



# SEWARD TOMORROW

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comprehensive plan

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The project team would like to acknowledge the contributions of the residents of Seward who gave their time, ideas, and expertise for the creation of this plan. It is only with their assistance and direction that this plan gained the necessary depth to truly represent the spirit of the community and it is with their commitment that the plan will be implemented.

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# FORWARD

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*Forward: onward so as to make progress; toward a successful conclusion.*

The City of Seward endeavored to create a new comprehensive plan to guide its growth and development over the next 10 to 20 years.

The plan, created with the voices of the community, articulates a vision for the future of the community and paves a roadmap for how that vision can be achieved incrementally over time. This plan seeks to enhance the character of Seward, the vitality of its neighborhoods and business community, and the addition of new residents.



## WHAT IS A COMPREHENSIVE PLAN?

A statement by the community about its vision for the future

A strategic roadmap for how that vision can be achieved

A guidebook for land use, development, investment, and policy decisions

## WHY PLAN?

### COMMUNITY BUILDING

*A plan is an opportunity to craft a shared vision for a joint future.*

A comprehensive plan is a working document that is reviewed annually, updated every five years and replaced approximately every ten years. The public engagement process is of vital importance because it informs community leaders exactly what the public wants from their community.

More than 300 stakeholders contributed their voices to this plan, and it is now the responsibility of community leaders – not only the city – to help build the future of Seward.

### LEGAL BASIS FOR LAND USE REGULATIONS AND DECISIONS

*A plan is required by state statute to allow for zoning.*

Nebraska Revised Statute 19-901 enables cities to adopt land use zoning to promote the “health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the community” when in conformance with a comprehensive plan.

Land use regulations, such as zoning ordinances, recognize that people in a community live cooperatively and have certain responsibilities to one another. These regulations establish rules that govern how land is developed within a municipality and its extra-territorial jurisdiction. The comprehensive plan creates a vision for how a community should develop and thus should guide land use decisions.

### GUIDANCE FOR DECISION-MAKERS

*A plan provides direction on the future of the community and should be consulted when decisions related to the future of the city are considered.*

While the City of Seward created this plan, the impact and responsibilities of its implementation fell to a variety of decision-makers across all dimensions of the community including: the city, the school district, Concordia University, the business community, and neighborhood leaders.

The comprehensive plan should be consulted on all decisions that impact the future of Seward. A few examples include: capital improvements such as roadway and trail improvements, facility expansions and relocations such as schools and parks, and land use and development decisions.

### RESPONSIVE TO A CHANGING WORLD

*A plan provides a stable reference point for thoughtful consideration of how the community should react to change.*

The world is changing – now faster than ever – and the future of our communities will follow suit. Much as it has happened in the past, the city will continue to face pressure to change. By being thoughtful about what Seward is and knowing what it wants to become, it is most possible to discern meaningful advancements and worthy investments (consistent with the city’s vision) from the inevitable fads that too often derail a community from its true goals.

A community with a vision for what it wants to become will better understand the implications, opportunities, and challenges presented by emerging trends, preferences, and technologies. The comprehensive plan should provide a reference point for thoughtful consideration of change.

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## HOW TO USE THE PLAN?

*The plan is a living document that should be consulted often, used as a tool for collaboration, and provide guidance to many user groups.*

While the chief user will be the City of Seward in the way it guides decisions, investments, and operations, the document offers guidance well beyond the scope of city government. Furthermore, the greatest gains toward achieving the vision articulated in this plan must be implemented through collaboration, and the plan should function as a statement of both intent and common-ground for where to begin.



### THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The comprehensive plan is a representative summary of the shared aspirations of the engaged citizenry. The plan was developed through countless hours of conversations with diverse stakeholders representing all aspects of the Seward community. The public should raise the vision expressed in this plan in public forums and in their personal actions in support of improving the community.



### POLICYMAKERS

Policymakers, most notably the City Council and Planning Commission, will help set the course to realize this plan. These are the bodies, empowered by the citizenry, to create and administer the policies that shape development in Seward. This plan should be used as a reliable guide to help with decisions related to both large-scale policies but also on individual projects.



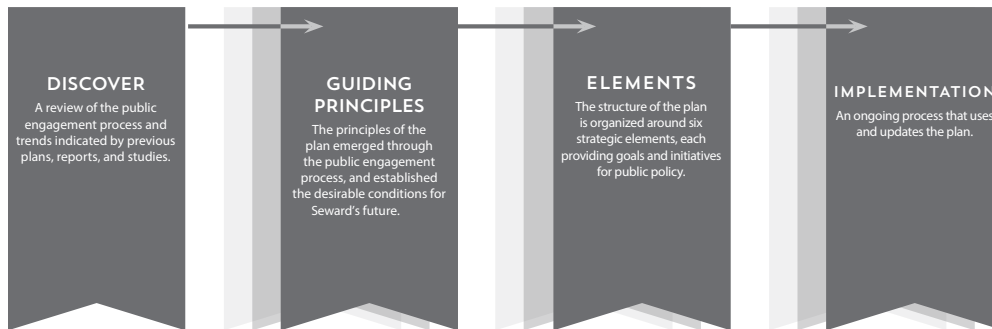
### DEVELOPERS AND LAND OWNERS

While guided by city policy, much of property development is undertaken through private and market-driven development. This plan should serve as a guide to developers who wish to work in Seward and by land owners. By understanding the city's vision for the future, these stakeholders can approach projects from a place of collaboration to avoid unnecessary delays and negotiations.



## NAVIGATING THE PLAN?

*The plan is organized as a progression of cumulative ideas: Discover (existing conditions); Guiding Principles (vision); Elements (direction on individual topic areas); and Implement (how to make the future a reality).*



The comprehensive plan is ambitious in its scope: to forecast community change; to review existing conditions; to provide guidance on all topics pertinent to the operation of a city; while offering this content in a manner that is interesting, usable, and accessible by a general audience. The least successful plans are the ones that fail to be implemented. The document is organized in the following manner:

### DISCOVER

*A review of the public engagement process and existing conditions in Seward.*

*"You have to know the past to understand the present." - Carl Sagan*

As an extension, we cannot know where we are headed until we understand where we stand. Discover examines public input, previous plans, and trends to set a solid foundation on which the remainder of the comprehensive plan is built.

### GUIDING PRINCIPLES

**A truly healthy community is created through many dimensions. These principles help frame the community vision and how it can be made a reality.**

*"All successful people are big dreamers. They imagine what their future could be, ideal in every respect, and then they work every day toward their distant vision, that goal or purpose." - Brian Tracy*

This also applies to all successful communities. They envision the details of the community they want to create and make daily strides (investment, decisions, and partnerships) toward making that future a reality. The Guiding Principles section explores Seward through the lens of these dimensions to articulate the many aspects of the future the community is trying to create. A healthy community does the following:

#### On Discover

"You have to know the past to understand the present."

- Carl Sagan

#### On Guiding Principles

"All successful people are big dreamers. They imagine what their future could be, ideal in every respect, and then they work every day toward their distant vision, that goal or purpose."

- Brian Tracy

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## On Elements

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“The difference  
between  
something good  
and something  
great is attention  
to detail.”

– Charles Swindoll

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## UNIFIED LAND USE PLAN

- The form of the city contribute structurally to the life residents will experience - from where they live, how they move around the city, and where they gather with friends, the form of the city silently creates this present and future.

The unified land use plan outlines a vision for how the city should develop including priority development areas, important street connections, and opportunities to reinforce existing neighborhoods and position new neighborhoods to offer a their residents an exceptional quality of life.

## ELEMENTS

- These four elements provide detailed guidance on key topic areas that contribute to the health and function of the city and will make take the vision a reality.

*“The difference between something good and something great is attention to detail.”*

- Charles Swindoll

The “comprehensive” part of comprehensive plan, these elements provide the detail necessary to make the vision a reality. The elements section is organized around the following five topic areas with each providing goals and initiatives for public and private policy.

1. A Connected City
2. Health & Activity
3. Strong Neighborhoods
4. Vibrant Businesses
5. Efficient Government



A Unified  
Land Use Plan



Connected  
City



Health  
& Activity



Strong  
Neighborhoods



Vibrant  
Businesses



Efficient  
Government

IMPLEMENT

Implementation is incremental, collaborative, and must be ongoing. This section highlights necessary actions, partners, and time-frames.

“Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes...” - Peter F. Drucker

Implementation must be incremental, collaborative, and ongoing. The chapter provides a roadmap for how to begin implementing the plan with individual actions sorted by importance (priority), type (investment, policy, action), and the partners who should collaborate to create the progress. The chapter provides an avenue for diverse stakeholders to make commitments to implementing elements of the plan.

INTEGRATED LAND USE VISION (CONTINUED)				
STEPS TOWARD IMPLEMENTATION				
RECOMMENDATION	TYPE	TERMS	LEAD-SHOP	PARTNERS
Require adequate screening of outdoor storage areas, preferably requiring that they are not visible from the I-29 corridor	Policy	Short	Planning Commission	City Council, City Staff
Ensure proper circulation within and between developments	Policy	Short	Planning Commission	City Council, City Staff
Provide proper wayfinding and gateway features at the major interchanges	Action	Medium	City Council	Planning Commission, City Staff
Encourage more mixed-use development, including residential uses, that provide housing close to jobs	Policy	Short	Planning Commission	City Council, City Staff
Commercial users should avoid large expanses of concrete that are visible from the interstate and do not integrate stormwater management best practices	Policy	Short	Planning Commission	City Council, City Staff
New developments along arterial streets should use shared entrances and avoid multiple access points	Policy	Short	Planning Commission	City Council, City Staff
Evaluate adopting a policy for geotechnical reports to be submitted with any preliminary plat for properties located within the environmentally constrained areas	Policy	Short	Planning Commission	City Council, City Staff, Developers

On Implement

"Unless commitment is made, there are only promises and hopes..."

- Peter F. Drucker



# Chapter 1

# DISCOVER

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A plan must be built on a firm understanding of the community.

The Seward Tomorrow Plan grows from public engagement, exploration of past community plans, and data analysis. This chapter explores these foundational elements on which the remainder of the plan is built.

## OVERVIEW OF FOUNDATION

Seward Tomorrow is built from a wealth of information which forms an accurate picture of Seward today. The process of discovery included reviewing decades of previous planning efforts and studies, an assortment of data, and by working closely with the public and a wide variety of stakeholder groups.

From this process, many ideas and insights emerged which form the content of the Seward Tomorrow Plan.



### Previous Plans Reviewed

2017 Downtown  
Revitalization Plan

2017 Downtown  
Marketing Plan

2016 Seward County  
Labor Study

2013 Seward  
Strategic Plan

2013 County-Wide  
Housing Study

Seward Uniform  
Land Development Ordinance

The Seward Plan (2001)



### Trend Analysis

Population, Demographic, and  
Market Trends

Housing Market Condition

Employment and Labor Trends

Geographic Factors on Existing  
Conditions

Building Permit and  
Zoning Data



### Public Engagement

Steering Committee  
(6 meetings)

Community Survey  
(335 participants)

Public Open House  
(3 events)

Stakeholder Group  
Discussions  
(8 meetings)

City Council  
(2 meetings)

Planning Commission  
(2 meetings)

## MAJOR THEMES FROM PREVIOUS PLANS

### ON LAND DEVELOPMENT

#### Assure that new development creates the greatest advantages for building the community

Growth should create excellent new residential environments, and it should also help improve the city's existing residential and business neighborhoods. Development directions should enhance positive features of the city, rather than create new patterns which turn away from the existing fabric of the city.

- *The Seward Plan (2001)*

#### Encourage the conservation of the existing housing stock.

Older homes represent a substantial housing resource that cannot be replaced at present costs. Moreover, the conservation of these units is vital to the health of traditional neighborhoods.

- *The Seward Plan (2001)*

### ON MOBILITY

#### Improve priority roadways to improve connections to Highway 34, Highway 15, and Interstate 80

Waverly Road, East Hillcrest/Bluff Road, Karol Kay are priorities for providing effective transportation routing to, from, and throughout Seward.

- *2013 Seward Strategic Plan*

#### Increase mobility and health through non-motorized transportation

The City of Seward seeks to increase the overall mobility and wellness of its citizenry by providing an integrated, non-motorized network of bicycle and pedestrian facilities throughout the community

- *2013 Seward Strategic Plan*

### ON ECONOMICS

#### Promote economic development

The economic development plan must emphasize the importance of preserving the high quality of life enjoyed by local residents and support community values such as environmental preservation, small town atmosphere, recreational facilities, and human resources.

- *2013 Seward Strategic Plan*

#### Reinvest in Downtown Seward

Downtown Seward represents the character of the community. As the first impression, the physical, figurative, and economic center of the city, and an exceptional urban place, the full potential of downtown Seward is yet unrealized. Additional housing, destination retail, and physical improvements will pay dividends (broadly) to the vitality of the community as a whole.

- *Seward Downtown Plan (2017)*

### ON QUALITY OF LIFE

An outdoor lifestyle is integral to Seward. Residents enjoy extraordinary access to excellent city and regional parks, along with the Blue River Valley. Park needs in the community include both active and passive recreation. Yet, in Seward, park and open space development is more than an amenity. Rather, it is an indispensable part of an overall economic development strategy.

- *The Seward Plan (2001)*

Future growth strategies should grow from a triad of futures, including: (1) its natural and built environment...; (2) Strategic location...; and (3) its intellectual resources.

- *The Seward Plan (2001)*

#### Plans Reviewed

2018 County-Wide  
Housing Study

2017 Downtown  
Revitalization Plan

2017 Downtown Marketing  
Plan

2016 Seward County Labor  
Study

2013 Seward Strategic Plan

Seward Unified  
Development Ordinance

The Seward Plan (2001)

## Trend Analysis

Population, Demographic,  
and Market Trends

Housing Market Condition

Employment and Labor  
Trends

Geographic Factors on  
Existing Conditions

Building Permit and  
Zoning Data

## TREND ANALYSIS – MAJOR THEMES

### PEOPLE AND POPULATIONS

#### Historic Population Change

- **Strong Historic Growth Pattern.** Seward grew at an average annual growth rate of 1.07% between 1990 and 2010. Neither too fast nor too slow, this growth rate is healthy, stable, and sustainable without posing an immediate threat to the character or function of the community.
- **Role in Regional Growth.** Both Seward and Seward County continue to grow; however, the City is growing in the share of the total county population that it accommodates. In 1990, the city accommodated 36.5% of the total county population, which increased to 41.7% in 2016.

**FIGURE 1.1:** Historic Population Change, 1960-2010

	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2016
Seward City	4,208	5,294	5,713	5,634	6,319	6,964	7,133
Seward County	13,581	14,460	15,789	15,450	16,496	16,750	17,113
% of County	31.0%	36.6%	36.2%	36.5%	38.3%	41.6%	41.7%

Source: US Census Bureau,

- **Cohort Analysis.** Seward's population is getting older with its median age increasing from 32.4 in 2010 to an estimated 38.1 in 2016. The trend is further reinforced in the following changes in the population character of the city during the same time period:
  - › A 1.4% decrease in residents aged 0-14. As these individuals rarely relocate on their own, this reduction is likely related to an out-migration of young adults or a lower birth rate in the millennial generation.
  - › A 1.8% increase in residents aged between 65 and 84.
  - › A 0.7% reduction in the number of residents aged between 35 and 44

**FIGURE 1.2:** 2010 and 2016 Summary Population

AGE GROUP	2010		2016		2010-2016 DIFFERENCE	
	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT	NUMBER	PERCENT
0-14	1,313	18.9%	1,242	17.4%	-71	-1.4%
15-19	725	10.4%	742	10.4%	17	0.0%
20-24	848	12.2%	948	13.3%	100	1.1%
25-34	771	11.1%	801	11.2%	30	0.2%
35-44	724	10.4%	695	9.7%	-29	-0.7%
45-54	850	12.2%	878	12.3%	28	0.1%
55-64	682	9.8%	670	9.4%	-12	-0.4%
65-74	452	6.5%	525	7.4%	73	0.9%
75-84	362	5.2%	432	6.1%	70	0.9%
85+	237	3.4%	200	2.8%	-37	-0.6%
Total	6,964	100.0%	7,133	100.0%	169	
Median	32.4		38.1			

Source: US Census Bureau,



- **Actual Versus Predicted Change.** An effective way of understanding population change is to use standard birth and death rates to predict the way a population would change, absent any migration, and then to compare the prediction to actual change.
  - › Based on the age/sex character of the population in 2010, the model predicts a 2016 population of 7,095. The prediction is 38 individuals low of the actual 2016 population (0.5%), however the change was greatly affected through in- and out-migration.
  - › Most notably, Concordia enrollment is visible in three phases:
    - » Enrollment Years (Ages 15 - 24): Relatively stable due to repeating enrollment
    - » Graduation / Relocation Years (25-34): A consistent decline due to graduating / relocating students
    - » Birth Ripple: Due to the influx of young adults (enrollment), the model predicts an increased number of children which does not occur due to exiting graduates
  - › Additionally, Seward saw in-migration in the 45 - 54 cohort (17.5% over predicted) and in the 75 - 84 cohort (28.4% over predicted)
- **Growth is Forecasted to Continue.** Based on factors such as historic population growth, building permit activity, and recent land development plans, Seward's population growth is projected to continue at a rate of 1.0% annually. More information in the chapter conclusion.

**FIGURE 1.3:** Predicted 2016 Population Versus Actual 2016 Population (2010 Base)

AGE GROUP	2010 ACTUAL	2016 PREDICTED	2016 ACTUAL	DIFFERENCE	% VARIANCE
0-14	1,313	1,373	1,242	-131	-9.6%
15-19	725	430	742	312	72.7%
20-24	848	662	948	286	43.1%
25-34	771	1,297	801	-496	-38.2%
35-44	724	760	695	-65	-8.6%
45-54	850	747	878	131	17.5%
55-64	682	766	670	-96	-12.6%
65-74	452	491	525	34	7.0%
75-84	362	337	432	95	28.4%
85+	237	231	200	-31	-13.5%
Total	6,964	7,095	7,133	38	0.5%

Source: US Census Bureau,

## ECONOMY AND REGIONAL INTERACTIONS

Seward's location is a strategic asset to the community which affords it access to labor, employment, and amenities not normally available to residents of small-towns. Its location with convenient access to and from Lincoln continues to shape Seward's population, economy, and character.

### Transportation & Employment

#### • Inflow / Outflow for Primary Employment

- › More than 5,000 employees interact with Seward's economy as their home or workplace.
- › Of these employees, 40% live in Seward and commute elsewhere for their primary employment.
- › Of the nearly 3,000 individuals employed in Seward, 36% live and work in Seward while the remaining 63% live elsewhere but travel to Seward for work.
- › Seward plays important roles as a bedroom to its commuters, a workplace for its commuter employees, and a home for its residents and resident employees. A vibrant and balanced community is desirable to all groups.

#### • Where Seward Residents are Employed?

- › Of Seward's total labor force (residents aged 16+), 34% are employed in Seward, 29% in Lincoln, 5% in Omaha, and 31% in other communities.

#### • Distance and Direction for Primary Employment

- › Of the number of individuals employed in Seward, 19% travel less than 10 miles and 14% travel between 10 and 24 miles.
- › For those leaving Seward for work, the greatest share (9.71%) travels east between 10 and 24 miles to Lincoln. While it is not unexpected, many residents would expect the percentage to be higher.
- › There are also notable percentages of residents traveling short distanced to the south, and the southwest.



U.S. Census Bureau  
(8 year average – 2008, 2010, 2012, and 2014 estimates)

**FIGURE 1.4:** Where Seward Residents are Employed? Aged 16+

EMPLOYMENT LOCATION	2008	2010	2012	2014	AVERAGE
Seward NE	31%	32%	37%	36%	34%
Lincoln NE	28%	30%	29%	30%	29%
Omaha NE	6%	5%	6%	6%	5%
All Other Communities	35%	33%	28%	28%	31%

US Census Bureau, 2016 American Community Survey

Business Composition and Employment

- **Primary Market Establishments**
  - › Service businesses account for nearly 39% of all businesses operating in Seward. The remaining classified businesses all account for between 10 and 20% of all establishments. This balance suggests that the economy would be resilient to market shifts.
- **Total Market Establishments**
  - › The prevalence of service businesses decreases by 4% and the share of industrial businesses increases by 8%.
- **Primary Market Employment**
  - › The service businesses account for nearly 39% of all establishments, employ nearly 47% of all employees. Likewise, retail trade (18% of all establishments) employs more than 21% of all employees.
- **Total Market Employment**
  - › Both the service and retail sectors employ a larger proportion than their share of establishments which suggests the presence of a few major employers operating in these market sectors.

Economic Market Areas

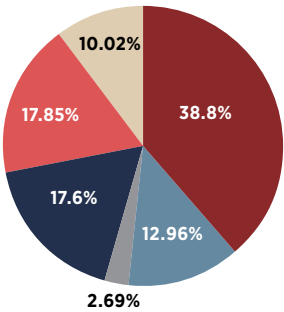
Primary Market

The areas where Seward is the center of economic gravity. For this purpose, the Seward City Limits

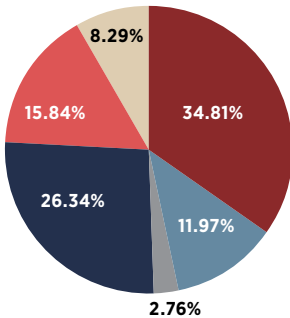
Secondary Market

The areas where residents look to Seward first for goods and services. The market reaches up to 18 miles from the city center.

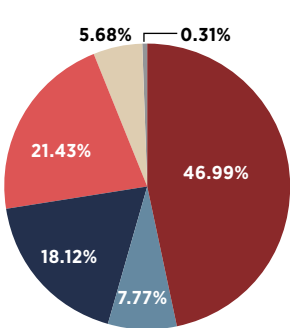
Primary Market Establishments



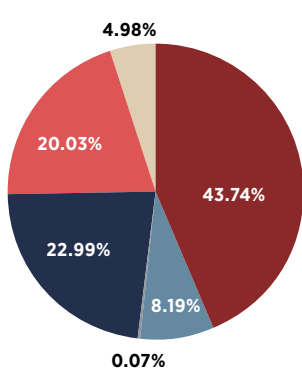
Total Market Establishments (Primary and Secondary)



Primary Market Employment



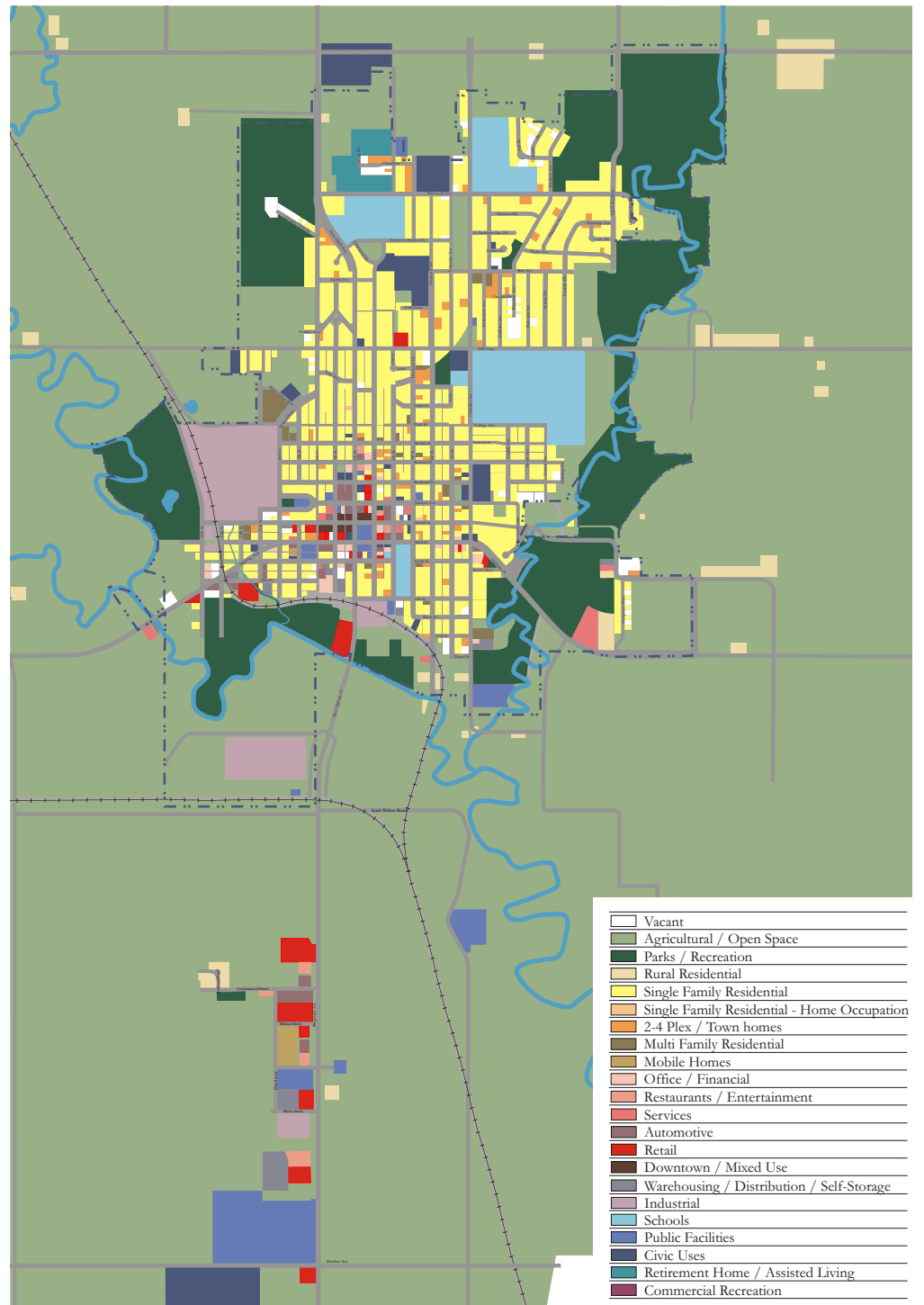
Total Market Employment (Primary and Secondary)



## PHYSICAL TRENDS

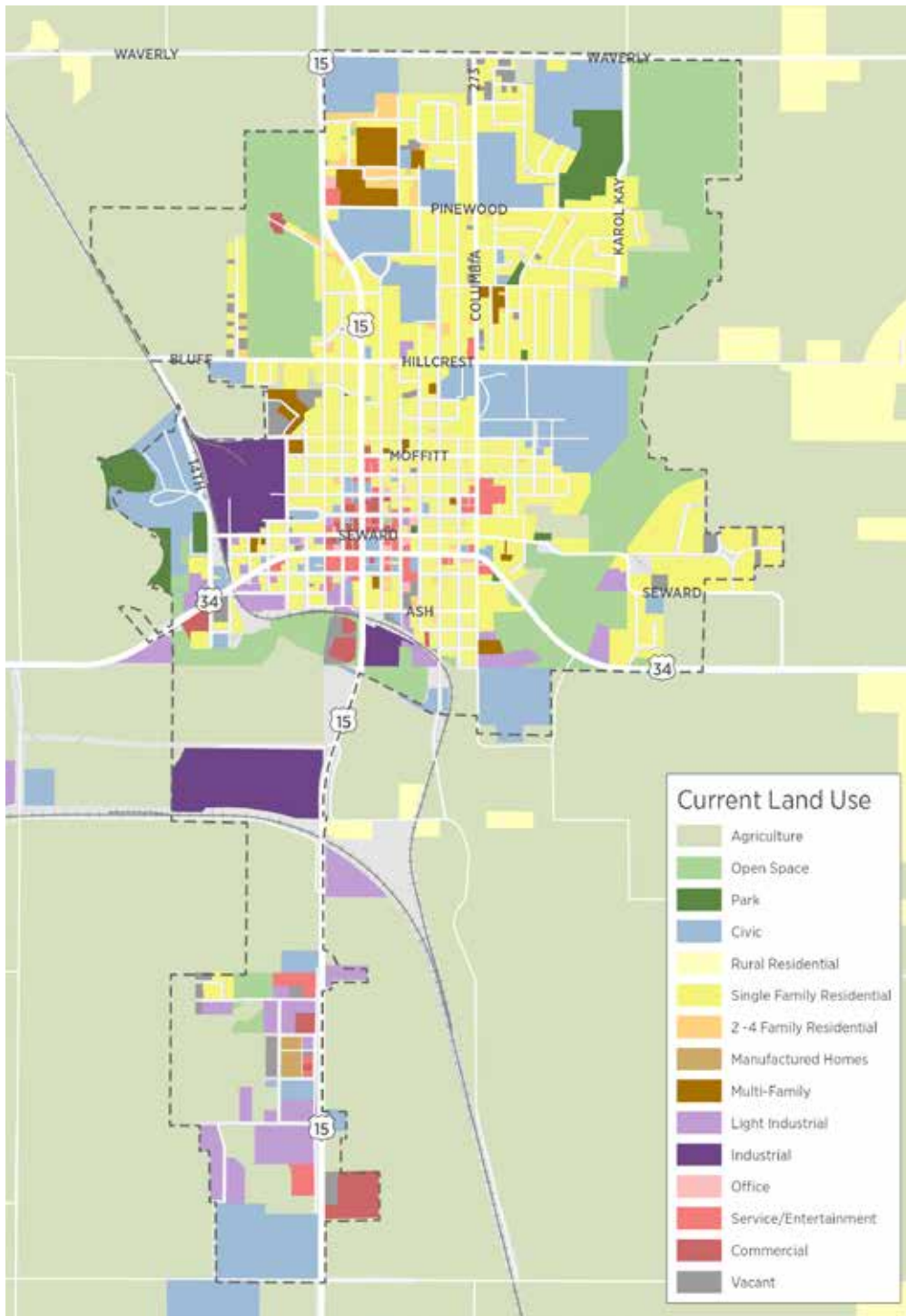
### Current Land Use

- Geographically, Seward has grown into its footprint and its many amenities including its wealth of recreational lands. As such, the density of the community increased due to the addition of new residents without the need to add a significant amount of land for support facilities.
- While the total density of land increased, the density of residential land decreased, which likely reflects the development of lower-density neighborhoods including Ridge Run and south of Waverly Road.



**Figure 1.5:** 2001 Seward Plan, Current Land Use

- While much of the growth occurred contiguous to existing development (south of Waverly, east of Plum Creek, and north of the railroad), several notable expansions have occurred:
  - › Expansion east of Plum Creek. The extension of infrastructure has accommodated additional residential growth and represents the eastern gateway to the city on Highway 34.
  - › Annexation of Highway 15 South to Fletcher Road. The extension of the city limits and infrastructure to this area allowed for business development and represents the southern gateway to the city on Highway 15.
  - › Annexation west of the Golf Course. While much of this land has been designated as floodplain, this expansion has accommodated additional residential development and will form the western frame of the city core.



**Figure 1.6:** Current Land Use, 2018

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## PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

### A COMMUNITY BUILDING PROCESS

The planning process is a conversation about the future, the statement of a common vision, and the creation of a practical implementation strategy to generate meaningful outcomes and momentum for future action. The process recognizes that each stakeholder has a valuable perspective but also the ability (and responsibility) to help create a better future for their community.

