

FINNEY County

Comprehensive Plan

November 2018

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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COUNTY COMMISSION APPROVAL

The Finney County Comprehensive Plan was approved on November 5, 2018 by the Finney County Commissioners, along with Resolution No. 13-2018.



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Content and Organization

The Finney County Comprehensive Plan includes the following eight chapters:

- **Chapter 1: Planning Context**

This chapter introduces the Plan, describing what a comprehensive plan is, its purpose, and what it will do for Finney County. It gives a brief overview of the history of Finney County and summarizes the background information that helped shape the Plan.

- **Chapter 2: Planning Process**

This chapter gives a brief history of Finney County as well as a summary of the relevant plans that were considered. It includes information on the organization of the Plan and provides an overview of the process used to prepare this Plan, including public engagement.

- **Chapter 3: Land Use**

This chapter reviews the current land use and development patterns in the County, as well as analyzing its issues and opportunities. It presents a future land use map, along with guiding principles.

- **Chapter 4: Housing**

This chapter includes an assessment of current housing trends, supply/inventory, and identifies needs. It also includes guiding principles.

- **Chapter 5: Transportation and Circulation**

This chapter discusses the conditions of the transportation and circulation network, issues and challenges, and guiding principles.

- **Chapter 6: Economic Development**

This chapter looks at the employment/jobs trends and projections. It also discusses the opportunities and lists guiding principles.

- **Chapter 7: Natural and Agricultural Resources**

This chapter examines the challenges of water shortage and rural character, as well as air quality and natural resources. It also provides guiding principles toward agricultural and resource policy.

- **Chapter 8: Public Service and Facilities**

This chapter provides an overview of existing facilities, services, public safety, fire protection, emergency medical services, and recreational facilities. It also lists principles to guide the policies and recommendations.

- **Appendix A: Public Engagement - Available as separate attachment**

- **Appendix B: Survey Results - Available as separate attachment**

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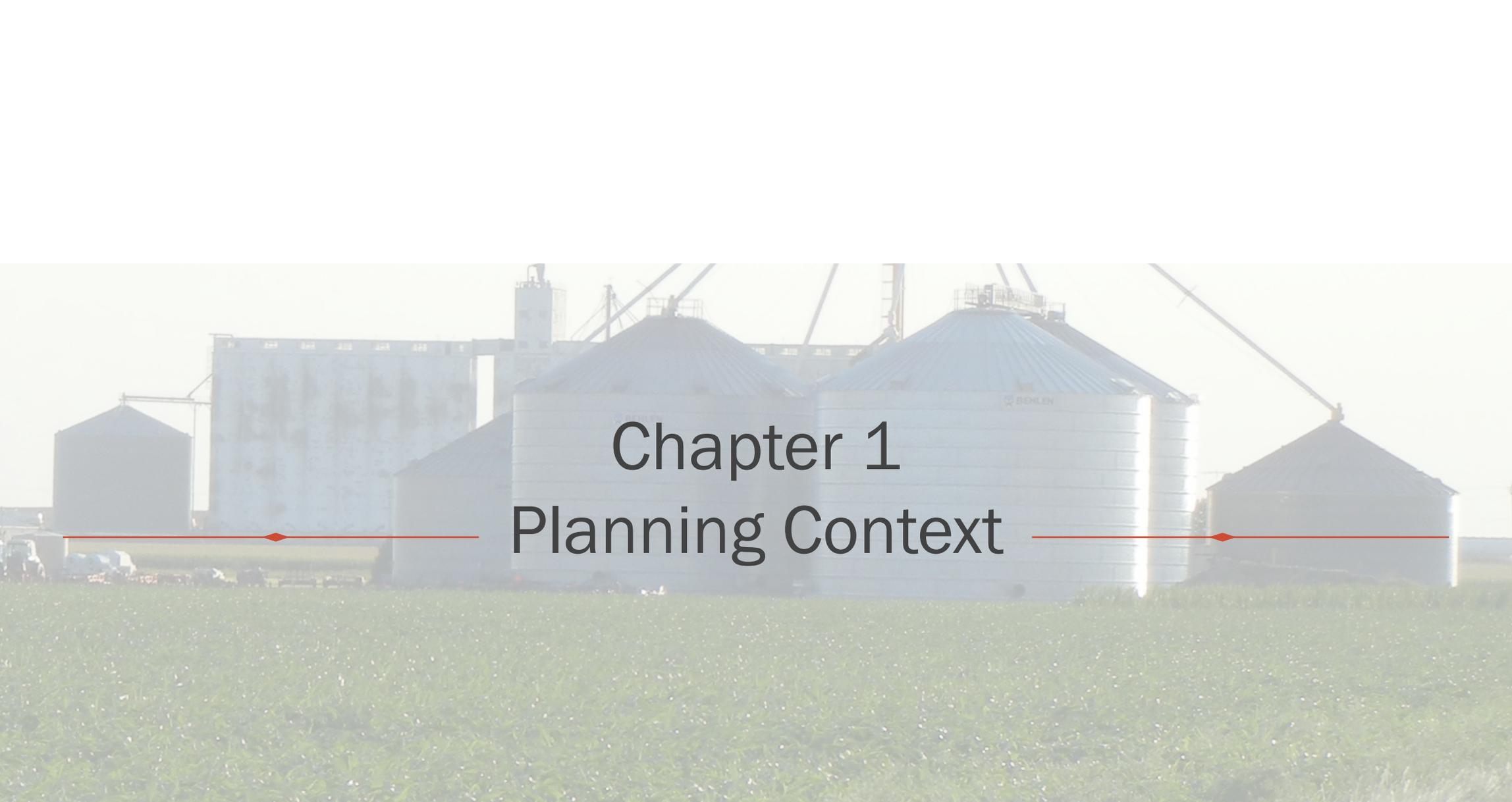
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Chapter 1 Planning Context

1 PLANNING CONTEXT

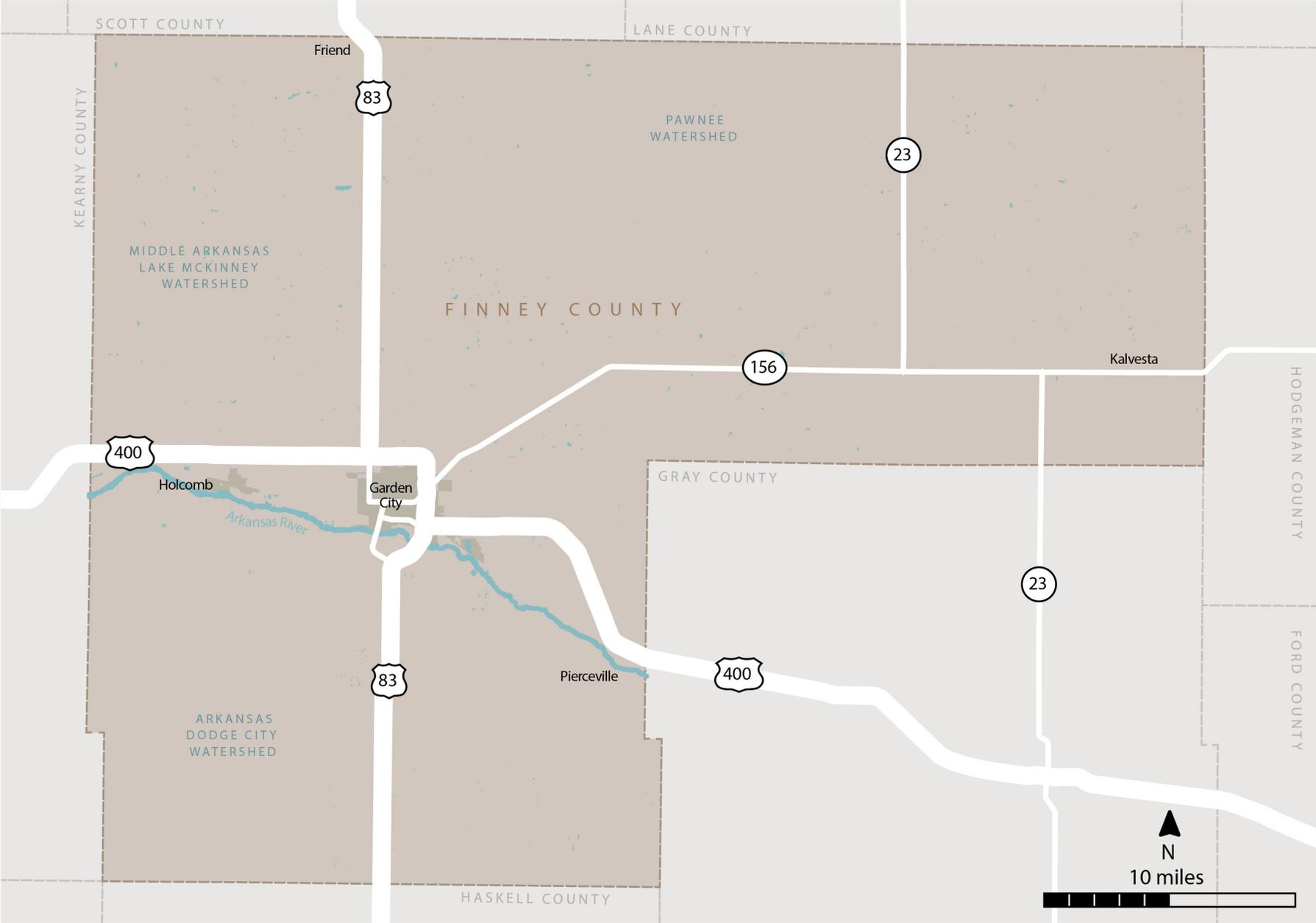


Figure 1-1: Finney County Regional Map

1 PLANNING CONTEXT

Purpose

As the County continues to grow, undergo change and develop as a regional hub for western Kansas, the Finney County Comprehensive Plan (Plan) will serve as the County's overall policy guide for growth and development over the next 20 years. It will provide strategies for positive economic development, quality residential growth, and resource conservation. The Plan's policies will also preserve crucial environmental resources, and the rural character of the County.

The Comprehensive Plan includes a vision statement, goals, guiding principles, policies, and actions to carry out the policies. It addresses a wide range of recommendations relating to land use, transportation, natural and agricultural resources, community facilities, community character and identity, economic development and housing. The Plan is the instrument that establishes long-range general policies in a coordinated and unified manner. Developers, stakeholders, policy-makers and citizens can use this Plan for guidance on resource allocation, zoning of land, capital improvements, budgeting and other County programs.

Periodic reviews are critical. As conditions change, the County's Plan should be reviewed and amended to take advantage of new opportunities and respond to new needs. Periodic reviews and amendment of the Plan are required to meet statutory requirements and to ensure it addresses the needs of the County businesses and residents as specified in KSA 12-747.

Planning Area

Finney County is the largest County in western Kansas, with an estimated population of 42,412 (Finney County Neighborhood & Development Services, 2017) and covering an area of 1,303 square miles. The most populous city and County seat is Garden City with a population of approximately 31,214 (Finney County Neighborhood & Development Services, 2017). The County has experienced significant growth since the last Comprehensive Plan was adopted in 1995. The population is relatively young with a median age of 30. The County's economy consists primarily of manufacturing and agriculture. Transportation is auto-dominant, but also includes freight rail service and the Amtrak Southwest Chief, operating on the BNSF Railway along the old Santa Fe Trail. The County is also served by the Garden City Regional Airport (GCK), with American Airlines, Finney County Transit, including the Beeline Bus, and Los Paisanos bus service.



Figure 1-2: Finney County Rural (top) and City (Downtown Garden City, Bottom) Context (Sources: Flickr, WSP)

1 PLANNING CONTEXT

Linking the Past to the Present

The area of Finney County was home to the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Commanche, Kiowa, Pawnee, and Plains Apache in the early 1700's. By the early 1800's, Indians, Mexican traders, and Spanish explorers followed a seasonal trail route which later became known as the Santa Fe Trail, extending from Missouri to Santa Fe, New Mexico. The Santa Fe Railroad later followed the trail route, as the coasts connected with rail. With the arrival of the Atchinson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railway, in Dodge City in 1872, the Santa Fe Trail became part of history.

An opportunity to market large herds of cattle brought cattlemen through the territory. Cattlemen started heading north from Texas and followed the Arkansas River from Pueblo, Colorado to the present location of Garden City. More cattlemen soon followed and established themselves south of the Arkansas River. In time, the land from Dodge City to the Colorado state line along the Arkansas River was largely claimed by cattlemen.

Homesteading laws were enacted in 1862, encouraging settlers to put down roots in the site of Garden City. Two of the first settlers were brothers, William D. and James R. Fulton in 1878. Charles Jesse "Buffalo" Jones was elected as the first mayor of Garden City and helped the Fulton brothers in bringing more people to the community.

Garden City experienced great growth in the 1880's with the help of irrigation (The Garden City Ditch), first constructed in 1879. Many other ditches were built after that. In addition, the first windmill pumping plant was erected east of Garden City. Irrigation helped bring bumper crops and economic prosperity. This was a time when land seekers poured in by the hundreds, but by 1887, the area experienced a dry spell and poor crops burst the bubble. Land values dropped, and farmers and residents moved away.

The area came back in 1905, after the depression, with the construction and opening of the Garden City Sugar Beet Factory in 1906. It operated for 50 years employing more than 250 workers. In 1940's, the County finally experienced good rainfall and the cattle and farming industries started to flourish again. Both cattle and grain were being shipped to eastern markets. In 1951, Earl Brookover of Garden City opened the first commercial feedlot in western Kansas. This innovation used local grain to finish beef cattle locally before shipping them to packing plants.

In December 1980, IBP, Inc. (formerly Iowa Beef Processors, Inc.) opened the world's largest beef packing plant on a tract of land near Holcomb, seven miles west of Garden City. IBP, Inc. (a subsidiary to Tyson Fresh Meats, Inc. since 2001) brought new economic opportunities and increased diversity to Finney County, nearly doubling the population between 1980 and 2000.

Finney County was founded on the cattle and agriculture industries as part of its founder's visions of more than 100 years ago. It still thrives in these industries, providing a steady economy and numerous jobs.



Figure 1-3: Charles Jesse "Buffalo" Jones served as Garden City's first mayor (Source: Finney County Historical Museum)

1 PLANNING CONTEXT



*Figure 1-4: An Early Irrigation Pumping Plant in Finney County, from 1911-1925
(Source: KNRC.ws)*

1 PLANNING CONTEXT

Finney County Today

This section presents information about the demographic and economic trends of Finney County. It examines population changes and characteristics.

Current Population and Projections

Finney County is home to a growing and diverse population. As of 2016, the County's total population is estimated at 42,412 —just larger than that found in Ellis and Ford Counties (Finney County Neighborhood & Development Services, 2017). Garden City and Holcomb serve as a combined anchor of the County, with seventy-five percent of Finney County's population residing within their borders. Recent estimates show Garden City's population as being 31,214, and Holcomb's at 2,179 (Finney County Neighborhood & Development Services, 2017).

Over the past few decades, the County has seen its population grow sharply, from less than 25,000, when Finney County had fewer people than both Ellis and Ford Counties, to more than 40,000 people in 2000 (University of Kansas Institute for Policy & Social Research, 2014). The disastrous ConAgra fire in 2000 led to a temporary reversal in population trends, as thousands of workers and families exited the County in search of employment opportunities elsewhere.

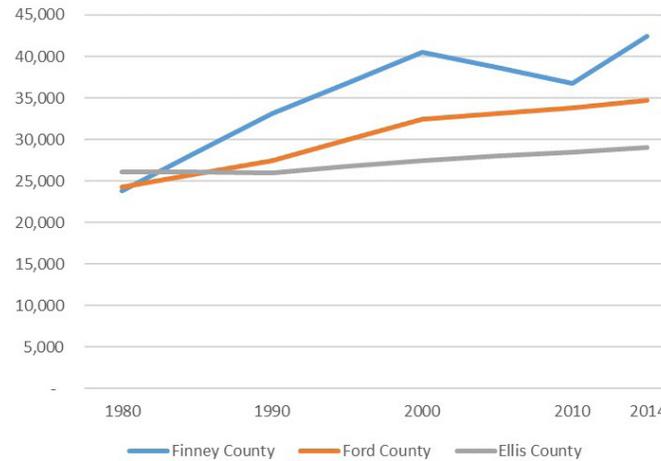


Figure 1-5: Population Growth, 1980-2014

In recent years, however, Garden City has attracted a steady stream of young families and job-seekers from across western Kansas and regions beyond. Data from the American Community Survey confirm what many Finney County residents observe daily: The County has a higher percentage of children and young adults compared to neighboring counties. This has contributed to a growing population and an expanding economic base that reflects investments that residents and community leaders have made over the years, and has well-positioned the County for future economic growth.

One of the challenges the County faces in preparing for its future is obtaining accurate population forecasts for the years and decades ahead. Due to a counting error made by the US Census Bureau in 2010, population growth forecasts, as well as official current counts, are not seen as reliable to the County, and in some instances, have hindered the ability of the County to attract businesses and investment.



Figure 1-6: Children at the Finney County Public Library (Source: Brad Nading, Garden City Telegram)

1 PLANNING CONTEXT

Demographically, Finney County stands out as one of the most diverse counties in western Kansas. Figures 1-7, 1-8, and 1-9 show the breakdown of the County's age and racial profile as reported by the 2015 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates, compared with statewide demographics. Because survey respondents are able to select more than one option for race and ethnicity, the net percentage may total to over 100%.

Finney County Age Distribution

Kansas Age Distribution

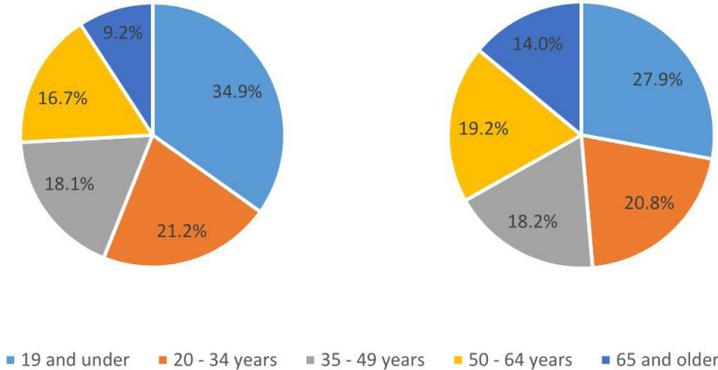


Figure 1-7: Age Distribution

Finney County

Kansas

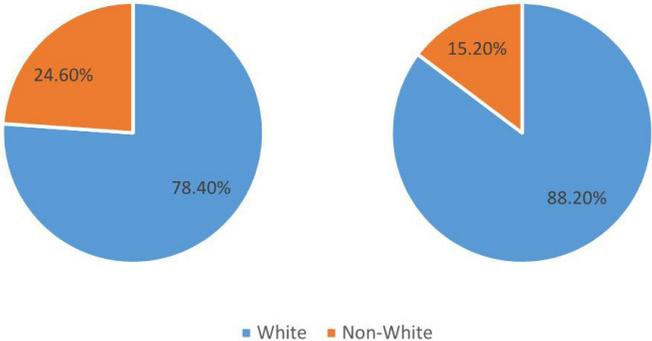


Figure 1-8: Race (White vs. Non-White)

Note: Survey respondents were able to select more than one option for race and ethnicity, therefore, the net percentage may total over 100%.

Finney County Racial Distribution

Kansas Racial Distribution

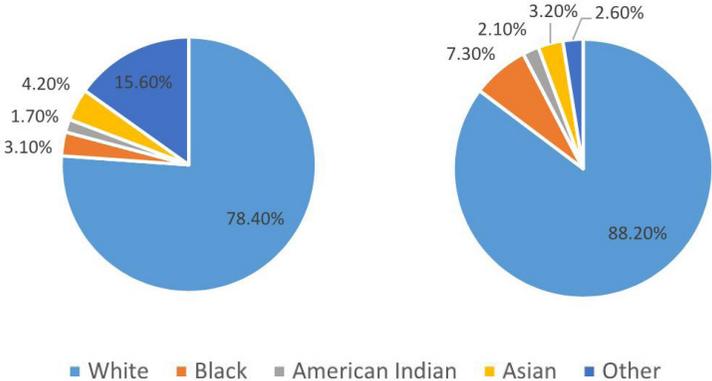


Figure 1-9: Race (County Comparison)

Note: Survey respondents were able to select more than one option for race and ethnicity, therefore, the net percentage may total over 100%.

1 PLANNING CONTEXT

The US Census Bureau considers race and ethnicity to be two separate and distinct concepts. Race is defined as a person's self-identification with one or more social groups. An individual may identify as White, Black or African American, Asian, American Indian and Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, or some other race. Ethnicity determines whether a person is of Hispanic origin or not. For this reason, ethnicity is broken into two categories- Hispanic or Latino and Non-Hispanic or Latino. Hispanics may report as any race.

The Hispanic community has grown significantly over the past several decades and now makes up a significant segment of the County's overall population. As shown in Figure 1-10, Finney County has a significantly higher percentage of Hispanic/Latino residents than the statewide percentage.

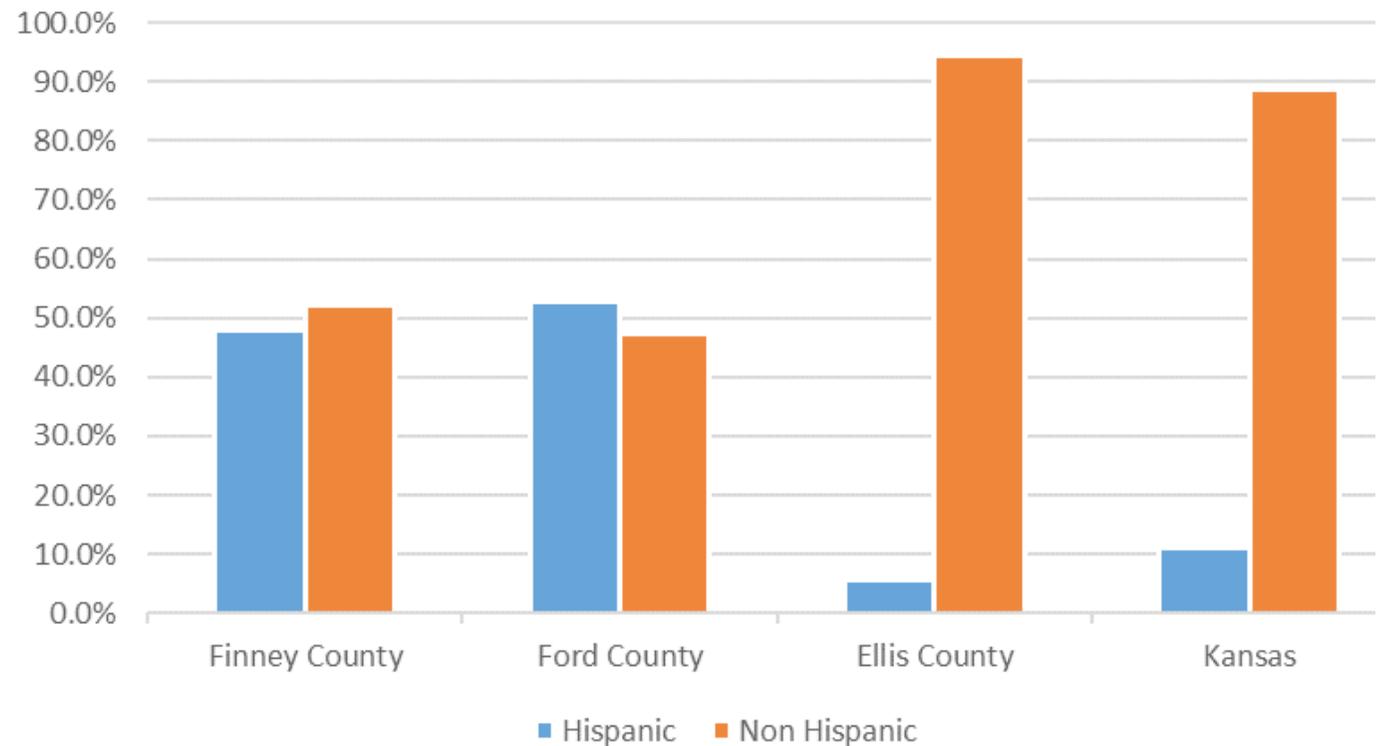


Figure 1-10: Ethnicity (Hispanic/Non-Hispanic)

Note: Comparison of Finney County, Ford County, Ellis County and Statewide Ethnicity Demographics

1 PLANNING CONTEXT

Finney County's diversity is reflected not only in its people but in the businesses and enterprises that have flourished in Garden City and elsewhere in the County. Minority businesses in Finney County account for more than 25% of all total businesses, as indicated in Figure 1-11.

As a predominantly rural County, the agricultural sector thrives in Finney County. However, as the County's population grows, new residents have brought economic diversification. Today, manufacturing, education, retail and healthcare are growing industries that offer Finney County residents a variety of employment and career opportunities.

