

# Comprehensive Plan 2015-2025



## *City of* Neligh, Nebraska

**Office Locations:**

Kearney  
McCook  
Holdrege  
Grand Island  
Colby, KS

Prepared By:



**Miller & Associates**  
CONSULTING ENGINEERS, P.C.

1111 Central Avenue  
Kearney, NE 68847  
(308) 234-6456

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### **City Council/Staff**

Mayor - Jeri Anderson  
City Clerk/Treasurer - Dana Klabenes  
Economic Development Director - Greg Ptacek  
Council President - Dale Wilkinson  
Council Members - Leonard Miller, Nancy Ofe, & Ted Hughes

### **Planning Commission**

Chair Person - Bennie Taylor  
Dane Nielson  
Walt Storey  
Don Zegers  
Lance Sanne

### **Steering Committee**

Jeri Anderson  
Greg Ptacek  
Dana Klabenes  
Jack Green  
Dennis Anderson  
Ryan Koinzan  
Dale Wilkinson  
Ted Hughes  
Walt Story  
Don Zegers  
Carrie Pitzer  
Krista Schindler  
Koryn Koinzan  
Advanced Consulting Engineering Services\*  
Jennifer Norton  
Bill Molewinkle  
Dr. George Strassler

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### **Consultant & Planner**

Miller & Associates  
Consulting Engineers, P.C.  
1111 Central Avenue  
Kearney, Nebraska 68847  
Telephone: 308-234-6456  
Web: [www.miller-engineers.com](http://www.miller-engineers.com)



## Envision Neligh

Neligh's residents and business owners are enormous assets to the community and their participation was essential to the planning process. The Envision Neligh planning process for Neligh's Comprehensive Plan included many public participation meetings, an online discussion forum, and mail-out surveys which, in turn, gave stakeholders the opportunity to frame the goals and directions of the plan. This plan presents a vision for the community, from the community.

Neligh is encouraged to have continuing community input of goals and ambitions for the City. The idea is to promote and grow a diverse economic base while emphasizing overall community development, including a proactive approach for attracting new residents. Commercial and housing development is currently an issue that needs to be addressed in order to attract and maintain residents. There are areas for development; however, these areas need to be marketed in order to attract a developer. Gateway corridors along Highways 275 and 14 were major discussion points during the public input sessions. Residents would really love to see these areas beautified in order to give a grand "first impression" to visitors. Other goals for Neligh are to create a variety of job options, agricultural and non-agricultural, while also maintaining infrastructure such as roads, water, and public buildings/services. The creation of this plan and the continual reference back to it and any other planning efforts, will benefit the City on its road to reach the goals laid out in this Comprehensive Plan.

## Introduction

The Neligh Comprehensive Plan 2015-2025 is an outline of the goals for the community and by the community. This Comprehensive Plan is a blueprint for the City's future, a blueprint to develop the kind of community for a better tomorrow. It provides guidance on where and how the City will invest and change over the next ten years. It contains maps, visions and goals for the future, and policies to address topics ranging from land use and demographics to transportation and community services. The purpose of a Comprehensive Plan is to provide long-range guidance to property owners, residents, elected and appointed officials, City staff, and others to inform, provide options, and stimulate community discussion on issues such as where and what type of future developments should occur.

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

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

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

### Nebraska Revised Statute § 17-1002.

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

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

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

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

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

The planning and zoning jurisdiction of City of Neligh is governed by Neb. Rev. Stat. §17-1004. As Neligh continues to grow and annex land into their corporate limits, their extraterritorial jurisdictions (ETJ) may extend further into Antelope County. The City of Neligh has chosen, at this time, to extend their jurisdiction the full one-mile.

#### Nebraska Revised Statute § 17-1004

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

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

#### Nebraska Revised Statute § 19-903

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Why a Comprehensive Plan?

This document is the community's long-term Comprehensive Plan that establishes vision and direction for the future (to the year 2025). Its objectives are to confirm the community's vision for the future, and to set the policy framework to help guide future decisions related to development and investment. It will help the City thoughtfully address future needs for economic development, transportation, housing, services, parks and open space, and other community benefits. It will also help to ensure a sustainable and fiscally responsible future, by setting the desired direction for future development regulations, policy decisions, and community programs.

## Goals for Neligh's Comprehensive Plan 2015-2025

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

- Improve Public Infrastructure
- Improve the Existing Housing Market
- Promote Commercial Development
- Expand Recreational Attractions & Amenities
- Develop Marketing Campaign
- Enhance Highway Corridors & Community Beautification

## Data Sources

### 2010 Census (short form)

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

### American Community Survey (ACS)

This survey is conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau in replacement of the Decennial Census Long Form. The ACS provides a lot of different data such as household income, commute time to work, year of household, etc. The survey is spread over five years (2008-2012) and it uses a much smaller sample population than the Decennial Census Long Form did. Every year a small portion of surveys are sent out to people; the Census Bureau then makes estimates based on those numbers that were gathered over the five-year time span. The ACS reports the data as an estimate with a margin of error. The ACS states there is a 90 percent chance of accuracy within the margin of error reported on either side of the original estimate.

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


ESRI reports data on Nebraska's Location One Information System (LOIS) website. ESRI reports data similar to the Census Bureau's data, and LOIS allows each community to enter additional information regarding commercial properties, including vacant lots and buildings, to market and promote economic development in each community and for the State of Nebraska.

## **Planning Period**

The planning period for Neligh's Comprehensive Plan, is from 2015-2025. This plan should be reviewed in 2016, 2020, and a complete update should be done in 2025 if City officials decide the community has had enough change to warrant a new plan or they determine the process and goal-setting would be beneficial for the City at that time. However, it is still important to continually refer to and update this plan throughout the planning period.

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

# Chapter 1: Community Profile

A photograph of a town street scene. In the foreground, there is a sidewalk with a black street lamp on the left and a concrete bench. Several cars are parked along the street. In the background, there are multi-story buildings, including one with a prominent tower and a sign. The sky is clear and blue.

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

- Description
- History
- Population
- Housing
- Economy



# Description

The City of Neligh, which is approximately 1.10 square miles, is situated in central Antelope County on United States Highway 275 and

Nebraska Highway 14. Other communities in Antelope County include Brunswick, Clearwater, Elgin, Oakdale, Orchard, Royal, and part of Tilden. Antelope County borders the following counties: Knox, Holt, Wheeler, Boone, Madison, and Pierce. Neligh is the County Seat of Antelope County. According to the 2010 Census, Neligh's population was 1,599. Neligh is home to several different industries, a wonderful school district, great healthcare options, senior housing and services, restaurants, stores, enjoyable recreational facilities, and multiple annual festivals including the Antelope County Fair, Bread and Jam Festival, and Old Mill Days. With many new additions in the community including a new residential subdivision, downtown businesses, a new Economic Development Director position, and several other notable projects completed in recent years, the City is working to capitalize on the growing population by increasing the quality of life for residents and creating a lucrative community for business owners. **Figure 1.1** shows Neligh's location in Antelope County. This map acts as a Study Area Map for the Comprehensive Plan.





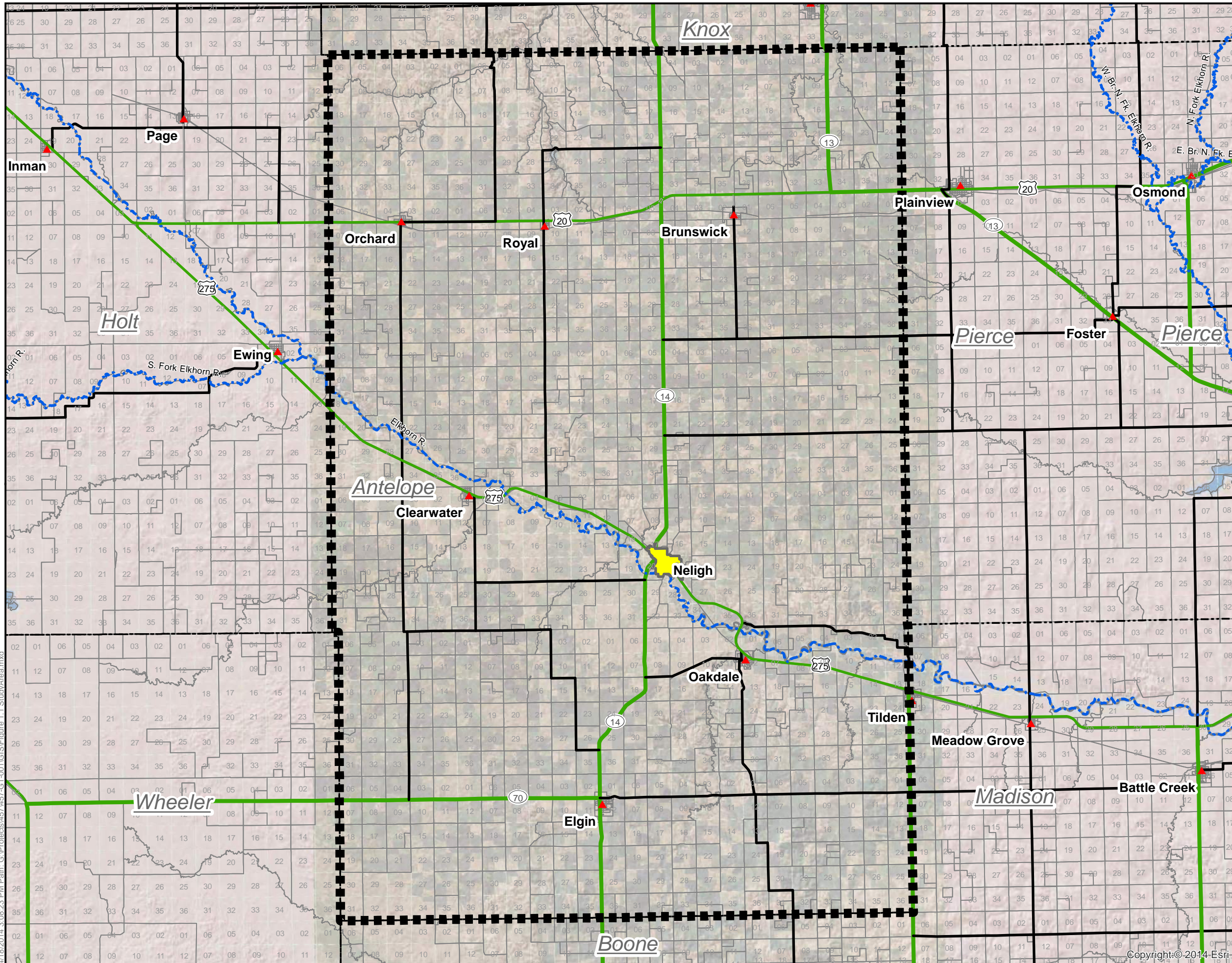
Prepared By:



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



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**Legend**

 Neligh Corporate Boundary

4/18/2014 3:08:23 PM Path: G:\Projects\457457-G1-001\GIS\Figure 1.1 Study Area.mxd

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**Figure 1.1**  
**Study Area Map**  
Antelope County, Nebraska





# History

The following account of Neligh's history was written by Ruth A. Wagner; it can be found on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's "Virtual Nebraska" website. This article and historic images of the community can be found by going to <http://www.casde.unl.edu/history/counties/antelope/neligh/>.

Neligh (pronounced Nee'Lee), near the center of Antelope County, is one of the towns with a name that is not duplicated elsewhere in the United States.

In 1872, John Neligh, impressed by the advantage offered by the Elkhorn River for water power, purchased land from the Omaha & Northwestern Railroad. He immediately contracted for brick to build a mill, and set about building a dam across the river. Machinery was installed for a saw mill where the cottonwood was made into lumber for homesteaders and timbers for use in the construction of a flour mill. Even prior to the coming of the railroad, large shipments of flour were made to the Black Hills by wagon train.



*Neligh Mills, one of the first structures in Neligh, as it appears today.*

Surveyed in 1873, its plat was not filed until 1875. By then homes and businesses dotted the area. The land office, the only one in this part of the state, was established in 1880 (about the time that the Fremont, Elkhorn & Missouri Valley Railroad arrived) and the building boom began. In a few years, Neligh challenged Oakdale for the county seat. After a bitter struggle, Neligh won. The records were moved on January 1, 1884.

Neligh was progressive from the start. A water system was established in 1886, and a volunteer fire department organized the following year. Electric street lights were turned on in 1890. The steady growth continued until 1894, when a severe drought caused a set-back. However, by 1900 the town had recovered and street lights appeared. A Carnegie library was built in 1911.

The "Neligh Journal" was published in 1875, and in 1879, "The Republican" appeared. The "Neligh Leader," established in 1885, was edited by three generations of the Best family. Purchased by Loren Fry, it celebrated 100 years of continuous publication. The "Neligh News," established in 1915, was also purchased by Fry.

A school district was organized in January 1872. In 1896 it became a 12-year institution. Many buildings were added in the west and east wards to accommodate the growing enrollment over the years. In 1975 the Neligh and Oakdale school districts merged to provide the education for students in the area. From 1881-99, Neligh was the home of Gates Academy, established by the Congregational Church.



*The second railroad depot, ca. 1912. Note mill in the background and freight truck at the left. Photo courtesy of <http://www.casde.unl.edu/>.*



*The beautiful Antelope County Courthouse. Note antelope above the entrance, and veterans' memorial on lawn. Photo courtesy of <http://www.casde.unl.edu/>.*



A street carnival on main street 1908, in front of the old Union Store, currently housing Educational Service Unit #8. Photo courtesy of <http://www.casde.unl.edu/>.



Laying cornerstone for Neligh High School, 1913. Photo courtesy of <http://www.casde.unl.edu/>.



Photo courtesy of <http://www.casde.unl.edu/>.



The band, in army uniforms, play at a Bond Rally, 1917, downtown Neligh. [Nebraska State Historical Society]. Photo courtesy of <http://www.casde.unl.edu/>.



Photo courtesy of <http://www.casde.unl.edu/>.

The following historic account of Neligh can be found on the City of Neligh's website at <http://www.neligh.org/city-hall/history/>. More information can be found by calling the Antelope County Historical Society at (402) 887-5046.

### The Mill

Shortly after founding the town, [John] Neligh located his mill in the southern part of town. The original two-story mill was built with bricks made by John J. Crawford, using local clay. When the financial panic of 1873 interrupted John Neligh's plans for the town he had founded, he returned to West Point, Nebraska, selling his Neligh interests, including the mill, to William C. Galloway and William B. Lambert. By 1882, the mill had a capacity of 250 bushels a day. In 1886, steel rollers replaced the stone-grinding burs, producing more finely ground white flour and new machinery that increased the daily output to 500 barrels. He also purchased equipment that supplied electric power to Neligh citizens. As large corporations began taking over flour production, the operation ceased milling flour in 1952 but continued to produce livestock feed. In 1965, the mill closed its doors. The persistent efforts of Neligh citizen Margaret Pierson brought the mill and its machinery to the attention of the Nebraska State Historical Society, and the mill is now a Nebraska State Historical Site.

### Stealing the Courthouse

The first towns in Antelope County, Oakdale and Neligh, engaged in a 10 year feud over the location of the county seat. In 1871, Oakdale settlers failed to stipulate a county seat during an election for the county's organization, while John Neligh's messenger carrying the petition to name Neligh as the county seat lost his way en route. In 1872, state officials declared Oakdale the county seat. Neligh challenged their choice in four elections and won the final vote in October 1883. Neligh began serving as the government center on January 1, 1884. After a mill levy passed, work began on the official structure, with the total cost not to exceed \$1,500. Fred Thornton was the architect, and T.H. Benton supplied bricks from his Neligh brickyard. The building was dedicate on January 8, 1885.

### Gates College

In May of 1881, the Columbus Association of Congregational Churches met at Oakdale to offer to maintain a college in the area. Two large bids were put forward by Neligh and Oakdale. Neligh's bid of \$7,000 and forty acres of land was chosen. The college was named for H.N. Gates, Superintendent of the Congregational Churches of the State. The main building stood on a hill northeast of town. Gates became a college in 1892, attracting students from across the country. It was the only Nebraska college between the Platte River and the Dakota Territory for several years. Gates became an academy in 1899 and was discontinued in 1914.

# Population

*The residents of Neligh are the lifeblood of the community. The people that live, work, and visit Neligh everyday are what make the community “tick”. Understanding the population is just as important as understanding the wants and needs in the community. Analyzing demographics is important to the Comprehensive Plan because it becomes the basis for prioritizing future growth. All other plan elements depend on an assessment of existing and changing population characteristics and the needs of future population. In order to accurately plan for the growth of Neligh, we first must consider the past and current populations before we can make projections for the future. Population projections are significant because they assist communities with a vision for where they will be in five, ten, and even fifteen years. This will in turn help decision-makers plan for social, economic, and physical infrastructure with the purpose of meeting the community’s future needs and demands.*

The 2010 Census data, which was released during the first few months of 2011, showed the City of Neligh had a 75 percent return rate for mail-in surveys. This was in-line with both the State and National averages of 77 percent and 74 percent, respectively. In 2000, the participation rate for Neligh was 84 percent for mail-in surveys. Having a high participation rate leads to higher accuracy levels for data reported by the Census Bureau as opposed to having a low rate of Census participation which causes the Census Bureau to make estimates from the minimal data provided. Neligh saw a three percent decrease in population from 2000 to 2010, or a total of 52 persons from the 2000 population of 1,651 to 1,599 in 2010. Neligh’s population is 97.2 percent White and 4.2 percent of the population is Hispanic or Latino of any race. The 2010 Census reported that there are 67 persons living in Neligh that are of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity which is the largest population sector other than White-alone. Almost four percent, or 58 persons, of Neligh’s Hispanic or Latino population declared Mexican as their race. The Hispanic or Latino population sector has significantly grown since the 2000 Census, when there were only 24 persons of Hispanic or Latino ethnicity living in Neligh which was only one and a half percent of the total population.

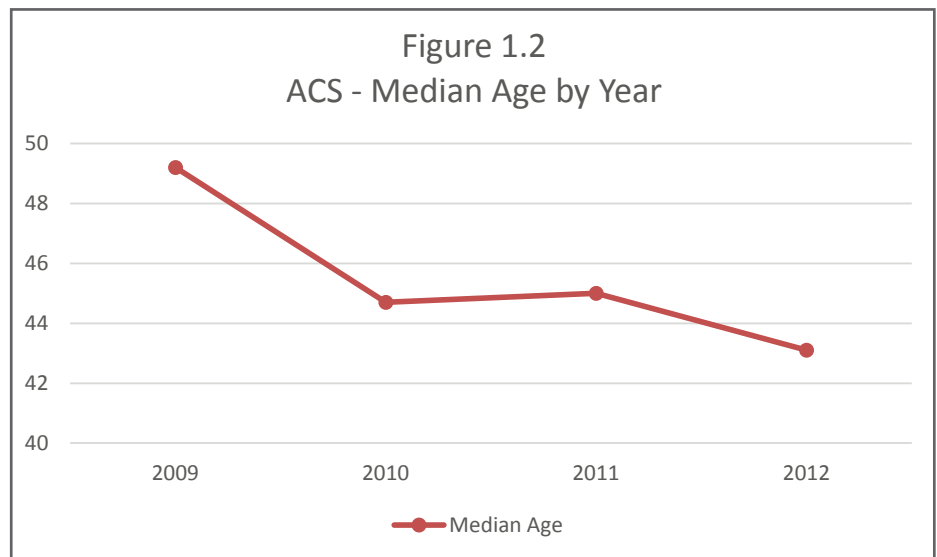
**Table 1.1** shows a comparison of Neligh’s population changes between 2000 and 2010 with surrounding communities that have similar characteristics to Neligh. Of the six communities in the region, four saw a decrease in population and only two showed an increase in total population. All of these communities have many of the same challenges that Neligh faces with growth, development, and trying to attract residents to their communities. Two of the communities saw an eight percent decrease in population in the ten-year span while Neligh experienced a three percent decrease. This data shows City leaders that regardless of a community’s size and location, they are still liable to population loss; proving that cities must continually work to retain the existing population and attract new residents.

Table 1.1 Comparable Population Changes, Neligh, 2000-2010				
Community	2000	2010	Difference	% of Change
Neligh	1,651	1,599	-52	-3.1%
O'Neill	3,733	3,705	-28	-0.8%
Atkinson	1,244	1,245	1	0.1%
Albion	1,797	1,650	-147	-8.2%
Madison	2,367	2,438	71	3.0%
Plainview	1,353	1,246	-107	-7.9%

Source: US Census Bureau



Gender is another facet to consider when analyzing the population. Over 52 percent of Neligh’s population is female and almost 48 percent of the population is male. The median age for women is 49.4 years-old, which is slightly higher than the male median age of 42.7. The median age for all of Neligh’s residents is 47.1. This is slightly higher than the County’s median age of 46.6 and both numbers are higher than the State’s median ages of 36.2. Neligh’s median age in 2000 was 43.7 which was still slightly higher than Antelope County’s 2000 median age of 40.6. The decennial census data provides historical data to utilize; but the American Community Survey shows more recent data on an annual basis from 2009. **Figure 1.2** shows the change in median age reported by the ACS from 2009-2012. Each year has an estimate with margin of error reported. Neligh’s ACS reported median ages are 49.2 ( $\pm 7.1$ ) for 2009, 44.7 ( $\pm 3.6$ ) for 2010, 45 ( $\pm 4.7$ ) for 2011, and 43.1 ( $\pm 5.2$ ) for 2012.



The reported ACS data shows a steady decrease in median age for Neligh’s residents since 2010 supporting the theory of Neligh tapping into the ‘Legacy Migration’ phase that has been taking place in communities across the Great Plains region. ‘Legacy Migration’ is a phrase being used to describe the influx of the younger generation heading back to their hometowns or their “legacy”. Neligh’s residents believe the City has seen an influx of younger generation residents moving to or back to the community. The annual release of the ACS data supports this theory showing a decrease in median age from 2009 to 2012. Age and gender differences can affect housing, recreation, community services, and businesses that will be desired in Neligh because of the differences in wants and expectations for amenities between men and women as well as between differing ages. Therefore, it is important to monitor and understand the changes in the community and how they affect the overall needs for the future of the City.

**Table 1.2** shows the history of Neligh’s population has fluctuated between each decennial census; however, Neligh has not seen a dramatic increase or decrease in population when looking at the overall change between 1930 and 2010. In this time span, Neligh experienced a three percent decrease in population, with the City’s largest population reaching 1,893 residents in 1980. Between 1980 and 2010, the City’s population decreased by 15.5 percent, but recent data shows a slower rate of decline. Most rural communities in Nebraska are experiencing an overall decline in population, and a previous table shows many communities near Neligh are undergoing large declines. Neligh has experienced fluctuation in total population reported during the decennial census, making projecting future populations more complicated when using a historical analysis method because of the variability. Neligh is a progressive community with proactive City leaders and community stakeholders. The City has a lot to offer to residents including a variety of job opportunities through a myriad of different industries. It is important for Neligh to stay ahead of the curve as a progressive, proactive community in order to continually attract new people and families to town, and to continually take advantage of the Legacy Migration that is taking shape in the Great Plains Region.

**Table 1.2 Population History, Neligh, 1930-2010**

Year	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
<b>Population</b>	1,649	1,796	1,822	1,776	1,764	1,893	1,742	1,651	1,599

Source: Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Census Bureau

**Table 1.3 Population by Age Cohorts, Neligh, 2010**

Age Cohort	Number	Percent
<b>Total Population</b>	1599	--
<b>Under 5 years</b>	91	5.7
<b>5-9 years</b>	96	6
<b>10-14 Years</b>	113	7.1
<b>15-19 years</b>	98	6.1
<b>20-24 years</b>	54	3.4
<b>25-29 years</b>	87	5.4
<b>30-34 years</b>	65	4.1
<b>35-39 years</b>	85	5.3
<b>40-44 years</b>	69	4.3
<b>45-49 years</b>	117	7.3
<b>50-54 years</b>	110	6.9
<b>55-59 years</b>	115	7.2
<b>60-64 years</b>	115	7.2
<b>65-69 years</b>	75	4.7
<b>70-74 years</b>	79	4.9
<b>75-79 years</b>	58	3.6
<b>80-84 years</b>	61	3.8
<b>85 years and over</b>	111	7
<b>Median Age</b>	47.1	

Source: U.S. Census 2010

The Census Bureau divides the total population into four-year groups called “cohorts”. A cohort is a set of individuals, grouped together based on experiencing the same event within the same time interval. Each decennial Census presents population data in cohorts. These cohorts range from under five years of age to the last cohort which is 85 years and over. **Table 1.3** shows all of the 18 cohorts, from the 2010 Census, and the corresponding percentages of the total population for each cohort.



## Figure 1.3 Population Pyramid

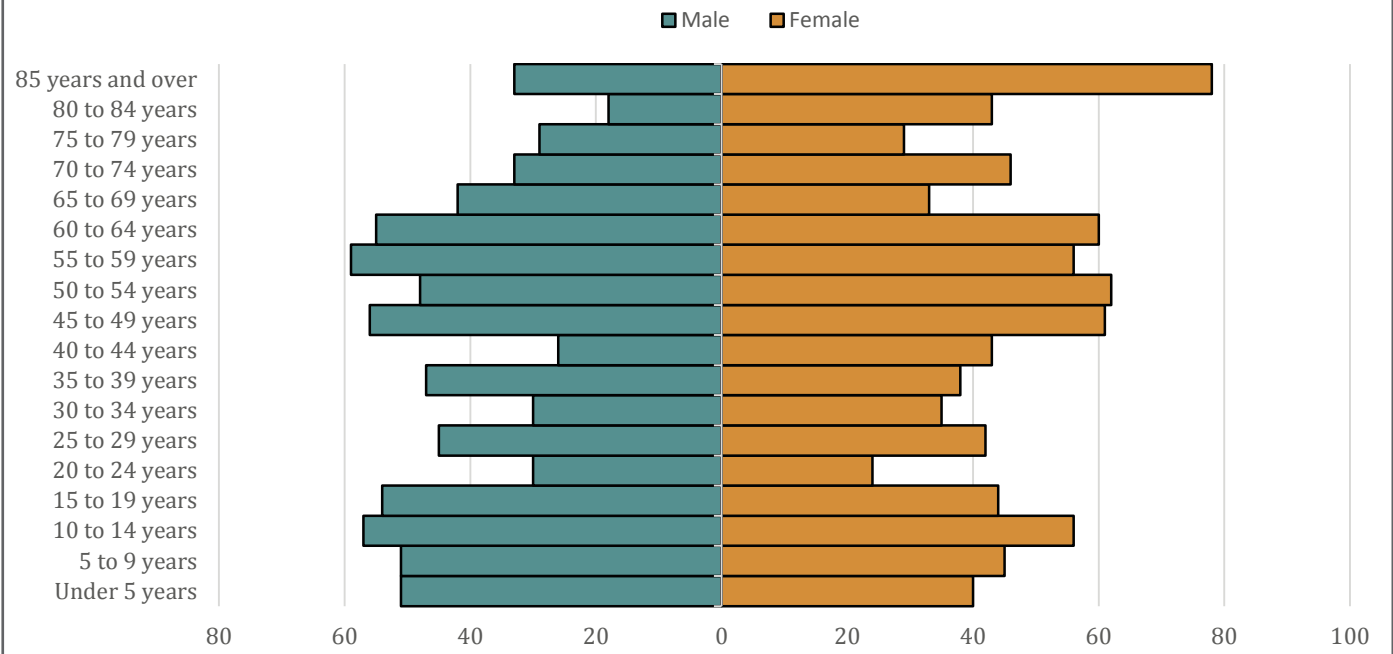


Figure 1.3 Population Pyramid - Neligh, 2010

Reported by the 2010 Census, 23 percent of the population was under 18 years-old. Of the City’s 1,599 residents, 24 percent, or 384 people, were 65 or older in 2010; this number is important because 65 is the common age of retirement, although trends now show the retirement age is starting to rise. **Figure 1.3** shows a population pyramid for Neligh’s 2010 Census population based on age and gender. A population pyramid is a series of bar charts set on a horizontal axis. The 18 bars represent each of the 18 cohorts with the male population being represented on the left side of the chart and the female population numbers being represented on the right side of the chart. A population pyramid that shows a healthy viable population has a large base of children and young adults and a much smaller number of elderly persons. A population pyramid uses two assumptions, with the first assuming that the community exists to meet the need of its residents. The government and other quasi-governmental agencies provide public/quasi-public uses including schools, Churches, medical facilities, emergency services, and public infrastructure to meet the needs of the public. The second assumption is that people have needs and expectations that change with age. A self-sustaining community is home to a larger number of children than elderly persons.

The population pyramid for Neligh shows a large female population over 85 years or over as well as a large section of middle-aged cohorts. Neligh’s population pyramid also shows a large number of younger generation cohorts; however, the pyramid does not show complete sustainability based on the 2010 Census data. In order for Neligh to grow, based on the 2010 population pyramid, the community will have to rely on in-migration to attract new families and depend on new and existing families to expand the base of the pyramid. Most rural communities in Nebraska have an aging population with a population pyramid that looks like an upside-down pyramid. Neligh’s pyramid has an overall larger base than a top, but the base of the population, or the younger cohorts, needs to continue to expand in order to truly create a pyramid showing future community growth.

Based on 2010 Census data there are a few cohorts that are drastically different than the majority, including the two cohorts that comprise the 35 to 39 year-olds and the two cohorts that comprise the 75 to 84 year olds because those cohorts experienced large decreases in population from 2000 to 2010. The two cohorts that comprise the 55 to 64 year olds saw the largest increase between 2000 and 2010. The 25-29 and 5-9 year old cohorts experienced an increase in population during the ten-year time period; however, the two others cohorts that make-up the school-aged children bracket experienced a decrease.

The largest cohort of population is 45-49 year-olds which makes up 7.3 percent of the population. The 20-24 year-olds make up the smallest percent of the population at 3.4 percent. Although this is not a large portion of the total residents in Neligh, it is not uncommon for this age range. This cohort is the typical age for college students and young professionals just entering the workforce; therefore, it is common to see a lower population percentage for this particular cohort. The 25-29 year olds experienced over a one percent increase in population, or 21 people, in this age group from 2000 to 2010 and in 2010 the 25-29 year olds made-up almost 5.5 percent of the total population. This cohort also falls into the young professional category which is an important cohort to attract to the community. Although, it is common to have a smaller percentage of college-aged people living in Neligh it is important for the community to attract those potential residents and young professionals after they graduate. Attracting young professionals and families is challenging in a smaller community; however, the legacy migration trend that is beginning to happen in the Great Plains region could positively affect Neligh in the coming years. This cohort is also more likely to stay in the community, plant roots, and start having a family of their own which adds more benefits to the community.

Job creation is the main “pull factor” for people moving into a community. If the City of Neligh and its businesses can continue to create more job opportunities, people will come to fill those jobs. It is also important to provide amenities and adequate housing for potential new residents. Attracting and keeping the young ‘creative class’ generation is imperative. The ‘creative class’ is a socioeconomic class of workers that bring new ideas, art, science, and technology together. Being able to draw these people in and to retain them as residents is critical in growing Neligh. Creating activities or a social group to help new community members get involved with current residents is a way for the community to reach out to new residents. A Young Professionals group or even an annual community dinner recognizing new community members would be beneficial for Neligh’s new residents. Another way to encourage young people to stay in the community or move back after furthering their education is to create a program that would provide job training opportunities specifically relating to businesses located in the community that high school students or recent high school graduates could participate in.



Photos courtesy of the Neligh, Nebraska Facebook page.

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

The history and apparent trends in Neligh’s history are important aspects in making projections for the community’s future population. Projecting Neligh’s population is key to understanding the future demographic character of the community. These projections help to determine the City’s future land use and community service needs and policies. **Table 1.4** shows the different population growth scenarios for Neligh until 2025.

<b>Table 1.4 Population Projections, Neligh, 2010-2025</b>				
<b>Annual Growth Rate Percentages</b>	<b>2010</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2025</b>
<b>Trend 1 (-0.03%)</b>	1,599	1,597	1,594	1,592
<b>Trend 2 (1.45%)</b>	1,599	1,718	1,847	1,984
<b>Trend 3 (-0.68%)</b>	1,599	1,545	1,494	1,443
<b>Trend 4 (-0.31%)</b>	1,599	1,574	1,550	1,526
<b>Trend 5 (0.50%)</b>	1,599	1,639	1,681	1,723

Source: Census Bureau, M&A

The first four trends are annual growth rate percentages coming from historic trends depicted by historic decennial Census data. Trend 1 is the annual growth rate percentage relating to the overall historic population trend from 1930 to 2010, which was a three percent decrease over the 80-year period. If the community was going to experience the overall rate of population change that it experienced over the past eight decades, then Trend 1 would be the approximate population figures for Neligh in the future. Trend 2 is the historic trend difference between 1940 and 1950, a 1.45 percent increase over the ten-year period, that was forecasted to the three time periods of 2015, 2020, and 2025. This scenario shows a steady increase in population over the projected years. Trend 3 shows the projected population based on the slight decline between 1960 and 1970. Trend 4 shows the decrease of population Neligh experienced between 2000 and 2010 and what the City’s population would look like in 2015, 2020, and 2025 if they experienced the same rate of decline. Trend 5 is not based on historic trends; however, it could be considered relative to some historic trends that have occurred. This growth rate percentage was determined by community members during a public input session to be a goal for the City to work to achieve an annual half percent growth rate. This is a feasible growth rate for the City to work to achieve, and several initiatives outlined in this Comprehensive Plan will provide community stakeholders with a strategies to complete in order to attract people to the community. Of course, populations do not change at a constant rate every year; however, these numbers give an example of what the population could look like at the five different projected time intervals.

There are differences in the five population projection trends shown in **Table 1.4**. This table helps to show City leaders what the population could look like over the next 5-15 years if the historic trends stay true into the community's future. There are a couple of things that could completely change the scene of Neligh. A major local industry or employer closing its doors or a new manufacturing business moving to town or into the region would drastically change the population of Neligh. In any community, this historic population fluctuation is typical, especially in a small rural community like Neligh. Therefore, it is important for City leaders to be prepared for a multitude of scenarios and to understand that doing nothing for the community is not an option. City leaders need to stay vigilant in the growth, success, and sustainability of the community in order to progress and move forward. Ways for City leaders to encourage growth are to have land available for both residential and commercial/industrial growth, incentivize development to encourage more opportunities, establish a successful business and retention program, and be willing to get involved and make opportunities happen with investment from the City.



*Photo courtesy of the Neligh, Nebraska Facebook page.*

Families are important to the viability of any community, including Neligh. A family, whether it is a one or two parent household, would add at least one worker to the local workforce, children into the school system, a rented or owned residence, more people to buy groceries in town, another vehicle to fill with gas, etc. It adds one more set of persons that have a vested interest in the welfare of the community. Families make up approximately 57.6 percent, or 407, of all occupied households in Neligh. Approximately 337 “family households”, live in owner-occupied homes while 70 families live in renter-occupied households. A household is considered to be a “family household” when at least one member of the household is related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption. “Non-family households,” those consisting of people living alone and households who do not have any members related to the householder, make up 42.4 percent of all occupied housing units in Neligh with 159 and 141 non-families living in owner-occupied and renter-occupied units, respectively. Based on the 2010 Census, 47 percent of all family households, or 332 total households, are husband-wife households, 23 homes have a male householder with no wife present, and 52 homes have a female householder with no husband present. There are 174 households in Neligh that have children under the age of 18 living at home.



