

VILLAGE OF ELWOOD COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

2025-2035

PREPARED BY:
West Central Nebraska
Development District



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Elwood Village Board:

Tom Martin – Board Chairman
Jim Kleine
Ken Townsend

Planning Commission:

Tim Rowe – Board Chairman
Brandon Wolf
Brian Hambidge
Rodney Renken
Kathy Jones
Cassidy Laier
Scott Weissert

Community Redevelopment Authority:

Brenda Sheets
Kenneth Schwarz
Katy Weissert
Ed Houlden
Stacy Schultz

Village Staff:

Laurie Jauken – Village Clerk
Kirk Corder – Village Superintendent
Shane Schultz – Assistant Superintendent

West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD):

Edward Dunn – Executive Director
Taylor Provost – Economic Development Specialist
Emma Castor – Economic Development Specialist
Ashley Neiman – Economic Development Specialist
Maggie Street - Economic Development Specialist

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PART 1 INTRODUCTION:

PLANNING PROCESS

The Comprehensive Planning Process was launched in May 2024 when the Village of Elwood enlisted the expertise of West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD) to revitalize the Elwood Comprehensive Plan. As one of Nebraska's eight development districts established in 1974, WCNDD brings decades of experience helping communities "jointly plan, address issues, and seize opportunities that transcend individual boundaries" through collaborative approach to regional development WCNDD.

The planning team orchestrated a dynamic series of community engagement activities to ensure every voice in Elwood was heard. Several strategically designed public meetings brought together Elwood residents to participate in a comprehensive Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (S.W.O.T.) analysis – creating a forum where community members actively shaped the village's future direction. Table # highlights the most prominent themes identified across each category.

In August 2024, specialized sessions engaged key leadership groups including the Village Board, CRA Committee, and Planning Commission. To maximize accessibility, two vibrant town hall gatherings were hosted at the Senior Center in September of 2024. Digital engagement complemented these in-person efforts through an electronic survey conducted from November to December of 2024, with paper alternatives available at both the Senior Center and Village Office. A comprehensive communication strategy featuring mass mailers, strategic flyer placement, and targeted social media campaigns ensured widespread awareness and participation.

Participants were invited to envision Elwood's future development trajectory while identifying cherished community assets worth preserving alongside areas needing enhancement or new implementation. This process was particularly vital given Elwood's current population of 629 residents and recent demographic shifts, including a population decline of 4.84% since the 2020 census.

The S.W.O.T. analysis presented in Table 1 reveals several issues appearing across multiple categories – a reflection of the diverse perspectives within the community. This valuable analytical tool captures citizen priorities, providing Village officials with critical insights into matters of greatest importance to residents. These community identified priorities are woven throughout the comprehensive plan, creating a roadmap that authentically represents Elwood's collective vision for the future.

Table 1



AUTHORITY TO PLAN

Nebraska State Statute empowers municipalities to develop comprehensive plans that serve their citizen's needs. To promote community health, safety, morals, and general welfare, the comprehensive development plan, as defined in Neb. Rev. Stat. §19-903, must fulfill specific requirements. The regulations and restrictions authorized by sections 19-901 to 19-915 shall align with a comprehensive development plan comprising both graphic and textual elements, designed to accommodate anticipated long-range future growth based on documented population and economic projections.

The comprehensive development plan shall include, among other possible elements:

A land-use element designating the proposed general distributions, locations, and extent of land use for agriculture, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, education, public buildings, and other categories of public and private land use;

- (1) The general location, character, and extent of existing and proposed major roads, streets, highways, and air and other transportation routes and facilities;
- (2) The general location, type, capacity, and service area of present and projected or needed community facilities including recreation facilities, schools, libraries, other public buildings, and public utilities and services;
- (3) For comprehensive plans developed or fully updated on or after July 15, 2010, but not later than Jan. 1, 2015, an energy element that: Assesses energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors; evaluates utilization of renewable energy sources; and promotes energy conservation measures that benefit the community. This subdivision shall not apply to cities; and

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

Regulations adopted under sections 19-901 to 19-915 shall be designed to: reduce street congestion; ensure safety from fire, panic, and other dangers; promote health and general welfare; provide adequate light and air; prevent land overcrowding; secure safety from flood; avoid undue population concentration; facilitate adequate provision of transportation, water, sewerage, schools, parks, and other public requirements; protect property against blight and depreciation; protect the tax base; secure economy in governmental expenditures; and preserve, protect, and enhance historic buildings, places, and districts.

Such regulations shall be established with reasonable consideration for: the district's character and its particular suitability for specific uses, with a focus on conserving building values and encouraging the most appropriate land use throughout the municipality.

EXTRA-TERRITORIAL JURISDICTION (ETJ):

The planning jurisdiction for the Village of Elwood encompasses both the village limits and the one-mile extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Both the Village of Elwood and Gosper County have committed to following the development policies and implementation measures outlined for annexation, zoning, and subdivision review within this one mile ETJ.

This strategic planning area surrounds Elwood's 0.52 square miles of land area and is visually depicted in Map 5.

DRAFT

PART 2 COMMUNITY PROFILE:

HISTORY OF ELWOOD:

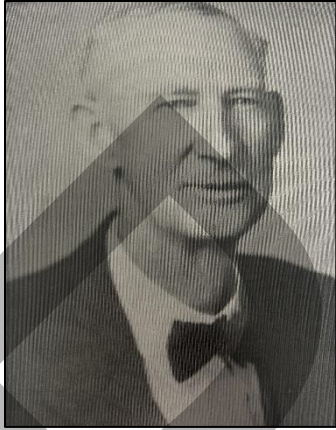
From Frontier to Thriving Community

Long before European settlement, the rolling grasslands of what is now Gosper County served as vast, untamed hunting grounds for the Pawnee people. These indigenous inhabitants would journey south from their encampments near Plum Creek, crossing the mighty Platte River to pursue buffalo across the expansive landscape that would one day become Elwood. Their seasonal hunting patterns maintained a delicate balance with the land for generations, leaving behind a rich cultural legacy that continues to influence the region.

By the mid-nineteenth century, pioneering cattlemen recognized the area's exceptional natural resources. The sweeping, free-range prairies provided prime summer grazing, while the network of deep canyons offered crucial shelter for livestock during Nebraska's notorious winter storms. These early ranchers established the first European presence in what would later become a thriving agricultural community.



Settlement progressed slowly until after 1870, when the westward expansion gained momentum. A pivotal moment came in November 1873 when newly elected county commissioners authorized construction of a courthouse in Daviesville. Though financial constraints prevented the building's completion – forcing county officials to store important records in their homes for several years – this marked the beginning of organized governance in the region.



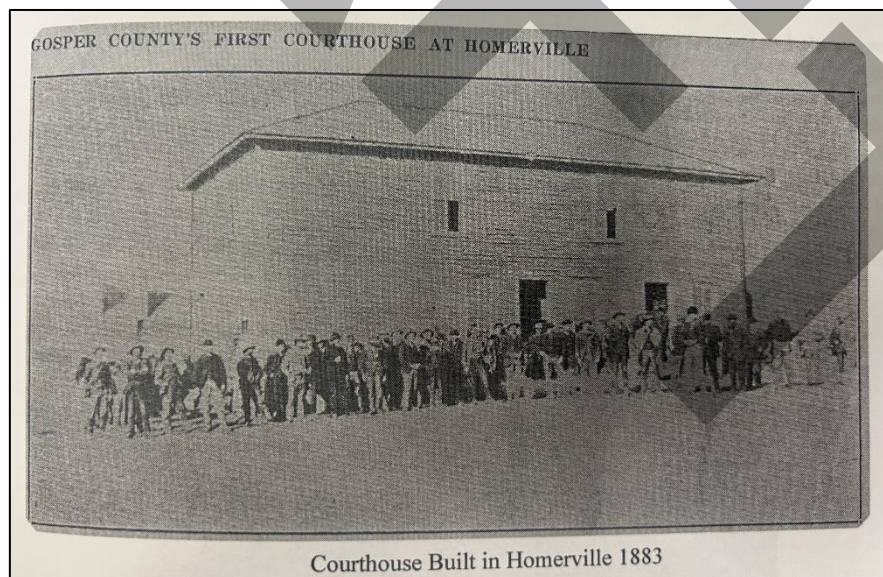
During this formative period, an ambitious settlement called Homerville emerged, with residents hoping to capitalize on rumors that the railroad would soon establish a route through their community. The settlement's population swelled rapidly, culminating in an August 1882 election where Homerville triumphantly secured designation as county seat, defeating two rival towns. However, destiny had different plans when the railroad bypassed Homerville entirely. As the Burlington Railroad pushed westward toward Colorado in 1885, surveyors platted a new townsite named after homesteader Elwood Thomas, a

young homesteader who resided nine miles southwest of the settlement. The Lincoln Land Co. recorded the plat for Elwood in the office of the county clerk on July 13, 1885. A petition signed by 225 residents was presented to the county commissioners seeking the incorporation of the Village of Elwood. The petition was recorded on January 13, 1886.

The battle for county prominence intensified three years later when a hotly contested election resulted in Elwood being named the new county seat. In a dramatic transformation that speaks to the pioneering spirit of early Nebraskans, many Homerville business owners and residents literally uprooted their lives, following the courthouse to Elwood – which proudly maintains its status as Gosper County seat to this day.

In the spring of 1889, the courthouse was relocated and transported in sections to Elwood, where it became the first courthouse in the newly established town. This building served the county for six years until it was destroyed by fire in November 1895. After the fire, the last of the frame buildings was constructed, which served the county for the next 44 years.

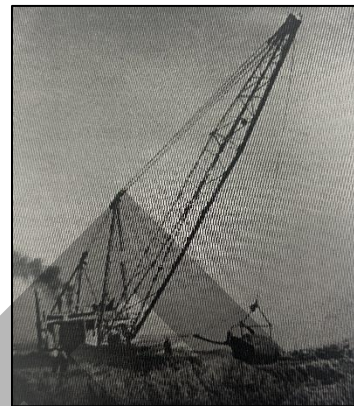
It was then replaced by the modern building still in use. This third courthouse, like its predecessors, was built at no direct cost to taxpayers. Most of the construction was funded through insurance proceeds. Although the county commissioners considered adding a



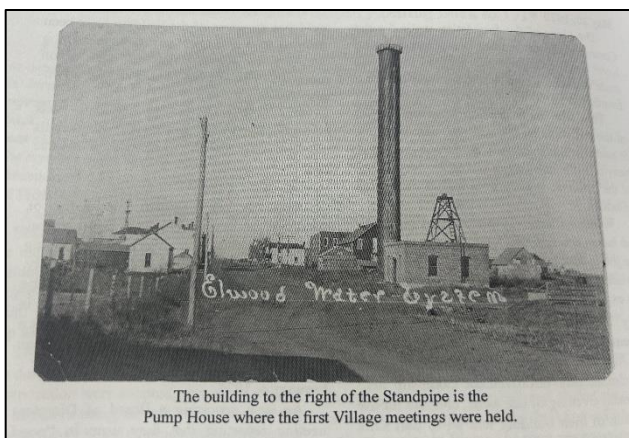
brick façade, they ultimately declined due to the additional \$1,000 expense. Lumber salvaged from the burned courthouse was repurposed to construct a county shop building for the road department on the west edge of Elwood; however, this structure was also eventually lost to fire. The current modern courthouse was dedicated in 1939 with formal ceremonies and continues to serve the county today.

The arrival of railroad lines through Smithfield and Elwood in 1885 catalyzed explosive development throughout the region. The railways revolutionized local agriculture, and by 1890, much of the once-untamed rangeland had been transformed into productive cropland. The era of nomadic cattlemen gave way to settled farmers who cultivated grain and raised livestock with unprecedented efficiency. The railroad's influence extended beyond agriculture, spurring diverse commercial enterprises including a roundhouse west of Elwood in the late 1880s. During this boom period, Elwood's business district flourished with three lumber yards, two hotels, a general store, and a mill. The community's commercial landscape later expanded to include a farm machinery dealership and various agricultural enterprises that strengthened the local economy.

Elwood's trajectory changed dramatically in 1940 when the town experienced a significant population surge, becoming home to workers constructing Johnson Lake and the innovative irrigation canal system for what would become the Central Nebraska Public Power and Irrigation District. This transformative infrastructure project revolutionized local agriculture by providing the critical ability to weather droughts, bringing unprecedented stability to farming operations throughout the region.



Throughout the latter half of the 20th century, the Village of Elwood continued to grow and modernize. In 1951, construction and maintenance of a village-wide sewer system began.



In 1959, the Village Board approved an agreement with the State of Nebraska to build a new hard-surfaced highway between Elwood and Eustis, followed by a similar agreement in 1960 for a highway connecting Elwood to Arapahoe. In 1962, the Board accepted a proposal from Consumers Public Power District to install a new street lighting system in the downtown area. The Village's first

Planning Commission was seated in 1963. In 1970, the Board approved the installation of street signs, and in 1971, it entered into an agreement with Nebraska Public Power District to provide electrical service to the community. A major communications upgrade came in 1983, when an agreement was signed with the Arapahoe Telephone Company to operate a cable television system in the village for fifteen years. In 1989, the Board adopted an ordinance establishing the "Housing Authority of the Village of Elwood, Gosper County, Nebraska." Continued residential expansion was marked by the 1995 approval of Ordinance No. 21, adding the Inverness Subdivision, and in 1999, the passage of Resolution No. 99.2, approving the subdivision of Lot 1 in the Bellamy Subdivision of the Northside Addition. Today, with a 2024 population of 629, Elwood remains the vibrant heart of Gosper County.

The community proudly describes itself as "A GREAT PLACE TO CALL HOME", a sentiment reflected in both its rich history and forward-looking vision. The downtown district



continues to serve as the community's core, housing essential businesses and services including banks, gas stations, a medical clinic, and insurance offices. The business community has expanded to include diverse enterprises such as a drive-in coffee shop, restaurant, implement dealer, well drilling business, attorney offices, real

estate brokers, insurance companies, a local newspaper, and two banks.

Elwood's educational foundation remains strong with the Elwood Public Schools, home of the Pirates, serving students from preschool through 12th grade. The school system recently initiated "Pirates Providing Hope," a compassionate program supporting students with rare diseases while raising awareness and funds for related foundations. This initiative exemplifies the community's commitment to caring for all its residents.

The community takes particular pride in its exceptional recreational amenities. Elwood is surrounded by several lakes and a reservoir offering premium opportunities for camping, fishing, and water recreation. The Elwood Reservoir, created in the late 1970s as part of the E65 Canal system improvement project, contains nearly 25,000 acre-feet of water and covers more than 1,300 acres when at maximum capacity. This impressive body of water

has developed a reputation as one of Nebraska's premier walleye fisheries, attracting anglers from throughout the region.

The nearby Johnson Lake State Recreation Area has evolved into one of Nebraska's most popular outdoor destinations, offering excellent camping, fishing, and water sports across its 68 acres with three access points to the 2,068-acre lake. The area provides abundant wildlife for hunting enthusiasts, with opportunities for turkey, pheasant, and deer hunting in the surrounding countryside.

Cultural and community traditions remain vibrant, with the annual Gosper County Fair hosted in Elwood featuring exceptional rodeo competitions. The community owns its carnival equipment, with dedicated volunteers working together to organize this beloved yearly event that draws visitors from throughout the region.



As Elwood looks to the future, it builds upon this rich historical foundation while embracing innovative approaches to community development. Recent initiatives include a forward-thinking free land program designed to attract new residents, offering building lots and covering 10% of construction costs up to \$25,000 for new homes. This program, reminiscent of the homesteading era that first established the community, demonstrates Elwood's commitment to sustainable growth and a vibrant future.

From its earliest days as hunting grounds for indigenous peoples to its current status as a resilient agricultural community, Elwood exemplifies the pioneering spirit and neighborly values that define rural Nebraska. It's remarkable journey through railroad development, county seat controversies, agricultural transformation, and infrastructure innovation has created a community that honors its heritage while actively shaping its destiny.

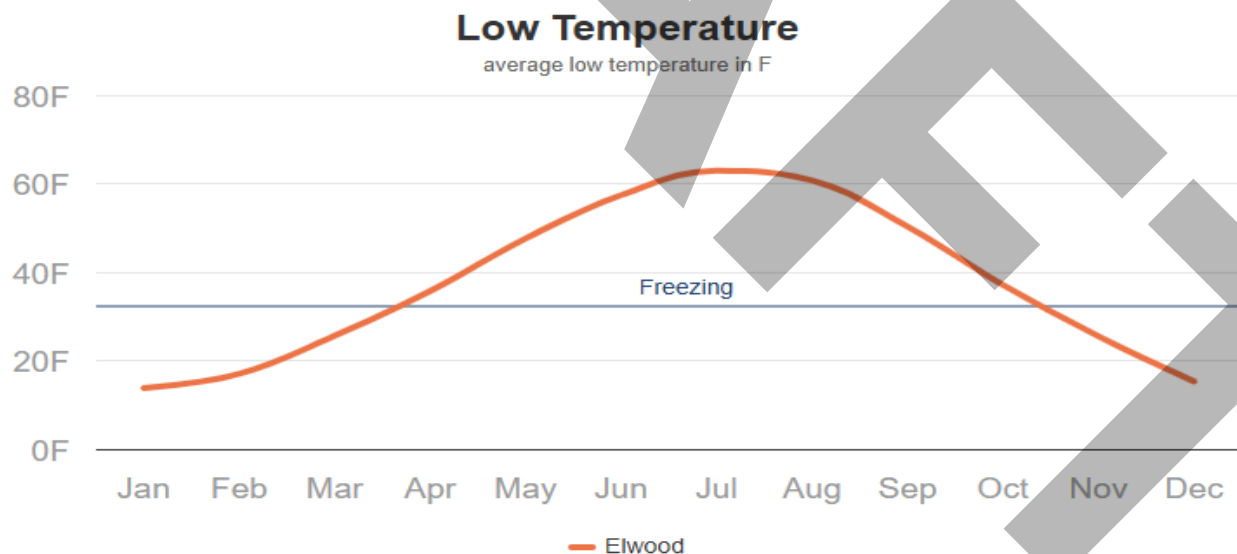
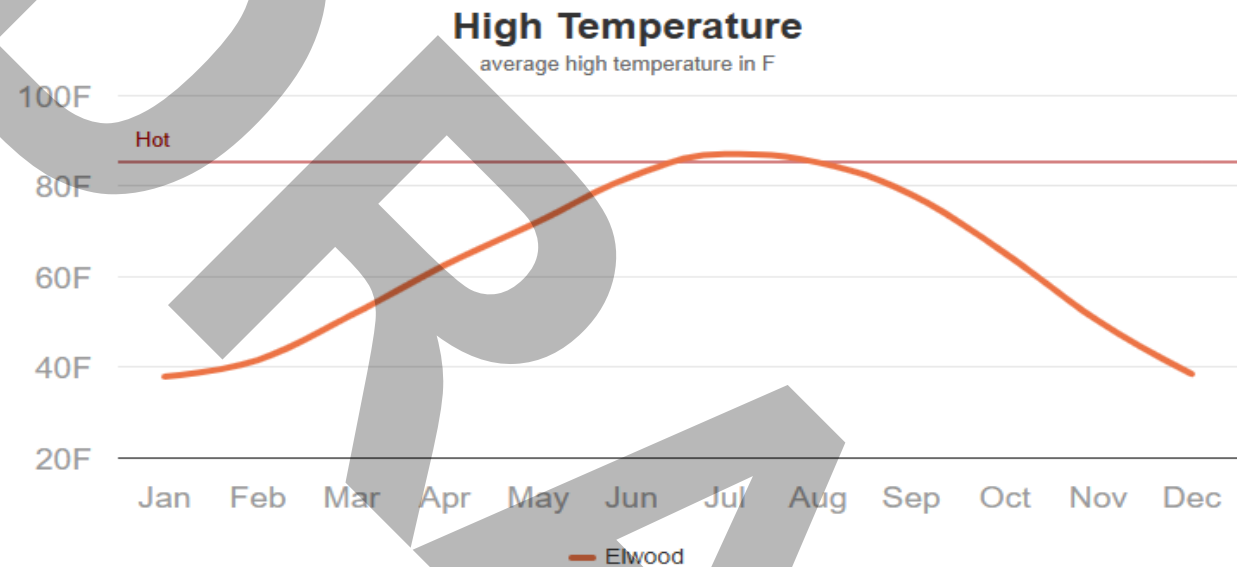
Environmental Context:

Climate Profile

Elwood's climate characteristics significantly influence development patterns, infrastructure needs, and quality of life considerations. The village experiences warm, mostly clear summers and freezing, snowy, windy winters, with annual temperature variations typically ranging from 16°F to 88°F. July stands as the

warmest month with average high temperatures reaching 88.3°F, while January records the coldest temperatures with average lows of 21°F.

Understanding these environmental patterns is essential for effective infrastructure planning, energy conservation strategies, and community design that maximizes Elwood's natural assets while mitigating climate-related challenges.



Elwood's Hydrologic Profile: Precipitation Patterns

Elwood's precipitation regime creates distinctive seasonal rhythms that shape agricultural production, infrastructure needs, and community activities throughout the year. May stands as Elwood's hydrologic powerhouse, delivering the year's most substantial rainfall with approximately 3.03 inches spread across 16.8 precipitation days, creating optimal conditions for spring planting and landscape rejuvenation. This marked seasonal variation continues with January representing the driest period, receiving a mere 0.51 inches of rainfall over just 4.8 days, highlighting the significant seasonal fluctuations that characterize our local climate.

Elwood's precipitation profile demonstrates distinct seasonal distribution patterns. Fall delivers considerable moisture, while spring experiences noticeably reduced precipitation volumes compared to regional averages. The community's annual rainfall totals approximately 18.35 inches, positioning Elwood toward the drier end of the precipitation spectrum for Nebraska communities, where regional averages typically range between 23-30 inches annually across south-central Nebraska.

Winter brings measurable snowfall to our community, though in moderate amounts compared to other Nebraska locations. Elwood averages 14.69 inches of annual snowfall accumulating over 31.7 days, with February delivering the most substantial snowfall at 3.62 inches across 7.4 days. The snow-free period extends from June through September, providing a reliable window for outdoor construction, infrastructure maintenance, and community activities.

Recent meteorological data confirms these patterns remain consistent, with precipitation monitoring stations near Elwood reporting totals that align with historical averages, though with some year-to-year variability. Understanding these precipitation patterns is essential for effective municipal planning, agricultural operations, and community preparedness, ensuring Elwood maximizes the benefits of available moisture while mitigating potential challenges during both wet and dry periods.

Rainfall

average rainfall in inches

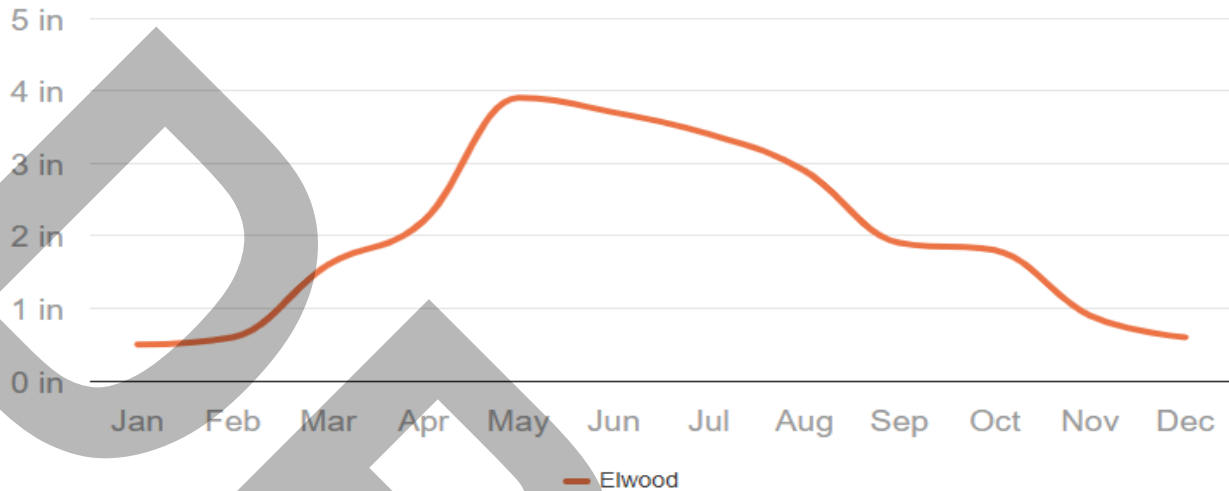


Chart 3

Snowfall

average snowfall in inches

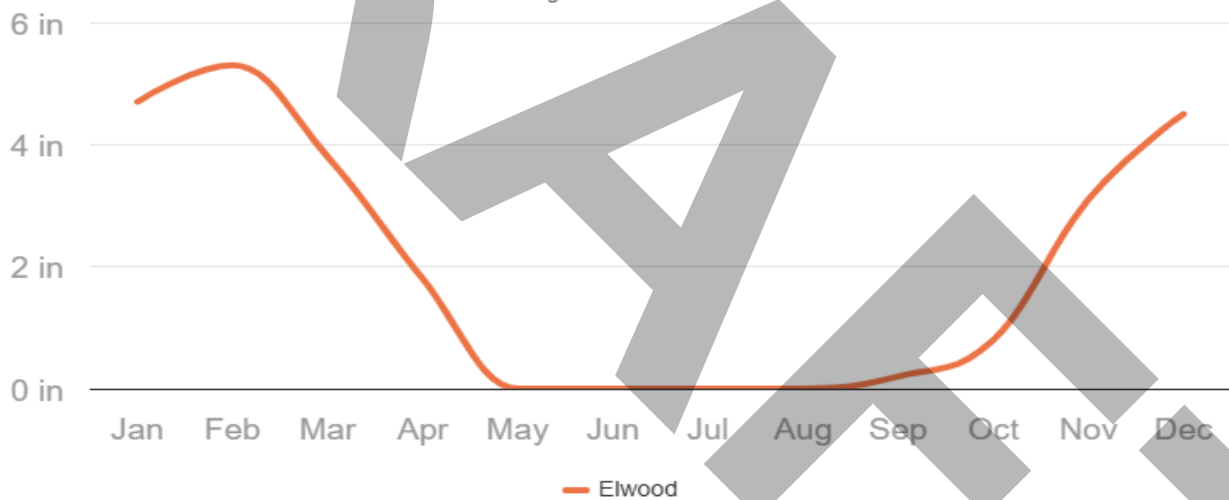


Chart 4

Environmental Foundations: Watersheds And Soils

Floodplain Management: Prudent Planning for Sustainable Development

Elwood enjoys a distinct geographic advantage regarding floodplain management that has supported its development pattern since the community's founding. Map 1 illustrates Elwood's Floodplain and map 5 depicts the Extra-Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) Floodplain, with areas designated in blue representing the regulatory 100-year flood plain as defined by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA).

Elwood has the notable benefit of being situated entirely outside the designated floodplain boundaries, providing development flexibility not available to many Nebraska communities.

This advantageous position should be preserved through strategic development policies that continue to concentrate growth outside potential flooding areas, ensuring that infrastructure investments remain protected from flood-related damages. All development decisions should consider the most current floodplain data, which is regularly updated through FEMA's National Flood Hazard Layer (NFHL) geospatial database, with the most recent updates for Nebraska released in October 2024.

The 1% annual chance flood (commonly known as the 100-year flood) remains the standard upon which flood insurance requirements and mitigation regulations are based. Structures located within designated high-risk zones with loans backed by the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC) require flood insurance, while voluntary coverage is strongly recommended for unencumbered properties in these same zones. The Nebraska Department of Natural Resources maintains interactive flood hazard mapping tools that provide Elwood's leadership with real-time access to the most current floodplain information for development decision-making.

Soil Resources

Elwood's exceptional soil resources support both agricultural productivity and stable construction foundations for community infrastructure. The following soil analysis presents the most current data available through the Natural Resources Conservation Service's (NRCS) Soil Survey Geographic Database (SSURGO), which provides comprehensive soil information for development planning. Map 1 illustrates the distribution of major soil types within Elwood and its immediate surroundings, with each mapped unit corresponding to specific soil classifications detailed below.

Holdrege Silt Loam (0-1% slope)

Designated as Nebraska's official state soil in 1979, Holdrege silt loam represents one of the state's most productive agricultural soils, covering approximately 1.8 million acres across central Nebraska. First identified in a 1917 Phelps County soil

survey, this iconic soil features exceptional characteristics that have made it world-renowned for agricultural production. Key properties include:

- Exceptional depth to restrictive features (more than 80 inches) [Ereferencedesk](#)
- Well-drained profile with moderately high water transmission capacity (0.20 to 0.60 in/hr)
- Very high available water supply capacity of approximately 12.7 inches within a 60-inch depth
- No flooding or ponding frequency, creating stable building sites
- Maximum calcium carbonate content of 10 percent

Coly-Uly-Hobbs Silt Loams (3-60% slopes)

This complex soil association combines three distinct soil types that frequently occur together on Elwood's landscape, primarily on upland side slopes and transitional areas. This soil complex is characterized by:

- Variable slopes ranging from 3% to steep 60% gradients
- Well-drained profiles with moderately high to high permeability (0.60 to 2.00 in/hr)
- Significant depth to water table (more than 80 inches)
- No flooding or ponding frequency
- Maximum calcium carbonate content of 10 percent
- Very high available water supply of approximately 13.2 inches within a 60-inch depth

Hall Silt Loam (0-1% slopes)

Hall silt loam represents a significant component of Elwood's agricultural landscape, occupying gently sloping positions and providing excellent cropland potential. Notable characteristics include:

- Minimal slope (0-1%), creating prime farmland conditions
- Exceptional depth to restrictive features (more than 80 inches)
- Well-drained profile with moderate permeability
- Low runoff classification, reducing erosion potential
- No flooding or ponding frequency
- Moderate calcium carbonate content (maximum 5%)
- Very high available water supply of approximately 12.0 inches within a 60-inch depth

Holdrege Silt Loam (1-3% slopes)

This slight variation of the Holdrege series occupies gently rolling terrain with increased slope percentages compared to the level Holdrege soils. Despite the modest increase in slope, this soil maintains excellent agricultural and development potential with characteristics including:

- Gentle slopes ranging from 1-3%, maintaining good stability
- Exceptional depth to restrictive features (more than 80 inches)
- Well-drained profile with moderate permeability (0.20 to 0.60 in/hr)
- Low runoff potential despite the increased slope
- No flooding or ponding frequency
- Maximum calcium carbonate content of 10 percent
- Very high available water supply of approximately 12.7 inches within a 60-inch depth

These soil resources represent a critical natural asset for Elwood's future development, providing both agricultural productivity and stable building foundations. Proper soil management practices should be incorporated into all development decisions to preserve these exceptional soil resources for future generations, particularly for the Holdrege silt loam series that represents Nebraska's agricultural heritage and potential.



