

Executive Summary

The City of Blue Hill Comprehensive Plan was created to guide Blue Hill's economic and community growth. Blue Hill is a bedroom community, thus maintaining the high quality of life is vital, and will be necessary to attract new people into the community. This planning document sets out achievable goals to ensure that the City of Blue Hill will be able to meet the challenges associated with growth and create a prosperous community.

Land use and annexation will be an extremely important part of Blue Hill's future. Special attention should be paid to ensure that the majority of the land is used for residential purposes. In order to accommodate the future growth of the community, the City will need to continue to offer quality, affordable housing. The Downtown District will also play an important role in the future of the community; this area should be developed as densely as possible. Because of the lack of vacant housing available, the City will need to incorporate more land into its corporate limits in order to meet the oncoming demands for residential growth.

The transportation system within a community is one the highest costs a city must bear, yet safe and maintained streets and sidewalks are necessary to the health of a community. Because the city is bisected by a major highway, the ability to grow to the east and move back and forth will be a concern.

The City of Blue Hill owns eighteen (18) pieces of real property including land, recreational facilities, emergency management assets, utility infrastructure support facilities, and office/meeting space. To further enhance the City's ability to maintain and develop these properties, the City should create a Capital Improvement Plan that will address certain improvements in the community including long term street development and rehabilitation, construction or complete rehabilitation of the City Swimming Pool, and infrastructure installation.

Energy is one of the biggest issues the world faces today. The City of Blue Hill should work to emphasize the importance of energy use awareness. To do this, the City should work to diversify their sources of energy and promote energy conservation within the community.

Why Plan?

What is a Comprehensive Plan?

- A comprehensive plan is a GUIDE that helps the City of Blue Hill decide what they want their community to look like and how (and if) they want their town to grow. The **FUTURE LAND USE MAP** is a key document that is produced by the comprehensive planning process.

What is a Zoning Ordinance?

- While the comprehensive plan is a guide, the zoning ordinance is the LAW that governs how/if a town will develop/grow.
- The **FUTURE LAND USE MAP** adopted by the comprehensive plan becomes the **ZONING MAP**, which becomes the **ZONING ORDINANCE**, a legal and enforceable document.

How do we get from the Comprehensive Plan to the Zoning Ordinance?

1. Key inputs are gathered and considered that enables leaders and residents to make decisions and agree upon a plan for the future of their town. The process of making decisions and planning for the future is called **VISIONING**.
2. Key inputs are assembled into a preliminary document commonly called the **COMMUNITY PROFILE**:
 1. Demographic, Housing, and Economic Data;
 2. Public Survey: 154 respondents;
 3. Focus Groups: school administrators/educators; elementary and high school students; Blue Hill Community Club;
 4. Stakeholder Interviews: Mayor; Council President; Housing Authority; Library; local realtor; grocery store owner; Fire Chief; local businesses; local ministers; and
 5. Existing Land Use Map.
3. The **COMMUNITY PROFILE** becomes an informational piece that helps us draw the **FUTURE LAND USE MAP**.
4. By studying the **COMMUNITY PROFILE**, and deciding how the **FUTURE LAND USE MAP** looks, we are conducting Visioning and intentionally considering and planning for the future of Blue Hill.

Key points about planning and zoning

- In the State of Nebraska, a city IS NOT REQUIRED TO HAVE a comprehensive plan or zoning ordinance. The choice to have zoning belongs to you; the responsibility to enforce your zoning ordinance also belongs to you.
- A city cannot have a zoning ordinance without a comprehensive plan.
- In order to participate in some economic development activities (bonds, loans, grants), a city will need to have a current comprehensive plan (examples: Tax Increment Financing (TIF), Downtown Revitalization, USDA programs).

Why is planning important to our current and potential businesses?

- Businesses have 3 important desires—ongoing planning can help a city ensure that they are meeting these needs:
 1. **Accessibility:** to capital and markets;
 2. **Capability:** quality workforce;
 3. **Stability:** predictable regulations and community development.
- Change is inevitable; the type, pace, and amount of change can be determined by you.
- Remember: the cost of engaging in planning and development is high, but not as high as the cost of doing nothing.

Community Profile

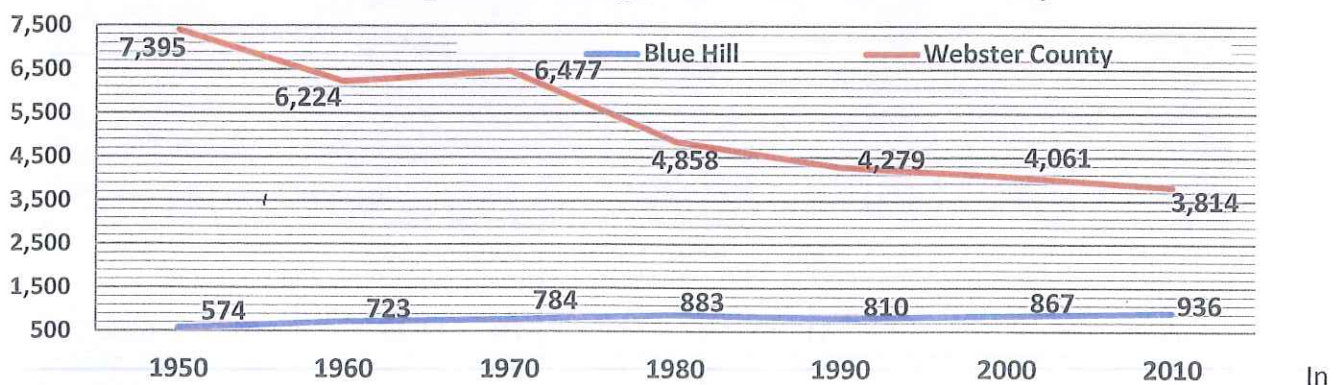
A key input into the comprehensive planning process is quantitative data; factual information provides insight about what has taken in place in Blue Hill and what we can expect for the future, if nothing is changed.

Population

The most important piece of information concerning the past, present, and future of Blue Hill is its people; they are the community's greatest asset and promise for growth. Population trends assist with planning for future growth, determining when it is best to maintain and when it is time to invest in new infrastructure, and understanding how to accommodate current residents while attracting new people.

Although Webster County lost over 1,000 residents, or 21% of its total population, Blue Hill has maintained population and reports a population of greater than 900 for the first time in 2010.

Chart 1.a Population Change, Blue Hill and Webster County



order to appreciate our changes in population, it is helpful to compare Blue Hill to nearby, similar communities. Similar to most Midwestern communities within agriculture-dependent counties, Blue Hill lost population during the 1980s. However, unlike Red Cloud or the rest of Webster County, Blue Hill recovered almost 80% its lost population during the 1990s and has experienced ongoing growth since 2000. Sutton and Arapahoe also recovered some population loss during the 1990s, yet Blue Hill has seen the largest increase, based upon percentage of total population. Breaking down a population by age and gender helps us understand how to accommodate our current residents and see where the largest areas of growth and decline are located.

Table 1.a- Population Change for Blue Hill and Similar Communities, 1980 - 2010

Place	Total Population				Population Change			Percent Change		
	1980	1990	2000	2010	80-89	90-99	00-10	80-89	90-99	00-10
Blue Hill	883	810	867	936	-73	57	69	-8%	7%	8%
Arapahoe	1,107	1,001	1,028	1,026	-106	27	-2	-10%	3%	-0.2%
Red Cloud	1,300	1,204	1,131	1,020	-96	-73	-111	-7%	-6%	-10%
Sutton	1,416	1,353	1,447	1,502	-63	94	55	-4%	7%	4%
Webster County (excl Blue Hill)	3,975	3,469	3,194	2,878	-506	-275	-316	-13%	-8%	-10%
Webster County	4,858	4,279	4,061	3,814	-579	-218	-247	-12%	-5%	-6%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (prepared by David Drozd, Center for Public Affairs Research, University of NE, Omaha)

Despite the fact that the baby boom generation, the largest generation in America, is aging, the median age of the population in Blue Hill has decreased over the past 10 years.

Although the age group of 35 to 44 year olds shrank slightly between 2000 and 2010, this demographic is part of the largest group of Blue Hill residents; 35 to 54 year olds. Adults aged 35-54 years are typically employed full time and are in their child raising years, suggesting they bring young children and sustainable incomes to the community. The proportion of retirees or senior citizens shrank between 2000 and 2010 while the amount of babies and school aged children has increased since 2000. This growth in children is most likely connected to the growth in adults aged 35-54.

Table 1.b - Composition of Blue Hill's Population							
SEX AND AGE	2000		2010		Change 00-10	%Change	Annual Growth Rate
	Total	% of Total	Total	% of Total	Total	Over 10 Years	Over 10 Years
Total population	867	100%	936	100%	69	8%	0.8%
Population by Age Groups							
Under 5 years	41	5%	67	7%	26	63%	6.3%
5 to 9 years	54	6%	68	7%	14	26%	2.6%
10 to 14 years	54	6%	59	6%	5	9%	0.9%
15 to 19 years	47	5%	66	7%	19	40%	4.0%
20 to 24 years	29	3%	37	4%	8	28%	2.8%
25 to 34 years	77	9%	86	9%	9	12%	1.2%
35 to 44 years	108	12%	101	11%	-7	-6%	-0.6%
45 to 54 years	109	13%	141	15%	32	29%	2.9%
55 to 59 years	38	4%	57	6%	19	50%	5.0%
60 to 64 years	49	6%	48	5%	-1	-2%	-0.2%
65 to 74 years	91	10%	84	9%	-7	-8%	-0.8%
75 to 84 years	112	13%	66	7%	-46	-41%	-4.1%
85 years and over	58	7%	56	6%	-2	-3%	-0.3%
Median age (years)	47	(X)	44	(X)	(X)	(X)	(X)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2000, 2010

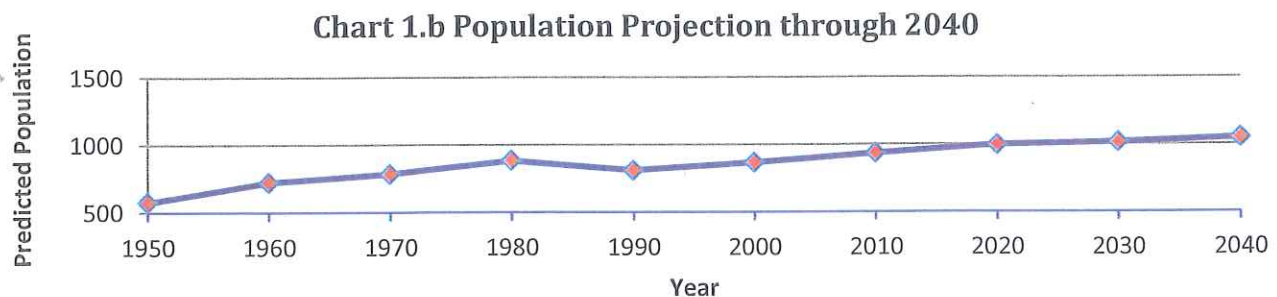


Chart 1.b is a prediction of Blue Hill's future population counts should the future become a direct reflection of the past. If Blue Hill did nothing different, a moderate amount of growth would continue to take place. However, lack of capacity for growth could negatively impact this projection while progressive preparation for growth could increase the amount of predicted growth.

Economy

The local economy has a significant impact on a community's growth. An understanding of economic factors such as employment, wage rates, and major employers will make Blue Hill better able to predict the manner in which economic factors will affect their town.

The unemployment rate in Nebraska and Webster County has continued to be extremely low. A low unemployment rate can be beneficial because it means that most people are working. However, a low unemployment rate can drive up the cost of labor for local employers and make it difficult to attract any new employers to the area.

Table 2.a - Unemployment Rate

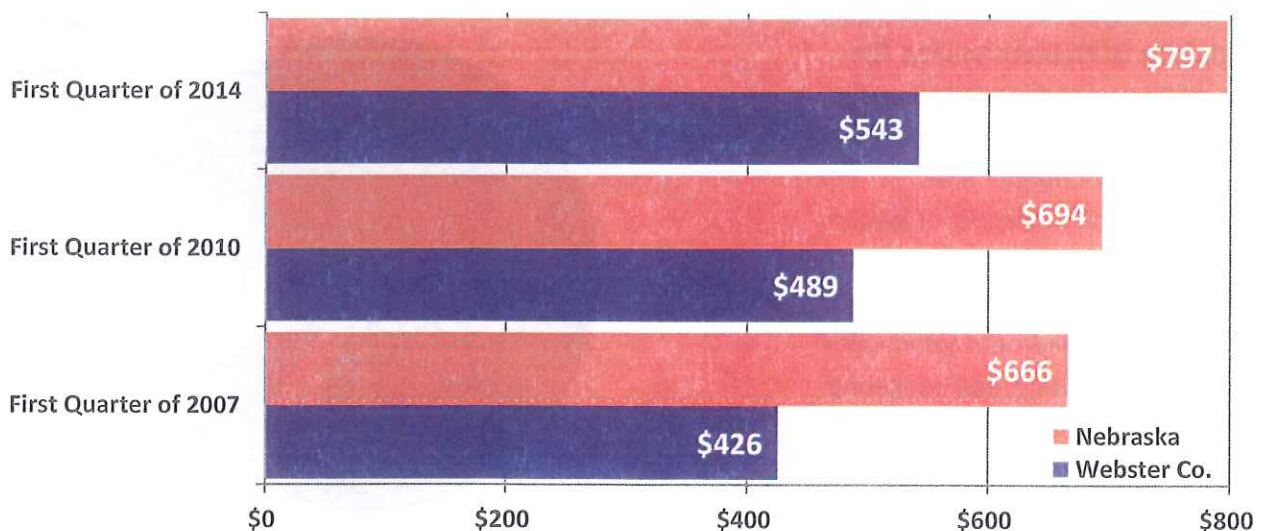
	1990	2000	2014
United States	5.6%	4.0%	5.8%
Nebraska	2.3%	2.8%	2.8%
Webster County	1.5%	2.7%	2.8%

Source: Nebraska Department of Labor

The low unemployment rate suggests a shortage of labor for local employers. The average weekly wages for workers in Webster County and Nebraska is displayed below. While the average weekly wage in Webster County is lower than Nebraska the increase from 2007 to 2014 was greater for Webster County workers. Weekly wages, on average, increased by 20% for Nebraska workers while the wage increased by approximately 27% for workers in Webster County.