**Table 1.5 Educational Attainment, Neligh, 2012**

<b>Educational Attainment</b>	<b>Estimate</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Population 25 years and over</b>	1,041 (±94)	--
<b>Less than 9th grade</b>	30 (±16)	2.9% (±1.5)
<b>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</b>	75 (±28)	7.2% (±2.5)
<b>High school graduate (Includes equivalency)</b>	350 (±57)	33.6% (±4.4)
<b>Some college, no degree</b>	236 (±41)	22.7% (±3.3)
<b>Associate's degree</b>	116 (±38)	11.1% (±3.6)
<b>Bachelor's degree</b>	186 (±43)	17.9% (±3.7)
<b>Graduate or professional degree</b>	48 (±21)	4.6% (±2.0)

Source: ACS 2008-2012

Educational attainment is yet another component to analyze in order to better understand your community's population base. The 2008-2012 American Community Survey (ACS) shows there were 1,041 (±94) people 25 years-old and older living in Neligh. The ACS also reported 11.1 (±3.6) percent of the 25 and older population has an Associate's degree and 17.9 (±3.7) percent of Neligh's 25 and older population has a bachelor's degree. Approximately 4.6 (±2.0) percent of the population has also received their graduate or professional degree. **Table 1.5** shows the Educational Attainment for Neligh. These educational attainment figures are almost identical to Antelope County's figures for an associate and graduate or professional degrees of 11.4 (±1.9) percent and 4.6 (±1.0) percent, respectively. Neligh's percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree is much higher at 17.9 percent than Antelope County's percentage of 11.2 (±1.4). Although Neligh has a larger percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree than Antelope County they fall slightly below the State's percentage of residents with a bachelor's degree of 19.0 (±0.2) percent. Approximately 9.1 (±0.2) percent of Nebraska's residents have a Graduate or Professional degree which is higher than Neligh's average; however, Neligh has a large amount of residents who have some form of a higher education degree in comparison to other small rural communities in Nebraska. Educational attainment levels should continue to grow over the next decade due to the growing demand for American's to get a college education. This societal change can be seen all around the country, but smaller communities are having a harder time trying to attract and retain persons with a bachelor's degree or higher.

Throughout its history, Neligh has seen population changes, even in the past ten years. There has been an increase in children under the age of ten from 2000 to 2010. There has also been an increase in young professionals between the ages of 25 and 30 living in Neligh. Development of community services and amenities coupled with housing development and job creation are the only ways to encourage more families to move to Neligh. Capitalizing on the recent in-migration of young professionals will help improve the community's sustainability without having to depend on in-migration of residents in the future because young professionals have a tendency to place their roots in the community when they decide to start a family. The more young families that live in Neligh, the larger percentage of young (under 18 years old) people will help support the future of the City.

Twenty-three percent of Neligh's population is under the age of 18 which is a group of cohorts that likes to be active both indoors and outdoors. Community members, of all ages, seem to be large supporters of the Neligh-Oakdale Warriors and community's student population in general. Providing amenities for this age group is also essential to provide a good quality of life for families as well as to successfully attract these students back to the community when they start their families. Things such as summer sports leagues and public and private recreational facilities are a great place for the 18 and under crowd to congregate.

Between 2000 and 2010 the 55-64 year-old cohorts saw a large increase in population. Because of the nature of life, the people in these cohorts will continue to grow older and could possibly retire in Neligh, if they have not already. These cohorts, which include empty-nesters tend to lead a different lifestyle than when they had young children at home. Empty-nesters like to dine out or go for walks around the community; they like to enjoy the freedom of being on their own schedule again. Neligh's Downtown District, Library, eateries, and some of the existing recreational facilities are all excellent amenities that many empty-nesters love to take advantage of in their community. As previously stated, 24 percent of Neligh's population is 65 years and older. Not only are these people empty-nesters, most likely they are retired or at least thinking about retirement in their near future. Community services such as an active Senior Center and ease of pedestrian traffic through sidewalk connectivity and/or hike/bike trails can promote a healthy quality of life for this cohort. It is important to provide amenities and services that will attract young families as well as provide a high quality of life for retirees in order to keep them in Neligh.

Population projections are meant to help decision-makers understand where the community is headed. The scenarios presented in this Comprehensive Plan are provided as a guide to decision-makers in order to know what to plan for and what types of public facilities will be needed. In order to prepare for future population changes, leaders need to continually gather and analyze population data. Every year leaders should review school attendance data, talk with local professionals, and be aware of building permits or home sales in comparison with previous years' totals. Waiting every ten years for Census data to be presented is not as beneficial for the community as staying up-to-date with the ever changing information. Utilizing other sources, revisiting the Comprehensive Plan or other community plans, and continually working with stakeholder groups will encourage leaders to stay active and up-to-date on the ever changing society that is present today as well as provide City leaders with an opportunity to market the community.



*Neligh's community members attend a meeting with Miller & Associates discussing the elements of the Comprehensive Plan. Photo courtesy of the Neligh, Nebraska Facebook page.*

# Housing



A Housing Market Study was completed during the same time period as this Comprehensive Plan. The Housing Market Study is a separate document but fully relates in whole to this Comprehensive Plan. All of the data analysis and outlined housing goals and objectives can be found in the Housing Market Study, this is the executive summary from the report.

Housing is a crucial piece to the prosperity of Neligh. Whether it is identifying needs for new market-rate housing or ways to encourage development of affordable housing options, Neligh must work to constantly assess and improve its housing market. In order to attract more people to the community, there has to be a supply of well-maintained, available, affordable, and safe housing. Projecting for future demand is an important, but sometimes difficult task when trying to promote growth in any community. Addressing the issues of old housing stock that does not meet the needs of today's renters and buyers is also another challenge that faces City leaders. Community growth and revitalization can be made possible through the identification of housing needs in Neligh. When considered in conjunction with population data, housing information analysis will enable Neligh to identify housing developments that are most appropriate for its success.

The City of Neligh has seen a decrease in population based on recent decennial census results. However, housing professionals and City leaders have noticed a recent increase in families moving into the community. It will be important for City officials to continue to monitor changes in the annual report of the American Community Survey data to determine if the attitude of these professionals is showing true in data results.

A large majority of the City of Neligh's housing stock was constructed in 1939 or earlier; however, the City has experienced some recent construction with two building permits issued in 2011, one building permit issued in 2012, and one building permit issued in 2013. There have also been seven lots sold in Country Side Acres Subdivision in 2014; therefore, the City should see an increase in building permit applications in the coming months.



The overall condition of the housing stock was rated 'average' at 3.57, on a scale of 1 to 5 with 5 being the highest. This rating was based on an exterior analysis of the City's housing stock. Housing professionals shared that interior updates need to be made in order to provide potential buyers/renters with modern amenities.

Approximately 70 percent of all occupied homes are owner-occupied and 30 percent of all homes are renter-occupied. Neligh needs to continue future housing development to fit the same 70/30 ratio for potential homebuyers and renters.

Housing professionals shared that buyers are looking for homes valued between \$50,000 and \$100,000 with some buyers looking at homes valued over \$100,000. It was shared that mid-level housing valued between \$120,000 and \$130,000 is a target range for many mature families looking to purchase homes. The median home value in Neligh is \$67,400 ( $\pm 5,606$ ) based on 2008-2012 ACS data.

The median rent for units in Neligh is \$559 ( $\pm \$61$ ) based on 2008-2012 ACS data; however, the local housing professionals believed most units were rented in the \$300 to \$400 price range. Most residents believe that the rent is too high in comparison to the condition and suitability of the rental units.

It is estimated that the City has approximately 38 existing structures that are deteriorated and not suitable for residence; therefore, they should be demolished. It is also assumed that approximately one percent of all housing structures will "fall off the market" each year due to aging structures and conditions. The City must not only work on constructing new housing units but also demolishing and replacing the structures that "fall off the market".

After all of the data analysis was completed, it was determined that the City will need to construct 36 additional housing units (25 for purchase and 11 for rent) by the year 2025 in order to provide housing stock for existing and potential residents. That number was based off of a -0.31 percent annual growth rate matching the historic trend of population growth between 2000 and 2010. If the City grows at their desired target rate of one half percent each year, then 127 additional housing units (89 for purchase and 38 for rent) by the year 2025 would need to be constructed.

By the year 2025, new homes will need to be constructed, regardless of population growth, in order to replace the number of vacant, dilapidated structures.

Increasing the number of units and variety of rental housing stock as well as improving the current rental stock is essential to the growth of the City of Neligh. However, it will also be important to provide mid-level housing for purchase to residents needing a larger, move-in ready home.

The City should follow these objectives to improve the housing market in Neligh: clean-up vacant out lots and uninhabitable properties; work with local businesses to determine housing needs for employees; create Investment Group to develop spec homes; promote infill development; create City-funded home-owner rehabilitation revolving loan fund; encourage property upkeep; and, locate areas for future residential development.





# Economy

*The ability for Neligh to predict development needs and future land uses relies heavily on economic trends. Therefore, a description and analysis of local economic factors is a crucial component of the City's Comprehensive Plan. Economic development is a major goal for many small town planning efforts. It is not a "once-and-done" event but rather a continual process that requires on-going efforts to make advancements. Communities differ greatly and no one economic development strategy fits all communities. In fact, economic development in rural communities often becomes community development. It requires active engagement of the community, its leadership, its organizations, its institutions, and its businesses. The keys to greater productivity are innovation, creativity, new technologies, and public and private investment. The private sector is the primary source of economic activity, but the public sector plays an important, and ideally, complementary role. Therefore, it is essential that both the public and private sectors be analyzed and included in the goal and strategy development for economic development in Neligh.*



A strong labor force is extremely important to a City of any size, especially during these trying economic times. Although Nebraska was not hit as hard through the 2007-08 economic crisis as other states were, it is vital for communities to create jobs in order to attract new residents and grow the tax base. Analyzing a labor force requires employment figures, income levels, and an understanding of the economic base. Residents 16 and older are considered to be of working age; therefore, in order to study the workforce population we only consider those that are 16 and older. The 2008-2012 ACS reported 1,241 ( $\pm 114$ ) people are 16 or older and 800 ( $\pm 89$ ) persons are in the labor force. The other 441 ( $\pm 81$ ) people are not considered to be a part of the labor force because they are neither employed nor officially classified as unemployed. This classification could be a variety of reasons such as full-time students, retired persons, volunteers, stay-at-home parents, persons unable to work due to a disability, etc.

As stated above, the ACS estimated 1,241 ( $\pm 114$ ) of Neligh's residents to be in the labor force. The ACS also reported of that 1,241 people in the labor force, 791 ( $\pm 86$ ) were employed while 9 ( $\pm 9$ ) people were unemployed. Based on the ACS, only 0.7 ( $\pm 0.7$ ) percent of Neligh's residents were unemployed which is starkly different than the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) 2012 national unemployment rate of 7.9 percent. Unemployment data is not as readily available for smaller communities which means we have to follow larger trends, rely on national data services, and follow local trends. Nebraska has weathered the recent economic downturn better than a majority of the nation, so luckily, Nebraska's communities they share in the same goodwill. With such a low unemployment rate in the City it is very challenging for businesses to find qualified employees.

There are several different job opportunities in the City of Neligh including the medical and educational systems, retail and service sector businesses, and many different types of agricultural and manufacturing businesses. Although there are many job opportunities in Neligh for their residents, some of them commute to work in other communities. This is fairly typical in the smaller communities across the United States including Neligh. Based on the Employee Housing Survey many employees also commute to Neligh for work. Commuting patterns for Neligh's residents include a mean travel time to work of 14.4 ( $\pm 2.3$ ) minutes. Approximately 665 ( $\pm 82$ ) people drive to work alone while 57 ( $\pm 20$ ) or 7.5 percent of Neligh's residents carpool. Approximately 21 ( $\pm 13$ ) people

**Table 1.6 Household Income, Neligh, 2012**

<b>Household Income</b>	<b># of Households</b>
<b>Less than \$15,000</b>	86 (±38)
<b>\$15,000-\$24,999</b>	133 (±47)
<b>\$25,000-\$34,999</b>	76 (±23)
<b>\$35,000-\$49,999</b>	107 (±30)
<b>\$50,000-\$74,999</b>	153 (±35)
<b>\$75,000-\$99,999</b>	87 (±29)
<b>\$100,000-\$149,999</b>	34 (±16)
<b>\$150,000-\$199,999</b>	11 (±9)
<b>\$200,000 or more</b>	3 (±4)
<b>Median household income (dollars)</b>	\$41,282 (±2,809)

Source: ACS 2008-2012 Estimates, ESRI

in Neligh’s total workforce, work from home. Based on 2011 U.S. Census Bureau, Center for Economic Studies, 628 people commute into Neligh for work while 448 of Neligh’s residents commute to areas outside of the corporate limits for work. Based on the same 2011 data source, there are 943 total employees employed in the City of Neligh with 315 of those employees in Neligh also being residents of Neligh.

**Table 1.6** shows the household income for Neligh in 2010. Household income is defined by the Census Bureau as the following:

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

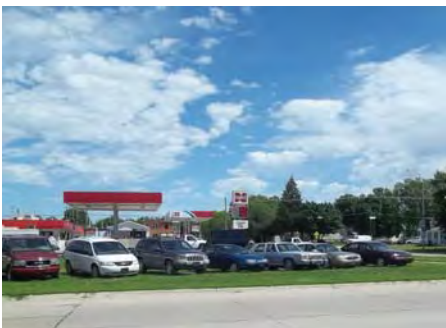
Household income data is displayed in ranges based on dollar amounts and the related number of households with an annual income that falls into the associated range. ACS reported Neligh’s median household income to be \$41,282 (±\$2,809). The ACS estimated Antelope County’s median household income to be \$40,397 which is slightly lower than the City of Neligh’s median household income. The ACS 2008-2012 estimates for the State of Nebraska’s median household income are \$51,381 which is higher than Neligh and Antelope County’s median household income. It is expected for the median household income to increase overtime due, if only, to inflation; however, based on comparisons between the increase in median household incomes for Neligh, the State of Nebraska, and the United States from 2000 to 2012, Neligh outpaced the other two geographies. Neligh’s median household income experienced a 35 percent growth from 2000 to 2012 while the State of Nebraska experienced a 30.91 percent growth and the United States experienced a 26.32 percent growth.



Neligh has a strong existing economy which is already drawing outside citizens to shop/do business in the community. However, there is always room for improvement. During our public input sessions, residents discussed the need to draw even more people into the community and to capitalize on people moving to the community. One way to do both of these things, with additional bonuses, is to market the community and what it has to offer. Several residents, during public input sessions, discussed their desire to promote tourism and focus on expanding on the economic businesses existing in the community. Results from the Community Needs Assessment Survey showed that 90 percent of respondents think that it is important and want to develop the tourism sector in Neligh. In order to attract people to the community to live or to visit, outside marketing must be done. Marketing Neligh with a brand like the one currently being used in the community “Not too small to have it all” will help to attract visitors to come to Neligh. It is still important to continue internal marketing to encourage shopping locally. Supporting local businesses and services is important and will be vital to the success of the community as a regional hub to market to outsiders.

The Downtown District is the main hub for retail and service sector businesses; however the Highway corridors, especially along Highway 275, are also very important to the community’s tax base. There are major differences in the way land is used between the Downtown District and the rest of the Highway corridors, especially on the fringe of the community. In order for the Downtown District to keep its distinct appeal, the City must focus on pedestrian friendly access to maintain the neighborhood feel that is essential for Downtown Districts; this ‘appeal’ is what helps attract people to shop in a Downtown area.

The Highway 275 corridor and the Highway 14 corridor on the southwest side of Neligh are best for businesses that require large areas of land, high visibility, and easy access from the Highway. Fortunately for Neligh, the community is facing one of the better economic development challenges possible, there is minimal land available along the Highway in the existing corporate limits. The businesses existing on the highways are successful businesses because of the high traffic volume, visibility, and easy access. Businesses along the Highway corridor should have off-street parking, larger setbacks, more green space, larger buildings, and even more signage than what is necessary for Downtown businesses while the Downtown District should focus on aesthetic continuity, pedestrian access, smaller lots and zero setbacks to promote downtown development that matches the existing businesses. It will be important for City leaders to understand the difference between the two commercial areas and encourage economic development to fit the unique identity of each area. The Downtown District is best suited for retail, entertainment, and personal service type businesses. These businesses encourage busy sidewalks which promotes safety and higher traffic for retail stores. Businesses with large traffic volume, a need for large lots, and agricultural or manufacturing is best suited along Highway 275 and Highway 14; therefore, development of those businesses should be encourage along the highway corridors in close proximity to the corporate limits so the land could be annexed if necessary.







Neligh is already home to several businesses both large and small that provide the community with basic needs, services, as well as a variety of other businesses that provide a mixture of job opportunities for residents. Job variety is important to attract new residents to move to Neligh as well as maintain the existing residents. However, it is also important to consider how businesses will affect the community. City leaders should focus on attracting businesses that can co-exist and/or support existing businesses and industries in Neligh in order to promote a self-sustaining economy. There should be an ongoing effort to develop local talent, retain jobs, and foster an environment that supports job creation, local businesses, and entrepreneurs. Economic growth should be sustainable over time and ought to provide young people with an opportunity to stay and work in the community or return after college and find a good job. These goals will require career options, affordable housing, supportive community and public services, such as access to healthcare, along with continuing education and training and cultural and recreational possibilities.

Small communities must be able to provide for all aspects of a person or family's needs in order to keep them in the community. It truly has to be a comprehensive approach to promote growth and economic development, including the analysis and development of other community needs like housing and recreational amenities. In the 1960s, economic development meant industrial recruitment, especially centered on the railroad. This industrial recruitment is better known as "smokestack chasing." However, over the past 40 years, manufacturing has declined in its contribution to the overall economy. Today, services and government jobs provide more than five out of every six jobs in America. Communities, like Neligh, must now focus their economic development efforts on self-help and self-promotion, local business creation and expansion, and strategic planning. Economic development is necessary for a community growth and for the City to maintain its quality of life, even if its population is declining.

The community as a whole is already attracting people from outside of the City limits to purchase a variety of items in Neligh. It is essential for Cities to provide residents with basic necessities but it is progressive and promising when a City can bring in money from outside sources. Business expansion or adding new inventory are a few ways that existing businesses could progress to meet more needs of Neligh's residents. Although some retail sectors are missing from the streets of Neligh, it allows room for improvement for the City. Also, there are some retail businesses that Neligh would not be able to viably support due to its close proximity to larger markets like O'Neill, Norfolk, Columbus, and Grand Island. Competing with larger towns that can easily support a variety of "big box" stores such as Wal-Mart, Target, Sears, and Menards is not easy for any small community.



Not all industry sectors would be self-sustainable businesses in Neligh. It is important for Neligh to take advantage of its location on the two highways which provides many commercial opportunities for the community that many other communities do not have. Therefore, having shovel ready sites to market to potential businesses along the highway corridor is important for a large scale economic development opportunity. But the community cannot forget to provide incentives and areas for business growth for small locally owned businesses.



Having an established retail base is difficult, but Neligh and its entrepreneurs/business owners have been working hard to maintain and expand the retail base in the community. Several businesses are expanding and several new businesses have come to the community in recent years. It is challenging for small communities to attract consumers. The Chamber of Commerce and Neligh Economic Development Office (NEDO) do a fantastic job encouraging residents to shop locally and support local business. These organizations also work hard to retain and expand local businesses; however, there is always room for improvement. Placemats in local restaurants or yard signs saying "Support your neighbors, shop locally" are the extra reminder residents need to support Neligh. Other ideas for a "shop local" campaign in Neligh could include establishing a Thankful Thursday event each week to encourage residents to show support and thanks for the local businesses and business-owners in the community by shopping at their stores or by encouraging business owners to stay open later in the evening one night a week to encourage downtown shopping. Holding events in the Downtown District is another way to draw people from the community and from outside of the community to be in Downtown Neligh.





**Table 1.7** shows employment by industry percentages for Neligh based on 2008-2012 ACS data. The largest employment industry in Neligh is educational services, health care, and social assistance with retail trade being the second largest employment industry. Both construction and public administration are the third and fourth largest employment industries, respectively.

<b>Table 1.7 Employed Population by Industry, Neligh, 2012</b>	
<b>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting, and mining</b>	4.3% (±2.0%)
<b>Construction</b>	9.7% (±3.4%)
<b>Manufacturing</b>	8.7% (±3.5%)
<b>Wholesale trade</b>	3.5% (±4.1%)
<b>Retail trade</b>	15.9% (±4.2%)
<b>Transportation and warehousing, and utilities</b>	7.6% (±3.7%)
<b>Information</b>	1.8% (±1.5%)
<b>Finance and insurance, real estate, rental, and leasing</b>	3.4% (±1.8%)
<b>Professional, scientific, management, and administrative and waste management services</b>	1.4% (±1.1%)
<b>Educational services, health care, and social assistance</b>	23.6% (±5.1%)
<b>Arts, entertainment, recreation, and accommodation and food services</b>	7.2% (±3.0%)
<b>Other services, except public administration</b>	3.4% (±2.2%)
<b>Public administration</b>	9.4% (±3.7%)

Source: ACS 2008-2012 Estimates

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

Non-basic sector industries serve the local economy and local residents; although, they will also help to bring people to Neligh from surrounding communities because these industries relate to the quality of life for residents. There are a few industries that are always considered to be non-basic sector regardless of the comparison calculations. A few of these sectors are construction, retail trade, and educational services because the purpose of these industries is to serve the local economy.



In order to establish which industries are base sectors of the local economy a simple comparison calculation is done to determine an industry's impact over the local economy versus that same industry's impact in the regional area. The calculations were computed based on 2008-2012 ACS data for Neligh and the State of Nebraska. The industries that are considered basic sectors for Neligh are transportation, warehousing, and utilities and wholesale trade. Manufacturing is always assumed to be a base-sector industry because manufacturers typically export the goods they manufacture. Based on the employment comparison with the State's manufacturing industry, Neligh does not have a specialized manufacturing sector in the community although there are several very successful manufacturing businesses. In fact, the comparison of employment percentages show that Neligh's percentage of employees in the manufacturing sector is very close to the State's percentage of employees in the manufacturing industry; therefore, if an existing manufacturing company in Neligh were to expand, the community's manufacturing sector could show an increase over the comparison of the State's manufacturing employment sector. Other sectors that are always assumed to be basic sector industries include agriculture, forestry, fishing, hunting, and mining; wholesale trade, and transportation and warehousing and utilities. As previously stated, Neligh's employment comparison shows transportation, warehousing, and utilities and wholesale trade industries are base sector industries for the community.

Another aspect to consider when comparing the basic and non-basic sectors of Neligh's economy is the job creation ratio. The analysis concluded, for Neligh, every basic sector job that is created, an additional 0.8 non-basic sector jobs will also be created or for every ten basic sector jobs that are created, eight non-basic sector jobs will be created as an effect. The non-basic sector jobs are not typically created immediately after the fact, it can take up to a couple of years before all potential jobs have been created. This relationship shows the impact of creating basic jobs in a local economy. An example situation, for every five jobs created at basic sector company, even an assumed basic sector company, such as Blackburn Manufacturing, four jobs could be created in non-basic sector businesses to support the additional employment at the basic sector company. Perhaps a job in personal services such as a restaurant, grocery store, or a local retail shop may also be created in order to better serve the other jobs that were created. Now these jobs are not necessarily directly tied to that one specific basic sector job. If the five basic sector positions were phased out one day the four other positions could still exist the next day meaning they are not directly related to one another. This comparison and analysis is used to show how different companies/businesses impact the local economy. Ultimately, basic sector employment is a major factor in the success of the local economy and the community.

**Table 1.8** shows Neligh's ten largest employers. If any of these companies were to downsize or leave Neligh, it would greatly affect the community and its economic status. As seen in the table, many of these companies employ a large amount of people; however, there are many other businesses in Neligh that still have an effect on the local economy.

Communities need all types of businesses, whether they are large or small, in order to be successful. Although not all businesses can staff a large number of employees, every business is still important to the betterment of the community. The City should also find ways to promote a good environment for entrepreneurship. Getting the "big fish," although is beneficial, is not where all of the focus should be put for economic development. Fostering an environment for small businesses that add to the character of the community will truly make Neligh unique.

<b>Table 1.8 Leading Employers, Neligh, 2014</b>	
<b>Employer</b>	<b>Number of Employees</b>
Antelope Memorial Hospital	165
Blackburn Manufacturing	50
Golden Living Center	75
Green Line Equipment	26
Morrison Farms	16
Educational Service Unit 8	130*
Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools	64
Sargent Irrigation	30
Smeal Fire Apparatus	18
Thriftway Market	45
*There are approximately 30 people employed in the Neligh Office	
Source: Neligh Economic Development Director	

Neligh is also in the planning stages of becoming a Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) Leadership Community. Being a Leadership Community would help open many more doors for Neligh in terms of growth and economic development. Neligh has a low unemployment rate and existing companies from a variety of sectors and many of these businesses are experiencing growth. It is important to continue working to attract new businesses to the community, but it is also important to support the existing businesses.

Neligh Economic Development Office (NEDO) continually works hard to provide assistance to existing and potential businesses. Northeast Nebraska Economic Development District (NENEDD) is also a great local resource for businesses in Neligh and the surrounding region. Between the two Economic Development offices, there are many resources available to businesses in Neligh. The following is list of the current programs available:

REAP Business Loans (Rural Enterprise Assistance Microenterprise Program)-this program was created by the Center for Rural Affairs as a rural microenterprise lending organization. REAP provides counseling, technical assistance, and training for small business owners as well as offers low interest loans to small businesses with five employees or less.



Rural Economic Development Loans and Grants-Because Neligh is a power generation town, the City has access to Rural Economic Development Loans and Grant (REDLG) through the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA). The City of Neligh has the ability to lend up to \$350,000 at zero percent interest. As payments are made back to the program, the money will be placed into a revolving loan fund that the City can then re-lend for another project. Money is available to non-profit and public bodies that embark on projects that create and enhance jobs.



Nebraska Advantage-The Nebraska Advantage was designed to create a business climate that makes Nebraska the preferred location for starting and growing businesses. In this progressive, pro-business tax climate, corporate income and sales taxes are reduced or virtually eliminated. More details can be found on Nebraska Advantage's website.

Northeast Center for Enterprise-Northeast Community College has launched a new endeavor that will become the choice of technical training and educational resources for the region. The purpose of the Northeast Center for Enterprise is to expand the college's rural revitalization efforts by providing advanced education and training opportunities for employers, employees, entrepreneurs, and communities.



LB840 (Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act)- The Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act (LB 840) was approved by Neligh voters in 2011 for a quarter of a percent sales tax to use for economic development. This provides the City with a financing tool to fund existing business needs, the development of new business start-ups and economic development site improvements. Currently, Neligh Economic Development Office is in charge of the Neligh Local Sales Tax Loan that was created after the passing of LB840.

Neligh Local Sales Tax Loan-After LB840 was passed in 2011, Neligh Economic Development Office has been able to offer low interest and potentially forgivable loans to businesses that are looking to expand or start-up in Neligh.



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



These programs should continually be supported by the City and its residents, because it is a great way to support local businesses while trying to expand the local economy. It is also important to maintain the Region-County-City relationship so that all resources can be utilized and so that the region is truly helping itself grow as opposed to one-man-for-himself type of strategy with economic development. Relationships and education will continually be a beneficial aspect for economic development in Neligh. Focusing efforts on education and involvement for community and economic development from the community’s youth will help to pave the way for the future of the City.

Economic growth is a challenging task, but it is extremely important for maintaining the vitality of Neligh. Neligh is taking the right steps forward, but as previously stated there is always room for improvement. Two additional items that need to be addressed in Neligh is business retention and expansion coupled with succession planning for many of the existing businesses. This is something that must be discussed for the successful sustainability of Neligh’s economic base. A succession plan will help owners plan for the longevity of their businesses and ensure that residents will maintain the quality of life they have become accustomed to in Neligh. Leaders in Neligh must be able to help change the culture of traditional economic development and re-focus efforts and energy toward new methods of development and growth. Focusing all of the City’s attention and landing the “big fish” means that the City is missing multiple opportunities for collecting many other fish that would still add value to the community. Business retention and expansion allows the existing business owners to know the City and NEDO is there for guidance and assistance when needed. It also is a way for NEDO and the City to be made aware of issues or needs of the existing businesses so they can find solutions to assist the businesses.

It will be crucial for community leaders and Economic Development personnel to stay up-to-date with the ever-changing economic world. The State of Nebraska offers many resources including Community Development Grants and educational sessions on community, housing, and economic development which the City of Neligh may be able to utilize. The City of Neligh and other stakeholder entities have done a fantastic job of being proactive for the community as well as providing funding assistance for residents and business owners in Neligh. This shows true support for the local economy, and is an important way to retain and attract businesses and residents alike.

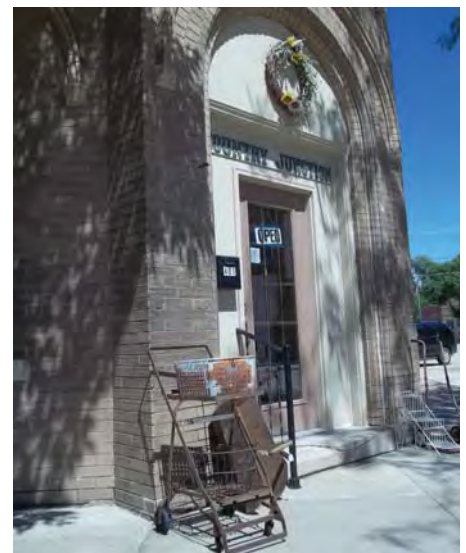
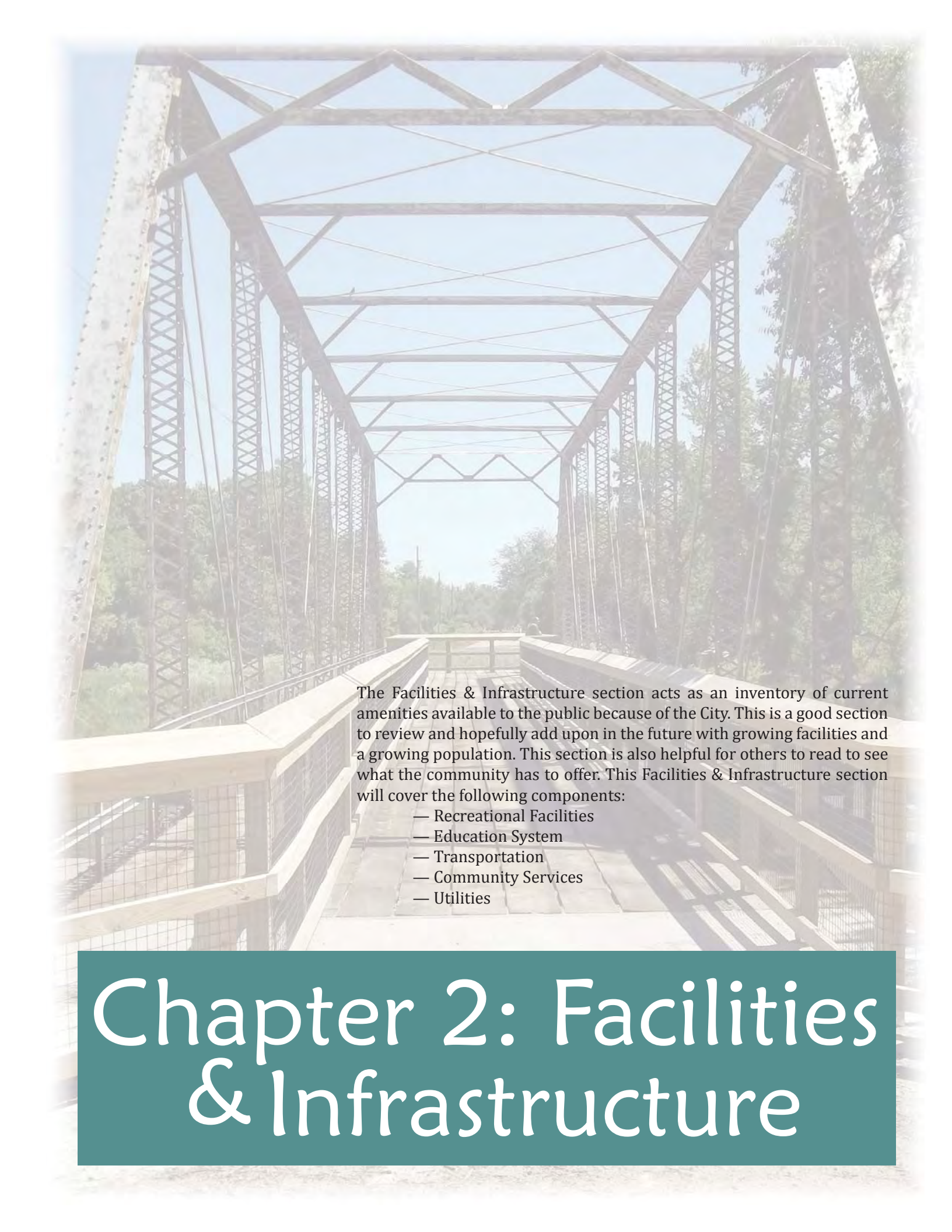




Photo courtesy of the Pitzer Digital Facebook page.







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

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

# Chapter 2: Facilities & Infrastructure



Neligh is home to several different parks and recreational opportunities from ball fields and playground equipment to a swimming pool and local wildlife areas. It is remarkable for a town the size of Neligh to have multiple unique parks spread throughout the community. Neligh's recreational attributes were a 'strength' and amenity discussed several times during the public input sessions. Neligh's list of recreational amenities includes the following:

# Recreational Facilities



## The Elkhorn River

The Elkhorn River travels through Neligh and has carved a beautiful valley through the Sandhills of Nebraska. This low-flowing river provides Neligh with relaxing and scenic views as well as a great destination for families. Possible activities for this area include tubing, tanking, four-wheeling, kayaking, and canoeing.

## Cowboy Trail

The Cowboy Trail runs from Norfolk to Valentine, passing through Neligh on its path. At 195 miles long, this is the nation's longest rails-to-trail path.

## Fred Penn Park

This park offers 8 acres of fishing area to Neligh. City regulations dictate a catch and release policy for the Largemouth Bass in this lake, but there are other species available; these include the following – Bluegill, Channel Catfish, and Common Carp. The park is also the location of Neligh's sand volleyball courts.

## Riverside Park

Riverside Park is co-located with the Antelope County Fairgrounds on the Elkhorn River. The park contains plots for tent camping along with camping pads - providing electric and water hookups, sewage dump, and Wi-Fi access. Neligh's pool is also located in Riverside Park.

## Antelope County Fairgrounds

The Antelope County Fair has been celebrated for one hundred years. The grounds are located on the Elkhorn River as part of the Riverside Park. The Fair is held every August.

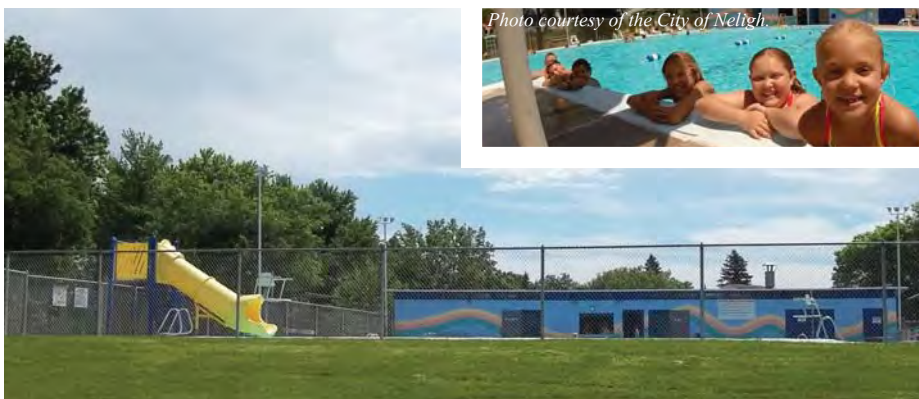






Photo courtesy of the City of Neligh. ⇨



### Grove Lake Wildlife Management Area

Grove Lake is a public lake located 20 miles north of Neligh. The lake houses Bluegill, Bullhead, Channel Catfish, Crappie, Largemouth Bass, and Northern Pike, in addition to the 200 Rainbow Trout released weekly from the Grove Lake Fish Hatchery and the Brown Trout found in surrounding creeks. Motorboats are allowed only for fishing and the maximum speed is limited to 5 mph to prevent discomfort and/or injury to other persons, vessels, and property. Grove Lake also boasts 195 acres of hunting ground with populations of deer, dove, rabbit, pheasant, quail, squirrel, turkey, and waterfowl.

### Red Wing Wildlife Management Area

The Red Wing Wildlife Management Area is a 320 acre park located 2.5 miles west of Neligh, on the Elkhorn River. The park is mostly wooded area with some grassland and marshes. It is a great place for launching canoes and kayaks, playing in the river, hunting, and fishing. For hunting and fishing, Red Wing is home to a variety of wildlife, including deer, dove, rabbit, pheasant, quail, squirrel, turkey, waterfowl, and fish including Channel Catfish, Common Carp, and Flathead Catfish.