Map 1 Source: USDA NRCS

Location

Elwood is strategically positioned in the northwestern portion of Gosper County at the dynamic intersection of Nebraska Highway 23 and U.S. Route 283. As the proud county seat of Gosper County, Elwood is part of the vibrant Lexington Micropolitan Statistical Area. The community lies approximately 13 miles south of Lexington and Interstate 80, making it conveniently accessible while maintaining its distinct small-town character. From Elwood, residents and visitors can reach Lincoln – Nebraska's capital city – via a 180-mile scenic drive eastward.

GOVERNMENT STRUCTURE:

Village government follows a structure reminiscent of the federal system, with distinct branches ensuring balanced governance. The mayor and administrative staff constitute the executive branch, while the village board serves as the legislative branch. Together, they create a comprehensive governance framework (with the judicial branch represented by the court system).

The board collectively holds responsibility for enacting ordinances and approving the village's budget. It's important to note that individual board members cannot independently establish policies – decisions require full board approval.

The mayor possesses unique authorities beyond the board's scope, including oversight of Elwood's day-to-day operations. Approximately 80% of mayoral responsibilities extend beyond board meetings, with significant focus on financial stewardship. Strong working relationships with the Village auditor, engineers, and other professionals are crucial for effective leadership. The Village superintendent manages most daily operations, including personnel decisions.

Financial landscape

Elwood operates within carefully managed financial parameters. The village's median household income has shown substantial growth, rising from \$36,500 in 2000 to \$61,053 in 2022, reflecting the community's economic resilience despite challenges.

The Village collects property taxes from properties within municipal boundaries, complemented by state allocations for operational purposes. Additionally, Elwood receives dedicated funding for highway maintenance and infrastructure through highway taxes and related revenues, which must be exclusively dedicated to street improvements.

POPULATION:

Population Profile

Elwood's demographic landscape reveals important trends shaping the community's future. According to recent projections, Elwood has a population of approximately 629 residents in 2024. The community faces demographic challenges, showing a declining population trend of about -1.26% annually in recent years.

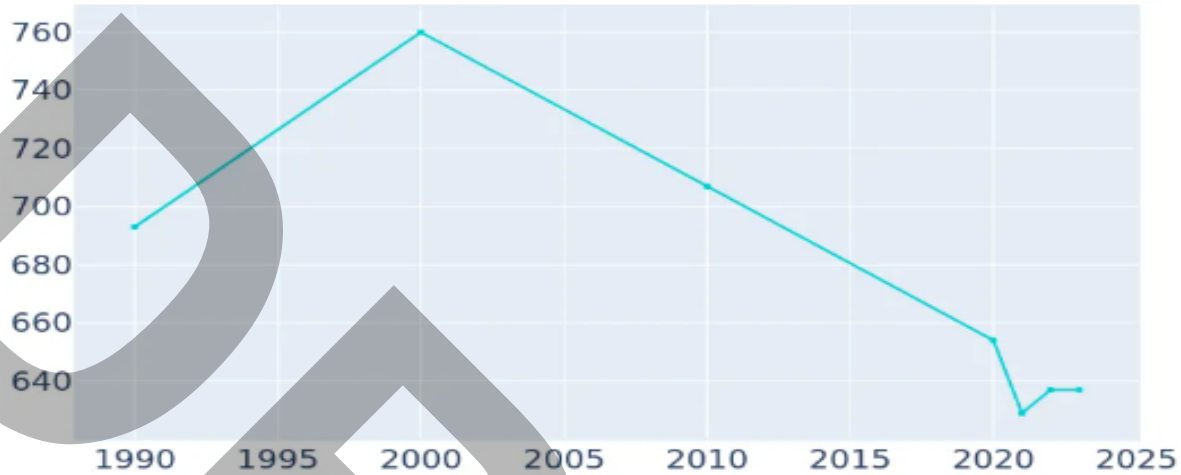
The median age in Elwood stands at 51.5 years (50.3 for males, 56.7 for females), significantly higher than the Nebraska average. This aging demographic profile presents both challenges and opportunities for community planning and service provision.

Population History

Elwood's population journey has been marked by fluctuations. In 1990, the village had 693 residents. By 2000, this number had grown to 761, showing positive momentum. However, the early 2000s brought demographic challenges, with the 2010 census recording 707 residents and further declining to 661 by 2020.

This demographic profile underscores the importance of strategic planning to enhance Elwood's appeal to new residents while supporting its existing population. The comprehensive plan addresses these demographic realities with forward-thinking initiatives designed to strengthen the community's vitality and resilience.

Elwood Population By Year



Year	Population	Rank in US	Growth Rate
2023	637	12,200	-0.0%
2022	637	12,191	1.3%
2021	629	12,247	-3.8%
2020	654	12,062	-0.8%
2010	707	11,862	-0.7%
2000	760	11,469	0.9%
1990	693	11,484	-

Chart 5

Current Population

Elwood stands at a pivotal demographic crossroad. According to the most recent data, Elwood's population reached approximately 629 residents in 2024 as reported by World Population Review, reflecting broader rural demographic patterns.

The demographic shifts follow distinct patterns: younger age groups continue to decrease – a common challenge across rural America – while the changes in older demographics reflect both natural population changes and migration patterns. Elwood's population is significantly more mature than the Nebraska average, creating both unique challenges and opportunities for community development.

Population Projection

Population projections serve as strategic forecasting tools that calculate expected population figures based on current demographic data and anticipated trends in births, deaths, and migration patterns. While inherently conditional due to the unpredictable nature of demographic variables, these projections provide vital planning insights when developed through collaborative stakeholder engagement and expert analysis.

Elwood's Demographic Horizon

Elwood's population dynamics emerge from the complex interplay between natural population changes and migration patterns over time. Elwood will continue facing demographic challenges through 2030 without strategic intervention.

This projected trajectory stems from multiple factors, including an aging population (with 155 seniors among the 443 adult residents) as noted in demographic assessments and limited employment diversification. However, Elwood possesses significant strengths to counter these trends, including its strong educational attainment among residents and relatively affordable housing according to city-data resources.

Through targeted economic development initiatives, housing strategies, and quality-of-life enhancements outlined in this Comprehensive Plan, Elwood is positioning itself to transform demographic challenges into opportunities for sustainable community revitalization.

Population Characteristics

Elwood's demographic landscape reflects the dynamic shifts affecting rural American communities. The community maintains approximately 282 households with a household composition of roughly 2.27 persons per household, creating the tight-knit social fabric that defines Elwood's community character. This household structure supports strong neighborhood connections while presenting opportunities for targeted housing and community development initiatives.

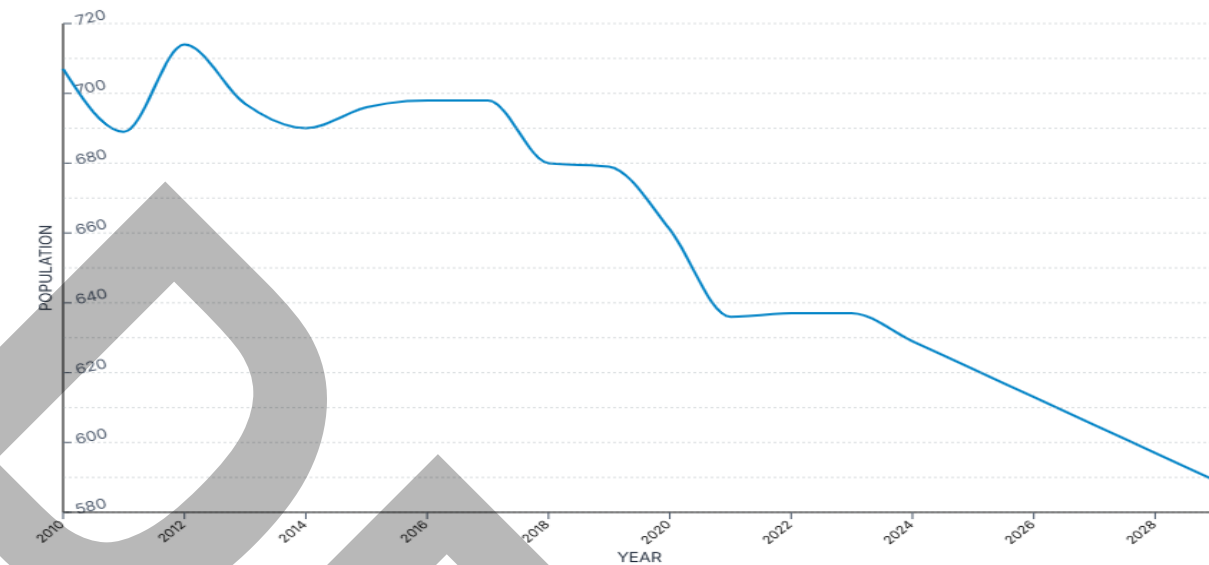


Chart 6

Age Distribution

Elwood's age profile represents one of its most distinctive demographic characteristics. The median age is currently 51.5 years (50.3 for males and 56.7 for females), significantly higher than both Nebraska's median age of 36.8 years and the national median of 38.5 years. This mature demographic profile has actually increased slightly from the 2010 Census median age of 47.3 years, reflecting the community's evolving age structure.

The age distribution reveals important insights: approximately 155 seniors among Elwood's 443 adult residents based on current population assessments contribute valuable experience, historical knowledge, and community leadership. This age structure presents both challenges and opportunities – driving needs for appropriate healthcare access and housing options while offering possibilities for intergenerational community initiatives and knowledge transfer programs.

Socioeconomic Indicators

Elwood demonstrates remarkable educational attainment with a 96.64% high school graduation rate among residents, showcasing the community's commitment to educational excellence. The bachelor's degree attainment rate stands at approximately 27.73% among the white population, reflecting opportunities for continued educational advancement.

The economic landscape shows promising resilience with median household income reaching \$62,917 as of 2022, representing substantial growth from previous

decades. Housing remains relatively affordable with a median property value of \$135,642 in 2022, having appreciated significantly from \$94,700 in 2021 according to community data profiles. The homeownership rate stands at a robust 68.2% based on recent assessments, exceeding the national average and demonstrating strong community investment.

These demographic characteristics provide the foundation for strategic planning initiatives designed to leverage Elwood's strengths while addressing challenges, creating a sustainable path toward community vitality and growth.

INCOME PROFILE:

Economic Vitality Assessment

Elwood's economic landscape reflects both resilience and opportunities for strategic growth when analyzed against broader economic frameworks. The income profile provides critical insights into the community's financial health and identifies potential focus areas for future economic development initiatives.

Household Income Analysis

Elwood's median household income presents a nuanced picture of the community's economic standing. According to the most recent data, Elwood's median household income stands at \$62,917, reflecting a position that requires attention when compared to state and national benchmarks. This figure contrasts with Nebraska's median household income of \$74,985 and the national median of \$80,610.

This 16% gap between Elwood and the state median, and 22% gap compared to the national figure, signals an opportunity area for economic development initiatives. However, it's important to note that Elwood's average household income of \$80,414 demonstrates that some households are achieving substantial financial success within the community, which provides promising foundations for further economic growth.

The income differential may be attributed to several factors including Elwood's rural location, its predominant industry mix with emphasis on agricultural sectors,

and demographic composition with a median age of 51.5 years that exceeds both state and national averages.

Income Distribution Dynamics

When examining income distribution across Elwood households, notable patterns emerge that help identify both strengths and potential vulnerabilities in the local economy. Table 2 illustrates how Elwood's household income distribution compares to state and national figures.

Household Income	US	Nebraska	Elwood
Less than \$10,000	5.3%	4.3%	6.8%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	3.5%	3.3%	3.2%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	6.4%	6.5%	8.2%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	6.8%	7.1%	4.1%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	10.3%	11.3%	15.5%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	16.1%	17.5%	17.3%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	12.07%	14%	15%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	17.4%	18.4%	20%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	9.1%	8.6%	6.8%
\$200,000 or more	12.4%	9%	3.2%
Median Income	80,610	\$74,985	\$62,917

Table 2 Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The data reveals several important insights:

Elwood shows greater representation in the middle-income brackets (particularly \$35,000-\$49,999 and \$75,000-\$149,999) compared to state and national distributions.

The community has a notable gap in the highest income bracket (\$200,000+), with only 3.2% of households reaching this threshold, compared to 9% statewide and 12.4% nationally.

The slightly higher percentage of households in the lowest income bracket (below \$10,000) indicates a segment of the population that may benefit from targeted economic support initiatives.

This distribution suggests Elwood has established a solid foundation of middle-income households while presenting opportunities to attract and develop higher-

income employment opportunities that could elevate overall community prosperity.

Family Income Structure

Family income metrics provide additional perspective on Elwood's economic foundation, particularly in understanding how multi-person households are faring financially. The data presents encouraging indicators in this area as referenced in Table 3.

Family Income	US	Nebraska	Elwood
Less than \$10,000	3.2%	2.2%	0%
\$10,000 to \$14,999	1.7%	1.3%	0%
\$15,000 to \$24,999	4%	3.3%	3%
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5.1%	4.4%	3%
\$35,000 to \$49,999	8.8%	8.6%	19.7%
\$50,000 to \$74,999	15.3%	16.2%	15.2%
\$75,000 to \$99,999	13.7%	15.9%	18.9%
\$100,000 to \$149,999	20.6%	23.7%	25%
\$150,000 to \$199,999	11.4%	11.9%	9.8%
\$200,000 or more	16.2%	12.6%	5.3%
Median Income	\$96,401	\$96,902	\$85,500

Table 3 Source: U.S. Census Bureau

The family income analysis reveals several promising aspects of Elwood's economic landscape:

The absence of families in the lowest income brackets (below \$15,000) suggests that family units in Elwood have achieved a baseline level of financial stability.

The substantial representation in the \$100,000-\$149,999 bracket (25% of families) indicates a significant concentration of financially secure families.

The median family income of \$85,500, while below state and national medians, represents a stronger position than the overall household income metrics, suggesting that family units are achieving greater economic success relative to single-person households in the community.

This family income distribution highlights Elwood's strength as a community where families can establish economic stability, while also identifying an opportunity to

develop pathways toward higher-income brackets that could enhance overall community prosperity.

Economic Implications and Strategic Opportunities

The income profile data illuminates several strategic considerations for Elwood's economic development:

The gap between median household income and state/national figures represents an opportunity area that could benefit from targeted economic development initiatives focused on attracting higher-wage industries and enterprises.

The strong middle-income foundation provides stability for community services, local businesses, and housing markets, creating a solid base for future growth.

With a low poverty rate of 6.59%, Elwood demonstrates strong fundamentals in providing baseline economic opportunity for residents.

The notable gap in the highest income brackets suggests potential for developing strategies to attract professional and specialized occupations that could diversify the local economy.

Recent demographic trends showing a population decline of 12.9% between 2021 and 2022 highlight the importance of initiatives that can attract and retain working-age residents to sustain economic vitality.

These income metrics provide crucial context for Elwood's comprehensive planning efforts, underscoring the importance of economic development strategies that build upon existing strengths while addressing identified opportunity areas. By strategically leveraging its solid middle-income foundation while cultivating pathways to higher-wage opportunities, Elwood can enhance its economic resilience and prosperity in the years ahead.

EDUCATION: BUILDING TOMORROW'S LEADERS



Educational Excellence in Elwood

The quality of education stands as a cornerstone of Elwood's community identity and long-term economic vitality. With impressive educational attainment metrics that surpass both state and national averages in key indicators, Elwood demonstrates its commitment to nurturing human capital and creating pathways for lifelong success.

Educational Attainment: A Foundation for Growth

Elwood residents exhibit remarkable educational achievement levels that reflect the community's dedication to learning excellence. Approximately 96.64% of individuals aged 25 and over have graduated from high school, significantly outperforming both Nebraska's overall rate of 92.1% and the national average of 88.5%. This exceptional high school completion rate positions Elwood among the most educationally accomplished communities in the region.

The community's commitment to higher education is similarly impressive. About 27.73% of Elwood's adult population holds a bachelor's degree or higher, exceeding the state average of 22.7% while approaching the national figure of 27.9%. This strong foundation of higher education attainment indicates a workforce equipped with advanced skills and knowledge – critical assets for sustainable economic development and community prosperity.

Elwood Public Schools: Performance Excellence

Elwood Public Schools demonstrates a strong commitment to academic excellence, particularly evident in their graduation rates. The district has maintained exceptional performance in recent years, as shown in the following data:

Graduation Rates		
Year	Elwood	State
2024	100%	89.25%
2023	100%	88.18%
2022	86.67%	87.12%
2021	100%	87.56%
2020	82.35%	87.51%

Table 4 Source: Nebraska Department of Education

The district's perfect graduation rate in recent years showcases its exceptional ability to support all students through to completion, substantially outperforming the state average. The temporary dip in 2020 coincided with the global COVID-19 pandemic, which disrupted educational systems worldwide. The immediate recovery to a 100% graduation rate in 2021 demonstrates the resilience and adaptability of Elwood's educational leadership.

Academic Performance: Areas of Strength and Opportunity

Standardized testing results provide valuable insights into Elwood students' academic performance relative to state benchmarks. While Elwood demonstrates areas of both strength and opportunity in academic performance, the community's commitment to educational excellence remains unwavering.

2023 -2024 English Language Arts Average Scale Score		
Grade	Elwood	State
3 rd	2496	2463
4 th	2477	2490
5 th	2488	2508
6 th	2507	2519
2023 -2024 Mathematics Average Scale Score		
Grade	Elwood	State
3 rd	1244	1191
4 th	1195	1219

5 th	1213	1440
6 th	1256	1240

Table 5 Source: Nebraska Department of Education

Overall assessment data reveals that approximately 37% of Elwood students demonstrate proficiency in both mathematics and reading/language arts, compared to statewide proficiency rates of 59% in English Language Arts and a varying percentage in mathematics due to new assessment standards implemented in 2023-2024. While this indicates an area for potential growth, it's important to note several contextual factors:

Elwood students display particularly strong performance in 3rd grade English Language Arts and in both 3rd and 6th grade Mathematics, where they outperform state averages.

The district demonstrates exceptional strength in developing student persistence through graduation, as evidenced by its perfect graduation rates in recent years.

Elwood schools offer robust extracurricular programming, including band, choir, art, drama, Future Farmers of America (FFA), Quiz Bowl, Student Council, National Honor Society, and various sports programs that develop students' non-academic talents and leadership capabilities.

Educational Environment: Personalized Learning

Elwood Public Schools offers a truly distinctive educational environment characterized by exceptional personalization and individual attention. The district maintains a remarkable student-teacher ratio of 9:1, substantially lower than Nebraska's state average of 14:1. This allows for highly individualized instruction and support, creating an environment where each student's unique needs and learning styles can be recognized and nurtured.

The district currently serves 212 students across its Pre-K through 12th grade programs, with 32.5% qualifying as economically disadvantaged. Despite this economic diversity, the district has maintained its exemplary graduation rates, demonstrating its commitment to supporting all students regardless of socioeconomic background.

The district demonstrates a substantial financial commitment to educational excellence, investing approximately \$16,910 per student annually. This significant investment – which exceeds the state median expenditure – reflects the community's prioritization of education as a cornerstone of Elwood's identity and future.

In 2021, Elwood Public Schools enhanced its athletic opportunities by forming an innovative partnership with neighboring Eustis and Farnam schools to establish the Hi-Line Bulls athletic teams. This collaborative approach illustrates the district's creative problem-solving and commitment to providing comprehensive extracurricular opportunities despite its modest size.

Educational Initiatives: Pirates Providing Hope

Beyond conventional academics, Elwood Public Schools demonstrates its commitment to the holistic well-being of students through innovative initiatives. A particularly inspiring example is "Pirates Providing Hope," a program created by Elwood teachers to support students with rare diseases while raising awareness and funds for related foundations. This initiative exemplifies the community's compassionate, student-centered approach to education that extends beyond standardized curriculum to address the unique needs of each child.

Post-Secondary Education Access: Regional Opportunities

Elwood's strategic location provides residents with convenient access to numerous post-secondary educational institutions within a 100-mile radius, creating pathways for continued learning and career advancement. These include:

- Central Community College Lexington Campus
- Hastings College
- Central Community College Hastings Campus
- Mid-Plains Community College North Platte Campus
- Mid-Plains Community College McCook Campus
- Nebraska College of Technical Agriculture
- University of Nebraska - Kearney

This regional educational ecosystem offers diverse options for traditional college-bound students, adult learners seeking career transitions, and those pursuing

specialized technical training. The proximity of these institutions to Elwood significantly enhances the community's educational landscape, providing accessible options for lifelong learning that can strengthen the local workforce and economic resilience.

Strategic Directions: Educational Enhancement

As Elwood looks to the future, several strategic opportunities exist to further strengthen its educational foundation:

Targeted Academic Support Programs: Developing focused initiatives to address specific academic areas where performance metrics indicate opportunity for growth could further enhance student achievement.

Expanded College and Career Readiness: Building upon the strong graduation rates with enhanced college preparation and career exploration opportunities could create even more robust pathways to post-secondary success.

Technology Integration: Continuing to invest in digital learning tools and technological literacy could prepare students for the increasingly digital economy while personalizing learning experiences.

Community-School Partnerships: Expanding connections between local businesses, organizations, and the school system could create authentic learning opportunities, mentorship programs, and career exploration.

Educational Facilities Enhancement: Strategic investments in school infrastructure and learning environments could further support educational excellence and attract families to the community.

Elwood's educational foundations represent one of the community's most significant assets – a springboard for individual achievement, economic vitality, and community prosperity. By building upon these strengths while addressing areas of opportunity, Elwood can continue to offer an exceptional educational experience that develops future leaders and contributes to the community's long-term vitality.

EMPLOYMENT:

POWERING ELWOOD'S ECONOMIC ENGINE

Workforce Strength and Resilience

Elwood, Nebraska boasts a remarkably strong labor market foundation that positions the community advantageously within the regional economic landscape. The village demonstrates exceptional workforce participation that significantly outpaces both state and national benchmarks, creating a solid platform for future economic development initiatives.

Employment Rate and Labor Force Participation

Elwood exhibits an impressively robust employment profile, with approximately 98.4% of its working-age population actively engaged in the workforce. This exceptional participation rate stands in stark contrast to broader economic indicators, significantly outperforming Nebraska's already impressive employment metrics. Nebraska's unemployment rate stands at 3.0% as of February 2025, reflecting the state's continued position as one of the nation's employment leaders. By comparison, the national unemployment rate during the same period reached 4.1%, underscoring Elwood's and Nebraska's substantial competitive advantage in workforce activation.

This exceptional employment rate serves as a cornerstone of Elwood's economic vitality, providing a stable foundation for community services, local business activity, and housing market strength. However, it also creates unique challenges in workforce recruitment and retention that must be strategically addressed through targeted economic development initiatives.

Table 6

Employment by Occupation

Elwood's occupational distribution reveals a diverse yet specialized workforce that differs in significant ways from state averages, highlighting the community's distinctive economic character. Table 6 illustrates Elwood's current occupational landscape compared to Nebraska:

Occupation Category:	Elwood	Nebraska
Management, business, science and arts	33.6%	42.5%
Service	19.4%	14.96%
Sales and office	15.8%	19.8%
Natural resources, construction and maintenance	13%	9.5%
Production, transportation and material moving	18.2%	13.3%

Table 6

This occupational distribution reveals several strategic insights:

Management and Professional Positions: While Elwood shows strong representation in management and professional positions at 33.6%, this remains below the state average of 42.5%. This differential likely reflects the community's rural context and the prevalence of Elwood Public Schools as a significant local employer for professional talent.

Service Sector Strength: Elwood's service sector employment at 19.4% substantially exceeds the state average of 14.96%, indicating a robust foundation of service-oriented businesses and potential opportunities for expansion in this area.

Production and Transportation Hub: The significantly higher percentage of residents employed in production, transportation, and material moving occupations (18.2% versus 13.3% statewide) highlights Elwood's role in the regional manufacturing and logistics network.

Agricultural and Natural Resource Expertise: The higher proportion of workers in natural resources, construction, and maintenance occupations (13% versus 9.5% statewide) reflects Elwood's continued connection to its agricultural heritage and related industries.

These occupational patterns create both opportunities and challenges for Elwood's economic development strategy. The community might benefit from initiatives that leverage its strong service and production workforce while also exploring pathways to expand management and professional employment opportunities.

Employment by Industrial Sector

Examining Elwood's employment by industry sector provides further insight into the community's economic DNA and potential development pathways:

Employment by Industrial Sector:	Elwood	Nebraska
Agriculture	15.4%	4.4%
Construction	4.9%	6.7%
Manufacturing	7.7%	10.4%
Wholesale trade	6.9%	2.3%
Retail trade	13%	10.1%
Transportation	3.2%	6.3%
Information	1.2%	1.4%
Finance, insurance, real estate	4%	7.8%
Professional, scientific and management, administrative, waste management	4.9%	9.5%
Educational and health care services and social assistance	21.1%	24.6%
Arts, entertainment and recreation, food service	4%	7.8%
Other	2.4%	4.8%
Public administration	11.3%	4%

Table 7

The industrial distribution reveals several distinctive aspects of Elwood's economic landscape:

Educational and Healthcare Foundation: The largest employment sector in Elwood is educational services, healthcare, and social assistance at 21.1%, reflecting the significant role of Elwood Public Schools and related health services in the local economy. Though slightly below the state average of 24.6%, this sector represents a cornerstone of stable employment in the community.

Agricultural Excellence: Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting remains a vital component of Elwood's economy, employing 50 people and standing as the community's largest industrial sector. At 15.4%, this sector's employment share is more than triple the state average of 4.4%, underscoring Elwood's continued connection to its agricultural heritage and the economic opportunities this specialization provides.

Public Sector Prominence: Public administration employment in Elwood (11.3%) significantly exceeds the state average (4%), highlighting the importance of government services and administrative functions in the local economy.

Retail Strength: Retail trade employs 13% of Elwood's workforce compared to 10.1% statewide, indicating the village's role as a commercial hub for surrounding rural areas.

Growth Opportunity Areas: Several sectors show potential for strategic expansion, including finance and professional services, where Elwood's current employment (4% and 4.9% respectively) lags behind state averages (7.8% and 9.5%).

This industrial profile highlights Elwood's economic resilience through diversification while also identifying targeted growth opportunities in specific sectors. Nebraska faces critical workforce shortages in several high-demand fields despite its low unemployment rate, including healthcare, education, technology, and skilled trades like HVAC and appliance repair. This statewide challenge presents both opportunities and potential constraints for Elwood's economic development strategy.

Commuting Patterns and Workplace Location

Commuting patterns provide critical insight into the relationship between Elwood's residential workforce and regional employment centers. The data reveals an intricate network of connections that shape both economic opportunity and quality of life for residents.

According to recent data, Elwood residents have an average commute time of 21.3 minutes, which is shorter than the national average of 26.7 minutes. This more efficient commute represents a quality-of-life advantage for residents while indicating that many travel to nearby employment centers for work opportunities.

The transportation modes utilized by Elwood commuters reflect both rural transportation realities and community collaboration:

The majority of Elwood workers (65.6%) drive alone to work, while a substantial 28.7% participate in carpooling arrangements. This carpooling rate is significantly higher than typical rural communities, demonstrating strong social networks and resource-sharing within Elwood. A smaller percentage of residents (3.58%) walk to their workplaces, likely employed at businesses within the village itself.

Employment data shows that between 2021 and 2022, total employment in Elwood declined from 308 to 279 employees, representing a decrease of 9.42%. This

employment contraction, coupled with the corresponding population decline during the same period, highlights the interconnected nature of demographic and economic trends in the community.

The most common employment sectors for Elwood residents include:

- Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting (50 people)
- Manufacturing (49 people)
- Health Care & Social Assistance (37 people)

These figures further emphasize Elwood's connection to agriculture while highlighting the importance of manufacturing and healthcare in providing stable employment opportunities for residents.

The moderate commute times suggest that many Elwood residents are employed in nearby communities like Lexington, which serves as a regional employment center. This regional employment integration underscores the importance of transportation infrastructure, particularly road maintenance and potential carpooling initiatives, in supporting Elwood's economic future.

Strategic Opportunities and Challenges

Elwood's employment profile presents a compelling mix of strengths and opportunities that can inform strategic economic development initiatives:

Workforce Development Alignment

Nebraska's workforce challenges include significant shortages in key sectors, with 46% of nursing jobs, 68% of teaching positions, 73% of technology roles, and 91% of HVAC and appliance repair positions unfilled statewide. These gaps represent potential opportunities for targeted workforce development initiatives in Elwood that align with high-demand fields.

Educational partnerships with regional institutions like Central Community College and University of Nebraska-Kearney could create pathways for Elwood residents to enter these high-demand fields while remaining in the community. The village's strong K-12 educational foundation provides an excellent platform for early career exploration and technical skills development.