As such, the public engagement process was specifically designed to engage as many residents and stakeholders as possible in the conversation about the future of their community.

#### Steering Committee

Local knowledge, insight, and guidance is essential to crafting a plan that represents Seward's vision for its future. To achieve this level of local participation, a group of representative stakeholders was assembled to guide the process and engage a diverse array of stakeholders and perspectives. The Steering Committee included representation from: the Seward City Council, Seward City Staff, downtown business and land owners, Concordia University leadership, Concordia University students, the school district, high school students, the Seward County Chamber and Development Partnership, and the business community.

#### City Council Workshop

At the beginning of the process, a workshop was held with the City Council to explore the purpose of a comprehensive plan, the many ways it can be used, and to understand their perspective on what a successful project would look like to them and their constituents.

#### Community Survey and Online Engagement

It is important to engage stakeholders in a variety of ways, including through the internet and social media. In early 2018, 335 stakeholders participated in an online survey which explored their perspective on a variety of community issues relevant to the Seward Tomorrow Plan.

Residents were also invited to stay involved in the project through [www.SewardTomorrow.com](http://www.SewardTomorrow.com), which included regular updates and meeting announcements.





## Stakeholder Group Discussions

A series of stakeholder group discussions were held over the course of three days to solicit input, explore ideas, and build excitement and engagement behind the planning process. To gain the greatest depth of understanding possible, the groups were organized into the following topic areas:

- Seward High School Student Council
- Concordia University Student Government
- Business Community
- Real Estate, Builders, and Developers
- Economic Development and Tourism

## Public Open House Events

A series of open house events were completed throughout the planning process to share progress, to solicit input, and to engage stakeholders in the implementation of the plan. The open house events were scheduled to coincide with major project milestones including the kick-off, the design workshop, and the unveiling of the final draft for public comment.

- Seward Public Library: 3/15/2018
- Neutral Grounds: 4/18/2018
- Bottle Rocket Brewing Company: 4/19/2018

## Design Workshop

A design workshop is a cornerstone of the planning process in which members of the public are invited to work along-side the planning team as they work through the details of how the community should grow. The workshop was held over the course of two days in April with public events in the evenings.



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"What is the right size for Seward? Is it 8,000 or is it 12,000 residents?"

– Stakeholder

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"Affordable fiber-to-the-home, second floor downtown development, and more affordable housing"

– Stakeholder

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## Public Hearings and Approval Meetings

The Seward Tomorrow Plan will become the operating document of the Seward City Council and Planning Commission. Through the process of formally adopting the plan, the two public hearings were held to solicit input on the plan.

## STAKEHOLDER THEMES

### On the Vision for the Future

Seward is an exceptional place today because it has focused on creating, preserving, and reinforcing exceptional community resources including its downtown, school district, the university, and its park and trail system.

- **Preserve and expand upon quality of life through high quality and intentional growth.**

Throughout the process, stakeholders asked: "What is the right size for Seward? Is it 8,000 or 12,000 residents?" The question is exactly the reason the city elected to create the Seward Tomorrow Plan as the right answer depends entirely on the scale that future development takes.

- **Maintain the character and quality of the city while accommodating additional growth through thoughtful and connected developments.**

### On Character, Downtown, and Quality Neighborhoods

People choose to live in Seward because of its small town atmosphere which allows them to enjoy traditional neighborhoods, a picturesque downtown square, high quality amenities, and knowing their neighbors.

- **Preserve the small town character of the community by reinforcing downtown as a destination, reinvesting in traditional neighborhoods, and integrating amenities into new development areas.**

### On Transportation

Seward is easy to navigate by car, by bike, and on foot. Its balanced transportation network contributes to the small town character that residents enjoy by ensuring that no part of the city is too far away or too isolated. Many stakeholders expressed a strong desire to complete the trail loop around Seward and for better access between neighborhoods and trailheads.

- **Create a transportation system that is safe and comfortable for vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.**

### On Economic Development

A community with a vibrant economy is able to reinvest in the quality of life that it offers its residents and businesses. The pursuit of economic development must be consistent with the outcomes that the community is trying to achieve.

- **Pursue economic development prospects that will reinforce quality of life in Seward.**
- **Support existing local businesses and incubate small businesses locally.**



# COMMUNITY SURVEY SUMMARY

## Perceptions

Respondents indicated a strong overall perception of the community with the following items being rated especially favorable: Concordia University, schools and educational facilities, amenities such as the bandshell, and the Plum Creek Sports Complex. When asked more broadly to evaluate their perceptions of the community as a whole, respondents expressed high favorability for the image of the community, the attractiveness to visitors, senior services and the availability of senior living, and civic involvement and volunteerism.

Respondents were less favorable about: the business climate, support for new business, available workforce, the ability to retain new graduates, employment growth, indoor recreation, availability of student-oriented housing, and affordability of rental housing.

## Greatest Assets

Over 70% of the respondents selected overall quality of life, proximity to Lincoln, and the community size as the top assets. Proximity to Lincoln as an asset aligns with 45% of respondents who wants to see growth eastward. The second highest asset identify is Concordia University according to 40% of the respondents.

## Priorities

Over 60% of the respondent said strengthening downtown as a destination and growing the local businesses should be the city’s top priorities. The next highest priorities were focused on attracting more diverse industries, increasing the supply of affordable housing, improving and increasing active transportation such as walking and biking, and preserving the character and existing neighborhoods.

### Community Priorities

1.	Strengthen Downtown	65.38%
2.	Grow local businesses	60.00%
3.	Increase affordable housing	38.85%
4.	Strengthen neighborhoods	37.31%
5.	Attract more diverse industries	33.85%
6.	Improve & increase active transportation facilities/ trails	31.15%
7.	Attract more arts & cultural features- entertainment	23.85%
8.	Provide a wider variety of housing types	23.08%

### Greatest Assets

1.	Location- proximity to Lincoln	79.92%
2.	Overall Quality of Life	71.81%
3.	Community size	69.50%
4.	Concordia University	40.93%
5.	Historic Character	28.96%
6.	Downtown District	20.85%

"Finish the trail system around the town."

- Stakeholder

"I like the small town charm. Keep the character of the small town."

- Stakeholder



# Chapter 2

## Guiding Principles

A successful community adheres to its own values, principles, and goals.

These principles came from the people of Seward and underpin the ideas, policies, and capital recommendations of the Seward Tomorrow Plan. These principles reflect the future that the people of Seward want from their city.



A Unified  
Land Use Plan



Connected  
City



Health &  
Activity



Strong  
Neighborhoods



Vibrant  
Businesses



Efficient  
Government



## A Unified Land Use Plan

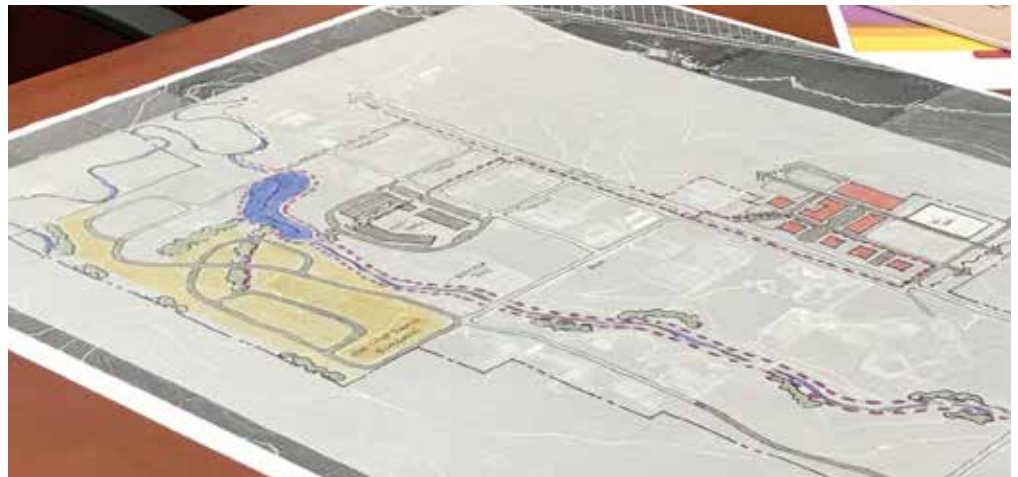
### A UNIFIED LAND USE PLAN

Many know Seward as the "Fourth of July Capital of Nebraska." This title is well-earned and demonstrates the capacity of the community to do something exceptional; however, the identity does little to provide practical direction to what the city should become. In this way, Seward has struggled over the past decades with competing destinies: (1) as a bedroom community and (2) as a city independent of Lincoln.

Seemingly, these options are diametrically opposed in terms of population and employment dynamics; however, when you consider the question of why people choose to live in Seward, the commonality becomes crystal clear: it is because Seward is a great community.

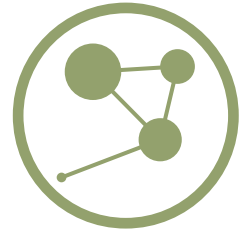
People from Lincoln choose Seward like they would any other exceptional neighborhood - based on its character, amenities, and the opportunities it has to offer. Residents and other newcomers choose Seward for these same reasons in addition to its academic, employment, and civic features.

- **Invest in the things that make Seward special**
- **Integrate community amenities into new development areas**
- **Invest to keep existing neighborhoods strong and create new high quality neighborhoods**
- **Focus energy on growing employment that will reinforce Seward as a great place to live, work, play, and do business**



## A CONNECTED CITY

A strong city is one that provides ample connections - physical and social - between its people, schools and civic organizations, community features and amenities, and business districts. For full-time and long-term residents of Seward, its people and neighborhoods are well connected; however, newcomers often find it difficult to connect with the city and its social groups.



Connected  
City

### Physical Connections and Mobility

- **Develop a future transportation network that will support desirable patterns of community development**
- **Provide a transportation system that is safe, convenient, and offers a variety of interconnected modes**
- **Connect Seward's neighborhoods and community destinations with a trail system that will provide a safe and healthy transportation alternative**

### Social Connections

- **Promote neighborhoods that feature central features where residents can engage with their neighbors**
- **Promote actions that connect new and existing residents with community organizations and each other to build the social capacity of Seward**







## Health & Activity

### HEALTHY COMMUNITY | ACTIVE LIFESTYLE

Communities that seamlessly integrate trails and recreational facilities into environments that make people want to be active are physically, socially, and economically healthy. It is clear that Seward residents are passionate about the existing trail, excited and impatient about completing the loop around the city, and are eager about additional recreational and wellness facilities.

- **Invest in trails and sidewalks that connect people, support healthy activities, and help reinforce Seward's small town atmosphere**
- **Provide an array of active and passive recreational facilities to allow residents ample opportunities to engage in their community and to meet and gather with their peers**
- **Provide park and recreation facilities, programs and services that are connected and accessible to all residents**
- **Identify gaps in existing facilities and explore options to fulfill community needs**



## STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS

High-quality neighborhoods contribute to the image, health, and happiness of residents. In turn, these residents reinvest their time, money, and energy to contribute to the overall financial and social health of the city. The investment and insistence that neighborhoods be well-designed, well-built, and well-maintained ensures that these areas will contribute to the quality, character, and economic health of the city as a whole.

- **Create neighborhoods and promote infill development that builds on the character and quality of existing neighborhoods**
- **Connect neighborhoods to community destinations including jobs, commerce, and recreation**
- **Expand housing diversity by type and cost**



Strong  
Neighborhoods







## Vibrant Businesses

### VIBRANT BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

Seward's business community is relatively strong, especially its manufacturing sectors; however, the city continues to face challenges meeting the needs of its residents in terms of retail, restaurant, and other commercial services.

The goals of the "unified vision" are built on a foundation of balance in that people and businesses choose Seward for multiple reasons and those multiple reasons must be convincing. Therefore, this balance must be carried forward in the economic development strategy by allocating resources to manufacturing and service/retail markets.

- **Invest in Downtown Seward as a destination, an economic engine, and the heart of the community**
- **Promote a strong retail, restaurant, and service economy**
- **Focus business recruitment on sectors that will complement the character of the city**
- **Support and promote the creation of community amenities that will attract and retain a young and talented workforce**





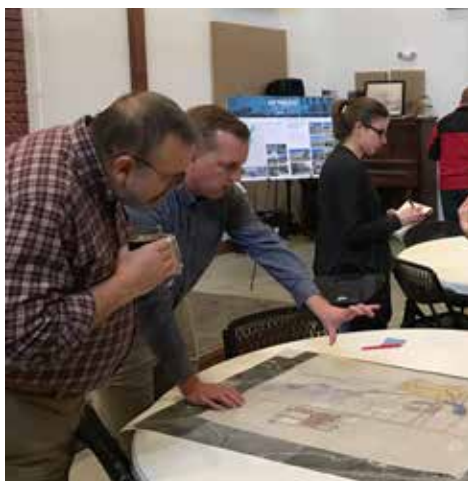
## EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT

The City of Seward is responsible for the health, safety, and welfare of its residents. It provides these services through the creation and maintenance of public infrastructure (streets, sewers, and parks), the administration of the city's budget, and the administration of the community's vision for its future. This document addresses much of government's decision making in this section and in the land use chapter; much of infrastructure in transportation (streets, often as a proxy for all underground infrastructure; parks and trails in the healthy and active chapter; leaving "efficient government" to include public facilities and policies.



Efficient  
Government

- **Ensure land use, infrastructure, and transportation patterns support the efficient and cost-effective delivery of emergency services**
- **Guide the extension of infrastructure in a way that supports efficient patterns of community and economic development**
- **Strengthen existing public facilities and infrastructure to encourage private sector investment and reinvestment, job creation, and to improve quality of life**
- **Plan ahead for major capital projects and implement in an expedient fashion to avoid unnecessary costs**







# Chapter 3

# Unified Land Use Plan

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Urban development patterns are formed by private and public investment, transportation pathways, and environmental constraints.

The Unified Land Use Plan was created through detailed study of the land, the community, its many people, and their desires for their community. This chapter outlines the many components that contribute to the physical character of the city.



## FOUNDATIONS OF LAND USE

### PRINCIPLES FOR RESPONSIBLE COMMUNITY GROWTH

#### Use urban services efficiently

Similar to the city's historic growth pattern, compact and contiguous development will help preserve the character of Seward as it continues to grow. This type of development reduces costly infrastructure extensions by developing on under-utilized infill properties or in strategic locations adjacent to existing development. Contiguous development also minimizes travel distances and encourages development that is more accessible to both pedestrians and cars.

#### Promote diverse housing options

Residents have expressed a clear desire for more diverse housing options at prices that more people can afford. Nationally, the Baby Boomer and Millennial generations continue to demonstrate a preference toward products with smaller lots and lower maintenance products including brownstones, townhomes, and small lot single family units, in addition to traditional single family homes. Neighborhoods with diverse housing options provide a mix of entry level options, move-up options for growing families, and downsize options for seniors and downsizers.



#### Promote infill development and neighborhood reinvestment

Infill development supports the economic value of Seward's existing neighborhoods by promoting investment in established areas with existing capital assets, rather than focusing attention solely at the fringe. Infill development and neighborhood reinvestment help make full use of existing infrastructure, thus limiting unnecessary expansions and associated expense. Such developments are appropriate when they respect the character of the surrounding neighborhoods.

#### Address stormwater management at both a local and regional level

Preserving wetlands, low lying areas, and floodplains can protect property values for adjacent and downstream developments, enhance and connect the park system, reduce flooding and lower development costs by providing more natural areas for water to be absorbed while reducing the amount of fill needed on a site. A network of natural preserve areas will enhance community character, protect existing properties and future development areas, and avoid short-term rewards with long-term costs.



#### Plan for community amenities such as parks and schools

Parks, open space, schools, and other public places can serve as neighborhood focal points that promote community activity, personal interaction, a sense of place, and ultimately a sense of ownership in the community. The physical form and function of a city is created communally with many stakeholders - including the city, school district, and others - contributing to the patterns that begin to emerge; as such, the community should plan for the interplay of major of community features to ensure that the future that is created is convenient, pleasant, and desirable.



## Provide a multi-modal and connected transportation network

A network of streets, trails, pedestrian paths and on-street bike facilities should provide safe, efficient connectivity and accommodate a diverse set of mobility needs and preferences. Although not every street can or will accommodate all modes of transportation, many residents expressed an interest in making sure that all of Seward is a place where residents can comfortably navigate on foot or by bike.

## Enhance public safety and minimize hazards

Land use decisions have a wide variety of effects on public safety and hazard mitigation. Preserving natural drainage-ways to manage stormwater minimizes the risk of injury and property damage due to flooding. A well-connected transportation network promotes better emergency service provision and evacuation routes in case of large-scale hazards. A mixture of land uses within neighborhoods enhances security by creating activity and “eyes on the street” throughout the day

## Encourage balanced and connected neighborhoods

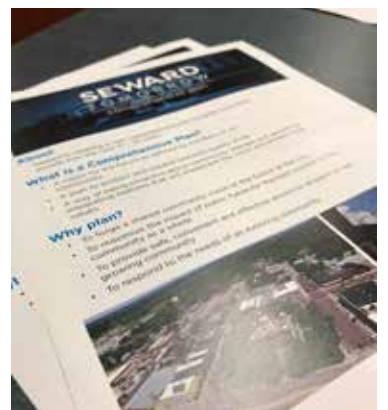
Residents often spoke of the need for a greater sense of “neighborhood”, especially in new development areas. Balanced neighborhoods provide residents with easy access to places where they can live, shop, work, play, and engage in community life. Mixing compatible uses, such as a corner store or school in a residential neighborhood, creates a sense of community and promotes efficiencies in infrastructure and travel times. Balanced neighborhoods offer a variety of housing options, access to open space, and contain activity centers such as parks, schools, civic centers, or commercial areas that are well-connected to surrounding neighborhoods. Appropriate transitions should be made between higher intensity uses, such as industry, and lower intensity uses, such as homes.

## Use public investments to promote private development

Seward’s public investments in streets, water, sewer, parks and civic facilities can be leveraged to promote private development. When strategically located, a new park or public building can inspire private residential development, while targeted infrastructure improvements can attract new industry. Any infrastructure extension should be done with the goal of maximizing private investment, thus supporting the long-term costs associated with any infrastructure or facility.

## Make decisions in a transparent and collaborative manner

Land use and environmental decisions should be made through a transparent process, with opportunity for input from all citizens and effected entities, such as the county or school district. Creation and implementation of land use decisions should be shared responsibilities that promote quality living environments and efficient use of fiscal resources.





## 100 Year Flood Plain

An area prone to inundation by a 100-year flood event (an event with a 1% annual probability or that over the course of a 30-year mortgage has a 26% chance of being flooded at least once). These areas are severely limited from development and are subject to many additional requirements. Development should not occur in the 100-year floodplain.

## 500 Year Flood Plain

An area prone to inundation by a 500-year flood event (an event with a 0.2% annual probability). These areas are limited from development, but issues can typically be mitigated responsibly without significant negative impact to the overall flow of water. Development may occur in the 500-year floodplain if it can be made flood resistant and be responsibly mitigated.

## Floodway

A regulatory floodway means the channel of a waterway that must be reserved in order to discharge the base flood without cumulatively increasing the water's surface elevation more than a designated height. Development should never occur in the floodway.

# WHERE WE GROW

## ENVIRONMENTAL FRAMEWORK

Seward's natural landscape is a tremendous asset to the community and its heritage, but it is also a challenge to future growth. The floodplains and the underlying hydrology guide the direction of growth through increased costs, the increased likelihood of hazard events, and the negative impact of distancing new development from the core identity of Seward.

### Major Themes

#### Floodplains

Seward is framed by floodplains, which divide parts of the community and guide the direction of its growth. Due to the increased risk to life and property, development in the floodplains should be minimized, limiting the direction of community growth to the north, south, and east in areas contiguous to existing development.

#### Wetlands

Seward's floodplains include several natural wetland areas that are rich habitats and effective flood deterrents. These natural features should be preserved and replicated in new development areas to manage stormwater and to create low-maintenance open space in neighborhoods.

#### Natural Drainage Areas

The drainage areas should be preserved as natural open space and protected from urban development. However, these spaces should also be viewed as part of the city's open space network which can feature trails that provide a connection to neighborhoods, destinations, and nature.

#### Stormwater Management

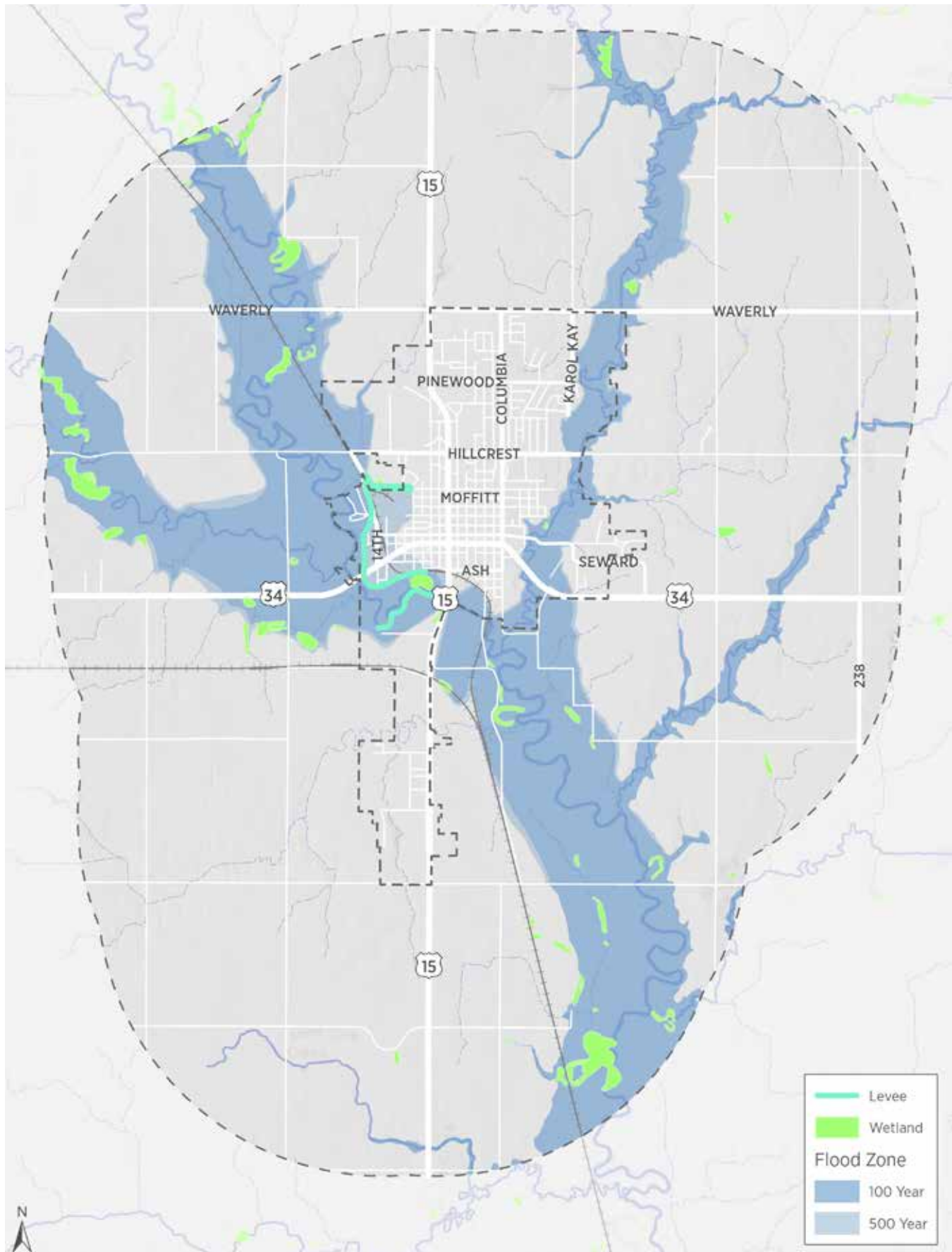
Land development increases the rate of stormwater discharge that, unchecked, will negatively impact adjacent lands and buildings through erosion and flooding. This issue is especially important in Seward because its relatively flat topography can be problematic for removing and managing stormwater in a responsible manner. Development projects should manage their impact on stormwater runoff through onsite detention or retention basins, and then release the water more gradually.

### A Natural Approach to Stormwater

Stormwater systems have traditionally focused on collecting rainwater into networks of pipes that transport water off-site quickly to detention basins and creeks. These systems can be costly to maintain and have negative side effects such as stream bank erosion and contaminated streams. Over the years, Seward has worked to improve the ways it handles stormwater, but often this is done on-site through small detention basins or even underground basins. Developments constructed before the detention regulations, with a high degree of impervious surfaces, still result in an overwhelming amount of runoff, causing ponding and flooding during rain events.

Seward, like many communities, has been trying to take a more natural approach to stormwater, by preserving natural areas that help mimic pre-development drainage patterns. In the past, this has included mitigation areas to offset the wetlands lost to development. However, as the city looks to the south where water already naturally drains, the focus must shift to increasing the volume of stormwater absorbed into the soil or stored in ponds.

Protecting this area allows it to continue serving its natural function. A natural system requires less costly hard infrastructure and the gradual infiltration results in less erosion and contamination in the waterways.



**Figure 3.1:** Environmental Limitations

## HOW MUCH WE GROW

Based on historic and recent growth patterns, upcoming projects, and strong economic development prospects, Seward is forecasted to continue growing. Urban growth should be viewed through three interrelated lenses: population growth (market pressure); land growth (response to pressure); and accommodation (configuration of development).

### POPULATION GROWTH

Seward has grown steadily for decades, and that growth is projected to continue into the future. Analysis of the existing population and recent patterns forms the basis for the projections of Seward's future population through 2040. This projection then drives the projection of land consumption and contributes to the city's future land use map contained later in this chapter. The plan considered several models based on probability.

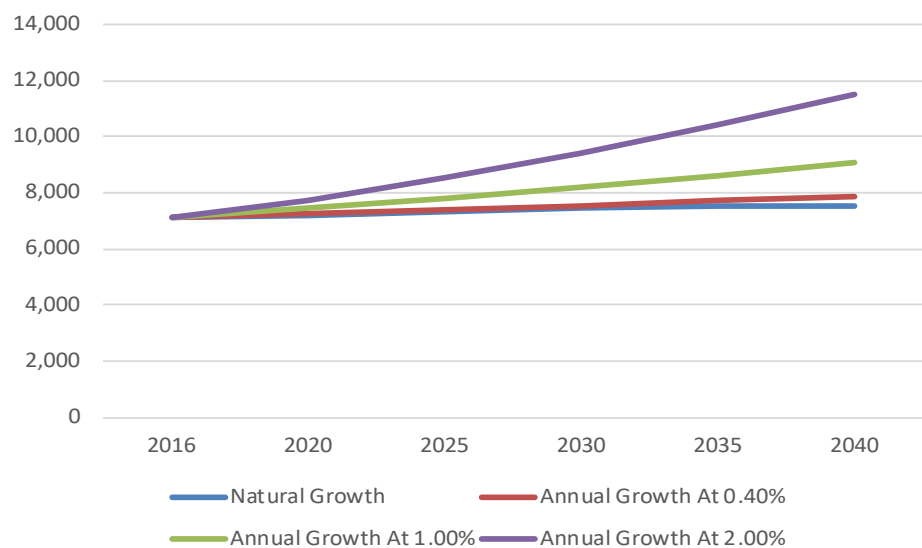
**Option 1: Natural Population Change.** Considering only births and deaths of the current population, this scenario was eliminated because Seward is experiencing in-migration and because the model overstates the role of university students on predicted births.

**Option 2: Forecast on Historic Growth, 2010 - 2016 (0.40% annual).** Predicting growth will continue at the same rate as 2010 through 2016, Seward would grow by 718 residents by 2040. While this reflects the ebb and flow of development in Seward, it was thought to be too conservative.

**Option 3: Ambitious Growth (2.0% annually).** Assuming an increase in residential and employment growth, the ambition model predicts that Seward will grow by 4,340 residents by 2040. While this scenario may be accurate for short increments during the next 20 years, the rate is not sustainable due to limited builder capacity and not desirable due to the rapid change it would bring to the character of Seward.

**Option 4 (preferred): Forecast on Historic Growth, 2000 - 2010 (1.0 annual).** Predicting growth will continue at the same rate as 2000 - 2010, Seward would be expected to grow by 1,924 residents by 2040. This model aligns well with historic trends, recent development plans, the vision of community leadership, builder capacity, and could be sustained over the next 20 years through steady progress. For these reasons, a 1.0% annual growth rate is selected as the Seward Tomorrow Population Forecast.

**FIGURE 3.2:** Population Projection Models





## LAND USE GROWTH

Population growth must be supported by new places for people to live, work, and play. Therefore, population growth has a direct correlation to the demand for new development or redevelopment at higher densities.

Many factors affect how and where Seward will grow, including environmental factors, market preferences, and access to city services. The land use planning process gave residents an opportunity to make choices about what kind of community they want to live in and the type of community they want to leave for their children and grandchildren. In order to facilitate these choices, a scenario planning process was undertaken with the Steering Committee and shared with the public so that they could visualize the consequences of choices made today.

Two growth scenarios were presented to the Steering Committee and public to solicit input on growth options including how (density) and where (location) Seward should grow. A third scenario was developed based on input from these groups and additional refinement.

- **Adjusted Trend Scenario.** This scenario assumes that the city will grow at a similar density and patterns that it has in the past, including a large number of single-family detached homes.
- **Efficiency Scenario.** This scenario assumes that development will happen in a slightly more compact manner, including a greater variety of housing options on smaller lots and reflect the national trend in smaller scale retail.
- **Hybrid Scenario.** This scenario is a hybrid of the above scenarios with greater allocation to medium and density residential uses. The model shifts at 2025 toward increased residential density.



## Estimating Future Land Requirements

The amount of land designated for planning purposes is greater than the projected need, in order to allow market flexibility and guide longer-term planning.

This demand will be accommodated within existing developments that have not built out, through infill sites, and in future developments.

The calculation to determine the amount of land that will be dedicated for each land use type follows:

Residential: 2X projected

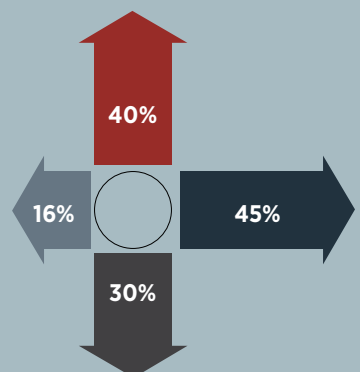
Commercial: 1.5X projected

Industrial: 3X projected

## Engagement on Growth Direction

Survey respondents were asked "which directions would you prefer for community growth?" They were allowed to select multiple directions.