### Ashfall Fossil Beds

Ashfall Fossil Beds State Historical Park is an active paleontologist site 29 miles Northwest of Neligh. Visitors can experience a dig with hundreds of prehistoric animal skeletons preserved in volcanic ash. A Visitors Center holds interpretive displays and a working fossil preparation laboratory. A Rhino Barn is the second building on the site which covers a portion of the fossil bearing ash bed.







### Golf the North

Golf courses in north central Nebraska and south central South Dakota participate in a golf vacation called “Golf the North”. This affordable vacation features 54 holes of golf and a two night stay for participating golfers.

There are multiple golf courses within a half hour drive of Neligh.

### Antelope Country Club

The Antelope Country Club is a 9-hole course, par 36 with a full service bar and grill. It is located two miles east of Neligh, near the Elkhorn River and Cowboy Trail. The course was built in 1940, boasting wide fairways with trees, water hazards, sand bunkers, and slick greens that make this short course fun and challenging. There is no tee time required at this golf course.

### Aquaventure

A 310 foot long raft slide, a Water Play Station with over 20 features, a wave pool, shooting geysers, and water cannons are all features that can be experienced at this water park. Aquaventure is located 30 miles east of Neligh, in Norfolk.

### Bowling

Antelope Lanes is located at 902 East 2nd Street.

*Photo courtesy of the City of Neligh.*







### Youth/Adult Programs

- Neligh Young Men’s Club
- American Legion
- American Legion Auxiliary
- Knights of Columbus
- Lions Club
- Pheasants Forever
- Shooter’s Club
- Team Mates Mentoring Program
- Neligh Travel and Camping Club
- Neligh Volunteer Fire and Rescue
- Neligh Public Library Foundation
- Friends of the Neligh Public Library
- Neligh-Oakdale Education Foundation
- Neligh Area Community Foundation
- Neligh Park Foundation
- Antelope County Health Care Foundation

### Youth Activities

There are many activities available for the youth of Neligh. Soccer club, flag football club, Karate and Taekwondo, dance, basketball, and volleyball are some of the options families have for children to be active and involved in the community.

The Neligh-Oakdale High School sports include basketball, track and field, cross country, dance, football, golf, volleyball, and wrestling. There is also a co-ed speech team, FBLA, FCCLA, one acts, student council, and marching band at the high school.

The Neligh-Oakdale Ball Program is the Baseball/Softball Program for youth in the Neligh area. Beginning at age 4, children can register for T-Ball teams, moving up through the levels to Junior Legion Baseball for boys and 13-14 League for girls. Neligh’s Ball Complex is a top-notch three field facility in Riverside Park, featuring water resistant fields. The complex is used to host several regional tournaments during the summers. More information can be found online at <http://noyouthball.com/>.



Photos courtesy of the City of Neligh.





Below is a list of potential recreational improvements or enhancements and other recreational development goals. The items listed below do not cover all of the recreational improvements that may be needed or desired in the future, but at this time these are goals or ideas that were discussed by residents at the several public input sessions held and online and mail-out surveys that were conducted during the planning process of this Comprehensive Plan.

Neligh's public swimming pool was constructed in the 1980's, because of the age of the swimming pool there are several repairs and/or updates that are needed in order to keep it functioning properly and up to par with State and Federal regulations. A Pool Study should be conducted in order to determine all of the issues present with the existing swimming pool. A Pool Study will also provide the City with a cost-benefit analysis to determine the best course of action moving forward including options of renovating/rehabilitating the existing swimming pool or constructing a new one. Residents consider the swimming pool a strength for the community, an amenity they wish to keep. The City will need to continually address this issue until a Pool Study is conducted and a final decision is made.

A major concern, and goal, for the City and its residents is to update the City's ball fields. One major improvement item is to re-do the infield for the northern most ball field in Riverside Park. In order to improve the infield, the City will need to excavate the existing infield, lay new gravel and lime to allow for proper drainage and an improved infield for the ball field. This project is important due to the number and frequency of ball games and tournaments held in Neligh. By improving the drainage for the ball field, it will ensure that the field is ready for use by avoiding as many rain delays or postponing of games due to field flooding.

Neligh has a variety of playground and picnic equipment to suit families and children of all ages. Existing park equipment should be periodically monitored to determine times for improvement or replacement to ensure Neligh's parks are a safe environment for children to play. In the future it may also be a goal for the City or the Park Board to add additional playground equipment or create an additional "neighborhood" park on the other side of the community.

Neligh is a part of the Cowboy Trail loop that uses a rails to trails program that converted old railroad right-of-way into a hike/bike trail that stretches from Norfolk to Chadron. Through the online discussion site, Mindmixer, users discussed the desire to have a concrete hike/bike trails constructed around Penn Lake to serve as an additional recreational amenity. An obvious attraction to hike/bike trails is the ease of access and use for all ages. Hike/bike trails provide a safe environment for exercising including walking, running, biking, and skating. Hike/bike trails can be constructed in phases which can add to the appeal of developing an amenity that can continue to grow and expand for residents.



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

All public restroom facilities should comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure accessibility for all of Neligh's residents and visitors. An evaluation of public facilities should be completed in order for the City to effectively budget and plan for the improvement and removal of any physical barriers in public places including recreational facilities. Such updates require planning to ensure funds are available to complete the tasks and guarantee compliance with ADA design guidelines and regulations. The City is aware of these regulations and are working hard to solve any issues. Residents on the City's Mindmixer site discussed their desire to have the restroom facility at Riverside Park updated to ensure it is ADA-compliant and to have a clean, user-friendly restroom facility.

Another option for an added recreational amenity would be the creation of a dog park. Residents on the City's Mindmixer site discussed the idea for a dog park in Neligh; one respondent shared the positive socialization benefits dog parks bring for people as well as our canine friends. This area should be fenced in to provide a space where dogs can be let off their leashes and allowed to run around. A possible location for a dog park/dog run could be at Russell Park. This amenity is not only beneficial for Neligh's citizens, but also for all of the four-legged residents in town.

One item that was heavily discussed during public input meetings and on Mindmixer was the desire for a Community Recreation Building in Neligh. Some possible uses for the Community Recreation Building could be indoor basketball courts, track for walking, weight room, a space for fitness classes, volleyball, racquetball courts, locker rooms, etc. This would be a place where residents of all ages could go to get some exercise. A building like this would greatly add to the quality of life for Neligh's residents, and if done correctly, it could attract residents from other communities to come to Neligh in order to utilize this asset. The additional basketball court(s) would allow another space for middle school, junior high, and high school students to practice. This space could also be used for men's, women's, or co-ed basketball or volleyball leagues. Throughout the public input opportunities many of the adults expressed a desire to have a place where they can play sports, lift weights, walk indoors, etc. A Community Recreation Building would be a solution for residents.

Vibrant, colorful landscaping helps draw people to an area, and creates a positive first impression. Not only does landscaping add beauty to the parks, but it is also an opportunity for residents to volunteer their time and talent in order to keep the parks beautiful. While considering landscaping improvements, stakeholders should also consider options to add shade trees or structures to areas in need, i.e. near bleachers, at the swimming pool, or near parking. This can help protect and provide relief from the summer sun for visitors of the park.

# Education System

*A great school system is becoming more than an amenity for communities in the Midwest. Neligh has a strong educational system as well as a strong tradition for their extracurricular activities. Community members seem to continually be supporters of the great school district, and City leaders should continue to promote a strong relationship between the community and the school. Great school districts are one of the leading factors when looking at population growth; families want to live in a community where their children can attend school and receive a good, quality education. The following section explores Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools and its existing presence in the community.*

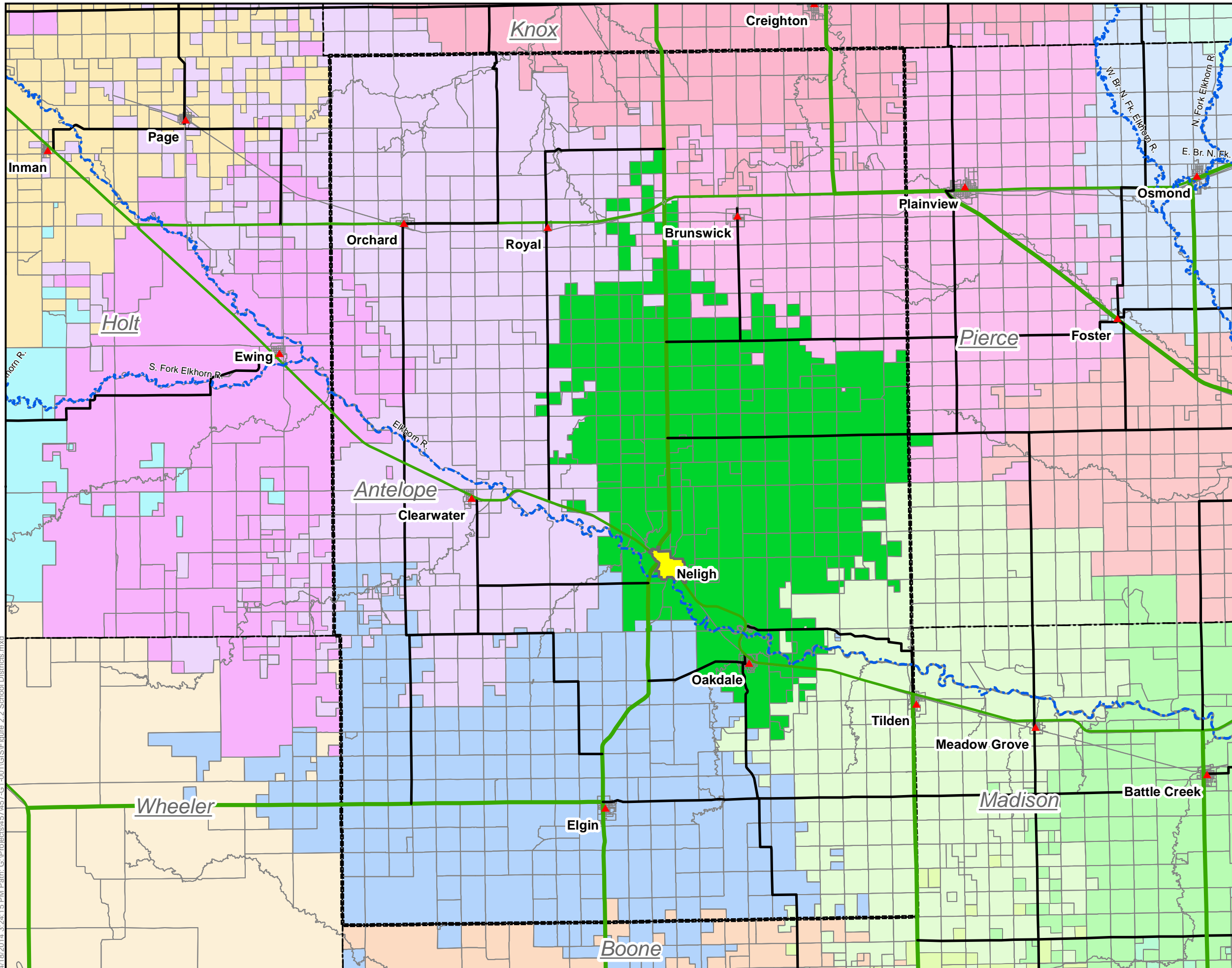
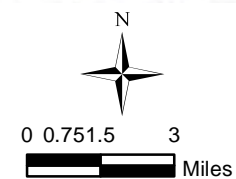
Many rural Nebraska communities and counties put a high value on maintaining and protecting their local schools, because they are vital in preserving community pride as well as supporting local residents and businesses. The following section analyzes Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools. Nebraska State Statutes group schools into six different classifications.

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

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

Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools (02-0009-000) is classified as a Class III School because it maintains both elementary and high school grades, and because the school district territory has a population of more than 1,000 and less than 150,000. **Figure 2.1** shows Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools' boundaries. The District boundary encompasses the central and eastern portions of Antelope County and one parcel in Pierce County. The communities of Neligh and Oakdale are obviously within the school district and then it stretches north towards Brunswick. Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools is a part of the Educational Service Unit 8 (ESU 8). The ESU 8 main office is located at 302 Main Street in Neligh, and covers the seven counties of Antelope, Boyd, Holt, Madison, Peirce, Stanton, and Wheeler. ESU 8's mission statement is to provide educational leadership and services that improve teaching and learning through quality partnerships.





**Legend**

Neligh Corporate Boundary

**School Districts**

- Neligh-Oakdale Schools
- Battle Creek Public Schools
- Boone Central Schools
- Chambers Public Schools
- Creighton Public Schools
- Elgin Public Schools
- Elkhorn Valley Schools
- Ewing Public Schools
- Madison Public Schools
- Nebraska Unified District 1
- Newman Grove Public Schools
- O'Neill Public Schools
- Osmond Public Schools
- Pierce Public Schools
- Plainview Public Schools
- Wausa Public Schools
- Wheeler Central Schools

Source:  
 US Census Bureau,  
 Geography Division - 2013

**Figure 2.1**  
**School District Boundary**  
 Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools

4/18/2014 3:24:15 PM Path: G:\Projects\457457-G1-001\GIS\Figure 2.2 School Districts.mxd





**Pre-K - 12 Schools**

Neligh is home to three schools including West Ward Elementary, East Ward Elementary, and the Junior/Senior High School. East Ward Elementary and the Junior/Senior High School are located on the same campus at 600 J Street and West Ward Elementary is located on the west side of Neligh at 500 West 8th Street. Neligh-Oakdale students have access to a variety of enriching activities and extra-curricular activities. Pre-school through second grade attends school at West Ward Elementary while grades three through twelve attend school on the shared campus of East Ward Elementary and the Junior/Senior High School.

**Table 2.1** shows the size of each class from Kindergarten to 12th grade. This data goes back to the 2000-2001 school year. The 2000-2001 school year saw the largest total enrollment for the school district in the past 13 years with a total school enrollment of 446. Increasing school enrollment figures is very important for any community and Neligh has seen stable numbers or increases for six school years. The average graduating class for Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools is 34 students. In recent years, the number of graduating seniors has experienced a slight decrease. However, the 2011-2012 school year had the largest Kindergarten class at 36 students, and the three years prior to the 2011-2012 school year saw large Kindergarten classes as well at 34, 34, and 33 students, respectively from 2010-2011 to 2008-2009.

**Table 2.1 School Enrollment, Antelope County Public Schools, Neligh 2000-2013**

School Year	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total Enrollment
2000-2001	22	25	24	31	31	30	42	42	36	48	36	38	41	446
2001-2002	28	22	25	25	31	31	31	40	40	35	45	37	39	429
2002-2003	28	25	25	25	24	32	35	30	41	41	33	48	36	423
2003-2004	33	29	25	24	24	27	29	38	28	44	45	31	45	422
2004-2005	25	32	28	24	23	27	26	25	41	27	45	44	29	396
2005-2006	31	24	32	28	24	26	26	26	27	38	27	45	38	392
2006-2007	24	33	26	29	31	25	28	26	29	26	34	23	43	377
2007-2008	27	24	30	26	30	31	25	25	27	29	24	34	22	354
2008-2009	33	27	27	32	28	31	30	27	24	27	28	22	39	375
2009-2010	34	34	25	30	33	28	30	30	31	27	28	31	28	389
2010-2011	34	28	36	22	29	32	28	33	30	29	28	29	32	390
2011-2012	36	20	29	35	25	26	29	31	36	27	29	26	29	378
2012-2013	26	33	22	25	36	24	27	30	32	33	29	29	22	368

Source: Nebraska Department of Education





The Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools is vital to the sustainability of Neligh and the surrounding area. It is important for communities to have a quality, productive school district within its corporate limits; therefore, this continual support will be necessary for the success of the school and the community. School districts provide many qualities in a community that are unable to be measured. However, it is important to know and understand school districts are evaluated on several different levels including test scores, graduation rates, and how their formula student population affects the amount of resources the district will receive as well as the operating expenditures per formula student.

**Table 2.2** depicts the adjusted general fund operating expenditures per formula student during the 2013-2014 school year. Formula students are based on the 2012-2013 average daily attendance and the 2012-2013 contracted students. The table highlights Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools and other districts in surrounding counties. Neligh-Oakdale's had 369.39 formula students for 2012-2013; the total expenditure cost per student was approximately \$10,457.72 for the same school year. As seen in the table, Neligh-Oakdale Public School's adjusted general fund operating cost per formula student is on the lower end of the middle range for the school districts in the surrounding counties. Typically the larger the school is, with a larger amount of formula students, the lower the operating costs are per student. This general rule can be seen in the table with the exception of Santee Community Schools in Knox County. Many students, parents, and teachers prefer a smaller student-to-teacher ratio for the attention and assistance each student receives. Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools seems to have the best of both worlds with a lower adjusted general fund operating expenditures per formula student and a low student to teacher ratio. They are a larger district than many of the surrounding schools yet they can offer smaller class sizes to ensure students can receive more attention from the teachers.

**Table 2.2 TEEOSA Formula Students, Antelope County Schools, 2012-2013**

**Nebraska Department of Education School Finance and  
Organization Services, Model LB235**

<b>County</b>	<b>County / District Number</b>	<b>District / System Name</b>	<b>Formula Students</b>	<b>Adjusted General Fund Operation Expenditures</b>	<b>Adjusted General Fund Operating Expenditures per Formula Student</b>
WHEELER	92-0045-000	WHEELER CENTRAL SCHOOLS	93.47	\$ 1,811,081.16	\$ 19,376.36
BOONE	06-0006-000	CEDAR RAPIDS PUBLIC SCHOOL	108.59	\$ 1,937,642.53	\$ 17,843.88
BOONE	06-0017-000	ST EDWARD PUBLIC SCHOOLS	132.50	\$ 2,036,393.79	\$ 15,369.38
MADISON	59-0013-000	NEWMAN GROVE PUBLIC SCHOOLS	166.23	\$ 2,451,810.24	\$14,749.38
ANTELOPE	02-0018-000	ELGIN PUBLIC SCHOOLS	175.55	\$2,574,414.39	\$ 14,664.82
HOLT	45-0137-000	CHAMBERS PUBLIC SCHOOLS	132.47	\$ 1,853,775.59	\$13,993.82
HOLT	45-0029-000	EWING PUBLIC SCHOOLS	125.74	\$ 1,645,743.57	\$13,088.96
HOLT	45-0239-000	WEST HOLT PUBLIC SCHOOLS	369.26	\$4,638,638.42	\$12,561.98
PIERCE	70-0005-000	PLAINVIEW PUBLIC SCHOOLS	333.06	\$ 4,066,980.61	\$ 12,210.84
BOONE	06-0001-000	BOONE CENTRAL SCHOOLS	541.83	\$ 6,557,832.91	\$ 12,103.07
KNOX	54-0501-000	NIOBRARA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	167.94	\$ 1,947,672.53	\$ 11,597.21
MADISON	59-0080-000	ELKHORN VALLEY SCHOOLS	286.03	\$ 3,291,016.36	\$ 11,505.77
PIERCE	70-0542-000	OSMOND COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	216.00	\$ 2,465,412.18	\$11,413.90
HOLT	45-0044-000	STUART PUBLIC SCHOOLS	168.30	\$1,767,131.86	\$10,500.20
HOLT	45-0007-000	O'NEILL PUBLIC SCHOOLS	699.13	\$7,327,457.03	\$10,480.77
ANTELOPE	02-0009-000	NELIGH-OAKDALE SCHOOLS	369.39	\$ 3,862,948.63	\$10,457.72
KNOX	54-0586-000	BLOOMFIELD COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	240.08	\$ 2,481,000.88	\$10,334.20
MADISON	59-0005-000	BATTLE CREEK PUBLIC SCHOOLS	404.96	\$ 4,082,074.00	\$ 10,080.09
KNOX	54-0096-000	CROFTON COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	345.76	\$ 3,468,628.47	\$ 10,031.89
KNOX	54-0013-000	CREIGHTON COMMUNITY PUBLIC SCH	330.78	\$ 3,259,878.07	\$9,855.15
MADISON	59-0001-000	MADISON PUBLIC SCHOOLS	494.28	\$ 4,793,704.55	\$ 9,698.39
ANTELOPE	02-2001-000	NEBRASKA UNIFIED DISTRICT 1	490.15	\$4,733,259.81	\$ 9,656.71
PIERCE	70-0002-000	PIERCE PUBLIC SCHOOL	629.43	\$ 6,004,687.14	\$9,539.89
KNOX	54-0576-000	WAUSA PUBLIC SCHOOLS	214.17	\$1,921,010.53	\$ 8,969.75
MADISON	59-0002-000	NORFOLK PUBLIC SCHOOLS	3,958.38	\$ 27,806,702.30	\$ 7,024.77
KNOX	54-0505-000	SANTEE COMMUNITY SCHOOLS	156.41	\$ 344,968.83	\$ 2,205.51

Source: Nebraska Department of Education

It is important to capitalize on the growth the school district is experiencing. One way to do that is to ensure there is a healthy connection between the community and the school while promoting the community itself to attract new families to move to Neligh. With the addition of new families to the community, there is potential of adding additional students to the total enrollment. Increasing community population and student enrollment will work hand-in-hand. This relationship inevitably ties back to employment and job availability in the community. Families are attracted to communities with quality school systems which in turn will help draw residents to Neligh. Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools recently proposed a seven million dollar school bond to improve, renovate, and complete additions to both West and East Ward Elementary Schools. Although the bond did not pass in 2014, through the Community Needs Assessment Survey, over 41 percent of respondents believed the school facilities were in good condition while another almost 28 percent selected satisfactory for the condition of school facilities (out of the following possibilities: Poor, Satisfactory, Good, Excellent). The mean score for the quality of the education system was 2.59 equating to a rating between Satisfactory and Good. Also, the public school system in Neligh was discussed as one of the strengths of the community during a public input session. Most towns thrive because of the presence of their school system, which also seems to be the case for Neligh. It is extremely important to the future growth and sustainability of Neligh that the community continue to work together to maintain Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools and provide what is best for the school district.

### **Post-Secondary Education**

Northeast Community College (NCC) is located thirty-five miles east of Neligh in Norfolk, Nebraska. NCC is the only community college in the State of Nebraska with one and two-year vocational, liberal arts, and adult education programs all on one main campus. Other post-secondary education options include the many different campuses of the University of Nebraska education system including University of Nebraska at Omaha and the University of Nebraska at Lincoln. Wayne State College is located 70 miles east of Neligh in Wayne, Nebraska and it is also a public, four-year institution. There are many options for Neligh's residents to obtain a higher education while staying close to home.





# Transportation

*Transportation systems control interactions, or*

*lack of interactions, between two places. Local roads, streets, and sidewalks should provide safe, reliable access to work, schools, shopping, parks, and back home. Transportation networks to the outside world are important to the economic growth of Neligh. These networks provide access to markets and to goods and services not found in the community. Transportation also provides a means by which employees commute to Neligh for work, businesses succeed because of increased exporting opportunities, and Neligh becomes more than just a “drive-through” community. An adequate system of streets, roads, and sidewalks provides a variety of options for accessibility to all parts of the community and beyond.*

Neligh’s transportation system creates many opportunities for growth because of the proximity and connectivity to the larger transportation network. U.S. Highway 275 runs southeast/northwest through the heart of Neligh and Nebraska Highway 14 runs north/south on the west edge of the City. These two highways connect many surrounding communities to Neligh. The highway corridors create important access points for the community also creating gateways for all travelers going to and from Neligh. These gateway entrances act as a “first impression” for visitors. It is important, when talking about community corridors and connections, to understand how highway corridors are important features for the City. Gateway entrance development is discussed in the Future Land Use section of this Comprehensive Plan. A majority of the Community Needs Assessment Survey respondents believe the City’s street and sidewalk infrastructure is in satisfactory or poor condition.

Antelope County Airport is a publicly owned airport located on the south side of Neligh, east of Highway 14. From 2012 to 2013 there were an average of 108 aircraft operations per week, 55 percent were local general aviation and 45 percent were transient general aviation. The airport has a 60-foot wide, 3,700-foot long concrete runway and a 50-foot wide, 3,310-foot long asphalt runway. The airport will soon be renovated to have all concrete runways. Eppley Airfield in Omaha is located 140 miles southeast of Neligh and is the most accessible passenger service airport for Neligh’s residents.

There are a few options for bus and public transportation services in and near Neligh. The nearest national bus service is provided by Greyhound in Norfolk which is 35 miles east of Neligh. The City of Neligh’s Dial-A-Ride Public Transportation system is open to the general public. The cost is \$1.00 for a one-way trip, and is available to all residents. Dial-A-Ride also has a contract with four area churches for Sunday morning services. Dial-A-Ride is a public transportation service provided by the City of Neligh.

The final form of transportation in Neligh is pedestrian foot traffic. There is sidewalk circulation throughout the community; however, some locations in town are lacking sidewalks. Also, some of the sidewalks are in need of repair and/or replacement just based on age and condition. The transportation section of a Comprehensive Plan is important because it is necessary to address the condition of both local road and street networks that tie the community together and the types of transportation that link Neligh with the outside world.



### Roads

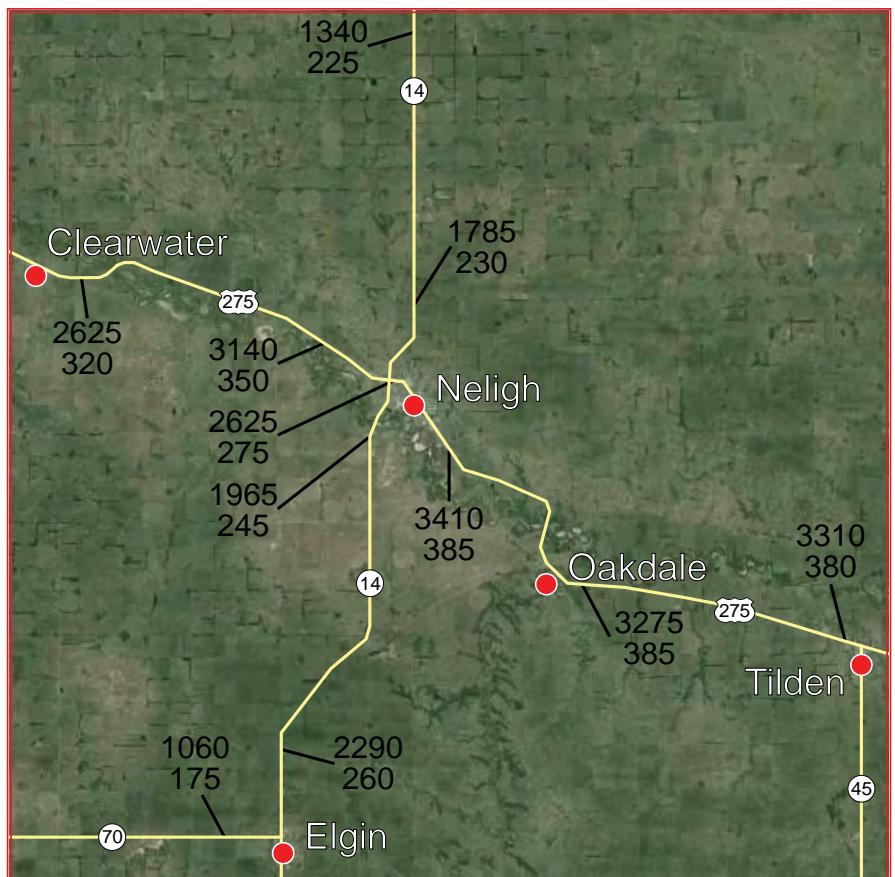
As previously mentioned, transportation systems are vital to the sustainability of the community; especially in the automobile dependent society we live in today. There are three different categories of roads in Neligh: local, collector, and arterial streets. Highways 275 and 14 are the main arterial roads carrying traffic into and out of town acting as the gateway to Neligh. Development along arterial roads says a lot about the overall appearance and priorities of the community. During our public input sessions, many residents discussed the desire to beautify these highway corridors in order to enhance the general appearance of the entire City. Highways 275 and 14 will influence the potential economic growth for Neligh.

The Nebraska Department of Roads (NDOR) annually reports surface aggregates for all of the roads in Neligh. Updated in 2014 road types include concrete, asphalt, bituminous, and gravel surfaces. The Lane-Mile Report for Neligh detailed the following figures, 13.84 miles of concrete, 1.59 miles of asphalt, 1.17 miles of bituminous surfacing, and 2.74 miles of gravel in Neligh. Although there are roads that are in need of improvement, Neligh has a large percentage of concrete roads existing in the community. Although concrete is not the only street surfacing option, it has the longest life-span and needs less maintenance in comparison to other road surfacing types; therefore, concrete roads are a good investment for the future of the community. Successful street networks are dependent on the availability and condition of the roads throughout the community. Neligh has a safe, efficient transportation system. However, this type of public infrastructure, like all others, requires continual maintenance and updates in order to maintain the high level of effectiveness.



NDOR also conducts traffic counts biannually; 2012 traffic counts are the most recent numbers available through the State. **Figure 2.2** shows traffic counts for the Highways 275 and 14 near Neligh. The top number represents the Average Daily Traffic (ADT) for all vehicles; the bottom number characterizes the number of heavy commercial vehicles. Highways 275 and 14 are the primary accesses for residents and visitors of Neligh to utilize. When new commercial businesses are looking at locating in any community, they look at traffic counts because commercial businesses want locations with high visibility, good connectivity, and access to the larger transportation network. With ADT counts of 3,410 and 3,140 on either side of Neligh on Highway 275, land along Highway 275 is prime real estate for commercial and/or industrial development. Both Highways provide the community with a link to the outside world which is an economic asset for the City. It is ideal for commercial development to happen along the Highway corridor because of the large number of vehicles that utilize both highways each day. Although many businesses are currently located along this highway corridor, there is still a large amount of land undeveloped, mainly on the outskirts and adjacent to corporate limits.

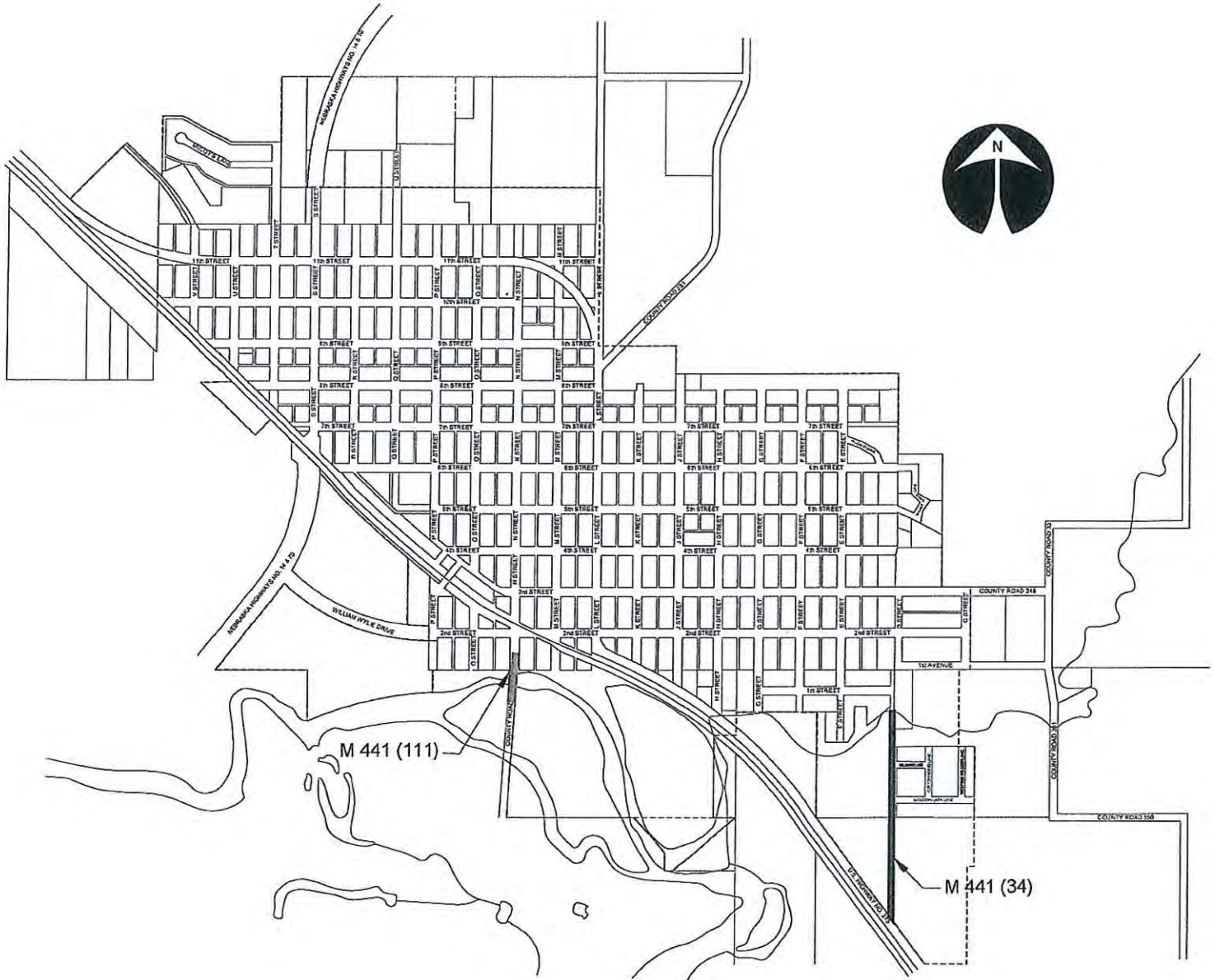
Neligh also completed its 1 & 6 Year Road Plan in January of 2014. This plan is in place to help guide achievable transportation development for the first year and development goals for the remaining five years. As seen in **Figure 2.3**, the one-year road plan has two projects listed for Neligh and **Figure 2.4** shows the 12 projects for the six-year plan. The two projects listed in the one-year road plan include grading, erosion control, and four-inch asphalt surfacing to 'D' Street from Belmar Creek Bridge south to the return at Highway 275 and grading, erosion control, and concrete pavement and a new 385-foot jump span bridge. The projects listed on the six-year road plan include concrete pavement for all 12 projects shown on **Figure 2.4** with a total estimated cost for all projects to be \$1,131,000. The total estimated cost for the one-year projects is approximately \$1,328,500.



