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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The Village of Gresham extends its heartfelt gratitude to all the residents, property owners, and business owners who actively participated in the development of Gresham's Comprehensive Plan. Your support and involvement were instrumental in bringing this plan to fruition. Thank you for your commitment to our community's future.

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VISION FOR GRESHAM

Gresham residents and business owners are valuable community assets. Their participation was, and is, essential to the process. The Comprehensive Plan presents a futuristic vision created by the community. The planning process for Gresham's Comprehensive Plan included public meetings, stakeholder meetings, and workshops which allowed community members to consider directions and goals for the plan.

Gresham's vision is to promote and grow a diverse economic base while emphasizing overall community growth and development. This requires a proactive approach to attract new investments, additional residents, and gathering input from existing residents.

Housing is an ongoing issue that will be addressed to attract and maintain population. Gateway corridors into town and the traditional downtown were major discussion points during public input sessions. Residents expressed support for aesthetics and improvements in those areas, in addition to employment initiatives while maintaining infrastructure is also a priority.

While the Comprehensive Plan captures many ideas, goals, and policies, there are some noteworthy directions and changes presented in this Plan. These new directions are a result of community feedback, reactions to current trends and conditions, and policy direction from elected and appointed community officials.

INTRODUCTION

The Comprehensive Plan is a toolkit for Gresham's future development, providing long-range guidance on how and where the community will invest and change over the next decade. The Comprehensive Plan contains goals for the future and addresses topics from land use planning and demographics to transportation and community services. The Comprehensive Plan will guide economic development, transportation, housing, parks and open spaces, and other community assets. It encourages a sustainable and fiscally responsible future by setting the desired direction for future development regulations, policy decisions, and community programs.

Compliance with State & Local Requirements

The governmental functions of Gresham, Nebraska are provided and coordinated by the Village Board. Gresham's planning and zoning jurisdiction includes an area within one mile of the Village's Corporate Limits pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statute § 17-1002. With the possibility of future growth, Gresham's extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) may extend further into York, County.

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.

(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.

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 Comprehensive Plan has been prepared in accordance with state statutes and requirements. The Village Board's duty is to make and adopt a master plan for the physical development of the municipality. The community's master plan shall be an advisory document to guide land development decisions. After a public hearing, the Planning Commission shall make its recommendation to the Village Board. Following another public meeting, the Village Board shall adopt and approve the Comprehensive Plan by Resolution.

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.

Data Sources

The following paragraphs highlight key data sources utilized in the analysis. A portion of the data was accessed through mySidewalk.com—an online data vendor—which brings together multiple data sources allowing for comparisons and strategic analysis.

Decennial Census

Beginning in 1790, the United States Census has tabulated each resident of the country based on where they reside on April 1 during years ending in zero. The mandatory survey determines the number of congressional seats for each state. Over time, the census has become more robust capturing data well beyond the original intent.

American Community Survey (ACS)

Conducted by the U.S. Census Bureau, the ACS supplements the decennial census. This ongoing survey supplies data about the nation on an annual basis. In contrast to the universal decennial census, the ACS is sent to a sample of addresses—approximately 3.5 million in all fifty states along with the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico.

For the 2020 5-Year Estimates, Nebraska's response rate was 90.6 percent. The ACS attempts to capture topics beyond those included in the decennial census and includes education, employment, internet access, and transportation data.

Environmental Systems Research Institute (ESRI)

ESRI data is similar to census data but allows communities to enter additional information regarding commercial properties, including vacant lots and buildings. This helps communities and the State of Nebraska market and promote economic development opportunities. ESRI data is reported as estimates utilizing the most recent census data and marketing forecasts for the associated year.

What is a Comprehensive Plan?



This document is Gresham's long-term Comprehensive Plan and establishes vision and direction for the future. Its objectives are to set the policy framework to help guide future decisions related to development and investment. It will help the Village thoughtfully address future needs, for economic development, transportation, housing, services, parks and open space, and other community assets. 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.

Planning Period

The planning period for Gresham's Comprehensive Plan is 2023-2033 and should be reviewed frequently to guarantee its relevance to the community it serves. A formal review process should be undertaken in 2025 and 2028 which will be important to the Comprehensive Plan's overall success.

Goals for Gresham's Comprehensive Plan 2023-2033

While this Plan embodies many ideas, goals, and policies parallel with other communities' goals in this region, there are some noteworthy new directions and slight changes in the 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:



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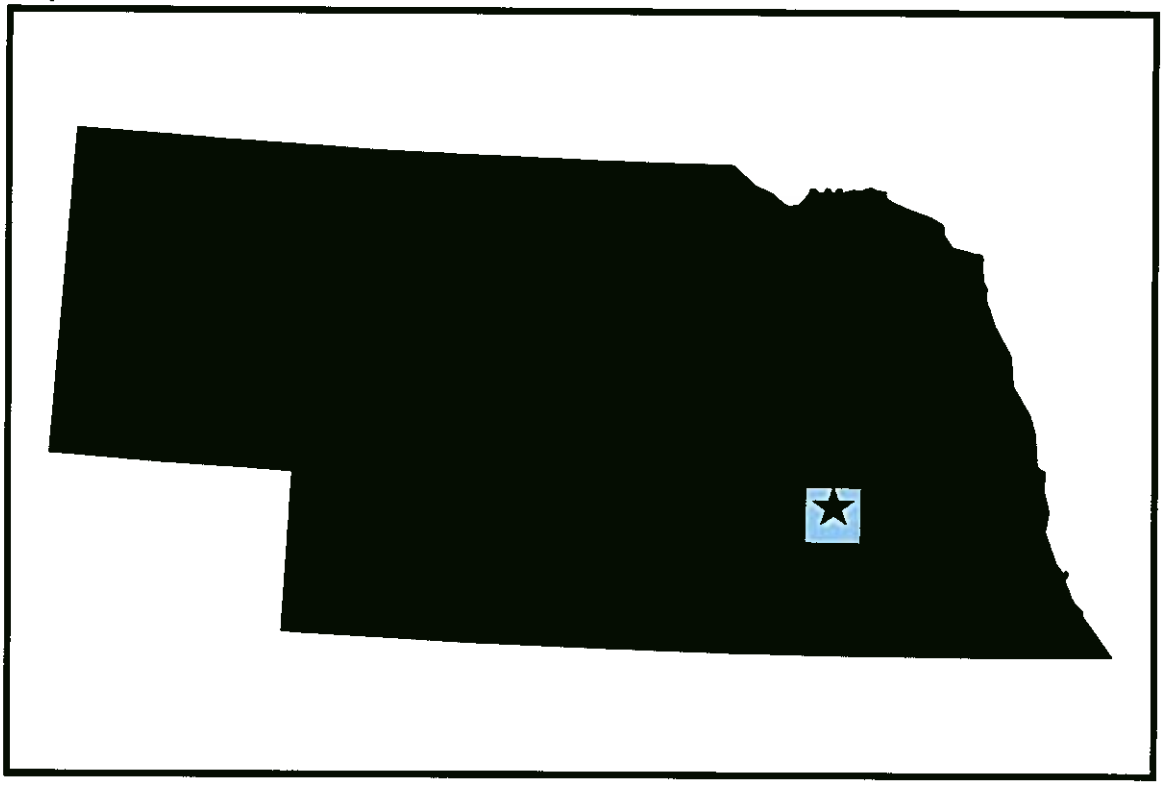
CHAPTER



COMMUNITY PROFILE

The Community Profile chapter provides a snapshot of current conditions in Gresham and forms the foundation for planning for the next ten years. This profile compiles information derived from outside sources, conversations with stakeholders, on-site assessments, and data analysis. The Community Profile chapter includes the following components:

- Description
- History
- Population
- Housing
- Economy & Capital Improvement



Description

The 2020 census reported Gresham's population at 219, slightly down from the 2010 count of 223. Gresham is located in northeast York County, which has Polk County to the north, Fillmore County to the south, Seward County to the east, and Hamilton County to the west (Figure 1.1). York County is easily accessed as Interstate 80 crosses the county east-west, as does Highway 34. In addition to Interstate 80 and Highway 34, Highway 81 runs north-south through the center of the county and Highway 69 runs directly to the south from Gresham to Highway 34. The Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroad maintains a prominent east-west line through the county as well.

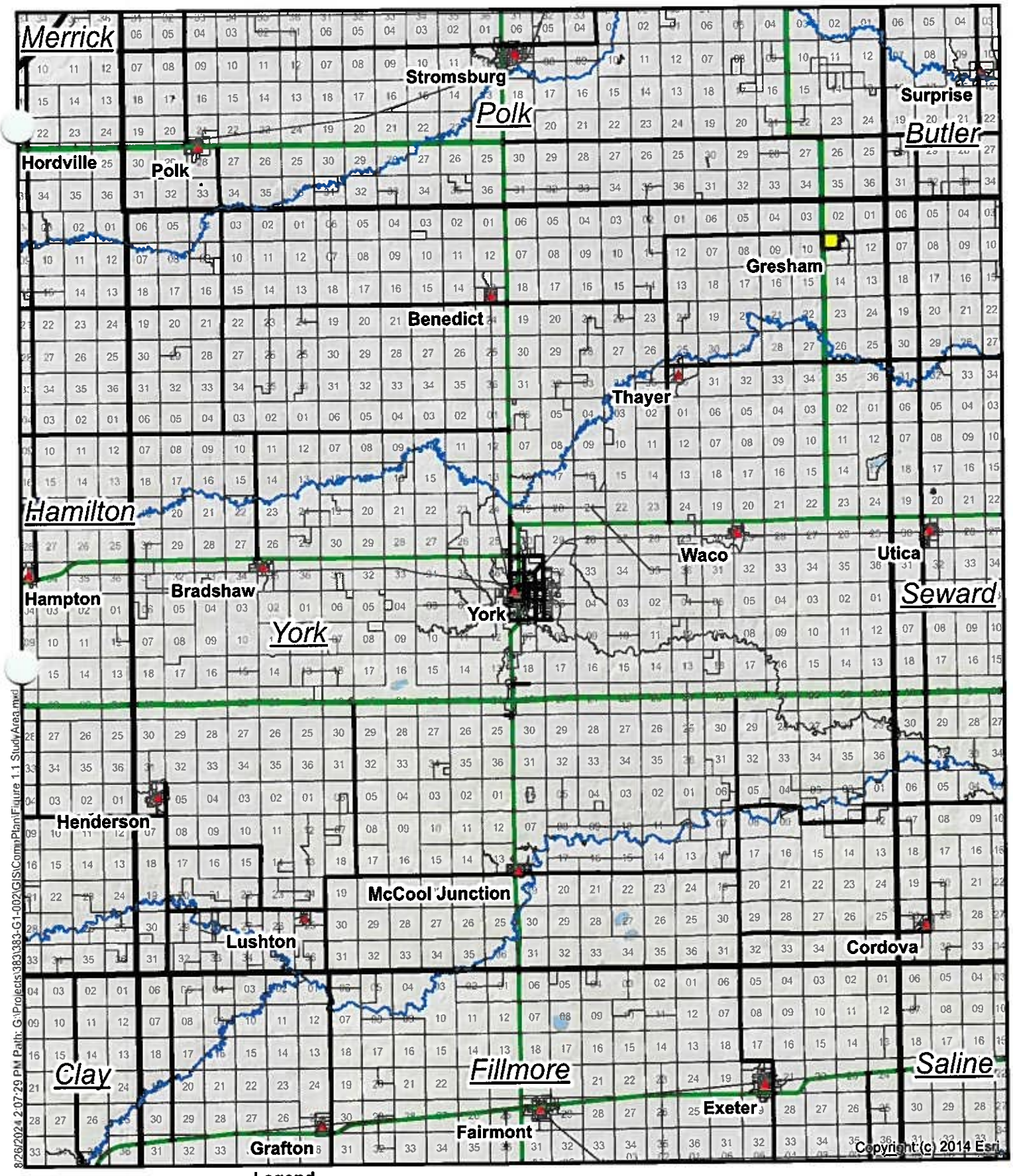
Table 1.1: State Population Classification

State of Nebraska, 2024

Classification	Population	Number of Municipalities
Metropolitan Class	More than 300,000	Omaha Only
Primary Class	More than 100,000; less than 300,00	Lincoln Only
First Class	More than 5,000; less than 100,000	30
Second Class	More than 800; less than 5,000	115
Village	More than 100; less than 800	385

Total number of municipalities in Nebraska: 532

Source: Nebraska State Statute § 14-101, § 15-101, § 16-101, § 17-101, § 17-201



Legend

Gresham Corporate Boundary

Prepared By:

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

N

0 2 4 8 Miles

Figure 1.1 Study Area Map

York County, Nebraska

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History

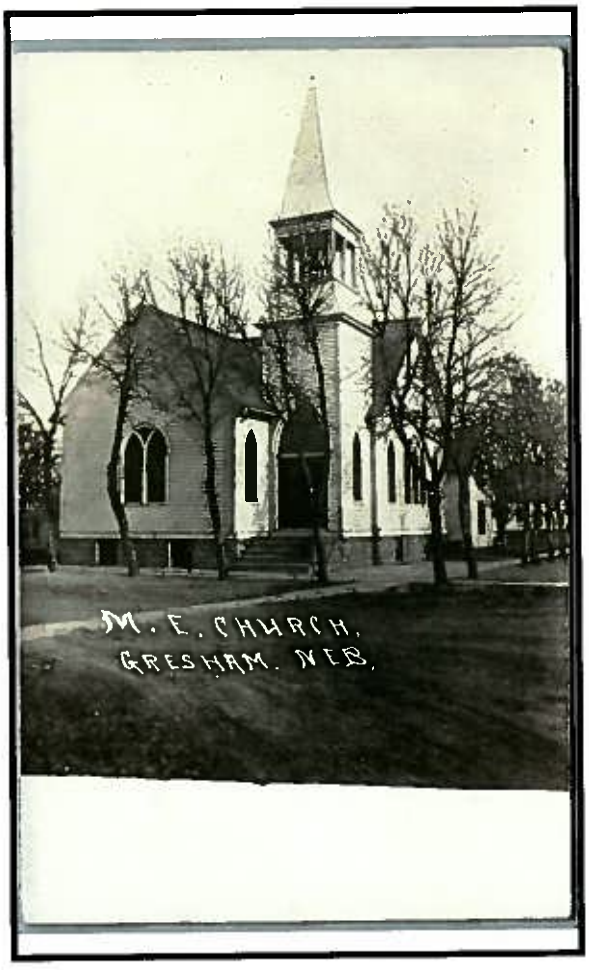








First named Poston in honor of Judge George Post, the name was later changed once it was determined that a community by the name of Poston already existed—the community was initially laid out by the Pioneer Town-Site Company in late 1887 (Perkey 1982). Instead of Poston, Gresham was the name given to the community in honor of Walter Gresham, Secretary of State in President Grover Cleveland's administration (several other Nebraska communities were named after cabinet members, they include Carlisle, Creswell, Lamar, and Manning) (Link 1933). Gresham was originally platted in 1887 when the Fremont, Elkhorn and Missouri Valley Railroad extended through the northeast tip of York County. Within a short time of its founding, Gresham was home to a hardware and grocery store, a blacksmith shop and grain elevator, along with a lumber yard, a harness shop, and a meat market (Sedgwick 1921). By the early 1900s the community was served by a light plant in addition to its own waterworks and the York County Telephone Company.



Population

Understanding the population's composition provides guidance for community development. Demographics are the basis for prioritizing future goals, all other plan elements depend on an assessment of existing population characteristics and future projections. This data creates a vision for the next five, ten, and fifteen years and helps decision makers plan for social, economic, and physical infrastructure to meet Gresham's needs and objectives.

Population Change

Gresham first recorded a population in 1900 at 297. By 1920 the population had increased to its peak of 492. The population has bounced back and forth since that time but has been, in general, on a downward trend in recent decades. In 2020, Gresham's population was recorded at 219 (Table 1.1). In comparison, York County was organized in 1870 and peaked in population in 1910 at 18,721 (Table 1.1) (Perkey 1982). More recently the county has increased from 13,665 in 2010 to 14,125 in 2020.

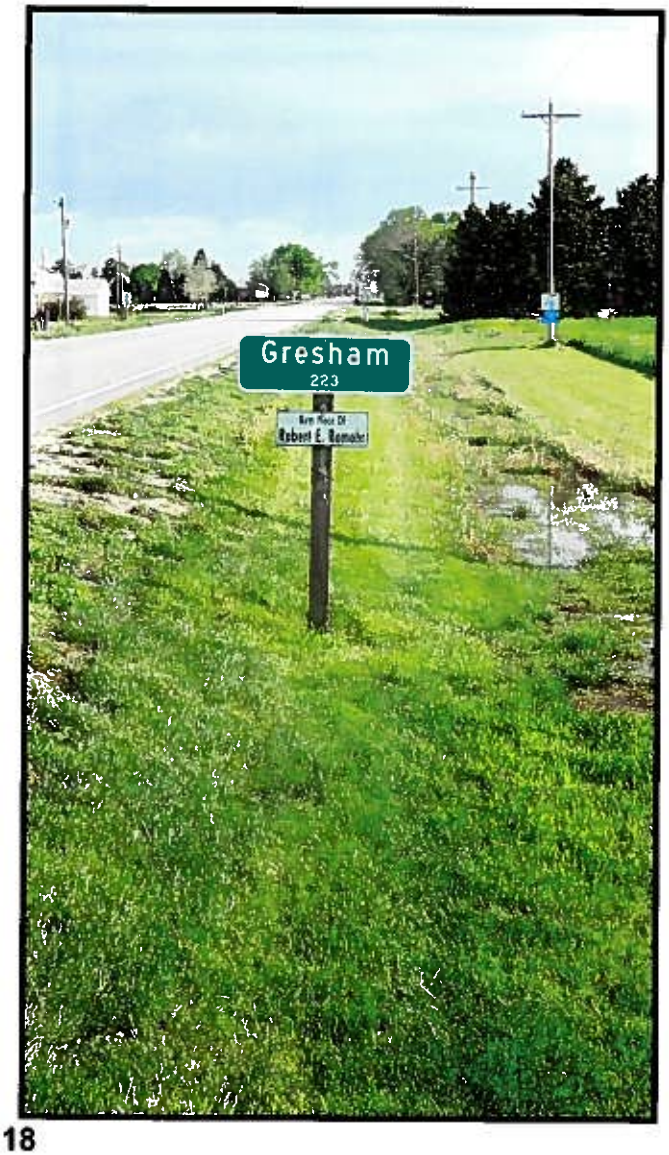


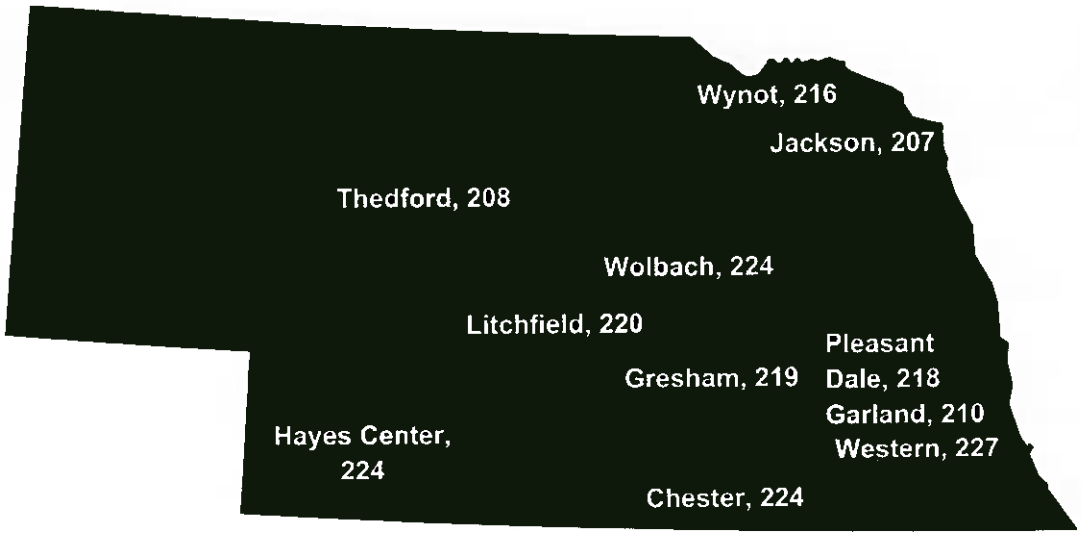
Table 1.2: Population Totals 1870-2020
Village of Gresham and York County, Nebraska
2023

Year	Village of Gresham	York County
1870	-	604
1880	-	11,170
1890	-	17,279
1900	297	18,205
1910	344	18,721
1920	492	17,146
1930	442	17,239
1940	352	14,874
1950	267	14,346
1960	239	13,724
1970	248	13,685
1980	320	14,798
1990	253	14,428
2000	270	14,598
2010	223	13,665
2020	219	14,125

Source: Bureau of the Census, U.S. Federal Statistical System, www.census.gov.