Chart 2.a Average Weekly Wage

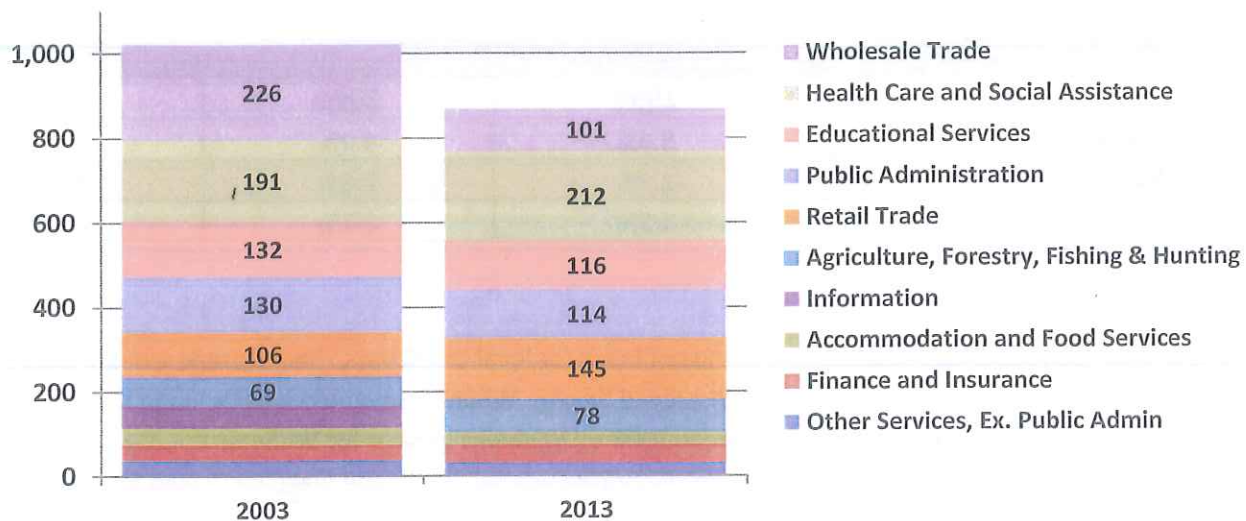
(Source: Nebraska Department of Labor)



The following chart displays the type and number of jobs in Webster County as provided by the Nebraska Department of Labor. While wages have increased the total number of jobs has decreased by 152 as the total jobs for all industries reported in 2003 were 1,022 and down to 870 by 2013. The main employer in Webster County is the wholesale trade industry followed by healthcare and social assistance, educational services, and public administration.

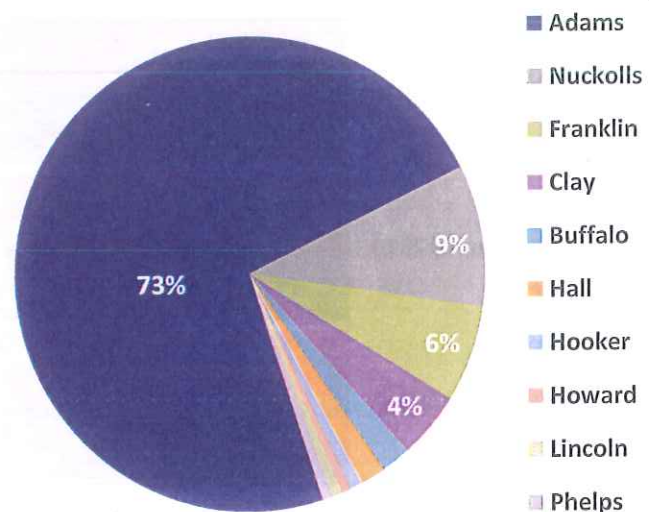
Webster County is listed by the United States Department of Agriculture, Economic Research Service (ERS) as farm dependent, which means that the local economy is heavily reliant upon agriculture. The employment by industry chart below does not account for the number of workers that list farming as their primary occupation. In 2012, ERS conducted a census of agriculture, in which it recorded 228 individuals that are the principal operator of a farm in Webster County.

Chart 2.b Jobs by Sector (Source: Nebraska Department of Labor)



While the number of jobs available in Webster County has decreased, commuter data suggests that over 1,000 employed individuals work outside of Webster County. The table below shows that the main source of out-of-county employment is in Adams County. The combination of the loss of jobs in Webster County and gain of residents in Blue Hill affirms that Blue Hill is a bedroom community. Land use, housing, and budgeting decisions should be made with this understanding of the main source of employment for Blue Hill residents.

Chart 2.c-Workers Commuting out of Webster County, Top 10 (American Community Survey)



Housing

Should Blue Hill continue to exist as a bedroom community, housing will become a key piece of its economic and community development strategy.

In 2012, SCEDD and the City of Blue Hill partnered to conduct a Community Needs Assessment Survey (CNAS). The participation rate was very high as almost 90% of residents responded to the survey.

Total Households Surveyed	406
Less Vacancies	10
Total Deliverable	396
Total Returned and Scanned	356
Response Rate	89.9%
Vacancy Rate	2.5%

A vacancy rate of only 2.5% was discovered as a result of the survey. An extremely low vacancy rate is comparable to an extremely low unemployment rate.

While it is a benefit that most houses in Blue Hill are filled, the lack of more available houses is most likely hampering the community's ability to grow.

The estimated age of homes chart suggests that the number of houses in Blue Hill has not kept pace with the amount of growth the community has experienced. The largest group of homes was built prior to 1940 and the second largest group was constructed during the 1970s.

Chart 3.a Estimated Age of Homes
(U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey)

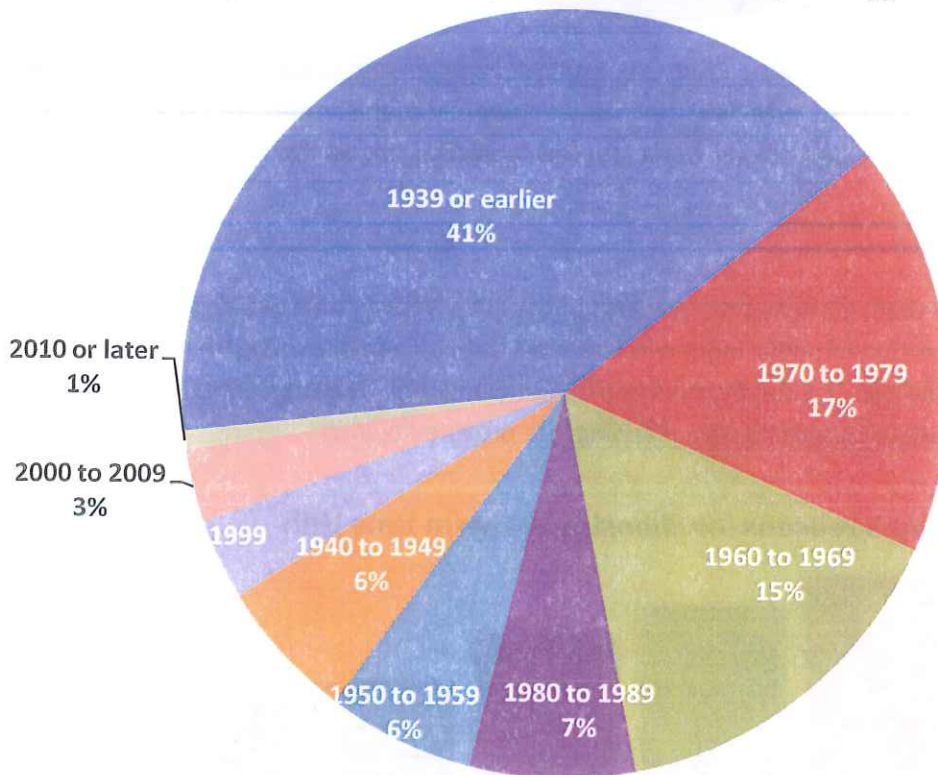
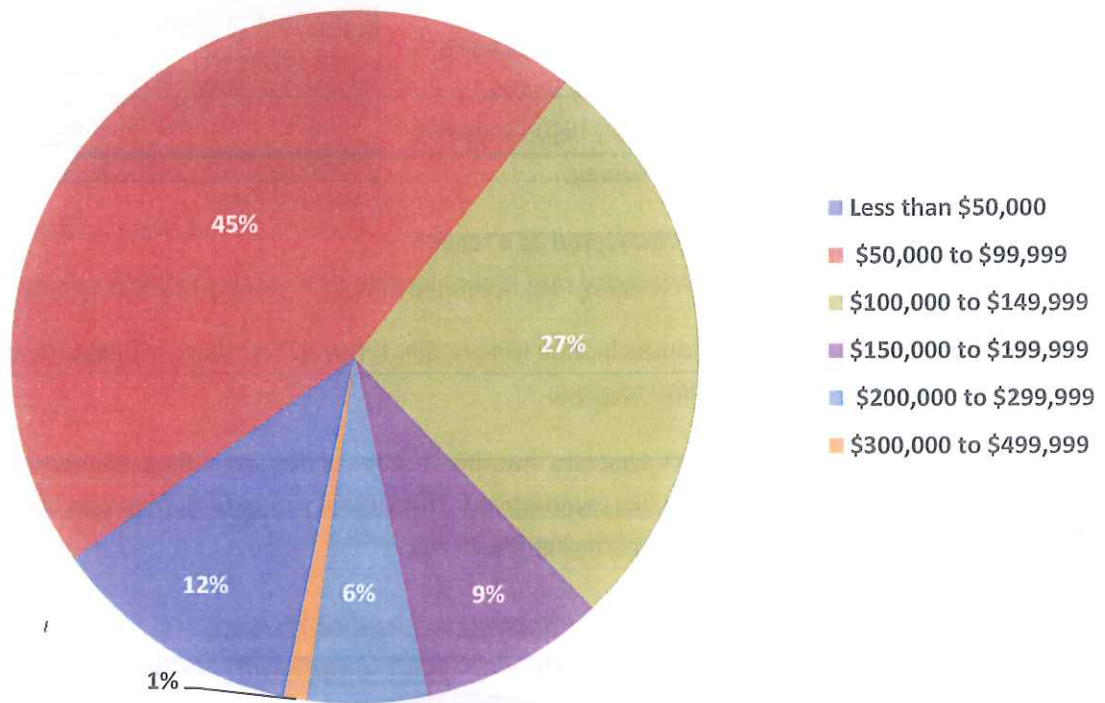


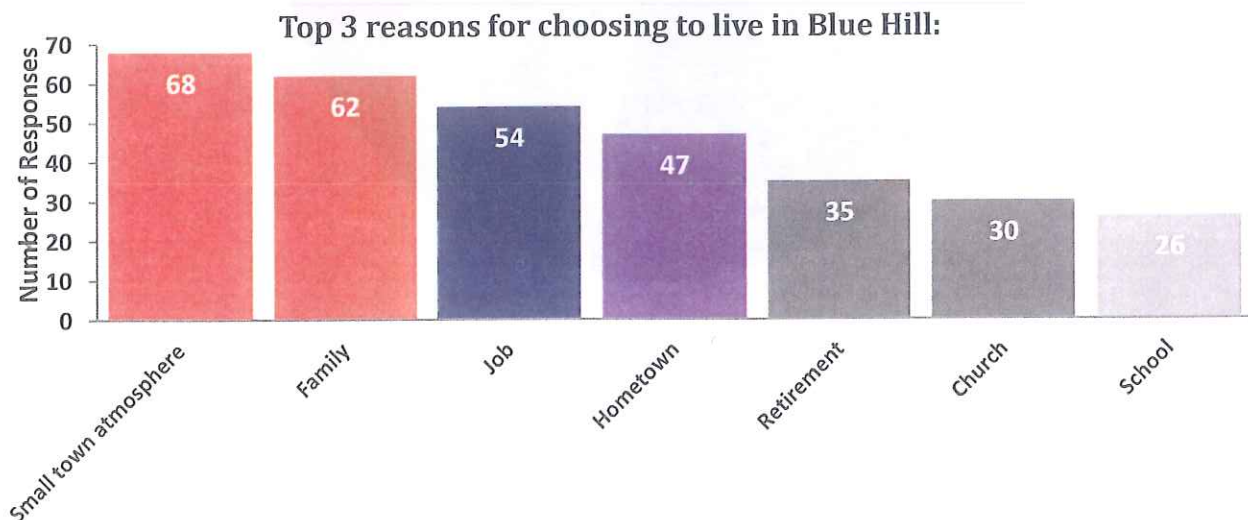
Chart 3.b Estimated Home Value
(U.S. Census Bureau American Community Survey, 2009-2013)



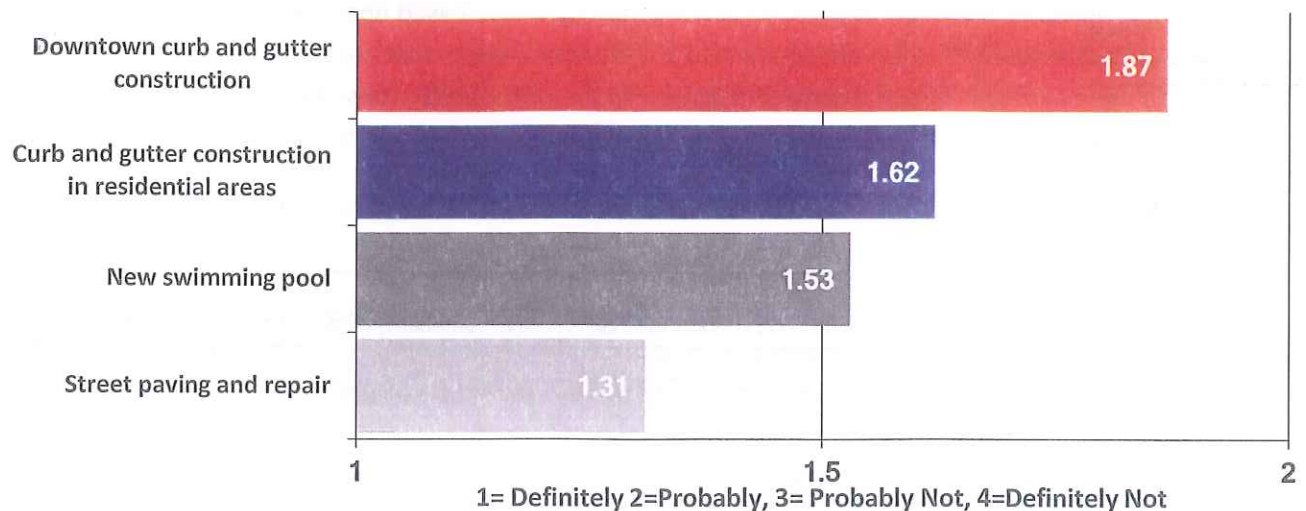
Housing value is closely related to age. Chart 3.b displays the estimated value for houses in Blue Hill and suggests that most of the homes have held their value. Over half of the homes are valued between \$50,000 and \$150,000 while just over 10% are valued at less than \$50,000 and just fewer than 10% are valued at \$150,000-\$199,999.