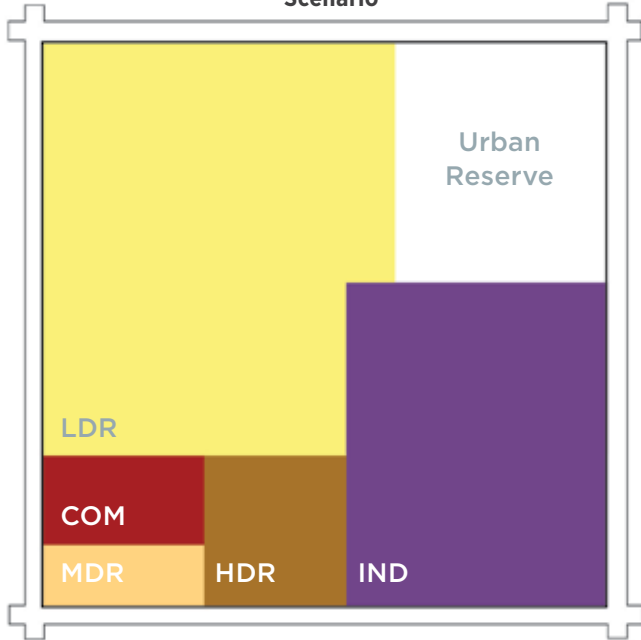
Respondents indicated a preference toward east, north, and, to a lesser degree, south.



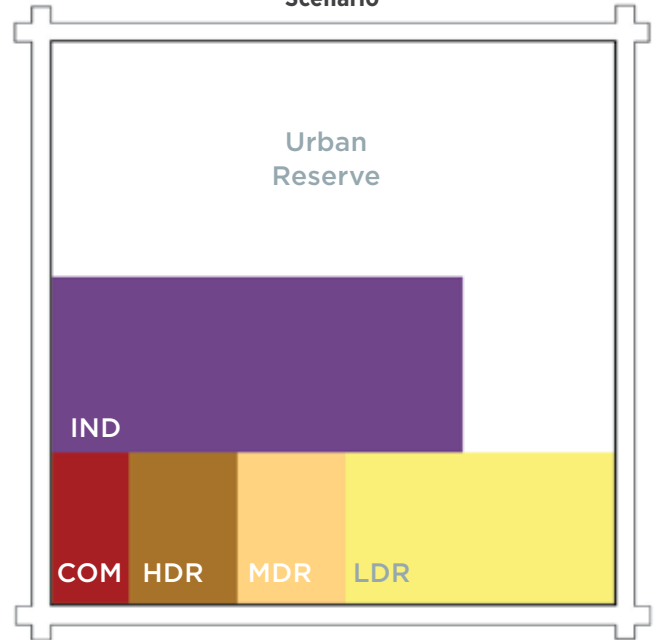
## Findings

- The Adjusted Trend Scenario will require approximately 50% more land and infrastructure than the Hybrid Scenario
- In the Adjusted Trend Scenario were to continue, Seward would expand rapidly to the north and east further separating new residents from the physical core of the city, amenities, and the character of the community
- Through the scenario planning process, the Steering Committee found that continuing the Adjusted Trend Scenario would be costly and it would be difficult to retain Seward's character

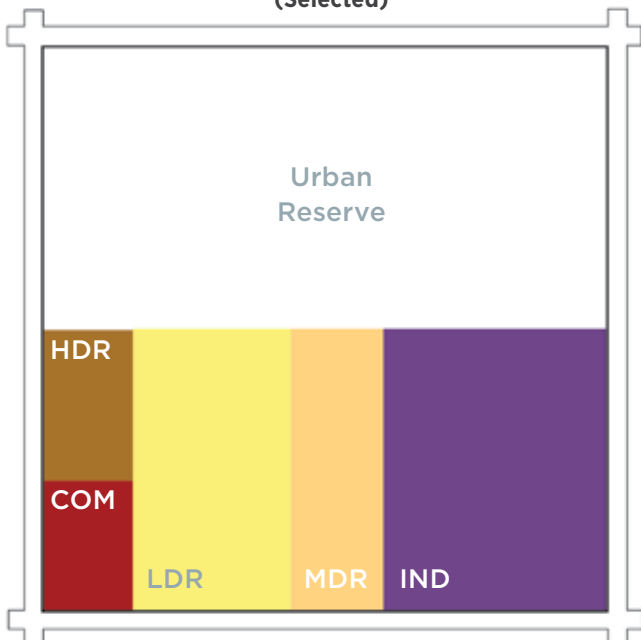
**Adjusted Trend Scenario**



**Efficiency Scenario**



**Hybrid Scenario  
(Selected)**



**Hybrid Scenario  
Composition**

	Projected Need (ac)	Designated Land (ac)	Percent of Residential	
			Through 2025	2025-2040
<b>Low Density Residential</b>	36	72	30%	30%
<b>Medium Density Residential</b>	23	46	45%	30%
<b>High Density Residential</b>	8	15	25%	40%
<b>Commercial</b>	20	30	-	-
<b>Industrial</b>	58	174	-	-

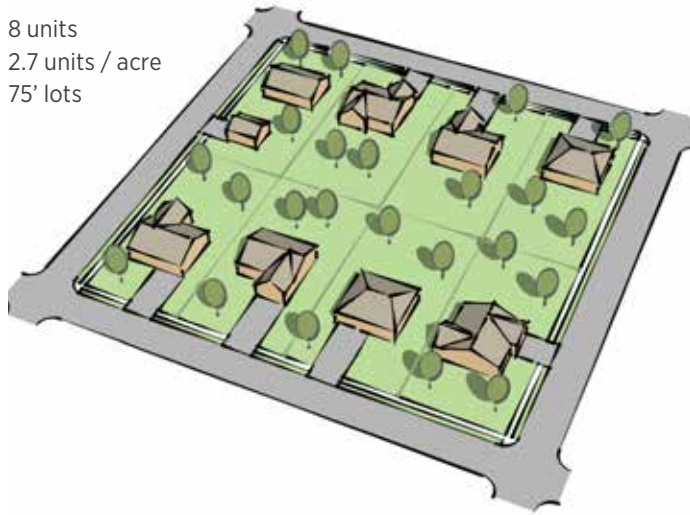
Source: RDG Planning & Design

## HOW WE GROW: VISUALIZING DENSITY

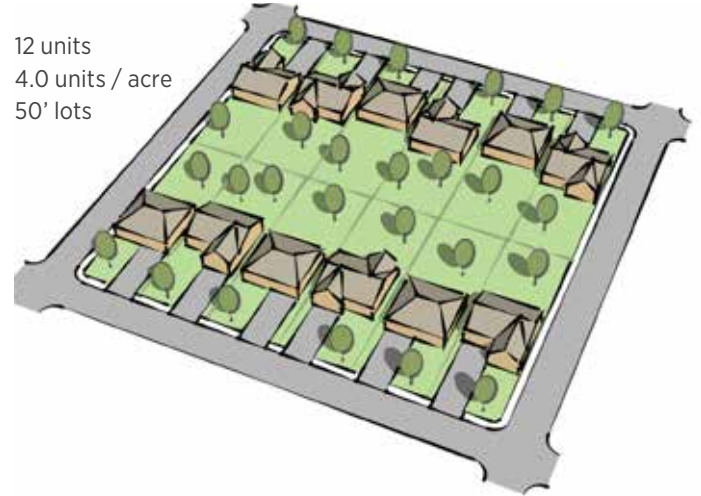
Development can occur in many ways - in different configurations, at different densities, and with different landscape, setbacks, and resource management requirements. The following graphics illustrate a variety of residential densities for context. All units are 1,200 - 2,000 square feet.

### Single Family Detached

8 units  
2.7 units / acre  
75' lots

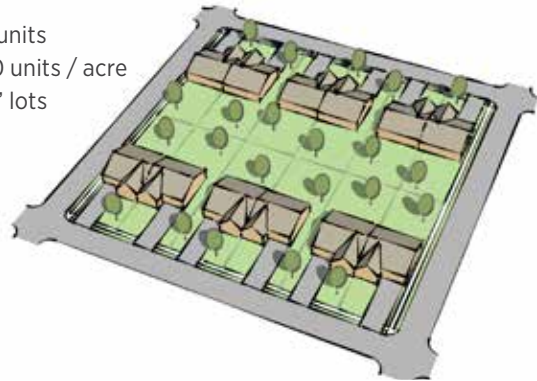


12 units  
4.0 units / acre  
50' lots

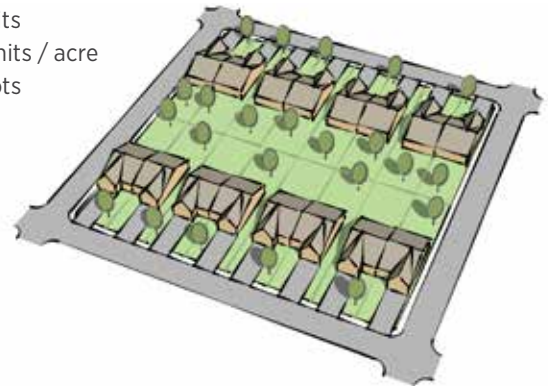


### Single Family Attached

12 units  
4.0 units / acre  
50' lots

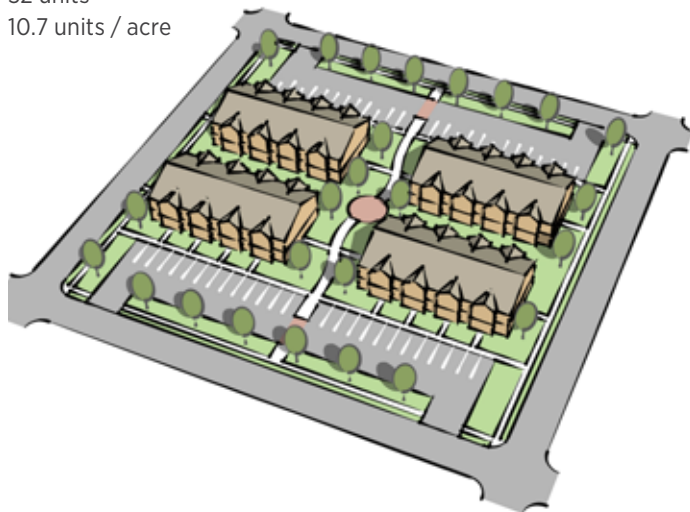


16 units  
5.4 units / acre  
40' lots



### Multi-Family

32 units  
10.7 units / acre



96 units  
32.2 units / acre



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## FUTURE LAND USE PLAN

A pillar of the Seward Tomorrow Plan, the Future Land Use Map is the legal guide for decisions related to land use in the City of Seward. Land use decisions, such as considerations to rezone land, must be compatible with the Future Land Use Map. While things can change overtime including the content of the map (through formal amendments), decisions must adhere to the content of the map.

## IMPLEMENTING THE FUTURE LAND USE MAP

The development concepts and future land use map are based on population projections, economic trends, environmental analysis, and public input. The amount of land that is planned for is greater than the projected need, in order to provide market flexibility, avoid creating a false land shortage, and provide long-term planning. This means that many areas shown in the maps are unlikely to develop in the 20-year time frame. There are three important points about the Development Concept and Future Land Use Map:

### 1. PROPERTY OWNERS DECIDE

The Future Land Use map depicts new land uses for privately-owned properties. The transition of these properties from their current use to the depicted use is expected to occur slowly over time, in response to market demands, as property owners voluntarily sell, develop, or change the use of their land.

### 2. GENERALIZED MAP

The Future Land Use map should be interpreted generally and is not intended to provide the specificity or the rigidity of a zoning map or engineering document. The map should provide guidance for the zoning map and is meant to show:

- › Generalized land use locations and transitions:

The boundaries between land uses on the map are “fuzzy” lines and are meant to show approximate areas for transition, rather than rigid boundaries. The exception to this are those areas that preserve floodplains and wetlands.

- › Collector and Arterial Street connections:

Critical arterial and collector street connections are specified on this map, though the exact routes will depend on detailed engineering studies. Local streets will be determined as development occurs.

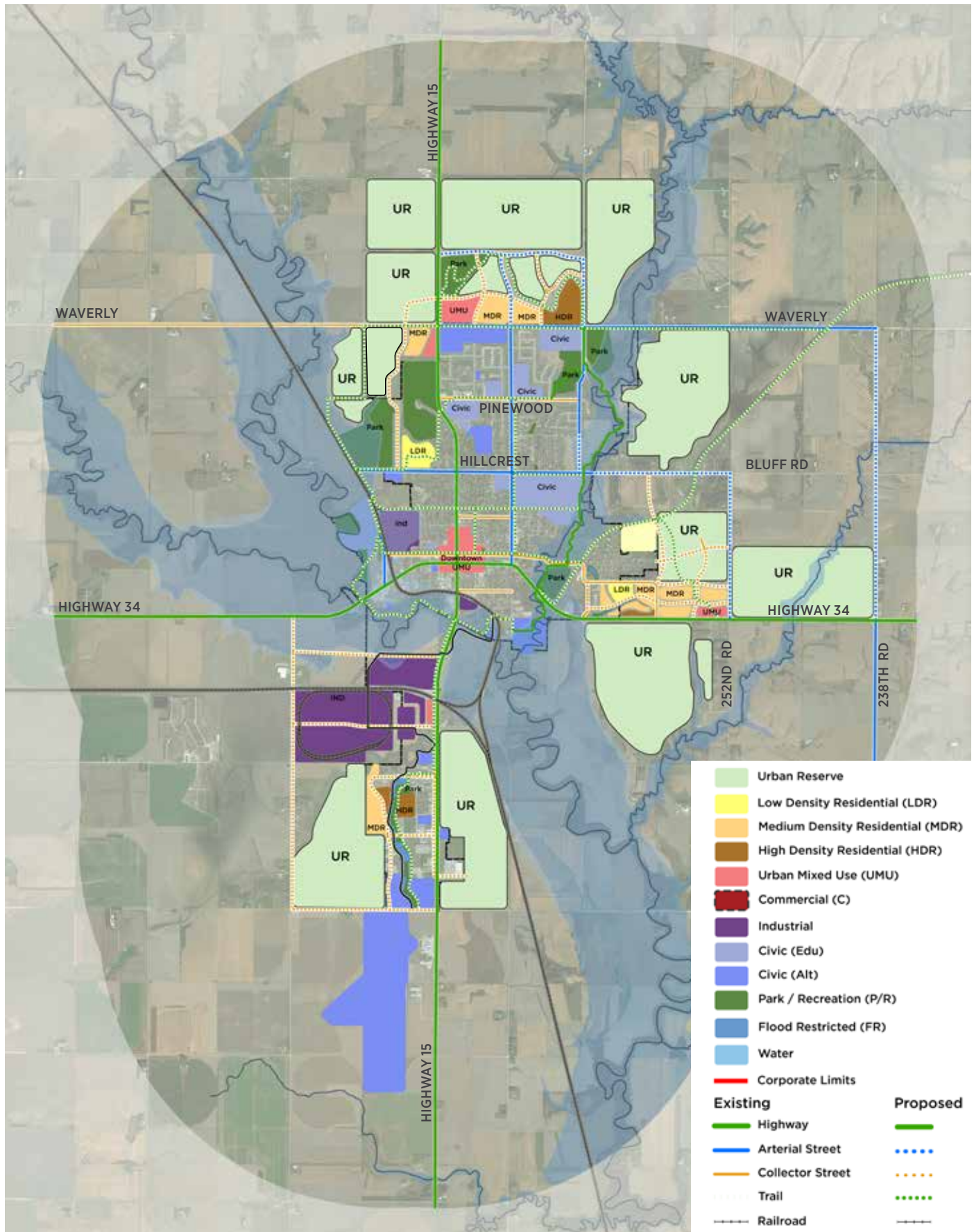
### 3. BASIS FOR LAND USE DECISIONS

The Future Land Use map should provide the basis for decisions of the Planning Commission, the City Council, and private developers. The map is a critical part of the approval process for development proposals and zoning decisions.

## DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

The Development Concept should be considered a framework for how new growth should occur with specific attention to the arterial and collector network, the configuration of land uses, and the connections between areas of the city. The concept should be used as a starting point for discussions related to greenfield development at the fringe of the city.





**Figure 3.3:**Development Concept

## Conceptual Big Idea: East 34 Gateway Neighborhood

Create a mixed-density neighborhood that is connected to the city and its amenities while also creating an exceptional 'front door' for Seward.

**Importance.** It is the first impression and the last memory of Seward for those traveling on Highway 34 and it will face eminent development pressure due to the availability of infrastructure and its direct access to Lincoln. Emphasis should be strongly on continued residential growth to the east leading to a mixed commercial area closer to the Highway 34 and 238th Road intersection.

The East 34 Gateway Neighborhood could become a uniquely Seward version of Lincoln's Fallbrook Neighborhood. Features should include: a gateway monument, high quality landscaping, a public event lawn and natural stormwater management features, attractive and varied architecture, a mix of housing products including brownstones, and potentially a neighborhood scale commercial component. The neighborhood should be a place to live, a place to visit on foot or by bike, and also a symbolic entrance to the community and the inherent quality that lies within.

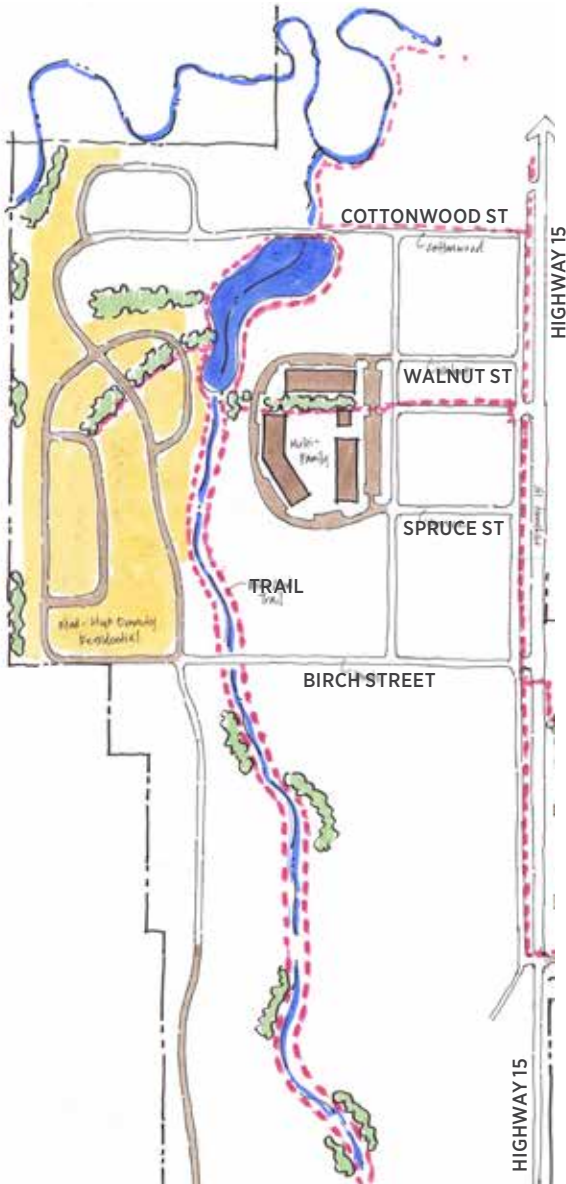


## Conceptual Big Idea: South 15 Neighborhood

Integrate residential near Highway 15 to create housing options near services, jobs, and the interstate.

**Importance.** It is in close proximity to major transportation routes and the rail campus employment center. Aside from permissive industrial zoning, there is no vision for the area which leaves it under threat from disorderly development.

The South 15 Neighborhood envisions a new neighborhood for the spectrum of employees ranging from entry-level employees to supervisory employees configured around central amenities including walking trails, streams, and potentially a series of ponds. The neighborhood should include a mix of housing types including multi-family, townhomes, and single family homes. The neighborhood should be designed with landscaping and land use transitions to reduce compatibility issues with adjacent land uses.



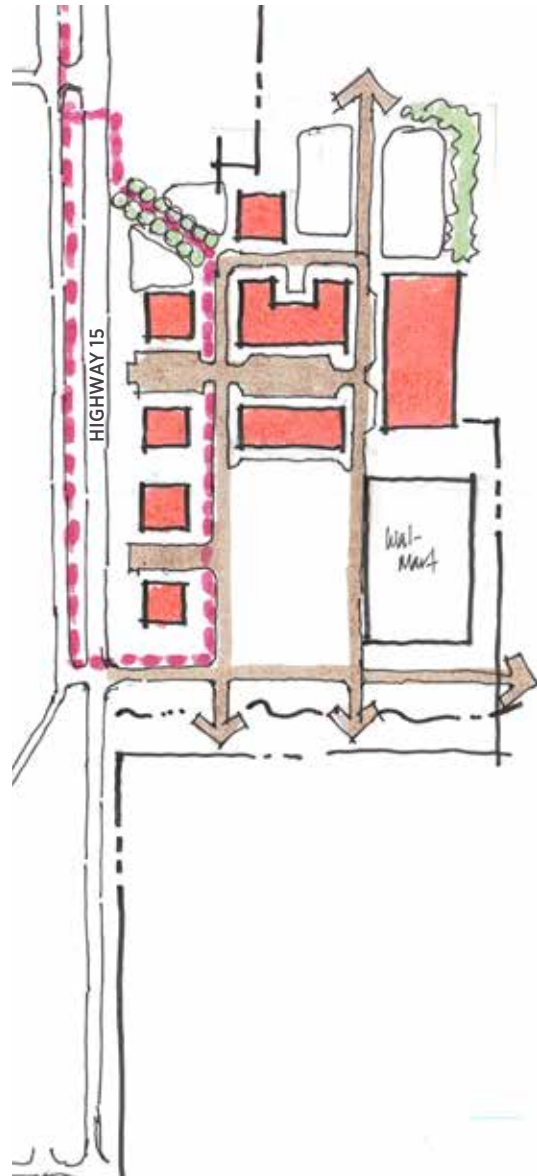
South 15 Neighborhood

## Conceptual Big Idea: South 15 Commercial Prototype

Establish the framework for how commercial development should occur in the South Highway 15 Corridor.

**Importance.** It is the south entryway to Seward, home to its corporate retail centers, and will service much of the employment and business traffic generated by the rail campus.

Seward should plan for the eventual build-out around its existing commercial area with a planned roadway network and a vision for how to configure commercial outlots. With this framework, buildings, parking areas, and vehicular routes can be efficient, functional, and economically sustainable long term.



South 15 Commercial Prototype

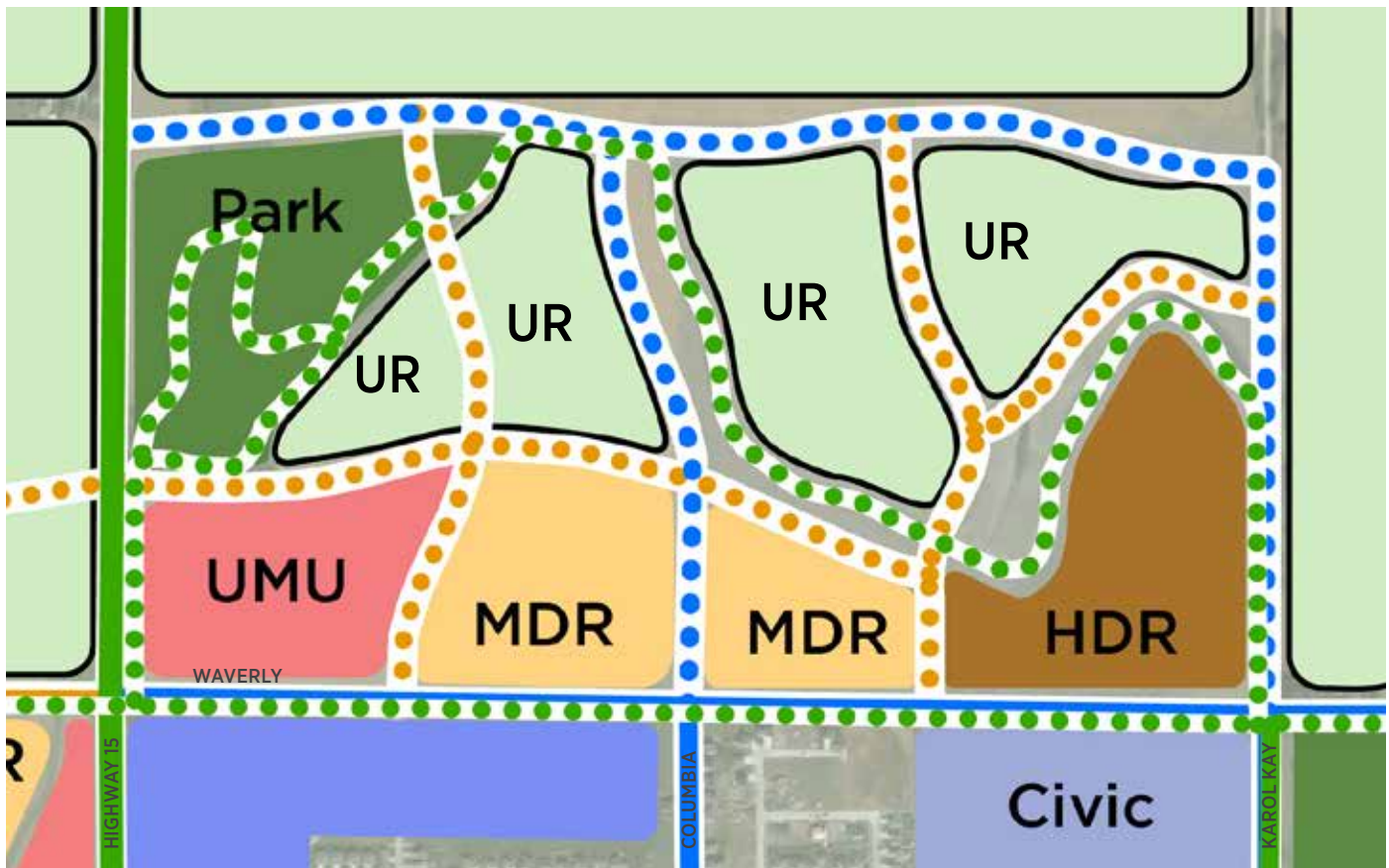


## Conceptual Big Idea: North Waverly Neighborhoods

Create a new neighborhood as an extension of the community with integrated amenities which contribute to the quality of Seward.

**Importance.** Its location represents the northern gateway on Highway 15 and also Seward's future expansion to the north with an entire mile of frontage to the developed areas.

Much in the same way as the East 34 Gateway Neighborhood, the North Waverly Neighborhoods should integrate: a mix of housing products, a mix of owner and renter units, amenities including park space and a trail navigating through the neighborhood, a gateway feature at Highway 15, a neighborhood scale commercial component, and potentially a civic component such as a major park or wellness center to anchor Seward's northern development area.





## Conceptual Big Idea: North Woods

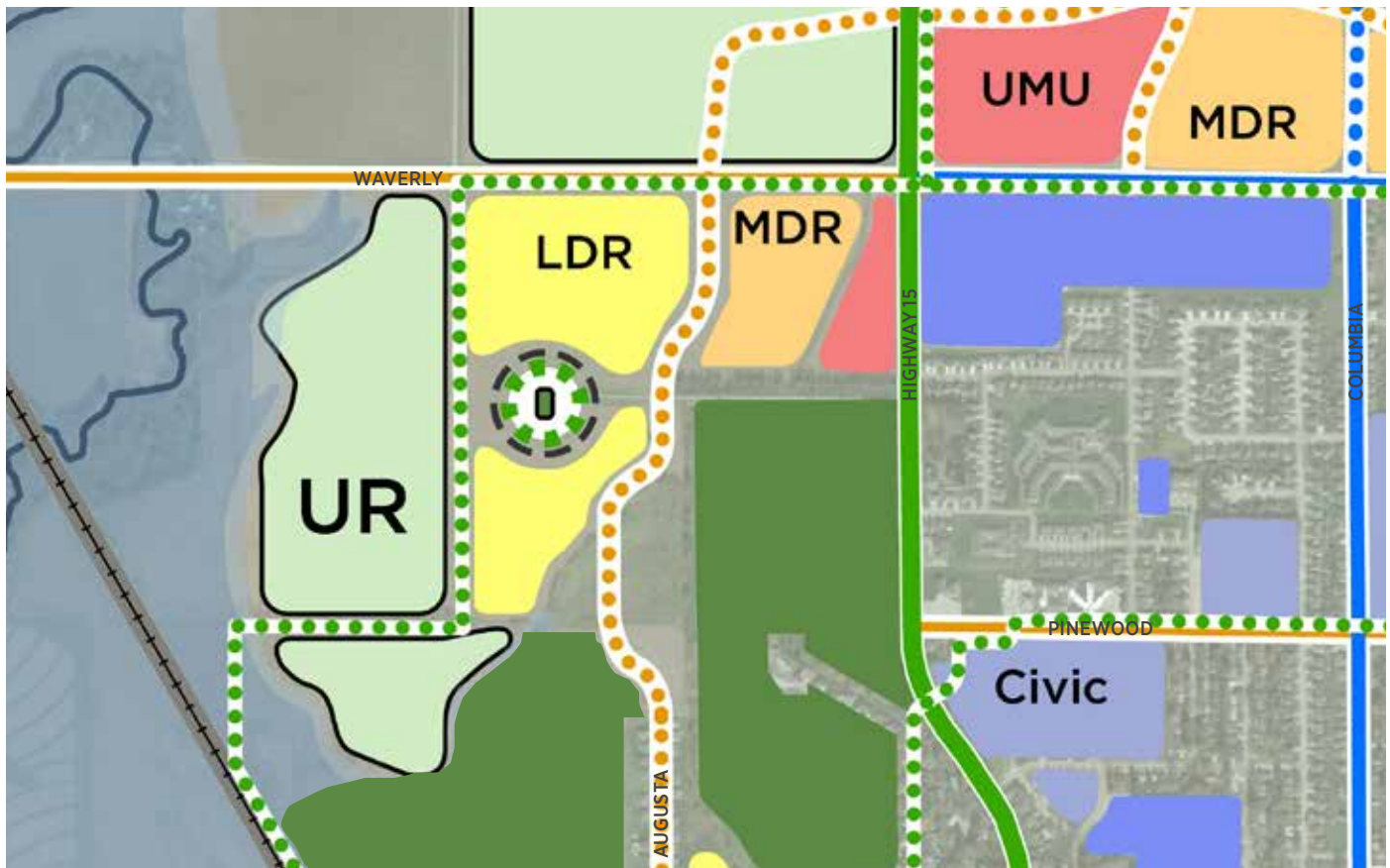
A long term plan for a mixed-use neighborhood designed around the existing residence as a focal point.

**Importance.** Its location in close proximity to the developed areas of the city, the proposed trail loop, Highway 15, Waverly Road, and the golf course.

The North Woods envisions future development of this section as a mixed-use neighborhood that preserves the existing homestead. The concept illustrates neighborhood commercial near the intersection of Highway 15 and Waverly, with a mix of residential products decreasing in density as it extends to the south and west. While this concept illustrates several long term elements, it should be implemented in the following sequence: Augusta Drive extension; development of the intersection of Waverly and Highway 15; and eventually, the remainder of the site as desired by the property owner.