Peer Communities

Figure 1.2: Peer Communities Map



Communities with similar characteristics make for a nice comparison to understand trends across the state—these communities were selected based on the 2020 census (Figure 1.2). Examining the previous five census recordings, none of the peer communities peaked in population in 2020 and only one—Western—peaked in 2010. Seven of these communities, including Gresham, peaked in population in 1980.

Table 1.3: Peer Community Population Change 1980-2020

Village of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023

Community	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020
Chester (Thayer)	435	351	294	232	224
Garland (Seward)	257	247	247	216	210
Gresham (York)	320	253	270	223	219
Hayes Center (Hayes)	231	259	240	214	224
Jackson (Dakota)	287	230	205	223	207
Litchfield (Sherman)	256	314	280	262	220
Pleasant Dale (Seward)	259	253	245	205	218
Thedford (Thomas)	313	243	211	188	208
Western (Saline)	286	299	310	324	227
Wolbach (Greeley)	301	280	287	283	224
Wynot (Cedar)	222	213	191	166	216

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (data.census.gov), U.S. Federal Statistical System.

In addition to population comparisons, Table 1.4 reveals trends related to median age, household size, and median household income. Of the peer communities, Gresham in comparison is in the middle of the range in regard to median age, toward the low end of average household size (York County's average household size was 2.36 and for the State of Nebraska it was 2.44), and has one of the lowest median household incomes (Table 1.4).

Table 1.4: Peer Community Comparisons

Village of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023

Community	Median Age	Average Household Size	Median Household Income
Chester (Thayer)	44.8	2.55	$58,250
Garland (Seward)	37.6	2.51	$50,625
Gresham (York)	37.1	2.08	$39,167
Hayes Center (Hayes)	45.9	2.99	$51,875
Jackson (Dakota)	22.9	3.47	$58,333
Litchfield (Sherman)	46.5	2.37	$57,750
Pleasant Dale (Seward)	31.8	2.3	$56,829
Thedford (Thomas)	31.4	1.58	$50,962
Western (Saline)	49.8	1.91	$37,143
Wolbach (Greeley)	36.9	2.5	$45,625
Wynot (Cedar)	51.8	2.3	$77,813

Source: American Community Survey Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com).

Population Cohorts

Using demographics to predict community change is critical. Planning for future needs, possibly a new elementary school or a retirement facility, based on population trends is important for a community to track. Several trends appear for Gresham based on population estimates for 2010 and 2020 (Table 1.5). The four age categories, for instance, which represent the population nineteen years old and younger declined from 27.3 percent to 22.8 percent from 2010 to 2020 indicating fewer children. At the opposite end of the spectrum, the oldest four population categories declined from 26.3 percent in 2010 to 14.7 percent in 2020.

Figure 1.3: Population Pyramid
Village of Gresham, Nebraska 2023



Table 1.5: Population Based on Estimated 2010 and 2020 Census Data Village of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023			
Age	Percent (2010)	Number (2020)	Percent (2020)
Under 5	11.6	23	9.9
5 to 9	5.4	7	2.6
10 to 14	4.9	16	6.9
15 to 19	5.4	8	3.4
20 to 24	2.7	17	7.3
25 to 29	10.3	15	6.5
30 to 34	4.9	18	7.8
35 to 39	2.7	27	11.6
40 to 44	8.5	6	2.6
45 to 49	5.4	11	4.7
50 to 54	4.5	9	3.9
55 to 59	2.2	18	7.8
60 to 64	2.2	21	9.1
65 to 69	3.1	3	1.3
70 to 74	2.2	3	1.3
75 to 79	1.8	22	9.5
80 to 84	19.2	5	2.2
85+	3.1	4	1.7
Total	**100.1**	**233**	**100.1**

Source: ACS Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com).

One way to invest in this community is to work toward creating a more livable environment, which is attractive to people of all ages. The American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) has created a Livability Index, using eight categories to calculate the overall livability of a community as its population ages. Engaging in all of these will create a vibrant, welcoming community, not just to the aging population, but to everyone.

Family Dynamics

Families are a fundamental structure for any community, including Gresham. Family is defined as a group of one or more parents and their children living together as a unit. Providing opportunities to all members of the community is critical and the Village of Gresham is able to make decisions based on family data. In addition to defining family, a household is considered a "family household" when at least one member of the household is related to the householder by birth, marriage, or adoption.

According to census data, there are 112 households in Gresham. Sixty-two of these are family households and fifty are non-family households. In regard to household size, Gresham has thirty-eight one-person households, thirty-four two-person households, twenty-five three-person households, and fifteen four or more person households (Table 1.6).

Table 1.6: Household Data

Village of Gresham, Nebraska and State of Nebraska, 2023

Household Size	Village of Gresham		State of Nebraska	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
1-Person	38	33.9	238,923	30.4
2-Person	34	30.4	275,089	35
3-Person	25	22.3	101,844	13
4+	15	13.4	170,126	21.6
Total Households	**112**		**785,982**	

Source: American Community Survey Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com).

Race/Ethnicity

Race/ethnicity is another way to analyze population. Gresham in 2020 registered a total population of 219 and of current estimates listed twenty-one Hispanics in Gresham with the remaining population listed as Caucasian. In comparison, the State of Nebraska with a total population of 1,961,504 in 2020, was 75.7 percent Caucasian (1,484,687), 12.0 percent (234,715) Hispanic, 4.8 percent (94,405) African American, 2.7 percent (52,359) Asian, and 0.8 percent (15,051) Native American.

People with Disabilities

Accessibility concerns are also considerations for the Village of Gresham. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), 56.7 million adults in the United States live with a disability. These concerns relate to community design, development, and maintenance of community assets. Although not captured in recent census data, it is most likely that Gresham does have a number of residents who live with a disability which might include hearing, vision, or mobility. Public spaces, community amenities, and community events should accommodate individuals with disabilities when possible. ADA-compliant ramps and amenities, for instance, are simple design standards that address accessibility.

Population Projections

Population composition and trends are important considerations when examining projections for a community's future. Projections help determine a Village's future land use and community service needs and policies. The various scenarios presented in this Comprehensive Plan present different outcomes—decline or growth—which guide community leaders in the planning process. Revisiting the Comprehensive Plan on a regular basis is important and will encourage community leaders to stay active and aware of community needs.

Since the peak in population in 1920, Gresham has lost 273 residents or -55.5 percent of its population. Table 1.7 presents Gresham's population change by decade since 1980, with declines ranging from just under 2 percent to over 20 percent, and one decade showed an increase just below 7 percent. Table 1.8 presents different population projections based on 1, 3, and 5 percent changes, both positive and negative. It is important to note and understand that slight changes over several decades can result in significant growth or decline.

Table 1.7: Population Change 1980-2020
Village of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023

Year	Population	Percentage Change
1980	320	***
1990	253	-20.9
2000	270	6.7
2010	223	-17.4
2020	219	-1.8

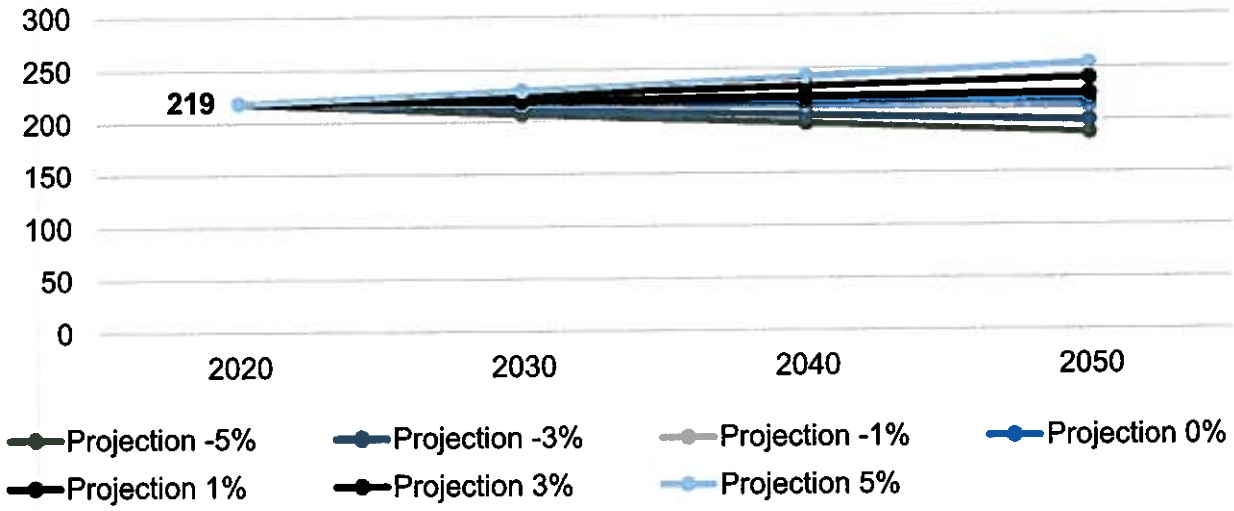
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (data.census.gov), U.S. Federal Statistical System.

Table 1.8: Population Projections and Estimates 2020-2050
Village of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023

Projections	2020	2030	2040	2050
	Population	Population	Population	Population
Projection -5%	219	208	198	188
Projection -3%	219	212	206	200
Projection -1%	219	217	215	213
Projection 0%	219	219	219	219
Projection 1%	219	221	223	225
Projection 3%	219	226	233	240
Projection 5%	219	230	242	254

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (data.census.gov), U.S. Federal Statistical System.

Figure 1.4: Population Projections
Village of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023







Housing

A recent article published by the Platte Institute titled "3 Building Blocks for More Housing in Nebraska" notes that the entire state is experiencing housing concerns (Vokal 2022). Concerns include a rapid rise in home prices, a shortage of homes listed for sale, while even rental property numbers have declined. Not only is the state dealing with shortages of rental homes and "starter" homes but struggling with the "Missing Middle" as well (Vokal 2022).

Conditions in Gresham are no different and addressing housing concerns is critical. The Village must seek ways to assess and improve housing options by identifying housing priorities—refurbish properties when that is an option and develop new housing when it does not. Inviting, well-maintained housing attracts potential residents and planning for future demand should be a priority. Issues related to aging housing stock are concerns if older homes no longer address the needs of today's buyers. Housing data in conjunction with demographics allows local leaders to find appropriate market improvements for community success.

Occupancy Characteristics

Tables 1.9 and 1.10 reflect a number of housing data, including total number of units, occupied housing data, and year structure built for Gresham, York County, and the State of Nebraska for comparison. A healthy vacancy rate typically varies between 2 and 7 percent. High vacancy rates tend to reduce the value of nearby properties, create fire and safety hazards, and impose costs for the local government. In Gresham's case, the current vacancy rate of 18.5 percent appears high in comparison to York County at 10.4 percent and the State of Nebraska at 8.4 percent (U.S. Census Bureau (data.census.gov), U.S. Federal Statistical System).

Table 1.9: 2020 Total Number of Housing Units (Occupied and Vacant), Village of Gresham, York County, and State of Nebraska, 2023

Location	Total Housing Units	Occupied	Percent	Vacant	Percent
Village of Gresham	119	97	81.5	22	18.5
York County	6,320	5,663	89.6	657	10.4
State of Nebraska	844,278	773,312	91.6	70,966	8.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau (data.census.gov), U.S. Federal Statistical System.







Table 1.10: Housing Tenure		
Village of Gresham, York County, and State of Nebraska, 2023		
Location	Owner-Occupied Percent	Renter-Occupied Percent
Village of Gresham	73.2	26.8
York County	74.8	25.2
State of Nebraska	67.8	32.2
Source: U.S. Census Bureau (data.census.gov), U.S. Federal Statistical System.		

Housing tenure is interesting in that Gresham and York County have slightly higher ownership rates in comparison to the state (Table 1.10).

Adequate housing is essential to support economic growth. A small percentage of vacant properties is necessary to attract new residents and create an atmosphere of a healthy housing market and tied to job creation and recruitment efforts. A tight housing market, for example, can increase housing prices and make it more challenging for employers to recruit additional staff. A quick search on realtor.com found that there are currently no listings for Gresham, however, there are forty-nine properties for sale within twenty miles of Gresham.










Age of Housing Stock

The age of housing stock is reflected in Gresham's census data. Aging or dated housing impacts the community's ability to recruit new residents, which is an important variable to consider. Gresham's housing stock is older than York County's and dramatically older than the State of Nebraska (Table 1.11). Gresham, for instance, has 79.5 percent of its houses built prior to 1960 and in comparison, the State of Nebraska only has 31.5 percent in the same category. Older properties are not liabilities simply based on age, but older homes do require continual upkeep and maintenance. Additionally, many older homes were constructed on smaller lots (often fifty-foot in width) and contain smaller bedrooms than the market typically demands today.

Table 1.11: Year Structure Built (Number and By Percent)

Village of Gresham, York County, and State of Nebraska, 2023

Year Built	Village of Gresham		York County		State of Nebraska	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2020 or later	0	0	13	0.2	5,012	0.6
2010 to 2019	0	0	177	3.2	76,078	9.7
2000 to 2009	1	0.9	301	53.8	94,225	12
1980 to 1999	7	6.3	782	14	158,511	20.2
1960 to 1979	15	13.4	1,593	28.5	204,612	26
1940 to 1959	20	17.9	890	15.9	106,315	13.5
1939 or older	69	61.6	1,841	32.9	141,229	18

Source: American Community Survey Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com).

Housing Value

The median value for owner-occupied housing units with a mortgage in Gresham is $63,000 which is considerably lower than both York County and the State of Nebraska (Table 1.12). A similar scenario is found for properties without a mortgage, where Gresham is also well below the county and state (Table 1.13). By property value, Gresham is well below the county and state in comparison. For properties with a mortgage, 87.9 percent of Gresham's housing is valued at less than $100,000—for York County in the same value category it is 25.0 percent and for the state it is 10.6 percent (Table 1.12). A similar trend is found for properties without a mortgage—Gresham has 89.8 percent in the lowest two categories (under $100,000) while York County stands at 29.0 and the State of Nebraska is below that at 26.5 percent (Table 1.13).

Table 1.12: Owner-Occupied Housing Units with a Mortgage

Village of Gresham, York County, and State of Nebraska, 2023

Value	Village of Gresham		York County		State of Nebraska	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than $50,000	15	45.5	63	2.8	11,257	3.5
$50,000 - $99,999	14	42.4	496	22.2	22,635	7.1
$100,000 - $299,999	4	12.1	1,443	64.4	193,435	60.9
$300,000 - $499,999	0	0	196	8.8	68,791	21.6
$500,000 - $749,999	0	0	19	0.8	15,548	4.9
$750,000 - $999,999	0	0	13	0.5	3,669	1.2
$1,000,000+	0	0	9	0.4	2,415	0.8
Median	**$63,000**		**$144,200**		**$220,900**	

Source: American Community Survey Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com).

Table 1.13: Owner-Occupied Housing Units without a Mortgage

Village of Gresham, York County, and State of Nebraska, 2023

Value	Village of Gresham		York County		State of Nebraska	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Less than $50,000	23	46.9	157	8.1	25,714	12
$50,000 - $99,999	21	42.9	407	20.9	31,170	14.5
$100,000 - $199,999	2	2	797	40.9	64,460	30
$200,000 - $299,999	2	2	309	15.8	47,537	22
$300,000 - $499,999	0	0	241	12.3	32,746	15.2
$500,000 - $749,999	0	0	33	1.7	7,702	3.6
$750,000 - $999,999	0	0	2	0.1	2,691	1.3
$1,000,000+	1	2	4	0.2	2,212	1
Median	**$57,500**		**$138,400**		**$174,500**	

Source: American Community Survey Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com).

Substandard Housing Conditions

When evaluating housing units, it is necessary to examine overall condition. Properties that are uninhabitable should be addressed with removal as a viable option to create infill opportunities. According to the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) guidelines, a housing unit is substandard if it lacks complete plumbing or if it qualifies as overcrowded. HUD defines adequate plumbing as a property with hot and cold piped water, a bathtub or shower, along with a flush toilet. Overcrowding is defined as more than one person per room.

According to census data, substandard housing conditions in Gresham do not appear to be a serious concern. Of the occupied housing units (112), 105 have complete facilities and 104 have complete kitchen facilities. Regarding utilities, 110 of the homes have telephone service and of the energy sources electricity (57 homes) leads the way followed by tank or lp gas (34) (ACS Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com)).

Affordable Housing

The Gresham Housing Authority offers programs from public housing, housing projects, to subsidized housing. Affordable housing in Gresham means rental or owner-occupied housing that costs at or less than 30 percent of an individual's gross income—public assistance is commensurate with income. Public housing facilities are located at 120 Maud Street in Gresham.