**Figure 2.2**  
**2012 NDOR Traffic Counts**  
 Neligh, Nebraska



**NELIGH, NEBRASKA**  
**ANTELOPE COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**1-YEAR PLAN**



**NOTE:**

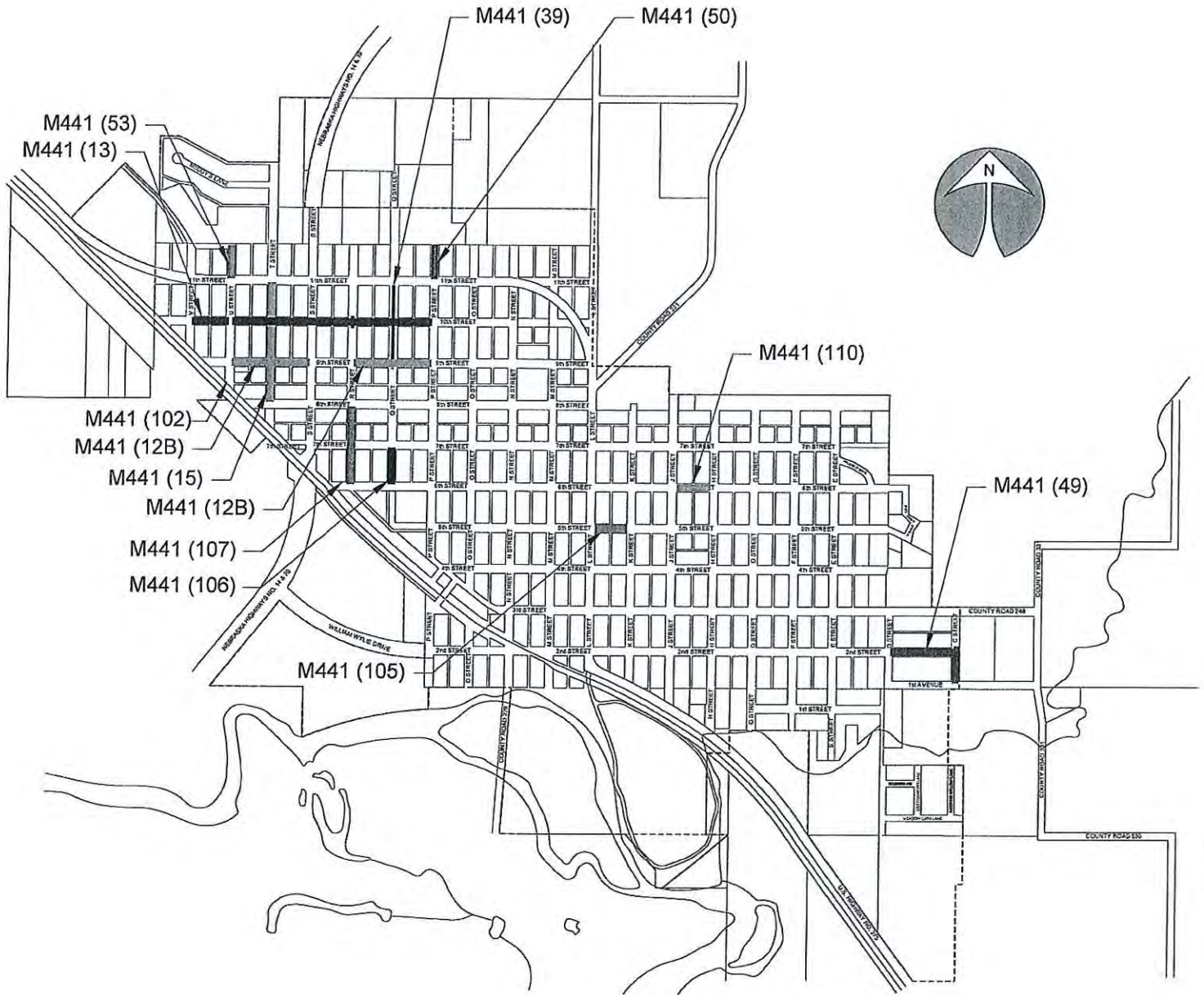
- COLORS ARE USED TO MAKE SEPARATE PROJECTS DISTINGUISHABLE.
- COLORS ARE NOT OF ANY RELEVANCE TO THE INDIVIDUAL PROJECT.



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 West Point, NE 68788  
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**Figure 2.3**  
**1-Year Road Plan**  
 Neligh, Nebraska

**NELIGH, NEBRASKA**  
**ANTELOPE COUNTY, NEBRASKA**  
**6-YEAR PLAN**



**NOTE:**

- COLORS ARE USED TO MAKE SEPARATE PROJECTS DISTINGUISHABLE.
- COLORS ARE NOT OF ANY RELEVANCE TO THE INDIVIDUAL PROJECT.



## Sidewalks

Sidewalks are a way to walk to the neighbor's house, allow kids to ride their bikes and walk to school, and for families to walk to the park. Neligh's community is also linked by sidewalks with approximately 39 percent of the community having existing sidewalk infrastructure; however, several of the existing sidewalks are in need of repair and/or replacement which will need to be addressed in the future. Sidewalks promote foot traffic and provide a safe place for children, students, families, and senior citizens to travel. Many people believe that busy sidewalks also lead to a safer community because when more people out and about it inherently deters crime and lowers the opportunity for criminal activity. With a chance of being seen by someone walking their dog or shopping downtown most criminals would be discouraged from attempting an unlawful activity.

Although sidewalks are an essential amenity in communities, they are also another form of public infrastructure that requires maintenance, ADA compliance, updates, and sometimes complete replacement. Areas of broken or cracked sidewalks coupled with incomplete connections make sidewalks challenging to use. Completing a sidewalk inventory and conditions analysis including ADA-compliance review would assist City leaders with planning for sidewalk improvements. Approximately 61 percent of the platted community is lacking sidewalk infrastructure of any kind. The majority of the inconsistent sidewalk network exists in the north part of the community. Improving existing sidewalks is important as the City moves forward, but it is also important for decision-makers to determine if new sidewalks need to be constructed in order to close some of the existing gaps to improve pedestrian transportation, safety, and connectivity. A matching program could be established by the City to encourage residents to construct new sidewalks and/or repair existing sidewalks in order to improve accessibility throughout the entire community. The most recent ADA design guidelines should be followed when any new sidewalk project is undertaken. Completing a sidewalk inventory map depicting where sidewalks exist and do not exist, if sidewalks are in poor condition and need repaired, and whether or not there are existing ADA ramps would be an important visual tool for the City to utilize when determining improvement needs. The map may also help stakeholders visualize specific areas in need as well as determine practical pedestrian traffic patterns and decide if sidewalks need to be constructed to better serve the community.





# Community Services

*Neligh offers many community services and events to its residents.*

*These services add to the quality of life citizens have come to enjoy living in Neligh. The following is a list of services and events available in Neligh.*

## Library

The Neligh Public Library is located at 710 Main Street, in Neligh, Nebraska and currently serves over 2,000 registered users. The library's annual circulation surpasses 63,000 volumes with a collection of more than 39,500 books. The hours of operation are as follows:

Monday-Thursday:	10:00 am - 8:00 pm
Friday:	11:00 am - 2:00 pm
Saturday:	10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Sunday:	Closed

Notary service, Wi-Fi, public access computers, a meeting room, genealogical references, and a large selection of audiobooks and DVD's are amongst the other services provided to the libraries users. In addition to these services, the library also runs programs to foster community involvement. Summer reading programs include both weekly programs for children and book bingo for all ages. There are also year round programs ranging from Preschool Story Time, Family Nights, and Movie Saturday Morning, to Adult and Teen Book Discussion Groups. A schedule of these events and programs is available on the library's website at <http://www.neligh.org/public-library/services-programs/>.

## Post Office

The United States Post Office is located at 116 W 3rd St in Neligh. Retail hours are Monday through Friday 8:00 am to 4:00 pm and from 8:00 am to 10:00 am on Saturday. The Post Office is closed on Sundays. For more information on the services offered at this USPS location, please visit the website at <http://www.uspspostoffices.com/ne/neligh>.



## News

The Neligh News and Leader is an award-winning, weekly newspaper, serving Antelope County as the county seat newspaper. The newspaper's address is 419 M Street. An e-Edition, Spanish Edition, and an online format are available at The Neligh News and Leader's website <http://www.nelighnews.com/>.



My Antelope County News is an online news source available to anyone at no charge. The news and events coverage includes information for the communities of Brunswick, Clearwater, Elgin, Neligh, Oakdale, Orchard, Royal, and Tilden. This news and event listing may be found at <http://www.myantelopecountynews.com/>.



## Churches

The City of Neligh is home to eight different churches including Abundant Life Christian Center, Calvary Bible Church, St. Francis Catholic Church, Church of Christ, First Congregational United Church, Grace Lutheran LC MS Church, Seventh Day Adventist Church, and United Methodist Church. Please visit the City of Neligh's website for a listing of the address and phone number for each Church.



## Public Safety

The Neligh Volunteer Fire Department is comprised of 45 members. To effectively serve the City of Neligh and the Neligh Rural Fire District, the department owns a collection of equipment including three pumper trucks, two tankers, three grass rigs, two equipment vans, and a 1941 Chevy Parade truck. The Fire Department is located at 512 West 11th Street. More information regarding the Neligh Volunteer Fire Department can be found on the "Neligh Vol. Fire Dept." Facebook page or on their website <http://www.nelighfire.com/>.



Three police officers are employed by the Neligh Police Department which is owned and operated by the City of Neligh for the protection of its citizens. As the county seat, Neligh is also home to the Antelope County Sheriff's Office.



*The new Antelope County Law Enforcement Center under construction.*

*Photo courtesy of [www.nelighnews.com](http://www.nelighnews.com).*

Antelope County has two intermediate certified ambulance services, staffed by four paramedics, 25 EMTs, and one first responder. A branch of Midwest Medical Transport Co., Nebraska's largest private ambulance service, is located in Neligh at 909 O Street. Visit <http://www.midwestmedicaltransport.net/> for more information. The City of Neligh also offers a text message alert system to keep citizens up-to-date on current emergency alerts.

The new Antelope County Law Enforcement Center is scheduled for completion in April, 2015. This will be a 30-bed facility including 7 double occupancy, 4 single occupancy, 2 single handicap accessible, and 2 dormitory style cells. The Center will house male and female inmates, as well as inmates with special needs. Amenities will include a laundry room, kitchen, multi-purpose space (library and church services), and a medical treatment room. The facility is currently under construction and located south of the County's weed district building, visible from Highway 275.

Chamber of Commerce/Economic Development/Tourism Center

The Tourism Center is the home of both the Neligh Chamber of Commerce and the Neligh Economic Development Office. It is located at 105 East 2nd Street.

The Neligh Economic Development Office (NEDO) has a two word mission statement for Neligh, “Grow Neligh”. The NEDO works hard to market Neligh as a thriving and competitive community. They also provide aid to businesses looking to start or expand in Neligh. NEDO also offers programs for business retention as well as providing access to multiple business incentives. More information can be found online at <http://www.neligh.org/work/economic-development/>.

The mission of the Neligh Chamber of Commerce is, “Educate our Members. Support the Business Community. Invest in Neligh. Achieve Greatness Together.” The Chamber supports various businesses in the Neligh community by getting people involved in voting on decisions impacting local businesses, helping business owners attract more business, increasing business exposure through the local directory, and sponsoring a Chamber Bucks Program to encourage shopping at local businesses. The Chamber also hosts Chamber Coffees and Lunch & Learns as part of their new Strategic Plan.



City Offices

The Neligh City Hall is located at 202 Main Street and houses offices for the City Clerk, Economic Development Director, City Superintendent, City Police Chief, Deputy Clerk, and Utility Billing Clerk. The City Hall Building is also host to the Mayor and City Council Chambers, where the City Council meets at 7:00pm on the second Tuesday of every month.



Funeral Home

Snider Memorial Funeral Home is located at 602 M Street in Neligh. The Funeral Home works with families to create personalized tributes for the deceased. There are also locations in Elgin and Clearwater. For more information, please visit <http://www.snidermemorialfh.com/>.

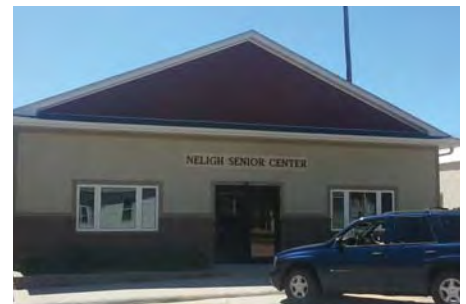


Cemetery

The Laurel Hill Cemetery is located northeast of Neligh, on County Road 198, between County Road 167 Spur and Cemetery Rd.

Senior Center

The Neligh Senior Center provides senior services for Antelope County; its address is 206 M Street. Hours of operation for the senior center are Monday through Friday 8:00am – 3:00pm. The Center offers rolls and coffee for breakfast and hot meals for lunches five days a week for those age 60 and over.







### Healthcare

The Antelope Memorial Hospital is located at 102 West 9th Street in Neligh. The Antelope Memorial Hospital is a 25-bed Critical Access Hospital which provides outpatient, inpatient, specialty clinic, cardiac rehabilitation, physical therapy, operating room, emergency care, obstetrics, and many other areas of healthcare services. Now offered by the hospital is a service called YourCareCommunity. This website allows patients to access personal healthcare records through an online source rather than contacting the hospital to request information. With this program, patients are offered additional benefits such as the ability to compare current lab tests with those previously performed.

Attached to the hospital is the AMH Family Practice, a family practice medical clinic with four satellite clinics located in Clearwater, Elgin, Orchard, and Tilden Nebraska. The Clinic is staffed with five medical practitioners. The Neligh Branch offers a Morning Walk-in Clinic Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 9:00 am and hours of operation as follows:

Monday:	9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Tuesday:	10:00 am - 5:00 pm
Wednesday:	9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Thursday:	9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Friday:	9:00 am - 5:00 pm
Saturday:	9:30 am - Noon
Sunday:	Closed

The Antelope Memorial Hospital is a not-for-profit organization and serves approximately 6,500 residents in eight rural communities. The hospital is the largest employer in the county with 165 employees. Affiliated with the Heartland Health Network and Mid America Health Alliance, Antelope Memorial Hospital delivers compassion, empathy, and professional expertise to its patients and their families.

In addition to the Antelope Memorial Hospital and Family Practice facilities, the Neligh Clinic, an outpatient clinic, is located at 1108 R Street. Regular hours at the clinic are Monday through Friday 9:00 am – 5:00 pm.



### Specialty Healthcare

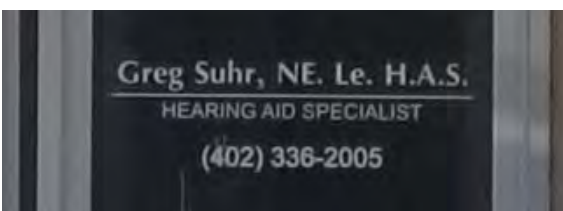
Additional medical services in Neligh include Antelope County Chiropractic, Creekwood Chiropractic, Neligh Chiropractic and Acupuncture, Terry M. Jensen, DDS – Family Dentistry, S. A. Claussen, MD (Allergy), and Neligh Eye Clinic. These offices are located primarily downtown.

### Pharmacy

Hilltop Drugs, Etc. is a pharmacy and gift shop located at 108 W 11th Street. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 8:30am – 5:30pm, and Saturday, 8:30am – 1:00pm.



Wanek Pharmacy is a pharmacy and gift shop located at 410 M Street. Hours of operation are Monday through Friday, 9:00am – 5:30pm, and Saturday, 9:00 – 1:00pm.



### Senior Living

The Willows Assisted Living, located at 806 S Street, is a first class facility, keeping its residents involved with numerous activities. Residents are provided with 24-hour safety and security, while still enjoying the privacy of residential-style homes without the stress of maintenance responsibilities. For more information, visit The Willows website at <http://www.thewillowsne.com/>.



Located at 1100 T Street, The Golden Living Center is a skilled nursing facility in close proximity to the Antelope Memorial Hospital. This facility offers both long-term care and short-term rehabilitation along with respite care, an Alzheimer's Care Unit and stroke rehabilitation. Residents are encouraged to stay active with both onsite activities and group outings. For more information, visit their website at <http://www.goldenlivingcenters.com/>.

### Neligh Housing Authority

The Neligh Housing Authority oversees the Pioneer Homes Apartments. This 46-apartment complex is an affordable housing option for low to moderate income, disabled, and elderly individuals or families. The Neligh Housing Authority can be contacted at (402) 887-4912.



### Lodging

The Walnut Grove Inn (B&B)  
101 Walnut Grove Lane

The Deluxe Motel  
101 J Street

West Hill View Motel  
1107 O Street



### Airport

The Antelope County Airport is located southwest of Neligh, a six minute drive from the city center. The airport is publicly owned and open to the public. There are two runways, bringing the total land area covered to 296 acres.







### Museums

The Antelope County Jail Museum is located at 509 L Street, with hours varying by season. Visitors can explore the Jail Museum, a replica log cabin, and the Pioneer Church while learning Antelope County History.

A private collection of John Deere tractors belonging to Galen Furstenau is the showcase of the Furstenau John Deere Tractor Museum. Interested guests are encouraged to call (402) 368-2198 to schedule an appointment to view this impressive collection.



The Neligh Mill State Historic Site is the only mill in Nebraska with the original equipment from the 1880's still intact. Guided tours explaining the history of the mill are offered during the site's hours of operation, which follow a summer and winter schedule.

Pierson Wildlife Museum & Learning Center is a unique educational display of taxidermy. Dr. Kenneth Pierson has harvested big game from all over the globe as well as developed a large collection of first edition books. Hours of operation vary by time of year. For more information, please visit the Pierson Wildlife Museum & Learning Center website at <http://www.piersonwildlifemuseumneligh.com/>.



A historical site showing the strong connection between Neligh and the Ponca Indians is the White Buffalo Girl State Historical Marker. This gravestone has been cared for by the citizens of Neligh for over 130 years. This marker is located in the Laurel Hill Cemetery; the story of White Buffalo Girl can be found on Neligh's website <http://www.neligh.org/>.

### Movie Theater and Drive-In

The TK Movie Theater is located in downtown Neligh at 318 Main Street. This theater shows movies and has rentals available. In addition to the TK Movie Theater, Neligh is also home to one of the two operable drive-in theaters. The TK-Starlite Drive-In is open Wednesday through Sunday every summer, with the gates opening at 8:00pm. Typically, two movies are played per admission with the first movie beginning at dusk and a ten minute intermission between movies. For more information about upcoming movies, show times, concessions, and more, please visit the TK-Starlite website at <http://www.nelighdriveintheater.com/>.





# Utilities

## Water

The City of Neligh currently maintains Nebraska Public Water Supply No. NE3100305. The current system supplies water to its residents and businesses with four active groundwater wells, a 250,000 gallon storage facility, 740 metered services and approximately 14.47 miles of distribution main. The four active wells were constructed in 1957, 1973, 1984, and 2004. The average daily water use in 2013 was approximately 170,000 gallons per day.

Recent work on the system has included the replacement of 16 blocks of new distribution mains in the eastern part of the City. Funding for this project came from FEMA and the total cost was approximately \$550,000 in 2014. Survey respondents from the Community Needs Assessment Survey were pleased with the recent water project and with the overall quality of the City's water. **Figure 2.5** shows the City's water infrastructure, this map was prepared by the City's engineer.

## Sanitary Sewer

The City owns and operates a collection system, four lift stations, and a mechanical wastewater treatment plant. The collection system is approximately 11.37 miles of PVC and vitrified clay pipe in diameters of 2-inch to 15-inch.

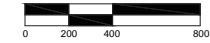
Recent sanitary sewer improvements include work at the Fairgrounds Lift Station in 2013, at a cost of \$140,000; work to the City Shop Lift Station in 2012 at a cost of \$75,000 and a sewer extension project in 2013 to the Countryside Acres Subdivision. **Figure 2.6** shows the City's sanitary sewer infrastructure, this map was prepared by the City's engineer.

## Stormwater Drainage

The City of Neligh has relatively good elevation changes which allows for surface drainage of precipitation in the City. Some areas utilize surface drainage, which due to the elevation changes, can pose a few problems as it jumps the curb and gutters. Surface drainage can cause flooding in the lower lying areas creating potential concerns for residents. Drainage projects are expensive and with other infrastructure concerns, the drainage issues are the easiest to neglect as water and sewer are regulated by the State and Federal governments and street conditions are noticed by all the constituents. Based on the Community Needs Assessment Survey, only 13 percent of respondents believe the City's stormwater drainage system is in poor condition; therefore, this may be an infrastructure system that City leaders deprioritize in lieu of other infrastructure improvement needs such as streets and sidewalks.



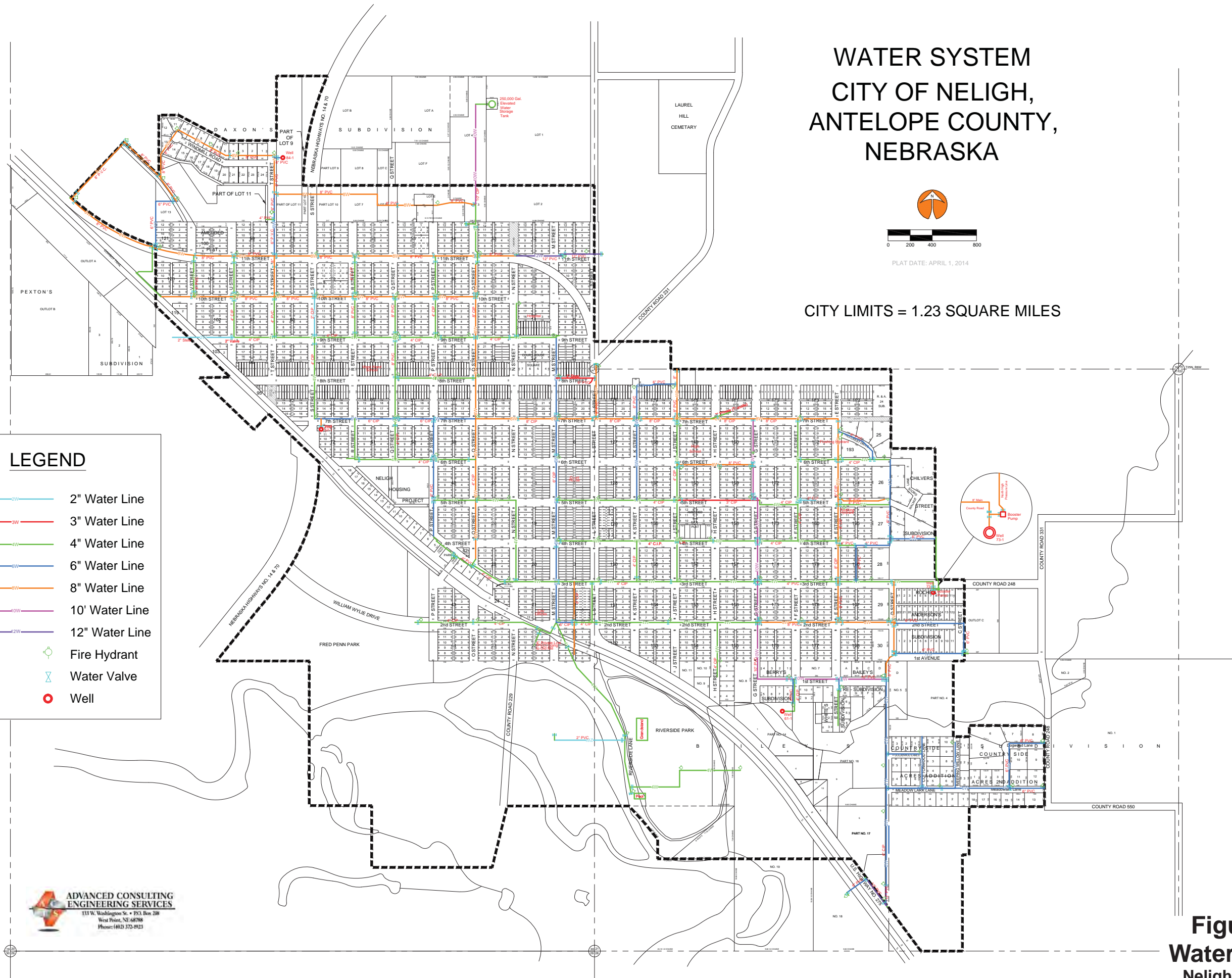
# WATER SYSTEM CITY OF NELIGH, ANTELOPE COUNTY, NEBRASKA



PLAT DATE: APRIL 1, 2014

CITY LIMITS = 1.23 SQUARE MILES

LEGEND	
	2" Water Line
	3" Water Line
	4" Water Line
	6" Water Line
	8" Water Line
	10" Water Line
	12" Water Line
	Fire Hydrant
	Water Valve
	Well



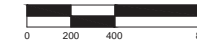
**ADVANCED CONSULTING  
ENGINEERING SERVICES**  
111 W. Washington St. • P.O. Box 208  
West Point, NE 68788  
Phone: (402) 372-1923

**Figure 2.5  
Water System  
Neligh, Nebraska**





# SEWER SYSTEM CITY OF NELIGH, ANTELOPE COUNTY, NEBRASKA

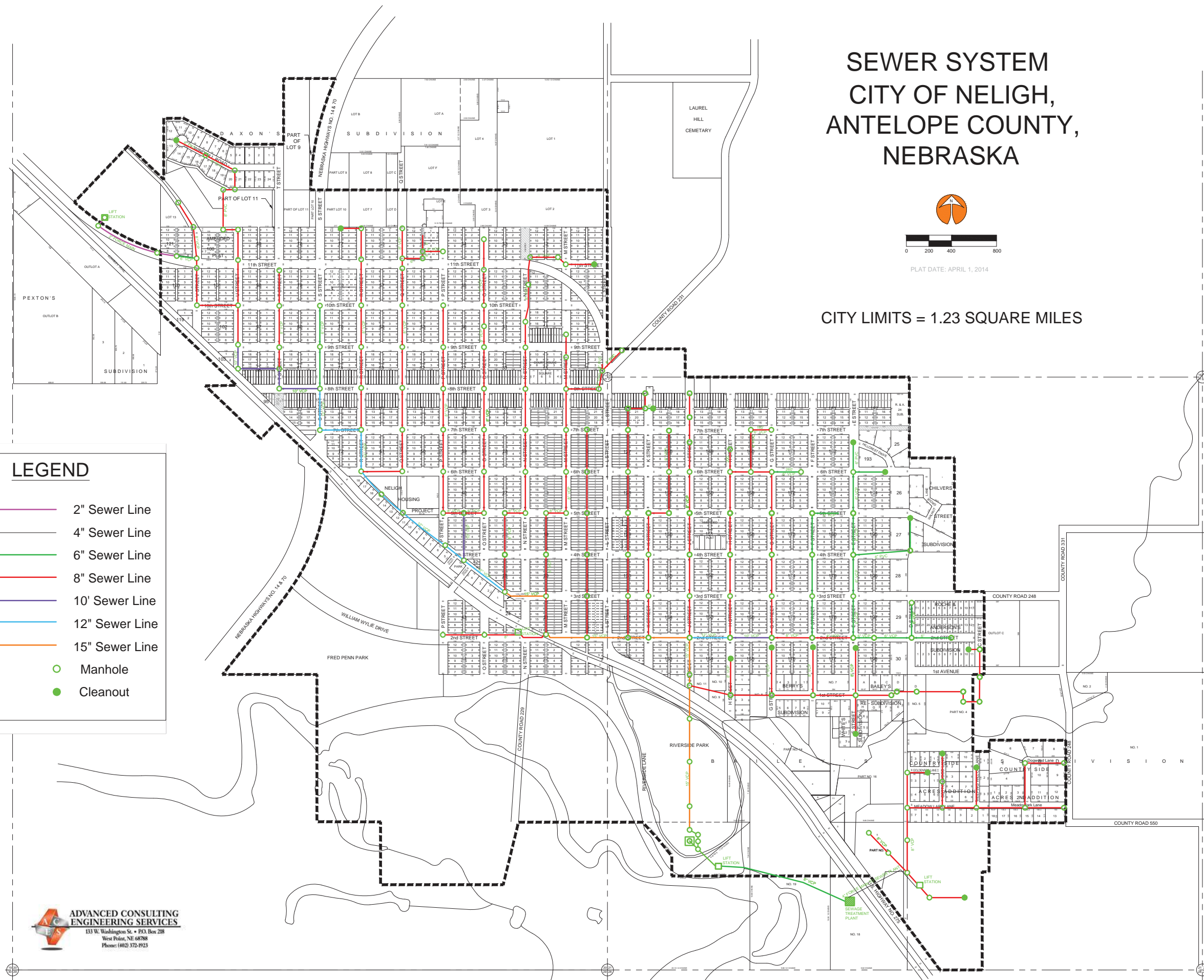


PLAT DATE: APRIL 1, 2014

CITY LIMITS = 1.23 SQUARE MILES

### LEGEND

- 2" Sewer Line
- 4" Sewer Line
- 6" Sewer Line
- 8" Sewer Line
- 10' Sewer Line
- 12" Sewer Line
- 15" Sewer Line
- Manhole
- Cleanout



**ADVANCED CONSULTING  
ENGINEERING SERVICES**  
133 W. Washington St. • P.O. Box 288  
West Point, NE 68788  
Phone: (402) 372-1923

**Figure 2.6  
Sewer System  
Neligh, Nebraska**





### **Electrical and Natural Gas**

The City of Neligh purchases electricity from the Southwest Power Pool. The City's daily peak demand was 4,784 Kilowatts in July of 2013. Electrical usage for citizens and businesses in Neligh was approximately 19,700,000 Kilowatts in 2013. The City of Neligh is responsible for maintaining all of the electrical lines, and Nebraska Public Power District is contracted to get power to the lines.

Neligh Municipal Power is the owner/operator of a one-of-a-kind 6.5 Megawatt Biodiesel Electric Generation Facility. This facility allows for the City to generate electricity in emergency situations, but also allows for electrical savings when economic conditions are favorable. The Nebraska Public Power District is in the process of constructing a 345,000 volt transmission line from Hoskins to a substation north of Neligh. This new infrastructure should increase capacity and reliability for the citizens of Neligh. In addition, the new transmission line will enhance NPPD's ability to expand and develop future renewable energy project in the area.

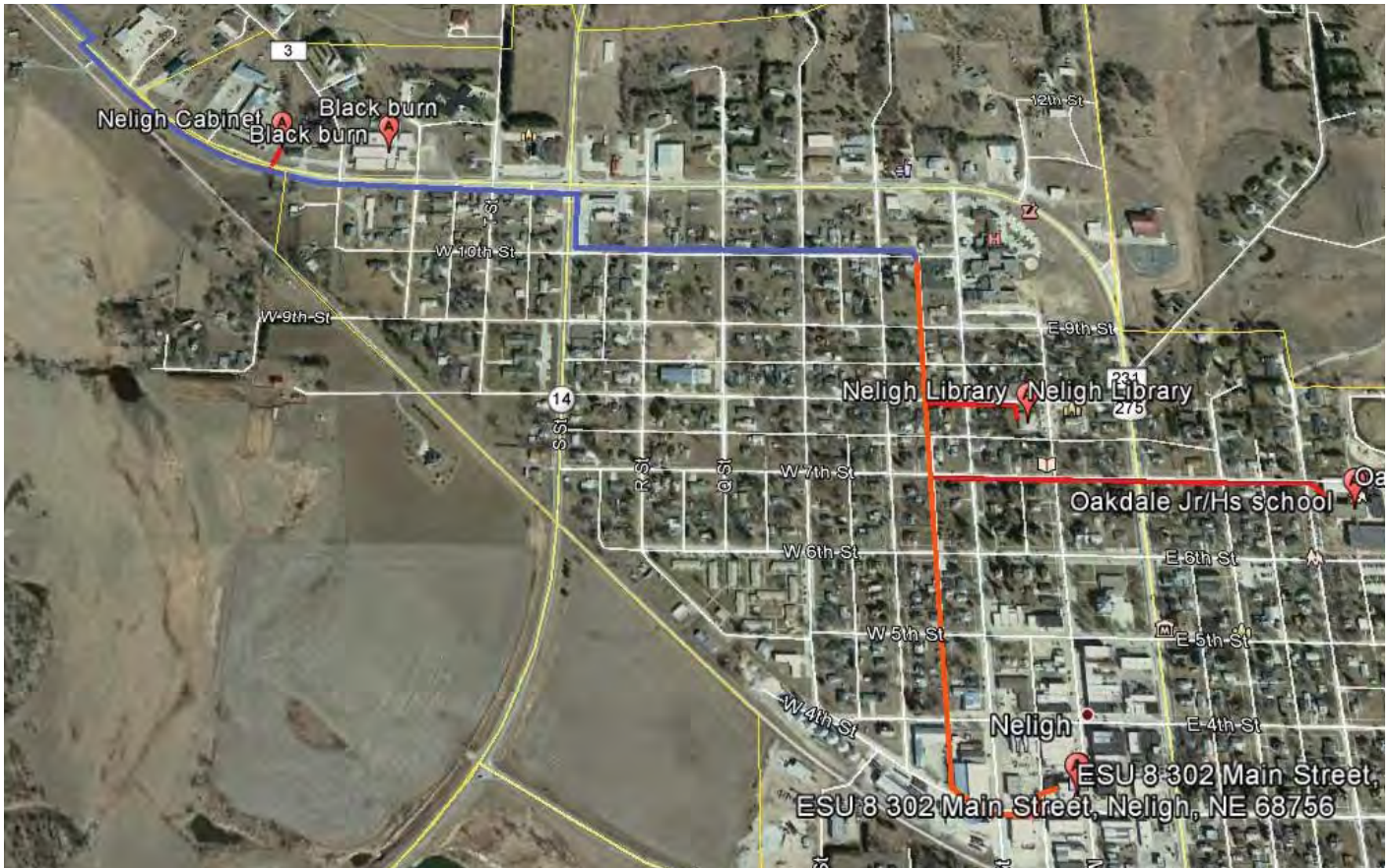
The City of Neligh participates in the Nebraska Choice Gas Program, which allows consumers to select their natural gas supplier each year. Natural gas infrastructure is owned by SourceGas Energy Services. SourceGas conducts meter readings and provides billing and maintenance services, regardless of the natural gas supplier.

### **Solid Waste/Recycling**

The City of Neligh has a progressive City garbage program that is designed to encourage recycling. Curbside garbage pickup is on Mondays. Many residents in Neligh appreciate the recycling program; however, through the Community Needs Assessment Survey respondents were unhappy with the City's solid waste program because they did not feel it was necessary to pay for the bags needed for the trash removal. Recycling pickups are scheduled East of Highway 275 on the first and third Thursdays and West of Highway 275 on the second and fourth Thursdays. Plastic tubs are available from the City Office for free and recycling items must be sorted, prior to pickup. The Recycling/Compactor facility is open Tuesday and Thursday 1pm to 5pm and 11am to 5pm on Saturdays.

## **Telecommunications**

Frontier Communications provides telephone and internet service to Neligh. Other Internet providers are Great Plains Communications, Nebraska Link, TeleBeep Wireless, and Wireless Internet of Nebraska. A major fiber upgrade has taken place within Neligh in the last two years. Neligh now has three Fiber Optics providers including Great Plains and Nebraska Link as well as Plainview TelCo, located two miles north of Neligh. As seen in the maps below, this upgrade has improved telecommunication service to the Neligh-Oakdale High School, Neligh Public Library, and Education Service

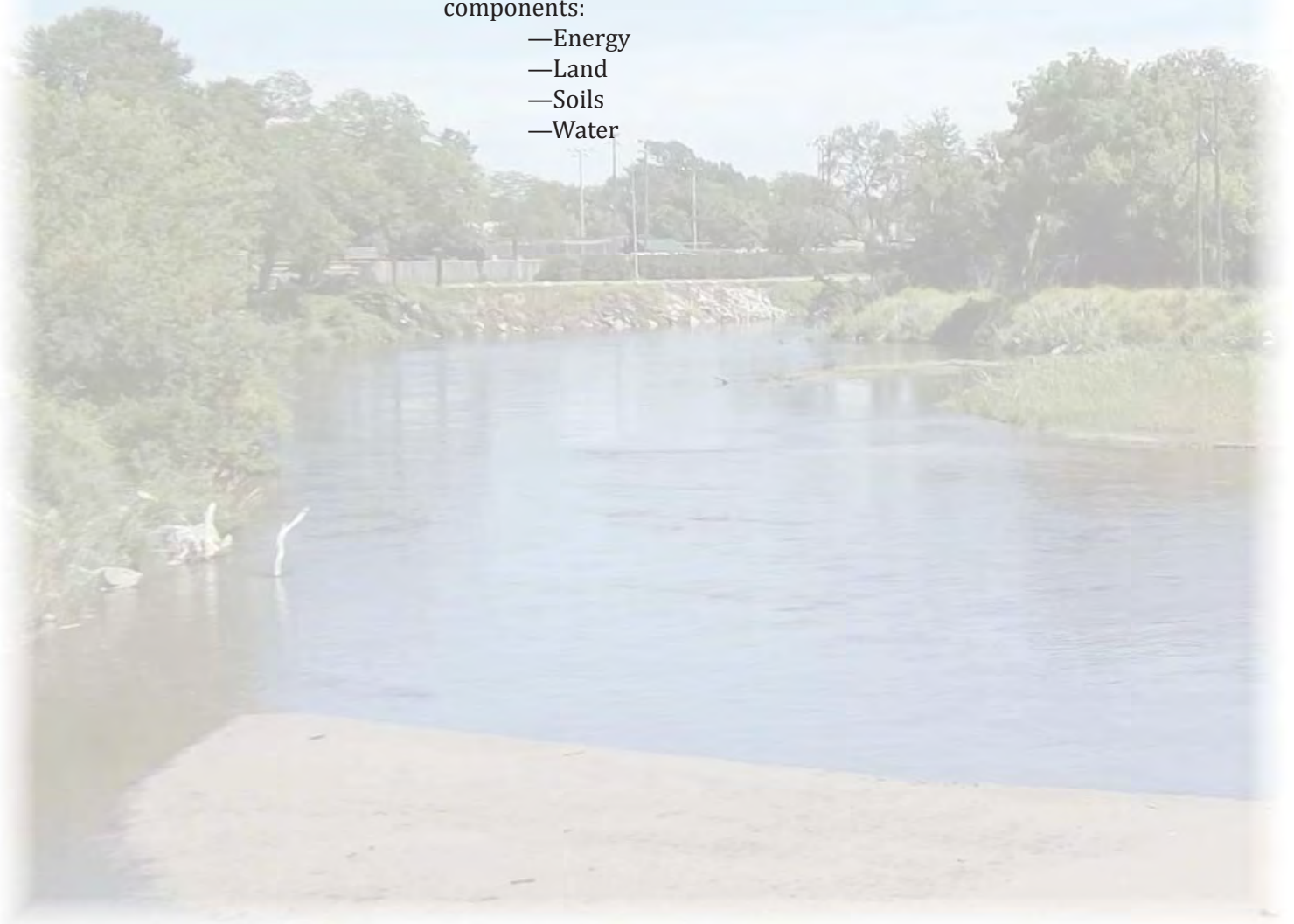


City of Neligh's Fiber Map courtesy of Nebraska Link.