Public Input

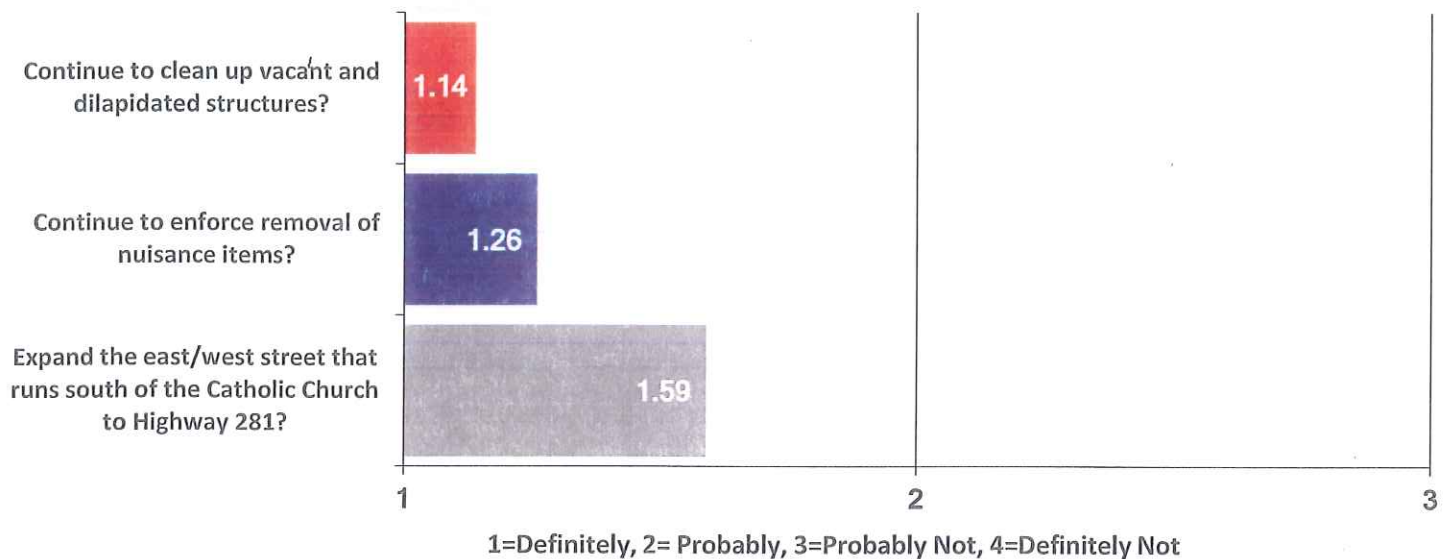
Important information that also drives the comprehensive plan is qualitative data; opinions of residents living in Blue Hill. The first portion of public input was collected through a public survey that was offered to people living in and around Blue Hill. The survey produced 154 respondents. The top 4 most informative questions responses, as they relate to comprehensive planning, are provided below.



Which of the following projects are most urgently needed in Blue Hill?



Should the City:



Please rate the physical condition of:



As planning decisions are made, leadership can organize priorities based upon what community factors are considered a strength and which are considered a weakness. Factors that are labeled as a strength must be improved upon in order to keep them a strong asset in the community. Those factors that are labeled as a weakness must be managed so that they do not become out of control and begin to dominate the community.

The public survey is summarized within the table below based upon Investing in our Strengths and Improving our Weaknesses.

Community Wide Surveys (2014 Public Survey, 2012 Community Needs Assessment Survey)	
Investing in our Strengths	Managing our Weaknesses
<p>Other projects are needed in Blue Hill?</p> <p>Downtown & residential curb and gutter construction seem to be completed. Some of the lesser used roads need to be tarred to protect against vehicle damage.</p> <p>Tear down the old bank and make it extra off street parking</p> <p>A bike path</p> <p>Please fix currently existing streets</p> <p>Costs would be too much for the road to highway 281.</p> <p>Change the set back on lots; cannot build a house on 50' lot unless side set backs are changed to 5'</p> <p>Senior housing</p> <p>Fix streets first. Curb on center along rail way street.</p> <p>Pave gravel roads first - the dust is horrible!</p> <p>Streets need too much work to be worrying about a swimming pool</p> <p>Streets!</p> <p>The streets around the old school and train tracks are terrible</p> <p>Fix the roads!</p> <p>Build a pool where the old school is located</p> <p>Need an area to build houses</p> <p>More maintenance on streets that are still gravel</p>	<p>Police</p> <p>There are 2 houses on the highway that represent Blue Hill poorly; they need to be cleaned up.</p> <p>Be fair about unlicensed vehicles - not all moved</p> <p>Strong dislike of seeing an accumulation of old "stuff" and many, many vehicles on some lots</p>
<p>In General...</p> <p>People choosing to live in Blue Hill for quality of life instead of economic reasons.</p> <p>Large percentage of employed adults commute outside of Blue Hill-Bedroom Community</p> <p>Appearance of entire community is excellent to good</p> <p>Need to prioritize between basic infrastructure and recreation facilities (streets/sidewalks vs. pool and parks)</p> <p>Retail development must focus on daily needs or unique niches (bedroom community)</p> <p>Housing units is not growing at same pace as population</p> <p>Potential and demand exist for expanding housing programs</p> <p>Extremely low vacancy rate for housing</p> <p>Largest age groups are aged 35-54</p>	<p>Strong support for continuing clean up efforts</p> <p>Presence of law enforcement</p>

Land Use & Annexation

As required per Nebraska Revised Statutes, Section 19-903, the land use element of the comprehensive plan must:

[D]esignate the proposed general proposed general distributions, general location, and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and lands, and other categories of public and private use of land.

As required per Nebraska Revised Statutes, Section 19-903, the annexation element of the comprehensive plan must:

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

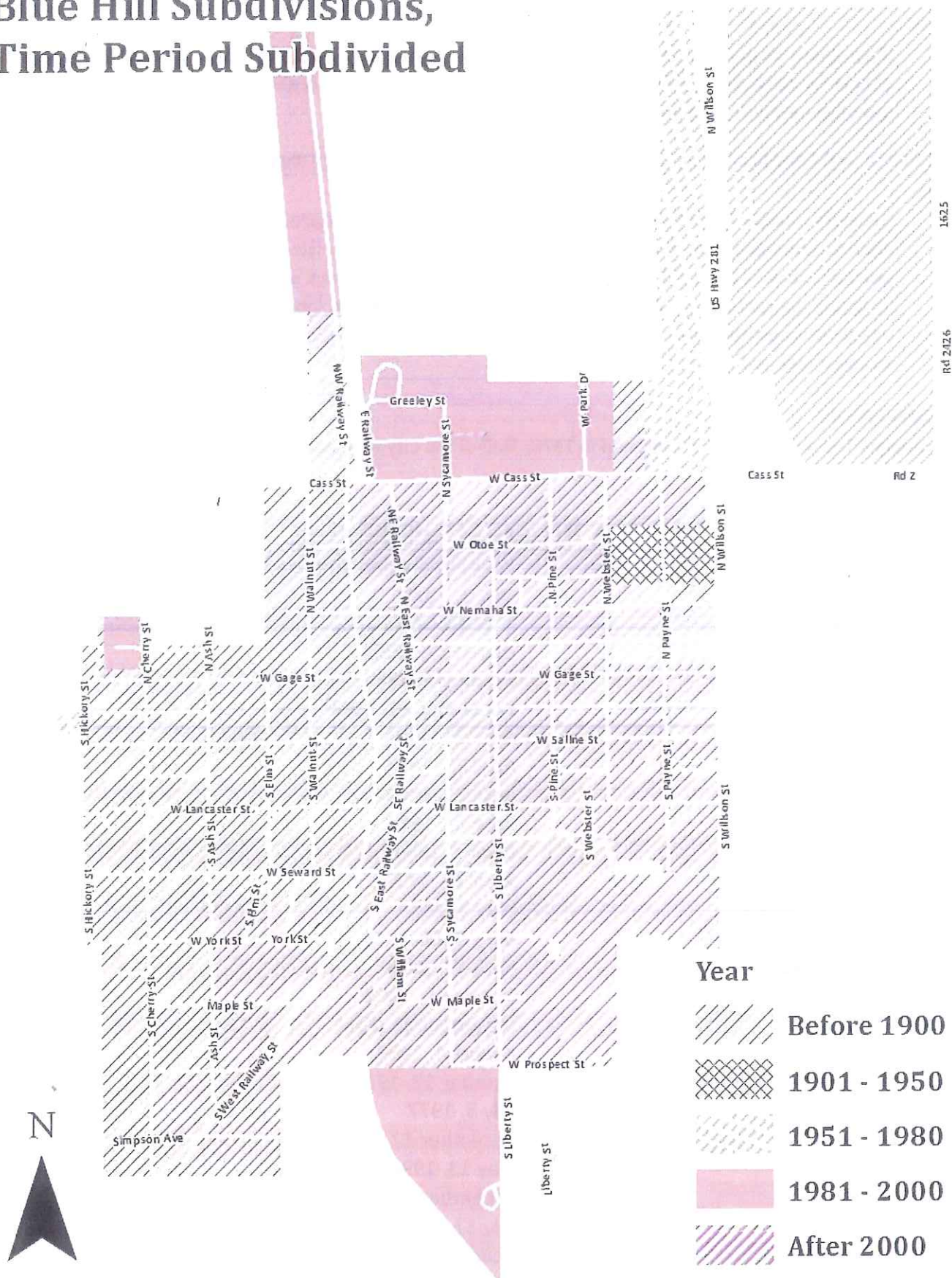
Subdivisions

The Original Town of Blue Hill was platted in 1878. Half of the City was platted before 1900. Since 2000, only four have been added

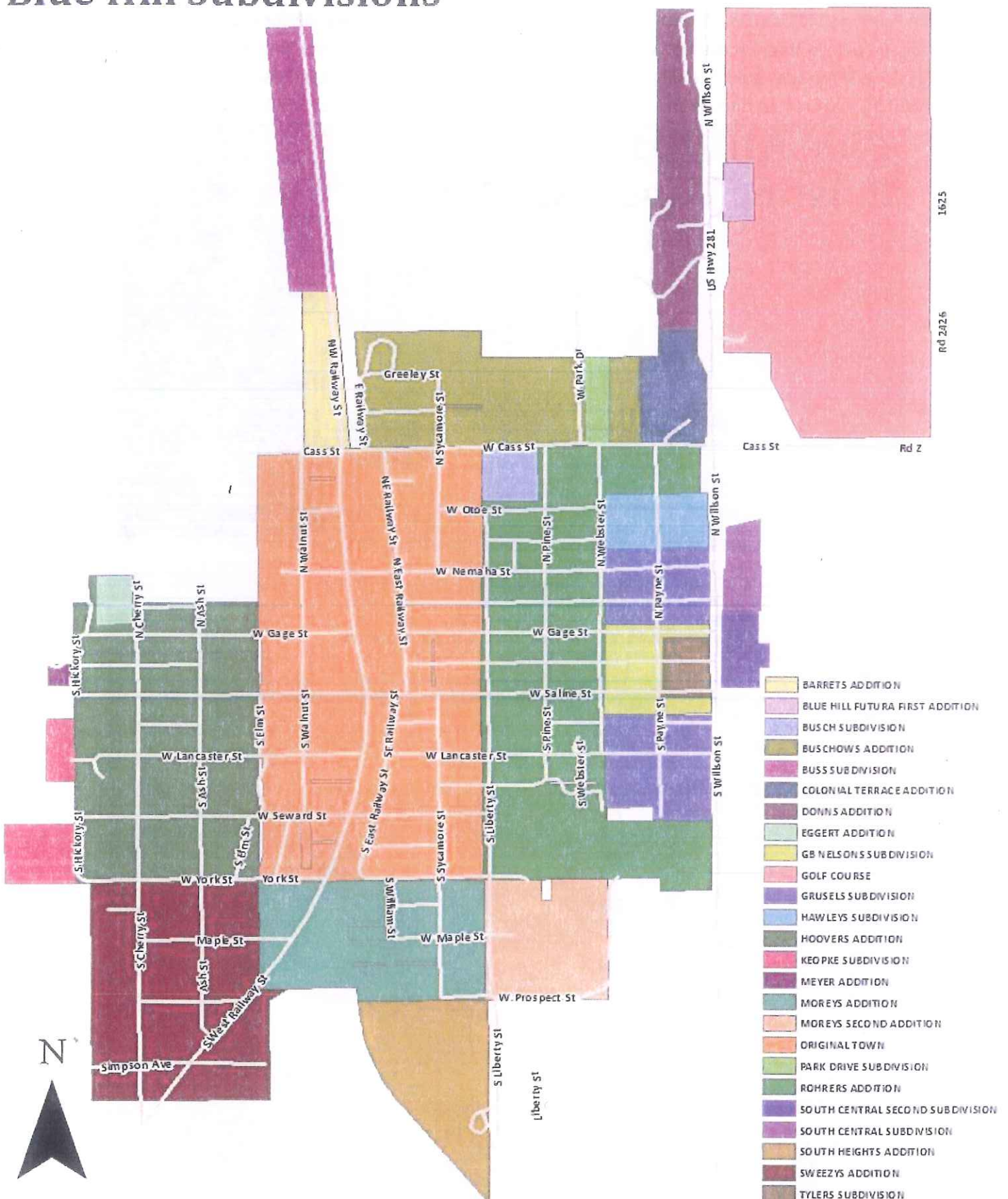
Blue Hill, History of Subdivisions

Subdivision Name	Year Subdivided/Annexed
Original Town	Oct. 1, 1878
Rhorer's Addition	May 27, 1882
Morey's Addition	March 27, 1883
Buschow's Addition	October 8, 1883
Sweezy's Addition	December 28, 1883
Gusel's Addition	April 21, 1884
G.B. nelson Addition	April 25, 1884
Busch's Sub.	April 29, 1884
Morey's 2nd Addition	June 17, 1884
Hoover's Addition	July 27, 1884
Barrett's Addition	April 16, 1886
Tyler's Sub.	May 5, 1887
Hawley's Sub.	May, 1906
South Height's Addition	April 17, 1913
Donn's Addition	October 8, 1962
Meyer's Addition	December 29, 1964
Buss Addition	August 4, 1969
Blue Hill Futura 1st Addition	October 12, 1971
Morrey's Sub. Of Block #4	July 5, 1977
Park Drive Sub.	December 12, 1985
Eggert Addition	May 13, 1998
South Central	December 17, 2008
Koepke Sub.	July 17, 2009
South Central 2nd	November 10, 2009
Keopke 1st Sub.	June 9, 2010

