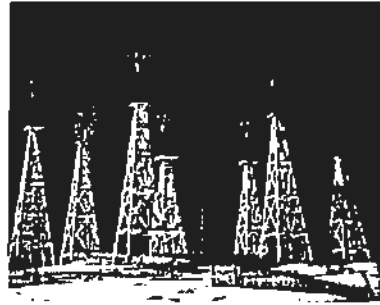
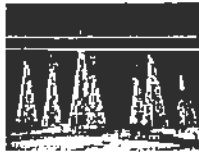


Sioux County



Comprehensive Plan

Sioux County



Comprehensive Plan

Sioux County Planning Commission

David Howell, Chairman

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Emory Prosser

Larry Wickersham

Mike Wickersham

Howard Willey

Sioux County Commissioners

James R. Henderson, Chairman

Harold A. Keener

John "Jack" Geiser

The following persons also contributed their efforts to the development of the plan:

Wendi McCormick, Sioux County Clerk

Adam Edmund, Assistant County Attorney

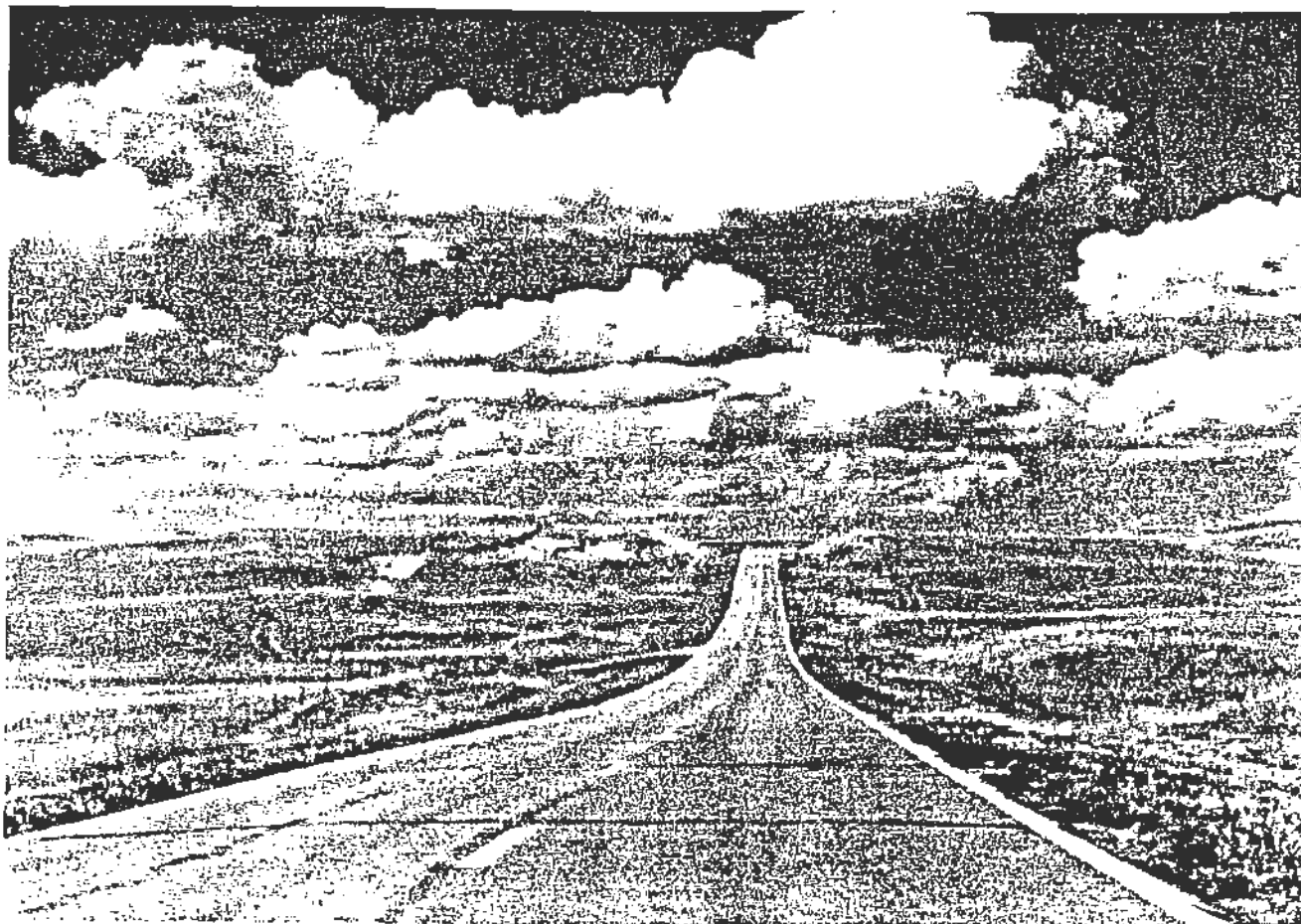
Sioux County Comprehensive Development Plan

written by

Jerrod Haberman

of the

Panhandle Area Development District



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Table 1: Population by Decade, 1930 - 1990.....	11
Table 2: Population Change by Age Group, 1970-90.....	12
Table 3: Population Change by Age Cohort, 1980-90.....	12
Table 4: Male/Female Population, 1970 - 1990.....	13
Table 5: Population by Race, 1970 - 1990.....	13
Table 6: Projected Population, 1990 - 2010.....	14
Table 7: Projected Population by Age Group, 1990 - 2010.....	15
Table 8: Projected Population by Age Cohort, 1990 - 2000.....	15
Table 9: Per Capita Income, 1970 - 1990.....	17
Table 10: Median Family Income, 1970 - 1990.....	17
Table 11: Median Household Income, 1970 - 1990.....	17
Table 12: Poverty Status, 1970 - 1990.....	18
Table 13: Education Attainment, 1970 - 1990.....	18
Table 14: Labor Force Characteristics, 1970 - 1990.....	19
Table 15: Number of Farms, 1982 - 1992.....	20
Table 16: Farming Principle Occupation, 1982 - 1992.....	20
Table 17: Farms Fully Owned, 1982 - 1992.....	20
Table 18: Worked Off Farm 200+ Days, 1982 - 1992.....	20
Table 19: Inflation Adjusted Retail Sales Comparison, 1982 - 1992.....	21
Table 20: Inflation Adjusted Wholesale Trade Comparison, 1982 - 1992.....	22
Table 21: Inflation Adjusted Service Receipts Comparison, 1982 - 1992.....	22
Table 22: Inflation Adjusted Crop Sales Comparison, 1982 - 1992.....	22
Table 23: Inflation Adjusted Livestock Sales Comparison, 1982 - 1992.....	22
Table 24: Value of Owner-Occupied Homes.....	25
Table 25: Contract Rent.....	25
Table 26: Homeowners by Age.....	26
Table 27: Renters by Age.....	26
Table 28: Sioux County School Enrollment.....	30
Table 29: Sioux County Land Use.....	32
Table 30: Future Land Use Projection.....	33

L
I
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G
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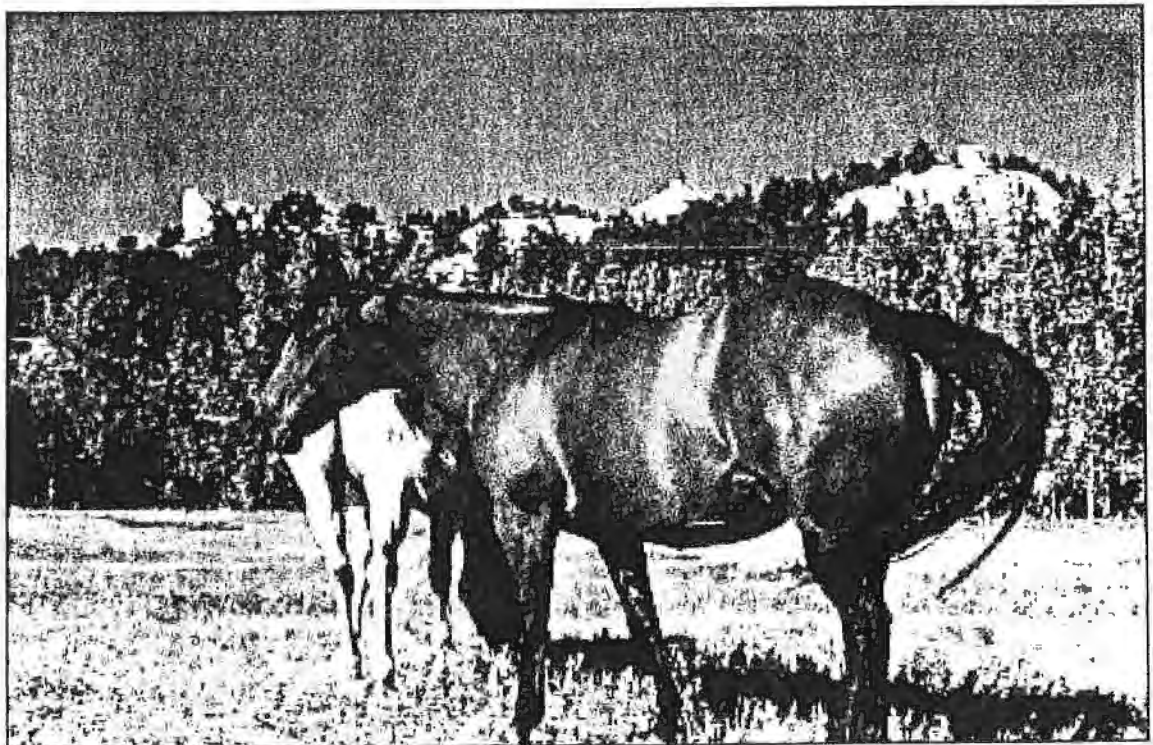
Map 1: General Vicinity of Sioux County	3
Map 2: Soil Association Map	5
Map 3: Groundwater Regions	7
Map 4: Road Classifications	28b
Map 5: Sioux County Future Land Use	32b

The purpose of completing a comprehensive plan is to provide basic guidelines and policies for use by the County board and planning commission. These policies should be followed when making decisions that effect existing and/or future uses of land and resources within the county. The plan addresses all facets of development: residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, open space, etc. It indicates what type and to what extent development should occur in a specific area of the county.

The comprehensive plan is intended to provide a general analysis of the condition of Sioux County and the needs of its residents. Past trends and future projections are studied in various areas to determine different deficiencies that need to be addressed or assets and opportunities that the County should build upon. This information is helpful in establishing priorities and setting goals.

Preparation of a comprehensive plan prior to adoption of a zoning ordinance is a sensible planning practice. The plan establishes county policies that the zoning ordinance will uphold. The plan may indicate that a particular area of the county is a prime area for a certain activity, the zoning ordinance then encourages that activity and minimizes conflicting uses. This protects the rights and best interest of the residents of Sioux County.

The planning process does not end with the completion of this document. Planning is an on-going process that will promote orderly growth and development through policies established in this plan.



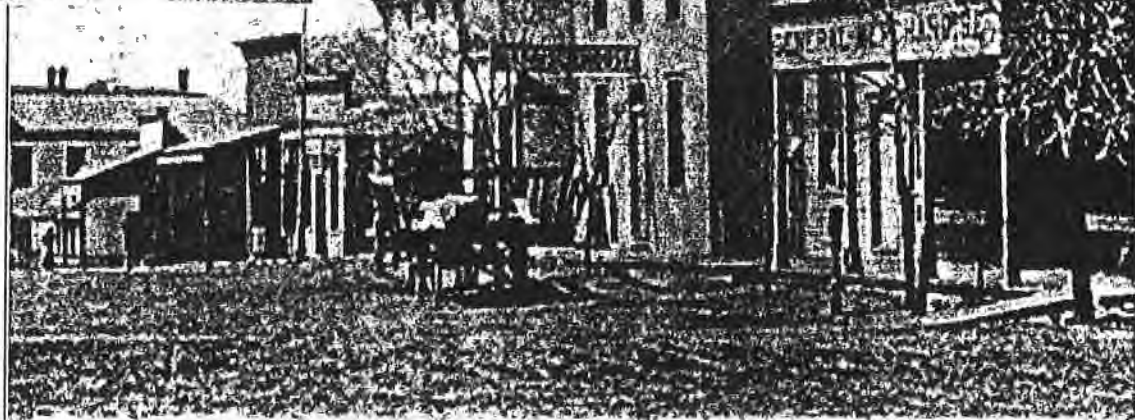
Historical Development of Sioux County

The first Anglo-Americans to enter Sioux County were fur traders and trappers in the 1830's. White settlement in this area, however, did not occur until the establishment of Fort Robinson in 1874. Soon after the establishment of Fort Robinson, cattle ranches such as the Warbonnet Ranch were started in the area. With the end of the Indian Wars came the arrival of the homesteaders. The first homesteaders came in 1880 and by 1885 the county was officially established.

The first railroad in the county crossed the northern section of the county in 1886. One of the construction camps along the railroad eventually became Harrison, the county seat. Despite these accomplishments, large scale settlement in this semi-arid climate did not occur until the passage of the Kinkaid Act of 1904. The Kinkaid Act allowed homesteaders 640

acres of land. This resulted in a wave of settlement that poured into the county. The influx of population was short lived, though, as a severe drought which lasted several years hit the area in 1910. The drought resulted in a steady decline of the counties population which has continued to the present day.

Today, cattle ranching is the predominate occupation in the county. Nearly 90% of the total land area in the county is in native grasses which are used for grazing or hay. Some irrigated farming does occur in the southwestern sections of the county where corn, sugarbeets, dry beans and alfalfa are grown. Some winter wheat and hay are grown in the dryland areas of the county but lack of seasonal rainfall limits production in these areas.



Introduction

The relationship of the natural environment to land use and future development is an important factor to consider while making decisions concerning potential uses of the land. As an understanding has grown about the complexity of relationships between human settlements and the natural environment, conflicts between social and economic forces and the capability of the environment to support development have become more apparent.

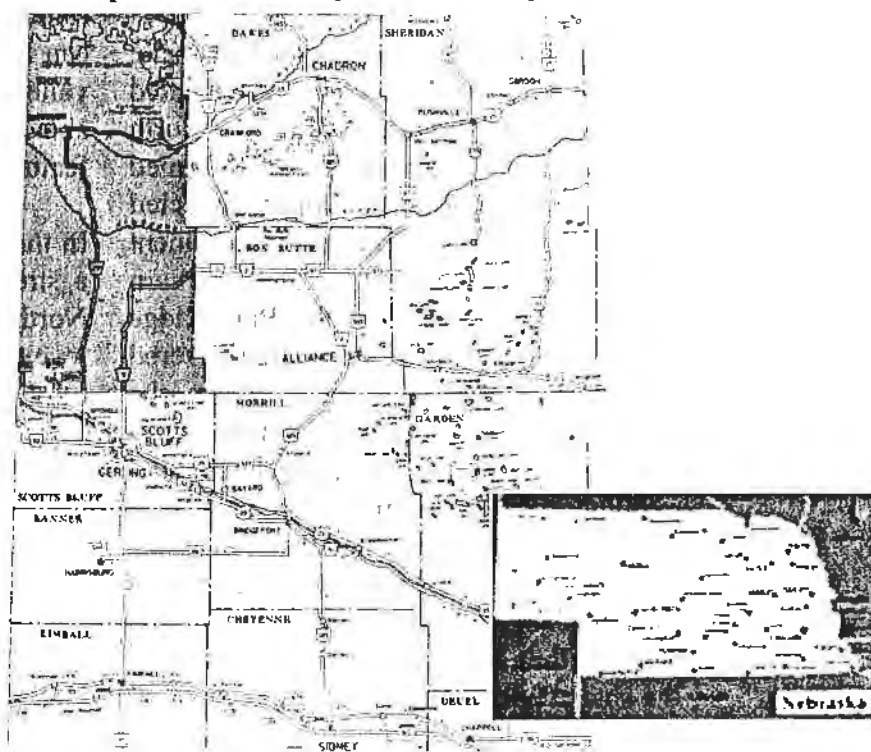
Historical development trends nation-wide have located urban development along river corridors where the most fertile soils are generally found. The more recent development trends of an affluent society have placed additional demands upon the natural environment. This has resulted in pressure to allow more intensive uses of the land within, or adjacent to, natural and scenic areas. As a preliminary step in addressing these conflicts and to provide guidance for future decision making, this section of the plan provides a brief overview of the County's natural environment.