Household Income

Household income is defined by the census bureau as "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; public assistance or welfare payments; retirement, survivor, or disability pensions; and all other income."

Gresham has the greatest number of households (23) in the $25,000 - $34.999 income category, closely followed by the next three higher divisions (Table 1.14). Typical of most household income examples, few are found in the extremes both high and low.

Table 1.14: Household Income (Occupied Housing Units)

Village of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023

Household Income	Number of Units Needed	Percent
$5,000 or Less	5	4.5
$5,000 - $9,999	4	3.6
$10,000 - $14,999	3	2.7
$15,000 - $19,999	8	7.1
$20,000 - $24,999	7	6.3
$25,000 - $34,999	23	20.5
$35,000 - $49,999	16	14.3
$50,000 - $74,999	20	17.9
$75,000 - $99,999	18	16.1
$100,000 - $149,999	7	6.3
$150,000+	1	0.9
Median Household Income = $39,167		

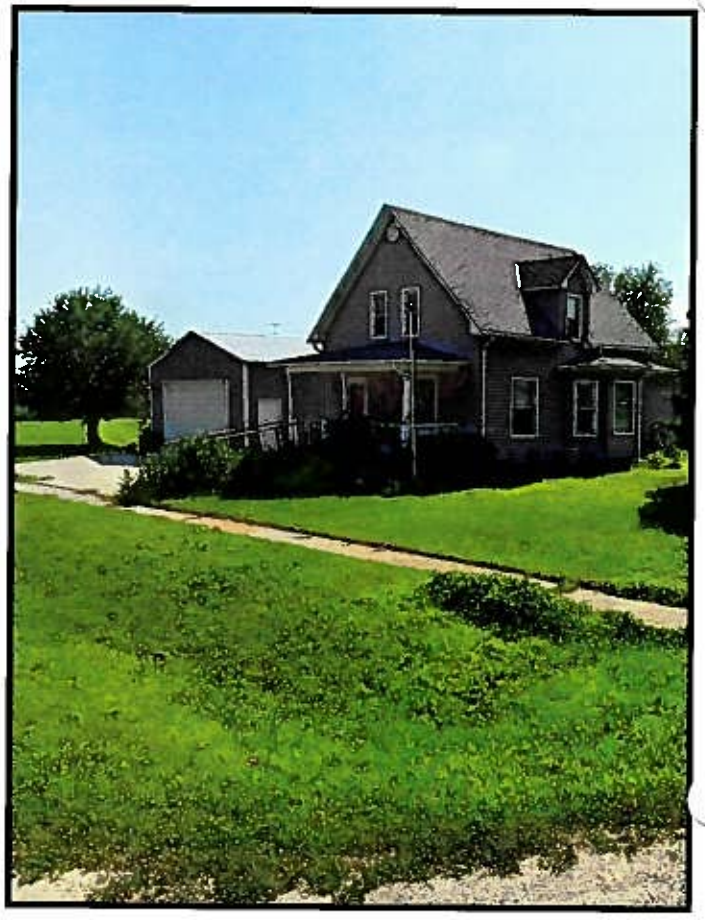
Source: American Community Survey Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com).

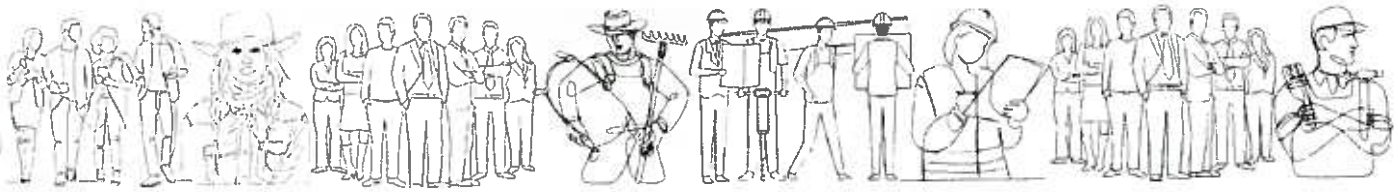
Housing Shortages and Community Involvement Options

In addition to the previous general housing conditions and household income data, the Village of Gresham recently completed a more in-depth blight study to evaluate conditions. The community housing survey focused on the physical appearance of siding, roof, and window conditions along with adjacent lawn and landscape for each property. Based on those criteria, it was determined that 32.1 percent of the surveyed properties in Gresham were deemed to have a "Minor Deficient" while another 13.4 percent were found to be "Major Deficient."

The study speaks of various local and state initiatives (TIF for instance) to confront the issue, while another option is the development of a local investment group. Fortunately, several examples of this can be found across the state but one example is worth sharing. Bertrand, Nebraska (Phelps County) has a local housing authority to address housing shortages. In Bertrand, for example, community leaders recognize the connection between job growth and housing. Working with the local development district, Bertrand was able to capture $525,000 of Nebraska Department of Economic Development funds (NDED 2023). Moving beyond one-bedroom apartments, the Village of Bertrand recognized the need not just for additional housing but various housing options. Sunset View Villa—a five-plex project with each unit consisting of two-bedrooms and a single-car attached garage—just opened in Bertrand and was supported by the Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust along with South Central Economic Development District, Phelps County Corporation, Bertrand Community Builders, Nebraska Department of Economic Development, and the Village of Bertrand. The project was welcomed with a celebration and marks the first new residential development in Bertrand since 2008. Initially, however, there was concern that a new complex in Bertrand would financially struggle (all five apartments rent for more than $1,000/month). Even before finishing construction all five units were leased and there is currently a waiting list (Bennett 2024). The Village of Bertrand has another five-plex that has both age- (55+) and income-restrictions and it has a waiting list as well. Beyond government entities and programs, Bertrand also has a private development group to address housing problems in the community. Bertrand Community Builders (BCB) was founded by a group of local citizens who realized that without housing, the community was in trouble (Ventura 2022). BCB focuses on demolition, rehabilitation, and new construction—often more affordable "starter" homes." As noted in the article, as BCB members invest in the association they invest in the community.







Economy

The ability to predict development needs and future land use relies heavily on economic trends and an analysis of local economic factors is a critical component of the Comprehensive Plan. Although no one development strategy fits all communities, economic development is a major goal of planning efforts. This does, however, require active engagement by the community, its leadership, organizations, institutions, and business community as well. The private sector is the primary economic engine, but the public sector does play an essential role.

Labor Force

Labor force is a critical consideration for any community. Playing a part in job creation, attracting new residents, and growing the tax base are fundamental issues for a community. An examination of workforce only includes residents who are sixteen years or older. For Gresham, 187 people are 16+ in age, of that number 112 are in the labor force and 108 are employed. Unemployment data is limited for Gresham, but as of May 2023 the unemployment rate in Nebraska stood at 1.9 percent and York County was a touch higher at 2.0 percent (https://fred.stlouisfed.org; https://dol.nebraska.gov). For labor force by occupation, construction stands out, as does retail trade and transportation (Table 1.15).

Table 1.15: Labor Force by Occupation

Village of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023

Occupation	Number
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing/Hunting, Mining	1
Construction	21
Manufacturing	9
Wholesale Trade	7
Retail Trade	17
Transportation Warehousing, and Utilities	14
Information	0
Finance and Insurance, Real Estate	7
Professional, Scientific, Management, Administrative	0
Education Services, Health Care, Social Assistance	9
Arts, Entertainment, and Recreation	0
Other Services, Except Public Administration	16
Public Administration	7

Source: American Community Survey Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com).

As for where Gresham's residents work, data reveals transportation patterns related to commuting. Transportation is key as a significant number of Gresham's residents work outside the community. A majority (67.6 percent) work in York County and 32.4 percent work outside the county, and many are commuting in excess of twenty to thirty minutes (Table 1.16).



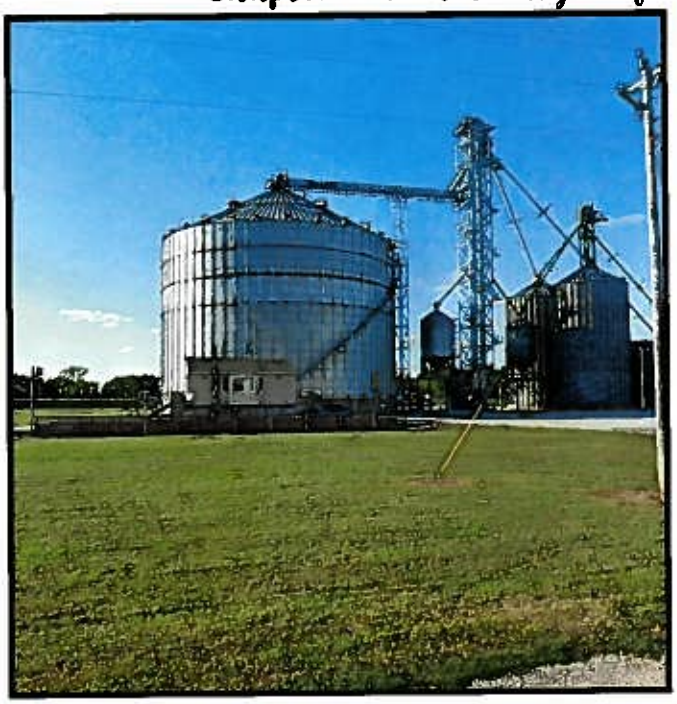
Table 1.16: Travel Time to Work in Minutes	
Villge of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023	
Minutes	Percent
10 or Less	15.9
10 – 14	0
15 – 19	17.8
20 – 24	12.1
25 – 29	6.5
30 – 34	21.5
35 – 44	17.8
45 – 59	3.7
60+	4.7
Mean Travel Time: 25.5 Minutes	

Source: American Community Survey Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com).

Poverty Levels

As reported by the ACS, twenty-four households in Gresham are below the poverty threshold which totals 21.4 percent of all households in the community. In comparison, for the State of Nebraska the number is much lower at 10.8 percent. Additionally, sixteen households (14.3 percent) in Gresham recently received public assistance income or food stamps (SNAP) (ACS Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com). SNAP is income-based assistance and defined as the "Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) [that] offers nutrition assistance to millions of eligible, low-income individuals and families and provides economic benefits to communities. SNAP is the largest program in the domestic hunger safety net. The Food and Nutrition Service works with state agencies, nutrition educators, and neighborhood and faith-based organizations to ensure that those eligible for nutrition assistance can make informed decisions about applying for the program and can access benefits."





Local Industry

Census data reports industry by type and Table 1.17 reveals Gresham's breakdown in five major categories—Management, Business, Science, and Arts; Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance; Production, Transportation, and Material Moving; Sales and Office; and Service.

Those five categories are further subdivided with random examples of employment. For Gresham, the top three brackets include sales and office occupations; production, transportation, and material moving occupations; along with natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations. Individually, the largest employer in Gresham is Central Valley Agriculture with five employees.

Table 1.17: Full-Time Civil Employment Population 16+, with Random Examples of Employment

Village of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023

Employment Category	Number	Percent
Management, Business, Science, and Arts Occupations	7	6.5
Management, Business, Financial		
Computer, Engineering, Science		
Education, Legal, Community Service		
Healthcare Practitioners		
Natural Resources, Construction, and Maintenance Occupations	27	25
Construction and Extraction		
Farming, Fishing, and Forestry		
Production, Transportation, and Material Moving Occupations	28	25.9
Transportation		
Material Moving		
Sales and Office Occupations	30	27.8
Service Occupations	16	14.8
Protective Services (Law Enforcement)		
Healthcare Support		
Total	108	100

Source: American Community Survey Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com).

Nebraska Rural Advantage

Nebraska Rural Advantage was designed to create a business climate that makes Nebraska the preferred location for starting and growing a business. Nebraska Rural Advantage offers Levels One and Two. With an investment comes refundable credits and wage credits. View the Nebraska Economic Development Department website for more information on the Nebraska Rural Advantage.

Nebraska Advantage Microenterprise Tax Credit Act

Nebraska Advantage Microenterprise Tax Credit Act provides a 20 percent refundable investment tax credit to micro businesses on new investment in targeted communities. The credit is geared to companies with five or fewer employees, including start-ups. View the Nebraska Department of Revenue website for more information on the Microenterprise Tax Credit Act.

Rural Enterprise Business Assistance (REAP) Business Loans

Rural Enterprise Assistance Program provides counseling, technical assistance, and training for small business owners as well as low interest loans to small businesses with five employees or less.

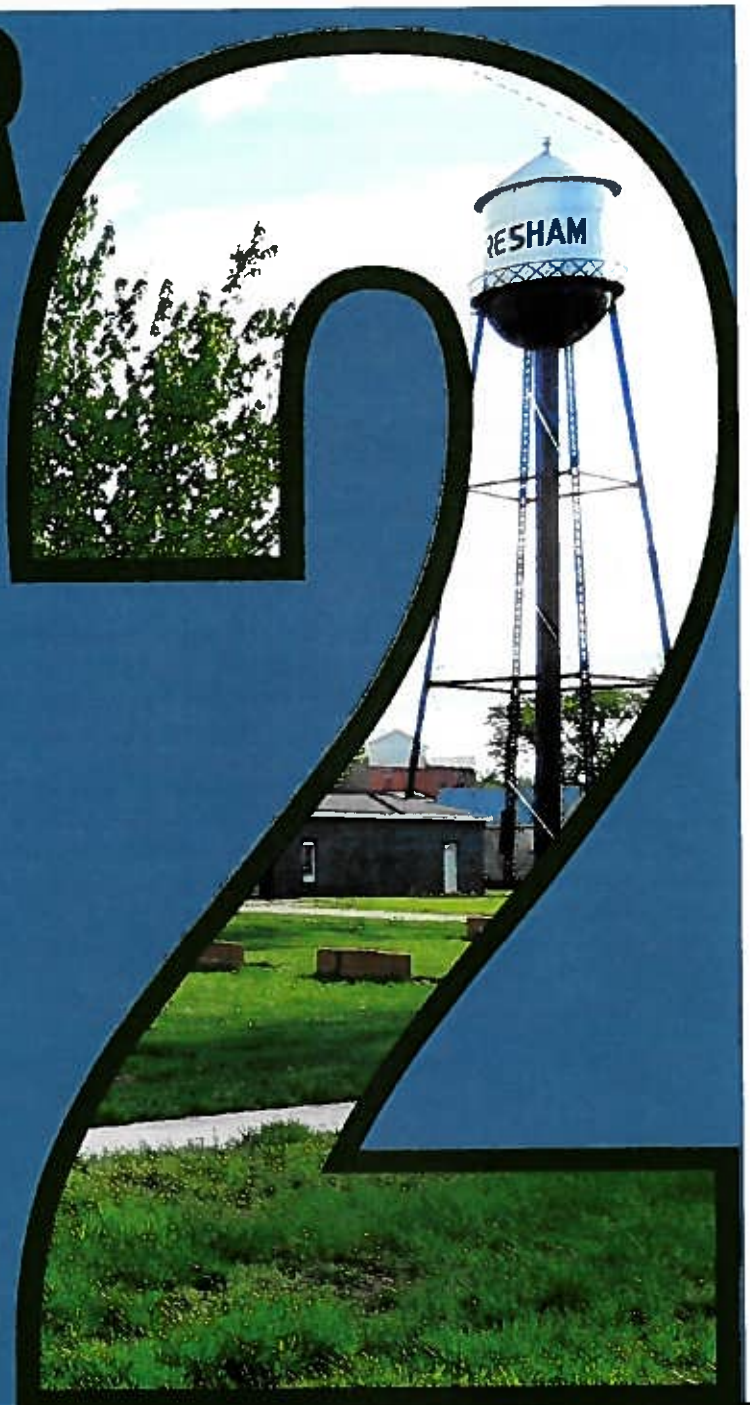
Tax Increment Financing (TIF)

Tax Increment Financing (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 a project. TIF projects may be commercial, residential, industrial, or mixed use. Generally, TIF funds can be used for land acquisition, public improvements and amenities, infrastructure, and utilities. View Nebraska's Department of Economic Development website for more information (https://opportunity.nebraska.gov).

Conclusion

Economic growth is challenging, but an important task for a community. Gresham has several options and resources to address business retention and expansion, workforce training, succession planning, and youth retention. This plan can offer recommendations, but community leaders must take the initiative to implement programs and recruit new businesses and future residents.

CHAPTER 2



FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE

The facilities and infrastructure section acts as an inventory of current amenities available to the public. This section should be continually reviewed and updated to support the community. In this chapter the following components are discussed:

- Education
- Transportation
- Community Amenities
- Parks, Recreational Facilities, and Wellness Services
- Utilities

Education

A quality educational system is a tremendous asset for any community. In many situations, local education opportunities reflect the community's priorities and serve to attract and retain families. Many rural Nebraska communities and counties place a high value on maintaining and protecting local schools which are vital in preserving pride in place as well as supporting local businesses and residents. Nebraska State Statutes group schools into six different classifications which are defined by the following law—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;

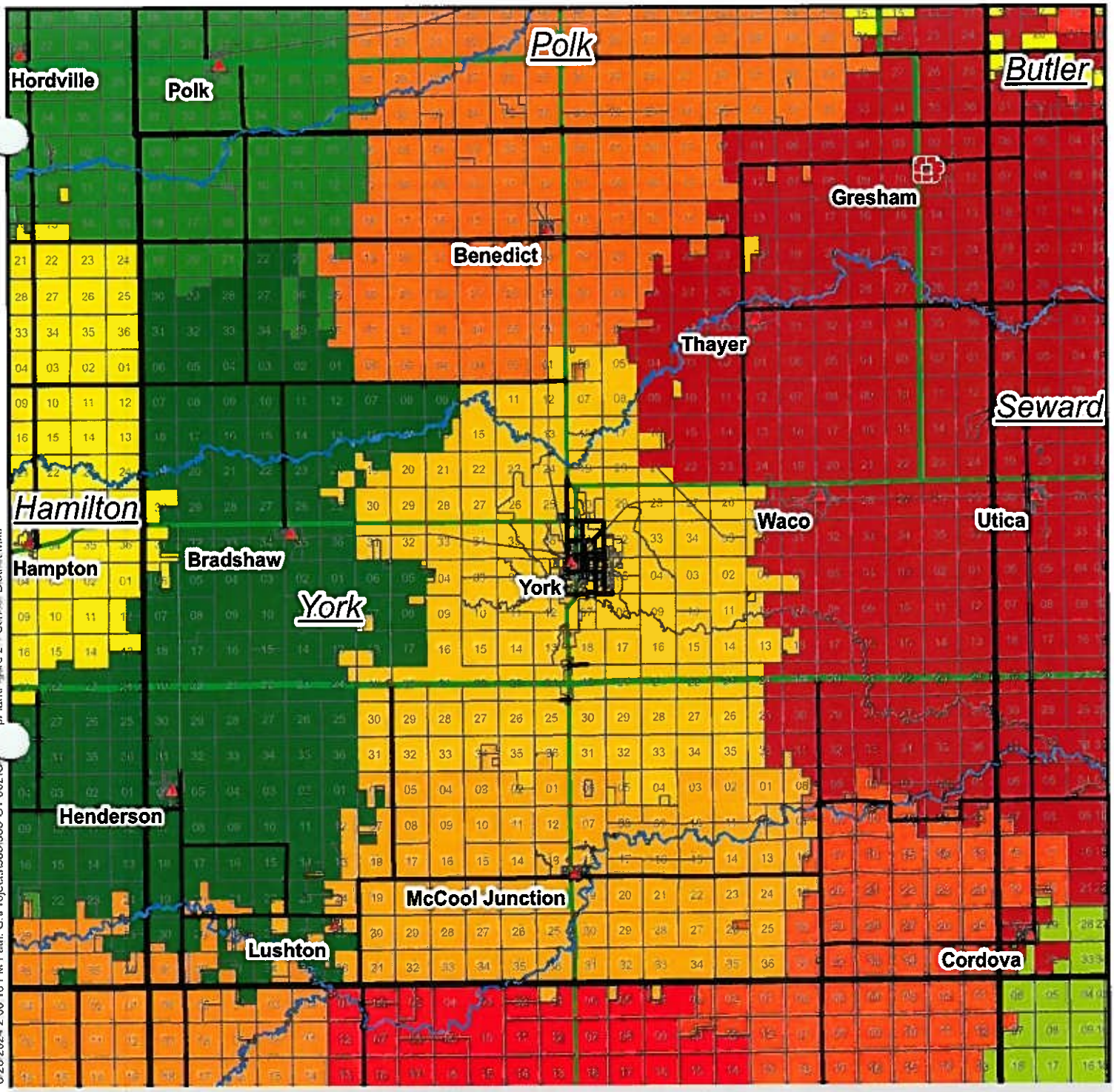
(2) Class II includes any school district embracing territory having a population of one thousand inhabitants or less that maintains both elementary and high school grades under the direction of a single school board;

(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.