Agricultural Innovation and Value-Added Processing

Elwood's agricultural expertise represents not just a historical legacy but a foundation for future innovation. The community's substantial agricultural workforce could be leveraged to explore value-added processing, specialty crop production, and agricultural technology applications that create higher-value employment opportunities within this traditional sector.

Remote Work and Digital Economy Opportunities

While not currently a major component of Elwood's employment landscape, the growing national trend toward remote work presents a strategic opportunity for the village. Investments in digital infrastructure and co-working facilities could attract remote workers seeking Elwood's quality of life advantages while bringing new professional skills and entrepreneurial energy into the community.

Tourism and Recreational Services Expansion

The proximity to Johnson Lake and Elwood Reservoir creates opportunities to expand employment in recreation, hospitality, and tourism services. Strategic development of these amenities could create additional employment opportunities while enhancing Elwood's appeal as a residential location.

CONCLUSION: BUILDING ON EMPLOYMENT STRENGTHS

Elwood's exceptional employment rate and diversified occupational profile provide a solid foundation for economic development initiatives. By strategically addressing both opportunities and challenges in the employment landscape, Elwood can enhance economic resilience while creating pathways for sustainable growth and prosperity.

Key strategic considerations include:

- **Workforce Development:** Creating targeted training and educational pathways aligned with regional high-demand occupations.
- **Business Retention and Expansion:** Supporting existing employers while fostering an environment conducive to business growth.

- Entrepreneurship and Innovation: Cultivating opportunities for new business creation, particularly in sectors that leverage Elwood's unique assets and advantages.
- Infrastructure Investment: Ensuring transportation, housing, and digital infrastructure support employment growth and access to regional opportunities.

By building upon its impressive employment foundation while addressing strategic opportunities in key sectors, Elwood can create a sustainable economic future that enhances prosperity and quality of life for all residents.

PART 3 LAND USE AND DEVELOPMENT:



LAND USAGE AND EXPANSION:

The arrangement and location of future land uses should be determined before the basic services for Elwood, such as utilities, community facilities, and streets, can be planned. Land use classifies land according to the way an area is utilized – residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, or recreational. Establishing suitable areas of town in which certain types of land use are acceptable is one of the foundation principles of planning and is primary to the development of efficient, safe, and economically sound municipalities. This section of the Elwood Comprehensive Plan analyzes current land use patterns and existing regional development trends. From this information and information obtained from members of the community, village officials and staff, this section also presents a Community Growth Plan, which is intended to guide land use decisions and become the basis for land use regulation in Elwood.

Existing Land Use

Planning for future uses can be completed only after the existing land use patterns have been determined. The predominant land use in Elwood is single family residence. The Village of Elwood encompasses approximately 0.52 square miles (335 acres) of land. Public, Light Industrial, Heavy Industrial, Multiple Family Residence, Manufactured Housing, Parks and Open space account for the remainder of land uses in the Village. (See Map 2)



Current Economic Profile

Elwood's economy is primarily driven by agriculture, with the largest employment sectors being Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting (38 people), Retail Trade (32 people), and Public Administration (28 people). The Village is home to approximately 166 businesses serving a population of approximately 629 residents. Major employers include local agricultural operations, retail establishments, and public services.

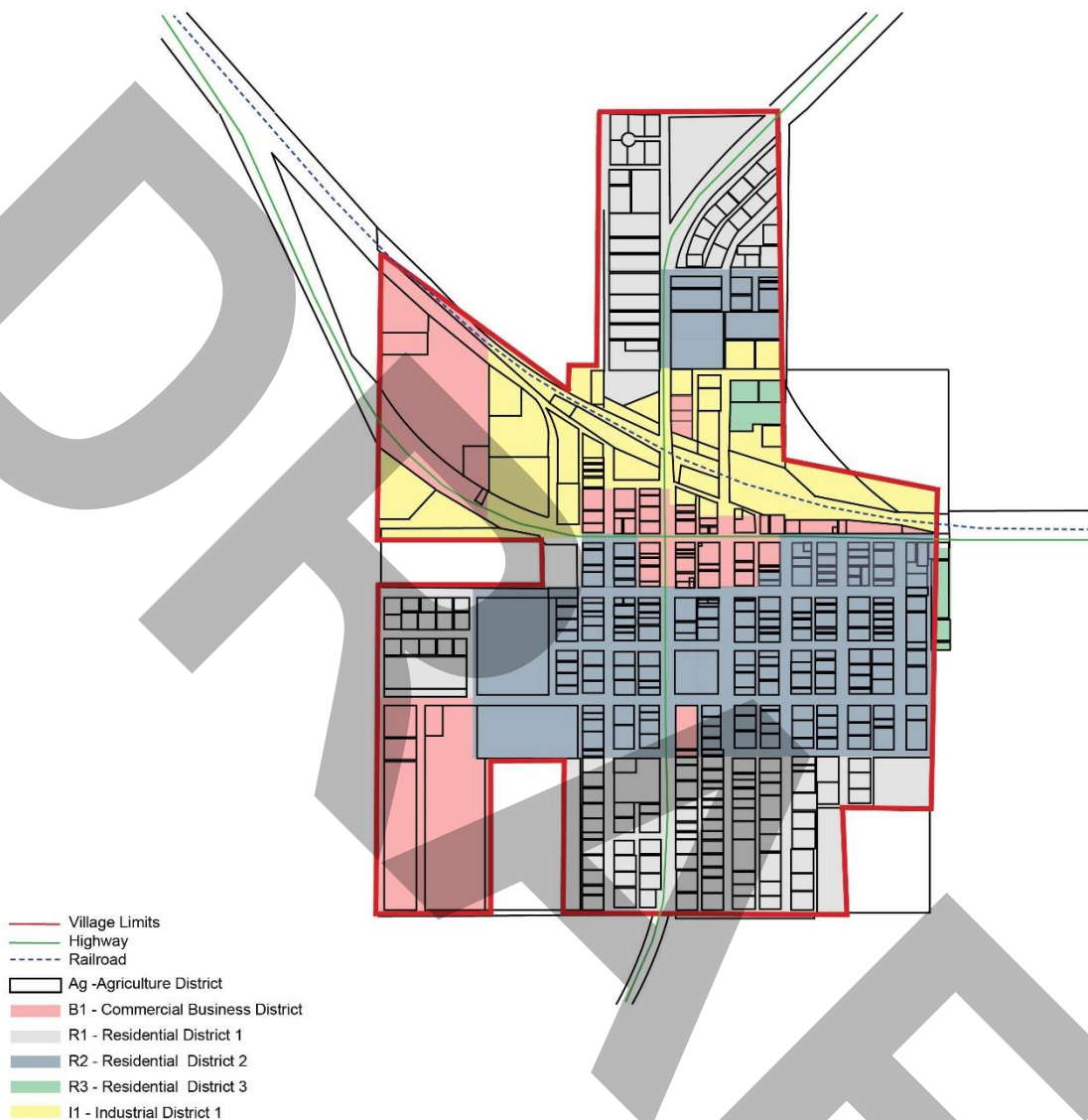
The Village serves as the county seat for Gosper County, which provides employment opportunities through county government offices. Elwood also benefits from its strategic location at the junction of Nebraska Highway 23 and U.S. Route 283, creating opportunities for highway-oriented commercial development.

Existing Community Assets

Elwood possesses several key community assets that contribute to its quality of life and potential for future development:

- Elwood Reservoir/Wildlife Management Area: Located 3 miles north of the village, this 1,200-acre lake is a significant recreational asset for fishing, hunting, and outdoor activities.

- Educational Facilities: Elwood Public Schools serves students from preschool through 12th grade in a single building, providing essential educational services to the community.
- Gosper County Fairgrounds: Located in Elwood, this facility hosts the annual Gosper County Fair and features rodeo grounds that attract visitors from surrounding areas.
- Assisted Living and Care Center: Provides important services for elderly residents.
- Gosper County Senior Center: Offers activities and services for senior residents.
- Gosper County Courthouse: A historic structure that serves as an architectural landmark and center of county government.



Map 2 - Current Land Use Map

Existing Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)

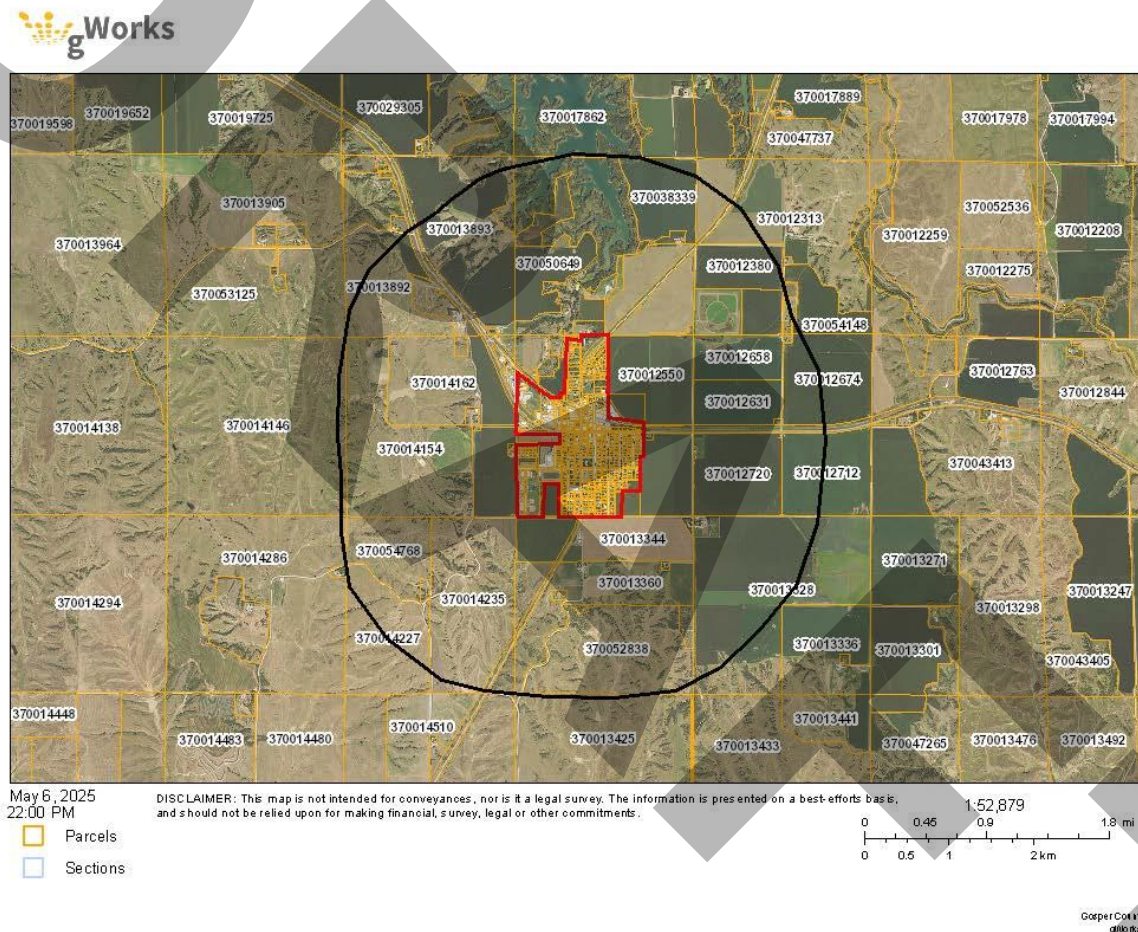
The planning jurisdiction for the Village of Elwood includes the area within the village limits as well as the one-mile extra-territorial jurisdiction (ETJ). Section 13-327 of the Nebraska State Statute states:

13-327. County; cede jurisdiction; when; procedure.

(1) The governing body of any city of the first or second class or Village may, by majority vote of its members, request that the county Council formally cede and transfer to the city or Village extraterritorial jurisdiction over land outside the area extending two miles

from the corporate boundaries of a city of the first class and one mile from the corporate boundaries of a city of the second class or Village. In making its request, the city or Village shall describe the territory over which jurisdiction is being sought by metes and bounds or by reference to an official map, except that a Village shall not request jurisdiction over any territory that is more than one-quarter mile outside the area extending one mile from the corporate boundaries of a Village.

Gosper County has allowed for the one-mile ETJ for Elwood. (See Map 3)



Map 3 - Elwood Extra Territorial Jurisdiction (ETJ) Map

LAND USE PROJECTIONS AND CURRENT TRENDS:

Residential uses should continue to dominate the Village of Elwood. Located at the junction of Nebraska Highway 23 and U.S. Route 283, Elwood has potential for

strategic growth. With a 2024 population of approximately 629 residents, Elwood has experienced a slight population decline in recent years. However, the village maintains a stable community with potential for modest growth through proper planning and development.

The proximity to the Elwood Reservoir, located three miles north of the village, provides recreational opportunities and potential for tourism development. Additionally, Elwood's role as the county seat for Gosper County provides stability through government employment and services.

The future land use map in Map 4 shows that Elwood should continue to develop the current commercial district along the highways while preserving and enhancing residential areas.

Land Use Goals

Bring in More Commercial Development

To generate a substantial amount of vehicle traffic, future commercial or industrial uses should be encouraged to locate along the major highways in Gosper County versus in rural Gosper County, which would require a higher maintenance level for county roads. The junction of Nebraska Highway 23 and U.S. Route 283 presents a strategic location for commercial development within Elwood.

Implementation Strategies:

- Develop targeted incentives for highway-oriented businesses
- Streamline permitting processes for commercial development in designated zones
- Partner with Nebraska Department of Economic Development for technical assistance and funding opportunities
- Create a facade improvement program for existing commercial properties

Expand Job Opportunities

The Village must take full advantage of the resources it has when it comes to expanding job opportunities. This could include providing suitable facilities and identifying the needs of the community. While there are some local service employers in the Village, the potential exists for additional job opportunities in the

area by encouraging local entities and private companies to develop partnerships to expand their scope of activity.

Implementation Strategies:

- Explore opportunities through the USDA Rural Development programs
- Develop partnerships with Rural Prosperity Nebraska for technical assistance
- Establish a microloan program for small business development
- Create a business incubator space in underutilized buildings
- Partner with Elwood Public Schools to develop workforce training programs

Residential Expansion

The expansion of residential uses will be a continued trend and a goal of this plan. A goal of this plan is to encourage the development of residential subdivisions and allow the Village to realize its potential in a controlled manner. Conventional single-family subdivisions are a big need in a village that is looking to grow. It is important that Elwood encourages new construction and maintains the quality of existing housing and residential neighborhoods.

Implementation Strategies:

- Identify and prepare "shovel-ready" residential development areas
- Develop infrastructure extension plans for targeted growth areas
- Partner with USDA Rural Development for housing program assistance
- Create incentive packages for new home construction
- Establish a housing rehabilitation program for existing properties

Enhance Recreational and Tourism Development

Elwood's proximity to the Elwood Reservoir and other natural amenities presents opportunities for recreation-based economic development.

Implementation Strategies:

- Develop connector trails between the village and the reservoir
- Create a tourism marketing campaign highlighting outdoor recreational opportunities

- Improve signage and wayfinding for visitors
- Develop partnerships with Nebraska Tourism Commission for promotional opportunities
- Explore potential for seasonal events that showcase natural amenities

Community Growth Plan

By establishing proactive community development policies and adhering to a vision of how the Village should grow, Elwood has the potential to successfully attract residential and commercial development and continue to provide quality public services to all. The sum of all community development policies and the strength of community development principles will determine, to a great extent, future land use in the village. Planned growth for Elwood will make the Village more effective when serving their residents, using resources, and able to meet and maintain the standards of living and more for a quality of life for the residents of Elwood. The Community Growth Plan consists of two parts:

Community Growth Principles

Setting forth the basic premises and community values used to guide all development actions.

Community Development Policies

Establishing areas of specific development focus and providing avenues to accomplish the goals contained in the plan.

General Principles

When considering development plans, ask: "Does the project/plan conform to the guiding principles?"

Concentric Growth:

Elwood's growth should occur in a logical procession from village limits outward. Residential growth should occur primarily north, west, and east of the Village and commercial growth should be reserved for land adjacent to Highway 23 and Highway 283. The total area of the village is only 0.52 square miles, so expansion must be carefully planned to optimize land use.

Managed Growth:

Areas identified for growth should be related to regional demand in the housing market and land demand for commerce and industry. Development policy should emphasize the need for multiple housing choices and location opportunities for potential residents and businesses. However, development policy should balance the need for choice with the need for orderly development and infrastructure extensions.

Responsible Growth:

A basic, continuous network of streets and open spaces should be pre-planned to maintain linkages between traditional village and newly developing areas. As Elwood looks to grow, the Village should maintain to some extent the grid street network that characterizes the established older part of town. New subdivisions and streets should not be considered as "standing alone" but should provide increased mobility and accessibility for all residents.

Sustainable Growth:

Elwood should incorporate sustainable planning practices that preserve natural resources, reduce infrastructure costs, and enhance quality of life. This includes:

- Encouraging energy-efficient building practices
- Preserving agricultural land and open spaces
- Protecting water quality and natural habitats
- Promoting walkable neighborhoods

LAND USE POLICIES:

Create Capacity for Growth

Elwood should take a proactive approach in providing space for residential expansion. Planning for residential growth areas to the west, north, and east of the village limits is recommended.

Phased Annexation

A program of phased voluntary annexation is recommended. Annexation of developable land will provide capacity for the future expansion of Elwood. This is

known as an "urban reserve." The use of TIF and other financial incentives can draw residential and commercial development into a community – but land must be incorporated into the Village in order for those incentives to be offered. The first step in phased annexation is to gauge landowners' willingness to annex and their future plans for their property. Landowners immediately adjacent to village limits should be the first tier of annexation and those parcels should logically be the first to develop. Fringe, or leapfrog development should be discouraged as it places greater burdens on utility infrastructure and creates fractious land use patterns. Discussing future land use plans with landowners is the most critical step to creating capacity for development. Obtaining voluntary petitions for annexation most often does not occur until a subdivision plat is ready for approval, however, many landowners may find it beneficial to have land annexed prior to a development beginning. Once land is annexed, the Village can prepare for utility extensions to the territory.

Zoning and Subdivision Regulations

Zoning and subdivision regulations are the "teeth" behind a comprehensive plan. This plan will establish the desired land use patterns and orderly development for the Village of Elwood, however, the zoning and subdivision regulations reinforce those ideas with actual regulatory power. A zoning map (see map 6), indicating what areas of town are suitable for certain types of development, will essentially mirror the current land use map (map 2), included herein. Subdivision regulations will ensure that any new development is constructed to be efficient, safe, and compatible with the rest of the community.

Smart Growth Strategies for Rural Communities

Elwood should incorporate smart growth practices tailored to small rural communities, including:

- Encouraging mixed-use development where appropriate
- Preserving historic buildings through adaptive reuse
- Enhancing walkability and connectivity between residential areas and commercial centers
- Promoting housing diversity to meet various income levels and life stages

- Utilizing sustainable infrastructure practices for new development

Economic Development Through Land Use

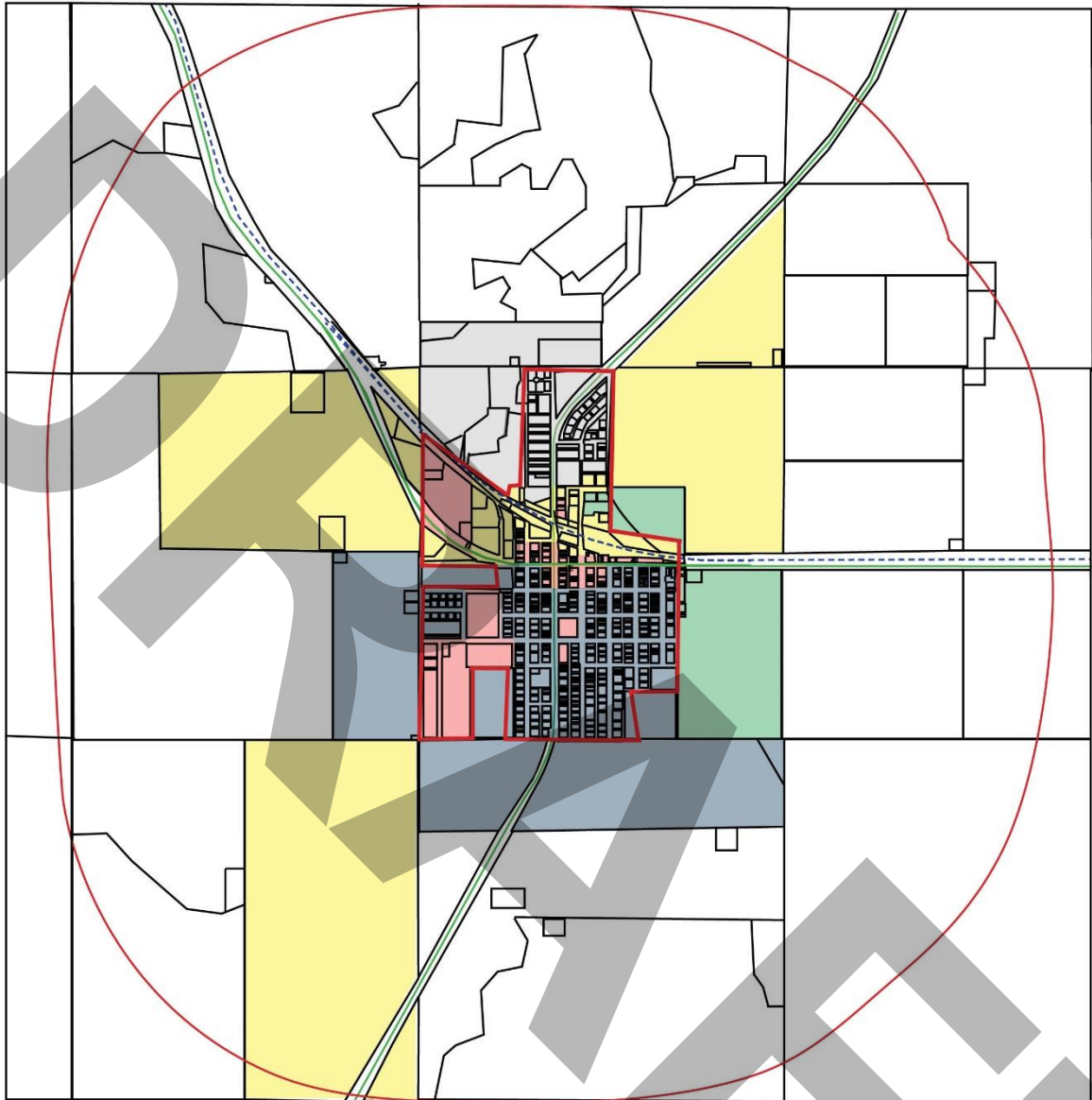
Land use decisions should support economic development goals by:

- Identifying appropriate locations for home-based businesses
- Designating areas for small-scale manufacturing or value-added agricultural businesses
- Creating flexible zoning for innovation and entrepreneurship
- Preserving prime agricultural land for production
- Identifying opportunities for renewable energy development

Environmental Considerations

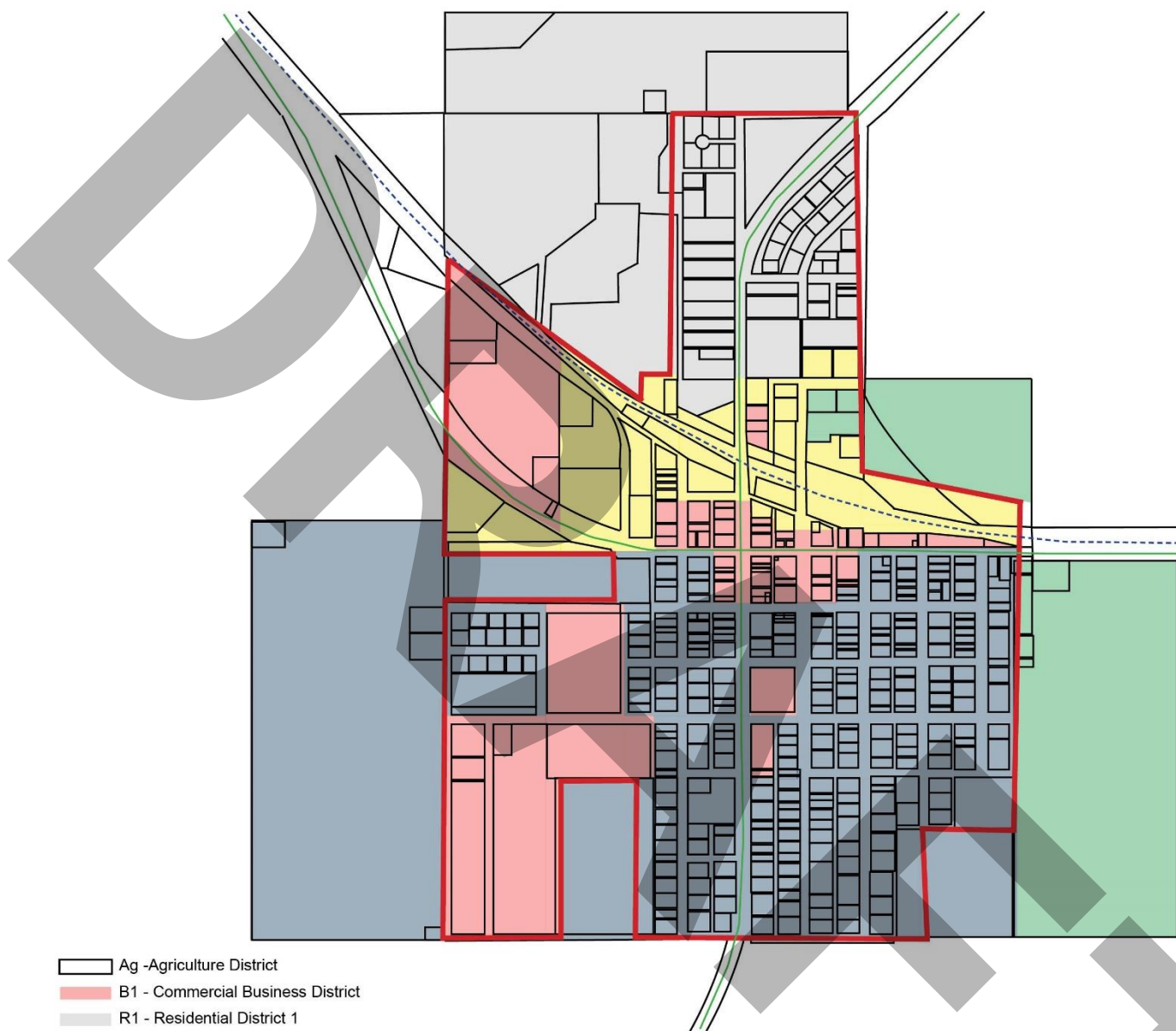
Land use planning should incorporate environmental stewardship through:

- Identification and protection of sensitive natural areas
- Development of stormwater management best practices
- Promotion of native landscaping to reduce water consumption
- Preservation of wildlife corridors and habitats
- Adoption of dark sky-friendly lighting policies



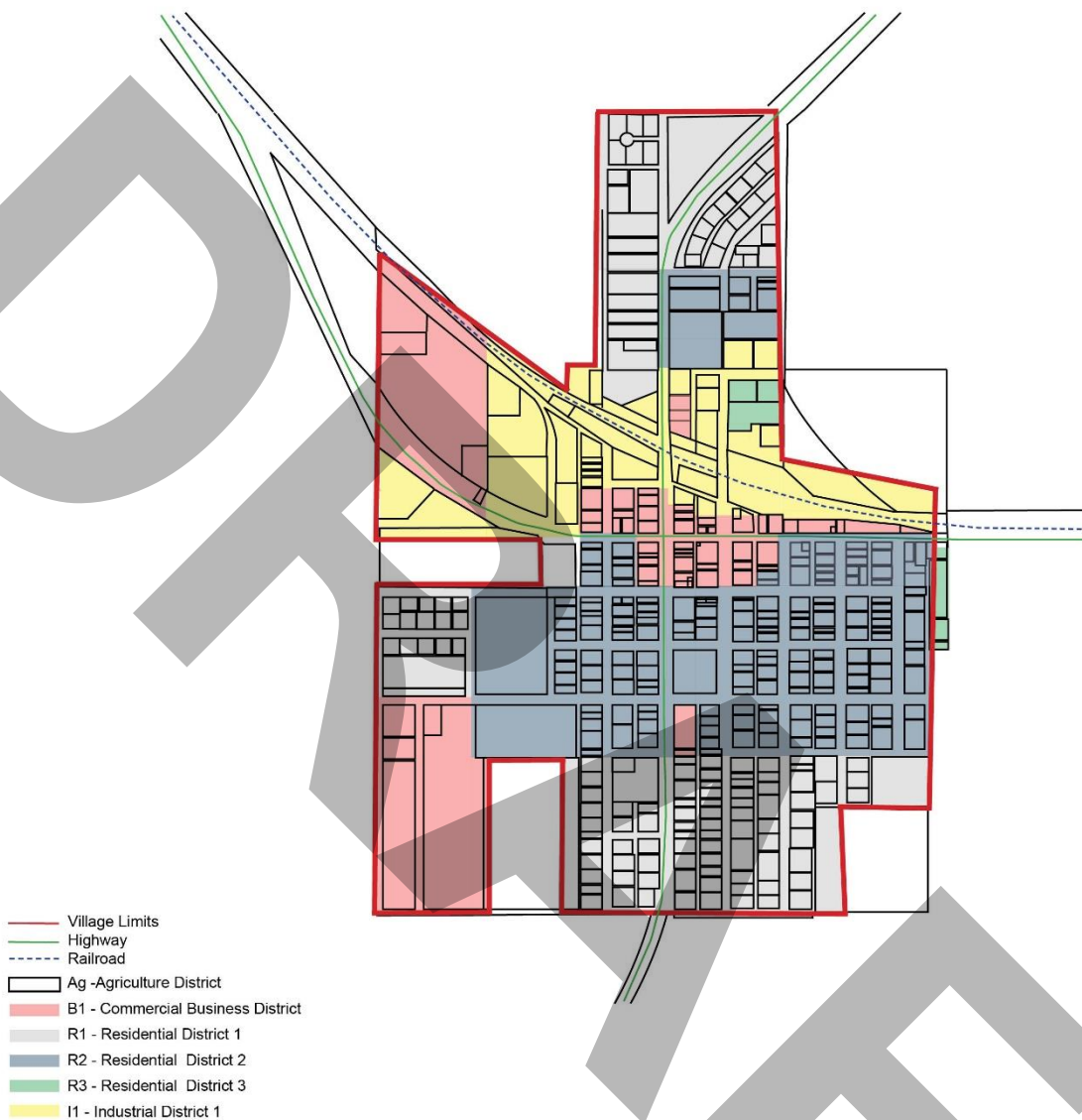
- Ag -Agriculture District
- B1 - Commercial Business District
- R1 - Residential District 1
- R2 - Residential District 2
- R3 - Residential District 3
- I1 - Industrial District 1
- ETJ
- Highway
- Railroad

Map 4 - Future Land Use



- Ag -Agriculture District
- B1 - Commercial Business District
- R1 - Residential District 1
- R2 - Residential District 2
- R3 - Residential District 3
- I1 - Industrial District 1
- Village Limits
- Highway
- Railroad

Map 5 - Future Land Use Village Limits



Map 6 – Current Land Use Village Limits

IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

The success of this land use and development plan depends on effective implementation. The following timeline provides a framework for carrying out the goals and policies outlined in this plan:

Short-Term Actions (1-2 Years)

- Review and update zoning regulations to align with comprehensive plan goals
- Develop a village-wide housing condition assessment

- Create an inventory of vacant commercial properties
- Establish a facade improvement program for downtown businesses
- Develop infrastructure extension plans for priority growth areas

Medium-Term Actions (3-5 Years)

- Implement phased annexation strategy for priority growth areas
- Develop a comprehensive trail and sidewalk connectivity plan
- Create incentive packages for commercial and residential development
- Establish partnerships with regional economic development organizations
- Develop recreation-oriented tourism marketing campaign

Long-Term Actions (5+ Years)

- Complete major infrastructure extensions to support growth
- Develop a downtown revitalization plan
- Create specialized districts (e.g., historic, recreation, etc.) as needed
- Re-evaluate and update the comprehensive plan based on progress
- Explore regional partnerships for economic development initiatives

This implementation strategy should be reviewed annually by the Village Board and Planning Commission to track progress and make necessary adjustments based on changing conditions and opportunities.

