

THE CITY OF
GERING

1995

(amendment #1 – November 2001)

**COMPREHENSIVE
PLAN**

PREPARED FOR
THE CITY OF GERING

BY
THE PANHANDLE AREA DEVELOPMENT DISTRICT

Amendment to the City of Gering Comprehensive Plan Regarding Future Development of the Gering Bypass Area

In 1995, the City of Gering adopted an updated Comprehensive Plan to guide future growth and development in the community. At the time this document was adopted the final location of the Gering Bypass portion of the Heartland Expressway had not been determined. As a result, the 1995 Comprehensive Plan suggested limiting development in the general area of the bypass until the final location had been determined.

Several development principles were also discussed on the goal and policy sections of the 1995 Comprehensive Plan relating to future development of the bypass area. These policies and goals suggested the following:

- Future development of the bypass area should be carefully planned.
- The bypass area should incorporate features such as frontage roads and planned commercial parks.
- Landscaping and signage standards should be adopted ensure a pleasant physical environment.
- Strip development should be discouraged.
- Key intersections should be improved to entice visitors into the community.

Once the final bypass location had been determined the City of Gering initiated a process to begin planning for future land use in the bypass area. The Panhandle Area Development District was requested to assist the city with this effort. Research conducted by the Panhandle Area Development District included:

- reviewing development patterns/trends in the twin cities,
- reviewing land conversion trends for commercial development in Gering,
- evaluating existing zoned land available for industrial, commercial and residential uses,
- identifying potential land use conflicts and environmental design factors in the bypass area, and
- reviewing existing and projected traffic volumes.

Upon reviewing this information with the Gering Planning Commission, discussions were held regarding alternative development visions for the community, identifying bypass development goals and strategies, and identifying future land use patterns.

A summary of the research findings and conclusions, results of the Planning Commission discussions and a proposed future land use plan for the bypass area are included in the following pages.

GERING BYPASS - Key Future Development Concepts Discussed

Gering/Scottsbluff Development Patterns

- ⇒ Fast food, medical, travel and retail clusters have located in Scottsbluff.
- ⇒ Gering is home to a developing tourism cluster with the Monument, Amphitheatre, RV Park, Civic Center, motel and golf course developments.
- ⇒ Gering has served as a primary single family residential development area.
- ⇒ Scottsbluff has captured much of the more recent multi-family residential development.

- ◇ Historical and recently emerging land use patterns in both Gering and Scottsbluff must be considered in planning future land use of the Gering Bypass.

Recent Land Use Conversion in Gering

- ⇒ On approximately fifteen occasions from 1994 to 2000 land was converted from an undeveloped status to a commercial activity. Two of these land conversions involved relocations of existing Gering businesses (Masek's and Midtown Animal Hospital) and six conversions were publicly sponsored/supported and/or non-profit projects (WAPA, Microtel, Civic Center Parking Lot, Farm & Ranch Museum, Amphitheater, Golf Course).
- ⇒ The remaining commercial land conversions involved one gas station (Texaco), one fast food facility (McDonalds), one cleaning service and three storage rental facilities.

- ◇ Gering has been able to capture a limited share of the recent commercial development activity taking place in the Twin Cities community.

Land Available for Development

- ⇒ Upper income residential development will continue to occur at the golf course or near the Monument.
- ⇒ Middle income development space is available near the Geil School and Pappas Addition areas.
- ⇒ Ample space is also available for low income housing developments.
- ⇒ Land available for commercial development is extremely limited and/or in a poor location.
- ⇒ Too much land may be currently zoned for industrial development.

- The short supply of commercial land available for development along with locational factors may have restricted growth in Gering.
- The volume of land available for residential and industrial development in Gering indicates the city may not need to provide more "traditional" development space but could utilize the bypass corridor to implement development concepts to create a unique environment.

Projected Traffic Volume and Intervening Opportunities

- ⇒ Year 2003 projected average daily traffic (ADT) volumes on highways entering Gering are 2,960 vehicles per day (VPD) on #71S; 2,495 VPD on #92E; and 960 VPD on #92W.
- ⇒ Year 2023 projections at the same locations are for 6,600 vehicles per day (VPD) on #71S; 4,200 VPD on #92E; and 3,200 VPD on #92W.
- ⇒ In comparison, year 2023 projected traffic volumes on Highway #26 east and west of Scottsbluff are for 15,000 VPD and 10,000 VPD respectively.
- ⇒ Projected traffic volumes suggest the most opportunistic development site for traveler services would be near the #71S intersection in Gering.

- Gering's ability to attract commercial development to the Bypass will be heavily influenced by existing traffic volumes, shopping patterns and employment commuting patterns in the Twin Cities community.

Land Use Conflicts and Environmental Design Factors

- ⇒ The proposed Gering Bypass will create six interchanges providing access to Gering. These include:
 1. A limited access interchange on #71 S,
 2. A full access at-grade interchange a short distance to the north on #71 S,
 3. An at-grade intersection on the south side of the City which will provide access to gravel roads and existing residential neighborhoods adjacent to 14th Street.
 4. An at-grade intersection on the south side of the City which will provide access to gravel roads and existing residential neighborhoods adjacent to 7th Street.
 5. A future at-grade intersection providing access to the Gering Industrial Park.
 6. An elevated crossing/intersection at Highway #92 on the east edge of the city,
 7. An at-grade intersection near the existing sugar factory road/U Street intersection east of the city.
- ⇒ The interchange design at interchange #1 will limit development access.
- ⇒ Land use and environmental design conflicts are present at interchanges #6 and #7 listed above due to the close proximity of waste treatment facilities/lagoons, unsightly industrial developments and/or the style of interchange needed to negotiate railroad tracks. These conditions could limit or detract from certain types of future investment at these locations.
- ⇒ The existing gravel roads and access to the community through residential areas will require special design considerations at interchanges #4.
- ⇒ The location and access to the community provided by interchanges #2 and #3 may present these areas with the greatest development potential.

Alternative Gering Development Visions Discussed

- ⇒ Out-compete Scottsbluff for commercial and retail development.
 - ⇒ Pursue manufacturing and high technology industries with a possible Front Range connection.
 - ⇒ Develop alternative or unique high class office, commercial and retail establishments that will compliment existing Twin Cities development.
 - ⇒ Develop as a high quality community with a focus on the development of schools, parks and other amenities needed to become the most attractive location for residential development.
 - ⇒ Take advantage of the Wildcat Hills view to the south while incorporating clean industry development along with unique residential and commercial activity in the bypass area.
- ◇ Gering's vision should incorporate most of the concepts described above while not attempting to duplicate Scottsbluff development trends.

Bypass Development Goals & Strategies

- ⇒ Create a unique, clean and odor free gateway style entrance extending the length of the bypass to provide a positive first impression of the community.
- ⇒ Create a sense of neighborhood in the bypass area by incorporating parks (or open spaces) with trails providing access to the community, not just another attachment to the city proper.
- ⇒ Maintain scenic vistas and install the impression of an uncongested community with "room for growth" by incorporating larger lot sizes & yards, maximum lot coverage requirements and decreasing development densities close to the bypass.
- ⇒ Promote orderly growth through the wise use of land and transportation access by promoting the development of commercial, industrial and residential clusters; and by preserving key locations for certain types of development.
- ⇒ Incorporate landscaping and signage standards to maintain a unique and high quality atmosphere.
- ⇒ Provide flexibility and adaptability in development standards to promote mixed use potential and allow for developer creativity.

Gering Bypass Future Land Use

Rural Residential Estate District

INTENT: Rural residential estates would be promoted to preserve views of the Wildcat Hills to the south and to provide a positive first impression of the community as a quality environment with room for growth.

Traveler Services District

INTENT: This district would be intended to preserve land adjacent to primary highway interchanges for the development of businesses that cater to the traveling public. This district would not be intended to serve as a general retail area for businesses primarily engaged in the provision of services or sale of retail goods to local residents.

Heavy Commercial District

INTENT: The heavy commercial district would provide a location for businesses that due to their nature require outdoor storage of supplies and equipment, may be aesthetically unpleasant and require screening, and which do not easily conform to permitted commercial uses in other zoning districts.

Employment Center District

INTENT: The employment center district would preserve land in close proximity to primary highway interchanges and local thoroughfares for the development of higher traffic retail, commercial, office and/or industrial uses. This district would allow mixed use development and provide for low visual impact by restricting the level of outdoor storage and commercial or industrial activity.

Light & Heavy Industrial Districts

Existing industrial zones would be utilized. However, some of the zone boundaries would be changed to eliminate excessive land reservation for these uses.

City of Gering Proposed Bypass Land Use

- ▲ Bypass
- Bypass Zones
- ▲ Traveler Services
- Employment Center
- Highway Commercial
- Light Industrial
- Heavy Industrial
- Rural Residential Estate



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TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Resolution of Adoption

Chapter 1: Introduction

1. Purpose and Scope of the Comprehensive Development Plan	1
2. Description of Planning Process.....	1

Chapter 2: History

1. Historical Development.....	2
2. Previous Planning Efforts.....	3
A. Comprehensive Plans.....	3
B. Housing Plan.....	3
C. Urban Design Plan.....	3
D. Community Attitude Survey.....	3
E. Downtown Revitalization Plan.....	4
F. Bypass Development Plan.....	4

Chapter 3: Environment

1. Introduction.....	5
2. Geographic Location.....	5
3. Physiography.....	6
4. Climate.....	6
5. Geology.....	6
6. Prime and Marginal Farmland.....	7
7. Water Resources.....	7
8. Water Rights.....	7
9. Flood Plains.....	8
10. Tree Inventory.....	9
11. Planning Issues.....	11

Chapter 4: Population

1. Introduction.....	12
2. Historical Population Change.....	12
3. Population Composition.....	14
4. Population Projections.....	16
5. Planning Issues.....	18

Chapter 5: Economy

1. Introduction.....	19
2. Income.....	19
3. Poverty.....	20
4. Education.....	22
5. Labor Force.....	23
6. Employment.....	24
7. Employment by Industry.....	24
8. Employment by Occupation.....	26
9. Unemployment.....	27
10. Strength of the Economy.....	27
A. Retail Trade.....	27
B. Wholesale Trade.....	29
C. Manufacturing.....	30
D. Services.....	30
E. Agriculture.....	31
11. Summary.....	32
12. Planning Issues.....	33

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 6: Housing

1. Introduction.....	34
2. Housing Stock.....	34
3. Affordability.....	36
4. Vacant Lot Inventory.....	37
5. Recent Development Trends.....	38
6. Current Development Activity.....	39
A. Single Family Housing.....	39
B. Multi-Family Housing.....	39
C. Elderly Housing.....	39
7. Ten and Twenty Year Housing Needs.....	40
8. Future Housing Development.....	41
9. Planning Issues.....	43

Chapter 7: Transportation

1. Introduction.....	44
2. Streets and Highways.....	44
3. Major Street System.....	44
4. Rail Transportation.....	45
5. Air Transportation.....	45
6. Heartland Express.....	45
7. Planning Issues.....	47

Chapter 8: Public Facilities

1. Schools.....	48
2. Inventory of Schools.....	48
3. WNCC.....	50
4. Parks and Recreation.....	50
5. YMCA.....	52
6. Municipal Golf Course.....	52
7. Department of Parks.....	52
8. Police Station.....	53
9. Fire Department.....	53
10. Public Works Department.....	53
11. Administration Building.....	53
12. Hospital.....	53
13. Library.....	54
14. Post Office and Package Services.....	54
15. West Lawn Cemetery.....	54
16. Senior Citizens Center.....	54
17. Civic Center.....	55
18. Information Sources.....	55
19. Planning Issues.....	56

Chapter 9: Public Utilities

1. Electricity.....	57
2. Natural Gas.....	57
3. Water.....	57
4. Sanitary Sewer.....	57
5. Solid Waste.....	57

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 10: Urban Design

1. Introduction.....	58
2. Defining Entrances.....	58
3. Improving Inter-Urban Connections.....	58
4. Strengthening Community Nodes.....	59
5. Enhancing and Linking Park Systems.....	59
6. Capitalizing on Natural Setting.....	60
7. Planning Issues.....	61

Chapter 11: Land Use

1. Introduction.....	62
2. Land Use Classifications.....	62
A. Residential.....	62
B. Commercial.....	62
C. Industrial.....	62
D. Park and Recreation.....	62
E. Public/ Semi-Public.....	63
F. Streets/Alleys.....	63
G. Vacant.....	63
3. Land Use Inventory.....	64
4. Land Use Patterns.....	65
5. Corporate Area Residential Uses.....	66
A. Southwest.....	66
B. West.....	66
C. Northfield.....	66
D. Monument.....	66
E. East.....	67
F. Southeast.....	67
G. Highland.....	67
6. Corporate Area Commercial Uses.....	68
A. CBD.....	68
B. North Tenth Street.....	68
C. Highway 92.....	68
D. South Tenth Street.....	68
7. Outlying Commercial Uses.....	69
8. Corporate Area Industrial Uses.....	69
9. Outlying Industrial Uses.....	69
10. Land Use Conflicts.....	70
A. Residential.....	70
B. Commercial.....	70
C. Environmental.....	70
11. Land Use Projections.....	71
12. Planning Issues.....	72

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter 12: Development Plan

- 1. Introduction..... 73
- 2. Future Development Goals..... 73
- 3. Development Objectives..... 74
 - A. Environmental..... 74
 - B. Population..... 74
 - C. Economic..... 74
 - D. Housing..... 74
 - E. Transportation..... 75
 - F. Public Facilities..... 75
 - G. Urban Design..... 75
 - H. Land Use..... 75
- 4. Land Use Policy..... 76
 - A. General..... 76
 - B. Natural and Urban Environmental..... 76
 - C. Residential..... 76
 - D. Commercial..... 77
 - E. Industrial..... 77
- 5. Recommended Physical Development Improvements..... 78
 - A. Urban Design/Environmental Improvement Areas..... 78
 - B. Major Intersections and Community Entrances..... 78
 - C. Commercial Districts..... 78
 - D. Natural Amenities..... 78
 - E. Park Development..... 79
 - F. Transportation Improvements..... 79
 - G. Urban Revitalization/Renewal Areas..... 79
 - H. Future Elementary School..... 80
 - I. Industrial/Commercial Parks..... 80
 - J. Excess School Capacity/Multi-Family Encouragement Areas..... 80

LISTING OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Population by Decade.....	13
Figure 2: Population Change, 1930- 1990.....	13
Figure 3: Population By Age Group, 1970 - 1990.....	14
Figure 4: Male/Female Population, 1970 - 1990.....	15
Figure 5: Population by Race, 1980 - 1990.....	15
Figure 6: Population Change by Age Group 1990 - 2000.....	17
Figure 7: Per Capita Income, 1970 - 1990.....	19
Figure 8: Median Family Income, 1970 - 1990.....	20
Figure 9: Poverty Rate (Persons), 1970 - 1990.....	21
Figure 10: Poverty Rate (Families), 1970 - 1990.....	21
Figure 11: Educational Attainment 12+ Years, 1970 - 1990.....	22
Figure 12: Educational Attainment 16+ Years, 1970 - 1990.....	22
Figure 13: Labor Force Participation Rates, 1970 - 1990.....	23
Figure 14: % Change in Total Employment, 1970 - 1990.....	24
Figure 15: Employment by Industry, 1990.....	25
Figure 16: Employment by Industry, 1980.....	25
Figure 17: Employment by Occupation, 1990.....	26
Figure 18: Employment by Occupation, 1980.....	26
Figure 19: Change in Adjusted Retail Sales, 1982 - 1992.....	29
Figure 20: Change in Adjusted Wholesale Trade, 1982 - 1987.	29
Figure 21: Change in Adjusted Manufacturing Shipments.....	30
Figure 22: Change in Adjusted Service Receipts, 1982 - 1992.	31
Figure 23: Housing Stock by Type of Unit in Gering.....	35
Figure 24: Single Family Homes in Twin Cities Area.....	35
Figure 25: Multi-Family Homes in Twin Cities Area.....	35
Figure 26: Mobile Home Units in Twin Cities Area.....	36
Figure 27: Gering Land Use.....	64
Figure 28: Gering Land Use Distribution.....	65

LISTING OF TABLES

Table 1: Community Tree Inventory.....	9
Table 2: Recommended Landscape Trees for Western NE.....	10
Table 3: Projected Population.....	17
Table 4: Change in Industrial Employment, 1980 to 1990.....	25
Table 5: Occupational Employment Change, 1970 - 1990	27
Table 6: Inflation Adjusted Retail Sales Comparison, 1982-92.	28
Table 7: Housing Affordability.....	37
Table 8: Gering Construction and Demolition Activity.....	38
Table 9: Projected Housing Needs for Gering, 1990 - 2000.....	40
Table 10: Traffic Flow and Safety Concerns.....	45
Table 11: Gering School Enrollments.....	49
Table 12: Gering Recreational Facilities.....	51
Table 13: Gering Land Use Inventory.....	64

LISTING OF MAPS

Map 1: Geographic Location.....	5
Map 2: Flood Plain Map.....	8a
Map 3: Street Classifications.....	44a
Map 4: Average Daily Traffic Volume.....	45a
Map 5: Existing Land Use.....	65a
Map 6: Future Land Use.....	81a
Map 7: Future Land Use (Two Mile Planning Area).....	81b
Map 8: Future Development Plan.....	81c

INTRODUCTION

Purpose and Scope of the Comprehensive Development Plan

The primary purpose for the development of any comprehensive plan is to provide basic guidelines and policies for use by public officials and the private sector whose decisions may affect existing and/or future uses of land and resources within the planning area. This document is a continuation of previous planning efforts and is intended to promote orderly growth and development within the City of Gering, as well as to provide guidelines for directing physical change.

The intended scope of the plan is to provide a general analysis of the needs of the City of Gering and its' residents, particularly as they are related to existing and future uses of the land. In doing so, the plan evaluates past trends in several subject areas and attempts to project in what manner changes will occur several years into the future. Primary emphasis is placed upon how these changing trends might impact physical growth and development within the City and the identification of policies needed to direct that change.

Although this study is a comprehensive plan for the incorporated areas of the City of Gering, it recognizes that both existing and future activities within the remainder of the county may directly or indirectly cause change to occur in the city. The conclusions drawn in this study attempt to incorporate these potential impacts and reflect the need for intergovernmental cooperation.

Description of the Planning Process

As directed by the Gering City Council, preparation of this plan was undertaken by the Gering Planning Commission. Technical assistance was provided by the Panhandle Area Development District. The study followed a general planning process consisting of research, analysis, identification of needs and the subsequent development of land use goals, objectives and policies. Background data was gathered from the U.S. Census; county soil surveys; local and regional plans; field surveys and aerial photographs. Public input was obtained by reviews of recent planning projects, a public needs assessment survey, comments at public meetings, and comments received through the distribution of a draft document.