*Note: The land west of the Augusta Drive Extension is designated as Urban Reserve on the Future Land Use Map.*

*This conceptual illustration identifies how the property may develop if/when it transitions from agriculture.*



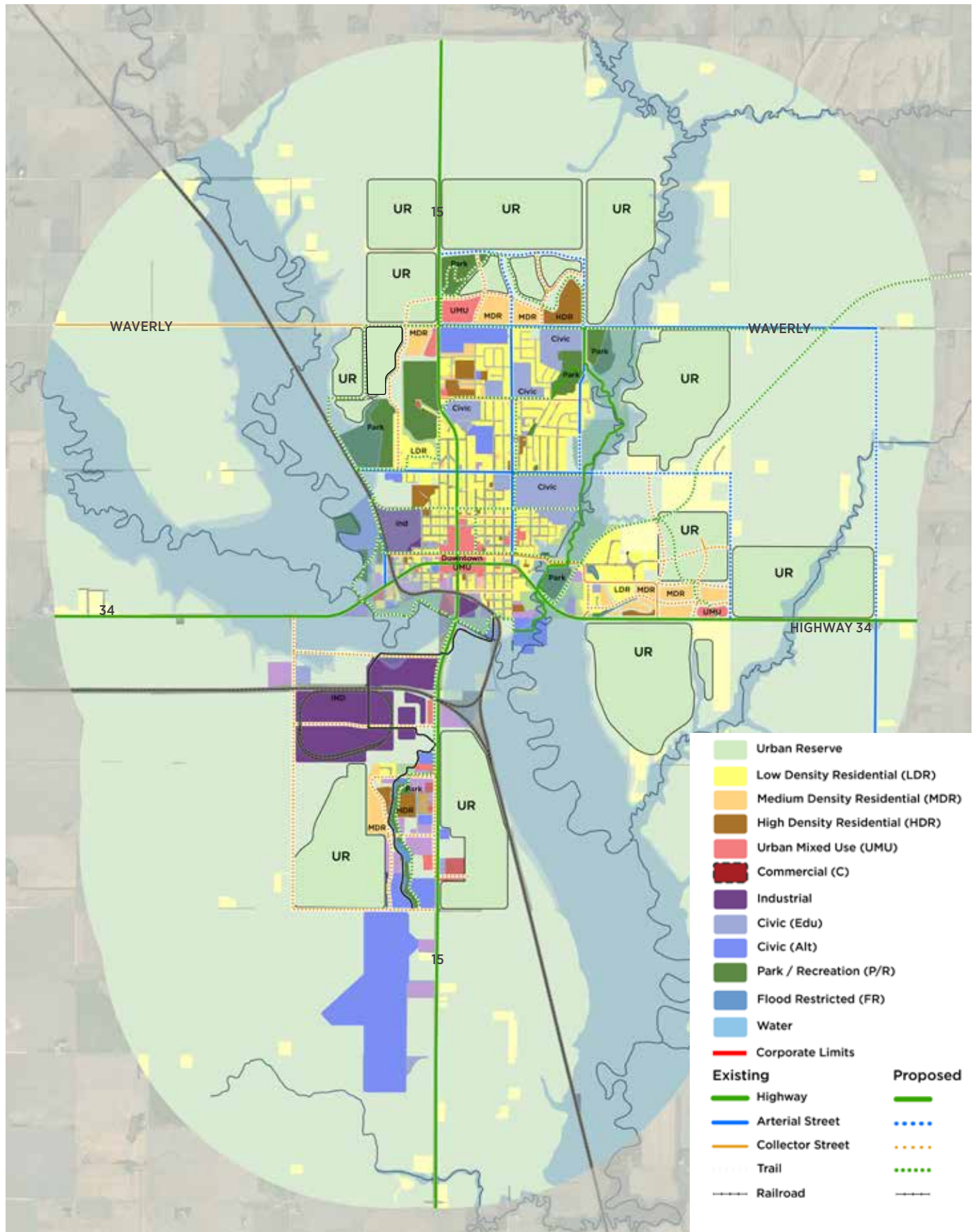


Figure 3.4: Future Land Use Map

## FUTURE LAND USE MAP

As described at the introduction of this section, the Future Land Use Map is a guide for land use decisions. These decisions, both large and small, impact the character of the city and the quality that residents and business owners experience from their community. The Future Land Use Map illustrates a framework of how development may occur in Seward and, at the foundation of this concept, is the interactions of different land uses.

### LAND USE COMPATIBILITY

Figure 3.5 is a compatibility guide to indicate which land uses can be located near each other, and which land use combinations will create significant conflict. The creation of new conflicts should be avoided moving forward. Existing conflicts should be encouraged to change over time as property turns over. This chart should be used to assess the relationship between land uses and provide a basis for development proposal review. The compatibility of each pairing is rated on a scale of 1 to 5:

#### 5: Completely Compatible

**4: Basically Compatible.** Traffic from higher intensity uses should be directed away from lower intensity uses. Building elements and scale should be consistent with surrounding development.

**3: Potential Conflicts.** Conflicts may be resolved or minimized through project design. Traffic and other external effects should be directed away from lower-intensity uses. Landscaping, buffering, and screening should be used to minimize negative effects. A Planned Unit Development may be advisable.

**2: Significant Conflict.** Major effects must be strongly mitigated to prevent impact on adjacent uses. A Planned Unit Development is required in all cases to assess project impact and define development design.

**1: Incompatible.** In general, proposed uses with this level of conflict will not be permitted. Any development proposal requires a Planned Unit Development and extensive documentation to prove that external effects are fully mitigated.

FIGURE 3.5 LAND USE COMPATIBILITY GUIDE

	Urban Reserve	Parks and Recreation	Low Density Residential	Medium Density Residential	High Density Residential	Urban Mixed-use	Downtown	Commercial	Business Park	Industrial
Urban Reserve	-	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
Parks and Recreation	-	-	5	5	5	5	5	3	2	1
Low Density Residential	-	-	-	4	4	4	4	2	2	1
Medium Density Residential	-	-	-	-	4	4	4	3	2	2
High Density Residential	-	-	-	-	-	4	4	3	3	2
Urban Mixed-use	-	-	-	-	-	-	4	3	3	2
Downtown	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	1	1
Commercial	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3	3
Business Park	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	3
Industrial	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

# LAND USE: URBAN RESERVE



## DESCRIPTION:

Long term growth areas. This comprehensive plan outlines the land needed to accommodate growth over the next 10 - 20 years. The urban reserve designation is assigned to areas that will be needed between 15 and 25 years into the future.

Development proposals in this area, including high-intensity agricultural operations, should be reviewed for their compatibility with future urban uses.

## POTENTIAL ZONING:

- AG Agriculture
- RR Rural Residential (as build-through-acreages)
- C/OS Conservation and Open Space

## USES:

Restrictive land use with an emphasis on land preservation such as crop cultivation.

## FORM:

Adjacent developments should be designed for future expansion of roads, sewers, and other infrastructure facilities into the urban reserve areas without cul-de-sacs and other configurations with will require future growth to leap-frog development areas.

## COMPATIBILITY:

Urban reserve areas should remain reasonably compatible with typical urban land uses including residential, commercial, and industrial operations.

The compatibility should be determined based on the future land use identified on the future land use map; for example: an urban reserve area adjacent to an area identified on the future land use map as industrial should be compatible to the industrial land use classification contained in this chapter.



## LAND USE: LOW DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (LDR)



### DESCRIPTION:

Neighborhoods emphasizing single-family detached homes, although other single-family attached and small lot single-family homes may be permitted based on location.

### POTENTIAL ZONING:

- RR Rural Residential
- R-1 Single Family Residential
- R-2 Moderate Density Residential
- TND Traditional Neighborhood Design
- HD Historic and Neighborhood Conservation

### INTENSITY (DU/A):

- 1-3 units per acre

### USES:

Restrictive land use, emphasizing single-family detached development, although innovative single-family forms may be permitted with special review. Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses. Developments will be provided with full city services.

### FORM:

Developments should provide connectivity within and between developments both for cars and pedestrians. A framework of streets and open space should create a sense of neighborhood. Densities should be higher at transition points with other more intense uses or districts.

### COMPATIBILITY:

Compatible with most single-family detached housing, attached single-family and some townhome developments. Traffic and higher intensity uses should be directed away from these areas and along major thoroughfares. Building elements and scale should be consistent with surrounding development.

### PARKING:

Majority accommodated off-street in private garages and driveways with a limited amount of overflow parking allowed on street.

Due to the limited demand for on-street parking, neighborhood streets can often be narrow with parking limited to one-side.

## LAND USE: MEDIUM DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (MDR)



### DESCRIPTION:

Neighborhoods that incorporate a mix of housing types, including single-family detached, single-family attached, townhouse, and small lot single-family. Civic uses would also generally be allowed. For reference, the density of this district is similar to the traditional neighborhoods near the courthouse square.

### POTENTIAL ZONING:

- R-1 Single Family Residential
- R-2 Moderate Density Residential
- R-3 Mixed Density Residential
- TND Traditional Neighborhood Design
- HD Historic and Neighborhood Conservation
- PUD Planned Unit Development

### INTENSITY (DU/A):

3-7 units per acre

### USES:

Restrictive land use, emphasizing a mix of housing styles including single-family detached, single-family attached, and townhouses. Limited multi-family development may be allowed with special review and criteria. Civic uses are generally allowed, with special permission for higher intensity uses.

### FORM:

High level of connectivity between and within developments. Connections to neighborhood commercial services and civic destinations should provide a sense of neighborhood. Developments should have articulated scale and maintain the identity of individual units. Densities should be higher at transitions points with other more intensive districts.

### COMPATIBILITY:

Applies to older established neighborhoods of the city which have diverse housing types, and in developing areas that incorporate a mix of development types. Projects may be incorporated in a limited way into urban mixed-use (UMU) areas.

### PARKING:

Accommodated off-street in private garages and driveways with a limited amount of overflow parking allowed on-street.

Due to the limited demand for on-street parking, neighborhood streets can be narrow with parking limited to one side.

Parking facilities should manage stormwater and be screened from adjacent land uses.

## LAND USE: HIGH DENSITY RESIDENTIAL (HDR)



### DESCRIPTION:

Neighborhoods that incorporate a mix of housing types, including multi-family housing. These areas may also allow small-scale office and commercial uses, but the primary use is residential. HDR areas should be designed and integrated into adjacent neighborhoods to avoid the creation of enclaves.

### POTENTIAL ZONING:

- R-3 Mixed Density Residential
- TND Traditional Neighborhood Design
- HD Historic and Neighborhood Conservation
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- MU Mixed-use District

### INTENSITY (DU/A):

12+ units per acre

### USES:

Allows multi-family and compatible civic uses. Some limited office and convenience commercial within primarily residential areas may be appropriate.

### FORM:

Located at sites with access to major thoroughfares and activity centers. Should be integrated into the fabric of nearby residential areas, while avoiding adverse traffic and visual impacts on low-density uses. Traffic should have direct access to collector or arterial streets to avoid overloading local streets. High level of pedestrian access and connectivity, avoiding the creation of compounds.

### COMPATIBILITY:

Conflicts with low-density residential developments should be resolved or minimized through project design. Traffic and other external effects should be directed away from lower-intensity uses. Landscaping, buffering, and screening should be employed to minimize negative effects. May be incorporated into mixed-use projects or planned areas.

### PARKING:

Accommodated through surface parking lots, parking structures, and underground parking facilities.

Parking facilities should manage stormwater and be screened from adjacent land uses.

When adjacent to a sensitive frontage, parking should be screened behind a residential or commercial space when possible.



# LAND USE: URBAN MIXED-USE (UMU)



## DESCRIPTION:

Vibrant, urban areas that draw customers and employees from outside the immediate area. A mix of housing types (see MDR), neighborhood and community commercial, office, and service uses.

## POTENTIAL ZONING:

- R-2 Moderate Density Residential
- R-3 Mixed Density Residential
- Traditional Neighborhood Design
- HD Historic and Neighborhood Conservation
- PUD Planned Unit Development
- CBD Central Business District

## INTENSITY (DU/A):

7-12 units per acre

## USES:

A mix of complementary uses, including single-family housings, multi-family housing, schools, mid-sized parks and churches, commercial and mixed-use. Amenities such as parks, plazas and quality streetscapes should be more prevalent than in LDR, MDR, and HDR areas,



## FORM:

A high-connectivity grid pattern expands viable locations for commercial land uses, and allows multiple access points and route choices between uses. As compared to LDR, MDR, and HDR areas, UMU encourages closer proximity between transportation, housing, and shopping choices.

## COMPATIBILITY:

Compatibility should be achieved through increased attention to traffic circulation and parking, site and building design, and on-site operations.

- Land uses are sometimes mixed vertically, resulting in complementary and alternating times of use and the ability to share parking areas.
- Different types of land use are positioned to create a smooth internal transition from lower to higher intensity uses; however, this transition happens over a shorter distance than within LDR, MDR, and HDR areas.
- Larger commercial or office uses should cluster around arterial streets.
- Smaller commercial uses are appropriate on any street provided that a smooth transition in intensity of uses is maintained.

## PARKING:

Accommodated in off-street in private garages, driveways, onstreet (limited) and surface parking lots. Parking facilities should manage storm water and be screened from adjacent land uses.

## LAND USE: DOWNTOWN (DT)



### DESCRIPTION:

Downtown Seward is the civic and commercial heart of the city. It should offer small to moderate scale commercial development along with housing. The district should remain connected to and surrounded by a mix of housing types, including townhomes and small lot single family

### POTENTIAL ZONING:

CBD Central Business District

### INTENSITY (DU/A):

12+ units per acre

### USES:

A broad range of retail services, excluding large-scale stores and services, auto-related services, and large offices. Multi-family uses can be mixed in with commercial, but commercial should be the dominate use.

### FORM:

Low to moderate building and impervious coverage, located along major streets in areas close to residential growth centers or at nodes created by significant intersections of streets. Developments should emphasize pedestrian scale and relationships among businesses and accommodate automobile access without being dominated by an automotive scale. Good pedestrian circulation should connect businesses and surrounding residential uses.

### COMPATIBILITY:

The emphasis for the downtown should be on creating a unique neighborhood center or village. Compatibility should be achieved through increased attention to traffic circulation and parking, site and building design, and on-site operations

Land uses may be mixed vertically in smaller scale two to three story buildings.

Horizontal mixed-use must create smooth internal transitions from lower to higher intensity uses in distances similar to the UMU district.

### PARKING:

Parking in the downtown should encourage customers to park around the courthouse square and employees/business owners to park on the side-streets or in off-street parking lots. It is appropriate to implement measures to discourage on-street parking for more than two hours.

Off-street parking lots should be a secondary option for downtown customers. Parking facilities should manage storm water and be screened from adjacent land uses.

# LAND USE: CORRIDOR STRATEGY AREA



## DESCRIPTION:

Both Highway 34 and Highway 15 will play a significant role in the future development of Seward. Both corridors will continue to drive development pressure and grow in traffic volume. These corridors also pass through a variety of important urban environments including traditional neighborhoods and the downtown historic district. For these reasons, these corridors are of strategic importance in the land use plan.

The Corridor Strategy Areas receive additional attention later in the plan to provide policy direction based on the individual segments of each route in terms of land use, development character, street character, and ingress/egress to development sites.

## POTENTIAL ZONING:

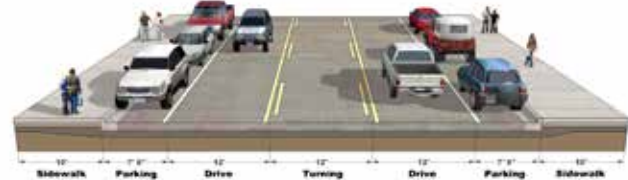
UC Urban Corridor Mixed-use District

## INTENSITY (DU/A):

7-12

## USES:

Developments should be based on a more strategic master plan for the corridors.



## FORM:

Transitions between higher intensity uses along the corridors and adjacent neighborhoods should be carefully buffered. These areas should maintain a high level of connectivity between the corridor and surrounding neighborhoods, especially for pedestrian and bicycles. Design and form should follow a strategic vision for each block along the corridor.

## COMPATIBILITY:

Compatibility should be achieved through increased attention to traffic circulation and parking, site and building design, on-site operations, and design treatments such as signage, landscaping, and streetscape design.

- Land uses may mix vertically. Combined with good transportation options parking may be shared or limited.
- Different types of land use are positioned to create a smooth internal transition from lower to higher intensity uses.

## PARKING:

Theses areas are focused on creating visually cohesive environments. Interruptions such as parking lots and drive aisles should minimized in the street frontage

Site design should emphasize transitions between land uses using landscape treatments, screening parking areas behind buildings, and designing parking areas in a way to reduce the impact on adjacent properties, especially residential neighbors.



## LAND USE: COMMERCIAL



### DESCRIPTION:

The Commercial category includes a variety of commercial uses including auto-oriented developments, major retailers, multi-use centers, restaurants, and other services. Small scale or more neighborhood oriented commercial uses may be integrated into an Urban Mixed-use area with additional consideration to the design and orientation of the site for additional compatibility.

### POTENTIAL ZONING:

- UC Urban Corridor Mixed-use District
- C-1 Community Commercial District
- Highway Commercial District

### INTENSITY (DU/A):

Not applicable

### USES:

- Service Oriented Commercial
- Office Commercial
- Retail Commercial
- Residential may be permitted



### FORM:

May include freestanding structures, attached centers, and vertical configurations. Commercial uses should consider the context of their surroundings, provide pedestrian walkways through parking areas, seek to provide pedestrian connections between adjacent properties, and maximize the positive interactions possible between complementary commercial ventures.

### COMPATIBILITY:

Typically situated on arterials, at intersections, and in established commercial areas. Commercial uses should: feature unobtrusive monuments; integrate landscaping into street frontages and site designs; and minimize the number of driveway accesses.

### PARKING:

Developments should supply off-street parking adjacent, or in close proximity, to the business. Traffic systems should provide alternative routes and good internal circulation.

Pedestrian pathways and landscaping should be integrated in the parking areas to increase comfort, order, and safety.

LAND USE: PARK / OPEN SPACE



DESCRIPTION:

Areas intended to remain undeveloped and natural or recreational in character.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

Various

INTENSITY (DU/A):

Not applicable

USES:

Limited, primarily natural. Any development is recreational and low impact in nature (such as park shelters or ball fields), while complementary to the purpose of the wider area as open natural space.

FORM:

Traditional park and recreation areas including both passive and active recreation. Seward’s many wetlands, floodplains, and any other sensitive areas should be preserved and incorporated into the city’s stormwater management system.

COMPATIBILITY:

These areas are valuable for the natural character and uses within them should have minimal impact. This requires minimal visual, auditory, and other pollutants that would reduce the pristine character of areas. Aids for compatibility may include:

- Heavy landscaping screening, very large buffers; height limitations, zero odor emissions, strict ambient noise requirements.

More intense recreation uses, like sports complexes should be treated like comparable commercial uses for the traffic and compatibility issues that they can generate.

## LAND USE: CIVIC / EDUCATION / CITY FACILITY



### DESCRIPTION:

These two classifications provide space for educational, institutional, assembly, and other public uses, including hospitals, major campuses, cemeteries, airport, landfills, water plant, and major utilities.

- Civic (Civic and education facilities such as Concordia University): Fewer compatibility considerations required.
- Civic (City Facilities such as water treatment facilities): Greater compatibility considerations required due to more industrial character.

### POTENTIAL ZONING:

Various

### INTENSITY (DU/A):

Not applicable

### USES:

- Educational: Public, private and parochial institutions at K-12 and post-secondary level, or trade/business schools and their accessory uses.
- Institutional and Assembly: Community or cultural facilities, religious institutions, public health care or human services facilities and their accessory uses.
- Other: Government or non-profit organizations and accessory uses.

### FORM:

Government facilities should be held to the same standard for site design and connectivity as any private enterprise of similar intensity

### COMPATIBILITY:

Civic uses may be permitted in a number of different areas, including residential areas. Maintenance, operating facilities and public works yards should generally be located in industrial areas. Individual review of proposals requires an assessment of operating characteristics, project design, and traffic management. Industrial operating characteristics should be controlled according to same standards as industrial uses.

### PARKING:

Typically accommodated through remote parking lots that allow visitors to park their vehicle one-time, then navigate the campus on foot.

Overall parking supply should be managed at a campus-wide level including the location of parking, permit supply and cost, and the creation of transportation alternatives on campus and routes leading to campus.

Bicycle parking facilities should be integrated throughout the campus including at all potential origins and destinations, such as residence halls, academic buildings.



LAND USE: BUSINESS PARK



DESCRIPTION:

Areas preserved for larger business development essential to Seward’s economic stability and future growth. These areas protect larger acreages to maximize clustering for specialization, synergy, transportation efficiency, and knowledge exchange.

POTENTIAL ZONING:

- BP Business Park
- I-1 Limited Industrial

INTENSITY (DU/A):

Not applicable

USES:

Centers with major office and business uses, such as technology and research centers, corporate headquarters, and lower intensity industries with larger scale visitor services located at the major intersections. Multi-family may be appropriate when integrated as part of a holistic development that incorporates retail and office uses.

FORM:

Areas should have a strong emphasis on quality design and landscaping standards as these considerations impact the marketability of the business park to prospective businesses. Transportation improvements should enhance connectivity, efficiency, and capacity.

COMPATIBILITY:

Adjacent and internal development should not compromise the viability of employment lands. Incompatible uses such as lower density residential or K-12 schools should not be located within BP areas.

- Development abutting a BP boundary, whether inside or outside the boundary, should be held to higher design standards to ensure compatibility between uses and possible adjacent residential uses.
- In cases where transportation infrastructure has been installed with the purpose of providing capacity to BP areas, any proposed rezone or subdivision outside of the BP area must not reduce the transportation capacity of the BP area below the level intended.

PARKING:

Typically accommodated through off-street lots. Surface lots can be shared with other complementary ventures.

Parking facilities should to manage storm water and be screened from adjacent land uses.

## LAND USE: INDUSTRIAL



### DESCRIPTION:

Areas intended to accommodate industrial uses that are difficult to integrate with less intensive uses due to negative impacts from heavy traffic, noise, or odors. The primary locations for this designation should include the Seward Rail Campus and potentially areas adjacent to major industrial employers already in existence.

### POTENTIAL ZONING:

I-2 General Industrial

### INTENSITY (DU/A):

Not applicable

### USES:

All types of industrial: manufacturing, warehousing, distribution, and office/industrial flex space. Uses in this area can be smaller in size than in the Business Park areas and aesthetic standards are less stringent.

### FORM:

Designation of any new GI areas should be done with consideration of the following factors:

- Highway and rail access;
- Availability and capacity of water and sewer service;
- Proximity to existing employment centers;

- Compatibility of neighboring land uses;
- Brownfield status;
- Impact of added employee/truck traffic to the level of service of roadways in the surrounding area and impact on the non-industrial uses along those roadways.

### COMPATIBILITY:

Development within GI areas will be similar in nature, so compatibility is less difficult to manage. However, in areas where industrial abuts other land use categories, the following should be considered.

- Design standards: including land buffers, architectural and site design standards, and other appropriate standards implemented through PUDs or new codes or guidelines.
- Operational standards that consider traffic, noise, lighting, and air quality.
- Areas adjacent to Highways 15 and 34 should have a higher level of landscaping and avoid outdoor storage visible from these corridors.

### PARKING:

- Typically accommodated through off-street lots. Surface lots can be shared with other complementary ventures. Parking facilities should to manage storm water and be screened from adjacent land uses.



# Chapter 4

## Plan Elements

A community is created through many interconnected elements that form the city's character, economy, and social environment of its many residents. As such, this plan follows suit with a detailed exploration of these elements: a connected city (physical and organizational connections between people and places); health and activity (quality of life features); strong neighborhoods; and vibrant business community.



A Unified  
Land Use Plan



Connected  
City



Health &  
Activity



Strong  
Neighborhoods



Vibrant  
Businesses



Efficient  
Government

## STRATEGIC APPROACH TO ACCOMPLISHING GOALS

Seward is a special community today. With growth pressure forecasted to continue, the city must be proactive to ensure that each of these assets (elements) continue contributing to the character of the city in a positive way. Simply maintaining the status quo does not ensure that Seward will retain the character that its residents love. In pursuit of the best future possible, the community must make bold and long-term decisions to seek excellence in each element.



# A Connected City

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A strong city is one that provides ample connections - physical and social - between its people, schools and civic organizations, community features and amenities, and business districts. Its people and neighborhoods are generally well-connected; however, newcomers often find it difficult to connect with the city and its social groups.





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## A CONNECTED CITY: GOALS

### Physical Connections and Mobility

- **Develop a future transportation network that will support desirable patterns of community development**
- **Provide a transportation system that is safe, convenient, and offers a variety of interconnected modes**
- **Connect Seward's neighborhoods and community destinations with a trail system providing a safe and healthy transportation alternative**

### Social Connections

- **Promote neighborhoods that feature central amenities where residents can engage with their neighbors**
- **Promote actions that connect new and existing residents with community organizations and each other to build the social capacity of Seward**

## EXISTING CONDITIONS: AT A GLANCE

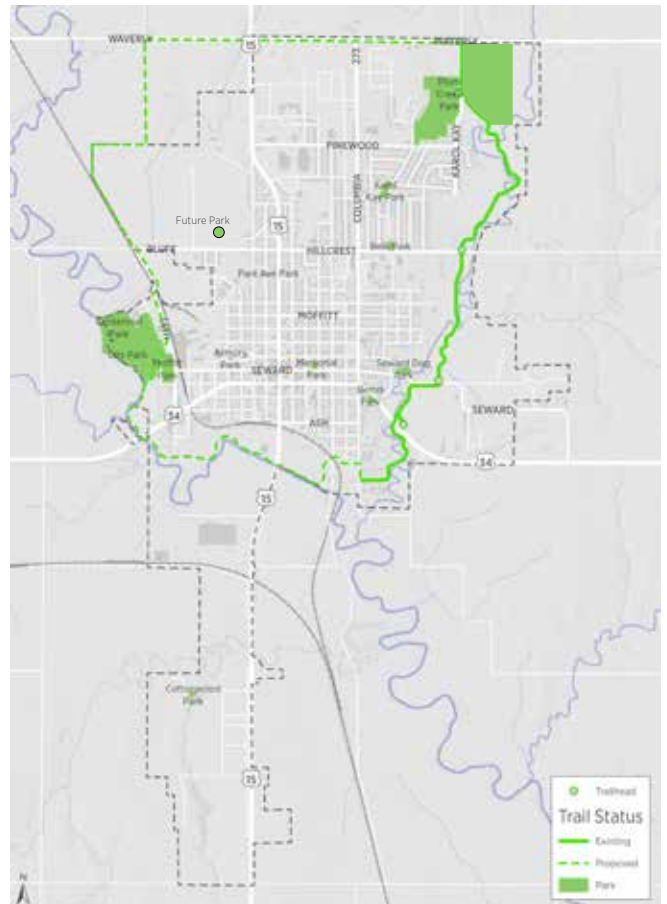
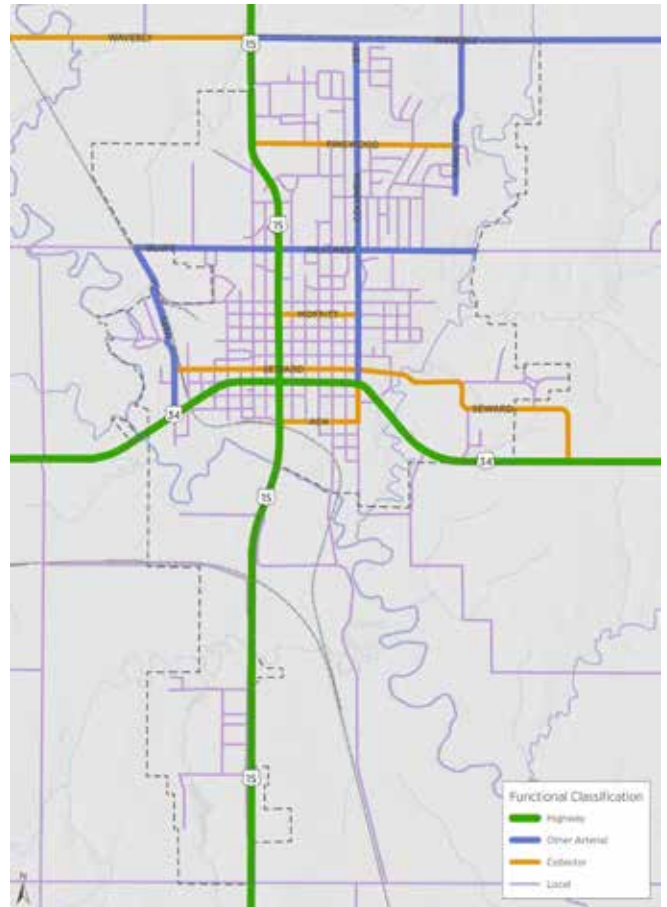
**Strong regional mobility connections.** Highway 15 and 34 provide direct and rapid access between Seward and Lincoln. This access makes Seward a destination as a bedroom community. There is also the potential to leverage this access to make it an easy “stay-cation” destination for residents from both Lincoln and Omaha.

**A mature arterial and collector network.** With the exception of Karol Kay Drive, Seward’s collector and arterial network efficiently moves people from place to place with little delay and impact on neighborhoods and businesses.

**Emerging Bicycle and Pedestrian Network.** Through the community survey and public meetings, residents have spoken to the delight of the multi-use trail that winds approximately 2.7 miles through the east side of Seward, and these stakeholders are eager for the trail to loop the city (planned completion by 2020). While this trail serves a recreational role, it is difficult for some users to access the trail on foot or by bike. Additional street improvements to make Seward’s roads more comfortable for walkers and bicyclists would increase trail use, the appeal of Seward’s neighborhoods, and the market for businesses in downtown Seward.

**Isolated Highway Corridor.** The South Highway 15 commercial district is difficult to reach without an automobile due to the narrow bridges and railroad overpasses; however, numerous individuals do walk or ride bikes into this area for work or commercial services. In addition to safety considerations, it may be appropriate to integrate a residential neighborhood into this area to leverage the location, the rapid mobility access of Highway 15, the employment opportunities of the proposed rail campus, and the commercial amenities.

**Opportunities for Social Connections.** As a small city, many of the social connections between residents have been forged through familial relationships and involvement in schools and churches, including sporting activities. While these opportunities have a long track record of success through history, each of these may appear exclusive to a newcomer. Integrating new residents is imperative to retaining talent at all levels including at Concordia, in entry-level positions, and residents who may be interested in community leadership or entrepreneurship.



## Implementing the Future Street Plan

The future street plan should be implemented in two steps:

### 1. Reserve Right-of-Way in Advance

The city should work with developers and property owners to reserve right-of-way for major streets in advance of development. This right-of-way should be adequate to accommodate multimodal facilities, utilities, and future expansion. Developers should leave room to extend streets to future adjacent development by leaving stub streets or empty lots where extensions are planned.