For additional information on the economy and employment of Finney County, please see Chapter 6: Economic Development.

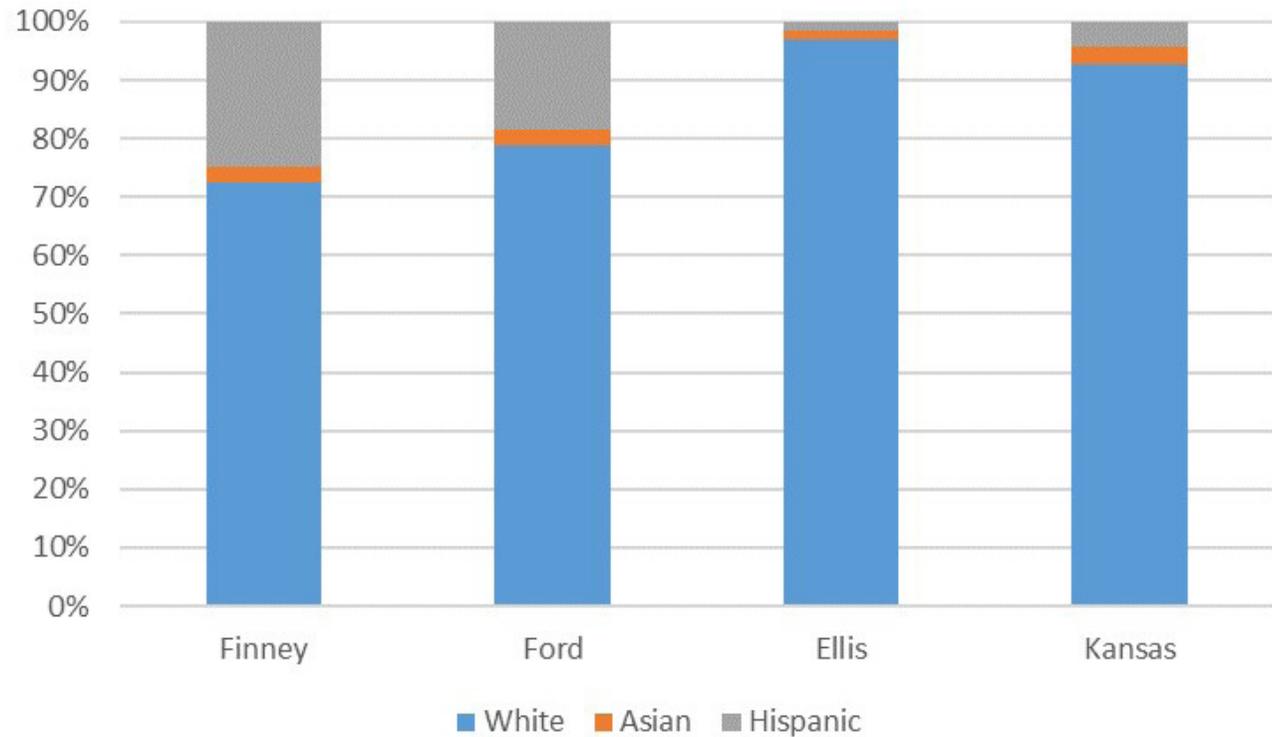
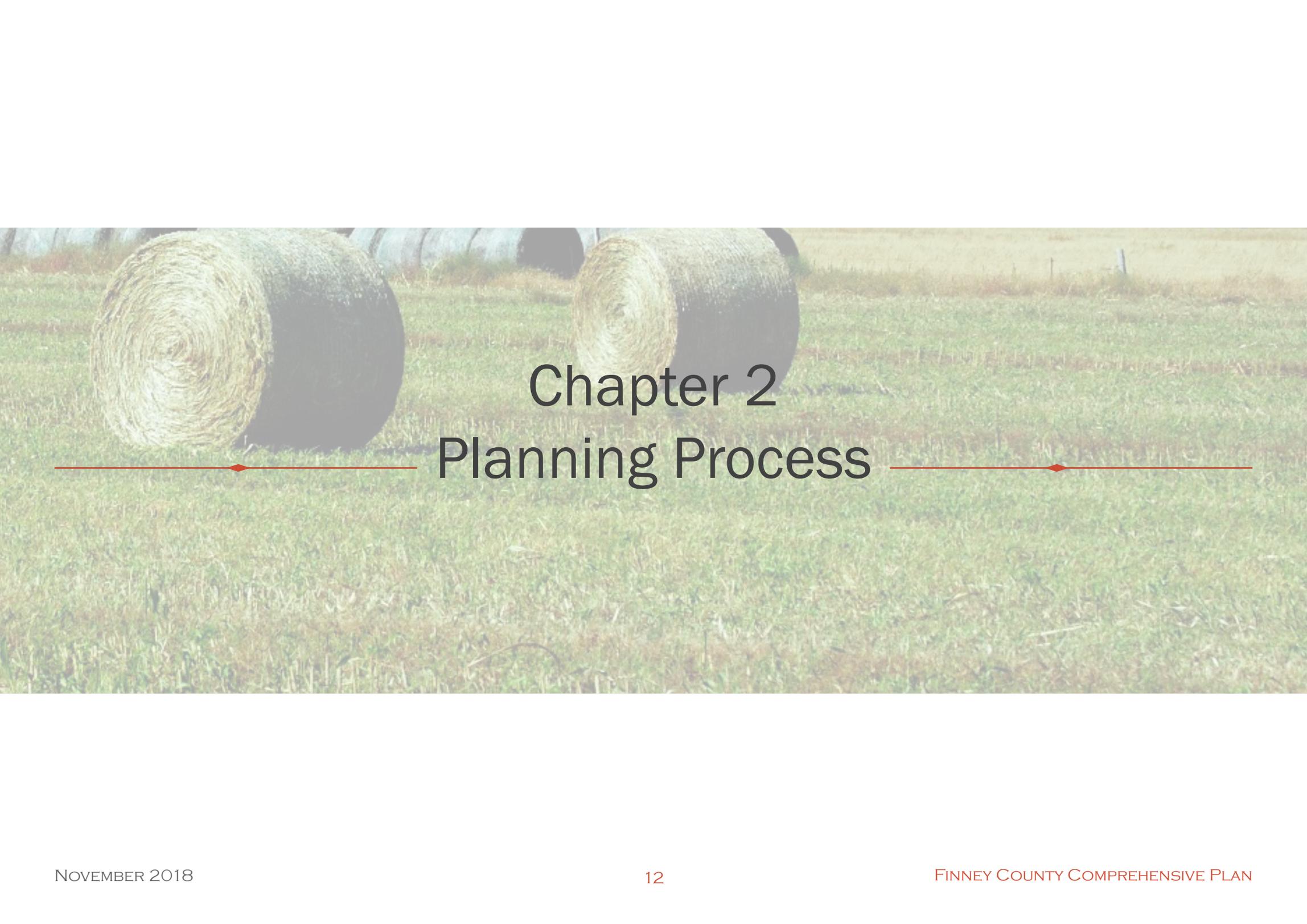


Figure 1-11: Distribution of Business Owners by Race

Note: Comparison of Finney County, Ford County, Ellis County and Statewide Race Demographics





Chapter 2 Planning Process

2 PLANNING PROCESS

Introduction

This Comprehensive Plan helps guide how the County wants to develop over the next 20 years. The Plan describes goals, policies, and implementation strategies needed to continue building on the high quality of life of Finney County. This document is intended to help Finney County in fully achieving the community's vision for its future. The recommendations in this Plan are a result of the community's vision for the future, and the County's existing conditions, the changing demographics of the County's population, and development trends. This section of the plan provides a brief history and general description of Finney County today and includes a list of current related plans that were considered through the development of the Plan.

Planning Process

The Finney County Comprehensive Plan was developed through multiple steps and stages that involved stakeholder outreach, public involvement, discussions with Commissioners, and research on best-practices. Below is an outline of the process used to build the Finney County Comprehensive Plan:

1. Existing Conditions: With the most recent version of the Finney County Comprehensive Plan prepared in 1995, much has changed within the community. An extensive review of previous documents, including municipal plans (see 'Related Plans' in following section), was utilized in setting the frame of reference for planning. From here, there were six topic areas that were decided for the focus of the plan. These areas are: land use, housing, transportation, economic development, agricultural resources, and public services. Each topic has its own respective chapter within the Comprehensive Plan.
2. Community Survey: Building from the six topic areas of the Plan, a survey was created to gauge public opinions and priorities for the Community. For more information on the survey, please see the 'Public Engagement' section later in this chapter. Survey questions and a summary of answers can be found in Appendix A.
3. Public Outreach: Citizen engagement provided invaluable feedback in the development of the Plan. Two separate outreach events were scheduled during the Plan development to gather feedback and engage citizens in the planning process. In addition to obtaining comments and anecdotes, these avenues allowed for citizens to view preliminary survey results and learn more about the County goals and visions ahead. For more details on specific activities in public engagement, see Appendix A.
4. Stakeholder Input: Several stakeholder groups were invited into the planning process to gain a better understanding of specific subjects for the Plan. Individual stakeholder meetings provided a focus on each of the six topics covered in the Comprehensive Plan, while additional focus meetings showed more depth into various parts of the community. For more details on these specific meetings and groups, please see Appendix A.
5. First Draft of Plan: An initial Comprehensive Plan was developed to provide a first read on what the community feedback, objectives within each focus area, and implementation strategies for each subject.
6. Revised Plan: Through discussions with Finney County Neighborhood and Developmental Services, a revised draft of the Comprehensive Plan was further developed to hone in on specific objectives, strategies for achievement, and refined implementation timeline.
7. Adoption of Plan: Following the acceptance from the Finney County Planning Commission and final public review, the Finney County Commissioners will formally review the Comprehensive Plan before adoption.

2 PLANNING PROCESS

Related Plans

The Finney County Comprehensive Plan is built upon a solid base of several current plans. Reflecting the numerous challenges and opportunities present in the County, several plans have been developed which represent many hours of public input and strategic planning. The following relevant planning documents, shown in Figure 2-1, were reviewed and used in the development of the Comprehensive Plan:

- Finney County Comprehensive Plan (1995)
- Pierceville Area Plan, July 17, 1997
- City of Holcomb Comprehensive Plan, September 2009
- Garden City 2020 Comprehensive Plan, November 2009

Public Engagement

Public engagement is fundamental to the Finney County Comprehensive Plan. The public engagement activities increase public awareness of the planning process, educate citizens about the importance of a long-range comprehensive plan and solicit ideas from residents. The visions, goals and direction set out in this plan are driven by and rooted in the concerns of the community.

The primary topical areas for the focus group discussions centered on:

- Land Use
- Housing
- Transportation and Circulation
- Economic Development
- Natural and Agricultural Resources
- Public Services and Facilities

Further detail on specific public outreach effort can be found in Appendix A.

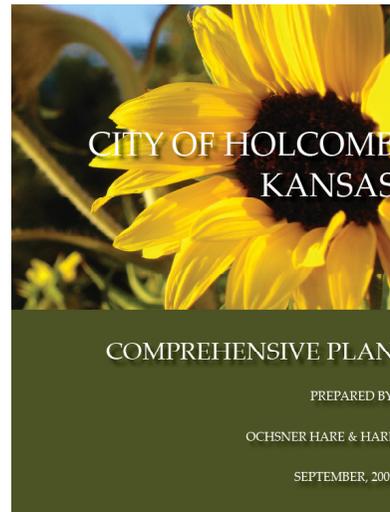
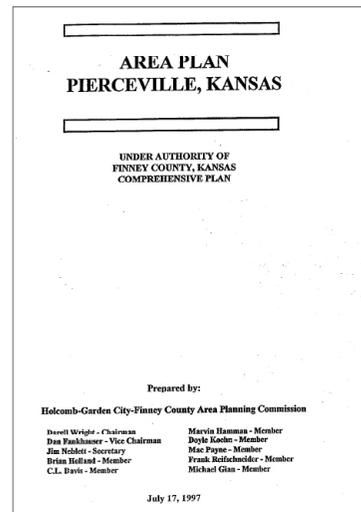
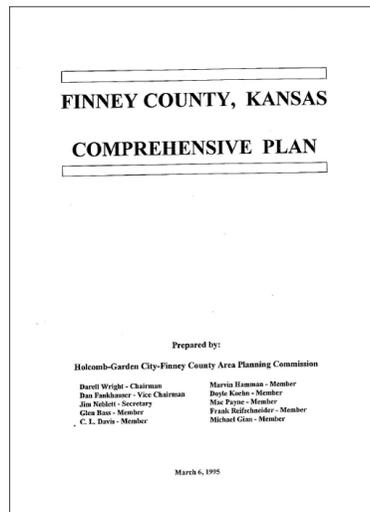


Figure 2-1: Previous Planning Studies and Reports

2 PLANNING PROCESS

Digital and Print Community Survey

To assist in the collection of data and input from a variety of residents in the Finney County community, a 17-question survey was developed. The survey asked questions about challenges, opportunities, priorities and what qualities make Finney County a special place to live. The survey was produced in both print and digital formats and was translated into Spanish to assist in gathering input from the second most common language spoken in the County (Figure 2-2). Printed copies of the survey were available at the Finney County Administration Building, passed out at all Comprehensive Plan public engagement events and at large community events like the Finney County Fair. The survey was also available digitally and accessed through the County's Facebook page. Detailed findings from the survey can be found in Appendix A.

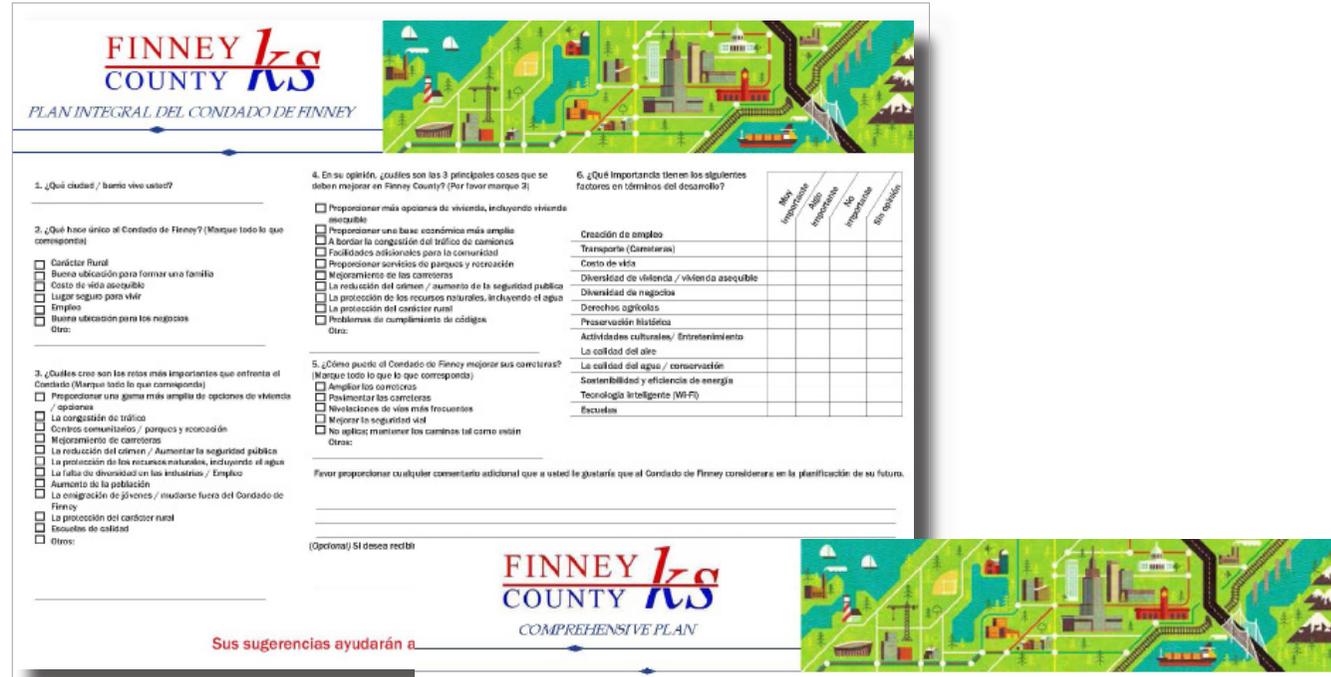


Figure 2-2: Community Survey in Spanish and English

2 THE PLANNING PROCESS

Impact and Reach of Public Engagement

Public outreach for the Finney County Comprehensive Plan included several efforts, in-person, online, and through stakeholder meetings. The number of interactions for each effort was documented to gauge the level of public involvement. An “interaction” is defined as anytime an individual interacted with the project, including participation in a survey, attending a stakeholder meeting, visiting a social media page, attending a public meeting, etc. In total, as of June 2018, the project has had over 5,000 interactions, including over 400 personal interactions that provided direct input into the Comprehensive Plan. A summary of these efforts and a description of each outlet is shown in Table 1.



Figure 2-3: Citizens Participate at the Finney County Comprehensive Plan Open House (Source: WSP)

Outcomes

Through a variety of public involvement activities, the planning team received hundreds of comments from the public. Residents identified strengths, values, challenges, and opportunities to be addressed in the County’s Comprehensive Plan. This feedback helped to craft a vision statement for Finney County and its overall goals through the Comprehensive Plan. This vision reflects a commitment to building a community with a high standard of living and quality of life.

In addition to the overall vision statement, goals and objectives were drafted for each topic within the Comprehensive Plan. Key objectives emerged through the voices of the community, expressed within meetings and surveys conducted.

In addition to the vision statement, goals and objectives were drafted for each of the topics or elements in the Comprehensive Plan. They emerged through the voices of the community as expressed in meetings and surveys conducted during the public engagement process. The Finney County community goals and objectives are included in each respective element chapters.

***FINNEY COUNTY VISION:
Finney County is a unique
place where family and
community are valued as
the highest priority. Finney
County will strive to act
with cooperation, integrity
and dedication to public
service. The County will
manage/encourage growth
within or near the cities
centers, while preserving
the rural character and
natural resources.***

2 THE PLANNING PROCESS

Public Outreach Method	Description of Effort	Number of Interactions
Online Survey	A survey was used to gauge citizen’s priorities and thoughts on the County on a broad range of topics. The survey was provided in English and Spanish.	293 survey responses
Door-to-Door Survey	Residents in rural and unincorporated areas of Finney County were surveyed in-person via door-to-door survey. Neighborhoods visited include Burnside, Plymell, Antelope Hills, Sagebrush, Southwind, and Towns Riverview. Unincorporated towns that were visited include Kalvesta, Pierceville, and Friend.	86 survey responses
Subject-Specific Stakeholder Meetings	During Finney County Discovery Week Round 1, several subject-specific stakeholder meetings were hosted to discuss specific topics. These include land use/housing, transportation, economic development, agriculture/natural resources and public services/utilities.	21 attendees
Public Open House	During Finney County Discovery Week Round 1, a public open house was held June 20, 2017 at the Finney County office. Citizens and commissioners joined in sharing thoughts and ideas in an open forum.	14 attendees
Phone Conferences	Several one-on-one phone conferences were hosted with various stakeholders. These meetings provided better depth into specific subjects, including land use/housing, transportation, economic development, agriculture/natural resources, schools and public services/utilities.	22 attendees
Stakeholder Meetings Round 2	During Finney County Discovery Week Round 2, additional stakeholder meetings were held with Tyson Fresh Meats, LiveWell Finney County, the LiveWell Neighborhood Learning Center, and County Engineer.	Over 60 people
Finney County Fair	During the Finney County Fair, the project team hosted a booth in the vendor area. Over two days, the team hosted a largely successful public-engagement game, spoke with several citizens, and shared initial survey results.	Over 150 families (About 375 individuals)
Social Media Outreach	Throughout the project, information has been shared on the Finney County Facebook (FB) page, Twitter account, as well as the consultant’s Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn sites. Each of these mediums provide an opportunity for citizens and a global audience to learn more about Finney County and the planning process.	Over 1,300 “Likes” (Finney County FB) Over 1,900 followers (Consultant Twitter) Over 1,100 impressions (Consultant Twitter)

Table 2-1: Public Engagement Results

2 THE PLANNING PROCESS

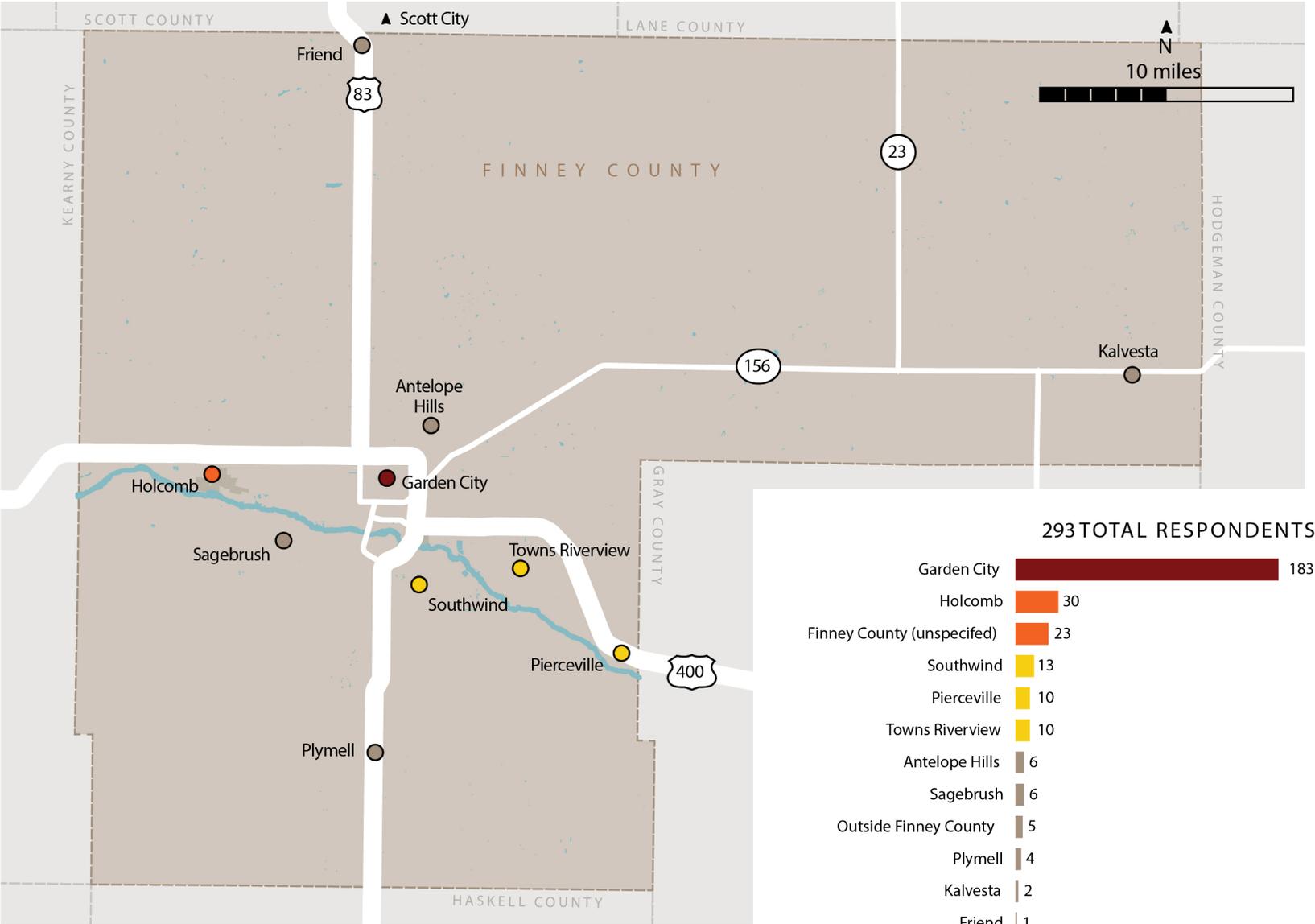
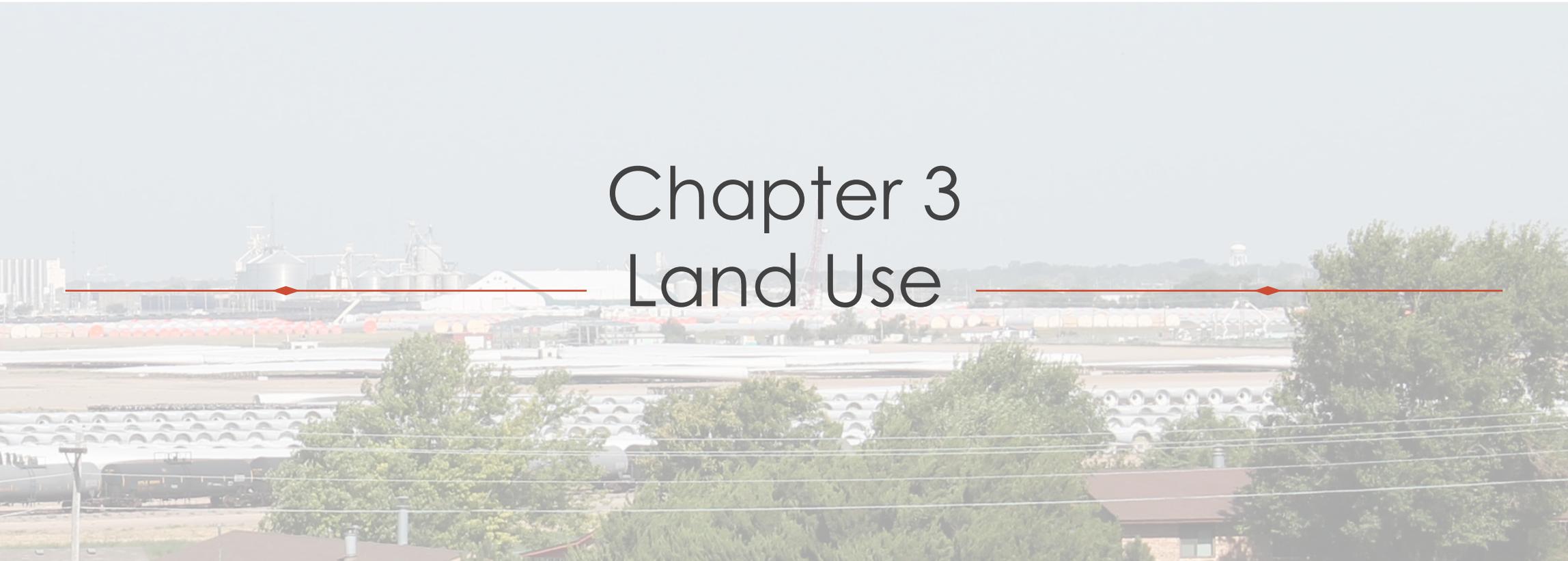


Figure 2-4: Public Participation Map





Chapter 3 Land Use

3 LAND USE

Introduction

Finney County is a mostly rural County in Western Kansas, whose primary land uses are agriculture and industry. Agriculture accounts for the lion's share of land use by area and the industrial uses are huddled around the two incorporated areas of the County—Holcomb and Garden City. Finney County, however, has a unique set of circumstances that are impacting current land uses and will likely drive future land use. The incorporated areas of the County are growing in population, but the unincorporated areas are seeing population decline. That growth has led to increased living and building costs which has pushed suburban development to spill over into the County. And, there are several factors that are limiting the ability of cities to expand their border to accommodate this growth.

