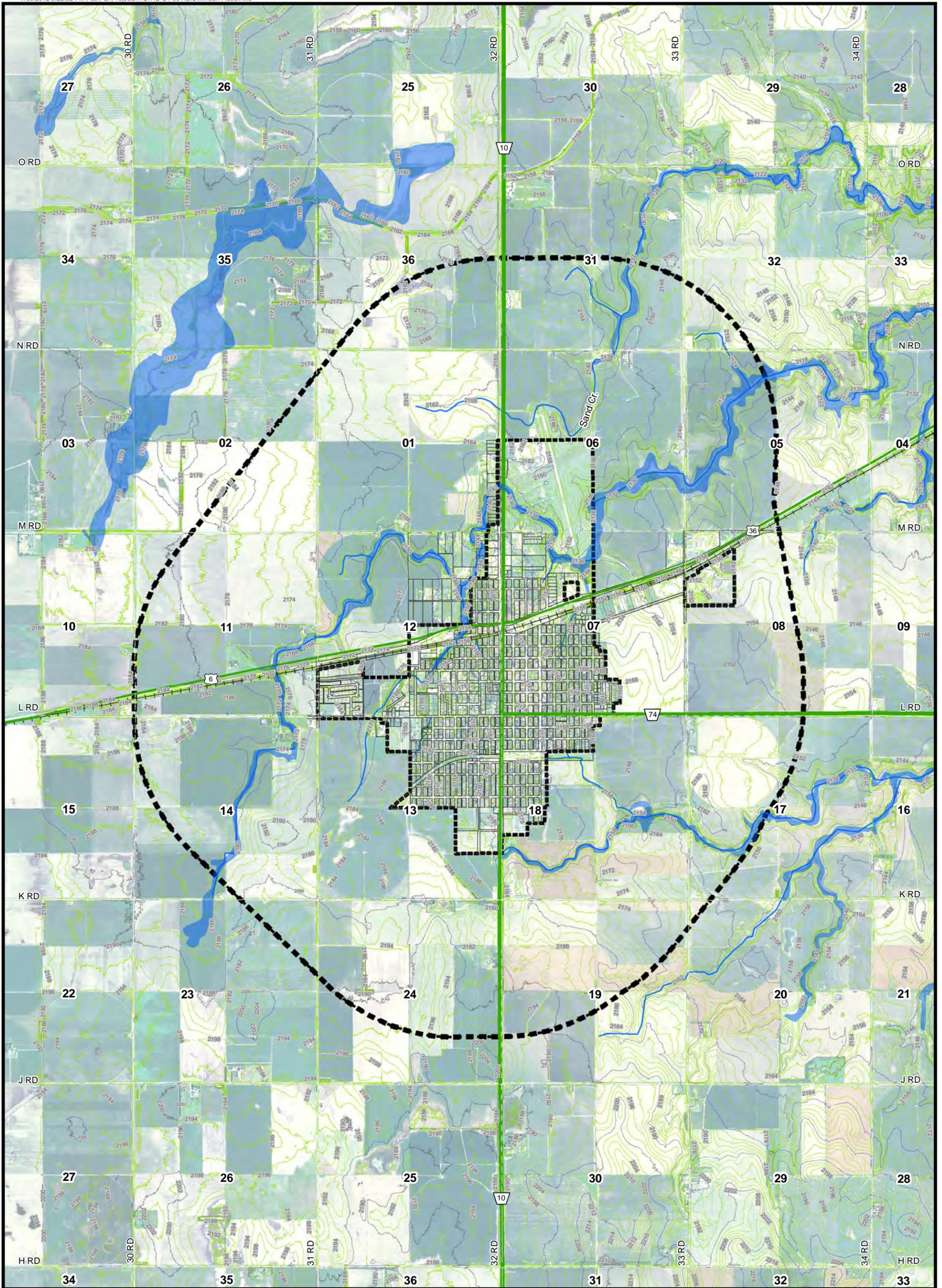
After evaluating the community and its potential for future development, the south portion of the City along the Highway 10 corridor and West St. Clair Street would be a great area for redevelopment. This area has great potential for residential and commercial development, and TIF would be a great incentive for developers who would be interested in the redevelopment for this portion of the community.

All of these proposed new developments should be annexed into Minden's corporate limits prior to any construction. This will allow the City to expand its physical size, population, and tax base. The following section discusses in more detail about Minden's Annexation Plan.

A final option for land use development is to create gateway entrances into town. The images to the left show existing pictures of the entrances into Minden and renderings of what the entrances could look like. Beautifying the entrances into town really add to the aesthetic of the whole community. It helps make a memorable statement to visitors as well as giving residents more of a reason to help keep all of Minden beautiful. Landscaping can be used for aesthetics and screening purposes. Land along highway corridors tends to be unsightly in many communities. Screening these land uses from highway travelers can really make a big impact. Zoning regulations are one way to help ensure that land along highways and major arterials and connector streets are screened to create an appealing view for travelers.