# Chapter 3: Energy & Natural Resources

Formulating a truly “comprehensive” plan for Neligh requires research and analysis for the community’s natural resources and energy options. Looking at land, soil, and water specifications will assist decision-makers when planning for future development and infrastructure. In order for any type of built environment to be developed, there must be an understanding of the natural resources existing and available in the area, how the development will impact the natural environment, and the development constraints existing on the site because of the natural environment. This Energy & Natural Resources section has the following components:

- Energy
- Land
- Soils
- Water





# Energy

*One important update for this Comprehensive Plan was to include an Energy section. In April 2010, Legislative Bill (LB 997) was signed into law by Governor Heineman and requires all Nebraska Cities and Counties to include an energy element in their new Comprehensive Plan by January 1, 2015. The energy element should assess current energy consumption and evaluate and promote utilization of renewable energy sources and energy conservation measures that benefit the community.*



1. Energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors:

The Nebraska Energy Office compiles statistics on energy consumption in the state by sector. The latest statistics are from 2007.

Residential: In 2007, 47.5% of the residential sector’s energy usage was from natural gas. 40.2% of the energy consumed in the residential sector was electricity, 7.7% were petroleum products, 4.9% was renewable energy (wood 4.38%, geothermal 0.22%, and solar 0.04%), and less than 1% was coal. [Source: Nebraska Energy Office, “Energy Consumption in Nebraska’s Residential Sector,” [www.neo.gov/statsht-ml/09/html](http://www.neo.gov/statsht-ml/09/html)]

Commercial: In 2007, 48.06% of the commercial sector’s energy usage was from electricity and 45.88% from natural gas. Petroleum products made up 4.1% of the energy consumed in the commercial sector (diesel fuel 1.65%, propane 1.58%, motor gasoline 0.88%, kerosene 0.01%), 1.8% was renewable energy (geothermal 0.92%, wood 0.85%, and ethanol 0.02%), and less than 1% was coal. [Source: Nebraska Energy Office, “Energy Consumption in Nebraska’s Commercial Sector,” [www.neo.gov/statsht-ml/12/html](http://www.neo.gov/statsht-ml/12/html)]

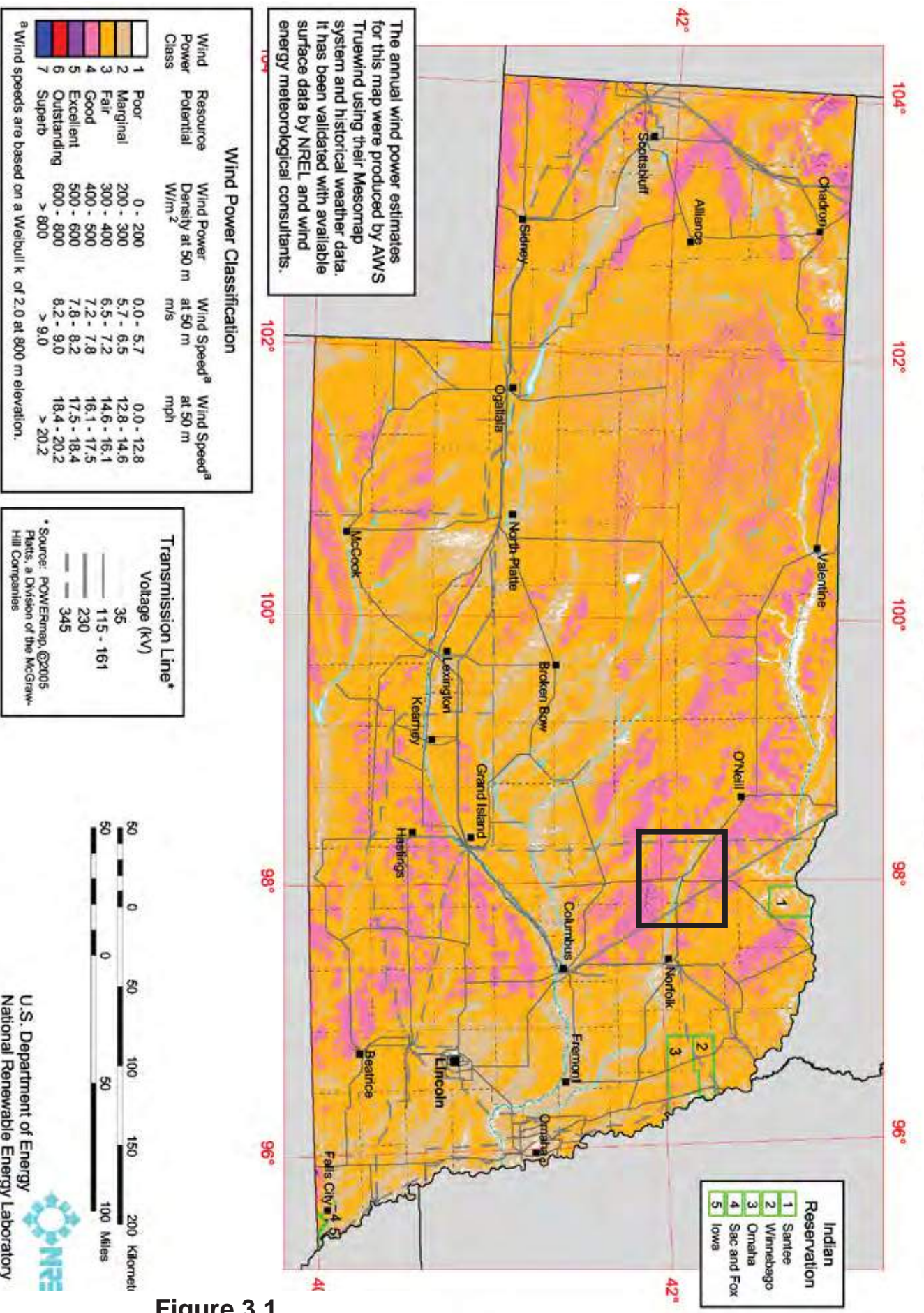
Industrial: In 2007, 38.13% of the industrial sector energy usage was from natural gas, 22.66% from diesel fuel, and 19.77% from electricity. Petroleum product other than diesel fuel were asphalt and road oil (3.8%), propane (3.51%), motor gasoline (2.33%), residual fuel (0.19%), lubricants (0.14%), kerosene (0.01%), and other petroleum (0.88%). 5.13% of the energy consumed in the industrial sector was coal and 3.44% was renewable energy (wood and wood waste 3.38% and ethanol 0.06%). [Source: Nebraska Energy Office, “Energy Consumption in Nebraska’s Industrial Sector,” [www.neo.gov/statshtml/15/html](http://www.neo.gov/statshtml/15/html)]

Energy infrastructure and energy use statistics by sector are not available for the City of Neligh. Specifics about the City of Neligh’s electric system can be found in the previous section of this Comprehensive Plan. **Table 3.1** shows the electric power consumption in Neligh for 2010 through 2013. This data was provided by the City of Neligh.

Table 3.1 Electric Power Consumption, Neligh, 2010-2013	
Year	Residential
2010	19,899,163 kWh
2011	20,303,685 kWh
2012	18,978,435 kWh
2013	19,691,845 kWh
Source: The City of Neligh	



# Nebraska - 50 m Wind Power



**Figure 3.1**  
**Nebraska 50M Wind Power Map**  
 Neligh, Nebraska



## 2. Utilization of renewable energy sources:

The Nebraska Energy Office reports that in 2007, 3% of Nebraska's energy consumption was from renewable energy sources. The sources of energy for Nebraska in 2007 were petroleum (33%), coal (31%), natural gas (21%), nuclear power (17%) and renewable energy (3%). The renewable sources were biomass (1.48%), conventional hydroelectric power (0.496%), ethanol (0.379%), wind (0.309%), geothermal energy (0.115%), and solar (0.005%). [Source: Nebraska Energy Office, "Nebraska's Renewable Energy Consumption," [www.neo.ne.gov/statshtml/92.htm](http://www.neo.ne.gov/statshtml/92.htm)]

The nation as a whole used a higher percentage of renewable energy than Nebraska. In 2008, 7% of the energy consumption in the United States was from renewable sources. That year the sources of energy for the nation were petroleum (37%), natural gas (24%), coal (23%), nuclear electric power (8%), and renewable energy (7%). The sources of renewable energy were solar (0.07%), geothermal (0.35%), wind (0.49%), hydropower (2.38%), and biomass (3.71%). [Source: U.S. Energy Information Administration, "Renewable Energy Trends in Consumption and Electricity," [www.eia.doe.gov/cneaf/solar.renewables/page/trends/rentrends.html](http://www.eia.doe.gov/cneaf/solar.renewables/page/trends/rentrends.html)]

Renewable energy source statistics are not available for the City of Neligh. **Figure 3.1** shows the rating of the State of Nebraska for 50M wind power. Antelope County has large areas that rate good with a few areas of fair ratings for wind power. Antelope County has better wind power potential than many other Counties in the State which is why the County is experiencing wind turbine development. The Nebraska Public Power District is in the process of constructing a 345,000 volt transmission line from Hoskins to a substation north of Neligh.

This new infrastructure should increase capacity and reliability for the citizens of Neligh. In addition, the new transmission line will enhance NPPD's ability to expand and develop future renewable energy project in the area. Currently 118 wind turbines are in operation between Neligh and Petersburg. A wind farm addition of 60 new turbines was recently approved by the Antelope County Commissioners and will be constructed south of Neligh which will increase the total power production from the 178 wind turbines to 275 megawatts.

The City is looking into purchasing the unused power from the new wind turbine development. Currently the City has a contract to purchase excess power from the market from the Gavins Point Dam near Yankton, South Dakota. Hydroelectric power is also another form of a renewable energy source. It is estimated that approximately six percent of the City's annual electric power comes from the hydroelectric plant at Gavins Point Dam.

### 3. Energy conservation measures that benefit the community:

- a. Energy Codes – Under §§81-1608 to 81-1616, the State of Nebraska has adopted the International Energy Conservation Code as the Nebraska Energy Code. Any city may adopt and enforce the Nebraska Energy Code or an equivalent energy code. If a city does not adopt an energy code, the Nebraska Energy Office will enforce the Nebraska Energy Code in the jurisdiction.

The purpose of the code, under §81-1608, is to ensure that newly built houses or buildings meet uniform energy efficiency standards. The statute finds:

*that there is a need to adopt the...International Energy Conservation Code in order (1) to ensure that a minimum energy efficiency standard is maintained throughout the state, (2) to harmonize and clarify energy building code statutory references, (3) to ensure compliance with the National Energy Policy Act of 1992, (4) to increase energy savings for all Nebraska consumers, especially low-income Nebraskans, (5) to reduce the cost of the state programs that provide assistance to low-income Nebraskans, (6) to reduce the amount of money expended to import energy, (7) to reduce the growth of energy consumption, (8) to lessen the need for new power plants, and (9) to provide training for local code officials and residential and commercial builders who implement the...International Energy Conservation Code.*

The Code applies to all new buildings, or renovations of or additions to any existing buildings. Only those renovations that will cost more than 50 percent of the replacement cost of the building must comply with the code.

The City of Neligh has not adopted an energy code. If a City of County does not adopt an energy code, the Nebraska Energy Office will enforce the Nebraska Energy Code in the jurisdiction.

- b. Energy Efficiency Programs – The City will work with utility companies that supply energy to the residents and businesses of the City to promote and implement energy efficiency programs that can be utilized by these customers to improve conservation and utilization of electricity, natural gas, and other energy sources.

Residents and businesses are encouraged to work with utility companies and take advantage of the companies' energy efficiency programs to improve conservation and use of electricity, natural gas, and other energy sources.

- c. "Energy Saving Tips" – The Nebraska Energy Office has listed ways to save money on energy bills for the home, farm, business, or vehicle. Options for energy savings are listed on the Office's web site at <http://www.neo.ne.gov/tips/tips.htm>. The City and residents and businesses in the City are encouraged to take advantage of the conservation measures.
- d. City may add other conservation measures. One suggestion is to include planting trees by communities. Cities that have been designated Tree City USA cities are providing energy efficiency/conservation options by planting trees.

# Land

The upland landscape in Antelope County consists of rolling loess hills, hummocky sandhills and a rolling transition zone between the loess hills and the sandhills. Loess is a composition of gravel overlain by wind-deposited silt. The Elkhorn River Valley, which is about two miles wide, crosses Antelope County from east to west. The river is a major water feature and is important to the landscape in and surrounding Neligh.

Topographic elevations in the planning area are approximately 1,755 feet above Mean Sea Level (MSL). The City of Neligh climate is typical for Nebraska, which is characterized by cold winters, warm summers, high winds, and frequent changes in weather conditions. This results in an average daily maximum temperature of 87° F in July dropping to an average daily minimum temperature of 8° F in January. Extreme temperatures range from below 0° F in winter to above 100° F in the summer. Annual rainfall-precipitation is approximately 25 inches per year with average annual snowfall of approximately 25 inches, but of course it varies from year to year.

Understanding the topography of Neligh and Antelope County is important to determine the community's best areas for potential development as well as understanding that proper land use practices can protect the natural resources and be a complement to the built environment. The natural topography of the community provides both opportunities and constraints for existing and future development. In Neligh, like most communities, the major development constraints and opportunities are associated with the existing soils, the condition of these soils, and the topography.



# Soils

The soils in and around Neligh are classified into soil groups, or associations, and have a broad range of characteristics. The United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation

Service conducted the Field Soils Survey and determined the boundaries of the soil types found in the region. The planning jurisdiction of Neligh, including the corporate limits and the one-mile extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ) outside of the corporate limits, is comprised of several generalized soil associations (**Table 3.2**). The Shell-Muir-Hobbs Soil Association is considered to be deep, nearly level, well drained, silty soils; formed in silty alluvium; on bottom lands and stream terraces.

**Table 3.2 Soil Association Characteristics, Neligh, 2014**

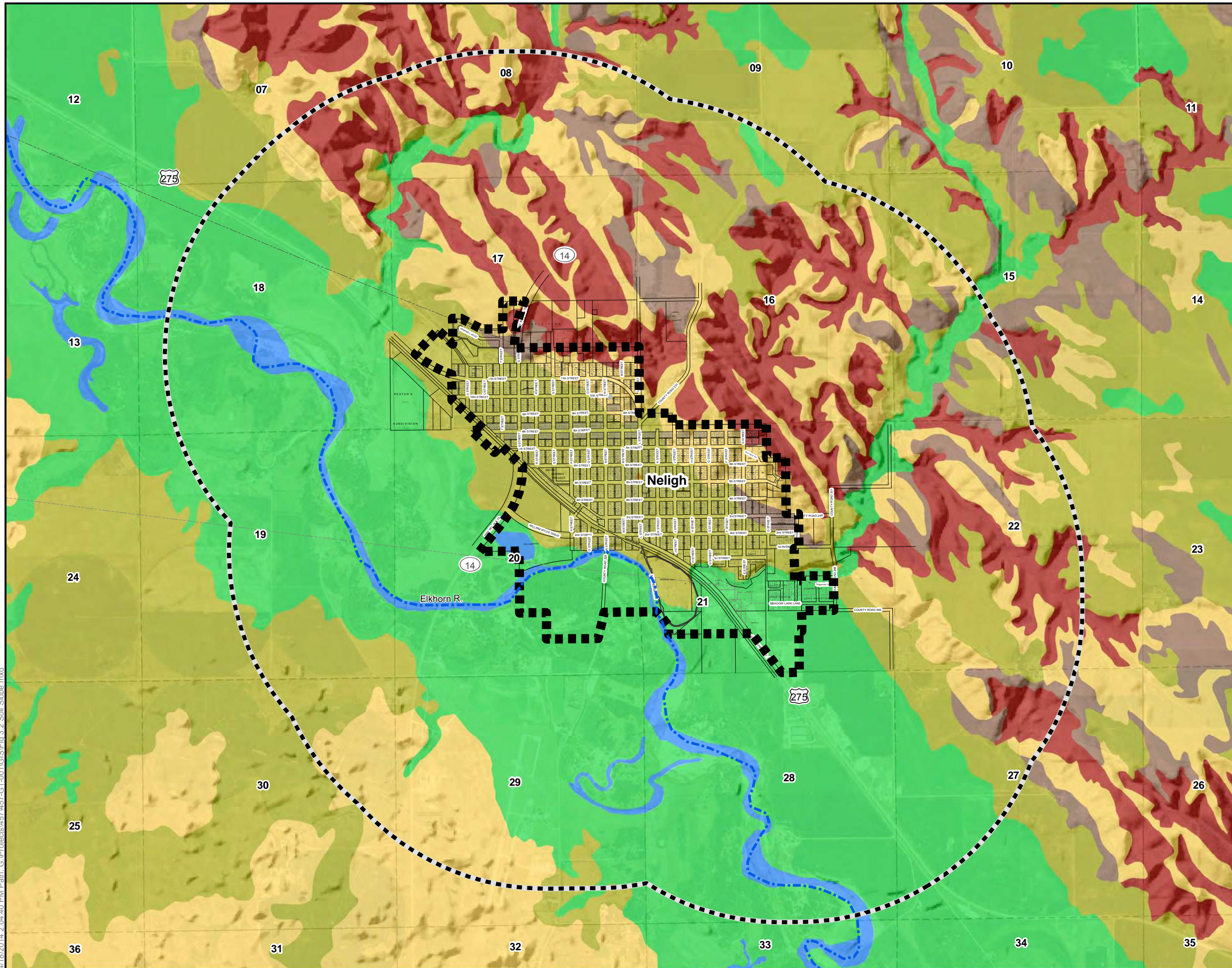
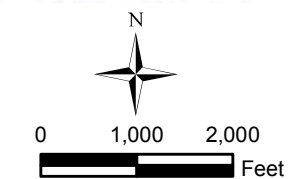
Association	Characteristics	Use and Vegetation
<b>Nora Silty Clay Loam</b>	The Nora series consists of deep, well drained soils formed in loess.	Nearly all areas are cultivated with corn, soybeans, and alfalfa the main crops.
<b>Crofton-Nora Complex</b>	This series consists of deep, well-drained soils formed in loess. This complex is present on ridgetops and hillsides in the loess uplands.	Most areas are cultivated with corn, soybeans, grain sorghum, small grains and alfalfa the primary crops.
<b>Cozad Silt Loam</b>	This soil is deep, nearly level, silty soil on stream terraces.	Nearly all areas are cultivated with corn, soybeans, and alfalfa the main crops.
<b>Hord Silt Loam</b>	The Hord series consists of deep, well-drained soils that formed in loess and silty alluvium.	Most areas are cultivated with corn, grain sorghum, soybeans and alfalfa.

Source: United States Department of Agriculture

Information and knowledge on soils is an important factor when discussing future development options. The built environment is dependent upon the natural environment and proper development practices must be followed in order to protect the natural environment. There are several different types of soils present in the planning jurisdiction of Neligh; these can all be broken down into many classifications based on slope, percentage of soil type, major and minor types of soil, and degree of drainage. In order to make land use recommendations, decision-makers need to understand how different soil types and slopes can affect future land uses, the environment, current residents, and farming practices. Soils data and classifications used in the following maps were gathered by the United States Department of Agriculture’s Soil Conservation Service. The following maps in this section depict slope, soil suitability, and dryland capability by soil associations for the planning jurisdiction of this Comprehensive Plan.

- Slope by Soil Association Map.....**(Figure 3.2)**
- Soil Suitability for Septic Tanks.....**(Figure 3.3)**
- Soil Suitability for Sewage Lagoons.....**(Figure 3.4)**
- Dryland Capability Classification.....**(Figure 3.5)**
- Soil Suitability for Prime Farmland.....**(Figure 3.6)**





**Legend**

- ETJ
- Corporate Boundary
- Slope Gradient - Weighted Average**
- Level to nearly Level (0-2 Percent)
- Gently Sloping (1-6 Percent)
- Moderately Sloping (6-11 Percent)
- Strongly Sloping (9-30 Percent)
- Very Steep (30-60 Percent)
- Water

Source:  
 Data Provided By: The U.S. Department of  
 Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation  
 Service 12-31-2013, M&A

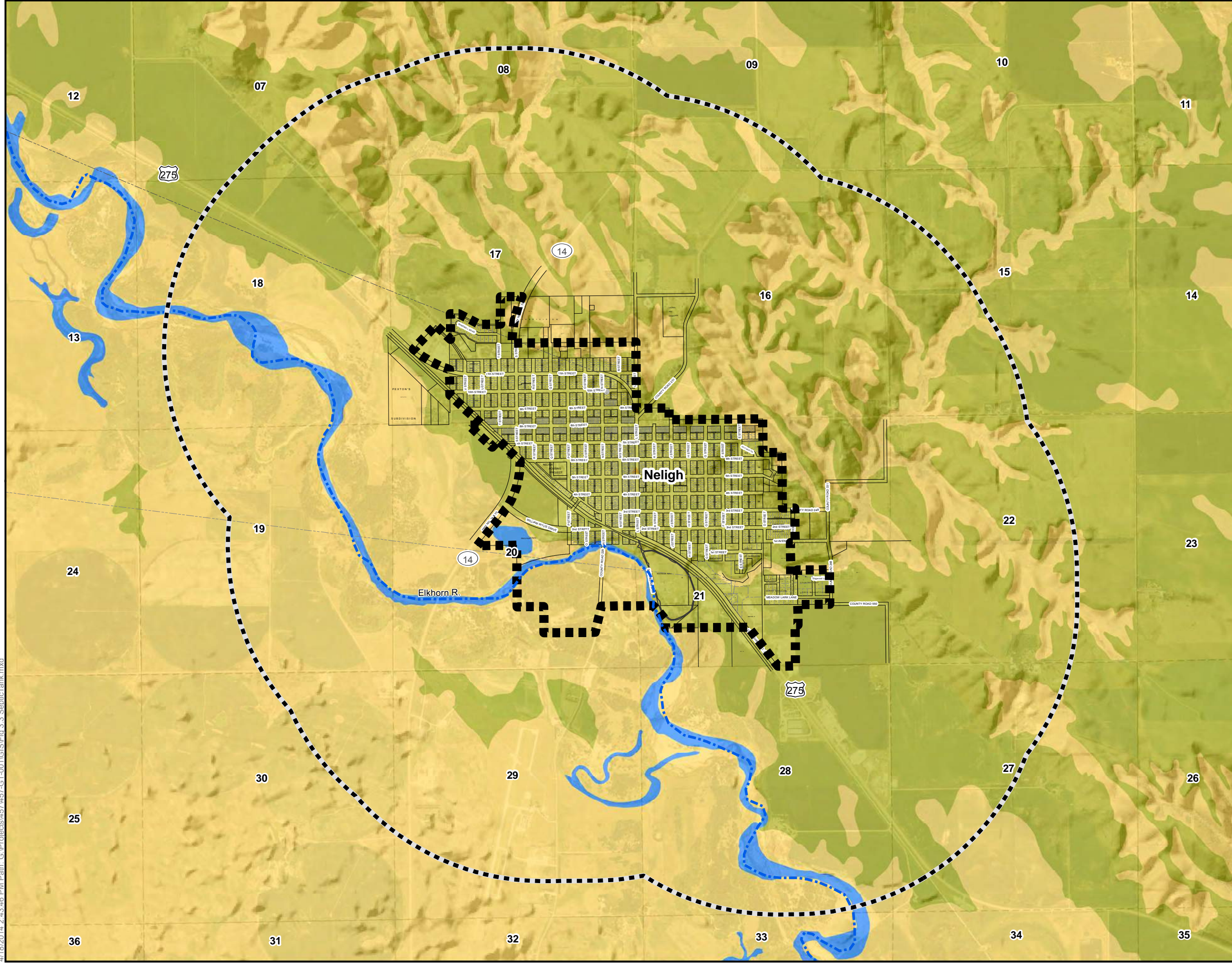
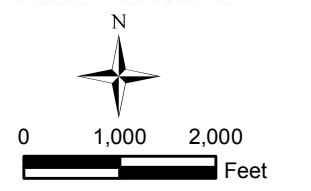
**Figure 3.2**  
**Slope By**  
**Soil Association Map**

Neligh, Nebraska














**Legend**

-  ETJ
-  Corporate Boundary
- Soil Suitability**
-  Somewhat limited
-  Very limited
-  Water

Source:  
 Data Provided By: The U.S. Department of  
 Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation  
 Service 12-31-2013, M&A

**Figure 3.3**  
**Soil Suitability For**  
**Septic Tanks**  
**By Soil Association map**

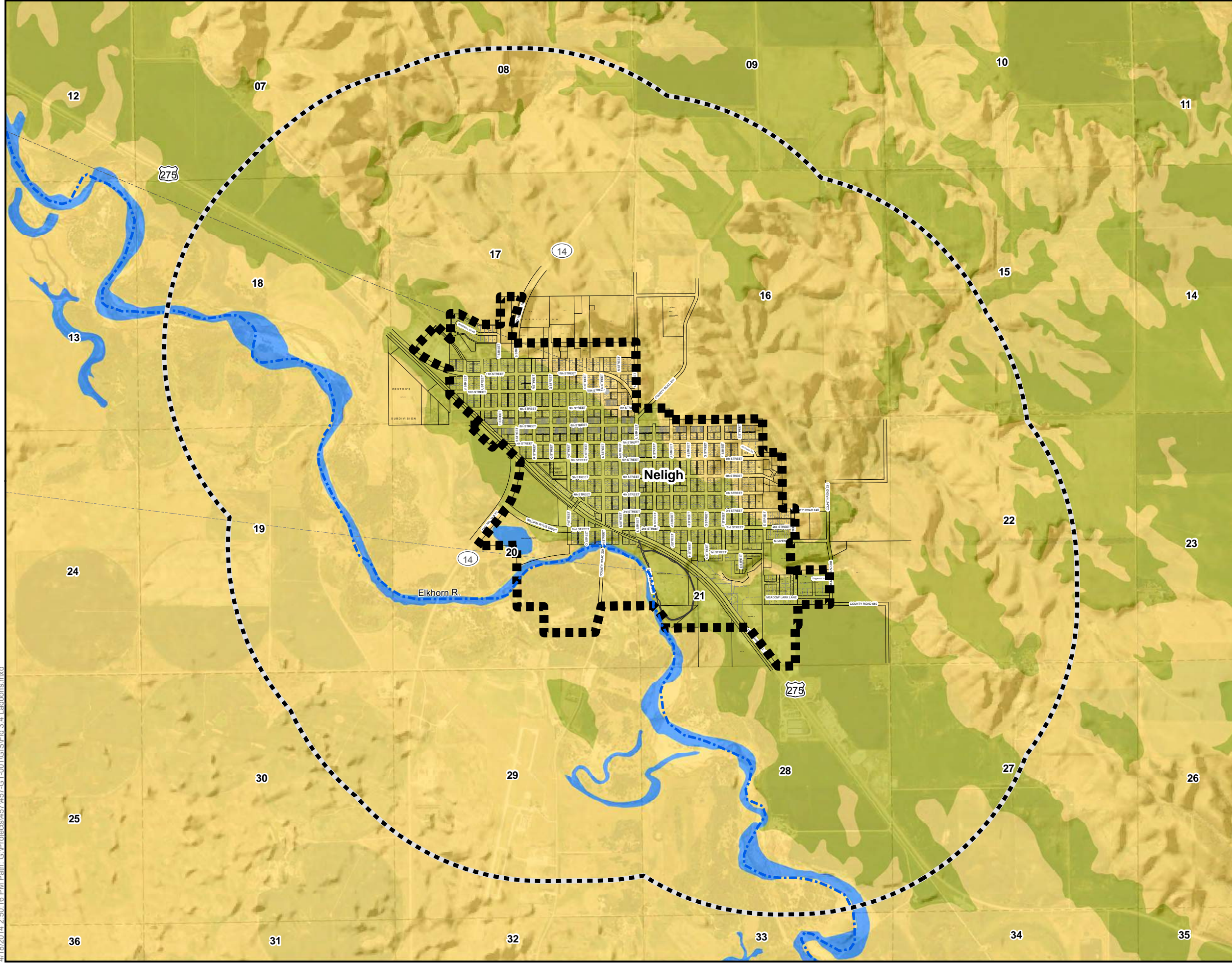
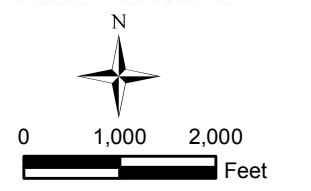
Neligh, Nebraska

4/18/2014 2:43:46 PM Path: G:\Projects\457457-G1-001\GIS\Fig 3.3 SepticTank.mxd














**Legend**

-  ETJ
-  Corporate Boundary
- Soil Suitability**
-  Somewhat limited
-  Very limited
-  Water

Source:  
 Data Provided By: The U.S. Department of  
 Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation  
 Service 12-31-2013, M&A

**Figure 3.4**  
**Soil Suitability For**  
**Sewage Lagoons**  
**By Soil Association map**

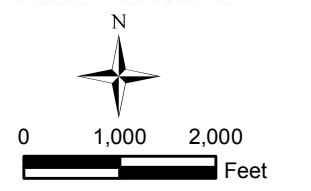
Neligh, Nebraska

4/18/2014 2:50:16 PM Path: G:\Projects\457457-G1-001\GIS\Fig 3.4 Lagoons.mxd









**Class Description**

- Class 1 Soils have few limitations that restrict their use.
- Class 2 Soils have some limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices.
- Class 3 Soils have some limitations that reduce the choice of plants or require moderate conservation practices or both.
- Class 4 Soils have very severe limitations that restrict the choice of plants, require very careful management, or both.
- Class 5 Soils have little or no erosion hazard, but have other limitations impractical to remove that limit their use.
- Class 6 Soils have very severe limitations that make them generally unsuited to cultivation and limit their use largely to pasture, etc.
- Class 7 Soils have very severe limitations that make them unsuited to cultivation and that restrict their use to grazing, etc.
- Class 8 Soils/landforms have limitations that preclude their use for commercial plant production and restrict their use.

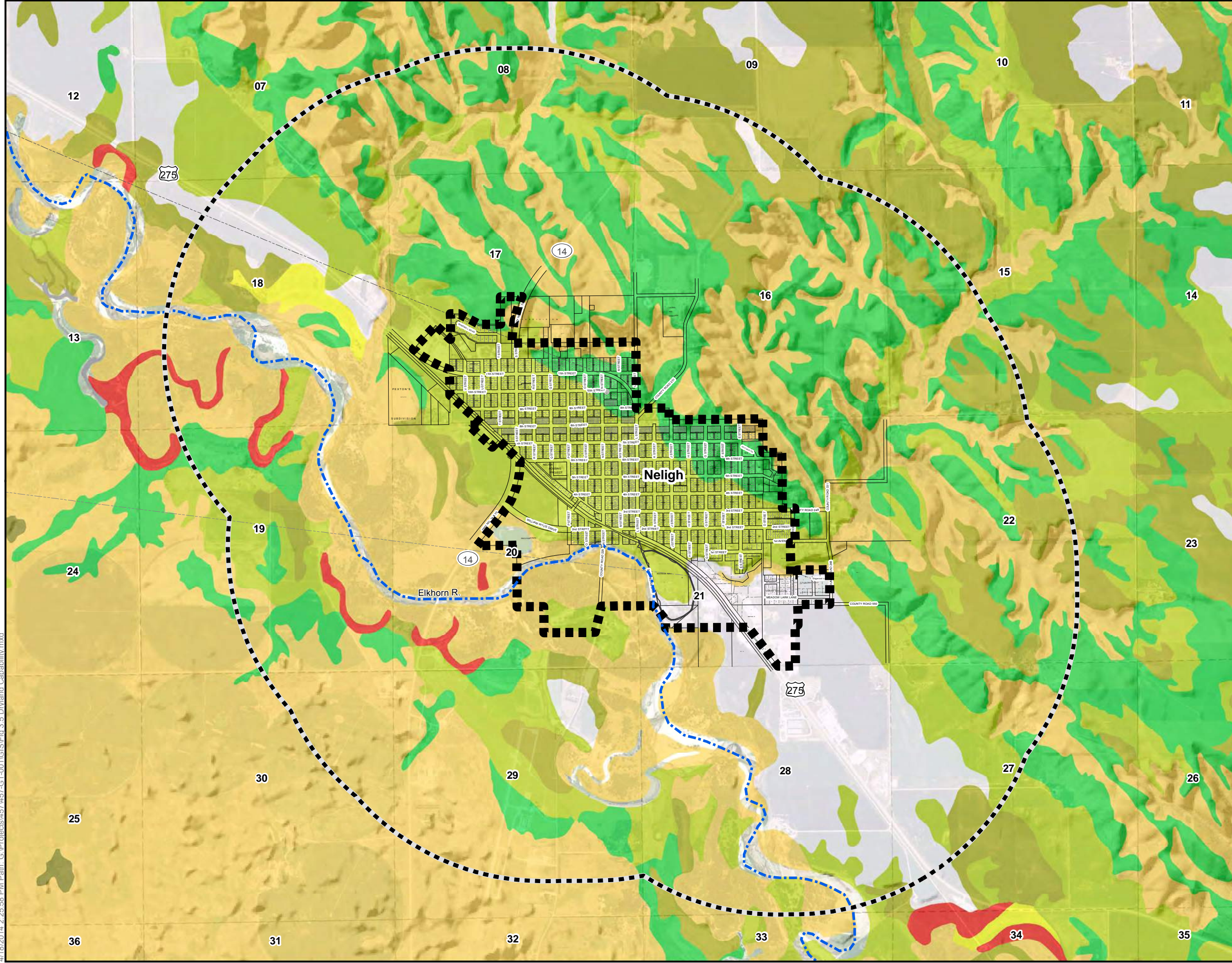
**Legend**

- ETJ
- Corporate Boundary
- Class 1
- Class 2
- Class 3
- Class 4
- Class 5
- Class 6
- Class 7
- Class 8

Source:  
 Data Provided By: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service 12-31-2013, M&A

**Figure 3.5**  
**Dryland Capability**  
**Classification By**  
**Soil Association Map**

Neligh, Nebraska

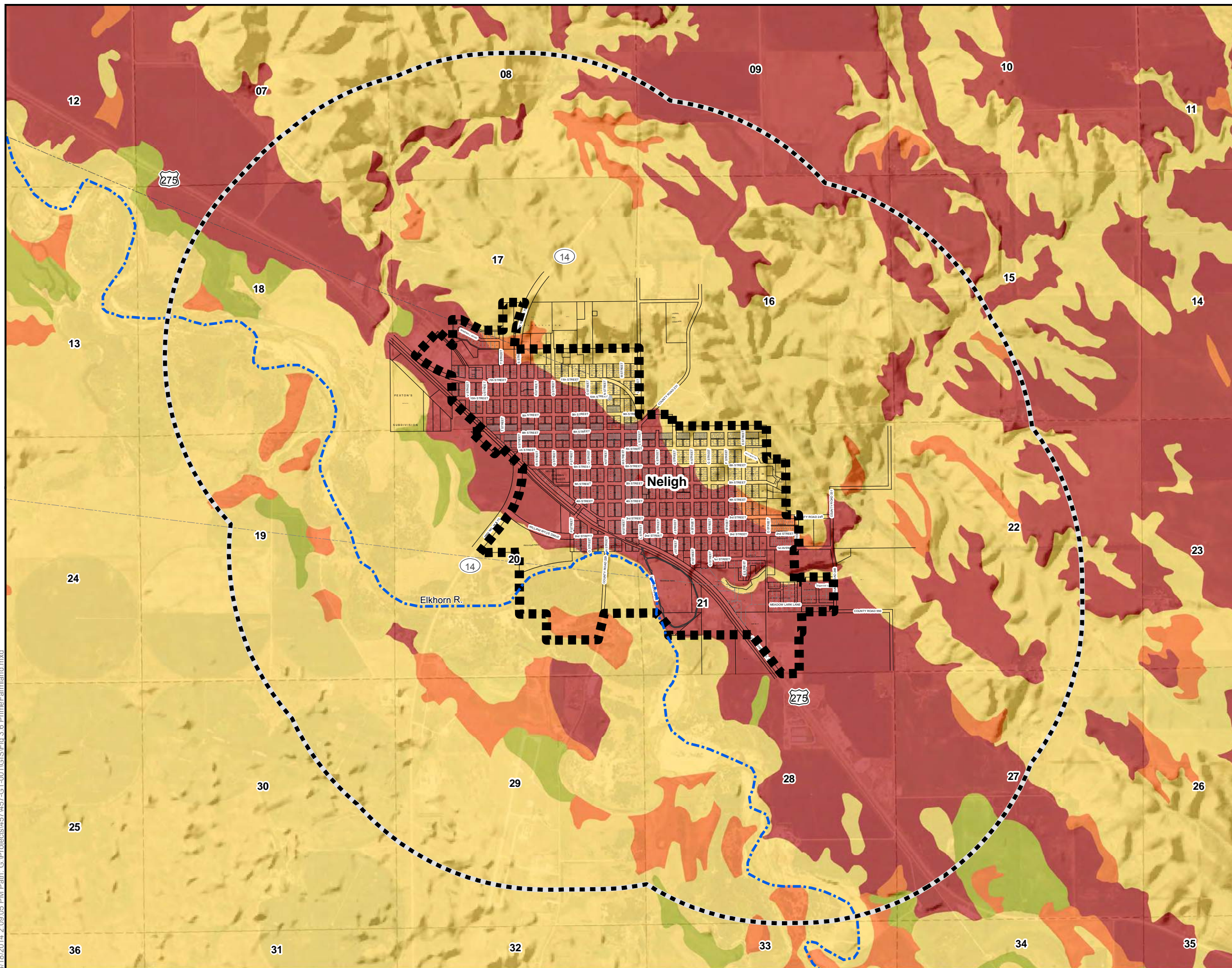
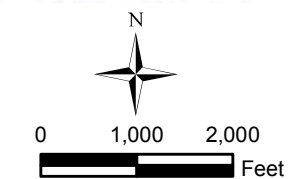


4/18/2014 2:25:58 PM Path: G:\Projects\457457-G1-001\GIS\Fig 3.5 Dryland Capability.mxd









**Legend**

- ETJ
- Corporate Boundary

**Soil Suitability**

- Farmland of statewide importance
- All areas are prime farmland
- Prime farmland if irrigated
- Prime farmland if drained
- Not prime farmland

Source:  
 Data Provided By: The U.S. Department of  
 Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation  
 Service 12-31-2013, M&A

**Figure 3.6**  
**Soil Suitability For**  
**Prime Farmland**  
**By Soil Association Map**

Neligh, Nebraska

4/18/2014 2:09:05 PM Path: G:\Projects\457457-G1-001\GIS\Fig 3.6 PrimeFarmland.mxd





Nebraska, including Antelope County, has an abundance of groundwater supply from the Ogallala Aquifer. Residents within Antelope County get their drinking and agricultural water from wells utilizing the bed of porous rocks that form the Ogallala Aquifer. It is a great natural resource for the State of Nebraska and in turn, for Antelope County and Neligh, but conservation and potential contamination need to be constantly analyzed.

