

A landscape photograph of a field at sunset. The sun is partially obscured by a tree line on the horizon. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and light blue. The field in the foreground is filled with tall, golden-brown grasses.

Reno County, Kansas

Comprehensive Plan

NOVEMBER 13, 2018

RESOLUTION 2018-27

A RESOLUTION ADOPTING THE 2018-2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR RENO COUNTY DATED NOVEMBER 13, 2018 AS RECOMMENDED BY THE RENO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION ON OCTOBER 18, 2018

WHEREAS, the Reno County Planning Commission on October 18, 2018, by Resolution adopted and recommended approval to the Reno County Board of County Commissioners the adoption of 2018-2040 Comprehensive County Plan for Reno County dated November 13, 2018; and

WHEREAS, a copy of the aforementioned Reno County Planning Commission Resolution and a certified copy of the 2018-2040 Comprehensive County Plan for Reno County dated November 13, 2018, along with a written summary of the public hearing thereon conducted by the Reno County Planning Commission, was provided to this Board for consideration and approval; and

WHEREAS, this Board conducted a public hearing on November 13, 2018, on the proposed Plan as adopted by the Reno County Planning Commission by Resolution on October 18, 2018.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF RENO COUNTY, KANSAS, that the 2018-2040 Comprehensive County Plan for Reno County dated November 13, 2018 as adopted by the Reno County Planning Commission is approved pursuant to K.S.A. 12-747.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the 2018-2040 Comprehensive Plan for Reno County replaces and supersedes in total Phase I of the Comprehensive

County Plan for Reno County dated October 4, 2013 from and after the effective date of this resolution.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that this Resolution is effective from and after its adoption.

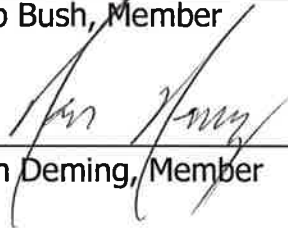
ADOPTED in regular session this 13th day of November, 2018.

BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF RENO COUNTY, KANSAS



Ron Hirst, Chairman

Bob Bush, Member



Dan Deming, Member

ATTEST:



Donna Patton, Reno County Clerk

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The update to the Comprehensive Plan for Reno County has been a collaborative effort involving many people within the community. The following are acknowledged for significant contributions to the work of updating the Comprehensive Plan.

RENO COUNTY BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSION MEMBERS

Ron Hirst, Chairman - District Two
Bob Bush, Vice-Chairman - District Three
Dan Deming, Commissioner - District One

RENO COUNTY PLANNING COMMISSION MEMBERS

Lisa French - Chairwoman
Mark Richardson - Vice Chairman
Mary Lynn Baker
Russ Goertzen
Ken Jorns
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Gary Price - Past Member

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Special appreciation is expressed to the following individuals and agencies for contributing information and assistance to this project:

Russ Ewy, AICP - Baughman Company, P.A.

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CHAPTER 1 – PLAN INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Reno County, as with most rural counties in Kansas, faces an uncertain future as populations slowly decline. Non-urban counties throughout the Midwest are struggling to maintain populations, maintain their tax base for the services they provide, and develop new economic opportunities, and Reno County is no different. The County's proximity to Sedgwick County appears to support the idea as younger populations move away for educational or employment reasons, they are not returning as permanent residents.

All of these aspects make for an uncertain future for Reno County despite its existing citizens having a deep attachment to their community. The plan is designed to build on past successes to create a basis on which to regrow the County through a program of actions and concepts aiming to advance the economy of the County, improve the lives of its residents, and attempt to stem the gradual eroding of its population base.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is intended to be the most visible part of the planning process for a community, setting the direction for the future growth and development of the community.

This direction is developed through the Reno County Planning Commission, the Reno County Board of County Commissioners, as well as the actions of all the incorporated cities in the County. These efforts begin with their commitment to engage the local citizens in the planning process. This is a noble endeavor, but is one that can be difficult to effectively accomplish. However, the rewards of a successful participatory planning process can be felt within the community for years.

Human nature tends to focus on the present situation rather than take a structured look to the future. Citizen input and involvement are often shrouded in an atmosphere of perceived crisis. As a result, communities have a tendency to be reactionary rather than proactive in their decision-making process. The comprehensive planning process should provide the foundation for developing a proactive plan and vision for the community.

To allow planning to work for the community, it is important to understand what is involved in the planning process. The planning process can be summarized as:

- Analysis of existing conditions and characteristics
- Application of accepted planning principles
- Development of goals and objectives for the future
- Creation of policies to guide future decisions and actions

Because the Comprehensive Plan gives a long-range perspective for directing the future course of a community, it is beneficial to understand the plan's inter-relationships. A lack of knowledge of the historical, sociological, economic, environmental, and psychological roots of a community can result in uninformed decisions based on perceptions which can have negative effects on the community. A clear understanding of existing conditions within Reno County, coupled with a carefully structured set of goals and objectives, serve as the framework for the Comprehensive Plan.

From this planning framework, policies for directing future land use and development decisions can be developed. Implementation of the plan might include such things as revising Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, expanding or modifying the code enforcement program, enhancing existing assistance programs and services, or establishing entirely new programs and services. All of these implementation actions would be intended to carry out the goals and objectives and implement the recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan.

REASONS FOR ADOPTING THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

This plan is to be used by public officials in guiding decisions dealing with proposed land use changes, funding of public programs and services, and investments in public facilities. Private citizens should rely upon the plan to guide private investments, offer some security in those investments, and build upon the assets of the community for the benefit of all. In particular, decisions such as where to locate new housing projects; determining the best location for new commercial and industrial developments; deciding which road improvements foster additional private investment in the community; and identifying where annexations might be in the best interests of the city, can all be guided by the plan. By following the policies and recommendations of the Comprehensive Plan it is possible to more efficiently control the cost of providing public services to the citizens of Reno County.

While the final Comprehensive Plan will contain specific goals, objectives, policies, and recommendations for future action, it must be understood that the Comprehensive Plan is just a guide document based on existing conditions and current understandings of the trends and directions of public and private investments. These conditions, along with local concerns, priorities, and attitudes will change over the course of time and must be reviewed and incorporated into the plan on a periodic basis.

Per Kansas Statute, the plan must be reviewed annually by the Planning Commission. An annual comprehensive update is not necessary, rather the plan should be reviewed annually to identify accomplishments and yearly goals. To ensure that the plan remains current to the vision of the community, the County should not wait more than ten years to perform a full update.

Change may not occur as fast in Reno County as it has in the recent past, but the pace at which change does occur, coupled with the impacts of regional and/or national trends, can be felt in Reno County much faster than once was the case. A commitment by the County to make a strong planning program a major part of the local government process is vitally important in allowing the County to be responsive to change when it occurs. Such an effort, coupled with an active and informed Planning Commission, will allow this plan to remain a dynamic document that will consistently reflect local attitudes and concerns, and serve the County well into the future.

LEGAL BASIS OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The Comprehensive Plan is authorized by Kansas Statute K.S.A. 12-741, et .seq., and allows cities and counties to engage in Comprehensive Planning as a means to set the direction for the future growth and development of the community. In particular, statutes state the preparation of the Comprehensive Plan, or an update thereto, is the responsibility of the Planning Commission, who shall: "...make or cause to be made comprehensive surveys and studies of past and present conditions and trends relating to land use, population and building intensity, public facilities, transportation and transportation facilities, economic conditions, natural resources and may include any other element deemed necessary to the comprehensive plan."

The statutes further state the proposed plan shall show the Planning Commission's "...recommendations for the development or redevelopment of the territory including: (a) The general location, extent and relationship of the use of land for agriculture, residence, business, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and other community facilities, major utility facilities both public and private and any other use deemed necessary; (b) population and building intensity standards and restrictions and the application of the same; (c) public facilities including transportation facilities of all types whether publicly or privately owned which relate to the transportation of persons or goods; (d) public improvement programming based upon a determination of relative urgency; (e) the major sources and expenditure of public revenue including long range financial plans for the financing of public facilities and capital improvements, based upon a projection of the economic and fiscal activity of the community, both public and private; (f) utilization and conservation of natural resources; and (g) any other element deemed necessary to the proper development or redevelopment of the area." To the extent relevant, this update to the Comprehensive Plan for Reno County seeks to address the above items.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

As a policy guide, the Comprehensive Plan has no regulatory authority, thus relying on a variety of implementation tools to carry out its intent. The two most recognized tools are Zoning Regulations and Subdivision Regulations. These are often supplemented by other “land development related” codes and regulations, such as locally adopted building codes, property standards codes, sanitation codes, and other similar local standards.

The Comprehensive Plan will also be implemented on an incremental basis over time as landowners and developers approach the County with development proposals and rezoning applications. These proposals and applications should be considered in relation to the goals, objectives and policies articulated within this plan. If consistent with the plan, the decisions of the County are presumed to be reasonable, but this does not preclude a decision different from the findings of the plan on a specific development proposal or application.

More detailed actions concerning implementation of this updated plan are found elsewhere within the plan itself.

EXISTING PLANNING EFFORTS IN RENO COUNTY

Although Reno County has established and maintained a planning and zoning program for land use regulation in a small portion of their jurisdiction, the County now seeks through this plan to better understand and guide land use development—in the public interest—by preserving the County’s strengths and identifying areas to efficiently focus its financial resources by the following guidelines:

- Balance personal property rights with the rights of the larger community;
- Focus limited revenue to preserve existing infrastructure;
- Define and preserve a “sense of place” in Reno County;
- Accommodate new development while limiting adverse impacts to County facilities; and
- Review the County’s existing land use policies to determine the best balance of regulation.

The County has the opportunity to build on its strengths as it manages land use change. Growth is encouraged near the small cities within the “Areas of Urban Influence.” When urban development is approved outside the cities, it will be reviewed based on new planning standards.

The values of Reno County—for example, the preservation of a “sense of place”, or the protection of a farmer’s right to farm—can be enhanced by the plan. The timing and phasing of growth can also be better managed through the planning process. The way growth “fits” into the County—the appearance, the preservation of open space and farmland—can be influenced, as well.

The Comprehensive Plan calls for the County to continue regulating growth in the defined unincorporated areas based on the objectives within this Plan and the standards of its local zoning and subdivision regulations. With each new development application, an evaluation of the “highest and best use” for the land in question should be considered before farmland is converted to other uses. This Plan also seeks to guide much of the future development within Reno County towards those cities with the local capacity to serve urban growth while maintaining the majority of productive farmland for agricultural use or other uses that directly support agricultural production.

The County attempts to coordinate with the area cities when regulating land uses near their jurisdictions. Strengthening established communities is a major challenge for Reno County. The cities and the County should continue coordinating in order to attract urban development to the “Areas of Urban Influence.”

Also of importance to development in Reno County is the timing and phasing of growth so that limited financial resources can support the dual demands: maintaining what is here now, balanced with extending services in response to growth. A key recommendation of the plan is to focus on the maintenance of the Capital Improvements Program (CIP) which ranks projects in phases by five-year periods.

Finally, the Plan calls for initiatives that must be taken by many groups and not just the County government. “Policy Steps” are detailed for the entire Reno County community. The development objectives, for example, are challenges for the entire community. Better coordination among public and private groups, including developers, will support local values articulated in the Plan.

This Plan will be the next logical step toward implementing previous planning efforts, such as the 2004 K-96 Corridor Economic Plan, as well as the Reno County Comprehensive Plans from 1997 and the relevant sections from the County’s 2013 Plan update. These current plans provide some limited guidance for the recommendations in this Plan, but their primary inclusion is to ensure this update to the Reno County Comprehensive Plan is in general compliance with plans for the region as well. This section below provides a basic summary of these plans’ recommendations and objectives.

RENO COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

The key points of these plans are:

- Identifies the southeastern quadrant of the County as its highest growth area.
- States the Wichita metropolitan area is the main driver of population growth along the K-96 corridor.
- Claims an increase in the conversion of agricultural land to non-farm residential uses.
- Stable but aging population trends throughout the County.
- The pattern of businesses and industries locating outside the corporate limits of cities has been increasing in recent years.
- Future development locations are affected by floodplain in many areas of the County.
- Prime farmland and rare or unique agricultural production acreage should be protected from unreasonable encroachment by non-farm or urban development.
- Future development shall be located and designed to make efficient use of energy resources, public transportation systems, facilities and services.
- The direction and intent of the Future Land Use Plan shall constitute a basis for all future decisions concerning application of the Zoning Regulations.
- All commercial, industrial and suburban residential developments are encouraged to utilize the infrastructure of the adjacent city, including potable water, sanitary sewer, and street extensions.
- New suburban development shall provide evidence of funding necessary for installation of needed improvements.

K-96 CORRIDOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The *K-96 Corridor Economic Development Plan* addresses the future development within Reno and Sedgwick Counties and the communities of Maize, Mt. Hope, Haven, and South Hutchinson. The K-96 Highway Corridor is the primary transportation route between Wichita, to the southeast, and South Hutchinson at the northern end of this corridor. K-96 Highway is one of the most-heavily traveled highways within Kansas, and offers an easy commute between two prominent cities in south-central Kansas. The counties and municipalities who were a part of this planning effort continue to be hopeful this collaborative plan benefits the region. This Plan is reaching the end of its project horizon, but still offers a foundation on which to continue to create a viable economic corridor between Wichita and Hutchinson.

The K-96 Plan was enacted to “protect the assets that the corridor has and to attract development that enhances the economy and the physical nature of the corridor.” The plan summarizes the three most important elements that need to be addressed in achieving the Plan’s vision as being a sustainable development pattern, cooperation among the various communities along the corridor, and providing balanced development regulations across the corridor. The policy recommendations that have been outlined includes a “nodal development pattern” or the concentration of new development focused near these smaller communities, cooperation efforts between these towns, and the adoption of necessary planning regulations, such as zoning and/or zoning overlays, floodplain overlays and subdivision regulations, to address these elements.

The key points of the Plan are:

- Comprehensive outlook for the region spanning from South Hutchinson to Wichita completed in 2004.
- Stresses on-going implementation by each of the four communities identified by the plan, including Haven.
- Envisions limited opportunities for commercial and industrial development.
- Outlines preferred development patterns, and offer general design guidelines for new projects.
- The plan further reinforces the idea of Haven growing its agribusiness employment base and maintaining its appeal as a bedroom community to take advantage of its location between the two larger regional cities.

CITY OF HUTCHINSON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2014)

Adopted in March of 2017, Hutchinson's Comprehensive Plan *Designing Our Future: Imagine Hutch 2037* mirrors similar demographic trends of this Plan, and envisions several objectives to redirect its population trends in an upward direction.

The plan discusses various physical improvements to the downtown core, creating marketing strategies to draw people and businesses to the city, as well as preserving its entertainment and cultural resources into the future. Hutchinson seeks to continue to build its relationship with Reno County to create a systematic plan for utility infrastructure extensions and annexations to accommodate urban growth in an efficient manner.

The key points of the Plan are:

- Explore updating the Downtown Design Guidelines.
- Promote more residential living spaces and live/work units downtown.
- Examine the City's Zoning Regulations to determine if changes need to be made to facilitate mixed uses Downtown.
- Reduce barriers to economic development, including building and fire code barriers.
- Require flood prone areas to be dedicated as easements as part of new development.
- Conduct a fire hazard education program on prairie fire risks and prevention measures.
- Improve marketing strategies to promote Hutchinson as a desirable community with a low cost of living.
- Develop a master plan to reduce the number of at-grade crossings.
- To reduce infrastructure costs per development, explore amendments to the zoning and subdivision regulations to encourage more compact development patterns.
- Continue to work on implementing a comprehensive pavement management system.
- Develop an airport business plan.
- Work with Reno County to establish extraterritorial jurisdiction, shared jurisdiction, a mandatory annexation zone or some other option that protects the City's borders and allows for expansion to 2037 and beyond.
- Develop a parks master plan.
- Develop a public involvement process for bicycle and pedestrian facility improvements.

CITY OF SOUTH HUTCHINSON COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2016)

The 2040 Comprehensive Plan is the official policy document of the City of South Hutchinson, and as with similar plans establishes long-term goals to guide future development, identifies community growth needs, and helps the City meet those needs. Due to its location at the intersection of major transportation routes, South Hutchinson is poised to capture its share of future growth within Reno County and their plan outlines various strategies to manage any expansion to the community.

The key points of the Plan are:

Economy

- Encourage the expansion of business and job opportunities within South Hutchinson through a strong economic development program.
- Enhance the local business climate through city regulations, policies, programs, and decisions.
- Actively promote South Hutchinson to encourage economic growth.

Growth & Development

- Encourage South Hutchinson to grow in an orderly and efficient development pattern.
- Avoid unnecessary environmental impacts as a result of future growth and development.

Housing

- Work to assure decent, safe, and affordable housing for all South Hutchinson residents.

Transportation

- Provide and maintain an efficient and safe transportation system.
- Provide a safe, well-connected bicycle and pedestrian system that enhances community mobility.

Public Services & Utilities

- Ensure the effective and efficient provision of city services and utility systems as South Hutchinson grows.

Quality of Life

- Sustain and expand programs to maintain a high quality of life and build community pride.
- Promote South Hutchinson's unique identity through its local culture and community assets.
- Facilitate youth involvement in the community.

CITY OF HAVEN COMPREHENSIVE PLAN (2016)

The City of Haven's recent Plan update focuses on the protection of the community's limited growth areas adjacent to the north, northeast, and northwest of the existing city limits. These surrounding areas are inundated with unlocated pipelines, which limit the logical extension of residential subdivisions to serve what is hoped to be a modest growth trend over the next twenty years. Haven has a fair mix of industrial development and agricultural support businesses, but has not seen a steady increase in its population despite its close proximity to Hutchinson and Wichita.

The Plan also outlines Haven's goals of "fiscal stewardship" to ensure local funding is available to facilitate future growth, as well as provide amenities such as improvements to its parks and swimming pool. Haven's extra-territorial jurisdiction – roughly a one-mile square around the City – allows Haven control of zoning and land development to ensure their restricted growth vectors are not further limited by intrusive land uses. In addition to its zoning authority, development within this extra-territorial jurisdiction is also controlled by Haven's Subdivision Regulations.

OTHER EXISTING PLANS

A number of adopted plans exist to help guide decisions on specific areas of Reno County's operations.

The Reno County Bridge Infrastructure Replacement Plan, prepared by the Public Works Department and adopted by the County in 2015, provides a strategic approach to identifying structures under County jurisdiction and prioritizing their maintenance, replacement, as well as potential closure. This effort will help address the safety of the County transportation system, while focusing financial resources in the most efficient manner.

The Reno County Multi-Hazard Mitigation Plan was prepared in 2009 to "guide hazard mitigation planning to better protect the people and property of the County from the effects of natural and man-made hazard events." This plan will be discussed primarily when addressing floodplain development and community facility needs.

In 2016 the Reno County Bicycle Trail Advisory Committee prepared a study of how best to fund and develop a non-motorized transportation network within the county. This study seeks to identify potential trail locations which link other recreational and natural features together for recreational purposes, as well as a transportation alternative.

Elements of all these planning efforts will be integrated throughout various sections of this Plan, and the recommendations of this Plan will seek to further their objectives.

HOW TO USE THIS DOCUMENT

The Reno County Comprehensive Plan creates a process for applying new public policies to development review. The following objectives are intended to help guide County decision makers with their review and approval of development applications within the unincorporated areas of the County:

- Compare the application to the Goals, Objective, and Policy Steps of the Plan.
- Evaluate development proposals relative to the planning principles of the Plan.
- Utilize the Site Plan Review procedures and standards found within the Zoning Regulations.
- Amend the county Zoning Regulations, as necessary, to incorporate new standards for future land uses not currently regulated.
- Review Subdivision Regulations to address new platting requirements and to ensure site planning standards are applied to future projects.
- Present the plan to the cities of Reno County to continue building support for joint ventures, such as a county-wide code enforcement administration and related cooperative efforts.