All of these ideas discussed in the Future Land Use Plan are goals to work towards over the next ten years. This plan is to be used as a guide, and ideas for future development options. When planning for future development it is important to consider any potential issues with floodplains. **Figure 3.4** is the floodplain map for Minden and it should be referred to anytime new development options are considered. The goal for any community should be to continually move forward with population and development growth. It is important to have ideas and plans in place to help steer that growth.





0 1,250 2,500  
Feet

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Source:  
Data Provided By: The U.S. Department of  
Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation  
Service 12-16-2011, M&A

**Legend**

-  Extraterritorial Jurisdiction
-  Minden Corporate Limits
-  BNSF Rail Road
-  Streams

**CONTOUR**

-  2 FT. Contour
-  10 FT. Contour

**Flood Zone**

-  A, AE, AO, AH
-  0.2 PCT Annual Chance
-  X Protected By Levee
-  1 PCT Future Conditions

**Figure 3.4**  
**Floodplain Map**  
Minden, Nebraska

---

Minden's Annexation Plan should create opportunities for new development as well as to help facilitate the goals of the Future Land Use Plan set forth in this document. In order to create opportunities for new development, Minden needs to have a plan in place to reserve the land that is necessary to carry out the goals of the community. To do this, the City will need to annex adjacent territory and expands its extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). The City's annexation plan should do the following:

# Annexation Plan

## Protect and Enhance the City's Tax Base

Acquiring the land south of Highway 6/34 and next to the Railroad into Minden's corporate limits will help to enhance the community's tax base. This land is prime real estate for commercial development in Minden. In order for Minden to capture the increased tax base when the land becomes developed, the land must be a part of Minden's corporate limits. In another facet of annexation, there are residents and businesses that are located in the fringe, they still benefit from the City's parks, streets, utilities, and other facilities and programs without having to contribute to the tax base.

## Increase Population and Size

By increasing the City's physical size and population, Minden could also increase its level of political influence and attractiveness to commercial and light industrial developments. Annexation has a way of forcing new development, which in turn can help increase the City's tax base and jobs.

## Avoid Jurisdictional Confusion

By Minden having a plan in place, it will ease the confusion of jurisdictions and this will help Minden plan for future services by establishing an orderly and logical boundary. This process would be very beneficial for both the City and the County, especially because changing boundaries between two different jurisdictions can become cumbersome.

## Control Fringe Development

Minden has lots available throughout town for residential and commercial development. Infill development should be promoted until larger parcels of land are needed. This will help to avoid sprawl and to protect the agricultural land around the community as well as to prevent spending unnecessary public funds for the construction of new public infrastructure to serve sprawled development areas. Any new annexed land should be for the benefit of residential and commercial development, and public services should be assessed as the population of Minden continues to change. If new public services are needed in order to serve a growing population; new land could be annexed to serve those needs. Through annexation, Minden can extend its zoning jurisdiction to adjacent areas and thus guide development in a direction that will provide safe and healthy environments.