Land Use & Economy

The link between land use and economy is inextricable, and basic economic and employment figures help shed light on land use issues in Finney County. Because jobs in manufacturing represent the largest single-sector of employment for Finney County (see Table 3-1), it is advantageous for the County to support these businesses and continue to attract new ones.

A substantial portion of the Finney County economy is agriculture related. During the stakeholder and public input portion of the planning process, participants expressed an interest in seeing a greater diversity in agricultural business types in Finney County. This feedback was primarily expressed as shifting from the current commodities based economy to one that strikes a balance of producing both goods and commodities. Since much of the land designated for manufacturing in Finney County has been developed, attracting goods based manufacturing business will require the proper zoning for new business to locate.

Intense County Development

There are several areas of Finney County where development patterns and intensity are more characteristic of a city than of an unincorporated County. In Finney County, these areas tend to be near municipal borders where residents enjoy the conveniences of a city while avoiding some of taxes and regulations that come along with it. Finney County has been challenged with regulating some of this development, which has led to issues including failing septic systems and inadequate access to drinking water.

Industry	Employment
Manufacturing	19.2%
Retail	11.7%
Healthcare	10.3%
Education	9.1%
Food Service, Agriculture, Construction	6% (each)

Table 3-1: Employment by Industry (ACS 2015)

FEMA Special Hazard Flood Areas

Special hazard flood areas (SHFAs) that are designated by FEMA help shape growth and development patterns. Currently, SHFAs border Garden City and Holcomb on the South and East. As these cities grow and expand their boundaries, these flood areas will likely guide growth to the North and West. The County should anticipate growth and development in these directions.

Agricultural Expansion

Agriculture is one of the primary characteristics and industries of Finney County and feedlots are one of its hallmarks. The feedlots that are near, or abut, Garden City and Holcomb were established long ago. Previously, these lots were located in the outskirts of residential and urban areas. As the towns of Garden City and Holcomb continue to grow, development has slowly crept outward, with some commercial areas meeting the perimeter of feedlots.

As Finney County considers its long-term land use plan, it will be important to consider all parties and elements in the community. The County should work with developers, residents, and business owners to implement the most sustainable long-term practices. As the community continues to grow and its existing boundaries are stretched, the County should be strategic in its policies and land use plan, maintaining a keen eye for the long-term implications and effects.

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Land Use Guiding Principles

There are a few key principles driving the land use approach in the Comprehensive Plan. Throughout the baseline data analysis on housing, as well as the public and stakeholder feedback process, the issues of affordable housing came up repeatedly. The lack of income appropriate housing has led to a number of other issues including people building suburban style neighborhoods in unincorporated areas of the County. Addressing the housing issue properly will require a comprehensive approach that directs housing development and densification to the best suited areas of Finney County. The below guiding principles are the driving motivations behind this comprehensive approach.

Create a Foundation for Future Planning Initiatives

Because accurate land use information will be the basis of future planning initiatives and the 2020 Census, it is important for Finney County to maintain a current land use map.

Provide for Finney County's Future Needs

As cities within Finney County grow and the economy evolves, it is important for Finney County to address current land use challenges and to provide for anticipated future land use needs.

Preserve the Health Safety and Welfare of County and City Residents

When development and growth go unchecked, they can lead to health and safety issues as areas of the County must carry development intensities and uses they are not equipped for. A review of land use regulation can help prevent these issues.

Direct Future Growth and Development to the Appropriate Areas

As Finney County grows and the issue of housing (and land) affordability continue, the County must work with cities to provide a unified vision regarding where development should occur to prevent land use conflict and irresponsible development practices.

Development Envelope

Key Strategies:

- *Focus growth within a concentrated area*
- *Provide improved utility coordination*
- *Allow gradual growth*
- *Prevent "leap frog" developments*

Land Use Goal:

Adopt land use policies that allow Finney County to track growth and development, protect land owners, and direct healthy development toward the appropriate areas.

Objectives:

1. Continue process for establishing and maintaining a Current Land Use Map
2. Create a Development Envelope for Future Growth
3. Revise zoning regulations to prevent conflicts with agriculture and other uses
4. Revise code enforcement process
5. Provide land for industrial growth

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Objectives, Policies and Implementation Strategies

Objective #1: Continue Process for Establishing and Maintaining a Current Land Use Map

A current land use map is the basis of nearly every planning effort and is great tool to prepare for the 2020 census and thus is invaluable to Finney County. The County has already established a process for tracking and updating current land uses as permits are filed via the County's GIS database. The County should continue this effort and continue to look for ways to streamline the process where practical.

Policy 1.1: Finney County should continue maintaining and updating the County land use map on a regular basis.

Objective #2: Create a Development Envelope for Future Growth

In some areas of the County, growth and development have transformed the character of the area to resemble a suburban community than a rural area. Development that occurs outside the periphery of a city may help developers and home builders realize cost savings, however, this often puts a strain on counties and special districts that become financially burdensome. Finney County has fewer development regulations than the incorporated areas. This has attracted development into areas where providing the necessary infrastructure is prohibitively expensive.

Finney County, Holcomb, and Garden City should work together to define a boundary for future growth between the two municipalities called a Development

Envelope. By working in conjunction with both Holcomb and Garden City, all three entities should establish an agreed upon boundary for the Development Envelope that encompasses both municipalities as well as the area between them (see Figure 3-3 & Figure 3-4, Future Land Use Maps). This area has an existing water district and by working together, all three entities can take steps to help establish a sewer district—which are two of the biggest deficiencies for many areas of the County. Growth within the Development Envelope should not be unfettered, rather growth should be allowed gradually and only when adjacent to existing development to prevent “leap frog” development. Directing growth to the Development Envelope can be enforced through regulations, but it can also be incentivized through infrastructure investment and financing mechanisms like Tax Increment Financing (TIF).



Figure 3-1: Main Street Historic Signage (Source: WSP)

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Policy 2.1: Finney County should work jointly with Holcomb and Garden City to create a Development Envelope for growth and development, limiting development that is not rural or agricultural in nature to the Development Envelope.

Policy 2.2: For townships outside of the Development Envelope, development intensities should match what is appropriate for the township and should be limited to an area near the original plat boundaries.

Policy 2.3: For areas outside of the Development Envelope, residential development should fall under one of the rural classifications in the County's zoning ordinance, agricultural in nature, or in a designated industrial area. In addition, developers must provide proof to the County that they have access to adequate clean water.

Policy 2.4: Development within the designated Development Envelope will be required to connect to city water and sewer provided they are within 400' of an existing line (per Kansas state law) or they will be required to build the necessary infrastructure to easily upgrade to water and sewer district services when they are extended to within 400' of the property.

A Development Envelope should be established between Finney County, Holcomb, and Garden City to define a boundary for future growth between the two municipalities and the County. Working together, these entities can coordinate the existing water district and plan to establish a new sewer district.

Objective #3: Revise Code Enforcement Process

One of the crucial aspects of revising County codes is making sure they are enforced. During the public and stakeholder input process, people expressed opinions that the enforcement of code violations was inconsistent. Currently the Finney County Planning Department is responsible for making the initial contact with land owners in violation. The incident is then given to the Finney County Counselor's Office and dealt with at their discretion. If the Counselor's Office was required to act and issue a citation within 90 days this may help more code enforcement issues be rectified.

Policy 3.1: Finney County may consider revising the County statutes so that code enforcement violations referred to the County Counselor's office are met with a citation within 60 days.

Objective #4: Provide Land for Industrial Growth

In terms of employment, manufacturing is the single biggest sector of the Finney County Economy which means there is a skilled labor ready for new manufacturing businesses. In addition, the public and stakeholder input process showed there is a desire to attract more manufacturing and industrial uses to Finney County. The Burnside neighborhood, zoned Industrial, lacks access to major highways and this has stifled growth in the area. By providing land that is adjacent to both highways and railroads and zoned properly, Finney County can provide an attractive space for new industrial and manufacturing businesses to locate. The Future Land Use Map (Figure 3-3) proposes the areas west of Holcomb and east of Garden City as locations for industrial uses. These areas (about 6,800 acres in total) are close to both highways and

railroads, are buffered from existing residential areas, and are clear of the anticipated growth patterns from incorporated areas.

Policy 4.1: Using the Future Land Use map as a guide, establish specific areas as Industrial land use within the County.

Policy 4.2: Ensure that areas zoned for Industrial are adjacent to major transportation networks, including highways and railroads.

Future Land Use Map

Background Information

Municipal Growth Areas and Future Land Uses

Both Garden City and Holcomb have future land use maps that include future growth areas extending into the County. The Finney County Future Land Use map assumes the County will adopt these future land uses.

Intense Development Should Happen within Cities

Throughout the stakeholder input process, Finney County has expressed a desire to limit unfettered development (specifically residential development) in unincorporated areas of the County. As such the Future Land Use map proposed a Development Envelope that encompasses both Holcomb and Garden City, and includes both cities' future growth areas.



*Figure 3-2: The Dairy Farmers of America production plant in Garden City opened in Fall 2017.
(Source: Shambaugh & Son)*

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Flood Zones

Because FEMA's Special Hazard Flood Areas (SHFAs) border Garden City on the east and both Garden City and Holcomb to the south, this Future Land Use map attempts to direct growth between the two cities. Though there is a SHFA that covers some of the area, there are benefits directing development between the two cities. It is critical that the County work with the cities to mitigate impacts of floodplains.

Future Land Use Priorities

Provide Industrial Growth Areas

Finney County has a strong industrial sector as part of its economy. During the stakeholder and public input process, several parties expressed the desire to attract more industry to the County. Part of this effort will be providing land for new manufacturing businesses to set up shop near major transportation routes. The Future Land Use Map (Figure 3-3 & Figure 3-4) allows for new industrial uses in the areas of the County west of Holcomb and east of Garden City, near the airport. Both these locations are adjacent to major highways and railroads and would provide an additional 6,800 acres of land for industrial operations. These areas are also out of the way of future anticipated municipal growth in hopes that urban and suburban development do not encroach upon them decades from now.

Tiered Growth Opportunity Zones

Currently, some areas within Finney County lack sewer and water districts. In the areas where there is an overlap in existing public water district or sewer district and an opportunity zone, this is deemed a Tier 1 Growth Opportunity, which have the highest potential for development. Areas with only a water district, sewer district, or opportunity zone are Tier 2 priority. These opportunity zones are shown in Figure 3-5.

Establish a Development Envelope

As the incorporated areas of Finney County grow, development (specifically residential development) is starting to spill over into unincorporated areas of the County, leading to health, safety, and welfare concerns. To address these issues, the County can establish a growth boundary, also referred to as a Development Envelope. The proposed boundary on the Future Land Use Map encompasses Holcomb, Garden City, both the cities' future growth areas, and the land in between the two cities. Within the growth boundary, the County can allow more dense development when it is consistent with the surrounding context and when applicants can show proof of adequate water and sewer or septic access. This should be planned in conjunction with Holcomb and Garden City so that future development in this area is eventually annexed by a city.

Outside the boundary, rural developments will go through the County's standard planning process and be recognized through the Planning Commission for approval. The one exception to this would be for the small towns in unincorporated Finney County. For these towns, development with higher than rural intensities should be limited to platted town boundaries but will need to be addressed on a case by case basis through town plans or small area plans.

The area between Holcomb and Garden City is a place the County should consider for future development as both the Cities grow. Though some of it is considered a flood zone according to FEMA, there is a water district in the area and Jones Avenue (the primary connector between Holcomb and Garden City) has high traffic volumes. Both factors will help support future development.

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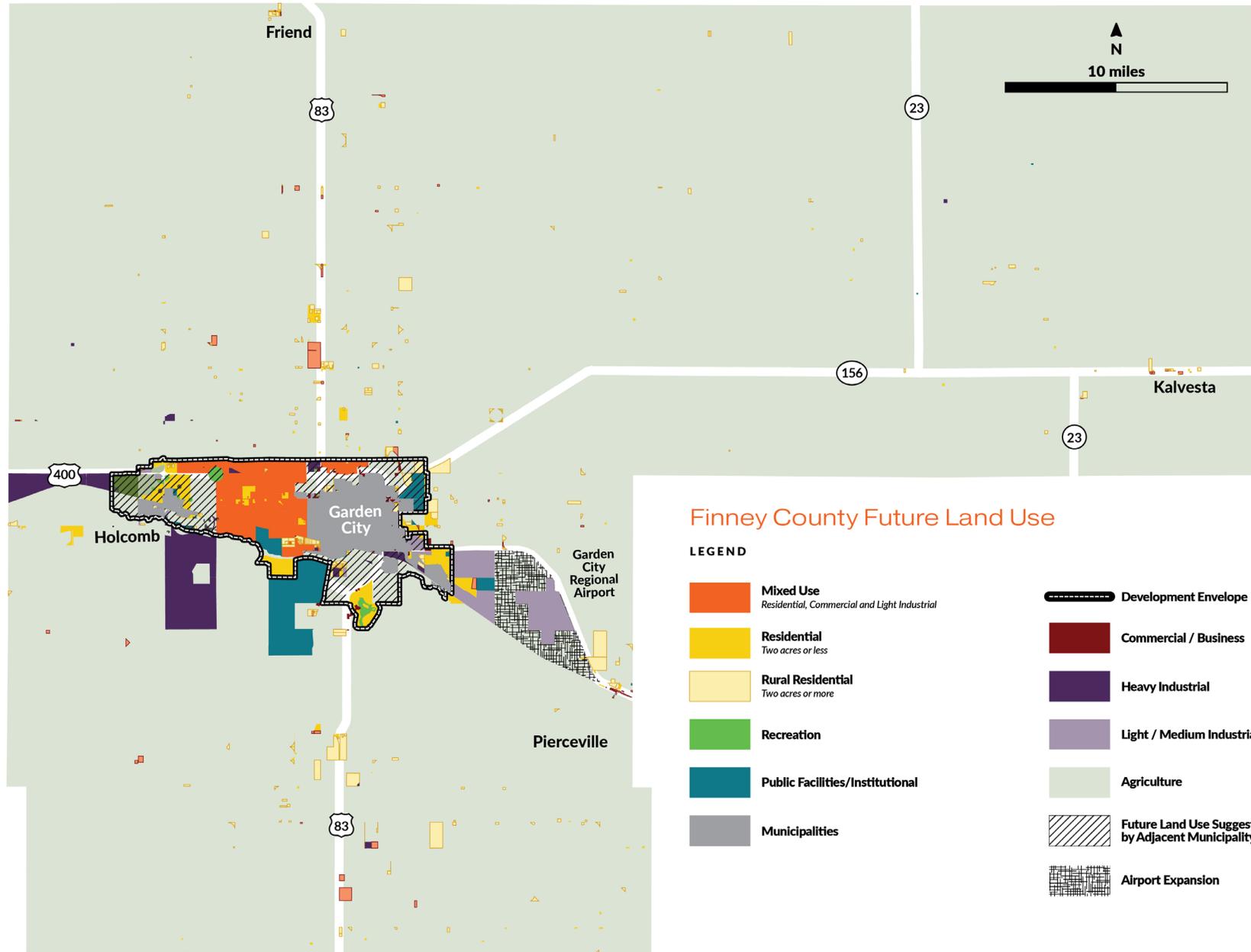
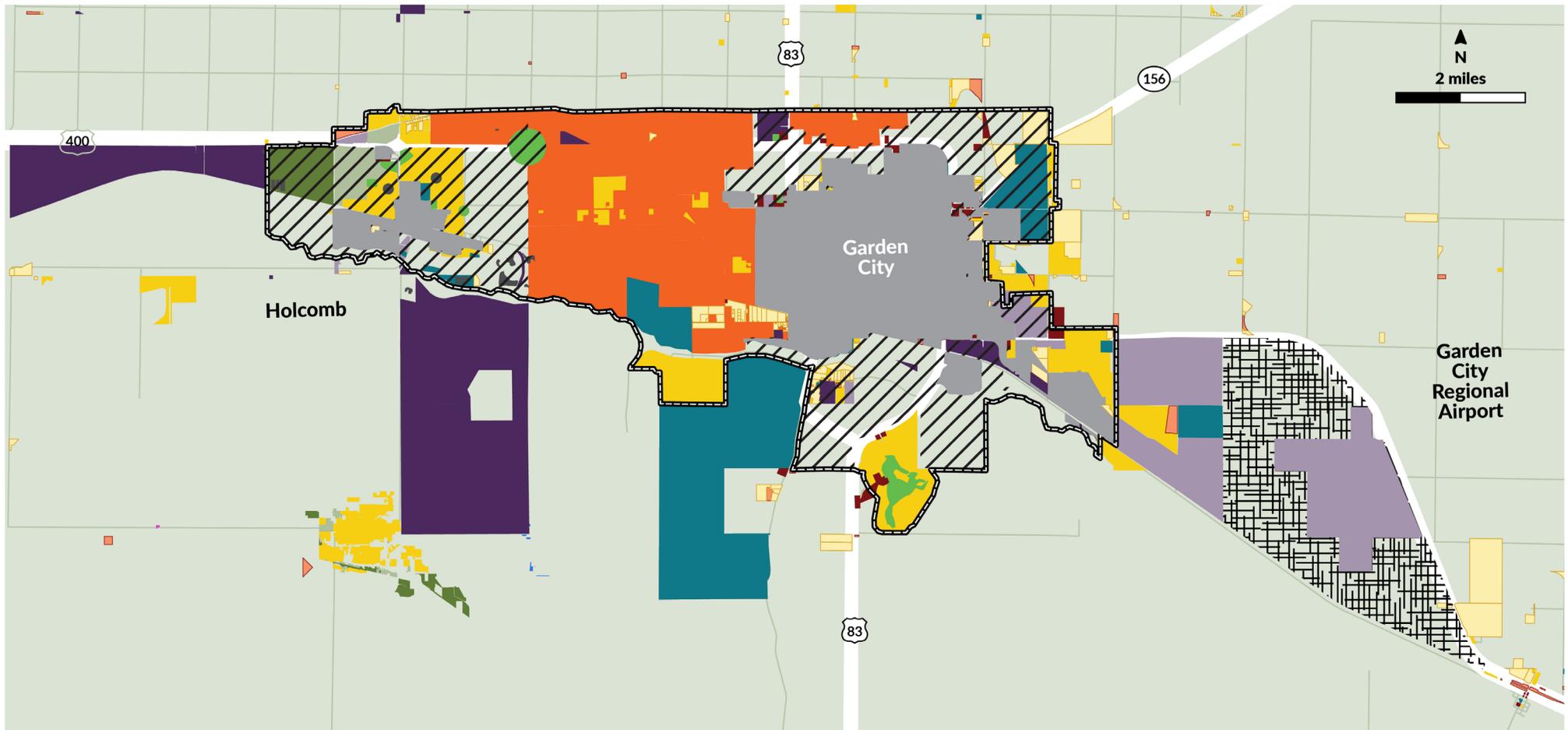


Figure 3-3: Finney County Future Land Use Map

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Finney County Future Land Use

LEGEND

- | | | | | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------|----------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Mixed Use
<i>Residential, Commercial and Light Industrial</i> | Recreation | Commercial / Business | Agriculture | Future Land Use Suggested by Adjacent Municipality | Development Envelope |
| Residential
<i>Two acres or less</i> | Public Facilities/Institutional | Heavy Industrial | Future Land Use Suggested by Adjacent Municipality | Airport Expansion | |
| Rural Residential
<i>Two acres or more</i> | Municipalities | Light / Medium Industrial | | | |