The background data was reviewed by the Planning Commission and used to develop goals, objectives, and land use policies. The Planning Commission held a public hearing to obtain additional public input prior to recommending adoption of the plan by the Gering City Council.

*A plan to provide
guidelines & policies
to direct physical
change in Gering*

HISTORY

Historical Development

Although the city of Gering was established just over a century ago, it carries the ghosts of a colorful and extensive history. Situated in the North Platte River Valley, it has served as a prairie pathway for at least 10,000 years. Native Americans were attracted to this area to hunt buffalo which converged at the river. These Indians came upon a prodigious bluff ascending 800 feet above the valley floor. Its size and adjoining badlands inspired the Indians to name the bluff Me-a-pa-te, meaning "hill that is hard to go around."

The first whites to use the North Platte route were seven of John Jacob Astor's men who arrived at Me-a-pa-te on Christmas Day 1812. Within a decade the bluff became a familiar sight to trading caravans traveling to the Rocky Mountains. Me-a-pa-te was renamed Scotts Bluff in memory of Hiram Scott, a fur company clerk. Scott died tragically at the foot of the bluff after being deserted and left for dead far to the west at Laramie Fork.

The routes traveled by these traders and trappers were later taken by people headed for the Pacific along the Oregon and Mormon trails. Forty-Niners, military expeditions, stagecoaches, Pony Express riders, and mail and freight carriers quickly joined the trailblazers along this route.

With the connection of the Union and Central Pacific railroads in 1869, the Oregon trail's traffic waned and the railroad became the new mode of transportation to the west. Ranching in the area began in the 1870's and by the late 1880's homesteaders started to stream into the valley.

On April 27, 1887, Gering, originally known as Vendome, was founded. In 1888, Gering was named the county seat of the newly created Scotts Bluff county. The Burlington railroad extended through the valley in 1899, but did not go through Gering until 1910. The railroad provided easy access to the City resulting in the rapid progression of Gering.

Today Gering serves as a service and retail center for much of the Panhandle and eastern Wyoming. Cars and planes now take the place of horses and covered wagons, but the spirit and work ethic of Hiram Scott and the other pioneers lives on to this day.

*Gering was established
in 1887 under the name
Vendome*

HISTORY

Previous Planning Efforts

Comprehensive Plan:

The City of Gering last adopted a comprehensive plan in 1980. The plan provided a summary of demographic, economic, land use, and related data. The plan incorporated this data along with population projections and current city facilities to develop future land use plans and overall policy and physical development recommendations.

This plan formed the basis for future decision making regarding the use of land, proposed public developments, and land use development restrictions. Current land use inventories and site visits to developed areas suggest that the City has, for the most part, followed the recommended land use policies depicted in the plan.

Housing Plan:

"A Housing Plan for the Twin Cities" was developed in 1993 to examine the housing situation in the Twin Cities Area. The plan examined demographics, the economy, housing inventory, vacant lot inventory, housing trends, and the overall housing market. From this analysis the housing needs of the city were identified. A comprehensive housing plan was then developed for the city. The City has undertaken projects to implement recommendations offered in the plan.

Urban Design Plan:

"The Sweep of the Sky, The Cities of the Hills" is an urban design plan written in 1992. The plan's purpose is to develop a unified concept for physical improvements in the Twin Cities area. It also develops an implementation program to ensure that the plan becomes reality.

The urban design plan pinpointed the areas assets and liabilities. Using this information the plan developed six design themes. An implementation plan concluded the report detailing how to finance and perform the design plans identified in the themes. Few projects have been implemented at this point. However, efforts to initiate projects are underway.

Community Attitude Survey:

In 1992, Gering developed the "Gering 1992-93 Community Attitude Survey". This survey was developed to receive reactions of Gering citizens regarding utility rates, public and professional services, local amenities, housing, business climate, and community improvements. This information was used to identify the City's strengths and weaknesses so as to assist in developing programs to improve the quality of life in Gering.

*The City of Gering
last completed a
comprehensive plan
in 1980*

*The City of Gering is
is undertaking efforts to
implement existing plans*

HISTORY

Downtown Revitalization Plan

In 1982 Gering prepared the "Downtown Revitalization Plan". This plan was developed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Gering's downtown central business district in order to develop a revitalization strategy.

The study assessed the current situation of the business district and provides an estimation of the downtown's potential retail market. The plan uses this data to develop a land use plan, site plan, and design guidelines. An implementation plan is then developed to address financing alternatives, project priorities, marketing and promotional strengths. Few concepts in the plan have been undertaken.

Bypass Development Plan

"The Impact of the New By-Pass on Future Development" was prepared in 1980. The plan was developed to evaluate the impact of the Highway 71 bypass in order to guide development.

The plan evaluated storm sewer flows, vistas, traffic flow, land use, prime ag land, and highway access. This data was used to develop three alternative development plans. The city adapted the third alternative and has followed the zoning recommendations closely. However, the City has not followed height and design regulations, utility location, and development restrictions recommended in the plan.

*Much of Gering's 1982
Downtown Revitalization
Plan has not been
Implemented*

ENVIRONMENT

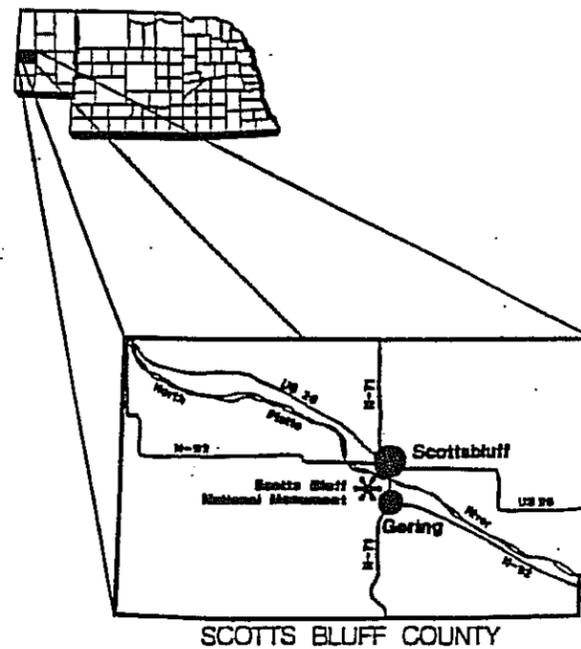
Human settlements have encountered many complications with the natural environment. These complications have evolved into a greater understanding of the relationship between human settlements and the natural environment. This understanding has made apparent the conflicts that social and economic forces have placed upon the environment's ability to support development. Thus when determining the potential land uses of a city, the interrelationship of the natural environment to land use and future development merits important consideration. To provide guidance for future decision making, this section presents a brief overview of the City's natural environment.

Geographic Location

Gering, the county seat of Scotts Bluff County, is located in the Panhandle Region of western Nebraska approximately 20 miles east of Wyoming and 60 miles north of the Colorado. The city of Gering is situated at the crossroads of State Highways 71 and 92 in the North Platte River Valley across the river from Scottsbluff. Nearby to the west, Scotts Bluff National Monument towers majestically over the city.

Denver, the nearest large metropolitan area, is located approximately 220 miles to the southwest. Lincoln and Omaha are 425 and 470 miles to the east, respectively. Cheyenne Wyoming is located 110 miles to the southwest and Rapid City South Dakota is 190 miles to the north.

MAP 1 State & vicinity map



*Social and economic forces
often conflict with the
environment's ability to
support such development*

ENVIRONMENT

Physiography

Gering lies in a deeply eroded area of the central High Plains. This alluvial piedmont plain, whose original surface was 5,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level, was developed during the Tertiary Period as sand, silt, clay, and gravel were deposited by rivers coming down from the Rocky Mountains. Since its development, rivers have been cutting great valleys into these plains.

The North Platte River has cut a wide, flat valley about 1,000 feet deep. The river flows from northwest to southeast diagonally bisecting Scotts Bluff County and separates the cities of Scottsbluff and Gering. This massive erosion has resulted in shaping some of the most diverse and unique landforms in Nebraska.

Climate

Gering has a semiarid climate resulting from its location in the continental interior and several features of relief. Gering's location in the middle of the continent enables the weather to heat up or cool down very rapidly. The Rocky Mountains, Black Hills, and North Platte River Valley also effect climatic conditions by obstructing or altering precipitation and wind patterns.

Southerly winds are typically light while west and northwest winds may be strong. Wind velocities are the highest during March and April, when they average 12.35 miles per hour. The mean annual temperature is 48 degrees. Extremes range from 107 degrees above to 27 degrees below zero. Summertime temperatures range from daytime highs in the 80's and 90's to lows near 60. In the winter daytime highs are near 40 and nighttime lows are 15 to 20 degrees.

Average snowfall is 34 inches per year. Average annual precipitation is 15.2 inches, most of which falls as thundershowers during the late spring and early summer months. These storms are frequently accompanied by hail.

Geology

Most of Gering's soils are classified as Mitchell silt loam. These soils are deep, well drained, immature soils. In Gering, the slopes range from nearly level to about 5 percent in places. The soils have medium water holding capacity. Permeability of the underlying layers is moderate. The soils are susceptible to wind and water erosion.

The very north end of Gering along the North Platte River consists of sandy or wet alluvial land. These soils tend to flood annually and are made up of water deposited land. A small strip of gullied land exists in the west central area. This land has steep sided slopes and consists of unconsolidated materials.

The underlying Geology of the Mitchell silt loam in Gering consists of Brule Silstone. Solid fine grained blue shale called Chadron Formation underlies the silstone. This shale is over Cretaceous Deposits.

Wind & water erosion have shaped some of the most unique and diversified landforms in Nebraska adjacent to Gering

ENVIRONMENT

Prime & Marginal Farmland

The ability of land surrounding the city to support the production of most crops is influenced by soil type and the presence of irrigation systems. Conversion of this land from agricultural uses should be discouraged and avoided when feasible alternatives exist.

Water Resources

The North Platte River is the principle source of surface water in the city. The flow has been fairly constant since the completion of the Pathfinder and Guernsey Reservoirs in Wyoming. Lake Alice, Little Lake Alice and Lake Minatare are artificial reservoirs in the Interstate Canal system and provide an environmental and recreational resource for residents of the city. Winters Creek Lake is a shallow lake in a natural basin northwest of Lake Minatare.

The primary source of groundwater for the city is the alluvial deposits of the North Platte River. Groundwater recharge results from seepage of irrigation water, precipitation and underground flow of water.

Water Rights

Surface water, or water of every natural stream not appropriated within the State, is declared to be the property of the public and subject to appropriation dedicated to the use of the people of the State. New legislation is being proposed that ties surface and groundwater together further defining the conjunctive use of water.

This legislation, and the regulation that may result upon adoption, are important considerations for the City due to the groundwater recharge benefits derived from canal irrigation systems. It is estimated that seepage from irrigation canals has significantly raised groundwater levels recharging shallow aquifers from which the City draws its water. It has also been suggested that this leaching of the water from irrigation has contributed to sustained water quality in the aquifers. Changes in the appropriation of water rights could impact future development in the City.

The City should carefully monitor on-going research, environmental efforts, and legislation concerning the use of water in the North Platte Valley. Competition for the use of the North Platte River water resource and groundwater recharge potential could produce negative impacts upon the city's (and areas) ability to expand its population and economy.

Conversion of prime farmland to more intense urban uses should be discouraged

Changes in the appropriation of water rights could impact future development in the city

ENVIRONMENT

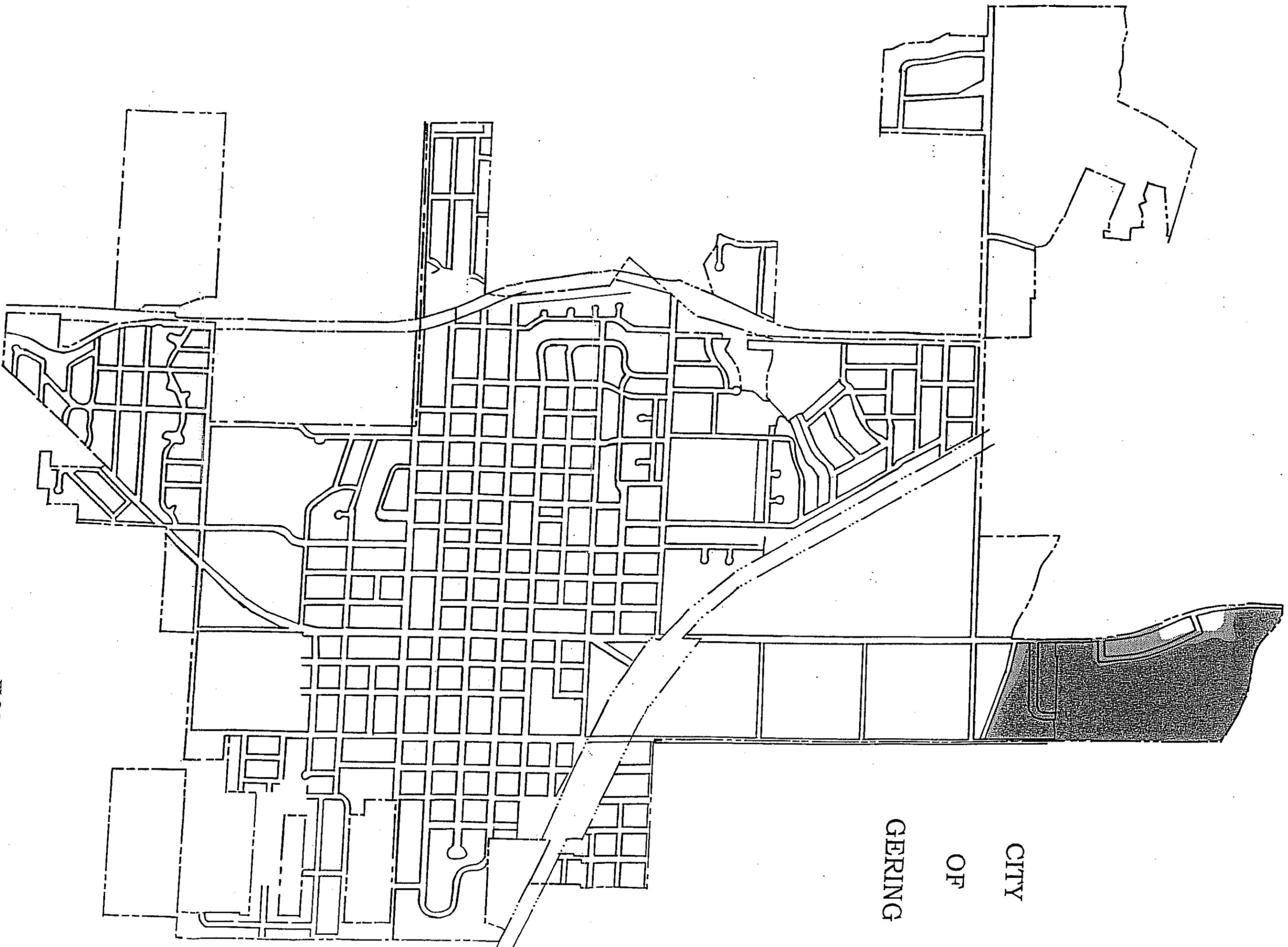
Flood Plains

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The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers completed a study of the North Platte River floodplain in 1975. The corps delineated an intermediate regional flood based on statistical analyses of streamflow and precipitation records and runoff characteristics of the basin. The intermediate regional flood is defined as a flood with an average frequency of occurrence of once in 100 years, or a one percent probability of occurrence in any year. The 100-year flood is based on a discharge of 18,000cfs and is illustrated on Map 2. The floodplain illustrated on Map 2 shows the area that would be covered by the 100-year flood. Flood depths would range from 6 to 7 feet near the main channel of the river to sheet flows at places on the outer limit of the flooded area.

*Upstream reservoirs
help reduce area
flooding*

CITY
OF
GERING



FLOODPLAIN MAP
100 Year Floodplain
500 Year Floodplain

HISTORY

Previous Planning Efforts

Comprehensive Plan:

The City of Gering last adopted a comprehensive plan in 1980. The plan provided a summary of demographic, economic, land use, and related data. The plan incorporated this data along with population projections and current city facilities to develop future land use plans and overall policy and physical development recommendations.

This plan formed the basis for future decision making regarding the use of land, proposed public developments, and land use development restrictions. Current land use inventories and site visits to developed areas suggest that the City has, for the most part, followed the recommended land use policies depicted in the plan.

Housing Plan:

"A Housing Plan for the Twin Cities" was developed in 1993 to examine the housing situation in the Twin Cities Area. The plan examined demographics, the economy, housing inventory, vacant lot inventory, housing trends, and the overall housing market. From this analysis the housing needs of the city were identified. A comprehensive housing plan was then developed for the city. The City has undertaken projects to implement recommendations offered in the plan.

Urban Design Plan:

"The Sweep of the Sky, The Cities of the Hills" is an urban design plan written in 1992. The plan's purpose is to develop a unified concept for physical improvements in the Twin Cities area. It also develops an implementation program to ensure that the plan becomes reality.

The urban design plan pinpointed the areas assets and liabilities. Using this information the plan developed six design themes. An implementation plan concluded the report detailing how to finance and perform the design plans identified in the themes. Few projects have been implemented at this point. However, efforts to initiate projects are underway.

Community Attitude Survey:

In 1992, Gering developed the "Gering 1992-93 Community Attitude Survey". This survey was developed to receive reactions of Gering citizens regarding utility rates, public and professional services, local amenities, housing, business climate, and community improvements. This information was used to identify the City's strengths and weaknesses so as to assist in developing programs to improve the quality of life in Gering.

*The City of Gering
last completed a
comprehensive plan
in 1980*

*The City of Gering is
is undertaking efforts to
implement existing plans*

HISTORY

Downtown Revitalization Plan

In 1982 Gering prepared the "Downtown Revitalization Plan". This plan was developed to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Gering's downtown central business district in order to develop a revitalization strategy.

The study assessed the current situation of the business district and provides an estimation of the downtown's potential retail market. The plan uses this data to develop a land use plan, site plan, and design guidelines. An implementation plan is then developed to address financing alternatives, project priorities, marketing and promotional strengths. Few concepts in the plan have been undertaken.

Bypass Development Plan

"The Impact of the New By-Pass on Future Development" was prepared in 1980. The plan was developed to evaluate the impact of the Highway 71 bypass in order to guide development.

The plan evaluated storm sewer flows, vistas, traffic flow, land use, prime agricultural land, and highway access. This data was used to develop three alternative development plans. The city adapted the third alternative and has followed the zoning recommendations closely. However, the City has not followed height and design regulations, utility location, and development restrictions recommended in the plan.