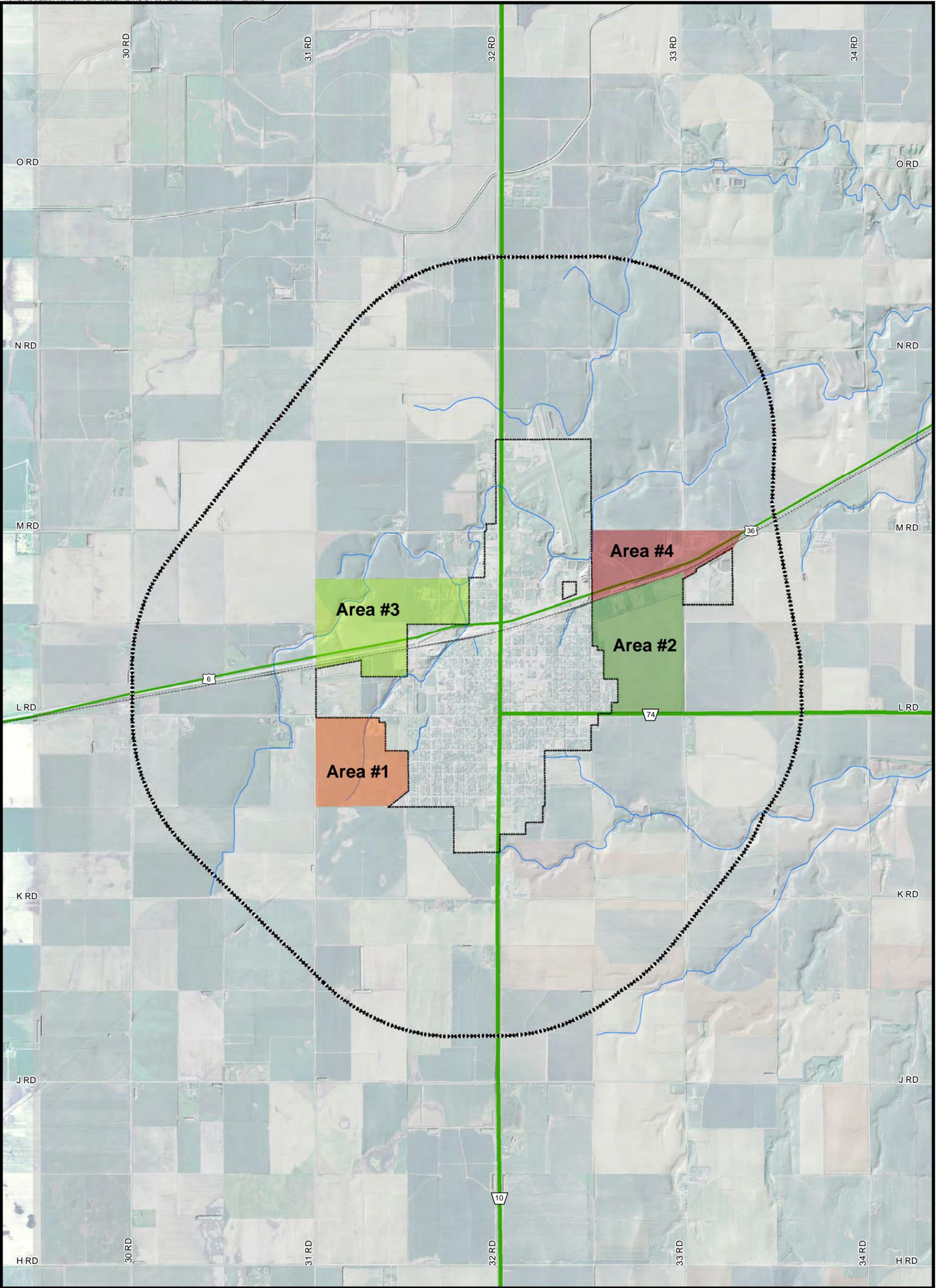


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Annexation should follow the guidelines set forth through Nebraska State Statute 19-3052. As seen in **Figure 3.5** the proposed areas for the annexation plan are the following:

1. Area 1 is located on the southwest side of Minden. This land would be a great area for a new residential subdivision. This land fits in with the Future Land Use Plan, and most of this proposed annexation would be used for single-family homes with some transitional zoning used to create multi-family developments. This land is ideal for phased developments, yet it allows decision-makers to plan for the entire residential development.
2. Area 2 is located on the east side of town. This land could be used for commercial or light industrial developments. It is situated in close proximity to the BNSF Railroad and Highway 6/34 which provides many opportunities for land development. On the west side of this proposed annexation would be room for addition of recreational amenities and greenspace. On the south side of the proposed annexation, along Fifth Street, offices or smaller commercial ventures could be placed to act as a buffer for the residential homes that are on the east side of town.
3. Area 3 is located along Highway 6/34 on the west side of town. This parcel of land lends itself to commercial development that would require Highway access and a great site visibility. This location of town would also be great for development because of its proximity and relationship to existing infrastructure. This land could be subdivided into smaller commercial parcels or it could be sold as one large lot for a commercial endeavor that would need a lot of space to develop. On the north end of this proposed annexation, large-lot single-family homes. These lots would be ideal for families that would like one-two acre lots, yet they are close to town and the amenities that Minden offers to its residents.
4. Area 4 is along Highway 6/34 on the east side of town. This proposed annexation includes vacant land, as well as existing commercial businesses that are located along the Highway corridor. Like Area 3, this land has the same positive aspects that can be used to promote the area.