Figure 3-4: Finney County Future Land Use Map - Close Up

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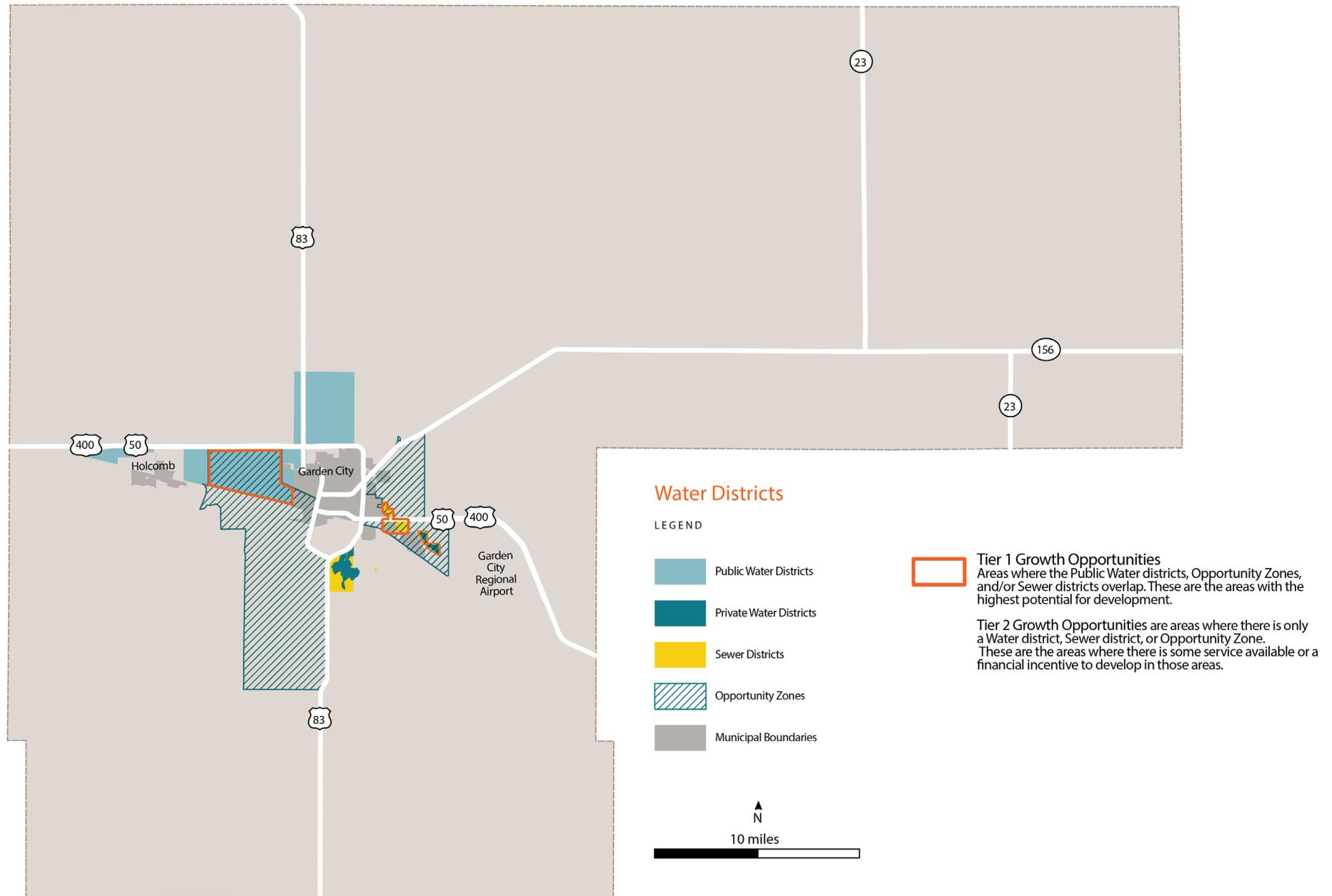
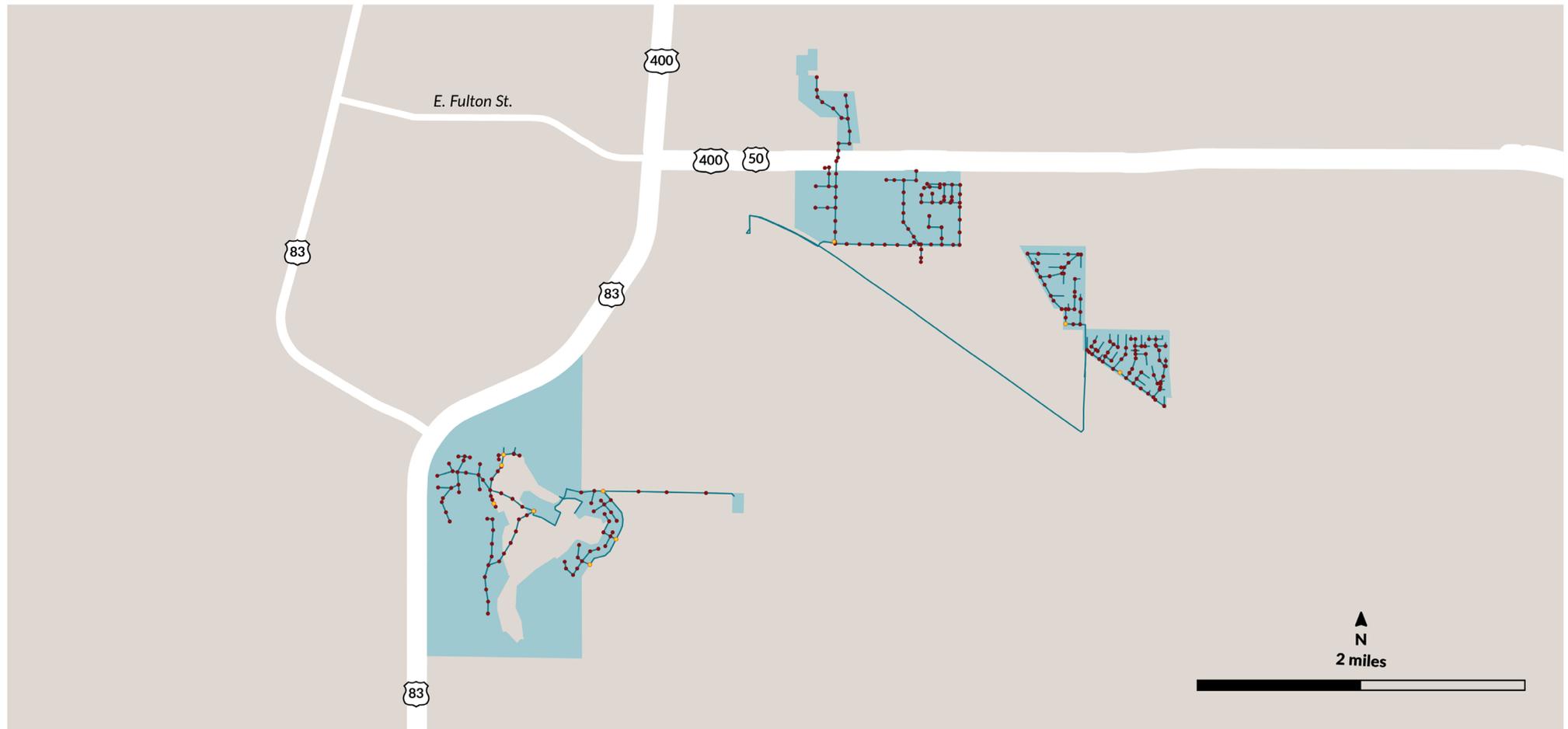


Figure 3-5: Finney County Water Districts and Opportunity Zones

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Sewer Districts

LEGEND

-  Sewer District
-  Water Mains
-  Manholes
-  Lift Stations

Figure 3-6: Finney County Sewer Districts

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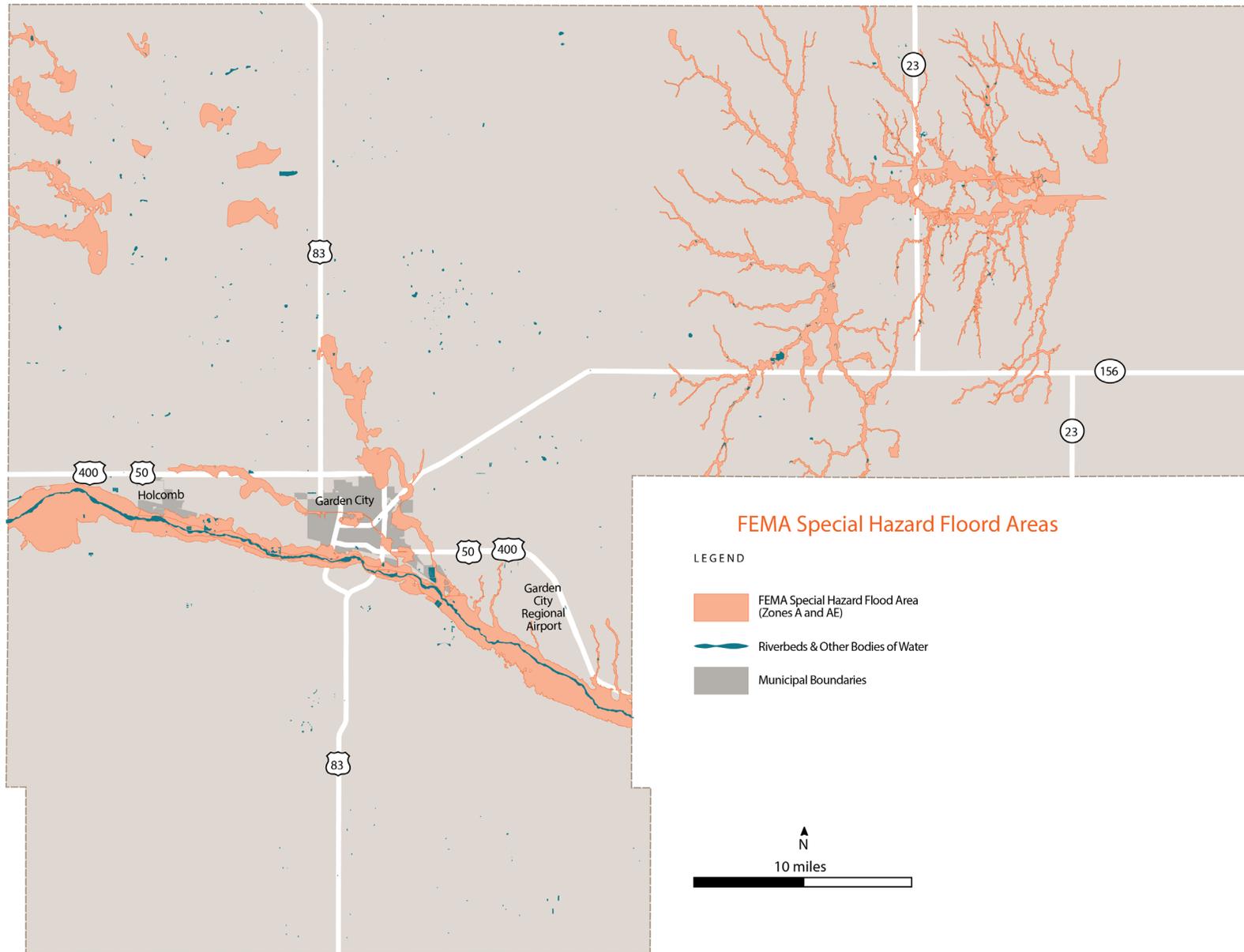


Figure 3-7: FEMA's Special Hazard Flood Areas (SHFAs)

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Table 3-2: Land Use Implementation Strategies

Policy Referenced	Strategies	Implementation Time Frame
Policy 1.1	Continue process for establishing and maintaining a current land use map.	Short-range
Policy 2.1	Work with Holcomb and Garden City to establish a boundary for Development Envelope and revise County Code and Zoning to reflect this.	Short-Range
Policy 2.2	Work with townships in unincorporated Finney County to establish a healthy boundary for growth and development. Revise the County Zoning Map to reflect this.	Medium-Range
Policy 2.3	Revise County Zoning Map to only allow rural residential development and agricultural uses outside of the Development Envelope.	Medium-Range
Policy 2.4	Revise County Codes to require builders within the Development Envelope to build water and sewer systems that can easily tie into water and sewer districts.	Medium-Range
Policy 3.1	Revise County statutes so that code violations sent to the County Counselor’s Office are met with a citation within 60 days.	Medium-Range
Policy 4.1	Using the Future Land Use Map as a guide, study and designate areas east of Garden City and West of Holcomb as industrial land use areas.	Short-Range
Policy 4.2	Ensure that areas zoned for Industrial are adjacent to major transportation networks, including highways and railroads.	Medium – Long Term

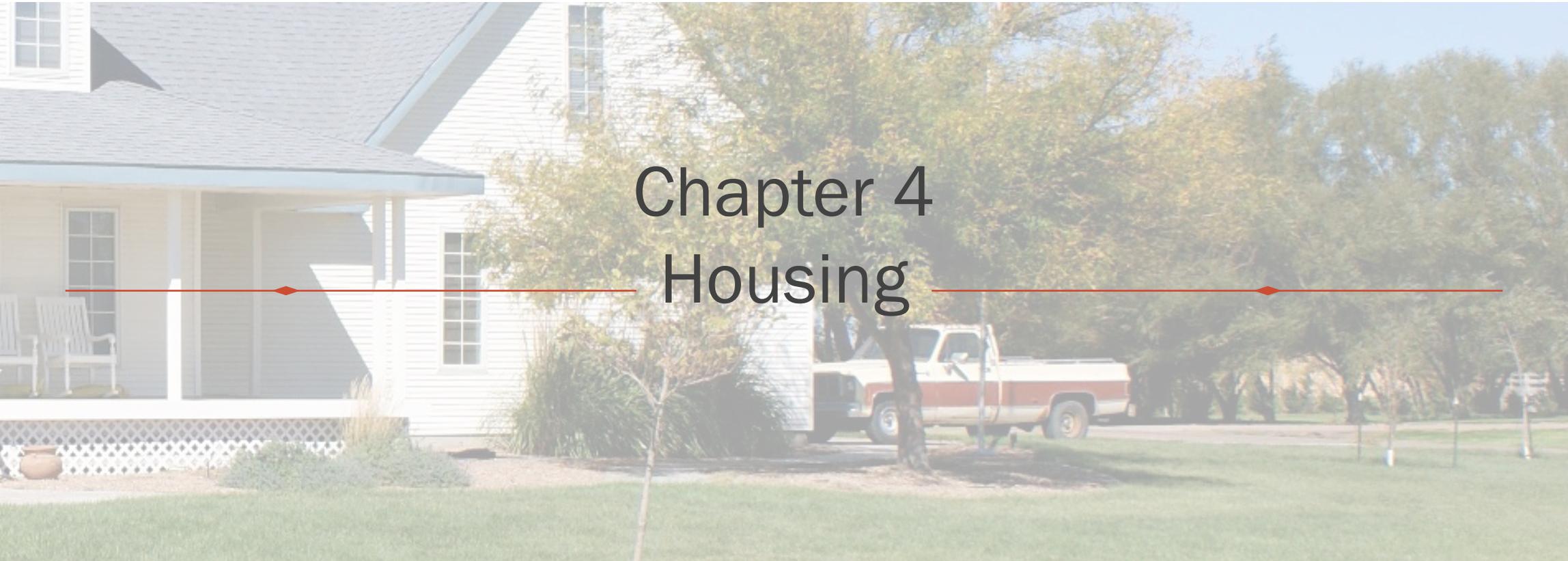
**Short Range Implementation Time Frame = up to 2 years completion target*

**Medium Range Implementation Time Frame = 2-7 years*

**Long Range Implementation Time Frame = 5-10 years*

NOTE: Recommendations to the County Commission are based on information provided in this Comprehensive Plan.





Chapter 4 Housing

Introduction

The baseline housing analysis utilizes data primarily from three sources—Zillow Research, US Census Bureau, and the 2017 Finney County Community Housing Assessment Team (CHAT) Study. The baseline housing analysis represents data collected about Finney County prior to stakeholder and public meetings.

Median Single-Family Home Selling Price			
Year	*Finney County	**Kansas City (Region)	**Kansas (Statewide)
2011	\$117,200		\$132,183
2012	\$125,900		\$137,575
2013	\$139,950	\$152,000	\$145,875
2014	\$136,450	\$152,883	\$146,887
2015	\$146,500	\$163,996	\$158,312
2016	\$162,500	\$173,425	\$163,617
2017	\$169,250	\$186,492	\$168,935

Figure 4-1: Median Single-Family Home Selling Price Data from 2011-2017 (Sources: *Garden City Association of Realtors (<http://gardencitymls.com>); **Center for Real Estate, Wichita State University (<http://realestate.wichita.edu/data-research/>))

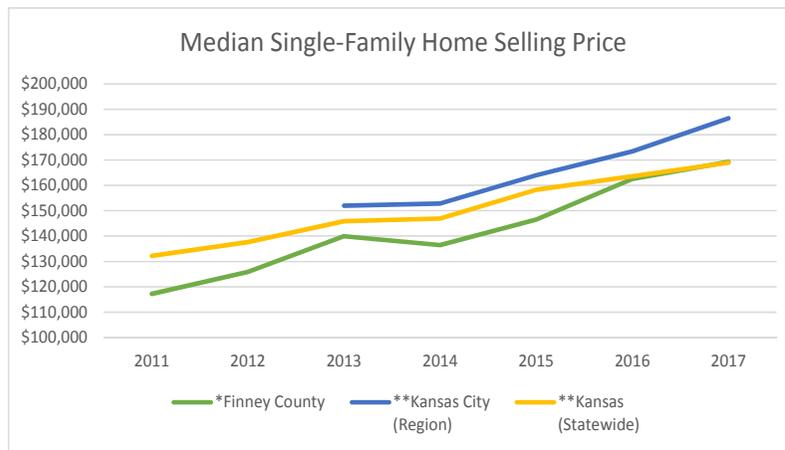


Figure 4-2: Median Single-Family Home Selling Price (Sources: *Garden City Association of Realtors (<http://gardencitymls.com>); **Center for Real Estate, Wichita State University (<http://realestate.wichita.edu/data-research/>))

Finney County Housing Market

Unlike most communities in the United States, the housing market in Finney County withstood the 2008 financial collapse well. The median home values were stagnant for a few years, however, home values in Finney County have climbed since the stagnation. Though this is a sign of a strong local economy, it means that many people were likely priced out of home ownership. As noted during several stakeholder interviews, many Finney County residents believe that there is an inadequate supply of affordable or lower-median level housing.

Affordability

Traditionally, housing affordability metrics look at the median housing cost and the median income. If the median housing cost is 30% or less of the median income, then housing is considered “affordable”. Using this method, the median cost of home ownership in Finney County is calculated to be 22% of the median gross income (Zillow Research) and would be considered affordable. However, because the population in Finney County has increased, the demand for housing, and the price of housing has also risen. From 2011 to 2017 the median home list price increased by nearly 82% (Zillow Research). When the median home listing price is considered in relation to the median gross income, housing cost accounts for almost 35% of the median income, meaning most the homes listed would be outside of the “affordable” range in Finney County.

In addition, the sudden rise in home prices since 2011 contribute to the sense of unaffordability, regardless of the percentage of median income, which is taken into account. As residents become accustomed to spending

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a certain percentage of their income on housing, a sudden and dramatic increase will likely strain their already established budgets. As the cost of housing increases, so too does the cost of other goods and services (World Economic Forum, 2015).

Rental Housing

The 2017 CHAT Study provides the best available data regarding rental housing in Finney County. The study illustrates the need for housing (both equity and rental products) but also outlines very important impacts of the lack of affordable rental housing. Because there is such a high demand for affordable rentals, but too little supply, rent increases will likely continue and may outpace wage growth. At the same time lack of competition for rentals means there is very little incentive for owners and property managers to upgrade rental units.

The 2017 CHAT also suggests that, given incomes in the County, rentals that cost between \$400 and \$1,250 per month will have the highest market demand. This concurs with anecdotal evidence gathered from stakeholder meetings with residents of Finney County. However, many residents also expressed that the current rental products are on the upper end of this range and the quality of the available rentals don't meet expectations—just as the CHAT alludes to.

Median Listing Price

From the bottom of the “Great Recession” in 2011 till now, the median home listing price has increased by nearly 50%.

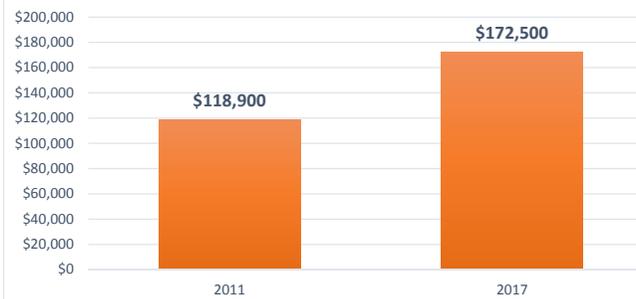


Figure 4-3: Median Listing Price from bottom of recession (2011) to present (2017) (Source: Garden City Association of Realtors (<http://gardencitymls.com>))

Owning vs. Renting

62.1% of Finney County residents own their home, versus renting. This is down nearly 3% from 2013.

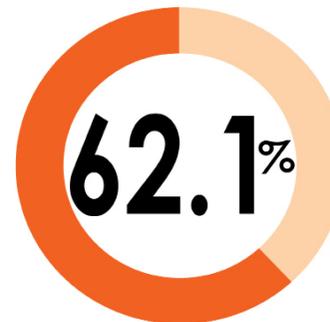


Figure 4-4: Owning vs. Renting in Finney County (Source: American Fact Finder)

Abandoned and Vacant Housing

Finney County Neighborhood & Development estimates about 5% of the County's homes have been vacant and abandoned. These vacant homes create several issues, including safety risks and affecting neighboring property values. Making these homes inhabitable not only increases the housing stock, but it also puts these homes back on County tax roll.

New Homes

The 2017 CHAT also indicates there is a demand for less expensive new build homes. As described in the CHAT (and confirmed by resident input), land prices and development costs have increased the price of new homes to over \$200,000, but earnings data suggests that income-appropriate homes are priced within the \$25,000 to \$100,000 range.

Generally, the baseline data available on housing in Finney County suggests that the cost of housing has increased in a short amount of time, demand for housing has—and continues to—outpace demand, and, thus, new and younger residents may find housing unaffordable.

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Housing Guiding Principles

Throughout the baseline data analysis on housing, as well as the public and stakeholder feedback process, the issues of affordable housing came up repeatedly. Lack of affordable housing leads to a number of other issues including construction of suburban style neighborhoods in unincorporated areas of the County. Addressing the housing issue correctly requires a comprehensive approach that directs housing development and densification to the best suited areas of Finney County. The guiding principles listed below are the driving motivations behind this comprehensive approach.

Help Provide Affordable Housing for All Finney County Residents

Because addressing affordable housing will require a comprehensive approach, Finney County should work with Holcomb and Garden City to address this issue holistically.

Ensure Housing Meets Health, Safety, and Welfare Standards

As more intense development takes place on the outskirts of incorporated areas, Finney County should work with this development to ensure that standards of health, safety and welfare are all met.

Relieve the County of the Cost of Abandoned Properties

Abandoned properties in Finney County cost the County money in terms of back taxes and maintenance. Finney County should work with the cities to get these properties back on the tax roll.

Housing Goal:

Adopt a comprehensive and collaborative approach to housing that protects the health, safety, and welfare of Finney County residents while also providing affordable housing options.

Objectives:

1. Work with cities in Finney County to develop a County-wide Strategic Housing Plan, expanding on the CHAT
2. Revise regulation regarding housing development in the County to improve health, safety, welfare
3. Partner with cities to get abandoned properties back on tax roll



Figure 4-5: Residents walk the neighborhood in a Garden City apartment community (Source: Mary Anne Andrei, Food and Environment Reporting Network)

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Objectives, Policies and Implementation Strategies

Throughout the stakeholder and public input process people expressed repeatedly that housing affordability was an issue in Finney County. Most of this feedback centered around housing prices in Garden City specifically, but because housing is impacted by the policies of Finney County, Holcomb and Garden City all three entities must approach the issue with cohesive and coordinated strategy.

Objective #1: Work with cities in Finney County to develop a County-Wide Strategic Housing Plan, expanding on the CHAT

The information provided by stakeholders, the public, and housing market data paints slightly different picture of housing issues in Finney County, Holcomb, and Garden City. Generally, people expressed that housing in Garden City is seen as unaffordable. People expressed that Holcomb has expensive housing also but if you are diligent enough an affordable place to live can still be found. In Finney County, houses are being built to escape some of the cost of living in a city, but can lead to infrastructure and health problems as many of the areas are not equipped for that development.

If any of these entities acts without coordinating with the other two, then the other two must deal with the fallout of that decision. A County-Wide Strategic Housing Plan (CWSHP) can help limit the impacts of relatively dense residential development in the County while providing affordable housing within municipal boundaries.

Policy 1.1: Finney County will lead the development of a County-Wide Strategic Housing Plan (CWSHP), building upon the CHAT. The CWSHP should support County efforts to direct suburban and urban residential development patterns in the County and assist in revising zoning codes to allow for denser development and smaller lot sizes.

Policy 1.2: The CWSHP should take into account the designated growth and development area (see Land Use) and should strategically plan the phasing, development, and redevelopment of the entire area.



Figure 4-6: Modern Finney County Homes (Source: Zillow)

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Objective #2: Revise regulation regarding housing development in the County to improve health, safety, welfare

With relatively dense housing development in unincorporated parts of the County there are two prominent issues that have been expressed by stakeholders and the public: (1) some homes have inadequate access to potable water, and (2) septic systems are only surviving for about a third of their design life.

Policy 2.1: Finney County should enact more stringent standards for residential building permits and development standards as they relate to septic systems and well water.

Objective #3 Partner with cities to get abandoned properties back on tax roll

Of the 10,000 housing units in Finney County, it is estimated by Finney County Neighborhood & Development that about 5% have been abandoned. By working with investors and contractors, the County may be able to get a good number of these abandoned properties back on the tax roll. The County can offer the homes to contractors, developers, or investors at a minimal cost, with the clear understanding that new owner will have a set amount of time repair the property to a predetermined standard and offer the home either for sale at a price deemed to be affordable, or rent the property at an affordable monthly rate for 5 years.

Policy 3.1: Finney County should work with individuals to get abandoned properties back on the tax roll and either sold in a predetermined affordable price range or rented in predetermined affordable range for 5 years. This will help the County begin to receive property taxes again and will provide more affordable housing.