*Much of Gering's 1982
Downtown Revitalization
Plan has not been
Implemented*

ENVIRONMENT

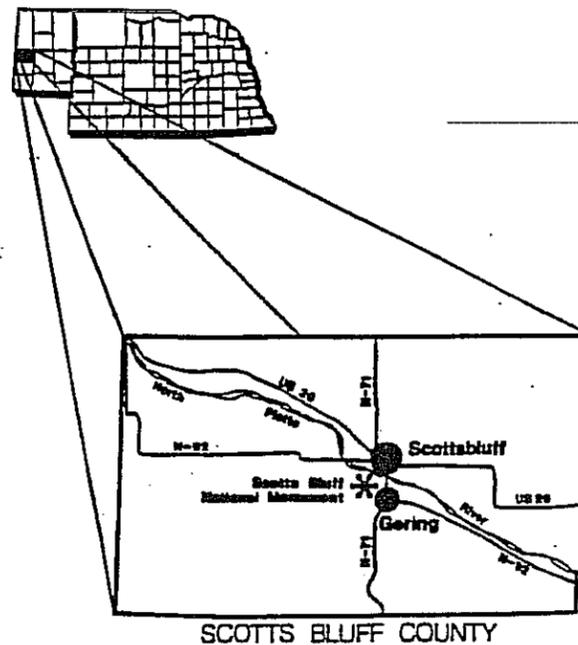
Human settlements have encountered many complications with the natural environment. These complications have evolved into a greater understanding of the relationship between human settlements and the natural environment. This understanding has made apparent the conflicts that social and economic forces have placed upon the environment's ability to support development. Thus when determining the potential land uses of a city, the interrelationship of the natural environment to land use and future development merits important consideration. To provide guidance for future decision making, this section presents a brief overview of the City's natural environment.

Geographic Location

Gering, the county seat of Scotts Bluff County, is located in the Panhandle Region of western Nebraska approximately 20 miles east of Wyoming and 60 miles north of the Colorado. The city of Gering is situated at the crossroads of State Highways 71 and 92 in the North Platte River Valley across the river from Scottsbluff. Nearby to the west, Scotts Bluff National Monument towers majestically over the city.

Denver, the nearest large metropolitan area, is located approximately 220 miles to the southwest. Lincoln and Omaha are 425 and 470 miles to the east, respectively. Cheyenne Wyoming is located 110 miles to the southwest and Rapid City South Dakota is 190 miles to the north.

MAP 1 State & vicinity map



Social and economic forces often conflict with the environment's ability to support such development

ENVIRONMENT

Physiography

Gering lies in a deeply eroded area of the central High Plains. This alluvial piedmont plain, whose original surface was 5,000 to 6,000 feet above sea level, was developed during the Tertiary Period as sand, silt, clay, and gravel were deposited by rivers coming down from the Rocky Mountains. Since its development, rivers have been cutting great valleys into these plains.

The North Platte River has cut a wide, flat valley about 1,000 feet deep. The river flows from northwest to southeast diagonally bisecting Scotts Bluff County and separates the cities of Scottsbluff and Gering. This massive erosion has resulted in shaping some of the most diverse and unique landforms in Nebraska.

Climate

Gering has a semiarid climate resulting from its location in the continental interior and several features of relief. Gering's location in the middle of the continent enables the weather to heat up or cool down very rapidly. The Rocky Mountains, Black Hills, and North Platte River Valley also effect climatic conditions by obstructing or altering precipitation and wind patterns.

Southerly winds are typically light while west and northwest winds may be strong. Wind velocities are the highest during March and April, when they average 12.35 miles per hour. The mean annual temperature is 48 degrees. Extremes range from 107 degrees above to 27 degrees below zero. Summertime temperatures range from daytime highs in the 80's and 90's to lows near 60. In the winter daytime highs are near 40 and nighttime lows are 15 to 20 degrees.

Average snowfall is 34 inches per year. Average annual precipitation is 15.2 inches, most of which falls as thundershowers during the late spring and early summer months. These storms are frequently accompanied by hail.

Geology

Most of Gering's soils are classified as Mitchell silt loam. These soils are deep, well drained, immature soils. In Gering, the slopes range from nearly level to about 5 percent in places. The soils have medium water holding capacity. Permeability of the underlying layers is moderate. The soils are susceptible to wind and water erosion.

The very north end of Gering along the North Platte River consists of sandy or wet alluvial land. These soils tend to flood annually and are made up of water deposited land. A small strip of gullied land exists in the west central area. This land has steep sided slopes and consists of unconsolidated materials.

The underlying Geology of the Mitchell silt loam in Gering consists of Brule Siltstone. Solid fine grained blue shale called Chadron Formation underlies the siltstone. This shale is over Cretaceous Deposits.

Wind & water erosion have shaped some of the most unique and diversified landforms in Nebraska adjacent to Gering

ENVIRONMENT

Prime & Marginal Farmland

The ability of land surrounding the city to support the production of most crops is influenced by soil type and the presence of irrigation systems. Conversion of this land from agricultural uses should be discouraged and avoided when feasible alternatives exist.

Water Resources

The North Platte River is the principle source of surface water in the city. The flow has been fairly constant since the completion of the Pathfinder and Guernsey Reservoirs in Wyoming. Lake Alice, Little Lake Alice and Lake Minatare are artificial reservoirs in the Interstate Canal system and provide an environmental and recreational resource for residents of the city. Winters Creek Lake is a shallow lake in a natural basin northwest of Lake Minatare.

The primary source of groundwater for the city is the alluvial deposits of the North Platte River. Groundwater recharge results from seepage of irrigation water, precipitation and underground flow of water.

Water Rights

Surface water, or water of every natural stream not appropriated within the State, is declared to be the property of the public and subject to appropriation dedicated to the use of the people of the State. New legislation is being proposed that ties surface and groundwater together further defining the conjunctive use of water.

This legislation, and the regulation that may result upon adoption, are important considerations for the City due to the groundwater recharge benefits derived from canal irrigation systems. It is estimated that seepage from irrigation canals has significantly raised groundwater levels recharging shallow aquifers from which the City draws its water. It has also been suggested that this leaching of the water from irrigation has contributed to sustained water quality in the aquifers. Changes in the appropriation of water rights could impact future development in the City.

The City should carefully monitor on-going research, environmental efforts, and legislation concerning the use of water in the North Platte Valley. Competition for the use of the North Platte River water resource and groundwater recharge potential could produce negative impacts upon the city's (and areas) ability to expand its population and economy.

Conversion of prime farmland to more intense urban uses should be discouraged

Changes in the appropriation of water rights could impact future development in the city

ENVIRONMENT

Flood Plains

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*Upstream reservoirs
help reduce area
flooding*

ENVIRONMENT

Tree Inventory

The beauty and character of a city are largely determined by the type and condition of trees lining the streets. Careful arrangement and selection of appropriate trees is needed to maximize planting efforts. Hardiness, longevity, form, and cleanliness are characteristics that have the greatest impact on aesthetic appeal. Table 1 lists the types of trees that are most appropriate for landscaping in Western Nebraska.

Tree maintenance is very important in sustaining the health of trees. Many diseases have origins in dead wood. It is thus important for cities to remove and destroy these trees as soon as possible.

The most significant tree maintenance problem facing Gering is a large population of poor, dead and dying Siberian Elm trees. Many of these trees were killed or severely damaged in the fall of 1989. Removal and replacement of these trees may need to be addressed in the immediate future. A summary of the community owned tree inventory can be seen in Table 2.

A large number of dead and dying Siberian Elm trees need to be removed and replaced in the near future

TABLE 1: COMMUNITY TREE INVENTORY

Species	Class	#	%
Siberian Elm	V	2215	26.2
Juniper/Cedar	II	1833	21.7
Misc. Class I	I	1487	17.6
Hackberry	II	1003	11.9
Colorado Blue Spruce	I	487	5.8
Ponderosa Scotch Pine	II	261	3.1
Austrian Pine	I	213	2.5
Honeylocust	II	193	2.3
American Elm	V	162	1.9
Crabapple	II	112	1.3
Other Class IV	IV	113	1.3
Other Class III	III	107	1.3
Other Class II	II	98	1.2
Other Class V	V	89	1.0
Other Class I	I	59	0.7
Miscellaneous		20	0.2

Species Class	# Trees	% Total	Average Diameter	% of Good	% of Fair	% of Poor	% of D & D
I	2,253	26.7	4.7	39.8	39.2	19.6	1.3
II	3,506	41.5	7.7	47.8	34.1	16.7	1.5
III	108	1.3	5.0	68.5	24.1	0.0	7.4
IV	113	1.3	8.3	15.0	30.1	42.5	12.4
V	2,464	29.2	9.1	6.0	15.9	59.9	18.2

ENVIRONMENT

TABLE 2:
RECOMMENDED LANDSCAPE TREES FOR WESTERN NEBRASKA

SMALL - Mature Height 35' or Less

Broadleaf

Amur Maple (I)	Flowering Crab (II)
Dogwood (I)	Hawthorn (II)
Gambel Oak (I)	Buckthorn (II)
Amur Cork Tree (I)	Japanese Tree Lilac (II)
Mountain Mahogany (II)	Eastern Redbud (II)
Rocky Mountain Maple (II)	Mountain Alder (II)
Serviceberry (II)	

Evergreen

Mugho Pine (I)	*Note: evergreen trees are <u>not</u> recommended street trees
Juniper (II)	
Arborvitae (II)	

LARGE - Mature Height 35' or more

Broadleaf

Hophornbean (I)	Kentucky Coffeetree (II)
Littleleaf Linden (I)	Pine Oak (II)
Redmond Linden (I)	Japanese Pagoda Tree (II)
Bur Oak (I)	Bradford Pear (II)
English Oak (I)	European Mountain Ash (III)
Swamp White Oak (I)	Black Walnut (III)
Northern Red Oak (I)	American Sycamore (III)
Norway Maple (I)	Horsechestnut (III)
Ginkgo (I)	European Birch (III)
Green Ash (I)	Black Birch (III)
White Ash (I)	Cutleaf Weeping Birch (III)
Hackberry (II)	Ohio Buckeye (III)
Honeylocust (II)	Paper Birch (III)
American Linden (II)	

Evergreen

Austrian Pine (I)	Ponderosa Pine (II)
Colorado Blue Spruce (I)	Scotch Pine (II)
Norway Spruce (I)	Jack Pine (II)
Eastern White Pine (I)	Black Hills Spruce (II)
Limber Pine (I)	Douglas Fir (II)
Pinon Pine (I)	Concolor Fir (II)

*Note: Evergreen trees are not recommended street trees

ENVIRONMENT

Planning Issues:

- * The semi-arid climate and moderate winters generally associated with the region present a marketing opportunity for the encouragement of future growth and development.
- * The city's proximity to unique landforms such as Scotts Bluff National Monument and its short distance to many popular vacation locals provide marketing opportunities for the encouragement of future development and growth
- * Existing water resources are sufficient to accommodate new growth. However, the City should carefully monitor water rights, environmental and legislative discussions regarding the North Platte River and groundwater recharge relationships. Demands for water both up and downstream from the city could produce negative economic and population growth impacts.
- * Future expansion in flood prone areas should be carefully monitored and/or avoided. In addition, the North Platte River floodplain provides an outstanding environmental and recreation resource for the community and should be preserved.
- * In general terms, soils in the planning area present few problems for future growth. However, high water tables and foundation design should be considered when building in certain areas of the community.
- * Future development policy for the City should encourage in-filling and urban renewal to minimize the conversion of prime farmland to more intense land uses.
- * Future development policy for the City should strive to preserve the high quality natural resources and scenic amenities of the area, particularly adjacent to Scotts Bluff National Monument and the North Platte River.
- * The most suitable areas for converting land to accommodate new growth include: the area west of Highway 71 adjacent to Canyon Estates; the Southwest, and the Southeast including Pappas, Pathfinder, and Deerfield additions.
- * The City's development policy should direct new growth to existing platted land (in-filling) and encourage redevelopment/conversion of dilapidated areas. In addition, expansion of the urban boundary should be carefully evaluated to minimize the negative impacts of development on the natural environment.
- * The City needs to address removing and replacing the large number of dead and dying trees in the community, especially Siberian Elm trees.

POPULATION

The dynamics of population change is one of the most important variables to consider in the comprehensive planning process. The city's physical environment has, and will continue to be, developed or preserved to meet the demands of a changing population. Growth or decline in total population, as well as structural changes within the population, can have a profound impact on future uses of the land and the provision of necessary public services and infrastructure.

Change in the total population is measured in two ways. The first of these is called natural change, or the number of births versus the number of deaths experienced. The second is net migration, or the number of persons moving into the area versus the number leaving the area. Both of these factors have had a tremendous influence on population change in Gering.

Historical Population Change

The City of Gering's total population has increased substantially over the past sixty years. The city experienced considerable growth each decade from 1930 to 1980. From 1930 to 1970 population changes by decade ranged from 19.3% to 23.8%. During the 1970's Gering's population increased dramatically from 5639 persons in 1970 to 7760 persons in 1980, an increase of 37.6%. The 1980's, however, ended Gering's era of large population increases as the population grew by only 2.4% during the decade.

Population gains from 1930 to 1950 were primarily due to a healthy agricultural economy. Population gains from 1950 to 1980 were largely the result of the baby boom and urbanization trends. Increases during the 1970's were assisted by a healthy economy and the construction of retirement facilities in the city.

Although Gering experienced a slight increase in population during the 1980's it suffered a large net out-migration. The net out-migration of 508 people suggests that the agricultural recession had a devastating impact on the local economy.

The largest population losses resulting from out-migration during the 1980's occurred among young families and their children. Many 15-29 year olds left the city to attend college or find more lucrative employment. A large number of people over 64 years old who moved to Gering for retirement helped off-set some of the out-migration.

Population changes will impact land use, public service, & infrastructure requirements of the City

Gering suffered a net out-migration of 508 people during the 1980's despite a slight increase in population

POPULATION

Figure 1: Population by Decade

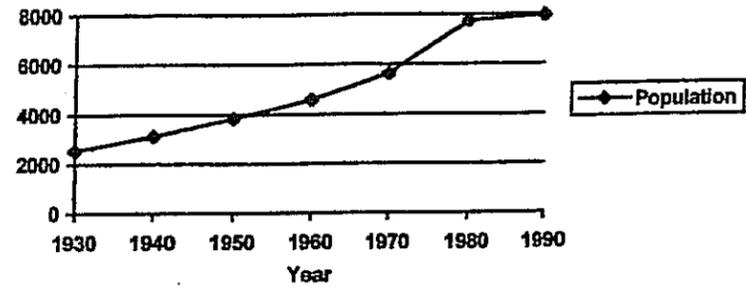
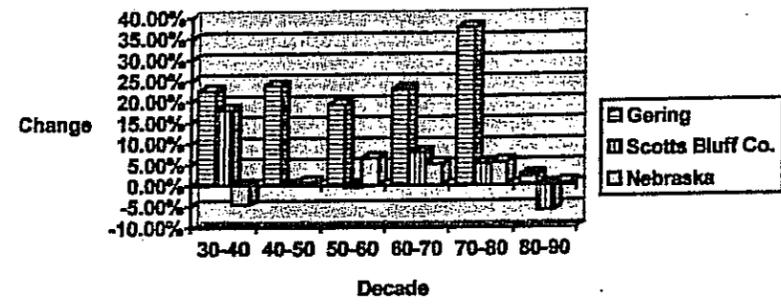
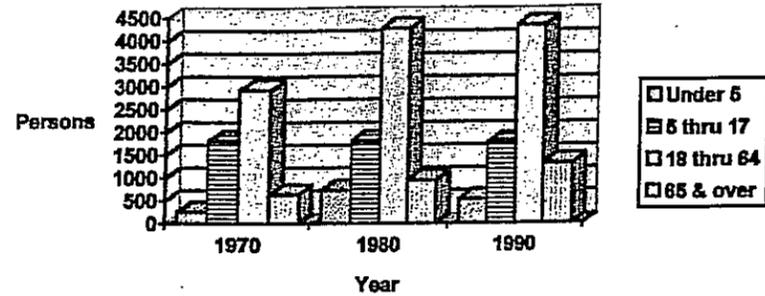


Figure 2: Population Change 1930 - 1990



POPULATION

Figure 3: Population Age 1970 - 1990



Population Composition

Another important planning consideration is the distribution of the population by age and gender. Trends and projections based upon the age and gender of the population can assist in identifying future needs in areas such as employment, housing, education and recreation. To evaluate changes in age group structure the city's population was divided into four age group categories as follows: pre-school (0-4 years old); school age (5-17); working age (18-64); and retirement (65 and over).

From 1970 to 1990, the most significant change among age groups occurred in the 65+ category. During this time period the city's retirement age population increased by 108%, or by 684 people. This increase was primarily due to the construction of retirement facilities. During the same time period the percentage of children under 18 increased by only 10%. The stagnation of school age children can be attributed to both out-migration and the movement of the "baby boom" generations into older age groups. This trend is expected to continue due to smaller family sizes and an aging population.

Distribution of the population among these four age categories in Gering is similar to that of the State of Nebraska, however, with a slightly higher concentration of elderly persons and a lower concentration of people between the ages of 18 and 64.

Over the past twenty years the city, and the State, have been experiencing a slight increase in the percentage of females. Females represent the largest percentage of the city's total population, or 52.6% of all persons in 1990. This trend is expected to continue as females tend to live longer than males.

The City of Gering contains a much higher percentage of minorities than the State average, 13.0% versus 7.5%, respectively. The largest minority group in the city is persons of Hispanic origin. This group represents 11.9% of the city's total population.

Gering's retirement age population increased 108% from 1970 to 1990 largely due to construction of retirement facilities

Gering has a higher percentage of minorities than the state average

POPULATION

Figure 4: Male/Female Population 1970 - 1990

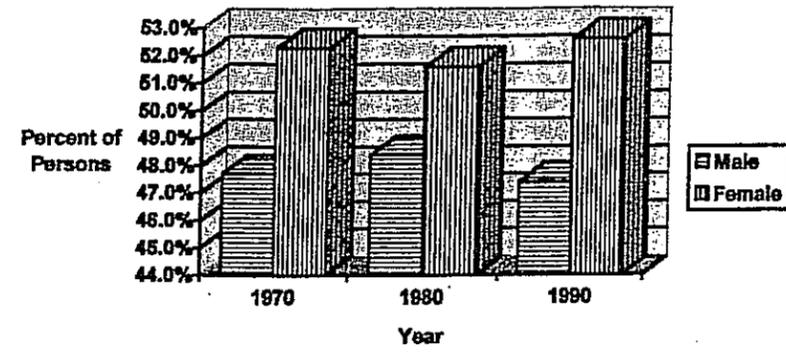
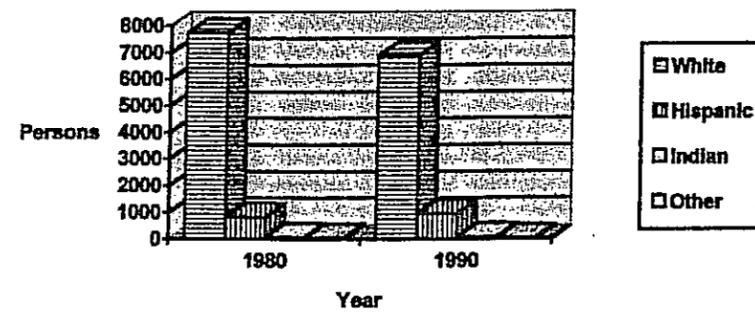


Figure 5: Population by Race



POPULATION

Population Projection

Projected growth or decline in the population is one of the most important factors to consider while planning for future development. A change in total population and growth or decline within age groups of the population can impact the city in a variety of ways. Potential impacts may include differing needs for public infrastructure and services or making additional land available for new development. The city's ability to generate or attract new development will also be influenced by changes in population.