8/26/2024 2:06:10 PM Path: G:\Projects\383\383-G1-002\GIS\MapPlan\Figure 2.1 School District.mxd

Legend

School Districts

- Aurora Public Schools
- Centennial Public Schools
- Central City Public Schools
- Cross County Community Schools
- David City Public Schools
- Exeter-Milligan Public Schools
- Fillmore Central Public Schools
- Friend Public Schools
- Hampton Public Schools
- Heartland Community Schools
- High Plains Community Schools
- McCool Junction Public Schools
- Osceola Public Schools
- Seward Public Schools
- Shelby-Rising City Public Schools
- Sutton Public Schools
- York Public Schools
- Gresham Corporate Boundary
- York County

Prepared By:

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Figure 2.1
Unified School District Boundary

York County, Nebraska

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Centennial Public Schools

Public school students in Gresham attend Centennial Public Schools in Utica, Nebraska. The district encompasses a wide area, including Gresham along with Beaver Crossing, Thayer, Utica, and Waco. In the 1960s, several districts—Beaver Crossing, Utica, and Waco—began discussions related to consolidation. Gresham joined the mix in 1986, and the district now covers 316 square miles (Figure 2.1). Schools are often fundamental building blocks for communities, especially rural communities. Maintaining and/or increasing quality enrollment is critical, and the Centennial district has held steady in recent years—460 in 2018-2019, 451 in 2019-2020, and 454 in 2020-2021 (Table 2.1).



Table 2.1: School Enrollment

Centennial Public Schools, 2023

School Year	PK	K	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	Total Enrollment
2012-2013	46	25	32	27	27	28	25	35	20	39	32	44	36	41	457
2013-2014	45	32	29	32	29	30	28	29	36	20	46	31	44	37	468
2014-2015	38	22	33	27	28	27	27	29	29	36	24	44	32	44	440
2015-2016	49	29	22	32	28	28	30	27	29	27	45	28	40	33	447
2016-2017	49	28	29	20	30	26	28	30	27	29	33	48	28	42	447
2017-2018	56	33	28	28	19	32	24	34	25	29	34	33	47	32	454
2018-2019	56	25	29	31	35	23	31	22	34	27	32	34	33	48	460
2019-2020	45	32	25	31	32	32	25	33	24	33	38	30	37	34	451
2020-2021	34	32	32	27	33	34	32	25	33	21	47	37	29	38	454
2021-2022	50	24	33	37	26	33	35	30	26	31	34	44	36	34	473
2022-2023	57	28	25	33	44	27	34	39	33	28	39	32	40	37	496
2023-2024	53	29	29	22	34	41	30	35	40	36	31	38	36	43	497

Sources: Nebraska Department of Education, Statistics & Facts About Nebraska Schools, 2012-2023, Retrieved from education.ne.gov, 2023.

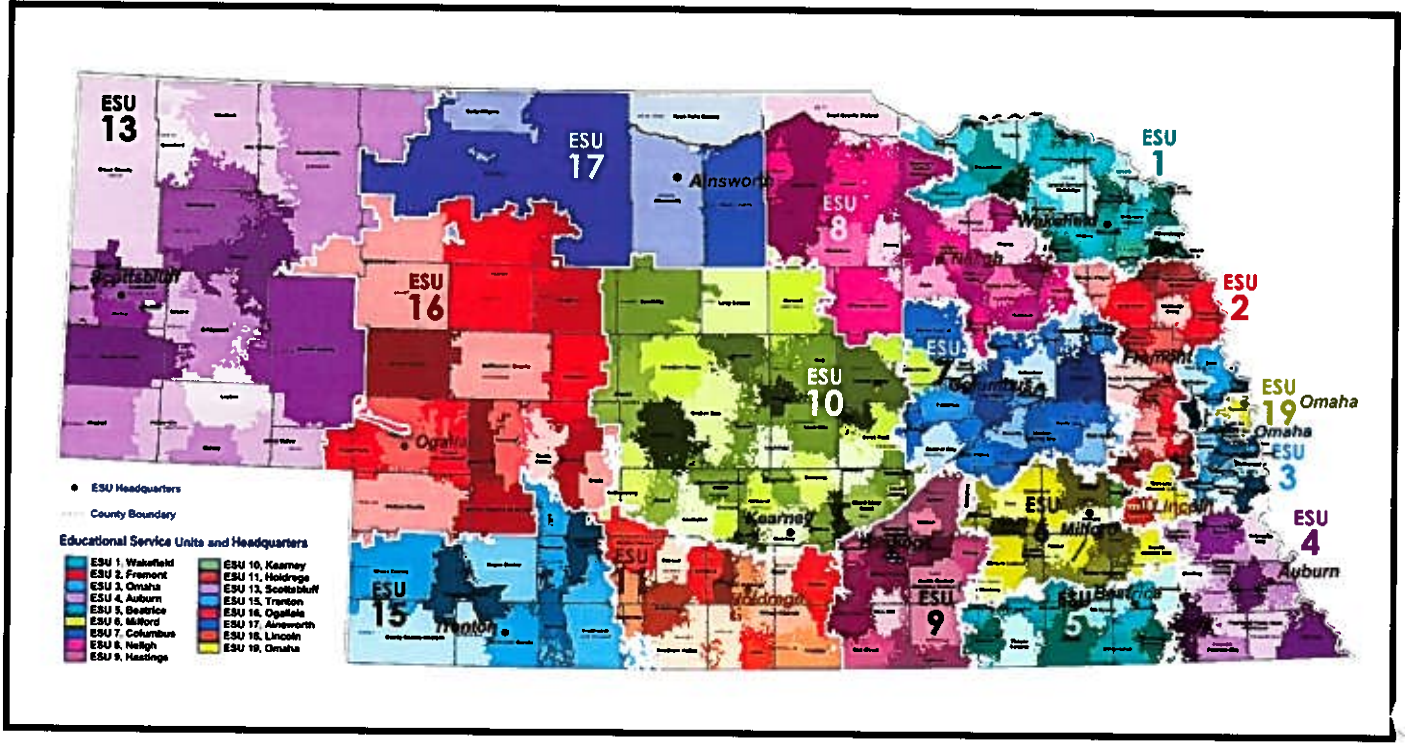
In regard to funding, Centennial is toward the high end of comparison districts at $22,452 per student (Table 2.2).



Table 2.2: Per Pupil Expenditures, by District		
School	Number of Students	Per Student Expenditures
Centennial Public Schools	473	$22,452
Elkhorn Valley Schools	454	$18,323
Hemingford Public Schools	394	$20,929
Ravenna Public Schools	395	$21,114
Twin River Public Schools	437	$23,146
West Holt Public Schools	437	$20,896
Wisner-Pilger Public Schools	438	$22,513
Source: Nebraska Department of Education.		

Centennial is also part of Educational Service Unit (ESU) 6 that serves Fillmore, Lancaster, Saline, Seward, and York counties in Nebraska. Currently seventeen ESUs in Nebraska serve 261 districts across the State (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Nebraska's Educational Service Units



Educational Attainment

In a rapidly changing economy, skill requirements for employment are constantly changing. Workforce training and education programs must keep pace with the changing requirements to prepare students and workers for jobs in the short-term and careers in the long-term. Community leaders often look for ways to close skill gaps and address mismatches that exist between supply of and demand for workers.

Obtaining additional education typically, although not always, provides the ability to earn a higher income over a lifetime. In comparison to the State of Nebraska, Gresham has a higher percentage for those with a high school education or less and at the other end of the spectrum a much lower percentage of college graduates in comparison to the State (Tables 2.3 and 2.4).

Table 2.3: Educational Attainment, Population 25 to 64

Village of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023

Age 25+ Education	N-162	Percent
Less than High School	45	27.8
High School Graduates	48	29.6
Some College or Associate's Degree	61	37.7
Bachelor's Degree or Higher	8	4.9

Source: American Community Survey Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com).

Table 2.4: Educational Attainment, Population 25+

State of Nebraska, 2023

Ages 25+ Education	State of Nebraska	Percent
Less Than 9th Grade	48,334	3.7
9th – 12th Grade	52,981	4.1
High School Graduate	325,200	25.1
Some College	281,018	21.7
Associate's Degree	139,742	10.8
Bachelor's Degree	286,510	22.1
Graduate or Professional	159,751	12.3

Source: American Community Survey Estimates (2021) (mysidewalk.com).

Transportation

Transportation is a key concern related to interaction, to movement. Quality transportation systems provide access to jobs and markets while helping to make communities vibrant. Located in northeastern York County, Gresham is easily accessed by Highway 69 running north-south that connects to Highway 34 (nine miles south of Gresham). Just a few miles south of that juncture and a few miles in either direction (east or west), Gresham has access to Interstate 80. With access to major highways, Gresham is a short drive away from many larger hubs in eastern and central Nebraska—Grand Island (62 miles), Lincoln (52 miles), Omaha (102 miles), Seward (25 miles), and York (21 miles).

Transportation is a fundamental consideration for any community. Transportation is a criterion often viewed from a local standpoint or regional perspective. Networks within the community and those outside Gresham allow for the movement of goods, services, and people, in addition to continual economic development and recreational opportunities.

Street Improvement Plan

The Nebraska Department of Transportation (NDOT) annually reports surface aggregates for all roads in Gresham—road types include asphalt, bituminous, concrete, and gravel. Gresham has a total of 11.34 lane miles in the community and a breakdown by percent is found in Table 2.5.

Table 2.5: Lane Mile Report

Village of Gresham, Nebraska

Surface	Miles	Percent
Asphalt	1.72	15.2
Bituminous	5.38	47.4
Concrete	-	-
Gravel	4.24	37.4
Total	**11.34**	

Source: Nebraska Department of Roads 2023.

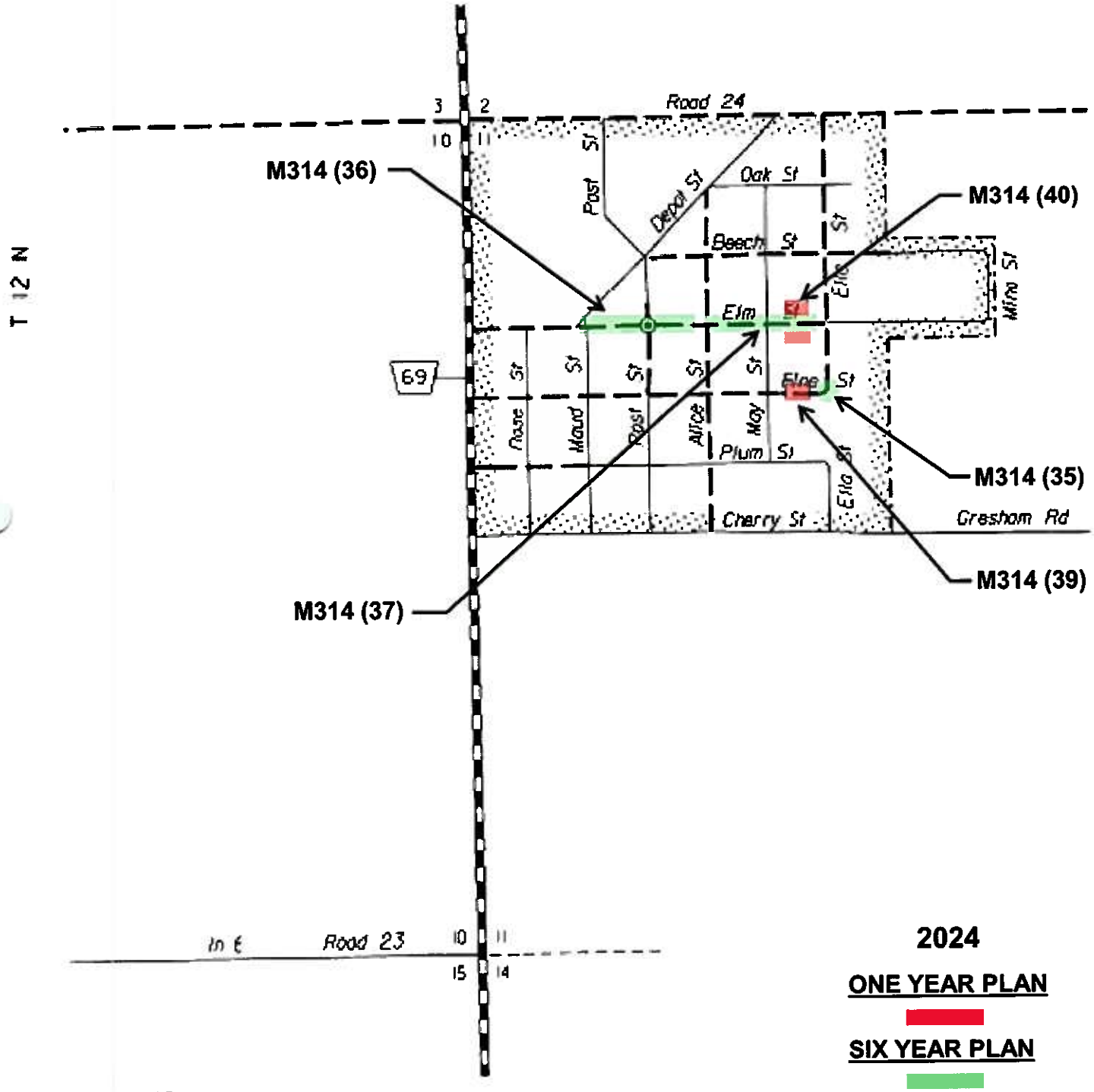


GRESHAM

YORK COUNTY
NEBRASKA
POPULATION 223 (2010 CENSUS)

2014

R 1 W



2024

ONE YEAR PLAN

SIX YEAR PLAN

North

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Sidewalks

Pedestrian activity is critical for a community's livability and research has shown that sidewalk traffic leads to safer communities (Duany et al. 2000; Jacobsen 2003). A positive for the entire community, sidewalks are key for two vulnerable populations—young children and elderly adults. Sidewalks are an essential amenity in communities, they are also public infrastructure and require maintenance, ADA compliance, and on occasion complete replacement. Disrepair coupled with non-compliant connections make sidewalks a hazard.

Completing a comprehensive sidewalk inventory would assist Village leaders with a strategic sidewalk plan, locating problem areas and connectivity issues.

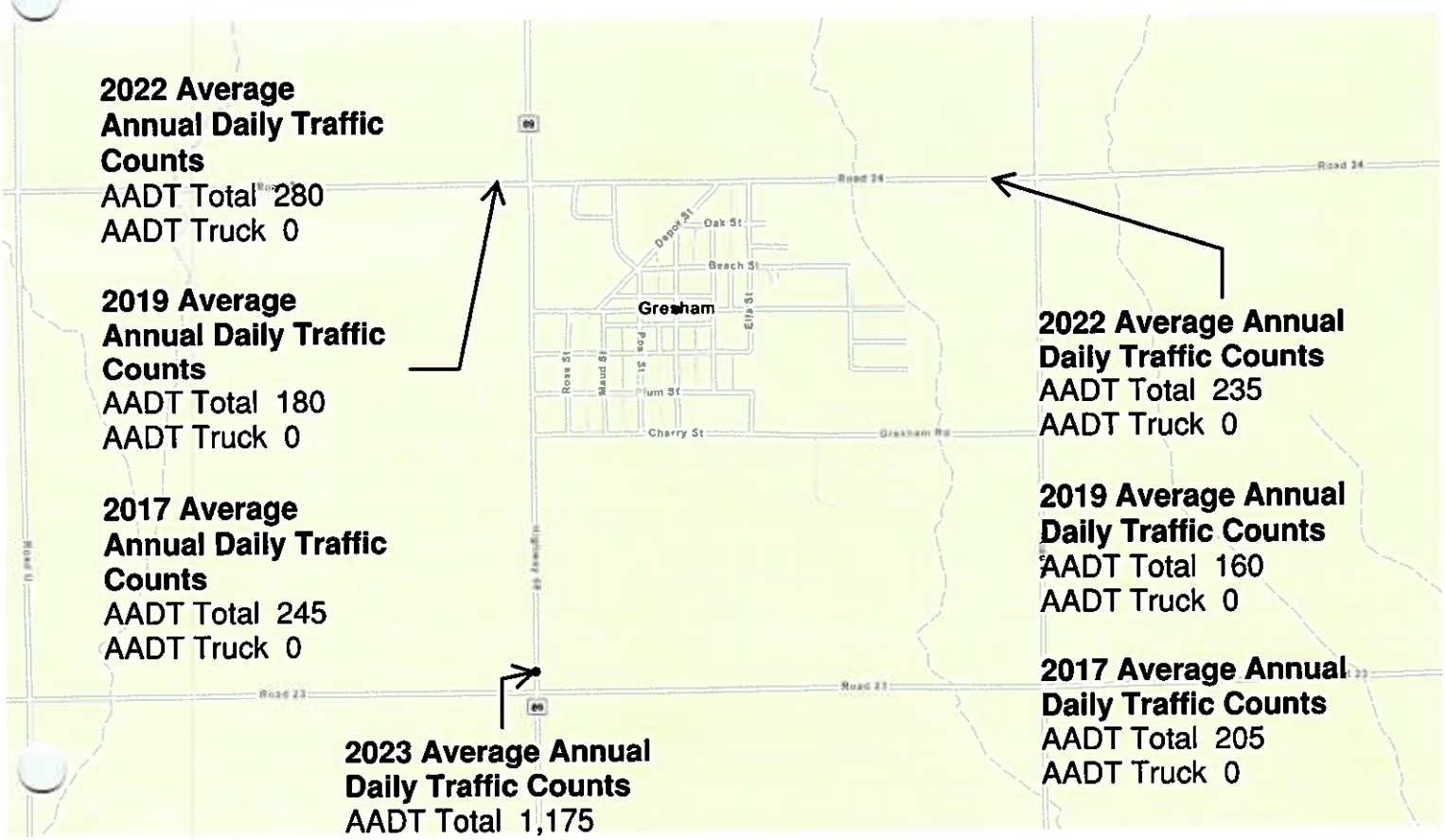


Traffic Counts

Gresham's connectivity to a larger transportation network creates growth opportunities. Traffic counts are an important consideration, and the Nebraska Department of Transportation provided traffic flow data for major highways/roads near Gresham. In 2022, a few miles south of Gresham on Highway 69 the average annual daily traffic count was seventy, east of Gresham less than one mile on Road 24 the AADT was 235, and just northwest of Gresham at the intersection of Highway 69 and Road 24 the count was 280 (Figure 2.4).

