
SUMMARY STATEMENT:

The City of Valley has developed in a manner that is typical of many Nebraska communities. The city proper has grown from a solid central downtown commercial core that was established along the railroad. Over the course of history, the city was eventually serviced by U.S. Highway 275. The highway was constructed and ran parallel to the Union Pacific Railroad tracks. In recent years, U.S. Highway 275 was relocated to a location that currently bypasses the community. The fortunate circumstance about the new alignment is that it is within reach of Valley's future development.

Valley has several additional issues that will impact the future development of the community. These include the location of Valmont's primary manufacturing facility, the location of a 3M plant, a large floodplain due to the proximity of the Platte River, the appeal of the area for sand excavation facilities, and a water table that typically is close to the surface. Each of these issues will eventually impact the development patterns of Valley. It will be crucial to derive a future land use policy and concept that accounts for each of these issues and maximizes on the potential that each issue brings to Valley.

FUTURE LAND USE PLAN:

The City of Valley has seen steady growth over the past 63 years. In 1940, the City had a population of 985 people. By 2000, the population had grown to 1,788 people. The recently released 2003 population estimates now show Valley with a population of 1,823 people. The key to this growth is that in no decade since 1940 has Valley seen a decrease in population. A key element of this continued growth centers on Valley's location, Douglas County. Douglas County is the largest county on Nebraska and has seen a growth trend from 1940 when the county had just fewer than 250,000 to 2003 with a population of nearly 500,000. The growth within Douglas County during the observed 63 year period has been moving west and has been getting closer to Valley each decade. Based upon these factors it is anticipated that Valley will continue to see growth in the future and this growth will likely become accelerated in the coming years.

Population projections for Valley indicate a continued growth in population. These projections show a total population in 2030 as few as 2,122 people and as high as 6,073 people. Currently there are developed areas and proposed developments within Valley's zoning jurisdiction with over 300 building lots. If all these lots are built upon and are full time residences then Valley is looking at an additional 750 to 1,000 people less than one-mile from the current corporate limits. The planning commission and city council need to continually monitor estimates and development in order to maintain controlled growth. Rapid growth can and will create problems with specific city services.

Future annexations should take place in the non-agricultural land use districts as the City grows. These tracts could and should be annexed in conformance with the Nebraska Revised State Statutes. Special consideration must be given to the annexation of existing and future Sanitary Improvement Districts (SID). When the annexation of a SID occurs, the City becomes liable for the remaining debt load of the entity. Annexation of these areas should only occur when the debt load has been eliminated or low enough that the costs vs. benefits are in favor of the City of Valley. However, the planning commission and city council should work to discourage the use of SID's in the future; provided a financially sound approach to constructing the infrastructure can be found. SID's will eventually slow the city's growth and will likely become a major barrier for increasing the corporate limits and potential valuation of the city.

A certain amount of open space/parks and recreation will also be needed in each district to provide for proper open space or recreation opportunities in each neighborhood. To develop the community in the most efficient and orderly manner possible, the focus should be placed on the development of suitable (developable) vacant land within the jurisdiction of Valley. Currently, the development trend near Valley is lakefront subdivisions. These lakefront properties are being developed due to two specific factors. These factors are the quality and value of the sand and gravel located within the Platte River valley and the shallow depth to groundwater in the Platte River valley. In a number of cases, the sand and gravel operations are being converted (reclamation) to housing development once the useful life of the operation is reached. These operations are a major asset to the community. First they provide potential jobs and revenue for the businesses of the area and then once reclamation proceeds, then the area is seeing an increase in the number of people living in the area and in a number of cases the property values of the land and structure is significantly higher than a standard subdivision. The City need to examine this asset and develop a land use policy and zoning regulation that is conducive to this development approach.

RESIDENTIAL:

Future residential development in and around the City of Valley during the coming decades will likely be new subdivisions. The city needs to examine the appropriate locations and policies for these new subdivisions. Based upon the population projections, Valley will be faced with a demand for new housing and developable lots. The type of developments will likely vary from a standard subdivision layout to additional lakefront subdivisions.