As previously mentioned, population change is measured in terms of natural change and net migration. The effects of natural change are measured by applying birth and survival rates to 5-year age cohorts. For the purposes of this plan, a Cohort-Survival Projection model incorporating national birth and survival rates adjusted to more closely reflect State trends was used. In addition, birth rates in the model were further adjusted to more closely reflect what has occurred in the City of Gering. Migration rates for 5-year age cohorts were developed by reviewing historical migration trends with consideration given to current economic activity in the city.

By running a natural change projection, or projecting the city's 1990 population forward to the year 2000 with no migration effect, it can be estimated that the city's population could grow by a total of 694 persons during the decade. When a migration factor is included the city's total population is projected to grow by 316 persons by the year 2000. The projection indicates that natural change will be a key factor in the city's future growth patterns. In-migration is not projected to occur at a rate high enough to offset projected out-migration. Therefore, migration rates will reduce the amount of growth that Gering would expect to gain from natural change.

Even though a minimal gain in population may result due to migration rates, this does not suggest that few new families will be moving into the city. Historical trends suggest that young adults will continue to migrate out of the city for college and in search of employment. To compensate for this loss of population and continue to maintain population growth, new residents must move into the city. It is estimated that approximately 364 new residents, or 131 new households, will be needed by the year 2000 to compensate for the out-migration of young adults.

In addition to changes in total population, the city will experience changes among the different age groups of the population. These changes are primarily the result of two factors, which include migration and to a greater extent movement of the population into higher age cohorts. The most significant increases in population by age group are likely to occur in the 45 to 59 year old group, the 20 to 24 age group and the 70 & over age group. The largest decreases will occur in the 30 to 39, 10 to 14, and 60 to 69 year age groups.

Out-migration will offset much of Gering's natural change growth

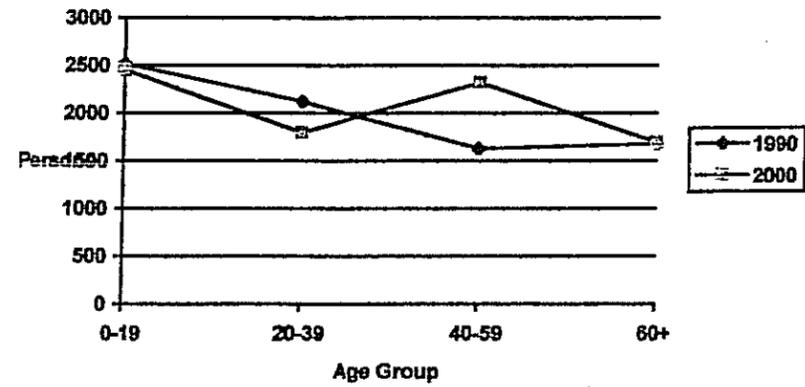
Young adults are expected to continue migrating out of Gering

POPULATION

TABLE 3: PROJECTED POPULATION

Age Group	1990 Population (Actual)	2000 Population (Projected)	1990-2000 Change
0-4	522	569	47
10-14	701	558	-143
15-19	636	697	61
20-24	355	493	138
25-29	475	429	-46
30-34	603	362	-241
35-39	687	514	-173
40-44	597	641	44
45-49	422	698	276
50-54	319	584	265
55-59	292	400	108
60-64	361	297	-64
65-69	344	278	-66
70+	973	1116	143
TOTAL	7946	8265	319

Figure 6: Population Change by Age Groups 1990 - 2000



POPULATION

Demographic Planning Issues:

- * The city's population is expected to increase by 316 people by the year 2000 and by a total of 831 people by the year 2010. The projection optimistically assumes that economic growth will continue at a rate similar to that of the early 1990's.
- * The city's projected population growth is largely dependent upon the development of housing opportunities.
- * Much of the population increase will be due to natural change. However, as the population ages and smaller age groups enter child bearing ages, increases resulting from natural change will be minimized.
- * A large proportion of people migrating out will continue to be young adults leaving for educational and employment opportunities. Retaining, or replacing, this younger population will require expanded efforts to create quality employment opportunities and/or an improved quality of life to attract new residents to the community.
- * The level of in-migration needed to offset projected out-migration of young adults suggests that 131 new households will move into the community during the 1990's. This influx of new residents will create additional demands for housing and land development.
- * Large out-migration during the 1980's suggest that the local economy is tied too heavily to the agricultural industry. Additional efforts to diversify are needed.
- * An aging population may create new demands for public infrastructure and services. In addition, the percentage of the population living on fixed incomes is likely to increase.
- * Cultural diversity within the community may create a larger cross section of development opportunities.

ECONOMY

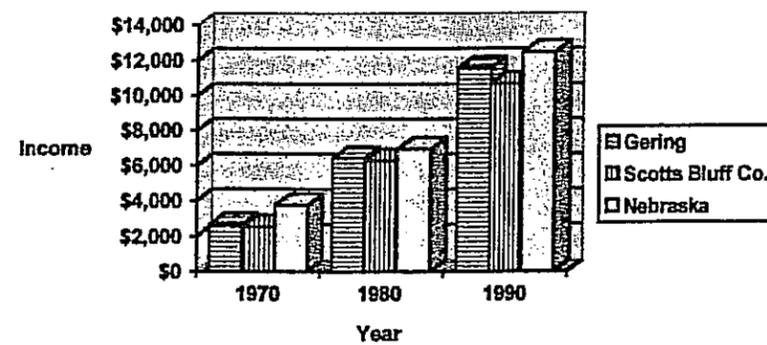
The future of the community is directly related to the economic well-being of the primary, or base, industries that employ its residents. The economic base of the community can be composed of a variety of industries that produce a product from raw material, add value to a product or provide a service which can be exported. Base industries may include manufacturing, agriculture, retail and service industries. The money received from exports by these industries is distributed throughout the community in the form of wages, benefits, taxes, purchased services, etc. and forms the base upon which the local economy is built.

A detailed analysis of the city's base industries is beyond the scope of this plan. However, a general understanding of the health of the city's base industries can be obtained by evaluating trends in income, poverty, employment, unemployment and other factors. This type of analysis can provide useful background information to guide future decisions concerning both public and private investment in community and economic development activities.

Income

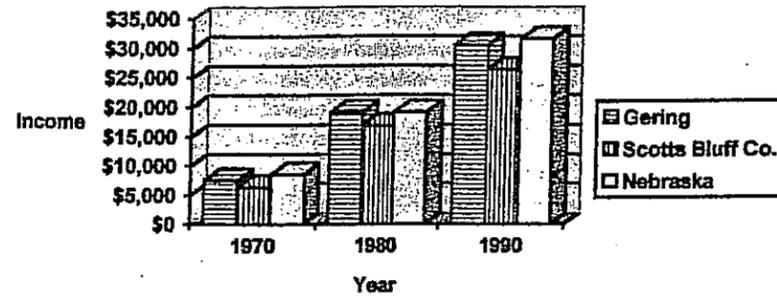
Income data is generally used to compare the relative economic well-being between areas. Census data indicates that the City's per capita income (total income divided by the city's total population) has risen dramatically since 1970. The rate of increase experienced in the city has exceeded State and county-wide rate increases.

Figure 7: Per Capita Income 1970 - 1990



ECONOMY

Figure 8: Median Family Income 1970 - 1990



The city's per capita relative wealth position to that of Scotts Bluff County and the State has improved since 1970. In 1970, the city's per capita income represented 104% of the county's and 70% of the State's. By 1990, the city's per capita income represented 92.8% of the State's and 109% of the county.

A similar change in median family income was recognized from 1970 to 1990. In 1970, the city's median family income represented 118% of the county's and 87.7% of the State's. By 1990 the city's median family relative wealth position to the State increased significantly to 96.6%.

Although the city's rate of increase has exceeded State-wide rate of income increases, the total dollar disparity in median family incomes has grown. In 1970, the city's median family incomes were \$1,054 lower than the state's. In 1990, the difference in median family income had grown to \$1,083.

The total dollar disparity in per capita incomes between Gering and the State's did decrease. In 1970 the disparity was \$1,116. By 1990 the disparity was reduced to a \$990 difference.

Poverty

Changes in poverty rates over time provide insight into the health of the local economy. Poverty rates in Gering continue to remain below State-wide levels. Poverty rates per person and per family declined from 1970 to 1980. However, the 1980's recession caused poverty rates to increase slightly, but remained well below the 1970 levels. The increase in poverty levels during the 1980's actually was significantly less than those experienced throughout the Panhandle and the County. County-wide family poverty levels were nearly twice as much as Gering's in 1990.

Gering's relative wealth is increasing at a greater rate than State levels but still remains below state levels

ECONOMY

Figure 9: Poverty Rate (Persons) 1970 - 1990

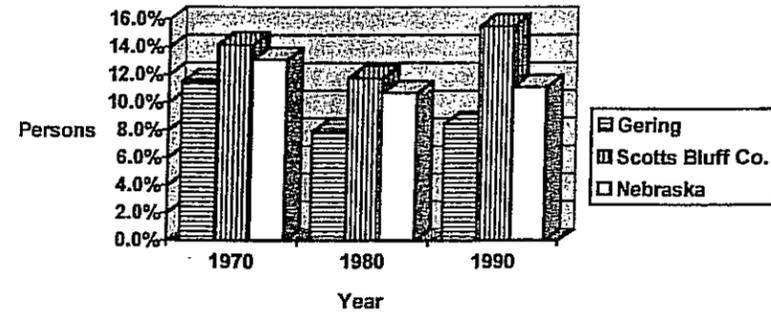
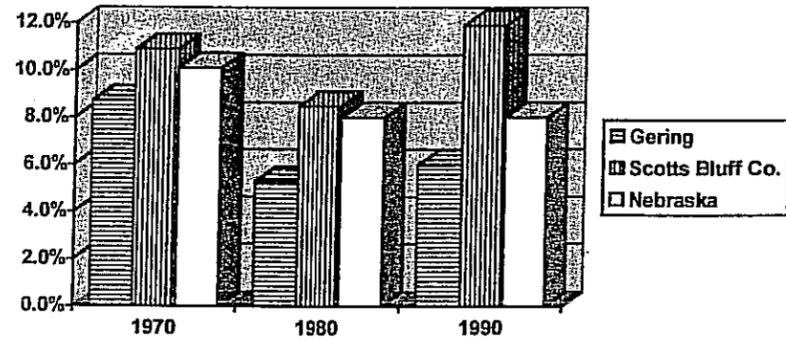


Figure 10: Poverty Rates (Families) 1970 - 1990



ECONOMY

Education

The nation's economy is expected to continue a general shift which places more emphasis on service industries and high technology. As this trend progresses, educational attainment and skill levels of the city's labor force will play an increasingly important role in the community's ability to stabilize its economy and population base.

The percentage of the city population age 25 & over with at least a high school education has increased dramatically since 1970. However, the city is not keeping pace with the rate of increase experienced by the State as a whole. This is most likely due to the high out-migration of young to middle age adults. Increases in the number and percentage of elderly persons may also be a factor.

The city needs to attract industries that have higher educational requirements

Figure 11: Educational Attainment 12+ years 1970 - 1990

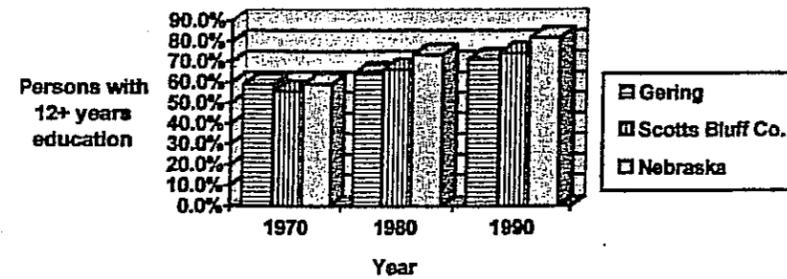
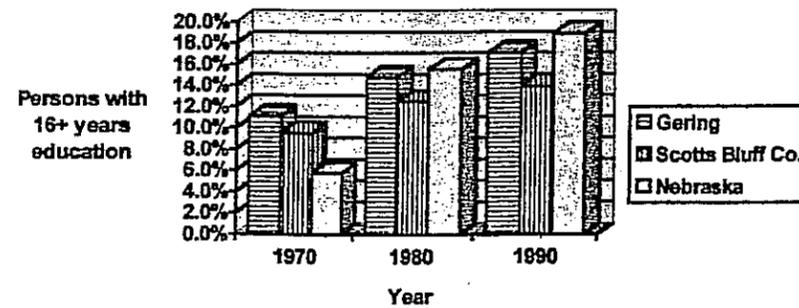


Figure 12: Educational Attainment 16+ Years 1970 - 1990



ECONOMY

The percentage of the population age 25 & over with four years of college education was more than double the State average in 1970. However, the city's percentage has increased at a much slower rate since 1970 and by 1980 had fallen and remains below the State average. This is due primarily to the out-migration of young and middle aged adults. The city's inability to keep pace with the State's growth in percentage of the population with a college education is clearly representative of a previous lack of economic opportunity. This factor points to the need to attract industries that require a higher education and suggests the need for continued retraining of the city's labor force.

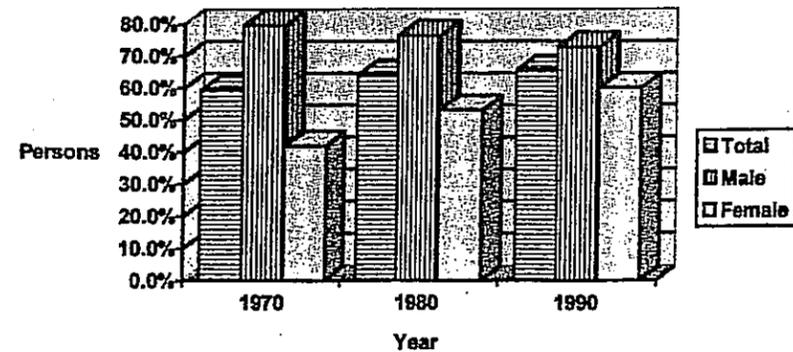
Labor Force

The size and composition of the area labor force is an important factor to consider relative to the city's ability to foster new economic growth. The labor force is defined as all persons age 16 and above who are either employed, unemployed or available for employment. For the purposes of this plan, civilian labor force figures were used which excludes area residents who are on active military duty.

By removing those persons from the total labor force who are over sixteen but not likely to be available for employment on a full-time basis (senior citizens, college and high school students), it is estimated that approximately 416 people are available as a potential labor pool above and beyond those that are currently employed. However, not all of these persons will accept full-time employment. It is estimated that an 80% participation rate for men and a 70% participation rate for women is nearing the practical upper limit. The 1990 participation rates in Gering for men and women were 72.8% and 60%, respectively. A larger available labor pool of women is likely present than of men.

A large number of woman are available to the labor force

Figure 13: Labor Force Participation Rates 1970 - 1990



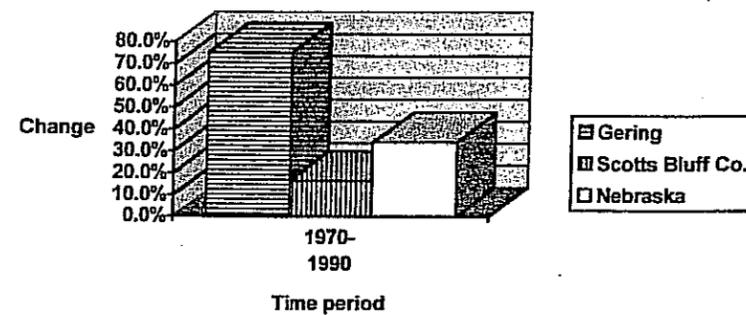
ECONOMY

Employment

Evaluating how employment is distributed among, and has changed within, the primary sectors of the economy provides an indication of the overall performance of each sector. This information also indicates the level of economic diversification within the community.

From 1970 to 1980, a period of economic stability and growth nation-wide, Gering's total employment grew by 1,346 employed persons, or a 62.9% increase. This compares to employment gains of 20% and 24% registered by the county and the State during this time period. During the 1980's recession total employment in the city increased by only 11%. This indicates that employment diversification efforts should be continued in the city.

Figure 14: Percentage Change in Total Employment 1970 - 1990



Employment by Industry

A comparison of employment by industry between the city and the State suggests that employment in Gering appears to be fairly well diversified among the major industry classifications. Despite an increase in total employment during the 1980's that was slightly higher than State-wide increases, it is apparent that even though employment data suggests that the city is diversified, the city's base industries remain tied too heavily to a limited number of industry sectors, i.e.: agriculture. Employment data for 1990 suggest that manufacturing is one economic sector in which the city should continue to promote employment growth. The data also indicates that the city is a retail and service center.

Considerable change has occurred in employment by industry from 1980 to 1990. The percentage of persons employed in transportation/communication/public utilities (TCPU), retail trade, and service sectors increased significantly.