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Figure 2.4
Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts
Village of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023



2022 Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts
AADT Total 280
AADT Truck 0

2019 Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts
AADT Total 180
AADT Truck 0

2017 Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts
AADT Total 245
AADT Truck 0

2023 Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts
AADT Total 1,175
AADT Truck 100

2020 Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts
AADT Total 1225
AADT Truck 105

2018 Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts
AADT Total 1230
AADT Truck 105

2022 Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts
AADT Total 235
AADT Truck 0

2019 Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts
AADT Total 160
AADT Truck 0

2017 Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts
AADT Total 205
AADT Truck 0

2017 - 2023 AADT = Average Annual Daily Traffic Counts

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Community Services

Gresham Public Library

The Gresham Public Library is located at 230 Ella Street. The library contains over 8,500 volumes and circulates some 350+ items per year.



Village Park

The Blackbird Park is on the community's western side between Elm and Pine Streets. Recent upgrades include a large, covered pavilion along with new sidewalks and playground equipment.



Post Office

Gresham's United States Post Office is located at 350 Elm Street.



Public Safety

Gresham's Volunteer Fire Department is located at 380 Elm Street and is one of ten fire departments in York County. Law enforcement is handled by York County which also has an emergency management system (natural disasters).

Village Offices

Gresham's municipal building is located at 310 Elm Street.



Cemetery

Gresham's Cedar Lawn Cemetery is located at the far end of Elm Street on the town's east side.



Places of Worship

Gresham, Nebraska Presbyterian Church 400 Pine Street

St. Peters Lutheran Church 2320 Highway 69







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CHAPTER 3



ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Evaluating natural resources—land, soil, and water—is necessary for community leaders to consider when planning for development and infrastructure. Development requires an understanding of natural features and potential impacts. Proper land use practices can protect an area's natural resources while complementing the built environment, hence it is important to acknowledge and understand Gresham's climate and topography. Conservation can, and should, complement development and progress. With that in mind, this section focuses on the following components—

- Energy
- Land
- Soil
- Water.

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Land, Climate, & Setting

Gresham is located in York County in southeastern Nebraska. Gresham—which occupies 0.27 square miles of land—officially sits at 41-1-40 north latitude and 97-24-5 west longitude. The county's terrain consists of rolling prairies, primarily devoted to agriculture. The county's total land area is 576 square miles—99.5 percent of which is land, the remaining 0.5 percent is water.

The county's average elevation is 1,650 feet above sea level and ranges from 1,500 feet where the West Fork Big Blue River crosses the county's eastern boundary to 1,740 feet near Arborville in the northwest corner. Gresham's continental climate is typical for the Great Plains, characterized by extremes—cold winters and warm summers, high winds, and dramatic changes in weather conditions (Table 3.1). A government document nearly a hundred years old noted that the lowest temperature recorded took place in February at -31 and the highest recorded temperature (112 degrees) had been recorded both in July and August (Hayes and Goke 1928). Despite the extremes, Gresham's climate is conducive for crop production with both an adequate growing season and precipitation. The typical last day for a "killing" frost is April 29 and first hard frost of the fall occurs on or near October 7—which equals nearly 130 days. Along with that, the community annually receives 28.74 inches of precipitation (Table 3.1).

Table 3.1: Average Highs-Lows and Precipitation

Village of Gresham, Nebraska, 2023

Month	Average High	Average Low	Precipitation
January	36	13	0.56
February	41	18	0.89
March	52	29	2.02
April	64	39	2.64
May	74	51	4.48
June	84	61	4.38
July	88	66	3.38
August	86	63	3.31
September	79	52	2.89
October	66	40	1.91
November	51	28	1.39
December	38	16	0.89

Average Annual Precipitation = 28.74 inches

Average Annual Snowfall = 26 inches

Source: www.usclimatedata.com.

Energy

Nebraska legislators passed LB997 in 2010 that requires cities and counties to adopt an energy element in comprehensive plans. The energy element is required to include infrastructure and use by sector, utilization of renewable energy sources, and energy conservation measures that benefit the community.

Nebraska Energy Use by Sector

In 2020, Nebraska was 19th lowest in energy consumption in the United States. The state consumed 863.7 trillion British thermal units (Btu) of energy, less than one percent of the (0.93 percent) of the nation's total. In comparison, Texas was highest at 13,480.8 trillion (15 percent of the nation's total) and Vermont was lowest with 125.7 trillion Btu (Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy 2022).

In 2020, the industrial sector consumed nearly half (43 percent) of Nebraska's total. Of the remainder, the transportation sector consumed 22 percent, the residential sector 19 percent, and the commercial sector 16 percent. Between 2019 and 2020, all sectors witnessed a decrease in consumption—transportation -8.4 percent, commercial -7.7 percent, residential -5.5, and industrial -1.4 percent (Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy 2022).

In regard to per capita consumption, Nebraska was 9th highest in the nation. In that respect, petroleum provided 25.3 percent of the state's energy needs, followed by coal 23.7 percent, renewable energy 22.5 percent, natural gas 21.4 percent, and nuclear power at 7.2 percent. Of the 22.5 percent in the renewable category, wind energy dominates with by far the majority of energy in this sector, in addition to biofuels, geothermal, hydroelectric, solar, and wood/waste energy (Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy 2022).

In regard to local utilities, Gresham has electricity provided by the Perennial Public Power District located at 2122 South Lincoln Avenue in York, heating petroleum is supplied by Sapp Brothers in York, and both water and sanitation facilities are managed by the Village of Gresham.

Renewable Options

There are currently three viable renewable energy options to consider—solar, water, and wind.

Solar Energy

Solar energy is a renewable energy source that involves harnessing light from the sun and converting it to electricity. In the process, sunlight is captured using either photovoltaic (PV) collectors or flat plate collectors. There is potential for solar power in Nebraska, yet the expense and logistics associated with this technology remains questionable. York County does have approximately 220 sunlit days each year (the U.S. average is 205 days) so there is potential for solar power.

Water Energy

Nebraska has an abundance of groundwater, much from the Ogallala Aquifer. As previously noted, there are currently 277 active registered domestic wells and 2,957 active registered irrigation wells in York County. This critical resource requires constant monitoring to ensure quality and supply are both maintained. In many situations—based on typography and landscape elements—hydroelectric power generation is an option, even in certain locations in Nebraska. Hydroelectric power, however, at this time does not appear to be a viable option throughout much of the state, in particular for Gresham and York County.

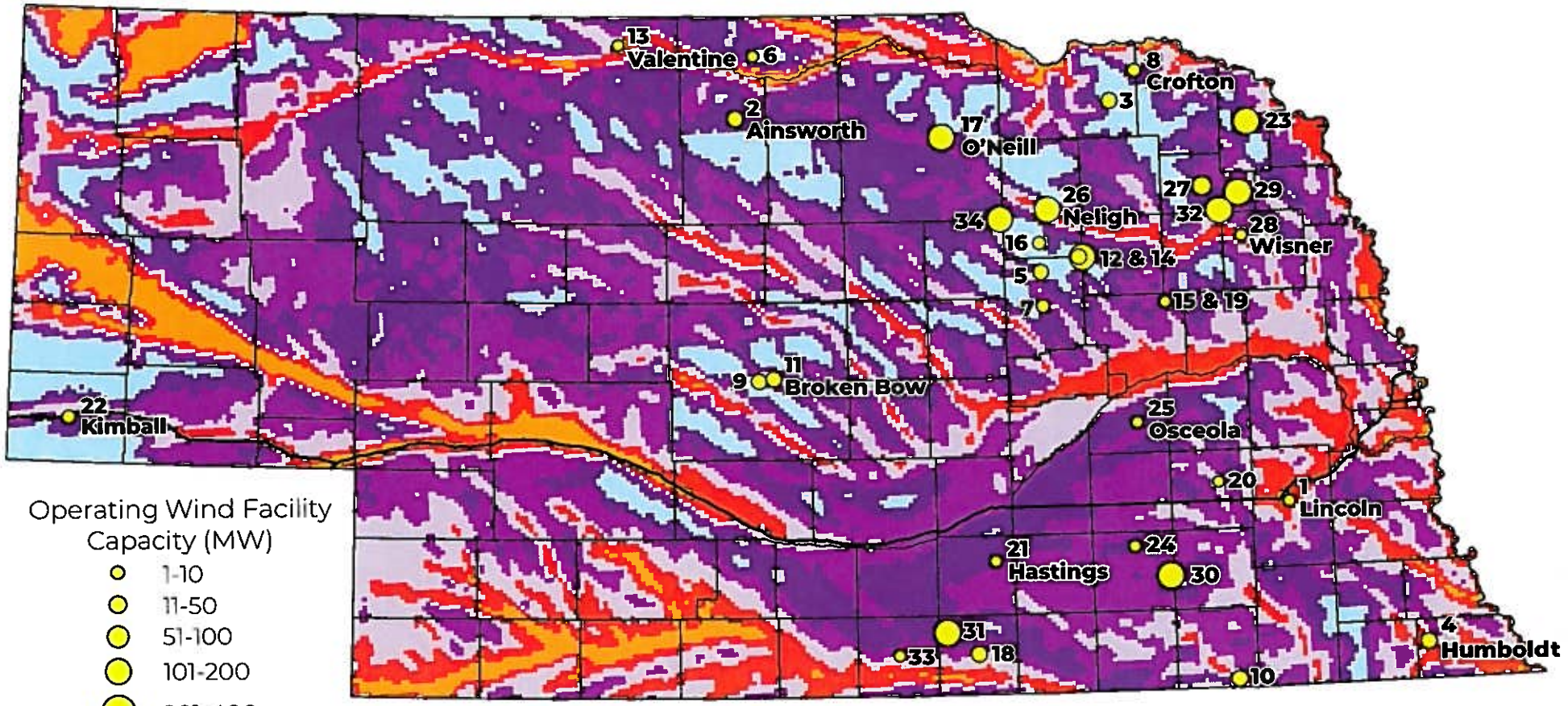
Wind Energy

Wind power is yet another renewable energy source, one that has become more common not only in the Great Plains and Midwest but in Nebraska in particular. Capturing wind to produce power is not new, the idea has been in play for centuries. Wind turbines convert kinetic energy into mechanical power or wind power. At the end of 2021, Nebraska was one of twenty states that generated over 1,000 megawatts of wind capacity. Figure 3.1 demonstrates the current wind production sites in the state.

Wind Development in Nebraska

NEBRASKA
DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENT AND ENERGY

Operating Facilities



Operating Wind Facility Capacity (MW)

- 1-10
- 11-50
- 51-100
- 101-200
- 201-400

Total operational MW: 3,519.9

Numbers on the map correspond with the table on the back.
Wind facilities as of October 2023.
Map shows 80-meter wind overlay.

Wind Speed (m/s)

7.81-8.81 | 7.55-7.80 | 7.28-7.54 | 6.96-7.27 | 6.53-6.95 | 5.80-6.52

For questions or comments on this map, contact neo.energy@nebraska.gov.
For more information, visit: https://neo.ne.gov/programs/stats/inf/89.htm

Sources: Base map provided by National Renewable Energy Laboratory for U.S. Department of Energy (2017).
Facility locations provided by the Nebraska Department of Environment and Energy (2023).

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Soils

York County is located in southeastern Nebraska in what is referred to as a loess (wind blown soils) region. Much of eastern and southern Nebraska was "once a broad nearly level or rolling plain" that was "mantled with loess, a smooth silt deposit, in some places more than 100 feet thick" (Hayes and Goke 1928, 1). About 85 percent of York County is described as "upland" and the "remainder is alluvial land occupying the broad shallow valleys along the major streams" (Hayes and Goke 1928, 1). The uplands are described as being nearly level to strongly rolling, with numerous shallow basins like depressions.

Productive Hastings silt loam soil—with 18-20 inches of topsoil rich with organic matter—occupies nearly 400 square miles (roughly 70 percent) of York County (Table 3.2) (Hayes and Goke 1928). Hastings silt loam (slope phase) is the second most common soil type—subjected to erosion and found along drainage ways—and occupies approximately 14 percent of the county. Alluvial soils in York County—Waukesha silt loam is the most common—are found on terraces and first bottom areas along larger waterways—Big Blue River, West Fork Big Blue River, and Lincoln Creek, that all drain to the east—usually in strips of a few dozen feet in width to more than a mile in width.

Table 3.2: Major Soil Types
York County, Nebraska, 2023

Type	Acres
Butler Silt Loam	5,248
Cass Fine Sandy Loam	1,664
Crete Silt Loam	1,792
Fillmore Silt Loam	5,952
Hall Silt Loam	5,440
Hastings Silt Loam	248,890
Hastings Silt Loam, Slope Phase	49,216
Judson Silt Loam	320
Nuckolls Loam	320
Scott Silt Loam	11,328
Shelby Loam	640
Wabash Silt Loam	10,688
Waukesha Silt Loam	26,496

Source: Hayes and Goke 1928.

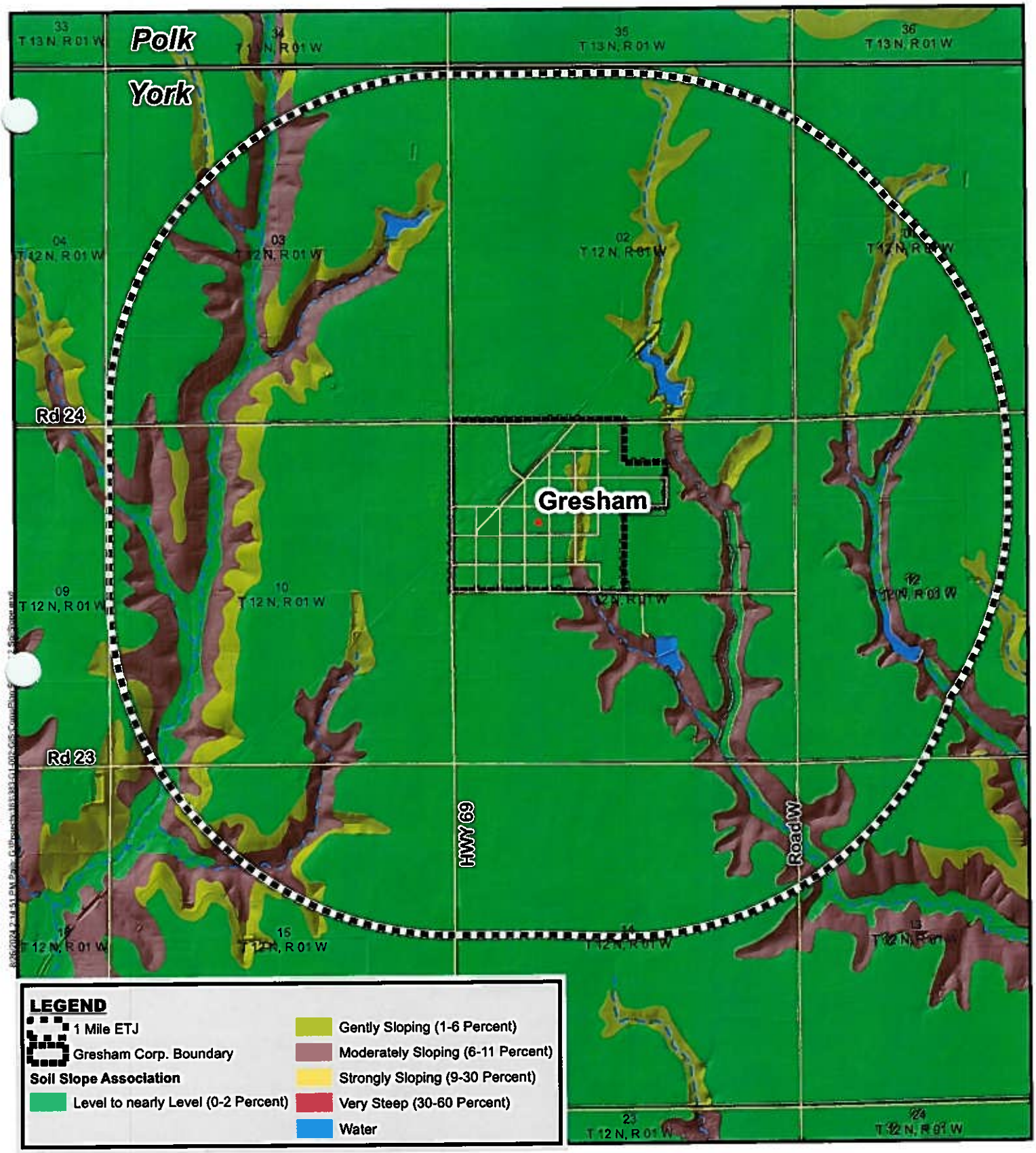
Independent of soil type, ground water is a major asset for York County. According to the Nebraska Department of Natural Resources (2023) there are currently 277 active registered domestic wells and 2,957 active registered irrigation wells in York County. Those wells in conjunction with nearly thirty inches of precipitation and excellent soil are a combination that presents itself as a tremendous asset for the county, one that requires diligent maintenance and stewardship.

Although understanding soil types might seem trivial, having even a limited knowledge of soil type is important for land use and management practices. For instance, soil properties are of "special interest to engineers because they affect construction and maintenance of highways, roads, airports, pipelines, foundations of buildings, and facilities for storing water, controlling erosion, irrigating and draining soils, disposing of sewage, and conserving soil and water" (Huber et al. 1967, 26).