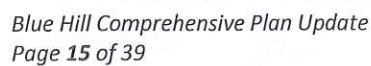
Blue Hill Subdivisions, Time Period Subdivided



Blue Hill Subdivisions



The Existing Land Use (ELU) inventory and map provides a base for setting goals for growth. The ELU Map was utilized during a visioning exercise where members of the Blue Hill Community Club, Planning Commission, and City Council provided guidance for moving from the ELU map to the Future Land Use (FLU) map. The ELU inventory was created through the completion of a field survey performed by SCEDD in the fall of 2014.

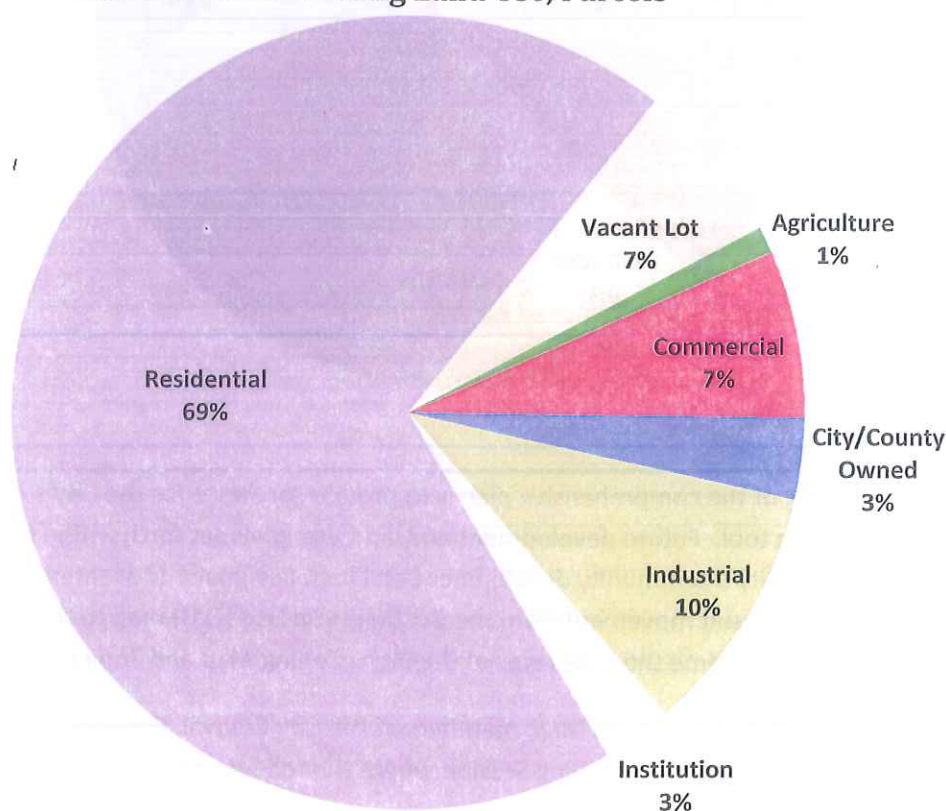


Blue Hill Existing Land Use Inventory Calculations, 2014

Use	Total Parcels	% of Total	Total Acres	% of Total
Agriculture	5	1%	10	3%
Commercial	31	7%	11	3%
City/County Owned	15	3%	112	32%
Industrial	46	10%	33	10%
Institution	13	3%	26	7%
Residential	313	69%	129	37%
Vacant Lot	30	7%	26	7%
Total	453	100%	347	100%

Source: SCEDD, 2014 Field Survey

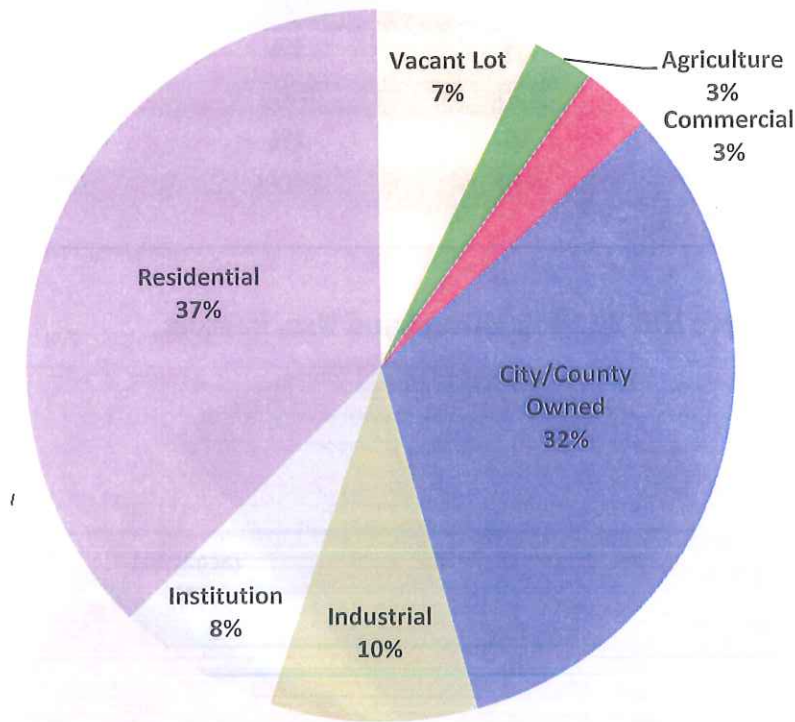
Blue Hill 2014 Existing Land Use, Parcels



Parcels represent ownership of land and the manner in which property tax burden is distributed. Acres of land represent the amount that is classified as a particular use. After residential, the second largest classification represents industrial uses while vacant lots and commercial are tied as the third largest classification of parcels. Only 1% of the parceled land in Blue Hill is considered agriculture. While residential accounted for 69% of parceled land, it only accounts for 37% of acres. A third of the land in Blue Hill is owned by the City or County. This large percentage is skewed as the golf course is part of this percentage.

Industrial uses cover 10% of the land in Blue Hill. Vacant lots cover 7% of the land in Blue Hill. The actual amount of land that is vacant is 26 acres; assuming all of the land is developable, could be transformed into approximately 104 single family homes. This assumption is based on the estimation that ¼ acre is enough land for a single family residential lot.

Blue Hill Existing Land Use, Acres



Future Land Use

An important function of the comprehensive plan is to provide guidance for the City's Zoning Ordinance, which is a land use regulation tool. Future development and land use goals set forth within this chapter will provide documentation of the City's community development and land use goals. Movement toward the City's development goals will result movement from the Existing Land Use (ELU) map to the Future Land Use (FLU) Map. The FLU map will become the base layer of the City's Zoning Map and Zoning Ordinance.

In order to create the Future Land Use Map, members of the City Council, Planning Commission, and Blue Hill Community Club participated in a Visioning Session where the following tasks were completed:

- review of the Community Profile;
- review of Existing Land Use (ELU) Map;
- discussion of goals for the future of Blue Hill.

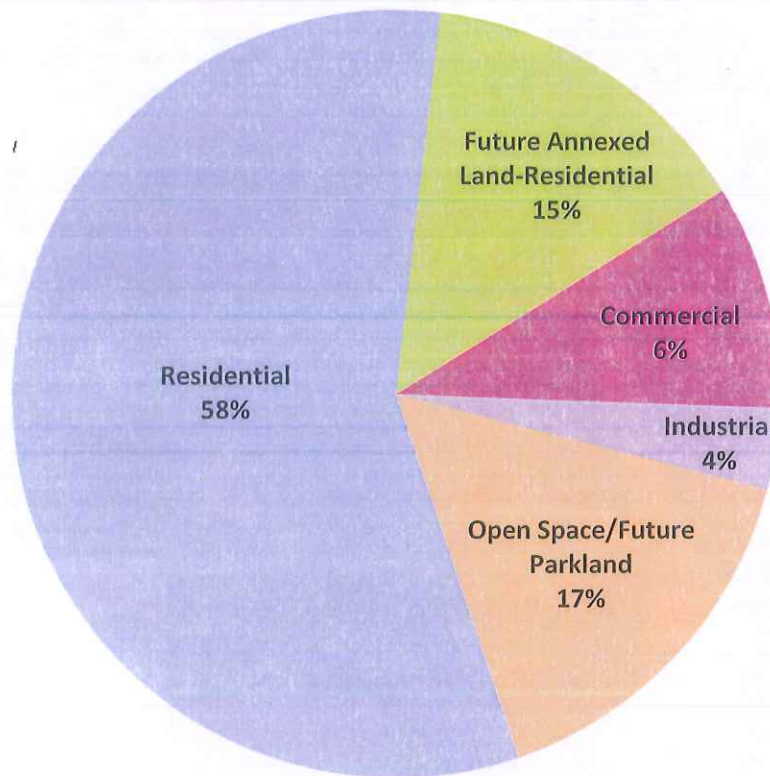
At the completion of the above tasks, meeting participants were asked to provide input about future land use patterns in Blue Hill by drawing on a blank aerial map of the City. In addition to the information gathered during from the community's public surveys and community profile, input from the Vision Session was considered in. Those factors produced the resulting Future Land Use calculations and Map which are displayed below.

Blue Hill Future Land Use Calculations, 2030

Use	Acres	% of Total
Commercial	29	6%
Industrial	21	4%
Open Space/Future Parkland	78	17%
Residential	273	58%
Future Annexed Land-Residential	71	15%
Total	472	100%