Figure 1: Reno County Aerial Map

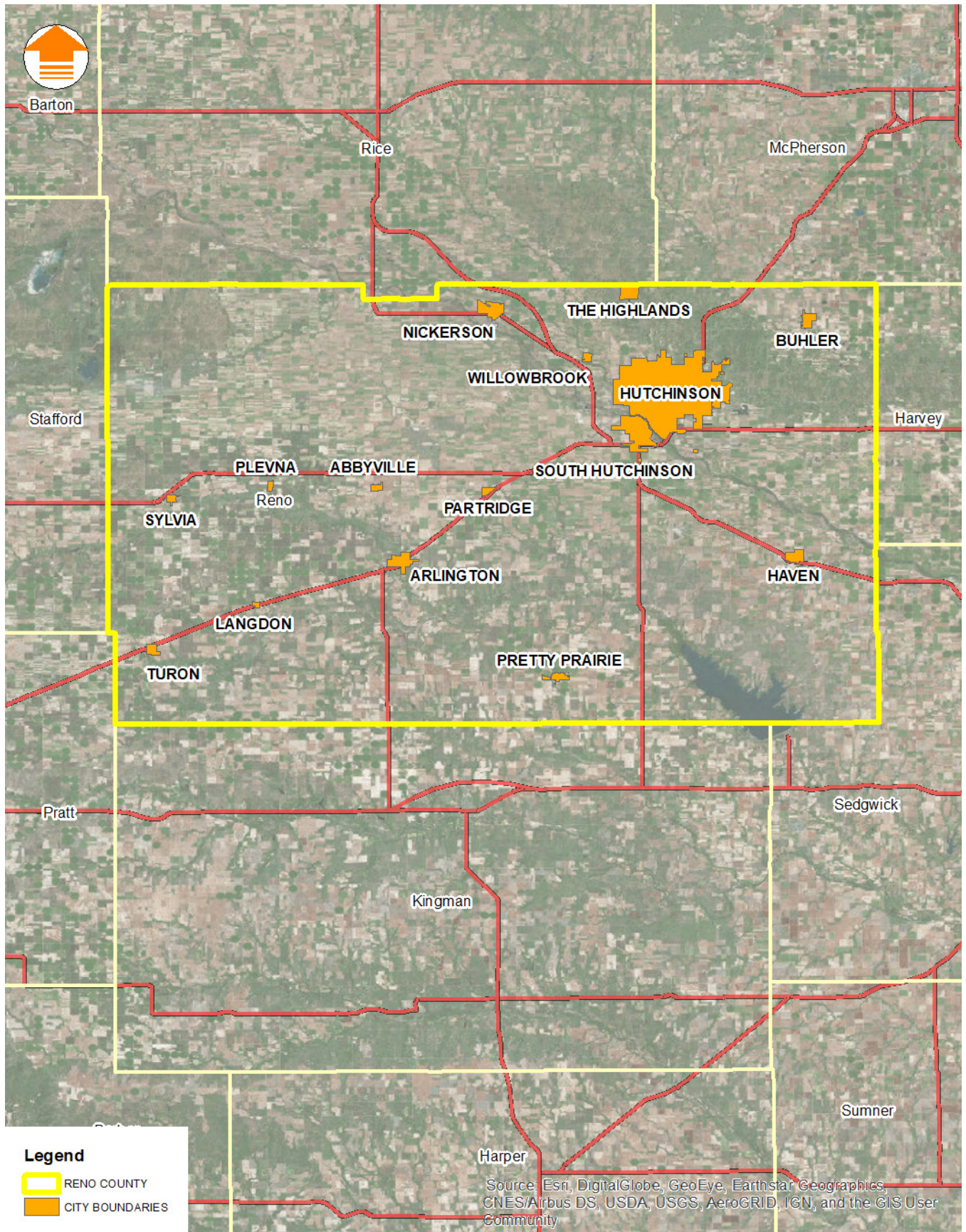


Figure 2: Regional Location Map

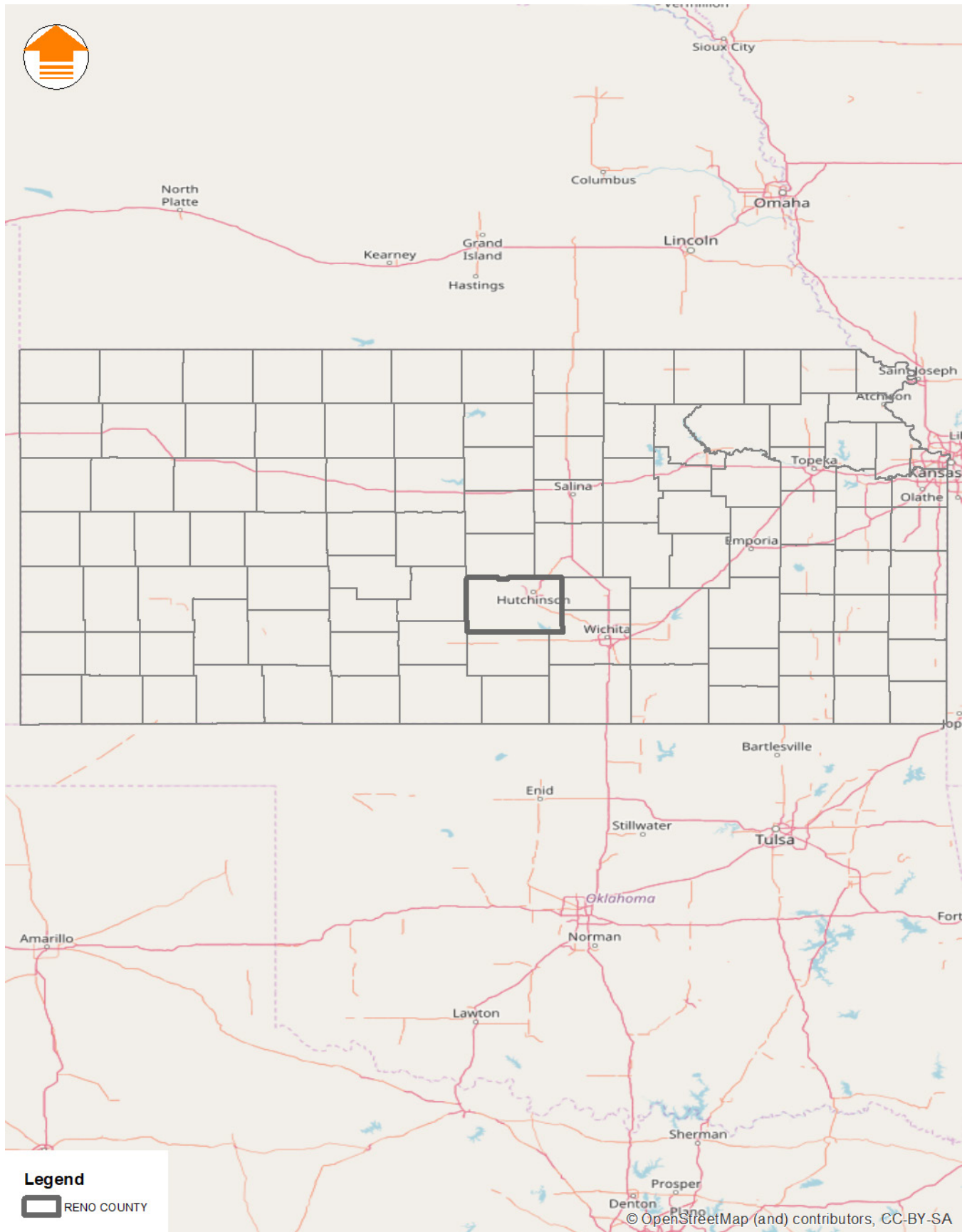


Figure 3: Surrounding Counties Map

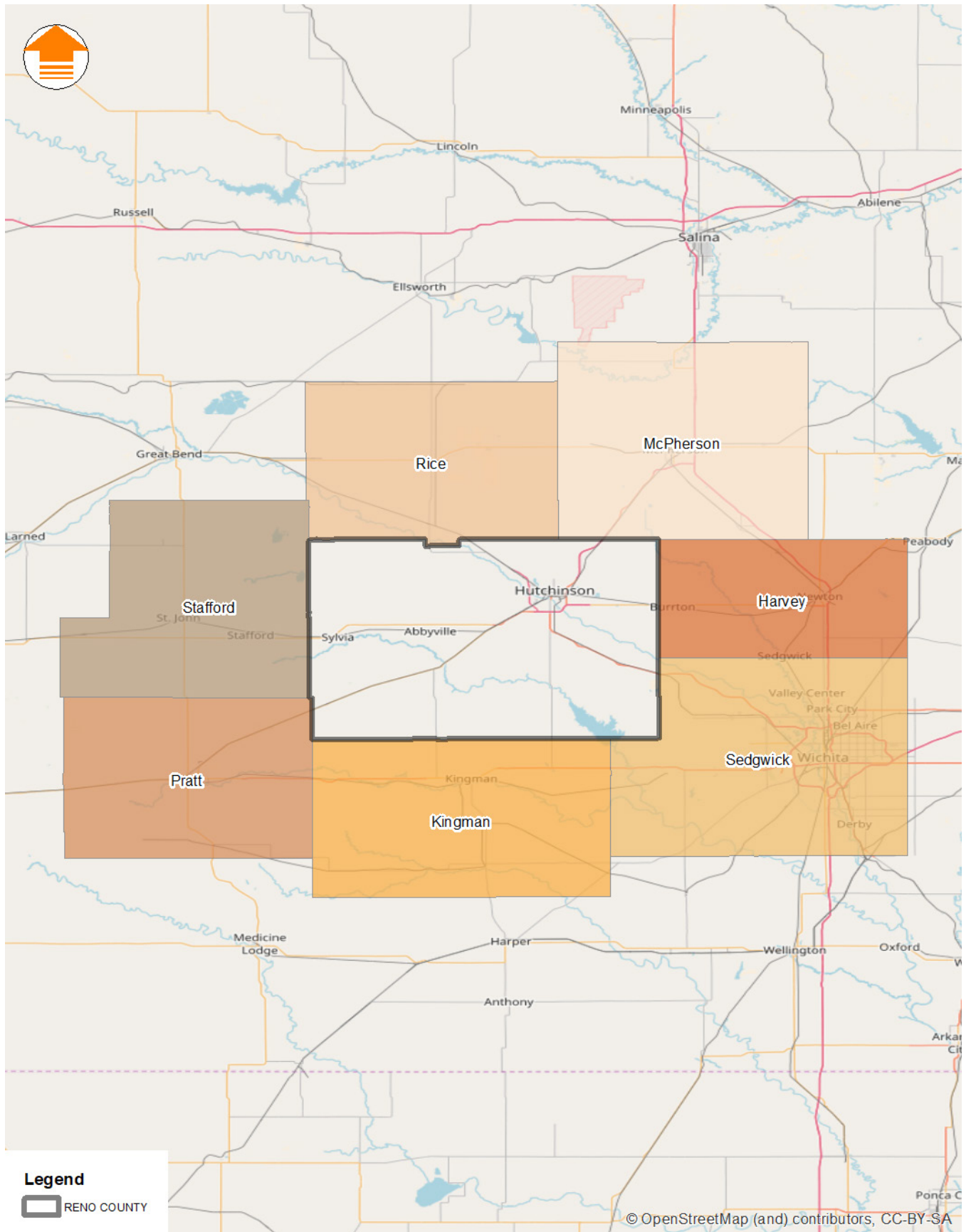


Figure 4: Reno County Township Map

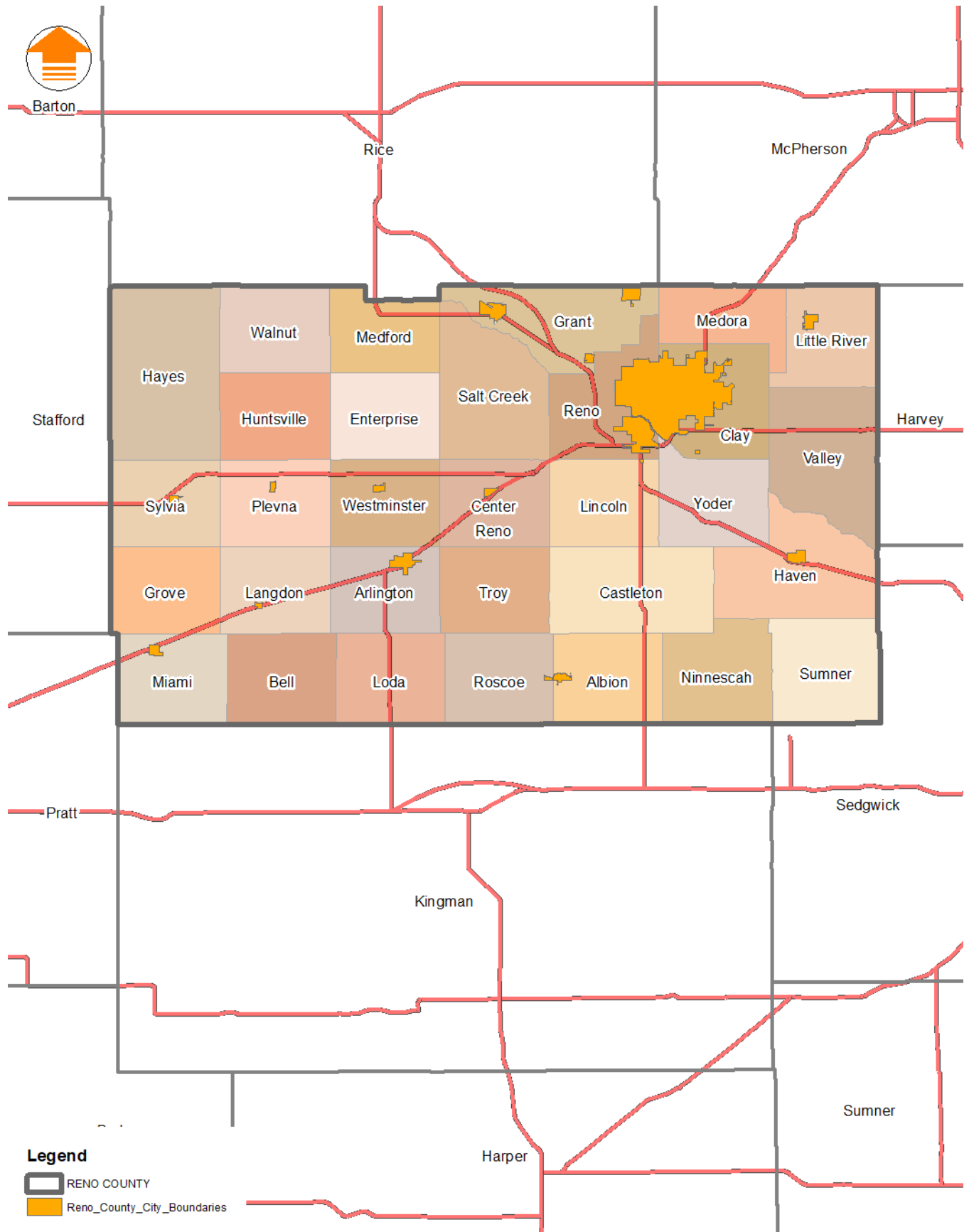
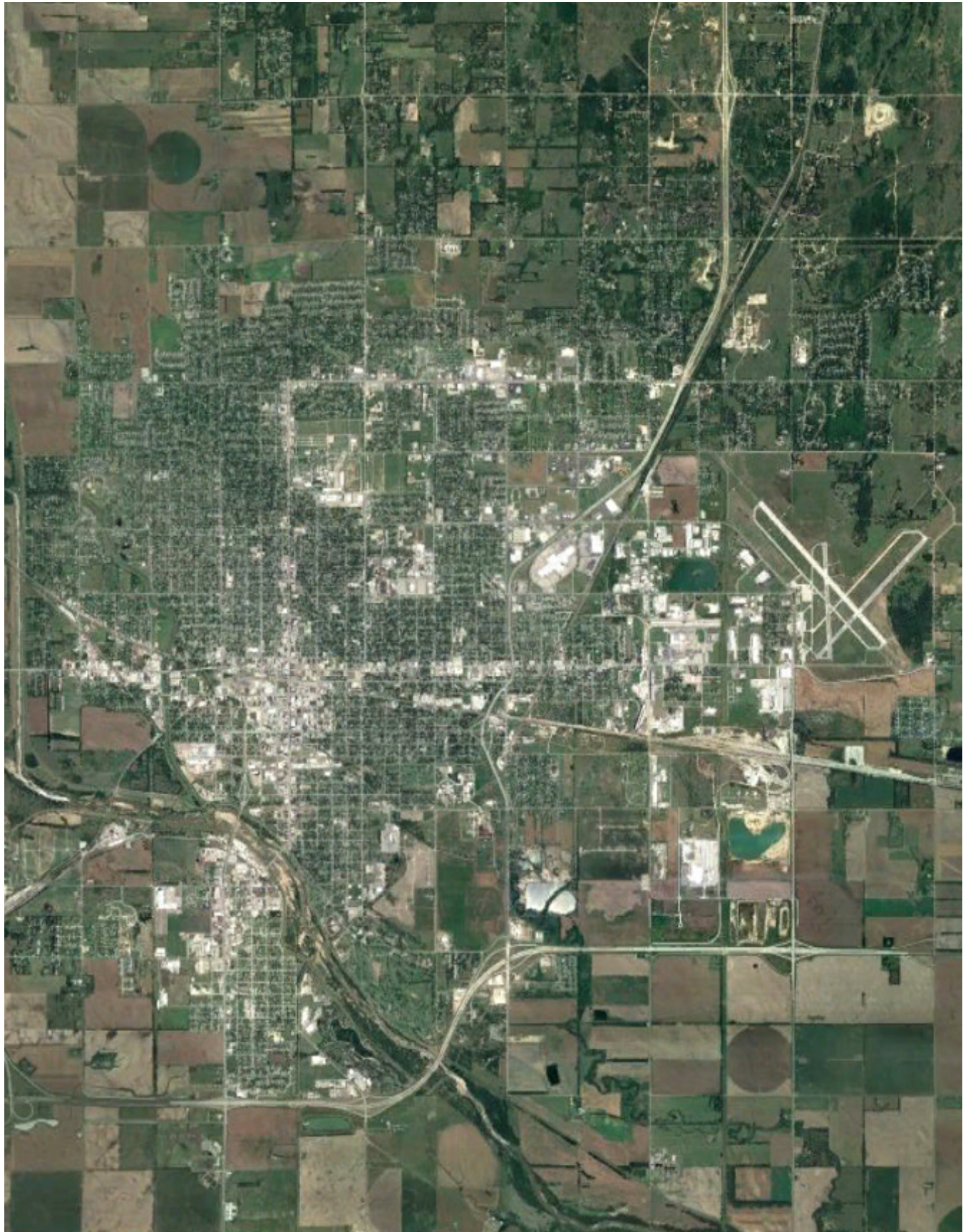
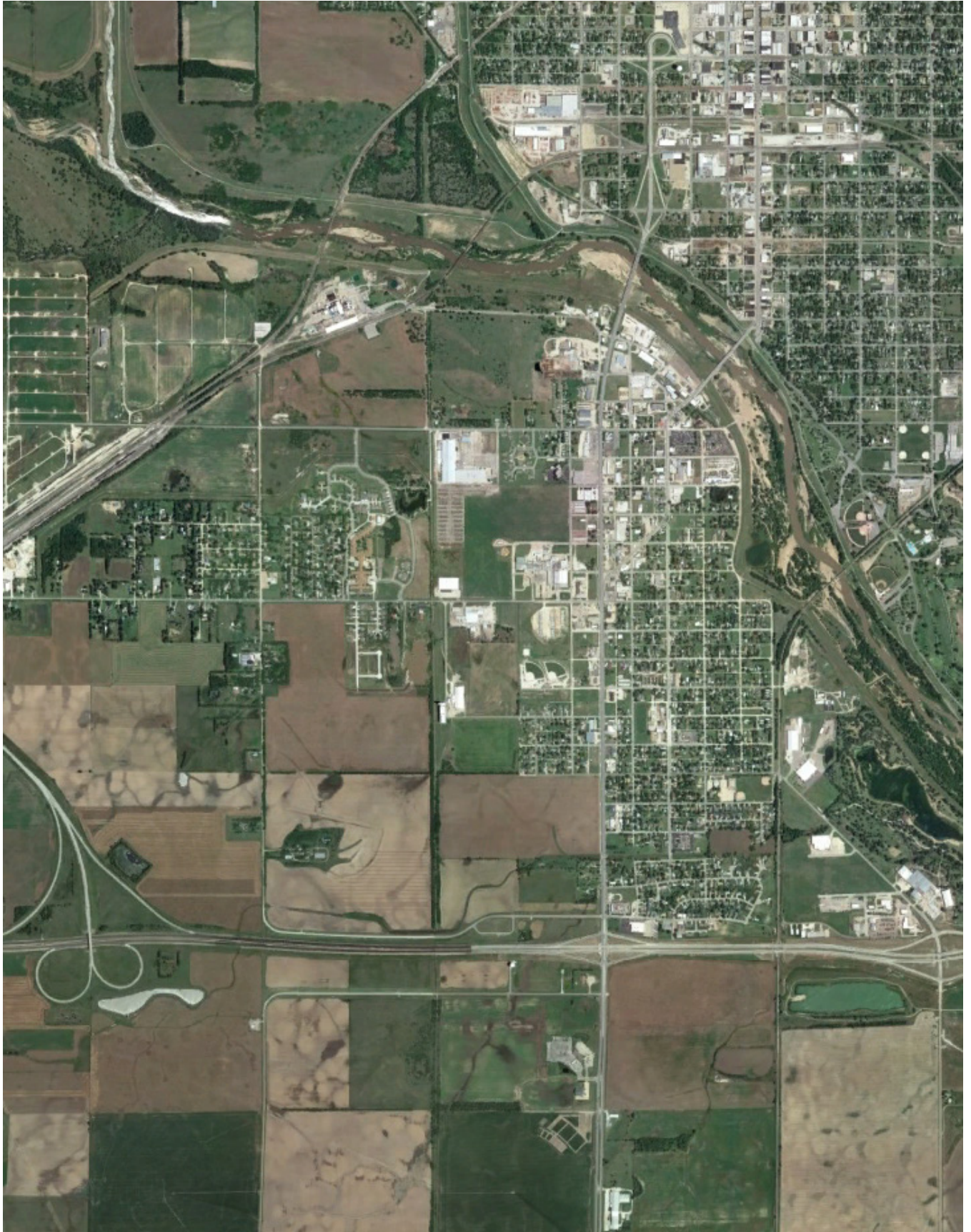


Figure 5: Aerial - City of Hutchinson



Source: Google Earth (2015)

Figure 6: Aerial - City of South Hutchinson



Source: Google Earth (2015)

Figure 7: Aerial - City of Abbyville



Source: Google Earth (2015)

Figure 8: Aerial - City of Arlington



Source: Google Earth (2015)

Figure 9: Aerial - City of Buhler



Figure 10: Aerial - City of Haven

Source: Google Earth (2015)



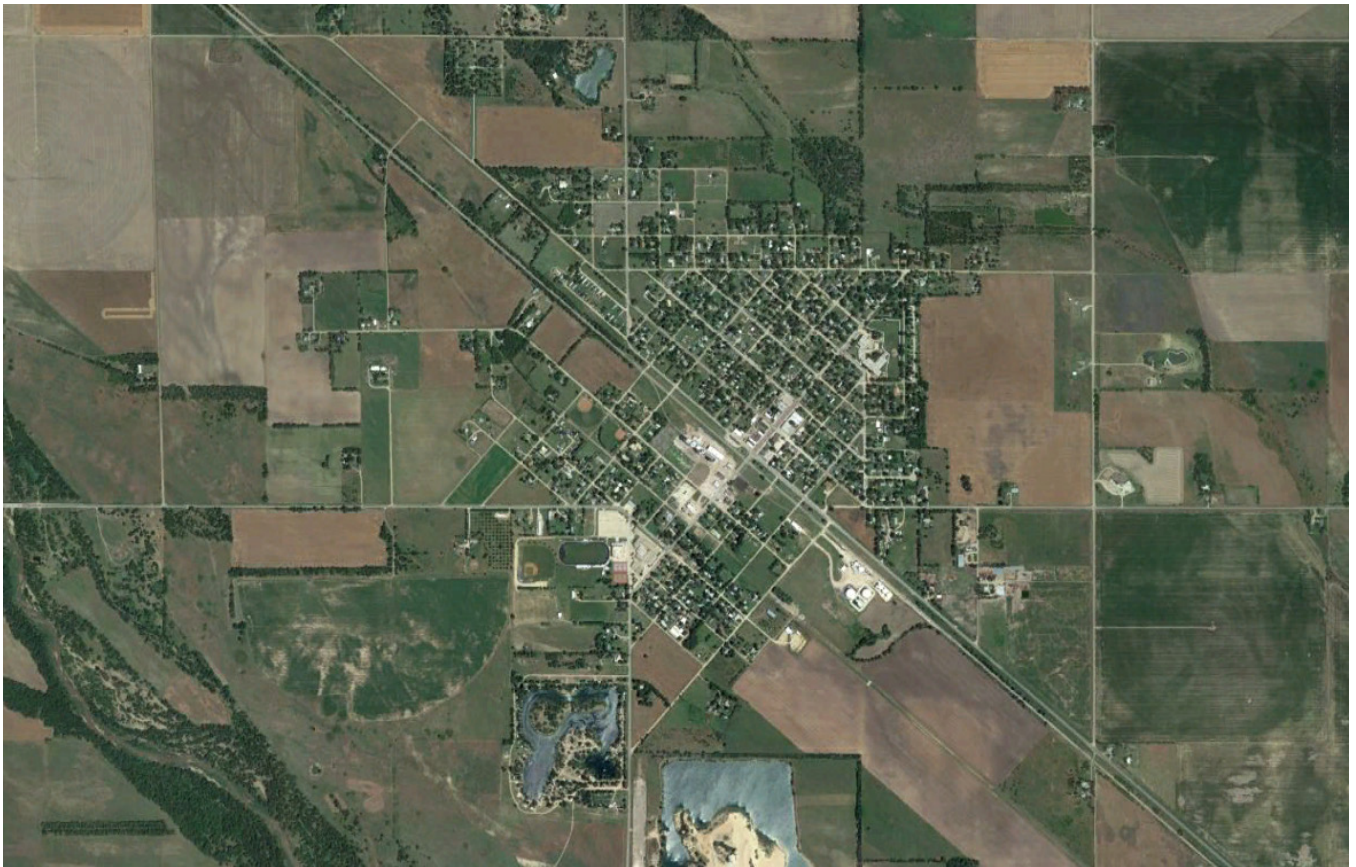
Source: Google Earth (2015)

Figure 11: Aerial - City of Langdon



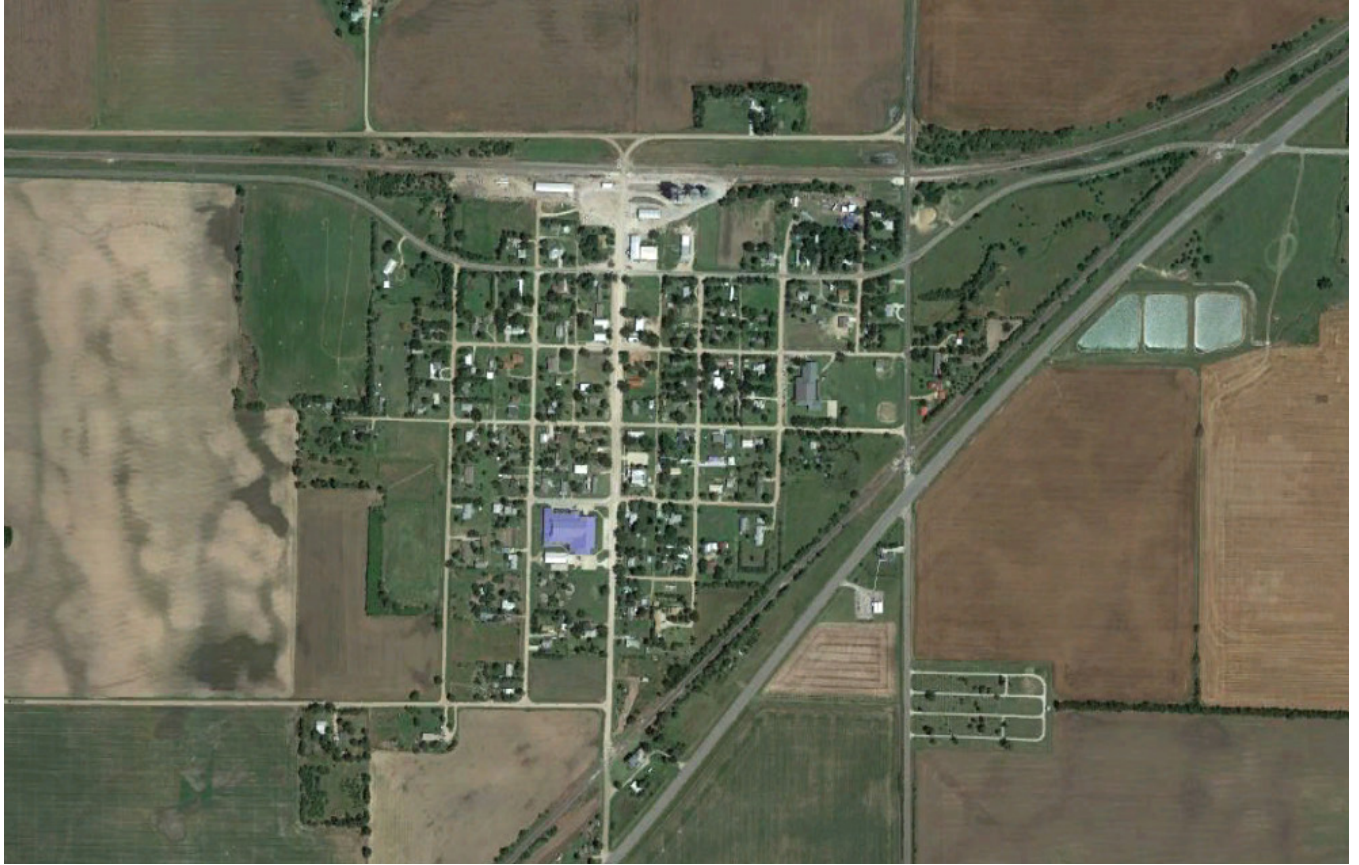
Figure 12: Aerial - City of Nickerson

Source: Google Earth (2015)