PART 4 INFRASTRUCTURE:



TRANSPORTATION:

Transportation is not just about roads and vehicles – it is the living heartbeat that connects every corner of our rural communities. The streets we travel on daily represent more than concrete and asphalt; they are the most expansive public spaces we share as neighbors in our village. When you think about it, these pathways are silent witnesses to our daily lives, our celebrations, and our quiet moments of community.

The beauty and condition of our streets deeply influence how we feel about where we live, how our properties maintain their value, and even how we interact with one another. A truly meaningful transportation network does so much more than just carry us from one place to another – it creates spaces where pedestrians of all abilities can move safely, where trees and greenery refresh our spirits, and where the very design of our pathways enhances our quality of life.

As we examine Elwood's transportation landscape in this Comprehensive Plan, we are looking beyond mere functionality. We are exploring how our roads connect

hearts and homes, how our sidewalks invite everyone to participate in community life, and how the spaces between buildings can become treasured civic assets rather than just passages to traverse.

This section offers a heartfelt look at how Elwood moves today, identifies where connections might be strengthened, and imagines a future where our transportation network doesn't just serve our needs – it elevates our experience of home, creating pathways that nurture both our practical needs and our sense of belonging in this special place we share.

Existing Conditions

Streets and Roads



Most of the streets located within the Village boundaries are constructed from three main materials: asphalt (a dark, semi-solid petroleum product used for road surfaces), armor coating (a protective layer applied over asphalt to extend its life), and gravel (loose rock fragments). If

you are interested in learning about planned improvements to these roads, you can find comprehensive details in the 2024 Elwood 1-6 Year Road Plan, which outlines all the necessary upgrades and maintenance projects scheduled for the coming years.

Railroad

Currently, the Nebraska-Kansas-Colorado Rail Net (NKC) operates an extensive network spanning 450 miles of track that provides freight service across three states. The network includes several strategic interchange points – Sterling in Colorado, plus Holdrege and Orleans in Nebraska – where rail cars can be transferred to the Burlington Northern line. This connection is crucial as it allows shipments to continue their journey across the country through the larger national rail system.

For local communities, NKC delivers essential freight transportation services to areas such as Elwood and Perkins County, facilitating the movement of goods both into and out of these regions. For passengers seeking rail travel, the nearest option is available in McCook, where Amtrak provides passenger service connections to the national rail passenger network.

Transportation Goals

Transportation goals are to provide a transportation system throughout Elwood for the safe and efficient movement of people, goods, and services and to create and maintain design standards and policies for various classes of streets, roads, highways, and bridges to enhance the function and safety of the roadway and street system in Elwood. Goals might include but are not limited to:

- Install/Repair Sidewalks as needed.
- Install/Repair Streets as needed: Develop, improve, and maintain most-traveled roads.

Transportation Policies: Elwood One- and Six-Year Road Plan

Annually, the Village of Elwood must fulfill a state requirement to develop and approve a One-Year and Six-Year Plan. This comprehensive plan outlines various projects and maintenance activities scheduled for implementation during the fiscal year. Nebraska Revised State Statutes §19-929 mandates that this plan undergo review and receive public commentary. When the Planning Commission and Village Board make decisions regarding land use and zoning matters, they should consistently reference and consider this One-Year and Six-Year Plan as an essential guiding document.

VILLAGE OF ELWOOD 1- & 6-YEAR STREET IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The following improvements listed below are in no particular order and the plan may be added to or subtracted from with the expressed consent of the Elwood Village Board.

M270 (160B): Raymond Street from Ontario to Smith Avenue

Description: Concrete to Include: Grading, Drainage Structures, Curb, and Gutter
Depth: 8"
Width: 34'
Length: .1 mile
Existing Material: Gravel
New Material: Concrete
Estimated Costs: \$115,000.00
Color on Map: Blue

M270 (183): Orange Avenue from Rush Street to Rochelle Street

Description: Asphalt
Depth: 4"
Width: 24'
Length: .1 mile
Existing Material: Armor Coat
New Material: Asphalt
Estimated Costs: \$20,000.00
Color on Map: Blue

M270 (186): Rush Street from First Avenue to Second Avenue

Description: Removal of Existing Surface to be Graded, Address Proper Drainage,
Replace with Dirt and Gravel
Depth: 6"
Width: 22'
Length: .1 mile
Existing Material: Spotty Concrete

New Material: Dirt & Gravel

Estimated Costs: \$50,000.00

Color on Map: Blue

M270 (173): Orange Avenue from Rochelle Street to Rockford Street from
Oakland Avenue to Orange Avenue

Description: Armor Coat

Depth: 4"

Width: 24'

Length: .2 miles

Existing Material: Asphalt

New Material: Armor Coat

Estimated Costs: \$40,000.00

Color on Map: Blue

M270 (179): Second Avenue from Rush Street to Rockford Street

Description: Armor Coating Existing Gravel to Include Grading and Drainage
Structures

Depth: N/A

Width: 22'

Length: N/A

Existing Material: Dirt & Gravel

New Material: Armor Coat

Estimated Costs: \$20,000.00

Color on Map: Blue

M270 (151): Oakland Avenue from Rochelle Street to Rush Street

Description: Patching Asphalt

Depth: 2 ½"

Width: 35'

Length: .1 mile

Existing Material: Asphalt

New Material: Asphalt

Estimated Costs: \$20,000.00

Color on Map: Red

M270 (177): North Oxford Avenue from Roscoe Street to Highway 283

Description: Asphalt

Depth: 4"

Width: 24'

Length: .3 mile

Existing Material: Armor Coat

New Material: Asphalt

Estimated Costs: \$52,500.00

Color on Map: Red

M270 (175A): Railroad Street from Smith Avenue to AA Street

Description: Grading and Armor Coat

Depth: N/A

Width: 24'

Length: .3 mile
Existing Material: Gravel
New Material: Armor Coat
Estimated Costs: \$23,900.00
Color on Map: Red

M270 (176): Fair Avenue from South Street to Rockford Avenue

Description: Grading and Armor Coat

Depth: N/A

Width: 24'

Length: .4 mile

Existing Material: Gravel

New Material: Armor Coat

Estimated Costs: \$34,600.00

Color on Map: Red

M270 (182): Monroe Drive

Description: Addition of Curb and Gutter

Depth: 6"

Width: 30'

Length: .2 mile

Existing Material: Gravel

New Material: Concrete

Estimated Costs: \$80,000.00

Color on Map: Red

<u>M270 (184):</u>	Ontario Avenue from Raymond Street to Railroad Street
Description: Gutter	Concrete to Include: Grading, Drainage Structures, Curb, and
Depth:	8"
Width:	40'
Length:	.1 mile
Existing Material:	Gravel
New Material:	Concrete
Estimated Costs:	\$100,000.00
Color on Map:	Red

Future Elwood Transportation System

The future transportation system improvements in the Village of Elwood are outlined in detail within two planning documents: the Village One-Year Road Plan and the Six-Year Road Plan. The One-Year Plan specifically focuses on transportation projects scheduled for completion during the 2022 calendar year. Meanwhile, the Six-Year Plan takes a longer view, detailing projects that are planned for implementation through 2027. It is worth noting that projects in the Six-Year Plan may be completed earlier than their scheduled dates if additional funding becomes available for these initiatives.

Traffic Volume

Elwood's transportation infrastructure is anchored by two main roadways that serve as the village's lifeline. State Highways 23 and 61 form crucial corridors that connect Elwood to surrounding communities and facilitate the movement of both people and goods.

To understand the scale of traffic in this rural community, consider the traffic data from 2018, which provides valuable insights. Highway 23 (which runs westward)

and Highway 61 (to the north of Elwood) handled a combined average of 3,795 vehicles each day. This figure represents the total volume of cars, trucks, and other vehicles using these routes.

Breaking down these numbers further reveals that approximately 285 vehicles in this daily count were trucks—representing about 7.5% of all traffic. This proportion of commercial vehicles indicates the role these highways play not just in personal transportation but also in supporting local commerce and industry.

Complementing the road network is the Nebraska Kansas Colorado Railway Line, a single rail corridor that traverses the village's southern boundary in an east-west direction. Unlike passenger-focused railways in more urban areas, this line serves a specialized industrial purpose. The railway primarily transports chemical products that are essential to the agricultural economy of the region:

- Ethanol: An alcohol-based fuel often produced from corn and other crops
- Phosphoric acid: A chemical compound widely used in fertilizer production and food processing
- Anhydrous ammonia: A nitrogen-rich substance that serves as a critical component in agricultural fertilizers

Together, these road and rail systems form the backbone of Elwood's connection to the wider region and support both the movement of residents and the agricultural economy that sustains the community.

Map 7 Elwood Road Classification Map



HOUSING:

Elwood's homes are much more than just buildings – they represent essential infrastructure that supports our entire community. Just as we maintain roads and utilities, the ongoing care, improvement, and development of our housing is fundamental to preserving and enhancing the quality of life that Elwood residents currently enjoy.



Think of our housing supply as the Village's most valuable investment. The collective value of these homes largely determines Elwood's financial health and stability. When our housing thrives, our community thrives.

In this section of the Plan, we will take a detailed look at current housing conditions and examine broader regional housing market trends. Based on identified community needs, we will establish clear goals and provide practical policy solutions designed to ensure that high-quality housing remains available for all who call Elwood home.

Existing conditions

Elwood's residential landscape is characterized predominantly by older homes, with a significant amount of aging housing stock. Analysis of the data reveals that more than half (54.9%) of Elwood's homes were built before 1960, representing structures that are now over 65 years old. In contrast, only 9.3% of homes in the community were constructed in 1980 or later, indicating minimal recent development.

Table 8 provides a detailed breakdown of Elwood's housing by construction period:

Table 8 Age of Elwood Housing Stock

Year Built	Percentage
Built 2020 or later	0.0%
Built 2010 to 2019	0.0%
Built 2000 to 2009	1.1%
Built 1980 to 1999	8.2%
Built 1960 to 1979	35.8%
Built 1940 to 1959	27.3%
Built 1939 or earlier	27.6%

Table 8 Source: 2020 American Community Survey

Given this aging housing stock, it would be beneficial for housing policies to prioritize the rehabilitation and renovation of older homes. These older structures often face challenges related to energy efficiency and modern comfort standards. Implementing specialized weatherization programs could provide valuable assistance to homeowners looking to improve their properties through various upgrades including:

- Replacement of outdated windows
- Enhancement of insulation systems
- Installation of effective weather stripping
- Modernization of heating and cooling systems

These targeted improvements would not only preserve Elwood's architectural heritage but also increase energy efficiency, reduce utility costs for residents, and improve overall housing quality throughout the community.

Regional trends

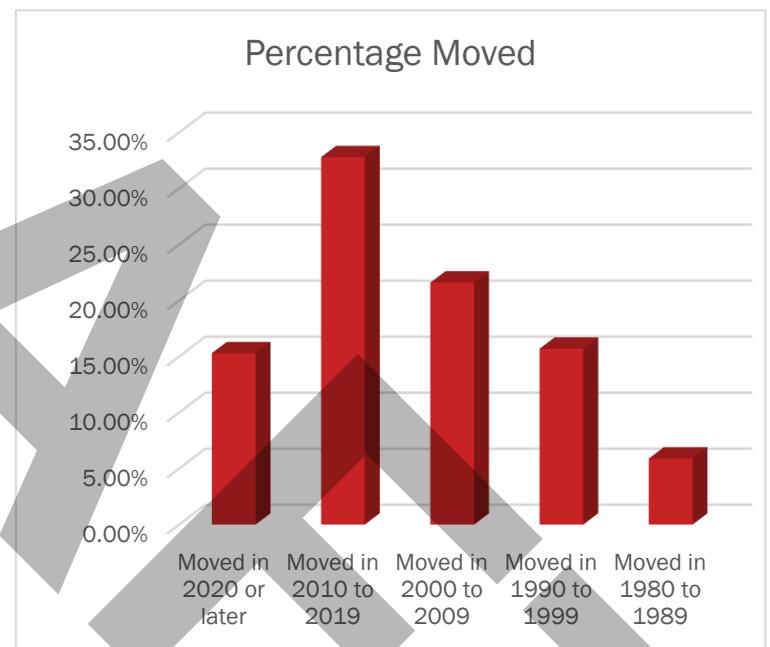
Many Nebraska communities generally have experienced small housing booms corresponding with fluctuations in the national housing market. When interest rates are low and development costs comparatively low, people often look to “move up” to higher value homes in bedroom communities. In general, this trend is

expected to continue as the North Platte area grows and people seek different housing options. As jobs and housing become more dispersed and remote jobs become more common, people could look to communities such as Elwood as places to live.

Table 9 shows that there has also been an increase in the number of people who have moved into new housing units, indicating that people may want to move or are financially able to move to a new home at this time. It appears homes with two or three bedrooms are the most popular, with four to six total rooms in a housing unit seeming to fit the needs of the homeowner in Elwood. (See Table 10)

Year Moved	Percentage Moved
Moved in 2020 or later	15.30%
Moved in 2010 to 2019	32.80%
Moved in 2000 to 2009	21.6%
Moved in 1990 to 1999	15.7%
Moved in 1980 to 1989	5.90%
Moved in 1979 or earlier	8.7%

Table 9 – year moved 2023 2023 American Community Survey



7- year moved 2023 2023 American Community Survey

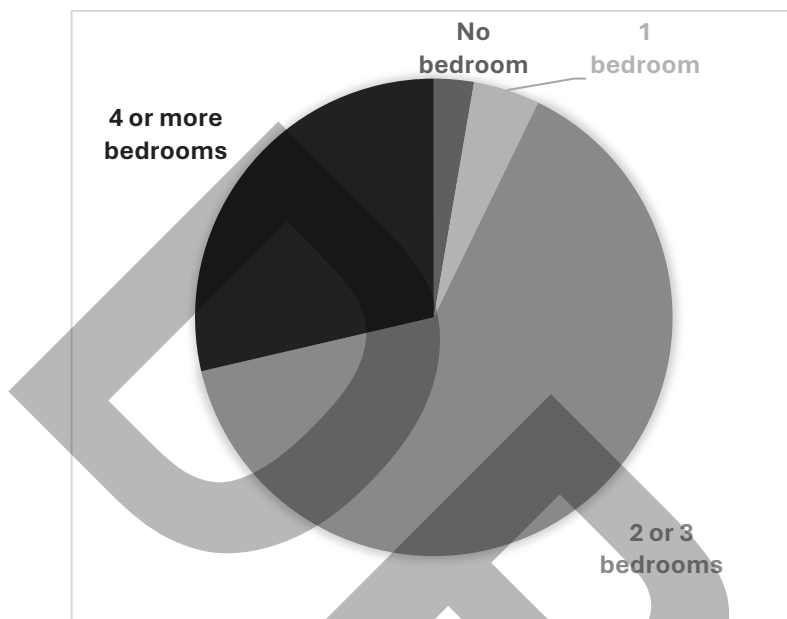


Chart 8 – year moved 2023 2023 American Community Survey

Number of Bedrooms	Percentage
No bedroom	2.7%
1 bedroom	26.0%
2 or 3 bedrooms	64.1%
4 or more bedrooms	28.6%

Table 10– year moved 2023 2023 American Community Survey

Housing Characteristics

Table 11 on the next page provides a comprehensive view of housing trends in Elwood, Nebraska over a 13-year period, revealing several important patterns about this small rural community's housing market and population dynamics.

Chart 8

Table 10

Housing Units And Occupancy

The total number of housing units in Elwood has fluctuated slightly between 2010 and 2023. In 2010, there were 312 housing units, which increased to 316 by 2014, then decreased back to 312 in 2019, and further declined to an estimated 308 units by 2023. This modest decline of approximately 1.3% in total housing units from 2019 to 2023 suggests minimal new construction and possibly some housing demolition or conversion.

The occupancy rates have remained relatively stable throughout this period, hovering around 90-91%. In 2010 and 2019, the occupancy rate was 90.4%, while it rose slightly to 91.1% in 2014 and estimated at 91.2% in 2023. This consistent occupancy rate indicates that Elwood has maintained a balanced housing supply relative to demand, despite its slowly declining population.

Vacant housing units fluctuated in a complementary pattern to occupancy rates, ranging between 8.8% and 9.6%. The vacancy rate of 8.8% in 2023 is lower than Nebraska's statewide average and significantly lower than many rural communities, suggesting that Elwood remains a relatively desirable place to live within its region.

Housing Values and Affordability

The median housing value in Elwood has increased substantially over this period, growing by approximately 62% from \$83,700 in 2010 to an estimated \$135,642 in 2023. This represents an average annual appreciation rate of about 3.9%, which outpaces inflation for much of this period and suggests relative strength in the local housing market despite the rural setting.

The percentage of homeowners with a mortgage has shown a gradual increase from 60.8% in 2010 to 62.6% in 2023, with a peak of 63.8% in 2019. This slight increase might indicate that more properties are changing hands and new buyers are financing their purchases rather than paying cash, which is often more common in rural areas with lower property values.

Housing Costs

The median monthly mortgage payment has increased significantly, rising by approximately 62% from \$985 in 2010 to \$1,596 in 2023. This increase mirrors the growth in median housing values and reflects a combination of rising property values and potentially higher interest rates in more recent years.

Median gross rent has also increased substantially, growing by about 22% from \$639 in 2010 to \$778 in 2023. Interestingly, rental costs have increased at a slower rate than mortgage costs, which might indicate that the rental market in Elwood is constrained by local incomes more than the ownership market.

Contextual Insights

This housing data reveals Elwood as a small rural community experiencing economic transitions typical of many Midwestern towns. The decreasing number of housing units paired with stable occupancy rates suggests a community that is managing its housing stock well despite population challenges. The substantial increase in property values indicates that Elwood has maintained its attractiveness

as a place to live and possibly even increased its appeal relative to other nearby communities.

The growing divergence between rental costs and mortgage costs might create affordability challenges for residents hoping to transition from renting to homeownership. The combination of rising property values, increasing mortgage costs, and a high percentage of homeowners with mortgages suggests that housing affordability may be becoming a greater concern in this small Nebraska community, particularly for younger residents or newcomers to the area.

Table 11 Elwood Housing Characteristics

Year	2023 (Est)	2019	2014	2010
Number of Housing Units	308	312	316	312
Number of Occupied Housing Units	281	282	288	282
Occupied Housing Units (percentage)	91.2%	90.4%	91.1%	90.4%
Vacant Housing Units (percentage)	8.8%	9.6%	8.9%	9.6%
Median Housing Value (in dollars)	\$135,642	\$124,500	\$92,400	\$83,700
Percentage of Homeowners with a Mortgage	62.6%	63.8%	61.5%	60.8%
Median Mortgage per Month (in dollars)	\$1,596	\$1,425	\$1,050	\$985
Median Gross Rent per Month (in dollars)	\$778	\$732	\$675	\$639

Table 11 Source: 2023, Census, 2019 Census, 2014 Census, 2010 Census

Table 11 provides a comprehensive view of how Elwood's population and household structure have evolved over a 13-year period.

Overall Population Trend

The most immediate observation is Elwood's steady population decline. From 2010 to 2023, the village lost 78 residents, representing an 11% decrease over this

period. This is not unusual for small rural communities in the Midwest, which often face challenges retaining younger residents who may move to larger cities for education and employment opportunities.

The decline appears to be accelerating slightly – the village lost only 17 people between 2010 and 2014 (about 4 per year) but then lost 32 people between 2020 and 2023 (almost 11 per year).

Family Structure Changes

The "Total Families" column shows an interesting pattern that is not simply a straight decline:

2010: 183 families

2014: 195 families (increase of 12 families)

2020: 178 families (decrease of 17 families)

2023: 172 families (further decrease of 6 families)

The temporary increase in families between 2010 and 2014 is noteworthy. This might reflect a brief period when more families moved to the area, possibly due to employment opportunities, affordable housing, or other factors that temporarily made Elwood attractive to family units.

Since 2014, however, the number of families has declined by 23, returning to below the 2010 level.

Household Trends

The "Households" column shows a different pattern than the population or family counts:

2010: 282 households

2014: 288 households (slight increase of 6)

2020: 282 households (returning to 2010 level)

2023: 281 households (virtually unchanged)

A "household" represents any occupied housing unit, whether by a family, a single person, or unrelated individuals living together. The relative stability in household count despite population decline suggests that while people are leaving Elwood, housing units remain occupied – just with fewer people in each home.

Persons Per Household

This metric most clearly illustrates the changing dynamics of Elwood's community:

2010: 2.51 persons per household

2014: 2.40 persons per household

2020: 2.34 persons per household

2023: 2.24 persons per household

The steady decrease in household size reflects several possible demographic shifts:

- Aging population with adult children moving away
- Increase in single-person households, particularly elderly residents
- Smaller family sizes (fewer children per family)
- More "empty nesters" whose children have grown up and left home

This decline in persons per household (a 10.8% decrease over 13 years) is more dramatic than the overall population decline, indicating that household composition, not just population size, is changing significantly in Elwood.

Comparative Analysis

When we compare the different metrics:

Population: -11% (2010-2023)

Total Families: -6% (2010-2023)

Households: -0.4% (essentially stable)

Persons Per Household: -10.8% (2010-2023)

This suggests that while Elwood is losing residents, the village is not seeing abandoned housing. Rather, the remaining housing stock continues to be

occupied, just by smaller household units. The community is likely experiencing a demographic shift toward more single-person or two-person households.

Implications

These trends have significant implications for the village's future planning and development:

- Service needs may shift toward supporting an older, smaller household population
- Housing demand may favor smaller units rather than larger family homes
- Tax base challenges may emerge as the population decreases while infrastructure needs remain constant
- Community institutions like schools may face enrollment pressures with fewer children
- Economic development strategies may need to adapt to changing demographic realities

This data tells us the story of a small rural Nebraska community undergoing gradual but significant demographic transformation, with important consequences for its long-term viability and character.

Table 12 Household Characteristics

Year	Population	Total Families	Households	Persons Per Household
2023 (Est)	629	172	281	2.24
2020	661	178	282	2.34
2014	690	195	288	2.40
2010	707	183	282	2.51

Table 12 Source: 2023, Census, 2019 Census, 2014 Census, 2010 Census

Housing Goals

Developing Senior-Friendly and Smaller Housing Options to Address Demographic Shifts

The data clearly shows Elwood's household size has decreased significantly from 2.51 persons per household in 2010 to 2.24 in 2023, suggesting an aging population



and more single or two-person households. Despite population decline, the number of households has remained relatively stable at around 280-282, indicating demand for housing continues even as household composition changes.

Therefore, Elwood should prioritize developing housing options

specifically designed for seniors and smaller households, including accessible single-story homes, duplexes, and potentially assisted living facilities that allow aging residents to remain in the community. This approach addresses the demographic reality while creating living options that complement existing neighborhoods.

Implement a Strategic Housing Rehabilitation Program for Aging Housing Stock

Table 8 reveals that 29.4% of Elwood's housing units were built before 1940, indicating an aging housing stock. With median housing values rising from approximately \$83,700 in 2010 to \$135,642 in 2023, there is an opportunity to protect and enhance property values through targeted rehabilitation.

Elwood should establish a comprehensive housing rehabilitation program that:

- Provides technical assistance and financial incentives for upgrading older homes
- Focuses on energy efficiency improvements to reduce utility costs
- Addresses accessibility modifications for aging residents
- Preserves the historical character of older neighborhoods
- Leverages state and federal funding specifically targeting rural housing rehabilitation

Create an Affordable Housing Strategy to Address Rising Housing Costs

The data shows median mortgage payments have increased significantly from approximately \$985 in 2010 to \$1,596 in 2023, an increase of over 60%. Similarly, median gross rent has risen from \$639 to \$778. These increases outpace many residents' income growth, potentially creating housing affordability challenges.

Elwood should develop a multi-faceted affordable housing strategy that:

- Explores public-private partnerships to develop income-restricted housing units
- Creates a first-time homebuyer assistance program to help young families enter the market
- Establishes a housing trust fund that pools resources for affordable housing initiatives
- Actively pursues Nebraska-specific rural housing incentive programs
- Develops guidelines to ensure affordability is incorporated into all new housing developments

Implement Innovative Infill Development Strategies for Vacant Properties

With a vacancy rate of approximately 8.8% in 2023, Elwood has an opportunity to strategically repurpose vacant lots and properties. Rather than focusing exclusively on new subdivision development, which may exceed current population demand, Elwood should pursue targeted infill strategies.

This goal includes:

- Conducting a comprehensive inventory of vacant and underutilized properties
- Creating flexible zoning approaches that encourage creative reuse of existing structures
- Establishing a land bank authority to acquire, hold, and dispose of vacant properties
- Developing design guidelines that ensure new infill housing complements existing neighborhood character
- Offering incentives for developers who convert vacant commercial buildings to residential uses

Establish a Housing Leadership Collaborative to Guide Implementation

To successfully implement these housing initiatives, Elwood needs a coordinated organizational structure that brings together public, private, and nonprofit stakeholders. The declining population (707 in 2010 to 629 in 2023) suggests Elwood must be strategic about housing investments and pursue partnerships to maximize impact.

This goal involves:

- Creating a housing advisory board with representatives from local government, businesses, residents, and housing professionals
- Developing a formal housing action plan with specific metrics and timelines
- Establishing a regional housing partnership with neighboring communities to share resources
- Training local staff on housing program administration and grant writing
- Creating an annual housing summit to evaluate progress and adjust strategies based on evolving demographic data

These goals directly respond to Elwood's specific housing challenges as revealed in the data while building upon the housing principles outlined in the provided text. By implementing these strategies, Elwood can create housing opportunities that support current residents, attract new community members, and ensure long-term community vitality despite demographic changes.

Housing Tools

Looking at Elwood's housing and demographic data over the 2010-2023 period reveals a community in transition. The population has declined from 707 to 629 residents, yet the number of households has remained relatively stable (282 to 281). This indicates a fundamental shift in household composition – families are getting smaller, with persons per household dropping from 2.51 to 2.24, and the median age rising to 51.5 years. These demographic shifts create specific housing challenges that require targeted financial tools and carefully crafted policies.

Nebraska Community Development Law: A Foundation for Neighborhood Revitalization

The Nebraska Community Development Law (Neb Rev Stat §§18-2101 to 18-2154) provides Elwood with powerful tools specifically designed for communities experiencing the exact challenges revealed in our data analysis.

When we examine why this legislation is so relevant to Elwood's situation, we can point out several key criteria that make the village eligible for assistance:

Aging Housing Stock: Nearly 30% of Elwood's housing was built before 1940. The law specifically designates areas as potentially "blighted" when "the average age of residential or commercial units is at least 40 years." Many of Elwood's neighborhoods clearly meet this threshold.

Population Decline: The law recognizes areas with "stable or decreasing population" as qualifying for assistance. Elwood's 11% population decline from 2010 to 2023 meets this criterion.

Potential for Economic Liability: As housing ages and population declines, property values can stagnate, creating what the law terms an "economic liability" to the community. While Elwood's housing values have increased (from \$83,700 to \$135,642), this growth may be uneven across neighborhoods, with some areas potentially lagging.