The percentage of persons employed in manufacturing, construction, wholesale trade and FIRE (Finance, Insurance, Real Estate) declined. Employment increases and decreases during this time period are shown below:

Gering needs to promote growth in the manufacturing sector

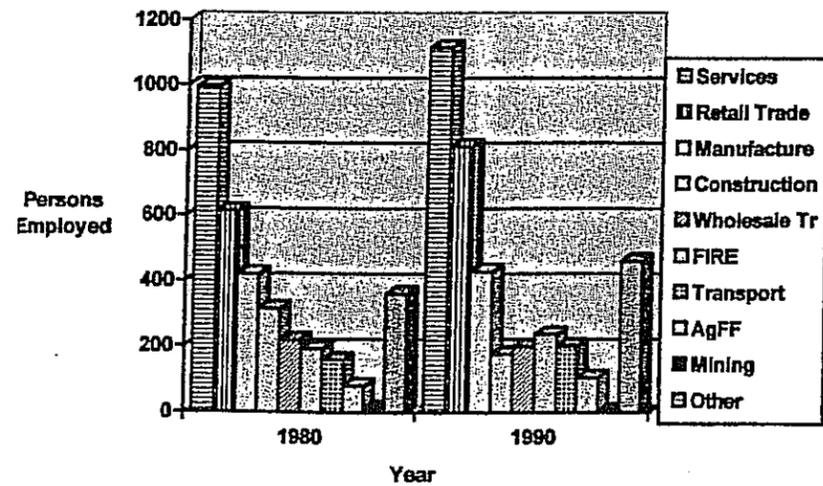
ECONOMY

TABLE 4: 1980 to 1990 Change in Employment

Industry	Employment Change
AG/F/F	+24
Mining	-9
Construction	-138
Manufacturing	+9
TCPU	+41
Wholesale Trade	-19
Retail Trade	+199
FIRE	+45
Services	+121
Other	+99

The rate of employment increases in the city exceeded State-wide rate increases in the Ag/F/F, TCPU, Manufacturing, Retail Trade, FIRE and "other" categories during this time period. Employment in the city decreased in the Mining and wholesale trade industry sectors while a gain was registered by the State. Employment in the construction sector decreased at a greater rate than state-wide decreases.

Figure 15: Employment by Industry 1990



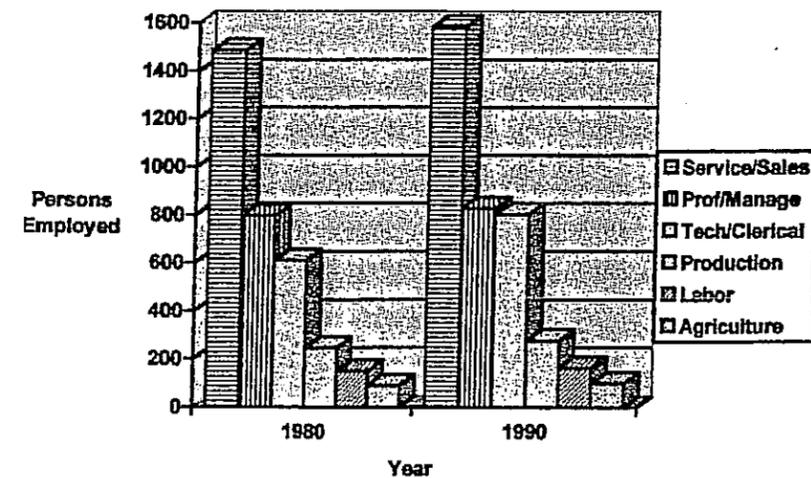
ECONOMY

Employment by Occupation

1990 employment by occupation data indicate that the city employs lower percentages of persons in agriculture, professional/management, production, and labor occupations in comparison to State averages. Employment in technical/ clerical positions is slightly higher in the city than in the State. Services/sales employment is considerably higher on a percentage basis.

From 1970 to 1990 the number of persons employed in every occupational category increased in Gering. However, the percentage of persons employed in professional/management positions decreased. This indicates that fewer high paying positions are being created in relation to total jobs created. The largest increase in occupational employment occurred in sales/services as 794 additional persons were employed, an increase of 101%. Employment change by occupation is depicted below:

Figure 16: Employment by Occupation 1990



Fewer high paying jobs are being created in relation to the total jobs being created

ECONOMY

TABLE 5: OCCUPATIONAL EMPLOYMENT CHANGE
1970 - 1990

Occupation	Change in # Employed	% Change
Prof/Management	+348	+72.8
Tech/Clerical	+360	+81.4
Service/Sales	+794	+100.5
Agriculture	+37	+54.4
Production	+41	+17.4
Labor	+64	+65.3

Unemployment

Unemployment in the city declined from 4.2% in 1980 to 3.8% in 1990. The city continues to have a slightly higher unemployment rate than the State. Gering does, however, have much lower rates than the County and the Panhandle. Unemployment is not a great concern in the city. However, underemployment should be a concern given the lower incomes of the city in comparison to the state.

Strength of the Economy

As previously mentioned, the local economy is composed of a number of base industries. These industries may include manufacturing, wholesale trade, retail trade, agriculture, services, etc. An understanding of the strength of the city's economy can be obtained by monitoring trends in the employment, sales and number of establishments in each of these sectors.

To evaluate the composition and strength of the city economy, change in employment and sales data for each of the five industry sectors listed above was evaluated. Employment data used in this evaluation is not comparable with other employment data used in this report due to differences in the years reported, i.e.: 1977 & 1987 versus 1970 & 1990 data. In addition, the following analysis uses paid employee data versus total employment.

To present a true picture of the economy during this time period all 1977 sales figures were adjusted for inflation to reflect 1987 real dollar values. Gross Domestic Product Implicit Price Deflators were used to make the adjustment.

Note: 1982 and 1992 data were used for retail and agricultural sales as this was the most recent data available.

Retail Trade:

Economic census data indicate that the value of total retail sales in Gering increased by 15.1% from 1982 to 1992. During this same period of time retail sales state-wide increased 70%. This information suggests that the retail sector of the city's economy has improved, but at a much lower rate than across the state. To truly quantify the impact of this change, sales should be adjusted for inflation.

Underemployment is very evident in Gering

ECONOMY

By converting the value of 1982 sales to real dollar sales expressed in 1992 terms it can be shown that the city's total inflation adjusted retail sales decreased by \$5,442,000, or 20.4%, over the ten year period. If the retail sales market area of the city is expanded to include the City of Scottsbluff the data indicates that inflation adjusted sales for the combined area decreased by just \$1,272,000, or 0.7%. In comparison, inflation adjusted retail sales state-wide increased by 17.7% from 1982 to 1992.

Retail employment in the city decreased by 81 during this period while the number of establishments declined by 31. County-wide employment data suggest that a transfer of employment took place between the City of Scottsbluff and the remainder of the county. Only 110 new retail employees were gained county wide compared to a 287 increase in Scottsbluff during the ten year period. This indicates that Gering and the remainder of the county are losing a large amount of Retail sales to Scottsbluff.

**TABLE 6: Inflation Adjusted Retail Sales Comparison
1982 - 1992**

Place	Net Gain/Loss	% Gain/Loss
Gering	-\$5,442,000	-20.4
Scottsbluff	+\$4,170,000	+2.7
Scottsbluff/Gering	-\$1,272,000	-0.7
Scotts Bluff County	-\$6,050,000	-3.0
State	+1,198,682,000	+17.7

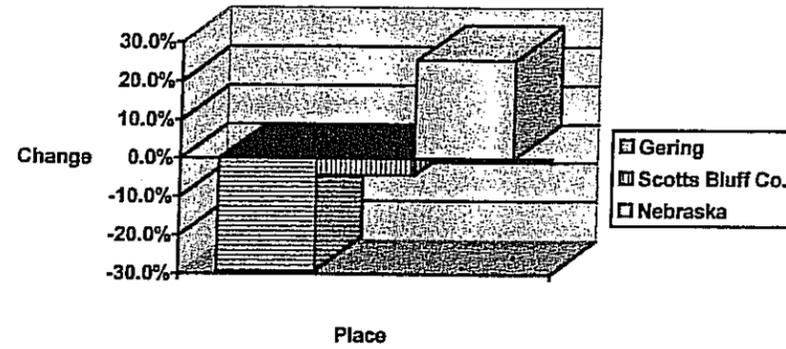
To estimate the amount of the retail sector industry that is leaking out of Gering, the portion of Effective Buying Income (approx. 54%) a household typically spends on retail consumer goods was applied to total retail sales. In 1992, the portion of the city's median household EBI spent on retail purchases was estimated at \$16,498. This figure multiplied by the city's 3,034 households indicates that resident retail purchases were approximately \$50,054,932. Total retail sales in Gering for 1992 were just \$30,770,000. This indicates that at least 19,284,932 retail dollars left the city. If retail sales to non-residents were figured into the equation, it is very likely that over half of the retail sales potential of Gering's citizens may have left the city.

Inflation adjusted retail sales decreased 20.4% from 1982 to 1992

Gering is losing a large proportion of its potential retail sales to Scottsbluff

ECONOMY

Figure 17: Change in Adjusted Retail Sales 1982 - 1992

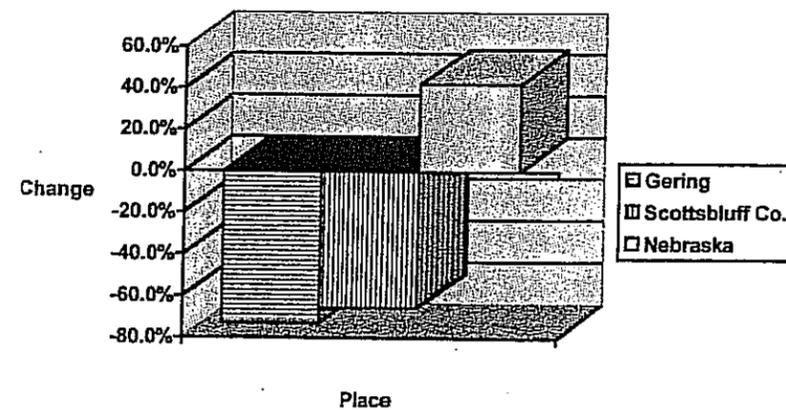


Wholesale Trade:

Wholesale trade data for the city is presented from 1982 to 1987 as 1977 employment and sales data were withheld. From 1982 to 1987 the value of wholesale sales in the city increased by \$29,457,000. Adjusting 1982 sales to 1987 dollars indicates that inflation adjusted sales decreased by \$14,665,000, or 14%, during the five year period. Employment and the number of establishments in the wholesale industry declined by 176 persons and 2 establishment during this same period of time. In comparison, the State recognized a 2.8% increase in inflation adjusted sales from 1982 to 1987.

Inflation adjusted wholesale sales decreased from 1982 to 1987

Figure 18: Change in Adjusted Wholesale Trade 1982 - 1987



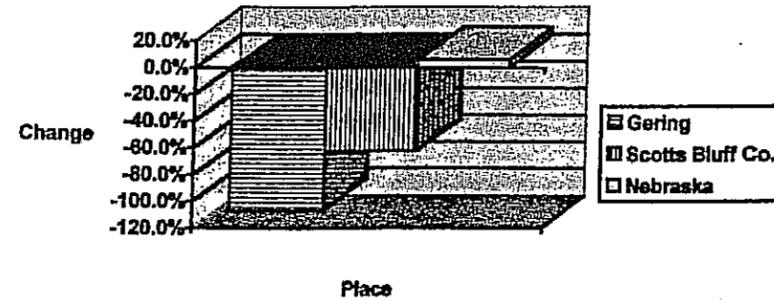
ECONOMY

Manufacturing:

The value of goods shipped by the cities manufacturing businesses decreased by \$41,800,000 from 1977 to 1987. Adjusting the value of 1977 shipments to 1987 dollars indicates that the constant dollar value of manufacturing shipments decreased by \$89,428,000, or 60%, during the ten year period. In comparison, inflation adjusted manufacturing shipments for the State increased by 3.1% from 1977 to 1987.

Severe decreases in manufacturing employment were experienced from 1977 to 1987. Overall, manufacturing employment decreased by 600 paid employees. The number of manufacturing establishments decreased by two.

Figure 19: Change in Adjusted Manufacturing Shipments 1977 - 1987



Services:

Of the five industry sectors evaluated, the service industry sector was the only sector to experience an increase in inflation adjusted sales from 1977 to 1987. Total service industry receipts increased during this time period by \$7,341,000. Inflation adjusted receipts were up \$2,620,000 or an increase of 77.9%. In comparison, inflation adjusted service industry receipts state-wide increased by 129% from 1977 to 1987.

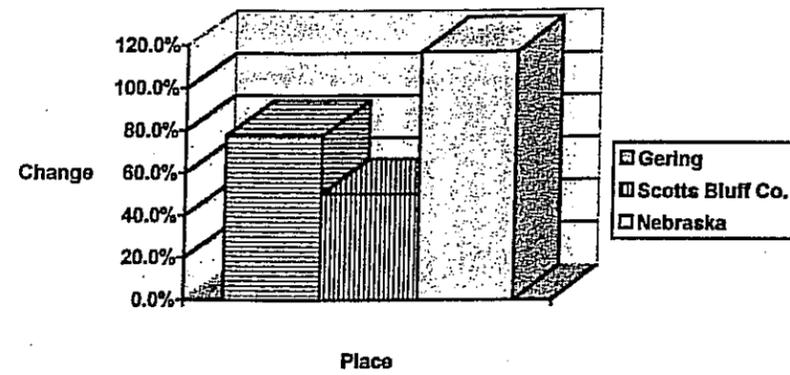
Total paid employment in the city's service industries increased by 231 during this time period. The number of establishments could not be compared due to a variation in the way data was collected in each economic census.

Manufacturing employment decreased by 600 paid employees from 1977 to 1987

The service industry was the only sector to experience a gain in inflation adjusted sales

ECONOMY

Figure 20: Change in Adjusted Services Receipts 1982 - 1992



Agriculture:

Although agricultural production does not take place within the city limits, the health of the agriculture industry can have profound effects on the city's economy. Therefore, agricultural statistics collected for the county have been reported. For the purposes of this report agricultural sales were combined into two broad categories, crop sales and livestock sales. From 1982 to 1992, total crop sales in the county increased by \$9,945,000, or 22.3%. Adjusting 1982 sales to reflect 1992 dollars indicates that inflation adjusted sales decreased by 15.3%. State-wide inflation adjusted crop sales for this same time period increased by 22.9%.

Total livestock sales, from 1982 to 1992, decreased by \$2,636,000. When adjusted for inflation the county's livestock sales decreased by \$44,753,000 or a 32% decrease. State-wide inflation adjusted livestock sales for the same period increased by 9.4%.

From 1982 to 1992 the number of farms, and farm operators, decreased by 166. The county also experienced a large decrease in the number of farmers who consider farming to be their principle occupation, a decrease of 24.8% compared to the state-wide decrease of 17.7%. By 1992, 9.6% more of the county's farm operators were working 200+ days off the farm than in 1982.

ECONOMY

Summary

It must be noted that several factors created a negative influence on the city economy during this time period. The data collected for this analysis represents a period of time when the city was experiencing the 1980's agricultural recession. In addition, the city was losing a large percentage of its population due to out-migration. If data had been presented covering a longer period of time, for example going back to 1967, it is likely that the economy would not have appeared as weak as presented. Additionally, the local economy has improved somewhat during the early 1990's.

However, presenting the data in this manner does point out some serious weaknesses in the local economy. The city's economic base remains over dependent upon agriculture. Although the agricultural base and its supporting services and industries should, and will, remain an important sector of the economy, efforts to diversify should be continued. In addition, other base industries in the city, with the exception of the service sector, are not growing at a rate that exceeds inflation. Future efforts to diversify the local economy should focus on industries capable of maintaining growth rates higher than inflation.

*A lack of diversification
resulted in poor economic
performance during the
1980's*

ECONOMY

Economic Planning Issues:

- * Unemployment is not viewed as a critical issue in the community given the low unemployment rate. However, underemployment may be an issue due to the lower per capita and median family incomes of the community.
- * Continued retraining and education of the labor force will be required to attract industries, or types of employment opportunities, that will result in long term economic improvement.
- * An adequate available labor pool exists to accommodate moderately sized business and industry.
- * Manufacturing is one economic sector in which the city is weak in terms of employment distribution.
- * Overall, employment is fairly well diversified among the major industry groups, with the exception of manufacturing. However, population out-migration and the inability of the city's primary industry sectors to grow at a rate exceeding inflation indicates the local economy is over-dependent upon slow growth industries. In addition, the local economy remains too closely tied to production agriculture.
- * Expanded diversification efforts are needed with emphasis placed on attracting industry types that are projected to experience long term growth rates that exceed inflation.
- * It is very probable that higher paying/high growth industries, if attracted to the community, will require an imported labor force.
- * Efforts need to be made to reduce the retail sales leakage to other cities in the three state area.

HOUSING

The availability of affordable, quality housing is an important factor to consider in determining the future housing needs of the county, as well as the physical space that may be needed to accommodate new housing construction. Three factors that should be considered in housing evaluation include the quantity, quality, and affordability of available housing units. Housing, a basic need for all people, should be made available for the disadvantaged, first time home buyers, persons wishing to assimilate upward within the housing market and persons wishing to relocate or retire within the city.

In 1994, the City of Gering adopted a housing study prepared by RDG Martin Shukert, Inc. entitled "A Housing Plan for the Twin Cities". Those portions of the plan pertaining to the City of Gering are summarized in the following narrative. The document as a whole is incorporated by reference into this plan.

Housing Stock

The housing stock of the Gering area contains 3,172 total housing units in the City of Gering and adjacent unincorporated and outlying areas. Of these units 2,506, or about 79% are single-family units, and 11.7% are multi-family units. Housing Authority multi-family developments provide an additional 120 multi-family units, or 3.8% of the city area unit total. Mobile homes comprise 5.5% of the total housing units in the area, providing 173 units. A vast majority of the single-family housing units in the Gering area (71.4%) were constructed between World War II and 1980.

Housing conditions in Gering and its adjacent unincorporated and outlying areas reflect a supply of units in excellent to very good condition in post-war neighborhoods, while needs for housing rehabilitation are evident in the older neighborhoods to the east, southeast, and southwest of downtown. Of the pre-war single family housing stock, about 42% of all units require substantial repair. Nearly 31% of the multi-family units in the study area are in need of substantial repair. More than 60% of all mobile homes units are in fair or poor condition.

The Gering area contributes 35.5% of all the single family units in the Twin Cities housing market, and more than 32% of all mobile home park units. Gering contains 28.6% of the Twin Cities' supply of duplex and four-plex multi-family units, and 20.6% of all apartment units in buildings larger than 6 units. The unincorporated area of Highland near Gering comprises the area's largest concentration of Scotts Bluff Housing Authority units, with 120 units, or 69% of the Twin Cities total. Only 4.2% of all new single family units built since 1980 in the Twin Cities area were constructed in the Gering area.