0 1,250 2,500 Feet

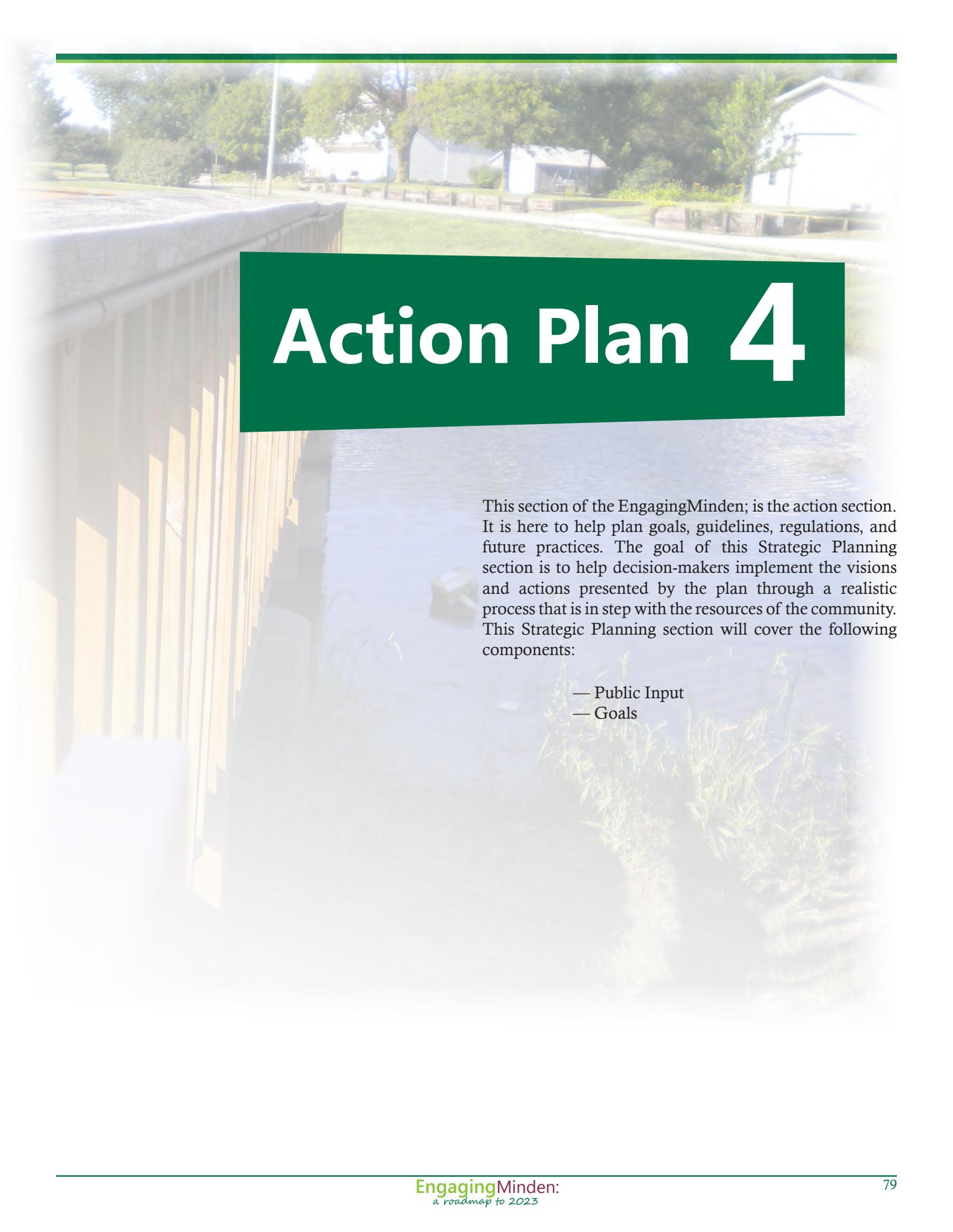
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**Legend**

Area 1	BNSF Rail Road
Area 2	Streams
Area 3	ETJ
Area 4	Minden Corporate Boundary

**Figure 3.5**  
**Annexation Plan Map**  
Minden, Nebraska



# Action Plan 4

This section of the EngagingMinden; is the action section. It is here to help plan goals, guidelines, regulations, and future practices. The goal of this Strategic Planning section is to help decision-makers implement the visions and actions presented by the plan through a realistic process that is in step with the resources of the community. This Strategic Planning section will cover the following components:

- Public Input
- Goals

---

These questions were asked during the first public input session during the planning stages of the Comprehensive Plan. Residents had the chance to openly discuss some of their responses. This analysis is called SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). Strengths are viewed as assets to the community; areas they want to retain and continue to improve. The weaknesses are seen as areas that need improvement for community members. Opportunities are viewed a potential areas of gain in the future, and threats are seen as aspects that may hinder the growth and development of Minden.