Geographic Location

Sioux County is located in the northwestern corner of Nebraska in what is generally referred to as the Panhandle. It is bordered by Dawes and Box Butte counties to the east, Scotts Bluff county to the south, Wyoming to the west and South Dakota to the north. The county is rectangular in shape extending approximately 31 miles east to west and 68 miles north to south. The county encompasses approximately 1,322,880 acres or 2,067 square miles.

Denver, the nearest large metropolitan area, is located approximately 228 miles southwest of Harrison. Lincoln and Omaha are 459 and 515 miles to the east, respectively. Cheyenne is located approximately 130 miles to the southwest and Rapid City approximately 146 miles to the north. (Distances by blacktop roads)

Map 1: General Vicinity of Sioux County



Physiography

Sioux County is in the High Plains section of the Great Plains physiographic province. Sioux County probably has the most diverse physiography in the entire state as there are seven general types of land forms in the county. The county's average elevation is 4,500 feet above sea level but varies from 5,255 feet near the state line northwest of Harrison to 3,560 feet where Hat Creek enters South Dakota.

The north end of the county below the Pine Ridge is dominated by shale plains and badlands. The area is a broad rolling plain largely consisting of weathered material from Cretaceous and Tertiary age shales and siltstones. Slopes range from nearly level to very steep. A considerable amount of seasonable precipitation leaves the area as runoff due to the low permeability of the soils. This runoff has left the area dissected by many entrenched drainage ways and badlands. This area makes up 18 percent of the county.

Two small areas of footslopes that make up three percent of the county are located below the Pine Ridge and above the North Platte terrace. These areas were formed mainly by long smooth slopes dissected by drainage ways. The most prominent physiographic feature in the northern section of the county is the Pine Ridge feature. This area of steep, tree-covered hills and escarpments runs across the county in a northwest to southeasterly direction. The area is characterized by extremely rough terrain, sheer rock outcroppings, and high relief that can range up to 600 feet. The tertiary sandstones in the area are the source of many of the streams that flow north and east through the shale and badlands.

In the central part of the county lies an area of rugged escarpments, hills, and steep sided slopes that make up about 14 percent of the county. These physiographic features were formed by the steep entrenchment of the Niobrara River and its tributaries. The area is largely made up of eroded material from tertiary sandstone and has outcrops of sandstone at the surface in many places.

The dominate physiographic feature from the Pine Ridge south to the North Platte Terrace is the mixed sandy and silty eroded tableland. This feature makes up about 48 percent of the county and consists of eroded remnants of the ancient high plains. Slopes range from nearly level to steep slopes where the underlying tertiary sandstone bedrock is at or near the surface.

In the west central and southeast corners of the county lies areas of rolling and hilly sand dunes. The tops of the highest dunes can be between 50 to 200 feet above the valley floor. The dunes are highly permeable resulting in no surface runoff. This feature makes up 11 percent of the county.

In the southwest corner of the county lies a stream terrace that was formed by the North Platte River. The area is mainly level to gently sloping and contains most of the irrigated farmland in the county. This area makes up 3 percent of the county.

The remaining three percent of the county is in stream valleys. The principal valleys where these are located are the Niobrara and White Rivers and the Whistle, Sheep, Hat, and Indian Creeks.

Soils

The soils in the north end of the county below the Pine Ridge were formed in shales and siltstone bedrock. These soils are mainly suited for rangeland with a few areas used for growing hay and wheat. Water erosion and blowing soil are hazards to these soils.

The major soils on the Pine Ridge and Niobrara breaks were formed in material that weathered from sandstone bedrock. These soils are loamy and sandy and are suited to use as rangeland as they are generally too shallow and too steep for cultivation. The soils in the sandhills and on dunes in the river valleys were formed in eolian sand. They are suited to use as rangeland. A main hazard to these soils is from blowing soil. In the valley foot slopes, uplands, and small stream terraces there are deep, well drained loamy and silty soils. The more gently sloping soils are suited to cultivation while the steeper soils are more suited to rangeland. Water and wind erosion present the greatest hazards to these soils.

The soils on the North Platte terrace in the southwestern corner of the county consist of sandy, silty, and loamy soils. The silty and loamy soils will raise good yields of cultivated crops. The sandy soils, however, are best used as rangeland.

The loamy and silty soils in the county that are gently sloping to nearly level are suited to growing irrigated and dryland crops. Major hazards to these soils are water and wind erosion.

There are some soils of lesser extent on bottomlands that were formed in alluvium. These soils are silty, loamy, clayey and sandy. Most of these soils are best suited to use as rangeland and hay. A few of the soils are suited to either dryland farming or irrigated crops. Wetness caused by a seasonal high water table is a limitation. Some soils are affected by saline-alkali characteristics. Flooding and soil blowing are the main hazards to these soils.

Map 2: Soil Association Map

- Pierre - Samsil
- Bridgeport - Keith
- Rough Broken Land
- Keith - Rosebud
- Valentine - Dundy
- Anselmo - Keith
- Mitchell - Tripp



Geology

Sioux County has undergone significant regional uplift over the last five million years. During this period erosion has greatly exceeded deposition and has been the major factor influencing evolution of the landscape of Sioux County.

The majority of the strata exposed in Sioux County are part of an extensive sequence of Tertiary age non-marine deposits extending eastward from uplifts in Wyoming. The oldest exposed rocks at the surface in the county belong to the late Cretaceous age Pierre Shale. These make up the bedrock in northernmost Sioux County and were deposited in the extensive sea that covered much of the interior of North America during the Cretaceous Period.

The contact between the Pierre Shale and overlying Tertiary age Chadron Formation of the White River Group represent over 40 million years of time during which uplift, erosion, and intense weathering occurred. The Chadron, Oligocene in age, is up to 200 feet thick in the subsurface. It consists of sandstone with local conglomerates and siltstone deposited in an ancient valley that extends eastward across the northern Sioux County.

Overlying these deposits in other parts of the county, but exposed only along the foot of the Pine Ridge, the Chadron consists of bentonitic greenish-gray and gray claystones and mudstones. The Brule Formation, also Oligocene in age, overlies the Chadron and consists of brown to greenish-gray mudstones and siltstones up to 800 feet thick. Exposure of the Brule occur all along the Pine Ridge, along the North Platte Valley, and the Niobrara River. The Arikaree Group, late Oligocene to early Miocene, overlies the Brule Formation throughout the central part of the county. Both the Arikaree and White River groups contain large amounts of volcanically derived detritus. The Oglala Group, middle to late Miocene, is exposed in the Niobrara River Valley and occurs as isolated patches in the southern parts of the county. The Oglala rocks are a complex set of ancient valley fills composed mostly of materials derived from the mountains to the west although discrete beds of volcanic ash are present.

Isolated alluvial deposits of Pliocene and Quaternary age occur in the southwest corner and along the major streams of the county. Sand dunes cover part of south central Sioux County and are probably less than 5,000 years old.

Climate

Sioux County has a semiarid climate as a result of its location near the center of a large continent and effects caused several features of relief. The Rocky Mountains and the Black Hills significantly effect climatic conditions experienced in the county by blocking and redirecting wind patterns and/ or precipitation.

Sioux County experiences extreme variances in temperature during the year. In winter, periods of cold temperatures alternate with milder intervals that often occur as a result of tepid downslope winds. The average temperature in winter is 24 degrees (Fahrenheit) with the average daily low being 12 degrees. The lowest temperature on record occurred in Harrison on January 19, 1963 when the temperature dipped to 33 degrees below zero.

The summer, conversely, is warm with periods of very hot weather. The relatively low humidity, however, makes the periods of hot weather more comfortable than in the eastern sections of the state. The average temperature in the summer is 67 degrees with the average daily high being 82 degrees. The highest recorded temperature in the county occurred on July 12, 1954 in Harrison when the mercury rose to 105 degrees.

Being sheltered by the Rockies, the total annual precipitation is only 17.2 inches. Most of the precipitation (13 inches) falls as rainfall between April and September. The area is susceptible to severe droughts. Approximately two out of every ten years brings less than 10 inches of precipitation between April and September. Periods of heavy rainfall also occur as thunderstorms are experienced about 44 days each year. Occasionally these thunderstorms can be severe and accompanied by tornadoes. Hailstorms tend to occur during the warmer periods of the year and can damage or even destroy crops in the area.

Snowfall in the area is frequent as an average of 22 days each year have at least one inch of snow cover on the ground. The number of such days varies considerably from year to year and the snow cover usually disappears during the milder winter periods. Blizzards with high winds and drifting snow can hit the area at times. The overall average seasonal snowfall in the area accumulates to 64 inches.

Water Resources

The amount of surface and groundwater supplies in Sioux County vary considerably throughout the county. The county has six major streams with the Niobrara River, White River, Whistle Creek being perennial streams and Indian Creek and Hat Creek being intermittent streams that flow only in the spring and after heavy summer rains. The area north of the Pine Ridge has very little groundwater. Water in the northern areas of the county is supplied by a large network of pipelines supplied from the Arikree group and fractures in the Brule formation in the Pine Ridge area. Surface water is also taken from several small streams that emanate from the base of the Pine Ridge. This water is primarily used for flood-irrigation of hay meadows.

The major groundwater source south of the Pine Ridge is the Arikaree group. An area of thick saturation is present and is greatest around Harrison where wells have the potential to yield several hundred gallons per minute. The yield of this formation tend to decrease southward.

Irrigation wells have been developed in the central part of the county in the Niobrara River Valley. In the western part of this valley where the wells dip into the sandy alluvium and the underlying Arkaree group, wells can yield up to 750 gallons per minute. In the eastern end of the valley where wells penetrate into the Brule formation, yields are

also good. The Niobrara River is also used to divert water to several small canals for flood irrigation purposes.

In the southwestern area of the county, irrigation wells have been developed in the Dutch Flats area. These wells have high yields as they lie in an alluvial sand and gravel terrace of the North Platte River. Water for irrigation in the Dutch flats area is also taken from the surface water of the North Platte River via the Interstate Canal.

Scattered irrigation development has also occurred in the southeastern section of the county. The source of the water in these area of the county comes from a small area of Oglala formation.

Wellhead Protection

Wellhead protection areas should be determined and zoned accordingly to maintain a safe source of drinking water for the county. Development that could possibly contaminate well fields should be prohibited from locating near these areas. reventing contamination is especially important since removal of contaminants would be very costly.

Flood Plains

Sioux County has not been mapped for flood plains.

Map 3: Groundwater Regions

Pierre Shall Hills in the north, Chadron clay and Brule Siltstone in the south. Bedrock at or near the surface; generally unfavorable for shallow wells except where fractured.

Northern Tablelands and River Valley lowlands. Moderate to large supplies (above 500 gpm) available from sandstones and coarse textured valley alluvium.

Water lift over 200 feet.

Includes Southern Tablelands and high terraces bordering major streams. Small to moderate supplies (below 500 gpm) available from sand stones and



Forested Lands

The largest area of forested land in Sioux County is located along the slopes and canyons in the Pine Ridge area. Ponderosa pine is the most prevalent species in this area. Approximately 85% (175,000 acres) of the forestland in the Pine Ridge is under non-industrial private ownership. The remaining 15% (20,000 acres) is government owned.

Before Anglo-Americans settled into this region, the forestland of Sioux County was more savannah-like due to natural and Native American-caused fires. Old growth stands of ponderosa pine were scattered with native grass predominating. Hardwood forests consisting of American elm, hackberry, boxelder, and green ash existed only in drainage bottoms. Due to the many fires, quaking aspen was very prevalent. The periodic fires, however, were considerably reduced with the arrival of white settlers. Consequently, ponderosa pine forests began to expand while quaking aspen disappeared, forming the present day forests.

Timber harvesting activities in Sioux County have been limited as compared to other areas of the Pine Ridge. The extreme topography and lower site productivity deter extensive timber harvesting. Ridgetops and south slopes have too harsh an environment to produce merchantable stands of pockets of gently rolling topography. Many areas are practically inaccessible due to steep, heavily dissected slopes. The cost of logging and the potential for soil erosion increases in these areas.

Much of the pine forestland in Sioux County is unmanaged. Timber stand improvement activities such as precommercial or commercial thinning have not been practiced. Due to this lack of management, most of the pine stands are overstocked and are not growing at their full potential. A unique aspect of ponderosa pine is that it offers opportunities to grow both timber and grass on the same acre. Unmanaged pine stands shade out desirable forage resulting in limited livestock grazing potential.

Forest fires are a serious threat to the unmanaged Sioux County pine forests. Due to the lack of management, forest fuels have built up to dangerously high levels.

The hardwood riparian forests on private land in Sioux County are generally in poor condition.

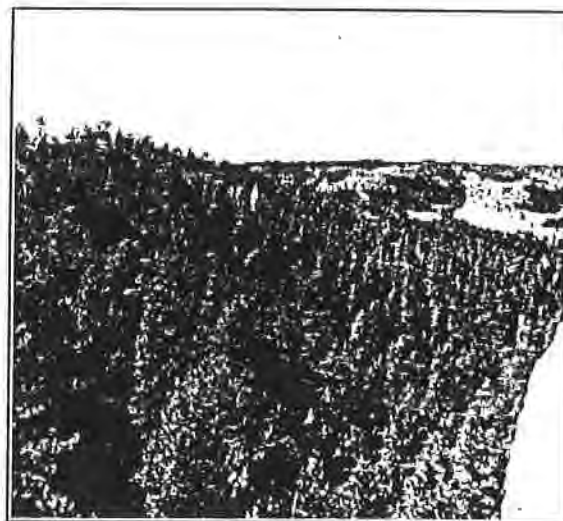
This is primarily due to excessive overgrazing by cattle, whereby all understory shrubs and hardwood tree reproduction is destroyed. Livestock grazing in these areas needs to be controlled if they are to recover.

Riparian woodland along tributary streams of the North Platte River are in poor condition or non-existent due to heavy farming pressure of gravity irrigated land. Riparian woodland has been removed for more crop production which results in accelerated erosion, direct entry of sediment and farm chemicals, and degradation of wildlife habitat. The streams should have an adequate buffer strip on each bank.

Windbreaks

Windbreaks are an important feature in protecting farm and ranch operations. Windbreaks can reduce calf mortality rates, reduce livestock feeding costs, prevent access roads from drifting shut and they reduce soil erosion, while increasing crop productivity and irrigation efficiency.

Despite the importance of the windbreaks, Sioux County lacks an adequate supply of windbreaks. Most of the existing farmstead windbreaks consist of two to three rows of Siberian Elm with some farms having evergreen rows. Many of the Siberian Elm trees are dead or dying. This creates a problem as many landowners cut down their dead Siberian Elm trees. These trees should remain standing because they still serve their purpose as a windbreak.

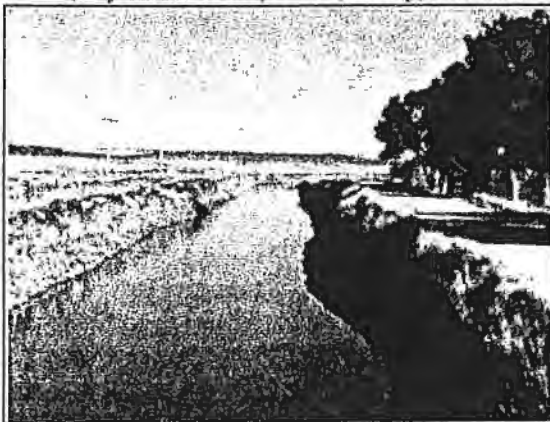


Prime Farmland

Preserving prime farmland for the exclusive purpose of agricultural use is important because these soils produce the highest yields with minimal inputs of energy and economic resources and farming them results in the least damage to the environment.

About 242,300 acres, or about 18 percent, of the county has the potential to be prime farmland. Due to the relatively dry climate in Sioux County, only land that is irrigated and meets the soil requirements will be classed as prime farmland.

About 47,000 acres of land is irrigated and used for crop production in Sioux County. Scattered areas of this land are found throughout the county, but most are in the southwestern part. The crops grown on this land are mainly corn, sugar beets, alfalfa, dry edible beans, wheat, barley, and oats.



Vegetation

Sioux County is located in short-grass country. The only native trees in the county are ponderosa pine, cottonwood, boxelder, willow, juniper, ash and stunted pine.