### 2. Build with Development

Seward and Seward County should work with developers to extend new roads or to improve existing roads as development demand arises, in conjunction with development agreements. Street construction is one of the costliest pieces of new development, and the high costs of development make it difficult to build new homes at prices that most families can afford. One way to control the cost of local street construction is to avoid overbuilding local streets.

## GOAL 1: DEVELOP A FUTURE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK THAT WILL SUPPORT DESIRABLE PATTERNS OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

### Recommended Actions:

#### Implement in concert with the future land use plan.

Transportation and land development are codependent – a transportation system is created to serve land as it develops, and land can only develop as access is granted. This is especially pertinent to development in Seward, where land access and development are often limited by environmental factors. For the purposes of advancing a coherent land use plan and a high-quality transportation system, land use and transportation plans must be coordinated.

Seward classifies roadways based on their function in the city's transportation system. Local roads, collector streets, arterial roadways, and highways are the primary designations. In this order, each classification provides increased mobility and decreased land access. This hierarchy should guide future investment, the methods for providing land access in new developments, and the design specifications of new streets based on their context.

#### Plan connections ahead of development and build in concert with growth.

The purpose of the functional classification map is to illustrate the most important pieces of the transportation system, today and in the future. The map demonstrates the connections that should occur as land develops; however, unless these connections are planned ahead of time and implemented at the time of development, it is unlikely the connection will ever occur.

The future street plan is:

- **Big Picture.** The map does not show every street that would be needed for future development. The local street pattern should be determined as development occurs.
- **Flexible.** While the routes shown in Figure 4.1 have been carefully thought out, the exact path of these streets may vary depending on the details of development as it occurs. The priority is to maintain the principle of connectivity, to provide access to key connecting points, and to follow the general path shown in the map. Minor modifications can be made as needed on a case-by-case basis. Detailed engineering studies will be needed before undertaking any new road construction.
  - › Collector streets have a higher “status” than the local streets. The collector routes should be given significant weight when making development decisions, while local streets are more flexible.
- **Implemented with Property Owners.** Many new roads shown on this map run through property that is privately owned, and their implementation will therefore depend on the decisions of the property owners. The city should reach out to property owners in these key areas to discuss plans for the future.

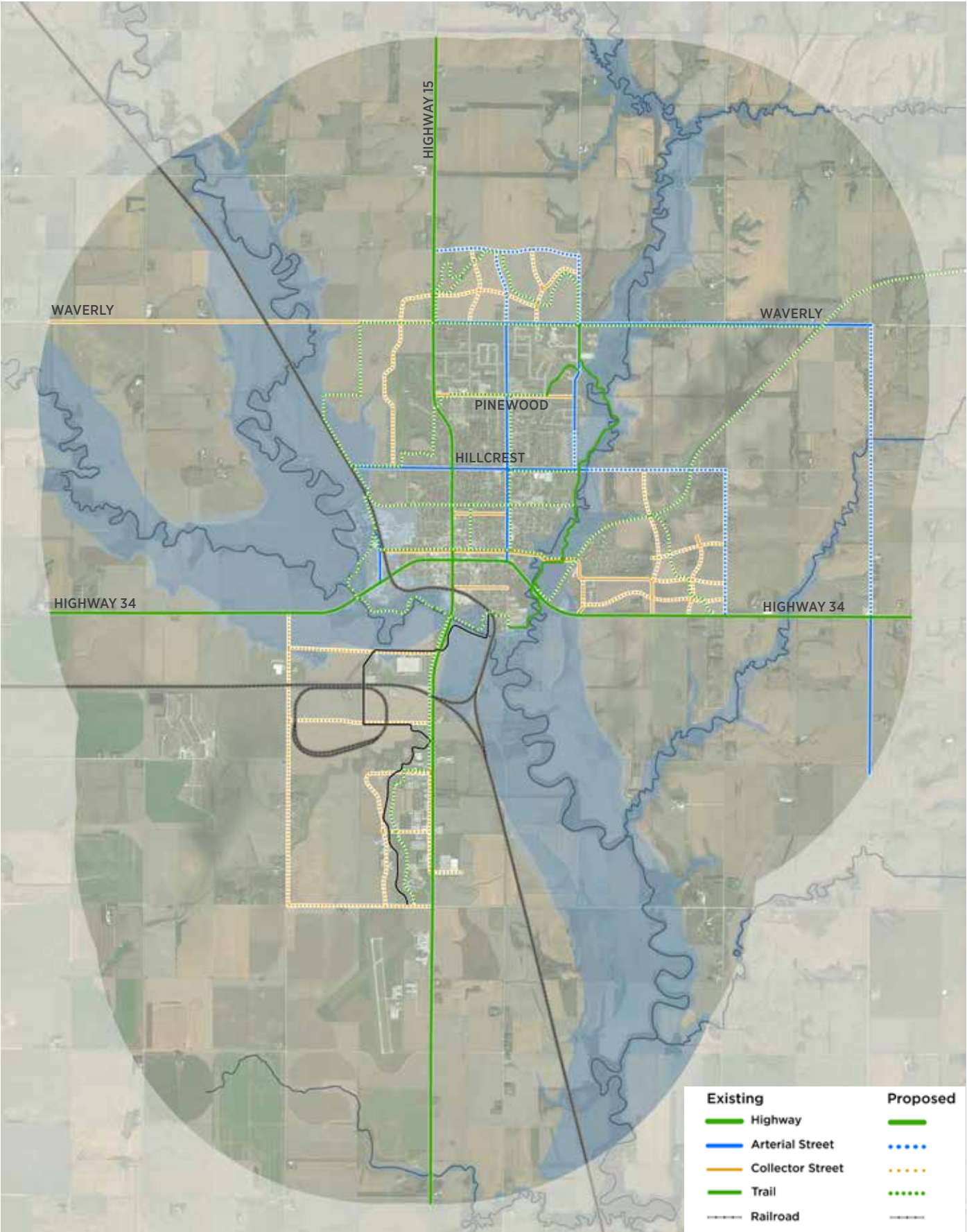


Figure 4.1: Functional Classification Map



## Context Sensitive Street Design

ITE Manual "Context Sensitive Solutions in Designing Major Urban Thoroughfares for Walkable Communities", features include:

- "Streets as places", making community identity a key component in street corridor design
- The surrounding community influences the design of a given roadway, instead of applying a standard cross-section that is applied everywhere
- Accommodate all modes of travel and make walking, transit, and bicycling more enjoyable and practical
- Design features that enhance safety by controlling speed and access
- A street design that may change as it passes through different "context zones" or land uses within the community
- Capacity through a network of streets, rather than widening a single corridor to accommodate more vehicular traffic
- Concentrate longer trips along limited access routes
- Measure performance by more diverse standards than just level of service for automobiles

### Tailor street specifications to the desired character of the development.

Over the past 50 years, streets have been designed by policy minimums and often with a "bigger is better" mentality. This produced a legacy of wide-streets and developments reliant on the automobile for virtually all movement. The character of a corridor, neighborhood, or commercial center will be influenced by the design of the street in a profound way; the forethought about the character of the surrounding areas (current and desired) has earned the name "context sensitive design" from the Institute of Transportation Engineers (ITE); see the left margin for their guiding principles.

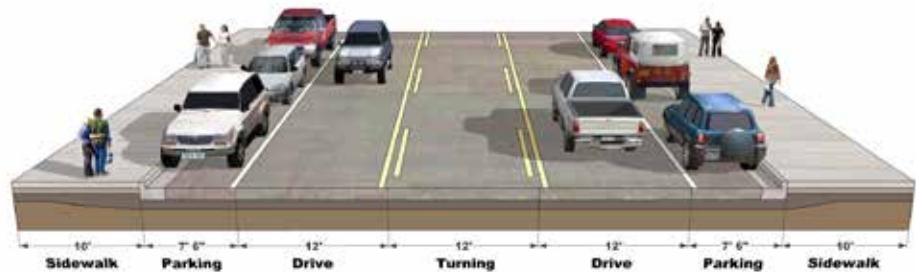
In many urban and suburban areas, neighborhood advocates have begun requesting road-diets to slow traffic and reclaim roadway as true public space. Examples of this include reducing the number of lanes on a street, reducing the width of the roadway at intersections, or installing traffic-calming devices such as mini-roundabouts. However in newly-developing areas, it is better to simply create a street that is appropriately designed in the way that people want it to operate. For example:

- A neighborhood street should access to individual properties, should provide a short and slow path to a collector street, and be a place that families can use the street as public space for walking, playing, and gathering with neighbors
- A collector street should be a way for people to travel short distances within the community by vehicle, bicycle, or on foot, between a local street and an arterial street at low speeds

### Softening Pedestrian Barriers in Downtown

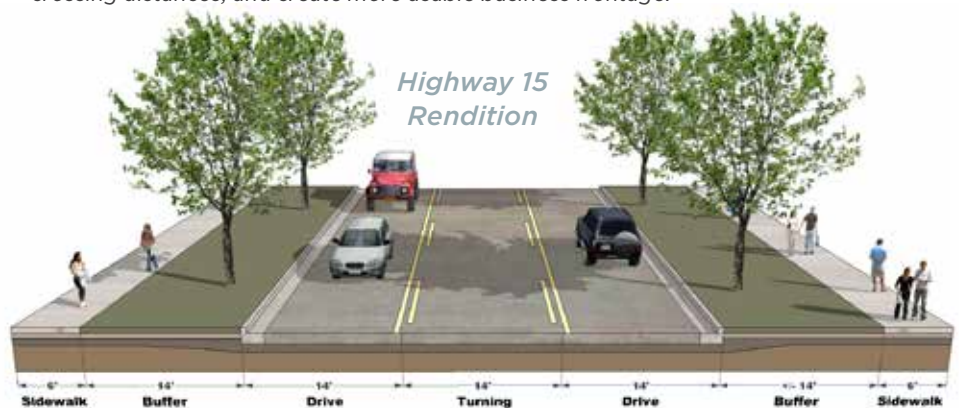
Downtown Seward is home to Highway 34 and Highway 15. While these routes bring potential patrons to downtown, they also divide make it uncomfortable to walk throughout the district. The downtown plan reviewed both highway corridors and found that both are good candidates for lane-diets and/or improved pedestrian features.

#### Highway 34 Rendition



*Through downtown, a reduction in travel lanes would slow traffic, shorten pedestrian crossing distances, and create more usable business frontage.*

#### Highway 15 Rendition



*North of downtown, a three-lane section can be achieved (as desired by Nebraska DOT) while preserving street trees, allowing pedestrian crossing medians where desired, and maintaining reasonable traffic speeds.*



## GOAL 2: PROVIDE A TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT IS SAFE, CONVENIENT, AND OFFERS A VARIETY OF INTERCONNECTED MODES

### Recommended Actions:

**Implement standard street design practices that incorporate measures to increase pedestrian safety (ex: sidewalks, intersection bulb-outs, etc.).**

In much the same way that context-sensitive design addresses the overall design of the street, streets should feature pedestrian accommodations in new development areas, in significant redevelopment, in roadway reconstruction projects, and in priority areas in the core of the city such as areas surrounding downtown, schools, or Concordia University. A tenant of context-sensitive design is creating a roadway that provides a safe space for all road users.

Generally, treatments that are good for pedestrian comfort are also good for the comfort of bicyclists. These include actions that slow traffic, demonstrate order, and promote predictable patterns. Street design practices to increase bicycle comfort include providing a space on the roadway for bicycles, signs and pavement marking to demonstrate that motorists should expect to see bicyclists, and identify low-volume neighborhood streets as routes to get from place to place. When thinking about creating an environment that is comfortable for bicyclists, it is better to think of whether a family or child would feel comfortable in a given environment than an urban cyclist.

### *Designing Streets for People*

Streets are the most local of public spaces. Approximately 25% of all developed land, virtually everyone is adjacent to a public roadway. Streets should balance the needs of its various users including those using the streets for transportation (people in cars, on bikes, and on-foot) or simply as a public space (downtown sidewalks, shaded tree-lawns, or quiet residential areas where it is a place for basketball, street hockey, and general recreation).

The process of implementing the street plan should continually ask how pedestrians and bicyclists will interact with the transportation network including current roadways, major roadway improvements, and new roads. For example, the city council should ask the following questions when reviewing proposals:

- how will pedestrians and people on bicycles interact with this roadway (will this deter use); will this project create a barrier that will deter pedestrian/bicycle transportation; are there any interventions that will make this improvement more equitable for all road users?



### Intermodal Street Design Treatments

A street design standard should evaluate the appropriateness the below types of bicycle and pedestrian improvements in every street installation, improvement, or expansion.

- **Sidewalks.** Sidewalks are typically a minimum of five feet wide. Sidewalks should be provided along both sides of the street with special considerations to width and street crossings near schools or at major nodes such as in proximity to a shared-use path.
- **Shared-Use Paths.** Beside a roadway or on its own dedicated right-of-way such as the current trail, these paths are typically between 8 and 12 feet wide.
- **Intersection Bulb Outs.** At intersections, bulb outs extends the curbs to slow traffic, shorten pedestrian crossing distances, and add landscaping into the streetscape.
- **Stamped or High-Visibility Crosswalks.** In areas with high pedestrian traffic or priority pathways, high-visibility crosswalks to denote that motorists should expect to see pedestrians.
- **Pedestrian-Activated Beacons.** Pedestrian-activated beacons stop traffic when a pedestrian is present.

Ensure that new development proposals complement and extend the existing connectivity plan in a way that is consistent with the spirit of the development concept.

An effective transportation plan informs the creation of individual components to eventually provide a connected network that is easy, predictable, and reliable to navigate. The desired pattern is generally articulated by the development concept and implemented through the incremental development of individual land areas. Seward's street system is well-connected today, and its grid system of roads and sidewalks should be extended through new development areas.

### GOAL 3: CONNECT SEWARD'S NEIGHBORHOODS AND COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS WITH A TRAIL SYSTEM PROVIDING A SAFE AND HEALTHY TRANSPORTATION ALTERNATIVE

#### Recommended Actions

Inventory sidewalks, trails, and destinations and use this as a guide for the development of priority pedestrian and bicycle routes.

Residents of Seward cherish the small town character of the community; part of this character comes from how easy it is to get around. It is the type of place where a family shouldn't hesitate to walk or ride their bikes to downtown or to their neighborhood park. A vision of this comprehensive plan is that, even with continued growth, Seward should remain a place where its residents feel comfortable walking and riding their bikes around town.

By creating an inventory of facilities and destinations, Seward should target investments to: (1) eliminate sidewalk gaps between origins and destinations; and (2) to improve comfortable pedestrian and bicycle access between key destinations and the emerging loop trail. One such recommendation from the downtown plan is using Seward Street to connect downtown with the emerging trail loop.

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#### *Create a Pedestrian Pathway to Downtown*

All actions should reinforce the function of the downtown as a system – best visited on foot, comprised of complementary businesses, amenities worth visiting, and comfortable to shop, dine, and linger. These connections can be reinforced by policy, organization, and physical improvements that make it easier and more desirable for patrons to navigate throughout the district.

Seward Street should be the primary pedestrian and bicycle east-west pathway through Seward. It should connect the recreational trail, Concordia University, through downtown, to Moffitt Park and the proposed trail extension around the westside of the city. This route should be reinforced with signage, lane marking, and thematic elements.



## GOAL 4: PROMOTE NEIGHBORHOODS THAT HIGHLIGHT CENTRAL FEATURES WHERE RESIDENTS CAN ENGAGE WITH THEIR NEIGHBORS

### Recommended Actions

Encourage new developments to include park-like features such as trails, plazas, and playgrounds.

An essential part of a community is the interaction between its people, and many of these interactions occur first in public. New neighborhoods should include community amenities that serve and integrate these areas with the rest of the city such as trails, parks or plazas, schools, and other facilities. Drainage or wetland areas may function as open space amenities for neighborhoods.

**Explore and promote the use of planned districts to allow for innovative approaches to neighborhood development.**

The City of Seward has multiple zoning districts designed to allow innovative approaches to housing development, including its traditional neighborhood design district and its planned unit development district. While these districts have been rarely used in the past, they present an opportunity for an innovative approach to neighborhood development, and it is often possible to negotiate concessions from the typical development regulations. For example, a greater overall density could be permitted in exchange for integrating a trail extension throughout the site or using a drainage as a public amenity. As every site is unique, these tools should be promoted to allow both the developer and the city to gain the greatest value from the project.

## GOAL 5: PROMOTE ACTIONS THAT CONNECT NEW AND EXISTING RESIDENTS WITH COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND EACH OTHER TO BUILD THE SOCIAL CAPACITY OF SEWARD

### Recommended Actions

Develop and execute a collective outreach strategy for all community organizations to welcome new (and relatively new) residents to integrate them and increase organizational capacity.

Seward is in a unique position in the way that it is both growing but still tightly-knit. While this is something that its residents love, both community organizations and new residents have indicated that it is difficult for a newcomer to engage in the community.

A coordinated effort to welcome new residents and share the many opportunities to engage in the community would reinforce the character and impression that Seward is a welcoming small-town that values all of its residents. The outreach strategy would seek to connect new and relatively new residents with organizations that may need new energy.

### The Impact of Connectivity on Walkability and Bikeability

The following examples demonstrate the impact that connectivity has on walkability. Both scenarios show a quarter-mile walking distance. The example with high connectivity has a significantly greater reach (greater efficiency) than the low connectivity example, which requires the walker to back-track.

#### High Connectivity

Walking Distance: .25 mile

Range/Reach: .21 mile

Efficiency (Range/Distance): 84%



#### Low Connectivity

Walking Distance: .25 mile

Range/Reach: .09 mile

Efficiency (Range/Distance): 36%





# Health & Activity

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The quality of life that residents experience is based on a variety of factors, including many that are deeply personal. The focus of this chapter is the foundation of services that the community can provide to enable its residents to thrive.





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## HEALTH AND ACTIVITY: GOALS

- Invest in trails and sidewalks that connect people, support healthy activities, and help reinforce Seward's small town atmosphere
- Provide an array of active and passive recreational facilities to allow residents ample opportunities to engage in their community and to meet and gather with their peers
- Provide park and recreation facilities, programs, and services that are connected and accessible to all residents
- Identify gaps in existing facilities and explore options to fulfill community needs



## EXISTING CONDITIONS: AT A GLANCE

**Healthy Supply of Parks and Natural Areas.** Seward has a strong park and recreation system today with many modern park facilities and excellent access to nature via the river trail. Additional study should be conducted to reveal whether the system includes an adequate supply of individual amenities - such as playgrounds, ballfields, and etc - to serve the total population; however, the total supply of parks and accessible natural areas is healthy.

**Good Access to Parks and Recreation.** In addition to overall supply, a second metric is whether parks are located within a reasonable walking distance of all neighborhoods. Figure 4.2 draws a 1/8- and 1/4-mile ring around each individual park facility, revealing that many residents are within a reasonable distance to their nearest neighborhood park. This standard should be applied to new development areas to ensure that new residents are able to enjoy the same convenient access to quality neighborhood parks.

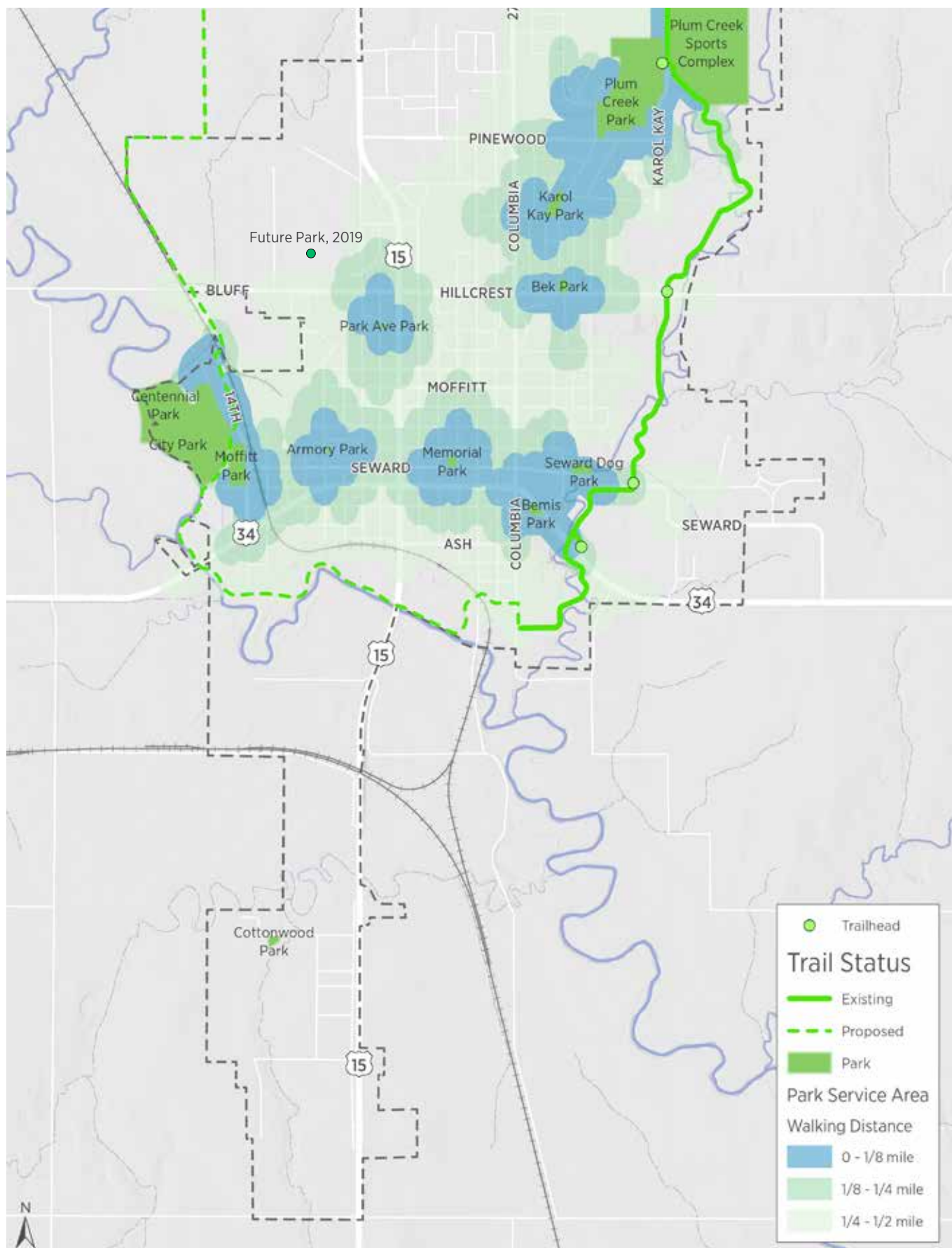
**Areas to Improve Park Service and Trail Access.** There are areas that could be better served by parks and trails including the most recent residential areas. While supply and distance metrics are strong benchmarks, access occurs through pathways including trails, sidewalks, and city streets; these pathway environments should be designed and redesigned to connect people (people on foot and on bicycle) to the places they might want to go. For the purpose of considering improved access, the following areas and types of destinations should be considered:

- **Schools and Parks.** Important community destinations, the city's street and park resources should be targeted to ensure children and families can safely and comfortably navigate the route to their local park or school.
- **Access to the Loop Trail.** The eventual loop trail is a well-respected amenity today that is valued by many residents of Seward. The trail should be viewed as an extension of the park system that can be easily accessed through a short and comfortable walk or bike ride.
- **Priority Development Areas.** The unified land use plan identifies multiple priority development areas. Each of the development concepts is centered on using parks, trails, and natural drainageways to serve and connect these new neighborhoods with quality of life amenities.

**School Activities as a Common Thread.** While this plan does not specifically provide direction or analysis of the school district or Concordia University, it is nonetheless an essential part of Seward's identity, the reason many residents migrate to Seward, and a unifying element in the common experience of local residents. Seward residents will continue to bond and socialize over school events, intramurals, and other activities.

**Common Topic: Indoor recreation.** Throughout the development of this plan and the downtown plan, the community was engaged in a serious conversation about how to bring additional indoor recreational opportunities to Seward. This topic remains relevant and continues to evolve. Pertaining to the comprehensive plan, an indoor recreational facility should be sited at a location in the community where it can anchor a neighborhood (new or existing) and where it can be easily accessed on-foot or by bicycle.

**Common Topic: Love the trail system.** A nearly universal comment from stakeholders is their love of the river trail. This amenity allows residents to delight in nature at their designed pace and provides a space for residents of all backgrounds to mingle. It is common to see high school students, Concordia students, young families, and others enjoying the trail. Almost as universal was their desire to extend the trail.



**Figure 4.2:** Existing Parks, Service Areas, and Trail



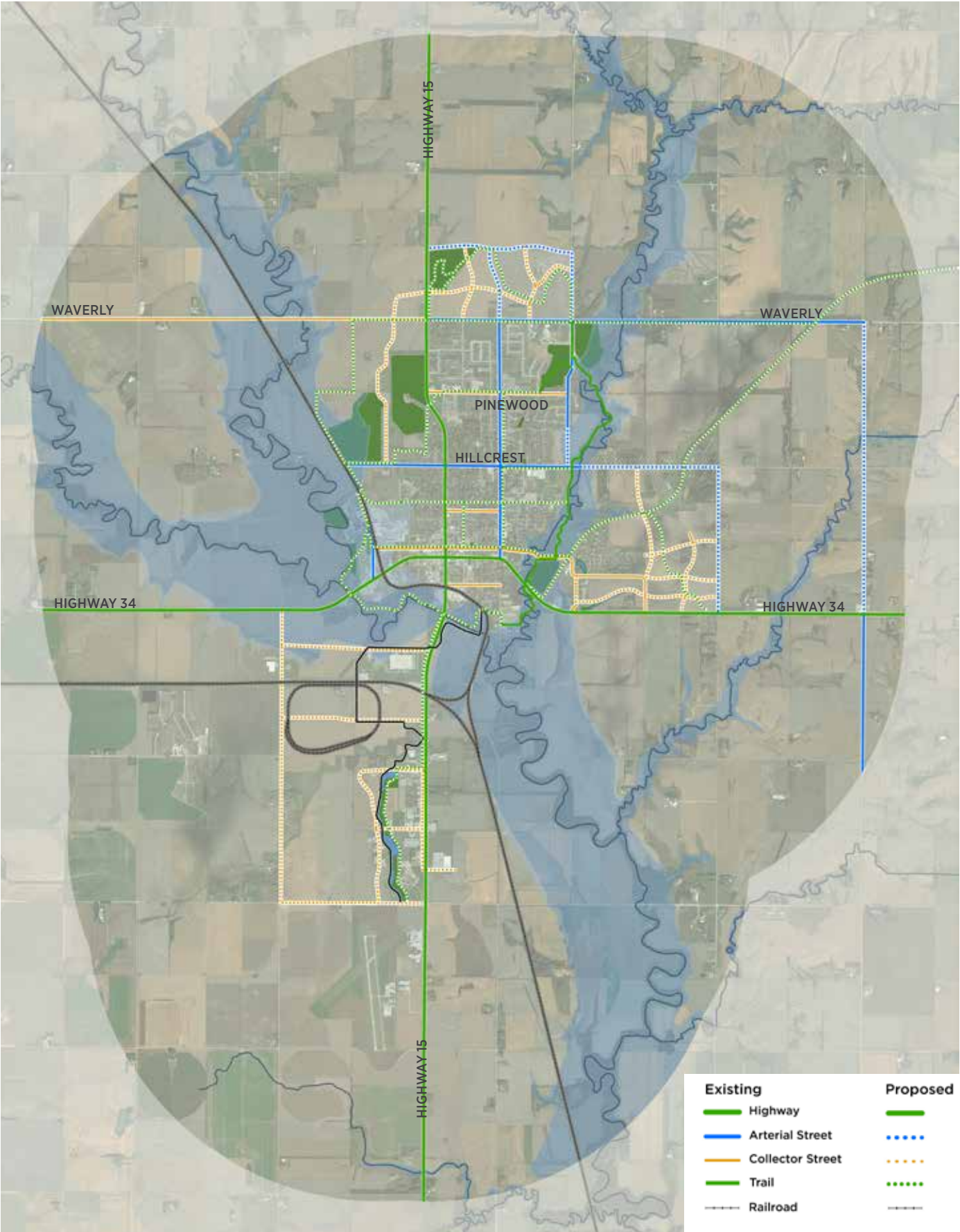


Figure 4.3: Park and Trail Development Concept

## Case Study: Solon, IA

Solon, Iowa is home to approximately 2,600 residents about an equal distance between Iowa City and Cedar Rapids, Iowa – 13 and 18 miles respectively.

Leveraging its proximity to both urban areas and nearby Lake McBride, Solon positioned itself as a destination for walkers and bicyclists seeking an experience away from the city.

Through investments in trails and roadway improvements to prioritize bicycle tourism and in the revitalization of their downtown district, Solon has become a destination that now enjoys the vitality brought by new investment, new businesses, and increased commercial spending.

Seward and Solon are similar in multiple ways: both pride themselves on their small town charm; both have historic business districts; and both are located within a reasonable distance to a major population center.

Solon demonstrates the potential of using active transportation to serve residents, to underscore the small town charm of a place, and to bring additional spending into the community.

## GOAL 1: INVEST IN TRAILS AND SIDEWALKS THAT CONNECT PEOPLE, SUPPORT HEALTHY ACTIVITIES, AND HELP REINFORCE SEWARD'S SMALL TOWN ATMOSPHERE

### Actions and Recommendations:

#### Plan connections in advance of development and build in concert with growth.

In much the same way as the transportation system should be built with development, the same should be done for trail extensions. As indicated in the development concept, new development areas should be interwoven with trails that connect with the trail loop. These trails should be planned ahead of development (see the development concept), platted with development, and funded through the development or, if appropriate/needed, later.

#### Require pedestrian and bicycle features in new developments and encourage trail-oriented development.

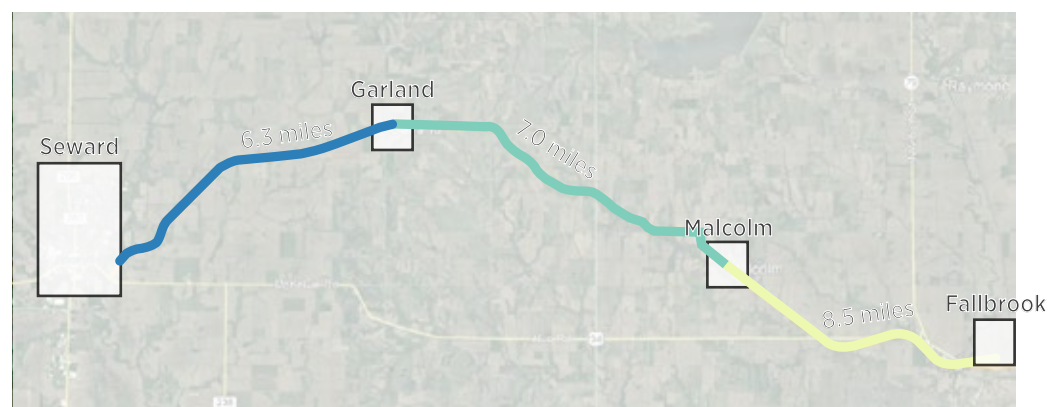
New residential areas should seamlessly integrate new residents with opportunities to walk or ride a bike for recreation or transportation. As the trail system is much-loved by virtually all residents, the plan proposes the idea of "trail-oriented development" for new neighborhoods. The concept follows:

- The trail loop will be completed in the coming years ("the wheel")
- The trail will then be connected through the core of the city providing access to important destinations such as schools and the downtown ("the spokes")
- The trail will be extended into new developments through additional loops or spurs. By configuring new residential areas with the trail as a common feature, these residents gain access to the trail loop and the remainder of the community via the spokes.