Source: Google Earth (2015)

Figure 13: Aerial - City of Partridge



Source: Google Earth (2015)

Figure 14: Aerial - City of Plevna



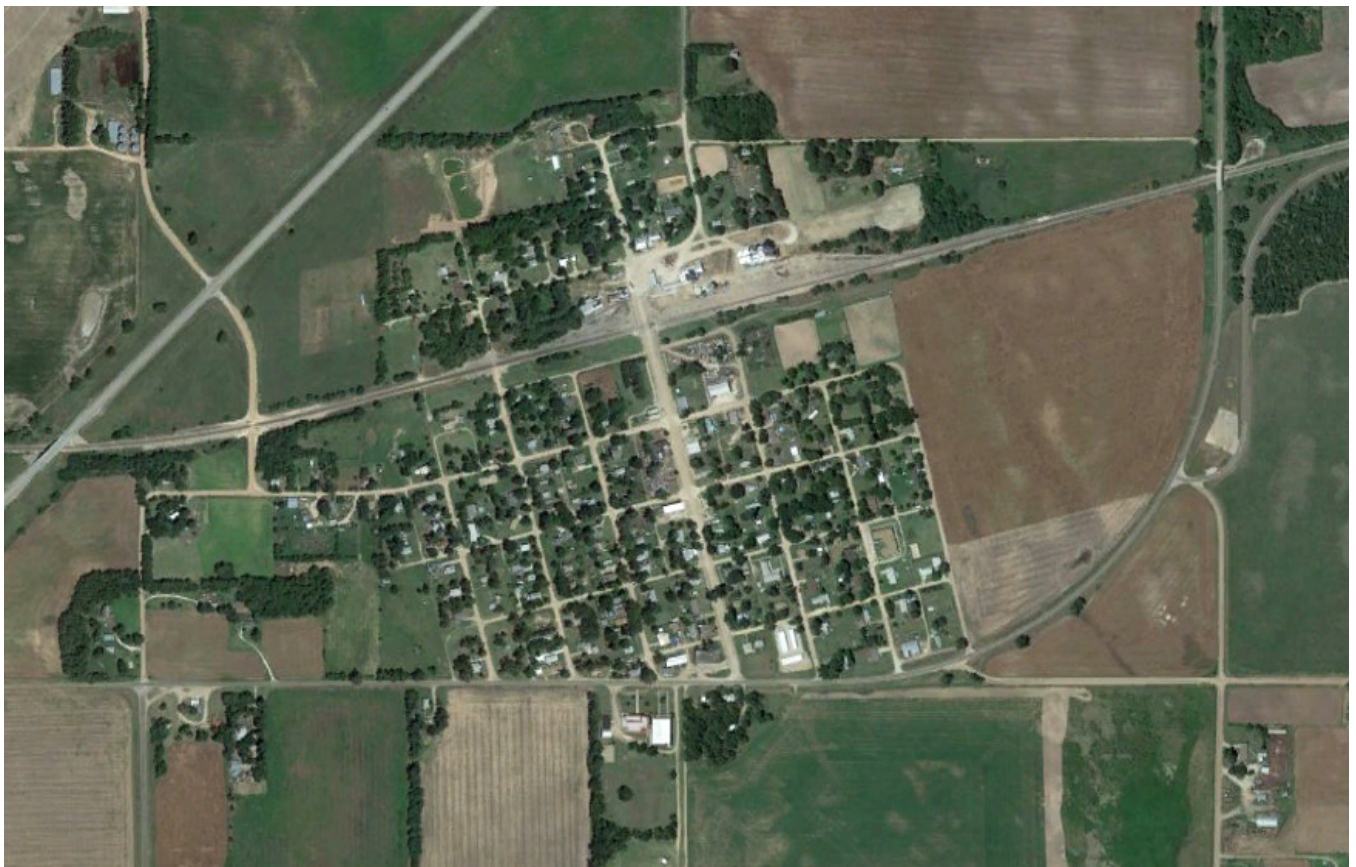
Source: Google Earth (2015)

Figure 15: Aerial - City of Pretty Prairie



Source: Google Earth (2015)

Figure 16: Aerial - City of Sylvia



Source: Google Earth (2015)

Figure 17: Aerial - City of The Highlands



Source: Google Earth (2015)

Figure 18: Aerial - City of Turon



Source: Google Earth (2015)

Figure 19: Aerial - City of Willowbrook



Source: Google Earth (2015)

CHAPTER 2 – CURRENT CONDITIONS

COUNTY DESCRIPTION

HISTORY

The area in south-central Kansas known as Reno County was part of the area purchased by the United States from the French in 1803. Explorers passed through Kansas between 1803 and 1861 when Kansas became a state but settlement did not begin until congress created Kansas territory and decreed that it was no longer Indian territory.

The Kansas legislature drew the boundaries for Reno County in 1868. The population was not sufficient to necessitate self-government until December of 1871. The first election for County officers was held in January of 1872.

Reno County was named for Major-General Jesse Lee Reno who fought in the Civil War and died in the line of duty at the Battle of South Mountain in Maryland in 1862. Hutchinson is the county seat and the largest city in the County. Hutchinson was named after its founder, Clinton Carter Hutchinson. Mr. Hutchinson claimed to be a Baptist pastor and he stipulated that no alcoholic beverages could be sold or consumed on the property or the land would forfeit back to him. This kept the town quiet. The early settlement of the County by Amish and Mennonites also contributed to the quiet history. The Mennonites and Amish are still strongly represented in the County.

According to State reporting, an estimated 63,000 people live in Reno County in 2017, up slightly from the estimated population of 62,400 persons in 1990. Like several of its adjoining counties, Reno County is slowly losing population from its population peak of approximately 65,000 persons in the mid 1980s. This slow out-migration reflects a larger population decline throughout the Midwest in general, and by various accounts will continue over the timeframe of this plan.

RAILROADS

Railroads were instrumental in the development of not only Kansas but Reno County. The railroad played a significant role in the development of some of the smaller towns within the County. Railroads provided transportation for people and goods from the more populous and prosperous eastern United States. Without a railroad, a town was without an efficient lifeline to the news and materials people demanded. The arrival of the Santa Fe Railroad established Hutchinson, Partridge, Abbyville, Plevna, and Sylvia. The Rock Island and Frisco Railroads established some of the other small cities in Reno County. This access to rail traffic allowed Hutchinson to succeed as a center of trade for farmers who homesteaded and cultivated the surrounding land as well as for industries established in the County.

Today, three major railroad companies serve the County. The Burlington Northern / Santa Fe Railroad bisects the County west to east generally following U.S. Highway 50 through the cities of Sylvia, Plevna, Abbyville, Partridge, South Hutchinson and Hutchinson. The Kansas & Oklahoma railroad generally follows K-96 Highway, cutting across the County northwest to southeast, with a Union Pacific line following State Highway 61 north to McPherson.

INDUSTRIES

Reno County industries include a wide-range of agricultural products, such as wheat, corn, milo, and soybeans, as well as livestock production and food processing. Manufacturing operations within the County include agricultural implement manufacturing, the manufacture of buses, and grocery storage and distribution. Reno County is also a regional hub for commercial and healthcare services. Perhaps Reno County is best known for producing salt, which was discovered by Ben Blanchard in South Hutchinson when he was trying to find oil in September of 1887. In 1923, Emerson Carey, who started the Carey Salt Company, dug the first mine in Reno County. The Carey mine is still in use and is operated by the Hutchinson Salt Company. Commercial corporations Cargill and Morton still maintain evaporative salt plants in South Hutchinson.

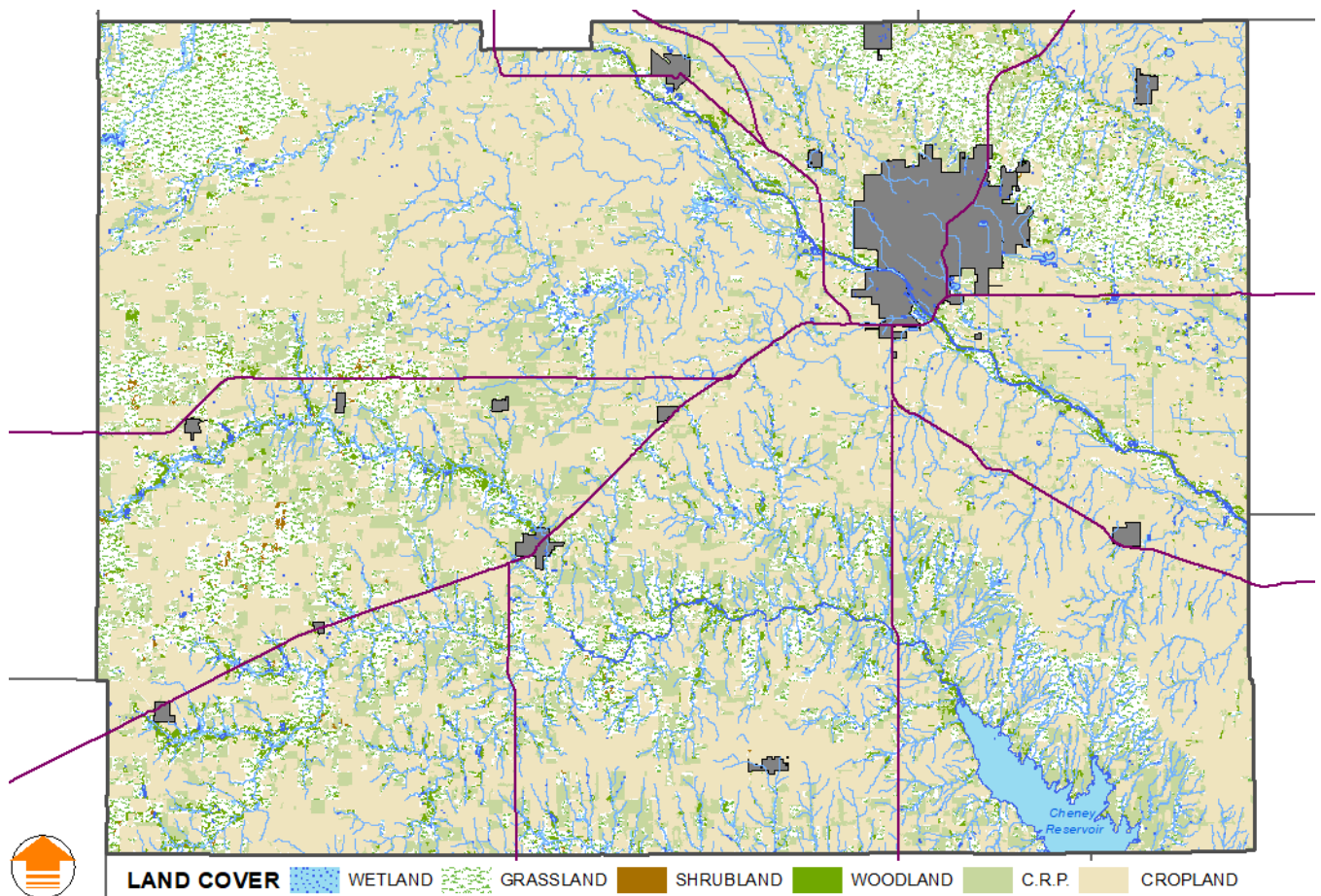
Portions of the Carey Mine are used for archival storage, including movie and television masters, data tapes, and permanent business records. The mine hosted tours in its early days, and eventually the Kansas Underground Salt Museum, now known as Strataca was created so that the mine may still be toured.

Other industries made their homes in Reno County as well. Both the storage and milling of wheat are important to the region and the world’s longest grain elevator was built in Hutchinson. Dillons grocery store, later bought out by Kroger, Co., was established in Hutchinson in the 1920s; Dillons eventually grew to over 200 stores nationwide. The company still operates a distribution center in town.

GEOGRAPHIC FEATURES

The main geographic features of Reno County include the Arkansas River, the North Fork of the Ninnescah River and Cow Creek. The County is a part of the Arkansas River Valley. Parts of the County have a very sandy soil while other parts contain heavier clay soils. The County does not have any major high points, however, there are sand hills in some areas covered by native grasses. Figure 20 below shows the major classes of land cover and vegetation found in the County, with significant areas of grasslands and wetlands within the northwest and northeast quadrants of the County, as well as along the river systems.

Figure 20: Land Cover and Vegetative Classification



COUNTY PATTERNS

Reno County measures 1,256 square miles and is the third largest county in size in the state behind Butler and Finney Counties. Agriculture constitutes the primary land usage in the County, with the areas surrounding the City of Hutchinson comprised of urban and suburban development. Cheney Reservoir is a major land feature within Reno County and provides recreational opportunities in addition to being a source of municipal water supply to the City of Wichita.

About 79% of the population in Reno County lives within incorporated areas, which is an increase from 77% in 1990. Hutchinson, the dominant city in the County, still comprises approximately 63% of the population as it has over the past several decades. Similarly, the other smaller cities within the County have also maintained their respective population totals as a percentage of the County's total population since 1990.

The County is well served by U.S. and State highways that function as major thoroughfares for movement of people, goods and services within the region. U.S. Highway 50, and State Routes K-96 Highway, K-61 Highway, K-14 Highway, and K-11 Highway are the major transportation corridors within Reno County.

Residential Land

The non-farm related residential development in Reno County tends to be located near incorporated cities and highway corridors. Many people perceive the countryside as a safer, cleaner, cheaper, and more rewarding place to live, compared to the congestion, crime, and high property taxes of cities. Reno County's development pattern is little different than other counties throughout the Midwest in that agricultural tracts of land are often parceled out for small suburban home sites, creating additional strain on rural roadways, drainageways, and other public infrastructure and services.

Capacity of the County to Serve Growth

The impact of rural residential development must be examined in terms of the cumulative effects over time. Initially, a house here and a house there does not seem to place a large burden on the environment or local services; nor does it appear to cause major conflicts with farm neighbors. But over time, the scatter of houses can add up to sewage disposal and water quality problems, as well as with conflicts between farm operators and rural newcomers.

Rural roads and bridges need millions of dollars in investment. Telecommunication links to remote towns need to be upgraded to compete with urban centers. Electricity must be available at rates that won't price rural businesses out of competition. Many newcomers to the countryside want their own septic and well systems and do not want to pay monthly utility bills.

The major dilemma stems from the fact that, per capita, the cost of providing the physical infrastructure to support growth is higher in sparsely populated areas than the costs of development in close proximity to existing communities with the capacity to extend municipal services.

Capacity of Urban Centers to Serve Growth

The cities of Reno County were evaluated on their service capacity and their ability to serve growth within the Plan's timeframe. The following is a brief review of each communities' growth potential based on the projected demands of their future population:

Hutchinson and South Hutchinson

Both Hutchinson and South Hutchinson have areas designated at their urban fringe where growth is projected, and these cities have been mostly proactive in incorporating urban land outside the city boundaries. Both communities have sufficient water and sanitary sewer capacity for their level of anticipated growth. As with the County as a whole, these communities are likely to see a relatively flat to slightly increasing population and employment growth through 2040.

However, in the event these cities experience a more dramatic upward growth trend, both have a mix of land uses to support such expansion, including industrial parks and available commercial and office space within their respective core areas. The most probable areas for growth are along the major highway corridors.

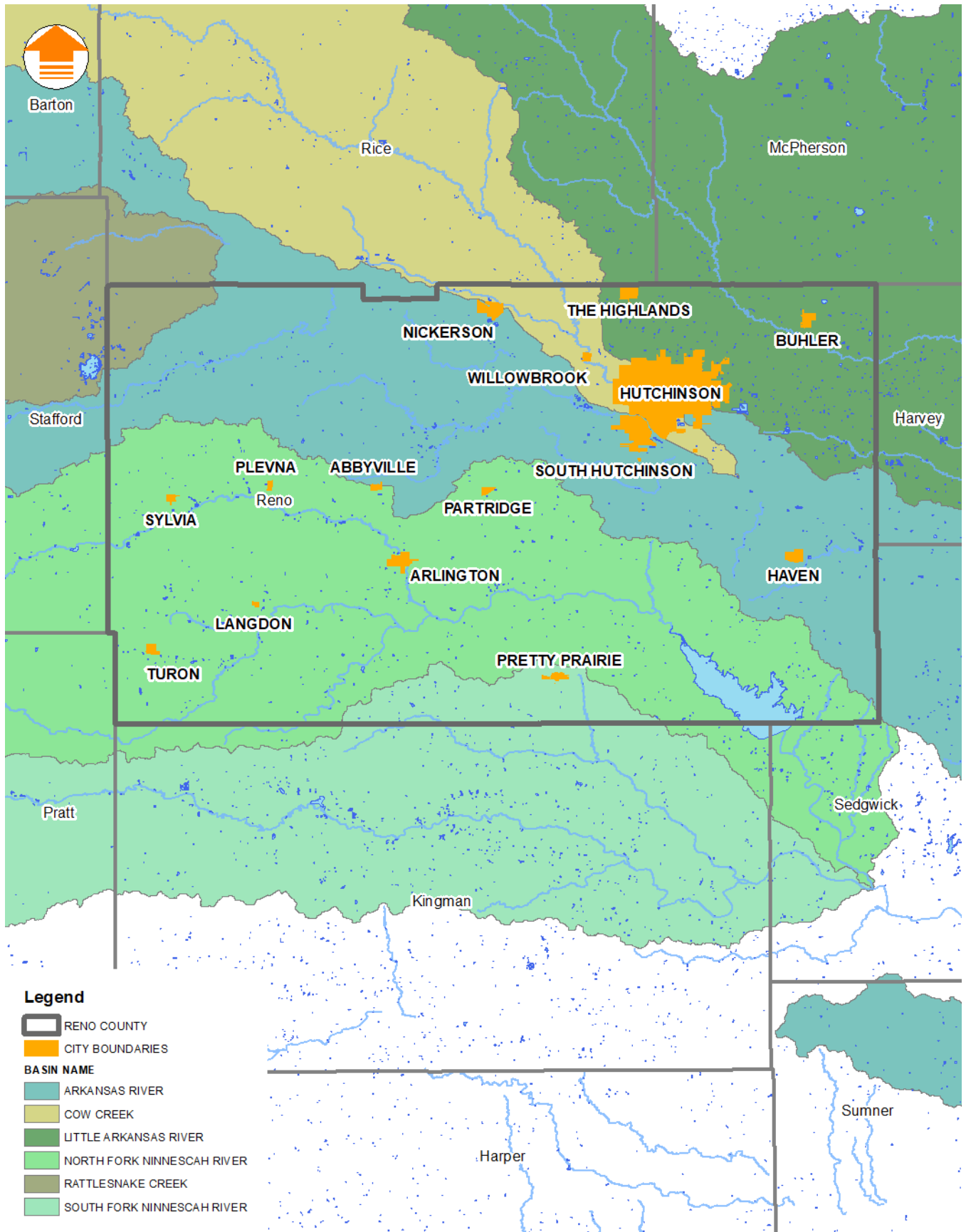
Buhler, Haven, and Nickerson

These three communities are expected to serve their urban growth needs; however, all face projected population declines through 2040. Any future growth beyond their current city boundaries should be directed toward their highway frontages.

Abbyville, Arlington, Langdon, Partridge, Plevna, Pretty Prairie, Sylvia, Turon, The Highlands, and Willowbrook

These cities are not expected to serve urban expansion, but are assessing capacity to serve growth on an on-going basis.

Figure 21: Lower Arkansas River Sub-Basin Map



AGRICULTURE CHARACTERISTICS

Active farming engages large parcels of land in productive natural resource use. Both large-scale and small-scale agricultural commerce provides open space, scenic views, wildlife habitat, and a climate for passive recreation, and, if care is given, clean air and a healthy environment. Farming adds to the local economy through its productive capacity—the wealth from farm products harvested every year and the jobs created to produce them.

The Reno County Comprehensive Plan seeks to move away from delineating and defining “prime farmland” for protection, and toward a more site-specific determination of the appropriateness of land development projects. Based on the current and project development patterns, the County does not seem threatened by over-development and the subsequent depletion of productive farmland. With that being said, future development in the rural areas of Reno County which are beyond the service boundaries of a city should still be encouraged to locate on lands less productive.

The management of change in the County and protection of the County’s rural character offers secondary benefits as well, such as attracting agri-tourists, maintaining hunting and fishing areas, and reserving lands for other recreational opportunities. But to remain a part of the landscape, agriculture must have the freedom to farm and maintain access to the land it needs to manage properly, in addition to access to goods and services, markets and market choices.

LOWER ARKANSAS RIVER BASIN

The Lower Arkansas River Basin in Kansas is part of the Arkansas River basin. The Arkansas River originates in central Colorado, where it flows southeast into and across southern Kansas. The Arkansas River crosses the Kansas-Oklahoma border south of Arkansas City (Cowley County). The Arkansas basin in Kansas is divided into two basins, Upper and Lower, for planning purposes. The Lower Arkansas Basin begins where Rattlesnake Creek confluences with the Arkansas River in southwestern Rice County (see Figure 21). The only major federal reservoir in the Basin is Cheney Reservoir. The Lower Arkansas basin covers 11,500 square miles of south central Kansas and includes all or part of 20 counties.

Counties, cities, and townships within the Basin have diverse interests that keep work varied and challenging. The Equus Beds groundwater and the Arkansas, Little Arkansas and North Fork of the Ninnescah Rivers are important in the regional economy and in providing water supply for municipal, agricultural and industrial needs. Regional Advisory Committee members are important in educating members of the public, both formally and informally, about water issues within the Basin. Groups charged with the Basin’s oversight are:

- Aquifer Storage and Recovery (ASR)
- Little Arkansas River WRAPS - Sponsored by K-State Research & Extension
- Arkansas River Coalition - The Arkansas River Coalition is a non-profit conservation organization established in 1998 working to protect and improve the Arkansas River Watershed.
- Cheney Lake Watershed Inc., - a private, non-profit organization, is based upon a unique urban/rural partnership. Farmers, ranchers, and other rural residents of this 633,449 acre watershed are working with the City of Wichita to protect a primary drinking water source for more than 300,000 people. Within this unusual partnership lies the key to a successful watershed program that is recognized throughout Kansas and the United States.

Current priority issues, objectives and goals in the basin include:

Wetland and Riparian Management - Maintain, enhance or restore priority wetlands and riparian areas.

Public Water Supply - Ensure that sufficient water storage is available to meet projected year 2040 public water supply needs for areas of Kansas with current or potential access to surface water storage.

Water Conservation - Reduce the number of public water suppliers with excessive “unaccounted for” water by first targeting those with 30 percent or more “unaccounted for” water.

Flood Management - Reduce the vulnerability to damage from floods within identified priority communities or areas.

Water Quality - Reduce the average concentration of bacteria, biochemical oxygen demand, dissolved solids, metals, nutrients, pesticides and sediment that adversely affect the water quality of Kansas streams.

Some of the major management entities in the Basin provide their expertise in pollution control and water quality maintenance. Their main objectives and programs are as follows:

Kansas Department of Health and Environment: Non-Point Source Pollution Technical Assistance Program - Provide technical assistance for activities that address the impairments. Develop projects to demonstrate effectiveness of non-point source pollution water quality protection technology for the impairments. Maintain the non-point source pollution management plan required under Section 319 of the Clean Water Act and continue to provide leadership in the promotion, coordination and implementation of water quality measures by targeting technical assistance and financial assistance to sponsors of local water quality protection projects and by developing and managing water quality protection demonstration projects.

Kansas Department of Health and Environment: Environmental Protection Grant Program - The main goal is to reduce the average concentration of dissolved solids, metals, nitrates, pesticides and volatile organic chemicals that adversely affect the water quality of Kansas's ground water. The Kansas Water Authority in concert with representatives from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment and the Kansas Water Office are tasked to:

- Identify appropriate cost sharing between state and local resources to support base "local environmental protection programs";
- Determine what fraction of base program activities should be funded via State Water Plan Fund; and
- Recommend other sources of state aid to support "base program activities" not financed via State Water Plan funds.

EQUUS BED DISTRICT

The Equus Bed Aquifer is the eastern most extension of the high plains aquifer system. The excellent quality of the water in the Aquifer, its relatively shallow depth, widespread lateral extent and the large saturated thickness, make the Equus Bed Aquifer a critical source of groundwater in South Central Kansas. The Aquifer is an important source of water for municipal, domestic, irrigation and industrial uses, with large water users clustered in areas with the greatest yield and high quality water.