Wildlife

Sioux County has the necessary food, water, and shelter suitable to a large variety of wildlife. Some of the more common types of wildlife in the county include antelope, deer, elk, rabbit, fox, prairie dogs, pheasants, grouse, turkey, ducks, and geese. Trout are also common, especially in the spring fed streams.



Planning Issues

- * Future development policy for the County should encourage in-filling and renewal to minimize the conversion of prime farmland to more intense land uses.
- * Future development in flood prone areas should be avoided.
- * Sioux County needs to add additional windbreaks.
- * Many of the pine forests in the county need to be thinned and better managed.
- * Development near well fields should be prohibited.
- * Sioux County provides good hunting potential for deer, antelope, and turkey. Many of the spring-fed, cold water streams provide good trout fishing.
- * The county's unique scenery and geological formations provide good potential for tourism.
- * The county's semi-arid climate and moderate winters provide an opportunity to attract

Introduction

The dynamics of population change is one of the most important variables to consider in the Comprehensive planning process. The county's physical environment has, and will continue to be, developed or preserved to meet the demands of a changing population. Growth or decline in total population, as well as structural changes within the population, can have a profound impact on future uses of the land and the provision of necessary public services and infrastructure.

Change in the total population is measured in two ways. The first of these is called natural change, or the number of births versus the number of deaths experienced. The second is net migration, or the number of persons moving into the area versus the number leaving the area. Both of these factors have had a tremendous influence on population change in Sioux County.

Table 1: Population by Decade, 1930 - 1990

Year	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
Population	4,667	4,001	3,124	2,575	2,034	1,845	1,549



Figure 1: Population Change by Decade, 1930 - 1990

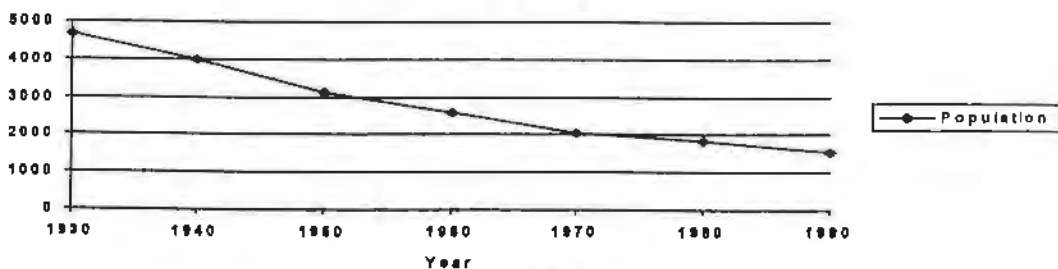
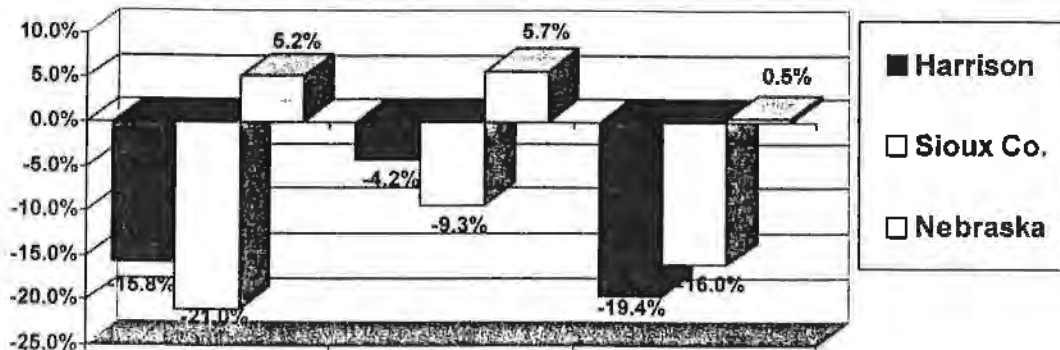


Figure 2: Population Change by Decade, 1960 - 1990



Historic Population Change

Sioux County has experienced a significant decline in population over the past sixty years. The County's 1990 population was only one-third of the 1930 total. Factors contributing to these substantial declines include the health of the local economy, changes in social structure, migration, and natural change.

In general terms it can be stated that the economies of this rural-oriented county have not performed at a level that can sustain population growth. Since 1930, the county has experienced continual population loss. Several factors have influenced this, including a national trend of urbanization, agricultural mechanization, the need for farm consolidation, or larger farm operations to produce an adequate income; and a lack of industrial diversification which resulted in fewer employment opportunities, especially for young adults.

Although the population in Sioux County has been decreasing, that does not mean people are not moving into the county. According to the 1990 census, 339 people living in Sioux County in 1990 lived in a different county in 1985.

Population Composition

An important consideration in planning for the future is the distribution of the population by age and gender. Trends and projections based upon the age and gender of the population can assist in identifying future needs in areas such as employment, housing, education, and recreation. To evaluate changes in age group structure the county's population was divided into five age group categories as follows: children (0-4), school age (5-17), young adult (18-29), middle age (30-64), and retirement (65 and over).

From 1980 to 1990, the most significant change among age groups occurred in the three 0 to 29 year old age groups. During this time period, the county's young adult population decreased by 80.1%. Much of this decrease can be attributed to the young adults leaving to go to college or to find more lucrative employment elsewhere. During the

same time period, the percentage of children decreased by 35.0% and the number of school age children decreased by 24.8%. The decrease in people between the ages of 0 to 17 can be directly attributed to the large number of people in child bearing age leaving the county and the movement of the "baby boom" generation into older age groups.

The two older age groups remained more steady than the two younger age groups. The 30-64 age group decreased by only 6.3% from 1980 to 1990 while the 65 and over age group declined by just 1.2%. The stability of the older age groups is likely due to these persons being more established in the existing industries, especially agriculture. The stability in the retirement age population can be attributed to the upper end of the middle age group shifting into retirement age.

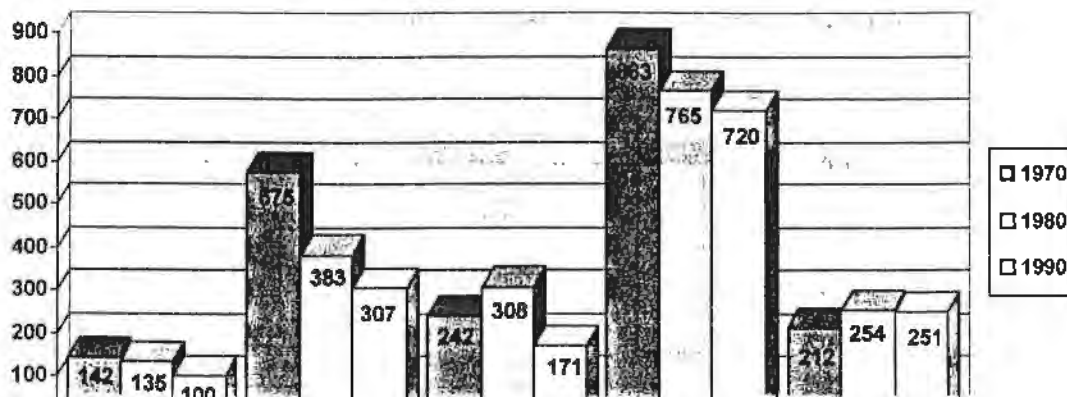
Table 2: Population Change by Age Group, 1970 - 1990

Age Group	1970 Population	1980 Population	1990 Population	70-90 Change
0-4	142	135	100	-42
5-9	183	120	110	-73
10-14	248	144	133	-115
15-19	194	174	97	-97
20-24	92	126	47	-45
25-29	100	127	91	-9
30-34	101	114	111	+10
35-39	132	110	123	-9
40-44	118	102	97	-21
45-49	130	125	89	-41
50-54	127	117	111	-16
55-59	126	95	107	-19
60-64	129	102	82	-47
65-69	78	100	70	-8
70-74	59	72	70	+11
75-79	39	50	53	+14
80-84	18	23	32	+14
85+	18	9	26	+8
TOTAL	2,034	1,845	1,549	-485

Table 3: population Change by Age Cohort, 1980 - 1990

1980 Age	1990 Age	1980 Population	1990 Population	Change
	0-4	-	100	+100
	5-9	-	110	+110
0-4	10-14	135	133	-2
5-9	15-19	120	97	-23
10-14	20-24	144	47	-97
15-19	25-29	174	91	-83
20-24	30-34	126	111	-15
25-29	35-39	127	123	-4
30-34	40-44	114	97	-17
35-39	45-49	110	89	-21
40-44	50-54	102	111	+9
45-49	55-59	125	107	-18
50-54	60-64	117	82	-35
55-59	65-69	95	70	-25
60-64	70-74	102	70	-32
65-69	75-79	100	53	-47
70-74	80-84	72	32	-40
75+	85+	82	26	-56
TOTAL	TOTAL	1,845	1,549	-296

Figure 3: Population Age Group, 1970 - 1990



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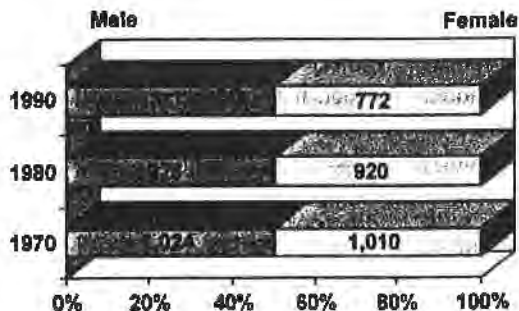
Gender:

The ratio of males to females remained nearly even as there were five more males than females in both 1980 and 1990. There is, however, a larger percentage of males in the rural areas of the county and a higher percentage of females inside of Harrison.

Table 4: Population by Sex, 1970 - 1990

	1970	1980	1990
Male	1,024	925	777
Female	1,010	920	772

Figure 4: Male/Female Population, 1970 - 1990



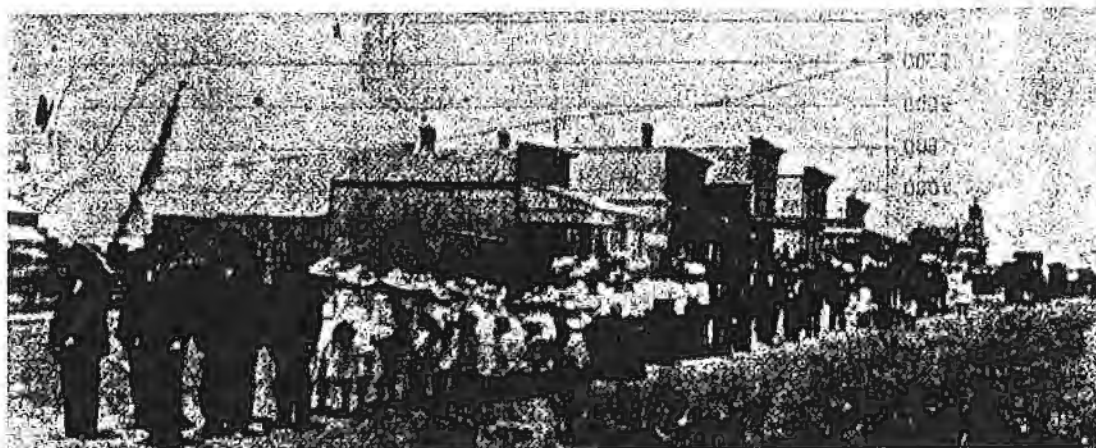
Race:

Minorities account for only 3.1% of the County's population. This is well below the state average of 6.5%. Most of Sioux county's minority population consists of people with Hispanic origins.

Table 5: Population by Race, 1990

Race	1990
White	1,510
Black	0
Native American	1
Asian	2
Other	36
(Hispanic)	44
(Hispanics of White Race)	9

Figure 5: Population by Race, 1990



Memorial Day Parade, early 1900's

Population Projection

Projected change in the population is one of the most important factors to consider while planning for future development. A change in total population and growth or decline within age groups of the population can impact the county in a variety of ways. Potential impacts may include differing needs for public infrastructure and services or making additional land available for new development. The county's ability to generate or attract new development will also be influenced by changes in population.

Population change is measured in terms of natural change and net migration. The effects of natural change are measured by applying birth and survival rates to 5-year age cohorts. For the purposes of this plan, a Cohort-Survival Projection model incorporating birth and survival rates adjusted to reflect what has occurred in Sioux County. Migration rates for 5-year age cohorts were developed by reviewing historical migration trends with consideration given to current economic activity in the county.

By running a natural change projection, or projecting the County's 1990 population forward to the year 2000 with no migration effect, it can be estimated that the County's population could decrease by a total of 47 persons during the decade. When a migration factor is included, the County's total population is projected to decline by 209 persons or 13.5% by the year 2000. In-migration is not projected to occur at a rate high enough to offset projected out-migration. Therefore, migration rates will contribute to the reduction in the population decrease that Sioux County would expect to gain from natural change.

When the projected population for the year 2000 is projected toward the year 2010 with no migration effect, it is estimated that the county's population would decline by 63 persons during the decade. When the migration factor is included, the county's total population is expected to decline by 206 persons or 15.4% between the years 2000 and 2010.

Figure 6: Population Projection, 1990 - 2010

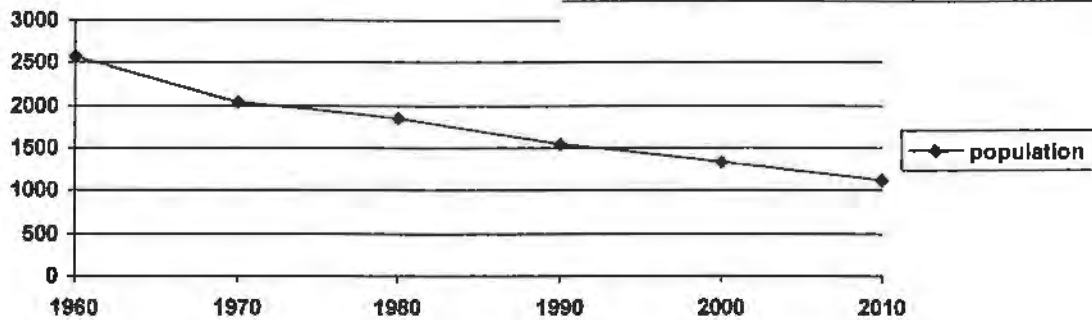


Table 6: Projected Population

Year	1990	1994	2000	2010
Population	1,549	1,619	1,340	1,134



Harrison, 1910

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Projection By Age Group

Examining projected populations by age groups finds that a majority of the projected loss is occurring in the 0 to 19 and 20 to 39 year old age groups. The number of 0 to 19 year olds is expected to decline by 25.1% while the number of 20 to 39 year olds is expected to decrease by 36.1%. This can be directly linked to an increase in the number of young adults leaving to go to college or to find more lucrative employment elsewhere. The continued decrease in young adults naturally effects the number of births in the county resulting in a decline in young children.

The number of persons between the ages of 40 and 64, however, is expected to increase by 11.1%. An expected net in-migration is expected to account for some of the gains in this age group. Much of the gains in this age group, though, are the result of a large number of 30 to 39 year olds in 1990 shifting into this age group.



A slight decrease of 7.2% is expected for retirement age persons. Some out-migration of persons looking for retirement housing outside the county will account for some of the loss. However, a large number of persons 70 years old and older in the county in 1990 may likely pass away and account for much of the declines in this age group. Much of the losses in this age group, though, will be offset as persons in the upper end of the middle age group move into retirement age.