Figure 4-7: Rural Finney County Subdivision

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Table 4-1: Housing Implementation Strategies

Policy Referenced	Strategies	Implementation Time Frame
Policy 1.1	Finney County will lead the development of a the County-Wide Strategic Housing Plan which includes identifying areas where housing density may be increased and lot sizes may be made smaller.	Medium-range
Policy 1.2	Utilizing the County-Wide Strategic Housing Plan, create a detailed phasing, development, and redevelopment plan for the Development Envelope (identified in the Land Use chapter).	Medium-range
Policy 2.1	Revise County code so the building permits are only issued after builders can prove they have access to an adequate potable water supply.	Short-range
	Revise development standards so that the requirement for septic system size is determined by total square footage or total number of rooms rather than number of bedrooms.	Short-range
Policy 3.1	Conduct a study to determine where abandoned properties are located within Finney County.	Short-range
	Properties that are abandoned and delinquent on taxes should be placed under the control of the cities and/or County.	Medium-range
	The County could offer the abandoned properties to individuals who can repair and resale or rent with specific guidelines as to timeframe and price.	Medium-range

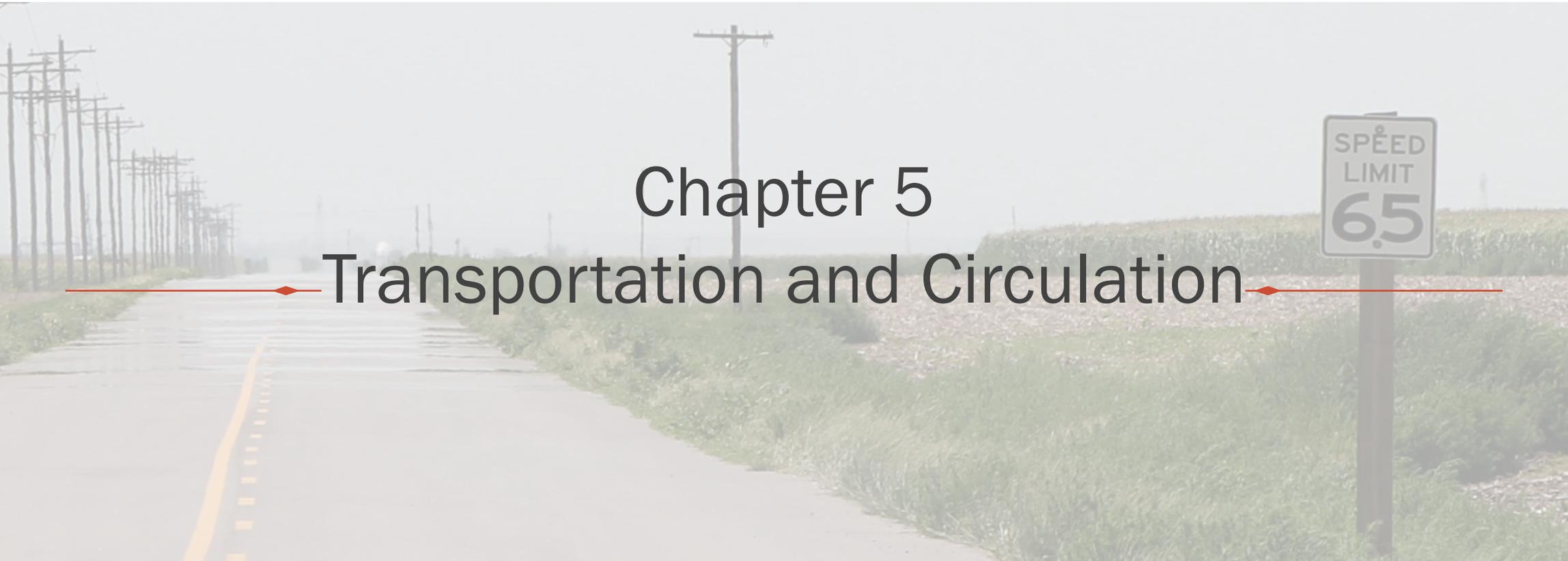
**Short Range Implementation Time Frame = up to 2 years completion target*

**Medium Range Implementation Time Frame = 2-7 years*

**Long Range Implementation Time Frame = 5-10 years*

NOTE: Recommendations to the County Commission are based on information provided in this Comprehensive Plan.





Chapter 5 Transportation and Circulation

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Introduction

The main purpose of this portion of the Comprehensive Plan is to provide guidance and priorities for the future Finney County Transportation System. This Plan will consider the existing transportation network, ongoing and planned transportation projects, input from County transportation stakeholders and input from the community obtained through local engagement opportunities (surveys, public meetings, interviews). The Plan will serve as a strategic guide to help develop short and long-term efficient transportation strategies for implementation.

The existing roadway network in Finney County, based on information provided by the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) Functional Roadway Classification Map (Figure 5-1) includes: Principal Arterials, Minor Arterials, Major Collectors, Minor Collectors and Local Roads. This system is a blend of state highways, County roads (paved/unpaved) and city streets. The focus of this Plan is on the paved/unpaved County roads, city streets near city limits (Garden City and Holcomb) and local roads within unincorporated communities (Friend, Kalvesta, and Pierceville). The most prominent “principal arterials” within the County are US-83 (two-lane highway), US-50/US-400 (a four-lane divided highway east of the City of Holcomb and a two-lane highway west of Holcomb), and the most important “minor arterial” is Highway 156/Kansas Ave (two-lane highway).

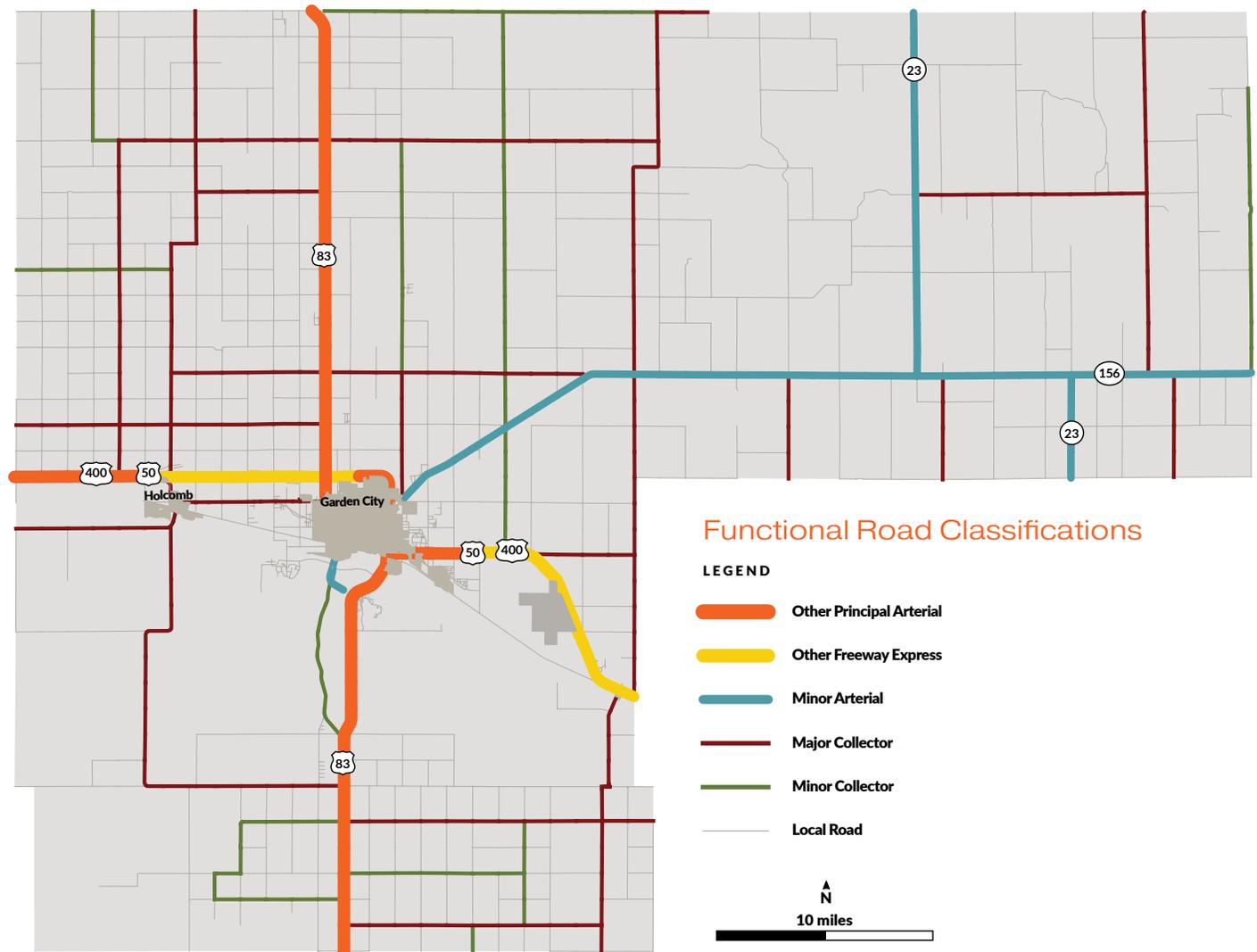


Figure 5-1: Functional Roadway Classification Map (Source: Kansas Department of Transportation)

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

According to KDOT's Long Range Transportation Plan (2008), routes such as US-50 and US-83 "are non-interstate routes with limited access, high-speed travel, long distance truck traffic and statewide significance." Routes such as K-156 and K-23 "are routes for regional travel and connect to high-speed, limited-access roads."

The paved County roads are classified as "major collectors" and "minor collectors." The major collectors are considered a part of the Federal-aid secondary highway system (FAS system). FAS roads consist of primarily farm-to-market roads, rural mail and public school bus routes, local rural roads, higher volumes County and township roads. These roads are chosen by KDOT and Finney County with approval by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

Street and Roadway Maintenance

According to the Finney County website:

Public Works is responsible for the County's infrastructure consisting of over 1,225 miles of roadway stretching across 1,302 square miles of land. The road system is made up of 232 miles of asphalt roads, 995 miles of gravel roads, 40 bridges and numerous other drainage structures. Our primary responsibilities are maintenance and construction of roads and bridges within Finney County.

Figure 5-2 shows a typical paved County road in Finney County, with a description of the planned schedule of road maintenance. Figure 5-3 shows a typical gravel County road, with road maintenance as described.



Figure 5-2: Typical Paved County Road – Finney County, KS (Source: WSP)

Paved Road Maintenance Schedule:

- 5 year cycle:
 - Sealing (chip/seal)
- 20 year +/- cycle:
 - Overlays
 - 8 to 10 miles a year



Figure 5-3: Typical Gravel County Road – Finney County, KS (Source: WSP)

Gravel Road Maintenance Schedule:

- Gravel Roads (as needed):
 - Grade shoulders
 - Re-gravel

Note: Finney County Road and Bridge manages and operates its own sand and gravel pit, producing materials for use on County roads. The operation produces a variety of materials including road gravel, sealing sand, and aggregate for asphalt.

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Passenger Rail (AMTRAK) on BNSF Railroad

The Kansas Statewide Rail Plan (2017) notes that "Intercity rail passenger service in Kansas is provided by Amtrak's Southwest Chief route. The Southwest Chief is part of Amtrak's long-distance service network with daily service between Chicago and Los Angeles. The cities of Lawrence, Topeka, Newton, Hutchinson, Dodge City and Garden City are served by this train" (Figure 5-4). Riders boarding and departing the Garden City Station increased by 4.3% between 2010 (7,075) and 2016 (7,378) according to Amtrak. It is projected that riders boarding and departing between 2014 and 2044 will decrease by -0.8 % per year at the Garden City Station.

In FY 2016, Amtrak reported the following performance measures regarding their support in Kansas:

- Earnings: \$3,646,000
- Employment: 70 employees
- Value Added: \$2,438,000

Truck/Rail Transload Facility

The transload facility in Garden City is served by BNSF Railway. Owned and operated by Transportation Partners and Logistics, LLC, it is the largest transload facility in North America at more than 600 acres. Transportation Partners and Logistics, LLC is a full-service logistics provider serving manufacturers throughout Finney County and across the globe by managing the transportation of products, including wind generation components, solar panels, aggregate, lumber, and more.



Figure 5-4: Amtrak Passenger Rail (Source: Flickr, Zach Pumphery)

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Garden City Western Railway Inc.

The Kansas Statewide Rail Plan (2017) notes that the “Garden City Western” (GCW) has been in business since 1916, serving the agricultural market of southwestern Kansas by connecting Garden City to the unincorporated communities of Wolf, KS to the west and Friend, KS to the north (Figure 5-5). The rail line’s customers ship grain (wheat and milo), farm equipment, feeding ingredients, molasses, peanut meal, fertilizers, frozen foods, and petroleum products. In addition, several other products, such as utility poles, are shipped in and out of a large rail-to-truck transfer facility located on the GCW in Garden City. In 2016, the railroad handled approximately 1,460 carloads on their 45 miles of rail lines. Currently, the GCW has three full-time employees. The GCW serves rural Finney County businesses who deal in these agricultural commodities.

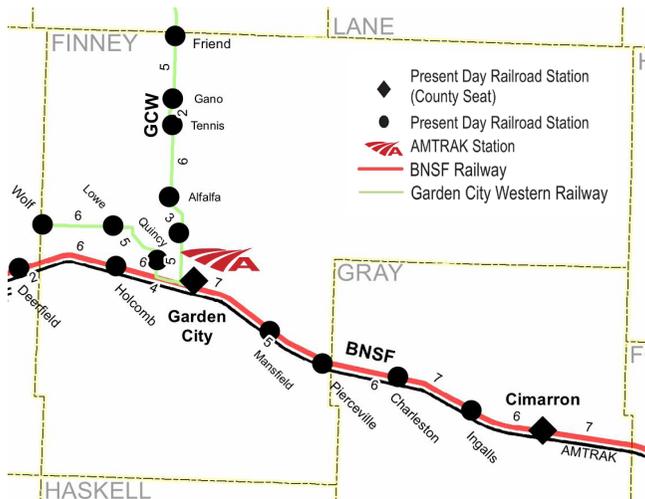


Figure 5-5: Finney County Railroad Map (Source: Kansas Railroad Map 2017)

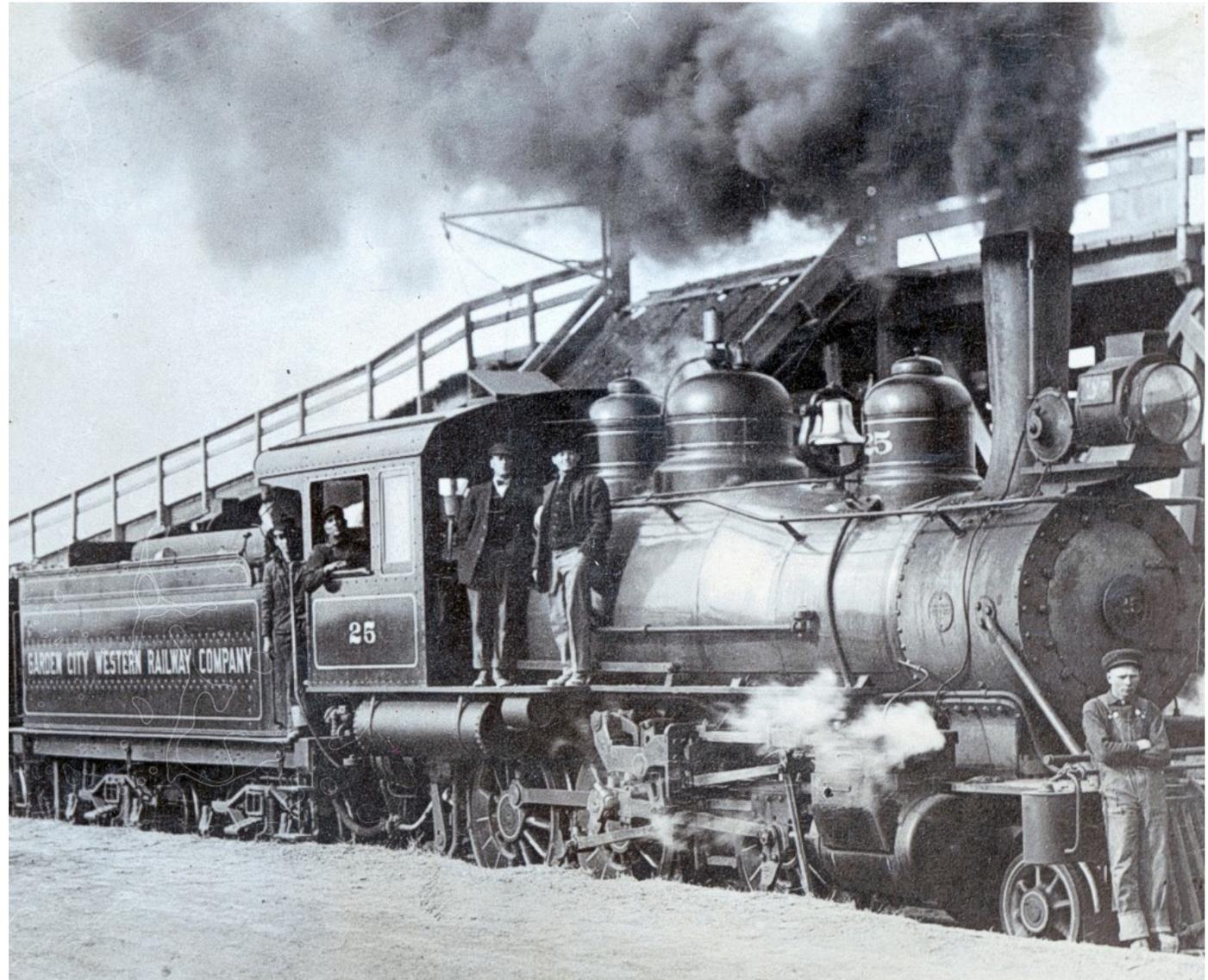


Figure 5-6: Garden City Western Rail - Early 20th Century (Source: Finney County Convention and Visitors Bureau)

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Existing Traffic Counts

Based on the 2015 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) maps obtained from KDOT (Figure 5-7), areas with unusually high traffic volumes within the County include some of the major collector roads between Garden City and Holcomb as well as south of Holcomb which has AADT's of up to 3,870 vehicles per day (vpd). This is also near the Tyson Plant which is the largest employer in Finney County with over 3,000 employees. For functional classification of roadways, please refer to Figure 5-1.

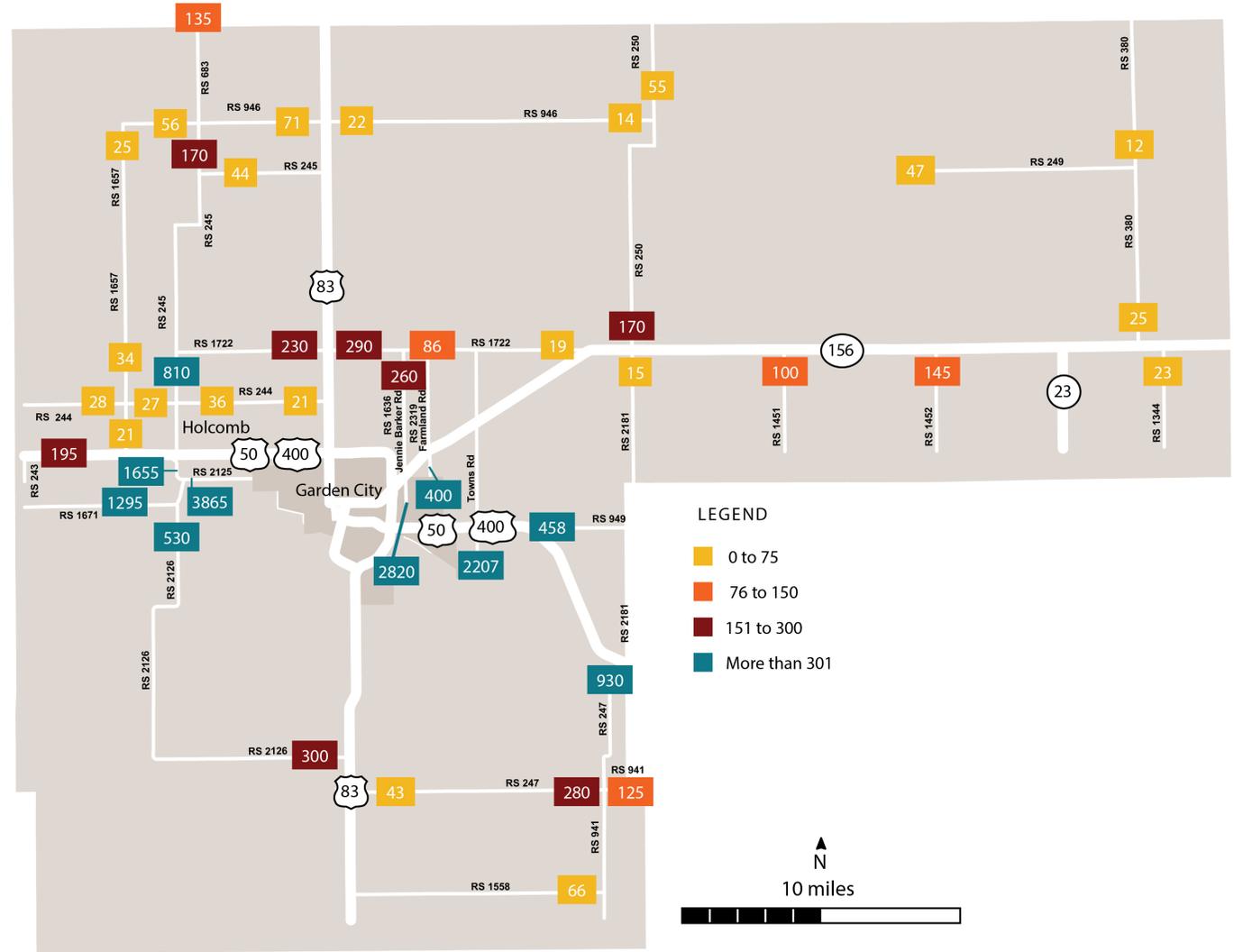


Figure 5-7: Finney County 2015 Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) - Kansas Department of Transportation

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Existing Crashes and Analysis

A five-year crash analysis (2011 – 2015) of Finney County showed that 3,070 crashes were reported within this period. Eighteen percent (543) of the crashes resulted in injuries while one percent (25) resulted in fatalities. Sixty-two percent of the total crashes occurred within the city limits of Garden City while two percent occurred within the City of Holcomb.

Finney County Crash Analysis (Outside Urban Areas)

Forty-eight percent of the injury and fatal crashes within Finney County occurred outside of urban areas (includes crashes on rural state highways). The number of injury and fatal crashes occurring in rural areas was stable through the five-year period (an average of just over 50 per year) Figure 5-8.

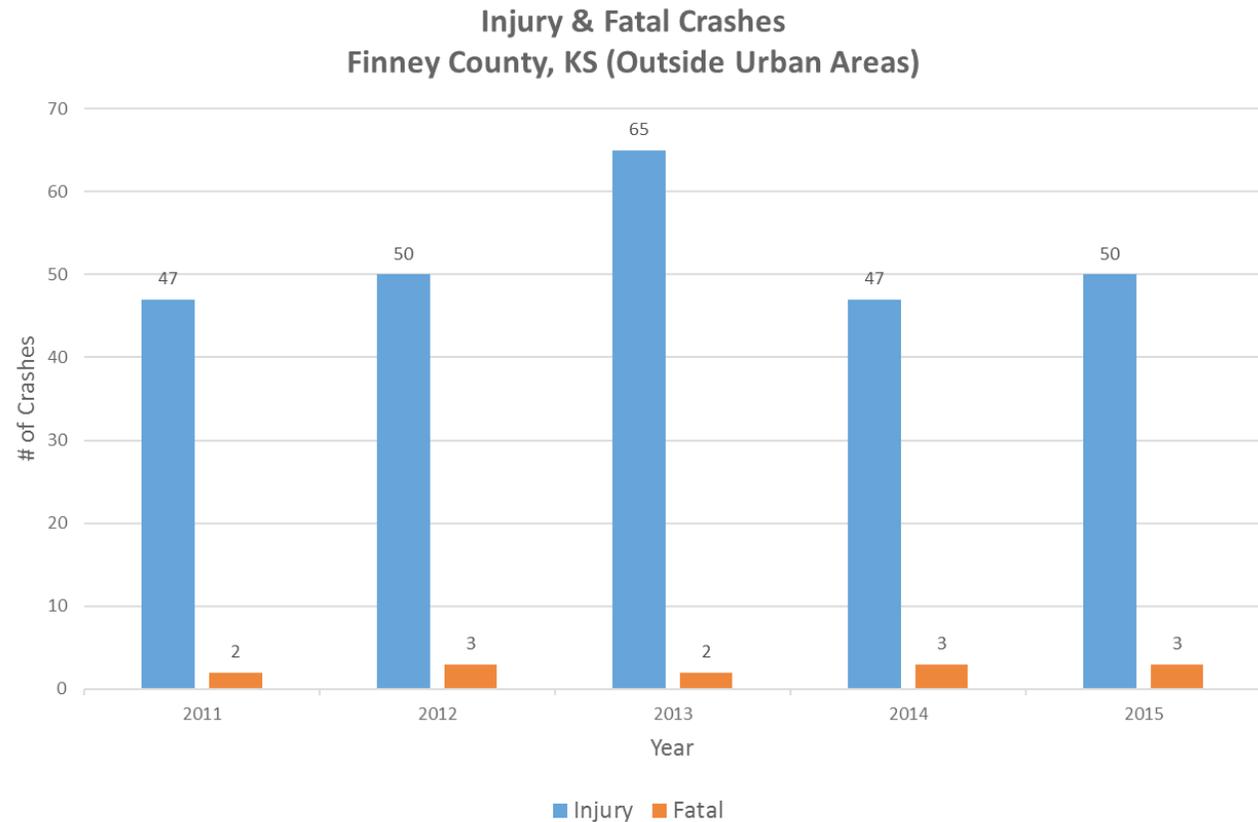


Figure 5-8: Finney County Crashes (Outside Urban Areas), 2011 - 2015

The highest number of injury and fatal crashes in rural areas are the single vehicle roadway departure crashes that result in striking a fixed object (61) or overturning their vehicle (70) for a total of 131. Collisions with other motor vehicles was second with 122. Angle side impact crashes accounted for 18% while rear ends accounted for 17%.