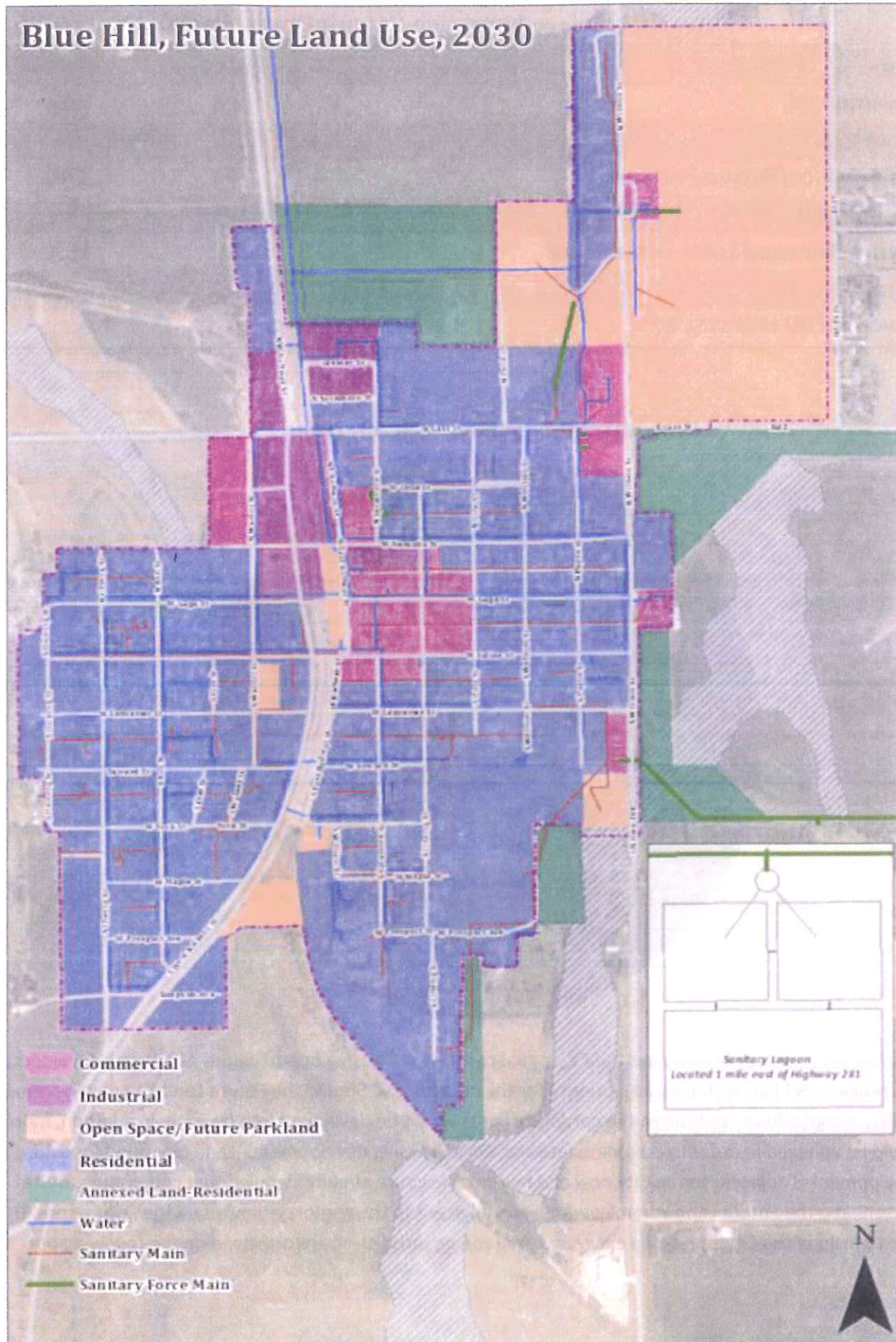
Source: SCEDD Estimates, 2015

Blue Hill Future Land Use, Acres, 2030

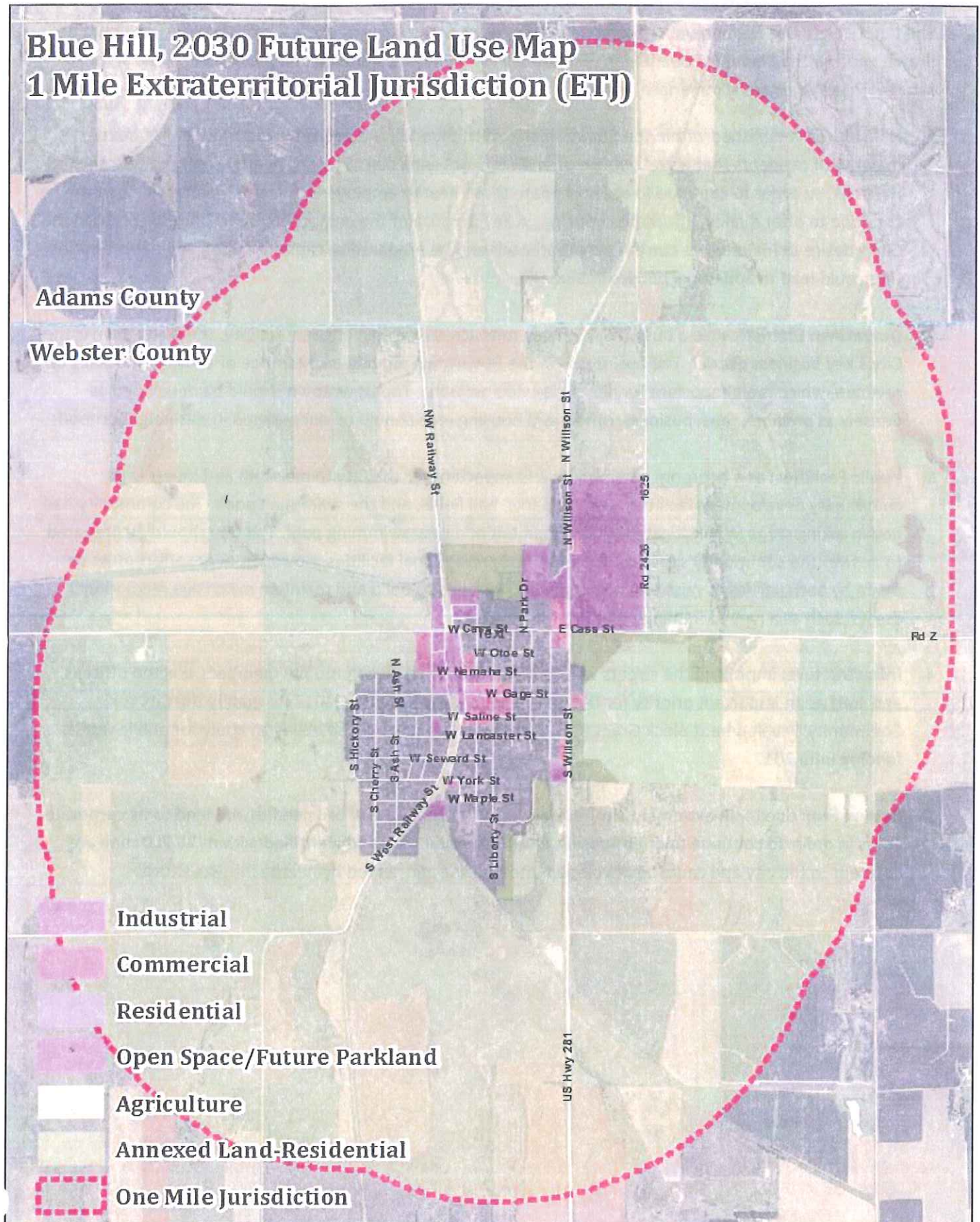


The Future Land Use Map displays the City's goal to increase housing opportunities as housing development had repeatedly been identified as a priority for the community. Should the Future Land Use map become a reality, all agriculture land within the corporate limits would be developed into housing. In addition, more land would be annexed in order to accommodate additional housing development. Land identified for future development is adjacent to the City now and has infrastructure already installed that could serve future households. The Future Land Use map within and adjacent to the corporate limits and the Future Land Use map to include the City's one mile extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction are displayed on the following pages.

Blue Hill, Future Land Use, 2030



Blue Hill, 2030 Future Land Use Map 1 Mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)



Future Land Use-Goals for Preservation and Growth

The Future Land Use Map provides a representation of the City's goals as well as information that should be drawn upon by the Planning Commission and Council when making planning and growth decisions in the future. Those goals are summarized below:

1. **Housing:** as established within the Community Profile, Blue Hill is a bedroom community that has a majority of residents that travel outside of town to work each day to larger, nearby communities, such as Hastings. In order to continue to accommodate those nearby employees, the community will need to continue to offer quality, affordable housing. A key purpose of the comprehensive plan is to establish the City's desire to maintain its current neighborhoods and be prepared to capitalize upon any opportunities that could lead to additional houses in Blue Hill.
2. **Downtown District:** while a busy U.S. Highway runs across the east edge of the City, the Downtown is the City's key business district. The businesses in the Downtown provide a key source of activity, and sales tax revenue, which is an important funder of citywide projects. The Downtown should be developed as densely as possible; thus, business, office, and housing uses should be encouraged in this neighborhood.
3. **Public Facilities:** as a bedroom community, it is important for the City to maintain and invest in its community development facilities, such as parks, ball fields, and the swimming pool. The community had begun taking steps to investigate the development of a new swimming pool. The City should be prepared to answer the community's request for improved recreational facilities. However, every effort must be made by both parties to raise and leverage needed funds to build and maintain expensive recreational assets, such as a new swimming pool.
4. **Infrastructure:** improving the streets was routinely identified by community members, elected officials, and staff as an important priority for the City. Due to efforts made in 2012, to qualify the City for Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding, the City has the ability to apply for public works funding until 2017.
5. **Annexation:** due to an extremely low housing vacancy rate, the City will need to add land to its corporate limits in order to continue to offer housing to future residents. Land identified within the FLU map are adjacent to the city and could be developed into housing and served by nearby infrastructure.

Major Transportation Routes and Facilities

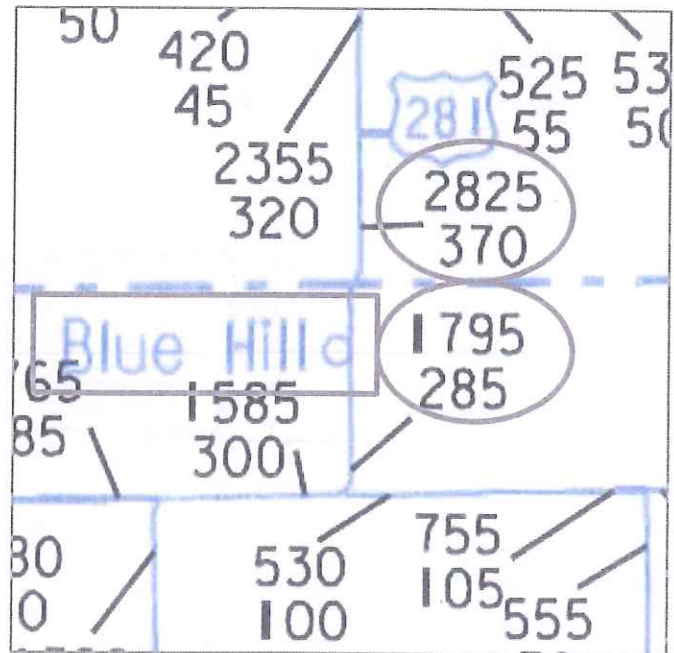
As required per Nebraska Revised statutes, Section 19-903, the transportation element of the comprehensive plan must include:

[T]he general location, character, and extend of existing and proposed major roads, streets, and highways, and air and other transportation routes and facilities.

Character of Roads

The City of Blue Hill is located along U.S. Highway 281 which is a spur of U.S. Highway 81 and is the only continuous three digit route to run from the Mexico to Canada. According to 2012 traffic counts recorded by the Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR), approximately 4,600 (1795+2825) north/south bound regular and heavy commercial vehicles passed through Blue Hill on a daily basis in 2012.

In addition to U.S. Highways, the City of Blue Hill has approximately 88,000 feet of local and collector streets. The City has four collector streets, the remaining are local streets. Local streets provide access to private property while collector streets move traffic from local streets to arterials; delivering people to private residences is a secondary function of collector streets.



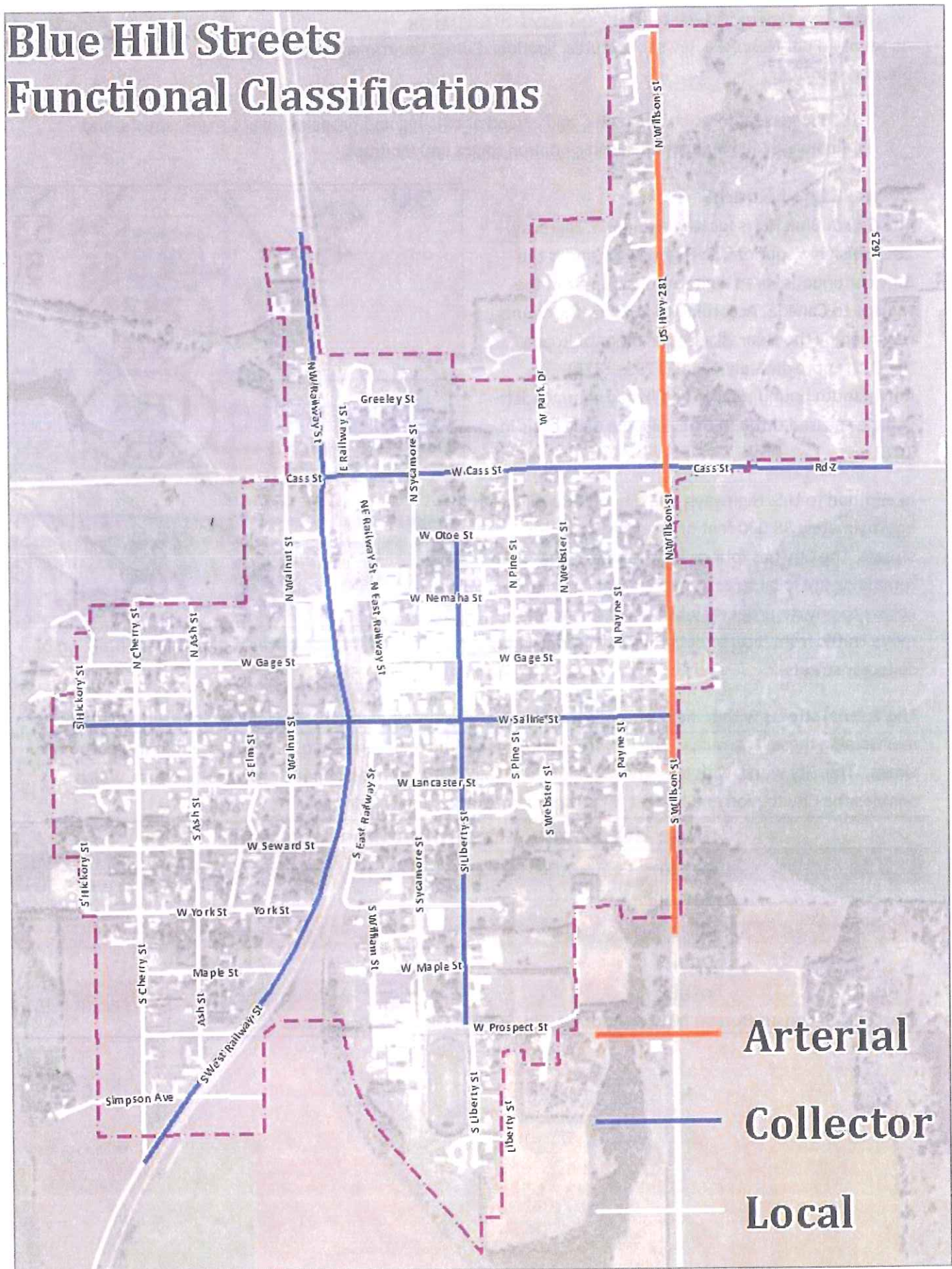
The arterial streets within the city's corporate limits are maintained by NDOR and the city pays NDOR for maintaining these lane miles. The City is responsible for the maintenance of all streets within the Corporate Limits. The City works with the City Engineer, to maintain and annually update a 1 & 6 year plan, which enables the City to plan and budget for street maintenance and repair projects.