Figure 7: Projected Population, 1990 - 2010

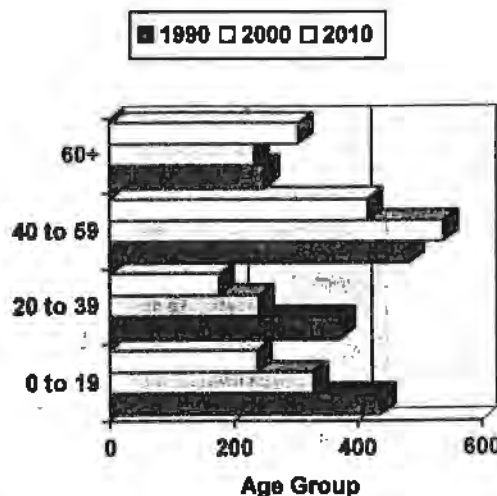


Table 7: Projected Population Change by Age Group, 1990-2010

Age Group	1990 Population	2000 Population	2010 Population	Change
0-4	100	88	55	-45
5-9	110	74	56	-54
10-14	133	100	68	-65
15-19	96	87	58	-38
20-24	47	44	33	-14
25-29	92	51	46	-46
30-34	112	45	42	-70
35-39	123	99	55	-68
40-44	97	127	51	-46
45-49	89	139	112	+23
50-54	111	102	134	+23
55-59	107	81	120	+13
60-64	82	91	84	+2
65-69	69	79	60	-9
70-74	70	55	61	-9
75-79	53	41	51	-2
80-84	32	30	24	-8
85+	26	27	24	-2
TOTAL	1,549	1,340	1,134	-415

Table 8: Projected Population Change by Age Cohort, 1990-2000

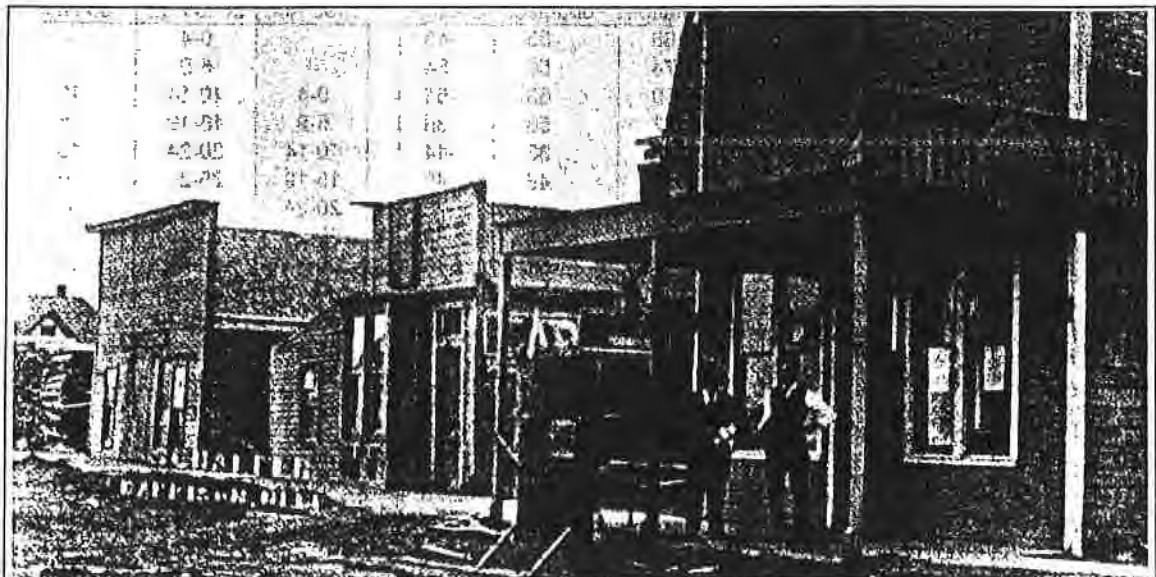
1990 Age	2000 Age	1990 Population	2000 Population	Change
	0-4	-	68	+68
	5-9	-	74	+74
0-4	10-14	100	100	0
5-9	15-19	110	87	-23
10-14	20-24	133	44	-89
15-19	25-29	96	51	-45
20-24	30-34	47	45	-2
25-29	35-39	92	99	+7
30-34	40-44	112	127	+15
35-39	45-49	123	139	+16
40-44	50-54	97	102	+5
45-49	55-59	89	81	-8
50-54	60-64	111	91	-20
55-59	65-69	107	79	-28
60-64	70-74	82	55	-27
65-69	75-79	69	41	-28
70-74	80-84	70	30	-40
75+	85+	111	27	-84
TOTAL	TOTAL	1,549	1,340	-209

Planning Issues

- * The population declines Sioux County has experienced over the past six decades will probably continue. The smaller population base will place a heavier tax burden on the remaining taxpayers to maintain and improve public facilities.
- * The area will continue to see an out-migration of young adults unless new, higher paying employment opportunities are provided.
- * A growing elderly population who require special services may be forced to migrate to communities that offer those services. Distance to medical services will have a significant influence on their decision.



Sioux County residents gather to lay cornerstone of Sioux County Courthouse, July 21, 1930



Unit Hardware and Lumber (Site now location of VFW Hall)



Introduction

The future of a county is directly related to the economic well-being of the primary, or base, industries that employ its residents. The economic base of the county can be composed of a variety of industries that produce a product from raw material, add value to a product or provide a service which can be exported. Base industries may include manufacturing, agriculture, health care, tourism, retail and service industries. The money received from exports by these industries is distributed throughout the county in the form of wages, benefits, taxes, purchased services, etc. and forms the base upon which the local economy is built.

A detailed analysis of the county's base industries is beyond the scope of this plan. However, a general understanding of the health of the county's base industries can be obtained by evaluating trends in income, poverty, employment, unemployment and other factors. This type of analysis can provide useful background information to guide future decisions concerning both public and private investment in community and economic development activities.

Table 10: Median Family Income

	Harrison	Sioux Co.	Nebraska
1970	*	\$6,167	\$8,564
1980	\$15,391	\$15,575	\$19,122
1990	\$19,615	\$22,054	\$31,634

Figure 8: Per Capita Income, 1980-90 *Harrison NA

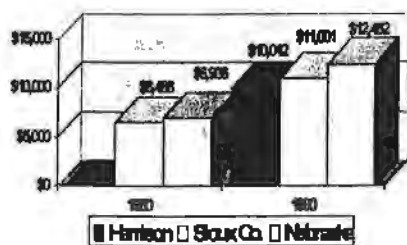
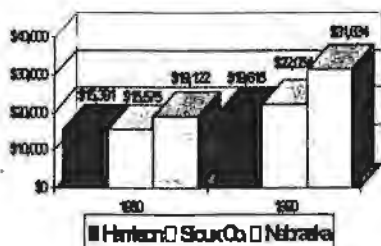


Figure 10: Median Family Income, 1980 - 1990



Income

Income data is generally used to compare the relative economic well-being between areas. Census data indicates that the county's per capita income (total income divided by the county's total population) has risen dramatically since 1970. The county's per capita income rate of change increase from 1970 to 1990 exceeded State-wide increases. However, the disparity in county income compared to state-wide income has increased. In 1980, the county's per capita income was \$752 lower than the State's. By 1990, the difference had grown to \$1,451.

Growth in the county's median family income also lagged behind that of the State. From 1970 to 1990 the county's median family income grew by \$15,887 while the State's grew by \$23,070.

Table 9: Per Capita Income

	Harrison	Sioux Co.	Nebraska
1970	*	\$2,062	\$2,814
1980	*	\$6,488	\$6,936
1990	\$10,042	\$11,001	\$12,452

Table 11: Median Family Income

	Harrison	Sioux Co.	Nebraska
1970	*	*	\$7,426
1980	\$11,319	\$14,174	\$15,925
1990	\$16,587	\$18,810	\$26,016

Figure 9: Per Capita Income as a % of Statewide Income

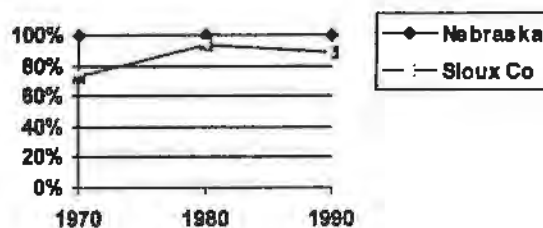
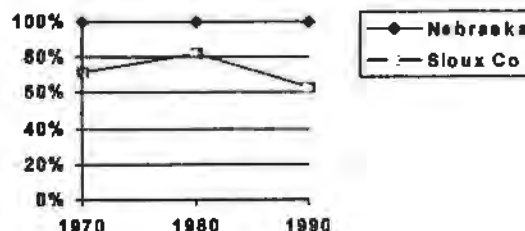


Figure 11: Median Family Income as a % of Statewide Income



Poverty

Changes in poverty rates over time provide insight into the health of the local economy and also indicate the standard of living for people in the community. Poverty rates in Sioux County remain well above state-wide levels. This trend indicates that the community's standard of living is falling well below state-wide levels.

Figure 12: Poverty Rate (Persons), 1980 -1990

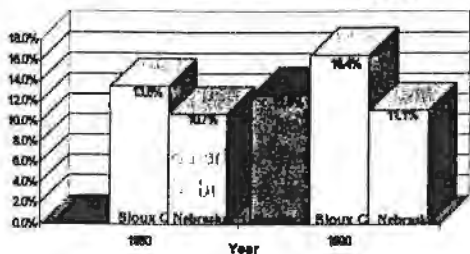


Figure 13: Poverty Status (Families), 1980 -1990

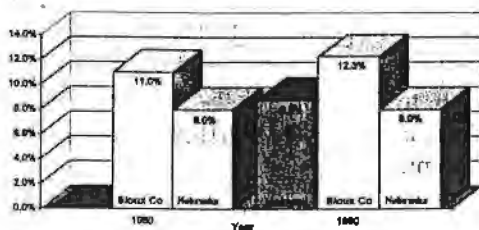


Table 12: Poverty Status, 1970 -1990

	Harrison		Sioux Co		Nebraska	
	Persons	Families	Persons	Families	Persons	Families
1970	-	-	23.6%	22.9%	13.1%	10.1%
1980	-	-	13.5%	11.0%	10.7%	8.0%
1990	12.6%	8.8%	16.4%	12.3%	11.1%	8.0%



Sioux County High School, built 1921

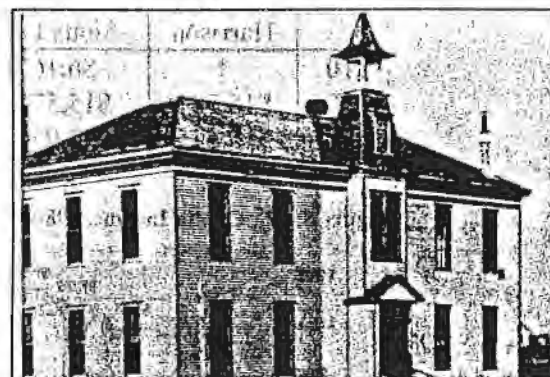
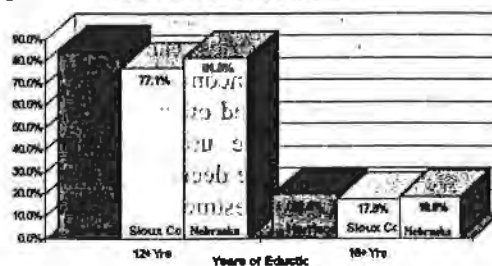
Education

The percentage of the Sioux County population age 25 and above with at least a high school education has increased dramatically since 1970. Despite this improvement, the county is trailing the rate of growth experienced by the State as a whole in education attainment. This can be partially attributed to the lack of professional jobs in the area causing an out-migration of much of the area's educated population.

Table 13: Educational Attainment

	Harrison		Sioux Co		Nebraska	
	12+ Year	16+ Year	12+ Year	16+ Year	12+ Year	16+ Year
1970	-	-	52.6%	8.9%	59.3%	5.7%
1980	-	-	76.9%	10.9%	73.4%	15.9%
1990	84.9%	20.0%	77.1%	17.8%	81.8%	18.9%

Figure 14: Educational Attainment



Sioux County High School, built 1908



Labor Force

The size and composition of the area's labor force is an important factor to consider relative to the county's ability to foster new economic growth. The labor force is defined as all persons age 16 and above who are either employed, unemployed or available for employment. For the purposes of this plan, civilian labor force figures were used which excludes area residents who are on active military duty.

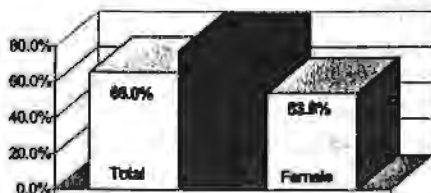
By removing those persons from the total labor force who are over sixteen but not likely to be available for employment on a full-time basis (senior citizens and students), it is estimated that approximately 111 people are available as a potential labor pool above and beyond those that are currently employed. However, not all of these persons will accept full-time employment. It is estimated that an 80% participation rate for men and a 70% participation rate for women is nearing the practical upper limit. The 1990 participation rates in Sioux County for men and women were 78.1% and 53.9%, respectively.

Total labor force participation rates have increased from 1970 to 1990 on all levels because of the increased participation of women in the labor force. This can be explained in part by the shift toward service industries and the need for a second income to improve the standard of living for many families. Should a new industry need a substantial increase in employment, an addition to the work force would need to come from outside the county. This would put additional strain on housing resources.

Table 14: Labor Force Characteristics

Year	Sioux County			Nebraska		
	1970	1980	1990	1970	1980	1990
Population 16+	1,434	1,415	1,183	1,031,435	1,180,393	1,192,803
Labor Force	716	802	780	592,142	744,195	802,139
Unemployed	15	23	25	16,077	27,562	29,326
% Unemployed	2.1	2.9	3.2	2.7	3.7	3.7
Employed	701	779	755	576,065	716,633	772,813
Not in Labor F	718	613	403	427,193	422,511	377,733

Figure 15: Labor Force Participation Rate, 1990



Employment

Evaluating how employment is distributed among, and has changed within, the primary sectors of the economy provides an indication of the overall performance of each sector. This information also indicates the level of economic diversification within the county.

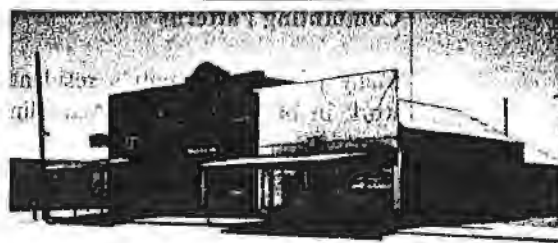
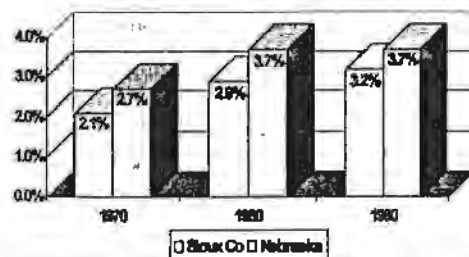
From 1970 to 1980, a period of economic stability and growth nation-wide, Sioux County's total employment grew by 78 employed persons, or an 11.1% increase. A similar, but larger employment gain of 24% was experienced by the State. During the 1980's recession total employment in the County decreased by 3%. Total employment in the State during this same time period increased by 8%. This indicates that employment diversification efforts should be continued in the county.

Unemployment

Changes in unemployment and unemployment rates can be analyzed to discover important trends in a given area. The changes can be used to determine whether or not a need for new sources of employment exists or sufficient new jobs have been created.

Although the unemployment rates of the county increased from 1980 to 1990, it is not a cause of concern as the rates remained low at 3.2%. Underemployment, however, may be a concern given the lower incomes experienced county-wide.

Figure 16: Unemployment Rates, 1970 - 1990



Employment by Industry

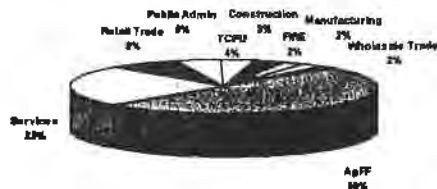
Analyzing employment by industry reveals the level of diversification of an area and identifies which industries the area is most dependent upon. A healthy economy includes a range of industries to help sustain it during periods of difficulty within individual economic sectors.

The economy of Sioux County has always been largely based on a few main industries. Agriculture, as is the case with the rest of the panhandle, was the original and remains a staple industry. Recently, service related industries have established themselves as the second most important industry in the county.

Agricultural industries constitute 50.2% of the county's total employment. This is largest percentage of employment in an individual sector of an economy in the Panhandle. The immense number of county residents working in agriculture makes the economy of the entire county extremely susceptible to an agricultural depression as the entire county's economy is only as stable or consistent as the stability of the agricultural industry.

Service industries (24.5%) solidified itself as the second largest employer in the county. From 1980 to 1990, this sector of the economy grew by 78%. Retail trade remains the third largest industrial sector in the county despite declining 15.7% from 1980 to 1990.