Of the total 3,070 crashes in Finney County, 8% (249) involved large commercial trucks or semis. 54 (22%) of the truck related crashes resulted in injuries while two crashes resulted in fatalities.

Source: Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT)

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Rural County Road Crashes

Of the total 3,070 crashes in Finney County, eight percent (243) occurred along rural County roads. Sixty-one percent of these crashes occurred on paved County roads (148) while thirty-nine percent occurred on unpaved roadways (95) (Figure 5-9 and Figure 5-11).

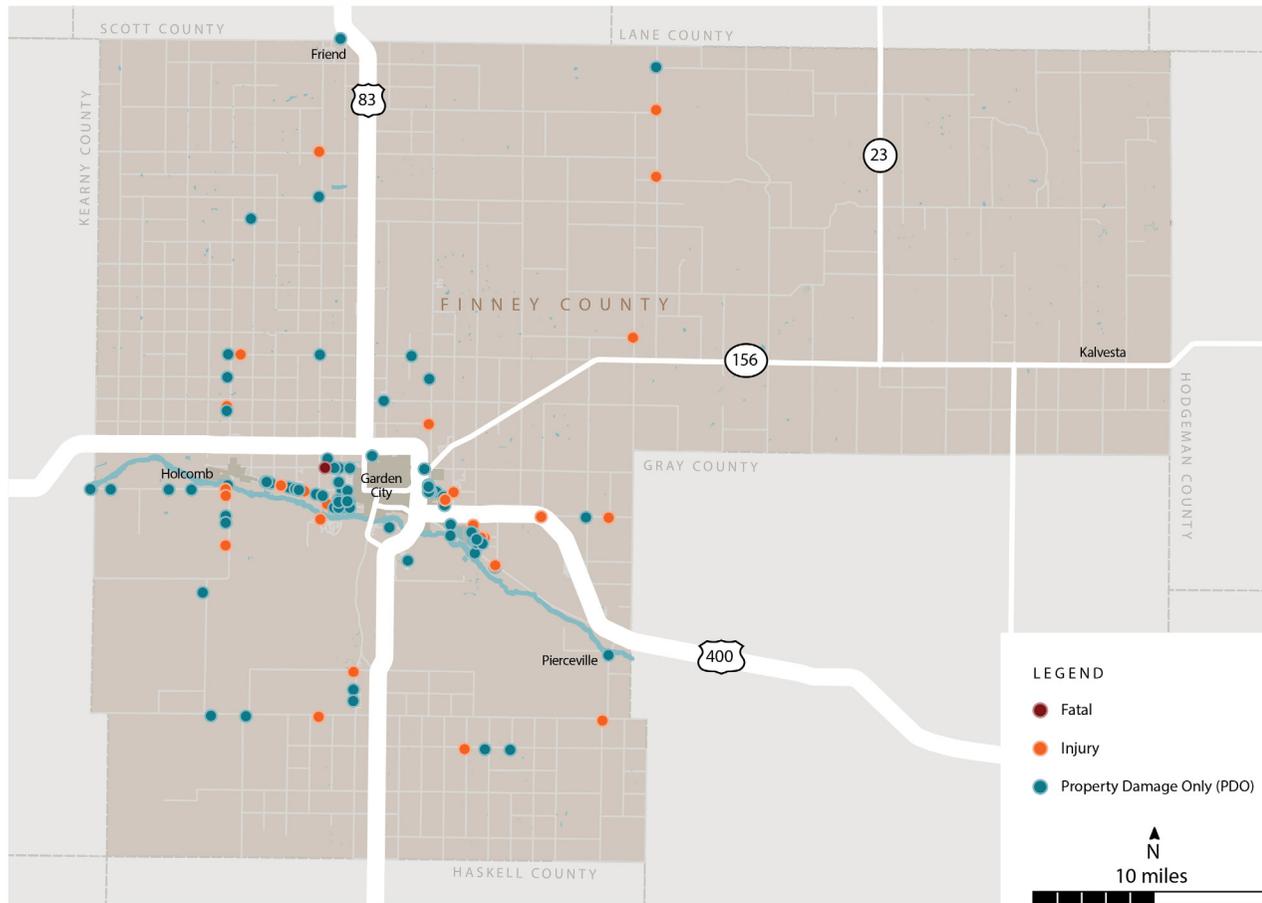


Figure 5-9: Paved County Road Crashes (PDO, Injury and Fatality) in Finney County (Jan 2011 – Dec 2015)

Crashes on paved County roads included: animal (27), fixed object (62), other motor vehicle (37), parked vehicle (2), pedestrian (2), and overturned (18).



Figure 5-10: Finney County Rural Road (Source: WSP)

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Existing Trail Infrastructure

There are currently no trails for pedestrians and bicyclists within the unincorporated areas of Finney County. All existing trails are located within the cities of Holcomb and Garden City; however, no trail currently exists that connects these two cities. Pedestrians and bicyclists instead utilize existing roadway sections for transportation, which provides little separation between vehicles.

Public Transportation

Finney County Transit (FCT) is comprised of fixed-route transit with “City Link” buses (implemented 09/06/07), a Mini Bus ADA Paratransit service and Demand Response Bus. City Link operates with 60 minute headways (see Appendix for City Link bus routes). The term ‘headway’ is defined as the time between buses picking up and dropping off passengers at bus stops within a transit system. For example, if you can catch a bus that “comes every hour,” then the service you ride has a headway of 60 minutes. FCT Demand Response bus service (door-to-door) is available to the elderly, disabled and general public in Finney County who reside at least 3/4 mile beyond City Link fixed route area outside Garden City's city limits on a first come first serve basis. Passengers are asked to schedule their ride 24 hours in advance. Demand Response County fares range from \$2.00 within 5 miles of the city limits (Garden City) to \$6.00 within 25 miles of the city limits. According to the FCT website: “Finney County Transit provided 80,850 rides in 2016 on the City Link and the Mini Bus” (<http://www.seniorcenterfc.com/transportation.html>).

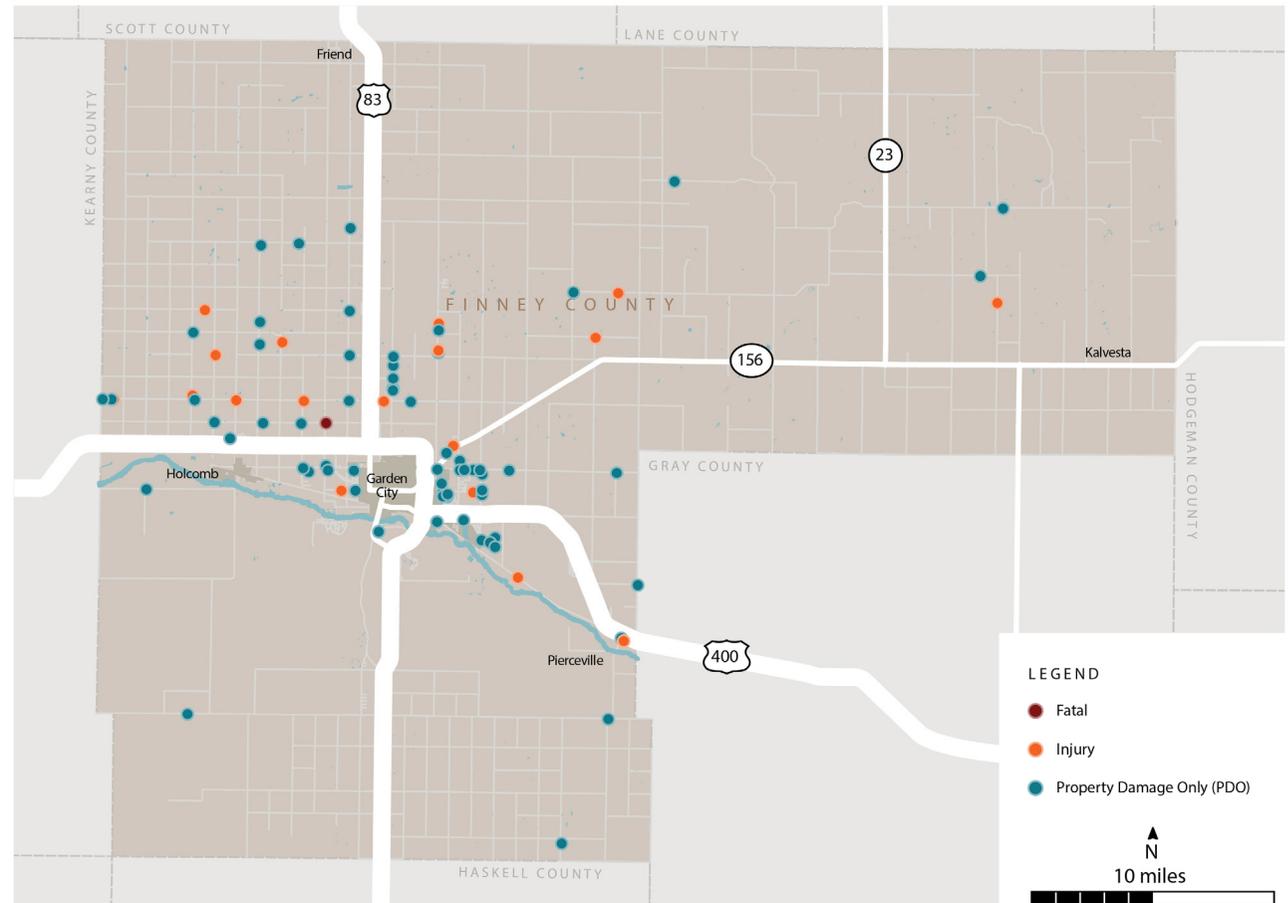


Figure 5-11: Unpaved County Road Crashes (PDO, Injury and Fatality) in Finney County (Jan 2011 – Dec 2015)

Crashes on non-paved roads included: animal (8), fixed object (38), other motor vehicles (18), other object (2), parked vehicle (2), and overturned (27).

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Transportation and Circulation Guiding Principles

Providing a Safe and Efficient Transportation System

Providing a safe and reliable tiered system of rural highways, arterials, collectors and local roads promote opportunities for new industrial, commercial and residential developments in the unincorporated areas of Finney County. Providing opportunities for safe and efficient travel in rural areas, and between cities, will improve the quality-of-life for Finney County residents.

Connecting the Community

Providing a transportation system that connects cities and rural areas of Finney County to education, employment, recreation, entertainment, commerce, services and other places is essential for a sustainable community. Promote the use of multi-modal transportation options (walking, biking and public transit) on infrastructure that is designed to accommodate multi-modal travel.

Accommodating Transport of Goods and Services

Accommodating the transport of goods and services in Finney County for industries such as agriculture, livestock, intermodal freight, food processing plants, ethanol and other truck based enterprises is important for the local economy. Designing for large trucks as a part of future transportation improvements projects, on specific roadways, will serve the needs of these industries.

Transportation and Circulation Goal:

Finney County will provide a transportation system that maximizes safety and efficiency for all users including motorists, pedestrians, bicyclists and transit riders; encourage active transportation and support public transit; and accommodate the transport of goods and services .

Objectives:

1. Plan and implement a system of bicycle infrastructure focused on connecting communities within Finney County
2. Support the expansion of Finney County Transit's fixed-route bus system (City Link) while reducing headways, or the time between buses, to 30 minutes or less
3. Utilize systemic low-cost safety improvements to improve safety on the Finney County Road Transportation System
4. Utilize Access Management strategies for new and existing roadways to improve safety, efficiency and promote economic activity in Finney County
5. Provide a transportation system that accommodates the transport of goods and services and is fiscally sustainable for Finney County and its residents
6. Support improvements to the Kansas State Highway System that improve quality-of-life for Finney County residents



Figure 5-12: Truck routes in Finney County (Source: WSP)



Figure 5-13: Roads are tiered by rural highways, arterials, collectors, and local roads (Source: WSP)

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Objectives, Policies and Implementation Strategies

A safe and efficient multi-modal transportation system in Finney County is essential to supporting connectivity, economic growth, and improved quality of life for County residents. This subsection focuses on existing conditions issues, identified through the public engagement process, that result in the following recommendations to change or enhance the transportation system in Finney County.

Objective #1: Plan and implement system of bicycle infrastructure focused on connecting cities within Finney County

Policy 1.1: Finney County should reach out to the bicycle community in Garden City/Holcomb/Finney County to determine current and future needs for bicycle infrastructure within the County Transportation System.

Objective #2: Support the expansion of Finney County Transit's fixed-route bus system (City Link) while reducing headways, or the time between buses, to 30 minutes or less.

Policy 2.1: Finney County should support Garden City, KDOT, and Finney County Transit in the review of routes and efficiencies for City Link fixed-route bus system into the future.

Objective #3: Utilize systemic low-cost safety improvements to improve safety on the Finney County Road Transportation System.

Policy 3.1: Finney County will work with Kansas Local Technical Assistance Program (LTAP) at the University of Kansas to receive training, and partner with other Kansas counties, regarding systemic safety strategies on the County Transportation System.

Policy 3.2: Finney County should utilize available programs within KDOT's Bureau of Local Projects/ Bureau of Transportation Safety & Technology focused on improving safety on the County Transportation System.

Objective #4: Utilize Access Management strategies for new and existing roadways to improve safety, efficiency and promote economic activity in Finney County

Policy 4.1: Finney County should determine the impact of developments on their County Road System by requiring developers to compensate the County for the transportation improvements needed to accommodate those impacts.

Objective #5: Provide a transportation system that accommodates the transport of goods and services and is fiscally sustainable for Finney County and its residents

Policy 5.1: Finney County supports the transportation needs of local land owners involved in agriculture, livestock, intermodal freight, food processing plants, ethanol, and other rural industries.

Policy 5.2: Finney County should partner with Holcomb, Garden City and KDOT to share resources needed to maintain the County Transportation System.

Policy 5.3: Finney County will be an active member of the Kansas County Highway Association (KCHA) to receive training, and partner with other Kansas counties, regarding the County Transportation System.

Objective #6: Support improvements to the Kansas State Highway System that improve quality-of-life for Finney County residents

Policy 6.1: Finney County should actively communicate with KDOT Area and District Personnel, as well as the Kansas Legislature, regarding future priorities on the State Highway System affecting County residents.

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

KDOT Future Transportation Program/Local Consult Meetings Strategy

Finney County relies on state and federal transportation funds to assist with implementation of roadway improvement projects. The Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) develops a list of key projects in each of six districts through Local Consult Meetings every three to five years in preparation of a future Transportation Program. Factors involving project selection include: key growth corridors, engineering data, economic impact analysis and local input.

One project has thus far been selected for preliminary engineering work in Finney County to have the project ready for construction when funding becomes available.

- The US-83 passing lanes from Oklahoma to K-4 project includes 2 miles of passing lanes for construction including an interchange area. The construction cost for this project is \$27.7 million.

There are also four additional projects that are currently candidates for Preliminary Engineering work (Table 5-1).

The Southwest Bypass and Northeast US-400/US-50 Bypass concepts were not included in the list of key projects during the last round of Local Consultation Meetings. However, if it is a priority for Finney County, it should be discussed as a priority with KDOT to be considered in future transportation programs.

Table 5-1: KDOT Finney County Transportation Projects Planned for Preliminary Engineering Work

Project Description	Scope	2016 Est Cost (Millions)	Length (Miles)	Notes
US-83 Passing Lanes from 2.5 miles north of Haskell-Finney County Line to Garden City	2-Lane of 4-Lane ROW	30	13	Selected for Preliminary Engineering Work. No funds for construction.
US-50 Expansion from Kearny-Finney County Line to Holcomb	4-Lane Expressway	25	6	Candidate for Preliminary Engineering Work
US-50 East of Garden City to Finney-Gray County Line	4-Lane Expressway Passing Lanes	16 8	4	
Garden City to Welbe Road	Passing Lanes	24	10	Candidate for Preliminary Engineering Work
Welbe Road to Finney-Scott County Line	Passing Lanes	19	14	Candidate for Preliminary Engineering Work

Source: Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT)



Figure 5-14: Photo of “Rumble Stripe” on K-156 in Hodgeman County. A rumble “strip” is placed directly under the white edge-line pavement marking when there is a narrow shoulder.

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LEGEND

-  Future US-400/US-50 NE Bypass
-  Future SW Bypass
-  E. Fulton St. (US-50) improvements: Campus Dr. to S. Jennie Barker Rd.
-  Farmland Rd. Improvements: US-400/US-50 to Mansfield Rd.

See Chapter 3 Land Use and Chapter 4 Housing for further discussion on future land use and housing development strategies.

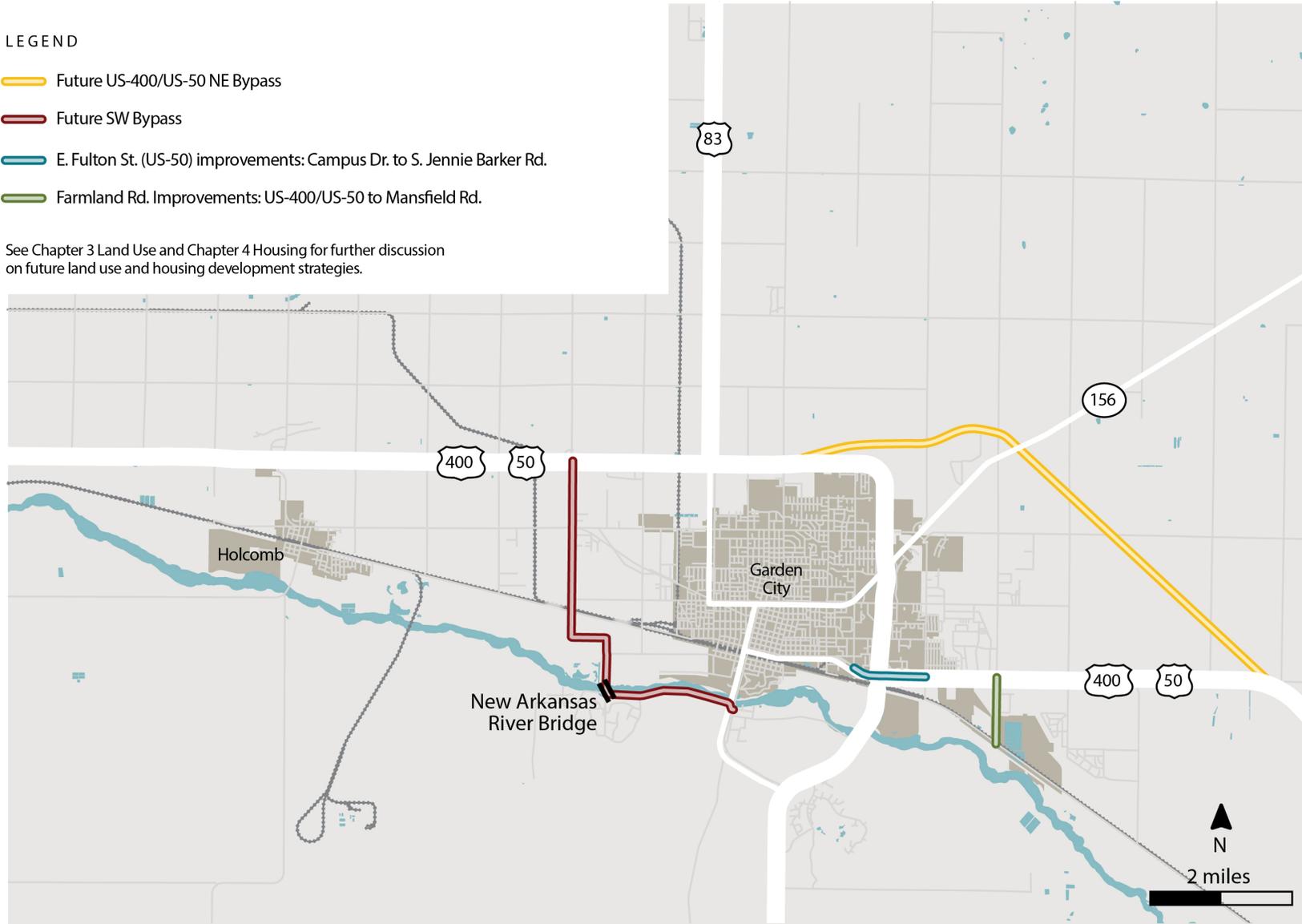


Figure 5-15: Planned and Proposed Future Improvement Projects

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

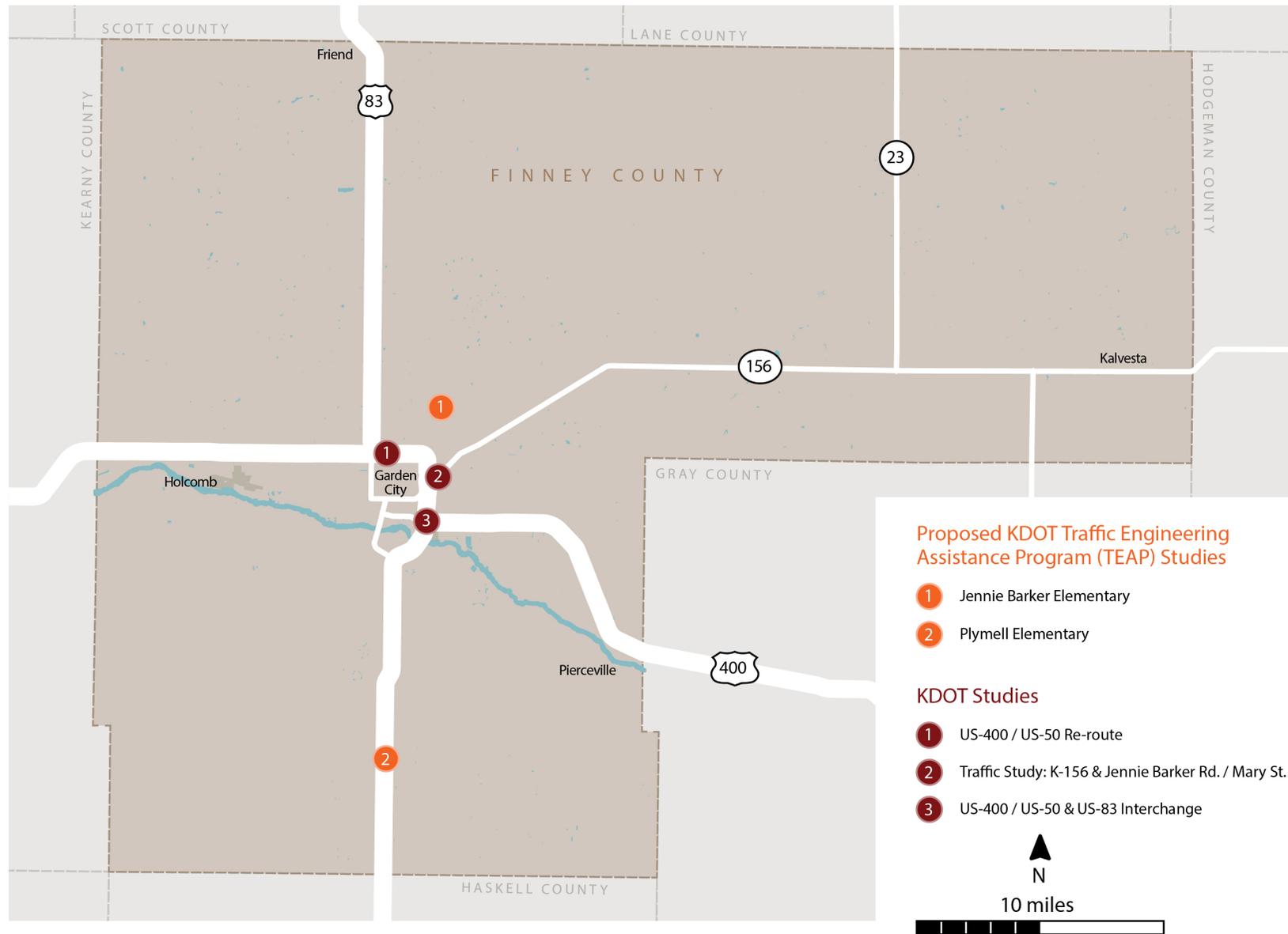


Figure 5-16: Proposed Future Traffic Studies

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LEGEND

- Sand Hill Trail — Phase II
- Sand Hill Trail — Phase I
- Garden City to Holcomb Trail 1
- Garden City to Holcomb Trail 2 (Adjacent to future SW Bypass)
- Talley Trail (existing)



Figure 5-17: Proposed Future Trails

Note: Additional alignment concepts for the Garden City to Holcomb Trail should be investigated such as a trail parallel to Railroad Avenue. This may be included as part of the development of a “Bicycle Master Plan” for Finney County.