By establishing a Community Redevelopment Authority or Community Development Agency, Elwood gains the ability to:

- Conduct detailed studies of neighborhoods to formally designate "substandard" or "blighted" areas according to the specific legal definitions

- Develop comprehensive redevelopment plans tailored to these areas' unique needs

- Utilize tax increment financing (TIF) to fund improvements without raising additional taxes

TIF works by capturing the increased property tax revenue that results from redevelopment and reinvesting it directly in the area. For example, if an older neighborhood in Elwood is redeveloped and property values increase, the additional tax revenue from that increase can be used to fund further improvements in that same area, creating a positive cycle of reinvestment.

Federal and State Funding Sources: Building Financial Capacity for Specific Challenges

Elwood can access several major funding sources that, when strategically combined, can address the specific housing challenges revealed in our demographic analysis:

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG)

This federal funding program, administered by Nebraska's Economic Development Department, is particularly well-suited to address several of Elwood's identified housing needs:

Owner-occupied rehabilitation: With nearly 30% of housing stock built before 1940, rehabilitation needs are significant. CDBG funds can help owners address issues like outdated electrical systems, inefficient heating, and cooling, deteriorating roofs, and structural problems.

Accessibility modifications: Given Elwood's aging population (median age 51.5 years), many homes need modifications to accommodate changing physical needs. CDBG funds can finance ramps, wider doorways, accessible bathrooms, and other improvements that allow seniors to age in place.

Program administration: As a small village with limited staff, Elwood may lack the administrative capacity to manage housing programs. CDBG can fund the necessary administrative support.

The importance of CDBG funding becomes clear when we consider that over 62% of Elwood's homeowners have a mortgage, with median monthly payments reaching \$1,596 in 2023. Many of these homeowners may struggle to finance necessary repairs, particularly if they are on fixed incomes.

HOME Funds

This federal resource complements CDBG by focusing on both homeownership and rental housing needs:

Homeowner rehabilitation: Similar to CDBG, but often with different eligibility requirements, allowing Elwood to serve a broader spectrum of residents.

Homebuyer assistance: With median housing values increasing 62% since 2010, first-time buyers may struggle to enter the market. HOME funds can provide down payment assistance and closing cost help.

Rental housing development: While 62.6% of housing units are owner-occupied, 37.4% are renter-occupied. HOME funds can help develop quality rental housing, particularly important as household sizes decrease and more seniors may transition from homeownership to renting.

A concrete example might involve using HOME funds to convert a larger, older home into several smaller apartment units suitable for seniors or individuals living alone – directly addressing the demographic shift toward smaller households.

Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund (NAHTF)

This state-level resource was established in 1996 specifically to address Nebraska's affordable housing needs. Several aspects make it particularly valuable for Elwood:

Flexible funding: NAHTF can be used for a wider range of activities than some federal programs, giving Elwood more latitude to address unique local needs.

Economic development focus: NAHTF recognizes the connection between housing and economic vitality – crucial for a community experiencing population decline.

Focus on lowest-income residents for the longest time: This aligns with Elwood's need to ensure housing remains affordable despite rising values.

Matching funds for federal resources: NAHTF can leverage federal dollars, multiplying their impact in the community.

Given that Elwood's median gross rent increased from \$639 to \$778 between 2010 and 2023, NAHTF resources could be critical in ensuring rental housing remains affordable for lower-income residents.

Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA)

NIFA rounds out the available resources with programs that span the housing spectrum:

Low Income Housing Tax Credits: These credits can make rental housing development financially feasible in small markets like Elwood where traditional financing alone might not work.

Rent-to-own programs: These create a bridge to homeownership for those who are not quite ready to purchase but want to build equity.

Tax-exempt bond financing: This can lower the cost of multifamily housing development.

Single-family mortgage programs: These provide below-market interest rates and down payment assistance to qualified homebuyers.

NIFA's resources become particularly valuable when we consider that while Elwood's overall population is declining, the number of households remains stable – indicating ongoing demand for housing units, just configured differently than in the past.

Strategic Housing Policies: Putting Resources to Work for Elwood's Future

To effectively utilize these financial tools, Elwood needs thoughtful policies that align with its demographic realities. These policies should form a coordinated strategy rather than isolated initiatives:

Zoning for Strategic Expansion and Adaptation

Elwood's zoning should accommodate both appropriate new growth and the adaptation of existing housing stock. This means:

Encouraging smaller housing units: With persons per household declining from 2.51 in 2010 to 2.24 in 2023, zoning should permit smaller, more efficient housing types.

Allowing accessory dwelling units: These could enable homeowners to create rental units on their property, potentially generating income for older residents while adding affordable housing options.

Permitting strategic density increases: In appropriate areas, allowing duplexes or small apartment buildings could create more housing options without dramatically changing neighborhood character.

Supporting adaptive reuse: Zoning should facilitate the conversion of larger homes into multiple units or the repurposing of non-residential buildings for housing.

For example, a larger older home that once housed a family of five might be difficult to maintain and inefficient for a single person or couple. Zoning that allows conversion to a duplex could create two right-sized, more affordable, and more energy-efficient units.

Affordable Housing Focus Across the Spectrum

The demographic data shows Elwood needs a diverse housing stock to serve varying household types. Policies should:

Define affordability locally: What is "affordable" in Elwood differs from Lincoln or Omaha. Policies should establish local affordability targets based on area median income.

Address both rental and ownership: With 37.4% of households renting, affordable rental options are just as important as affordable homeownership.

Consider lifecycle housing needs: As residents age, their housing needs change. Policies should encourage housing that allows residents to remain in the community through different life stages.

Incorporate energy efficiency: With rising utility costs, energy efficiency is a key component of overall housing affordability.

A comprehensive approach might include rehabilitation programs for existing homeowners, down payment assistance for new buyers, rental assistance for lower-income households, and incentives for developers to include affordable units in new projects.

Streamlined and Supportive Permitting Processes

Elwood's permitting processes can either facilitate or hinder housing development and improvement. By evaluating its current building permitting process, Elwood can:

Simplify requirements for small projects: Minor renovations and repairs should face minimal bureaucratic hurdles, encouraging ongoing maintenance and improvement.

Provide technical assistance: Many property owners, particularly older residents, may be intimidated by the permitting process. Offering guidance can help them navigate requirements.

Create fast-track options for priority projects: Projects that address identified community needs (like accessible housing or energy efficiency improvements) could receive expedited review.

Consider fee waivers or reductions: For affordable housing projects or accessibility modifications, reduced fees could improve financial feasibility.

This supportive approach to permitting recognizes that in a small community like Elwood, every housing unit matters, and barriers to improvement or development have outsized impacts.

Growth-Oriented Development Strategies

Housing policies should align with overall growth goals, focusing on stabilizing and potentially reversing the population decline from 707 in 2010 to 629 in 2023. This means:

Identifying target demographics: Elwood should determine which population groups it wishes to attract or retain (young families, retirees, remote workers) and tailor housing strategies accordingly.

Coordinating with economic development: Housing and jobs are interconnected. Efforts to develop or retain both should be coordinated.

Focusing on quality-of-life factors: Housing is just one factor in residential location decisions. Parks, schools, internet connectivity, and other amenities also matter.

Emphasizing quality over quantity: Given the stable household count despite population decline, Elwood may not need many additional units, but rather better-quality units that meet current needs.

A strategic approach might involve developing a small number of high-quality, energy-efficient homes designed to attract young families, while simultaneously improving existing housing stock to better serve current residents.

Regional Marketing with Data-Driven Messaging

Elwood should actively promote its housing opportunities regionally, using the data we have analyzed to craft compelling messages:

Affordability advantage: Despite increases, Elwood's median housing value of \$135,642 remains affordable compared to many areas. This comparative advantage should be highlighted.

Small-town quality of life: For those tired of urban congestion, Elwood offers a different lifestyle that many find appealing, particularly as remote work becomes more common.

Investment potential: The 62% increase in median housing values since 2010 suggests buying in Elwood can be a promising investment, even as the population has declined.

Community character: The stable household count despite population decline indicates Elwood retains a strong community fabric that new residents can join.

Marketing efforts might include digital campaigns targeting specific demographics, partnerships with regional employers, and participation in state-level initiatives promoting rural living.

Connecting Data to Action: A Strategic Implementation Framework

The housing characteristics and household data tell a story of a community in transition, facing challenges but also opportunities. By strategically combining the financial tools with thoughtful policy approaches, Elwood can address these specific challenges through a coordinated implementation framework:

Phase 1: Assessment and Planning (0-6 months)

Housing needs assessment: Use the demographic data as a starting point for a more detailed analysis of specific housing needs and conditions.

Resource mapping: Identify and prepare to apply for specific funding sources that align with identified needs.

Regulatory review: Evaluate existing zoning and building codes to identify barriers to desired housing development and improvement.

Community engagement: Involve residents in identifying priorities and developing solutions, ensuring buy-in for future initiatives.

Phase 2: Policy Development and Resource Acquisition (6-12 months)

Zoning updates: Modify zoning to encourage appropriate housing types, potentially including form-based codes that focus on building form rather than use.

Funding applications: Apply for CDBG, HOME, NAHTF, and NIFA resources based on identified priorities.

Incentive programs: Develop local incentives for desired housing activities, such as reduced fees or expedited permitting.

Community Development Agency formation: Establish the legal entity needed to implement Nebraska Community Development Law provisions.

Phase 3: Implementation (1-3 years)

Targeted rehabilitation program: Using CDBG and HOME funds to improve existing housing, focusing first on health and safety issues.

Infill development initiative: Work with developers to construct new housing on vacant or underutilized lots, using NAHTF or NIFA resources.

Blighted area redevelopment: Implement tax increment financing in designated areas to fund comprehensive improvements.

Marketing campaign: Launch efforts to attract new residents, highlighting improved housing options and community amenities.

Phase 4: Evaluation and Adaptation (Ongoing)

Outcome tracking: Monitor key metrics, including population, household count, housing values, and condition.

Program adjustment: Modify approaches based on results and changing conditions.

Continuous improvement: Regularly update the housing strategy to reflect new opportunities and challenges.

By approaching housing as a complex system intertwined with demographics, economics, and community character, Elwood can create a resilient strategy that not only addresses current housing needs but positions the community for sustainable future growth.

This comprehensive approach recognizes that in a small community like Elwood, housing is not just about physical structures – it is about creating the foundation for community vitality and individual well-being for generations to come.

FACILITIES AND UTILITIES:

The Vital Role of Facilities and Utilities in Community Planning

This section examines Elwood's essential infrastructure systems and their capacity to support current needs while accommodating future growth. When we assess a community's facilities and utilities, we're really evaluating its foundational systems that enable daily life, economic activity, and community development. These systems must function efficiently today while having sufficient capacity to support Elwood's needs throughout the planning period.

Water System: The Lifeblood of the Community



Elwood draws its water supply from wells tapping into the Ogallala Aquifer, one of North America's largest underground water reservoirs. This geological blessing provides Elwood with a remarkably reliable water source, even as many communities across the Great Plains face water scarcity challenges.

The Ogallala Aquifer stretches beneath eight states and supplies about 30% of the groundwater used for irrigation in the United States. For Elwood specifically, this means:

Consistent water availability even during drought conditions

High-quality groundwater requiring minimal treatment

Long-term supply security, though careful management remains essential

When considering Elwood's housing development potential, this abundant water supply represents a significant advantage, removing one of the common constraints that limit growth in many rural communities.

Wastewater Management: Essential for Public Health and Growth

Elwood maintains a municipal sanitary sewage system operating with a lagoon treatment method. Lagoon systems work by using natural biological processes to treat wastewater in a series of ponds, where:

- Solid waste settles to the bottom of the lagoon
- Aerobic and anaerobic bacteria break down organic matter
- Sunlight helps disinfect the water
- Treated water eventually evaporates or is discharged

These systems are particularly well-suited for smaller communities like Elwood because they:

- Require relatively low construction costs compared to mechanical treatment plants
- Need minimal daily operational oversight
- Use natural processes rather than energy-intensive mechanical systems
- Accommodate fluctuating population and seasonal changes effectively
- The capacity of Elwood's lagoon system directly influences the community's ability to add new housing units or commercial developments, as each new connection adds to the system's treatment load.

Solid Waste Management: Beyond Simple Garbage Collection

Elwood's approach to solid waste illustrates a commitment to both environmental responsibility and practical waste management. The Village collects trash and transports it to the J Bar J landfill in north central Perkins County.

What distinguishes Elwood's approach is its comprehensive recycling program, with designated drop-off sites accessible to both village and county residents. This system:

- Reduces the volume of waste sent to landfills
- Conserves resources through material recovery
- Potentially lowers long-term disposal costs
- Reflects community values regarding environmental stewardship

For residential development, effective solid waste management contributes to community livability and attractiveness to potential new residents who increasingly value environmental responsibility.

Stormwater Management: Protection Against Flooding and Erosion

Elwood uses a combination of traditional and natural stormwater management techniques. The current system includes:

- Ditches and culverts that channel run-off away from developed areas
- Pipes and inlets that collect and redirect water
- Natural drainage patterns that help disperse water flows

However, the assessment notes that some components are undersized, contributing to localized flooding during heavy rain events. This situation requires attention through:

- Upsizing existing pipes to increase capacity
- Installing additional inlets to capture runoff more effectively
- Potentially implementing green infrastructure solutions like rain gardens or bioswales

Effective stormwater management is increasingly important as climate patterns shift toward more intense precipitation events. For housing development, poor stormwater management can lead to property damage, reduced property values, and increased insurance costs.

Utility Services: The Modern Necessities

Elwood's utility infrastructure provides the essential services modern households require:

Electrical Service: Dawson Public Power supplies retail electrical service to Elwood. Reliable electrical service is fundamental for residential quality of life and enables economic activity. As energy needs evolve with increased electrification and potential renewable energy integration, maintaining and upgrading this system becomes increasingly important.

Municipal Utility Billing: The Village administration handles billing for water, sewer, and garbage services, simplifying payment for residents through a single monthly bill. This consolidated approach improves efficiency for both residents and municipal administration.

Natural Gas: Black Hills Energy owns, operates, and supplies a natural gas service in Elwood. Natural gas provides an affordable heating source for homes and businesses, particularly important in Nebraska's climate with cold winters.

Planning for the Future:

Infrastructure Goals

The assessment identifies two critical goals for Elwood's facilities and utilities:

- Capital Improvement Planning: Creating a comprehensive Capital Improvement Plan that prioritizes infrastructure repairs represents sound fiscal management. This approach:
- Identifies critical maintenance needs before they become emergencies
- Schedules replacements based on asset lifespan
- Allocates funding systematically rather than reactively
- Enables coordination between different infrastructure systems to minimize disruption and maximize efficiency

Underground Power Lines: Updating subdivision regulations to require underground power lines for new development would enhance community resilience and aesthetics by:

- Reducing vulnerability to weather-related outages
- Improving visual appeal of neighborhoods
- Minimizing maintenance costs and outage frequency
- Potentially increasing property values

The Digital Infrastructure:

Broadband and Cell Coverage

In today's connected world, digital infrastructure has become as essential as traditional utilities. Elwood's broadband situation reflects the typical challenges and progress seen in rural communities.

The village has achieved approximately 65% fiber coverage, representing the highest-quality internet connection type available. This partial coverage creates a digital divide within the community, with:

- Northern areas enjoying faster connections
- Southeastern areas experiencing slower service
- Some residents limited to less reliable options like satellite
- The diverse connection types across the 68937 zip code include:
- Fiber optic (highest quality, covering 65%)
- Cable (fastest for 20.79% of the area)
- Fixed wireless (fastest for 14.36%)
- DSL (fastest for less than 1%)

- Satellite (only option for less than 1% of homes)

The Nebraska Rural Broadband Task Force emphasizes that high-quality broadband access delivers multiple benefits for rural communities like Elwood:

- Attracts and retains younger residents, particularly millennials
- Stimulates economic growth and diversification
- Helps attract new businesses and remote workers
- Correlates with higher household incomes
- Supports small business development and expansion

For housing development specifically, broadband availability increasingly influences homebuyer decisions and property values. Areas with fiber access typically see higher demand and property values compared to areas with limited connectivity.

The Interconnected Nature of Infrastructure and Community Development

Understanding Elwood's facilities and utilities provides critical context for housing development planning. A community can only grow as far as its infrastructure allows. The relationship works in both directions:

- Infrastructure capacity determines development potential
- Development patterns influence infrastructure investment needs
- Strategic infrastructure improvements can stimulate targeted growth
- Coordinated planning optimizes both systems for community benefit

As Elwood considers its housing needs in light of its demographic changes (declining population but stable household count), infrastructure capacity will play a crucial role in determining where and how housing development or rehabilitation should occur. Areas with strong existing infrastructure represent more cost-effective development opportunities than areas requiring significant infrastructure expansion or upgrades.

By taking a holistic view of these systems, Elwood can make strategic decisions that maximize the value of its existing infrastructure while planning thoughtfully for future needs.

<https://bestneighborhood.org/fiber-tv-and-internet-689/>

Cellular Infrastructure Serving Elwood

Elwood's cellular connectivity landscape includes both Verizon and Veaero who have established cell towers in the areas surrounding Elwood, which create a foundation for wireless communication in the region. These towers represent significant infrastructure investments that enable mobile phone service, text messaging, and wireless internet access for residents, businesses, and visitors.

The Complex Nature of Wireless Signal Performance

Wireless network performance in Elwood, as in any location, is influenced by a complex interplay of numerous factors that affect how signals travel from these towers to user devices. Understanding these factors helps explain why cellular service may vary throughout the community:

Environmental and Geographic Influences

The local environment plays a crucial role in signal propagation. In rural areas like Elwood, factors that can impact signal quality include:

- Terrain variations: Hills, valleys, and depressions can block or reflect signals
- Vegetation density: Trees and dense foliage can absorb radio frequencies, particularly during growing seasons
- Building materials: Concrete, metal, and certain types of glass can significantly reduce signal penetration into structures
- Distance from towers: Signal strength naturally diminishes with distance from transmission sources
- Weather conditions: Heavy precipitation, fog, and extreme temperatures can temporarily degrade signal quality

Technical and Network Factors

Beyond environmental considerations, the technical aspects of wireless networking also impact performance:

Device technology: Newer smartphones and devices typically contain more advanced antennas and processors that more efficiently capture and process wireless signals

Network generation: Different cellular technologies (3G, 4G, 5G) operate on different frequencies with varying capabilities for penetration, speed, and range

Bandwidth capacity: During peak usage times, network congestion can reduce performance even in areas with strong signal

Frequency allocation: Lower frequencies travel farther and penetrate buildings better, while higher frequencies provide more data capacity

Physical Limitations of Wireless Technology

Some challenges stem from the fundamental physics of wireless transmission:

Signal attenuation: Radio waves naturally lose strength as they travel through space

Interference: Other electronic devices, power lines, and even competing cellular signals can create signal disruption

Multipath propagation: Signals bouncing off structures can arrive at devices at slightly different times, creating confusion in signal processing

Line-of-sight requirements: Particularly for newer high-frequency technologies like 5G, direct line-of-sight between devices and towers yields optimal performance

Strategies for Improving Cellular Service in Elwood

Understanding these challenges allows for targeted approaches to improve wireless connectivity:

Community-Level Solutions

Strategic tower placement: Working with carriers to identify optimal locations for additional towers or signal boosters

Distributed antenna systems: Small transmitters placed throughout the community can fill coverage gaps

Public-private partnerships: Community investment in infrastructure that carriers can utilize

Zoning flexibility: Adapting regulations to accommodate communication infrastructure while preserving community character

Individual User Solutions

Signal boosters and repeaters: These devices can amplify weak signals within homes and businesses

Wi-Fi calling: Utilizing internet connections for voice calls when cellular signal is weak

Device upgrades: Newer devices often contain more sensitive antennas and better signal processing

Optimal placement: Identifying locations within buildings where signal is strongest

Future-Oriented Planning

As Elwood considers housing development and community growth, incorporating telecommunications infrastructure planning is essential. This might include:

Conduit installation: Including underground pathways for future fiber optic deployment during road construction

Utility coordination: Planning water, sewer, power, and communications upgrades simultaneously

Technical requirements: Establishing standards for new developments that facilitate signal penetration

Advocacy: Working with state and federal programs that fund rural broadband and cellular improvements

By recognizing both the unavoidable limitations of wireless technology and the opportunities for strategic improvement, Elwood can work toward enhancing cellular connectivity for all residents and businesses. This improved connectivity directly supports community goals related to population retention, economic development, and quality of life enhancement.

The Complex Web of Wireless Connectivity Challenges

While many people recognize that wireless networks can experience performance issues, understanding the full range of factors affecting connectivity in a community like Elwood requires a deeper exploration. These factors interact with one another in complex ways, creating a multidimensional challenge that impacts everything from personal communication to business operations and economic development.

Physical Environment and Signal Propagation

Physical obstructions represent perhaps the most intuitively understood challenge to wireless performance. In Elwood's context, these obstructions take many forms:

Natural barriers: The rolling topography around Elwood creates varied elevation changes that can block signals, especially if towers are positioned at suboptimal heights relative to the landscape.

Built environment: Even in a small community like Elwood, buildings create significant signal barriers. Modern energy-efficient construction often incorporates materials that inadvertently block radio signals – metal roofing, energy-efficient windows with metallic coatings, and concrete with metal reinforcement all attenuate wireless signals.

Seasonal variations: Agricultural areas like those surrounding Elwood experience dramatic seasonal changes in vegetation. During growing seasons, fields of mature corn or other tall crops can create significant signal absorption that doesn't exist during winter months.

The local environment characteristics extend beyond simple obstructions. Environmental factors unique to the Great Plains region include:

Weather extremes: Nebraska experiences everything from thunderstorms to blizzards, each creating different challenges for signal propagation. Heavy rain can absorb microwave frequencies, while ice storms can damage antenna equipment.

Atmospheric conditions: Temperature inversions, common in the Plains states, can bend radio waves in unexpected ways, sometimes creating unusually extended coverage and other times causing signal dropouts.

Dust and particulates: During dry periods, agricultural activities can increase airborne particles that, while individually tiny, collectively affect signal quality.

Network Architecture and Technical Limitations

The network range and distance between devices is particularly relevant in rural communities like Elwood. Unlike urban areas where cell towers might be positioned every few blocks, rural towers must cover much larger geographic areas:

Signal attenuation: Radio signals naturally weaken with distance, following an inverse square law—doubling the distance quarters the signal strength.

Backhaul limitations: Even if a tower is physically present, its connection to the broader network (backhaul) may be limited, creating a bottleneck regardless of the radio connection quality.

Tower height regulations: Local ordinances may restrict tower heights, limiting their effective range in ways that wouldn't be problematic in more densely populated areas.

Poorly deployed antennas represent a technical challenge that's often overlooked. Optimal antenna deployment requires sophisticated engineering that considers:

Proper down tilt: Antennas must be angled slightly downward to focus coverage on populated areas rather than sending signals skyward.

Appropriate azimuth: The horizontal direction antennas face must be carefully calculated to provide overlapping coverage without creating interference zones.

Mechanical stability: Nebraska's high winds can gradually shift antenna alignments, degrading performance until maintenance realigns them.

Spectrum Management and Interference

Wireless network interference creates complex challenges that can be difficult to diagnose and address:

Co-channel interference: When multiple towers use the same frequencies, their signals can interfere with each other in overlapping coverage areas.

Adjacent channel interference: Even signals on nearby frequency bands can create problems if filtering is inadequate.

Non-cellular interference: Everything from microwave ovens to certain LED lighting systems can generate radio frequency interference that affects wireless networks.

Spectrum channel limitations constrain the total capacity available:

Finite resource: The usable radio spectrum is ultimately limited, with carriers having access to only specific bands.

Channel width tradeoffs: Wider channels allow higher data rates but cover fewer users, while narrower channels support more concurrent connections at lower speeds.

Rural allocation challenges: Carriers sometimes deploy less spectrum in rural areas, prioritizing urban deployments where return on investment is higher.

The phenomenon of signal reflection creates particular challenges in environments with large flat surfaces:

Multipath interference: Signals arriving via different paths (direct and reflected) can interfere with each other, either constructively (strengthening) or destructively (weakening).

Delay spread: The time difference between direct and reflected signals can create processing challenges for receiving devices.

Seasonal variations: Water surfaces, including seasonal flooding or even large puddles after rain, can create temporary reflection surfaces that alter signal patterns.

Capacity and Management Considerations

Signal sharing and network usage and load reflect the reality that wireless networks are shared resources:

Peak usage times: When many people use the network simultaneously (perhaps after work hours or during community events), the available capacity is divided among all users.

Quality of Service management: Carriers implement systems that prioritize certain types of traffic (like voice calls) over others (like video streaming) during congestion.

Backhaul constraints: The connection from towers to the broader internet may become congested even if the radio portion has capacity.

Transmitter power limitations are imposed by both physics and regulation:

FCC regulations: The Federal Communications Commission limits maximum transmission power to prevent interference and ensure safety.

Battery life considerations: Mobile devices must conserve battery power, limiting how strongly they can transmit back to towers.

Thermal constraints: Electronic components generate heat when transmitting, creating physical limits to sustainable power output.

Technical Protocol and Compatibility Issues

Several factors relate to the technical protocols and standards that govern wireless communications:

Backwards compatibility with older standards ensures that older devices can still connect but often at a performance cost:

Legacy support overhead: Networks must maintain support for older technologies (3G, early 4G) even as they deploy newer standards.

Mixed-mode operation: When networks support multiple generations simultaneously, they often can't operate at maximum efficiency.

Device population effects: In communities with lower income levels, older devices may remain in use longer, increasing the need for backward compatibility.

The polarization of signal refers to the orientation of radio waves:

Mismatched polarization: If transmitting and receiving antennas have different polarizations, significant signal loss occurs.

Environmental effects: Signals can experience polarization changes when reflecting off surfaces, creating mismatches even with properly aligned antennas.

Adaptive systems: Modern equipment often uses multiple polarizations simultaneously to improve resilience, but at the cost of increased complexity.

Speed loss due to wireless overheads represents the efficiency gap between theoretical and practical performance:

Protocol overhead: Significant portions of wireless transmissions are devoted to control information rather than user data.

Error correction: To maintain reliability, wireless systems include redundant information that consumes bandwidth.

Retransmissions: When interference causes data errors, entire packets must be resent, effectively reducing throughput.

Lowering performance to stay connected reflects how devices and networks make dynamic adjustments:

Rate adaptation: Devices automatically reduce data rates when signal quality degrades, prioritizing connection maintenance over speed.

Modulation simplification: Under challenging conditions, systems use simpler encoding schemes that are more resilient but carry less data.

Power control algorithms: Devices and towers constantly adjust transmission power, sometimes reducing it to minimize interference or save battery.

Wireless signal restriction encompasses both intentional and unintentional limitations:

Building codes and materials: Modern construction often inadvertently creates environments hostile to radio signals.

Intentional shielding: Some facilities deliberately block wireless signals for security, privacy, or safety reasons.

Geographic constraints: Natural features like hills or water bodies can create areas with inherently limited signal propagation.

Economic and Community Impact

The concluding point about effects on local businesses highlights the broader implications of these technical challenges. In today's economy, wireless connectivity impacts virtually every aspect of business operations:

Point-of-sale systems: Many smaller businesses now rely on tablet-based or mobile payment processing that requires stable internet connectivity.

Inventory management: Cloud-based inventory systems need reliable connections to maintain accurate stock levels.

Customer experience: Consumers increasingly expect to use mobile payment apps, check online reviews, or access digital promotions while shopping.

Marketing presence: Local businesses depend on social media and online visibility, which requires connectivity for updates and management.

Remote work support: Businesses that accommodate remote or hybrid work arrangements need reliable connectivity for employees working from various locations.

For Elwood specifically, addressing these wireless challenges has implications beyond individual user convenience. The community's economic resilience, ability to attract and retain residents, and capacity to support entrepreneurship all depend in part on the quality and reliability of wireless infrastructure.

Strategic Planning Implications

Understanding these factors in depth allows Elwood's planners to approach wireless infrastructure with appropriate sophistication:

Comprehensive assessment: Conducting detailed signal mapping throughout the community to identify specific problem areas rather than relying on general coverage maps.

Targeted infrastructure investments: Identifying strategic locations for small cells or signal boosters to address specific dead zones.

Building code considerations: Reviewing construction standards to potentially incorporate requirements or incentives for signal-friendly design in new development.

Business district prioritization: Ensuring that commercial areas receive enhanced coverage to support economic activity.

Public facility planning: Incorporating wireless infrastructure needs into public buildings and spaces to provide connectivity hubs.

Emergency resilience: Developing backup communication systems for critical services during network disruptions.

By acknowledging both the technical complexity and the community importance of wireless networking, Elwood can develop infrastructure plans that realistically address these challenges while preparing for future technological evolution.

Bridging Elwood's Digital Future: How Broadband Can Transform Our Village Economy

Elwood's Broadband Reality and Opportunity

Here in Elwood, we face a challenge common to many Nebraska villages. While 89% of Nebraskans statewide have access to fixed broadband with speeds of at least 25 Mbps download and 3 Mbps upload, this figure drops significantly to just 63% in rural communities like ours. This digital divide isn't just about convenience – it directly affects our ability to maintain a vibrant local economy and retain our population, particularly younger residents.

Our data shows that Elwood currently has approximately 65% fiber coverage, which represents a solid foundation, but leaves a significant portion of our village without this high-speed option. This uneven distribution creates disparities within our own community, with northern areas typically enjoying faster connections than southeastern neighborhoods.

The Power of Local Leadership in Broadband Development

For Elwood to improve its broadband situation, we need to understand a crucial insight from communities that have successfully enhanced their connectivity: the most important factor is having a committed local team leading the effort. This isn't something that will be solved by waiting for outside providers to decide Elwood is worth the investment – we need to drive this process ourselves.