**Figure 3.7** shows all of the registered wells in and around Neligh. The Ogallala Aquifer is the source of water for many irrigation systems and registered wells around Neligh in order to supply water to residents, crop and pasturelands, and livestock. The State of Nebraska receives about 80 percent of its public drinking water and nearly 100 percent of its private water supply from groundwater sources. The agricultural process most of Nebraska's communities are dependent upon is directly tied to these aforementioned water sources, proving contamination to be a major concern. Due to the dependence on groundwater supply, the cost of contamination runs high. The State of Nebraska understands the vital importance of the groundwater supply, and therefore utilizes Natural Resources Districts (NRD). The Upper Elkhorn NRD plays an important role in protecting this natural resource for Neligh and the surrounding areas.

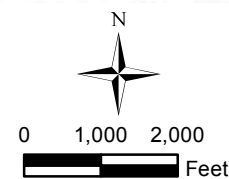
It is also part of Neligh's responsibility to protect the quality and availability of drinking water for the region. **Figure 3.7** also shows Neligh's Wellhead Protection Area as covering a majority of Neligh's corporate limits boundary. The goal of the Wellhead Protection Area is to protect the land and groundwater surrounding the public drinking water supply wells from contamination. Any endangerment to the supply threatens the public's health as well as the vital farming economy of the region.

Besides the Ogallala Aquifer, there is one major body of water transecting Neligh. The Elkhorn River shares the path of Highway 275 and exits the corporate limits of Neligh in the southeast portion of town, south of the wastewater treatment plant. All four sources of water can create challenges for development because of the possibility of a high water table and floodways and floodplains present with surface water. **Figure 3.8** is the floodplain map for Neligh. This map shows the 1.0 percent annual flood chance, or the 100-year flood, and the 0.2 percent annual flood chance, or the 500-year flood. The Elkhorn River drainage should only impact development along the Highway 81 corridor and south of the Cowboy Trail at this time. The 1.0 percent (100-year) and 0.2 percent (500-year) floodplains are designated for the United States by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Surface drainage does not pose a major threat to the urban areas of Neligh; however, flooding of the Elkhorn River has caused challenges for the community, as recently as 2010. As the community continues to grow, future development within the floodplain should only be allowed through the supervision of Local, State, and Federal regulations.



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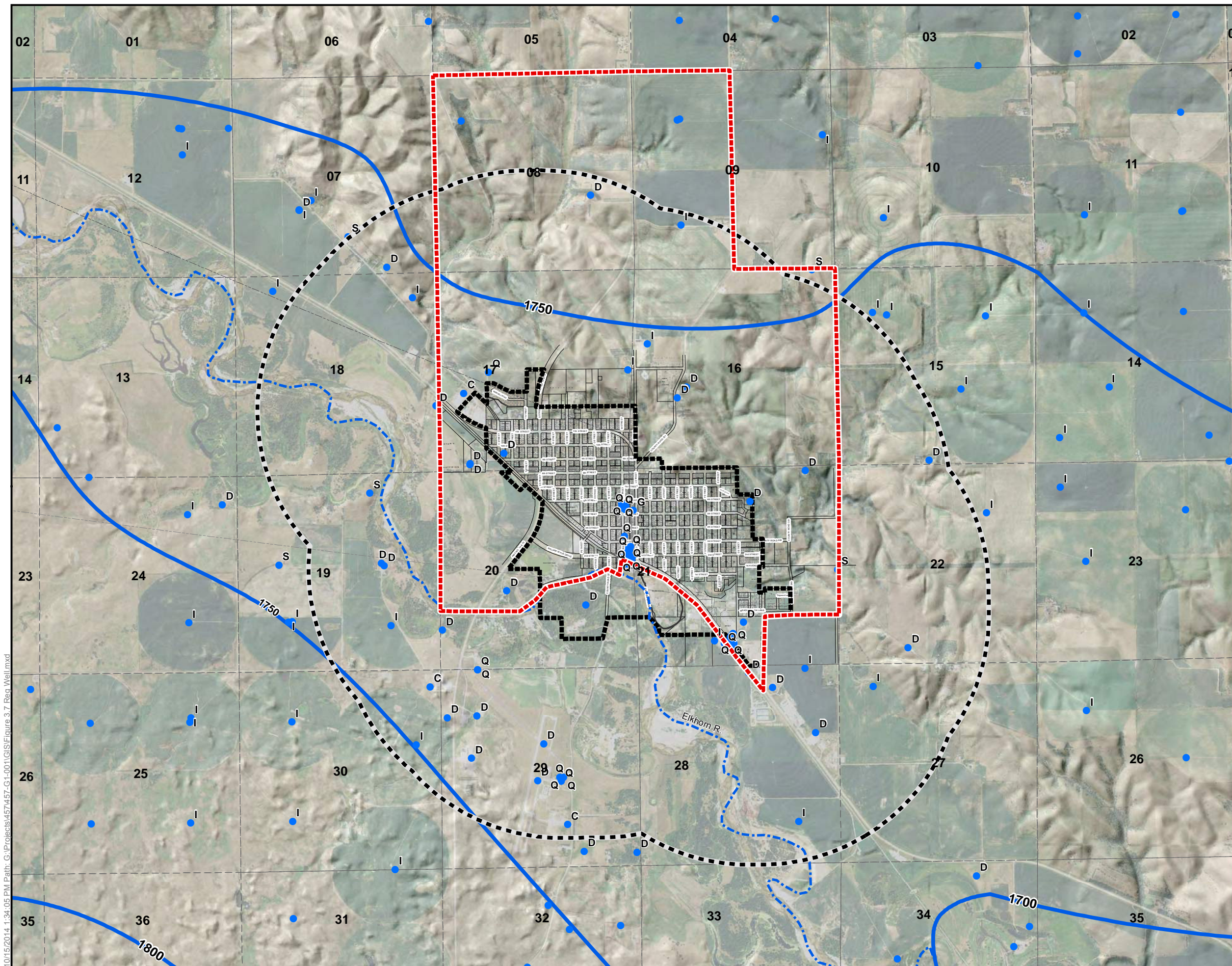


**Legend**

- Wellhead Protection Area Boundary
- ETJ
- Corporate Boundary
- Groundwater Contour
- Reg. Well (Use Type)
  - "C" = Commercial/Industrial
  - "D" = Domestic
  - "G" = Ground Heat Exchanger
  - "I" = Irrigation
  - "L" = Observation (Ground Water Levels)
  - "Q" = Monitoring (Ground Water Quality)
  - "S" = Livestock

**Notes:**

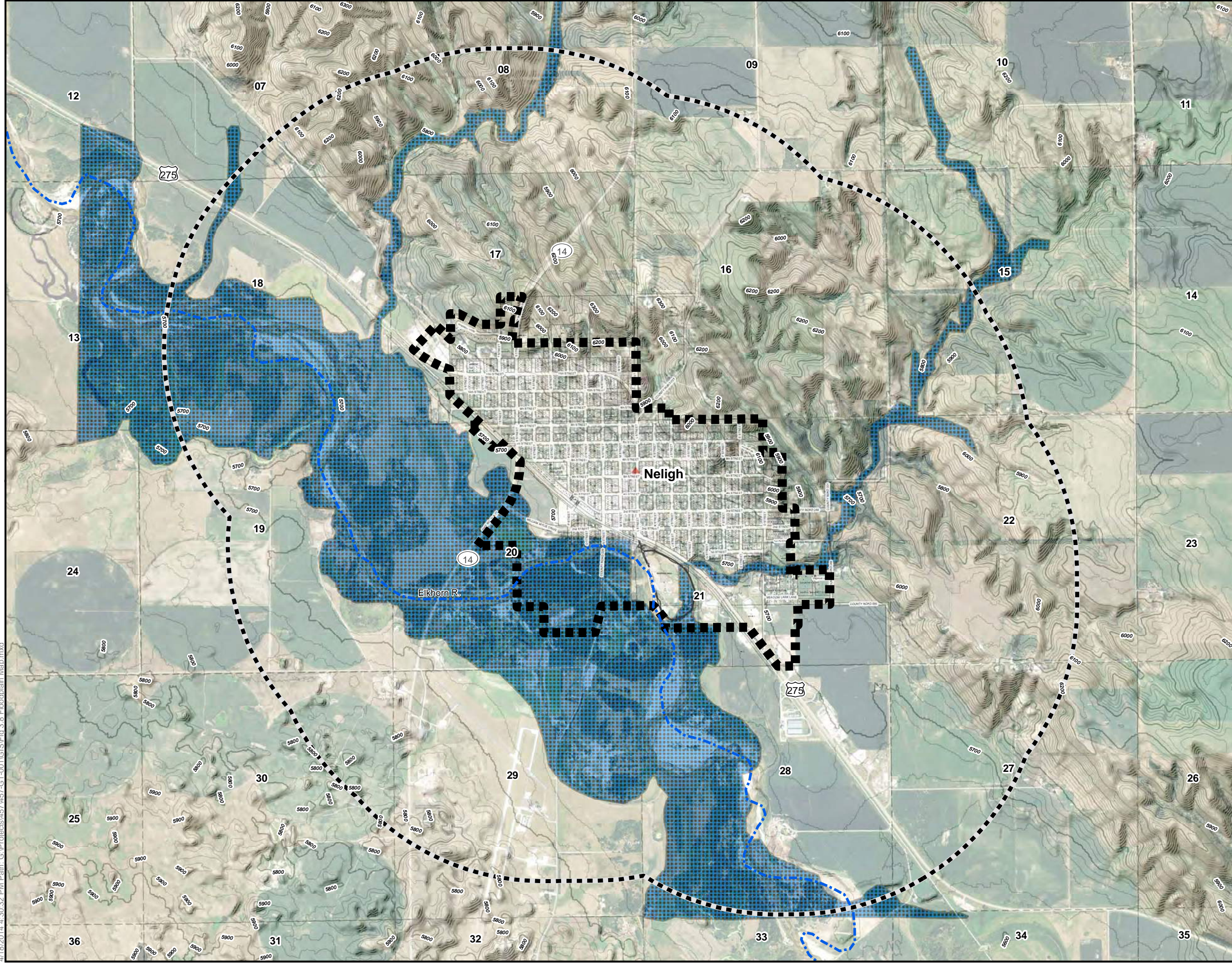
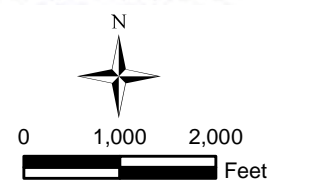
1. 1995 groundwater contours were digitized by the Conservation and Survey Division, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, from Maps developed by the U.S. Geological Survey.
  2. Registered well information provided by the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources, September, 2013.
  3. Registered well locations are positioned from well registration forms. Some errors may exist due to data input and inaccuracies within registration records.
- \* Public wells are not depicted on this map for safety purposes.





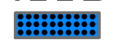
**Figure 3.7**  
**Registered Well &**  
**Wellhead Protection**  
**Area Map**

Neligh, Nebraska





**Legend**

-  ETJ
-  Corporate Boundary
-  Historic Flood Zone

Source:  
 Historic Flood Map data provided by FEMA.  
 Community-Panel No. 3104120006A  
 Effective Date: December 27, 1977

Note:  
 Map may not include all Special Flood Hazard Areas in the community. After a more detailed study, the Special Flood Hazard Areas shown on this map may be modified, and other areas added.

**Figure 3.8**  
**Floodplain Map**

Neligh, Nebraska

4/18/2014 4:30:32 PM Path: G:\Projects\457457-G1-001\GIS\Fig 3.8 Floodplain Map.mxd



# Chapter 4: Land Use & Annexation

The Land Use & Annexation section analyzes the current land uses within Neligh and then provides a vision with possibilities and options for future land use developments and growth. This section also analyzes potential areas for annexation adjacent to Neligh's corporate limits. This Land Use & Annexation section has the following two components:

- Existing & Future Land Use
- Annexation Plan



# Land Use

*Land use is an important aspect in the Comprehensive Plan allowing community members to visualize existing land uses as well as to stimulate discussion and direction for how and where the community could and should grow. How the land is being used creates relationships between the physical, built environment and the social world. Land use planning is an important process because it involves the systematic assessment of physical, social, and economic factors in a way that should mitigate the potential for conflict. This section will give decision-makers options on how the community can grow.*

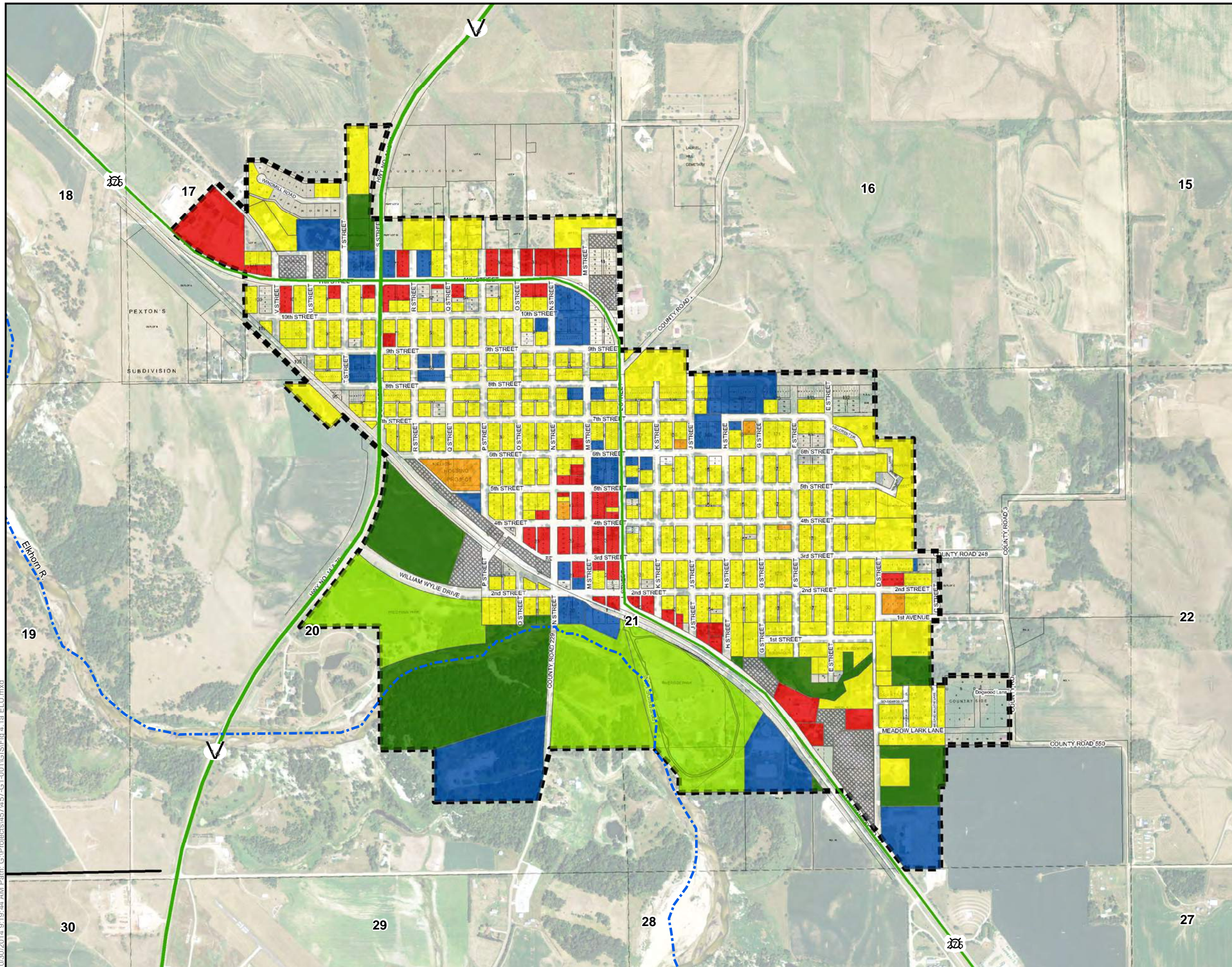
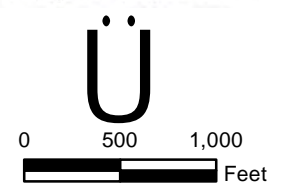
## Existing Land Use

The land use section of the Comprehensive Plan consists of two separate but related parts. The existing land use section is where the community studies and evaluates the pros and cons of Neligh's existing mix of land uses and development patterns. **Figure 4.1**, the Existing Land Use Map, shows the current land uses in Neligh. This allows the City to see how the community's land uses fit together and how the land use patterns should change in the future. Neligh has eight different land use classifications including single-family residential, multi-family residential, commercial, light industrial, public/quasi-public, agricultural/greenspace, recreational, and vacant parcels. Commercial land uses are found along the Highway 275 and 14 corridors as well as in the Downtown District. Commercial properties in any community are typically located in those two areas because of the visibility and access it provides for each business. Companies located along the highway corridors typically require easier access, more parking, or larger space/square footage. Larger economic ventures such as manufacturing, bulk storage, or distribution facilities typically fall into the light industrial category and those businesses should be located on the outskirts of the community. Highway and Downtown Districts tend to attract different types of businesses and they also tend to look and feel dramatically different from one another.

Many communities have separate zoning regulations for the highway corridor commercial district and the central/downtown commercial district. Separate districts are necessary because of the different setbacks, lot sizes, height restrictions, parking needs, and aesthetic desires for each of the areas. Downtown economic development should be catered towards retail, service, and/or hospitality businesses. It is important to protect the look and feel of the Downtown District because it is the heart of the community. Larger economic ventures are important to the economy because of the revenue and job opportunities they provide for the City; however, these developments should take place along the outskirts of town near Highways 275 and 14. Zoning Regulations are important to steer commercial development into proper zoning districts to ensure the mix of adjacent land uses is conducive to the new business.

The primary land use in Neligh is residential. Structures of this nature can be found throughout the community. As obvious as it seems, it is important when planning for any future development to maintain or enhance the existing feel of the neighborhood. This is especially true in residential areas of the community; any new structures that are built in those neighborhoods should be residential in nature. The existing residential land uses include both single-family and multi-family developments with mixes of single-family detached homes, duplexes, and apartments. There are a few multi-family or medium density developments spread throughout the community. Other residential development has taken place outside the corporate limits but within the City's one-mile jurisdiction. These homes are typically farm homes or single-family homes on large lots. This type of residential development can be very enticing and attractive for people because it allows for large spacious yards, privacy, and yet these homes can still be in close proximity to the community with some even utilizing public infrastructure such as City water and sewer.





**Legend**

Corporate Boundary

**Existing Land Use**

- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Recreational
- Agricultural/Greenspace
- Vacant

**Note:**  
 All areas outside of the Corporate Limits that have not been classified as a particular land use may be classified as Agricultural/Greenspace.

**Figure 4.1**  
**Existing Land Use**  
 Neligh, Nebraska

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There are several recreational areas throughout the community including the municipal swimming pool, Antelope County Fairgrounds, golf course, several ball fields, a hike/bike trail, and several areas with playground equipment. Recreational opportunities can provide amenities for a wide age range of residents in a community. Availability of a variety of recreational services and parks is important to maintain a high quality of life for all residents in Neligh, not just the children. The existing recreational districts are concentrated on the south side of the community which means that residents can go to one area of the community to enjoy all of the recreational amenities; however, it can provide accessibility challenges for all residents, especially those that live on the north end of the City. As more land continues to develop and more residents and families move into the community it will be important to assess the need for improved and additional recreational amenities including the potential need for neighborhood parks in other areas of the community.

Public/quasi-public land uses include churches, municipal properties, school buildings, healthcare facilities, museums, community buildings, etc. These existing land uses are spread throughout Neligh, and rightfully so. Public land uses need to be available and accessible by every resident in Neligh, not just concentrated in specific areas that could segregate neighborhoods based on available amenities. Public/quasi-public uses can many times be considered amenities therefore adding to the quality of life available to residents and another tool to utilize to attract potential residents. With several of these public/quasi-public land uses, it is important to analyze the potential need for expansion and availability of vacant land for any expansion. Vacant land in close proximity to public/quasi-public land uses should be considered a positive attribute for any potential future expansion or development of those land uses.

There are also a few areas of land that are deemed agricultural/greenspace, especially on the fringe of the corporate limits. Some of this land is farmed, and should continue to be until it is necessary to subdivide and develop for the benefit the community. Other areas are also considered to be agricultural/greenspace although they may not be farmed. This is possible for several reasons including topographic challenges that have hindered development for those properties or undesirable locations for development. Even though those areas of land may have development challenges they lend themselves to additional greenspace and/or buffers between the heart of the community and what lies outside of the corporate limits.

There are also a few vacant parcels of land dispersed throughout the community; these lots are platted parcels of ground that may or may not have ever had a structure built on them. The lots are desirable for infill development because of their vicinity to existing public infrastructure; however, the current lot sizes and conditions may not be conducive to attracting potential builders. When developing vacant, infill parcels it is important to maintain the balance of existing land uses surrounding the potential development. Most of the vacant lots are within residential neighborhoods; however, as previously mentioned original platted lots may not be suitable for development based on today's standards. Many areas in the community have adjacent vacant parcels making them conducive for infill development. Because there are not many vacant platted lots within the heart of the community it is important that the City does have other residential lots available for development. Without the existence of Country Side Acres or McCoys Subdivision and the readiness of the community to offer lots for residential development there is not a large portion of vacancies in desirable areas for development. **Table 4.1** shows the approximate percentages of each of the existing land use districts and their portion of the total make-up of the community. Each land use category within the corporate limits can fit into a hierarchy with the least dense classification, single-family residential, on the top of the pyramid and the most dense classification, industrial, on the base of the pyramid. This is an important way in understand how land uses work with each other.

<b>Table 4.1 Existing Land Use Percentages, Neligh, 2014</b>	
<b>Land Use Category</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Residential	38%
Multi-Family Residential	1%
Public/Quasi-Public	12%
Recreational	15%
Commercial	7%
Light Industrial	4%
Agricultural/Greenspace	14%
Vacant	9%
Source: Miller & Associates	

## Future Land Use

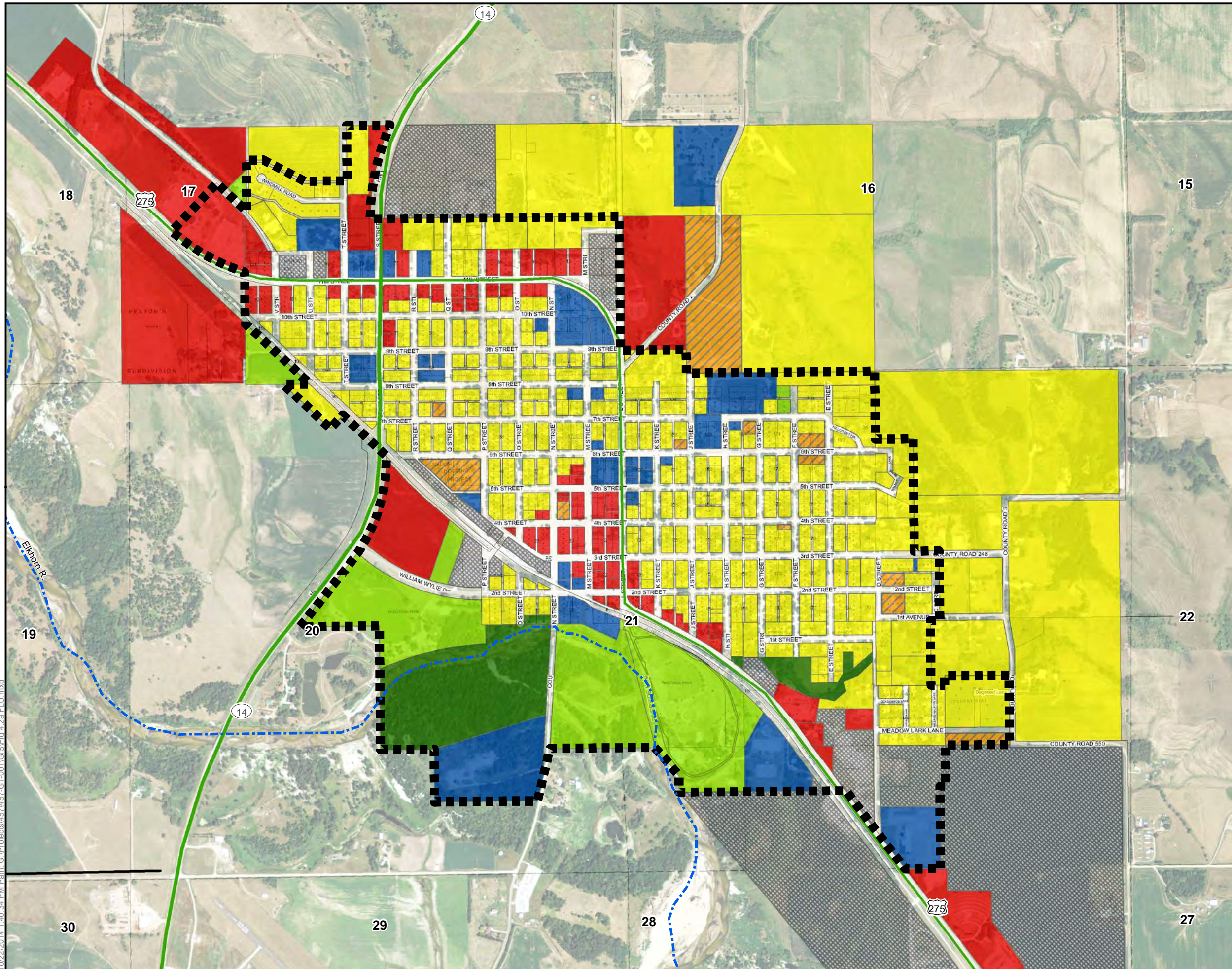
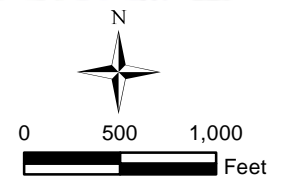
Planning and preparing for future land use options is a vital part of Neligh's Comprehensive Plan. Whether a community is growing or shrinking, there will still be changes in land use patterns; therefore, the purpose of this section is to provide a general guide for future development patterns. The idea is to avoid or minimize conflicts between land uses and the environment. The future land use plan must reflect existing land uses and options for changing land use needs. This plan should be flexible in nature in order to change as the community changes. Also, this plan should be molded to fit the needs, desires, and limitations of Neligh and its residents. Part of the preparation for the Comprehensive Plan was to hold a series of steering group/public input meetings. The input from those meetings was imperative to planning for future land uses. Having an understanding of what residents want and need within the community is important for gaining support and assistance in bettering Neligh. A summary of the input collected from one of the first steering group meetings can be found in the following chapter. Information gathered at those meetings as well as existing land uses and data from primary and secondary sources was used to develop the future land use plan. A workshop session was held with residents to determine where they could foresee future development taking place. Legos were used to address land uses, areas for growth, and to show the need for additional land for different land use classifications. A future land use plan should be a vision of what you want the community to look like; a vision of goals with different land uses to encourage 'smart' growth in your community. This vision should be an outlook and a guide for the next ten years.

In order to prepare and plan for the future of Neligh, decision-makers need to have ambitions and goals. Realistically, what is the future of Neligh going to look like, or what do you want it to look like? The main focus should be on keeping the strong community ties and progressive drive while diversifying amenities and the tax base in order to provide a high quality of life for residents. The types of land uses should vary within the community from single and multi-family homes, commercial ventures of different sizes, public areas including recreational amenities and public services, and some vacant land and greenspace for aesthetics and screening/buffering purposes. Homes should also vary, based on location, size, and price in order to attract a variety of residents. Having compatible housing is important when trying to appeal to new faces in the community. The housing stock versus household income analysis is an important way to determine the type of housing stock needed to best suit the needs and desires of residents. Improving the commercial sector should involve diversifying what is available to Neligh's residents. Commercial development should be promoted and developed depending on available resources. However, commercial ventures not only add to the tax base for the City but they also create job opportunities for residents or potential residents of Neligh. Envisioning goals as realities is important for the success of Neligh and ideas need to become actions in order to turn them into realities. City leaders are the ones ultimately responsible for making the final decisions for the betterment of the community; however, it is up to the residents to hold City leaders accountable to ensure the short- and long-term goals of the community are being met.

During the steering group/public input meetings many future development ideas were discussed. Attendees were asked to ignore their knowledge of current property owners and to "dream big" for Neligh. Exploring every possible option during the planning phase is important in order to be prepared and ensure that any community growth is following the goals outlined in this Comprehensive Plan or any other plan the City has created. **Figure 4.2a**, showing the corporate limits boundary, and **Figure 4.2b**, showing the full one-mile jurisdiction of the City, outlines potential areas of new development in and around Neligh. These areas will be discussed in detail throughout this section.

Neligh currently has a housing shortage, especially for market-rate homes valued over \$100,000. There are vacant lots throughout town that could be used for infill development; however, those lots, which were originally platted when most people did not even have a garage, may be too small to build a home of today's standards. In order to utilize these vacant lots, adjacent properties would need to be combined before there is enough square footage to build. When the town was originally platted, the largest lots would have been 50-foot wide. Today's standards for homes include three-four bedrooms, two bathrooms, and a two-three car attached garage which is nearly impossible to construct on a 50-foot wide lot. By combining multiple, adjacent lots the builder has more land to work with. However, not all vacant lots have an adjacent vacant lot next to it which makes it difficult to utilize all infill lots.





**Legend**

Corporate Boundary

**Future Land Use**

- Single-Family Residential
- Multi-Family Residential
- Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Public/Quasi-Public
- Recreational
- Agricultural/Greenspace

**Figure 4.2a**  
**Future Land Use**

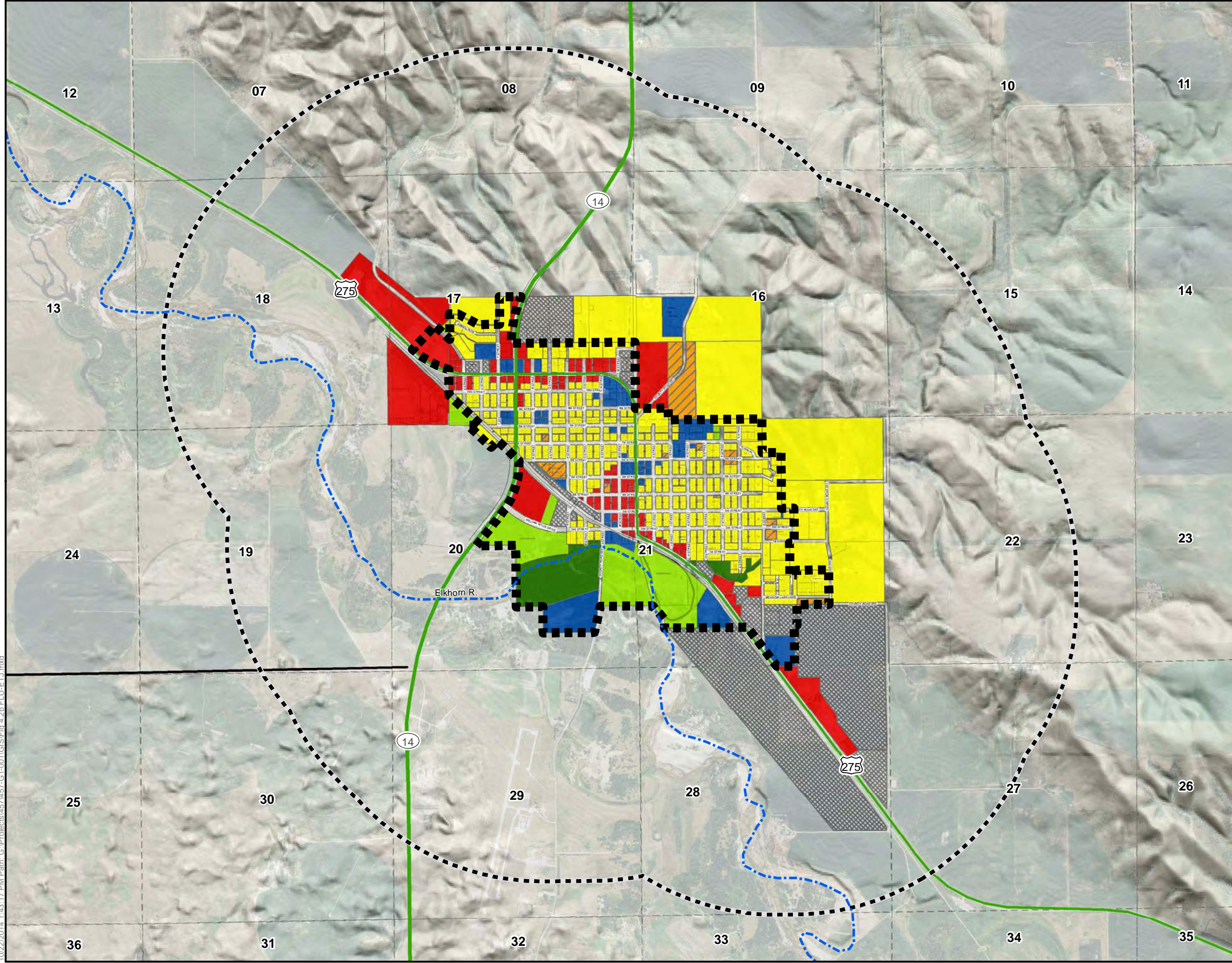
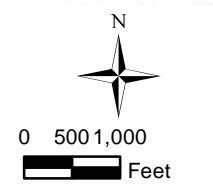
Neligh, Nebraska

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- Legend**
- ETJ
  - Corporate Boundary
- Future Land Use**
- Single-Family Residential
  - Multi-Family Residential
  - Commercial
  - Light Industrial
  - Public/Quasi-Public
  - Recreational
  - Agricultural/Greenspace

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**Figure 4.2b**  
**Future Land Use-ETJ**  
 Neligh, Nebraska







Neligh does have a few options for platted vacant lots that are suitable for infill development. In fact, there are a few areas in the community that have multiple vacant lots adjacent to one another. In areas where there are multiple lots, consideration could be made for multi-family development like a duplex, tri-plex, or four-plex. These areas can be seen in orange on the Future Land Use maps. Multi-family housing can include a variety of options such as duplexes, townhomes, condominiums, and apartment complexes. These styles of housing can also be considered transitional housing and fill a large need in the community catering to young families, single persons, senior citizens, etc. Many of the vacant platted lots on the east side of Neligh are conducive to multi-family development because of the amount of vacant land adjacent to existing infrastructure and because of its location near other multi-family developments and because they are in close proximity to East Ward and Jr/Sr High School campus.