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Table 5-2: Transportation and Circulation Implementation Strategies

Policy Referenced	Strategies	Implementation Time Frame
Policy 1.1	Support the development of a Bike Finney County working group in partnership with LiveWell Finney County, Holcomb and Garden City to identify current and future bicycle infrastructure needs prior to developing a “Bicycle Master Plan”	Short-range
	The County should support the development of a “Bicycle Master Plan” in partnership with Garden City and Holcomb. Note: This included options for extending the existing shared-use-path at Talley Trail from Garden City to Holcomb.	Mid-range
	The County should develop project plans for the Sand Hill Trail connecting the Finnup Park / Lee Richardson Zoo / County Fairgrounds with the Southwind development via US-83 Bus, E Burnside Dr (Phase II Shared Roadway) with a new shared-use-path along US-83 into Southwind (Phase I). Note: Transportation Alternative(TA) application was submitted to KDOT in the summer of 2017.	Mid-range
Policy 2.1	The County should support the development of a “Transit Master Plan” in partnership with Garden City/Holcomb and KDOT.	Mid-range
	Investigate opportunities to provide transportation to/from the Garden City Regional Airport through public transit, shuttle or private network transportation services such as Uber.	Mid-range
Policy 3.1	The County should implement a practice of installing edgeline pavement markings on County roadways with 1,000 or more Average Daily Traffic (ADT).	Short-range
Policy 3.2	Contact KDOT’s Bureau of Local Projects regarding their “Local Roadway Safety Plan” Program to add Finney County on their list of counties who are interested in participating.	Short-range
	Contact KDOT’s Bureau of Local Projects regarding their “TEAP Study” Program (as needed) for Traffic Studies to be performed at locations where there is a concern for safety in the County. Two potential candidates are a review of Rural School Zone Signing at Plymell Elementary and Jennie Barker Elementary.	Short-range
	The County should participate in a KDOT Traffic Study at the intersection of K-156 & Jennie Barker Road / Mary Street (initiated in Fall of 2017) to investigate the need for safety and intersection control improvements.	Short-range
Policy 4.1	The County should require developers to complete a Traffic Impact Study (TIS) per guidance in KDOT’s Access Management Policy (2013)	Short-range
	The County should support the development of an “Access Management Plan” in partnership with Garden City/Holcomb and KDOT	Long-range
	The County should support studying a SW Bypass alignment connecting S. Main St. to US-400/US-50 via S. River Dr, S Wilderness Dr and N Anderson Rd/W Cable Street.	Long-range

5 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

Policy Referenced	Strategies	Implementation Time Frame
Policy 5.1	The County should support improving Farmland Road from US-400/US-50 to Mansfield Rd to 26 ft wide with full depth pavement replacement.	Long-range
Policy 5.2	County Road Supervisor should communicate regularly with Garden City Road Supervisor and KDOT Area Maintenance Supervisor to share resources as appropriate.	Short-range
	The County should support KDOT adding “Rumble Stripes” on K-156 in Finney County. This project is an extension of rumble stripes that were installed on K-156 in Hodgeman County in 2008. A “Rumble Stripe” is a rumble “strip” placed directly under the white edge-line pavement marking when there are narrow shoulders.	Mid-range
	The County should support highway safety enhancement efforts by adding wider shoulders to K-156 and K-23, while adding passing lanes to US-83 and US-400/US-500, as part of a future State Transportation Program.	Long-range
Policy 5.3	Finney County Public Works is interested in establishing permits for oversized/overweight loads. These permits would specify allowable routes for oversized/overweight loads to travel on the County Road System. Communicate with the KCHA and/or LTAP office regarding examples of other Kansas Counties who issue OS/OW permits.	Short-range
Policy 6.1; 3.2	Finney County should request a Traffic Study be performed by KDOT at the US-400/US-50 (E. Fulton St.) & US-83 interchange regarding the inability for oversized WB vehicles (primarily wind blade loads) to traverse the loop ramp travel south on US-83 due to the tight radius. These trucks are required to go north on the US-83 by-pass and then turn-around to travel back to the south (double the trips on the bypass). (See Section: KDOT Future Transportation Program / Local Consult Meetings Strategy)	Mid-range
Policy 6.1	The County should support the reconstruction of US-400/US-50 (E. Fulton Dr.), from Campus Drive to Jennie Barker Road. This project is in the Top 5 list of KDOT 1R projects for FY 2018. (See Section: KDOT Future Transportation Program / Local Consult Meetings Strategy)	Mid-range
	The County should support KDOT’s interest in determining a US-50/US-400 reroute to take some of the load off the current by-pass. This was included as part of the US-400 Corridor study back in early 2000’s. (See Section: KDOT Future Transportation Program / Local Consult Meetings Strategy)	Long range

**Short Range Implementation Time Frame = up to 2 years completion target*

**Medium Range Implementation Time Frame = 2-7 years*

**Long Range Implementation Time Frame = 5-10 years*

NOTE: Recommendations to the County Commission are based on information provided in this Comprehensive Plan.





Chapter 6 Economic Development

6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development

A strong and growing economy is critical to the success of any community. This section of the comprehensive plan describes past and current economic trends and offers insights into how the County might best position itself for future growth. Additionally, issues such as income distribution and employment area will be discussed. By understanding the current conditions in Finney County's economy and business development, this will help in strategizing a plan to achieve goals.

Economic Factors

Although agricultural land dominates Finney County, the area's economy is varied and becoming more diverse as new industries and enterprises take hold. Currently, the manufacturing sector is the largest, accounting for nearly 20% of all jobs, followed by retail trade employment, health care and social assistance, and educational services. The chart in Figure 6-1 shows that over the past 10 years, the number of agricultural jobs have declined by 22%, while jobs in other sectors have taken their place.

As the County's economy has diversified, it has also grown moderately in recent years, as the unemployment rate has continued to fall since the Great Recession of 2008. At 3.2%, the unemployment rate has declined more sharply than that of neighboring counties, suggesting that economic growth is stronger in Finney County than in most other areas of western Kansas. The trend in the unemployment rate from 2000 – 2014 in Finney County and neighboring counties is shown in Figure 6-2.

Yet despite these successes, Finney County still relies heavily on major employers such as Tyson Fresh Meats, an enterprise that employs more than 3,000 people—twice as much as the second highest employer in the County, the public school system. Although new industries have grown in the County, most of these enterprises do not rely on a significant work force. Should large employers like Tyson Fresh Meats shut down or relocate, the economic consequences for the County would be severe.

Another challenge for the County is the reported difficulty that new residents face when trying to find

affordable housing options. This issue is seen as a hindrance to further economic expansion in Finney County. Despite these challenges, Finney County remains well-positioned for future economic growth. As expressed during stakeholder meetings, residents and County leaders alike are optimistic about future opportunities for growth. Finney County leaders and residents are eager to share their opinions on the measures that can be taken to attract more businesses and enhance the quality of life in the community, such as attracting more diverse businesses, providing technical training within local schools, and continuing to attract large, agricultural producers.

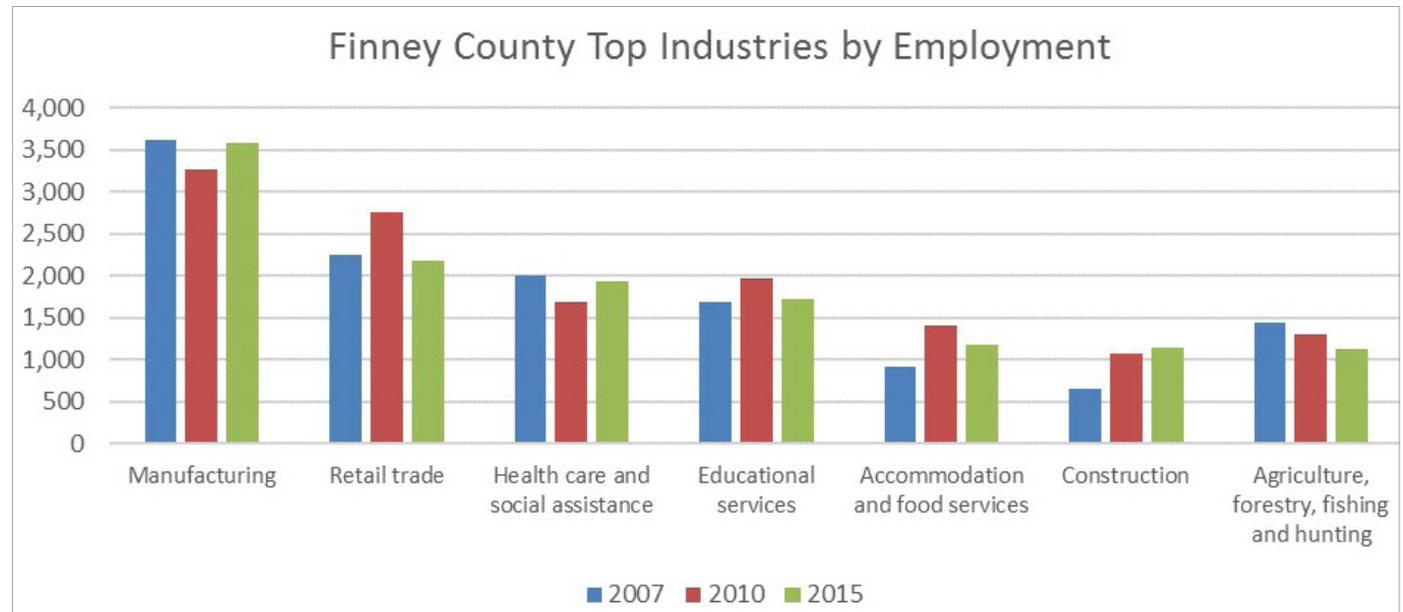


Figure 6-1: Finney County Top Industries by Employment (Source: ACS 2007, 2010, 2015)

6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

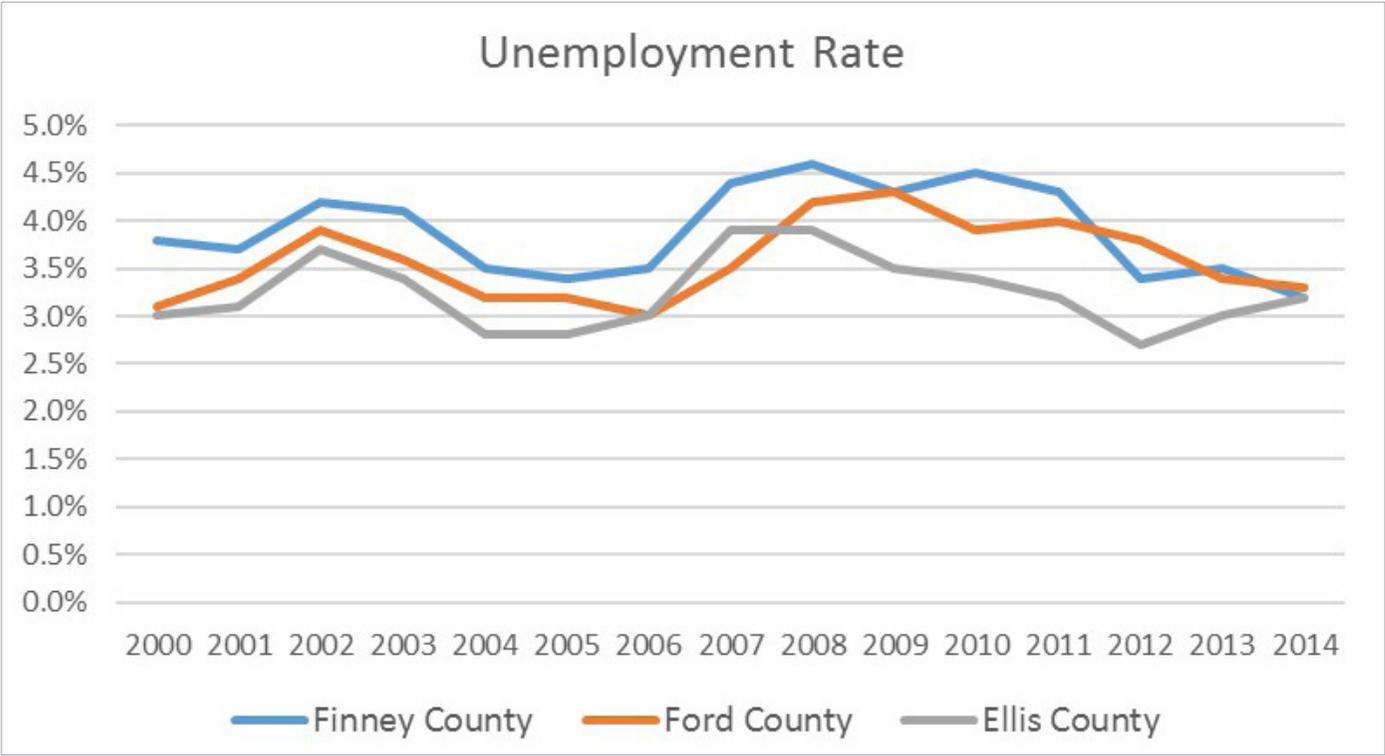


Figure 6-2: Unemployment Rate (Source: BLS 2015)

Note: Comparison of Finney County, Ford County, Ellis County Unemployment Rates



Figure 6-3: Schulman Crossing (Source: Collett)



Figure 6-4: Dairy Farmers of America opened a plant in Garden City in November 2017 (Source: Dairy Business)

6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Economic Development Guiding Principles

The guiding principles for economic development reflect the feedback and ideas received from residents across the County on ways for economic growth to advance, and new opportunities to flourish in Finney County. These principles are intended to leverage Finney County's strength as a regional center for commerce, so as to attract additional, diverse businesses that will provide jobs across a range of industrial sectors. In particular, many residents encouraged County leaders to advance policies that diversify the agricultural sector in the County and bring innovation to this important industry. Additionally, County residents recognize the importance that Downtown Garden City serves as a regional draw for visitors and businesspeople across Western Kansas and beyond. A strong Downtown Garden City economy benefits everyone in Finney County, and residents encouraged city leaders to advance plans that can continue the recent momentum around developing Downtown Garden City into a premier destination.

Promote a vibrant and diverse economic base in the County—including the agricultural sector

Finney County will attract and support a wide range of business and agricultural enterprises that provide diverse job opportunities to residents.

Support the development of a vibrant and active Downtown Garden City

Follow the recommendations of other studies that encourage the development of Downtown Garden City into an attractive regional center for commerce, entertainment, and affordable housing options.

Provide “quality of life” improvements that can attract and retain new workers and fulfill the needs of Finney County’s growing businesses

The County will work with area businesses to develop strategies that can help attract the new workers needed to support growing businesses.

Economic Development Goal:

Finney County will continue to serve as a regional economic engine, home to a robust and innovative agricultural sector, while also cultivating a diverse range of new businesses, entrepreneurs, and economic opportunities for the benefit of current and future residents.

Objectives:

1. Continue to diversify the economic and industrial base of the County's economy
2. Support efforts to develop Downtown Garden City into a regional draw that can offer economic opportunities to all the County's residents
3. Support the needs of existing employers while continuing to attract a wide range of major employers to the County

6 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Objectives, Policies and Implementation Strategies

Finney County will continue to serve as a regional economic engine, while also cultivating a diverse range of new businesses, entrepreneurs, and economic opportunities for the benefit of current and future residents.

Objective #1: Continue to diversify the economic and industrial base of the County’s economy.

Policy 1.1: Explore new partnerships and strategies to attract non-traditional industries and businesses.

Policy 1.2: Explore new partnerships and strategies with local students and schools to build opportunities for retaining local talent within the community.

Objective #2: Support efforts to develop Downtown Garden City into a regional draw that can offer economic opportunities to all the County’s residents.

Policy 2.1: Collaborate with the City on ordinance changes or other efforts to enhance the business and community offerings in Downtown Garden City.

Objective #3: Ensure that new workers and their families, attracted to Finney County’s economic opportunities, have affordable housing options and a high quality of life.

Policy 3.1: Support the development of additional housing options in the County, including the siting of multi-family housing options where appropriate.

Table 6-1: Economic Development Implementation Strategies Implementation Strategies

Policy Referenced	Strategies	Implementation Time Frame
Policy 1.1	Support the efforts of the Finney County Economic Development Corporation to convene County stakeholders, identify targets for economic expansion, and recruit new businesses.	Short range
Policy 1.2	Partner with local schools, including Garden City Community College, Garden City High School, and Holcomb High School, to establish technical training and trade school programs that can keep students and local talent within the community, as well as providing valuable, employable technical skills.	Short-Medium range
Policy 2.1	Review the recommendations contained in the Garden City Downtown Market Study and provide support where appropriate.	Short-Medium range
Policy 3.1	Work with municipalities and neighborhood stakeholders to increase housing options.	Medium-range

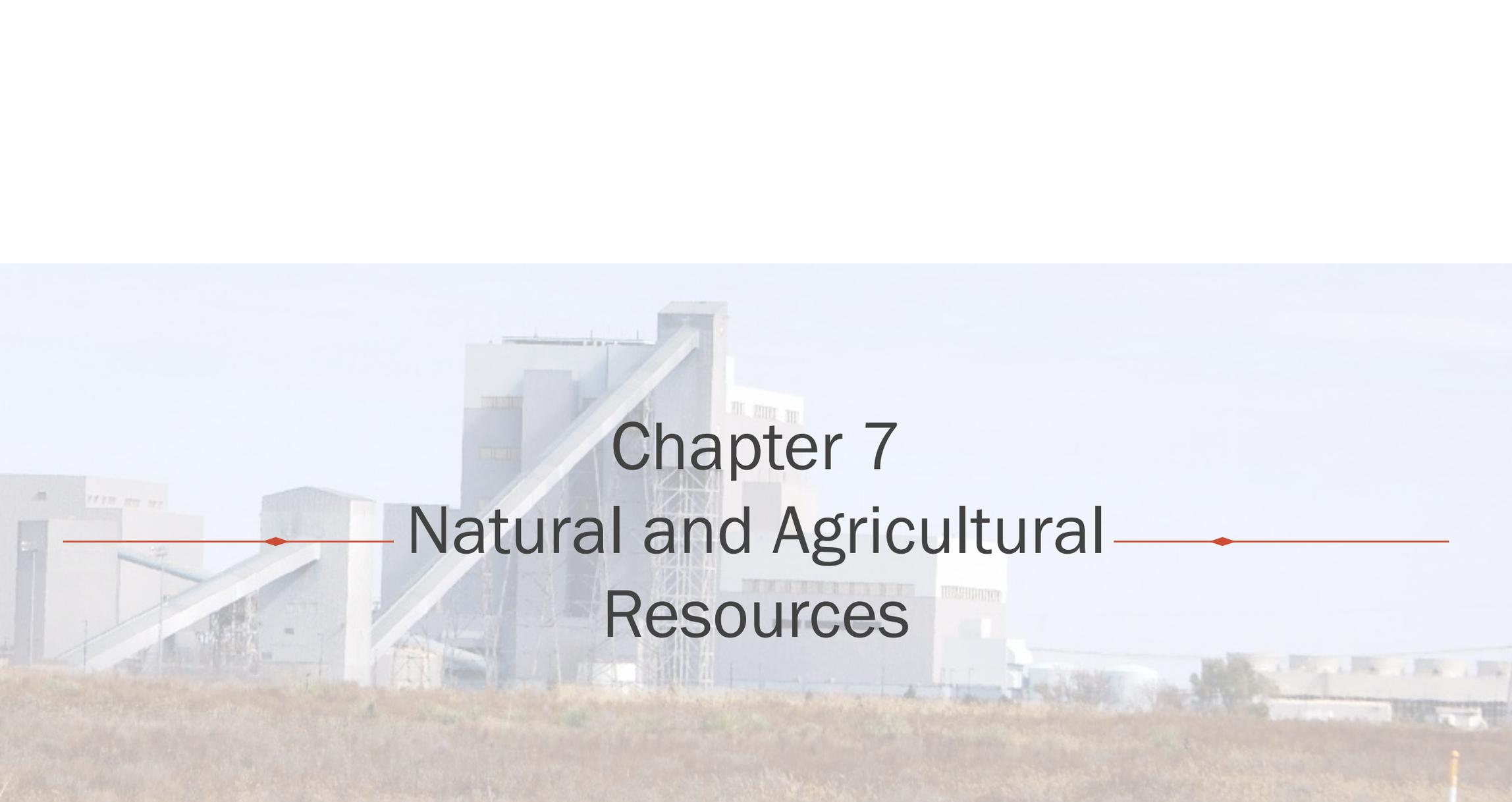
**Short Range Implementation Time Frame = up to 2 years completion target*

**Medium Range Implementation Time Frame = 2-7 years*

**Long Range Implementation Time Frame = 5-10 years*

NOTE: Recommendations to the County Commission are based on information provided in this Comprehensive Plan.





Chapter 7 Natural and Agricultural Resources

7 NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Introduction

Agriculture has long been a driving force in the economy, lifestyle, and culture of Finney County. Nationally, the area is well-known for its rich crop yield and prominent beef production. In Finney County, Tyson Fresh Meats is the largest employer with over 3,000 employees. Per the most recent Census for Agriculture (2012), Finney County has about 500 farms and over 815,000 acres in farm land, with the average farm size at 1,635 acres. The most common crops are wheat, corn, and sorghum.

As the economy and population of Finney County continue to grow, it is important to citizens for the area to maintain its character. The County should be mindful of new developments adjacent to agricultural areas and how the juxtaposition of redevelopment may affect the community. As discussed in Chapter 3: Land Use, lots adjacent to farmland may not be as conducive to residential or commercial due to odors and dust. The County should be strategic in planning future developments and be mindful in how the overall fabric of the community may be affected. As expressed during multiple stakeholder meetings, community members are proud of the agricultural heritage that Finney County was built on and they hope to maintain this industry for generations to come.

Water Supply

Droughts affect more people in North America than any other natural hazard. The cost of losses due to drought in the United States averages \$8-9 billion each year. During 2000-2006, low stream flows resulted in record low levels in Federal reservoirs. An unprecedented number of decisions made by the Kansas Department of Agriculture and Division of Water Resources curtailed water diversions from rivers to maintain minimum desirable streamflow. As shown in Figure 7-1 and Figure 7-2, water level in the Arkansas River has been non-existent to barely present. Shortage in natural running water has led to several challenges in providing adequate water for the residents and farms of Finney County. Some of the key challenges to water supply in the County currently include:

- The Arkansas River has run intermittently over the past decade
- Decreased precipitation has led to droughts
- Water storage is limited to an existing number of groundwater wells

Soils in Finney County can be characterized as sandy soils, which are highly erodible. As the water table and supply of groundwater under these lands decline, the valuation of these lands can also diminish. Some property and land owners have encountered problems with land devaluation due to groundwater levels, which can lead to other issues and challenges. Based on the Comprehensive Plan survey, some residents in Finney County have reported unsatisfactory conditions with their well water.



Figure 7-1: Arkansas River in Garden City, March 2018
(Source: WSP)



Figure 7-2: Arkansas River in Garden City, February 2013
(Source: Andrew Clark, USGS)

7 NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Groundwater supply has also become a key issue for Finney County. Currently, the extraction rate from the Ogallala Aquifer outpaces the recharge rate, raising challenges for maintaining a sustainable groundwater supply, as shown in Figure 7-4. At its current rate, it would take 6,000 years to replenish these resources naturally (Michigan State University). Based on historic data, this resource could be depleted within decades. Significant portions of the Ogallala Aquifer are at risk

of drying up if it continues to be drained at its current rate. To curb water usage and reduce the rate of decline in the aquifer, several partners in Kearny and Finney Counties are currently working toward establishing water management policies.