What might this look like for our village? We would need to form a core group including:

- Village government representatives, including the Village Board
- Local business owners, particularly those already experiencing connectivity challenges
- Elwood Public School administrators and technology staff
- Healthcare providers from our local clinics
- Representatives from the Elwood Public Library, which often serves as an internet access point for residents without home connections
- Local IT professionals, including any residents who work remotely in technology fields
- Representatives from our agricultural community, as modern farming increasingly relies on digital technology

This group would be tasked with assessing our current situation in detail, developing a strategic plan, identifying potential funding sources, and building relationships with providers and state agencies. The Nebraska Rural Broadband Task Force specifically emphasizes that this locally driven approach has proven most successful throughout the state.

Practical Technology Options for Elwood

Given Elwood's specific characteristics – our small population of around 629 residents, relatively flat terrain, and rural setting – certain broadband technologies may be particularly well-suited for our needs:

Fixed Wireless Using Mid-Band Spectrum: This technology could be ideal for covering our village and surrounding farms without the expense of running fiber to every location. With strategic tower placement, perhaps utilizing

existing structures like our water tower, fixed wireless could provide significant coverage improvements relatively quickly.

TV White Space: This technology utilizes unused television channels to deliver broadband and is particularly effective in rural areas because the signals travel well over long distances and through obstacles like trees and buildings—a valuable characteristic given our village's mature tree canopy.

Low Earth Orbit Satellites: Services like Starlink are beginning to offer another option for rural communities, though costs currently remain higher than traditional broadband. This could provide an immediate solution for outlying properties while we develop a more comprehensive fixed infrastructure.

While urban areas may soon benefit from 5G technology, the Rural Broadband Task Force cautions that this is likely to widen the urban-rural digital divide initially, as deployment will focus on population centers first. This reality makes it even more important for Elwood to pursue solutions specifically adapted to our circumstances.

Economic Development Opportunities Through Better Connectivity

For a village of Elwood's size, broadband represents a vital economic lifeline. With our population trending downward (from 707 in 2010 to 629 currently), we must leverage every tool available to strengthen our local economy and attract new residents.

E-commerce Potential: Elwood's businesses—from our local retailers to agricultural producers—could dramatically expand their customer base through effective e-commerce. Rather than being limited to the local population, our businesses could potentially market to customers regionally, nationally, or even globally. The availability of broadband makes the difference between this being a theoretical possibility and a practical reality.

Operational Efficiency: Our local businesses could reduce costs and improve services through technologies like:

- Cloud-based inventory management
- Digital accounting and payment processing

- Online ordering and customer service systems
- Remote monitoring of equipment and systems

Remote Work Opportunities: With appropriate broadband infrastructure, Elwood could attract remote workers who bring their jobs (and incomes) with them from larger urban centers. This is particularly relevant given our affordable housing (median value \$135,642) and quality of life advantages.

Agricultural Technology: The farms surrounding Elwood increasingly rely on precision agriculture technologies that require reliable connectivity. From soil sensors to equipment monitoring and market data access, modern farming operations depend on broadband access.

Building Capacity Through Training and Support

For Elwood to fully benefit from improved broadband, we need to couple infrastructure improvements with education and training. Many of our residents and business owners may need support to take full advantage of digital opportunities.

The Elwood Public Library could serve as a natural hub for digital literacy training, offering programs for:

- Local business owners interested in establishing e-commerce operations
- Seniors wanting to connect with family or access telehealth services
- Students needing to complete online homework assignments
- Job seekers updating resumes and searching for employment
- Farmers learning to use agricultural technology applications

By combining infrastructure development with skills training, we ensure that improved connectivity translates into real economic and quality of life benefits for our residents.

Next Steps for Elwood

To move forward, our village should consider these concrete actions:

Form a Broadband Development Committee with representation from key stakeholders

Conduct a detailed assessment of current coverage, speeds, and costs throughout the village

Survey residents and businesses to understand specific needs and pain points

Explore funding opportunities through state and federal programs specifically targeted at rural broadband

Develop relationships with potential service providers, especially those with experience in rural Nebraska

Create a phased implementation plan that acknowledges budget constraints while moving toward comprehensive coverage

By taking a proactive, locally-driven approach to broadband development, Elwood can position itself as a connected rural community ready to participate fully in the digital economy—ensuring our village remains viable and vibrant for generations to come.

PARKS, SWIMMING POOL, CAMPGROUND, & LIBRARY:



Elwood Village Park

Elwood village park offers a swimming pool, playground equipment, picnic shelter and tables and a nine-hole disk golf course.

Elwood Swimming Pool

Elwood Swimming Pool is located at 198 Rockford Street, southwest of the school. Regular hours are 1:00-6:00. Evening Swim and Lap Swim announced throughout season. Snacks are available at the office.

Elwood Resort & Campground

Elwood Resort & Campground is a family-owned Campground and Fishing Resort. It hosts a variety of customers, from relaxation long-term to hunters and fishing. With a 1300-acre lake (the Elwood Reservoir), there will be plenty of catch for you in our trophy fishery, and adequate game for hunting. The RV Park offers full hookups for water, sewage, and electricity.

Elwood Public Library

The Elwood Public Library was established by public vote on November 19, 2002,



and opened its first location in January 2004. It received a permanent charter in 2005 and moved to a larger 9,000-square-foot space in March 2009 to accommodate growing demand and offer expanded services, including study rooms, a community room, and more public computers. The library is

governed by a five-member Board of Trustees and funded primarily through local taxes. An annual budget vote and trustee election are held each April.

PART 5 SERVICES:

HEALTH SERVICES: The Heartbeat of Elwood's Community



Elwood stands as a testament to rural healthcare excellence, boasting a progressive medical community that has become a regional beacon of wellness. Remarkably, patients from larger population centers frequently travel to Elwood seeking the exceptional quality and personalized care that defines our medical services.

This healthcare magnetism represents

not just a community asset but a powerful economic and social driver for our town. Elwood must capitalize on this healthcare advantage to ensure our medical services continue to evolve and thrive in the rapidly changing healthcare landscape.

The demographic composition of Elwood presents both challenges and opportunities in healthcare planning. According to the most recent data, approximately 35% of Elwood's current population of 629 residents are seniors, with a median age of 51.5 years. This mature population profile necessitates forward-thinking health services focused on geriatric care, chronic disease management, and preventive medicine. Without strategic planning to address these evolving needs, our community risks facing critical healthcare gaps that could undermine quality of life for our most vulnerable residents.

Fortunately, Elwood benefits from established healthcare partnerships that form the foundation of our medical infrastructure. The Lexington Regional Health Center (LRHC) continues to operate its essential outreach clinic at 202 Smith Ave, offering comprehensive primary care services to community members of all ages. Barbara Foss, APRN, serves as a cornerstone of our local healthcare delivery, providing expert family nurse practitioner care through the clinic. Additionally, residents have access to full-service medical facilities in nearby Lexington and Kearney, including hospitals, specialized clinics, and nursing care facilities.

Looking ahead to 2025 and beyond, Elwood must embrace healthcare innovation to meet emerging challenges. Recent extensions of telehealth policies through September 2025 have created unprecedented opportunities for our rural community to access specialized care without extensive travel. To maximize these opportunities, Elwood must address crucial barriers including broadband access, digital literacy among seniors, and creating robust local support systems for telehealth adoption.

By strategically planning for healthcare advancements and reinforcing our medical infrastructure, Elwood can position itself as a rural health leader, ensuring all residents – especially our growing senior population – receive the comprehensive, cutting-edge care they deserve for vibrant, fulfilling lives.

Health and Wellness Services: Innovation in Rural Healthcare

Lexington Regional Health Center continues to demonstrate its commitment to Elwood through its thriving outreach clinic. Barbara Foss, APRN, leads the clinic's comprehensive medical services, providing essential care across the lifespan. Her expertise encompasses preventive care, chronic disease management, wellness screenings, and treatment for acute conditions – all delivered with the personalized touch that defines rural healthcare excellence.

The clinic has expanded its offerings through innovative care coordination initiatives, becoming a pioneer in rural healthcare delivery. By integrating Medicare services with emerging telehealth technologies, LRHC is revolutionizing access to specialized care for Elwood residents, particularly those managing complex or chronic conditions.

As we enter 2025, Elwood stands at the forefront of rural healthcare transformation. The integration of AI-driven health monitoring, remote patient management systems, and innovative telehealth platforms is eliminating traditional barriers to specialized care, creating unprecedented health opportunities for our community regardless of age or mobility. Through strategic partnerships and continued investment in healthcare infrastructure, Elwood is crafting a vibrant wellness future that enhances quality of life while supporting economic development and community vitality.

Elder Care: A CORNERSTONE OF COMMUNITY WELLNESS

Elwood Care Center: Excellence in Compassionate Care

The Elwood Care Center stands as a premier elder care destination in central Nebraska, offering comprehensive health services in a vibrant, supportive environment. This community-owned facility operates as an entity of the Village of Elwood and celebrates a proud legacy of over 50 years serving the region since its establishment in 1972. The center maintains 43 Medicare and Medicaid-certified beds with five private rooms and an attached 10-bed assisted living unit, providing diverse care options to meet varying levels of independence and medical needs.

Excellence in staffing forms the foundation of the Center's renowned care. From its humble beginnings with just 18 employees, the facility has expanded to employ over 60 dedicated professionals who deliver personalized, around-the-clock support. This exceptional staffing has earned the Center a 4-star Medicare staffing rating, significantly outperforming both state and national averages.

Residents benefit from an array of specialized services, including skilled nursing, memory care for those with Alzheimer's or Dementia, and independent living options, all supported by in-house occupational therapy services. The facility's thoughtfully designed spaces include landscaped gathering areas with beautiful walkways and an innovative "Healing Garden" featuring a waterfall, bridge, and fountain surrounded by sensory-rich plants specifically chosen to stimulate residents' senses through varied textures, fragrances, and colors.

Looking ahead to 2025, the Elwood Care Center is positioning itself at the forefront of elder care innovation through strategic integration of telehealth services, which have been extended through federal policy until September 2025. This technology adoption is particularly critical in rural Nebraska, where research shows that enhanced telehealth access significantly improves healthcare outcomes and reduces barriers for elderly residents.

Daily life at the Center revolves around a philosophy of active engagement, with comprehensive activity calendars designed to keep residents physically, mentally, and socially stimulated from morning until evening. Amenities include cable television in all rooms, central air conditioning, emergency call systems, housekeeping services, scheduled transportation for appointments, and memory care programs specially designed for residents with cognitive challenges.

The Center's mission is clear and compassionate: "to provide a safe, home-like environment enriched in love, peace, and dignity" where "every person who enters through our door is important and will be treated with the utmost respect." This resident-centered approach, combined with exceptional medical care, ensures that Elwood's seniors receive the support they need while maintaining dignity and quality of life. As our community's population continues to age, the Elwood Care Center remains an essential cornerstone of our healthcare infrastructure and a vital community resource that helps make Elwood an exceptional place to age with grace and dignity.

GOSPER COUNTY SENIOR CENTER: NURTURING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

The Gosper County Senior Center stands as a lively cornerstone of Elwood's age-friendly infrastructure, strategically located at 406 Ripley Street in the heart of our community. This welcoming hub for senior engagement maintains a stellar reputation, earning an impressive 4.9-star rating from community members who consistently praise its exceptional services and warm atmosphere.

The Center operates with convenient weekday hours to maximize accessibility for all seniors seeking connection and support. Doors open Monday through Thursday from 8:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. and Fridays from 8:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., creating ample opportunities for participation in the Center's diverse programming.

At the heart of the Senior Center's offerings is its exemplary nutrition program featuring nutritionally balanced midday meals. Each meal is expertly designed by nutrition professionals to meet one-third of seniors daily recommended dietary needs, ensuring adequate nutrition while creating invaluable opportunities for social engagement during mealtimes. These congregate dining experiences transform essential nutrition into meaningful social events that combat isolation and foster community bonds.

Beyond nutrition, the Center offers a comprehensive suite of services designed to enhance seniors' quality of life and independence. Activities range from educational programming and health clinics to recreational opportunities including card games, special events, and seasonal celebrations. The Center plays a particularly special role during Elwood's Old Fashioned Christmas celebrations, when it transforms into

Santa's headquarters, delighting both children and seniors alike during this cherished community tradition.

The Gosper County Senior Center operates in partnership with Nebraska's aging services network, benefiting from administrative support while maintaining its distinct local character. This collaboration ensures sustainable programming while allowing for community-specific activities that reflect Elwood's unique culture and needs.

With its central location, diverse programming, and unwavering commitment to senior well-being, the Gosper County Senior Center exemplifies Elwood's dedication to creating an inclusive community where residents of all ages thrive. As Elwood looks toward the future, the Center remains a vital component of our community infrastructure, continuously adapting to meet evolving needs while preserving the personal connections that make our town special.

PUBLIC SAFETY:

Gosper County Sheriff's Office: Guardians of Community Security

The Gosper County Sheriff's Office stands as the cornerstone of public safety in Elwood, providing exemplary law enforcement services with a commitment to community-focused policing. Following the retirement of longtime Sheriff Dennis Ocken in January 2022, Craig Ward was appointed Sheriff and has continued to build upon the office's strong foundation of service while implementing progressive strategies to meet evolving community needs.

Headquartered at 507 Smith Avenue in Elwood, the Sheriff's Office serves as the primary law enforcement agency for Gosper County and maintains operational hours Monday through Friday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., with 24/7 emergency response capabilities. Their comprehensive jurisdiction encompasses rural areas and unincorporated communities throughout the county's 458 square miles, ensuring consistent protection for all residents regardless of location.

Beyond traditional law enforcement duties, the Sheriff's Office fulfills essential administrative responsibilities including executing legal judgments, managing foreclosures and repossessions, processing tax delinquencies, and maintaining

comprehensive public safety records. The office meticulously maintains detailed records of criminal activities, warrants, convictions, and court proceedings, providing crucial documentation that supports both law enforcement operations and public information needs.

The Office operates with a proactive policing philosophy that emphasizes visibility, accessibility, and community partnership. Key strategic initiatives include enhancing community engagement, implementing targeted crime reduction strategies, maintaining transparent operations, and ensuring highly visible patrol presence throughout the county. This approach has fostered strong relationships between officers and community members, creating a collaborative environment for addressing public safety concerns.

The Gosper County Sheriff's Office also maintains and operates the county detention facility, overseeing all aspects of inmate management, rehabilitation programming, and facility security. This comprehensive approach to corrections emphasizes both public safety and inmate welfare, reflecting the office's commitment to balanced justice administration.

As the Gosper County Sheriff's Office moves forward, its leadership remains focused on implementing innovative approaches to community protection while maintaining the personal connections that characterize rural law enforcement excellence. Through continued professional development, strategic resource deployment, and community collaboration, the Sheriff's Office stands ready to meet emerging challenges while preserving Elwood's reputation as a safe, welcoming community for residents and visitors alike.

Elwood Volunteer Fire Department:

Champions Of Community Safety

The Elwood Volunteer Fire Department stands as a cornerstone of community safety, providing critical emergency response services through a dedicated team of local heroes. Strategically headquartered at 507 Ripley Street in Elwood, the department maintains a vigilant presence as Gosper County's primary emergency response organization. As one of 478 fire departments serving Nebraska's communities, Elwood's firefighters contribute to the state's network of over 17,000



emergency responders who stand ready to protect life and property around the clock.

The department's operational strength lies in its exceptional volunteer corps and diverse equipment fleet. Currently, the department maintains a force of 26 dedicated volunteer firefighters supplemented by 12 non-firefighting volunteers who provide essential support services during emergency responses and department operations. This robust team ensures comprehensive coverage for Elwood and surrounding areas despite the challenges of rural emergency response.

As active volunteer firefighters under Nebraska's Volunteer Emergency Responders Incentive Act, Elwood's team maintains rigorous training schedules and response readiness while balancing career and family responsibilities. This dedication enables them to effectively handle fire suppression, medical emergencies, hazardous material incidents, and search and rescue operations throughout their service area.

The department's response capabilities are enhanced by its well-maintained fleet of specialized emergency vehicles. The Elwood Volunteer Fire Department operates from a single station housing their diverse apparatus collection, including pumper trucks, tankers, grass fire vehicles, and ambulances. This equipment arsenal ensures appropriate response resources for the varied emergency scenarios encountered in Gosper County's rural landscape.

The department's critical importance was starkly demonstrated during the devastating range fire of April 2022, when over 28,000 acres burned across multiple counties. During this emergency, crews from 27 departments throughout the region collaborated with local farmers using plows and discs to battle the massive blaze that threatened homes and livelihoods. Tragically, this incident also highlighted the extraordinary sacrifices emergency responders make, as then-Fire Chief Darren Krull lost his life in the line of duty while responding to this emergency.

Looking ahead, the Elwood Volunteer Fire Department continues to prioritize community safety through meticulous incident reporting via the Nebraska Fire-Incident Reporting System (NEFIRS), which provides critical data for strategic planning, grant applications, and resource allocation. Their mission remains steadfast: "to safeguard the citizens and visitors of our community by providing the highest level of service" across all emergency response disciplines, delivered with honor and courage.

Through continuous training, strategic equipment upgrades, and unwavering commitment to service, the Elwood Volunteer Fire Department stands ready to meet future challenges, ensuring Elwood remains a safe, resilient community for generations to come.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING: ENHANCING COMMUNITY ACCESSIBILITY

Rush Creek Villa: Cornerstone of Housing Opportunity

Rush Creek Villa stands as a vital beacon of housing accessibility in Elwood, providing essential affordable living options for our community's most vulnerable residents. As part of Elwood's network of eight income-based apartments managed by the Elwood Housing Authority, this facility represents the community's commitment to ensuring housing security for residents across all economic levels. The facility provides a supportive living environment specially designed for retirees, individuals with limited income, and persons with disabilities, ensuring that all community members have access to dignified, appropriate housing regardless of financial circumstances.



What distinguishes Rush Creek Villa is its personalized approach to resident care. Each resident receives a meticulously crafted care plan tailored to their unique circumstances and needs, creating an environment where individualized support empowers independent living. These accommodations feature essential amenities including emergency call systems, fully accessible facilities with safety adaptations, and energy-efficient utilities – all designed to enhance quality of life while maintaining affordability.

The financial structure of Rush Creek Villa reflects federal affordable housing guidelines, ensuring residents typically contribute no more than 30% of their income toward rent and utilities. This structure creates sustainable housing security for residents while maintaining the facility's operational viability. This affordability model is particularly crucial as national housing costs continue to rise, with home prices increasing 5.5% in the past year and experts projecting continued challenges in housing affordability through 2025.

The facility's operations are seamlessly integrated with Elwood's broader community infrastructure, with administrative oversight provided through the

Village Office (308-785-2480) located at 304 Calvert Avenue, which maintains weekday accessibility from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM. This operational structure ensures responsive management and consistent support for both current and prospective residents.

Looking ahead, Rush Creek Villa continues to enhance its service offerings, including expanded social programming, wellness initiatives, and community integration activities. These enhancements reflect a holistic approach to resident well-being that extends beyond basic housing to encompass social, emotional, and physical health needs.

As Elwood plans for future development, Rush Creek Villa represents a cornerstone of our commitment to inclusive growth that serves citizens across all economic circumstances. By maintaining and strengthening this essential community resource, Elwood demonstrates its dedication to being a community where all residents can find appropriate, affordable housing that supports their dignity, independence, and quality of life.

ELWOOD PUBLIC LIBRARY: COMMUNITY KNOWLEDGE HUB

Powering Information Access and Community Engagement

In today's rapidly evolving digital landscape, libraries remain irreplaceable cornerstones of community infrastructure, delivering essential information services while adapting to meeting changing resident needs. The Elwood Public Library, strategically located at 306 Calvert Avenue, exemplifies this vital community resource, serving as a dynamic knowledge hub for Elwood's population of 707 residents. Since opening its doors in 2012, the library has continuously evolved its services to enhance educational opportunities, foster community connections, and provide equitable information access for all residents.



Under the dedicated leadership of Director Jane Hilton, the library maintains an impressive collection of 19,165 volumes spanning diverse subjects, formats, and interest areas. This comprehensive collection supports the information needs of residents across all age groups and educational backgrounds, providing critical resources that might otherwise be

inaccessible in our rural community. The library's annual circulation of 12,759 items demonstrates the collection's relevance and the community's robust engagement with these resources.

The library's physical space serves as much more than a repository for books – it functions as a versatile community gathering place that enhances Elwood's social infrastructure. The facility features multi-purpose meeting rooms that accommodate groups of various sizes, supporting everything from educational workshops and civic meetings to cultural events and recreational activities. These flexible spaces help address the community's need for accessible gathering venues while fostering connections between residents.

The library's programming reflects contemporary needs through diverse offerings including children's story times, craft workshops, technology training, educational lectures, and specialized services for seniors. Participation in statewide initiatives like the Nebraska Summer Reading Program and Reader Zone enriches these offerings, allowing Elwood to provide sophisticated programming despite its rural setting. These activities play a crucial role in promoting literacy, lifelong learning, and community building across age groups.

The library actively participates in Nebraska's annual public library statistical reporting system, providing accountability and transparent performance metrics that help secure continued funding and support. Through careful stewardship of resources, the library maximizes its impact while addressing the evolving needs of our diverse population.

As we look toward 2025 and beyond, the Elwood Public Library remains committed to innovation and adaptation, embracing new technologies and service models while preserving its core mission of providing equitable information access to all community members. This balance of tradition and innovation ensures the library will continue serving as an essential anchor institution in Elwood's civic infrastructure, enhancing quality of life and fostering community connections for generations to come.

DRAFT

PART 6 PLAN IMPLEMENTATION:

STRATEGIC PLAN MAINTENANCE:

A comprehensive plan is only as effective as its implementation process. Following adoption, Elwood must establish a robust annual review mechanism to ensure the plan remains relevant and responsive to changing community needs. This review should involve a diverse coalition of stakeholders including elected officials, Planning Commission members, Growth Committee participants, and representatives from community and economic development groups to foster broad ownership of implementation goals. The review process should thoroughly evaluate the following:

- Whether the plan accurately reflects Elwood's current demographic and economic realities
- The continued validity of recommended policies for village growth and stability
- Potential amendments needed to address emerging opportunities or challenges

Effective plan maintenance requires transparent communication, appropriate resource allocation, clear timelines, and genuine community engagement – elements that build resident trust while advancing community goals. The Planning Commission should create structured opportunities for both citizens and developers to propose modifications, fostering an inclusive approach to community development that leverages diverse perspectives.

Annual Review Framework

To maintain momentum and ensure accountability, Elwood should implement a structured annual review process with these key components:

- **Proposal Collection:** Establish a formal mechanism for individuals, civic groups, and development interests to submit improvement ideas, infrastructure needs, and policy recommendations throughout the year, culminating in an annual evaluation period.
- **Implementation Assessment:** Conduct a thorough review of actions taken during the previous year to implement plan recommendations, identifying both successes and challenges that require additional resources or modified approaches.

- Strategic Adjustments: Define necessary modifications to the comprehensive plan based on implementation experience, changing conditions, new opportunities, and evolving community priorities to ensure the plan remains a living document.

Embracing Innovation and Opportunity

Elwood's future prosperity depends on its ability to recognize and capitalize on emerging opportunities that align with the community's vision:

- The village should remain open to innovative and unanticipated development proposals that advance community goals, applying plan principles rather than rigid prescriptions when evaluating new concepts.
- When significant changes to the Comprehensive Plan are required, a transparent review process featuring robust public comment periods and Village Board approval should be undertaken to maintain community trust.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN (CIP): INVESTING IN ELWOOD'S FUTURE

A strategically crafted Capital Improvement Plan is essential for translating Elwood's vision into tangible infrastructure improvements. As a community planning and fiscal management tool, the CIP coordinates the location, timing, and financing of capital improvements over a multi-year period, typically spanning four to six years.

The CIP should focus on major, non-recurring physical expenditures including land acquisition, buildings, public infrastructure, and essential equipment that shapes community growth and service delivery. When properly executed, the CIP demonstrates local government in action by clearly articulating how and when improvements will be made, setting appropriate expectations, and documenting progress.

Elwood's CIP process should incorporate the following:

- A specific, financially grounded work program for the upcoming fiscal year that aligns with available resources and establishes priority projects for immediate implementation.

- A three-year strategic program that provides a medium-term implementation framework and informs annual work plan development through a multi-year perspective.
- A six-year capital improvement roadmap integrated with Elwood's established fiscal planning to ensure long-term financial sustainability for major infrastructure investments.

COMMUNITY GOALS - ELWOOD, NEBRASKA: VISION & ACTION PLAN

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Elwood, Nebraska is a resilient rural community of approximately 629 residents situated at the junction of Nebraska Highway 23 and U.S. Route 283. As the county seat of Gosper County, Elwood faces both challenges and opportunities common to many rural Midwestern communities, including population decline, an aging population, and changing economic conditions.

This action plan transforms the overall comprehensive plan into an actionable roadmap with specific timelines, responsible parties, funding mechanisms, and success metrics through 2035. The extended timeline allows for more ambitious goals and transformative projects while maintaining realistic implementation schedules. The plan focuses on five strategic priority areas that will guide Elwood's development over the next decade:

1. Community Revitalization & Housing
2. Economic Development & Infrastructure
3. Quality of Life Enhancement
4. Governance & Community Engagement
5. Environmental Stewardship & Sustainability

CURRENT SITUATION ANALYSIS

Strengths:

- Strong educational system with 96.64% high school graduation rate
- Quality healthcare facilities including the Elwood Care Center

- Abundant water resources through the Ogallala Aquifer
- Recreational amenities including proximity to Elwood Reservoir
- Stable village government and county seat status
- High employment rate (98.4%)
- Strong community bonds and volunteerism

Weaknesses:

- Population decline (707 in 2010 to 629 in 2024)
- Aging population (median age 51.5 years)
- Limited housing stock (54.9% built before 1960)
- Limited broadband access in portions of the community
- Median household income below state average (\$62,917 vs. \$74,985)
- Limited commercial and industrial development

Opportunities:

- Strategic location at highway junction
- Potential for housing rehabilitation and new construction
- Remote work possibilities through improved broadband
- Tourism development leveraging reservoir and outdoor recreation
- Agricultural innovation and value-added processing
- Intergenerational mentorship and knowledge transfer

Threats:

- Continued rural out-migration
- Aging infrastructure requiring significant investment
- Limited resources for community development
- Climate variability impacting agricultural economy
- Competition from larger regional centers

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: COMMUNITY REVITALIZATION & HOUSING

Goal 1.1:

Implement a Comprehensive Housing Rehabilitation Program

• **Actions:**

1. Conduct comprehensive housing condition assessment
2. Establish a Housing Advisory Board with diverse stakeholders
3. Develop funding application for CDBG and HOME funds

4. Create technical assistance program for homeowners
5. Implement targeted energy efficiency improvements program
6. Establish low-interest loan program for qualifying homeowners
7. Complete Phase 1 rehabilitation of 15 homes
8. Launch Phase 2 focusing on historic home preservation
9. Implement Phase 3 with net-zero energy retrofits

- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, Planning Commission, Housing Advisory Board

- **Funding Sources:**

CDBG, HOME funds, Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund, historic preservation grants

- **Success Metrics:**

- 25 homes rehabilitated by end of 2035
- 40% improvement in energy efficiency in rehabilitated homes
- 80% of homeowners reporting satisfaction with program
- 2 historic homes preserved and modernized

Goal 1.2:

Develop Diverse Housing Options for All Life Stages

- **Actions:**

1. Inventory available lots for development
2. Update zoning to facilitate diverse housing types
3. Partner with developers for senior housing project
4. Develop incentive package for qualifying projects
5. Complete first senior-oriented housing development
6. Implement workforce housing initiative

- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, Planning Commission, CRA Committee

- **Funding Sources:**

TIF, NIFA, private investment, USDA Rural Development, Workforce Housing Fund

- **Success Metrics:**

- 5 new housing units specifically designed for seniors by 2035
- 10 workforce housing units developed by 2035
- 10% increase in overall housing stock by 2035

Goal 1.3:

Implement Strategic Infill and Neighborhood Development

- **Actions:**

1. Complete vacant and underutilized property inventory
2. Establish property acquisition program
3. Develop design guidelines for infill development
4. Create incentives for vacant property redevelopment
5. Identify pilot project for innovative infill
6. Complete first phase of infill projects
7. Implement neighborhood revitalization program
8. Develop model sustainable neighborhood

- **Responsible Parties:**

Planning Commission, CRA Committee, Village Board

- **Funding Sources:**

TIF, Nebraska DED, USDA Rural Development, EPA brownfield grants

- **Success Metrics:**

- Reduction in vacant properties by 50% by 2035
- 5 infill development projects completed by 2035
- One model sustainable neighborhood developed
- 25% increase in property values in targeted areas

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & INFRASTRUCTURE

Goal 2.1:

Create a Diversified Economic Development Strategy

- **Actions:**

1. Update zoning for commercial development
2. Create targeted business incentives
3. Develop comprehensive economic development strategy
4. Implement streamlined permitting for new businesses
5. Target and recruit highway-oriented businesses
6. Develop remote work/entrepreneurial hub
7. Establish agricultural innovation center
8. Create tourism development strategy leveraging natural assets

- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, Planning Commission, economic development partners

- **Funding Sources**

Village budget, Nebraska DED, private investment, USDA Rural Business Development grants

- **Success Metrics:**

- 3 new commercial developments by 2035
- 10% increase in commercial property valuation
- 25 new jobs created through diversified economic development
- 7 remote workers/entrepreneurs supported through hub

Goal 2.2:

Implement Next-Generation Digital Infrastructure

- **Actions:**

1. Form Broadband Development Committee
2. Complete detailed assessment of current coverage and needs
3. Develop phased implementation plan
4. Apply for broadband infrastructure grants
5. Partner with providers for expanded coverage
6. Implement digital literacy programs at library
7. Create public Wi-Fi zones in key community areas
8. Develop smart village infrastructure pilot projects
9. Implement community-wide IoT network for municipal services

- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, Broadband Committee, Library Board

- **Funding Sources:**

Nebraska Rural Broadband Task Force, USDA ReConnect, federal infrastructure funds, tech partnership grants

- **Success Metrics:**

- 100% of village with access to high-speed broadband by 2030
- Smart infrastructure managing 50% of municipal services by 2035
- 200 residents completing digital literacy training by 2035
- 5 smart village pilot projects implemented

Goal 2.3:

Create Resilient and Sustainable Infrastructure

- **Actions:**

1. Complete comprehensive infrastructure assessment
2. Develop prioritized Capital Improvement Plan
3. Implement Year 1 street improvement projects per plan
4. Upgrade stormwater management systems
5. Modernize water and sewer infrastructure
6. Require underground utilities for new development
7. Implement renewable energy for municipal facilities
8. Develop integrated water management system
9. Create resilient microgrid for critical infrastructure

- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, Village Superintendent

- **Funding Sources:**

Village budget, bonding, USDA Rural Development, state infrastructure grants, DOE energy grants

- **Success Metrics:**

- 100% of street improvement plan projects completed by 2035
- 75% reduction in stormwater management issues
- 50% of municipal energy from renewable sources by 2035
- Microgrid system supporting critical infrastructure during outages

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: QUALITY OF LIFE ENHANCEMENT

Goal 3.1:

Create a Premier Rural Recreation Destination

- **Actions:**
 1. Develop comprehensive parks and recreation master plan
 2. Create connector trails between village and reservoir
 3. Upgrade playground equipment at village park
 4. Enhance swimming pool facilities
 5. Develop outdoor fitness stations
 6. Implement comprehensive trail system
 7. Create water recreation center at reservoir
 8. Develop regional outdoor recreation events
- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, Parks Committee
- **Funding Sources:**
- Village budget, Nebraska Game & Parks grants, private donations, tourism development grants
- **Success Metrics:**
 - 2-5 miles of trails developed by 2035
 - Recreation center with 2,000 annual visitors by 2035
 - 3 signature outdoor recreation events established
 - 95% community satisfaction with recreational amenities

Goal 3.2:

Develop Innovative Rural Healthcare Model

- **Actions:**
 1. Conduct healthcare needs assessment
 2. Develop telehealth support program through library
 3. Enhance senior transportation to medical appointments
 4. Support expansion of outreach clinic services
 5. Implement community wellness program

6. Create integrated care coordination system
7. Establish rural healthcare innovation center

- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, Senior Center, Library Board, healthcare partners

- **Funding Sources:**

Healthcare partners, HRSA rural health grants, telehealth grants, village budget

- **Success Metrics:**

- 80% of healthcare needs addressable locally through combination of in-person and telehealth
- Rural healthcare innovation center serving as regional model
- 50% improvement in preventive care participation
- 90% of seniors reporting adequate healthcare access

Goal 3.3:

Establish Educational Excellence and Lifelong Learning

- **Actions:**

1. Establish education partnership committee
2. Develop mentorship program with local businesses
3. Create scholarship program for returning graduates
4. Implement community internship program
5. Support school facility improvements
6. Establish vocational training center
7. Create rural education innovation lab
8. Develop intergenerational knowledge transfer program

- **Responsible Parties:**

School Board, Village Board, community partners

- **Funding Sources:**

School budget, grants, private donations, Department of Education rural innovation grants

- **Success Metrics:**

- Maintain 100% graduation rate

- 20% improvement in standardized test scores by 2035
- 30 students participating in internship program annually
- 2 educational innovations implemented and shared regionally

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: GOVERNANCE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Goal 4.1:

Implement Innovative Rural Governance Model

- **Actions:**

1. Establish formal annual review framework
2. Create implementation tracking dashboard
3. Develop quarterly progress reports
4. Hold annual community progress meeting
5. Bi-annual review of the comprehensive plan
6. Implement digital governance tools
7. Host rural governance innovation summit

- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, Planning Commission

- **Funding Sources:**

Village administrative budget, governance innovation grants

- **Success Metrics:**

- 85% of plan objectives on schedule or completed
- Digital governance platform with 75% citizen utilization

Goal 4.2:

Create a Vibrant Community Engagement Ecosystem

- **Actions:**

1. Develop comprehensive community engagement strategy
2. Create digital communication platforms
3. Implement quarterly town hall meetings
4. Establish volunteer recognition program
5. Develop youth engagement initiatives
6. Create community leadership development program
7. Implement participatory budgeting process

8. Establish intergenerational community councils

- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, community partners

- **Funding Sources:**

Village administrative budget, community foundation grants

- **Success Metrics:**

- 25% increase in meeting attendance
- 50% increase in volunteer participation
- 30 graduates from leadership development program
- 75% of residents reporting satisfaction with community engagement

Goal 4.3:

Develop Strategic Regional Leadership

- **Actions:**

1. Identify key regional partnership opportunities
2. Develop formal partnership agreements with neighboring communities
3. Create joint marketing initiatives
4. Implement shared service arrangements
5. Participate in regional planning initiatives
6. Create rural communities innovation network
7. Host regional rural prosperity summit

- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, regional partners

- **Funding Sources:**

Village budget, shared costs with partners, regional development grants

- **Success Metrics:**

- 3 formal partnership agreements established
- 25% cost reduction through shared services
- Regional economic development alliance generating \$500 K in investments
- Rural innovation network with 7+ community participants

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 5: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP & SUSTAINABILITY

Goal 5.1:

Implement Comprehensive Water Stewardship Program

- **Actions:**
 1. Conduct water usage assessment
 2. Develop water conservation education program
 3. Implement water-efficient landscaping in public spaces
 4. Offer water conservation incentives for residents
 5. Modernize water infrastructure to reduce losses
 6. Implement aquifer recharge project
 7. Create integrated watershed management program
 8. Develop water innovation demonstration projects
- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, Village Superintendent, environmental partners
- **Funding Sources:**

Village utilities budget, conservation grants, EPA water programs, NRWA
- **Success Metrics:**
 - 25% reduction in per capita water usage by 2035
 - 100% of public spaces using water-efficient landscaping
 - Water projects serving as regional models
 - Implementation of at least one aquifer recharge project

Goal 5.2:

Create a Rural Clean Energy Model

- **Actions:**
 1. Complete community energy assessment
 2. Develop municipal energy efficiency plan
 3. Explore community solar opportunities
 4. Implement energy efficiency upgrades in municipal buildings
 5. Create renewable energy incentives for residents and businesses
 6. Implement municipal microgrid

7. Create agricultural energy innovation projects

- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, energy partners

- **Funding Sources:**

Energy efficiency grants, Nebraska Environmental Trust, DOE rural energy programs

- **Success Metrics:**

- 25% reduction in municipal energy usage
- 25% of municipal energy from renewable sources by 2035
- Implementation of agricultural energy innovation project

Goal 5.3:

Establish Climate Resilience and Adaptation Program

- **Actions:**

1. Update stormwater management plan
2. Conduct climate vulnerability assessment
3. Implement green infrastructure pilot projects
4. Develop emergency response protocols
5. Create resident education program on climate preparedness
6. Implement infrastructure improvements for hazard mitigation
7. Develop climate-smart agriculture demonstrations
8. Create regional climate resilience coalition

- **Responsible Parties:**

Village Board, emergency response partners, agricultural partners

- **Funding Sources:**

FEMA grants, state emergency management funds, USDA climate-smart agriculture programs

- **Success Metrics:**

- 50% reduction in climate-related infrastructure damage
- 3 green infrastructure projects implemented
- 2 climate-smart agriculture demonstrations established
- Regional climate resilience coalition with 5+ community members

IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

Phased Implementation Approach

1. Foundation Phase (2025-2027)

- Establish committees and governance structures
- Complete key assessments and planning documents
- Secure initial funding for priority projects
- Begin high-impact, low-cost initiatives

2. Development Phase (2028-2030)

- Implement infrastructure improvements
- Launch major program initiatives
- Develop initial partnerships and collaborations
- Complete first comprehensive plan review and update

3. Acceleration Phase (2031-2033)

- Scale successful programs
- Implement innovative demonstration projects
- Strengthen regional partnerships
- Develop replicable models for rural communities

4. Innovation Phase (2034-2035)

- Launch transformative initiatives
- Establish Elwood as a model rural community
- Host innovation summits and knowledge-sharing events
- Begin planning for next comprehensive plan cycle

Annual Review Process

1. Quarterly Progress Assessments (March, June, September, December)

- Track implementation progress
- Identify challenges and solutions
- Adjust timelines as needed

2. Annual Community Progress Meeting (January)

- Present achievements from previous year
- Outline priorities for coming year

- Gather community feedback

3. Strategic Plan Adjustments (February)

- Update action items based on progress and feedback
- Reallocate resources as needed
- Document lessons learned

4. Five-Year Comprehensive Reviews (2030, 2035)

- Complete thorough evaluation of plan implementation
- Update demographic and economic data
- Adjust long-term goals and strategies
- Renew community vision based on progress and new opportunities

Critical Success Factors

1. Leadership Continuity:

Sustained commitment across election cycles and leadership changes

2. Resource Diversification:

Multiple funding streams to support implementation

3. Community Ownership:

Broad-based participation and volunteer engagement

4. Adaptive Management:

Flexibility to adjust strategies based on outcomes and changing conditions

5. Knowledge Management:

Effective documentation and transfer of institutional knowledge

6. Innovation Culture:

Willingness to pilot new approaches and learn from both successes and failures

RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Grant Opportunities

1. Community Development Block Grant (CDBG):

Housing rehabilitation, infrastructure

2. USDA Rural Development:

Water/sewer systems, community facilities, housing

3. Nebraska Affordable Housing Trust Fund:

Housing development and rehabilitation

4. Nebraska Department of Economic Development:

Business development, tourism

5. FEMA Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC):

Climate resilience

6. Nebraska Environmental Trust:

Conservation, renewable energy, sustainability

7. USDA ReConnect Program:

Broadband expansion

8. EPA Smart Growth Grants:

Sustainable community development

9. Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA):

Rural healthcare innovation

10. Department of Energy Rural and Municipal Energy Programs:

Clean energy development

11. National Endowment for the Arts "Our Town":

Cultural development

12. Economic Development Administration (EDA):

Economic resilience and innovation

Local Funding Mechanisms

1. Tax Increment Financing (TIF):

For qualified development projects

2. Local Option Municipal Economic Development Act (LB840):

Business incentives

3. Capital Improvement Bonds:

For major infrastructure projects

4. Public-Private Partnerships:

Leveraging private investment for community goals

5. Special Assessment Districts:

For targeted infrastructure improvements

6. Community Foundation:

Developing endowments for long-term program sustainability

7. Crowdfunding and Community Investment:

Small-scale local investment opportunities

8. Fee-for-Service Innovations:

Revenue-generating municipal services

Transformative Initiatives for 2035

In addition to the core goals outlined above, Elwood will pursue several transformative initiatives designed to position the community as a model for rural prosperity by 2035:

1. Elwood Rural Innovation Hub

A centralized facility combining co-working space, business incubation, educational programming, and technology access. This hub will serve as a catalyst for entrepreneurship, remote work, and knowledge economy jobs, directly addressing population decline by creating opportunities for younger residents and attracting new talent.

2. Intergenerational Community Campus

A mixed-use development combining senior housing, family homes, childcare facilities, and community spaces designed to foster interaction across age groups. This project will leverage Elwood's demographic profile as a strength, creating opportunities for knowledge transfer while addressing housing needs across the lifecycle.

3. Climate-Smart Agricultural Demonstration Center

A partnership with agricultural producers, educational institutions, and technology providers to showcase sustainable farming practices, water conservation techniques, renewable energy integration, and climate adaptation strategies. This center will build on Elwood's agricultural heritage while positioning the community at the forefront of rural innovation.

4. Regional Healthcare Innovation Network

Building on telehealth foundations, this initiative will create an integrated care model combining in-person services, digital health technologies, preventive care programs, and specialized outreach services. The network will address healthcare access challenges common to rural communities while creating a replicable model for other small towns.

5. Rural Prosperity Institute

A knowledge-sharing and training center focused on developing transferable models for rural community development. By documenting Elwood's implementation process, successes, and lessons learned, this institute will help other communities adapt proven approaches to their unique contexts.

CONCLUSION

This wide-ranging Vision & Action Plan as a part of the Elwood Comprehensive Plan provides Elwood with a broad roadmap for sustainable development over the next decade, building from immediate needs to transformative long-term initiatives. This plan provides the community with a model in which they can pursue more ambitious goals while maintaining realistic implementation timelines.

The plan balances practical infrastructure improvements with innovative approaches to economic development, housing, quality of life enhancement, governance, and environmental stewardship. This integrated approach recognizes that rural prosperity requires addressing multiple interconnected factors rather than focusing on isolated issues.

Success will require dedicated leadership, meaningful community engagement, strategic partnerships, and creative resource development. However, by implementing this plan, Elwood has the opportunity to transform from a community managing population decline to one that creates a new model for rural vitality—maintaining its small-town character and quality of life while embracing innovation and sustainability.

Through consistent implementation and regular adaptation, Elwood can move confidently toward a vibrant, sustainable future that honors its heritage while creating new opportunities for current and future generations. By 2035, Elwood can stand as a model for rural communities throughout the Midwest, demonstrating how small towns can thrive in the 21st century economy while preserving the values and connections that make them special places to call home.

DRAFT

APPENDIX 1

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Soil surveys are comprehensive studies conducted to provide detailed information about the soils and miscellaneous land areas within a specific geographic region. These surveys are designed to support a wide range of land management decisions by describing the types of soils, their physical and chemical properties, their spatial distribution, and their limitations for various uses such as agriculture, construction, forestry, and conservation. Each survey includes descriptions, maps, and tables that help interpret how soils will respond to different land uses and environmental conditions.

Soil scientists begin the survey process by closely observing natural features across the landscape. This includes evaluating the steepness, shape, and length of slopes; the general patterns of surface and subsurface drainage; the types of native vegetation and cultivated crops; and the composition of underlying bedrock. One of the most important aspects of this work is the study of soil profiles—vertical cross-sections of soil that reveal a sequence of distinct layers, or horizons. These horizons provide information about how the soil has developed over time through weathering, organic activity, and chemical processes. The profile typically extends from the soil surface down to the unconsolidated material beneath, and in some cases, all the way to bedrock. This underlying material, often unaltered by biological processes, marks the foundation of the soil's development.

Modern soil surveys are organized within the framework of Major Land Resource Areas (MLRAs). MLRAs are large geographical areas that share common features such as geology, climate, water resources, soils, vegetation, and land use patterns. Soils are mapped within these boundaries to ensure consistency and to better understand the broader ecological and geological context in which they exist. A single soil survey area may span one or more MLRAs. Within these regions, soil patterns tend to follow an orderly and predictable distribution based on topography, geology, and natural vegetation.

Each type of soil or miscellaneous area in a survey is usually associated with a specific landform or a part of a landform. Through detailed observations and modeling, scientists

build a conceptual framework to predict how soils form and where they are likely to occur. These models help identify the types of soils present even in areas that haven't been directly sampled, which allows for efficient and reliable mapping over large landscapes.

Although soil types often blend gradually into one another across the landscape, soil scientists must define clear boundaries between them for the purposes of mapping. Since it is not feasible to examine every soil location, they rely on a combination of direct observations, aerial imagery, and knowledge of soil-vegetation-landscape relationships. These tools help determine the boundaries of different soils with a high degree of accuracy.

Field observations are supported by laboratory analyses. As scientists study soil profiles, they record key characteristics such as color, texture, structure, the size and shape of soil aggregates, presence of rock fragments, depth of plant roots, and pH levels. These observations are used to classify soils into taxonomic units using the Soil Taxonomy system, a standardized classification framework developed by the USDA. Each soil is assigned to a specific class based on defined criteria. These taxonomic classes serve as the foundation for organizing and comparing soils systematically, not only within a region but across the country.

The goal of soil mapping is not to isolate pure, uniform soil types but rather to delineate areas—called map units—that represent a combination of soil components and/or miscellaneous areas with similar land use and management requirements. Each map unit consists of dominant and minor soil types occurring in predictable proportions. While some components within a unit may differ significantly, this diversity is accounted for in the data and does not reduce the utility of the map. For highly detailed or intensive land uses, such as construction projects or precision farming, more specific on-site investigations may still be necessary.

Throughout the mapping process, the number of field observations is influenced by several factors, including the scale and intensity of the mapping, landscape complexity, and the experience of the soil scientists. Initially, frequent observations are made to refine the soil-landscape model. Once this model is established, fewer measurements are needed. These can include both field measurements, like texture and depth to bedrock, and laboratory tests for properties such as sand, silt, clay content, salt levels, and organic matter.

Because soil properties naturally vary across a landscape, scientists aggregate observations for each map unit to describe the typical range of characteristics. Not all data points are directly measured; some values are estimated from related properties or statistical modeling. Data from other sources, such as crop yield records, scientific research, and long-term field experience, are also used to validate or enhance predictions.

Soil behavior predictions are not based on soil properties alone. Other influential factors include climate, water movement, and biological activity. While soil conditions are generally predictable over long periods, short-term variations—such as daily fluctuations in the water table—are more difficult to forecast. Still, long-term predictions help users

understand soil limitations, like seasonal wetness, erosion risks, or structural stability for buildings.

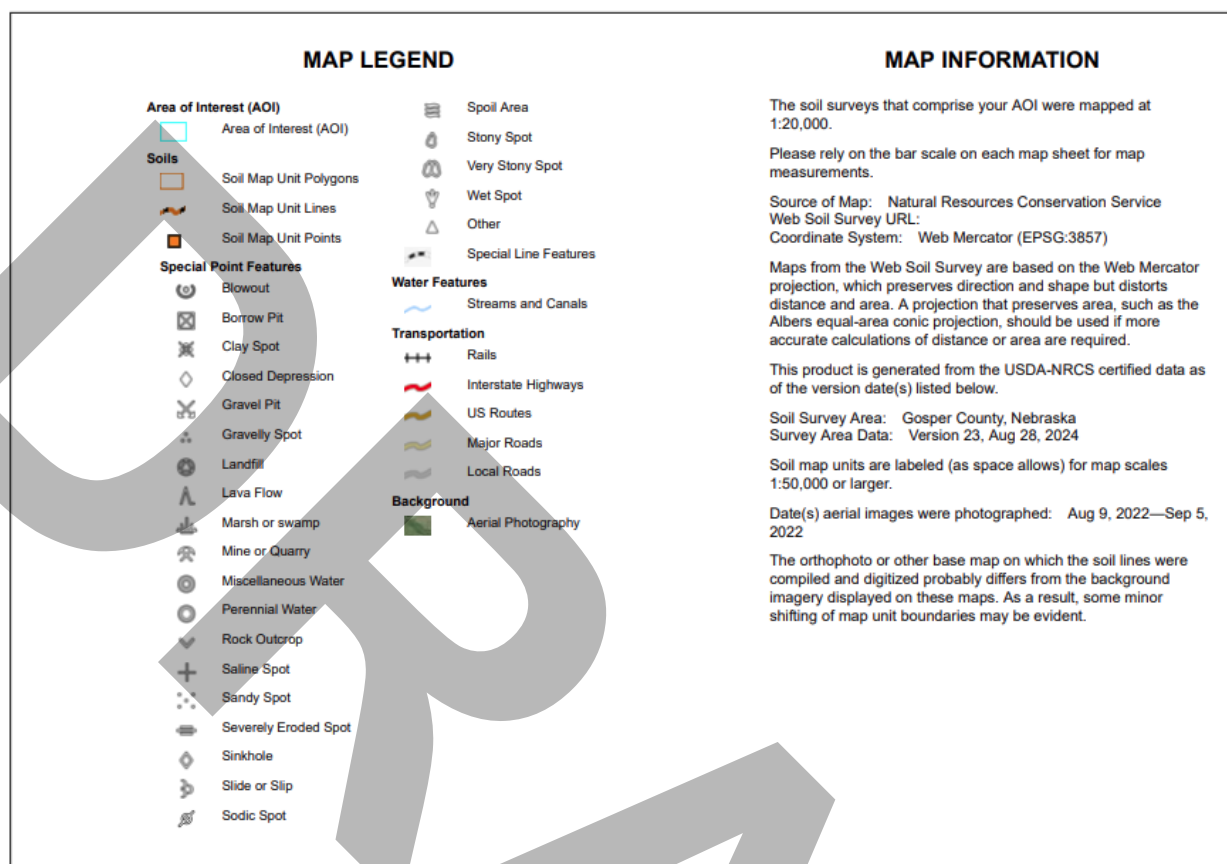
Once soils have been observed, classified, and interpreted, their boundaries are drawn on aerial photographs. These images, which display roads, rivers, vegetation, buildings, and other features, assist in accurately locating and marking soil map units. The final soil survey is a vital resource for anyone involved in land management, helping to ensure the sustainable and informed use of natural resources.

Soil Map

The soil map section includes the soil map for the defined area of interest, a list of soil map units on the map and extend of each map unit, and cartographic symbols displayed on the map. Also presented are various metadata about data used to produce the map, and a description of each soil map unit.



Custom Soil Resource Report



Map Unit legend (Elwood)

Map Unit Symbol	Map Unit Name	Acres in AOI	Percent of AOI
2560	Coly-Uly-Hobbs silt loams, 3 to 60 percent slopes	20.2	2.9%
2667	Holdrege silt loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	243.0	35.4%
2668	Holdrege silt loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes	162.9	23.7%
4157	Holdrege-Uly silt loams, 3 to 7 percent slopes, eroded	2.1	0.3%
8840	Hall silt loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes	257.8	37.6%
Totals for Area of Interest		686.1	100.0%

Table12

Map Unit Descriptions

The map units delineated on the detailed soil maps in a soil survey represent the soils or miscellaneous areas in the survey area. The map unit descriptions in this report, along with the maps, can be used to determine the composition and properties of a unit.

A map unit delineation on a soil map represents an area dominated by one or more major kinds of soil or miscellaneous areas. A map unit is identified and named according to the taxonomic classification of the dominant soils. Within a taxonomic class there are precisely defined limits for the properties of the soils. On the landscape, however, the soils are natural phenomena, and they have the characteristic variability of all natural phenomena. Thus, the range of some observed properties may extend beyond the limits defined for a taxonomic class. Areas of soils of a single taxonomic class rarely, if ever, can be mapped without including areas of other taxonomic classes. Consequently, every map unit is made up of the soils or miscellaneous areas for which it is named, soils that are similar to the named components, and some minor components that differ in use and management from the major soils.

Most of the soils similar to the major components have properties similar to those of the dominant soil or soils in the map unit, and thus they do not affect use and management. These are called noncontrasting, or similar, components. They may or may not be mentioned in a particular map unit description. Some minor components, however, have properties and behavior characteristics divergent enough to affect use or to require different management. These are called contrasting, or dissimilar, components. They generally are in small areas and could not be mapped separately because of the scale used. Some small areas of strongly contrasting soils or miscellaneous areas are identified by a special symbol on the maps. If included in the database for a given area, the contrasting minor components are identified in the map unit descriptions along with some characteristics of each. A few areas of minor components may not have been observed, and consequently they are not mentioned in the descriptions, especially where the pattern was so complex that it was impractical to make enough observations to identify all the soils and miscellaneous areas on the landscape.

The presence of minor components in a map unit in no way diminishes the usefulness or accuracy of the data. The objective of mapping is not to delineate pure taxonomic classes but rather to separate the landscape into landforms or landform segments that have similar use and management requirements. The delineation of such segments on the map provides sufficient information for the development of resource plans. If intensive use of small areas is planned, however, onsite investigation is needed to define and locate the soils and miscellaneous areas.

An identifying symbol precedes the map unit name in the map unit descriptions. Each description includes general facts about the unit and gives important soil properties and qualities.

Soils that have profiles that are almost alike make up a *soil series*. All the soils of a series have major horizons that are similar in composition, thickness, and arrangement. Soils of a given series can differ in texture of the surface layer, slope, stoniness, salinity, degree of erosion, and other characteristics that affect their use. On the basis of such differences, a soil series is divided into *soil phases*. Most of the areas shown on the detailed soil maps are phases of soil series. The name of a soil phase commonly indicates a feature that affects use or management. For example, Alpha silt loam, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is a phase of the Alpha series.

Some map units are made up of two or more major soils or miscellaneous areas. These map units are complexes, associations, or undifferentiated groups.

A *complex* consists of two or more soils or miscellaneous areas in such an intricate pattern or in such small areas that they cannot be shown separately on the maps. The pattern and proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas are somewhat similar in all areas. Alpha-Beta complex, 0 to 6 percent slopes, is an example.

An *association* is made up of two or more geographically associated soils or miscellaneous areas that are shown as one unit on the maps. Because of present or anticipated uses of the map units in the survey area, it was not considered practical or necessary to map the soils or miscellaneous areas separately. The pattern and relative proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas are somewhat similar. Alpha-Beta association, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is an example.

An *undifferentiated group* is made up of two or more soils or miscellaneous areas that could be mapped individually but are mapped as one unit because similar interpretations can be made for use and management. The pattern and proportion of the soils or miscellaneous areas in a mapped area are not uniform. An area can be made up of only one of the major soils or miscellaneous areas, or it can be made up of all of them. Alpha and Beta soils, 0 to 2 percent slopes, is an example.

Some surveys include *miscellaneous areas*. Such areas have little or no soil material and support little or no vegetation. Rock outcrop is an example.

Additional information about the map units described in this report is available in other soil reports, which give properties of the soils and the limitations, capabilities, and potentials for many uses. Also, the narratives that accompany the soil reports define some of the properties included in the map unit descriptions.