Blue Hill Roads, Functional Classifications

Function	Length (feet)
Arterial	5,437
Collector	14,400
Local	71,899
Total	88,134

Source: U.S. Census Bureau Master Address File, SCEDD, Olsson & Associates

Blue Hill Streets Functional Classifications



Blue Hill has a mixture of paved and gravel. There are approximately 21,100 linear feet of gravel streets. Due to traffic activity and maintenance costs, gravel is an appropriate surface for some streets. As with many small Midwestern communities, many of the City's paved, asphalted streets are beginning to fail.

The current condition of Liberty Street is the most concerning; it is a failing asphalt street that was last armor coated over 20 years ago. Liberty Street is a collector street that conducts traffic to and from Blue Hill Community School as well as other community facilities. SCEDD is currently working on a 2015 CDBG Public Works Grant to improve the concrete pavement with integral curb gutter, storm sewer, storm sewer inlets, and necessary appurtenances. West Maple Street and West Seward Street are also part of this proposed improvement project.

Character of Sidewalks and Trails

Non-motorized, bicycle, and pedestrian mobility is a valid form of transportation. A well rounded transportation system should provide options for travel, promoting active life styles and connecting citizens to the community.

Sidewalks: The City of Blue Hill currently has an under developed sidewalk system. Within the city limits, there are approximately 60,200 linear feet of missing sidewalks along streets. Due to the low level of traffic on some local streets, the street may serve as a sidewalk and street. Should the City choose to install sidewalks in developed areas, it should only focus on the City's collector streets.

Trails: There are currently no trail systems within the City of Blue Hill. However, there is potential for trail development within the existing abandoned railroad site. Also, the low traffic activity in the City would allow for some local streets to serve as part of an overall trail network.

Safety

The City has developed primarily to the west of Highway 281: however, the community pool and activity center are on the east of the highway. Future development potential also exists to the east of the highway. This could create unsafe conditions as more people will to cross the highway to access community services. In the future, the City and NDOR should work together to find affordable, realistic options that improve the safety of pedestrians crossing the highway.

Another safety concern facing the community is the active railroad tracks that run through the community. Currently, there are no controlled crossings in town. The City of Blue Hill should work with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad to address how to ensure safe crossings.

Blue Hill, 2015

Gravel Streets

No Sidewalks

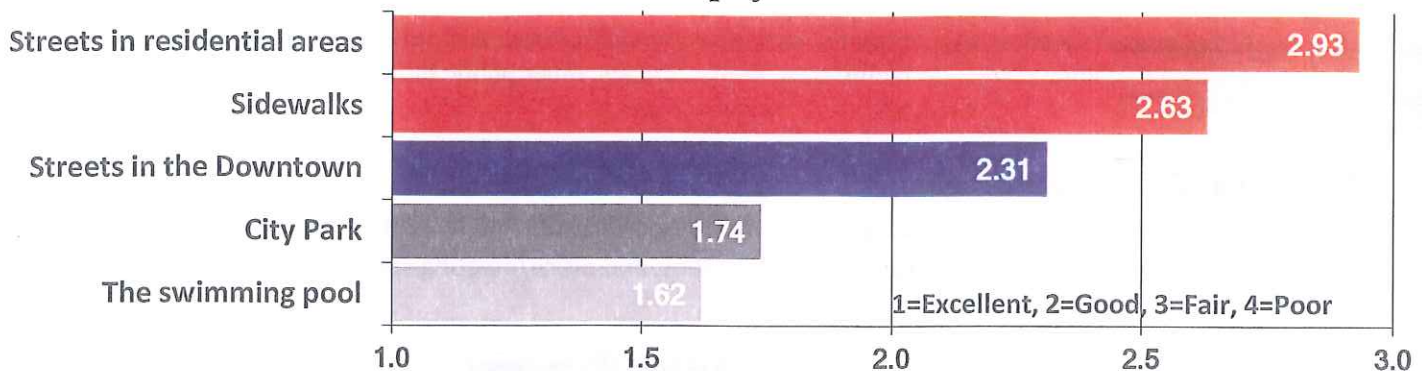
No Sidewalks

Gravel Streets

Community Input

Concern for the condition of the city's streets and sidewalks was the primary concern of respondents.

Please rate the physical condition of:



Transportation Goals for Growth and Preservation

Transportation is an asset that will require ongoing public support in order to continue to attract private investment.

1. Maintenance

- Should the City of Blue Hill receive the CDBG Public Works Grant, Liberty Street should be repaired to working condition and maintained as a busy collector street.
- Good streets and sidewalks are a basic necessity for any healthy community. However, maintaining each road in the City as a paved surface may not be financially feasible. The City should establish a **Capital Improvement Plan** for its streets system and determine which streets are most important to the City's transportation system.
- Once a neighborhood is established, the installation of new sidewalks is difficult. Per city ordinance, sidewalk maintenance is the property owner's responsibility. Requirement of the owner to maintain his/her sidewalk is the most feasible way for the city to maintain its sidewalk system.

2. Safety

- In areas where sidewalks are not present, the local street system is also the local sidewalk system. The width of streets and lack of traffic activity makes "sharing the road" feasible in some neighborhoods. Furthermore, the local culture accepts pedestrian use of streets.
- Instead of installing sidewalks within an established neighborhood, where necessary, the city could stripe the pavement to create a lane and raise motorist awareness of bicyclists and pedestrians.
- The City of Blue Hill should work with NDOR to address the safety of pedestrians crossing Highway 281; the City of Blue Hill should work with Burlington Northern Santa Fe Rail Road to address the safety of pedestrians crossing the active rail system that runs through the city.

3. New Development

- Maintaining the local transportation system is one of the most necessary and expensive functions of city government. As transportation assets are installed and upgraded, the city should require high quality development, which may be more costly up front, but will ultimately save the city resources as those assets are maintained in the future.
- Going forward, the city's subdivision regulations should ensure that new developments meet the following, basic requirements:
 - streets should be installed with concrete (instead of asphalt or gravel);
 - new streets must have curb and gutter, or some basic storm water disposal system; and
 - all new developments must have (minimum) 4' wide sidewalks.

As required per Nebraska Revised Statutes, Section 19-903, the community facilities element of the comprehensive plan must include:

Public Lands and Buildings

This map displays the following streets and landmarks:

- Streets:** S Hickory St, S Cherry St, S Ash St, S York St, S Maple St, S Liberty St, S Sycamore St, S Lancaster St, S Walnut St, S Vine St, S Pine St, S Willow St, S Payne St, S Webster St, S Gage St, S Cass St, S Broadway St, S Olive St, S Elm St, S Chestnut St, S Locust St, S Spruce St, S Fir St, S Cedar St, S Redwood St, S Cypress St, S Juniper St, S Birch St, S Alder St, S Poplar St, S Cottonwood St, S Dogwood St, S Magnolia St, S Oak St, S Hickory St, S Cherry St, S Apple St, S Pear St, S Peach St, S Plum St, S Grape St, S Elderberry St, S Rosemary St, S Basil St, S Thyme St, S Sage St, S Oregano St, S Dill St, S Parsley St, S Cilantro St, S Fennel St, S Carrot St, S Onion St, S Garlic St, S Shallot St, S Leek St, S Asparagus St, S Broccoli St, S Cauliflower St, S Spinach St, S Kale St, S Lettuce St, S Cucumber St, S Zucchini St, S Eggplant St, S Tomato St, S Potato St, S Sweet Potato St, S Yam St, S Turnip St, S Radish St, S Beetroot St, S Carrot St, S Onion St, S Shallot St, S Leek St, S Asparagus St, S Broccoli St, S Cauliflower St, S Spinach St, S Kale St, S Lettuce St, S Cucumber St, S Zucchini St, S Eggplant St, S Tomato St, S Potato St, S Sweet Potato St, S Yam St, S Turnip St, S Radish St, S Beetroot St.

- | | |
|----|---|
| 8 | Water Tower |
| 9 | Material Storage Shed |
| 10 | Satellite and Antennae Lot |
| 11 | Lot: residential
405 W LANCASTER ST |
| 12 | Lot: residential
(drainage)
200 BLK S WALNUT ST |
| 17 | Old Lagoon |

Recreational Facilities

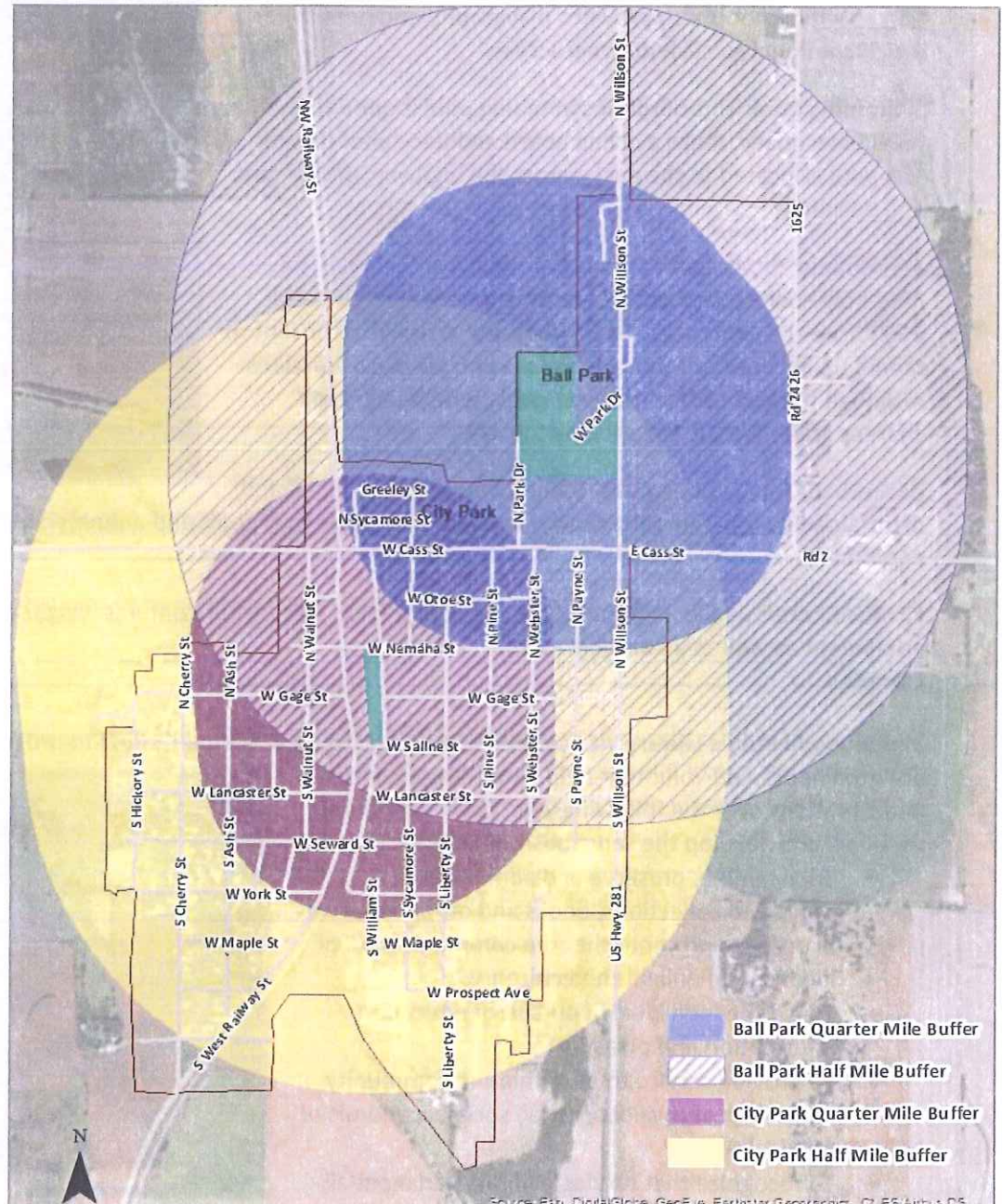
City Parks

The city has 13 acres of park space located within three parks: Ball and City Park are located on the northern boundary of the City while the Railroad Park is located west of downtown. The majority of residents live within one-quarter mile of a park while almost all residents live within one-half mile of a park. Barriers that impact pedestrians traveling to a park include the railroad tracks as all three park spaces are located to the east of the tracks.

According to information compiled by RDG Planning & Design in Omaha, NE, the average amount of park space for communities in the American Central Plains is approximately 3.3 acres per 100 residents.

The average amount of park space per 100 residents in Blue Hill is 1.38 acres per 100 residents; almost half of the average throughout the American Central Plains.

In order to reach the average, the City would need to add 14 acres of park space. Should the city decide to add the 14 acres of park space, developing the open space northeast of town would increase recreational acreage.



It should be noted that Blue Hill Community Schools is located in the southern portion of the City and does offer open space and playground equipment that is open to the public. This is not a City owned facility and is therefore not included in the amount of park space available to Blue Hill residents.

Railroad Park: Centrally located, this park has a state of the art playground equipment and picnic tables. There is an historic train station also located here.

Ball and City Park: There are two diamond ball fields with dugouts, bleacher seating, restrooms and a batting cage. To the east of the ball diamonds, there is playground equipment, restrooms, running water and a covered picnic area. Blue Hill Community Schools also provides playground equipment, which community residents may access.

Swimming Pool: This outdoor swimming pool is open to the public seasonally. It has a diving board and baby pool on site. The pool is located to the east, across the highway, of the park and ballpark.

Ash Hollow Public Golf Course: Ash Hollow golf course is a nine-hole course playing 2700 yards from the blue tees and 2600 from the white tees. The Clubhouse is available for rent to members for the community for social and business functions. Although the golf course received paid memberships and charges green fees, it is owned by the city.

Basketball/Tennis Courts and School Playground: Owned and maintained by the Blue Hill School, there are four basketball goals and a tennis court, as well as playground equipment.

Fitness Center: Available for adults in the community. This center contains weight and circuit training equipment as well as an aerobic room.