Figure 17: Employment by Industry, 1990



Commuting Patterns

Many of Sioux County's residents commute to work in other counties. According to the 1990 Census, nearly one-third of the county's employed residents worked outside of the county. Sioux County residents spend a total of nearly 350 hours a day driving to and from work.

Employment by Occupation

Employment by occupation figures indicate nearly half of all persons in Sioux County are employed in agriculture. Professional/Management positions are second with 18% of the employment and Services/Sales makes up 14% of the occupations

Many of Sioux County's residents commute to work in other counties. According to the 1990 Census, nearly one third of the county's employed residents work outside of the county. Sioux County residents spend a total of nearly 350 hours a day driving to and from work.

Figure 18: Employment by Occupation



Farm Employment

The number of farms and the number of persons with farming as their principle occupations declined in Sioux County by 10.4% and 16.5%, respectively, from 1982 to 1992. These figures are lower than the decreases experienced statewide, but are greater than the rates experienced in the Panhandle.

Table 15: Number of Farms

	Sioux Co	Panhandle	Nebraska
1982	365	5,453	60,243
1987	333	5,428	60,502
1992	327	4,927	52,923
Change	-10.4%	-9.7%	-12.2%

Table 17: Farms Fully Owned

	Sioux Co	Panhandle	Nebraska
1982	128	2,106	20,840
1987	140	2,302	23,301
1992	136	2,002	21,477
Change	+6.3%	-4.9%	-13.9%

Table 16: Farm as Principal Occupation Table 18: Work off Farm 200+

	Sioux Co	Panhandle	Nebraska
1982	303	4,313	47,549
1987	284	4,051	45,387
1992	253	3,690	39,123
Change	-16.5%	-14.4%	-17.7%

	Sioux Co	Panhandle	Nebraska
1982	52	912	10,764
1987	61	1,191	13,009
1992	54	1,021	11,927
Change	+19%	+120%	+108%

Figure 19: Place of Employment, 1990



Strength of the Economy

As previously mentioned, the local economy is composed of a number of base industries. These industries may include manufacturing, wholesale trade, retail trade, agriculture, services, etc. An understanding of the strength of Sioux County's economy can be obtained by monitoring trends in the employment, sales and number of establishments in each of these sectors.

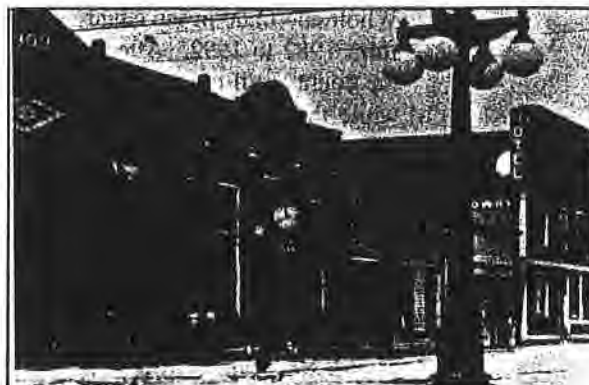
To evaluate the composition and strength of the local economy, change in employment and sales data for each of the five industry sectors listed above were evaluated. Employment data used in this evaluation are not comparable with other employment data used in this report due to differences in the years reported, ie: 1982 & 1987 versus 1980 & 1990 data. In addition, the following analysis uses paid employee data versus total employment.

To present a true picture of the economy during this time period, 1982 sales figures were adjusted forward for inflation to reflect what the identical value of sales would have been in 1992. Gross Domestic Product Implicit Price Deflators were used to make the adjustment.

Retail Trade

Data from the Census of Retail Trade indicate the value of retail sales in Sioux County decreased by 19.3%. During the same time period retail sales statewide increased by 64.7% while Panhandle-wide retail sales increased by 61.3%. To gain a true measure of the impact of change sales need to be adjusted for inflation. When 1982 dollars are adjusted to equal 1992 dollars, the county's retail sales show a decrease of 44.2% from 1982 to 1992. During the same time period, the state's inflation adjusted retail sales increased by 14% and the panhandle's increased 12.1%.

This data may suggest local residents may be spending more money on retail items outside of the county. To present an estimate on the amount of retail dollars that are leaving the county, the portion of Effective Buying Income (approximately 54%) a household typically spends on retail consumer goods is compared to total retail sales. In 1992, the portion of the county's median household EBI spent on retail purchases was estimated at \$8,126. This figure multiplied by



Harrison Businesses, 1920's



Harrison Businesses, 1904

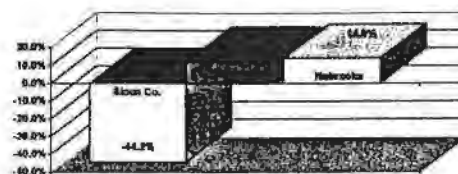
the county's estimated 612 households indicates that retail purchases by Sioux County residents can be estimated at \$4,973,112. When compared to the number of retail sales in 1992 (\$1,975,000) it indicates at least \$2,998,112 left the county.

The large number of retail dollars leaving the county makes it obvious that efforts need to be made in the county to capture local retail sales dollars. Efforts also need to be made to capture retail sales from non-residents. Expanding the tourism industry may be one solution.

Table 19: Inflation Adjusted Retail Sales, 1982 - 1992

Place	Net Gain/Loss	% Gain/Loss
Sioux County	-1,560,915	-44.2%
Panhandle	+84,392,245	+12.1%
Nebraska	+1,413,346,510	+14.0%

Figure 20: Inflation Adjusted Retail Sales, 1982 - 1992



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Wholesale Trade

Wholesale trade in the county increased by 75.9% from 1982 to 1992. After adjusting for inflation, the county still experienced an increase of 21.7% while the Panhandle saw a decrease of 46% after inflation. The growth the county experienced in wholesale trade over the decade, however, did not keep pace with the growth experienced statewide (29.2%).

Figure 21: Inflation Adjusted Wholesale Trade

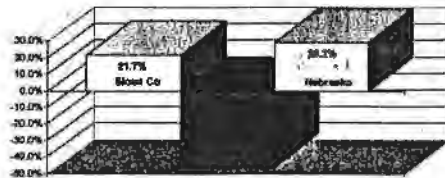


Table 20: Inflation Adjusted Wholesale Trade, 1982 - 1992

Place	Net Gain/Loss	% Gain/Loss
Sioux County	+2,680,810	+21.7%
Panhandle	-264,427,495	-46.0%
Nebraska	+7,332,791,240	+29.2%

Manufacturing

Manufacturing shipment values for Sioux County are not published due to disclosure rules.

Services

Sioux County performed extremely well in the service sector from 1982 to 1992. Service industry receipts increased by 231.4% from 1982 to 1992 and after adjusting for inflation the increase was 129.4%. This increase was even above the state and regional increases of 80.9% and 27.5%, respectively.

Figure 22: Inflation Adjusted Service Receipts, 1982 - 1992

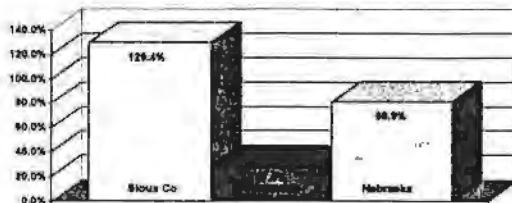


Table 21: Inflation Adjusted Service Receipts, 1982 - 1992

Place	Net Gain/Loss	% Gain/Loss
Sioux County	+760,885	+129.4%
Panhandle	+33,357,635	+27.5%
Nebraska	+2,606,545,295	+80.9%

Agriculture

Agriculture statistics for this study have been broken down into two categories; crop sales and livestock sales. Although the entire state and region experienced a steep reduction in its inflation adjusted crop sales from 1982 to 1992, Sioux County suffered a much larger reduction. Sioux County's crop sales decreased by 9.9% over this time period and the decrease measured 37.6% after adjusting for inflation.

Livestock sales, however, increased dramatically in Sioux County from 1982 to 1992. Sioux County's livestock sales increased by 107% from 1982 to 1992, and after adjusting for inflation the county's livestock sales still increased greatly by 43.3%. These numbers are much greater than changes in regional and state-wide livestock sales where decreases were experienced.

Figure 23: Inflation Adjusted Crop Sales, 1982 - 1992

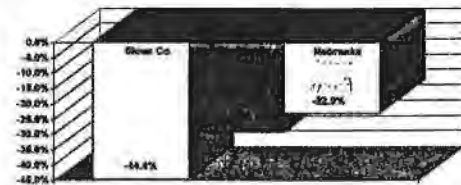


Table 22: Inflation Adjusted Crop Sales, 1982 - 1992

Place	Net Gain/Loss	% Gain/Loss
Sioux County	-3,585,885	-44.4%
Panhandle	-92,299,895	-29.2%
Nebraska	-787,342,895	-22.9%



Figure 24: Inflation Adjusted Livestock Sales, 1982 - 1992

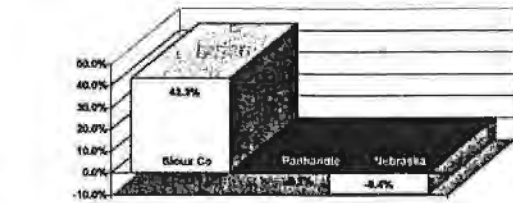


Table 23: Inflation Adjusted Livestock Sales, 1982 - 1992

Place	Net Gain/Loss	% Gain/Loss
Sioux County	+17,574,830	+43.3%
Panhandle	-1,231,565	-0.2%
Nebraska	-577,162,295	-9.4%

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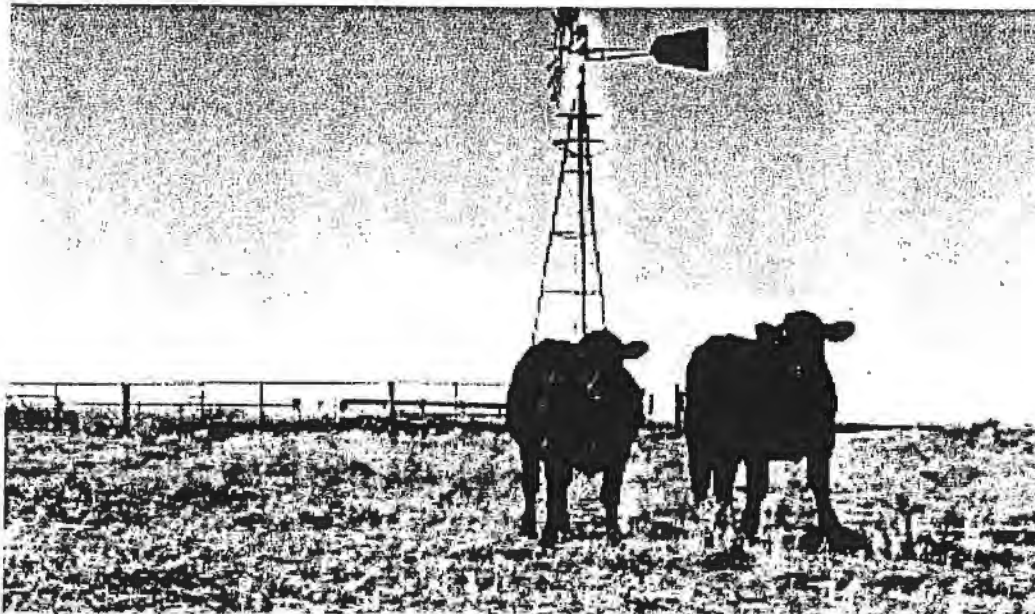
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Planning Issues

- * County income levels are well below State-wide levels and the large percentage of residents in the agricultural sector illustrate the need to diversify the economy and create higher paying jobs. The economy of Sioux County is reliant on just a few industries; agriculture and services leading the way.
- * As the population base declines, so does the size of the labor force. This makes it difficult to attract any new business.
- * The current participation rate of the labor force is near the maximum so any new business may need to hire from outside the county.
- * The economy of Sioux County is following the national trend by shifting toward service industries.
- * Increases in labor force participation rates over the past three decades are due in part to the shift toward service industries and the need for a second family income.
- * Long term development strategies of promoting new homegrown and entrepreneurial business and industry should be expanded.
- * Unemployment is not an issue in the community given the low unemployment rate. However, underemployment may be an issue due to the lower per capita and median family incomes in the community.
- * Sioux County should attempt to attract non-site specific industries.
- * The county continues to lose much of its educated population.
- * Increasing tourism may help increase retail sales and service receipts.



Introduction

An important and sometimes deciding factor that potential residents observe when considering a move into an area is the availability of quality, affordable housing. It is also a major determinant in retaining existing residents who desire a larger or more upscale home.

Some residents may desire some sort of retirement housing or other specific type of housing. A community should provide a variety of housing units to fill the needs of a diverse population which includes first time home buyers and persons looking to retire.

Quantity

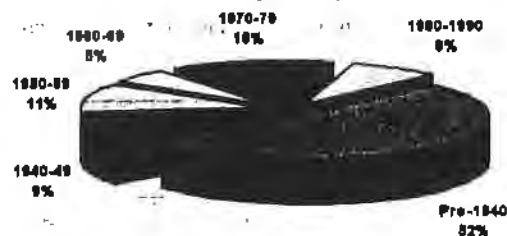
A housing unit is defined as any living space that provides separate kitchen and bathroom facilities, ie: an apartment, townhouse or single family home. In 1990, the county contained 869 housing units. Of these units, 22% were located in Harrison while the rest were distributed throughout the county. The average household size in 1990 was 2.53 persons/household.

Quality

The quality and condition of housing units in the county can be surmised by evaluating the age of housing units. In Sioux County, 52% of the houses were built before 1940 and 72% of the housing units were constructed before 1960. The relatively old age of the majority of the county's housing units indicates that many of the existing units are probably in need of fair to considerable rehabilitation.

According to census data statistics 71 housing units were added in the county from 1980 to 1990. During the same time period, the county lost 296 residents.

Figure 25: Age of Housing Units, 1990



Affordability

Following the national trend, housing values in Sioux County have increased dramatically over the past 30 years. This creates a problem because of the lower incomes in the county. Most people cannot afford to build new housing and there is a very limited supply of existing affordable housing. This issue can tremendously hinder economic development in Sioux County.

Despite the increase in housing values and rents in Sioux County over the last twenty years, the cost of housing is well below Panhandle and Nebraska rates. A major reason for the lower values is that there are numerous older houses in the county. However, if a person desires to build a new house it will most likely cost them as much, if not more, to build their house in

Sioux County as it would elsewhere in the state. A new house in Sioux County, though, will likely appraise at lower value than the cost of constructing the home. This makes it difficult to develop new speculation homes in the county.

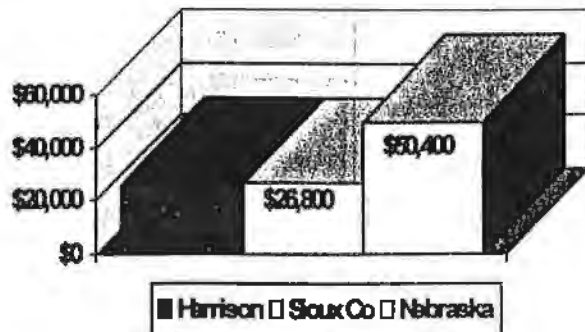
Table 24: Value of Owner-Occupied Homes

Value	Sioux Co	Panhandle	Nebraska
\$0-24,999	45.3%	38.9%	19.9%
\$25-49,999	44.5%	39.1%	33.5%
\$50-74,999	7.8%	16.9%	30.6%
\$75-99,999	0.0%	4.7%	11.5%
\$100-124,999	0.0%	1.4%	3.9%
\$125-149,999	0.0%	0.6%	2.0%
\$150-199,999	1.6%	0.3%	1.5%
\$200,000+	0.8%	0.1%	1.1%

Table 25: Contract Rent

Rent	Sioux Co	Panhandle	Nebraska
\$0-149	37.2%	21.5%	14.3%
\$150-199	30.2%	23.5%	12.1%
\$200-249	25.6%	20.3%	13.6%
\$250-299	4.7%	16.4%	15.4%
\$300-349	0.0%	8.0%	13.7%
\$350-399	2.3%	5.2%	11.8%
\$400+	0.0%	5.1%	19.1%

Figure 26: Value of Owner Occupied Housing Units, 1990



Tenure

Tenure statistics for homeownership is just below the statewide average for home ownership as nearly two-thirds of all households own their homes. However, the percentage of persons who own their homes for all age groups under age 65 is well under the state average.