It is essential to the development and essential growth that Neligh has developed McCoy's Subdivision and Country Side Acres Subdivision for residential construction which will improve the overall housing market conditions in the community. But with shovel-ready residential subdivisions to stimulate and promote new development the City is moving forward at a time that most communities cannot. Other areas for single-family residential development, including infill development and other feasible areas for new residential lot development can be seen in yellow in the future land use maps. Residents during the future land use workshop session believed most residential development would happen north and east of the community due to the development constraints of the Elkhorn River on the south and west sides of Neligh.

There is existing residential development in the form of farm homes and single-family homes built on large lots, sometimes on acres of land. These homes are typically found to the north and east of Neligh; therefore, the areas shown in yellow outside of the corporate limits would fit in with the surroundings of existing development. These areas shown on the outskirts of town are in close proximity to existing single- and multi-family development within the corporate limits as well. The other benefit of additional residential development along the corporate limits boundary is close vicinity the new developments would be to existing public infrastructure.

Ideas to keep in mind when planning for future residential development are finding ways to maintain a neighborhood feel, connecting new subdivisions to the existing community to promote accessibility, incorporating some greenspace into development plans, and providing a small mixture of lot sizes for different residential development types in larger subdivisions.

LEGO LEGEND	
	Single-Family Residential
	Multi-Family Residential
	Recreational
	Commercial
	Light Industrial



Parks and recreation areas are major community assets. Parks provide open space for residents as well as visitors and generally enhance a town's appearance. Proposed recreational development can be seen in light green on the future land use maps. There is a large amount of land that makes-up the existing recreational amenities in Neligh. Although there are three existing parks in Neligh they are all concentrated on the south side of the community. While it is nice for all amenities to be in one location, it is not always convenient for residents. Parks serve the community best if they exist in most areas of the community. Therefore, it may be beneficial to look at developing other smaller recreational areas on the north, west, and east sides of the community. These smaller parks would be considered neighborhood parks because the main objective of these parks would be to serve the surrounding neighborhood. There are three neighborhood park areas shown on the future land use maps. The first two are on the northwest side of the community. The first one is on the south side of the Cowboy Trail and the second one is on the west side of McCoy's subdivision. Both of these parks would also act as buffers between proposed commercial development and existing residential development. The third neighborhood park is to the east of the Jr/Sr High campus. This park would serve a large population that live in the north east part of the community. All three of these parks would also serve residents in the potential residential development areas. The final area of recreational development can be seen directly north of Penn Lake and Fred Penn Park. This area should be development as a greenway, which may not necessarily have playground equipment, but would serve as a connection between Cowboy Trail and Penn Lake and Fred Penn Park. This would allow trail users to have a safe and accessible way to reach two of Neligh's wonderful amenities.

Commercial development in Neligh, like most rural communities, is a work in progress; however, the City has been very successful with the business sector. There has been 26.6 million dollars in private and public investment since 2012. This type of investment shows a true commitment to the community and has been made possible by hard work and dedication from the City and Economic Development Office. Because of successful business climate and investments made to Neligh's economy most of the available land for commercial development is full within the City's corporate limits. Therefore, the City will have to look at annexing land adjacent to the corporate limits in order to provide commercial lots for development. Commercial lots should border the highway corridor because most businesses are looking for land availability, easy access to transportation, and high visibility. Land along Highway 275 provides all of these things to potential businesses and if the City annexes the land and extends public services to targeted commercial land, Neligh would have shovel-ready commercial sites that would easily attract businesses.

Desires for downtown improvements were discussed by several residents. Completing a Downtown Revitalization Plan for Neligh would address concerns for downtown development and would provide the City with a plan for further revitalization. A Downtown Revitalization Plan will help residents and decision-makers envision an overall look and feel to physically emulate in the Downtown District. The plan will provide images and ideas for aesthetic improvements including facades, awnings, signage, and streetscapes as well as provide ideas for improving the economic climate in the downtown district. There is only so much real estate space available in the Downtown District so planning for future commercial development will ensure space is used wisely to continue to encourage downtown businesses to grow. Businesses in the Downtown District should be centered on retail and entertainment such as restaurants, bars, theaters, etc. Other areas for service industry-type commercial development include the entire corridor of Highway 275 through the community. There are many existing residences along the Highway corridor which is a feasible type of development for this location; however, most people do not want to live along a highway and most businesses want to be located along a highway. Therefore, land along the corridor is best suited and most attractive for commercial development.



Areas for large commercial and light industrial development include the northwest and southeast sides of Neligh, as they border Highway 275. Both Highways are resources that Neligh should always try to take advantage of because it provides many opportunities for commercial growth and development. Access, visibility, and land availability along the two Highway corridors shaded in red and grey on the Future Land Use Map are highly feasible areas for commercial and/or light industrial developments such as a manufacturing company, Shopko, bulk grain storage, implement dealers, car dealerships, etc. The City and Neligh Economic Development should work with potential small business ventures in the retail/trade sector to focus on business development in the Downtown District whereas the large tracts of land on the fringes of the community along the Highway corridors are prime areas for 'heavier' commercial businesses like manufacturing or car dealerships that have requirements for visibility, have high traffic volumes, and need space for displays. In order to capture sales and property taxes from potential businesses along the Highway corridor and to be able to provide development incentives to potential businesses, Neligh will need to consider annexing land into the City that may be prime real estate to target commercial or light industrial development. Annexing the land would require an infrastructure expansion plan and could possibly include the development/expansion of new infrastructure to serve the annexed areas. This would require a site survey and engineering design before the full cost-benefit analysis can be completed; however, it would mean tax base growth for the community as well as the ability to offer development incentives to potential businesses. Developing along a highway does come with a few constraints including obtaining permits from NDOR to be able to have access onto the highway. NDOR would like to limit the amount of access points for safety purposes because of the high rates of speed people travel on a highway so frontage roads and cul-de-sacs may need to be constructed in order to best utilize all of the land available while limiting the amount of access points onto Highways 275 and 14.

Light industrial development is shown on the southeast side of Neligh along Highway 275. This area provides a large amount of land that could be developed for light industrial purposes. Most industrial parks range between 20 to 50 acres, sometimes even larger and this area shown in grey on the Future Land Use Map would provide enough space for that type of planning and future development potential. This area is planned on the outskirts of the community for other reasons such as the possibility of having a light industrial business that may create noise, dust, smell, etc. pollution concerns for nearby residents so it was planned to have this type of development on the fringe of the community as opposed to the near heart of the community. Also, City leaders should determine any impact a potential business may have on the surrounding land uses before approving any permit to ensure all concerns are thought through. When there are any conflicting land uses proposed adjacent to each other a buffer should be encouraged to provide a visual and physical break in the land uses. Some buffers including trees, shrubs, and greenspace while other buffers consist transitional zoning such as a medium density residential zone between a single-family residential zone and a commercial or light industrial zone. These transitions in the land uses help protect each land use. Careful consideration should be taken when planning for areas of mixed land uses in order to protect the least dense use (i.e. single-family residential) while also allowing the most dense use to have the opportunity to operate without hassle or complaints from the least dense use.

Other future development options are to enhance the wayfinding, branding, and beautification throughout the community. Neligh already has attention-grabbing gateway entrances into town with signage and landscaping which is important because gateway entrances can make a statement to travelers passing by on the Highway. Wayfinding signage is dual purpose; it directs and informs people while also being aesthetically pleasing and attention grabbing. Based on traffic counts, roughly 3,000 to 3,400 vehicles pass through Neligh on Highway 275 every day. Of course, some of those travelers are residents of Neligh commuting to and from work; however some of those vehicles are visitors to Neligh and the gateway entrance is the City's opportunity to make a good first impression. Highway 275 through Neligh is a way to advertise all that Neligh has to offer. Banners, landscaping, beautification, and wayfinding signage highlighting all of Neligh's amenities are ways to take advantage of the Highway and promote the community to all of the travelers. A beautified highway corridor helps make a memorable statement to a visitor and it can help to direct and promote what the community has to offer. Wayfinding signage could be used to act as directional signage to the parks, museum, Library, Downtown District, Hospital, schools, or anything else the City would like to highlight. This is a "first impression" to visitors, but beautifying the highway corridor may also give residents more of a reason to help keep all of Neligh beautiful. Landscaping can be used for aesthetics and screening unwanted sites from vehicles. Land along highway corridors tends to be unsightly in many communities. Screening these land uses from highway travelers can really make a big impact. Zoning regulations are one way to help ensure land along highways and major arterials and connector streets are screened to create an appealing view for travelers. Images seen on this page and the following pages are ideas to help City stakeholders visualize what beautification and wayfinding signage could look like in Neligh.

All of the proposed new developments that are not currently in Neligh's corporate limits should be annexed into the community prior to any construction. This will allow the City to expand its physical size, population, and tax base while also providing potential benefits to the new developments. The following section discusses in more detail about Neligh's annexation plan. All of these ideas discussed in the future land use plan are goals to work towards over the next ten years. This plan is to be used as a guide, and to help develop and steer ideas for future development. When planning for future growth it is important to consider any potential issues that could arise in order to protect the City and its current residents. The goal for any community should be to continually move forward with population and development growth while mitigating the impact on existing residents and property owners. It is important to have ideas and plans in place to steer growth in the right direction.





Looking NW - Proposed LED Signage  
Corner of Hwy 275 and 2nd Street



Looking NW - Proposed  
Directional Signage  
Corner of Hwy 275 and 2nd Street



Looking NW - Existing  
Corner of Hwy 275 and 2nd Street

# Annexation Plan

*Neligh's annexation plan should create opportunities for new development as well as help facilitate the goals of the future land use plan set forth in this document. In order to create opportunities for new development, Neligh needs to have a plan in place to reserve the land that is necessary to carry out the goals of the community. In order to do this, the City may need to consider annexing adjacent territory and expand its jurisdiction, including its one-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). This annexation plan, like the future land use plan, is a guide or a tool the City can utilize when discussing future growth and development options. This annexation plan is not law; annexation should take place in a manner that will follow State Statutes and best suite the City's goals and development needs at that time, also taking into consideration any future goals. The City's annexation plan should do the following:*

## Protect and Enhance the City's Tax Base

Annexation allows each community to protect and enhance the City's tax base for several reasons. Land along the Highway corridors and along the railroad are prime real estate options for commercial and light industrial development. In order for the City to capture property and sales taxes, those companies need to be within the City limits of Neligh. Many new business developments want some incentives to build a new facility in a community. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an incentive communities can offer to a potential business. In order for a business to utilize TIF, the development must be located within the City limits. In another facet of annexation, there are residents and businesses that are located in the fringe of the community, yet not in the City limits. Those residents and businesses still benefit from the City's parks, streets, utilities, and other facilities and programs without having to contribute to the tax base. By annexing this population into the community, they would then be paying taxes for multiple amenities and services they most likely already utilize.

## Increase Population and Size

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

## Avoid Jurisdictional Confusion

Having a plan in place will ease the confusion of jurisdictions between the City and the County and will help Neligh plan for future services by establishing an orderly and logical boundary and understand how that growth will affect public infrastructure needs. This process would be very beneficial for both the City and Antelope County, especially because changing boundaries between two different jurisdictions can be cumbersome.

## Control Fringe Development

Planning for the growth of Neligh is important for the community as well as the land adjacent to the corporate limits. Finding a balance between development and existing land uses requires time and planning. Infill development should be promoted until larger parcels of land are needed for growth. This will help avoid sprawling development and protect the agricultural land around the community. Any new annexed land should be for the benefit of residential and commercial development, and public service needs should be assessed as the population of Neligh continues to change. Through annexation, Neligh can extend its zoning jurisdiction to adjacent areas and thus guide development in a direction that will provide a safe and healthy environment.

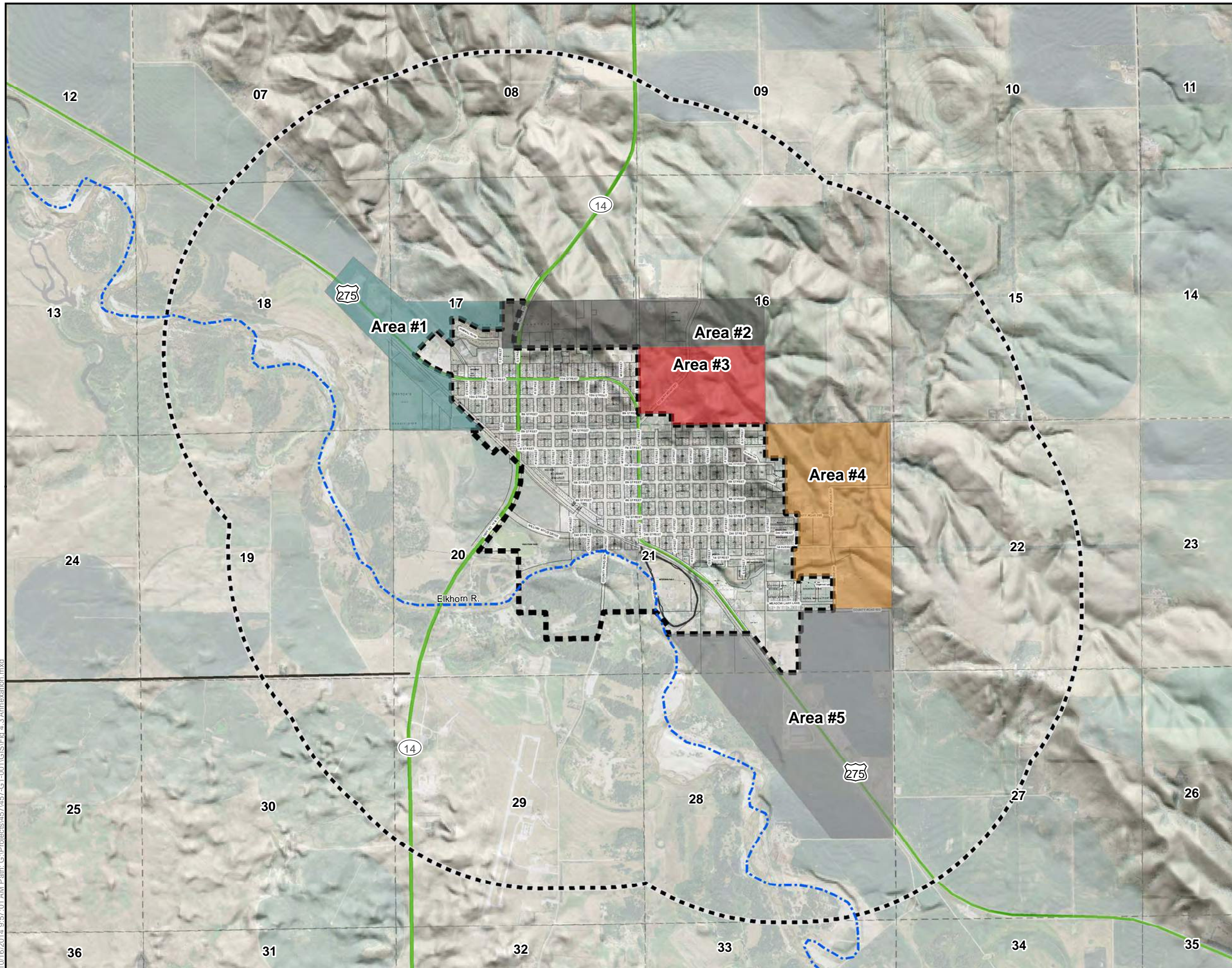
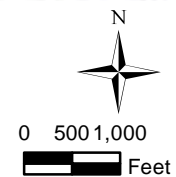


Annexation should follow the guidelines set forth through Nebraska State Statute 19-3052. As seen in **Figure 4.3** the proposed areas for the annexation plan are the following:

1. Area 1 is northwest side of Neligh. This annexation would include a few existing single-family homes and undeveloped farm ground that could be developed into a residential subdivision. This property is adjacent to existing public infrastructure lessening the cost of development and it closely borders the existing corporate limits boundary of Neligh. This land also lends itself nicely to tying into the existing grid system for transportation access. Lots developed on the east side of the proposed annexation area could follow a typical single-family, low density pattern of development while lots on the west side of the proposed annexation area could tie into the existing homes with large lot development including multiple acres per lot.
2. Area 2 is located on the north side of Neligh adjacent to Highway 14. The annexation of Area 2 would include a few single-family homes and vacant, agricultural land. With the presence of Highway 14 and close proximity to Highway 275, this land has potential for light industrial or commercial development next to Highway 14 with residential development capacity further east in Area 2. With existing businesses in close proximity, this land is very attractive for additional commercial and/or light industrial development. With commercial/light industrial and residential development potential in the same area, proper planning needs to be taken into account to provide a buffer space between those two land uses because they are not ideal land uses to have directly adjacent to one another. Therefore, a bufferyard or other type of physical buffer should be encourage between the two land uses.
3. Area 3 is also located on the north side of town, directly north of Neligh-Oakdale Schools and east of the hospital and Highway 275. This proposed annexation includes vacant, agricultural land and single-family homes near the existing corporate limits of Neligh. Because of the location and close proximity to the school, this may be a nice development option for additional commercial or residential land uses. The location of this land lends itself to attract a variety of development types. Because of the amount of land, a mixed-use development could also be considered with commercial development along the west edge adjacent to the Highway 275 corridor, followed by medium density residential development east of the commercial properties, and low density residential development further east of the medium density residential development. This transitional development is most ideal to offer each land use an appropriate area and buffer between more dense land uses.
4. Area 4 is located on the east side of Neligh. This annexation area would include a vacant, agricultural land as well as existing single-family homes. Development of this land could very likely replicate existing residential development on the east side of the community. This land is in close proximity to existing public infrastructure making it more feasible for development.
5. Area 5 is located on the southeast side of town, adjacent to the southeast entrance into Neligh along Highway 275. This proposed area of annexation could include several existing businesses that have been developed along the highway corridor as well as undeveloped agricultural land. This area is prime real estate for light industrial or commercial development because of the access to transportation, accessibility, and availability of a large amount of undeveloped land. A majority of these businesses are not currently utilizing City water or sanitary sewer infrastructure; however, by extending public infrastructure to these existing businesses it may also entice a new business to develop in this location because of the presence of water and sanitary sewer infrastructure. With the ability to be subdivided into a variety of commercial parcel sizes which could significantly increase the community's tax base.

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**Legend**

-  Area #1
-  Area #2
-  Area #3
-  Area #4
-  Area #5
-  ETJ
-  Corporate Boundary

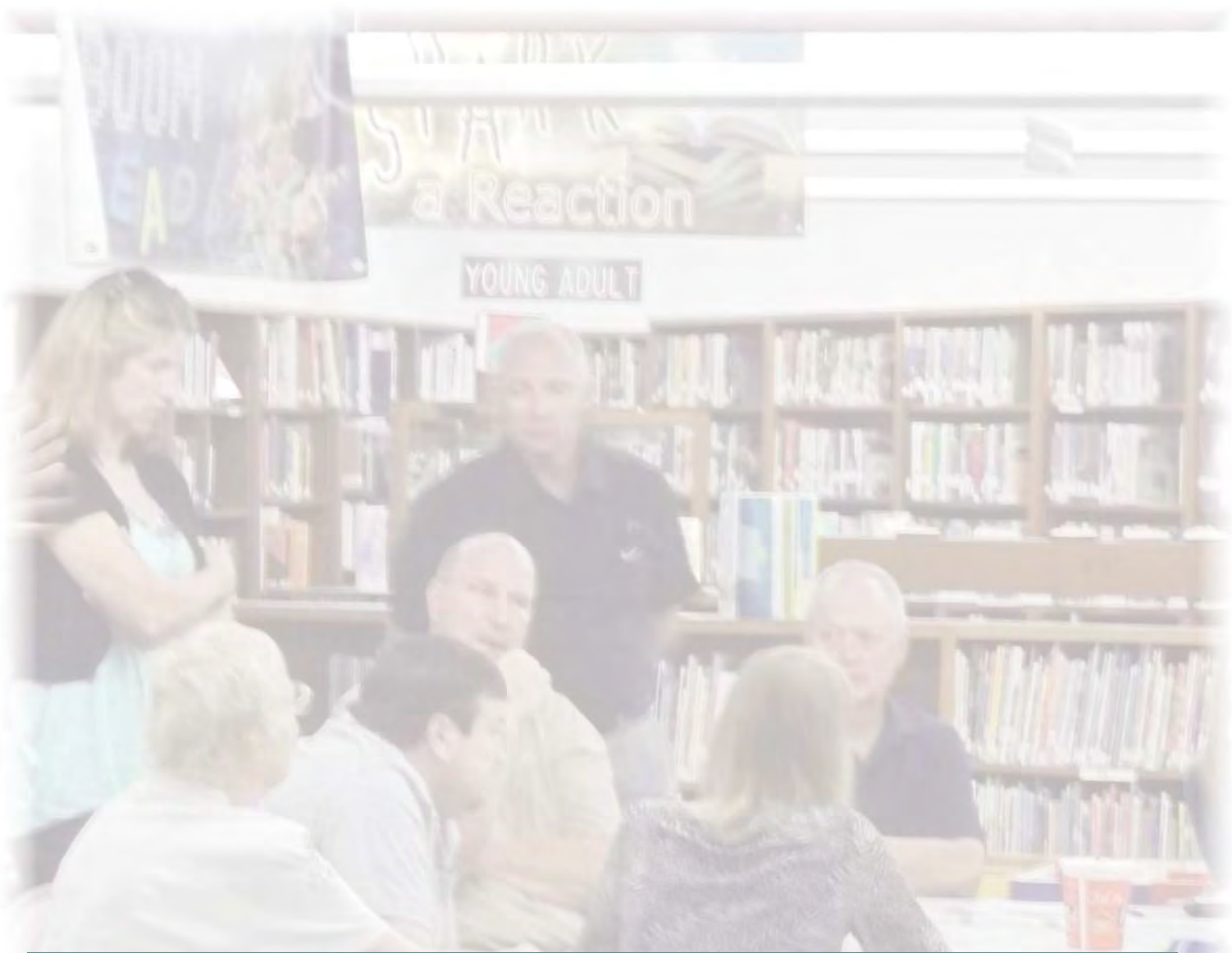
**Figure 4.3**  
**Annexation**  
**Plan Map**

Neligh, Nebraska









# Chapter 5: Public Input & Goals

This section of Neligh's Comprehensive Plan is the action section. It is here to help plan goals, guidelines, regulations, and future practices based on the needs and wants of the public. The goal of this action section is to help decision-makers implement the visions and actions presented by the plan through a realistic process that is in step with the resources of the community. This Public Input & Goals section will cover the following components:

- Public Input
- Goals

# Public Input

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

## Strengths (NOW/INTERNAL-advantages, things that are unique to Neligh)

- Education System
- Library
- ESU-8
- Grant Funded High Speed Fiber Optic Internet
- Two Banks
- Automatic Car Wash
- Mainline Natural Gas
- Fire Hall & Volunteer (Large number of volunteers)
- EMT volunteer, 1 ambulance
- Confluence of Highways 14 & 275 – Accessibility
- Services – Medical
- Hospital – Life Flight, 2 ambulances, Outpatient
- Two Doctors
- Three Physician Assistants
- Specialty Doctors
- Two Pharmacies
- Wellness Center
- 24 hour fitness (mostly women utilize this amenity)
- Senior Citizen Center
- Assisted Living – Willows Assisted Living Facility, Golden Living Center
- Independent Living
- Churches – Variety (Seven Total)
- Wholesale Power – Control of costs & power through 4 different ways
- Airport (Upgrades are planned to airport)
- Legion – Banquet Facility – Many Events
- People come to Neligh to work
- Small Town
- Security – Community Safety
- Incubator Building – Four Businesses (Full)
- Four Museums – Good
- Park – Beautiful – Recreational Programs
- Friendly
- County Government – County Seat
- County Services
- Small Manufacturing
- Two Gas Stations
- Bowling Alley
- Pool
- Country Club
- Campground has Wifi
- Tourism
- Monthly Family Night
- Humanities NE – Library and Cultural Programs could use more people
- Number of Active Civic Groups – Fair Board, Park Board, Tree Board, Auxiliary Board, City Ball Board
- Junior Chamber
- Young Men’s Group – Flags/4th of July/Easter Egg Hunt
- Veterans Service Officer
- Five Antique Shops
- One Car Dealership
- Garden Nursery
- USDA
- Drive-In Theater
- Cowboy Trail – Used a lot (goes from Chadron to Norfolk)
- Industrial Sector
- Agricultural-based Services
- Three Implement Dealers
- Parks
- Golf Course
- Fishing
- Service Businesses
- Variety of Housing (affordable)
- Progressive Attitude
- New Jail
- New School
- Restaurants
- Nice Downtown Architecture
- People
- USDA Office
- Extension Office
- Number of Historical Sites
- NDOR Office



Weaknesses (NOW/INTERNAL-limitations, where could Neligh improve, what should we avoid)

- Aging Community Demographics
- Aging Public Infrastructure
- Diversity of Economic Development
- Available Commercial Building for Sale or Rent
- Housing (for PurAntelope or Rent)
- Single & Multi-Family Housing Options
- City Services-Specifically Garbage

Opportunities (FUTURE- opportunities for Neligh to improve, grow, attract new people/business)

- Semi-Truck Accessibility for Diesel
- Communications – Use signs businesses already have to inform citizens about City/Public events
- Commercial land – Suitable development
- Elkhorn River – and Cowboy Trail
- Toddler Programs/Activities at Night (the day activities are nice but hard to utilize when both parents work)
- Rent – to – Own Store
- Check cashing place
- Seafood place
- Promote Tourism
- Teen store (like Claire's)
- 5-10 year-olds (kid's clothes)
- Mid-Level Housing – Mature Families (\$120,000-\$130,000) – Move in Ready
- Rental Units Needed (both House and Multi-Family) 3-4 Bedrooms
- Truck wash
- Norfolk – Promote Neligh at shows, Home/Garden Etc.
- 2 hotels (1 for sale, could be updated)
- Curb Appeal
- Need Modern Amenities
- Hospital-Too Much Payroll Leaves Town
- New School
- Infrastructure
- Rec Center/Exercise Facility
- New Motel/Lodging
- Electrical Substation (for wind farm development)
- Wind Farm Construction
- Labor Force (need for blue collar workers)
- Community Partnership (need to work with regional communities on issues)
- County-Wide School System

Threats (FUTURE-what obstacles does Neligh face, what are other communities doing)

- Lack of Blue Collar Worker
- State of Nebraska Funding
- Geography (too close to O'Neill & Norfolk)
- Lack of Financing for Entrepreneurial Businesses Locally
- Increasing Regulations
- Variety of Professional Careers (Example: If a teacher hired for the school system or a doctor at the hospital, they're employment opportunities may be limited.)
- What does the spouse do?
- Are there opportunities for spousal employment within Neligh or do they have to consider O'Neill and Norfolk? If so, then do they choose to live in O'Neill or Norfolk?

# Goals

*This section is in place to give ideas, summaries, and guidelines for development and growth opportunities for Neligh to work towards over the next ten years. These goals are a combination of information gathered from the public input sessions, research, and data analysis. The importance of these goals is that they are realistic in nature, but allow the community to continually have goals to strive towards.*



## **Improve Public Infrastructure**

Neligh’s officials are taking the necessary steps in order to resolve some of the on-going issues with public infrastructure. Improving and expanding public infrastructure is an on-going task. Although there have been recent improvements made, more work needs to be done. They have been working with Engineers for assessments, looking into funding options, and working hard to balance the community’s budget. The most important step is to prioritize the tasks required for updating and improving public infrastructure. Once priorities have been set, the City can then begin to plan and budget for necessary repairs, updates, and improvements. Public infrastructure needs and improvements are listed below according to each infrastructure system.

### *Sidewalks/ADA Compliance*

Based on the public input sessions, Neligh’s residents discussed their issues and concerns with the condition and lack of sidewalks in the community. Improving the sidewalks and following ADA compliance guidelines is an important goal for the community. A sidewalk inventory should be used to analyze areas in need of sidewalks and existing sidewalks in need of repair. We know approximately 61 percent of the community is lacking sidewalk infrastructure; however, the other 39 percent of the community that does have existing infrastructure may also need improvements. The sidewalk inventory would analyze each sidewalk and ramp (or lack thereof) to determine the overall needs for the community. At that time the City could formulate a plan for improvements including construction of new sidewalks and improving existing. These improvements require funding as well as support from the residents of Neligh in order to turn into actual results. An idea for implementing a program feasible for the City to utilize would be to create a cost-share program between the City and the property owner to split costs for the new improvements. Some financial assistance may entice residents to put forth some of their funds to assist in the development of ADA accessible sidewalks. The City could budget a set amount each year and residents could apply for funds out of that budgeted amount to assist in making these improvements throughout the City. Pedestrian accessibility throughout the community is important for residents especially between key features in the City such as the swimming pool/school, the downtown district, medical facilities, public parks, Library, etc. To improve accessibility for all pedestrians the City must continually work to make these improvements a priority.

Federal ADA compliance regulations were updated in 2010. City leaders are aware of the goals that they need to accomplish. They are working towards making Neligh an ADA compliant community, but like every other item on the list, it requires time, funds, and community support. The City will continually work to resolve this matter making it a goal to accomplish accessibility for all residents and visitors.



### *Water*

The City of Neligh has recently completed water main improvements in the eastern part of the community. Future improvement projects would include replacement of four-inch water main. These future improvements are important for the fire safety and protection as well as the quality of life for residents in the community. Planned water improvements for the City include a new water main from J Street to 11th Street and from Dogwood Lane to 1st Avenue. The variable speed controls on the west and the north wells need to also be updated in order to provide the best service. Other improvements would include the need to extend water main to areas of new development or potential new development in order to provide City services to marketable areas for commercial and residential development.

### *Sanitary Sewer*

As described in the Utilities section of Chapter Two in this plan, the City owns and operates a sanitary sewer collection system. Recent sanitary sewer improvements include work at the Fairgrounds Lift Station in 2013, at a cost of \$140,000; work to the City Shop Lift Station in 2012 at a cost of \$75,000 and a sewer extension project in 2013 to the Countryside Acres Subdivision. Planned improvements to the City's system includes replacing 8-inch line on U Street from 8th to 9th Streets and replacing the lift station on Wylie/N Street. Future improvements would also include the need to maintain and update the City's other lift stations and the need to extend infrastructure to new developments.

### *Paving*

The City's 1 & 6 Year Road Plan can be found in the Transportation section of Chapter Two in this plan. This map shows road improvements that the City is planning for in 2014 and within the next five years. The two projects listed in the one-year road plan include grading, erosion control, and four-inch asphalt surfacing to 'D' Street from Belmar Creek Bridge south to the return at Highway 275 and grading, erosion control, and concrete pavement and a new 385-foot jump span bridge. The projects listed on the six-year road plan include concrete pavement improvements for all 12 projects listed in the plan.

Approximately 22 percent of respondents to the Community Needs Assessment Survey believe the City's sidewalk and street infrastructure is in poor condition. Another 47 percent believe the sidewalks and streets are merely satisfactory. This means a majority of the respondents to the survey feel sidewalk and street infrastructure is in below average condition. Updates will continually need to be made to provide the best quality of life for all of Neligh's residents. Community support will entrust decision-makers with the tasks of accomplishing these goals in a timely manner; however, funds must be available in order to begin construction on any one of these projects.

The City will continue to have infrastructure needs and projects will be adjusted on the priority list as issues or concerns arise. At this time, the City has completed some recent improvements to public infrastructure and they will need to continue to assess the City's needs on an annual basis. The City's Capital Improvement Plan will help to resolve budgeting concerns for public infrastructure improvements.

### *Electric*

The City of Neligh purchases electricity from the Southwest Power Pool. The City's daily peak demand was 4,784 Kilowatts in July of 2013. Electrical usage for citizens and businesses in Neligh was approximately 19,700,000 Kilowatts in 2013. The City of Neligh is responsible for maintaining all of the electrical lines, and Nebraska Public Power District is contracted to get power to the lines. Neligh Municipal Power is the owner/operator of a one-of-a-kind 6.5 Megawatt Biodiesel Electric Generation Facility. This facility allows for the City to generate electricity in emergency situations, but also allows for electrical savings when economic conditions are favorable. Future improvements to the City's electrical infrastructure includes line improvement needs by pulling neutral and restringing secondary of K & L, N & O; transformers and underground lines at Pioneer Homes; backfeeds to Body Works/Antelope Memorial Hospital and to Blackburns Manufacturing; and boring new underground lines between E and D Streets. Other needs for the City's electrical infrastructure are multiple vehicles to help with maintenance and repair.

### **Improve the Existing Housing Market**

As discussed earlier in this plan, there is a housing shortage in Neligh for both rental and owner-occupied units. In order to solve this issue a few things can be done. The obvious answer is to develop more housing, but in order for that goal to be accomplished private developers or local investors will need to be willing to participate otherwise residential development will only happen when a person/family constructs their own private residence. Typically in communities there are lots available to develop; however, those lots are not in a desirable location or large enough to construct the type of home a buyer is wanting. However, with McCoys Subdivision and Country Side Acres Subdivision, Neligh has taken big steps to help correct the housing shortage dilemma.

Housing development and job growth/economic development fits the old adage of what comes first the chicken or the egg? Developing new housing will help to attract new residents to Neligh working as a chain reaction, with new homes available, families could move to town and enroll their children in Neligh-Oakdale Public Schools, keeping Neligh a viable community with a high quality of life for all residents. With more families in the community, it may also open more jobs. If more jobs are available in Neligh, it is most likely that employees will want to live in the community. Decent, attractive, and affordable homes as well as shovel ready lots need to be available in order to ensure that new employees will live in Neligh instead of a nearby community. Through the Employer/Employee Housing Survey it was evident that the housing market plays a key role in the economic forecast of businesses in Neligh and their ability to grow and expand. Employers that were surveyed believed the lack of suitable, available housing in Neligh affects their ability to hire new employees as well as maintain the employees they currently have. With a close correlation between the housing market and economic climate for businesses it is even more crucial that housing market improvements are taken seriously and made a top priority.