#### Explore the creation of a regional trail system with an eventual connection to Lincoln.

Seward was once connected to Garland, Malcolm, and eventually Lincoln (the Fallbrook Neighborhood) by a former railroad. This connection is now relevant once again with the rail-to-trail movement which was demonstrated with great success the impact that a regional trail can have on a small community both economically and socially. While the project would take years to complete due to the need for land acquisition, fundraising, and eventually construction, it is a worthy endeavor that would likely be supported by Garland, Malcolm, and Lincoln.

#### *Regional Trail Route: Phasing Concept*





## GOAL 2: PROVIDE AN ARRAY OF ACTIVE AND PASSIVE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES TO ALLOW RESIDENTS AMPLE OPPORTUNITIES TO ENGAGE IN THEIR COMMUNITY AND TO MEET AND GATHER WITH THEIR PEERS

### Actions and Recommendations:

**Complete a regular review of recreational facilities by type and condition and use this to allocate funding resources and engage community partners.**

A balanced park and recreation system should include both active and passive opportunities. The city should regularly review the opportunities offered in Seward and be proactive in offering a diverse array of options throughout the park system. Communities with exceptional park systems typically engage community partners for funding, programming, and maintenance. Potential partners may include the business community, philanthropic interests, and other entities interested in personal and community health.

## GOAL 3: PROVIDE PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES, PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT ARE CONNECTED AND ACCESSIBLE TO ALL RESIDENTS

### Actions and Recommendations:

**Create parks to serve all neighborhoods of the city, including new development areas.**

All residents of Seward should have access to a neighborhood park or, preferably, access to multiple parks via an interconnected trail system. With residential growth predicted to the north and east, these areas should be prioritized for new park development, including how the park will be integrated into the development, the type of amenities that should be included (such as what is missing from the current system), the scale of the park, and what partners may be available to help create a premier facility.

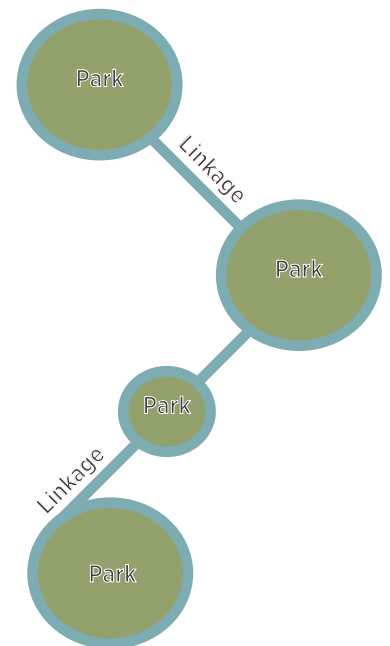
The city has wisely adopted a policy of not creating out-lot parks that would technically satisfy their parkland dedication ordinance because these facilities are costly to maintain and contribute little to nearby residents or the overall park system. Instead, the city accepts payment in lieu to plan future park facilities to serve a larger part of the community in a better way.

**Expand the park and greenway system to connect resources in the core of the city and to ensure that all residents are within a half-mile of a park facility in the newly-developing areas.**

People often refer to a "park system" without additional thought. However, the term indicates variety and interconnectedness. For example, not every park needs to include every type of amenity; if someone likes softball and someone else likes tennis, they should each be able to walk, ride a bike, or drive to a facility with their desired amenity. By focusing on providing variety across the park system and offering comfortable ways to get between parks, a child or family could safely and easily get from place to place.

The concept of a park and greenway system is illustrated on the right. The circles indicate current and future parks while the connections between the circles indicate connections between the parks (the greenways). By leveraging existing parks, the park system is better used, residents feel like they have greater access to resources within a reasonable proximity to their homes, and the community can make use of drainages as part of the greenway network.

*A "Park System" Illustrated*



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## GOAL 4: IDENTIFY GAPS IN EXISTING FACILITIES AND EXPLORE OPTIONS TO FULFILL COMMUNITY NEEDS

### Actions and Recommendations:

Explore the feasibility of an indoor recreation facility, the appropriate programming for the space, and the partners needed to implement.

At the time this document was written, much of the community had mobilized in support of an indoor recreational facility. While the project had recently fallen through due to issues securing financial commitments, it was clear from the process that the general idea was widely supported; however, the detail still need to be worked through including programming, funding, management, and location. These issues should be explored to identify the feasibility of the project and, if appropriate, a strategy toward making it a reality.

### Complete a park and recreation master plan.

There was a time when a city would be amiss if it didn't have a horse-shoe facility in its city parks. The park system should seek to maintain a diverse, balanced, and relevant offering of amenities throughout the years without overemphasizing any one particular feature. A parks master plan would study current amenities, forecast future demand for individual facility types, and articulate a realistic and cost-effective strategy for park maintenance, development, and modernization.





# Strong Neighborhoods

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Vibrant communities are composed of a variety of safe and interesting places for people to live, work, play, and learn. These types of places exist today in Seward, and they are the types of places residents seek to maintain and incorporate into Seward's future.





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## STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS: GOALS

- Create neighborhoods and promote infill development that builds on the character and quality of existing neighborhoods
- Connect neighborhoods to community destinations including jobs, commerce, and recreation
- Expand housing diversity by type and cost



## EXISTING CONDITIONS: AT A GLANCE

**Established Neighborhoods.** Seward is home to many established neighborhoods which exhibit a clear pride of ownership. While housing development can occur rapidly, it takes time for neighborhoods to establish themselves socially. Due to its steady pattern of growth, many of Seward's neighborhoods are now stable, established, and desirable. By offering more than a house, established neighborhoods can offer a sense of community in their own right.

**Well Maintained Housing Stock.** Consistent with the subjective observation on established neighborhoods, the majority of homes in Seward are well maintained. While there are areas of Seward that would benefit from rehabilitation, these areas are limited in scope.

**Strong History of Housing Construction.** Seward has constructed an average of 30 new dwelling units each year since 2010. To the forecasted annual population growth of 1% annually would require only a slight increase to 36 units annually.

**Owner / Renter Balance.** Seward's housing stock is roughly a 60% / 40% mix of owner and renter occupied units respectively. This share is typical for cities in the Midwest however it is important to note that housing construction since 2004 has favored owner occupied dwellings at a share of 86 and 14% mix respectively.

**A Shortage of Lifecycle Housing and Limited Housing Diversity.** A healthy housing market provides a lifecycle of options which serve residents throughout the evolution of their changing housing needs, from renter, to entry-level ownership, family, and then back to a downsize option that could be either renter or an ownership option. The majority of Seward's housing stock is owner occupied single family detached housing. In addition to a shortage of rental units, Seward more broadly lacks a variety of housing types. The community should focus on promoting diverse housing options with a balance of rental and owner occupied units.

**Residential Density and Cost of Community Services.** Residential land consumes the greatest share of urban land use in most American cities and this has a direct impact on the cost of supplying infrastructure and how much a resident will need to rely on an automobile to get them from place to place, even within town. Residential neighborhoods should be mindful of density – specifically lot width – to reduce the cost of development and the long-term cost of infrastructure including water, sewer, in addition to police, fire, and park service. In Seward, 35% of all developed land is residential.

**Neighborhood Anchors.** Traditionally, residential areas developed with community features as the focal point. Anchors traditionally included schools, libraries, commercial areas, and parks. This plan integrates this same philosophy to creating new neighborhoods but it is also important to reinforce existing neighborhoods. While many of Seward's neighborhoods still have their local anchor, the areas south of downtown and formerly anchored by the middle school should be evaluated and target to promote reinvestment.

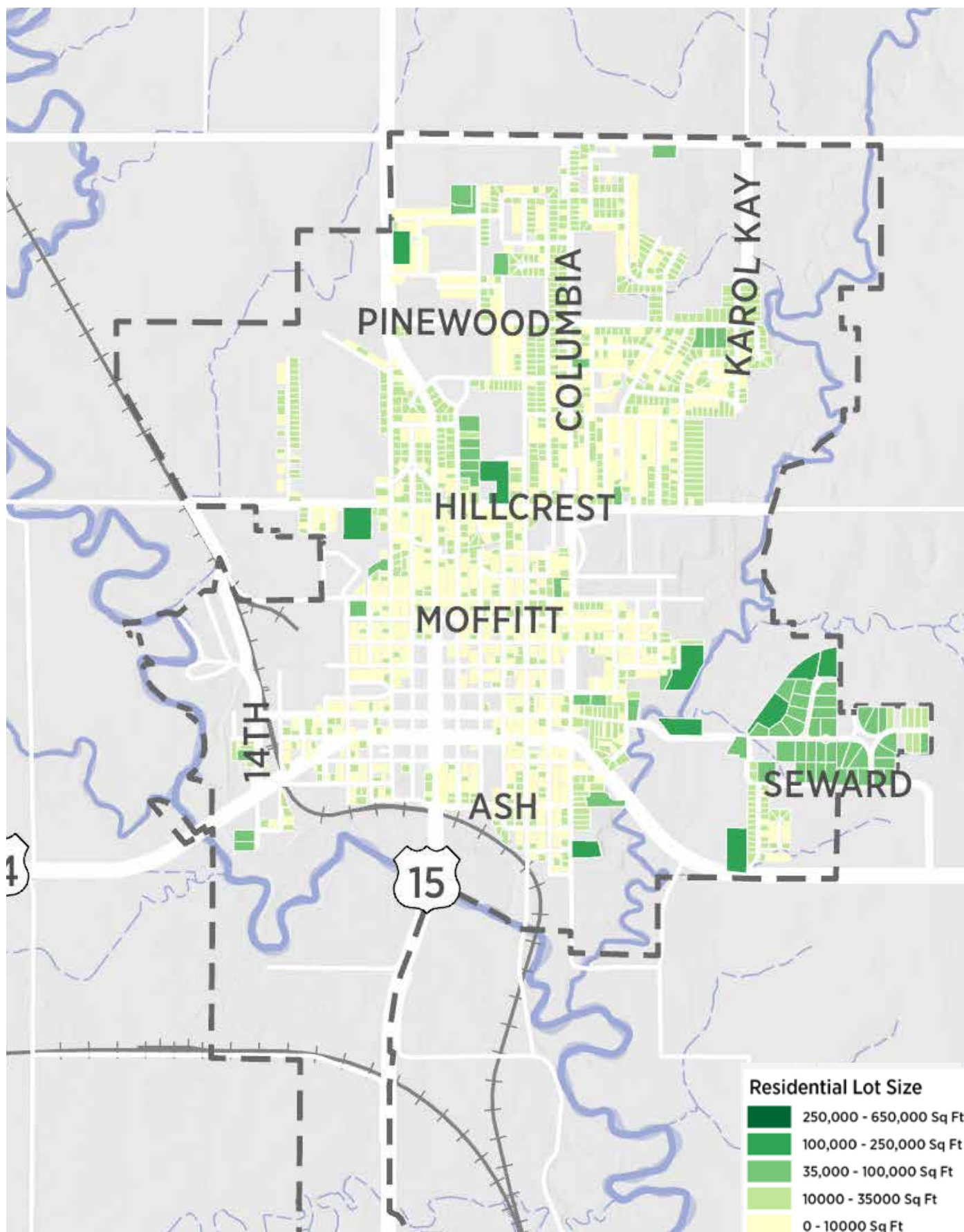


Figure 4.4: Residential Lot Sizes

**FIGURE 4.5:** Housing Occupancy

	2000	% OF OCCUPIED UNITS	2010	% OF OCCUPIED UNITS	CHANGE 2000-2010	2016	% OF OCCUPIED UNITS
Total Units	2,415		2,796		381	2,792	
Occupied Units	2,281		2,521		240	2,607	
Owner-Occupied	1,497	65.6%	1,736	68.9%	239	1,693	64.9%
Renter-Occupied	784	34.4%	785	31.1%	1	914	35.1%
Total Vacant	134		275		141	185	
Vacancy rate	5.5%		9.8%			6.6%	

Source: US Census Bureau, 2000 &amp; 2010; 2016 American Community Survey

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## GOAL 1: CREATE NEIGHBORHOODS AND PROMOTE INFILL DEVELOPMENT THAT BUILD ON THE CHARACTER AND QUALITY OF EXISTING NEIGHBORHOODS

### Actions and Recommendations:

#### Establish incentive programs for housing rehabilitation.

Seward's existing housing stock is its best source of character and affordable housing because it is difficult to build new housing at an affordable rate. Housing rehabilitation and maintenance programs should include a mixture of owner and renter assistance programs. Owner assistance programs may include:

- Emergency repair program for very low-income residents in need of emergency repairs. These programs are designed to meet critical individual needs and keep viable housing from deteriorating further.
- Direct rehabilitation loan programs that provide forgivable loans or grants to low-income households.
- Energy efficiency loans for improvements that can extend the life of a house and substantially reduce utility bills for a household.

Rental assistance programs can be more challenging because they are income-producing properties; therefore, any program must be combined with code enforcement. A program would likely be a matching loan that would require regular inspections during the life of the loan. For a community like Seward with a high demand for rental properties, new construction of affordable rental units can also help improve the market. With new construction, units in the worst condition will need to make improvements to stay competitive; however, some of the most vulnerable in the population can still find themselves living in substandard units.

#### Target public facility improvements to highest-risk neighborhoods.

Neighborhood condition is often cyclical as occupancy changes and as homes face similar rehabilitation/maintenance needs. The condition of neighborhoods can also shift due to external factors such as increased traffic on a roadway or the relocation of a major public facility, such as a school. While Seward does not have any neighborhoods that are truly blighted today, it is important to pay attention to changes and potential impacts that may disadvantage a neighborhood - be it gradual or immediate due to a significant change.

One example of an area that should be monitored and addressed is the neighborhoods south of Highway 34; once anchored by a school which has since relocated, residents must now bus or drive their children to school. While this is likely an inconvenience today, the distance from the school and the loss of a major neighborhood institution may deter investment and reinvestment. To remedy or soften the impact of this change, public facility improvements such as trails, parks, sidewalks, or rehabilitation programs may be appropriate.

#### Review and update property maintenance codes.

A city's property maintenance code and enforcement procedures are on the front lines of ensuring that the housing stock remains in a state of good repair. While these policies should not be overbearing, they are important to maintaining property values and a healthy stock of residential dwellings. Even a single house allowed to exist in a visible state of ill-repair has a ripple effect of values and conditions as nearby residents begin to ask themselves, "Does it make sense for me to reinvest in my property?"

Seward should examine its property maintenance codes and enforcement procedures. Many communities of its size operate on a complaint basis, which is often appropriate; however, it is appropriate to pursue violations encountered in the process of typical workday.



## Encourage Infill development

Infill development is a key component of stabilizing and revitalizing older neighborhoods; however, it can also be the one of most challenging projects for the private market. Site development issues, including older infrastructure, compatibility with existing neighborhood structures, or the removal of an existing structure, along with lower-assessed values for surrounding properties can increase the costs and risk for development. Often these types of projects need some assistance from the city, but the return on the investment can be significant for both the neighborhood and the city's overall tax base; Seward has identified a redevelopment area in the southern core of the city where projects can already receive tax increment financing to assist qualifying projects such as infill development. An infill development policy may include any of the following components:

**Establish incentives for vacant lot development.** Infill housing refers to housing that is built on vacant or underused lots in existing neighborhoods. Vacant lots can be a good resource for new affordable housing. However, these lots may have site issues that need to be addressed, such as dilapidated structures that need to be removed. Site issues along with the scattered nature of vacant lots can make infill development challenging.

**Assist with land assembly.** One of the biggest hurdles to transformative infill development in struggling neighborhoods is the assembly of land or lots. Most developers do not have the capital, time, or other resources to assemble lots from multiple property owners. This can be true for both deteriorated older residential areas or even older commercial and industrial sites. In areas with a concentration of infill sites or just one larger infill development, preparation of a redevelopment plan by the city should guide developers and builders.

**Standards for infill development.** Infill development must respect the character of the existing neighborhood and contribute to the city's vision for the future of a neighborhood, such as medium-density housing at the fringe of downtown. Principles that should be considered with any infill development include:

- **Transitions.** Provide transitions between higher-intensity uses and lower-intensity uses to address compatibility issues.
- **Scale.** The size and height of the buildings is in keeping with surrounding buildings or the context of the corridor.
- **Context.** The design fits the housing styles around even if the type of units are different. Other context variables on a site may include views that enhance the site or stormwater facilities that may add open space amenities.
- **New Housing Options.** Can the site provide an alternative that might allow a young adult to live in the neighborhood where they grew up or enabling a senior to downsize without needing to leave their neighborhood behind?

## GOAL 2: CONNECT NEIGHBORHOODS TO COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS INCLUDING JOBS, COMMERCE, AND RECREATION

### Actions and Recommendations:

#### Identify green space that should be added to growth areas.

It is important that all residents have convenient access to the park and recreation system. New developments should include spaces where residents or visitors can gather and have shared community experiences. This may include park or open spaces, plazas, or outdoor seating areas in mixed-use developments. These spaces should increase opportunities for community interaction and increase the sense of belonging to a community. Drainage or wetland areas may function as open space amenities for neighborhoods.

#### Protect and buffer drainage areas in developing areas to create neighborhood amenities.

Drainage areas should be viewed as an opportunity to create something that is both functional and attractive to a resident of Seward. One way to expand and connect the city's recreation system is by multi-purposing drainages and environmentally-sensitive areas to support stormwater management and greenspace - both active and passive. This system can function as linear parks and trails that safely connect major destinations and recreation features.

In past decades, the City acquired the Plum Creek Corridor and positioned these areas as natural preserves with a trail. Drainages - both large and small - should serve the purpose of managing stormwater and providing natural and high quality open space to residents of Seward.

#### Use incentives to further the image of the downtown as a neighborhood with housing in and around the downtown.

Throughout the downtown planning process, stakeholders mused about how to make the area more prosperous and lively throughout more of the day. Part of the answer is making downtown more of a neighborhood to bring more repeat customers into the district and to connect more residents with the core of the city as their identity. The use of financial incentives to promote the development of housing on the upper floors of downtown buildings and at the fringe of the district would help make downtown function as more of a neighborhood. The downtown plan discusses the recommendations, including case studies, model proformas, and estimated unit counts that could be supported in the district.



## GOAL 3: EXPAND HOUSING DIVERSITY BY TYPE AND COST

### Actions and Recommendations:

#### Direct and support incentives toward mixed-income housing.

Any incentives, whether they come from the city or the economic development community, should favor housing developments that blend income levels. For many residents working in the service industries, the cost of housing is a burden. This is often the hardest housing market to address, as the profit margins are not high enough to attract private market construction and prospective tenants often make over the income limits required to qualify for housing assistance programs. By blending income levels, projects should also provide a mix of housing styles.

#### Establish design standards for any projects receiving city incentives or support.

An underlying idea of this plan is to support those willing to take risks in pursuit of something that is in the best interest of the community; this may include trying something that is yet untested in Seward such as a neighborhood with innovative housing products or an urban scale mixed-use component. If the city considers supporting a project financially, it should be held to a higher standard in terms of architecture, site design, and other considerations as deemed appropriate.

#### Encourage and support new projects that integrate a variety of housing products not currently present in Seward.

A healthy market provides options that appeal to the needs and desires of their buyers and renters but today, Seward offers primarily single-family detached and apartment dwellings. The community should promote projects that integrate additional choice to prospective buyers and renters, both for new residents and those looking to move-up or downsize within Seward. The City and SCCDP should explore the appropriateness of financial, policy, or organizational support that can be offered to innovative neighborhood development projects.





# Vibrant Businesses

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Historically, the form of our cities reflects the investment of the business community and often their role as philanthropists. Today, the business community plays an equally important role; however, it is rarely viewed as having the same level of engagement as was common in the past. A strong business community is a prerequisite for a strong community and vice-versa; therefore, it should be viewed as a partner in the strength of the community.





## VIBRANT BUSINESSES: GOALS

- Invest in Downtown Seward as a destination, an economic engine, and the heart of the community
- Promote a strong retail, restaurant, and service economy
- Focus business recruitment and incubation on sectors that complement the overall character of the city in terms of its strengths, its people, and its vision for the future
- Support and promote the creation of community amenities that will attract and retain a young and talented workforce



## EXISTING CONDITIONS: AT A GLANCE

**Strong Community Image.** Seward is a community that is well respected and recognized throughout the region. People interact with Seward for many reasons - school events, Concordia University, the Fourth of July Festival, and many others. The lasting memory of these visits is often downtown, which is quintessential Americana, and its quaint neighborhoods. Actions should reinforce this positive image.

**Location as an Advantage and Challenge.** Seward's location 30 miles northwest of Lincoln and five miles north of Interstate 80 is both an advantage and a challenge for the community. As an advantage, Seward benefits (and should continue to benefit) from an expanded workforce, an expanded market of individuals fueling its population growth, and, theoretically, an expanded market for businesses in Seward. As a disadvantage (or potential disadvantage), this proximity threatens to undermine its unique identity, the market for its businesses, and the share of individuals vested in the community and its institutions.

**Long-Standing Employers.** Seward's business community is comprised of several major employers including Tenneco, Hughes Brothers, Seward Family Medical Center/Memorial Hospital, the Seward Public School System, and Concordia. In addition to these major employers, there are countless small businesses that provide jobs and services to residents. These employers should be viewed as partners, assets, and stakeholders in the future of the city. Through an economic development lens, these represent opportunities for expansion and synergy with business recruitment prospects.

**Prime Land for Economic Development.** Seward has invested in reserving and planning for major employment growth through its rail campus. With infrastructure, or an actionable plan for infrastructure, Seward is prepared to recruit major enterprises with an attractive land opportunity.

**Interconnectedness of Businesses and Limiting Factors.** The idea of economics is based on the interconnectedness of factors including supply and demand; while these principles are examined and applied at the micro-level within individual businesses, they should be viewed broadly in the context of community development, such as whether there is sufficient capacity (housing, amenities, or public infrastructure) to support a business prospect. When considering recruiting or incubating a new business, it is appropriate to consider whether a cluster of complementary businesses would allow the entire cluster greater opportunity for growth and reduced costs.

**Downtown as the Social, Civic, and Economic Center of Seward.** Often, downtowns are viewed independently of serious economic development initiatives; however, our downtowns play a major role as an employer, as an essential amenity to attract businesses and their employees, and as a force for diversity and stability in the overall economy. Actions should reinforce downtown as the center of the community in terms of social, civic, and economic life.

**Changing Economic Landscape.** Only a few years ago, comprehensive plans would have forecasted continued growth in big-box retail in markets such as Seward. While this may still occur, recent national trends suggest a more conservative perspective on this market including its growth, popularity with consumers, and entry into smaller markets.

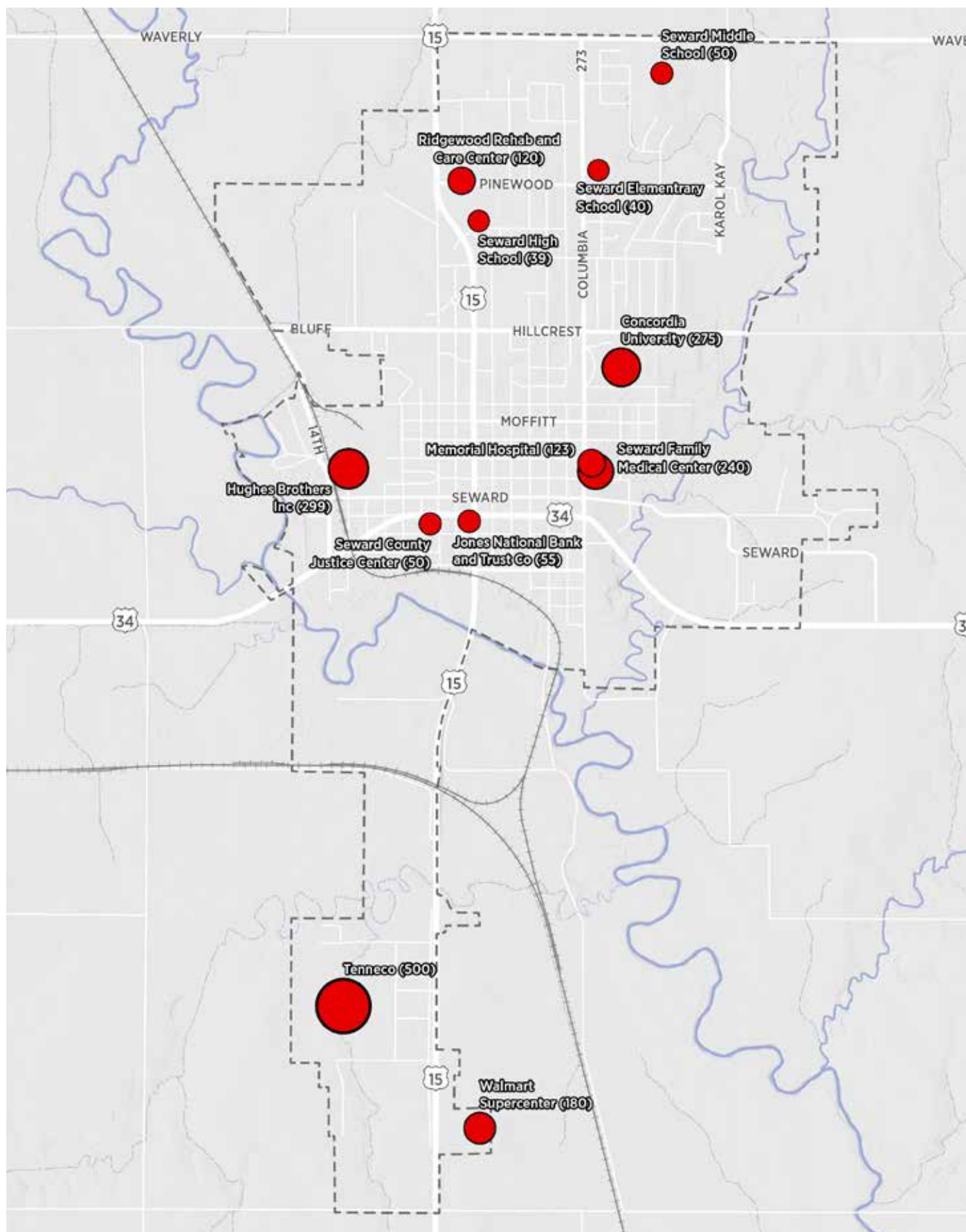


Figure 4.6: Large Employers

## GOAL 1: INVEST IN DOWNTOWN SEWARD AS A DESTINATION, AN ECONOMIC ENGINE, AND THE HEART OF THE COMMUNITY

### Actions and Recommendations:

#### Implement the recommendations of the downtown revitalization plan

The City of Seward and the Seward County Chamber and Development Partnership elected to create a comprehensive downtown revitalization plan in 2017. The planning process engaged hundreds of residents to articulate their vision for the downtown and priorities. In essence, the community should invest to make downtown a vibrant place with people, businesses, and things to do.

**Understand the role of downtown.** Downtown should not be reviewed by the same metrics as a traditional stand-alone business but should instead be judged by its contribution to the community as a whole. Downtown contributes to the city by offering it an identity (what is Seward if not for its iconic downtown), by providing a place for people to gather (how much do people enjoy downtown), and by leaving a lasting impression with visitors, including Concordia parents, business prospects, residents, and prospective residents. While subjective, downtown contributes to Seward in a remarkable way and deserves community support.

**Increase organizational capacity.** In a similar vein as the subjective role of downtown, the district offers a locational advantage to its residents that it not fully realized. As a district, land and business owners should be able to reap the rewards of increased organizational capacity in terms of marketing, management of public resources such as parking, and stakeholder engagement.

**Increase financial capacity.** At the time of the downtown plan, much of the total square footage in downtown remained vacant or underutilized. While main floor occupancy was strong in certain blocks, the share of total usable square footage (including the upper floors) was relatively low. Increasing the use of these floors will increase the valuation of the district as a whole and increase the revenue stream for individual property owners.

**Increase patron visits.** Ultimately, the goal of the plan is to make downtown into an area where people live, work, and play because each of these actions support a prosperous business community, reinforce downtown as the center of the community, and will increase reinvestment in downtown buildings.

Actions highlighted in the Downtown Revitalization Plan include:

- **Reinforce downtown the economic, social, and civic center of the community.** Investment in downtown represents an investment in the community as a whole, not an investment to favor an individual or business venture.
- **Promote full occupancy of downtown buildings through incentives, demonstration projects, and promotional events.** Downtown buildings should be viewed as infrastructure; when fully occupied, these resources serve the community to the maximum benefit through unique housing, destination businesses, and by reinforcing the overall quality of the district.
- **Invest to make the district easy, safe, and comfortable to navigate as a park once district.** Strengthening a downtown relies on providing a great experience in totality from the time a patron first arrives in the district, to their path to their initial destination, and any other experiences or interactions they have along the way. When viewed holistically, the elements include: arrival (vehicle parking, on-foot or by bike; navigating the district (wayfinding signage), eliminating barriers (designing roads for pedestrian comfort), and maximizing delight (art, window displays, eclectic ventures).

"the community  
should invest to  
make downtown a  
vibrant place with  
people, businesses,  
and things to do"

- Downtown Revitalization  
Plan Response



## District Specific Leadership

Many communities have found value and success in district specific leadership groups.

Common examples include business improvement districts (BID) and Main Street Districts which target funding, energy, and advocacy behind the betterment of a targeted district.

Elements of a successful improvement district

- **District Buy-In.** A district can only be successful if it has (or can build) widespread support.
- **Financial Backing.** A BID is a self-tax on property in a defined district which requires the support of property owners. A Main Street District requires stable financial support from community partners. A fundraising loop must be avoided.
- **A Mission and Implementation Strategy.** An effective organizations must have long term goals and short-term projects and initiatives to advance the district toward the goal.

While Downtown Seward is well-respected and well-recognized as the heart of the city, the people of Seward have spoken and want downtown Seward to be exceptional. An improvement district would offer the attention, resources, and the vision to advance the district consistently over the coming years.