Custom Soil Resource Report

Gosper County, Nebraska

2560—Coly-Uly-Hobbs silt loams, 3 to 60 percent slopes

Map Unit Setting

- *National map unit symbol:* 31658
- *Elevation:* 2,300 to 3,280 feet
- *Mean annual precipitation:* 20 to 25 inches
- *Mean annual air temperature:* 48 to 54 degrees F
- *Frost-free period:* 140 to 170 days
- *Farmland classification:* Not prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

- *Coly and similar soils:* 60 percent
- *Uly and similar soils:* 20 percent
- *Hobbs, frequently flooded, and similar soils:* 15 percent
- *Minor components:* 5 percent
- *Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.*

Description of Coly Setting

- *Landform:* Hillslopes

- *Landform position (two-dimensional):* Backslope
- *Landform position (three-dimensional):* Side slope
- *Down-slope shape:* Convex
- *Across-slope shape:* Convex
- *Parent material:* Loess

Typical profile

- *A - 0 to 6 inches:* silt loam
- *AC - 6 to 21 inches:* silt loam
- *C - 21 to 79 inches:* silt loam

Properties and qualities

- *Slope:* 3 to 60 percent
- *Depth to restrictive feature:* More than 80 inches
- *Drainage class:* Well drained
- *Runoff class:* Medium
- *Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat):* Moderately high to high (0.60 to 2.00 in/hr)
- *Depth to water table:* More than 80 inches
- *Frequency of flooding:* None
- *Frequency of ponding:* None
- *Calcium carbonate, maximum content:* 10 percent
- *Maximum salinity:* Nonsaline to very slightly saline (0.0 to 2.0 mmhos/cm)
- *Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches:* Very high (about 13.2 inches)

Interpretive groups

- *Land capability classification (irrigated):* None specified
- *Land capability classification (nonirrigated):* 7e
- *Hydrologic Soil Group:* B
- *Ecological site:* R075XY063NE - Loess Breaks
- *Hydric soil rating:* No

Description of Uly Setting

- *Landform:* Hillslopes
- *Landform position (two-dimensional):* Backslope
- *Landform position (three-dimensional):* Side slope
- *Down-slope shape:* Concave
- *Across-slope shape:* Linear
- *Parent material:* Fine-silty calcareous loess

Typical profile

- *Ap - 0 to 6 inches:* silt loam
- *A - 6 to 11 inches:* silt loam
- *Bk - 11 to 21 inches:* silt loam
- *C - 21 to 79 inches:* silt loam

Properties and qualities

- *Slope:* 3 to 30 percent
- *Depth to restrictive feature:* More than 80 inches
- *Drainage class:* Well drained
- *Runoff class:* Medium
- *Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat):* Moderately high to high (0.60 to 2.00 in/hr)
- *Depth to water table:* More than 80 inches
- *Frequency of flooding:* None
- *Frequency of ponding:* None

- *Calcium carbonate, maximum content:* 10 percent
- *Maximum salinity:* Nonsaline to very slightly saline (0.0 to 2.0 mmhos/cm)
- *Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches:* Very high (about 13.2 inches)

Interpretive groups

- *Land capability classification (irrigated):* None specified
- *Land capability classification (nonirrigated):* 6e
- *Hydrologic Soil Group:* B
- *Ecological site:* R075XY063NE - Loess Breaks
- *Hydric soil rating:* No

Description of Hobbs, Frequently Flooded Setting

- *Landform:* Drainageways
- *Landform position (two-dimensional):* Toeslope
- *Landform position (three-dimensional):* Base slope
- *Down-slope shape:* Concave
- *Across-slope shape:* Linear
- *Parent material:* Stratified silty alluvium

Typical profile

- *Ap - 0 to 6 inches:* silt loam
- *C - 6 to 79 inches:* stratified silt loam to silty clay loam

Properties and qualities

- *Slope:* 0 to 3 percent
- *Depth to restrictive feature:* More than 80 inches
- *Drainage class:* Well drained
- *Runoff class:* Low
- *Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat):* Moderately high to high (0.60 to 2.00 in/hr)
- *Depth to water table:* More than 80 inches
- *Frequency of flooding:* Frequent
- *Frequency of ponding:* None
- *Calcium carbonate, maximum content:* 3 percent
- *Maximum salinity:* Nonsaline to very slightly saline (0.0 to 2.0 mmhos/cm)
- *Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches:* Very high (about 13.2 inches)

Interpretive groups

- *Land capability classification (irrigated):* None specified
- *Land capability classification (nonirrigated):* 2w
- *Hydrologic Soil Group:* B
- *Ecological site:* R073XY026NE - Silty Overflow - Veg. zone 2
- *Hydric soil rating:* No

Minor Components Holdrege

- *Percent of map unit:* 5 percent
- *Landform:* Hillslopes
- *Landform position (two-dimensional):* Summit
- *Landform position (three-dimensional):* Interfluv
- *Down-slope shape:* Linear
- *Across-slope shape:* Linear
- *Ecological site:* R075XY063NE - Loess Breaks
- *Hydric soil rating:* No

2667—Holdrege silt loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes

Map Unit Setting

- *National map unit symbol:* 2tml3
- *Elevation:* 1,130 to 2,770 feet
- *Mean annual precipitation:* 23 to 31 inches
- *Mean annual air temperature:* 50 to 54 degrees F
- *Frost-free period:* 149 to 175 days
- *Farmland classification:* All areas are prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

- *Holdrege and similar soils:* 90 percent
- *Minor components:* 10 percent
- *Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.*

Description of Holdrege Setting

- *Landform:* Hillslopes
- *Landform position (two-dimensional):* Summit
- *Landform position (three-dimensional):* Interfluve
- *Down-slope shape:* Convex
- *Across-slope shape:* Convex
- *Parent material:* Loess

Typical profile

- *Ap - 0 to 6 inches:* silt loam
- *A - 6 to 11 inches:* silt loam
- *Bt1 - 11 to 16 inches:* silty clay loam
- *Bt2 - 16 to 26 inches:* silty clay loam
- *BC - 26 to 33 inches:* silt loam
- *C - 33 to 79 inches:* silt loam

Properties and qualities

- *Slope:* 0 to 1 percent
- *Depth to restrictive feature:* More than 80 inches
- *Drainage class:* Well drained
- *Runoff class:* Low
- *Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat):* Moderately high (0.20 to 0.60 in/hr)
- *Depth to water table:* More than 80 inches
- *Frequency of flooding:* None
- *Frequency of ponding:* None
- *Calcium carbonate, maximum content:* 10 percent
- *Maximum salinity:* Nonsaline to very slightly saline (0.0 to 2.0 mmhos/cm)
- *Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches:* Very high (about 12.7 inches)

Interpretive groups

- *Land capability classification (irrigated):* 1
- *Land capability classification (nonirrigated):* 2e
- *Hydrologic Soil Group:* C
- *Ecological site:* R075XY058NE - Loamy Plains
- *Hydric soil rating:* No

Minor Components Hastings

- *Percent of map unit:* 8 percent
- *Landform:* Hillslopes
- *Landform position (two-dimensional):* Backslope
- *Landform position (three-dimensional):* Side slope
- *Down-slope shape:* Linear
- *Across-slope shape:* Linear
- *Ecological site:* R075XY058NE - Loamy Plains
- *Hydric soil rating:* No

Fillmore, frequently ponded

- *Percent of map unit:* 2 percent
- *Landform:* Playas
- *Landform position (two-dimensional):* Summit
- *Landform position (three-dimensional):* Interfluve
- *Down-slope shape:* Concave
- *Across-slope shape:* Concave
- *Ecological site:* R075XY049NE - Closed Upland Depression
- *Hydric soil rating:* Yes

2668—Holdrege silt loam, 1 to 3 percent slopes

Map Unit Setting

- *National map unit symbol:* 2tmlf
- *Elevation:* 1,130 to 2,770 feet
- *Mean annual precipitation:* 23 to 31 inches
- *Mean annual air temperature:* 50 to 54 degrees F
- *Frost-free period:* 149 to 175 days
- *Farmland classification:* All areas are prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

- *Holdrege and similar soils:* 90 percent
- *Minor components:* 10 percent
- *Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.*

Description of Holdrege Setting

- *Landform:* Hillslopes
- *Landform position (two-dimensional):* Summit
- *Landform position (three-dimensional):* Interfluve
- *Down-slope shape:* Convex
- *Across-slope shape:* Convex
- *Parent material:* Loess

Typical profile

- *Ap - 0 to 6 inches:* silt loam
- *A - 6 to 11 inches:* silt loam
- *Bt1 - 11 to 16 inches:* silty clay loam
- *Bt2 - 16 to 26 inches:* silty clay loam
- *BC - 26 to 33 inches:* silt loam
- *C - 33 to 79 inches:* silt loam

Properties and qualities

- *Slope*: 1 to 3 percent
- *Depth to restrictive feature*: More than 80 inches
- *Drainage class*: Well drained
- *Runoff class*: Low
- *Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat)*: Moderately high (0.20 to 0.60 in/hr)
- *Depth to water table*: More than 80 inches
- *Frequency of flooding*: None
- *Frequency of ponding*: None
- *Calcium carbonate, maximum content*: 10 percent
- *Maximum salinity*: Nonsaline to very slightly saline (0.0 to 2.0 mmhos/cm)
- *Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches*: Very high (about 12.7 inches)

Interpretive groups

- *Land capability classification (irrigated)*: 2e
- *Land capability classification (nonirrigated)*: 2e
- *Hydrologic Soil Group*: C
- *Ecological site*: R075XY058NE - Loamy Plains
- *Hydric soil rating*: No

Minor Components Hastings

- *Percent of map unit*: 8 percent
- *Landform*: Hillslopes
- *Landform position (two-dimensional)*: Backslope
- *Landform position (three-dimensional)*: Side slope
- *Down-slope shape*: Linear
- *Across-slope shape*: Linear
- *Ecological site*: R075XY058NE - Loamy Plains
- *Hydric soil rating*: No

Fillmore, frequently ponded

- *Percent of map unit*: 2 percent
- *Landform*: Playas
- *Landform position (two-dimensional)*: Summit
- *Landform position (three-dimensional)*: Interfluvium
- *Down-slope shape*: Concave
- *Across-slope shape*: Concave
- *Ecological site*: R075XY049NE - Closed Upland Depression
- *Hydric soil rating*: Yes

4157—Holdrege-Uly silt loams, 3 to 7 percent slopes, eroded

Map Unit Setting

- *National map unit symbol*: 2wsf5
- *Elevation*: 1,660 to 3,000 feet
- *Mean annual precipitation*: 19 to 24 inches
- *Mean annual air temperature*: 48 to 57 degrees F
- *Frost-free period*: 140 to 165 days
- *Farmland classification*: All areas are prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

- *Holdrege, eroded, and similar soils*: 45 percent
- *Uly, eroded, and similar soils*: 40 percent
- *Minor components*: 15 percent

- *Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.*

Description of Holdrege, Eroded Setting

- *Landform:* Hillslopes
- *Landform position (two-dimensional):* Summit, backslope
- *Landform position (three-dimensional):* Interfluvium
- *Down-slope shape:* Linear
- *Across-slope shape:* Linear
- *Parent material:* Loess

Typical profile

- *Ap - 0 to 7 inches:* silt loam
- *Bt1 - 7 to 11 inches:* silty clay loam
- *Bt2 - 11 to 20 inches:* silty clay loam
- *BC - 20 to 28 inches:* silt loam
- *C - 28 to 79 inches:* silt loam

Properties and qualities

- *Slope:* 3 to 7 percent
- *Depth to restrictive feature:* More than 80 inches
- *Drainage class:* Well drained
- *Runoff class:* Medium
- *Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat):* Moderately high (0.20 to 0.60 in/hr)
- *Depth to water table:* More than 80 inches
- *Frequency of flooding:* None
- *Frequency of ponding:* None
- *Calcium carbonate, maximum content:* 10 percent
- *Maximum salinity:* Nonsaline to very slightly saline (0.0 to 2.0 mmhos/cm)
- *Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches:* Very high (about 12.6 inches)

Interpretive groups

- *Land capability classification (irrigated):* 3e
- *Land capability classification (nonirrigated):* 3e
- *Hydrologic Soil Group:* C
- *Ecological site:* R073XY100KS - Loamy Plains
- *Hydric soil rating:* No

Description of Uly, Eroded Setting

- *Landform:* Hillslopes
- *Landform position (two-dimensional):* Backslope
- *Landform position (three-dimensional):* Side slope
- *Down-slope shape:* Convex
- *Across-slope shape:* Linear
- *Parent material:* Loess

Typical profile

- *Ap - 0 to 6 inches:* silt loam
- *A - 6 to 10 inches:* silt loam
- *Bk - 10 to 19 inches:* silty clay loam
- *C - 19 to 79 inches:* silt loam

Properties and qualities

- *Slope:* 3 to 7 percent
- *Depth to restrictive feature:* More than 80 inches
- *Drainage class:* Well drained
- *Runoff class:* Medium

- *Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat):* Moderately high to high (0.60 to 2.00 in/hr)
- *Depth to water table:* More than 80 inches
- *Frequency of flooding:* None
- *Frequency of ponding:* None
- *Calcium carbonate, maximum content:* 10 percent
- *Maximum salinity:* Nonsaline to very slightly saline (0.0 to 2.0 mmhos/cm)
- *Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches:* Very high (about 13.2 inches)

Interpretive groups

- *Land capability classification (irrigated):* 3e
- *Land capability classification (nonirrigated):* 3e
- *Hydrologic Soil Group:* B
- *Ecological site:* R073XY100KS - Loamy Plains
- *Hydric soil rating:* No

Minor Components Coly, eroded

- *Percent of map unit:* 15 percent
- *Landform:* Hillslopes
- *Landform position (two-dimensional):* Backslope
- *Landform position (three-dimensional):* Side slope
- *Down-slope shape:* Convex
- *Across-slope shape:* Convex
- *Ecological site:* R073XY101KS - Limy Slopes
- *Hydric soil rating:* No

8840—Hall silt loam, 0 to 1 percent slopes

Map Unit Setting

- *National map unit symbol:* 1tswd
- *Elevation:* 1,000 to 3,000 feet
- *Mean annual precipitation:* 22 to 24 inches
- *Mean annual air temperature:* 50 to 54 degrees F
- *Frost-free period:* 145 to 165 days
- *Farmland classification:* All areas are prime farmland

Map Unit Composition

- *Hall and similar soils:* 98 percent
- *Minor components:* 2 percent
- *Estimates are based on observations, descriptions, and transects of the mapunit.*

Description of Hall Setting

- *Landform:* Divides
- *Down-slope shape:* Linear
- *Across-slope shape:* Linear
- *Parent material:* Loess

Typical profile

- *A - 0 to 14 inches:* silt loam
- *Bt - 14 to 40 inches:* silty clay loam
- *C - 40 to 60 inches:* silt loam

Properties and qualities

- *Slope:* 0 to 1 percent
- *Depth to restrictive feature:* More than 80 inches

- *Drainage class:* Well drained
- *Runoff class:* Low
- *Capacity of the most limiting layer to transmit water (Ksat):* Moderately high (0.20 to 0.60 in/hr)
- *Depth to water table:* More than 80 inches
- *Frequency of flooding:* None
- *Frequency of ponding:* None
- *Calcium carbonate, maximum content:* 5 percent
- *Available water supply, 0 to 60 inches:* High (about 12.0 inches)

Interpretive groups

- *Land capability classification (irrigated):* 1
- *Land capability classification (nonirrigated):* 2c
- *Hydrologic Soil Group:* C
- *Ecological site:* R073XY100KS - Loamy Plains
- *Forage suitability group:* Not Suited (G073XY000KS)
- *Other vegetative classification:* Not Suited (G073XY000KS)
- *Hydric soil rating:* No

Minor Components Fillmore

- *Percent of map unit:* 2 percent
- *Landform:* Playas
- *Landform position (three-dimensional):* Dip
- *Down-slope shape:* Concave
- *Across-slope shape:* Concave
- *Ecological site:* R073XY115KS - Closed Upland Depression
- *Other vegetative classification:* Not Suited (G073XY000KS)
- *Hydric soil rating:* Yes

COMMUNITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY:

DRAFT

Q1 Rank the adequacy of:

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	NO OPINION	TOTAL
Law enforcement	19.23% 10	50.00% 26	19.23% 10	7.69% 4	3.85% 2	52
Fire protection	61.54% 32	32.69% 17	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	5.77% 3	52
Rescue squad/ambulance service	57.69% 30	34.62% 18	1.92% 1	0.00% 0	5.77% 3	52
Library services/facilities/hours	35.29% 18	39.22% 20	7.84% 4	3.92% 2	13.73% 7	51
Camping facilities	9.62% 5	23.08% 12	11.54% 6	30.77% 16	25.00% 13	52
Village park	17.65% 9	49.02% 25	21.57% 11	9.80% 5	1.96% 1	51
Ball park	26.92% 14	57.69% 30	7.69% 4	1.92% 1	5.77% 3	52
Downtown parking	17.31% 9	57.69% 30	21.15% 11	3.85% 2	0.00% 0	52
Control of loose pets	13.46% 7	44.23% 23	23.08% 12	9.62% 5	9.62% 5	52
Building code enforcement	9.62% 5	34.62% 18	9.62% 5	9.62% 5	36.54% 19	52
Zoning regulations enforcement	7.69% 4	34.62% 18	17.31% 9	5.77% 3	34.62% 18	52
Nuisance code enforcement	5.88% 3	31.37% 16	21.57% 11	23.53% 12	17.65% 9	51
Village wide street lighting	15.38% 8	50.00% 26	26.92% 14	1.92% 1	5.77% 3	52
Water quality	34.62% 18	48.08% 25	7.69% 4	3.85% 2	5.77% 3	52
Medical facilities/services	13.73% 7	52.94% 27	23.53% 12	7.84% 4	1.96% 1	51
Cell phone coverage	36.54% 19	51.92% 27	11.54% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	52
Local efforts toward community betterment	19.61% 10	49.02% 25	17.65% 9	9.80% 5	3.92% 2	51
Utility services provided by the city	25.00% 13	59.62% 31	9.62% 5	5.77% 3	0.00% 0	52

Q2 Rank the general appearance of:

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	NO OPINION	TOTAL
The community as a whole	25.00% 13	63.46% 33	7.69% 4	3.85% 2	0.00% 0	52
Highway entrances to town	23.08% 12	65.38% 34	11.54% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	52
Residential areas	15.38% 8	67.31% 35	13.46% 7	3.85% 2	0.00% 0	52
Vacant houses	1.92% 1	30.77% 16	26.92% 14	30.77% 16	9.62% 5	52
Vacant lots	3.85% 2	28.85% 15	38.46% 20	17.31% 9	11.54% 6	52
Main street - downtown	21.15% 11	67.31% 35	7.69% 4	1.92% 1	1.92% 1	52

Q3 Rate the Condition of:

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

	EXCELLENT	GOOD	FAIR	POOR	NO OPINION	TOTAL
Streets in residential/downtown	5.77% 3	65.38% 34	19.23% 10	9.62% 5	0.00% 0	52
Sidewalks in residential/downtown	3.85% 2	59.62% 31	25.00% 13	11.54% 6	0.00% 0	52
Swimming pool	3.85% 2	19.23% 10	30.77% 16	36.54% 19	9.62% 5	52
Village park	13.46% 7	53.85% 28	19.23% 10	7.69% 4	5.77% 3	52
Elwood Civic Center	40.00% 20	50.00% 25	4.00% 2	0.00% 0	6.00% 3	50

Q4 What improvements to the village park are most important to you?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
ADA accessibility	36.54% 19	23.08% 12	25.00% 13	15.38% 8	52	2.81
Concession stand updates	13.46% 7	21.15% 11	25.00% 13	40.38% 21	52	2.08
Playground equipment updates	19.23% 10	40.38% 21	28.85% 15	11.54% 6	52	2.67
Lighting updates	30.77% 16	15.38% 8	21.15% 11	32.69% 17	52	2.44

Q5 Should the village:

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

	DEFINITELY	PROBABLY	PROBABLY NOT	DEFINITELY NOT	NO OPINION	TOTAL
Hire/provide funding for an Economic Developer	23.08% 12	30.77% 16	21.15% 11	11.54% 6	13.46% 7	52
Enforce nuisance regulations	42.31% 22	40.38% 21	5.77% 3	5.77% 3	5.77% 3	52
Enforce zoning ordinances	38.46% 20	40.38% 21	7.69% 4	1.92% 1	11.54% 6	52
Develop a plan to expand village limits for new residential/business areas	34.00% 17	44.00% 22	8.00% 4	6.00% 3	8.00% 4	50

Q6 Does Elwood encourage public participation - individuals having a voice regarding local government decisions?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	63.46%	33
No	28.85%	15
No opinion	7.69%	4
TOTAL		52

Q7 Should the community investigate the development/renovation of a community project?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	80.77%	42
No	5.77%	3
No Opinion	13.46%	7
TOTAL		52

Q8 Should the new/renovated community project focus on:

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Recreation (dog park, walking trail, etc.)	34.62%	18
Streets/Sidewalks	32.69%	17
Pool	51.92%	27
Wellness center	34.62%	18
Firehall improvements	25.00%	13
Parking area for semis or downtown parking	9.62%	5
Pickleball court	11.54%	6
Other (please specify)	9.62%	5
Total Respondents: 52		

Q9 Would you be willing to volunteer your labor to help complete/renovate a community project to meet the identified needs?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	73.08%	38
No	26.92%	14
TOTAL		52

Q10 Would you contribute to a fund drive for the community project?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	92.31%	48
No	7.69%	4
TOTAL		52

Q11 Are the following projects needed in the community?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

	DEFINITELY	PROBABLY	PROBABLY NOT	DEFINITELY NOT	NO OPINION	TOTAL
Dog park	5.77% 3	28.85% 15	28.85% 15	19.23% 10	17.31% 9	52
Pickleball court	5.88% 3	35.29% 18	23.53% 12	21.57% 11	13.73% 7	51
Pool - new	44.23% 23	19.23% 10	13.46% 7	17.31% 9	5.77% 3	52
Pool - update existing	28.85% 15	28.85% 15	21.15% 11	19.23% 10	1.92% 1	52
Recreations such as axe throwing, bowling alley, escape room, etc.)	5.88% 3	21.57% 11	41.18% 21	21.57% 11	9.80% 5	51
Splash pad	16.00% 8	48.00% 24	12.00% 6	18.00% 9	6.00% 3	50
Walking trail	23.08% 12	32.69% 17	25.00% 13	15.38% 8	3.85% 2	52
Wellness center	25.00% 13	32.69% 17	23.08% 12	11.54% 6	7.69% 4	52
RV parking/camping area	11.54% 6	44.23% 23	19.23% 10	5.77% 3	19.23% 10	52
Sidewalk reconstruction	23.08% 12	50.00% 26	21.15% 11	1.92% 1	3.85% 2	52
Residential street maintenance	32.69% 17	51.92% 27	11.54% 6	0.00% 0	3.85% 2	52
Commercial truck parking area	3.85% 2	26.92% 14	34.62% 18	9.62% 5	25.00% 13	52
Downtown parking area	3.85% 2	25.00% 13	46.15% 24	5.77% 3	19.23% 10	52
Firehall improvements	19.61% 10	33.33% 17	19.61% 10	3.92% 2	23.53% 12	51

Q12 If partial funding for the projects listed above can be acquired from state and federal sources, how should Elwood fund its share?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Community fundraising events	80.77%	42
Private contributions/foundations	69.23%	36
Local investment groups	50.00%	26
Bonds	36.54%	19
Property taxes	23.08%	12
Village sales tax	42.31%	22
Total Respondents: 52		

Q13 Do you agree with the following statement as it pertains to your household?*At least one time within the last 90 days, we have worried whether our food would run out before we could afford more?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	5.77%	3
No	94.23%	49
TOTAL		52

Q14 Are you aware of the Food Pantry located at the Methodist Church?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	86.54%	45
No	13.46%	7
TOTAL		52

Q15 Are you aware the Senior Center delivered meals are available for those age 55 and over or with mobility needs?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	78.85%	41
No	21.15%	11
TOTAL		52

Q16 What would encourage you to volunteer at more community events such as parades, the chili cook off, Sunday evening supper in the park, or the county fair?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
More awareness of opportunities	59.62%	31
Meeting times in the evening	19.23%	10
Meeting times on the weekend	3.85%	2
Other (please specify)	32.69%	17
Total Respondents: 52		

Q17 Overall, how do you feel about Elwood?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very positive	32.69%	17
Positive	51.92%	27
Neutral	5.77%	3
Negative	5.77%	3
Very negative	3.85%	2
TOTAL		52

Q18 Why do you feel that way?

Answered: 52 Skipped: 0

DRAFT

Q19 Do you live in:

Answered: 51 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
House	96.08%	49
Apartment	3.92%	2
Mobile home	0.00%	0
Duplex / Townhome	0.00%	0
Public / Assisted housing	0.00%	0
TOTAL		51

Q20 Do you pay more than 30% of your income towards housing (rent/mortgage plus utilities)?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	29.41%	15
No	70.59%	36
TOTAL		51

Q21 How many bedrooms are in your home?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1	1.96%	1
2	17.65%	9
3	39.22%	20
4	25.49%	13
5+	15.69%	8
TOTAL		51

Q22 How would you rate the condition of your residence?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Excellent, solid roof & foundation, contributes positively to community's housing stock	50.98%	26
Structurally sound, may need minor repairs such as shingles, paint, concrete steps, or new doors	43.14%	22
Substantial wear, has one major issue such as sagging roof, missing or rotted siding, rotting windows, sagging porch	5.88%	3
Overall unsatisfactory condition, multiple issues such as a crumbling foundation, broken or rotted windows and doors, sagging roof	0.00%	0
TOTAL		51

Q23 Do you rent or own your home?

Answered: 51 Skipped: 1

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Rent	9.80%	5
Own	90.20%	46
TOTAL		51

Q24 Does your current rental meet your needs?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 48

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	50.00%	2
No	25.00%	1
If No, indicate the primary reason: (select only one)	0.00%	0
Too small	0.00%	0
Too large	0.00%	0
Cost	0.00%	0
Location	0.00%	0
Quality	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	25.00%	1
TOTAL		4

Q25 What are you currently paying for rent on a monthly basis? (not including utilities)

Answered: 5 Skipped: 47

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
less than \$500	20.00%	1
\$500-\$699	40.00%	2
\$700-\$899	0.00%	0
\$900-\$1,099	20.00%	1
\$1,099 +	20.00%	1
TOTAL		5

Q26 If other rental housing were available in Elwood which type would you prefer?

Answered: 8 Skipped: 44

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
No preference	12.50%	1
Single family home	50.00%	4
Apartment	25.00%	2
Duplex / Multiplex	12.50%	1
Upper story living	0.00%	0
Mobile home	0.00%	0
TOTAL		8

Q27 How difficult was it to find your current rental?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 47

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Very difficult	0.00%	0
Somewhat difficult	20.00%	1
Not very difficult	60.00%	3
Not difficult at all	20.00%	1
TOTAL		5

Q28 How long do you plan to continue renting?

Answered: 4 Skipped: 48

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than 1 year	0.00%	0
1-2 years	0.00%	0
3-5 years	25.00%	1
6-10 years	25.00%	1
More than 10 years	50.00%	2
TOTAL		4

Q29 Do you prefer to rent or own? (if Rent, skip to next section)

Answered: 11 Skipped: 41

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Own	72.73%	8
Rent	27.27%	3
TOTAL		11

Q30 What is your price range for purchasing a home?

Answered: 5 Skipped: 47

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Less than \$100,000	40.00%	2
\$100,001 - \$150,000	20.00%	1
\$150,001 - \$200,000	0.00%	0
\$200,001 - \$250,000	0.00%	0
\$251,001 - \$350,000	0.00%	0
More than \$350,000	40.00%	2
TOTAL		5

Q31 Which of the following are barriers for you?

Answered: 6 Skipped: 46

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lack of down payment	0.00%	0
Lack of available housing	16.67%	1
Lack of housing in our price range	33.33%	2
Lack of available lot/building site	16.67%	1
Other (please specify)	33.33%	2
TOTAL		6

Q32 Would you be willing to apply for cost sharing assistance to complete rehabilitation of your home?

Answered: 39 Skipped: 13

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	41.03%	16
No	58.97%	23
TOTAL		39

Q33 Are you considering changing your residence to upgrade or downsize? (If No, go to next section)

Answered: 42 Skipped: 10

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Upgrade	16.67%	7
Downsize	4.76%	2
No	78.57%	33
TOTAL		42

Q34 If you've considered changing your residence, which type of housing would you prefer? (select only one)

Answered: 21 Skipped: 31

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Apartment	4.76%	1
Duplex	4.76%	1
Single family home	57.14%	12
Townhome	0.00%	0
Upper story living	0.00%	0
No preference	33.33%	7
TOTAL		21

Q35 What barriers keep you from changing your residence?

Answered: 16 Skipped: 36

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lack of available housing	31.25%	5
Lack of lot/building site	18.75%	3
Lack of down payment	12.50%	2
Other (please specify)	37.50%	6
TOTAL		16

Q36 Are you considering building a new home in the community?

Answered: 35 Skipped: 17

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	8.57%	3
No	91.43%	32
TOTAL		35

Q37 Would you utilize the following businesses if they were available in Elwood?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

	DEFINITELY	PROBABLY	DEFINITELY NOT	PROBABLY NOT	NO OPINION	TOTAL
Appliance store/repair shop	30.43% 14	36.96% 17	2.17% 1	23.91% 11	6.52% 3	46
Automatic car wash	36.96% 17	47.83% 22	0.00% 0	13.04% 6	2.17% 1	46
Home cleaning service	8.70% 4	30.43% 14	8.70% 4	36.96% 17	15.22% 7	46
Auto body shop	30.43% 14	43.48% 20	6.52% 3	6.52% 3	13.04% 6	46
Computer, mobile phone repair	13.04% 6	43.48% 20	6.52% 3	30.43% 14	6.52% 3	46
Pharmacy	47.83% 22	34.78% 16	0.00% 0	15.22% 7	2.17% 1	46
Accountant	13.04% 6	36.96% 17	8.70% 4	34.78% 16	6.52% 3	46
Optometrist	13.04% 6	58.70% 27	4.35% 2	17.39% 8	6.52% 3	46
Dentist	21.74% 10	45.65% 21	4.35% 2	17.39% 8	10.87% 5	46
Newspaper	26.09% 12	34.78% 16	10.87% 5	17.39% 8	10.87% 5	46

Q38 Rank the importance of the following chamber of commerce focus areas, 1, most important, to 4, least important:

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

	1	2	3	4	TOTAL	SCORE
Local events	58.70% 27	30.43% 14	6.52% 3	4.35% 2	46	3.43
Tourism	0.00% 0	17.39% 8	45.65% 21	36.96% 17	46	1.80
Educating/supporting businesses	39.13% 18	41.30% 19	15.22% 7	4.35% 2	46	3.15
Networking opportunities	2.17% 1	10.87% 5	32.61% 15	54.35% 25	46	1.61

Q39 Rank the importance of the following economic development focus areas, 1, most important, to 4, least important:

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Support the expansion of existing businesses	26.09% 12	39.13% 18	21.74% 10	8.70% 4	4.35% 2	46	3.74
Attract new business & industry	30.43% 14	21.74% 10	26.09% 12	15.22% 7	6.52% 3	46	3.54
Support creation of new, small businesses	13.04% 6	23.91% 11	41.30% 19	17.39% 8	4.35% 2	46	3.24
Promoting tourism	0.00% 0	8.70% 4	2.17% 1	30.43% 14	58.70% 27	46	1.61
New housing developments	30.43% 14	6.52% 3	8.70% 4	28.26% 13	26.09% 12	46	2.87

Q40 What would enable you to improve your employment? (check all that apply)

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Additional training	6.52%	3
Formal education	2.17%	1
Career exploration	2.17%	1
Childcare	4.35%	2
Computer skill training	8.70%	4
Not applicable/ not interested	84.78%	39
Total Respondents: 46		

Q41 Are you interested in starting or purchasing a business in town?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	19.57%	9
No	80.43%	37
TOTAL		46

Q42 If yes, what is keeping you from starting or purchasing a business:

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Lack of a business plan	8.70%	4
Lack of employees	13.04%	6
Lack of funding	6.52%	3
Lack of a facility	6.52%	3
Other (please specify)	65.22%	30
TOTAL		46

Q43 Are you a business owner that will be seeking to transition out of your business in the future?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	8.70%	4
No	91.30%	42
TOTAL		46

Q44 If yes, how soon do you want to transition?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
1-5 years	2.17%	1
6-10 years	2.17%	1
More than 10 years	4.35%	2
Does not apply	91.30%	42
TOTAL		46

Q45 If you plan to transition your business, what assistance would be helpful to you? (check all that apply)

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Assistance establishing a value / sales price	13.04%	6
Assistance finding a buyer or establishing an exit plan	19.57%	9
Other (please specify)	71.74%	33
Total Respondents: 46		

Q46 Should Elwood utilize incentives to encourage housing development?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES		RESPONSES	
Yes		82.61%	38
No		17.39%	8
TOTAL			46

Q47 Should Elwood utilize incentives to encourage business development?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	91.30%	42
No	8.70%	4
TOTAL		46

Q48 Would you support a new village sales tax?

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	69.57%	32
No	30.43%	14
TOTAL		46

Q49 If a village sales tax was passed, should it:

Answered: 46 Skipped: 6

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Be limited to a specific project	30.43%	14
Be limited to a specific time period	26.09%	12
Remain in force and be used as needed	43.48%	20
TOTAL		46

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