HOUSING

Figure 21: Housing Stock by Type of Unit in Gering

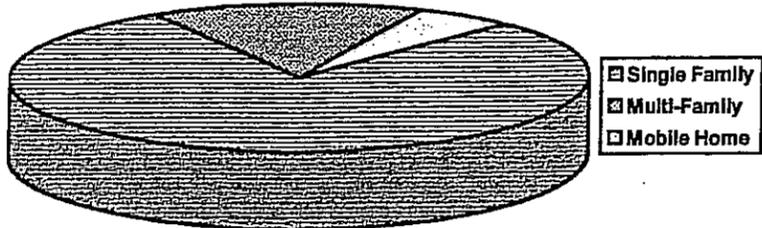


Figure 22: Single Family Homes in Twin Cities Area

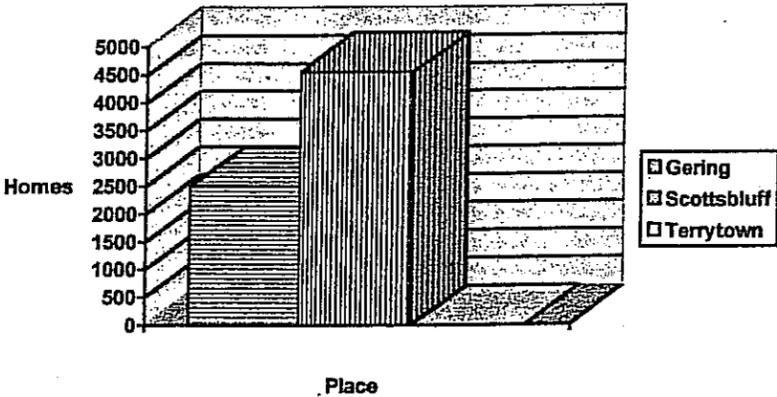
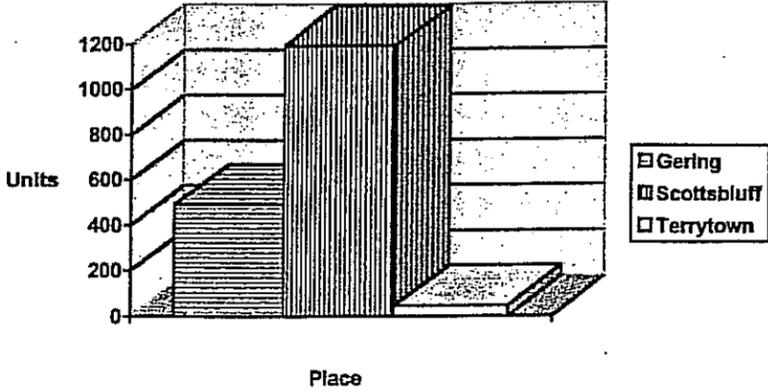
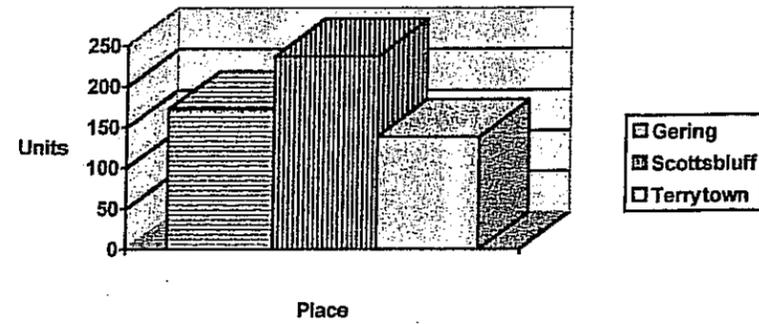


Figure 23: Multi-Family Units in Twin Cities Area



HOUSING

Figure 24: Mobile Home Units in Twin Cities Area



Affordability

Given the lower incomes in the community, affordability is a primary concern in the provision of new housing stock in the community.

The value of the majority of the city's owner-occupied housing units is considerably lower than state-wide averages. State-wide, approximately 49% of owner-occupied units are valued at less than \$50,000. In Gering 69% of units are valued at less than \$50,000. Likewise, the majority of rental units in the city fall in the low cost rent category. In Gering 44% of units rent for less than \$250 versus 40% state-wide.

Even though a large percentage of the city's housing units can be purchased or rented at a lower cost in comparison to state-wide percentages, this does not necessarily imply that the city's housing stock is more affordable. The housing affordability table presented below suggests a need for additional housing virtually throughout the price range spectrum. The table also indicates that a large percentage of the population can not afford the cost of a modest newly constructed single family home. Unless new housing prices can be reduced, or incomes raised, the City will need to consider strategies such as Planned Unit Development or similar options to bring housing costs closer to affordable ranges.

*A large number of citizens
can not afford a new single
family home*

HOUSING

TABLE 7: HOUSING AFFORDABILITY

Household Income	#HHS 1990	Affordable Range (1)	#Units in Range	Affordable Range (2)	Affordable Range (3)
\$0-9,999	460	0 - 19,149	130	0 -14,361	0 - 9,574
\$10-14,999	476	to 35,907	395	to 28,726	to 21,544
\$15-24,999	668	to 66,552	1194	to 54,582	to 42,613
\$25-34,999	537	to 100,070	67	to 83,312	to 66,555
\$35-49,999	554	to 150,346	38	to 126,406	to 102,464
\$50,000	350	150,347+	4	126,407+	102,465+

Notes: All affordable ranges assume a 20% down payment, 30 year loan, 9.9% interest, cost of the lot included in payment, and \$100 to \$120 of monthly income will be needed to pay property tax and insurance costs. The affordable range is for debt retirement only.

- (1) Assumes a loan payment will not exceed 28% of income. Lending institutions will generally not loan in excess of this percentage.
- (2) Assumes loan payment will not exceed 24% of income. In 1990, selected housing costs including loan payments and utilities for 75% of Gering homeowners with a mortgage did not exceed this percentage of household income.
- (3) Assumes loan payment will not exceed 20% of income. In 1990, selected housing costs including loan payments and utilities for 60% of Gering homeowners with a mortgage did not exceed this percentage of household income.

Vacant Lot Inventory

A survey of vacant lots conducted by RDG Martin Shukert during May 1993 identified an improved vacant lot inventory of 311 single-family lots and 27 multi-family lots. Many of the vacant lots are in static subdivisions which have either stalled in their completion or have never proceeded beyond platting into construction. The largest concentration of vacant lots in such "troubled" subdivisions in Gering includes the Pappas subdivision, 17 lots, Deerfield, with 49 lots, and the recent Pathfinder with 83 vacant lots.

The inventory of available vacant lots in the city, located within active subdivisions, and close to urban services is much smaller than the total inventory would suggest. Thus, a compelling need exists to increase the vacant lot inventory within desirable housing areas, and to actively renew efforts to complete stalled and paper plat subdivisions.

Planned Unit Developments and other options should be considered to make housing more affordable

The number of available lots is less than the vacant lot inventory indicates

HOUSING

Recent Development Trends

Gering experienced a peak of land development activity in the 1960's and 1970's, supported by the development of major community facilities such as a new high school and shopping centers. The construction of a Highway 71 bypass during the late 1960's established the framework for the growth of Gering to the west.

The mid 1970's brought Gering a real estate investment cycle based on optimism and high value land prices. This increase in land values was felt in Gering as new subdivisions were platted, and investment decisions were founded on the economics of urbanizing land. Local government regulation encouraged developers to finance and install improvements to newly platted areas in advance of actual home construction, and many private developers made deep capital investments in new housing areas.

The difficult decade of the 1980's brought an abrupt end to the land development and value trends of the late 1970's. The increase in value of previous years was undone when agricultural land values declined by more than 75% within two to three years. The local housing market suffered; interview information suggests that existing homes in the Scottsbluff-Gering area experienced losses of up to 30 to 50% of their value. These new economic realities devastated many of the area's land developers, many of whom were forced into financial restructuring or foreclosure. These reversals in the development of community created a sense of caution among homebuilders and homebuyers in the Twin Cities area.

Detailed records for number of housing units constructed do not exist for Gering before 1986. Between 1986 and 1994 Gering built 64 housing units. Only 15 of these units were constructed between 1986 and 1990.

**TABLE 8: GERING CONSTRUCTION AND DEMOLITION ACTIVITY
1986-1993**

Year	Single Family	Multi-Family	Senior Housing	Demolition	Net Total
1986	1	na	na	0	1
1987	7	na	na	3	7
1988	3	na	0	1	3
1989	3	na	0	0	3
1990	1	na	0	0	1
1991	6	na	0	1	6
1992	10	na	24	1	34
1993	9	na	0	0	9

Housing Development Activity in Gering Peaked in the 1960's and 1970's

HOUSING

Current Development Activity

Single-Family Housing:

Permit information recorded by the City of Gering reveal that 1992 new single family housing permit levels were at their highest point in nearly ten years. Gering issued 10 permits for new homes in 1992. This represents a significant increase from 1988 levels when only three permits were issued.

The most active subdivisions in the Twin Cities area are in Scottsbluff, particularly in the northern part of the city. Single-Family Housing in Gering is far more limited with few new homes currently underway.

Multi-Family Housing:

According to a survey of local builders, no major multi-family projects are underway or contemplated. A few duplex and four-plex units are in process. Permit information from municipal sources indicate that only 2 permits were issued in Gering between 1984 and 1993, with no units added since 1990.

Elderly Housing:

Despite being the most active market segment in Scottsbluff, building permit information for Gering indicates that only one permit was issued (a 24-unit development) for new elderly housing in Gering since 1986.

The Residency in Scottsbluff, a 94 unit elderly housing complex, was originally planned to be built in Gering. Neighborhood opposition to mid-rise senior housing development at the Northfield site deterred its development in Gering.

Gering, however, experienced significant construction of elderly housing developments in the 1970's. The Northfield Villa, a 144 unit elderly housing complex, was built in 1974. Other projects include the HUD-financed Dome Rock Manor, and the Heritage Health Care Center.

High quality projects, combined with excellent medical facilities and supporting services, have made the Twin Cities a regional destination for retirement living. Thus a significant number of units in new developments are occupied by people from outside the Twin Cities.

*Elderly Housing Units
Draw many outsiders
to Gering*

HOUSING

Ten And Twenty-Year Housing Needs

Population, household, and vacancy information can be used to estimate the number of new housing units that will be required for Gering over both a ten and twenty year period. The forecasts can then be compared to current development activity and available land for future development to set priorities for the types and locations of housing development that should be encouraged.

TABLE 9: PROJECTED HOUSING NEED FOR GERING, 1990-2010

	2000	2010
Total Population	8,262	8,461
Household Population	8,084	8,278
People/Household	2.35	2.30
Household Demand	3,440	3,599
Vacancy Rate	5%	5%
Total Units Needs	3,621	3,788
Units in Base Year	3,167	3,167
Units Lost	50	100
Available Units	3,117	3,067
Cumulative Need	504	721
Single Family Units Needed	328	469
Multi-Family Units Needed	176	252

NOTE: 2010 represents need from 1990 to 2010.

ACRES OF LAND NEEDED FOR SINGLE FAMILY HOMES

Number of Acres Needed 78.15 acres+ 111.74 acres+

ACRES OF LAND NEEDED FOR MULTIFAMILY HOMES

Number of Acres Needed 11.17 acres+ 16.00 acres+

*Gering will need 504
Housing Units by the
year 2000 to accommodate
its growth potential*

HOUSING

The projections indicate a ten year need of 504 housing units and a twenty year need of 721 housing units for Gering. Based on current occupancy distributions, about 328 and 469 of these units, respectively, should be single family homes and 176 and 252 units, respectively, should be multi-family units.

By comparison, between 1991 and 1993, Gering produced 49 housing units, or an annual average of just over 16 units - over three times less than the amount of units required annually in this housing projection. Also, 24 of these units, nearly half of the units built, came from the single senior housing project.

Future Housing Development

Future housing development in the Gering area should seek contiguous growth areas that can be affordably served with city services. In addition, there is an important need to make changes to street, lot, and recreation space linkages in Southeast Gering to improve the marketability and living environment of the scattering subdivisions that have been platted, but have not been successfully completed. The most advantageous sites for future subdivision activity in the Gering area are located in the Monument, West, Southwest and Southeast districts. In addition, the city and developers must work together to build upon existing infrastructure investments in Southeast Gering, making strategic investments, code enforcement efforts, and other public improvements to encourage the successful completion of platted subdivisions in the area.

Sites for new subdivision activity in the Monument Growth Area exist west of Highway 71 between Country Club Road and U Street. The recent 16 acre Canyon Estates subdivision lies in this growth area, providing 27 single-family lots on a scenic site at the foot of Scotts Bluff National Monument. While more than 250 additional acres exist at the base of the Monument for future development, the City of Gering should encourage contiguous growth adjacent to Canyon Estates.

This part of the growth area is located convenient to Gering High School, Northfield Elementary, downtown shopping, and employment centers. These areas are adjacent to existing utilities which can be readily extended. The sites offer attractive home sites with an in-city setting and offer impressive views. However, further development will be needed in this area. Safe pedestrian crossings across Highway 71 must be an important priority. There also is a need to complete recreation trails corridor links between the Monument, the Gering Golf Course, Johannes Park, and existing subdivisions in Gering.

Sites for new subdivision activity in the West Gering Growth Area exist west of Highway 71 between M Street and U Street. While more than 230 acres of additional land exists at the base of the Monument for future development, the City of Gering should encourage continuous growth along the Highway 71 corridor, adjacent to the Meadows or Canyon Estates.

Future Housing Growth in Gering should be directed towards the Southwest, West, and Southeast.

HOUSING

This growth area is convenient to schools, downtown shopping, and employment centers. Existing utilities are nearby and can be easily extended. The sites offer attractive home sites with an in-city setting and offer impressive views. Safe pedestrian crossings across Highway 71 must be addressed in this growth area. There also is a need to complete recreation trails corridor links between the Monument, the Gering Golf Course, Johannes Park, and existing subdivisions in Gering. The city of Gering should consider setting aside land for future development of a park to complement future growth in this area.

In the Southwest Gering Growth area the optimum site for new subdivision activity is located north of M Street to D Street. The area is bounded by Highway 71 to the west and Oregon Trail park to the east. In addition to these 55 acres of land, this growth area contains two existing subdivisions with vacant lots. Hawley Place has slightly more than 3 acres in 13 vacant lots and Pioneer Plaza has slightly more than 4 acres in 5 vacant multi-family lots.

These areas are conveniently located near Geil Elementary, Oregon Trail Park, downtown shopping, and employment centers. This area abuts recent housing developments during the 1970's and are adjacent to existing utilities which can easily be extended. The sites offer attractive home sites with excellent views of the Bluff, and abut market proven housing areas experiencing present homebuilding. The city should provide this area with safe pedestrian crossing across Highways 92 and 71. The city should plan to extend pedestrian and bicycle routes to the north and west to connect with the Monument Valley Pathways.

The Southeast Growth Area has enormous potential to provide additional housing opportunities to residents of the community. Several subdivisions have been platted to open this area for growth, but financial and site problems have prevented the area from reaching its full potential. Three platted subdivisions, the Pappas, Pathfinder, and Deerfield Additions, have experienced slow absorption of lots, and together contain more than 190 vacant improved lots.

All of these sites are adjacent to existing utilities which can be readily extended. It also provides lots located convenient to shopping and employment centers. This area, however, is not near any schools and street linkages are presently very poor with no adequate collector streets to connect the subdivisions into a viable neighborhood.

Improved pedestrian safety may be needed across Highway 71 in the future

HOUSING

Housing Planning Issues:

- * The majority of housing stock in post war areas of the community is in excellent to very good condition. However, there is a contrasting need for rehabilitation and/or redevelopment in the older neighborhoods located east, southeast and southwest of the Central Business District.
- * Future development policies of the City should incorporate provisions for Planned Unit Development housing projects, or similar methods, to assist the provision of affordable housing development.
- * The city should encourage in-filling and redevelopment/renewal projects to make use of the substantial number of vacant improved lots and existing corporate land zoned for housing development.
- * Gering will need 721 new housing units by the year 2010 to accommodate its full growth potential
- * Design standards should be implemented for all future development west of Highway 71
- * Improved street linkages and the paving of D street in the Southeast part of Gering are needed to accommodate housing development in this area of the City.

TRANSPORTATION

The movement of people and goods to, from, or within a given area has more influence upon the way an area will develop than any other factor. The transportation system not only influences the location and types of development, but dictates the land use activity to a certain extent. The purpose of this section is to analyze the existing transportation system within the city and examine the problems and inadequacies of the system.

Streets and Highways

The streets within Gering have been classified by the state Department of Roads according to the function of the particular street. The basic categories of streets in the city are as follows: expressway, major arterial, other arterial, collector, and local streets. This functional classification of streets is illustrated on Map 3.

Expressways are extensions of rural expressways which consist of a group of highways following major traffic desires in Nebraska. The expressway system is one which ultimately should be developed to a multi-lane divided highway. Major arterials provide continuous service through municipalities for long-distance rural travel. Other arterials interconnect major activity areas within a city such as shopping centers, the central business district, and manufacturing centers. Collectors distribute traffic to the arterial system from local and residential streets and also serve abutting land uses. Local streets are those streets having the primary function of providing access to abutting property. Through traffic movements are discouraged on this type of facility.

Major Street System

The street system in Gering is characterized by a grid pattern of streets and is served by three major arterial streets. (Highways 71 & 92, and Tenth Street) Highway 71 serves as a bypass route for Gering as it channels through traffic around the city and separates through traffic from traffic having origins and/or destinations within the city. Sugar Factory Road, to a lesser extent, serves as a bypass on the east side of Gering. The Heartland Expressway, when completed to the east of Gering, will serve as the major bypass route in Gering.

Highway 92 performs a dual function of serving through traffic movements as well as local traffic movements. This dual function does create some conflicts as through traffic flow is slowed down. This problem, though, is not very serious..

Tenth Street provides access to Gering's Central Business District and main industrial center. It also provides access for local travelers going to and from Scottsbluff. This route often is blocked by trains obstructing traffic flow.

Country Club Road, U Street, and 7th Street are the other primary streets in Gering. Both Country Club Road and U Street provide access to the Central Business District from the Bypass Route and local neighborhoods. U Street also provides access to the east "bypass", especially for Gering residents traveling to the mall, college, or employment in Scottsbluff. Seventh Street serves mostly local traffic and provides access to Highway 92, U Street and Country Club Road.

*Bypass routes help
ease congestion on
local streets*

TRANSPORTATION

Traffic flow continuity in the Gering street system is good for most of the system, but with a few exceptions listed below. Improvements such as a railroad overpass, additional turning lanes, medians to restrict access points, and the removal of visual barriers would improve traffic flow and safety in many instances.

TABLE 10: TRAFFIC FLOW AND SAFETY CONCERNS

Street	Conditions Affecting Traffic Flow and Safety
Tenth Street	# of access points - industrial & commercial Angle Parking - Courthouse & CBD At Grade Railroad Crossing
Highway 92	Two Traffic Lanes # of access points - residential & commercial On-Street Parking
Highway 71	Poor Pedestrian Accessibility
East U Street	Poor Visibility at Many Intersections

Rail Transportation

Rail service in Gering is provided by the Union Pacific Railroad. Local service shipping can be accommodated from existing rail sidings. Passenger transportation services are not available.