# Public Input

## **Strengths (Now/Internal-advantages, things that are unique to Minden)**

- Aesthetically pleasing
- Courthouse Square
- Historical
- Safe
- Kids
- Schools
- Manufacturing
- Parks/Ball fields
- Fast food
- Pharmacy
- Restaurants
- Close to hunting/fishing/camping
- Bedroom community
- Retirement community
- Nursing home
- Churches
- Donations for Opera House
- Grocery Stores
- Alumni
- Lower housing cost
- Niche markets
- Internet/Cable TV/Telephone
- Volunteer Fire Department
- New City Administrator
- Hospital
- Low unemployment
- Pioneer Village
- Community Pride
- Sports
- Newspaper
- Tradition
- Culture
- Ethanol plant
- Golf course/Clubhouse
- Airport
- Hike/Bike trail
- Median Age - 43
- All-weather track
- Frisbee-golf course
- Opera House
- Christmas pageant

---

**Weaknesses (Now/Internal-limitations, where could Minden improve, what should we avoid)**

- Water
- Streets
- Code enforcement
- Dirt pile with weeds
- Infrastructure
- Vandalism (from out-of-town kids)
- Land ownership issues (in certain areas of town)
- Proximity to Kearney
- Pioneer Village (not locally-owned)
- Gateways

**Opportunities (Future-opportunities for Minden to improve, grow, attract new people/businesses)**

- Industrial Tract (shovel ready)
- Need for restaurants, hotel, and commercial
- Pioneer Village
- Hike/Bike trail
- Downtown Square-retail
- Leadership Community
- Local grant/re-use funds
- Pool/tennis courts (age-opportunity to revamp)
- Lots of commuters (both in and out)

**Threats (Future-what obstacles does Minden face, what are other communities doing)**

- Blocks of ground in corporate limits
- Retaining 45 and under
- Nothing to compel the under 45 age group to move/stay
- Lack of available jobs
- Lack of housing and variety
- National economy strongly affects agriculture

This section is in place to give ideas, summaries, and guidelines for development and growth for Minden to work towards in the next ten years. These goals are a combination of information gathered from the public input sessions, the 2011 Community Needs Assessment Survey\* conducted by the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK), and data analysis. The importance of these goals is that they are realistic in nature, but allow the community to continually have something to strive towards.

# Goals

## Quick Look

Improve Public Infrastructure  
Create Gateway Entrances  
Housing Improvements  
Promote Commercial Development  
New Swimming Pool  
Become a Leadership Community  
Support Minden Public School District

- Improve Public Infrastructure
  - Water\*
  - Paving\*
  - Sidewalks
  - ADA Compliance
  - Stormwater Drainage

City officials are aware of the existing conditions of all of the City's public infrastructure, whether it be good, fair, or poor. Many of the issues are outlined in the Utilities Section of Chapter Two in this plan. The City is working on options and costs for improvements; although, they are currently financially constrained - like most other communities in America. This means that it may, understandably, take more time for some of these goals to be completed. Public infrastructure improvements always require large investments to be made which in turn requires time and planning to ensure everything is in-line before any construction begins. The City has vehemently been working with Engineers to assess the condition of the City's water, as well as coming up with options for improvements. The City is also looking into multiple funding resources to try and help offset the costs of improvements. This was not only discussed during the public input sessions, but also in the Community Needs Assessment Survey. When asked about projects needed in Minden, 39 percent of the respondents cited the need for water main replacements. A question was asked regarding raising the City sales tax, and 73 percent of surveyors responded that they would be in favor of a half percent increase. It might be an option for the City to consider putting a sales tax increase to a vote. The City is currently exploring State Revolving Funds (SRF), bond options, and a sales tax increase which would be isolated solely for infrastructure.

Paving was another issue that was brought up during the public input sessions and in the Community Needs Assessment Survey. In 2008, 84 City streets were repaired to quality standards; this was completed because of a citizen-approved bond passed in 2006. Currently, NDOR is in the midst of a repaving project on Highways 6&34 and Highway 10 which includes making improvements to the Highways in town including making them ADA accessible. These recent improvements are all great accomplishments for Minden; however, there is still paving improvements that need to be completed. One area in particular that was discussed during the public input sessions was Fifth Street from Highway 10 to the Downtown Square. Having improved transportation along this route would provide the Square with a better entrance for vehicular and pedestrian access. The Council has approved for the City's engineers to complete the plans, specs, and bidding documents for the two blocks of Fifth Street and all of Minden West Estates. The plans, specs, and bidding documents are completed and are in the review

\* A full copy of the Survey results can be found on Minden's website under Economic Development.

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stage and thus will be put of for bid within the month. The project is expected to be completed by the fall of 2012 or spring of 2013. The new paving projects at Minden West Estates should also boost lot sales because of the increased ease of access and traffic flow for residents. The City's One and Six Year Road Plan can be found in the Transportation section of Chapter Two in this plan. These maps show road improvements that the City is planning for within the next six years.