One reason for the low ownership rates of younger persons is that nearly all the persons above age 65 own their home. Many of the elderly households are single occupant households as 68 elderly persons live alone in the county. Another factor causing low home ownership amongst younger households is that the cost of building a home is too high for many of the households under 45 years of age.

Figure 27: Tenure by Age Group

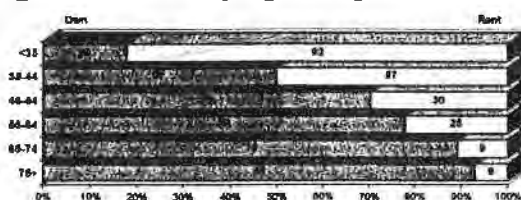


Table 26: Homeowners by Age

	Sioux Co	Nebraska	Sioux Co	Nebraska
<34	20	64,847	17.9%	38.6%
35-44	57	88,742	50.0%	70.3%
45-54	72	65,466	70.6%	79.1%
55-64	88	65,093	77.9%	83.1%
65-74	75	63,260	89.3%	82.5%
75+	81	53,008	93.1%	75.4%
Total	393	400,416	64.2%	66.5%

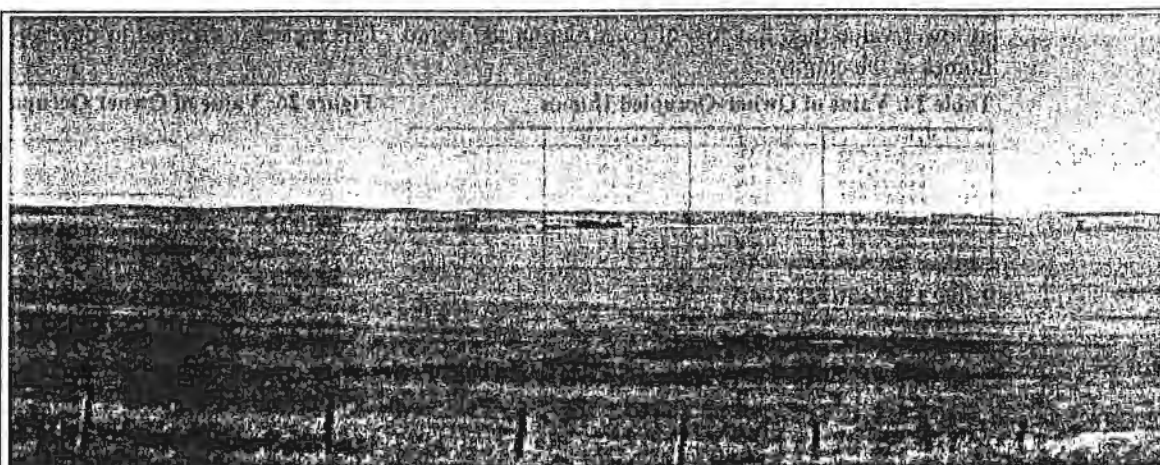
Table 27: Renters by Age, 1990

	Sioux Co	Nebraska	Sioux Co	Nebraska
<34	92	103,131	82.1%	61.4%
35-44	57	37,531	50.0%	29.7%
45-54	30	17,310	29.4%	20.9%
55-64	25	13,206	22.1%	16.4%
65-74	9	13,408	10.7%	17.5%
75+	6	17,341	6.9%	24.6%
Total	219	201,947	35.8%	33.5%

Projected Housing Needs

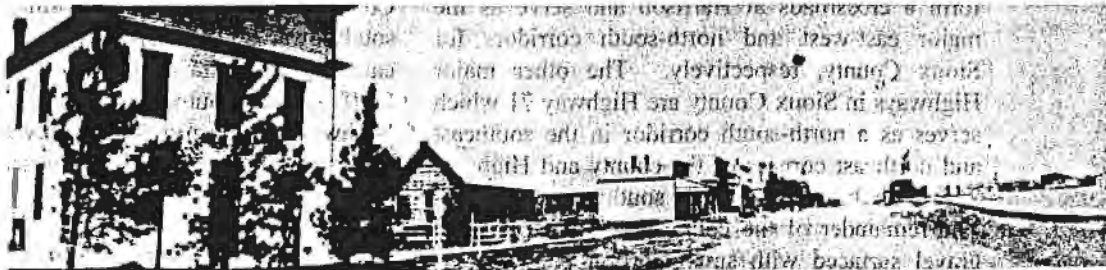
Population, household, and vacancy information can be used to estimate the number of new housing units that will be required for Sioux County over a ten year period. The forecasts can then be compared to current development activity and available land for future development to set priorities for the types and locations of housing development that should occur.

The projected housing needs indicate that no additional housing is needed to accommodate future population projections. However, if an adequate number of newer homes are not constructed in the county, the overall quality of housing will continue to deteriorate. This would inhibit the county's ability to attract new residents to the county as a large percentage of the homes in the county are relatively old. Also, the number of homes counted by the census may be overstated bringing the demand for housing near or in excess of housing supply.



Planning Issues:

- * Housing is a common need across the entire Panhandle. Affordable housing for rent or for sale is in short supply, inhibiting any possible growth through in-migration.
- * Sioux County has a rural quality of life that appeals to many. This could be enhanced with improved infrastructure and an increased available housing stock to possibly attract new residents.
- * Newly constructed homes in the county often appraise at a lower value than the cost of construction. This hinders opportunities to develop spec homes.
- * The cost of constructing a new home in Sioux County is at least the same, if not more than other places in the state.



Harrison, 1903

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Introduction

The movement of people and goods to, from, or within a given area has more influence upon the way an area will develop than any other factor. The transportation system not only influences the location and types of development, but dictates the land use activity to a certain extent. The purpose of this chapter is to analyze the existing transportation system in Sioux County and to thus examine the problems and potentials of the system.

Highways

Sioux County is served by 857 miles of roads. Among these roads are three major paved highways. US Highway 20 and Nebraska Highway 29 form a crossroads at Harrison and serve as the major east-west and north-south corridors for Sioux County, respectively. The other major Highways in Sioux County are Highway 71 which serves as a north-south corridor in the southeast and northeast corners of the county and Highway 26 which bisects the very southwestern corner. The remainder of the county roads are primarily gravel surfaced with small portion being unsurfaced.

Road Conditions

All of the county's arterial highways and many of the county's collector roads are paved. Roads that are paved include Highways 20, 29, and 71, S79A, S79B, S83A, the Agate Fossil Beds Road, and the road leading to Gilbert-Baker Wildlife Area. Most of Sioux County's roads, though, are gravel roads which connect local farms and ranches to the county's primary roads. Many of these roads either are impassable or nearly impassable after heavy rains or significant snowmelt.



Road Classifications

A description of the County road classifications are shown below. The street classifications can be seen on the Street Classification Map.

Expressways - none

Major Arterioles - Highway 20 is Sioux County's major arteriole. Highway 20 carries east-west traffic through the north half Sioux County. It also carries local traffic to and from the county seat of Harrison.

Minor Arterioles - Highway 29 and Highway 71 are minor arterioles in Sioux County. Highway 29 is the primary road in south and central Sioux County for traffic headed north to Harrison or south towards Scotts Bluff. Highway 71 primarily carries through traffic headed to or from Scotts-bluff in the southeast corner of the county. Highway 71 also provides county residents in the southeast corner of the county access to Scotts-bluff.

Collectors - These streets link local roads to the County's minor and major arterioles. Collector roads in the County include S79A, S79B, S83A, Agate Fossil Beds Road, and the Gilbert-Baker Road.

Local Roads - The remainder of the County's roads are classified as local streets. The roads primarily provide access to farm and ranch residences.

Rail Service

Sioux County is no longer served with rail transportation. The Chicago Northwestern Railroad does, however, bisect the southwest corner of the county.

Air Transportation

Sioux County leases and operates a small air strip from Harrison. The airfield is located just north of Harrison.

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Planning Issues:

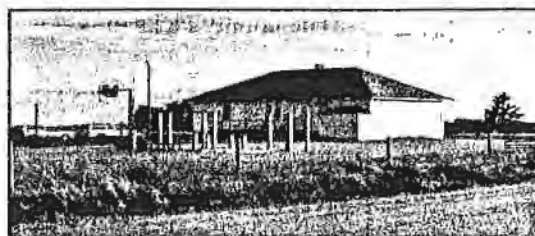
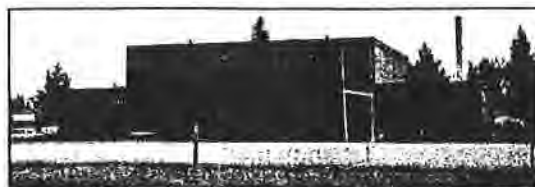
- * Decreasing tax revenues is making it more difficult to properly maintain roads.
- * Many of the local county roads are nearly impassable or impassable after rain or significant snowmelts.
- * The county lacks gravel and road material resources.
- * Government mandates will increase the difficulty of properly maintaining county roads.
- * Maintenance of a new paved road to the Gilbert-Baker Wildlife Area will be the responsibility of the county.
- * The county should explore inter-governmental agreements that may reduce the overall cost of road maintenance.

Schools

Sioux County has one High School, located in Harrison, and eight elementary schools distributed across the county. Enrollments vary from 3 students in District 51 to 58 students in District 7 located in Harrison. Enrollments over the past five years have remained quite stable.

Table 28: Sioux County School Enrollments

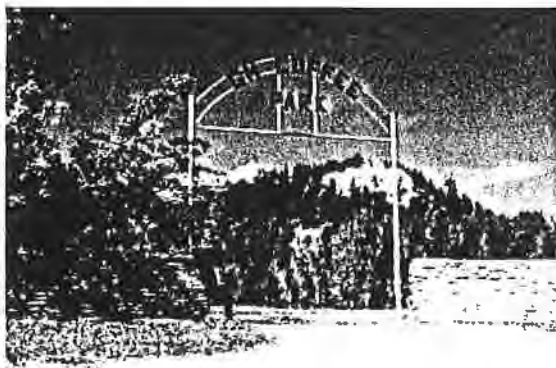
District	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96
2	8	5	6	10	8
6	18	13	12	14	14
7	57	59	66	71	58
12	4	4	3	3	4
23	5	5	5	4	4
43	10	8	7	6	5
51	6	7	8	6	3
68	7	6	7	6	11
73	19	22	16	13	14
SCHS	40	42	51	53	57
Total	174	171	181	186	178



Sioux County High School (top) Chalk Butte School (bottom)

Parks

Coffee Park northeast of Harrison offers playground equipment, restrooms, running water, picnic tables, and shelters.



Hospital

Sioux County does not have any hospitals. The nearest medical facilities for people in the northern sections of the county is Crawford. Scottsbluff provides the nearest medical facilities for southern Sioux County residents. In addition a doctor from Crawford visits Harrison once a week.

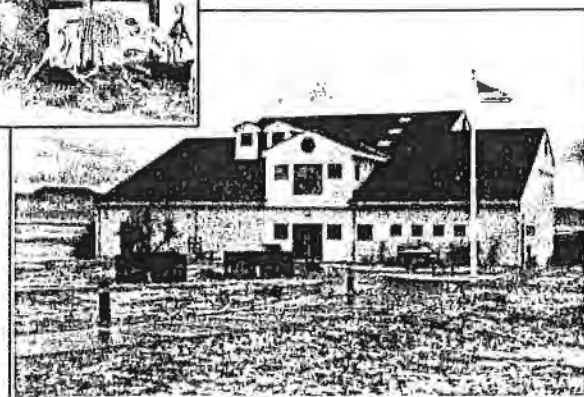
Libraries

The only library in Sioux County is in Harrison. The library is a public library which is provided in collaboration with the school system.

Historical and Tourist Sites

Sioux County contains numerous sites of historical significance. The Buffalo Bill-Yellowhand Monument, Fort Laramie to Fort Robinson Trail, Montrose Church, and the Warbonnet Battlefield are the most prominent historical sites in Sioux County.

There are also numerous tourist attractions in Sioux County. Agate Fossil Beds, Toadstool Park, Sowbelly Canyon, Oglala National Grasslands, Hudson-Ming Bison Kill Site, Gilbert-Baker Wildlife Management Area, Sioux County Museum, Nebraska National Forest, Soldier Creek Wilderness Area and the Wagon's Ho trail rides are among the most popular tourist attractions in the county.



Introduction

Land use refers to the kind of activity for which any given parcel of land is being utilized. Since existing land use conditions and activities exert a strong influence in future growth and types of development, it is necessary that a detailed and accurate land use survey be completed.

Land Use Classification

A detailed land use inventory of Sioux County was completed during the month of April, 1996. Using aerial photographs and field studies, each lot or parcel was observed and the existing use was noted on a field map. The total amount of land in each land use type was determined using 1990 Census data. The various categories of land characteristics are identified as follows:

Farms:

This category includes all land from which \$1,000 or more of agricultural products were produced and sold, or normally would have been sold. In terms of quantity, land in farms has been broken down into cropland, woodland, pastureland and miscellaneous.

Rural Non-Farm Residential:

This category includes all land on which the primary structure serves as a dwelling unit. In addition, these units are not part of a farm operation development, ie: one and two family units, multi-family units and mobile homes.

Commercial:

This category includes all land and buildings where products, goods, or services are sold or exchanged. Included are retail stores, business offices, hotels, motels, service stations and private off-street parking spaces.

Industrial:

This category includes land where the land use involves the application of labor and materials to produce a product that is not normally sold to the ultimate consumer on the premises. This category also includes wholesaling activities, processing and the storage of materials, agricultural products and chemicals/fuels.

Public Land:

This category includes land developed and maintained for recreational purposes such as schools; public parks, monuments, etc.; land and buildings owned by governmental entities for administrative purposes, service delivery, and utilities. In addition, land uses that serve other general community needs such as churches and hospitals are included.

Transportation:

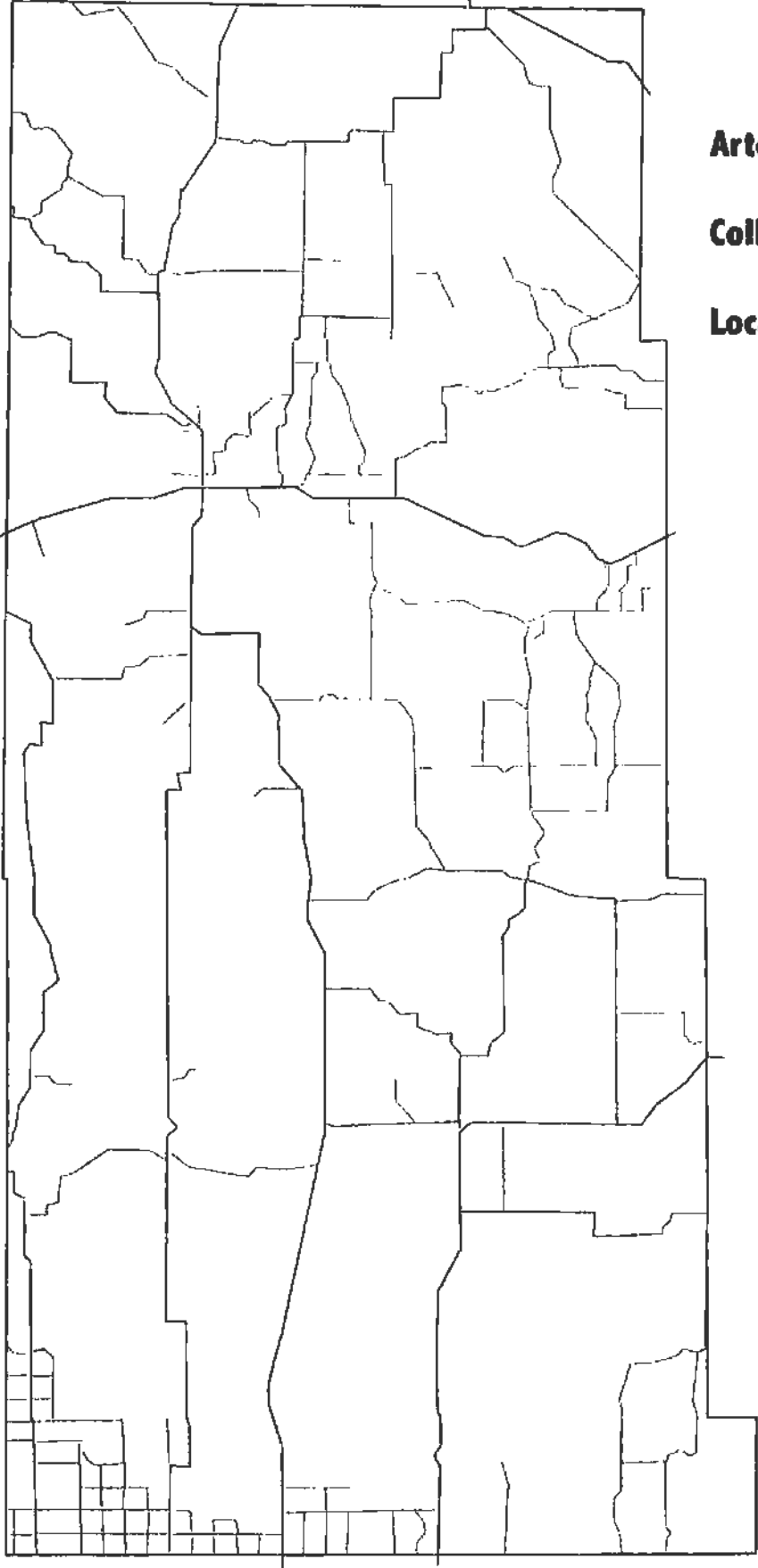
This category includes land platted and/or currently used for transportation purposes, including railroad right-of-way.