Examining the future demand for residential development, the population projections discussed previous are a major asset. Based upon a few assumptions, the future demand for residential uses can be approximated. The following table illustrates the potential demand for residential development (not including rights-of-way, parks, etc).

TABLE 1: PROJECTED RESIDENTIAL LAND NEEDS 2000 THROUGH 2030

Year	Average Lot Size	Average persons per household	Projected Population and households				New Land Needed (acres)	
			Low Series		High Series		Low Series	High Series
			Population	Additional Households	Population	Households		
2000		2.49	1,788	-	1,788	-	-	-
2003		2.49	1,823	-	1,823	-	-	-
2010	10,000	2.97	1,957	45	2,318	167	10.3	38.3
2020	10,000	2.97	2,221	89	5,795	1,171	20.4	268.8
2030	10,000	2.97	2,521	101	6,073	94	23.2	21.6
Total				235		1,432	53.9	328.7

JEO Consulting Group, Inc. 2004

The major assumptions within the table include an average lot size of 10,000 square feet and that the average household size will increase from 2.49 persons per household to 2.97 persons per household. The increase in the average household size is based upon the 2000 average in Elkhorn.

The calculations in Table 1 show that Valley will need between an estimated 53.9 acres to 328.7 acres of land strictly for residential lots by 2030. Again, this does not include any future street rights-of-way, park space, etc... It can be assumed that the demand will be for various types of residential development, as currently being seen near Valley and in western Douglas County. Provisions and policies will need to be established in order to guide this residential demand in the proper manner.

Low Density Residential (LDR)

There have been provisions made for Low Density Residential districts within Valley’s one-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction. These areas are designated as LDR on the Future Land Use Map. The location of the LDR districts is primarily on the outer edges of the jurisdiction.

Development within the LDR district should meet the following standards:

- Consist of lots between one acre and 10 acres in size,
- Be within close proximity to maintain county roads including both gravel and hard surfaced segments,
- Be developed in areas where denser development is not likely to occur by 2030,
- Be located in areas that will allow these developments to act like a buffer between Valley and future developments of Omaha. These lots will allow for a distinctive visual barrier between the two jurisdictions.
- The visual barrier will also aid in creating a defined gateway into the city of Valley, and
- In some case mobile home developments



An example of a residential lot within a low density district

Medium to High Density Residential (MDR)

The Medium to High Density Residential District (MDR) makes up the majority of future land uses within Valley’s jurisdiction. The MDR designation is intended to allow a wide variety of residential development within this district. The zoning districts that are intended to be allowed within the MDR area include:

- Typical single-family residential development.
- Townhouse and condominium residential development.
- Multi-family residential development.
- Lakefront residential development, and
- In some case mobile home developments.

Typical single-family residential development will likely be design in the standard lots and blocks approach. However, when possible the city should encourage creative developments that center on the clustering concept. The clustering concept will allow the developer in most cases to develop a subdivision with similar densities while creating open spaces and/or conserving natural resource areas.

Townhouses, condominiums and multi-family development within Valley’s jurisdiction should be designed in a manner that is sensitive to the scale and development styles of the community. These types of developments may be sited within clusters of similar structures and uses or in some design layouts it would be appropriate to create a mixture of residential uses in a subdivision.

Lakefront development within Valley’s jurisdiction will likely continue to be centered on sand pit lakes. These developments are appropriate for the Valley area due to the existence of a high water table. Allowing this type of development will actually generate development potential on land that may otherwise be limited and have a shorter productive life span. In order to effectively ensure that the extraction operations are eventually converted, the City should allow them within a residential zoning district as a conditional use while requiring a development concept to be presented with the conditional use permit application.

Clustered and Mixed Use District (CMD)

The CMD district has been developed in order to provide policy direction on land that may be suitable for a number of uses. These uses include commercial and residential. This district is also intended to be used as a buffering district between industrial uses and residential developments.