City leaders are aware of the physical barriers present in their community, and they understand the need to remove these barriers and improve the existing conditions of the sidewalks. However, everything cannot happen at once and priorities must be set. Based on the public input sessions and the 2011 Community Needs Assessment Survey, Minden's residents discussed the current water and paving issues as more of an issue than sidewalks. Improving the sidewalks is still a top goal for the community, and over the planning period of this document they will continue to work towards creating better pedestrian flow throughout the town. But again, these improvements require funding, planning, and support by the citizens of Minden.

Federal ADA compliance regulations were updated in 2010. As previously mentioned in this plan, City leaders are aware of the goals that they need to accomplish. They are working towards making Minden an ADA compliant community, but like every other item in this list, it requires funding and community support. The City will continually work to resolve this matter.

Community leaders believe the City's sanitary sewer system is currently the best that it has ever been. The goal is to get all of Minden's infrastructure to this point. Stormwater drainage is something that needs to be assessed in Minden. In areas of town, stormwater drainage has been a problem for the residents in town; one area of town that may see some issues is Minden West Estates. Once this area is fully paved, this should mitigate any stormwater drainage issues that do exist. If major drainage issues do arise in the future, it should be an important task for decision-makers to resolve any of the persistent issues especially because of the potential damage it could cause around the community.

Improving public infrastructure is an on-going task. Although there have been recent improvements made, more work needs to be done. As stated above, these projects require planning, time, and funding. Updates will continually need to be made in order to provide the best quality of life for all of Minden's residents. Survey respondents to the Community Needs Assessment Survey voted the adequacy of utility services and the condition of streets as the top two priority items for City tax expenditures. Community support will entrust decision-makers with the tasks of accomplishing these goals in a timely manner; however, funds must come available in order to begin construction on any one of these projects. Besides the City's annual budget, a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) should be completed. A description of a CIP can be found under the Economy & Capital Improvement section in Chapter One of this plan. The CIP will be a way for decision-makers to plan for capital improvement needs for the next six years. This will outline potential needs, costs, and a timeline. It will be important to annually update this plan in order to maintain and accomplish the goals that are outlined. Minden officials are taking the next steps in order to resolve some of the issues with public infrastructure. They have been working with Engineers for assessments, they have been looking into funding options, and they have been working hard to balance the community's budget. In order to stay on task, community leaders will need to continue to push forward with these steps to see some more accomplishments.

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- Create Gateway Entrances

Gateway entrances were discussed heavily during the public input sessions held for this EngagingMinden plan. Not only were the issues discussed, but also some ideas on how to improve the aesthetics of the area. In the Community Needs Assessment Survey, survey respondents rated the appearance/condition of Highway entrances into the City. The scale used in the survey was one to four, with one being excellent and four being poor. The average response for gateway entrance appearance/condition was 3.19. The appearance of highway entrances into the City was then voted as the top third priority for City tax expenditures. The InVision Minden Plan also discusses the need to improve Minden's gateway entrances. The following is a segment taken from the InVision Minden Plan created by Olsson Associates in 2011.

*“Currently, if entering the community from the north, the traveler is welcomed into an area that feels largely industrial and uninviting. The suggested involves the development of new nodal intersections to enhance attractiveness and community wayfinding for traffic and pedestrians.”*

This has been and issue and will continue to be a issue until someone decides to do something about it. Residents have discussed their dislike, and some improvement ideas have been suggested. Typically, when you live in a community for so long you tend to overlook the negative aspects or the visually unappealing nature of an area. However, these areas are Minden's chance at a first impression to visitors. In order to improve the four gateways into town, adjacent property owners will need to be supportive and understanding of the overall goal that Minden is trying to achieve. Ideas and visuals for this goal can be seen in previous sections of EngagingMinden. In the Downtown Square section of Chapter One, the idea of creating an entrance into the Square is discussed. The idea behind this goal is to “grab” traveler's attention so they know where the Square is located. This will hopefully help attract people to Downtown as well as creating an area that ties the Square in with the rest of the community.

There are many different ways to create beautiful entrances. Typically landscaping, lighting, signage, and screening are the main projects involved. A Gateway Improvement Authority could be created to help drive these projects. Something to keep in mind is the fact that Minden has four entrances into town. Based on traffic counts, north Highway 10 and west Highway 6/34 see the most traffic. Entrance beautification could easily be completed in phases. The two locations mentioned above should be completed first in order to make the biggest impact. The other two entrances should not be forgotten, but north Highway 10 and west Highway 6/34 will be seen the most by travelers and this will allow for the biggest “bang for your buck” type of project. A partnership could also be created with adjacent property owners to ensure everyone is on the same page, and hopefully with the support of the property owners this goal could be accomplished. With the creation of a new Gateway Improvement Authority, other groups in town such as the Minden Beautification Team, which purchased and installed 14 benches and 11 trash receptacles and hung 16 hanging flower baskets in the Downtown Square in 2009, and the Tree Board along with any other interested group could all work together to make these dreams a reality. The most important part is to have an overall plan and vision created before anything is done; that way there will be a cohesive look throughout the community and every group knows what needs to be done to create the desired look. Screening will make the biggest improvement because of some of the unsightly land uses located on both sides of each Highway corridor. Screening could also be beneficial for property owners because the screen could also act as a sound buffer from the Highway traffic. Signage should not only be informational, but also attractive. Minden currently has very nice “Welcome to Minden” signs at each of the four entrances. The signs and landscaping were completed in 2007 by the Kearney County Horticulture Club with some financial help from a Nebraska Arboretum Grant. These welcome signs are a great start; although, more could be accomplished along the corridors. Creating a cohesive, aesthetic plan; forming a group to spearhead the project; balancing partnerships with adjacent property owners, City officials, and other community beautification groups; and aligning funding will be the keys steps in beautifying Minden's gateways.