- **Reinforce the identity of downtown as a district (a collection of complementary businesses in a pleasant environment) rather than a collection of independent ventures.** Too often, downtowns are viewed as competition to other commercial ventures and investment in viewed as favoritism. As the central business district of Seward, the common identity of Seward residents, and the lasting memory for virtually all visitors, downtown plays an especially important role that warrants additional support and investment.
- **Implement a comprehensive strategy to downtown parking that focuses awareness, allocation, and supply versus demand.** The downtown revitalization plan revealed that, as a whole, there is a surplus of available parking spaces compared to demand. While there are places where demand exceeds supply, there are virtually always available spaces within a block; therefore, no additional parking is needed at this time. However, with additional development/building utilization in downtown, additional parking will be needed. The strategy should include: directing employees to remote parking areas, improved bicycle and pedestrian access to reduce vehicle parking demands, and enforcement to promote compliance with parking restrictions.
- **Become a Main Street America community ([www.mainstreet.org](http://www.mainstreet.org)) or pursue the creation of a business improvement district.** As described previously, downtown is a special district in terms of its physical character, image and identity locally and throughout the region, and potential as a destination district. Therefore, the community should create an organization solely dedicated to the implementation of the downtown revitalization plan and strengthening downtown Seward.

## GOAL 2: PROMOTE A STRONG RETAIL, RESTAURANT, AND SERVICE ECONOMY

### Actions and Recommendations:

#### Establish incentive programs to support additional retail, restaurants, and service businesses in target areas such as downtown.

It is sometimes necessary to provide support to get the outcome that is desired. Universally, residents of Seward take pride in downtown and are committed to its long-term sustainability and vibrancy. This support should be formalized through financial and logistical support in pursuit of that goal. While an investment in the overall public environment (such as a streetscape) is often most palatable, a direct investment in the renovation of a downtown building is often appropriate and necessary.

An incentive program should be transparent, accessible for all to apply, and be designed to yield the greatest overall impact. When evaluating a project, the following questions should be asked:

- Does the project lay the foundation for the implementation of future downtown revitalization initiatives?
- Does the project generate the maximum level of private market response?
- Does the project respond to specific or high-profile community issues or needs?
- What is the project's potential to transform the image of the area and the community?
- Does the project attract both local residents and visitors, increasing business traffic and creating new reasons for people to be downtown?
- Can the project be implemented within a reasonable timeframe with available resources?
- Does the project incorporate and leverage outside funding sources, such as state grants or charitable contributions, or engage new financial partners?



### **Implement design standards for commercial ventures to promote site designs that complement adjacent uses and, when appropriate, bring activity outside through outdoor dining and displays.**

The fact that patrons appreciate good site design is evident in the great places across the region including Fallbrook, the Haymarket in Lincoln, and the Old Market in Omaha. By distilling each of these to their primary elements, several common traits emerge:

1. An attractive public environment.
2. Complementary businesses concentrated together and oriented to the pedestrian environment.
3. Their emergence was almost always supported by public-private partnerships to create an exceptional destination district.

While design standards and guidelines are not necessary everywhere, they are appropriate to promote thoughtful design in high-visibility areas and at priority development/redevelopment areas. As appropriate to the overall context, the standards should encourage a concentration of complementary uses (such as housing, retail, and clean employment ventures), orient buildings to amenities and priority street frontages, limit the scale of signage, and situate parking behind buildings. Design standards can be implemented through overlay districts, planned unit development districts, and through negotiations of public incentives.

## **GOAL 3: FOCUS BUSINESS RECRUITMENT, INCUBATION, AND RETENTION EFFORTS ON SECTORS THAT COMPLEMENT THE OVERALL CHARACTER OF THE CITY INCLUDING ITS STRENGTHS, ITS PEOPLE, AND ITS VISION FOR THE FUTURE**

### **Actions and Recommendations:**

#### **Implement and adhere to the Seward County Chamber and Development Partnership's 2035 Vision as it relates to strengthening community assets and planning for the future.**

The 2035 Vision was carefully crafted to recognize that the region need not sacrifice its inherent quality and sense of community in blind pursuit of economic development. Instead efforts should be targeted to the specific needs and strengths of each community. This vision, which could easily be reimagined as one for the community as a whole, should be reviewed frequently and publicly to ensure efforts and decisions continue to align with the spirit of this vision. In much the same way as a comprehensive plan, a vision statement is only valuable when used.

#### **Encourage the creation of complementary business cluster to reduce operational costs to promote business growth.**

The operational costs of individual business ventures converge with the role of city governance in two primary ways: (1) workforce availability, recruitment, and retention and (2) the locational benefits of locating in a given community. The first is addressed throughout this plan, but the second must be addressed here. A significant operational cost of business comes from the need to transport items as part of the production facility

Example: If a business in Seward must import raw materials from Iowa, conduct their primary operation, and then pass along the product to Colorado to finishing, the business would experience significant cost savings if it could consolidate even a share of the operation locally.

A balanced economic development strategy should be cognizant of the major employers operating in the community, the major operational costs, and potential alignments to yield cost savings. Often, co-location/clusters include multiple businesses located for mutual

## Seward County Chamber and Development Partnership:

## 2035 Vision Statement

Seward County is a proactive and collaborative area with vibrant, welcoming, family-friendly, and safe communities, recognized for pillars of strength in agriculture, arts and culture, business, education, entrepreneurship, government, and healthcare.

We are a destination location for businesses, visitors, and residents within the greater metropolitan area and an active partner in the region.

Our residents enjoy picturesque and diverse neighborhoods, viable main streets, outstanding recreational opportunities, active civic life, faith-based living, and quality housing and employment choices.

The private and public sectors are united and citizens are engaged for the betterment of all Seward County.

### Guiding Principles

**Integrity.** We are open, honest and hold ourselves to the highest ethical standards.

**Respect.** We treat everyone with courtesy, equity, and fairness.

**Leadership.** We understand the importance of engaged leadership and that leadership must transition to ensure the vision continues for future generations.

**Giving/Philanthropy.** We are caring and generous. We encourage giving freely and helping those in need. We champion volunteerism for its powerful contribution to our area.

**Planning for Our Future.** We acknowledge the importance of a shared vision and being intentional about planning our future. We believe our collective efforts will be sustainable for the long-term betterment of all Seward County.

benefit. Through interviews with existing ventures and prospective businesses, it is possible to understand limitations and target recruitment accordingly.

### Engage existing businesses in regular, action-oriented, discussions to understand their state of affairs and identify potential solutions to overcome barriers to retention and expansion.

An underrated component of an economic development strategy is business retention. These initiatives are rarely newsworthy but silently underpin the overall stability of the city's employment landscape. Recruitment initiatives should engage employers to understand the issues they may be facing, opportunities for expansion, and any role the community may play in supporting the retention or expansion of the venture.

## GOAL 4: SUPPORT AND PROMOTE THE CREATION OF COMMUNITY AMENITIES THAT WILL ATTRACT AND RETAIN A YOUNG AND TALENTED WORKFORCE

### Actions and Recommendations:

**Promote the creation of high-quality neighborhoods that feature a variety of housing styles, occupancy types (renter and owner-occupied), and price-points configured in an environment attractive to young professionals.**

As discussed in the housing element, people choose where they want to live based on the environment it offers and the way of life that environment affords. Through the lens of economic development, Seward should compare itself (as a neighborhood) to the neighborhoods in Lincoln because this is often the decision that prospective residents must make. As a neighborhood, Seward offers great schools, an iconic town center, and a small town environment; however, it lacks housing diversity, availability, and some community amenities like mid-distance trails. A major component of sales is overcoming objections - by employing the perspective of Seward as a neighborhood, it can strengthen its appeal by overcoming challenges.

**Encourage the creation of housing units in proximity to employment centers and other community and cultural features to provide residents with convenient housing opportunities.**

Contemporary land development policies have sought to separate uses in the effort to reduce compatibility issues. From a history where high density residential was immediately adjacent to high pollution industry, this approach is reasonable; however, the offsite impacts of most modern commercial and industrial operations can be addressed through appropriate design, buffering, and regulations. Furthermore, many residents actually desire these centers within walking distance of their residence for convenience. Subject to the type of industrial or commercial use and the site plan, it may be appropriate to consider how to integrate a neighborhood component into an otherwise single use district. The development should incorporate amenities, a mix of housing products and price-points, and be connected with the core of the city.



# Efficient Government

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The role of government is to ensure the health, safety, and welfare of its citizens. This mandate extends from the day-to-day decisions all the way to how those decisions accumulate overtime. The services provided by the government sets the foundation that supports everyday life in Seward; the provision of these services in a cost efficient manner is the chief responsibility of the city.





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## EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT: GOALS

- Ensure land use, infrastructure, and transportation patterns support the efficient and cost-effective delivery of emergency services
- Guide the extension of infrastructure in a way that supports efficient patterns of community and economic development
- Strengthen existing public facilities and infrastructure to encourage private sector investment and reinvestment, job creation, and to improve quality of life
- Plan ahead for major capital projects and implement in an expedient fashion to avoid unnecessary costs



## EXISTING CONDITIONS: AT A GLANCE

**Facility Condition.** Seward offers its community services at new, newly renovated, or well-maintained facilities including the Seward Public Library, City Hall, and the Seward Civic Center. These facilities should be evaluated on a regular basis to ensure they remain in a state of good repair to convey a sense of community pride.

**Service Capacity & Response Time.** Seward provides the sewer, water, electrical, police, and fire services. These services support life and land development in Seward and all are considered adequate for the current population but should be evaluated to identify necessary expansions. Specifically, the following facilities should be explored to understand the capacity limitations, cost of improvements, and project urgency:

- *Police and Fire Service.* The direct metric for evaluating police and fire service is response time, which is directly tied to the city's street pattern and the direction of growth. Response times for both facilities should be evaluated when considering major land development proposals and proposed street patterns.
- *Waste Water Treatment.* The capacity of the waste water treatment plan is considered the limiting factor to which economic development prospects are viable and/or economical.

**Infrastructure and Utility Extensions.** To accommodate Seward's growing population, the city will need to extend infrastructure to developing areas. Often, infrastructure is extended through a combination of private and public actions and investments. While the initial installation is typically financed by the land owner, all long-term maintenance projects (10 - 100 years into the future) falls to the city; therefore, the specifications, configuration, and character of the development are a matter of public interest.

**Stormwater Management.** Land development projects should be expected to responsibly manage the additional stormwater produced by their project. Stormwater can be managed in multiple ways ranging from the small detention basins common in contemporary housing developments to preserving natural drainageways. The natural depressions and drainageways should be viewed as an opportunity at both the site level and at the community scale wherein the drainageways can be reimagined as greenways and trail connections.

**Relatively Compact & Modern.** The geographic scale and configuration of the community impacts the cost of installing and maintaining all municipal infrastructure. Seward is fortunate to have grown in a relatively compact and contiguous manner that has allowed it to avoid unnecessary or inefficient service extensions. As described in the land use plan, this pattern should continue to reduce the lifecycle costs of providing municipal services while also maximizing the sense of community in Seward.

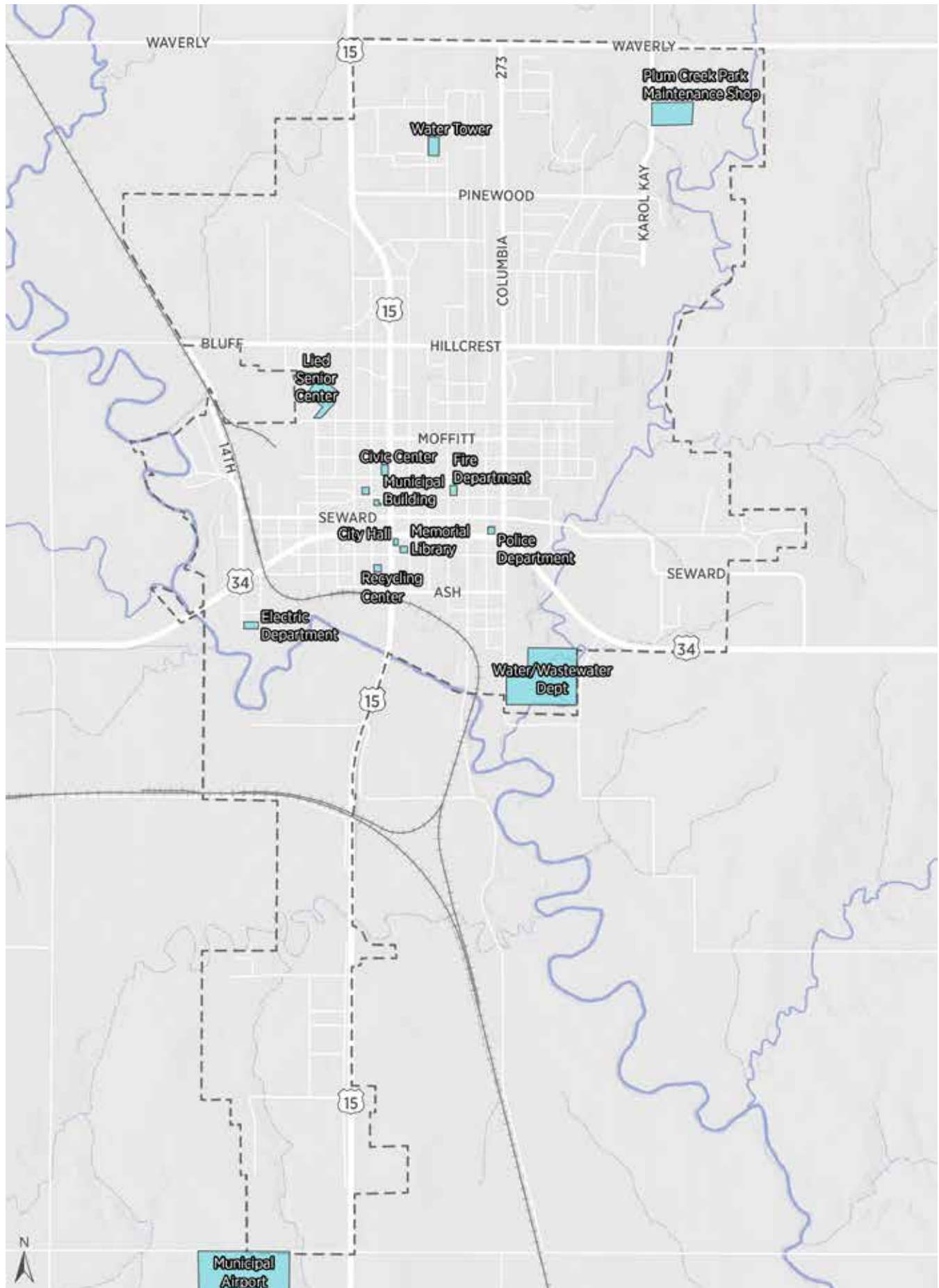


Figure 4.8: Seward Municipal Facilities



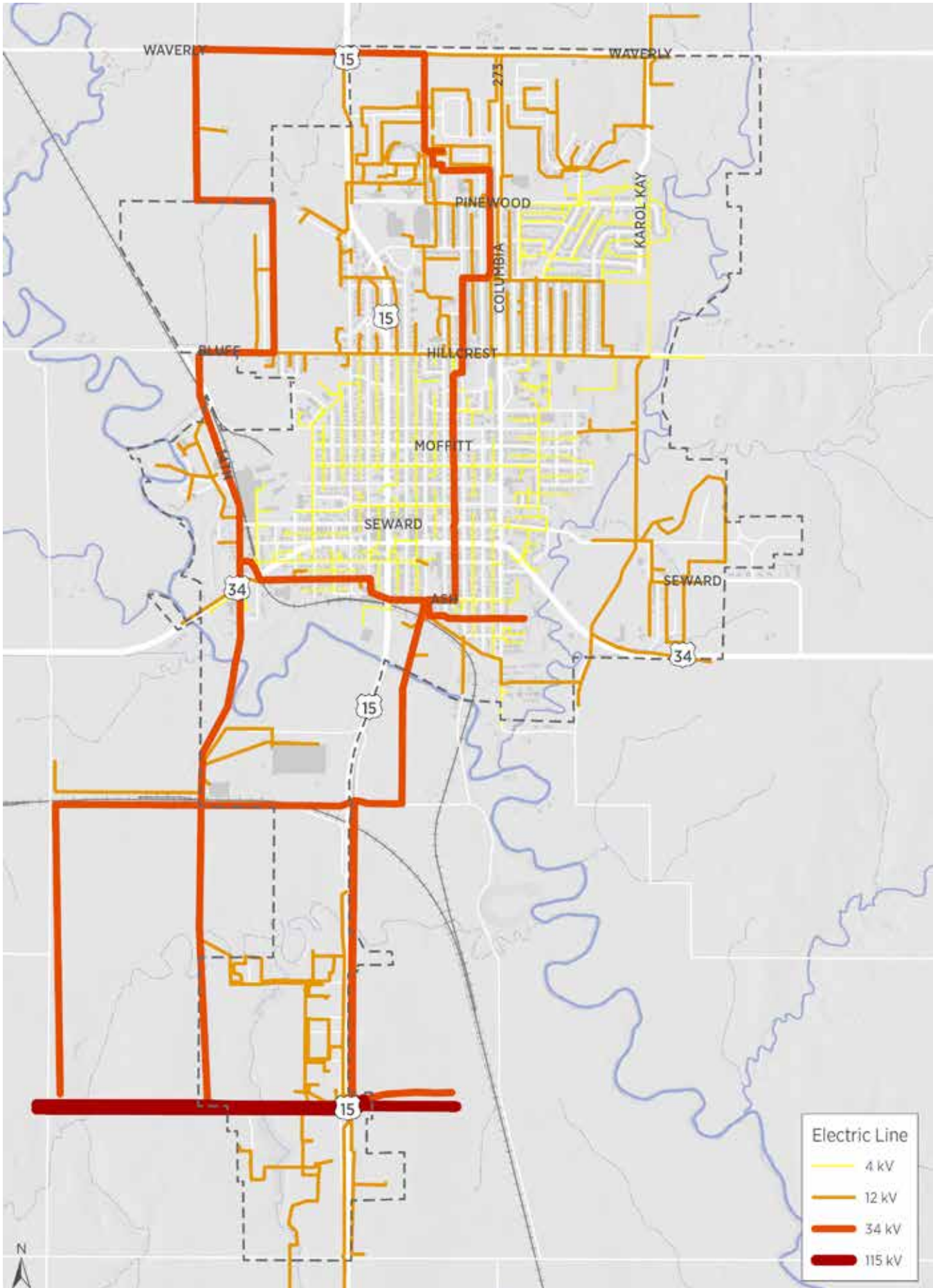
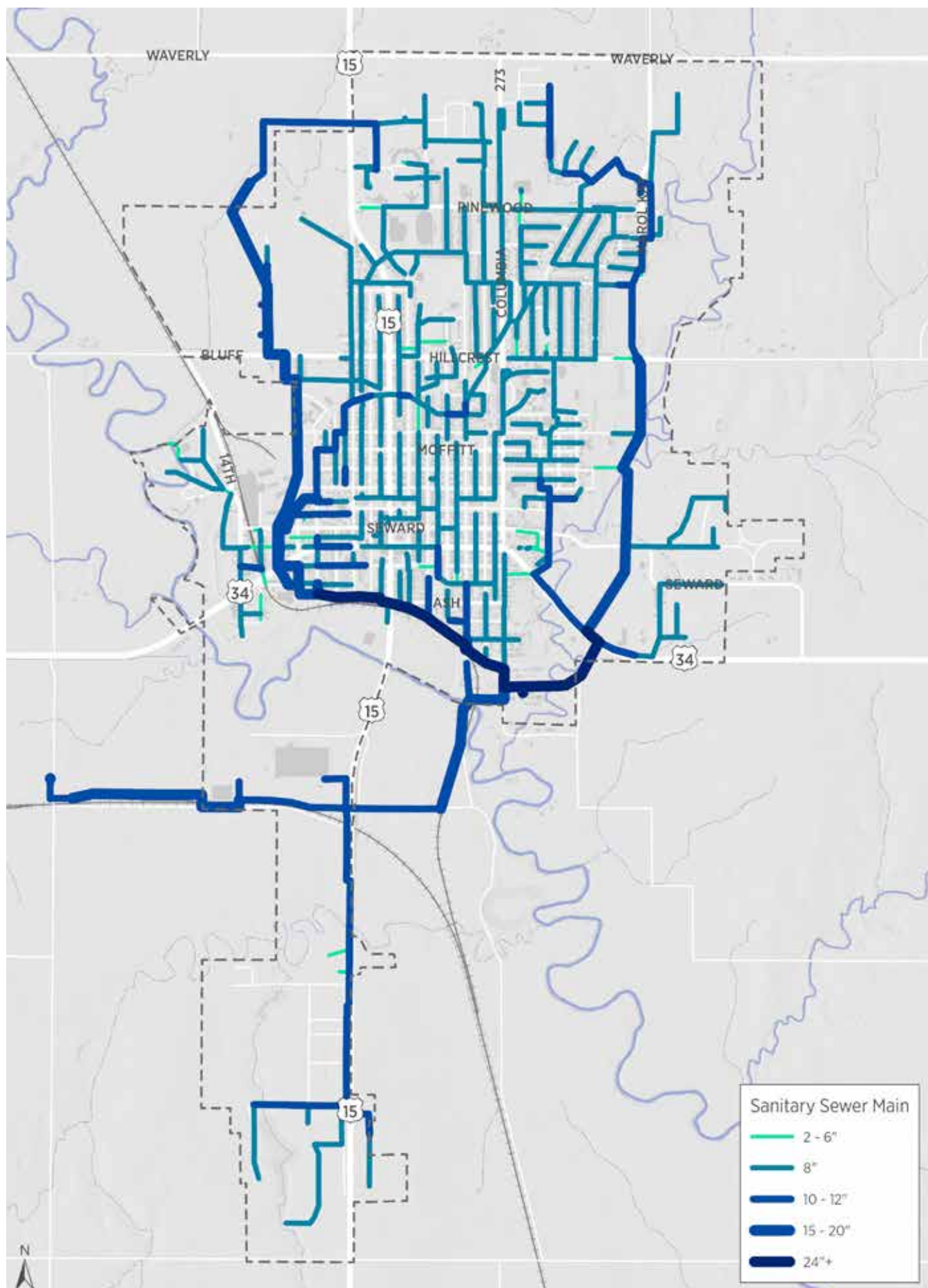


Figure 4.9: Electrical Transmission Lines



**Figure 4.10:** Sanitary Sewer Infrastructure



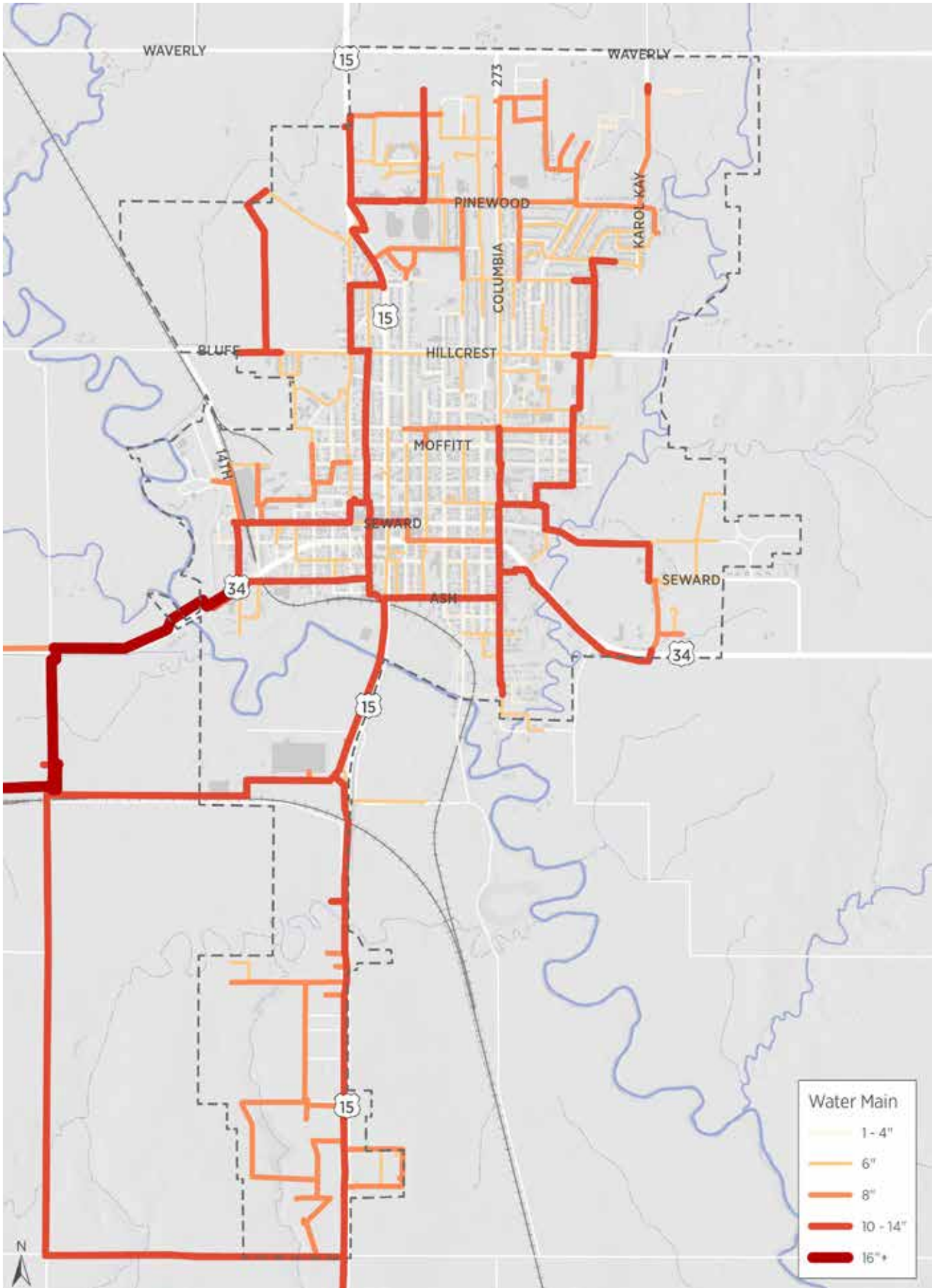


Figure 4.11: Water Lines

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## GOAL 1: ENSURE LAND USE, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND TRANSPORTATION PATTERNS SUPPORT THE EFFICIENT AND COST-EFFECTIVE DELIVERY OF EMERGENCY SERVICES

### Actions and Recommendations:

#### Promote development consistent with the comprehensive plan in terms of land use and street connectivity.

This comprehensive plan identified several priority land development areas and a framework of streets, trails, and parks that should be integrated into each. The plan should be used as a guide for negotiations, site plans, and the development of site facilities including streets. Due to the long-term implications of infrastructure costs, development must be done in a thoughtful manner that will use resources in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

Extension of infrastructure must be maximized, so very low-density development in many areas is not the best use of infrastructure resources or developable land. Expedited permitting or density bonuses can be provided for projects that incorporate elements that advance the goals of this plan. In this way, policies for infrastructure extensions can be used to guide land development.

#### Implement and enforce stormwater management requirements in new developments and in significant redevelopments

The implementation of responsible stormwater practices is imperative for the city because the impact of poor stormwater management presents a burden and hazard to the residents downstream. In addition to enforcing existing stormwater management requirements, the city should consider an ordinance or policy that allows or requires stormwater management to be integrated as a site amenity such as a pond, linear park, or dry stream.

#### Maximize public safety through site design

The design of the public realm and how it interacts with private property has a direct impact on the overall health and perception of safety throughout the city.

**Clearly define public and private spaces.** Undefined spaces can often leave visitors feeling unwelcome and unsafe. Well-defined public spaces are places where people can literally see and be seen. These spaces increase the level of positive interaction that is the essence of a quality neighborhood.

Hidden or neglected public spaces have the opposite effect, attracting nuisances and sometimes crime, and being scary or off-putting places that people avoid.

**Design spaces with natural surveillance.** Areas with natural surveillance are designed to have physical features that can include walkways, gathering areas, roadways, and structures that eliminate hiding places and increase human presence and supervision.

**Maintain public spaces and enforce existing codes to create environments that feel well kept and safe.** Property maintenance can have significant impact on a visitor's comfort level. Areas filled with litter and overgrown landscaping can feel unwelcoming and unsafe. Studies have shown that the best way to combat property damage and illegal activity is to create a strong sense of ownership. If a public space feels "owned" by the community, and any damage is quickly cleaned up or removed, criminal activity often decreases.

**Prohibit developments with one access point.** Large developments with one access point can leave homes and business isolated during emergencies. The more access points or street connections that a development has, the easier it is for emergency personnel to reach areas

in need of their services. Neighborhoods with a high degree of connectivity can improve emergency response times as well as offer alternative routes for motorists and pedestrians.

## GOAL 2: GUIDE THE EXTENSION OF INFRASTRUCTURE IN A WAY THAT SUPPORTS EFFICIENT PATTERNS OF COMMUNITY AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### Actions and Recommendations:

#### Establish a funding mechanism for the maintenance of all types of public facilities to ensure the long-term viability and efficiency of public infrastructure.

Maintaining public facilities is a priority of the city, so establishing a funding mechanism to maintain all types of public facilities is essential to ensuring the long-term viability and efficiency of public infrastructure and services. In some cases, services will be covered or partially covered by fees, while in other cases, grants and cost-sharing will be required. In all situations, a facility maintenance schedule is necessary.

#### Incorporate new facilities and enhancements into the capital improvements plan (CIP).

Many community facilities in Seward have recently seen investment through new development or major rehabilitation. However, the city still should maintain a "facilities and enhancement construction and maintenance schedule" to budget for expenditures in a predictable manner. This could then be incorporated into the capital improvements plan (CIP), allowing the consideration of the full life cycle costs of new projects. In addition, life cycle cost analysis can provide the city a better idea of the difference in long-term cost effectiveness of different measures such as the use of high quality materials.

**Identify funding sources.** Local public funding will be the primary method for funding new enhancements for public services. Part of this will require creating a strategy for successful bond issues which will likely require marketing and educating the public on the issue. Other local funding sources include economic incentives or cost-sharing, where developers can also play a role.

In addition to local funding of maintenance and public service provision, alternative funding sources can be identified. State and federal grants are often able to assist with the construction of new facilities, often for innovative approaches such as green infrastructure.

Private foundations and philanthropy can also be an effective source of funding for projects with appropriate public recognition and memorialization. These sources should be identified prior to projects as the life cycle costs are being determined since they could make projects feasible that may not be using local public dollars alone. Specific funding sources are identified in the implementation chapter of this plan.

**Create a strategy for successful bond issues.** Every project is different and therefore the strategy for a successful bond issue can be different, but there are well-documented approaches that have been shown to be successful. With any bond issue the city should establish a strategy that:

- Ensures the greatest benefit to the largest portion of the community.
- Establishes why this is important to the community as well as the talking points that communicate the message to residents.
- Establishes a marketing plan to communicate the importance of the project to residents and how they will personally benefit.

Having a well-documented understanding of the need and benefit of any project is the first step to any successful strategy.