Typically, the commercial uses would consist of:

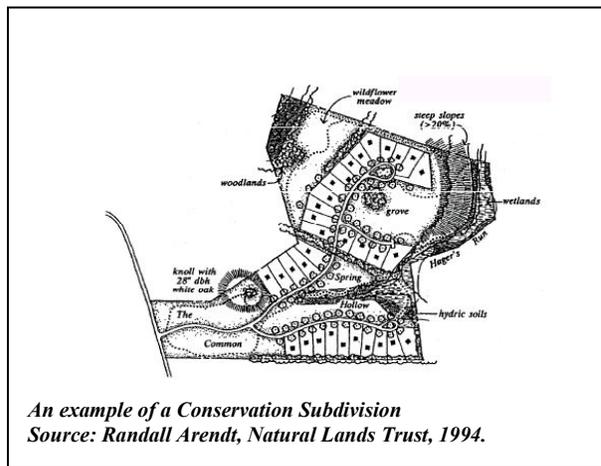
- Convenience stores
- Smaller restaurants
- Office buildings

COMMERCIAL:

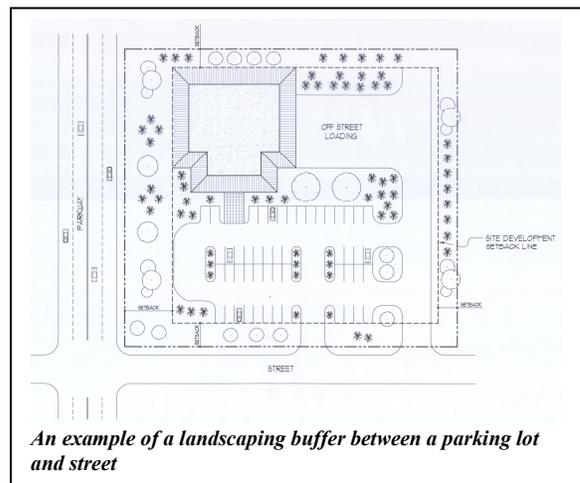
Valley’s future commercial land use areas are anticipated to include the existing facilities along old U.S. Highway 275, the downtown area, and along new U.S. Highway 275. During the planning period of this future land use plan, the pressure to develop along the new U.S. Highway 275 will become even greater. The city must determine the types of commercial development that will be allowed within this corridor. It is likely that larger retail and “Big Box” retail



An example of a multi-family development with an appropriate scale and design.

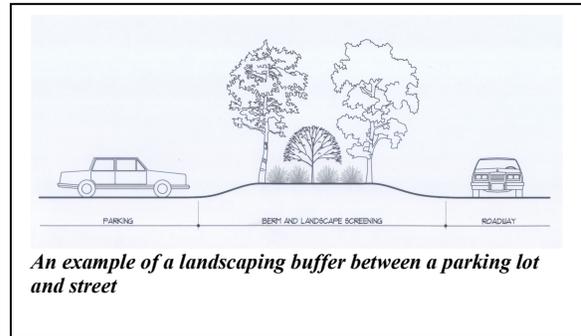


*An example of a Conservation Subdivision
Source: Randall Arendt, Natural Lands Trust, 1994.*



An example of a landscaping buffer between a parking lot and street

will become interested in the Valley area in the future, especially as Omaha grows into this area. These uses are not necessary a negative for the community; however, provisions should be made for site development within the corridor. The more design guidelines that can be placed on the property and structures, the better this “Gateway Corridor” to Valley will look. In addition to retail development, this corridor would also be an appropriate location for office buildings and office parks.



Major commercial development along the U.S. Highway 275 corridor will be required to have access roads and an internal street system. These transportation elements are intended to require the use of landscaping and buffers. Buffers and screening should also be encouraged and used between the transportation system and all parking areas.

The *Gateway Corridor* into Valley is along the new U.S. Highway 275 and extends nearly across the city’s jurisdiction. This corridor is intended to guide development throughout this primary entrance into the community. This district should implement special design criteria with regard to building design, layout, site development, sign standards, landscaping and lighting design. The majority of the Corridor’s design standards will allow for some flexibility of design in order to encourage creativity while protecting the property values and investment made by other property owners in and near the corridor.