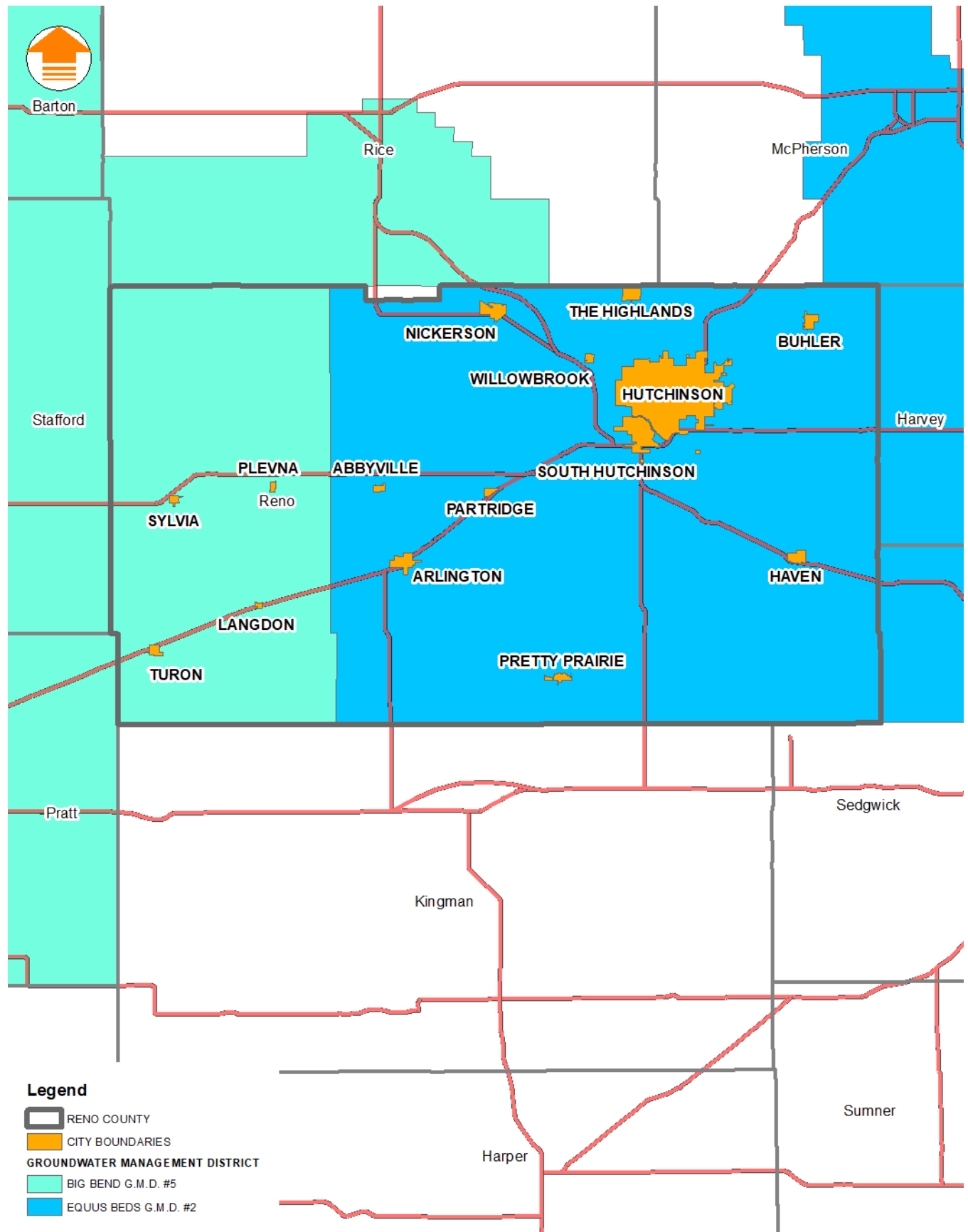
The Equus Bed Aquifer is recharged by several sources including precipitation, bedrock seepage, and stream and river infiltration. The major recharge source is precipitation which is estimated to occur at approximately 15% to 20% of the annual rainfall. Due to the large lateral extent of the Aquifer and the relatively thin soil mantle cover, the potential for surface activities to affect the quality of the underlying water quality is relatively high. Past domestic and industrial operations and disposal practices of various industries have affected the quality of the groundwater in localized areas.

Present regulatory requirements, in conjunction with industrial operational modifications and waste handling practices, have eliminated many of the contamination sources. Protecting the quality of the water in the Aquifer in Reno County from both man-made and natural problems is, therefore, an important consideration.

In Kansas, local units of government, called groundwater management districts, provide water-use administration, planning, and information. Five groundwater management districts were created in the 1970s in the western and central parts of the state. The primary use of ground water in these areas is irrigation, although several districts also face issues of municipal supply. The districts are governed by local boards and have been instrumental in providing information and identifying research and regulatory needs within their boundaries.

The Equus Beds Groundwater Management District No. 2 is located in south-central Kansas and underlies portions of McPherson, Harvey, Reno and Sedgwick counties. It is 878,720 acres in size and includes: 167,680 acres in western Harvey County; 140,160 acres in southern McPherson County; 460,800 acres in eastern Reno County; and 110,080 acres in northwestern Sedgwick County. The District lies exclusively within the eastern most region of the Great Bend Prairie physiographic province, except for its eastern edge which is in the Flint Hills Upland province. In addition, the Big Bend Groundwater Management District No. 5 maintains jurisdiction within the western portion of Reno County, and is currently working toward a potential Local Enhanced Management Area (LEMA) in the Rattlesnake Creek region to implement "irrigation technology enhancements, stream flow augmentation, and water bank incentives" for the public. Figure 22 illustrates these district boundaries.

Figure 22: Groundwater Management District Map



CHENEY RESERVOIR

Cheney Reservoir is a reservoir on the North Fork Ninnescah River in Reno, Kingman, and Sedgwick counties. Completed in 1965 and managed by the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation for local water supply, it is also used for flood control and recreation. The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks operate the Cheney State Park located at the lake.

The “Cheney Division” of the “Wichita Project” provides a supplemental water supply to the City of Wichita, flood control for protection of downstream areas, and recreation and fish and wildlife benefits.

MUNICIPAL AND INDUSTRIAL WATER

The project provides storage and delivery of a supplemental municipal and industrial water supply to the City of Wichita, Kansas. A pumping plant located at the dam and a 5-foot diameter pipeline were constructed by the City of Wichita for conveying the regulated flows from Cheney Dam to the water treatment facilities.

Storage began at Cheney Dam with closure of the river outlet works gates on November 5, 1964. Delivery of municipal and industrial water to the city of Wichita began in the summer of 1965. The conservation storage in Cheney Reservoir gradually increased until it was filled in October 1968.

FLOOD CONTROL

The project provides flood control benefits in protection of downstream areas. Flood control operations at Cheney Dam involve cooperation between the Corps of Engineers, the City of Wichita, and the Bureau of Reclamation. No significant flood control releases were made from Cheney Reservoir until after the conservation storage had been filled in October 1968. Releases have since been made for the protection of downstream areas.

RECREATION AND FISH AND WILDLIFE

The construction of Cheney Dam and Reservoir has provided this otherwise arid region of Kansas with a variety of recreational uses and fish and wildlife benefits. Located near Wichita in south-central Kansas, Cheney State Park at Cheney Reservoir provides most species of sport fish common for Kansas. There are camping, boating, swimming, and picnicking facilities, and trailer park facilities with electric, water, and sewer hookups.

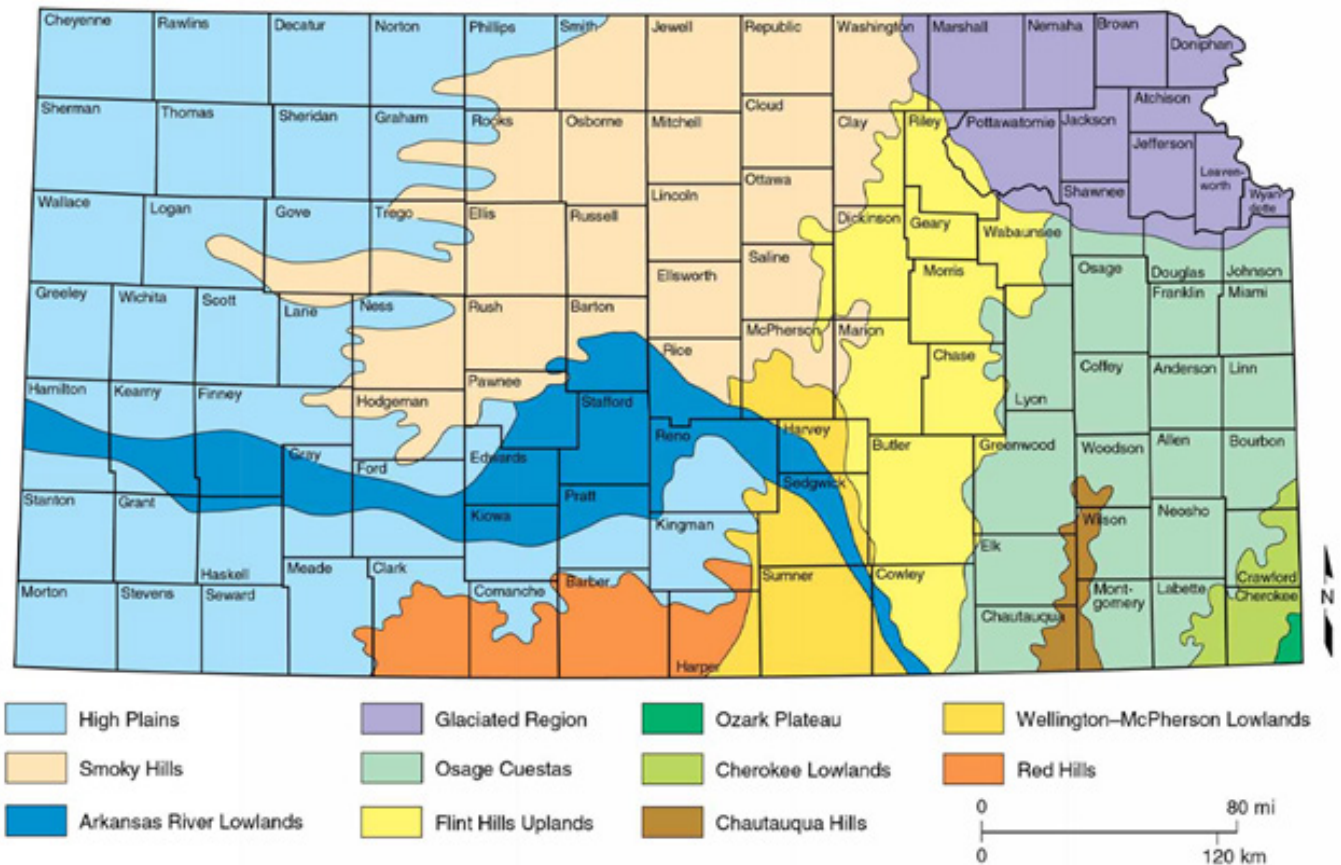
The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks administers the recreation areas at Cheney Reservoir, including some 1,900 acres of land and over 5,400 acres of water. The Cheney Wildlife Area covers over 5,200 acres of land and 4,100 acres of water for conservation and management of migratory birds and other wildlife.

RENO COUNTY PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCES

The Kansas landscape was formed by alternating periods of deposition and erosion. This landscape divides regions of Kansas according to physical geology, or physiography. Each region is different, and that difference is determined largely by geology, along with other factors such as climate (see Figure 23). Physiographic provinces within Reno County include:

- High Plains - This region comprises northwest and southwest Kansas. Excellent farmland slopes gently downward from the west. Numerous irrigated fields compensate for the area’s limited rainfall.
- Arkansas River Lowlands - The river that produced the Royal Gorge 240 miles to the west cuts across the High Plains of southwest Kansas, leaving sand and gravel deposits, irregular hills, and sand dunes over a wide area, including mineral deposits in Reno County.
- Wellington and McPherson Lowlands - Permeable sand and gravel and a large quantity of high-quality water in the Equus beds underlie some of this area. Salt mines and marshes are nearby.

Figure 23: Kansas Physiographic Provinces



WIND RESOURCES IN RENO COUNTY

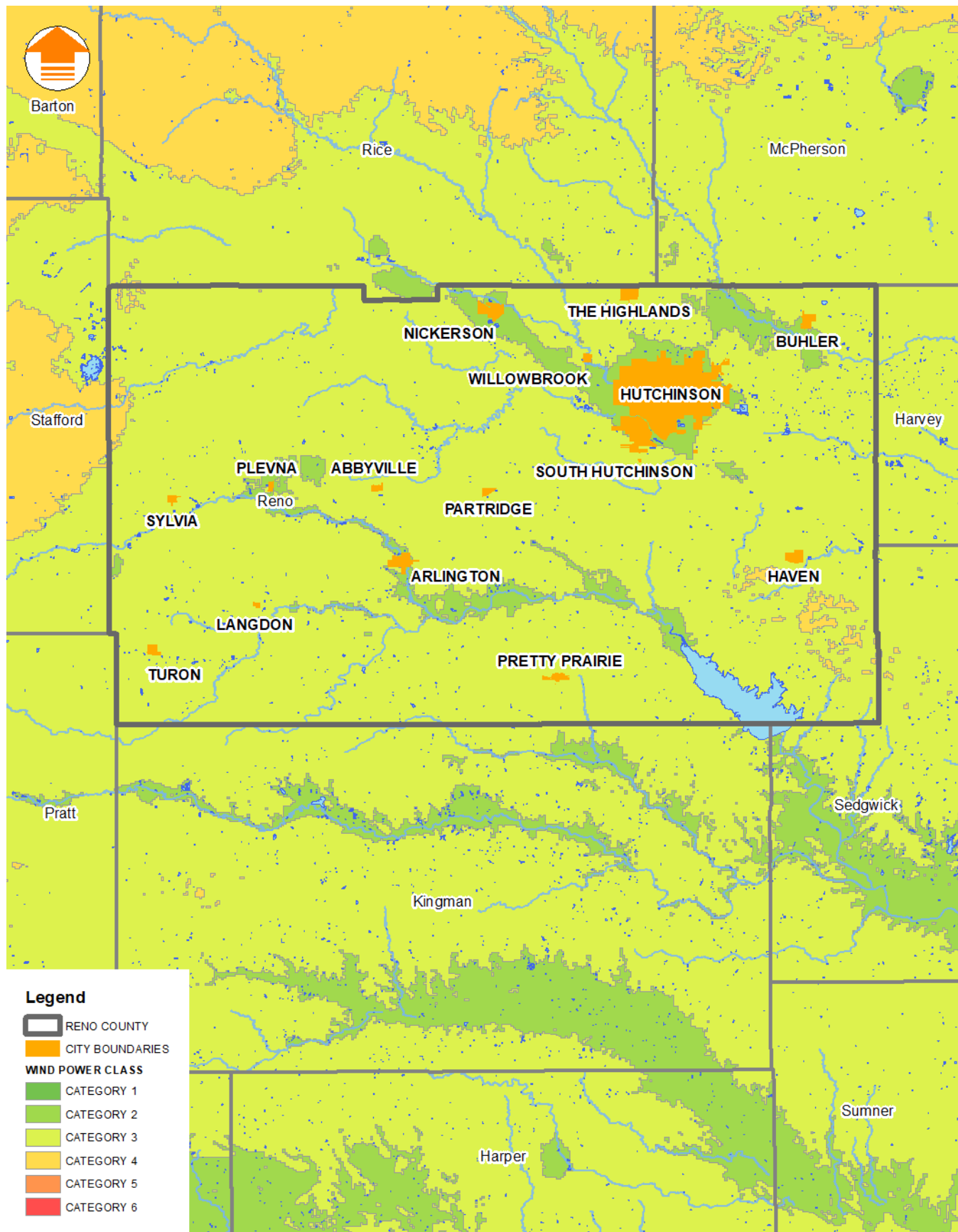
The national wind resource assessment of the United States was created for the U.S. Department of Energy in 1986 and is documented in the Wind Energy Resource Atlas of the United States, October 1986.

This wind resource assessment was based on surface wind data, coastal marine area data and upper-air data. The data was evaluated at a regional level to produce 12 regional wind resource assessments. The regional assessments were then incorporated into the national wind resource assessment.

The assigned “wind power class” is representative of the range of wind power densities likely to occur at exposed sites within any geographic area. Hilltops, ridge crests, large clearings, and other locations free of local obstruction to the wind are expected to be well exposed to the wind. In contrast, locations in narrow valleys and canyons, downwind slopes of hills or obstructions, or in forested or urban areas are likely to have poor wind exposure.

Areas designated Class 3 or greater are suitable for most utility-scale wind turbine applications, whereas Class 2 areas are marginal for utility-scale applications, but may be suitable for rural applications. Class 1 areas are generally not suitable, although a few locations (e.g., exposed hilltops not shown on the maps) with adequate wind resource for wind turbine applications may exist in some Class 1 areas. The degree of certainty with which the wind power class can be specified depends on three factors: the abundance and quality of wind data; the complexity of the terrain; and the geographical variability of the resource. A certainty rating was assigned to each grid cell based on these three factors, and is included in the Wind Energy Resource Atlas of the United States. Figure 24 shows the wind power class designations currently found within Reno County.

Figure 24: Reno County Wind Resources Map



CHAPTER 3: POPULATION AND DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers such variables as population characteristics, population growth forecasts, and other demographic factors which help a community better plan for its future.

Understanding the demographic profile of a community is one of the key elements of a Comprehensive Plan since these trends help shape development goals and objectives. Population size and composition are related to a wide variety of factors which dictate how communities plan for economic development, housing, transportation, community facilities, and public infrastructure. As such, it is relevant to understand these trends for successful planning and policy implementation, especially that due to increasing global integration rural areas and economies are no longer isolated from larger economic, political and societal trends.

According to the Kansas Institute for Policy & Social Research, there has been a prolonged population decline in the Midwest due in part to agricultural production becoming more efficient while requiring fewer farmers to maintain current needs. The overall population of the Great Plains is not shrinking yet, but its growth rate is well below the national level. Trends at the County level differ greatly between metropolitan and non-metropolitan places as well. Many rural areas experience actual population decrease and their age structure and migration patterns suggest prolonged decline for the future as well. Localized, positive net migration in the Great Plains is usually associated with either suburbanization or the availability of natural amenities.

RENO COUNTY POPULATION TRENDS

Population Concentration

In the 20th century, the population of Kansas increased from 1.5 to about 2.7 million people, growing approximately 8% per decade, while the national average growth rate was 13.2%. Historically, Kansas has experienced 5% to 10% less growth than the nation, and over two-thirds of the counties reached their peak total population by 1930.

Farm consolidation in Kansas was a process linked to urban concentration, and a part of the general transformation of rural America. In fifty years, the number of farms declined more than 50%, while their average size doubled. The farm population of the state declined from almost half a million people to below a hundred thousand.

The share of the urban population in Kansas reached nearly 70% in 2016, up from 52% in 1950. This population concentration occurred in and around those counties that host the three large urban centers: Kansas City, Topeka, and Wichita. The average population of rural Kansas counties remained around 12,000 people over the course of 20th century, and most rural areas faced slow population decline. Of the few rural counties experiencing modest growth over this time frame, the common factor has been an influx of immigrant laborers who come to work in the food processing industry in southwest Kansas.

Population Aging

The demographic dynamics behind the aging population reflect a complex interaction of birth and death rates, population migration, and changes in fertility rates. For example, declining mortality resulted in high life expectancy at birth, increasing the number of people who survive to old age, while declining fertility changed the overall age composition. With fewer children born, the younger population cannot balance out the increase of the older population. Migration is perhaps the most influential factor shaping rural county populations, and is characterized by the out-migration of the younger generation who leave for job opportunities elsewhere. Rural areas without significant labor attraction are experiencing a vicious cycle of disappearing businesses, diminishing capacity to retain the younger citizens and a shrinking population dominated by the elderly cohorts.

According to Census Bureau projections, the population of Kansas will increase by approximately 252,000 people by 2030. This population increase however is very unevenly distributed across various age groups. Most of the increase (237,000 people) will occur in the 65+ age category.

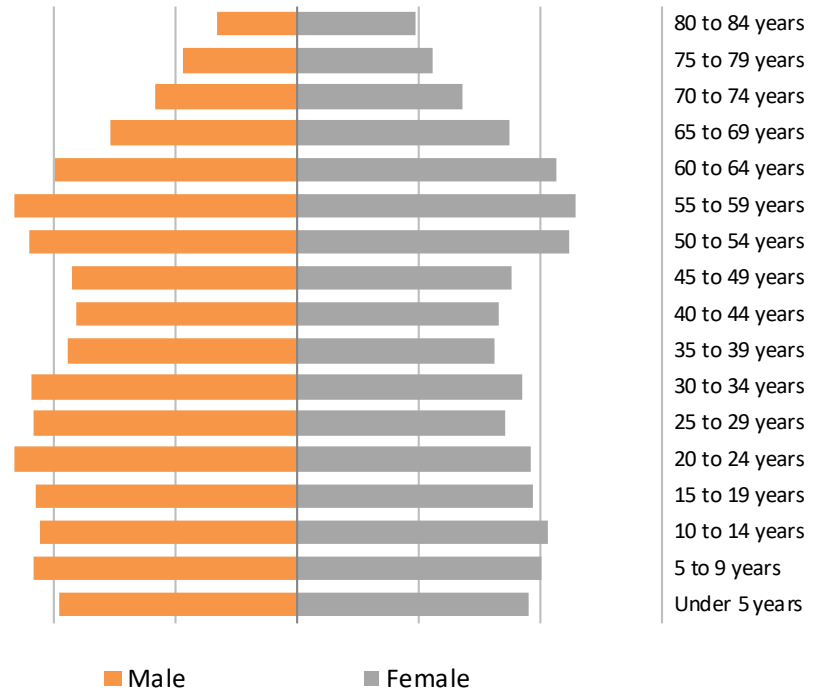
Among the most important challenges communities face are employment opportunities for the elderly, health and institutional care, and the community services to this segment of its population. Urban and suburban communities have a better chance at providing these opportunities, while rural communities have a disadvantage.

Demographic trends in Kansas include increasing population concentration, slow population growth, increasing population diversity, and aging in place. These trends are similar to what is experienced across the Midwest. Population growth will occur mostly in metropolitan places and their outlying areas, which will accelerate the aging population trend in most rural counties.

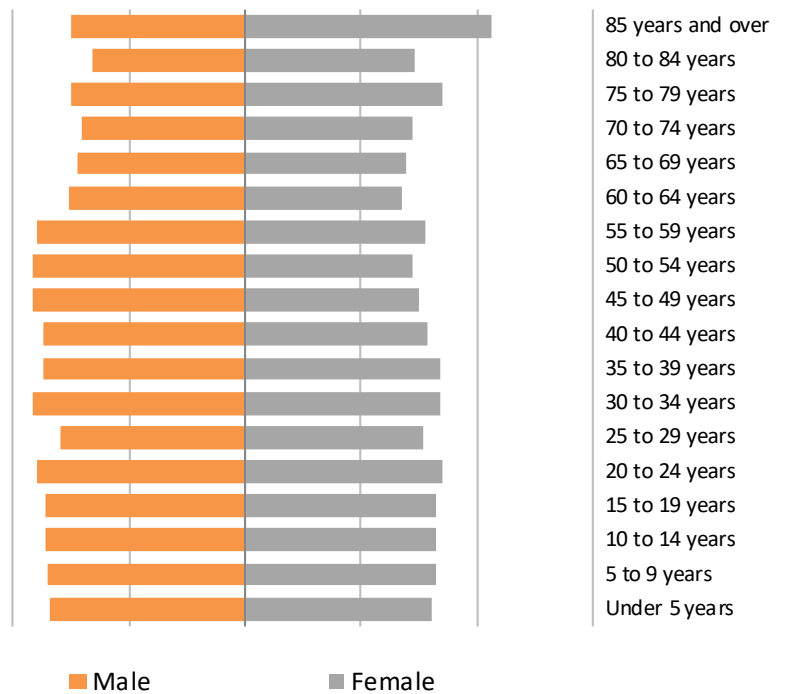
Reno County’s population is distributed among seventeen “age cohorts” or age groups, creating what is called a “population pyramid.” A population pyramid serves to graphically represent the age structure of the community’s male and female population. A typical population will have a “pyramid” shape, with the larger cohorts near the base representing those younger than 18 years of age. The pyramid then “bulges” in the middle-age cohorts before tapering near the older cohorts. Compared to this average shape, a community’s population pyramid can illustrate an aging population (those with a “top-heavy” appearance); a middle-aged/non-family population (those with a diamond shape appearance); or a younger/family-oriented population (those with a larger base and mid-section).

The two pyramids to the right graphically depict Reno County’s population based on Wichita State University’s Center for Economic Development and Business Research cohort-survival method projections between 2019 and 2039. Not only do they indicate an overall aging of the population upwards in the cohorts, but also shows a narrowing of the pyramid which signal a decline of the overall population.