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## GOAL 3: STRENGTHEN EXISTING PUBLIC FACILITIES AND INFRASTRUCTURE TO ENCOURAGE PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT AND REINVESTMENT, JOB CREATION, AND TO IMPROVE QUALITY OF LIFE

### Actions and Recommendations:

**Invest in public service amenities and coordinate with quasi-public providers (such as the school district) to offer an exceptional quality of life for residents.**

Many of the major institutions and organizations in Seward have created strategic plans. These plans often articulate a vision for what they would like to achieve in the next 10 years with implementation steps classified as short-term, mid-term, and long-term. Together, these plans provide a roadmap of the actions needed to accomplish their goal. By coordinating the plans, it is possible to identify the places where the various plans intersect. These alignments can help identify projects that will leverage resources, energy, and outcomes for the greatest benefit to the community as a whole.

**Maintain all facilities in a state of good repair, continually evaluate facility use and adapt accordingly to best serve the market, and expand services to meet the needs of the growing community.**

The growing population and geographic expansion of the city will mandate new facilities in new development areas. However, the city should still prioritize the maintenance of existing facilities to continue serving the current population, neighborhoods and districts. The city must balance its focus and resources to serve the full population, including existing development and new development areas. Making sure new demand is served through the proper and efficient extension of services will ensure the long-term sustainability of the system for future generations.

**Continue to maintain facilities and equipment on a routine schedule.** Currently, the City of Seward does a good job of continually evaluating facility use and maintenance needs over time. Doing so provides some regularity in year-to-year budgets by spreading out large repairs and capital projects. In addition, maintaining facilities in a state of good repair prolongs the life of facilities and equipment, saving money and making more efficient use of taxpayer dollars.

On the other hand, deferring maintenance causes services to suffer while requiring higher costs over time. Working with other service providers to ensure minimum standards of quality and maintenance, the city can produce benefits for non-city owned entities. It can do so by setting standards and helping them evaluate the need, location, and functional suitability for public buildings to prevent inefficiencies.

## GOAL 4: PLAN AHEAD FOR MAJOR CAPITAL PROJECTS AND IMPLEMENT IN AN EXPEDIENT FASHION TO AVOID UNNECESSARY COSTS

### Actions and Recommendations:

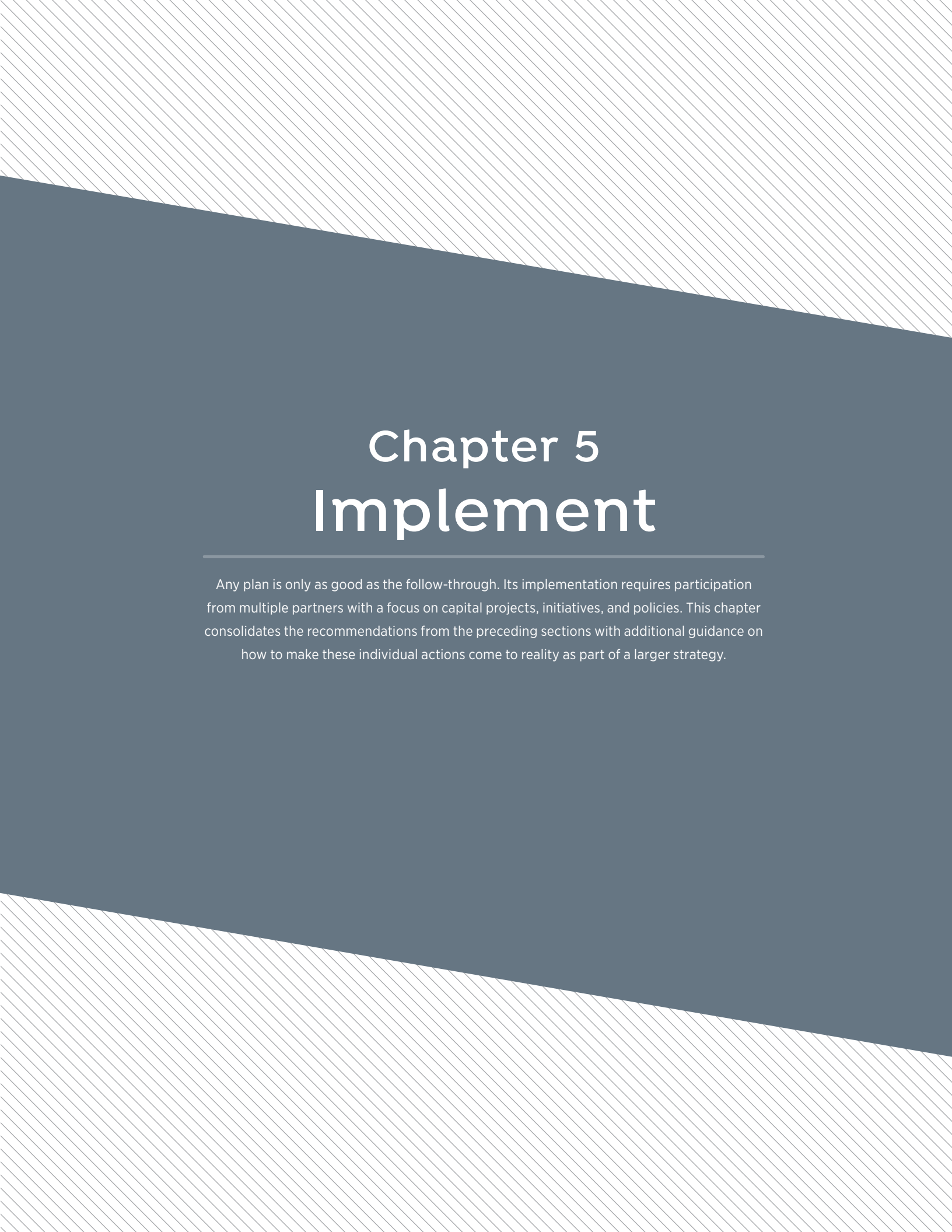
Complete an annual review of facilities including recent expenditures, condition issues, and capacity to accommodate growth.

Due to age, demand, or changing technologies, it is often necessary to upgrade or update municipal facilities. Through an annual review process, the city should seek to understand upcoming facility needs, the various courses of action ranging from minor intervention to major action, and an objective understanding of the positives and negatives of each option. By understanding upcoming issues, the city should plan and budget ahead to make facility improvements. Decisions should consider the intended and unintended costs of deferred action which often include the following:

- Minor Improvements Only.
  - › Short-term investment needed
  - › Forecasted increase in operational costs
  - › Forecasted increase in total facility life
- Major Improvement.
  - › Short-term investment needed
  - › Forecasted increase in operational costs
  - › Forecasted increase in total facility life
- Facility Replacement
  - › Investment needed
  - › Forecasted facility life
  - › Forecasted change operational costs
  - › Community benefits







# Chapter 5

# Implement

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Any plan is only as good as the follow-through. Its implementation requires participation from multiple partners with a focus on capital projects, initiatives, and policies. This chapter consolidates the recommendations from the preceding sections with additional guidance on how to make these individual actions come to reality as part of a larger strategy.

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## INTRODUCTION

Seward Tomorrow articulates many recommendations – policies, initiatives, and investments – to help the community achieve the vision expressed by residents throughout the engagement process. Components of this chapter include the following:

**Regulatory Mechanisms & Annexation Policies.** Annexation is one tool for accommodating growth over time. This section outlines policies for evaluating areas for annexation.

**Plan Maintenance and Changes.** A comprehensive plan is a living document that must be maintained, updated, and revisited to ensure it remains a helpful and relevant guide for the community. This section outlines the process for maintaining the plan and evaluating progress toward the plan goals.

**Roles and Responsibilities.** The implementation of this plan must be a partnership of many stakeholders throughout the community. This section outlines the key players and their potential roles in achieving the goals of this plan.

**Implementation Table.** This section summarizes the many recommendations of the plan and presents a projected time frame, responsible parties, and potential funding mechanisms.

## REGULATORY MECHANISMS & ANNEXATION POLICIES

The regulatory tools of the city, including zoning and subdivision regulations, are essential to implementation of the plan.

### Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Seward has extraterritorial jurisdiction over an area two miles beyond its corporate limits. The extraterritorial jurisdiction is the rural area adjacent to the City where urban development is expected to occur. As such, it is imperative that the City and County continue to evaluate land use proposals for compatibility with future urban development. Planning for appropriate land uses minimizes future conflicts and efficiently utilizes infrastructure investments when land is annexed. The boundaries of the extraterritorial jurisdiction will change over time and the land use policies affecting these areas should be reviewed and updated cooperatively to ensure consistency with the vision of the community.

### Annexation Policies

One of the important regulatory tools that the city can use when addressing growth and development is annexation. Nebraska Law prescribes the process by which communities can annex land. This section provides the legal framework for annexation, but each community should also establish a policy framework for implementation of annexation codes. These policies should take into consideration the following:

- **Areas with Significant pre-existing development.** Areas outside the city with substantial commercial, office, or industrial development are logical candidates for annexation. In addition, existing residential areas developed to urban densities (generally higher than 2 units per acre) should be considered for potential annexation. However, these areas should be closely considered under a cost benefit analysis.
- **Protection of Future Growth Areas.** In order to allow the city to guide its growth and development more effectively, future growth areas will need to be managed through annexation. Annexation will allow the city to extend its zoning and subdivision jurisdiction, thus guiding development in a direction that will provide safe and healthy environments.
- **Public Services.** Public service issues can provide compelling reasons for annexation. Areas for consideration should include:

- › Parcels that are surrounded by the city but remain outside of its corporate limits. In these situations, city services may provide enhanced public safety with improved emergency response times. These situations should be resolved and avoided in the future.
- › Areas that are served by municipal infrastructure. Seward's sewer and water system should not be extended without an annexation agreement.
- **A Positive Cost Benefit Analysis.** The economic benefits of annexation, including projected tax revenues, should compensate for the additional cost of extending services to newly-annexed areas. The review policy for annexation should include the following:
  - › Estimated cost impact and timetable for providing municipal services.
  - › The method by which the city plans to finance the extension and maintenance of municipal services.
  - › Identification of tax revenues from existing and probable future development in areas considered for annexation.
  - › Calculation of the added annual operating costs for urban services, including public safety, recreation, and utility services, offered within newly-annexed areas.

## Annexation Priority Map

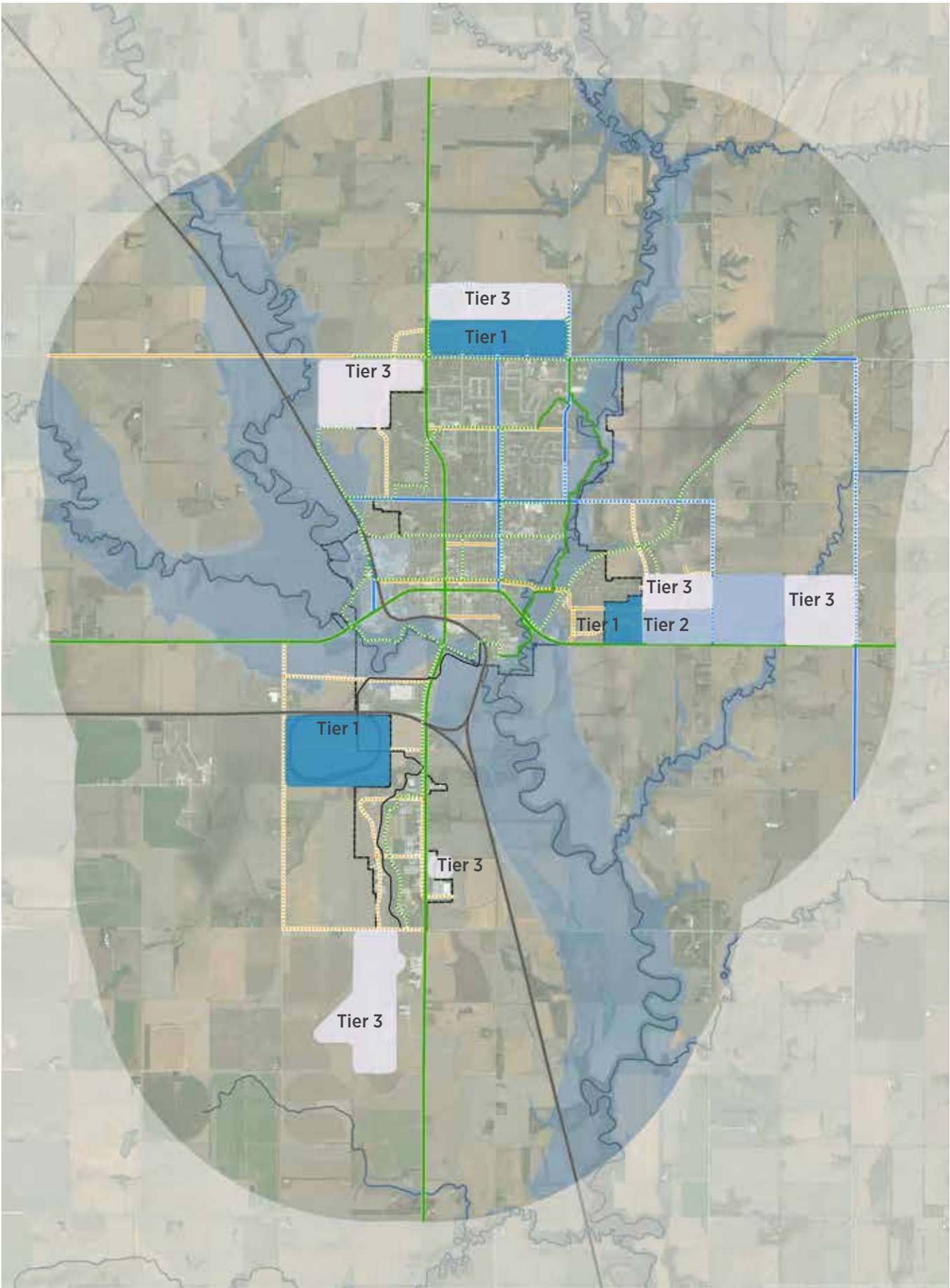
Seward should implement an annexation policy that incorporates future development areas and meets state statutory requirements. The city should work with the county to establish annexation agreements and ensure desirable land development.

The development concept is predicated on community growth being attractive as a living environment. The projected land demands exceed the amount of available, undeveloped land within existing city limits. Sound community growth will require annexations to accommodate land needs during the planning period.

Voluntary annexation of developments should occur before extension of city services. Seward should also adopt an annexation policy that establishes objective criteria for annexation and identifies candidate areas for incorporation into the city. Areas considered for annexation should meet at least one of the criteria previously discussed.

The Annexation Plan illustrates those areas around Seward that should be considered for annexation. The areas are categorized into three phases based on the estimated likeliness for incorporation into the city. Within each phase, sections are delineated by their relevance regarding the need for annexation and the services the city will need to provide. The need for annexation should be determined by each area's unique situation.

- **Tier One – Short Term.** Location and associated issues will likely warrant consideration for annexation in the next ten years. These areas are adjacent to city limits and may already have access to city services
- **Tier Two – Medium Term.** Conditions exist that may bring about the need for annexation of these sections. Annexation will not be likely during the early stages of the plan.
- **Tier Three – Long Term.** The Development Concept does not identify future uses within this area beyond agriculture. In the event of development pressure emerging in these areas, the plan recommends discouraging large-lot development that could possibly hem the city from expanding services beyond those areas.



**Figure 5.1:** Annexation Priority



## CHANGES TO THE PLAN

This plan should be viewed as a living document. It is not meant to be rigid or static, but should adapt in response to changing conditions, resources, and opportunities. As explained earlier, land use maps and other maps are meant to be general guides of policy, rather than carrying the specificity and rigidity of a map such as a zoning map. As such, the Planning

Commission, City Staff, and the City Council can exercise some discretion as to whether a proposal matches the intentions of the plan. This plan was created through a public process, and therefore, any official changes to the plan should be made through a public process.

## PLAN MAINTENANCE

The initiatives and action items of the Seward Tomorrow Plan are ambitious and long-range, and its recommendations will require funding and other continuous support. The city should implement an ongoing process that uses the plan to develop annual improvement programs, as outlined below.

### Annual Action and Capital Improvement Program

The Planning Commission and City Council should define an annual action and capital improvement program that implements the recommendations in this plan. This program should be coordinated with Seward's existing capital improvement planning and budgeting process, even though many of the plan's recommendations are not capital items. This annual process should be completed before the beginning of each budget year and should include:

- A work program for the upcoming year that is specific and related to the city's financial resources. The work program will establish which plan recommendations the city will accomplish during that year.
- A three-year strategic program. This component provides for a multi-year perspective, aiding the preparation of the annual work program. It provides a middle-term implementation plan for the city.
- A six-year capital improvement program. This is merged into Seward's current capital improvement program.

### Annual Evaluation

The Planning Commission should conduct an annual evaluation of the comprehensive plan at the end of each fiscal year. This evaluation should include a written report that:

- Summarizes key land use developments and decisions during the past year and relates them to the comprehensive plan.
- Reviews actions taken by the city during the past year to implement plan recommendations.
- Defines any changes that should be made in the comprehensive plan.

The plan should be viewed as a dynamic changing document that is actively used by the city as a source of information and guidance on policy and public investment.

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## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The public, decision-makers, and staff must be concerned with the short and long-range consequences of present actions. Each of these groups plays a role in ensuring that decisions are made in the interest of good quality design and protecting the integrity of what makes Seward an exceptional community.

### Responsibilities: Elected/Appointed Officials

Decision-makers, along with staff, must be conscious of the rights of others. Decisions should expand choices and opportunities for all persons, including the disadvantaged, and promote economic integration. Officials include the City Council and City Boards and Commissions.

### Responsibilities: City Staff

City staff should continue to seek meaningful input from the public on the development of plans and programs. The Seward Tomorrow Plan is rooted in a public engagement process, and thereby the goals and initiatives represent the aspirations of the community as a whole. Recommendations from staff to decision-makers should provide accurate information on planning issues to all affected persons and to governmental decision-makers.

## IMPLEMENTATION TABLE

The tables at the end of this chapter present a summary of the recommendations of the Seward Tomorrow Plan. Recommendations are listed in order of their place in the plan. Each recommendation is characterized according to several categories:

### Type

- › **Goal.** A general guiding principle of the plan to be incorporated and evaluated at a philosophical level to all decisions.
- › **Policy.** Continuing efforts over a long time period. In some cases, policies include specific regulatory or administrative actions.
- › **Action (Capital).** Specific efforts or accomplishments by the city or community including public capital projects that will implement features of the plan.

### Timing

The implementation of a comprehensive plan must be flexible, multi-faceted, and also respect the finite resources of all stakeholder organization. The timing of the implementation table was explored by the city and the Steering Committee who assigned each action into a time frame.

- **Ongoing.** Most of the recommendations fit into this category. These are matters related to general policy and operations, and have no completion date.
- **Short Term.** Implementation within 5 years.
- **Medium Term.** Implementation in 5-10 years.
- **Long term.** Implementation in 10-20 years.

Although the implementation timing can help with the question of “where to start,” it should not dictate the order of implementation. The city should be open to implementing any of these recommendations if/when the opportunity arises or the conditions are right.

## Responsibility & Leadership

The primary audience of this plan is the City Council, City Staff, and the Planning Commission. However, it is important for the City to partner with other entities who have an interest in implementing the recommendations of the plan. Columns in Figures 5.2-5.7 recommend which group should take the lead in carrying out the recommendation and who the potential partners are.

This designation of “leadership” is not meant to be exhaustive, or to exclude any group that would like to take the lead on a project or policy. Any group or resident is invited to work with the city to support the implementation of this plan. However, this list can serve as a starting point and provide guidance on the expectations of the groups listed here.

The entities named in the table are listed below, followed by the abbreviated name used in the table.

- City Council (Council)
- Planning Commission (PC)
- Park and Recreation Board (Park Board)
- City Staff
- Seward Tomorrow Steering Committee
- Seward County Chamber and  
Development Partnership (SCCDP)
- Residents or Resident Groups (Residents)
- Private Land Developers (Developers)
- Private Property Owners (Owners)

## Unified Land Use Plan: Steps toward implementation

**FIGURE 5.2 IMPLEMENTATION TABLE (UNIFIED LAND USE PLAN)**

RECOMMENDATION	Type	Timing / Priority	Leadership	Partners
Use urban services efficiently.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF
Promote diverse housing options.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, DEVELOPERS
Promote infill development and neighborhood reinvestment.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, DEVELOPERS
Address stormwater management at both a local and regional level.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, PC
Plan for community amenities such as parks and schools.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	PARK BOARD, COUNCIL, PC
Provide a multi-modal and connected transportation network.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF
Enhance public safety and minimize hazards.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF
Encourage balanced and connected neighborhoods.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF
Use public investments to promote private development.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF
Make decisions in a transparent and collaborative manner.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, PC, PARK BOARD
<b>Conceptual Big Ideas</b>				
East 34 Gateway Neighborhood: create a mixed-density neighborhood that is connected to the city and its amenities while also creating an exceptional "front door" for Seward.	POLICY	ONGOING	PC	CITY STAFF, COUNCIL
South 15 Neighborhood: integrate residential near Highway 15 to create housing options near services, jobs, and the interstate.	POLICY	ONGOING	PC	CITY STAFF, COUNCIL
South 15 Commercial Prototype: establish the framework for how commercial development should occur in the South Highway 15 Corridor.	POLICY	ONGOING	PC	CITY STAFF, COUNCIL
North Waverly: create a new neighborhood as an extension of the community with integrated amenities which contribute to the quality of Seward.	POLICY	ONGOING	PC	CITY STAFF, COUNCIL
North Woods: a long term plan for mixed-use neighborhood designed around the existing residence as a focal point.	POLICY	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	PC, COUNCIL

## Plan Elements (A Connected City): Steps toward implementation

**FIGURE 5.3 IMPLEMENTATION TABLE (A CONNECTED CITY)**

RECOMMENDATION	Type	Timing / Priority	Leadership	Partners
Develop a future transportation network that will support desirable patterns of community development.	GOAL	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	PC, COUNCIL
Implement transportation network in concert with the future land use plan.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	PC, COUNCIL
Plan connections ahead of development and build in concert with growth.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	DEVELOPERS, PC, COUNCIL
Tailor street specifications to the desired character of the development.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	DEVELOPERS, PC, COUNCIL
Soften pedestrian barriers in downtown	ACTION	SHORT	CITY STAFF	PC, COUNCIL, SCCDP
Provide a transportation system that is safe, convenient, and offers a variety of interconnected modes.	GOAL	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	CITY COUNCIL
Implement standard street design practices that incorporate measures to increase pedestrian safety (ex: sidewalks, intersection bulb-outs, etc.).	ACTION	SHORT	CITY STAFF	PC, COUNCIL
Ensure new development proposals complement and extend the existing connectivity plan in a way that is consistent with the spirit of the development concept.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	PC, COUNCIL
Connect neighborhoods and community destinations with a trail system, providing a safe and healthy transportation alternative.	GOAL	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	PC, COUNCIL
Inventory sidewalks, trails, and destinations and use this as a guide for the development of priority pedestrian and bicycle routes.	ACTION	SHORT	CITY STAFF	PC, COUNCIL, SCCDP, PARK BOARD
Create a pedestrian pathway to downtown	ACTION	MEDIUM	CITY STAFF	PC, COUNCIL
Promote neighborhoods that highlight central features where residents can engage with their neighbors.	GOAL	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	OWNERS, RESIDENTS, COUNCIL
Encourage new developments to include park-like features such as trails, plazas, and playgrounds.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	PC, COUNCIL, DEVELOPERS, PARK BOARD
Explore and promote the use of planned districts to allow for innovative approaches to neighborhood development.	ACTION	MEDIUM	CITY STAFF	PC, COUNCIL, DEVELOPERS
Promote actions that connect new and existing residents with community organizations and each other to build the social capacity of Seward.	GOAL	ONGOING	RESIDENTS	CITY STAFF, PC, COUNCIL
Develop and execute a collective outreach strategy for all community organizations to welcome new (and relatively new) residents to integrate them and increase organizational capacity.	ACTION	SHORT	SCCDP	CITY STAFF, PC, COUNCIL, RESIDENTS



## Plan Elements (Health & Activity): Steps toward implementation

**FIGURE 5.4 IMPLEMENTATION TABLE (HEALTH & ACTIVITY)**

RECOMMENDATION	Type	Timing / Priority	Leadership	Partners
Invest in trails and sidewalks that connect people, support healthy activities, and help reinforce Seward's small town atmosphere	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	PARK BOARD, CITY STAFF, RESIDENTS
Plan connections in advance of development and build in concert with growth.	ACTION	SHORT	PARK BOARD	CITY STAFF, DEVELOPERS, COUNCIL, PC
Require pedestrian and bicycle features in new developments and encourage trail-oriented development.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	PARK BOARD, PC, COUNCIL
Provide an array of active and passive recreational facilities to allow residents ample opportunities to engage in their community and to meet and gather with their peers.	GOAL	ONGOING	PARK BOARD	CITY STAFF, COUNCIL
Complete a regular review of recreational facilities by type and condition and use this to allocate funding resources and engage community partners.	ACTION	ONGOING	PARK BOARD	COUNCIL
Provide park and recreation facilities, programs and services that are connected and accessible to all residents.	GOAL	ONGOING	PARK BOARD	COUNCIL, CITY STAFF, PC
Expand the park and greenway system to connect resources in the core of the city and to ensure that all residents are within a half-mile of a park facility in the newly-developing areas.	ACTION	MEDIUM	PARK BOARD	COUNCIL, CITY STAFF, PC
Identify gaps in existing facilities and explore options to fulfill community needs.	GOAL	SHORT	PARK BOARD	COUNCIL, CITY STAFF, PC
Explore the feasibility of an indoor recreation facility, the appropriate programming for the space, and the partners needed to implement.	ACTION	SHORT	COUNCIL	PARK BOARD, CITY STAFF
Complete a park and recreation master plan.	ACTION	SHORT	PARK BOARD	CITY STAFF, COUNCIL, PC

## Plan Elements (Strong Neighborhoods): Steps toward implementation

**FIGURE 5.5 IMPLEMENTATION TABLE (STRONG NEIGHBORHOODS)**

RECOMMENDATION	Type	Timing / Priority	Leadership	Partners
Create neighborhoods and promote infill development that build on the character and quality of existing neighborhoods.	GOAL	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	DEVELOPERS, COUNCIL, PC
Establish incentive programs for housing rehabilitation.	ACTION	SHORT	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF
Target public facility improvements to highest-risk neighborhoods.	ACTION	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF
Review and update property maintenance codes.	ACTION	SHORT	CITY STAFF	COUNCIL, PC
Encourage infill development.	ACTION	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, DEVELOPERS, PC
Connect neighborhoods to community destinations including jobs, commerce, and recreation.	GOAL	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	COUNCIL, PC
Identify green space that should be added to growth areas.	ACTION	SHORT	CITY STAFF	PARK BOARD, COUNCIL
Protect and buffer drainage areas in developing areas to create neighborhood amenities.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	PARK BOARD
Use incentives to further the image of the downtown as a neighborhood with housing in and around the downtown.	ACTION	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF
Expand housing diversity by type and cost.	GOAL	ONGOING	DEVELOPERS	CITY STAFF, COUNCIL
Direct and support incentives toward mixed-income housing.	ACTION	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF
Establish design standards for any projects receiving city incentives or support.	ACTION	SHORT	CITY STAFF	COUNCIL, PC
Encourage and support new projects that integrate a variety of housing products not currently present in Seward.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	COUNCIL, PC, DEVELOPERS

## Plan Elements (Vibrant Businesses): Steps toward implementation

**FIGURE 5.6 IMPLEMENTATION TABLE (VIBRANT BUSINESSES)**

RECOMMENDATION	Type	Timing / Priority	Leadership	Partners
Invest in downtown as a destination, an economic engine, and the heart of the community.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, PC, SCCDP
Implement the recommendations of the downtown revitalization plan.	ACTION	SHORT	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, PC, SCCDP
Promote a strong retail, restaurant, and service economy.	GOAL	ONGOING	SCCDP	COUNCIL, CITY STAFF
Establish incentive programs to support additional retail, restaurants, and service businesses in target areas such as downtown.	ACTION	SHORT	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, SCCDP
Implement design standards for commercial ventures to promote site designs that complement adjacent uses and, when appropriate, bring activity outside through outdoor dining and displays.	ACTION	SHORT	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, SCCDP, DEVELOPERS
Focus business recruitment, incubation and retention efforts on sectors that complement the overall character of the city including its strengths, its people, and its vision for the future.	GOAL	ONGOING	SCCDP	CITY STAFF, COUNCIL
Implement and adhere to the Seward County Chamber and Development Partnership's 2030 Vision as it relates to strengthening community assets and planning for the future.	ACTION	MEDIUM	SCCDP	COUNCIL, CITY STAFF
Encourage the creation of complementary business clusters to reduce operational costs to promote business growth.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	COUNCIL, SCCDP
Engage existing businesses in regular, action-oriented, discussions to understand their state of affairs and identify potential solutions to overcome barriers to retention and expansion.	ACTION	ONGOING	SCCDP	CITY STAFF
Support and promote the creation of community amenities that will attract and retain a young and talented workforce.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, PARK BOARD
Promote the creation of high-quality neighborhoods that feature a variety of housing styles, occupancy types (renter and owner-occupied), and price-points configured in an environment attractive to young professionals.	ACTION	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, DEVELOPERS
Encourage the creation of housing units in proximity to employment centers and other community and cultural features to provide residents with convenient housing opportunities.	ACTION	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, DEVELOPERS

## Plan Elements (Efficient Government): Steps toward implementation

**FIGURE 5.7 IMPLEMENTATION TABLE (EFFICIENT GOVERNMENT)**

RECOMMENDATION	Type	Timing / Priority	Leadership	Partners
Ensure land use, infrastructure, and transportation patterns support the efficient and cost-effective delivery of emergency services.	GOAL	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	COUNCIL, PC
Promote development consistent with the comprehensive plan in terms of land use and street connectivity.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	COUNCIL, PC, DEVELOPERS
Implement and enforce stormwater management requirements in new developments and in significant redevelopments.	ACTION	SHORT	CITY STAFF	COUNCIL, PC
Maximize public safety through site design.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	COUNCIL, PC, DEVELOPERS
Guide the extension of infrastructure in a way that supports efficient patterns of community and economic development.	GOAL	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	COUNCIL, PC
Establish a funding mechanism for the maintenance of all types of public facilities to ensure the long-term viability and efficiency of public infrastructure.	ACTION	SHORT	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF
Strengthen existing public facilities and infrastructure to encourage private sector investment and reinvestment, job creation, and to improve quality of life.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF
Invest in public service amenities and coordinate with quasi-public providers (such as the school district) to offer an exceptional quality of life for residents.	ACTION	MEDIUM	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF, PARK BOARD
Maintain all facilities in a state of good repair, continually evaluate facility use and adapt accordingly to best serve the market, and expand services to meet the needs of the growing community.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	COUNCIL
Plan ahead for major capital projects and implement in an expedient fashion to avoid unnecessary costs.	GOAL	ONGOING	COUNCIL	CITY STAFF
Complete an annual review of facilities including recent expenditures, condition issues, and capacity to accommodate growth.	ACTION	ONGOING	CITY STAFF	COUNCIL