Air Transportation

Air transportation service to Gering is provided by Continental Express, United Express and GP Express. Continental provides four daily flights to and from Denver, Colorado. GP Express provides three flights daily with service to North Platte, Grand Island, Lincoln, Omaha and Minneapolis/St. Paul. United provides six flights daily to and from Denver. In 1994, the airport had a total of 3,568 flights with 19,496 inbound and 18,753 outbound passengers.

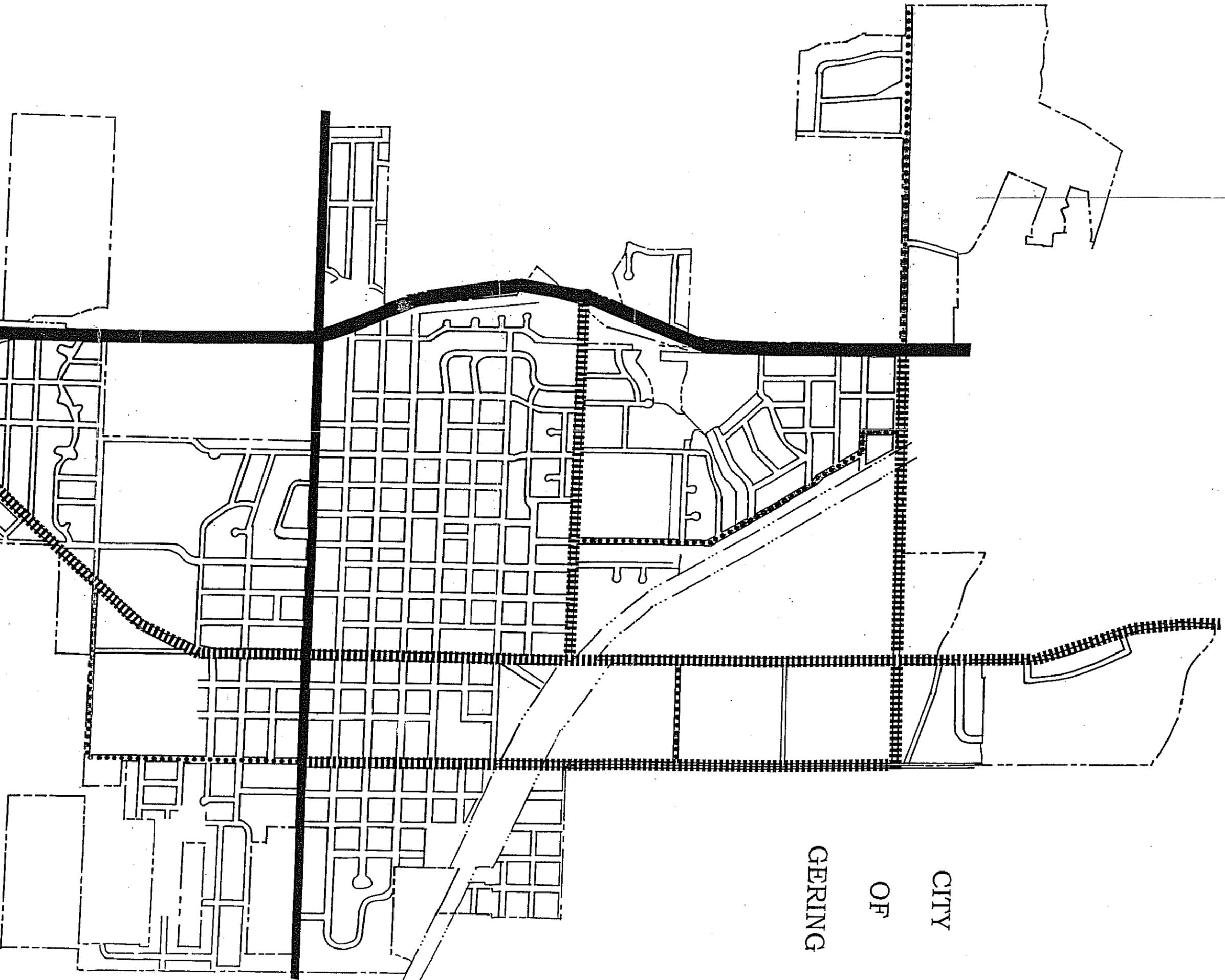
Heartland Expressway

The Nebraska Department of Roads is planning to construct a four-lane divided highway from Kimball to Chadron via Scottsbluff and Alliance. Although this expressway will not have the impact that an interstate highway such as I-80 would possess, it will affect local travel patterns, increase through traffic modestly, and provide Gering with some economic opportunities which it presently does not enjoy.

The most significant opportunity for Gering is that with proper planning the City can create an intervening opportunity of traffic oriented services for northbound travelers. This is very significant because much of the traffic entering the community on the Heartland express will be coming from the south. Presently Gering provides very few services for highway traffic northbound on Highway 71.

*The Scottsbluff
Airport had over
3,500 flights last
year*

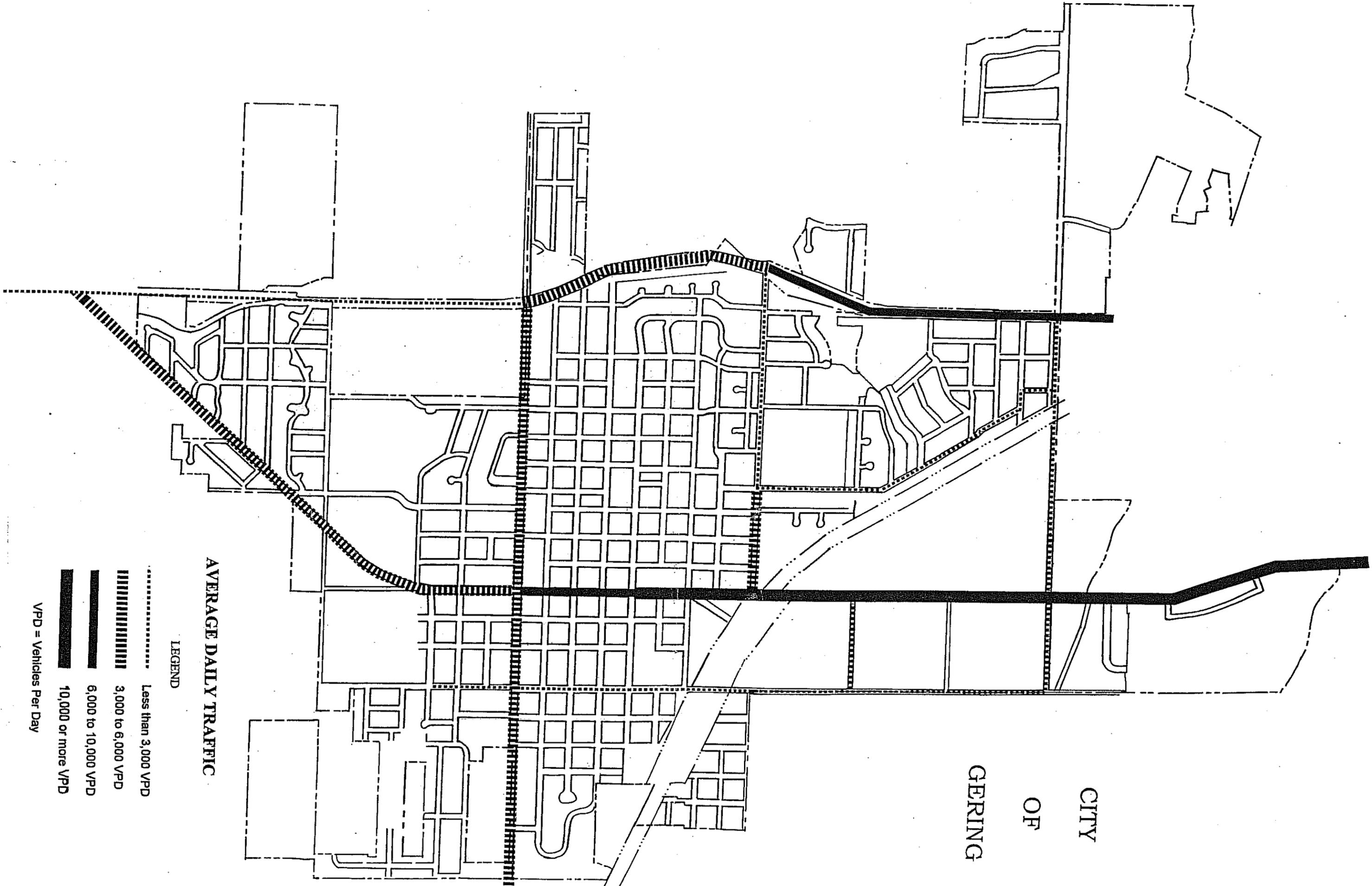
CITY
OF
GERING



STREET CLASSIFICATION MAP

LEGEND

- Expressway
- Major Arterial
- Other Arterial
- Collector
- Local



AVERAGE DAILY TRAFFIC

LEGEND

- Less than 3,000 VPD
 - ||||| 3,000 to 6,000 VPD
 - 6,000 to 10,000 VPD
 - 10,000 or more VPD
- VPD = Vehicles Per Day

CITY
OF
GERING

TRANSPORTATION

The expressway will also present Gering with a more time efficient and dependable surface transportation system to regional markets. This tool can be used to help attract much needed manufacturers to the region. It must be noted, though, that although many manufacturers require a surface transportation system such as the Heartland Expressway, the transportation system alone is not a sufficient reason for manufacturers to locate in an area. Therefor, the City will need to work on marketing other factors such as labor supply and climate to attract prospective industries.

The expressway will alter local travel patterns by directing much of the through traffic to the east side of the City. This will result in more people entering the City from the east off of the Highway 92 interchange and will decrease the traffic on Highway 71.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation Planning Issues:

- * Commuter and local commerce (shopping) traffic should be studied to identify potential future traffic patterns and street systems in need of expansion.
- * Street design or traffic regulation measures should be implemented to reduce access points or provide additional turning lanes on high traffic volume streets serving commercial areas.
- * Angle parking on Tenth Street should be converted to parallel parking with additional off-street parking spaces provided.
- * Visual barriers such as shrubs, trees and fences that obstruct the views of drivers at intersections should be removed.
- * The Heartland Expressway, when completed, will serve as the major bypass route.
- * With proper planning, the Heartland Express can bring Gering some economic opportunities that presently do not exist.
- * The City may need to develop frontage roads on East M Street where strip commercial development may arise with the Heartland Expressway.
- * Improved linkage of City streets in the southeastern section of the community is needed.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Schools

Gering's elementary and secondary education is served by six different schools. These include a public senior high school, a public junior high school, and four public elementary schools.

Declining enrollments in the Gering elementary school system may, however, consequently culminate in the closing of one or two elementary schools in the near future. Although no schools will be closed for the 1995-96 school year, McKinley and Lincoln Elementary schools are candidates to close in the near future. The closing of these schools may be quite eminent due to the cost of rehabilitating these structures.

The closing of one or both of these schools will ultimately require expansion of the Geil and Northfield schools and/or the creation of a new school. The decision of how to distribute the students will need to be made by the school board and the people of Gering in the near future.

Declining enrollments are also affecting the number of teachers needed. Although the elementary schools are not laying off teachers, they are decreasing the amount of faculty by not replacing teachers who leave or retire.

Inventory of Schools

McKinley Elementary, located at 1430 6th Street, is one of the oldest Gering Elementary Schools. Despite being built in the early 1920's the building is structurally in good condition. However, the building is not handicap accessible, has small classrooms, lacks storage space, and the wiring is not up to code to handle modern technological equipment such as computers.

McKinley's enrollment of 214 students is over 26% below its enrollment capacity for the 1990-91 school year. This drastic decline in enrollment combined with the school's lack of modernization has made the school a candidate for possible closure. Thus no plans for capital improvement projects are planned to help update the facility.

Lincoln Elementary, located at 1725 13th Street, is also one of the oldest elementary schools in Gering. Despite being built in 1921, the school is structurally in good condition. Due to its age, though, it has many significant problems. The wiring is not up to code to handle modern technology, the furnace is very inefficient, and the layout of the building may be a safety concern, especially in the event of a fire. The school building is not handicap accessible and it lacks adequate storage and parking space.

Although the school's enrollment of 259 students is below its capacity of 300 students, some of the classes are at or very near capacity. The declining enrollments of the Gering elementary schools combined with Lincoln's

*McKinley & Lincoln
Elementary schools may
close in the near future*

PUBLIC FACILITIES

outdated facilities has made the school a candidate for closure. Therefore, no investments in upgrading the facility are expected.

Northfield Elementary, located at 1900 Flaten Avenue, is the largest elementary school with an enrollment of 343 students. The school, which was built in 1970, is in good condition with no major problems, although it does lack storage space.

Despite the school's size, expansion may be needed to absorb many additional students if McKinley and/or Lincoln close. The school is presently pushing its capacity of approximately 350 students.

The Gering elementary school experiencing the largest declines in enrollment is Geil Elementary. This school, located at 1600 D Street, has lost nearly a third of its enrollment in the past five years.

Geil is a candidate to absorb a large majority of students if any elementary schools close. The seventeen year-old school is in excellent condition and has a capacity of approximately 350 to 400 students.

The only significant problem with the facility is that it faces a major shortage of storage space. The school also needs to upgrade the handicap accessibility of its restrooms, but has made many improvements in increasing the building handicap accessibility.

Gering Junior High School, located at 800 Q Street, is in good condition. The school was expanded and remodeled in 1975. The school's enrollment of 566 is near the facilities capacity of 600 students, but projected enrollments are expected to be remain below capacity.

Gering High School, located at 1500 U Street, presently has 501 students enrolled. The school, which was built in the 1950's, is in very good condition although it needs tuckpointing. The facility has a student capacity of about 550 students, comfortably above present and projected enrollments. The only significant problem the school building has at this time is that the restrooms and water fountains need to be more accessible to the handicap.

Gering is also served by a private High School. Christian Heritage, located at 2105 17th Street, provides religious education services for junior and senior high students. The school has an enrollment of 60 students and does not have any major problems with its facilities at this time.

TABLE 11: GERING SCHOOL ENROLLMENTS

	1990-91	1991-92	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95
Gering HS	510	525	498	482	501
Gering MS	505	536	589	593	566
Lincoln	302	300	296	259	259
Guile	392	281	279	287	263
Northfield	341	345	312	331	343
McKinley	291	302	288	253	214

PUBLIC FACILITIES

TABLE 12: GERING RECREATION FACILITIES

Name of Park	Size	Facilities
Legion Park	2.0	Community park with picnic tables and shelter, playground equipment horse shoe pits, amphitheater, basketball court, and restrooms.
Gardner Park	2.0	Community park with picnic tables and shelter, playground equipment, horse shoe pits, basketball court, and restrooms.
Gentry Park	2.0	Community park with picnic tables, playground equipment, and a basketball court.
Johannes Park	3.0	Community park with picnic tables, playground equipment, and a basketball court.
Carl Grey Park	2.0	Community Park with picnic tables and horseshoe pits.
Roundhouse Park	3.0	Community Park with picnic tables, basketball court, playground equipment, and ball field.
Hampton Park	3.0	Community Park with picnic tables, playground equipment, basketball court, ball field, and restrooms.
Southeast Park	5.0	Community Park with picnic tables, playground equipment, ball field, and soccer fields.
Northfield Park	15.0	Community Park with picnic tables, and Arboretum playground equipment, horse shoe pits, sledding slope, and nature trail.
Robidoux Park	15.0	Recreational Vehicle Park with multi-activity use building, picnic tables, outdoor Bar-B-Que grills, playground equipment, rest rooms, showers, and 35 concrete slab RV pads with electric hook-ups and water/sewer.
Oregon Trail Park	68.0	Community park with picnic shelters, rest rooms, ball fields, swimming pool with water slide, camp ground, tennis courts, horseshoe pits, volleyball courts, playground equipment, soccer fields, basketball court, greenhouse, and a museum

PUBLIC FACILITIES

YMCA

The YMCA, located at the intersection of Broadway and South Beltline in Scottsbluff, provides the citizens of Gering with numerous recreation opportunities for persons of all ages. The YMCA currently has Universal and Olympic weight training rooms, four racquetball courts, an aerobics room, a natatorium, indoor running track, gymnastics room, sauna, two gymnasiums for basketball and volleyball, a day care center, and locker rooms.

Organized leagues are available for basketball, volleyball, and racquetball. In addition classes are held for gymnastics, aerobics, youth basketball and Tae-Kwon-Do.

Construction is nearing completion for a multi-million dollar expansion to the complex. This expansion will create an additional gymnasium, a youth center, and mat area. In addition the universal weight room and locker rooms will be expanded and remodeled. This additional space will also make it possible to increase the amount of youth programs provided.

Municipal Golf Course

The Gering Municipal Golf Course is a 66 acre, nine-hole golf course and club house. Over 27,000 rounds of golf are played annually. The golf course also has 260 members.

The City of Gering is expanding the municipal golf course to 18 holes. The course will eventually be expanded to 27 holes. Lots for homes will also be available within this area.

Department of Parks

The Gering Department of Parks operates and manages the parks and recreation programs and facilities for the City of Gering. The Department feels that they are provided with adequate shop and office space and are not experiencing any significant problems with their facilities at this time.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Police Station

The Police Department is located in the west end of City Administration Building. The 3,600 square foot facility, constructed in 1990, is in excellent condition.

Department personnel consists of 15 full-time officers, 1 record technician, 1 humane officer, and 4 part-time crossing guards.

The department arranges jail facilities with the Scotts Bluff County Sheriff's Department in Gering. The average expenditures needed for police protection have averaged \$700,000 over the past three years.

The only problem the police department has experienced with its facilities is a lack of parking space. Purchasing additional land for parking space has been considered, but no plans for such an acquisition are in the works.

Fire Department

The Gering fire department presently has 1 full-time fireman and 36 volunteers. The department has a 6200 square foot facility for equipment storage.

The fire department is in need of at least another 3,000 square feet of space to adequately store the department's equipment. Showers and training room facilities are also needed. The only other significant problem facing the department is that the heating system is inefficient and will need replacing in the near future.

Public Works Departments

The Gering Street, Water, Electric, Sewer Departments all share the same facility at 225 D Street. The present facility supplies adequate space and does not pose any serious problems at this time.

Administration Building

The Gering Administration Building, located at 1025 P Street, is a 12,000 square foot building constructed in 1990. The city administrator, city clerk, city engineer, city treasurer and utilities department are all housed in the Administration Building. The Police Headquarters are also located within this facility. The building is in excellent condition and does not present any significant problems at this time.

Hospital

The city of Gering does not have a hospital. However, Regional West Medical Center in Scottsbluff is only a short distance from Gering. Regional West can serve Gering with nearly all of its medical needs as it is a regional hospital with 279 beds, 80 physicians and 710 FTE's.

*The Fire Department
may need expansion
of its facilities in the
near future*

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Library

The Gering Public Library is located at 1055 P Street. The library has 8,777 borrowers, 38,855 volumes of information, and 125 magazine subscriptions.