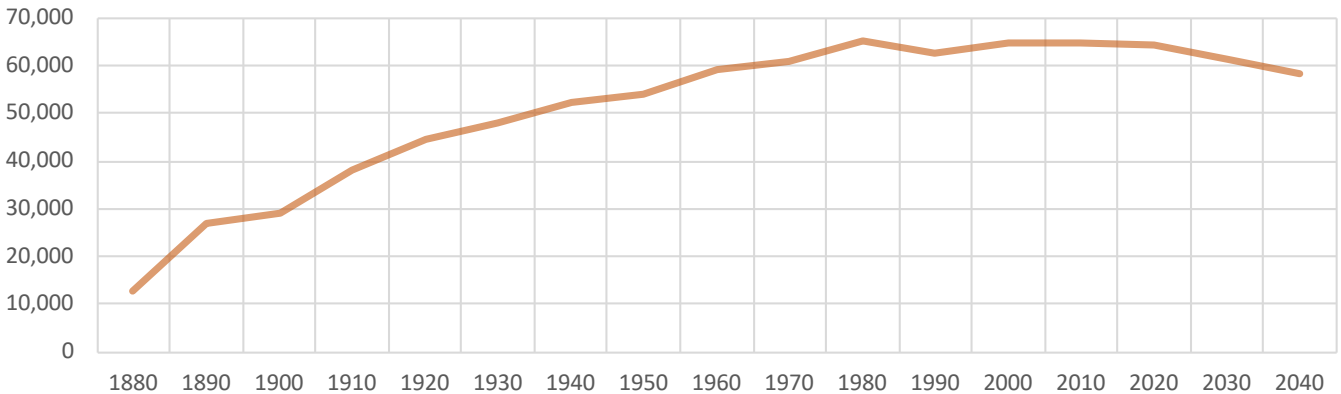
RENO COUNTY POPULATION PYRAMID 2014



RENO COUNTY POPULATION PYRAMID 2040



Historic Population - Reno County



Source: U.S. Census Data

According to the US Census Bureau, Reno County population reached its peak of nearly 65,000 persons in 1980, then declined to 62,400 by 1990, back to 64,800 by 2000, before falling steadily to approximately 62,510 in 2017 (current population count per Kansas Certified Population, Kansas Secretary of State by Division of the Budget, July 2018). It is projected by 2040 the County population will shrink by approximately 10.9% to its mid-1950s population of approximately 55,720 persons.

Table 1: County Population Projections (2017 – 2040)

County	2017	2020	2030	2040	% Change 2017-2040
Reno	62,510	61,579	58,577	55,720	-10.9%
Harvey	34,544	34,392	33,888	33,393	-3.3%
Kingman	7,360	7,127	6,403	5,752	-21.8%
McPherson	28,708	28,392	27,365	26,375	-8.1%
Pratt	9,547	9,458	9,169	8,889	-6.9%
Rice	9,660	9,504	9,000	8,524	-11.8%
Sedgwick	513,687	518,697	535,755	553,373	7.7%
Stafford	4,207	4,135	3,902	3,682	-12.5%
Kansas	2,913,123	2,926,882	2,973,216	3,020,284	3.7%

Source: Kansas Certified Population, Kansas Secretary of State by Division of the Budget, 2018

Reno County and its neighboring counties may expect a regional population decrease of approximately 8.5% based on extending the average annual population change from 2012 to 2017. Sedgwick County is the only county showing positive growth through the planning period, again due in part to Wichita’s economic pull in the region. Neighboring Kingman County, Rice County and Stafford County - which are already significantly lower in population than the other adjoining counties - are expected to see double-digit decreases in their populations in the future as well (see Table 1). Compared with the 0.16% annual projected growth rate for Kansas, the majority of the region’s counties may continue to see an average annual population decline of 0.4% through 2040.

Historically, the City of Hutchinson accounts for nearly two-thirds of the County’s population, while the City of South Hutchinson is the only other city within Reno County with a population over 2,500 persons. Over the timeframe of this plan (2017 through 2040), the average population trend of all the communities in Reno County look to maintain a very gradual and consistent decline of approximately 10.6%, while the unincorporated portion of the County trending towards a 19.6% decrease based on a linear trend projection method. The one exception to this trend appears to be South Hutchinson, with a projected total growth rate through 2014 of nearly 10%. The Highlands, which could see 13% growth depending on the availability of existing home sites within this newly incorporated city, and its capacity to expand, is another community showing positive growth (see Table 2).

Table 2: City Population Projections (2017 – 2040)

City	2017	2020	2025	2030	2035	2040	% Change 2017-2040
Hutchinson	41,187	40,700	39,888	39,076	38,264	37,452	-9.1%
South Hutchinson	2,567	2,598	2,650	2,702	2,754	2,806	9.3%
Buhler	1,316	1,301	1,275	1,249	1,223	1,197	-9.0%
Haven	1,211	1,196	1,171	1,146	1,121	1,096	-9.5%
Nickerson	1,013	983	933	884	834	785	-22.5%
The Highlands*	735	755	774	794	814	833	13.3%
Pretty Prairie	669	656	633	611	588	566	-15.4%
Arlington	446	432	409	385	362	338	-24.2%
Turon	375	370	361	353	344	336	-10.4%
Partridge	242	239	235	231	227	223	-7.9%
Sylvia	212	209	203	198	192	187	-11.8%
Plevna	96	94	92	89	87	84	-12.5%
Abbyville	87	85	83	80	78	75	-13.8%
Willowbrook	85	83	81	78	76	73	-14.1%
Langdon	41	40	38	37	35	34	-17.1%
Balance of Reno County	12,719	12,387	11,847	11,307	10,767	10,227	-19.6%

Source: Kansas Certified Population, Kansas Secretary of State by Division of the Budget, 2018

* Population based on block data from 2010 U.S. Census

These projection methods are relatively basic, and the assumed decline in the County’s population should not necessarily be taken as a forgone conclusion. However, compared with several Kansas Counties with similar population patterns, Reno County’s average population decline since 2012 of approximately 3% remains a concern. Saline and McPherson Counties experienced similar population declines, while Crawford, Finney and Ford Counties were more in line with the State’s drop in population of approximately 1%.

Unlike the previous Comprehensive Plan estimates, the urban populations are not experiencing a steady increase over the planning period. The traditional trend of family farm population decreasing and shifting from a rural to urban population may play a part in Reno County’s rural population relocating to its cities.

While the median age of Reno County’s population sits at 40 years of age - approximately 10 percent higher than the average for the entire state - it is consistent with the average median age of the surrounding counties (see Table 3).

Reno County will most likely continue to maintain a balance of the various age groups, which is one indication of a steady population base. Continued effort should be made to encourage younger families to locate in the County to help stabilize its population and vitality for future decades.

Table 3: Median Age of Regional Counties

County	Median Age
Reno	40.1
Harvey	38.7
Kingman	45.4
McPherson	41.8
Pratt	38.8
Rice	37.7
Sedgwick	35.1
Stafford	43.0
Kansas	36.2

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2016 5-year estimates

CHAPTER 4 – ECONOMIC PROFILE

INTRODUCTION

The amount and type of economic activity in the County is the major force that will affect the need for change. It is for this reason that economic conditions and trends play a major role in formulating and maintaining the Comprehensive Plan.

Economic activity in the manufacturing, agricultural, mining and wholesale sectors, provides two basic elements which are important to public agencies and the citizens of the County. First, it provides jobs and sources of employment and income. This fuels retail trade, construction and other secondary industrial activity. Second, growth of the primary industrial, retail and wholesale trade and service sectors increase the tax base, which is necessary to fund governmental services and infrastructure improvements. With broad economic opportunities slowing for many counties, protecting those most important to Reno County is critical to ensuring its prosperity into the future.

This section of the plan will provide a brief overview of the economic profile of Reno County. Numerous other entities within the region are devoted to promoting and developing the economic growth of the community, and this Plan does not attempt to duplicate or contradict those efforts.

EMPLOYMENT

Reno County residents fall slightly below the rest of the state in terms of overall employment if its population with just over 60 percent in the labor force last year. This percentage rises to just over 73 percent of those Reno County residents within the “working age” classification.

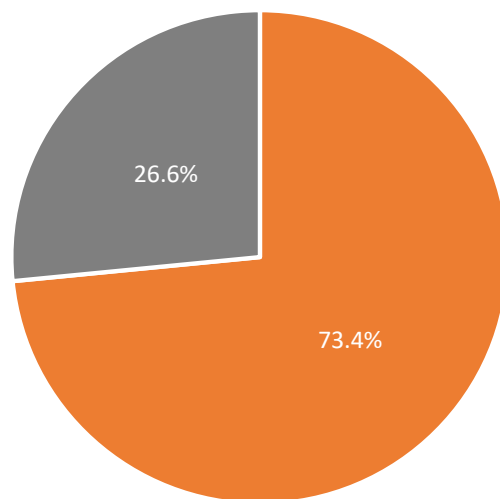
Of those employed, Table 4 on the following page shows the general employment by sector of Reno County residents compared with Kansas as a whole. The data show a general correlation between the County and the balance of Kansas with regard to the distribution of employment within these major employment sectors. Reno County has a slightly higher percentage employed in the agricultural sector, and also exceeds the State percentage of employees within the manufacturing and retail sectors as well. This employment data is based on the sector employment of residents of the County and does not consider if the jobs are in the County or if these residents travel outside the County to work.

Agriculture and agri-business are recognized as valuable contributors to the employment opportunities and economy of the County. Though the total number of farms in the

County is decreasing according to the US Department of Agriculture, a loss of 7% of the nearly 1,750 farms between 2007 and 2012, the market value increased from \$171.2 million in 2007 to \$267.3 million in 2012, a 56 percent increase. Likewise, the average farm size has grown by 8% from 446 acres to 483 acres. Agriculture doesn’t directly employ a large workforce, but its economic impact, including the food and food processing industries, is estimated to support \$1.7 billion in combined economic output and 6,360 jobs according to a 2017 Kansas Department of Agriculture analysis. These sectors comprise roughly 19 percent of the County’s economy, either directly or indirectly.

The contributions of the farming operations, both in terms of employment and as purchasers of equipment and materials, will continue to be important to the overall economic health of the region. Barring any significant employment increase, or population growth, the overall distribution of employment across these sectors should continue to remain relatively constant over the course of this Plan, as evidenced by a fairly stable, long-term correlation.

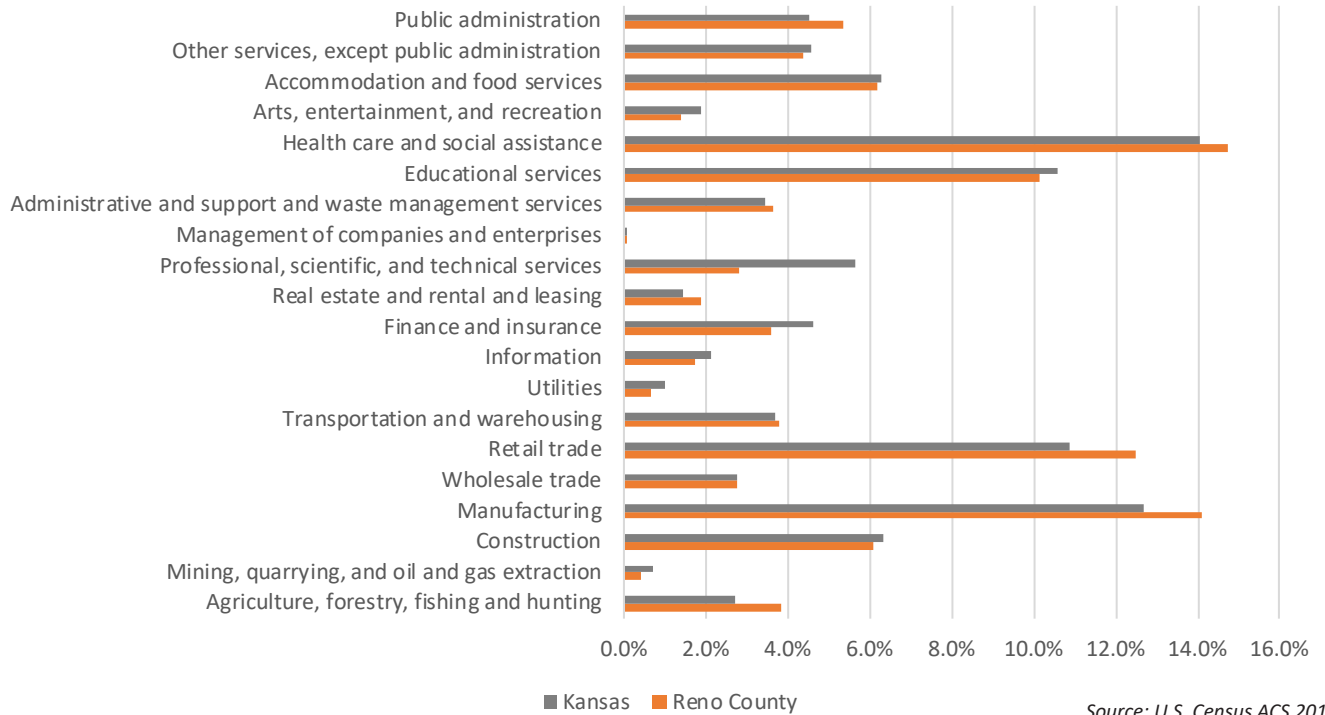
**EMPLOYMENT STATUS
WORKERS AGED 16 TO 65**



■ In labor force ■ Not in labor force

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2016

Figure 25: Workers by Industry in Reno County



Source: U.S. Census ACS 2016

Table 4: Employment by Industry - 2016

Industry	RENO COUNTY	%	KANSAS	%
Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting	1,119	3.8%	38,276	2.7%
Mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction	120	0.4%	9,870	0.7%
Construction	1,789	6.1%	88,942	6.3%
Manufacturing	4,145	14.1%	178,621	12.7%
Wholesale trade	803	2.7%	39,174	2.8%
Retail trade	3,673	12.5%	153,234	10.9%
Transportation and warehousing	1,108	3.8%	52,208	3.7%
Utilities	187	0.6%	14,009	1.0%
Information	515	1.8%	30,121	2.1%
Finance and insurance	1,049	3.6%	65,209	4.6%
Real estate and rental and leasing	556	1.9%	20,562	1.5%
Professional, scientific, and technical services	824	2.8%	79,616	5.7%
Management of companies and enterprises	14	0.0%	1,223	0.1%
Administrative and support and waste management services	1,066	3.6%	48,679	3.5%
Educational services	2,980	10.1%	149,068	10.6%
Health care and social assistance	4,329	14.7%	197,592	14.0%
Arts, entertainment, and recreation	411	1.4%	26,217	1.9%
Accommodation and food services	1,812	6.2%	88,309	6.3%
Other services, except public administration	1,290	4.4%	64,342	4.6%
Public administration	1,577	5.4%	63,646	4.5%
Civilian employed population 16 years and over	29,367		1,408,918	

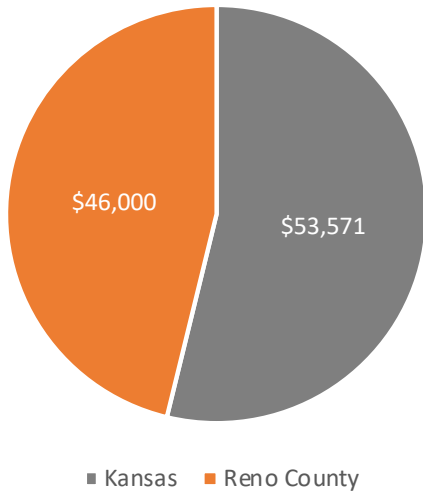
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2012-2016 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Table 5 provides local employment information based on a self-reported survey from the County’s major employers. These employment figures reflect the more general employment patterns of the above-referenced Census data with health care, education, retail and manufacturing providing the most jobs in the County.

Table 5: Leading Employers in Reno County - 2017

	# of Employees
Hutchinson Regional Healthcare System	1,200
Hutchinson Public Schools (USD #308)	878
Hutchinson Community College	877
Hutchinson Clinic	609
Dillons	548
Tyson Prepared Foods	548
Hutchinson Correctional Facility	507
City of Hutchinson	430
Reno County	395
Siemens Wind Power	360
Buhler Public Schools (USD 313)	331
Kroger Accounting Services	319
Wal-Mart Supercenter	300
Portfolio Recovery Associates	281
Wesley Towers	268
Lowen Corporation	275
Nickerson Public Schools (USD 309)	245
Collins Bus Corporation	230
Mennonite Friendship Communities	225
Kuhn Krause, Inc.	208

Median household income



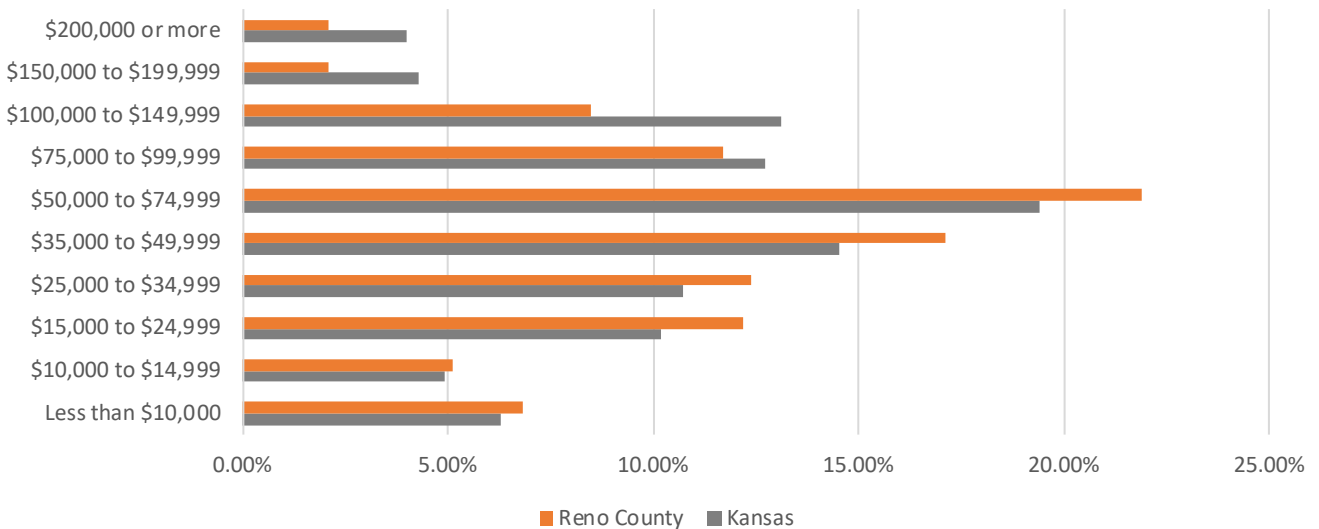
Source: U.S. Census ACS 2016

INCOME DISTRIBUTION

Figure 26 illustrates the income distribution for Reno County and the State. These distributions represent the five-year estimates generated by the American Communities Survey program of the US Census Bureau. As a whole, Reno County lags behind the State in terms of the number of households with an income in the top four income brackets. The County’s median household income of \$46,000 is slightly higher than Hutchinson’s \$42,646 but approximately 14 percent less than the state of Kansas’ median income of \$53,571.

Source: Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce - 2017

Figure 26: Income Distribution in Reno County - 2016

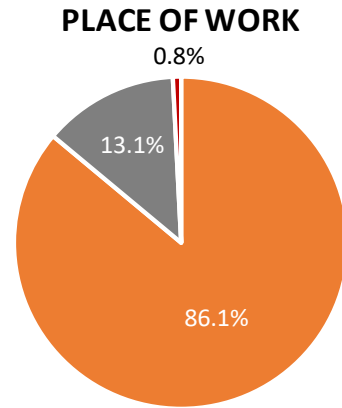


Source: U.S. Census ACS 2016

Reno County household incomes are on par with half of the counties in the region, though significantly lower than median household incomes in McPherson, Harvey, Kingman and Sedgwick Counties, which average \$54,130.

PLACE OF WORK

The graphic to the right shows the vast majority of the County’s residents work within Reno County, while 13 percent travel to other counties in Kansas - and a small number work in another state - for their employment. This would seem to suggest the County is retaining most of its employment base, and not exporting its workforce to neighboring counties.



- Worked in Reno County
- Worked outside Reno County
- Worked outside Kansas

Source: U.S. Census ACS 2016

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

The changes in economic conditions described above suggest a number of objectives which should be followed in developing and maintaining the Comprehensive Plan.

The objectives and associated planning criteria and policy which should be addressed include the following: The need for industrial and commercial development and specific areas across the County in which this development should take place. Industrial development will likely be concentrated predominantly southeast of Hutchinson and west of South Hutchinson. Much of this growth could occur outside these cities’ boundaries. Commercial development, as with all development, should be encouraged to occur where infrastructure already exists, i.e. within the various cities of the County.

Industrial activities should be encouraged to locate in areas where existing resources, such as streets, highways, water, sewer, fire protection and other services, are available to support such activity. This means first looking and locating within cities’ boundaries. Industrial development in areas not well served by basic public facilities and services can require considerable public investment to provide for these facilities. In such cases the public costs can be greater than the revenue generated by the development.

CHAPTER 5 – TRANSPORTATION

INTRODUCTION

The present and future characteristics of the local transportation system can dramatically influence a community's long-range pattern of growth and development. Adequate transportation is vital to the movement of raw materials and the distribution of the commodities and products of agriculture and local industry. A community's transportation network is equally essential to the day-to-day activities of the population who are dependent upon direct, efficient and safe access throughout the County.

The purpose of the transportation element is to review the current transportation systems serving the community and explore the ways and means by which these systems can continue to help the local population and businesses in the future.

Three primary transportation systems presently serve Reno County, these being air, rail, and surface vehicular systems. Of these three, the most important to the continued development of the community is the surface vehicular mode consisting of the network of streets, roads, and highways within the planning area. Accordingly, the central objective of this section of the Comprehensive Plan is to evaluate the existing system of streets, roads, and highways that will continue to move traffic safely and efficiently in and around the County.

SURFACE VEHICULAR TRANSPORTATION

The surface transportation system is the most significant infrastructure element of nearly all counties throughout the state and tends to have the most significant impact on the overall economic well-being of the citizens of the County.

HIGHWAYS

Highways are primary arterial roadways that are partially access controlled and are typically the highest traveled corridors, serving major activity centers and carry a significant portion of trips entering or leaving the County and the cities within the County.

Although there are no interstate routes (Class A roadways) within Reno County, it is within close proximity to Interstate I-135 - a major regional corridor serving central Kansas. The primary roads which serve as the backbone of the vehicular transportation system in Reno County include K-96 Highway, K-61 Highway, US Highway 50, K-14 Highway, and K-11 Highway.

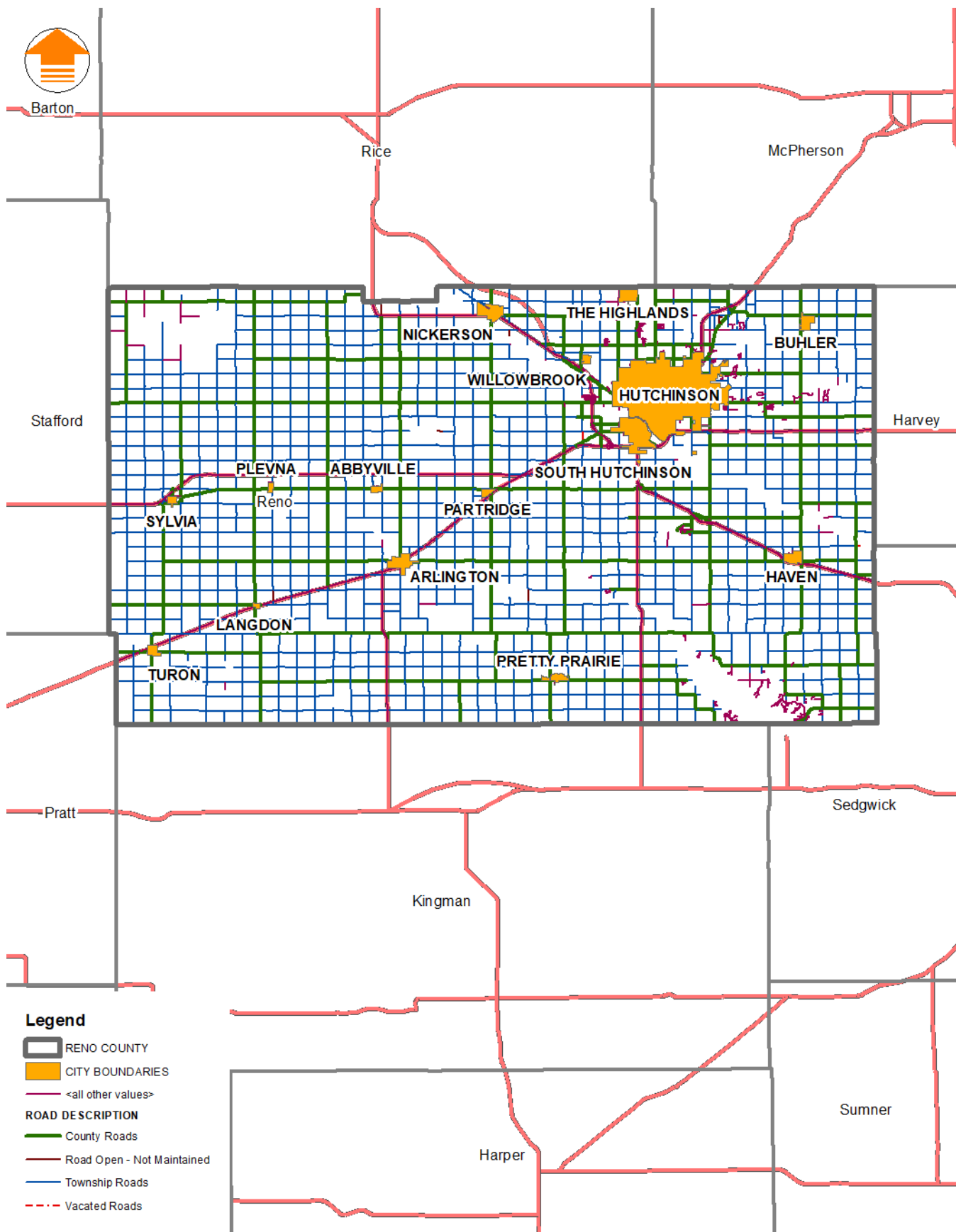
Of these highways, K-96 Highway and K-61 Highway are the two roadways classified as "expressways" by the Kansas Department of Transportation (KDOT) and are characterized as multi-lane, divided highways with the highest level of controlled access. K-96 Highway serves as the primary link between Hutchinson and Wichita to the southeast, and Great Bend to the northwest. Within Wichita, K-96 Highway links with Interstate I-135 and the Kansas Turnpike for south and eastbound travel. K-61 Highway provides the primary connection between Hutchinson and McPherson to the north, as well as providing a connection to Interstate I-135 for north-bound trips. KDOT maintains both of these highways as primary links in the overall highway system, and both are capable of handling significant traffic loads.