Libraries

The Blue Hill Public Library was created in 1929 by the local Woman's Club to provide Blue Hill a library with donated books and volunteer help. The Library Boards and Librarians over the following years have continued to follow and develop the same basic objectives:

- To assemble, preserve and administer in organized collections, books and other materials in order to promote the free communication of ideas for an enlightened citizenry.
- To aid the individual in pursuit of education, information and pleasure.
- To provide service to all within the community regardless of religious, racial, social, economic or political status.
- To recognize that no single library can meet all the demands of the community, and to cooperate in services and programs with other libraries and library agencies.

The library provides numerous programs and services to residents of all ages. Programs include: Overdrive e-book service, summer reading program, after school homework assistance, wireless internet access, TV and occasionally plays videos for younger students, computer access, collection of cake pans, and interlibrary loan.



The library is a well-used space, which has created a demand for an expansion of services and possible building expansion. There is room behind the current building for expansion. Should the library decide to proceed with expansion plans, they should consider applying for the Civic Center Funding Grant available through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NEDED).

If the library were able to expand, it would be able to provide more programs as well as increased safety and comfort for the users.

- The library currently does not have a safe zone/tornado shelter located on the property.
- Computers: the library currently has three computers that are in constant use. More computers would provide greater access to larger number of people.
- Resources: the library is regularly used by citizens of all ages within the community. As the demand rises, the library will need to expand its book collections for children, youth, and young adults.

Public Lands

Residential Lots: the city owns two unimproved lots; one is labeled in the Future Land Use Map for open space/park while the other one has been reserved for future residential. .

Satellite dishes/antennae: The city owns property housing satellite dishes and antennae which provide telecommunications capability to the area

Water Tower: the city owns property that houses the water tower, which provides water to the community during times of need.

Well House: the Well House area provides storage for city materials.

Other Public Buildings

Blue Hill Volunteer Fire Hall: the Fire Hall currently houses one Quick Attack, three Pumper engines, and two tankers.

Blue Hill Community Senior Center: this building is large enough for wedding receptions and banquets. Citizens may also rent out smaller portions of the building for smaller gatherings. The Center includes a complete kitchen, comfortable sitting area, and a gymnasium.

Blue Hill City Building: The City Building provides meeting space, which includes a large meeting table and pace for an additional forty to fifty chairs.

Light Plant: the Power Plant houses the equipment necessary to provide Blue Hill with all of its energy needs. The power plant also provides office space for the City's utility employees.



Schools

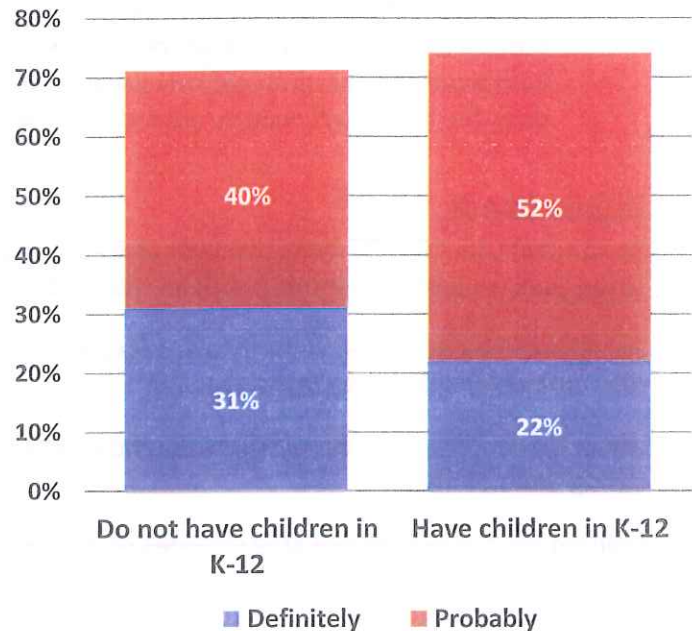
Blue Hill Community School District is a critical community and economic development asset for the Blue Hill community. Education is also the greatest expense for a local community; while the school is not controlled by the City Council, decisions made by the School Board will impact land use patterns and infrastructure needs within the City of Blue Hill.

A relationship between the school and the city is crucial to the success of both entities. Within the 2012 Community Needs Assessment Survey (CNAS), a section of questions was dedicated to the community's opinion of the school.

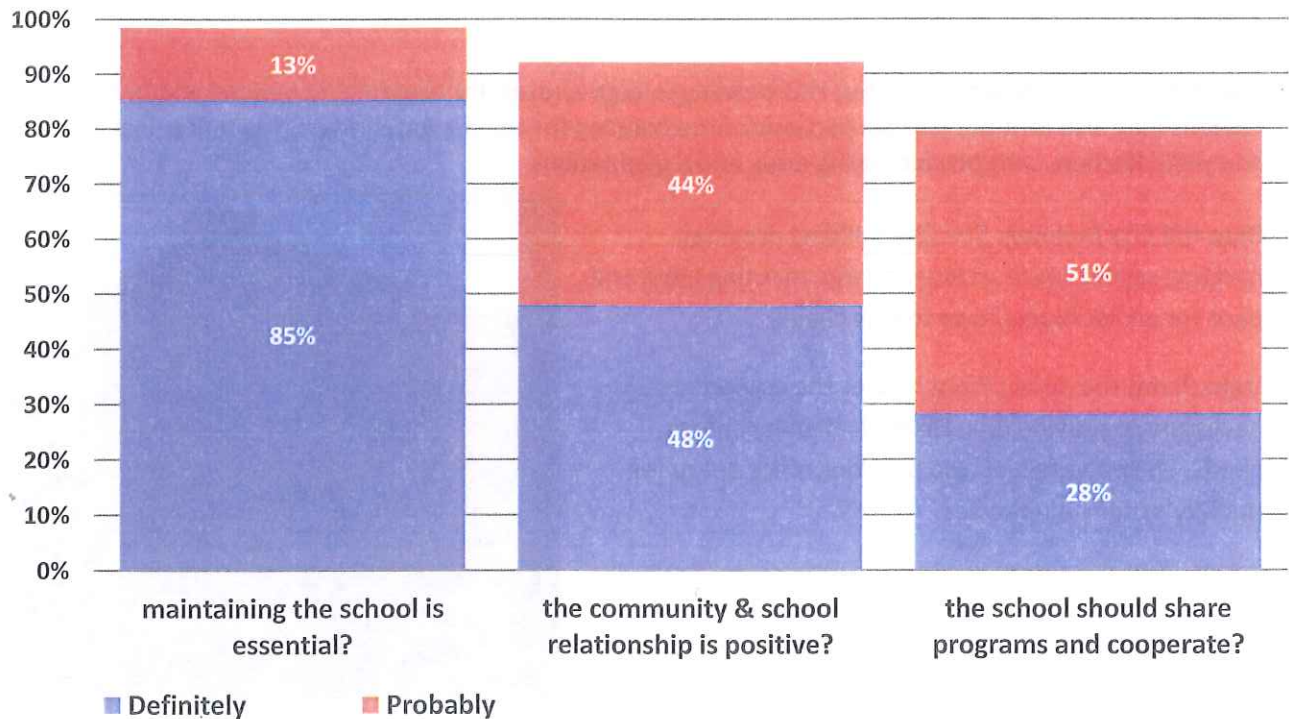
Of those respondents that took the survey, 25%, or 83 had children in the K-12 school. The other 75% or 338 respondents did not have children in school.

Results of the questions demonstrated the community's appreciation for the local school as well as their support for strengthening the District's facilities and quality of education.

Support for a levy increase to help fund school programs and improvements



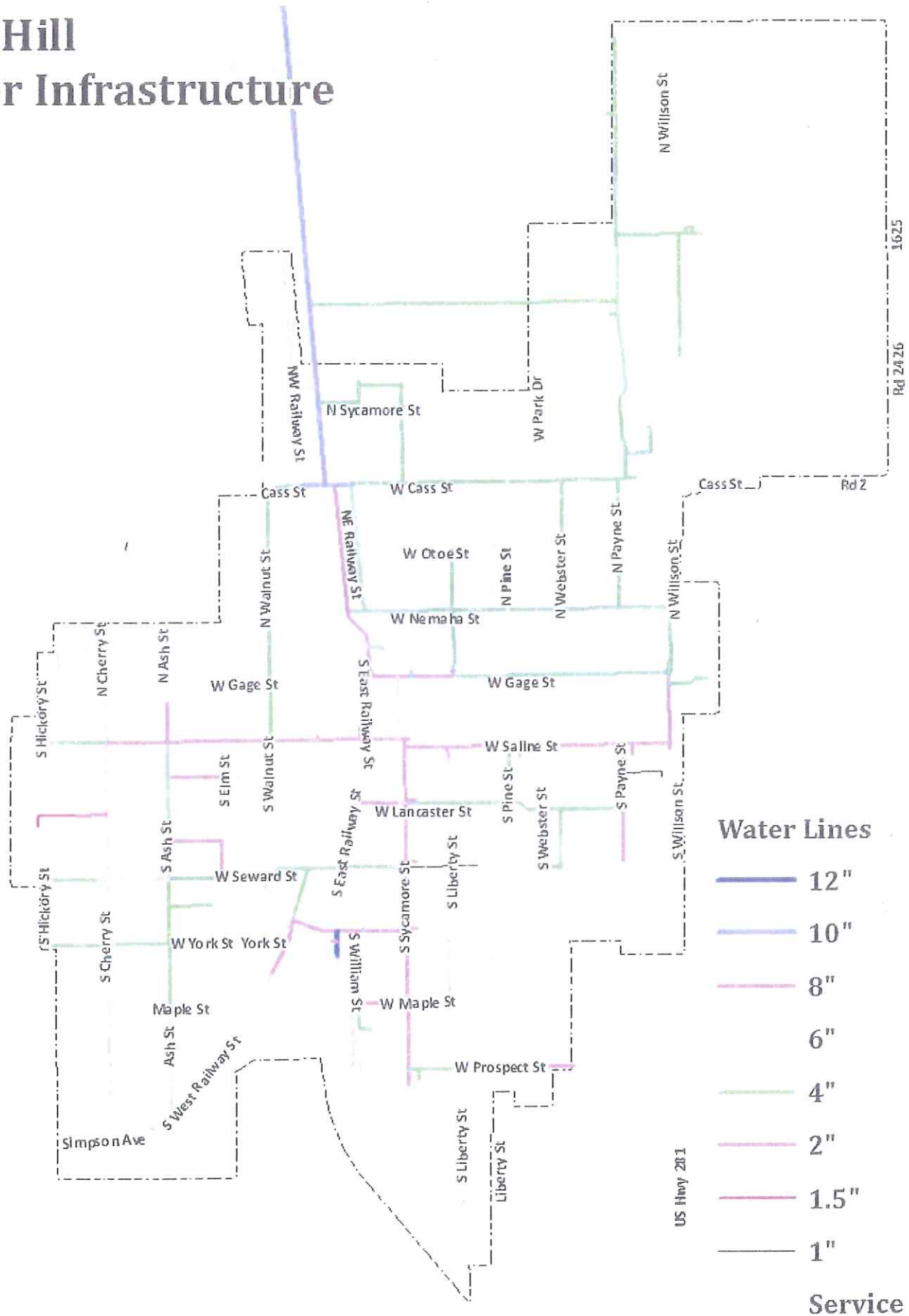
Do you agree that:



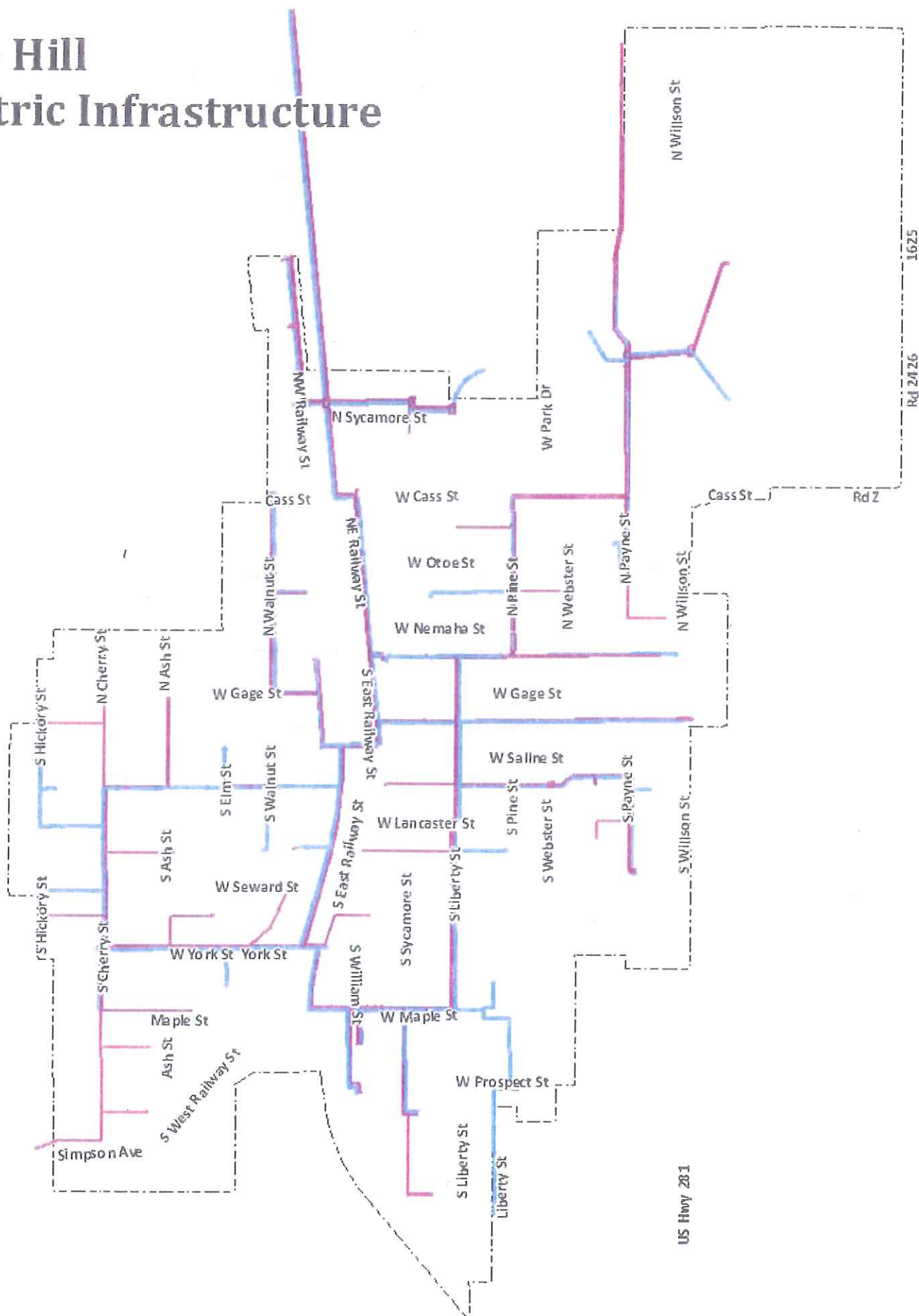
The City of Blue Hill operates the city sanitary sewer, water, and electric systems. A map for each system that displays the size and location of distribution lines is provided on the following pages.