A housing option that residents discussed included transitional housing development. Residents see the need to expand transitional housing options in the community for potential new residents, residents who do not want to maintain the exterior of their property, residents who are not wanting a large home but are not ready for assisted or convalescent care living, or any other person(s) looking for a two-to-four bedroom housing unit with a garage and decent-sized living space available. Transitional housing could include duplexes, tri-plexes, townhomes, etc. The most important need with transitional housing, as discussed by residents of Neligh, is to offer exterior home maintenance and care services for residents of the units. Mid-level housing development in the \$120,000 to \$130,000 price range was also discussed as a need by residents during a public input session. Looking at the housing affordability analysis, it was indicated through the data analysis that there is a need for homes valued over \$100,000, fitting what residents said during the public input session. It would be challenging to construct a home for under \$180,000 therefore this mid-level housing will have to come from existing structures in the community. Many updates to homes would need to be made in order to modernize a home and increase the value to fit in that price range and attract a mature family with needs for move-in-ready home.

The City can be involved in housing improvements in a few different ways. Cleaning up lots and uninhabitable homes in Neligh is an on-going task; however, it will create more lots for new infill development as well as rid the neighborhood of eye sores that are also safety hazards. The City has continually been working on this concern of vacant dilapidated structures, but it does require time, funding, and approval. Improving the condition of the existing housing stock will also help attract new residents to the community because the condition of the homes available would be more appealing to buyers. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) can be used to carry out plans for the demolition of structures in a redevelopment area that the City determines to be unsafe or unfit for human occupancy. This is new to the Community Development Law with LB 729, and Neligh should look into this option to see how it could benefit the community.



Neligh can also access funds for demolition through Community Development Block Grants (CDBG). The one stipulation for this grant is that a new housing structure has to be constructed on the newly vacant lot, and it will only be available to those residents that are low-to-moderate income (LMI). This is a way to rid the community of an unsafe, unsightly dwelling and replace it with a new home; however, the new home may not be available to all citizens who are looking to purchase a home. Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED) through CDBG has offered owner-occupied housing rehabilitation funds which is a resource Neligh has utilized for several years and continues to utilize through CORE Development for housing improvements. The City could also work to create incentives for home-owners and people wishing to purchase homes such as down-payment assistance, first-time home-buyers credits, and a home-ownership rehabilitation program to encourage improvements to the housing market. Neligh’s officials should look into each of these avenues to determine what resources may be feasible and beneficial for the community.

The public-private partnerships will be key as the City tries to accomplish this goal of housing market improvements. If private developers are not able to relieve all of the pressure on the housing market in Neligh, then local investors or a local committee may need to implement a plan for home development. Some communities have a group of residents that contribute money to begin the process. Funds contributed were used to build a spec home, also employing a local contractor. The home was then sold and the money was used to build another spec home, and the process continues for these communities. This has been a feasible model for home construction in small communities throughout Nebraska and it could be an avenue that Neligh looks into although it takes a motivated leader and group of people willing to invest money for the housing cause. Other communities have proven this to be successful, and Neligh has the ability and potential resources to do so as well. Neligh has been taking all of the right steps to ensure the housing market is capable of expanding to support an increasing population and stimulate growth.



Future Land Use Planning Session



All of the “Oh the Places Neligh Will Go” drawings are courtesy of the City of Neligh.

In order to make housing market improvements the City should work to meet the following objectives:

*Clean-up vacant out lots and uninhabitable properties;*

All vacant lots and vacant uninhabitable homes are properties that could be utilized for infill residential development. The City should access different avenues available to them to assist with the clean-up of vacant lots and uninhabitable properties. There is not a large amount of lots available for infill development; therefore, efforts should be made to create more availability. Also, by cleaning up vacant lots and uninhabitable homes the City will be able to rid the community of unnecessary eye sores and safety and health hazards. Based on data presented previously in this study, approximately 38 homes need to be demolished because of the age and condition.

*Work with local businesses to determine housing needs for employees;*

By working with local employers, the City may be able to get a feel for real-time and projected housing needs for the community. Having these discussions with employers is beneficial for multiple reasons, it shows support for the local businesses and it opens the line of communication between the City and employers to help provide beneficial information to one or the other. Local businesses may also be able or willing to offer assistance with improving the housing market conditions in Neligh. Some businesses are able to provide down-payment assistance for their employees, some have purchased homes to rent to their employees, some businesses have even been able to help build spec housing to offer to new or existing employees. There are many ways that businesses may want to get involved to benefit the community and their company as well, but the conversations must be had between City leaders and employers to determine if they are willing or able to assist with housing market improvements.

*Create Investment Group to develop spec homes;*

Stakeholder citizens should be encouraged to create an Investment Group of some type in order to build spec housing in Neligh. Many times people are afraid to construct a new home on their own; however, if a group of residents was able to get the ball rolling it may prove to be beneficial for existing and potential residents as well as provide some relief for the housing market. Some housing professionals in Neligh were concerned that spec housing would not work in Neligh because of previous experiences that have not been as successful as desired. However, if the home can be marketed and sold prior to completing construction, it is more desirable for the contractor, investor, and homebuyer. The homebuyer is then able to personalize the home to fit their needs, the investor is able to get their return, and the contractor is able to work with the homebuyer to finalize the home based on their wants and needs. Therefore it is encouraged to market the home prior to and/or during construction so the home does not sit because of poor finishing touch decisions that do not fit what a buyer is looking for.

*Encourage utilization of funding opportunities for renters, homeowners, and developers;*

There are a few potential Federal and State funding agencies that can provide assistance to homeowners, renters, developers, and communities alike but the program that is solely focused on housing and is able to provide multiple benefits to each group is NIFA (Nebraska Investment Finance Authority). Some of opportunities for housing development include the following programs offered to developers to assist in the development of singlefamily residential projects: Prairie Gold Homes, NebHi-RED, CROWN, BINGO Bonds, Infrastructure Loan Guarantee, Predevelopment Revolving Loan Fund. There are also several funding opportunities for developers to construct rental units. The following is a list of programs offered by NIFA to developers for multi-family residential development, Low-Income Housing Tax Credits (LIHTC), Multifamily Tax-Exempt Bonds, CROWN, CRANE, Infrastructure Loan Guarantee, and Predevelopment Revolving Loan Fund. The LIHTC program has been very successful in many communities across Nebraska. There is a grant for first-time homebuyers that many residents in Nebraska have been able to utilize. This allows first-time homebuyers who qualify to apply for a down-payment assistance grant to help purchase their first homes. NIFA also offers technical assistance to communities to reach their housing development goals. There are many different types of technical assistance offered throughout Nebraska such as the Housing Study Grant Program that funded the development of this Housing Study for the City of Neligh. These programs are wonderful tools for the City to utilize as funding opportunities to provide developers and residents with assistance. NIFA understands the importance of the housing market to the local community which is why they have developed so many programs to assist in improving local conditions. The City should be aware of these programs and help point potential developers and residents in the right direction when they are in need of assistance.



*Promote infill development;*

Infill development, by its nature, is less expensive because there is no need to extend public utility services. Infill development utilizes existing public infrastructure, filling in vacant properties with residences. By promoting infill development, the City can save funds by avoiding sprawl and the need to extend public infrastructure to new developments on the out-skirts of the community. There are a few potential infill areas that would be ideal locations for multi-family development. These areas should be considered for duplex-four-plex development because there are multiple vacant lots adjacent to one another providing enough land for a multi-family development. There is a large need for rental housing and constructing these units on infill lots will help to keep development costs down. There are two subdivisions in the City's current corporate limits that are not full at this time. These lots are considered infill lots because they have public infrastructure adjacent to them. Neligh should continually market and promote both subdivisions in order to create more lots for residential development.

*Create City-funded home-owner rehabilitation revolving loan fund;*

The City could create their own loan program for owner-occupied housing rehabilitation setting guidelines and regulations based on the needs of the City. This option may be attractive to the City and its residents because the City could help middle-income residents while also boosting the existing housing conditions in the community. If the City creates their own revolving loan fund, they have the ability to set their own guidelines, income-restrictions, interest rates, pay-back regulations, etc. The City could create their own program to fit the needs of their community. It is also important for the City to promote the existing Owner-Occupied Housing Rehabilitation program in order to take advantage of the grant funds.

*Encourage property upkeep; and,*

The City should work to incentivize as well as continually follow-through with nuisance abatement throughout the community to encourage residents to maintain their properties. A clean community is attractive to visitors, potential residents, and potential new businesses. A "Yard of the Month" program or some type of incentive could be created to encourage residents to maintain their properties and take pride in the way the community looks.

*Locate areas for future residential development.*

The City should use the Future Land Use Plan Map in the Comprehensive Plan to establish target areas for all types of residential development including large lots, single-family homes, transitional housing, and other types of medium-density rental housing in order to fill all of the needs within the community. Although the City may not need to develop additional residential subdivisions at this time, it is important to target areas that are attractive for residential development in order to plan for growth and development in Neligh.



## **Promote Commercial Development**

Neligh has a vibrant Downtown District which is situated on Main Street, one block west of Highway 275, as well as a thriving commercial and light industrial sector which can mainly be found along the Highway 275 corridor. The Downtown District is home to many existing retail and service industry businesses including offices, restaurants, and retail shops. Ideas for creating a distinct appeal for the Downtown District would come from a Downtown Revitalization Plan. This plan would give the City ideas on aesthetic improvements, traffic and pedestrian flow, parking, and potential residential opportunities. The City of Neligh needs to first achieve the designation of Leadership Community from the Nebraska Department of Economic Development (NDED). The City is in the process of completing the application to be submitted to NDED. Once the City achieves the designation from NDED, the City is then eligible to apply for Downtown Revitalization grant funds. The first grant is a Downtown Revitalization Planning grant. Just as any other planning process including the one for this Comprehensive Plan, the Downtown Revitalization planning process should include several opportunities for public input from building and business owners downtown, City officials, and other community stakeholders. The plan would be a guide for development in the Downtown District. The positive side of following NDED's guidelines for Downtown Revitalization and seeking grant funding for the planning process through the State includes the opportunity to apply for Phase II funds which historically has been for \$350,000 for physical improvements in the Downtown District that were outlined in the Downtown Revitalization Plan.

Because commercial development is so heavily hinged on attracting private investors/business owners it is essential for the community to constantly work on attracting new businesses in order to grow the tax base. Tax Increment Financing (TIF) is an important card to hold when private developers are interested in commercial developments. New commercial development will create more job opportunities which in turn attracts new people to Neligh, increases the City's tax base, and potentially provides residents with a new amenity or place to shop or eat. Creating relationships and resources, such as TIF and the Economic Development office and other resources they create, in place is beneficial for private developers and existing businesses. Promoting and marketing Neligh's assets, needs, location, funding sources/incentives, and land availability will be key to attracting private investment. One statewide source the City can utilize to share land and building availability information as well as a community profile for possibly attracting new businesses to the community is Location One Information Systems (LOIS). LOIS is an online database that the State of Nebraska, as well as many other states, utilizes to share current information with potential businesses. For example, an owner wanting to expand his manufacturing business could look at LOIS's website and search for the specific requirements necessary for his business including location, land availability based on size, availability of public utilities, etc.

Recruitment of new businesses should be based on the feasibility of the business being successful in the region as well as how it will complement the existing industries, such as agriculture sector which is vital to the progress and growth of Neligh. Businesses in the agricultural sector currently exist in Neligh, but expanding this sector with complementary businesses could not only benefit the City but also help existing agricultural businesses and possibly lead to necessary expansions for those existing businesses.

The City of Neligh has been compiling a long list of success stories for attracting new businesses and helping existing businesses succeed which shows how the City is successful with implementing projects from an idea to an actual business that helps support the community. Since 2012, Neligh has seen 26.2 million dollars in public and private investment for economic development. This is a major accomplishment for a small rural community in the Midwest. When potential commercial companies start looking at Neligh, the City should consider how these developments might impact existing businesses within town. To ensure existing businesses have the opportunity to expand, new businesses will need to complement the existing economic industries in Neligh.



Because of the limited space available in the downtown district, vacancies should be filled by retail and/or basic service sector businesses. Larger companies or service businesses that provide a unique service may best fit along the Highway 275 and 14 corridors. In order to have a distinct Downtown District appeal, the sidewalks need to be filled, store fronts need to be decorated, and businesses need to be open. Some businesses, even in the service sector, do not fulfill all of those needs for the Downtown District; therefore, the limited retail space should be left to retail and entertainment oriented businesses which encourage pedestrian traffic throughout the day, evenings, and weekends. During public input sessions residents discussed their desires and wants for additional retail, entertainment, and service businesses which included a seafood restaurant, toddler programs/activities at night, a teen store for clothes and accessories, kids clothing store, and a check cashing place. These are businesses that residents would like to see in the community and several of them could be successful based on the need. Also, these are businesses that would fit well in the Downtown District.

Developing along Highways 275 and 14 can be viewed as daunting because it is a challenge to encourage development of commercial space while keeping an aesthetically pleasing corridor. Possible commercial businesses could include a car dealership, truck wash, rent-to-own store, new motel/lodging, or a strip mall to provide space for the service sector businesses and possible manufacturing or light industrial businesses like grain storage, and possibly could lead to existing businesses expanding because of the land availability. Having both the Highways present in Neligh does provide many opportunities for commercial and light industrial development that other communities do not have. Knowing the land is valuable and promoting or marketing that to companies is important; companies need to feel like the land was meant for their business. When doing any engineering design it is important to understand if the area can be served with utilities and how those utilities will get there, but it is also important to leave some of the land development open for change therefore it can best fit the needs of the business or developer.

It is important to promote and market the City of Neligh as well as to promote and market within the City of Neligh. It is the best way to inform potential residents and investors about all of the positive aspects of the community and a way to remind local residents what it takes to be a self-sustainable community. Promotion and marketing is an important step for officials and local committees or groups to take in order to stimulate commercial development. Some of the other steps for City leaders to take would include partnership development and creation of relationships that support funding resources available in the area including regional, state, and federal agencies that may be useful. The future land use plan and map gives developers and City decision-makers a plan to follow. It allows leaders to make informed decisions and to ensure everyone is working towards the same goals.



*Neligh's SWOT Discussion facilitated by Miller & Associates. Photo courtesy of the Neligh, Nebraska Facebook page.*

In order to promote commercial development the City should work to meet the following objectives:

*Target areas for prime commercial development;*

The City should work to target areas of land for prime commercial development. This land should have access to the larger transportation network including Highways 275 and 14. Visibility and land availability are important aspects for commercial business ventures; therefore, those should also be important factors when locating prime commercial and light industrial real estate. This land should be close to the existing corporate limits and public infrastructure and adjacent to existing commercial and/or light industrial businesses. Once areas have been targeted for commercial development, the pros and cons of allowing other types of development on that property should be heavily weighed in order to prevent unnecessary urban sprawl.

*Job and employee recruitment;*

The City of Neligh and Neligh Economic Development Office should market the community to potential business developers and while the City is working to recruit new businesses they could also work with employers to determine what their need is for employees in order to recruit personnel to the community. There is a demand for employees in Neligh and the City could assist all developers by attending career fairs in place of each business. That way, the City could market to and recruit for a variety of positions to help fulfill the needs of employers in the community. During this time, the City could also be marketing and working to recruit potential businesses. With the City and NEDO showing assistance for business owners in the community it would show the level of support for businesses which would be an attractive quality when a business owner is looking to relocate/open a new location.

*Continue effective Business Retention and Expansion Program;*

Through the Community Needs Assessment Survey, respondents voiced their opinion on the City's economic development efforts and where they wanted the City's efforts to be focused. Survey respondents' top two goals were business retention and recruiting new businesses. An effective way to work to retain existing businesses is to focus efforts on an on-going Business Retention and Expansion (BR&E) program. This will help to maintain relationships with business owners, open lines of communications between the City, NEDO, and businesses, and it will help the City and NEDO determine the needs of employers. This is a job the Economic Development Director can continue to focus on and work towards meeting with all business owners on an annual basis. Each of these 'interviews' or conversations should be recorded and formatted so that NEDO can keep a database. This helps ensure that NEDO knows of business owners' needs, can help recruit employees when needed, could help with any expansion needs, look into possible grant funding or other development resources, and can assist with succession planning.

*Market prime commercial real estate to potential businesses and developers;*

After prime commercial real estate has been targeted, the City can work to market land availability to potential developers and businesses. It is important to utilize all marketing sources available especially including online sources. The City should not only market each individual site, but also what the City has to offer to the businesses including development incentives and what the community has to offer to potential residents that would help attract employees to the new business.



*Develop annexation plan of prime commercial real estate;*

Any land targeted for prime commercial development that does not fall within the existing corporate limits boundary should be analyzed for possible annexation. Having commercial property within the corporate limits is important to help expand the tax base for the City as well as to be able to offer certain development incentives such as Tax Increment Financing to the potential businesses. Also if the new business wants to utilize public infrastructure it is essential then, that the business is located within the corporate limits.

*Complete Blight & Substandard Analysis of prime commercial real estate;*

Completing the Blight and Substandard analysis is important for the City if they want to be able to offer Tax Increment Financing (TIF) as an incentive tool for new commercial development. It is imperative to complete the Blight and Substandard Study prior to any commercial development taking place and it can be an encouragement to a potential business; therefore, the City should consider meeting this objective prior to marketing the prime commercial real estate.

*Align development incentives from local, regional, and state sources; and*

Aligning development incentives for all sources including local, regional, and state could help attract a potential business to locate in Neligh. When marketing any real estate, the City should also show what development incentives are offered in the area. When developers are looking to locate a new commercial business venture they also consider how development incentives can entice them to select a certain location. Having all development incentives labeled easily and readily available for businesses to analyze and utilize will be helpful when encouraging development in Neligh.

*Create development plan for Industrial Park.*

NEDO has a goal to plan for and potentially develop an industrial park to be able to market shovel-ready sites to developers. An Industrial Park is typically 20 – 50 acres of land, sometimes even more, with public infrastructure already extended to the park so the sites are shovel ready. In the Future Land Use Map and potential area for industrial development is shown on the southeast side of Neligh along Highway 275. Highway access will be essential for any industrial business because of their need to import and export. The City could work to annex the land into the corporate limits, acquire or discuss acquisition with property owners, and develop a preliminary plat. Most developers like to see a site developed based on their needs and specifications as if the site were developed solely for their business; therefore, it is recommended that only a preliminary plat phase is completed until there is a business owner ready to develop. At that time the final platting process could be completed. Once an Industrial Park is ready for development, maybe even prior to, the City and NEDO could begin to market sites to potential developers/business owners. Industrial Park development does not happen overnight and businesses can be challenging to recruit so this is a goal that will require on-going efforts.

## **Expand Recreational Attractions & Community Amenities**

Neligh has many amenities to offer to its residents and visitors; however, residents and community stakeholders realize the value additional amenities can add to the quality of life in the community. Below is a list of potential recreational improvements or enhancements and other recreational development goals. The items listed below do not cover all of the recreational improvements that may be needed or desired in the future, but at this time these are goals or ideas that were discussed by residents at the several public input sessions held and online and mail-out surveys that were conducted during the planning process of this Comprehensive Plan.

Neligh's public swimming pool was constructed in the 1980's, because of the age of the swimming pool there are several repairs and/or updates that are needed in order to keep it functioning properly and up to par with State and Federal regulations. A Pool Study should be conducted in order to determine all of the issues present with the existing swimming pool. A Pool Study will also provide the City with a cost-benefit analysis to determine the best course of action moving forward including options of renovating/rehabilitating the existing swimming pool or constructing a new one. Residents consider the swimming pool a strength for the community, an amenity they wish to keep. The City will need to continually address this issue until a Pool Study is conducted and a final decision is made.

A major concern, and goal, for the City and its residents is to update the City's ball fields. One major improvement item is to re-do the infield for the northern most ball field in Riverside Park. In order to improve the infield, the City will need to excavate the existing infield, lay new gravel and lime to allow for proper drainage and an improved infield for the ball field. This project is important due to the number and frequency of ball games and tournaments held in Neligh. By improving the drainage for the ball field, it will ensure that the field is ready for use by avoiding as many rain delays or postponing of games due to field flooding.

Neligh has a variety of playground and picnic equipment to suit families and children of all ages. Existing park equipment should be periodically monitored to determine times for improvement or replacement to ensure Neligh's parks are a safe environment for children to play. In the future it may also be a goal for the City or the Park Board to add additional playground equipment or create an additional "neighborhood" park on the other side of the community.

Neligh is a part of the Cowboy Trail loop that uses a rails to trails program that converted old railroad right-of-way into a hike/bike trail that stretches from Norfolk to Chadron. Through the online discussion site, Mindmixer, users discussed the desire to have a concrete hike/bike trails constructed around Penn Lake to serve as an additional recreational amenity. An obvious attraction to hike/bike trails is the ease of access and use for all ages. Hike/bike trails provide a safe environment for exercising including walking, running, biking, and skating. Hike/bike trails can be constructed in phases which can add to the appeal of developing an amenity that can continue to grow and expand for residents.

The Elkhorn River is also an existing amenity for the City. Some residents discussed their desire to utilize this River to market for recreational purposes like tubing, tanking, kayaking, canoeing, etc. This is a wonderful resource that is already located in the community and many people in Nebraska will travel in order to participate in those types of recreational amenities; therefore, it may be an item the City could look into to market as additional recreational amenities in Neligh.

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





All public restroom facilities should comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to ensure accessibility for all of Neligh’s residents and visitors. An evaluation of public facilities should be completed in order for the City to effectively budget and plan for the improvement and removal of any physical barriers in public places including recreational facilities. Such updates require planning to ensure funds are available to complete the tasks and guarantee compliance with ADA design guidelines and regulations. The City is aware of these regulations and are working hard to solve any issues. Residents on the City’s Mindmixer site discussed their desire to have the restroom facility at Riverside Park updated to ensure it is ADA-compliant and to have a clean, user-friendly restroom facility.

Another option for an added recreational amenity would be the creation of a dog park. Residents on the City’s Mindmixer site discussed the idea for a dog park in Neligh, while one respondent shared the positive socialization benefits dog parks bring for people as well as our canine friends. This area should be fenced in to provide a space where dogs can be let of their leashes and run around. A possible location for a dog park/dog run could be at Russell Park. This amenity is not only beneficial for Neligh’s citizens, but also for all of the four-legged residents in town.

One item that was heavily discussed during public input meetings and on Mindmixer was the desire for a Community Recreation Building in Neligh. Some possible uses for the Community Recreation Building could be indoor basketball courts, track for walking, weightroom, a space for fitness classes, volleyball, racquetball courts, locker rooms, etc. This would be a place where residents of all ages could go to get some exercise. A building like this would greatly add to the quality of life for Neligh’s residents, and if done correctly, it could attract residents from other communities to come to Neligh in order to utilize this asset. The additional basketball court(s) would allow another space for middle school, junior high, and high school students to practice. This space could also be used for men’s, women’s, or co-ed basketball or volleyball leagues. Throughout the public input opportunities many of the adults expressed a desire to have a place where they can play sports, lift weights, walk indoors, etc. A Community Recreation Building would be a solution for residents.

Vibrant, colorful landscaping helps draw people to an area, and creates a positive first impression. Not only does landscaping add beauty to the parks, but it is also an opportunity for residents to volunteer their time and talent in order to keep the parks beautiful. While considering landscaping improvements, stakeholders should also consider options to add shade trees or structures to areas in need, i.e. near bleachers, at the swimming pool, or near parking. This can help protect and provide relief from the summer sun for visitors of the park.

In order to expand community amenities in Neligh, the City should work to meet the following objectives:

*Establish locations for each amenity;*

With a long list of goals for additional amenities in the City, residents should devise a plan for a location for each amenity. Proximity to other community amenities, the general public, and access/visibility for visitors should all be taken into consideration when planning for locations of community amenities. Once each goal has a proposed location it will be simpler to establish a plan for development.

*Prioritize projects;*

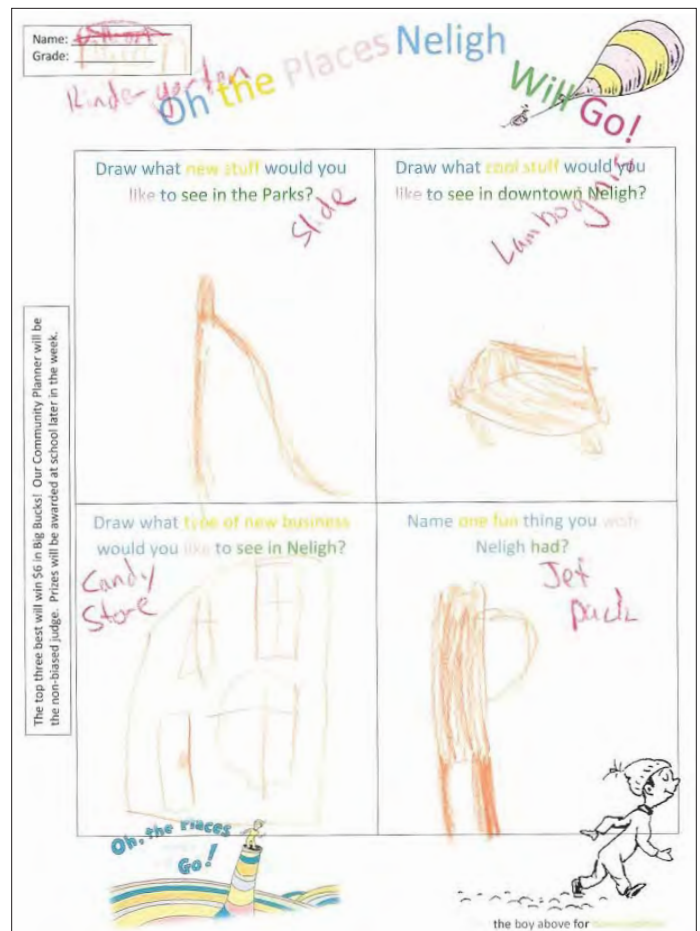
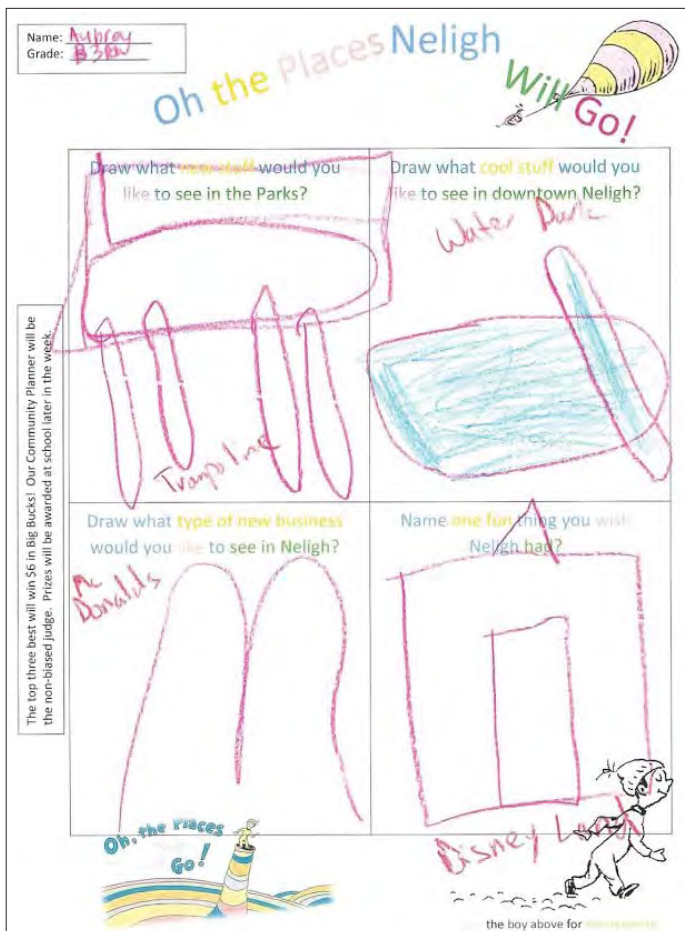
Because the City has many goals for additional recreation and service areas, the City should work to prioritize the list of goals. Once priorities have been set, the City can work with community groups to establish a plan for implementation. It is very important that the City establish their priority projects in order to be effective with implementation of the goals outlined in this Plan.

*Set group(s) to be in charge for each project; and*

It should not be the entire responsibility of the City to complete all of the goals outlined in this Plan; therefore, the City should work with community groups to determine which groups will be in charge of which projects. Once groups are set with their associated goals they can begin to implement based on the timeline determined by the City and community groups.

*Formulate timeline/funding options.*

Because so many groups will be involved in the development of the community amenities, a timeline should be created based on priority projects and funding availability. This timeline should be followed by the City and all community groups involved. Funding options, including grant opportunities should also be determined. Typically grant applications can only be submitted by one community for one project; therefore, it is necessary to determine which goals meet the grant application requirements and determine how each goal will be funded. Currently, there are a few grant opportunities available for different community amenities; however, these grants are highly competitive and are not available for all types of projects. It is important for the City to have other sources of funding for amenity development because grant funds may not be available or accessible.





### **Develop Marketing Campaign**

Creating a community brand and marketing that brand to existing and potential residents and visitors is important when trying to develop an image and it is evident that several of Neligh's stakeholders realize this importance because of the recent improvements in development a 'marketing campaign'. With all that Neligh has to offer its residents, from amenities to local retail businesses, the community truly is a destination place and does attract visitors. However, the city needs to develop a marketing campaign to promote existing businesses as well as capitalize on its ability to grow.

The City and/or local Chamber and Economic Development offices should also focus on marketing to its own residents. A "shop local" campaign could involve many different marketing strategies to reach various community members. Marketing the City to existing residents is sometimes just as important as marketing to potential visitors. A shop local campaign could consist of yard signs, placement reminders at restaurants, or participation in "Thankful Thursdays" when residents are encouraged to show their support and thanks to local businesses.

Social media marketing is one way to share information with existing residents while also marketing the community to potential residents and visitors. Online marketing is a quick and almost instant way to share information. It is also accessible almost anywhere for most people. In today's society, people want instant information and one way to provide that is to have a strong web presence promoting the City and all that it has to offer including both public places and private businesses.

Marketing the City should be an on-going effort made in part by the City of Neligh as well as the local Chamber and Economic Development offices with the assistance of local businesses. The idea is to inform the surrounding area, as well as visitors passing through, of the wonderful amenities the community has to offer. The goal is to let people know that Neligh is a community with multiple things to do throughout the day for a variety of age groups. Neligh truly does have a lot to offer to its residents and visitors; however, sharing that information is the only way the City will be able to capitalize on all it has to offer. Social media and other internet sources, regional or State-wide visitor's guides or magazines, and marketing brochures and materials are just a few of the ways the community can get the word out about Neligh.

The City of Neligh has recently created a brand for itself including a logo and slogan which states that Neligh is “Not too small to have it all”. In order to continue a marketing campaign for Neligh, the City should work to meet the following objectives:

*Establish responsible roles for marketing;*

As with community amenity development, not all of the marketing should be left to the City. Other community groups such as a Chamber or Economic Development office should also be instrumental in marketing for Neligh. These groups, along with the City, should work to establish roles for marketing.

Create marketing pieces;

Using the brand developed for the City, marketing pieces should be created that can be utilized online as well as for posters, videos (which has been a wonderful marketing tool the City has been creating), brochures, etc. Thinking comprehensively to hit all targeted areas is important when creating marketing pieces. It is also important to continually update the marketing pieces to ensure current information is being utilized and the pieces look modern and up-to-date.

Maintain updated social media and other online marketing materials; and Social media can be thought of as a way to get information to a large amount of people in a short amount of time. Also, social media sources such as Facebook and Twitter are free resources to use for marketing and most likely a majority of the community’s residents and visitors use some form of social media on their own. Other online marketing tools should also be considered in order to effectively reach potential developers or business owners to show what the City has to offer.

Market within Neligh.

Marketing within the City itself is also important. Developing a “shop local” campaign to market to residents and encourage them to support local businesses is important to the success of businesses in the community. Signs, such as a shopping mall directory, could also be placed at key points of interest in the community to display other amenities or businesses in Neligh. It would serve as a map showing other possible areas to visit or things to do in the community.



### **Enhance Highway Corridors & Community Beautification**

Highway corridors and overall community beautification were discussed during the public input sessions held for the Comprehensive Plan. Not only were the issues discussed, but ideas were developed to improve the aesthetics of the area. Unappealing highway corridors can provide visitors with a bad reflection of what the community really is and what it has to offer. After an individual has lived in a community for several years, one starts to overlook the negative aspects or the visually unappealing areas. However, a gateway entrance and highway corridor is Neligh's first impression and opportunity to market to visitors. In order to improve the corridor through town, adjacent property owners will need to be supportive and understanding of the overall goal that Neligh is trying to achieve. Ideas and visuals for this goal can be seen in previous sections of this Comprehensive Plan.

There are many different ways to create beautiful corridors. Typically landscaping, lighting, signage, and screening are the main projects involved. A Highway Beautification Committee could be created or an existing community group could help drive these projects or an existing group or board could volunteer their efforts for beautifying the highway corridor through Neligh. It will be important to achieve continuity in the aesthetics of all improvements. Having a plan or visuals in place before making any changes will be important to stimulate public support and develop a cohesive look to match the City's brand. There is no right or wrong answer to how this process will unfold, and it will be up to the community to determine the best method.

It will be up to the City and their citizens to make final decisions for the vision of their community; however, this vision should encompass the entire community for all beautification projects as opposed to having a mixture of several different "looks" or products used. Beautification is important throughout the entire community not just the highway corridor, so any of ideas or themes could be carried into the Downtown District, public parks, or any residential neighborhood. If the City works to beautify the community and its highway corridor, it may spark the desire in residents to keep their properties clean.

A partnership could also be created with adjacent property owners to ensure everyone is on the same page aesthetically, and hopefully with the support of property owners this goal could be accomplished. As previously mentioned, one group or several groups could work to make this goal become a reality. The most important part is to have an overall plan and vision created before any projects are started; that way there will be a cohesive look throughout the community and every group will know what needs to be done to achieve the community's vision.


Screening will make the most noticeable improvement due to some unsightly land uses located on both sides of the highway corridors. Screening could also be beneficial for property owners because the screening can act as a sound buffer from the highway traffic. Signage should not only be informational, but also attractive. A cohesive look starting from one entrance sign and carrying through the community to the opposite end creates a distinct appeal and enhances the brand Neligh is developing. Creating a cohesive, aesthetic plan; forming a group to spearhead the project; balancing partnerships with adjacent property owners, City officials, and other community beautification groups; and aligning funding will be the key steps in beautifying Neligh's corridors.

Name: Austin  
Grade: 3

## Oh the Places Neligh Will Go!


Draw what **new stuff** you like to see in the Parks?

a bridge




Draw what **cool stuff** you like to see in downtown Neligh?

3 subway




Draw what **type of new business** would you like to see in Neligh?

duck Dynasty



Name **one fun thing** you wish Neligh had?

crack



The top three best will win \$6 in Big Bucks! Our Community Planner will be the non-biased judge. Prizes will be awarded at school later in the week.

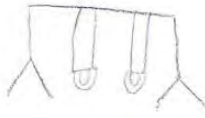
the boy above for \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Isaiah  
Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

## Oh the Places Neligh Will Go!


Draw what **new stuff** you like to see in the Parks?

More Swings




Draw what **cool stuff** you like to see in downtown Neligh?

A Chick-fil-E




Draw what **type of new business** would you like to see in Neligh?

More clothing stores



Name **one fun thing** you wish Neligh had?

a water park



The top three best will win \$6 in Big Bucks! Our Community Planner will be the non-biased judge. Prizes will be awarded at school later in the week.


the boy above for \_\_\_\_\_

Name: Isaiah  
Grade: \_\_\_\_\_

## Oh the Places Neligh Will Go!


Draw what **new stuff** you like to see in the Parks?

Roller coaster




Draw what **cool stuff** you like to see in downtown Neligh?

Dairy Queen




Draw what **type of new business** would you like to see in Neligh?

a new Cabela's



Name **one fun thing** you wish Neligh had?

NFL football team




The top three best will win \$6 in Big Bucks! Our Community Planner will be the non-biased judge. Prizes will be awarded at school later in the week.

the boy above for \_\_\_\_\_


Name: Austin  
Grade: 2

## Oh the Places Neligh Will Go!

Draw what **new stuff** you like to see in the Parks?




Draw what **cool stuff** you like to see in downtown Neligh?




Draw what **type of new business** would you like to see in Neligh?

aquarium



Name **one fun thing** you wish Neligh had?

Y 10 20 30 40 50 60 70 80 90



The top three best will win \$6 in Big Bucks! Our Community Planner will be the non-biased judge. Prizes will be awarded at school later in the week.

the boy above for \_\_\_\_\_