US Highway 50 is a two-lane highway with four-lane segments near South Hutchinson which provides another primary east-west route through Reno County and stretches over 3,000 miles across the United States. U.S. Highway 50 is an example of a secondary route to the interstate system and is a vital link to many smaller rural communities as a freight route. Other less critical highways maintained by the state also are within the County, namely K-14 Highway and K-11 Highway, which traverse the county north and south.

COUNTY ROADWAYS

The remainder of the roads within the unincorporated portion of Reno County is the responsibility of the County, or individual Township (see Figure 27). Reno County is one of 35 Kansas Counties that functions under a "non-county unit" or "county-township" road system. In these jurisdictions, the County maintains the higher-traveled roads, which include the County federal-aid routes and those roads designated by the County Commission as routes designed primarily for the

Figure 27: Reno County Road Map



movement of traffic between different areas of the County. Reno County currently maintains approximately 600 miles of roads and about 1,100 bridge structures throughout the County.

The various townships maintain the balance of the local roads that are not located within a city and must work with the County to establish regulatory signage - like traffic control signs and speed limits. Further, the County maintains all bridges over 20 feet in length, drainage structures under 20 feet in length and a waterway opening of 25 square feet or larger, as well as those culverts with a waterway opening of 25 square feet or larger. The remaining storm water conduits are the responsibility of the townships.

ARTERIAL ROADS

Arterial roadways - often further classified into minor and major arterials - are appropriate for carrying traffic through areas of the community without directly accessing adjoining properties. Arterial roads serve major activity centers and bear a high proportion of traffic on a limited number of roadway miles. The ideal range for traffic volume on a four-lane arterial roadway is between 12,000 and 25,000 vehicles per day. Currently, the County has one minor arterial road - South Yoder Road stretching from K-96 Highway north to the city limit boundary of Hutchinson.

COLLECTOR ROADS

Collector roads function to “collect” traffic from the local road network to arterial roadways and may also directly serve residential properties abutting the collector road. Collector roadways can handle areas where traffic demand is expected to range between 1,500 and 12,000 vehicles per day. The design of a collector road section may include left turn lanes, or acceleration/deceleration lanes, depending on site-specific conditions.

LOCAL ROADS

Local roadways provide direct access to private property and typically offer the least amount of access control to adjoining properties. The ideal traffic volume for local roads is less than 1,500 vehicles per day and would usually fall under the authority of the township for maintenance.

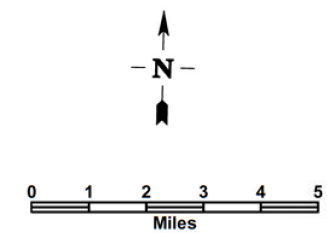
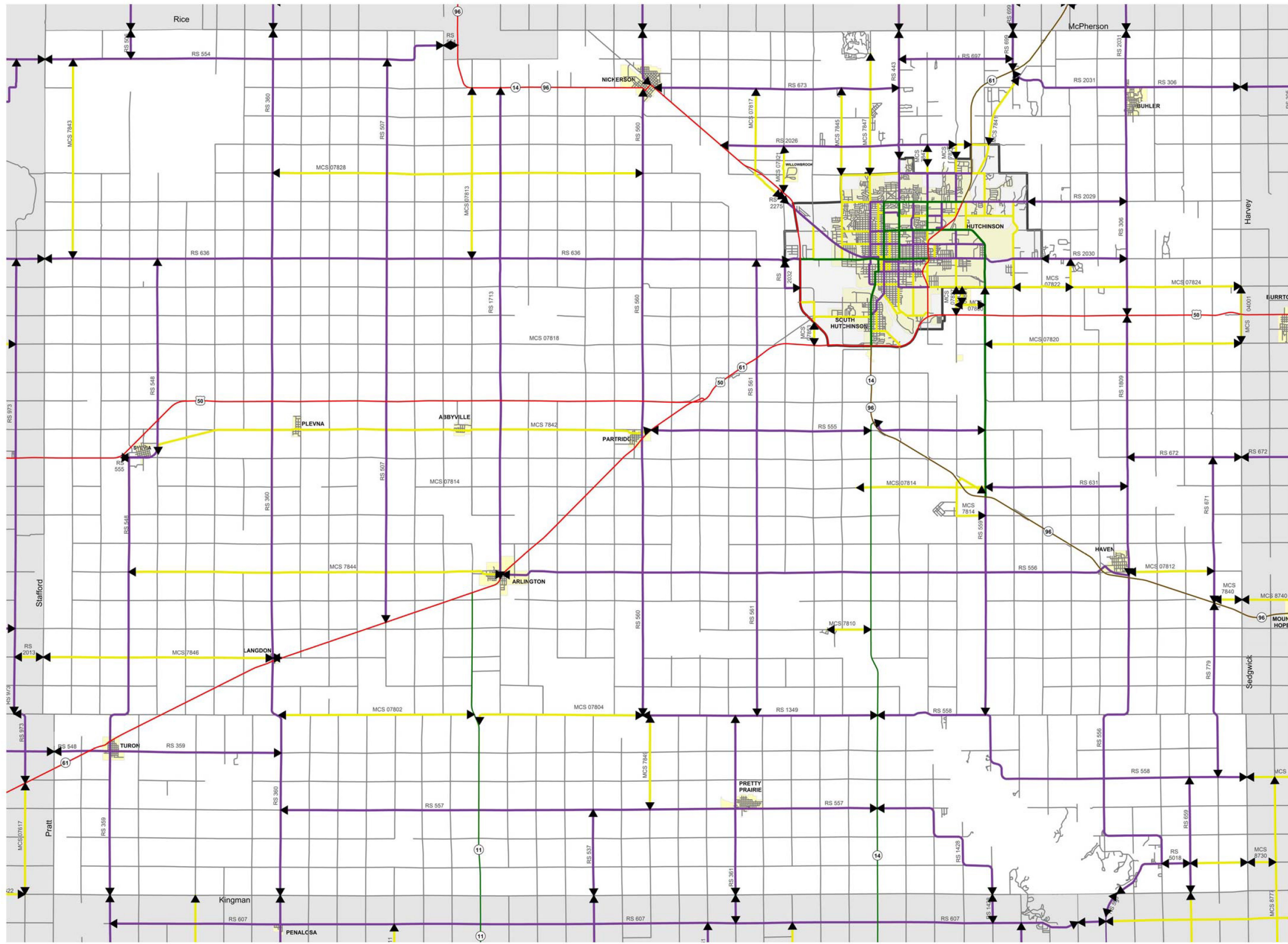
FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF ROADWAYS

The Federal Highway Administration created a framework to manage the country’s extensive network of roadways. This system is structured around specific travel objectives, such as long-distance passenger and freight needs to serving local residential developments.

The functional classification of roadways defines the role each element of the street network plays in serving the travel needs of the public. Since its inception, the functional classification system has expanded to not only describe the role of a roadway in moving vehicles through a network of highways but also factors in roadway design, speed, capacity and relationship to existing and future land use development. The U.S. Department of Transportation also uses functional classification in determining eligibility for funding under the Federal-Aid Highway Program. The KDOT system includes five classification levels – “A” through “E” routes – which use such factors as daily traffic volumes, route continuity across the state and beyond, access to major cities, trip length and route spacing. Figure 28 on the following page shows the classification of Reno County roads based on this system. The five categories as defined by KDOT are:

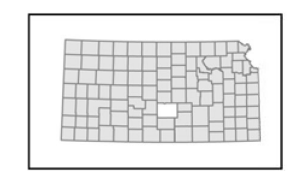
- CLASS A - The Interstate System, including the Kansas Turnpike.
- CLASS B - Routes that serve as the most critical statewide and interstate corridors for travel. The routes serve distinct trip movements since they are widely spaced throughout the State. On significant sections of the routes traffic volumes are relatively constant. A substantial number of out-of-state vehicles use Class B routes, and trips on the highways are typically very long.
- CLASS C - Defined as arterials, these routes are closely integrated with Class A and B routes in service to all parts of the State. Major locations that are not on A or B routes are connected by a C route. Average trip lengths are typically long.
- CLASS D - These routes provide access to arterials and serve small urban areas not on a Class A, B, or C route. The roads are important for inter-county movement.
- CLASS E - Primarily for local service only, these routes are typified by very short trips. Class E routes are frequently used on a daily basis, sometimes several times a day, to connect rural residents with other routes or to provide access to small towns in the area.

FIGURE 28: KDOT Functional Classification Road Map - Reno County



- FUNCTIONAL CLASSIFICATION**
5 - 10 YEAR FUTURE
- Interstate
 - Other Freeway/Expressway
 - Other Principal Arterial
 - Minor Arterial
 - Major Collector
 - Minor Collector
 - Local Road
 - City Limits
 - Urban Boundaries

COUNTY APPROVAL 11-18-14
F.H.W.A. APPROVAL 12-17-14



Functional Classification
Map of
Reno County 78
KANSAS
PREPARED BY THE
KANSAS DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
BUREAU OF TRANSPORTATION PLANNING
IN COOPERATION WITH THE
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
FEDERAL HIGHWAY ADMINISTRATION

ROAD STANDARDS

Road standards within Reno County fall into four categories; those for which Reno County is directly responsible, those that are the responsibility of the townships, those that are the responsibility of the various cities within the County, and those that are the responsibility of the State of Kansas. For this plan, only those standards and practices employed by the Reno County Public Works Department are discussed. At this time the current process of maintaining the County road system will remain in effect with no substantial modifications to the standards in use.

PROPOSED ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

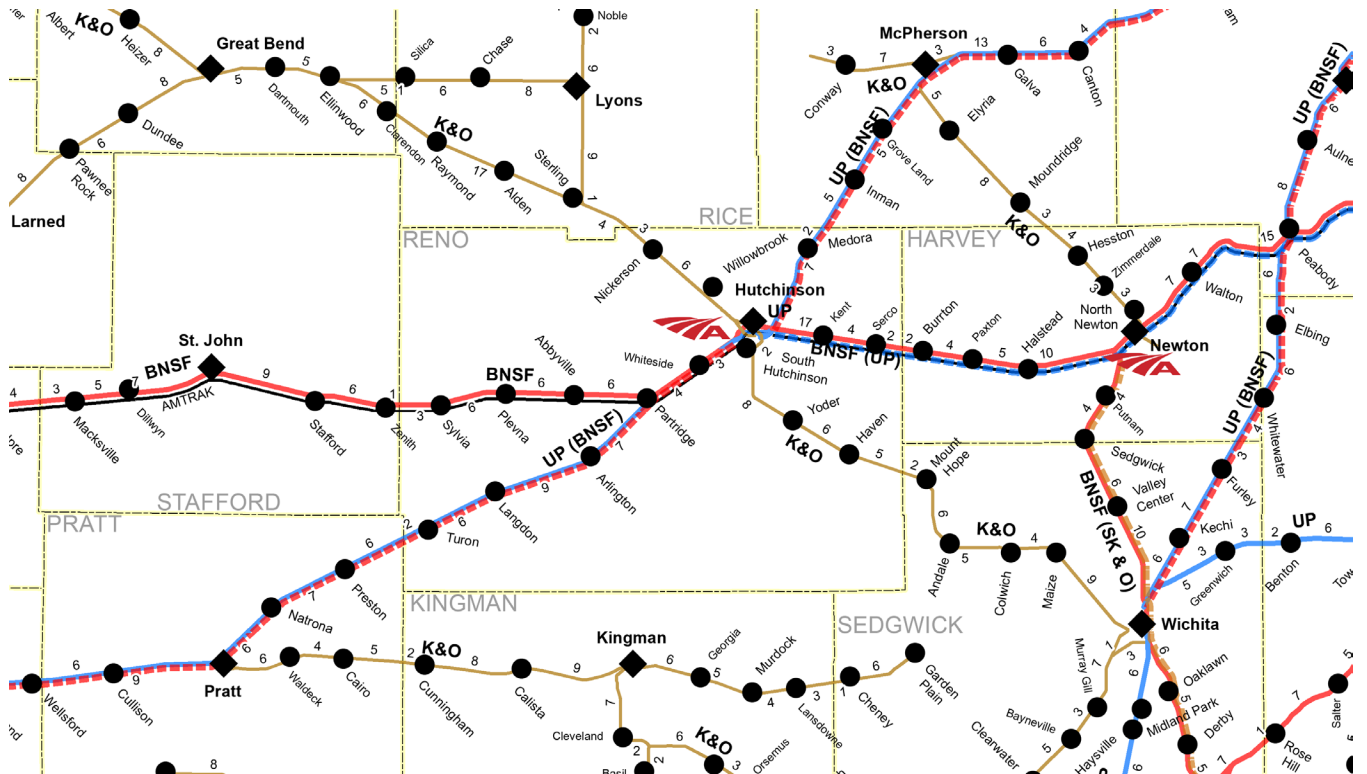
Reno County is currently in a scheduled road maintenance mode with no immediate road construction projects planned. This maintenance program includes resurfacing the roadways and open ditch cleaning as needed at a rate of approximately 30 miles per year. The County amended its “Bridge Infrastructure Replacement Plan” in 2015 to account for the rising need to repair, replace or close these structures in the face of limited resources. Since 2008, Reno County Public Works has made improvements to approximately 66 bridge structures. The Public Works Department constructs most bridge structures in-house and utilizes federal aid as part of the funding.

RAIL TRANSPORTATION

Reno County, like most counties in Kansas, has seen a significant reduction in the number of rail miles serving the County. However, with its centralized location and collection of industries which still rely on rail transportation, the County continues to maintain a viable rail system.

Two of the state’s three Class I railways, consisting of the most significant railroads, provide service to the County. The Union Pacific Railroad’s “Golden State Route” enters Kansas near Liberal and terminates at Kansas City, passing through Hutchinson and Topeka. This route follows K-61 Highway across the County passing through Hutchinson, Partridge, Arlington, Langdon, and Turon. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad’s “La Junta” freight line -- on which Amtrak’s Southwest Chief passenger train currently travels - follows U.S. Highway 50 through Hutchinson, Partridge, Abbyville, Plevna, and Sylvia.

Figure 29: Railways in Reno County



Class III railroads are typically known as “short lines,” are small in scale and provide localized connections for their shippers to the Class I railroads and the national rail system. Two short-line railways carry freight through the County; the Kansas & Oklahoma Railroad and the Pacific Western Railway. The K&O line originates in Wichita and extends to the Colorado state line generally along K-96, and serving Haven, South Hutchinson, Hutchinson, and Nickerson.

In 2005, the Pacific Western Railway purchased the Hutchinson and Northern Railroad. The following year V&S Railway, LLC began operating the railroad on behalf of Pacific Western Railway, including the 3.5-mile line in Hutchinson. Funding for rail capacity improvements to the railroad and the City of Hutchinson to provide rail service to the Siemens nacelle production facility came from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA). Commodities shipped on the line include salt and scrap iron, and connects with the BNSF, Union Pacific, and Kansas and Oklahoma Railways at Hutchinson.

The rail services within the County will continue to play a vital role in offering support for industrial development. The ability to maintain a connection with the Class I rail companies will continue to be a challenge, and the County should participate with the local cities and economic development agencies in securing support for rail services. Failure to do so will reduce the ability to attract additional businesses and will increase the burden placed on the surface transportation system by increasing the amount of heavy truck traffic.

The only passenger rail service in Kansas today is the long-distance Amtrak service that crosses Kansas on its way from Chicago to Los Angeles. This once-a-day train connects the cities of Kansas City, Lawrence, Topeka, Emporia, Newton, Hutchinson, Dodge City and Garden City via its Southwest Chief route. For a variety of factors, Amtrak is not currently considered a convenient mode for interstate travel and does not provide the levels of service that could significantly expand rail ridership in Kansas.

AIR TRANSPORTATION AND FACILITIES

The only significant public air facility within Reno County is Hutchinson Regional Airport located in the northeastern quadrant of Hutchinson. The City of Hutchinson owns the airport, which provides three runways ranging in length between 4,000 feet and 7,000 feet and is surrounded by lands devoted to industrial development. Classified as a “general aviation airport” by the Federal Aviation Administration, private and corporate air services are present along with other aviation support services. The airport has not offered commercial passenger air service since 1990.



Sunflower Aerodrome Gliderport - Google 2015

The Sunflower Aerodrome Gliderport is a sizeable private air facility in the County and is located approximately two miles southwest of Yoder on the grounds of the former Hutchinson Naval Air Station. This facility, as its name suggests, supports several glider organizations, namely the Kansas Soaring Association (KSA) group and the Wichita Soaring Association (WSA) club. Several small, private landing strips also are scattered throughout the County but are for individual users with no oversight by the Federal Aviation Administration.

OTHER TRANSPORTATION SERVICES

The Reno County Area Transit (RCAT) is a service of the Reno County Aging and Transportation Department and provides public transportation service within the County. RCAT currently offers a fixed-route service with hourly transportation routes throughout the cities of Hutchinson and South Hutchinson, para-transit service for persons with mobility impairments, and on-demand rural area service. The program is financed through a combination of funds provided by the Kansas Department of Transportation grants, Reno County’s general fund, and the Reno County Elderly Mill Levy tax.

However, as is typical in most counties throughout the state, this service is limited in its scope and only a relatively small portion of the County residents benefit from it. The likelihood of obtaining additional funding to expand this service for the citizenry is remote. However, the County should continue to evaluate all potential transportation services that would enhance the quality of life for a broader segment of the public.

NON-MOTORIZED TRANSPORTATION

In addition to numerous benefits associated with bicycling, such as health and quality of life enhancement, the creation of an interconnected bicycle network can also serve a community's transportation system by providing an alternative to vehicular travel.

The Reno County Bicycle Transportation Study (2016) calls for the development of a trail system to provide local and regional bicycle routes to enhance the overall transportation system in the County. The vision statement of the Reno County Bicycle Trail Advisory Committee is to: "Develop a plan that promotes cycling as an enjoyable and healthy mode of transportation in Reno County through the identification of routes, marketing, public education, and mapping while promoting safety and consultation on potential improvements to the infrastructure."

Although there are no officially designated bicycle routes developed or managed by Reno County, the groundwork to begin developing such a system is in place. Several potential pathways are identified in the 2016 study, and as funding opportunities arise stronger efforts should be made to implement the Study's recommendations.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

The planning implications for the transportation system are many and varied. The County should continue to work with the Kansas Department of Transportation in identifying improvements to state highways within the area. The County should also continually pursue funding support for additional public transportation services for its citizens, not only for the elderly programs but for all citizens with need.

Perhaps the most crucial planning implication that directly affects county government, however, deals with developing policies and standards that make the most efficient use of limited funding for existing roads and bridges. With a stable population forecast through the planning period, the need of expanding the existing miles of road appears unnecessary; therefore, the focus should be on maintaining the present system and perhaps evaluating the lowest-volume roads for closure.

CHAPTER 6 – PUBLIC FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

INTRODUCTION

As with transportation, the provision of public facilities and services is an essential measuring stick in the evaluation of “quality of life” within a community. Public facilities and services are generally those that are beyond the means of individuals or families to provide for themselves. This element of the plan will provide an overview of those facilities and services not otherwise addressed elsewhere in this plan.

FIRE PROTECTION

The rural areas of Reno County are provided fire protection services by seven fire districts. All the districts rely on volunteers and are intended to provide the best possible service to the citizens of each district. Mutual aid agreements and coordination with other public safety services exist and should continue to be reviewed in light of additional rural development, but no change is identified as a priority during this planning period.

LAW ENFORCEMENT SERVICES

Reno County provides law enforcement services to all of the rural areas of the County through the Reno County Sheriff’s Office. In addition, many of the smaller incorporated cities rely on patrol services from the Sheriff’s Office for law enforcement within their city limits.

Currently, the Sheriff’s Office oversees a 97-person department as well as the Reno County Correctional Facility that opened in August 2015. The department has four divisions that handle all patrols, investigations, and management of the Correctional Facility. Reno County is divided up into three beats which are continuously patrolled by the Sheriff’s deputies and are staffed by a shift commander and at least three patrol deputies per zone.

The growth in the rural areas can increase the demands on the Sheriff’s Office in many ways. The increase in property crimes is typical with an increase in non-farm rural residential development because the homes are more likely to be unoccupied during the daytime. Farm homes, where the residents are relying on farming enterprises for their livelihood, are more likely to have people and activity around the homestead on a continual basis, thus reducing the interest by those of criminal intent. The result is growing demands for more patrols and more visibility, which adds to the cost to the County.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES

County-wide Emergency Medical Services (EMS) are provided through a partnership with Reno County EMS and Hutchinson Regional Medical Center. There are two EMS stations, one located in Hutchinson and one in Arlington, to provide the best service and response times possible given the funding available.

Reno County EMS is staffed by approximately 35 paramedics and eight Emergency Medical Technicians (EMTs). Reno County EMS relies on volunteer EMS agencies located in Pretty Prairie and Haven and volunteer first response agencies located in Nickerson and Sylvia to provide immediate response in rural areas of the county. The volunteer agencies receive training, supplies, back up coverage, and advanced life support assistance from Reno County EMS.

Changes in population can impact EMS service levels and eventually will require either additional EMS stations or changes to the location of the existing EMS stations.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

The County itself does not provide designated park, recreation or open space facilities. However, Reno County is home to a number of park and open space facilities that provide public recreation opportunities.

As discussed previously in the plan, areas surrounding the Cheney Reservoir provide several recreational opportunities for the region, including fishing, hiking, boating, sailing, and camping. Within the Cheney State Park, the Cheney State Park Trail offers over five miles of biking and hiking within the park. The Cheney Wildlife Area contains over 5,000 acres along the northern shore of the reservoir and permits hunting and nature watching activities to the public.

Other passive recreation facilities include the Arkansas River water trail system, which provides a canoeing and kayaking route across the County, and the Sand Hills State Park, which offers over 1,100 acres of natural open space and an interconnected series of trails and is located in the northeast quadrant of the County between Medora and Hutchinson. Many of the cities within Reno County also have parks and recreation programs available to the residents of the County, which also add to the “quality of life” of the County as a whole.

RENO COUNTY LANDFILL

The Reno County Landfill is a Sub-Title D solid waste facility and is located approximately three miles west of Hutchinson. After twenty years in operation, the facility was upgraded to meet new federal requirements in 1996 and currently serves the region.

The County also operates a 26.5-acre Construction and Demolition Waste (C&D) disposal site, which was approved on February 2, 2009, by the Kansas Department of Health and Environment’s Bureau of Waste Management. With this recently-expanded capacity, the life of both landfills is expected to meet the needs of the County through the planning period. The possibility of another expansion to facilitate a County burn site within the landfill complex may occur in the next few years.

According to the Kansas Department of Health and Environment’s Bureau of Solid Waste, the landfill took in an average of 300 tons of municipal solid waste and 100 tons of C&D waste per day last year from the waste stream generated in Reno, Kingman, Stafford, Rice, McPherson, and Harvey counties. County residents and businesses are assessed a landfill fee on their property tax statement, but not charged a tipping fee at the facility to dispose of household waste.



Reno County Landfill - Google 2015

CEMETERIES

There are two existing cemetery districts in the County, the Lerado Cemetery District, and the Valley Township Cemetery District, although a number of other small cemeteries exist.

Under state law, the operation and maintenance of the cemeteries in the unincorporated portion of the County are the responsibility of the township boards in the various townships of the County, unless there are other specific ownership arrangements in place. Some of the cemeteries are owned and operated by a nearby city, but the bulk of the cemeteries are operated and managed by the townships.

In many cases, the available space within these facilities is getting limited. It is important for the County to work with the townships and other interested parties to manage the needs of the citizenry concerning cemetery space in the future.

PUBLIC BUILDINGS

The County has several buildings within its ownership from which it provides its services and operations. The most notable facility is the historic Reno County Courthouse located in Hutchinson.

Other buildings include office buildings, maintenance facilities, and road and bridge shops in Hutchinson and South Hutchinson, as well as other satellite locations throughout the County. The County should annually evaluate the sufficiency of these buildings to meet the present and future needs of the County.

UTILITIES

The utilities serving a community are a vital component of the services that define the “quality of life” within that community. Most counties in Kansas do not provide utility services per se, although a few are active in constructing and managing wastewater systems in high-growth areas of their County.