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- Housing Improvements
    - Develop More Housing to Attract Both Home Owners and Renters
    - Improve Existing Housing Stock
    - Clean-Up Vacant Out Lots and Uninhabitable Homes

As discussed earlier in this plan, there is a housing shortage in Minden for both rental and owner-occupied units. In order to solve this issue a few things can be done. The obvious answer is to develop more housing, but in order for that goal to be accomplished private developers will need to be a part of the picture. There are lots available, in Minden West Estates, to build single-family homes. The same Lincoln company that built the first eight duplexes in Minden West Estates is also looking at building eight more, directly to the east of the existing 16 units. There is also land available along Minden's corporate limits for new subdivision developments. The Future Land Use Plan shows suggested areas of development based on public input sessions, cost control, and feasibility. Although not everyone will be financially able or interested in building their own homes, but new homes do need to be constructed in order to increase the supply of homes available in Minden. The three goals under housing improvements all tie-together. There are different ways the City can get involved to help the efforts; however, this goal, more than most, will need the support and efforts of private investors and residents to really make it happen. Cleaning up lots and uninhabitable homes in Minden will create lots for new infill development. Surveyors rated the appearance/condition of vacant houses and lots in Minden as 3.44 on a scale of one to four with four being poor and one being excellent. This is obviously an issue that residents would like to see resolved. Improving the condition of the existing housing stock will also help attract new residents to the community because the condition of the homes available would be more appealing to buyers. Developing new housing will also attract more people to move to Minden. It almost works as a chain reaction, with new homes available, families could move to town and enroll their children in Minden Public Schools, keeping Minden a viable community. With jobs available, people will want to move to Minden. Decent, attractive, and affordable homes need to be available in order to ensure that those new employees will plant their roots in Minden instead of a nearby community that has many homes for sale.

The City can be involved, in housing improvements, a few different ways. Because Minden has maintained updated blight and substandard studies to ensure TIF is available to developers, then the City could also use those funds to carry out plans for the demolition of structures in a redevelopment area that they determine to be unsafe or unfit for human occupancy. This is new to the Community Development Law with LB 729 just getting passed this last legislative round, and Minden should look into this option to see how it could benefit the community. Minden can also access funds for demolition through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The one stipulation for this grant is that a new housing structure has to be constructed on the newly vacant lot, and it will only be available to those residents that are low-to-moderate income (LMI). This is a way to rid the community of an unsafe, unsightly dwelling and replace it with a home. Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) through CDBG has, in the past, offered owner-occupied housing rehabilitation funds. However, the fate of this funding resource is not looking bright due to Federal and State budget cuts. Currently, Minden could work through Community Action Partnership of Mid-Nebraska for Weatherization Assistance Program (WAP) and Housing Rehabilitation funds. There are also resources for housing available through Nebraska State Trust Funds. Minden officials will need to look into each of these avenues to determine what resources feasible and beneficial for the community.

Minden has been doing what it can to provide resources for potential developers, moving forward they will be able to research a few funding options as well as market the area for housing developments. Developers will come to the table if they know there is a need to be filled because that will translate to dollars for the developer. They will typically ask if TIF is available and for parts of Minden that is a real resource that can be used. The City is in a good position, they have the need for housing, now that need should be filled. The public-private partnerships will be key as the City tries to accomplish this goal.

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- Promote Commercial Development
    - Create and Promote a Distinct Appeal for the Downtown Square
    - Continually Assist Existing and New Business Owners in Order to Expand Minden's Economy

Ideas for creating a distinct appeal for the Downtown Square would come from a Downtown Revitalization Plan. This plan would give distinct ideas on aesthetics, traffic and pedestrian flow, parking, and business opportunities. It is a goal for the City of Minden to become a Leadership Community and then initiate a Downtown Revitalization Plan. There are other specific steps to take after a Downtown Revitalization Plan is completed, those steps can be found under the Downtown Square section of Chapter One in this plan. Of course, the community could create a Downtown Revitalization Plan of their own and move forward with the implementation steps. Although, it is feasible for the City to complete their own version of a Downtown Revitalization Plan, it is appealing for business owners, residents, and City officials to see new ideas from a third party.