Incorporated Areas:

This category includes all land contained within the corporate boundaries of Harrison.



Sioux County Road Classifications



Arterial Road _____

Collector Road _____

Local Road _____

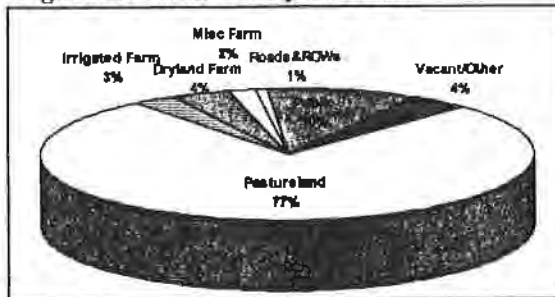
Land Use Inventory

Results of the land use survey indicate that there are approximately 1,322,880 acres of land within Sioux County. According to the 1996 Abstract of Assessment, 85.3%, or 1,005,877 acres, of this land are in farms or ranches. Public land covers approximately 131,421 acres or 9.9% of the county. Roads and right of ways use approximately 10,303 acres. The remaining 51,401 acres are either in vacant or other land uses. The following tables a description of current land use estimates:

Table 29: Sioux County Land Use (Approximate Acres)

Land Use Type	Acres	Percent
Farms	1,129,563	85.3%
Irrigated Farmland	37,868	2.9%
Dryland Farmland	52,090	3.9%
Pastureland	1,017,042	76.9%
Misc	22,563	1.7%
Incorporated Areas	192	0.02%
Public Land	131,421	9.9%
Roads & Right of Ways	10,303	0.8%
Vacant/Other	51,401	3.9%
TOTAL	1,322,880	100.0%

Figure 28: Sioux County Land Use



Agricultural

Over 85% of Sioux County's land is used for agricultural purposes. The predominant agricultural use is pastureland which occupies three-quarters of the total county land use. Cropland accounts for nearly 7% of the total land use. Most of the cropland is concentrated in the southwest corner of the county and in areas along the Niobrara River. Cropland is scattered across the county either as dryland farming or in small areas where irrigated.

Residential Areas

A large percentage of the residential development in Sioux County is within Harrison. The Village contains 22% of the county's housing units. The rest of the housing units are distributed throughout the countryside. The only platted residential areas in the county outside of Harrison are located at Andrews and Glen.

Public Land

Sioux County has over 130,000 acres of public land. Public land uses include Oglala National Grasslands, Agate Fossil Beds, Fort Robinson State Park, Gilbert Baker Wildlife Management Area, Peterson Wildlife Area, Soldier Creek Wilderness Area, Toadstool Park, and Coffee Park.

Commercial Uses

Commercial land use in the county is located primarily within Harrison.



Land Use Projection

The amount of land needed to accommodate future growth is dependent upon a variety of factors. Population change, health of the area economy, land costs and development policy will all effect changes in land use. The following table provides an estimate of projected land use changes in the county.

Table 30: Future Land Use

Land Use	1997	2010	Projected Change
Farms and Ranches	1,129,563	1,129,563	0 acres
Incorporated Areas	192	192	0 acres
Public Land	131,421	131,421	0 acres
Roads	10,303	10,303	0 acres
Vacant/Other	51,401	51,401	0 acres
TOTAL	1,322,880	1,322,880	0 acres

The future land use policy of this comprehensive development plan implies the philosophy of directing growth to areas which have the existing facilities to efficiently accommodate growth. Non-farm rural development cannot occur without some expense to the County, whether direct or indirect. Non-farm rural development may also adversely affect farmers by raising agricultural taxes through speculation. The presence of non-farm rural development thus does not reflect the best interest of the general public in Sioux County.

This comprehensive development plan therefore recommends that all rural areas of the county be zoned for agricultural use. All areas other than existing commercial, industrial, and residential areas should be zoned for agricultural use. Rezoning to high density residential, commercial, or industrial uses if the need exists would only be readily encouraged adjacent to existing incorporated communities and only if the proposed development is compatible with the community's growth plans.

Factors to be evaluated when rezoning to residential, commercial, or industrial use not near incorporated communities:

- a) Quality agricultural land is not proposed for conversion to an urban type use in order that quality agricultural land can be preserved and remain available for production
- b) Adjacent to adequately paved roads and in clusters to promote efficient development patterns where public and/or private facilities are present or planned including; streets, water, sanitary sewer and parks.

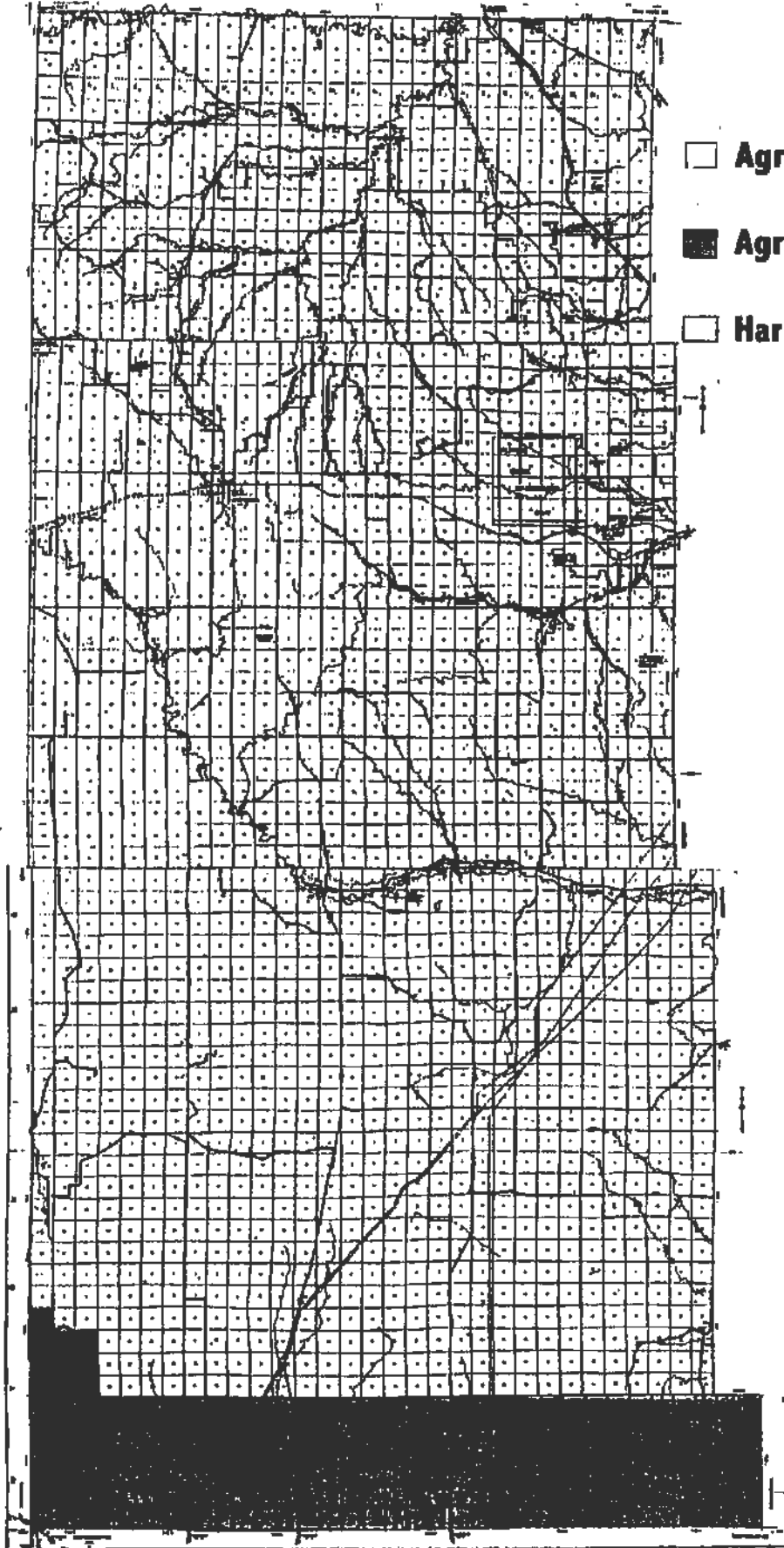
- c) A service district or other means are established to maintain and operate any public facilities created in the area.
- d) Environmental constraints are applied to control erosion and sewage affluent.
- e) An analysis is made of both long and short term County expenses and revenues resulting from the project and it is shown that the County is not being obligated for direct or indirect services beyond the value of the revenues received from the project.
- f) The development is not disruptive to existing agricultural activities.
- g) It is demonstrated that there is a recognized need for such development.
- h) The development is secure from fire, floods and other dangers.

The agricultural zone, though, should be constructed to permit normal agricultural and related uses plus a very low residential non-farm density. A low non-farm residential density of not more than one unit per 80 acres in high land value area (with each unit on at least a one acre site) would not substantially increase County service needs nor materially effect agricultural production, if a major share of the 80 acres is left in agricultural use. On the lower value areas of the county, a density of one unit per 320 acres would be feasible.

Future land use policies should not prevent land owners from continuing existing operations. Thus, any structure or use which exists prior to the implementation of a county-wide zoning resolution that does not conform with land use regulations may be continued as long as it remains otherwise lawful.

Intense land uses such as feedlots, salvage yards, landfills, oil storage (for uses other than on site punping), concrete plants, asphalt plants, surface mining, prisons or any other intense land use that may destroy the integrity of neighboring land uses should be categorized as conditional uses permitted by special review. This will enable Sioux County to evaluate the impact of intense land uses on a case by case basis in order to better serve the best interest of the general public.

Sioux County Future Land Use



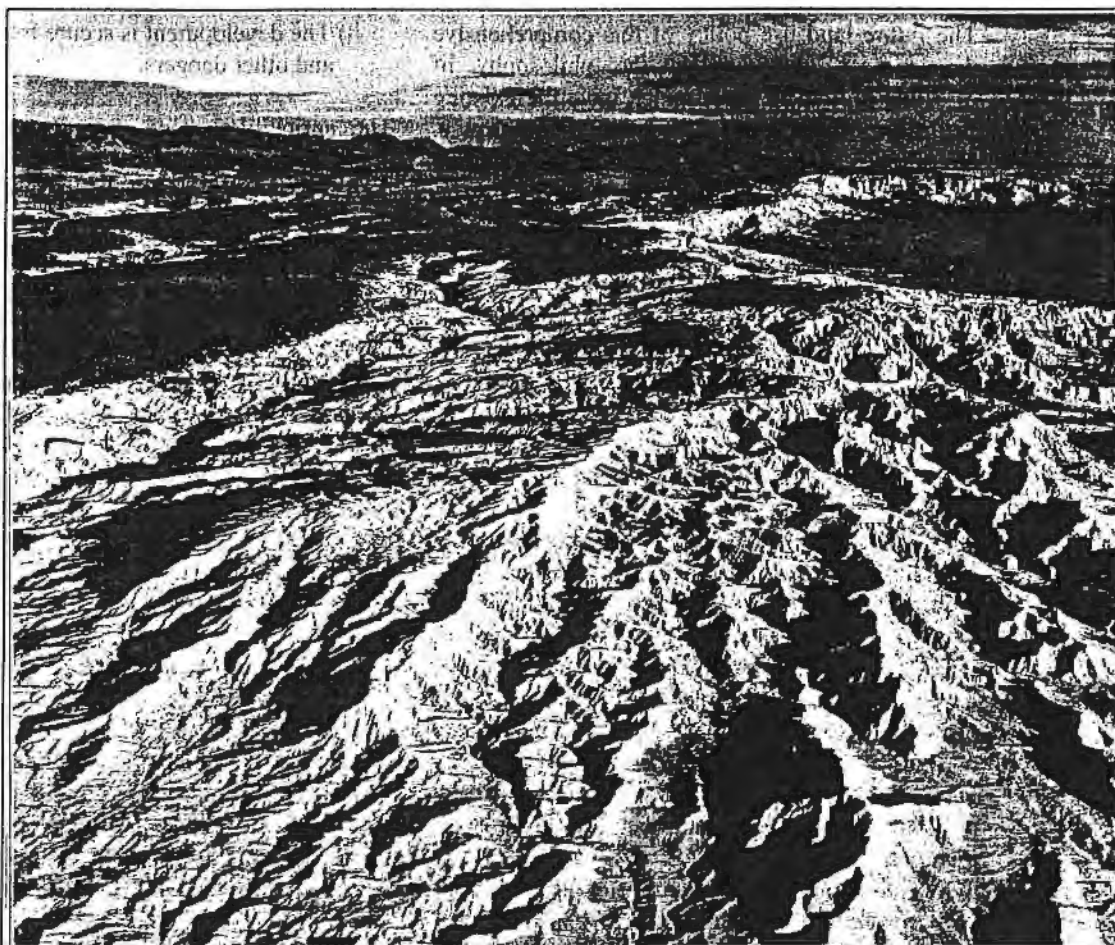
□ Agriculture - Large Lot

■ Agriculture - Small Lot

□ Harrison

Planning Issues:

- * Agricultural preservation and feedlot zones should be established to preserve this important sector of the county economy.
- * Future residential, commercial and industrial development should be directed to communities and/or existing platted rural subdivisions to minimize development impacts on county infrastructure.
- * Strip commercial and industrial development along state and county roads should be strongly discouraged.
- * Development within flood prone areas should be strongly discouraged.