Virtually all of the incorporated cities within Reno County provide some level of utility service within their community, and in some cases have extended those services beyond their borders. Also, there are special districts that provide utility services similar to municipal systems, most notably the rural water districts within the County.



Reno County Courthouse - 2018

Reno County’s Public Works Department oversees the operations of the following water and sewer districts:

- Blue Spruce - Reno County Sewer District No. 3/10
- Cedarview - Reno County Sewer District No. 1
- H.A.B.I.T. - Reno County Sewer District No. 202
- The Highlands - Reno County Water No. 8 and Sewer District No. 8
- Yoder - Reno County Water District No. 101 and Sewer District No. 201

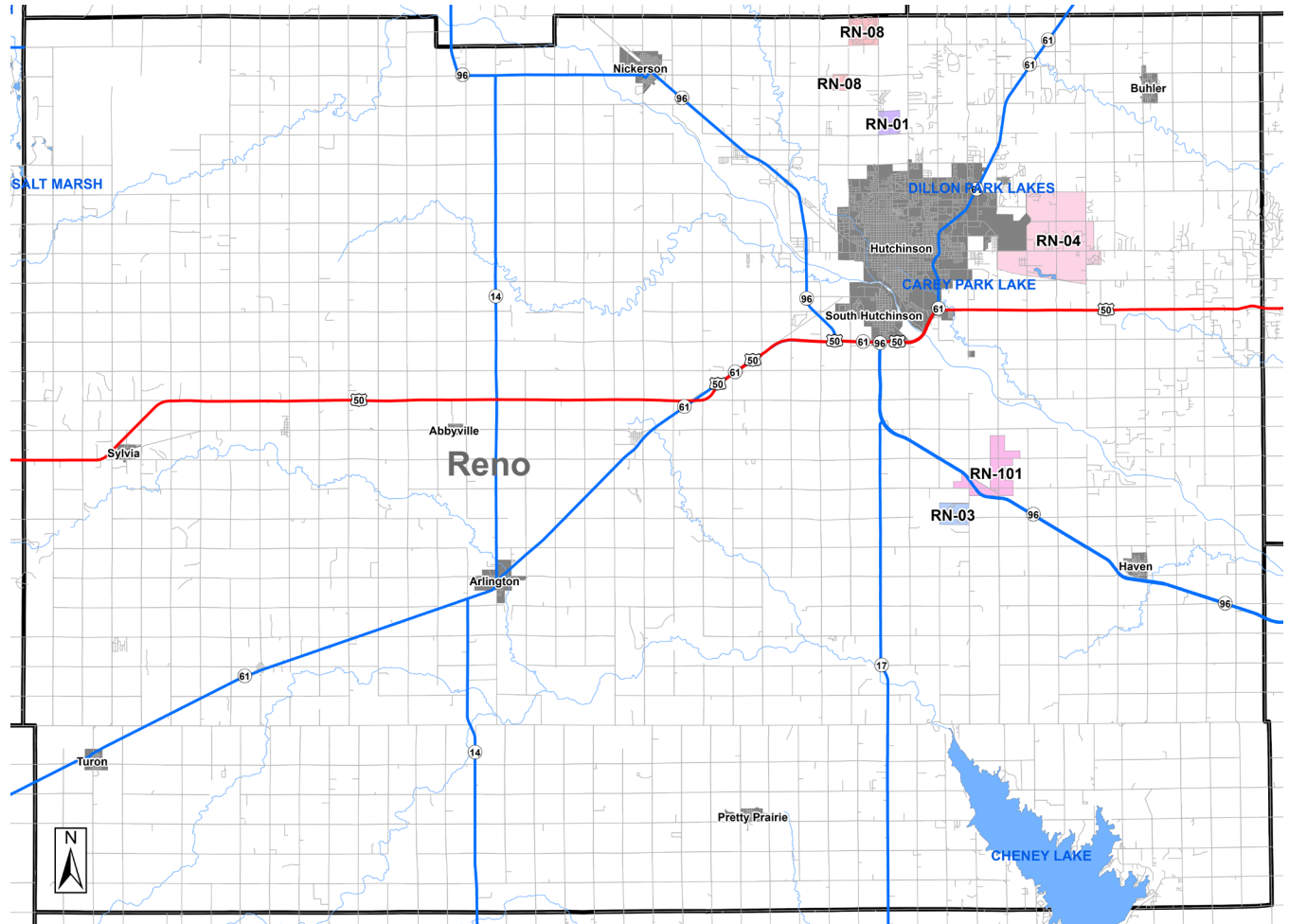
WATER SYSTEMS

Reno County Public Works manages two water districts that serve the Yoder area and The Highlands city, in addition to the remaining Rural Water Districts providing public water supply to small portions of Reno County. There are currently three rural water districts operating in the County: Reno County RWD #1, Reno County RWD #3, and Reno County RWD #4 (see Figure 30).

The County government has no role in these systems other than to authorize their initial organization and approve additions to the service territory following statutory requirements.

Most of the cities within the County have their own water utilities and provide some limited service beyond their borders. However, as these cities grow, conflicts between city utility services and rural water district “franchise” territories will present significant problems. The long-term impacts are often not taken into account when approvals were given to establish or expand rural water districts across the state, and it remains a contentious issue with the future development. This topic should be taken into account if any future expansions of rural water districts are proposed near any cities.

Figure 30: Water Districts in Reno County



Kansas Rural Water Association/Kansas Water Office - October 2015

WASTEWATER SYSTEMS

In past years, Reno County has taken responsibility for five sanitary sewer districts within its jurisdiction. These sewer districts were established to serve rural development on smaller lots that do not have the land area to accommodate on-site wastewater treatment systems. These sewer districts taken over by the County were either failing to handle wastewater appropriately or simply cannot accommodate expansions to the treatment facilities for additional development. The County should clearly establish a policy regarding such proposed systems for future residential projects.

Most of the cities within the County provide sanitary sewer service within their respective towns and, to a limited extent, some sewer service beyond their borders. But for the most part, cities are not as willing or able to extend sewers due to limits on treatment capacity.

OTHER UTILITY SERVICES

Private companies provide the remainder of utility services, such as cable, telephone, electric and gas service throughout the County. Except broadband internet lines, these private utilities have the necessary infrastructure in place and are considered adequate and capable of providing services meeting all demands in the planning period with no additional oversight by the County.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

The central planning implication to Reno County is to remain aware of the changing demand for public services as the population continues to change. The rate of change will have a direct bearing on the level of change in the need for services. The potential impacts on existing or future tax-supported services should be evaluated in all future development proposals.

With regard to utilities, the most significant planning implications for the County will be the impacts associated with water and sewer service demands as the rural areas of the County develop. Specific policies should be established with the cities and others in the business of providing these services to understand the long-term implications of future demands for additional services. The primary objective is to assure that as decisions are made they will serve the best interests of the citizenry, both now and into the future.

CHAPTER 7 – LAND USE

INTRODUCTION

The development of policies regarding land use establishes the framework within which the private sector makes its decisions to invest within that community. The more locally adopted rules, regulations, and policies work to achieve a favorable investment climate, the more the community will benefit. Ensuring public policies promote quality in new development, and effectively evaluate new land use proposals before construction begins, creates a positive atmosphere for private investors.

The intent of this chapter is to give an overview of the existing land use patterns within Reno County and address any changes needed in the regulatory provisions of the County to improve its ability to manage change for the benefit of all property owners. While no general discussion will be given to land uses within the various cities in the County, the extent city land uses impact or affect the land use patterns within the rural areas will be addressed.

EXISTING LAND USE

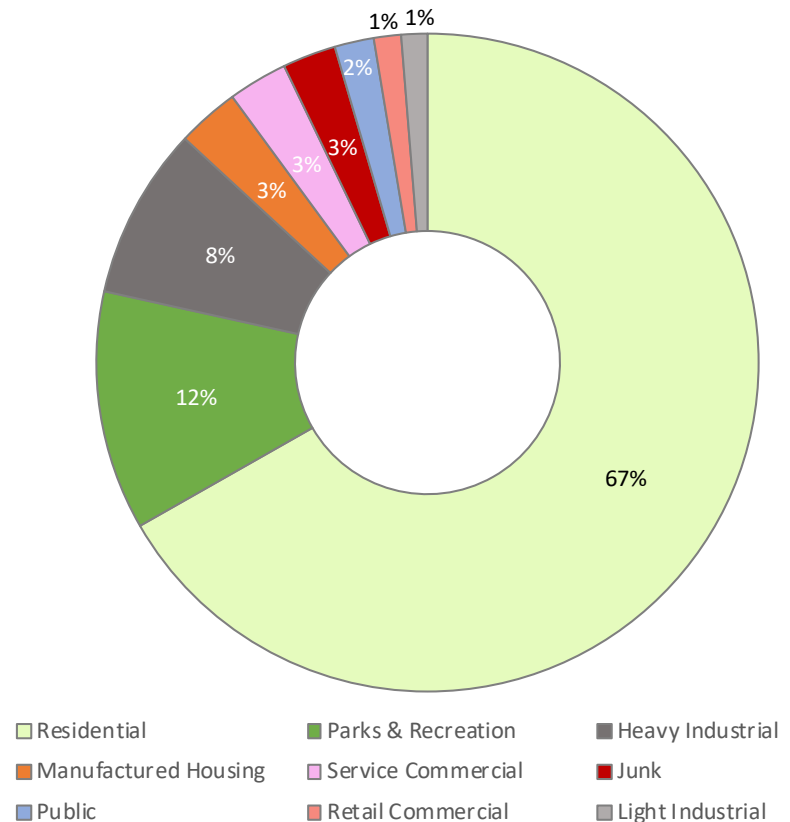
As noted in previous chapters of the Plan, the land use patterns in the unincorporated portion of Reno County have not changed significantly over the years. While the vast majority of the rural areas are devoted to agricultural uses, a growing percentage of the land is being converted to rural residential uses, along with some introduction of commercial and industrial uses as well.

The bulk of land conversions have occurred in the northeastern quadrant of the County, but new areas of rural development are being seen in other portions as well, such as the areas surrounding Cheney Reservoir within the southeast corner of Reno County.

Historically, the rural areas of Midwestern counties contained scattered farms with the residents farming the surrounding property. Economic conditions and aging populations reduced the number of working farmsteads and enlarged the farming operations, and the same pattern occurred in Reno County over the decades.

As is also typical, much non-agricultural development has occurred through the years along the highways near many of the cities. This land use pattern includes a mixture of residential, industrial and commercial uses, frequently resulting in harm to the properties' overall value. In other words, there are examples where implementation of proper land use planning could have benefited the landowners of today by limiting the impacts of decisions that are based solely on the desires of an individual without regard to the effect on neighboring landowners.

DISTRIBUTION OF NON-AGRICULTURAL LAND USE



There are many areas of established residential neighborhoods that have existing commercial and industrial uses which have reduced the value of all properties in the area. Conversely, the best utilization of some tracts of land would be for commercial development but have concentrations of homes in the area. The further expansion of the business interests then create embittered and highly vocal residents who feel threatened from more commercialization. This situation is not unique to Reno County but can become an on-going problem.

Of particular concern lately is the number of requests to create new suburban-scale subdivisions within the County for new home sites. The current land use regulations provide a measure of control for these projects; however, the pattern of requests consistently challenges these standards, and the County struggles with imposing new rules which could further dampen development.

This issue needs to be studied and reviewed for potential new procedures to accommodate future development reasonably without eliminating the existing requirements.

EXISTING ZONING

Presently, Reno County has recently updated its Zoning Regulations, which only apply to approximately a third of the unincorporated portion of the County, and should continue to amend those regulations when issues arise. The practice of understanding land use changes in the State is good, and Reno County should keep evaluating its zoning practices to ensure orderly development in the future.

Additionally, the County has as its present policy that tracts of rural land 40 acres in size or larger are considered “agricultural lands,” which is considered a good practice. The purpose of the “acreage policy” for agricultural uses is to make a statement that agricultural lands are of primary importance and any division of tracts of land less than 40 acres does not always work in the long-term best interests of the County. That is why the land divisions are managed under these standards.

SUBDIVISION STANDARDS

The Subdivision Regulations apply to the same area of unincorporated Reno County as its zoning authority. As previously noted, unplanned rural subdivisions can become a challenge to orderly growth, and the Subdivision Regulations contain the rules and standards to manage that activity. Efforts should continue to create additional mechanisms to address this process without sacrificing the overall value of managing changes within the rural portion of the County.

FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This section presents the Future Development Plan for Reno County. It includes both a series of policy statements and directives for future decision-making by the public and private sectors. Typically a comprehensive plan will provide a map of areas within the County where future development projects should be encouraged to locate, such as areas near cities or regions in the County with adequate transportation infrastructure. With Reno County’s existing zoning authority limits, and new regulations utilizing Conditional Use Permits for all non-residential developments, it is unnecessary to depict on a map the locations of future projects since each application is evaluated on its own merits.

The policies within the Plan should be viewed as general statements of action to be used as a basic guide for future decisions within the planning area. These statements are based on the understandings and aspirations of the County as of the time of the adoption of the Plan. New developments and other events may occur which will demand alterations to these statements over time.

The Future Land Use Plan is intended to provide a generalized pattern of agricultural and rural residential uses within the County. There are limited commercial or industrial land uses identified on the Land Use Map, primarily because most of the commercial and industrial land uses are best located within the incorporated cities where sufficient infrastructure and public service support exists to accommodate the growth and expansion of such developments. It is also due to the infrastructure needs for these uses being much more difficult to pre-identify in the rural areas, and the placement of these uses are evaluated on a case-by-case basis through the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.

To the highest degree possible, the text herein states the principles and policies for each general land use category.

AGRICULTURAL LAND USE

The Agricultural Land Use is the dominant land use designation within the unincorporated portion of Reno County. The vast majority of land within the unincorporated part of the County is agriculturally used and is expected to remain agricultural. These agricultural lands are exempt from the County's Zoning Regulations and stay exempt from zoning so long as the property is used for agricultural purposes. That is why the definitions portion of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations attempt to clarify at what point the use of land goes from agricultural use to "non-agricultural" use. Reno County does an excellent job of continually evaluating this distinction and should continue to do so into the future.

The planning principles in the Agricultural Land Use designation is to promote the continuance of agricultural practices in agricultural areas. The conversion of these lands to non-agricultural uses, especially in significant concentrations of residential uses, can have a detrimental effect on the farming operations and should be discouraged where possible. This is especially true when the new rural residents find the intensive farming practices that are normal (i.e., dust, odors, noise, slow-moving vehicles, etc.) to be offensive to their expectations of what living in the rural areas is to be. The Zoning and Subdivision Regulations set a minimum lot size for Agricultural zoning to 40 acres as a means to further enhance agricultural land uses within the County and to provide the County the opportunity to evaluate the conversion of agricultural lands to non-agricultural uses earlier in the rural development process.

It is when land is proposed for non-agricultural uses that the value of County review through the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations becomes most valuable. The evaluation and determination of the viability of those non-agricultural uses, including the appropriateness of the proposed use at that location and at that time, are the primary purposes for the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations.

The conversion to non-agricultural uses may be for residential developments or commercial or industrial developments. The residential developments should be subject to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations of the County as defined by those regulations. As noted previously; it is the isolated, single-lot creation of new residential properties that continue to challenge the County from a regulatory perspective. The present standards accommodate a "lot split" process for most of the isolated sites; however, these are subject to certain standards and requirements that some believe to be too onerous. A more extensive and deep evaluation of what the "intent" and desire concerning these situations is warranted with appropriate adjustments to the regulations.

The overall desire of the County is to continue to allow new, isolated, residential development that does not burden the provision of public services. This has been especially true regarding the creation of lots on "minimum-maintenance" public roads that result in the need to upgrade the road. The existing policy is for the entity creating the upgrade to pay the costs for that work. However, this always creates challenges to the elected officials who are pressured to make the improvements out of general funds of the County. This is the issue that needs an extensive evaluation of all factors involved, to be followed by the development of a clear and precise written policy that will avoid making decisions based upon "who is asking," instead of consistent policy-based requirements.

As for commercial and industrial uses within the rural areas, these are best considered under the Zoning Regulations as a Conditional Use, where the appropriateness can be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. Platting should also be required through the Subdivision Regulations to address the appropriate demands on the public infrastructure.

As noted earlier, one of the most significant threats to agricultural activities is the introduction of people to the rural areas that have no connection to agricultural production and who seek a more tranquil lifestyle. The objections to farming activities from these people are an endangerment to the practice, and new development of such residential properties should be evaluated accordingly. Additionally, commercial and industrial uses should be carefully evaluated in the rural areas where insufficient support services exist and the extension of services can be very costly. Some non-agricultural uses are appropriate for the rural areas, such as bulk storage of petroleum and agricultural products, quarries, salvage yards, and the like; but these uses must be judiciously located to minimize the impacts associated with those businesses.

RESIDENTIAL LAND USES

The Residential Land Use designation is considered primarily for single-family residential uses and should generally be confined to the immediate environs surrounding many of the cities within the County, as well as designated areas around Cheney Reservoir and areas within the northeast and southeast quadrants in the County. As previously noted, other residential development patterns within Reno County have been disjointed and very scattered throughout the years and continue to be so. This practice has resulted in an intermingling of residential and agricultural land uses that present the potential for the problems discussed earlier in this Chapter.

The underlying planning principles provide for the provision of housing opportunities which promote a continuation of a high quality of life and the creation of housing developments to encourage a healthy living environment in the rural areas without inappropriately encroaching into agricultural areas or threats from other non-agricultural land uses. People who invest in housing within the rural areas of Reno County should be afforded protections from outside impacts that might reduce the value of those investments through a judicious application of appropriate Zoning and Subdivision Regulations, as well as other locally adopted codes and standards. Proposals for housing at a density higher than single-family are not considered suitable for the rural areas and should be strongly encouraged to locate within the incorporated cities.

COMMERCIAL LAND USES

The County's existing Commercial Land Uses are shown on Figure 31 and do not comprise a large number of properties within the unincorporated areas. The goals within this plan should not be construed as prohibiting commercial development within the rural areas of Reno County. To the contrary, many commercial activities are often more appropriately located in the rural areas, such as quarries, landfills, salvage yards, bulk agricultural and petroleum products, and the like. Within the Zoning Regulations, commercial uses are considered Conditional Uses and require separate approval.

The underlying planning principles provide for the provision of commercial uses that are appropriate for the location and demands of the individual project. Also, the desire is to integrate the commercial uses within the community in a manner to provide the highest level of accessibility to the general populace with the least amount of development impact. Hence, the Plan intends to encourage the commercial development only in those areas where a combination of transportation services and other supporting public services exist or can be reasonably provided. As such, commercial development should be targeted to the primary road system within the County and near the incorporated cities.

Occasionally, commercial uses are very individualized and require the approval of a conditional use permit for its specific location. This is usually because a proprietor wishes to conduct the business at their "home," and the use does not qualify as a "home occupation" under the Zoning Regulations. The present regulatory process to consider these locational uses is deemed appropriate, and the process should not change. These have been, and will continue to be; a case-by-case issue decided based on the conditions present in each request.

INDUSTRIAL LAND USES

Industrial Land Uses are treated in the same manner as commercial land uses. Again, these uses are not shown in a "generalized" manner on a standard "Future Land Use Map" due to the fact the zoning regulations do not intend to tie these non-residential uses to any specific area within Reno County. The underlying planning principles provide for the provision of industrial uses the same as for commercial uses and should be located and considered under the same criteria.

MAJOR ROAD PLAN

The major roads within the planning area will remain the state and federal highways, and all of the section-line roads. The classification of these roads is established by the various governmental units responsible for the operation and maintenance of their respective roads. The purpose of making all these roads "major roads" is to assure the County the ability to maintain appropriate setbacks of new construction to protect the future right-of-way needs of those roads for future uses.

OTHER SPECIAL LAND USES

The most significant “other special land uses” Reno County may face in the future are proposals for the construction of large “Wind Energy Conversion Systems,” commonly known as “wind farms.” The location of these facilities should be left to the open marketplace and investment decisions of the developers of such systems to determine the most acceptable locations, with the County retaining the final decision through the conditional use permit approval process. These special land uses are typically consistent with all other “non-agricultural” and “non-residential” land use decisions under the Zoning Regulations.

The anticipated ongoing changes in technology, coupled with policy changes at the state and federal level, will dictate the future development of these systems more than anything that could be done at the local level; short of a “prohibition” of the development of such facilities, which is not proposed at this time. The County may seek an expanded study of the potential impacts these facilities could impose on the County, and whether to adopt additional zoning standards for their management or prohibition. Prohibition may be necessary to protect the development of future urban areas and existing and future suburban area population bases, particularly in Eastern Reno County. The K-96 Corridor may also be preserved for future urban development with a prohibition. The process to evaluate an application for a Conditional Use Permit for a Wind Energy Conversion system could take months to complete, and a potential moratorium on the development of wind farms could be considered by the County. This process could take months to complete, and a potential moratorium on the development of wind farms should be considered by the County. The same general policies regarding any potential “commercial solar energy systems” or “solar panel farms” should apply as noted for the wind farms above.

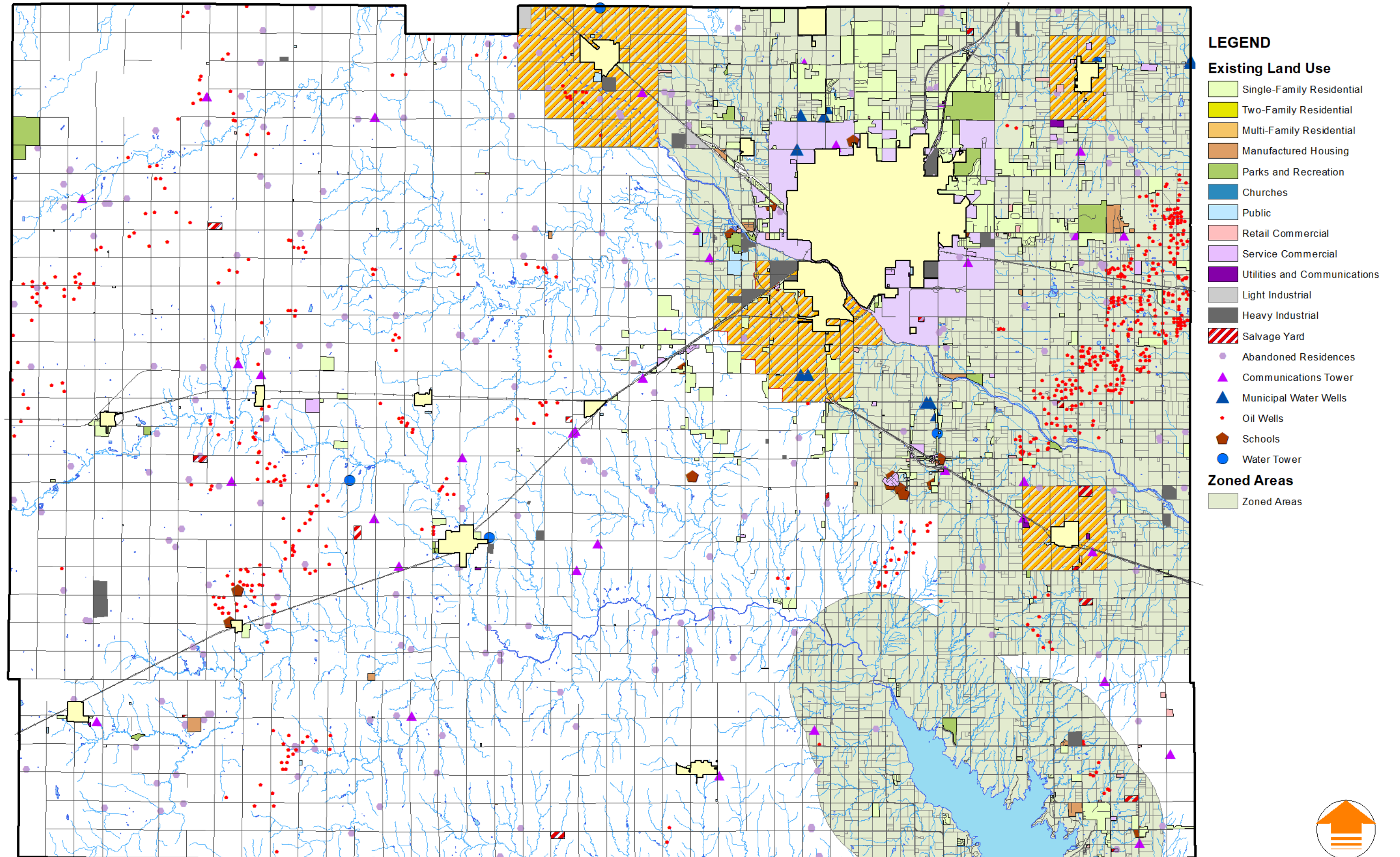
As previously stated, some heavy commercial and industrial uses, such as quarries, salvage yards, and similar projects, are more appropriately located in rural areas and away from concentrations of people in residential neighborhoods or incorporated cities. The establishment of these activities require a conditional use permit under the present Reno County Zoning Regulations, and no change to that policy is proposed at this time.