The following maps in this section depict slope, soil suitability, and dryland or irrigated capability by soil associations for the planning jurisdiction of this Comprehensive Plan; soils data and classifications were gathered by the NRCS.

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

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Source:
Data Provided By: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil Survey Geographic Database 2021, M&A

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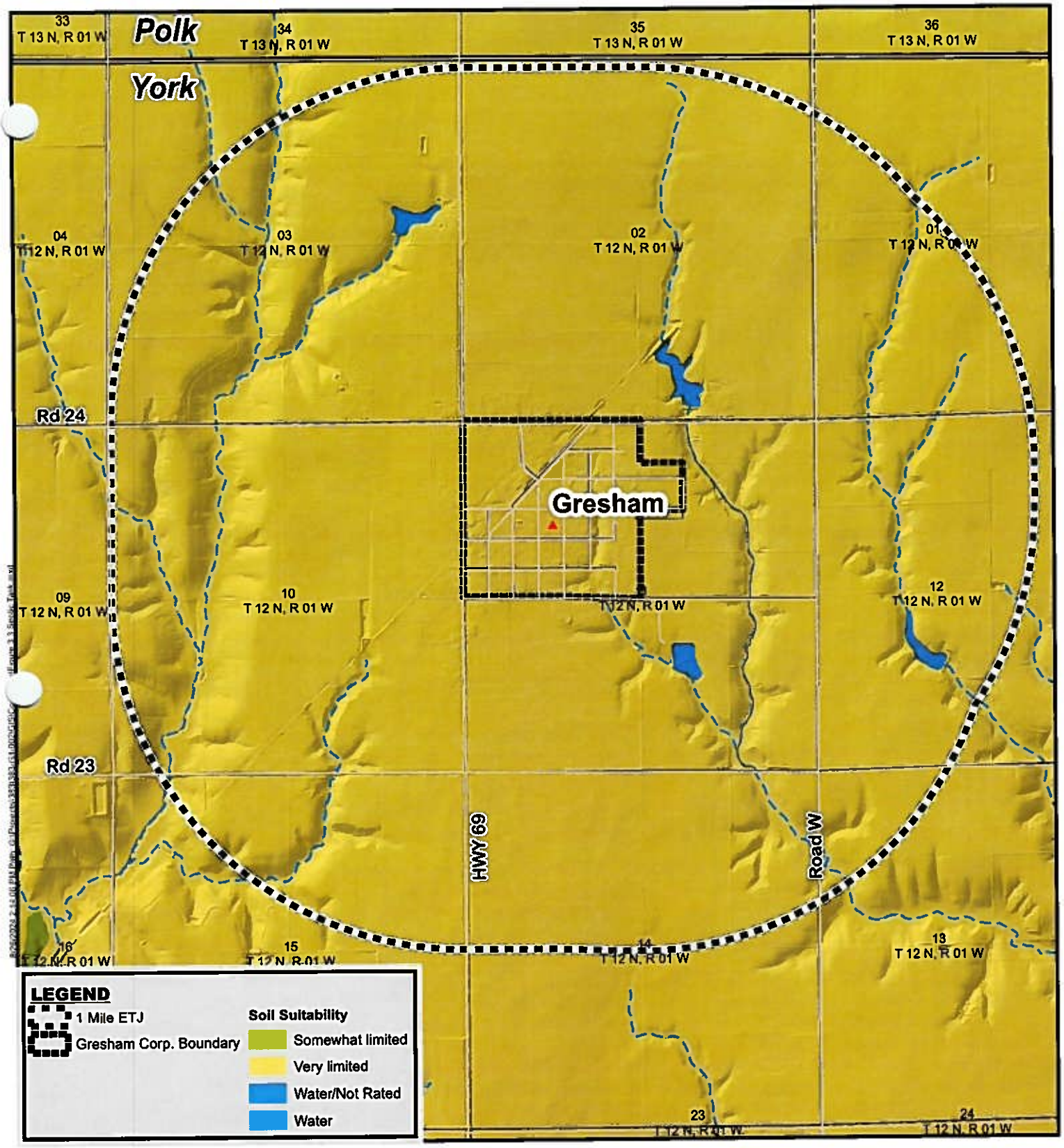
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Figure 3.2
Slope By Soil Association Map

Gresham, Nebraska

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Source:
Data Provided By: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil Survey Geographic Database 2021, M&A

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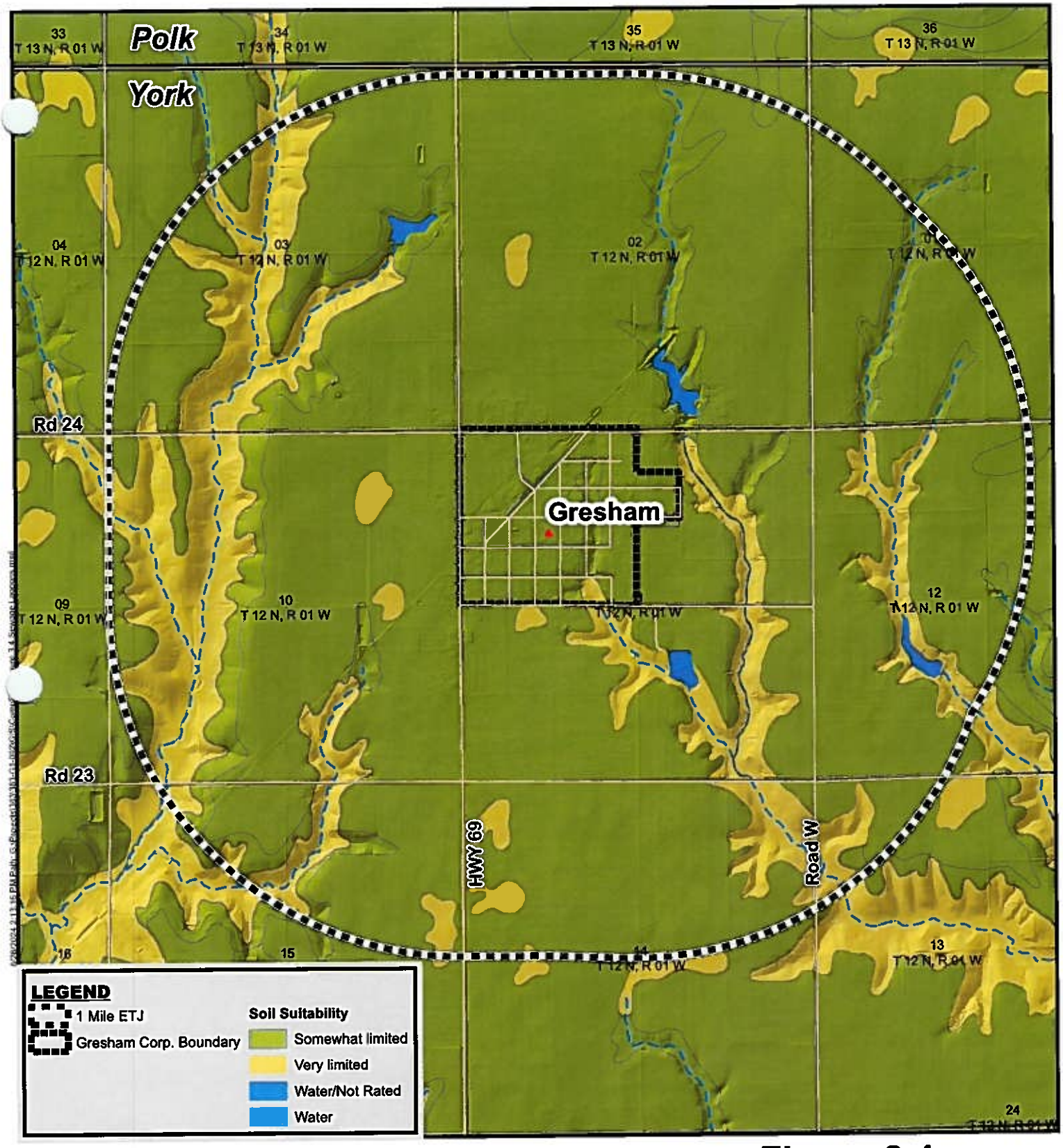
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Figure 3.3
Soil Suitability For Septic Tanks By Soil Association Map

Gresham, Nebraska

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Source:
Data Provided By: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil Survey Geographic Database 2021, M&A

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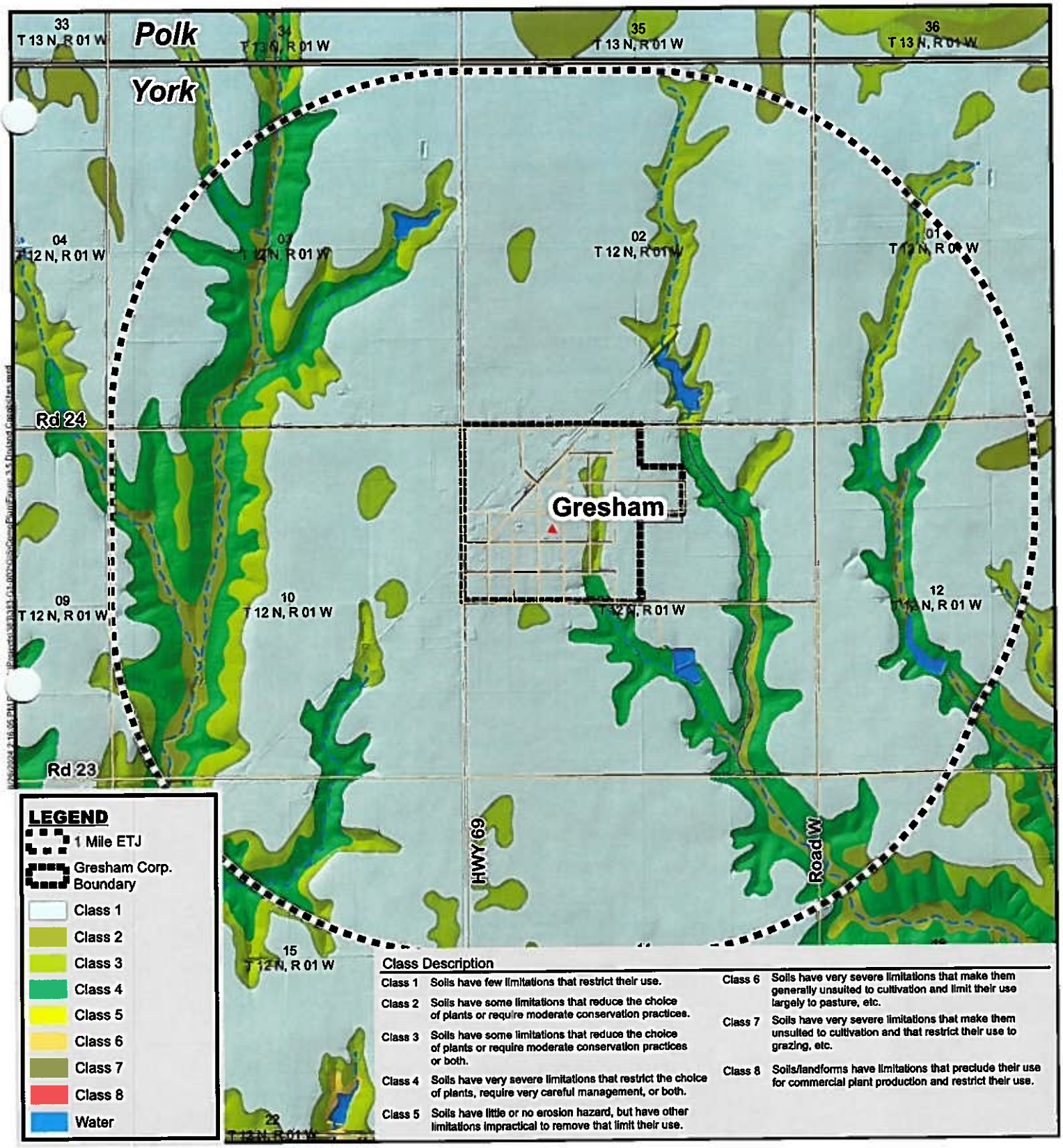
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Figure 3.4
Soil Suitability For Sewage Lagoons By Soil Association Map

Gresham, Nebraska

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Source:
Data Provided By: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil Survey Geographic Database 2021, M&A

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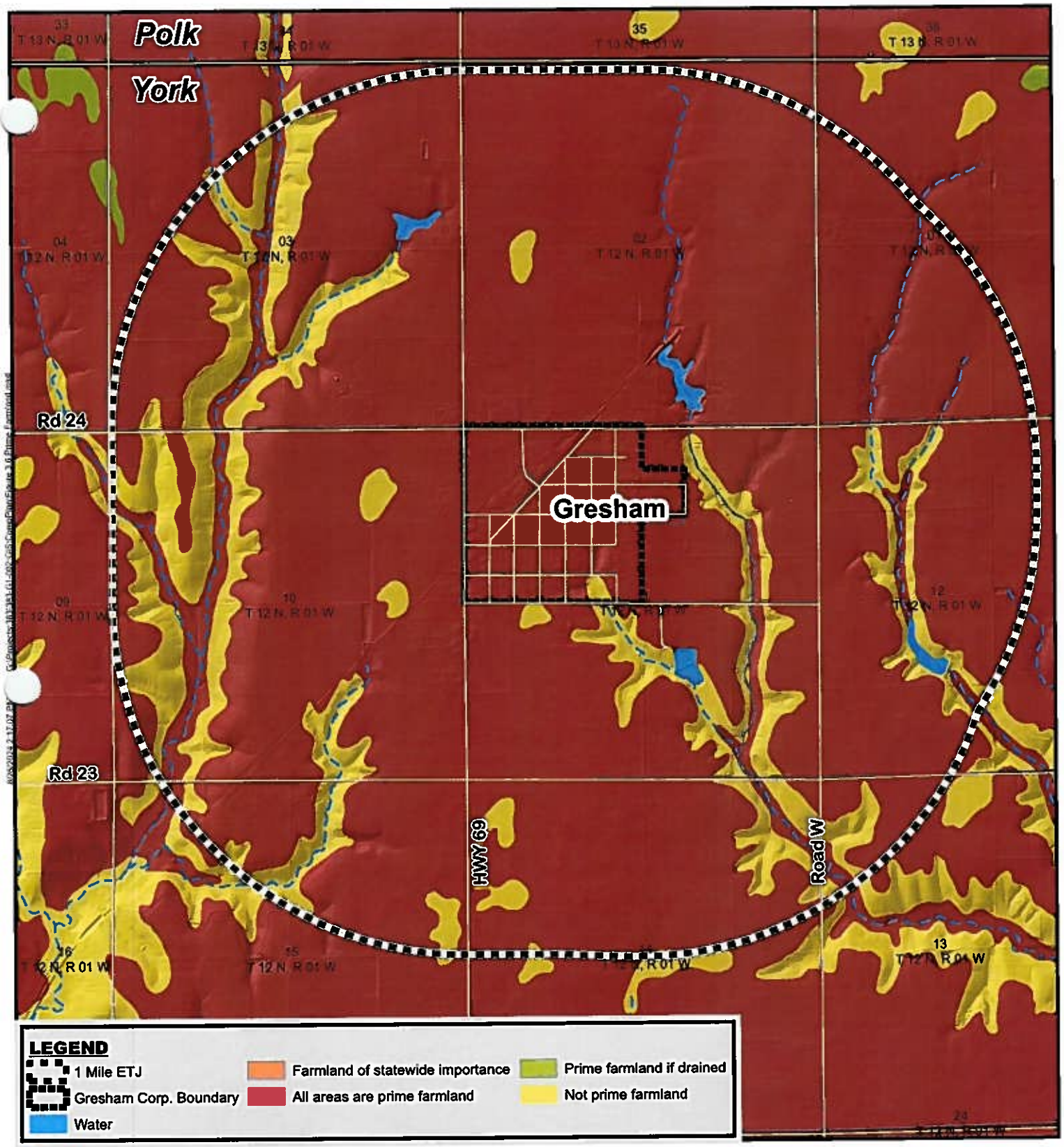
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Figure 3.5
Dryland Capability Classification By Soil Association Map

Gresham, Nebraska

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Source:
Data Provided By: The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Soil Survey Geographic Database 2021, M&A

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Figure 3.6
Soil Suitability For Prime Farmland By Soil Association Map

Gresham, Nebraska

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Water Supplies

The State of Nebraska receives approximately 80 percent of its public drinking water and nearly 100 percent of its private water supply from groundwater sources. The agriculture economy, which is fundamental to the entire state economy, is directly tied to these natural sources as well.

The State of Nebraska understands the vital importance of natural resources and has developed Natural Resources Districts (NRDs) to protect and oversee resources, in this case water resources. This critical resource is protected by the Wellhead Protection Program that provides the following information on Federal regulation compliance:

- Outlines duties of the governmental entities and utility districts.
- Determines protection area.
- Identifies contamination sources.
- Develops a containment source management program.
- Develops an alternative drinking water plan.
- Reviews contaminated sources in future wellhead areas.
- Encourages public participation and involvement.

The Nebraska Wellhead Protection Program aims to:

- Prevent new contamination sources in Wellhead Protection Areas through planning.
- Minimize the hazard of existing contamination sources through management.
- Provide early warning of existing contamination through groundwater monitoring.