Figure 7-3: View of Arkansas River under Main Street bridge in Garden City, KS (March 2018). (Source: WSP)

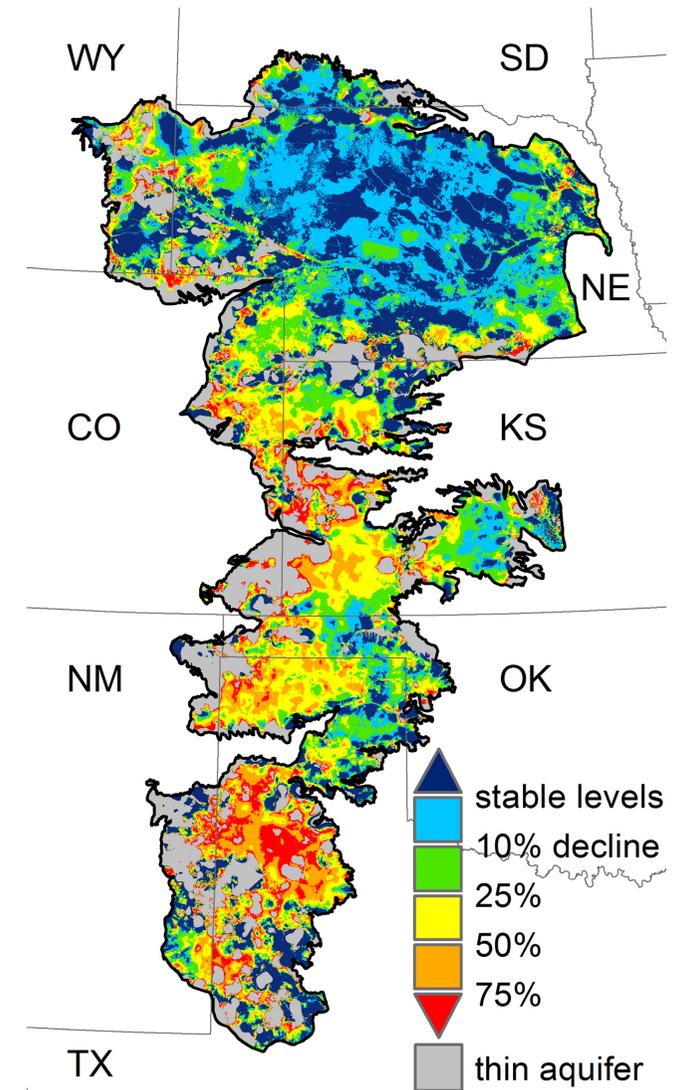


Figure 7-4: Depletion rates of the Ogallala Aquifer from 1950s to Present (Source: Michigan State University)

7 NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Air Quality

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment works with Finney County to monitor air quality and emissions. Many large producers, including Tyson Fresh Meats and Sunflower Electric, have internal programs to monitor energy usage and air quality. At Sunflower Electric's Holcomb station, HL1 is a primary production plant powered by coal. The HL1 plant is one of 36 plants built in the United States after 1978 and is subject to more stringent federal clean-air requirements. Sunflower is limited to releasing just under 0.5 pounds of sulfur-dioxide (SO₂) per British thermal units (Btu) of heat input. Through its advanced technology and equipment, the plant typically operates at 0.10 to 0.20 pounds of SO₂ per million Btu.



Figure 7-5: Sunflower Electric Plant in Holcomb
(Source: Sunflower Electric Power Corporation)

Energy

In Finney County, the three primary energy providers are Garden City Electric Utility System, Sunflower Electric, and Wheatland Electric. Garden City Electric Utility System is owned and operated by the City of Garden City. Sunflower operates as an energy cooperative, consisting of several power cooperatives. As Finney County grows, Sunflower Electric has planned a phased expansion to acquire other energy cooperatives and partner with Tri-State Energy. Wheatland provides electrical power for Finney County as well, operating as an energy cooperative that serves rural and farming portions of Finney County.

On a smaller scale, Reeve Agri-Energy is an integrated ethanol plant and feedlot located in Finney County. In addition to ethanol production, the system on-site provides animal feed for the cattle feedlot.



Figure 7-6: Reeve Agri-Energy is an integrated ethanol plant and Feedlot. (Source: Katzen International, Inc.)

Natural Resources and Agricultural Guiding Principles

Preserve Water Resources

The challenges in Finney County reflect a broader struggle in the American West to cope with water conservation, accessibility, and supply. Open dialogue and communication among Finney County, local water districts, and surrounding counties will be critical in developing smarter water usage policy. These conversations and collaboration amongst agencies are key to ensuring access to quality resources in the future.

Promote Sustainable Energy

As the population of Finney County continues to grow, the County should work to adopt sustainable energy practices. These include monitoring energy usage, utilizing more efficient energy sources, and reducing overall energy consumption. By encouraging its residents and businesses to practice sustainable living, Finney County can help in creating a more sustainable natural-environment for generations to come.

Preserve Agricultural Resources

Finney County has a rich history in its agriculture. To protect and preserve this industry for generations to come, it is important for Finney County to recognize the needs and challenges to the farming community.

7 NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Natural and Agricultural Resources Goal:

Finney County will strive to be a responsible steward of water resources, which are vital to the local physical and economic well-being of residents and are part of the wider interconnected regional and national water resource story. Finney County aims to foster sustainable water practices that contribute to resiliency and adaptability in the face of diminishing water resources. The County will work toward this goal by reducing water demands, increasing efficiency of existing and future water systems, and protecting existing water supplies through innovative and sensible policy and design.

Objectives:

1. Preserve water resources
2. Promote sustainable energy
3. Preserve agricultural resources while protecting rural character



Figure 7-7: Large wind generation components stored in Finney County. (Source: WSP)

7 NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Objectives, Policies and Implementation Strategies

Agriculture has played a key role in the development of Finney County through its economy, lifestyle, and culture. As the County continues to grow and develop, it will be critical for policies to protect agricultural rights while also considering future developments and individual property rights. Additionally, as natural resources are limited and scarce, particularly water, it will be paramount for the County to work and ensure these resources are around for generations to come. The following goals help to guide planning for Finney County's agricultural development and natural resources.

Objective # 1: Support Water Conservation Efforts

Finney County should work to support water conservation efforts, both in the short-term and long-term. By establishing a system and more formal roles for communication, this can allow for better transparency and progression of ideas, processes, and plans. Furthermore, upon implementation of these plans and strategies, continued monitoring of water resources and data will be key to determining the effectiveness of plans.

Policy 1.1: Finney County will work toward establishing a formal role to communicate and meet with other agencies, including the Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District, regarding water usage and water conservation efforts.

Policy 1.2: Finney County will work to promote and support advanced farming and irrigation technology that will provide more efficient water usage.

Policy 1.3: In partnership with the Kansas Department of Conservation, Finney County will work to improve water quality, reduce soil erosion, conserve water, reduce flood potential and improve local water supply.

Objective # 2: Promote Sustainable Energy

With a growing population, Finney County will continue to see an increase in demands for its resources. Harnessing sustainable energy sources, providing infrastructure, and educating businesses and citizens on resources are all ways to maintain a source of energy for years to come.

Policy 2.1: Finney County will work to encourage businesses to reduce overall energy consumption and usage.

Policy 2.2: Finney County will work to encourage residents to reduce overall energy consumption and usage.

Policy 2.3: Finney County will work toward providing and supporting more sustainable forms of energy.

Policy 2.4: Finney County will work toward creating more sound energy policy.



Figure 7-8: Oil well pumpjack collection system. (Source: WSP)

7 NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Objective #3: Preserve Agricultural Resources while Protecting Rural Character

Finney County has a rich history in agriculture that continues to thrive in the present-day economy. The County should prioritize agricultural preservation, protecting farm land and resources from unintended development. Additionally, as part of maintaining the rural character of Finney County, the County should protect individual property rights.

Policy 3.1: Finney County will work with partners and organizations to establish a formal Agricultural Land Preservation Program, such that this program can purchase conservation easements from willing landowners with an intent of long-term agricultural preservation.

Policy 3.2: Finney County will work to maintain local food security and the rural, agricultural character of the County.



Figure 7-9: Corn Crop and Irrigation System (Source: WSP)

7 NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Table 7-1: Natural and Agricultural Implementation Strategies

Policy Referenced	Strategies	Implementation Time Frame
Policy 1.1	Through partnerships with other agencies and the Southwest Kansas Groundwater Management District, Finney County will provide stakeholder feedback regarding proposed water management policies.	Short-range
	Finney County will work with Garden City to allow the transfer of rights for drainage ditch #2 (DD #2).	Mid-range
	Develop a long-range Water Transportation and Water Conservation plan in cooperation with other local agencies and water districts	Long-range
	Advocate for water transfers from the east to west, including Mississippi River to Navajo River and Missouri to Western Kansas.	Long-range
Policy 1.2	Seek partnerships for funding/grant opportunities to encourage innovative farming techniques and improved technology	Mid-range
Policy 1.3	Finney County will partner with the Finney County Conservation District to determine goals, plans, and strategies to improve water quality, conserve water, and reduce soil erosion in the County.	Short-Mid range
Policy 2.1	Finney County should encourage businesses to utilize energy consumption monitors and energy saving devices to reduce overall consumption.	Short-range

7 NATURAL AND AGRICULTURAL RESOURCES

Policy Referenced	Strategies	Implementation Time Frame
Policy 2.2	Finney County should encourage residents to utilize programs from Wheatland Electric to use “Kill-a-Watt” monitoring meters to identify which appliances use the most electricity, and how they can cut their energy consumption.	Short-range
Policy 2.3	Develop a Sustainability Plan for the County that provides specific goals and targets for sustainable practices (water and energy usage, transportation, etc.)	Mid-range
Policy 2.4	Finney County will work to develop sound energy policies that promote growth and safeguard the environment.	Mid-range
Policy 3.1	Working with partner organizations, Finney County should establish a formal Agricultural Land Preservation Program. This program will allow for the purchase of conservation easements from willing landowners through a formal, established process, with an intent of long-term agricultural protections.	Long-range
Policy 3.2	Finney County will work to establish an Agricultural Conservation Committee, made up of citizens and community partners. This committee will provide feedback and advise the County on issues and matters concerning the local agriculture community, including maintaining local food security, agricultural protections, and other concerns.	Mid-range

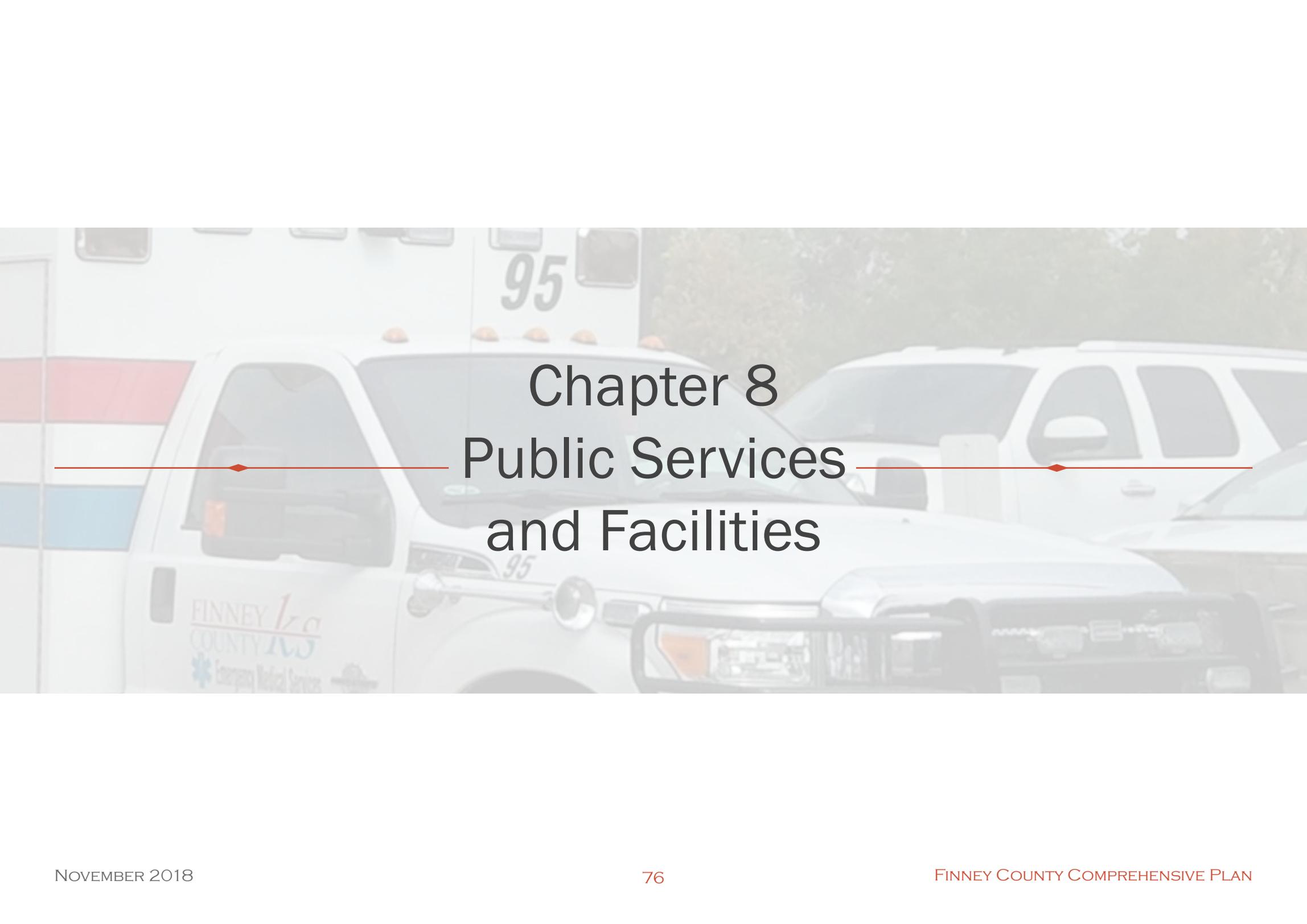
**Short Range Implementation Time Frame = up to 2 years completion target*

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NOTE: Recommendations to the County Commission are based on information provided in this Comprehensive Plan.





Chapter 8 Public Services and Facilities

8 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Public Services and Facilities

This section of the Finney County Comprehensive Plan contains information on significant facilities and services available to the residents in the County. Facilities and services discussed here include education, health, public safety, recreation and others.

Education

Finney County has multiple facilities supporting educational services available to County residents. Primary and secondary education are operated by two school districts: Unified School District (USD) 363 in Holcomb and USD 457 in and around Garden City. In the 2015 – 2016 school year the Holcomb school district had a total enrollment of 1,038 students and the Garden City school district had 7,813 total enrollment. There are twenty-one public schools supporting the approximate 9,000 students in Finney County. While the County does not operate any of the schools, these facilities provide a critical service for residents across the County.

Higher educational opportunities are provided to residents of Finney County through Garden City Community College (GCCC). GCCC is an accredited institution with roughly 2,000 students. The community college offers coursework in many areas including business/technology, humanities, nursing and healthcare, as well as technical education. The 80-acre campus is in the southeast portion of Garden City and consists of multiple buildings for classrooms, residence halls and athletic fields.

Health and Medical

Hospitals

The primary healthcare facility providing critical medical services to the residents of Finney County and surrounding counties is St. Catherine Hospital located near the center of Garden City. The hospital traces its beginnings to the early 1900's with the opening of a 2-room clinic above a clothing store on Main Street in Garden City. Today St. Catherine Hospital is a 119-bed facility with a wide array of medical specialties available to residents including: Level III emergency care, birth center, surgical services, cancer treatment center, radiology, pain management, sports medicine, rehabilitation services and several others. In 2016, St. Catherine reported the following key statistics:

- 587 associates employed
- 123 bedside nurses
- 112,836 physician/clinic visits
- 434 average patients a day
- 753 children born
- 92,720 annual non-emergency outpatient visits
- 17,547 annual emergency department visits

St. Catherine Hospital is a highly important asset for the residents of Finney County. It also serves as a major attractor for residents surrounding Finney County, bringing potential patients to Finney County every year seeking needed medical services.

Finney County Health Department

The Finney County Health Department operates a clinic located at 919 W. Zerr Road in Garden City and provides many important health and wellness services for the County's residents.



Figure 8-1: St. Catherine Hospital (Source: WSP)

8 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Public Safety

Law Enforcement

There are three primary law enforcement agencies in Finney County, Garden City Police Department, Holcomb Police Department and the Finney County Sheriff's Department. These agencies work closely in efforts to prevent crime and promote safety in the community. The Garden City Police Department (GCPD) is responsible for public safety in Garden City. The City of Holcomb has a small police department providing public safety and crime prevention services for the City of Holcomb. The Finney County Sheriff's Department is co-located with GCPD in the Finney County Law Enforcement Center in Garden City. The Sheriff's Department is responsible for public safety in areas of Finney County. The Sheriff's department is directed by the sheriff and undersheriff and oversees a staff of approximately 100.

Fire Protection

Fire protection services for Garden City and Finney County are provided by the Garden City Fire Department (GCFD). GCFD has contracts with all seven townships in Finney County to provide fire protection and emergency response services. Pierceville and Garfield have volunteer fire departments, but mainly focus on grass fires. GCFD also has an automatic first response agreement with Holcomb with response to emergencies.



Figure 8-2: Lee Richardson Zoo (Source: WSP)

Parks and Recreation

Public Parks

Currently there are no park areas in the County, outside the incorporated areas and Finney County does not have a Parks Department. In community stakeholder meetings, it was noted that there are no public campgrounds anywhere in Finney County for residents to enjoy camping activities.

High quality and accessible public parks are essential to support a good quality of life for all communities. In Finney County, all public parks are in Garden City or Holcomb.

Lee Richardson Zoo

The Lee Richardson Zoo (LRZ), located on the south side of Garden City, is an important amenity for the residents of Finney County. The zoo has a diverse array of animal exhibits, educational opportunities, trails, playgrounds and picnic area. The LRZ is also a regional attraction for the southwestern Kansas region bringing thousands of visitors to Finney County each year. In 2015, the zoo's annual attendance was 232,495. Some of the animal exhibits include lions, giraffes, rhinoceroses, flamingos and many more.

Fairgrounds

The Finney County Fairgrounds, owned and operated by Finney County, are located on the south side of Garden City, west of Main Street near the Arkansas River. The fairgrounds are used throughout the year to host various community events. The largest and most well attended of these recreational events are Beef Empire Days and the Finney County Fair. The fairgrounds are comprised of multiple buildings, stables, parking area and grandstand stadium capable of seating roughly 4,200 people. The Finney County Fairgrounds are another important asset for building community and showcasing the cultural, and agricultural attributes that characterize the area's rural roots.

8 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Sandsage Bison Range and Wildlife Area

The Sandsage Bison Range and Wildlife Area, formerly the Finney County Game Refuge, is located south of Garden City in south-central Finney County. The wildlife area is home to a large herd of bison and serves as a recreational and educational attraction for the residents of the County and surrounding area.

The Sandsage Bison Range is owned and managed by the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks and has been in operation since 1916. The wildlife area is approximately 3,500 acres. Camping is not allowed in the area and there are no developed hiking trails. Public tours to view the bison herd must be made in advance. Several special events are hosted, including Breakfast Time on the Prairie.

County Government

County Administration Building

Finney County government administrative services are provided from the County Administration Building located at 311 N. 9th Street in Garden City.

The Administration Building is home to several of the County's departments and services including:

- County Administrator
- County Board of Commissioners
- County Appraiser
- County Clerk
- County Treasurer
- Register of Deeds

The County Administration Building is a relatively new facility and functions very well in providing services for residents of Finney County and meeting the needs of County administrative staff.

County Courthouse

The Finney County Courthouse is located at 425 N. 8th Street, near the County Administration Building, Law Enforcement Center and Garden City City Hall. The courthouse is the home of the district court for the County.

District courts are created by the Kansas Constitution. They are the trial courts of Kansas, with general original jurisdiction over all civil and criminal cases, including divorce and domestic relations, damage suits, probate and administration of estates, guardianships, conservatorships, care of the mentally ill, juvenile matters, and small claims. It is here that the criminal and civil jury trials are held. Kansas is divided into judicial districts (total of 31), with a varying number of judges in each district. Finney County is home to Judicial District 25, which includes Finney, Greeley, Hamilton, Kearny, Scott, and Wichita Counties. There is a district court in each County and an office of the clerk of the court where cases may be filed.

Law Enforcement Center

The Finney County Law Enforcement Center is at 304 N. 9th Street, across the street from the County Administration Building. The Law Enforcement Center is where the Finney County Sheriff's Office is located along with the Garden City Police Department. The Finney County Jail is also located within this facility. The Office of Finney County Emergency Management operates out of the Law Enforcement Center. The co-location of all law enforcement and emergency response services in one facility is highly efficient, but does leave the County vulnerable to emergency response if the facility were to be made unusable for any unforeseen reason or natural disaster.



Figure 8-3: Finney County Administration Building
(Source: WSP)

8 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Public Service and Facilities Guiding Principles

Preserve Public Facilities

Finney County should maintain the public facilities critical to providing services that Finney County residents rely on for public safety, health and recreation.

Expand Public Services

The County should expand services such as fire protection, police or Emergency Medical Services where needed to meet growing residential and commercial demands in the community and continue to strive to provide excellent services in an equitable way to all residents of Finney County.

Public Service and Facilities Goal:

Finney County will continue to maintain and improve its public facilities for efficient, effective and equitable delivery of the many important services the County provides to its residents that keep the community safe, improves the health of the community with accessible healthcare, presents opportunities for education and job training, and provides an excellent quality of life, making Finney County a great place to call home.

Objectives:

Education

1. Partner with local schools to provide education and training opportunities to students

Health, Medical Facilities, and Services

2. Provide affordable, equitable and accessible medical services to Finney County residents

Public Safety

3. Expand Fire and EMS coverage to meet demand as the County continues to grow
4. Expand outdoor tornado siren system for coverage of all populated areas around Garden City and Holcomb

Parks and Recreation

5. Build upon and expand excellent parks and recreation opportunities in Finney County
6. Explore opportunities to coordinate Finney County Parks and Recreation needs with Garden City and Holcomb Parks and Recreation Department.

County Facilities

7. Enhance and maintain all County buildings to efficiently and effectively provide services to the residents of Finney County

8 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Objectives, Policies and Implementation Strategies

Public facilities and buildings provide many of the essential services that residents and visitors of Finney County rely on to provide police and fire protection, medical services, emergency response, parks and leisure space. This section looks at issues noted for the existing conditions of many of the County's public facilities and services and incorporates issues identified through the public engagement process to make recommendations to change or enhance the provision of critical services or improve public facilities in Finney County.

Education

Objective #1: Partner with and support local school districts and Garden City Community College to develop and promote vocational and technical training programs.

Policy 1.1: Finney County should support efforts of educational institutions in development of more technical training programs that can help to build a thriving and sustainable workforce in the County.

Health and Medical Facilities and Services

Objective #2: Provide affordable, equitable and accessible medical services and education to Finney County residents through the Finney County Health Department.

Policy 2.1: Finney County will continue to adequately fund programs and services offered through the Health Department and seek opportunities to expand.

Public Safety

Objective #3: Expand coverage of Fire and EMS services to meet demand as Garden City continues to expand eastward.

Policy 3.1: Finney County should coordinate with Garden City, Holcomb, and the EMS and fire departments to develop plans for a new emergency response center and/or fire station to provide expanded coverage for emergency services.

Objective #4: Expand outdoor tornado siren system and increase number of public storm shelters for coverage of all populated areas around Garden City and Holcomb.

Policy 4.1: Finney County and municipal partners should expand tornado siren warning system to evenly cover populated areas of the County. New public storm shelters should be provided in newly developed public spaces for enhanced protection.

Parks and Recreation

Objective #5: Build upon and expand excellent parks and recreation opportunities in Finney County.

Policy 5.1: Finney County should explore opportunities to create a new County park that allows camping and provides hiking/biking trails. Today there are no outdoor camping areas in Finney County. Finney County could partner with State of Kansas Wildlife to locate a park near the Sandsage Bison Range and Wildlife Area.

Policy 5.2: Continue to support efforts to expand the Lee Richardson Zoo. The Zoo is an important attraction for the County and important recreational amenity for the area.

Objective #6: Explore opportunities to coordinate Finney County Parks and Recreation needs with Garden City and Holcomb Parks and Recreation Department.

Policy 6.1: In the same manner that Planning and Community Development services and staff are 'shared' with Garden City Neighborhood and Development Services, Finney County should examine similar shared staff and responsibilities for future County-wide parks and recreation opportunities outside existing city limits.

County Facilities

Objective #7: Enhance and maintain all County buildings to efficiently and effectively provide services to the residents of Finney County.

Policy 7.1: Continually seek to improve the functionality of County buildings such as the courthouse, law enforcement center, health department, etc. with modern equipment, and amenities assisting County staff to execute their duties for the public in an effective and cost effective way.

8 PUBLIC SERVICES AND FACILITIES

Table 8-1: Public Services and Facilities Implementation Strategies

Policy Referenced	Strategies	Implementation Time Frame
Policy 1.1	Finney County should support educational institutions (local high schools, Garden City Community College, etc.) in developing more technical training programs to building a thriving and sustainable workforce within the community.	Mid-range
Policy 2.1	Finney County should continue its efforts to provide affordable and accessible healthcare by funding and supporting programs offered by the Finney County Health Department.	Short-range
Policy 3.1	Finney County should coordinate with Garden City and Holcomb and with EMS and Fire Departments, to begin planning process for new Emergency response/fire station needed to provide expanded coverage area for emergency services.	Short-range
Policy 4.1	Expand tornado siren system for all areas of that County in need of system expansion as determined by Emergency Management officials.	Short- range
Policy 5.1	The County should begin to develop plans for new Finney County Park to augment recreational needs in the County.	Mid-range
Policy 5.2	County should continue to promote and support the Lee Richardson Zoo as an important educational and tourism asset for the region.	Short-range
Policy 6.1	County should explore opportunities for combined County-wide Parks and Recreation Department that coordinates efforts of incorporated and unincorporated areas of the County.	Long-range
Policy 7.1	On an annual basis, review maintenance and facility improvement needs at all County owned facilities, making upgrades and repairs as needed.	Long-range

NOTE: Recommendations to the County Commission are based on information provided in this Comprehensive Plan.

**Short Range Implementation Time Frame = up to 2 years completion target*

**Medium Range Implementation Time Frame = 2-7 years*

**Long Range Implementation Time Frame = 5-10 years*