CONCLUSION

While the Plan does not create a traditional “Future Land Use Plan Map” to show where new development is expected to occur, the intent of this Plan is to allow the existing practice of using conditional use permit to determine the appropriateness of projects within the rural areas of Reno County. The pace and priority of when and where new development will occur will be dictated more by the open marketplace and the risks taken by private investors and developers in the coming years. The role of Reno County will remain one of seeking opportunities to assure that new developments occur to the benefit of all affected property owners.

PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

The most significant planning implication is the creation of expanded tools to address the rural lot creation that does not result in loss of support for the value of the land management tools of the land use regulations. This is to protect the public interests and avoid potential costs in the future.



CHAPTER 8 – IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION

As a policy guide, the Comprehensive Plan has no regulatory authority and, thus, relies on a variety of implementation tools to carry out its intent. The two most recognized tools are Zoning Regulations and Subdivision Regulations. These are often supplemented by other land development related codes and regulations, such as locally adopted building codes, sanitation or environmental codes, and other similar local standards.

The Comprehensive Plan will also be implemented on an incremental basis over time as landowners and developers approach Reno County with development proposals and rezoning applications. These proposals should be considered in relation to the goals, objectives, and policies articulated within this Plan. If consistent with the plan, the decisions of the County are presumed to be reasonable, but this does not preclude a conclusion different from the findings of the Plan on a specific development proposal or application.

IMPLEMENTATION OF LAND USE RECOMMENDATIONS

The most effective method of implementing the Future Land Use recommendations within this Plan is through the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations by providing the flexibility to respond to new developments. Reno County recently adopted new Zoning and Subdivision Regulations; however, the advisability of applying these regulations to the entire County will need further consideration. As part of this process, the potential need for expanded regulations on large-scale wind and solar energy systems should be discussed to ensure the County is in the best position to manage these facilities in the future.

IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR ROAD RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no significant changes in the overall transportation system considered within the Plan. This Plan has not identified any significant projects which would be addressed by the County in the planning period. As noted in the Transportation chapter, the County's road resurfacing program and bridge replacement program are effectively maintaining the existing transportation infrastructure.

In the future, the County may work to establish a prioritization process to identify significant road improvements with immediate needs and coordinate the projects with the ability of the County to finance those projects within the budgetary limits imposed by statute. This is best handled through the implementation of a capital improvement program (CIP) for the County. A CIP would address capital projects over a five- to ten-year period, giving priority ratings to the projects based on such things as relative need, availability of financing, benefits to the public, and total cost.

The CIP would allow the governing body to address the capital improvement needs over a longer time, adjust the priorities annually based on changes in demand or financing, and improve the dialogue between the County and the public on projects to be undertaken each year.

IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

The expectation is the Board of County Commissioners will adopt the Reno County Comprehensive Plan by the end of 2018. The completion of this action, following the required public hearings by the Reno County Planning Commission and governing body, will provide the County with current plans and regulatory tools to carry out the intent of the Plan. Future consideration of amendments to the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations should be part of an on-going discussion by the Planning Commission and governing body, although it is not the intent of this Plan to endorse additional regulation of land development.

OTHER IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

The County may also consider the adoption of building codes during future annual review sessions. It is not a recommendation of this Plan that actual adoption of building codes occurs at this time, but that the County begins the process to evaluate the steps necessary to do so in the future. Building code adoption may be an essential step for the County to consider to maintain the rural areas as an attractive location for new development. Other counties in Kansas have adopted building codes for commercial and industrial projects while not subjecting residential structures to this requirement.

Similarly, consideration of minimum housing standards codes for the rural areas of the County may be warranted in the future. The purpose of such codes is to set identifiable criteria used in evaluating existing housing stock that has fallen into disrepair. These standards would then provide a mechanism for the County to help assure that problem properties within the community are either fixed or removed.

If future consideration is given to the adoption and enforcement of any of these ancillary codes, Reno County should look to create a county-wide program for such services to promote full participation by all the incorporated cities within the County, with cost-sharing for staff and support services associated with such an effort. This approach would create a uniform standard for the entire County and could serve as a model of “interlocal cooperation” between the County and cities.

Although counties do not annex land, Reno County may consider working with its cities to establish clear guidelines for the annexation of land bordering a city. Issues with road maintenance, code enforcement, nuisance abatement, and infrastructure extension seem to warrant the creation of a clear policy to assist these communities in better understanding the rights and responsibilities of annexation.

PROCEDURES FOR REVIEW AND UPDATE OF PROGRAMS

State statutes establish that the Comprehensive Plan be reviewed annually. Most communities include such a review in the budgeting process generally conducted during the month of June. An annual review does not mean that significant modifications must be made to the Plan; only that the Plan is examined for consistency with existing programs and policies, as well as conformance with new programs and policies adopted in the previous year.

The Planning Commission should annually review the Comprehensive Plan for its consistency and conformance with the County’s programs and policies. This annual review is the time to adjust the Plan to accommodate these changes. In addition, all land development applications should be reviewed for consistency with the Plan’s goals and objectives.

Given the rate of change within the County’s planning area, a comprehensive update to the Plan should be considered no later than ten years from the adoption of this Plan. A complete update may be needed earlier if changes occur more rapidly, or if other activities warrant. However, since the Plan is considered one of the relevant documents to be reviewed when considering a zoning change, it is essential that the Plan is kept current.

Finally, the Planning Commission should also include a review of the Zoning and Subdivision Regulations during the annual review of the Comprehensive Plan. Such a review should be to address areas within the Regulations that may need modification or to consider subjects the Regulations do not currently address. Given the rate of change in our technological abilities and the societal expectations regarding these changes, it is anticipated that issues will develop that are unknown at this time. Therefore, an annual review of the regulations is necessary.

CHAPTER 9 – GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND POLICY STEPS

MISSION STATEMENT

The focus of the Comprehensive Plan is to establish the foundation for effective management of development within rural Reno County. To that end, the mission of the Plan is to encourage as much development as possible within the incorporated cities within Reno County. The mission is to provide assurances, to the greatest extent possible, that development in the rural areas is well planned, does not place undue demands for new or expanded services on tax-supported entities, and will contribute to the maintenance of the agricultural and rural residential nature of the unincorporated part of Reno County.

Goals and objectives for any community are intended to identify the aspirations and intentions of the citizens of that community with respect to various topics or “elements” of the planning process. While some may consider such statements to be “lofty” and of little real value to the present condition; the direction in which a community wishes to grow, both in terms of physical direction as well as social direction, is dependent upon a community’s understanding and acceptance of the “vision” such goals and objectives are intended to define.

In May of 2018, the Reno County Planning Commission engaged approximately 35 members of the public, city officials, and County staff in an “Issues and Concerns” exercise intended to elicit the opinion of stakeholders within the community on the various elements of the Plan. Thereafter, the Planning Commission reviewed those comments and spent considerable time developing the goals and objectives stated herein. Each of the stated goals and supporting objectives received considerable thought and were developed with the interests of the citizens of Reno County. It is the intent of the Planning Commission that the goals and objectives stated herein be viewed as a statement of “vision” for Reno County and its future.

The following goal statements and planning objectives are based on a summary of the ideas expressed at planning work sessions. The Plan allows the County to formulate goal statements and policy objectives, then policy steps to take in an action agenda. For each issue and goals/objectives statement, a policy step identifies the entity or group—public or private—that is the appropriate agent for action to implement the plan objectives. Also, Table 6 includes the Plan’s *Implementation Schedule* with action items and time frames at the end of this chapter.

GOAL FOR SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SOCIO-ECONOMIC GOAL 1: ENCOURAGE AND EXPAND THE OPPORTUNITIES FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT AND THE EXPANSION OF BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN RENO COUNTY TO PROMOTE QUALITY GROWTH WITHIN THE COUNTY AND ALL OF ITS CITIES.

- **OBJECTIVE 1:** Promote the development of new businesses and the expansion of existing businesses to create job opportunities to attract new residents to the County and retain the youth.

TIME FRAME: On-going

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce, Reno County economic development organizations.

- **OBJECTIVE 2:** Encourage businesses to look first to the cities within the County for new development locations.

TIME FRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, Reno County economic development organizations.

- **OBJECTIVE 3:** Work with real estate businesses and financial institutions to encourage a competitive real estate market and to enhance the opportunities for a wide variety of development in Reno County.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers.

- **OBJECTIVE 4:** Promote continuing education and skills training through established outreach programs and other local services and facilities to encourage residents of all ages to continue to live and work in Reno County.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce, all school districts.

- **OBJECTIVE 5:** Continue to use and support local economic development resources to enhance Reno County's competitive position in retaining existing and attracting new jobs to Reno County.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, economic development agencies, Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers.

- **OBJECTIVE 6:** Promote business and industrial development consistent with the overall quality of life within Reno County, which would benefit the County's economy and not adversely affect the environment. Efforts should focus on supplementing business types already in existence within the County and promoting development of new businesses compatible with the established business and skill base within the County.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, economic development agencies, Hutchinson/Reno County Chamber of Commerce, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers.

- **OBJECTIVE 7:** Assist in the identification of appropriate sites for business and industrial growth and assist in extending public facilities and services to these sites as appropriate or necessary. The primary focus should be to develop sites within the existing cities and not in the rural area of the County so full utility support from the cities may occur and the tax base for the city also grows.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities.

- **OBJECTIVE 8:** Develop land use regulations and development guidelines to assure commercial and industrial development receives protection from conflicting land uses when possible. Such regulations and guidelines would serve as a tool to attract new commercial and industrial development to Reno County.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities.

- **OBJECTIVE 9:** Consider the creation of a capital improvement plan to outline the priorities for improvements within the County supportive of new business and industrial development, economic growth, and enhancement of the County's overall quality of life.
TIME FRAME: Budget approval for 2020.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities.

- **OBJECTIVE 10:** Continually evaluate the use of other economic development policies as tools to encourage new development. Where appropriate, adjust the boundaries for these tools to maximize their successful implementation.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities.
- **OBJECTIVE 11:** Develop regulations that do not unduly restrict mixed-use activities within the County, especially “home-based industries.”
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities.
- **OBJECTIVE 12:** Promote local entrepreneurship efforts by assisting the Reno County Entrepreneurship Task Force.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, Reno County Entrepreneurship Task Force, all cities.

GOAL FOR HOUSING

HOUSING GOAL 1: WORK TO ASSURE DECENT, SAFE AND AFFORDABLE HOUSING FOR RENO COUNTY RESIDENTS.

- **OBJECTIVE 1:** Promote improvement of the quality of housing in the rural areas of Reno County where substandard quality exists.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.
- **OBJECTIVE 2:** Promote a wide range of housing choices at appropriate locations throughout the County.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, realty companies, lenders, builders, and developers.
- **OBJECTIVE 3:** Promote housing types sensitive to the demographic profile of the community. In particular, attention should be paid to the housing needs of a growing elderly population.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers.
- **OBJECTIVE 4:** Encourage the renovation and rehabilitation of housing units where practical, and the removal of housing units deemed uninhabitable, unsafe, or beyond repair.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities.
- **OBJECTIVE 5:** Encourage residential development inside the cities on existing vacant lots or as new residential developments.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities.

- **OBJECTIVE 6:** Recognize the use of manufactured homes as an affordable housing solution for many people and seek to locate these units in appropriate locations within the County. By law, zoning regulations will accommodate the location of residential-designed manufactured homes throughout the County. The placement of manufactured homes not meeting the residential-designed standards should be sited within established manufactured home parks or on suitable sites in the rural areas.

TIME FRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers.

- **OBJECTIVE 7:** Promote low-density rural housing within the Reno County. Seek and add zoning protections from incompatible land uses for residential development within the high-growth areas in the northeast and southeast quadrants of the County and encourage properly-designed rural subdivisions that are supported by adequate infrastructure for residential projects with higher densities and multiple lots.

TIME FRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.

- **OBJECTIVE 8:** Encourage the use and limited expansion of existing rural water districts and sewer districts where capacity exists.

TIME FRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.

- **OBJECTIVE 9:** Discourage the development of any new water or sanitary sewer improvement districts in the County.

TIME FRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.

- **OBJECTIVE 10:** Seek to turn the management of The Highlands water and sewer districts to the City.

TIME FRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County and the City of The Highlands.

GOAL FOR TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM

TRANSPORTATION GOAL 1: PROVIDE AN EFFICIENT AND SAFE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM DESIGNED TO MOVE PEOPLE AND GOODS WITHIN AND AROUND THE COUNTY.

- **OBJECTIVE 1:** Promote improvement to traffic flows within and through the County by proper use and development of all the road types.

TIME FRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.

- **OBJECTIVE 2:** Promote the development and use of alternative modes of individual and mass transportation and the infrastructure necessary to support the same within the County.

TIME FRAME: On-going.

RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, Kansas Department of Transportation.

- **OBJECTIVE 3:** Ensure that new private development in rural Reno County does not negatively impact the existing transportation system nor place demands for major upgrades to the transportation system in an untimely manner.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.
- **OBJECTIVE 4:** Discourage unplanned residential development along section-line roads in the unincorporated areas.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.
- **OBJECTIVE 5:** Promote the enhancement of regional transportation improvements that will benefit the County. Strongly support those major road improvements included in the Kansas Highway Improvement Plan.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, Kansas Department of Transportation.
- **OBJECTIVE 6:** Establish construction standards within the Subdivision Regulations outlining appropriate requirements for improvements to roads in new subdivisions.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.
- **OBJECTIVE 7:** Establish guidelines within the Subdivision Regulations for improvements to existing roads impacted by proposed developments.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.
- **OBJECTIVE 8:** Support the provision of special transportation needs, especially for an aging population, through programs at the county level or by private means.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, Kansas Department of Transportation, Department of Aging and Transportation.

GOAL FOR UTILITIES

UTILITY GOAL 1: PROMOTE THE EXTENSION OF UTILITY SYSTEMS TO PROVIDE SAFE AND AFFORDABLE UTILITY SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS OF THE COUNTY.

- **OBJECTIVE 1:** Assure the adequate provision of water and sewer facilities and services in coordination with growth areas identified in the land use element of the Comprehensive Plan. Areas beyond the city limits receiving infrastructure improvements from those cities should be considered for annexation to those cities in the near future.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities.

- **OBJECTIVE 2:** Update and enhance the Sanitation Code of Reno County to assure the standards and requirements for on-site water and wastewater systems promote the purpose and intent of the Comprehensive Plan.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, Kansas Department of Health and Environment, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers.
- **OBJECTIVE 3:** Continue to work with providers to expand and enhance internet service to all areas of Reno County.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, internet and cell phone providers.
- **OBJECTIVE 4:** Discourage the extension of municipal services into the County without concurrent annexation.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities.
- **OBJECTIVE 5:** Discourage the development of subdivisions within the floodplain.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities.

GOAL FOR DRAINAGE AND FLOODING

DRAINAGE GOAL 1: PROMOTE THE PROPER MANAGEMENT OF THE DRAINAGE SYSTEMS WITHIN RENO COUNTY, ESPECIALLY IN RECOGNIZED FLOODPLAINS.

- **OBJECTIVE 1:** Identify areas subject to drainage problems and in the floodplain within the County that should be protected from encroachment of new developments consistent with the floodplain regulations.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, appropriate state agencies, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers.
- **OBJECTIVE 2:** Work with the watershed districts within the County to identify and protect breach impact areas below watershed structures once constructed.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, watershed districts, Conservation District, rural landowners.
- **OBJECTIVE 3:** Create a “best management practices” policy for new developments to protect erosion and sedimentation pollution in surface waters within the County.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, farming groups, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers.
- **OBJECTIVE 4:** Work with the Drainage Districts within the County to protect existing infrastructure and collaborate on funding sources for its maintenance.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, farming groups, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers.

GOALS FOR COUNTY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

COUNTY SERVICES/FACILITIES GOAL 1: PLAN AND PROVIDE FOR THE MAINTENANCE AND EXPANSION OF COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES IN RENO COUNTY SO THAT PROPER DEVELOPMENT IS NOT RESTRICTED AND TO HELP MAINTAIN OR IMPROVE THE LOCAL QUALITY OF LIFE AND STANDARD OF LIVING.

- **OBJECTIVE 1:** Locate all public and semi-public land uses in accordance with their individual service area requirements, transportation access needs and utility demands in conformance with the Comprehensive Plan.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities.
- **OBJECTIVE 2:** Promote design guidelines and controls for public and semi-public land uses which insure compatibility with surrounding areas, enhance the values of the natural landscape and serve as examples of the quality of development desired within the community.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers.
- **OBJECTIVE 3:** Provide parks and permanent green spaces where appropriate in order to meet growing recreational needs, protect floodplains and wildlife habitats, buffer adjacent land uses, and enhance property values.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities, Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks, builders and developers.

COUNTY SERVICES/FACILITIES GOAL 2: RECOGNIZE THE VALUE OF STRONG PUBLIC SCHOOLS TO THE OVERALL QUALITY OF LIFE WITHIN RENO COUNTY AND SUPPORT THE CONTINUATION OF THE SCHOOLS WITHIN THE COUNTY.

- **OBJECTIVE 1:** Support the continuation of existing school systems within Reno County.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, unified school districts.
- **OBJECTIVE 2:** Support expansion of programs and services from colleges to provide greater opportunities for continued education and job training for the residents of Reno County.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all school districts, economic development organizations.

GOAL FOR LAND USE

LAND USE GOAL 1: PROVIDE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE ORDERLY AND EFFICIENT DEVELOPMENT OF LAND WHICH WILL ACHIEVE A FISCALLY SOUND AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SAFE COUNTY, WHILE MAXIMIZING COMPATIBILITY AMONG LAND USES.

- **OBJECTIVE 1:** Ensure that future development occurs in a timely fashion and is adequately served by roads and other public facilities and services.
TIME FRAME: On-going
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers.

- OBJECTIVE 2: Protect the fiscal position of Reno County by ensuring that future development occurs in a cost-effective manner.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.

- OBJECTIVE 3: Minimize land use incompatibilities and ensure that adjacent developments are comparable in density and quality, thereby providing for a smooth transition between land uses.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.

- OBJECTIVE 4: Coordinate future development with the physical environment, placing a premium upon developing in harmony with existing natural features.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, realty companies, lenders, builders and developers.

- OBJECTIVE 5: Discourage new strip commercial development that is not promoted in a unified, consistent manner. Individual lot developments for single purposes that fail to coordinate with adjoining property development should be discouraged.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.

- OBJECTIVE 6: Provide regulatory programs that encourage and reward innovative site planning which reduces costs to the public.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.

- OBJECTIVE 7: Plan for the timely annexation of developed areas adjacent to the existing cities and work toward annexing properties prior to actual development. This will help assure development that is consistent with city standards and will enhance overall property values.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County, all cities.

- OBJECTIVE 8: Discuss the advisability of county-wide zoning to manage future growth in all areas of Reno County.
TIME FRAME: On-going.
RESPONSIBLE PARTIES: Reno County.

Table 6: Implementation Schedule

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS	ACTION	SHORT-TERM	MID-TERM	LONG-TERM
SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT				
Continue to use and support local Economic Development resources	Policy			•
Promote local cities’ housing program applications	Policy			•
Review building code programs and/or a minimum property standards code based on need	Policy		•	
Promote business and industrial development consistent with the overall quality of life within Reno County	Policy			•
Assist cities with the extension of infrastructure to new developments where possible	Capital			•
Promote local entrepreneurship efforts	Policy			•
TRANSPORTATION				
Continue to evaluate road improvement policies identified in this plan	Policy			•
Define a policy for a future bicycle/pedestrian network	Policy		•	
Encourage the creation of a “Bicycle Transportation Plan”	Policy			•
Define a policy for public access to the rivers	Policy	•		
Promote good communication with township officials on road maintenance issues	Policy			•
Create a “Township Maintenance Plan” for prioritizing joint road projects	Policy		•	
Evaluate the County’s low-volume roads for potential closure	Policy		•	
Establish a Capital Improvement Program	Policy		•	
Evaluate the potential for regional transit programs	Policy			•
Work with cities to annex partial street rights-of-way where feasible	Policy	•		
Consider hiring a transportation engineering company to analyze the existing county road network to identify segments which could be efficiently maintained by the Townships	Policy	•		
Maintain the existing policy of requiring 100 percent surety of all infrastructure costs associated with all new development	Policy	•		
Discourage all new developments where paved roads are proposed as to avoid maintenance issues with the Townships	Policy	•		

IMPLEMENTATION ITEMS	ACTION	SHORT-TERM	MID-TERM	LONG-TERM
PUBLIC FACILITIES, INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES				
Continue to evaluate and support the fire districts to enhance and improve service delivery	Capital			•
Continue to evaluate and support the Reno County Sheriff’s Office to enhance and improve service delivery	Capital			•
Continue to evaluate and support the Emergency Medical Services Department to enhance and improve service delivery	Capital			•
Continue to support the county’s school districts	Policy			•
Evaluate Park and Recreation opportunities	Policy			•
Evaluate infrastructure requirements for rural residential development	Policy		•	
Promote the expansion of internet and telecommunication services	Policy	•		
Create a unified fire district with a fire chief responsible for staffing, equipment needs, and building locations	Policy		•	
Prohibit new sanitary sewer districts within the County	Policy	•		
Transfer existing water districts to the nearest municipality or to a separate board of directors	Policy		•	
Monitor the effectiveness of existing sanitary sewer districts	Policy			•
Consolidate existing water and sewer districts	Policy		•	
Transfer authority over The Highlands’ water and sewer districts to the City	Policy			•
LAND USE				
Continue to evaluate and revise Extra-territorial Jurisdiction areas for Zoning and Subdivision Regulations as needed	Policy	•		
Continue to evaluate Zoning and Subdivision Regulations for effectiveness	Policy			•
Review off-site improvement requirements	Policy		•	
Create an annexation policy with Reno County cities	Policy	•		
Develop guidelines within the Zoning Regulations to address future placement of solar energy systems	Policy	•		
Explore the need for county-wide zoning as it relates to commercial wind and solar energy generation projects	Policy	•		
Consider adopting higher floodplain standards than the minimum requirements	Policy	•		
Consider purchasing properties located in the floodplain or floodway with recurring issues	Policy	•		
Identify high-risk areas that should be free from development	Policy	•		

RESOLUTION 2021- 35

A RESOLUTION REVISING AND UPDATING THE NOVEMBER 2018 EDITION OF THE RENO COUNTY COMPREHENSIVE PLAN BY AMENDING A PORTION OF CHAPTER 7 UNDER THE TITLES OF “RESIDENTIAL LAND USES” AND “OTHER SPECIAL LAND USES” AND A PORTION OF CHAPTER 9 “GOALS FOR HOUSING”, OBJECTIVE #7 AND INCORPORATING BY REFERENCE NEW GUIDELINES

WHEREAS, K.S.A. 12-747 authorizes the Board of County Commissioners to provide for the adoption or amendment of a Comprehensive Plan, and;

WHEREAS, pursuant to K.S.A. 12-747 the Reno County Planning Commission has recommended to the Board of County Commissioners that the Comprehensive Plan of Reno County, 2018 Edition as amended be amended further, and;

WHEREAS, all public notice and public hearing requirements have been satisfied and all other statutory requirements prerequisite to the adoption of the amendments to the Comprehensive Plan have been met, and;

WHEREAS, at its regular agenda meeting on December 14, 2021, the Board of County Commissioners considered the Planning Commission recommendation. The Board of County Commissioners, following review of the same, determined that it would be in the best interest of Reno County to amend Chapter 7 under the titles of Residential Land Uses and Other Special Land Uses, and Chapter 9 under the title Goals for Housing, Objective #7 pertaining to commercial wind energy conversion systems and to adopt and incorporate by reference said amendments based upon the recommendation of the Planning Commission.

WHEREAS, upon conclusion of the Board’s deliberations, Commissioner Hirst moved to approve the Planning Commission’s recommendation to amend Chapters 7 and 9 of the Reno County Comprehensive Plan and to adopt and incorporate by reference the text amendments pertaining thereto found in the Reno County Planner’s Summary Report dated December 8, 2021. Commissioner Friesen seconded the motion. The motion was approved by a 3-0 vote.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS OF RENO COUNTY, KANSAS, that:

1. The November, 2018 Edition of the Reno County Comprehensive Plan and the proposed amendments thereto at Chapters 7 and 9 are hereby adopted, and the same are incorporated herein by reference pursuant to K.S.A. 19-3303.
2. At least one copy of the Reno County Comprehensive Plan, as amended, shall be filed with the County Clerk marked "Official Copy" as Incorporated by Resolution No. 2021-35 and to which there shall be attached a published copy of this Resolution, said copies to be open for inspection and available to the public at all reasonable hours.
- 3.. Any provision of this Resolution which shall be declared invalid shall not affect the validity and authority of any other sections.

4. This Resolution shall be in full force and effect from and after its publication once in the official county newspaper.

APPROVED AND ADOPTED in regular session this 28th day of December 2021.

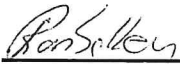
BOARD OF COUNTY COMMISSIONERS
OF RENO COUNTY, KANSAS



Ron Hirst – Chairman



Daniel P. Friesen – Member



Ron Sellers – Member

Attest:



Donna Patton – Reno County Clerk