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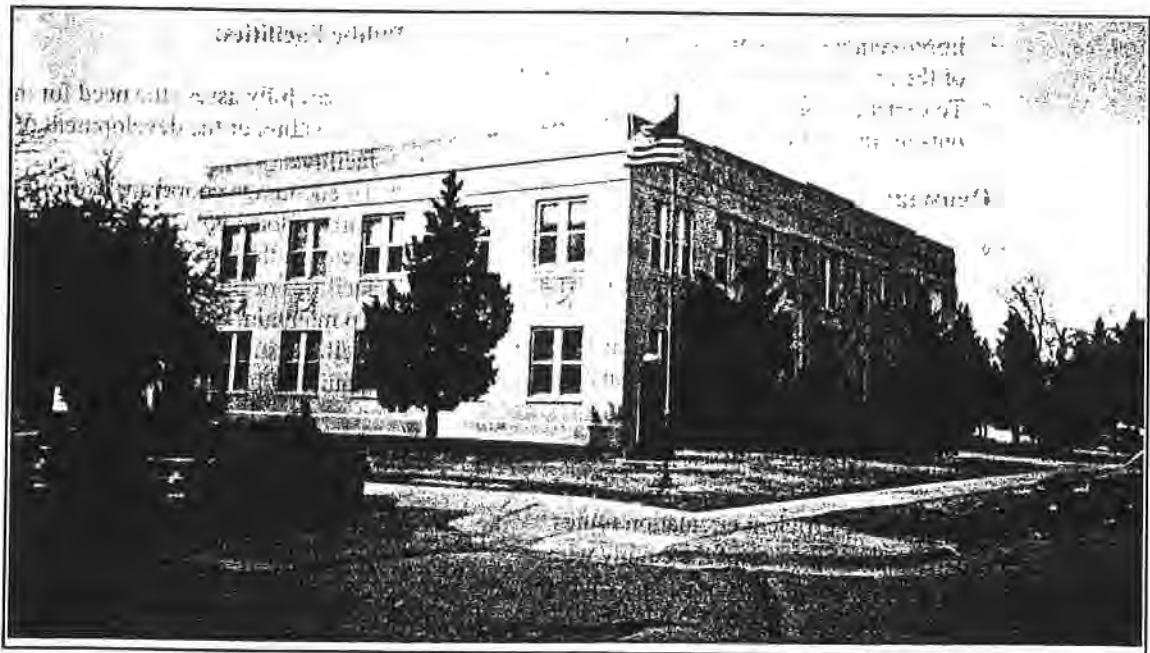
Introduction

This section of the plan contains a series of recommended goals, objectives and policies that are based upon the information gathered and evaluated during the preparation of this report. The goals, objectives and policies are intended to provide guidance to the County in the preparation and implementation of land use controls and development projects. In addition, a future land use map and future development plan map are provided recommending actions that can be taken by the county.

The section begins with a presentation of overall development goals which are, by necessity, broad and general in nature. The goals reflect the desires and aspirations of the county by describing basic concepts which should be used to guide future development. Objectives are provided that coincide with each section of the plan. The objectives recommend specific actions and development programs addressing each topic. Policy statements are then provided which offer specific guidance and direction for the formulation of future land use and development controls.

Development Goals

1. To ensure orderly and efficient growth of residential, commercial, industrial and public land uses in order to maintain, improve and protect the general welfare of the residents of Sioux County.
2. To protect and conserve the unique natural and physical resource base of the county.
3. To maintain and improve the county by undertaking improvements that will provide a high quality living and working environment.
4. To foster a strong balanced economy capable of ensuring the economic future of all residents.
5. To achieve safety, convenience and economic efficiency through the wise distribution of land use activities.
6. To encourage cooperation, communication and coordinated efforts between the county, other local governments and the general public to improve the manner in which the county's natural, human and economic resources are managed and developed.



Development Objectives

Environmental:

- * To develop design standards and/or monitor construction practices on soils that exhibit the need for special foundation design.
- * To preserve and develop the Pine Ridge Corridor as an environmental/recreation resource.
- * To discourage development from locating on productive agricultural soils and in other agricultural areas where conflicts may arise with farming and efficient farm practices.
- * To review and revise development standards and regulations to ensure that high quality scenic and historically significant sites are aesthetically protected.
- * To carefully monitor the design of commercial, industrial and agricultural waste systems to ensure a clean, high quality physical and natural environment.

Population:

- * To create an economic environment that will encourage the retention of young adults and the location of new residents to the county.
- * To ensure that facility and infrastructure improvements are developed with an awareness of the growing percentage of elderly residents.
- * To expand economic efforts to reverse previous out-migration trends.

Housing:

- * To encourage the removal of dilapidated structures and renewal efforts in older areas of the county.
- * To ensure that adequate land is available to meet future demands for new housing construction.

Transportation:

- * To provide efficient circulation routes connecting all areas of the county with important social, economic and education functions.
- * To provide for the safe flow of vehicular traffic throughout the county.
- * To carefully monitor the location of rural residential, commercial, industrial and ag developments to ensure roadways are designed to safely carry potential traffic volumes.

Economic:

- * To provide a broad range of employment opportunities to meet the needs of a diverse population.
- * To encourage and facilitate the creation and/or location of businesses and industries that will provide wages resulting in higher per capita and median family incomes.
- * To encourage and facilitate efforts to retrain and provide continuing education opportunities to the local labor force.
- * To encourage and facilitate efforts to expand existing or attract new industries that will diversify the local economy.
- * To encourage and facilitate efforts to expand and/or attract industries that employ higher percentages of professional, managerial and technical occupations.
- * To assist existing business and industry with their efforts to expand, diversify and achieve higher growth rates.
- * To ensure adequate public facilities, infrastructure and housing opportunities are available to accommodate potential new residents and businesses.

Public Facilities:

- * To carefully assess the need for improvements to existing, or the development of new public facilities.
- * To encourage cooperative efforts with other units of local government and/or the private sector in the development of new public facilities or provision of public services.
- * To maintain, upgrade and develop public facilities in a manner that will enhance the quality of life in all areas of the county.

Land Use:

- * To encourage the efficient use of existing public facilities and infrastructure by future development.
- * To ensure that adequate amounts of land are available to accommodate future growth.
- * To ensure that adequate planning, plan revision and policy development efforts are undertaken to preserve and improve the unique rural character of the county.

Land Use Policy**General:**

- * Land zoned for specific uses will be protected from the encroachment of conflicting land uses.
- * Planned residential, commercial and industrial parks will be encouraged as opposed to continued strip development patterns.
- * New residential, commercial and industrial developments will be encouraged to locate within incorporated communities or in existing subdivisions.
- * While Sioux County encourages development to locate within existing subdivisions and communities, it recognizes that some development in rural areas is both necessary and desirable.

The following guidelines have been drafted to assist in reviewing proposed new development in unincorporated areas. In as much a possible development should occur:

- on marginal agricultural land in order that quality agricultural land can be preserved and remain available for production.
 - adjacent to adequately paved roads and in clusters to promote efficient development patterns where public and/or private facilities are present or planned including; streets, water, sanitary sewer and parks.
 - in areas near existing employment centers and commercial areas so as not to encourage sprawl and unplanned scattered development.
 - where it is least disruptive to existing agricultural activities.
 - in stable environmental areas.
 - where it can be demonstrated that there is a recognized need for such development.
 - in a manner that secures safety from fire, floods and other dangers, and protects the health and general welfare of the public.
 - in a manner that avoids undue concentration of the population and prevents overcrowding of land.
 - in a manner where the County is not being obligated for direct or indirect services beyond the value of the revenues received through a development.
- * The provision of public infrastructure will be used to guide future development patterns.

Natural and Rural Environment:

- * In-filling and revitalization of existing developed areas will be encouraged to minimize the conversion of prime farmland to more intense urban uses.
- * Landscaping and design standards will be incorporated into future commercial, industrial and other high density development projects, particularly when located along major thoroughfares and environmentally sensitive areas.

Residential:

- * Residential development will be encouraged to locate on existing lots within incorporated communities or in existing platted subdivisions. However, residential development may be allowed to locate on existing platted lots and small parcels of land in the rural areas of the county.
- * Concentrated residential developments in rural areas will be encouraged to create a sanitary sewer and/or water district.
- * High density residential projects will be directed toward incorporated communities that have the infrastructure to accommodate development.
- * All rural residential lots, not located in a sanitary sewer and water district, shall be of sufficient size to ensure the safe installation and long term operation of wells and leachate systems.

Commercial:

- * Commercial development in rural areas shall be restricted to those businesses that provide only neighborhood and agricultural business needs and site location specific businesses such as campgrounds or establishments that coincide with historical or recreational sites.
- * In-filling and revitalization of existing zoned commercial areas will be strongly encouraged.
- * Discontinuance of improperly zoned or placed commercial areas will be encouraged.
- * Redevelopment of properly zoned or placed commercial areas will be encouraged.
- * Landscaping, design and signage schemes that coincide with historical and environmental areas will be encouraged for all developments located near such sites.

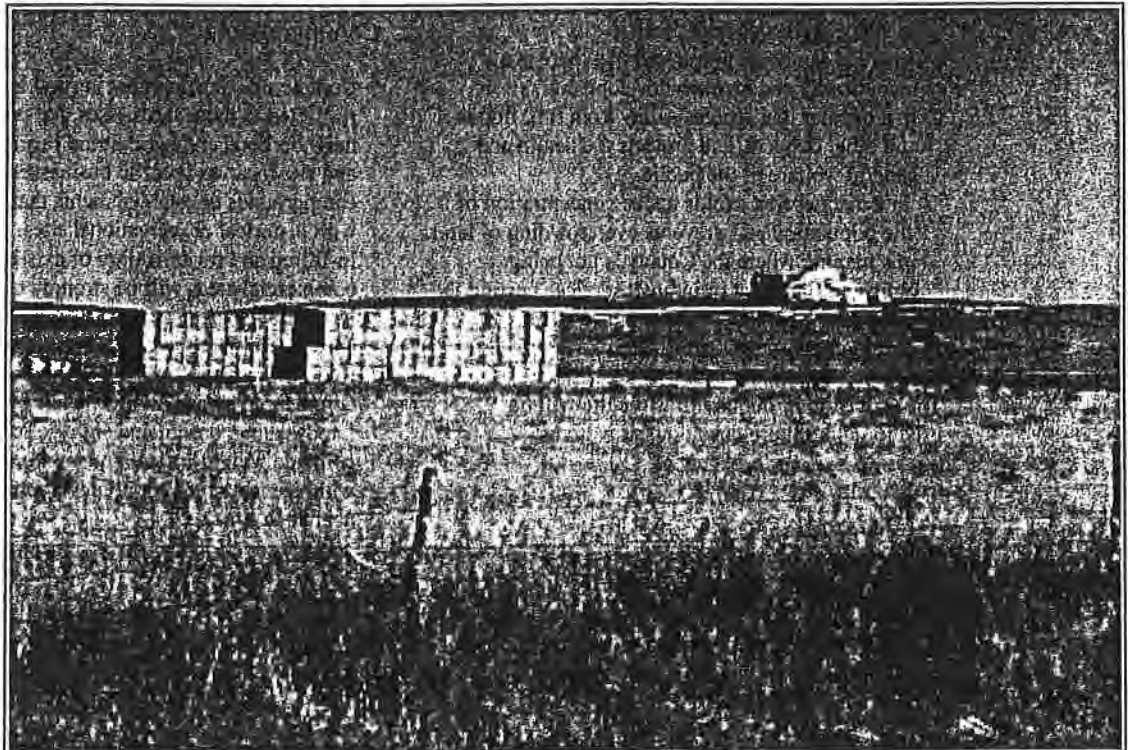


Industrial:

- * Industrial land uses will be directed toward existing industrial parks and to incorporated communities.
- * Redevelopment of existing industrial areas located adjacent to incorporated communities and paved roads will be encouraged.
- * Industrial uses will be allowed in rural areas only where the need for such can be demonstrated.

Agricultural:

- * High quality agricultural land should be designated for preservation and the establishment of agricultural preservation zones will be encouraged.
- * Quality and/or improved pasture and grazing land should be preserved for such uses.
- * Large feedlots, farrowing pens, other confinement operations and poultry farms not associated with a family farm are considered commercial endeavors. Such businesses have special nuisance problems which require regulation. As a means of protecting both the operator (whether commercial or agricultural), the rural resident and public recreational areas, a buffer area based on the number of animals should be established. All existing and proposed endeavors of this nature are encouraged to establish buffer zones. Within the buffer area no new resident can build unless a nuisance waiver is signed. Likewise, no new commercial endeavor of this nature can be located unless the existing residents within the buffer area sign a nuisance waiver.



Environmental Strategies

Increase the Number of Windbreaks

Windbreaks are an important factor in farm and ranch operations because they reduce calf mortality rates, reduce livestock feeding costs, reduce soil erosion and prevent roads from drifting shut. They also increase crop productivity and irrigation efficiency. The county should attempt to increase the number of windbreaks in the county by promoting tree planting and programs such as Natural Resource District cost-share programs.

Protect Historical Resource Areas

Sites identified as historical resource areas should be protected from the encroachment of intense development. Preservation zones with specific development guidelines should be established around these sites to protect their value as a historic and economic resource.

Discourage Development Within Flood Plains

Future Development within flood prone areas should be avoided. Currently Sioux County has not been mapped for flood plains. County officials may want to investigate if flood plain mapping for the county would be beneficial for its residents.

Preserve Park Areas

Public park areas should be protected from conflicting land uses that would potentially destroy their value as a recreational resource for county residents.

Preserve Agriculture Areas

The county's prime agricultural lands should be preserved as much as possible to maintain the efficiency of this economic resource. The county's prime farm areas should be zoned for agricultural purposes. Future residential development in high quality agricultural areas should be restricted to farmsteads.

Scenic Drive

The county should consider the development of a scenic drive that provides improved access to historical sites in the area of Sowbelly Canyon.

Demographic Strategies

Improve Ability to Retain and Attract Young Adults

Young adults leaving the area is the major reason substantial population declines have occurred in Sioux County over the past sixty years. Employment and social opportunities that are directed toward young adults need to be implemented.

Economic Strategies

Maintain and Expand the County's Economic Base

Sioux County will always rely heavily on agriculture. However, the heavy reliance on agriculture has made the county very susceptible to economic downswings. The county should thus make efforts to diversify the economy.

Develop Bed & Breakfasts, Fee Hunting, Dude Ranches, and Other Tourism Related Businesses

Sioux County can not receive much benefit from attracting tourism if tourists have nowhere to spend their money in the county. The county should consider promoting business development geared toward tourism. Some areas in which the county has untapped potential is in development of bed and breakfasts, fee hunting, and dude ranching.

Sioux County has an ideal setting for a bed & breakfast. The county's scenic beauty and isolation would be a perfect setting for persons wishing to spend a few days in a quiet country setting. There has also been a large increase in the number of travelers who wish to stay at bed & breakfasts.

The county's wildlife resources create an opportunity for farms and ranches to supplement their income from fee hunting. Fee hunting has become a big business in many surrounding states and it provides many spin-off expenditures for items such as meals, lodging, and equipment.

Sioux County is also well suited toward developing dude ranches. Wyoming presently has hundreds of dude ranches where people pay considerable sums to experience ranch life and living in the old west. Presently, liability issues have limited the number of dude ranches in Nebraska. However, Legislative Bill 153 is seeking to reduce this problem.

Regional Tourism Network

Sioux County has many quality tourist attractions. These sites on their own, though, are not significant enough to attract visitors from a long distance. The entire Panhandle Region with sites such as Scotts Bluff National Monument and Fort Robinson, however, can attract visitors to the area. The county should focus its tourism efforts as part of the Panhandle Tourism Coalition. By attracting visitors to the entire Panhandle Region, Sioux County can attract more tourists with fewer dollars than trying to market their county alone.

Support Employment Opportunities in Neighboring Counties

Many of Sioux County's residents work in Scottsbluff/Gering, Chadron, and Crawford. County officials should be supportive of efforts to create new employment opportunities in these communities.

Housing Strategies

Retirement Housing

Although over 20% of Sioux County's population is over 60 years old, the county does not have any retirement facilities. This is causing many retirement persons to either occupy a family sized house or else move out of the county. The county should promote the development of low-income and market rate elderly housing facilities.

Capture Growth from Nearby Employment Centers

Employment opportunities in Sioux County are limited, thereby decreasing the chance to capture in-migration. However, nearby areas such as Chadron and Scottsbluff/ Gering are growing and are suffering from a shortage of housing. If the county is to grow in population, it will need to promote its rural quality of life to capture some of the growth from these communities.

Public Facility Strategies

Share Equipment and Services with Other Counties/Communities

Sioux County's small tax base makes it difficult to provide certain types of services or buy needed equipment. Efforts to develop shared services agreements with larger cities and counties should be pursued. This may provide improved services in the county at a reduced cost.

Transportation Strategies

Explore Methods to Decrease the Cost of Road Materials

Sioux County lacks gravel and road material resources. This increases the cost to adequately maintain county roads. The county should thus explore methods of decreasing the cost of their road materials.

Land Use Strategies

Establish Residential Areas

Future residential growth should be directed to Harrison or the other existing platted subdivisions as much as possible. Adequate land is available within these areas to accommodate projected residential growth.

Develop Nuisance Buffers Around Feedlot Areas

The existing feedlot operations identified should be protected from the encroachment of conflicting land uses. Additional feedlot zones may be established but should follow locational requirements recommended in the policy section of this plan.

Establish Industrial/Commercial Areas

Future industrial or commercial development should be directed into existing commercial/industrial zones, or incorporated towns.