[illegible]

Blue Hill Water Infrastructure



Blue Hill Electric Infrastructure



Services

Other services provided by the city to residents include waste management, brush disposal, and fire and rescue. Police protection is provided by the Webster county Sheriff and Nebraska State Patrol.

Solid Waste Management

Woodward's Disposal Services Inc. is contracted by the City of Blue Hill to collect household garbage weekly. The city bills each customer (\$13.50, monthly) for providing this service. Once per year, the city offers a city wide clean-up program, which allows each property owner to set any piece of personal property that is no longer needed and/or wanted on the curb. City employees then pick up the items and deposit them into dumpsters owned by Woodward's. The city currently pays an average of \$6,600 a month (App. \$80,000 per year) to Woodward's Disposal Services for these services.

Fire and Emergency Responders

Established in 1878, the Blue Hill Volunteer Fire Department (BHVFD) has approximately 23 volunteers. The BHVFD houses and accesses the following equipment, which is utilized to serve a 121 square mile area:

- + 1 Quick Attack
- + 2 pumper trucks
- + 2 tanker trucks

5 emergency response vehicles housed in the Blue Hill Fire Hall

Community Facilities- Goals for Growth and Preservation

The City has been a calculated property manager and has made good use of the property it owns while making sure not to acquire more than it can manage. Upon completion, of the Comprehensive Plan, the City should create a Capital Improvement Plan. At a minimum, the Capital Improvement Plan should address the following issues:

1. development of a tornado shelter/safe zone for the **City Library**;
2. new construction or complete rehabilitation of the **City Swimming Pool**;
3. long term plan for the systematic replacement/rehabilitation of existing **streets**; and
4. discussion of the City's ability to fund **land development that will support/encourage new housing development.**

Energy

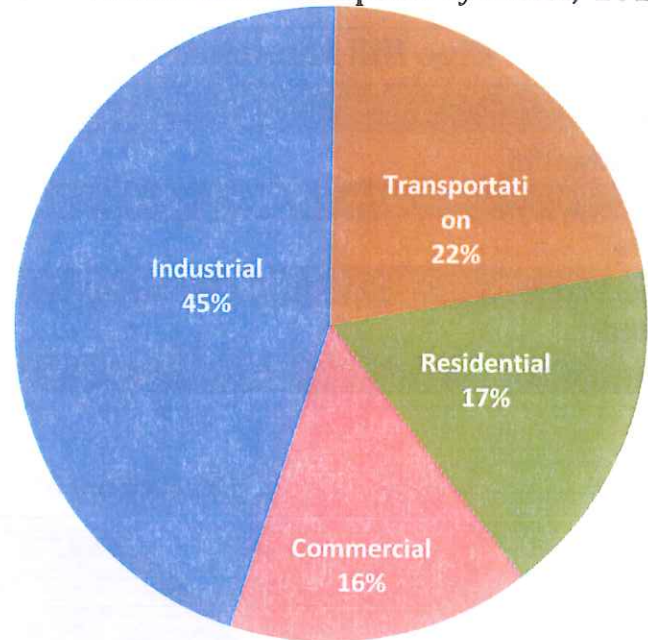
As required per Nebraska Revised Statutes, Section 19-903, the energy element of the comprehensive plan must:

[A]ssess energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors; evaluates utilization of renewable energy sources; and promotes energy conservation measures that benefit the community.

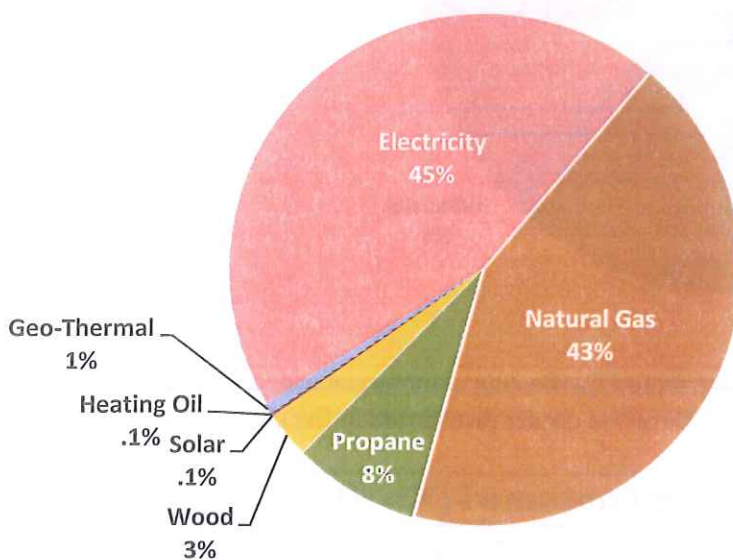
Energy Infrastructure and Use by Sector

According to the U.S. Energy Information Administration (EIA), the largest consumer of energy is the industrial sector. The EIA attributes this use to the large agricultural and food production portions of the industrial sector.

Nebraska Consumption by Sector, 2012



Net Energy Consumption by Fuel Type, Nebraska Households, 2012



Net Energy consumption is defined by the Nebraska Department of Energy (NEDOE) as the amount of energy minus electrical systems losses. Electrical system losses are defined as the amount of energy needed to generate, transmit, and distribute electricity. Electrical system losses are subtracted out in order to indicate the amount of energy actually consumed by a sector.

In Nebraska, Most households are primarily powered by natural gas or electricity. Due to the availability of data, energy consumption in Blue Hill will be based upon electricity.

Data concerning the sale of power from Blue Hill Municipal Power to customers was taken from three months in the past year (July 2014, January 2015, and May 2015).

That data was averaged to provide the following information concerning the sale and consumption of electricity in Blue Hill. The Blue Hill Municipal Power District has approximately 438 accounts that purchase power from the public utility. Residential customers make up the largest sector of customers. Residential is the primary user of land and electricity in Blue Hill. Commercial accounts for only a small portion of land use, however, it is the second largest customer class.

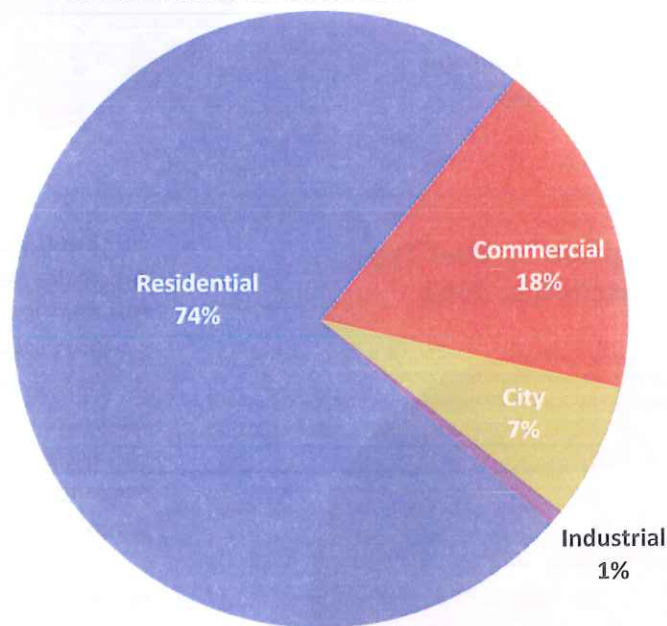
In Blue Hill, industrial customers include large account customers, such as Blue Hill Community Schools, Glenwood, and the Blue Hill Care Center.

Blue Hill Municipal Power, Breakdown of Customer Accounts

Customer Class	Total	% of Total
Residential	326	48%
Commercial	78	12%
City	31	5%
Industrial	4	1%
Total	674	100%

Source: City of Blue Hill

Breakdown of Customer Accounts



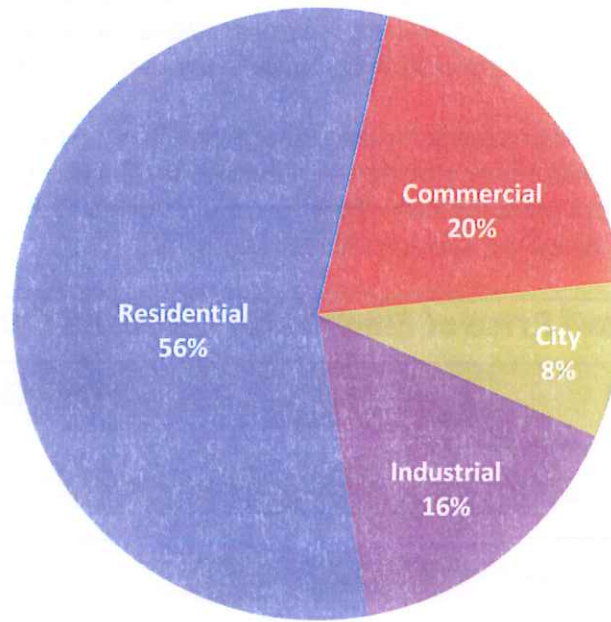
Residential uses consume just over half of the power distributed by the city; commercial uses consume the second largest amount. The last three classes consume 20% of the power distributed in the city.

Average Amount of Power Consumed (KWH)

Customer Class	Total (kWh)	% of Total
Residential	383,651	56%
Commercial	133,848	20%
City	55,750	8%
Industrial	107,227	16%
Total	680,476	100%

Source: City of Blue Hill

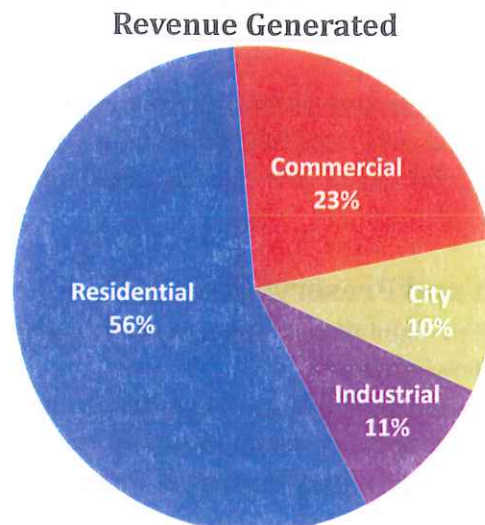
Average Amount of Power Consumed (KWH) Total



Similar to the amount of power consumed, residential and commercial customers consumed about 80% of the power distributed and provide over 80% of the revenue generated by Blue Hill Municipal Power.

Revenue Generated		
Customer Class	Total	% of Total
Residential	\$ 31,626.35	56%
Commercial	\$ 13,016.99	23%
City	\$ 5,701.05	10%
Industrial	\$ 5,854.08	10%
Total	\$ 56,198.47	100%

Source: City of Blue Hill



On average, the city generates a total of \$56,000 per month from the sale of electricity to customers. Blue Hill Municipal Power is a wholesale customer of Western Area Power Administration (WAPA) and the Municipal Energy Agency of Nebraska (MEAN). Therefore, the city purchases power at a wholesale price from MEAN and WAPA, then distributes that power to customers using its own electric infrastructure.

Regionally, the cost of electricity is lower for the City of Blue Hill as the City had the 147th highest cost of public power out of 158 public power providers in Nebraska. The EIA lists the average price of electricity for the residential sector as 9.14 cents per kWh. Therefore, the residents of the City of Blue Hill, as well as other regional cities, are paying below the average kWh for electricity.

Average Retail Price of Electricity, Nebraska Public Power Entities		
Rank	Community	Average Retail Price (cents/kWh)
1	Village of Wilcox- (NE)	15.05
6	City of Arapahoe	13.22
19	City of Red Cloud	11.55
32	City of Sutton - (NE)	10.93
147	City of Blue Hill	7.52
158	Village of Hildreth	3.79

Source: Nebraska Department of Energy, as of June 20, 2013, Residential Sector

Renewable Energy

While renewable sources of energy in Nebraska are increasing, coal remains the main source of energy in Nebraska, per the Energy Information Administration. Coal is a fossil fuel that is considered to be non-renewable due to the fact that it cannot re-generate itself within a human timeframe. Coal remains the most efficient form of power; however, factors such as supply and demand and regulations will continue to put pressure on the price of coal. The City of Blue Hill will need to look for renewable sources of energy to supplement the electricity that is currently purchased and sold to residents.

Energy Conservation

In order to emphasize the importance of energy conservation, The Nebraska State Legislature adopted the Nebraska Energy Code, which is based upon the 2009 International Energy Conservation Code. The Code requires new construction, additions, and renovations to be completed in a manner that ensures energy conservation.

Private contractors are expected to complete projects in conformance with the Nebraska Energy Code. The City of Blue Hill does not have a local code authority; however, work completed by contractors working within the City are expected to conform. The City of Blue Hill may utilize the Nebraska Energy Office to inspect work when necessary.

Energy-Goals for Growth and Preservation

The ability of the City of Blue Hill to maintain its community will depend on its ability to address energy issues. The City should start with the following goals:

- **Diversify sources of energy** by exploring and accommodating sources of renewable energy for powering City facilities as well as serving residential, commercial, and industrial customers.
- **Promote energy conservation** by providing financial incentives and programs to residential and commercial customers.