Just like housing development, commercial development will require public-private partnerships in order for progress to be seen. TIF is also an important card to hold when private developers are interested in commercial developments. New commercial development does many things for a community. It will create more job opportunities which in turn brings new people to Minden. It can also provide residents with a new amenity or place to shop, depending on the business. In the Economy & Capital Improvement section of Chapter One in this plan, many partnerships and resources are mentioned. Minden leaders are currently maintaining these partnerships and at this time that is one of the most useful resources for current and potential business owners in Minden. Having those relationships and resources, such as TIF, in place is beneficial for private developers. Promoting and marketing Minden's assets, needs, location, funding sources, and land availability will be a key way to attract private investment. Minden's current companies continue to expand, this shows there is economic growth and vitality in the community.

The top three targets, from the 2009 Target Industry Study are as follows; Manufacturing Retention and Expansion, Workforce Attraction, Hotel/Motel Development and Housing. Recruitment of new businesses is to be based on the current target study as well as the feasible sustainability of the business in the region and its resources such as agriculture. As determined by the economic base analysis in this plan, Agriculture, Manufacturing, Transportation & Warehousing, and Information were the four base-sectors for Minden's economy. These economic areas are vital to the progress and growth of Minden. Businesses in these economic sectors currently exist in Minden, but expanding these areas with correlated companies is always a possibility.

There are recent commercial ventures such as the Minden Opera House and KAAPA Ethanol Plant that have utilized the City's partnerships and resources. This shows the City is successful with implementing projects from an idea to an actual business that helps support the community.

*The Minden Opera House, renovated in 2000, plays an integral part of the Minden Downtown Square. It is host to bands, dances, wedding receptions, conferences, play productions and more. Minden is proud of the fact that no tax dollars used for the renovation; instead the local Kearney County Community Foundation played an important part in the finance solicitation.*

*In 2000 and 2001, Plains Produce Inc., a hydroponic greenhouse, and KAAPA Ethanol, the only farmer owned ethanol plant in Nebraska, utilized tax increment financing to help finance the public costs associated with their development projects.*

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Promotion and marketing will be key for Minden officials. It is the best way to let people know about all of the positive aspects of the community. It will be an important step for officials to take in order to stimulate commercial development. Some of the other steps for City leaders to take would include partnership development and creation of relationships that support funding resources available in the area. Minden is currently doing both of those by partnering with KCEDA, development of MEDAC, and having successfully used TIF in the past to show their ability to continue to implement this tool. The Future Land Use Plan gives developers and City decision-makers a plan to follow. It allows leaders to make informed decisions and to ensure everyone is working off of the same page.

- New Swimming Pool

Minden's current swimming pool is in need of repairs in order to resolve some of the major issues that pool staff and City leaders have to deal with every summer. A Pool Study should be completed in order to determine all of the issues that exist in the current pool and to offer options for improvement. After a Pool Study is completed options can be considered for rehabilitating the existing pool or building a new pool. If a new pool is constructed it will also be a decision for the community to decide the location of the new pool whether it be in place of the existing pool or a new location. It is a goal for community leaders to provide a modern pool with low-maintenance costs. This amenity is important to many families in any community and leaders want to continue to provide a great quality of life for residents. Again, this goal will require support, funding, planning, and time but it is something that leaders are working towards.

- Becoming a Leadership Community

It is a goal for the City to become a NDED Leadership Community. This title opens more doors for the City including a few extra funding options. The City is well on its way to completing the application including, checking many requirements off of the "to-do" list. An updated Comprehensive Plan is one of the requirements, along with some other items that the City will accomplish in the near future. Once Minden is awarded the Leadership Community title it will be yet another great accomplishment for the progressive community.

- Support Minden Public School District

Minden Public Schools are a GREAT "amenity" for attracting new residents to Minden. It will be very important for the City to continually support the school. It is great to see the school-pride that everyone in Minden seems to have. As the community's population continues to change, and hopefully grow, the City and School District may need to consider changes to the school's facilities. The idea has been discussed to create one campus for K-12. There is room to expand and make that dream a reality by the current High School. The Elementary School building could be re-purposed into offices or even apartments. There are many positives to have one campus for all of the school buildings. Many things will need to be done before that idea can happen including, proving the need, getting community support, aligning funding, and making sure the plan is feasible based on land and costs. It will be important for community members to keep an open-mind and to keep the end goal in sight.