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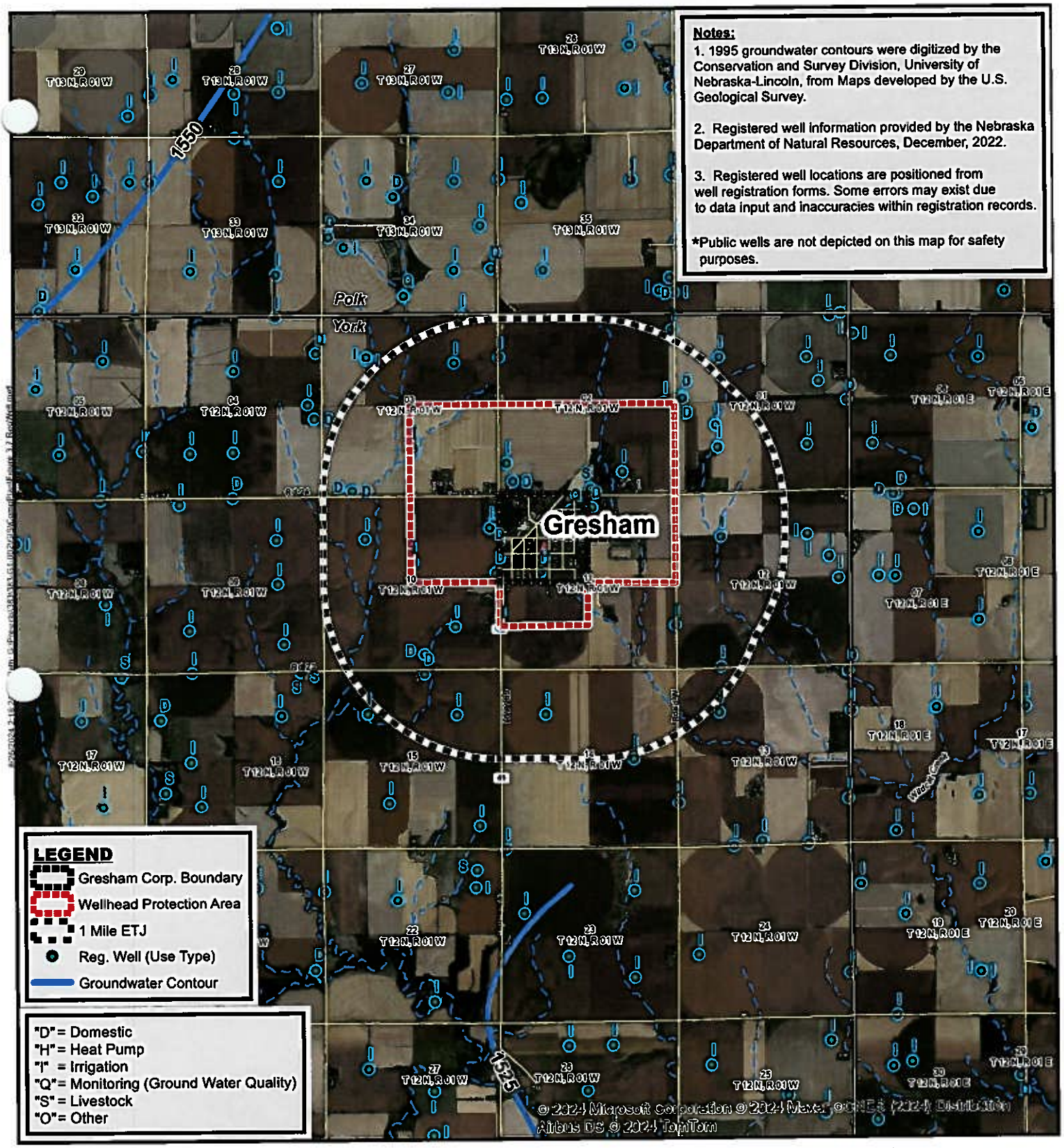


Figure 3.7
Registered Well & Wellhead Protection Area Map

Gresham, Nebraska

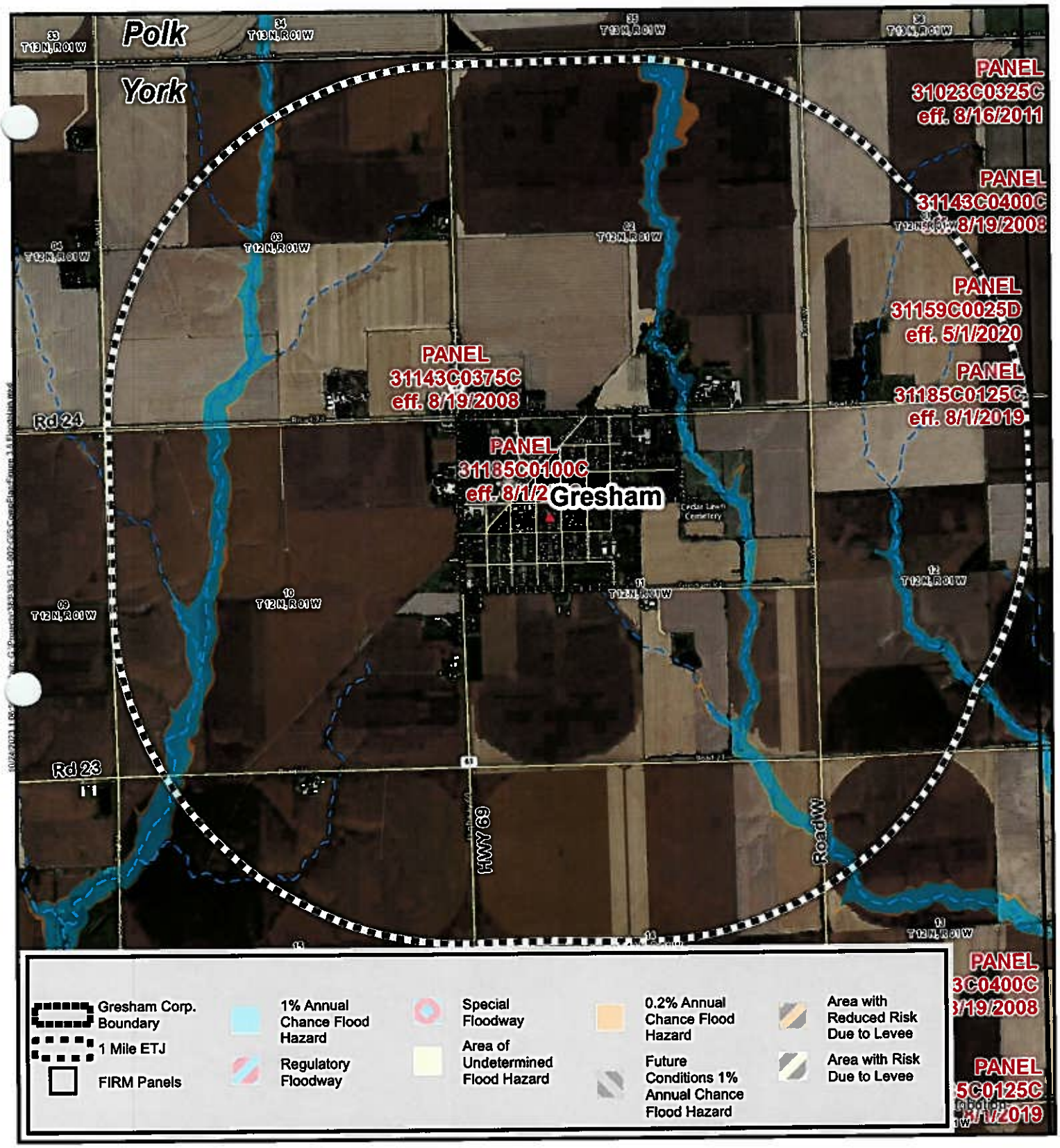
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Source:
Data Provided By: FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer ArcGIS online

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Figure 3.8
Floodplain Map

Gresham, Nebraska

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Village Utilities

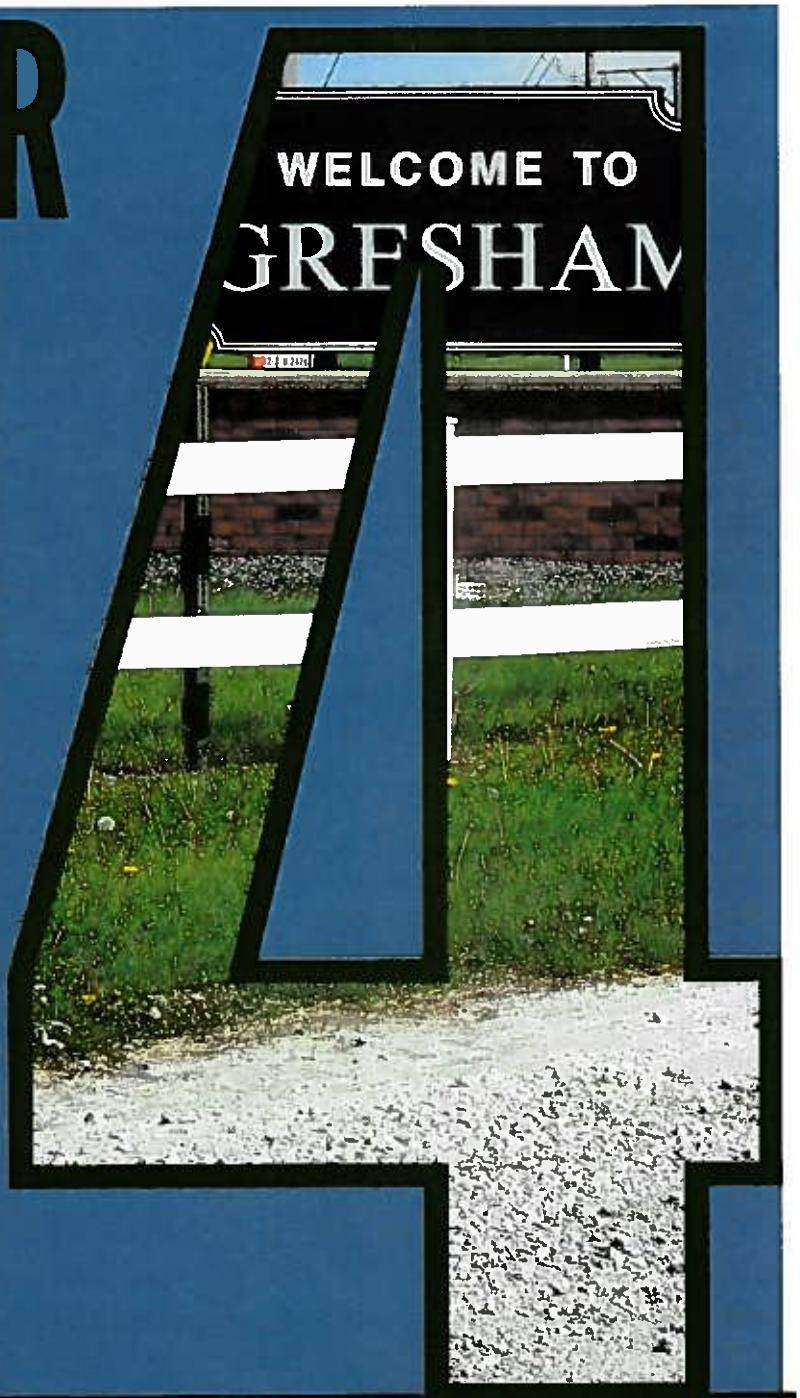
Electricity for Gresham is supplied by Perennial Public Power District in York, Nebraska. For heating petroleum, the Village is served by Sapp Brothers in York, Nebraska. In regard to water supplies and wastewater, Gresham has its own water supply system and currently has 116 water clients and 107 wastewater customers.

In 2023, was usage was 9,729,000 gallons and of that total approximately 20 percent was used for fire protection, water/sewer maintenance, construction, and repair. Water and wastewater systems have had several recent improvements. In 2010, for example, the community constructed a new well within the Village corporate limits and two years later a new lift station was approved.

More recently, wastewater lagoon improvements were approved by the State in 2022 and a year later those changes were implemented—based on random monthly surveys, the Village of Gresham produces less than 15,000 gallons of waster per day while the system is designed to handle much larger volumes.

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CHAPTER 4



LAND USE AND ANNEXATION

This section examines Gresham's land uses and provides a vision with possibilities and options for future development and growth. Discussions of existing and future land use plans are a good barometer of the community's overall health. This section also evaluates Gresham's existing and future land use plans along with annexation plans. With that in mind, this section focuses on the following components

- Land Use
- Annexation

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Land Use

Land use is a critical aspect in the Comprehensive Plan process which allows community members an opportunity to visualize existing land use and discuss how and where Gresham might grow and should grow. Land use planning is an important process that allows community leaders and residents to assess physical, social, and economic factors in a way to not only discuss growth opportunities but to also mitigate potential pitfalls moving forward. Asking questions, for instance, is always wise. If a housing development takes place in this area, how does that impact traffic patterns? Are there environmental concerns associated with a new development? Possibly public safety concerns? Those questions highlight the importance of planning and developing a comprehensive plan that guides and shapes projects is imperative to balance activities in a community.

Existing Land Use

The land use portion of the Comprehensive Plan consists of two separate but related sections—existing and future land use. The existing land use section evaluates pros and cons of Gresham's existing land use and development patterns (Figure 4.1a). Gresham has several primary land use categories—commercial, agricultural/vacant, public/quasi-public, and residential. Many commercial properties, for example, are found along Elm Street east-west in downtown Gresham and adjacent to Highway 69. The primary land use in Gresham is residential which is typical of most Nebraska communities. Single-family residential is the most common, however, there are multi-family units as well. Recreational space in Gresham includes a ball field on the community's northern edge along with a Village park that has a new shelter, tennis court, and a variety of playground equipment. These opportunities provide amenities for a wide range of the community's residents and provide an important quality of life aspect to Gresham's landscape. Public/quasi-public land use in Gresham includes churches, municipal properties, and community buildings (Figure 4.1b). These dispersed public areas are foundational properties for the community. Moving forward, public land is imperative as Gresham considers the role of public space and its connection to quality of life.

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Future Land Use and Planning

Planning for future land use options is an essential step in Gresham's Comprehensive Plan. The purpose of this section is to provide a general guide for future changes in development patterns with the underlying goal of avoiding or minimizing conflicts between land use and the environment. The future land use plan must reflect existing land use patterns while being flexible to adapt as the community changes as it moves forward.

As a component of the planning process, a series of public input meetings was held, and a public input survey was shared with residents. Community involvement was, and is, essential to capture the public's input and plan for future land use choices. Community leaders and residents are all responsible for providing input and making choices to push the community forward. During one public input meeting, future development ideas were discussed. Attendees were encouraged to "think outside the box" and "dream" about future development. With that, ideas were brought forward and discussed and Figure 4.2a presents those results.

A series of roundtable discussions relying on public input were held as community leaders "envisioned" future growth and development in Gresham. From the discussions several themes appeared (Figure 4.2a). Many pointed to land north and west of the existing grain elevator as potential areas to develop—either commercial or industrial. Those areas, large enough to support truck traffic and adjacent to Highway 69, are prime areas for development. Other commercial areas exist along Elm Street in downtown Gresham and along the entire western edge along the highway. Suggestions in the roundtable discussions included a coffee shop, café, and additional storage units or a new car wash. Part of further discussions regarding downtown Gresham include redevelopment renderings done by Village staff (Figure 4.2a). The renderings depict not only cosmetic updates to downtown properties but present ideas to revitalize commercial buildings and lots to meet today's demands, including a mix of commercial and residential development options.

Beyond commercial, public surveys and roundtable discussions both pointed to housing as a major concern for Gresham. Gresham does, however, have several areas that lend themselves to residential growth. Not only are several infill lots available throughout the community, but open tracts also exist on Gresham's southeast and eastern sides and with connectivity could support larger housing developments (Figure 4.2b). On the Village's east side, for instance, the former school property was recently demolished and the vacated property (4.6 acres) makes sense for additional residential development. Utilities are in place (water, sewer, electricity) which eliminates a portion of upfront costs associated with new development and connecting existing streets is doable as well (Figure 4.2b).

Along with commercial and residential opportunities there is a park and recreation component to consider. Gresham has a nice Village park, one that has witnessed several improvements during the last few years. Several participants pointed to the need for additional sidewalks or even more grand ideas including a hike-bike trail around the community's perimeter with trail links through downtown to allow for connectivity.

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Annexation Plan

In simple terms annexation is the addition of territory to a unit of government, usually in terms of a city/village adding adjacent land to accommodate expansion (Pacione 2009). Why do this, why annex additional land? Political reach is a consideration as a community extends control over a larger area (Kaplan et al. 2004). Done correctly, an annexation plan should create opportunities for new development and help facilitate future land use plans outlined in this document.

To create opportunities for new development, there needs to be a plan in place to reserve land necessary to accomplish the community's goals. This plan—similar to the future land use plan—is a guide or tool for the Village to utilize when discussing future growth and development opportunities. This annexation plan is not law, annexation should follow local regulations and state statutes while at the same time following Gresham's development needs and goals.

Benefits of Annexation

Annexation is beneficial in that it allows a community to protect and enhance its tax base. Land along the highway corridor, for instance, is prime real estate for commercial and industrial development. Many proposals look for incentives and forward thinking communities can offer packages that often include tax increment financing as an incentive, but the development must be within the community's corporate limits. Another facet of annexation is considering those who live adjacent to the community and utilize public services yet do not contribute to the tax base that supports the community's parks, streets, public facilities, programs, and utilities. Establishing an orderly and logical expansion plan is essential and allows for community leaders to plan for public infrastructure needs in the future.

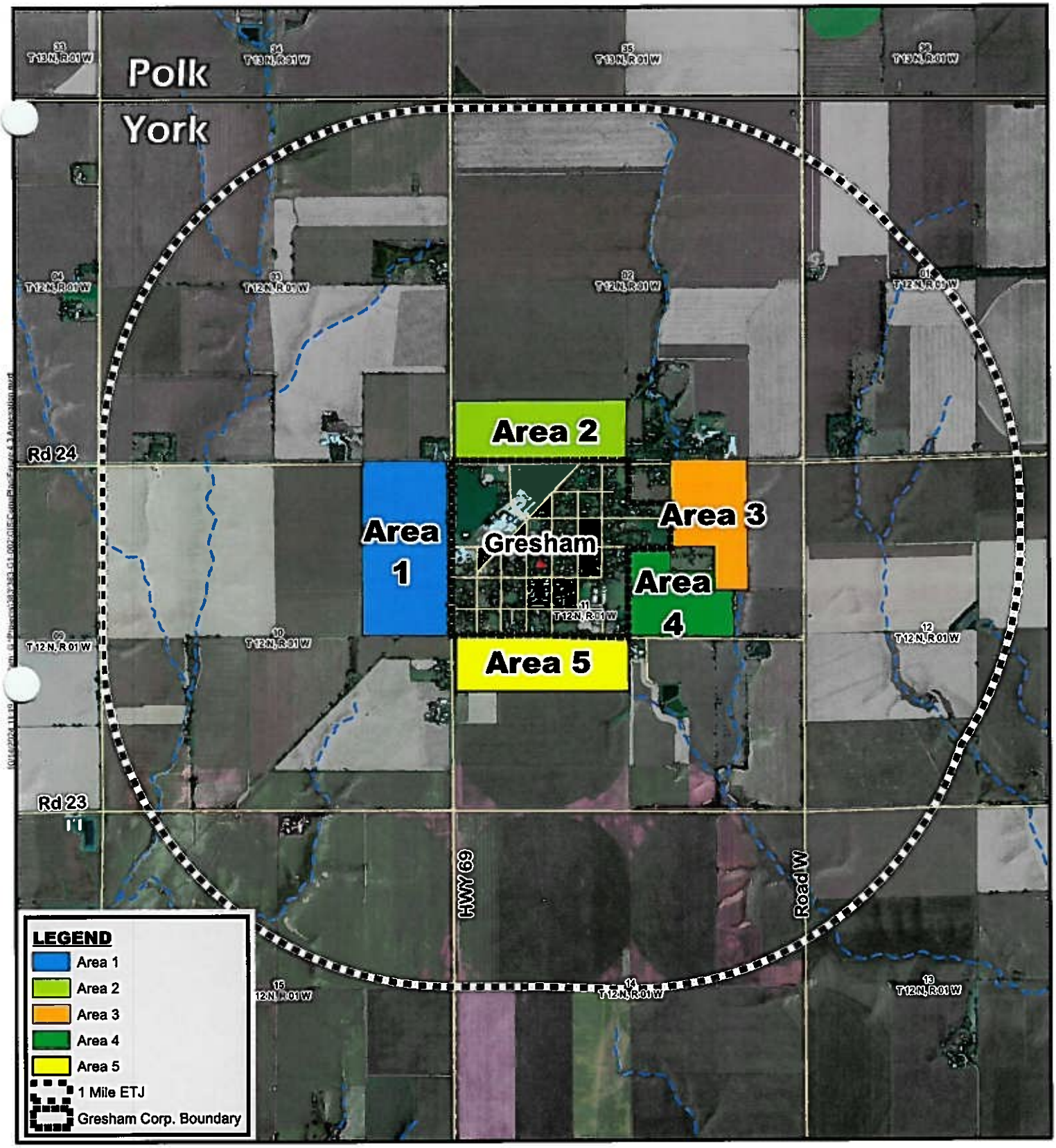
Avoid Jurisdictional Confusion & Control Fringe Development

With a plan in place, confusion between the Village and the County will be alleviated. This will also allow planning directives to logically work through development which will require infrastructure and benefit both Gresham and York County. Finding a balance between development and existing land use requires both time and planning. Where appropriate, infill development—which takes advantage of existing infrastructure in many cases—should be promoted.