INDUSTRIAL:

Industrial lands identified in the Future Land Use Plan designate existing industrial development along within some potential expansion area. The continuation of the existing industries and the development of new industrial development will assist the community in diversifying its growth and development, as well as expanding its tax base and employment opportunities. Desirable transportation corridors are adjacent to the majority of the present and future industrial districts. Industrial uses should be classified into two categories which include:

Light: The Light Industrial category is intended for industrial areas that have a special emphasis and attention given to aesthetics, landscaping and internal and community compatibility. Light Industrial areas are comprised predominantly of industrial uses but may incorporate office and commercial uses that support and complement the industrial area, including warehouses, light manufacturing and assembly, and contractor facilities.

Heavy: Heavy industrial is characterized by intense industrial activities that may have significant impacts to surrounding areas, including, but not limited to noise, odor or aesthetic impacts. Mines, quarries, cement and asphalt plants, hazardous material storage, petroleum storage are example of heavy industrial type uses.

PUBLIC/QUASI-PUBLIC:

Future public/quasi-public land uses in Valley will be comprised of several things as the community grows. These uses are the main reason that the planning commission and city council should monitor future population estimates and compare the estimates to population projection. As the area grows, the city, county, and school district will need to provide additional space for existing uses but potentially new services and facilities will need to be constructed to accommodate the population.

Currently, only existing public and quasi-public uses are identified on the future land use map. The public entities within the Valley jurisdiction should never identify future land for public use prior to having a controlling interest in the land. By identifying future public land prior to acquisition, the entity is tipping their hand and it may be creating an artificial inflation of the land value, thus making the land higher in price when the desired acquisition time arrives.

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS:

Conservation Easements are a development tool, which requires a developer to preserve certain natural characteristics within a proposed development. A Conservation Easement allows the developer to place these areas into a perpetual easement that goes with the development. In most cases, the easement stipulates that no development activity will occur within the described boundaries.

Conservation Easements may be maintained in one of three basic ways; through a homeowners association, by the City, or by a third party such as the Natural Resources District. The maintenance of the preservation area must be indicated and clearly stated within the easement agreement.

In areas of the City's jurisdiction where floodplains, wetlands, and wooded areas are present, the City should encourage developments to preserve these areas within a Conservation Easement. In some cases, the City may choose to allow development within an indicated floodplain and /or Open Space and Recreational area as long as the development is along the perimeter of another land use district. However, a large portion of the floodplain and /or Open Space and Recreational area is preserved within Conservation Easements.



An example of preserved open space

Through a combination of Conservation Easements and Clustered/Mixed Use Developments, the City should encourage density bonuses, through the use of the Clustering/Mixed Use District, when a developer provides the proper Conservation Easements. Density bonuses may be a direct proportion of lot area reduction to conserved land or additional lots may be allocated if certain conditions are agreed upon within the easements.

Conservation easements can be an excellent means to preserve natural resources and characteristics. This tool allows the developer to create even more attractive subdivisions and the City to protect some of the natural characteristics of the community and surrounding areas. This tool has been designed to be a win – win situation for all concerned parties, the developer, the City, and residents of the development.

TRANSITIONAL AGRICULTURE:

The Transitional Agriculture District (TA) is where agricultural practices will continue during the planning period. Most of these areas likely will not see development pressure. However, those areas designated along the northern and eastern edges of Valley's jurisdiction may see some pressure during the planning period either from Valley's growth or the further growth of Omaha.

SUMMARY:

The Future Land Use Plan of a City is critical to ensure the proper development of the community. The Plan is policy driven and directs the existing and future Zoning of the community. Therefore, it is critical that the Future Land Use and the Zoning Regulations remain consistent with one another.

The Future Land Use Plan should be reviewed and scrutinized annually to identify any changes in policy, which may be needed. This includes examination of changes within the City's desired policies, major changes in the development markets that will impact the community positively or negatively, or any other conditions that may be present.