Future Annexation

Annexation should follow guidelines set forth by Nebraska State Statutes §19-3052. When considering annexation, the Village of Gresham has several opportunities (Figure 4.3) In general, annexation should—and often does—work in conjunction with development. In Gresham's case, the most likely areas of development/annexation are along the community's western side adjacent to the highway corridor (Figure 4.3). Logically, this area is potentially viable for both commercial and residential growth. A second annexation phase to consider is either the community's northern or southern edge. Annexation that relies on extending existing street patterns and utilities beyond the current corporate limits into either of these directions is most reasonable. Annexing property east of the existing corporate limits appears more challenging. Cedar Lawn Cemetery occupies much of the area on Gresham's east side and a floodway just east of the corporate limits, making annexation of larger parcels in that area more difficult as well.

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Figure 4.3
Annexation Plan Map

Gresham, Nebraska

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CHAPTER 5



PUBLIC INPUT AND GOALS

This is the "action" section of Gresham's Comprehensive Plan. This section outlines the guidelines, regulations, and future practices with the purpose of helping decision-makers implement the actions and visions presented in this plan that align with the community's goals. This section covers the following components:

- Public Input
- Goals

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Public Input

Public input is the backbone of any successful comprehensive plan. It provides residents and stakeholders with the opportunity to share their hopes and concerns as they consider what is next. This section is the place to share ideas and possible guidelines for development and growth in Gresham. These goals are a combination of information gathered from the public input sessions and data analysis and are realistic but do allow the community to develop new initiatives as they look to the future.

Community Input

The first meeting was held on September 20, 2023, at Gresham's community center and served as an introduction to the comprehensive plan process as well as a discussion of the community's demographics. The second public meeting was held on January 10, 2024. This meeting covered public input survey results, a SWOT analysis was conducted, and zoning regulation updates were shared. The third public input meeting in Gresham was April 3, 2024. During this meeting, the results from the SWOT analysis were discussed as were findings from the blight study. Attendees were also involved in a land use exercise and provided input on "futuristic" goals for the community. A discussion of zoning standards was also provided as the Village updates current regulations. The fourth and final meeting took place on October 16, 2024.



Public Input Survey

Perhaps it is best to start by answering the question, what is a survey? Simply put, a survey is one way to gather data and information to capture the public's thoughts and goals (Clegg 1983; Secor 2010). Montello and Sutton (2006, 82) contend that "surveys require respondents to answer questions about their opinions, attitudes, or preferences. They can also ask questions about activities or demographics." Secor (2010, 196) adds that surveys "allow researchers to gather information about a population" and answer "questions about the distribution of characteristics within a population and across particular sites or population subgroups."

Decades ago, face-to-face surveys were more commonplace, now with advancements in technology more options exist. Even though more survey techniques are now available, response rates have declined in recent decades (Tourangeau and Plewes 2013). For many, one primary concern is distrust. Other factors that often lead to low response rates are areas with large numbers of "single-parent households, families with young children, workers with long commutes, and high crime rates" (Tourangeau and Plewes 2013, 7). To create more trust in the process, community leaders were charged with promoting the survey both in person and on social media. The Village of Gresham also included a postcard flyer advertising the community survey in monthly utility bills. Surveys were then available in traditional paper format (which normally generates different responses in comparison to telephone or face-to-face surveys) at Village locations open to the public as well as an on-line option (direct mail surveys tend to have extremely low response rates and are expensive to conduct). The on-line option was managed by Miller & Associates as part of the larger comprehensive plan project.

The "Gresham" survey may be labeled as a random survey, in that every member of the entire community had an equal chance of completing the survey (it also eliminates the potential bias of cluster area sampling) (Leisher 2014). Most questions allowed participants to "rank or order" choices; others were "open ended" meaning that choices were not provided on the survey which encouraged respondents to provide answers. Confidentiality was, and is, a survey concern. In this case no personal information (names or addresses) was captured. Finally, survey length was also a consideration. There is an inverse relationship associated with survey length. Surveys with fewer questions tend to have higher response rates and as response rates increase so does accuracy (Tourangeau and Plewes 2013).

The Gresham survey was made public from October 23, 2023, to November 21, 2023, and had a total of forty-eight responses. The survey itself contained thirty questions, divided into eight sections. The first section contained six questions that have several secondary questions. These general questions focused on Gresham's community facilities, connectivity, the downtown district, economy, housing, and infrastructure. The second section focused on the economy with four more questions, three of which are more open-ended. Section 3 dealt with education and had two questions. Section 4 involved childcare with three more questions. Section 5 dealt with "Telecommunications" and had two questions. Four questions relate to "Housing" in Section 6. The penultimate section related to tourism with four questions and the final section captured basic demographic information about those who provided responses to the survey.

Section 1 contained six questions, which all have secondary questions to provide further insights.

> Overall responses to Question 1 demonstrate that many respondents were either "Satisfied" (39.1 percent) or "Very Satisfied" (35.8 percent) with Gresham's community facilities and services. "Fire Protection/EMS" received high ranks as did "Parks & Recreation." "Centennial Public Schools" also captured several "Very Satisfied" remarks as did the "Library." Overall, 11.1 percent of responses were "Very Unsatisfied," and another 14.0 percent were "Unsatisfied." For Question 2, nearly half were "Satisfied" (46.0 percent) and another 13.0 percent selected "Very Satisfied" with Gresham's connectivity. "Vehicular Accessibility," "Pedestrian Accessibility," and "Wayfinding to Landmarks" all captured several "Very Satisfied" responses for connectivity. Of those who were "Unsatisfied" or "Very Unsatisfied," "Hike/Bike Trails" and "Pedestrian Accessibility" were the two top choices for those with concerns. Question 3 relates to Gresham's downtown district, just over 60 percent selected "Unsatisfied" and "Very Unsatisfied." No single category stood out, as those who took the survey expressed concern with "Aesthetics/Beautification," "Restaurant Variety," "Retail Store Variety," and "Entertainment Variety." Only "Lighting/Signage" had a majority of positive responses. Question 4 regarding Gresham's economy revealed several concerns. All five sub-categories—Overall Economy, Business Support & Retention, Entrepreneurship Support, Job Opportunities, and Youth Retention—received significant numbers of either "Unsatisfied" (34.2 percent) and/or "Very Unsatisfied" (39.1 percent) responses. Just over a quarter of the responses were positive, with "Overall Economy" and "Business Support & Retention" both capturing several "Satisfied" responses. Gresham's housing market (Question 5) appears to be one of the biggest areas of concern. Just 29.0 percent of respondents selected "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" while 71.0 percent selected either "Unsatisfied" or "Very Unsatisfied." All but one (Housing for Older Adults 55+) received a majority of "Unsatisfied" or "Very Unsatisfied" responses and concerns were expressed for "Housing for Purchase," "Housing for Rent," "Homeownership Assistance," "Housing Rehabilitation Assistance," and the "Overall Housing Market." The final broad question (Question 6) dealt with Gresham's infrastructure with a slight majority of "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" responses (56.5 percent to 43.5 percent). Those who were satisfied pointed to "Sanitary Sewer," "Streets," and "Stormwater Drainage," while those unsatisfied expressed concerns about "Water Quality" and "Sidewalks."

Section 2 focused on the economy with four questions.

> Question 7 asked respondents to rank in order their top three stores regularly visited in Gresham. The "C-Store" or "Country Store" led the way with thirty-one responses, followed by Rolling Ts with thirteen, the Big Horn Bar with eleven, and the York State Bank with six. The "Salon" along with the "Post Office" also received several remarks. The next survey question asked what retail stores Gresham's residents patronize in other communities. Wal-Mart (22) (Columbus, Lincoln, Seward, and York) led the way, followed by Cubby's (10) (Shelby), Hy-Vee (7) (Columbus and Lincoln), and Menard's (6) (Columbus). Question 9 asked respondents what additional type of business they would support in Gresham. A grocery store (20) by far led the way, followed by restaurant (10), café or coffee shop (7), and hardware store (6). The next question focused on local economic development efforts. Ten options were provided, and "Downtown Revitalization" (18) and "Housing Development" (18) led the way, with "Existing Business Support" (15), "Incentives for Retail Stores" (12), and "Incentives for New Industries" (10) rounding out the top five.

Childcare outside of the home does not appear to be a concern in Gresham. Few respondents utilize childcare services and those who do (3) shared frustration with "Price," "Hours of Operation," and "Quality of Care."

Section 5 highlights internet connection (Question 16) in Gresham. "Wireless/Cellular Network" (54.8 percent) is most used followed by "Fiber Internet" (25.8 percent) and "Cable Internet" (19.3 percent). In regard to satisfaction, an even 50-50 split was reported for those who are either "Very Unsatisfied" and "Unsatisfied" compared to those who are "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied."

Questions in Section 6 asked residents to describe the physical condition of housing structures in Gresham. Four choices were offered, with 28.6 percent needing no repairs, 25.7 percent needing under $3,000 worth of repairs, 34.3 percent requiring $3,000 - $15,000, and 11.4 percent that need major repairs of more than $15,000. The next question examines Gresham's greatest housing need. Eight responded that there is a need to "clean up," "remove," or "demolish" dilapidated properties. The same number expressed calls for "more housing" both to buy or rent. The final housing question revealed that 83.3 percent of respondents own their home with the remainder in rental situations.

Section 7 contains questions that touch on tourism with 55.5 percent indicating that tourism is currently not important to Gresham. Interesting to note that the next question reveals that respondents by a wide margin (70.0 percent to 30.0 percent) would, however, support tourism development. Of events currently held in the community, "Gresham Days," "Memorial Day Car Show," and the "Firemen's Picnic" stand out as favorite events that bring people to the community.

The final section provided a demographic snapshot of those who completed the survey. Of survey participants, most have lived in the community for more than twenty years (58.3 percent) while others have been in the community for one-five years (13.9 percent), six-ten years (16.7 percent), and eleven-twenty years (5.6 percent). An interesting mix of responses explain why residents currently live in Gresham—38.9 percent "Grew up in Gresham," another 27.8 percent enjoy the "Small Town Atmosphere," 22.2 percent due to "Job Location," and 11.1 percent reside in Gresham as a result of "Cost of Living." As for those who took the Gresham survey, 50.0 percent were in the 60+ in the age category, another 30.6 percent in the 20-39 age bracket, and 19.4 percent in the 40-59 age range. At the survey's end, respondents were offered a chance to share final comments. Many expressed a strong connection to the place and their attachment to Gresham, however, one common theme found in comments relates to a lack of communication and trust between the community and Village Board.

SWOT Analysis

SWOT analysis is conducted by an organization to identify its internal strengths and weaknesses along with its external opportunities and threats (Ghazinoory and Memariani 2007; Helms and Nixon 2010). Developed in the late 1950s and into the 1960s primarily for private companies, the "tool" has expanded to include charitable organizations along with municipalities to consider competitive advantages (Puyt et al. 2020; Sarsby 2016). Strengths (advantage over others), weaknesses (disadvantage over others), opportunities (elements to exploit to its advantage), and threats (elements that cause concerns) (SWOT) are characteristics to evaluate competitive positioning and consider both short-term and long-term goals and objectives. One research article summarized SWOT as safeguarding the satisfactory operations, opening the door to opportunities, fixing the faults, and averting threats (Puyt et al. 2020).



Strengths, for instance, are internal characteristics and for Gresham might include customer service or community events. Weaknesses are also internal, and examples are the lack of hike/bike trails and adequate housing. Opportunities are external factors that provide promise for future successes, examples are greater transportation improvements and technology advancements. Threats are external and typically cannot be controlled—greater market trends or state/federal regulations, for example. SWOT analysis is versatile and has demonstrated meaningful results for numerous Fortune 500 companies (Home Depot and McDonald's) and non-profit organizations (United Way).

For Gresham, the SWOT analysis took place on December 10, 2023. Responses were grouped into categories for discussion and from that several strengths were revealed. Of the ten categories that captured responses, "People" led the way with twelve. Other popular replies in the "Strength" section included "Businesses" (11), "Location" (9), "Services" (9), and "Community" (7). Many shared comments about community, family, safety, public services, and the value of a small-town lifestyle along with community leaders and their willingness to invest in Gresham. Location is an interesting "Strength" in that several noted that Gresham is "Quiet," yet is centrally located with easy access to larger communities.

The second category in Gresham's SWOT analysis examined "Weakness." The most common weakness response for Gresham was "Business," including limited retail, limited hours of operation for the few businesses, and limited opportunities for new businesses. The second highest response was "Housing" which is no surprise considering results from the earlier community survey. Housing, in this case the lack of, is a foundational concern for Gresham. Other "Weaknesses" mentioned include "People" (8) with a declining population and a perceived lack of community involvement. "Community" received five responses pointing to a lack of communication between the Village Board and the public and "Grants" also with five responses related to inadequate funding opportunities related to infrastructure.

The third SWOT category— "Opportunities"—solicited several responses as well. Leading the way in this category with nearly half of the responses was a general theme related to buildable lots, room to expand, affordable land, reasonable rental rates, and home-based businesses. Other "Opportunities" pointed to tourism and economic development—potential for the community to host a horse show, concert, or an extended "garage sale weekend" similar to the Junk Jaunt.

"Threat" is the final category in the SWOT analysis. Consider the seven themes identified in this category and the variety of responses. "Government" and "People" both received five responses, including a lack of transparency and limited resources along with both an aging and dwindling population. "Housing" and "Safety" both registered four responses. Similar to public survey findings, "Housing" with concerns about a lack of housing and dilapidated structures was demonstrated and "Safety" with limited local enforcement was also a concern. Finally, other "Threats" counted were a lack of community and aging infrastructure.

For Village staff and community leaders in Gresham, SWOT analysis offers an opportunity to consider the strengths and weaknesses as well as the opportunities and threats. From this analysis, realistic community goals and plans should be implemented to provide direction for community leaders to capitalize on strengths (people, location, and community) and opportunities (room to expand and grow in addition to the promotion of community events) as well as addressing weaknesses (limited retail options and a lack of housing) and threats (limited financial support for infrastructure improvements and an aging population).

Priorities, Goals, and Action Steps

Providing residents and stakeholders with an opportunity to express their hopes and share concerns, the Comprehensive Plan is intended to shape future policy and development. One way to accomplish this is to host public meetings where community members share ideas about development and growth in Gresham. These goals are a combination of information gathered from public input sessions and data analysis as the community looks forward.



Improve Existing Housing Market

- Create a Development Group
- Construct Affordable Housing
- Construct New Homes
- Improve Existing Homes
- Develop a Demolition Plan for Dilapidated Properties
- Prioritize Rental Properties
- Consider Infill Development

Housing is a major concern in Gresham, a concern nearly universal across the state. To address this, the obvious answer is to develop more housing. To accomplish this, private developers and/or local investors must be willing to invest. Developing new housing has the potential to attract new residents creating a chain reaction of positive events. More families and more jobs are often based on affordable housing, community leaders play an instrumental role in facilitating housing stock growth in the future. Part of the housing discussion includes community and Village leaders constructing new homes, improving existing homes, and considering a demolition plan for dilapidated properties. Furthermore, considering middle- and lower-income housing as well as rental properties is a priority.

Infill development is one option and is often less expensive since there is no need to extend utility services. Utilizing existing infrastructure, infill typically makes sense by avoiding "sprawl" and the costs of extending services. All vacant lots and vacant unhabitable homes are potential sites for infill development. One mechanism to achieve this is nuisance abatement. Whether conducted by the Village, legal counsel, or a third-party nuisance abatement is important to encourage property upkeep and provide ways to encourage renovation or demolition. One way to publicly counter dilapidated properties is to promote "yard of the month" programs to acknowledge residents who invest and take pride in their neighborhoods. One consideration is the creation and promotion of an investment group to build housing in Gresham. The formation of a group tends to limit individual liability and has proven successful in many communities across the state.







Further Enhancements, Tourism, and Branding

Not an exhaustive list, but Gresham does have several opportunities when considering community enhancements, tourism, and branding. Community aesthetics should not be overlooked, they are essential concerns for the community. Gateway entrances and attractive signage—or wayfinding signage—throughout town are key in promoting place. Gateway entrances allow for a community to make a tremendous first impression—landscaping, lighting, signage are all components for attractive entrances. Another overall consideration is branding. Branding allows for a community-wide effort to promote place. What stands out in the community? Possibly an event (Big Horn Car and Tractor Show that is part of Gresham Days to celebrate the community) or attraction for the community?

Improve Public Infrastructure

Gresham must continually prioritize project needs and evaluate funding sources for public infrastructure improvements, including water, paving/stormwater drainage, sidewalks/ADA compliance, and technology infrastructure.

Develop Marketing Campaign

Creating and marketing a community brand to existing and potential residents, developers, and business owners is important. By promoting existing businesses and "selling" its quality of life aspects, Gresham has potential to capitalize on its strengths. To develop a new marketing campaign or update an existing strategy, community leaders should consider the following objectives. Community advocates should identify an easily recognizable image to market and recruit residents and non-residents alike. A brand could include a logo, slogan, color scheme, and/or theme that represents the community. Once determined, a brand can be utilized to promote the community via posters, brochures, and letterhead in addition to an on-line campaign. Social media sources like Facebook and Twitter are free marketing platforms that can easily reach large audiences.

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