The major problems confronting the library are lack of space and parking shortages during certain time periods. The library will need to be expanded within the next five years. However, finding available land adjacent to the present facility will be difficult. The library meets the American Library Association standards for parking spaces provided for a library of its size. However, during certain time periods, such as the night of the auction sale, library parking spaces are being used by non-library users. If this problem begins to create inconveniences for library users, the library may need to designate certain parking spots as user-only lots.

Post Office & Package Services

The US Post Office in Gering is located at 1050 P Street and was built in 1960. The postal service provides house-to-house delivery. There are 2 mail receipts and 2 dispatches daily.

In addition to express and package delivery provided by the US Postal Service, these services are also provided by United Parcel Service, Federal Express and Airborne Express. UPS provides Gering with daily service to 48 states from their Scottsbluff distribution center. Federal Express and Airborne Express provides overnight delivery and all other delivery services available to and from Gering.

West Lawn Cemetery

West Lawn Cemetery is the only public cemetery currently serving the city of Gering. The 39 acre cemetery is located west of Gering on Highway 92.

The cemetery presently has 15 acres of land that is being used for farming. This land is expected to provide adequate space to accommodate burials for at least the next thirty years.

Senior Citizens Center

The Gering Senior Citizen Center, opened in 1978, provides the senior citizen population of Gering with numerous activities, recreational opportunities, and meals to shut-ins. The Senior Center averages 30 users daily and serves meals to approximately 34 shut-ins daily. The Center employs a manager/activities director and two cooks.

The only significant problem that the senior center experiences at this time is maintenance. Since the center is volunteer oriented, there isn't anyone assigned to day-to-day upkeep. Fund raisers are often needed to acquire funds to fix major problems.

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Civic Center

The Gering Civic Center, located at 1050 M Street, was opened in May 1993. The Civic Center provides Gering with a facility capable of attracting conventions and trade shows to the area. The 25,500 square foot facility also accommodates meetings, banquets, reunions, and receptions. The center can entertain up to eight events at one time.

The only major problems that the center has at this time is that it needs more parking space and a motel. The Civic Center is looking into acquiring additional land to be converted into parking spaces. Prospective developers have considered establishing a motel by the Civic Center but external factors have delayed the investment.

Information Sources

The city of Gering is served by seven different newspapers. The Gering Courier is the local newspaper and is available weekly by mail. The Scottsbluff Star Herald, published daily except Monday, and the Omaha World Herald, published daily, are available through home delivery. The USA Today, Rocky Mountain News, and the Sunday Denver Post are available at newsstands. The Business Farmer is another publication available in Gering.

There are nine radio stations in the Gering area. Six are FM stations and three are AM stations.

There are two local television stations in Gering. KSTF is affiliated with the CBS network and KDUH is affiliated with the ABC network. TCI Cablevision provides the community with 36 different stations including an NBC affiliated station out of Denver.

The Civic Center will need to expand its parking lot in the very near future

PUBLIC FACILITIES

Public Facilities Planning Issues:

- * Lincoln and McKinley Elementary are recommended as candidates for closure due to declining enrollments of the Gering Elementary school system and due to the outdated nature of these buildings. One or both of these buildings, however, may be able to assist in relieving the lack of storage space at the other Gering schools.
- * Gering may need to expand Northfield and/or Geil elementary schools to accommodate incoming students from Lincoln and McKinley. Other options may be to have the High School accommodate freshman so that the Middle School can accommodate the Sixth Grade to relieve enrollment pressure on the elementary schools.
- * Gering may need to consider expanding parking availability for the Police Station.
- * The Fire Department is in need of at least an additional 3,000 square feet of space to properly store equipment. The department also needs a training room, showers, and a new heating system.
- * The Gering Public Library lacks adequate space and may need to be expanded.
- * The Gering Civic Center needs additional parking spaces and a motel to enable the center to maximize its potential.
- * The Gering Public Golf Course is in need of expansion to 18 holes to accommodate local golfers.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

Electricity

Gering operates a municipal distribution system, purchasing power from the Western Area Power administration, Municipal Energy of Nebraska and the Nebraska Public Power District. There are seven substations with a total capacity of 22,492 kVA. The distribution voltage is 4,160 wye, and the transmission voltage is 34,500 kVA. Five 115 kV lines tie the city into the statewide electrical grid. The transmission substation has a capacity of 25 MVA.

Natural Gas

KN Energy, Inc, is the supplier and distributor of natural gas to Gering. Natural gas is available for both residential and industrial uses.

Water

The municipal water system in Gering is supplied by 12 wells. The city has added four new wells to the system in the past five years. Three wells began operation in 1991 while the fourth well began operation in 1995. The system has a combined pumping capacity of 10,800 gallons per minute and a storage capacity of 1,000,000 gallons. The average daily demand is 2,400,000 gallons. The static pressure varies across town according to elevation. The average pressure is approximately 100 pounds per square inch.

Groundwater is available for industrial uses. A 100-foot well should produce 1,500 gallons of water per minute. The quality of water in Gering does not necessitate a water treatment plant. The water table has not changed appreciably in the past five years.

Sanitary Sewer

Gering has a municipal sanitary sewer system and a storm sewer system. The sewage treatment plant, which is an aerated lagoon with stabilization ponds, was built in 1983 and has a daily capacity of 1,900,000 gallons. The average daily flow is 1,000,000 gallons, and the historic peak daily discharge is 1,800,000 gallons.

The storm sewer system in several areas of the community is in need of improvement to accommodate storm water runoff. In addition, new subdivisions should be required to provide adequate storm water drainage.

Solid Waste

Solid waste disposal in Gering is provided by privately-owned garbage removal services. The city of Gering owns a solid waste disposal site. The site has an estimated life of 95 years.

URBAN DESIGN

RDG Martin Shukert, Inc. was commissioned in 1991 to develop an urban design plan for the twin cities area. The plan, which was completed in 1992, identified six Urban Design Themes that express ideas and priorities to unify and coordinate current urban design efforts of the Twin Cities into a single overall concept.

Defining Entrances

Strongly defining entrances is the first theme. It is designed to upgrade the experience of entering the urban area and to provide succinct directional information in an attractive manner. With increased tourism and travel in the area it is particularly important to direct people to business and community centers. Attractive entrances also give a positive and lasting first impression.

Application to this theme should involve developing highway gateways featuring monument style entrance signs, landscaping and directional information. The area of highest priority for highway gateways is Highway 92 east of County Road 1055.

A directional signage system should jointly be designed with Scottsbluff to lead visitors to the main features of each community. The signs should extend from the highway gateways into the interior of the cities. The signs should be consistent in style and reflect high design quality.

A tourist center should be developed along the Heartland Expressway at the N-92 interchange. The center can provide valuable information to visitors about points of interest in the area. The present tourist center on N-71 should undergo improvements in its signage, lighting, landscaping, and parking.

Improving Inter-Urban Connections

Improved Interurban Connections is the second theme. This theme is designed to address major problems and opportunities that require strongly cooperative relationships between Scottsbluff and Gering and that tend to benefit both cities equivalently.

The highest priority of this theme is to upgrade the appearance of the Scottsbluff-Gering Highway. Improving the aesthetics of the bridge with landscaping, banners, and ornamental lighting will provide a pleasant view of an important connecting element. Providing a continuous sidewalk along one side of the Scottsbluff-Gering Highway will improve the pedestrian environment.

Site development standards should also be established along this corridor with minimum landscaping and tree planting requirements, screening of salvage yards, surfacing of parking lots. Sign standards should be established to improve the aesthetics and to protect the view of the monument.

*Community entrances
should be strongly
defined*

*Upgrading the
appearance of the
Scottsbluff-Gering
Highway should be
a high priority*

LAND USE

Land use refers to the kind of activity for which any given parcel of land is being utilized. Since existing land use conditions and activities exert a strong influence in future growth and types of development, it is necessary that a detailed and accurate land use survey be completed.

Land Use Classification

A detailed land use inventory of Gering was completed during the months of November and December, 1994. Using aerial photographs and field studies, each lot or parcel was observed and the existing land use was noted on a field map. The various categories of land characteristics are identified as follows:

Residential:

This category includes all land on which the primary structure serves as a dwelling unit. Residential categories were further delineated by density of the development, ie: one and two family units, multi-family units and mobile homes.

- * One & Two Family: Any parcel of land on which a single-family or duplex housing unit is located.
- * Multi-Family: Any parcel of land on which more than two housing units are located.
- * Mobile Home: Any parcel of land on which a mobile home is the primary structure.

Commercial:

This category includes all land and buildings where products, goods, or services are sold or exchanged. Included are retail stores, business offices, hotels, motels, service stations and private off-street parking spaces.

Industrial:

This category includes land where the use involves the application of labor and materials to produce a product that is not normally sold to the ultimate consumer on the premises. This category also includes wholesaling activities, processing and the storage of materials, agricultural products and chemicals/fuels.

Parks & Recreation:

This category includes land developed and maintained for recreational purposes such as some school playgrounds, neighborhood parks and recreational land serving the entire city such as Oregon Trail Park.

LAND USE

Public/Semi-Public:

This category includes land and buildings owned by governmental entities for administrative purposes, service delivery, and utilities. In addition, land uses that serve other general community needs such as churches and hospitals are included.

Streets/Alleys:

This category includes land platted and/or currently used for transportation purposes, including railroad right-of-way.

Vacant:

This category includes undeveloped platted land, agricultural land and land located in floodplains.

LAND USE

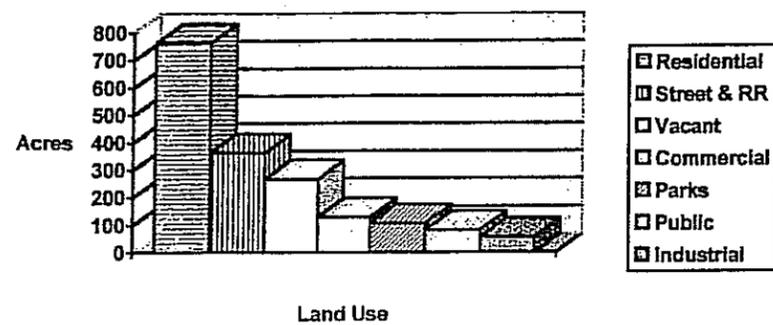
Land Use Inventory

Results of the land use survey estimates that there are approximately 1,765 acres of land within the corporate city limits of Gering. Developed land makes up 85% of Gering, or approximately 1,498 acres. The remaining 267 acres are either vacant or are being used for agricultural purposes.

TABLE 13: Gering Land Use

Total Land	Acres	%
Residential	712.94	40.40
Single Family	643.79	36.48
Multi-Family	46.61	2.64
Mobile Homes	22.54	1.28
Farm Estate	50.14	2.84
Commercial	128.72	7.29
Industrial	57.26	3.24
Public	80.55	4.56
Parks	105.00	5.95
Street & RR	363.27	20.50
Vacant	266.95	15.13
Total	1764.83	100.00

Figure 25: Gering Land Use



LAND USE

Corporate Area Residential Uses

The Twin Cities Housing Plan, completed in 1994, divided the City of Gering into seven neighborhood residential study areas. In order to maintain continuity with previous planning efforts the residential land use description will use these same neighborhood boundaries, as described below:

Southwest:

This neighborhood is located primarily in the triangle area within Highways 92 and 71, and Tenth Street. Most of the homes in this area are in good to excellent condition as nearly all of the homes in this neighborhood were constructed since 1950. The Southwest neighborhood has 126 units of multi-family housing. This district will be one of Gering's most important future growth areas as more than 60 acres of prime residential land is available.

The Southwest area is one of Gering's most important future growth areas.

West:

The West neighborhood is the largest neighborhood in the city with over 800 housing units. The neighborhood is located west of Tenth Street between M and U Streets. Although over two-thirds of the homes have been built since the second World War, only five single-family homes have been built in this neighborhood since 1980. Just over 15% of the homes in this neighborhood need rehabilitation. Most of these homes are located along the east, southeast and northeast areas nearest Downtown. The neighborhood has 22 units of multi-family housing, all in the form of duplex or four-plex homes. Although there is very little room for potential development in this area east of Highway 71, there are more than 40 acres of prime residential land available west of Highway 71.

Northfield:

The Northfield neighborhood is located north of U street between the Union Pacific Railroad and Highway 71. Nearly all of the homes in this area are in good to excellent condition. Only two homes in the neighborhood were constructed in the Pre-war era. Duplex and four-plex housing present 24 units of multi-family housing in this neighborhood. The prospects for future development in this area are slight as only 30 vacant lots are located in this neighborhood. Many of these vacant lots are not available for development.

Monument:

The Monument neighborhood is located near the base of the Monument west of Highway 71 and south of Country Club road. This neighborhood is made up entirely of single family homes of which all but one are in good to excellent condition. Over 70% of the homes in this neighborhood were constructed after 1980. This area should be one of Gering's biggest growth areas in the future as it has over 160 vacant acres available. Development in this area should, however, be monitored by strict design standards to ensure that such development will not compromise the integrity of Scotts Bluff National Monument.

New development near the Monument should meet strict design standards

LAND USE

East:

The East neighborhood is located north of M Street and East of Tenth street. More than two-thirds of the homes in this diverse neighborhood were built in the Pre-war era. Almost 40% of the homes in this area need rehabilitation in some form, especially those in the far east and along the tracks. The neighborhood has 67 mobile homes and 56 multi-family housing units. Although there are 39 vacant lots in the district, there is not much potential for future growth.

Southeast:

The Southeast area is located east of tenth street and south of M Street. Only one house in the neighborhood was built after 1980. More than 24% of the homes, most notably those in the central and south, need some form of rehabilitation. This area has 88 multi-family units, most in the form of apartments. There many platted subdivisions in the area with many available lots for sale. This area should be able to provide much growth in the future.

Highland:

The Highland district is an unincorporated area lying between Gering and Terrytown. All but one of the homes in this area were built between the Second World War and 1980. Nearly 21% of the homes in this district need some form of rehabilitation. There are four multi-family housing units in this area. The area has 30 vacant lots, but for the most part it can be considered fully developed.

*The Southeast Area
has many vacant lots
available for
development*

LAND USE

Corporate Area Commercial Uses

Commercial developments occupy approximately 128.72 acres of land, or 7.29 percent of the total available within the corporate boundary. The majority of developed commercial land is located within the following four commercial areas:

Central Business District:

The Central Business District (CBD) is the oldest developed commercial area in Gering and is roughly defined as the area from M to Q Street between 9th and 11th streets. In the past the CBD has been a retail service center, especially along 10th between M and P Streets. However, competition from Scottsbluff shopping centers and retail outlets in Gering such as Alco has influenced the evolution of the Gering CBD to more of an administrative, office, institutional and services district.

North Tenth Street:

The Northern Tenth Street commercial area extends from Q Street northward to the northern city boundary by the river. This commercial district can be broken into three distinct areas. The northern section from the river to Country Club Road exhibits traffic oriented strip development and a retail sales development area. The midsection from Country Club Road to U Street presents the most aesthetically displeasing area in the entire Twin cities region. The section is intermixed with heavy commercial and industrial use with very little landscaping. The southern section from U Street to Q Street experiences a variety of land uses. The land uses along this strip include highway commercial, retail service, customer service, office, public, park, and a museum.

Highway 92 (M Street):

This commercial area involves a core commercial area next to the CBD along tenth street and intermixed commercial use extending east and west along Highway 92. The core area consists of a retail sales area on the east side of Tenth Street that extends to K Street. The west side of tenth street is made up primarily of auto repair, auto parts, and auto sales businesses. East of the core area along M street, the commercial activities are intermixed with residential use. Most of these businesses are traffic oriented. West of Tenth Street, on M Street, a small concentration of service type commercial activity occurs on the south side of the Highway between 12th and 14th Streets.

South Tenth Street:

This commercial area is concentrated around the intersection of Tenth and D Streets. This area has mixed commercial uses including highway commercial, entertainment, auto repair, and public use.

LAND USE

Outlying Commercial Uses

Commercial development within the two mile planning area is fairly limited at this time. The majority of this development occurs along Rundell Road east of Gering and along the Highway east of Gering. Development along Rundell Road includes a golf cart distributor, a home manufacturer, feed distributors, wholesalers, and county offices. Development along the Highway includes a heavy equipment distributor, a major manufacturer, an auto sales lot, and an irrigation company.

Corporate Area Industrial Use

A large concentration of Industrial Use is intermixed with commercial activities in a strip extending along Tenth Street from U Street to Country Club road. Despite being the main transportation node connecting Gering with Scottsbluff, there has been very little landscaping along this section of Tenth Street.

Outlying Industrial Uses

The main area of industrial development within the two mile planning area is the area east of Gering along Highway 92 and Rundell Road. The major manufacturers in this area are Lockwood Corporation and Magnolia Homes.

LAND USE

Land Use Conflicts

Land Use conflicts occur when mixed land use classifications are allowed to develop without adequate consideration being given to potential impacts that may take place. Potential impacts can include health and safety hazards, noise, traffic increases and or potential decreases in market valuation. Land use conflicts that are present in Gering are described below:

Residential:

The primary land use conflict within residential areas is created by the intrusion of higher density residential development in single family neighborhoods. Multi-family housing sites are scattered throughout more mature neighborhoods within the City. The primary conflict created at these sites involves traffic safety concerns due to limited, or a complete lack of, off-street parking. At the present time this is not a severe problem as the multi-family units are fairly well dispersed throughout the City. However, Gering should ensure that future multi-family housing projects in all areas of the city provide adequate off-street parking.

Commercial:

The major land use conflict created by commercial areas occurs along Highway 92. Many commercial businesses are interspersed within residential areas. These businesses often encroach residences with no planned buffers established to separate the conflicting land uses. This creates an aesthetically uncoordinated and unsightly jumble, frequently caused by poor sign control and haphazard development of commercial structures.

Environmental:

Encroachment of environmental areas by man-made structures can create land use conflicts. Gering has two environmental areas that it needs to preserve. One of these is the North Platte River corridor. Although development in Gering has not affected this corridor, efforts to preserve and enhance the river corridor need to be established. The City should discourage all development adjacent to the river that is in the 100-year flood plain.

The other environmental area that needs to be protected is the Scotts Bluff National Monument. The City should closely monitor and regulate all development west of Highway 71. New construction should be set back from the Highway so that aesthetic views are not destroyed. New development also should not infringe upon the Monument's Park area.

LAND USE

Land Use Projections

The amount of growth needed to accommodate future growth is dependent upon a variety of factors. Population change, health of the local and area economy, land costs and urban renewal efforts or policy will dictate future land needs.

A future land requirement estimate was determined by adjusting existing land use acres upward on a percentage distribution basis to reflect projected change in the city's total population. This was accomplished by estimating the total acres of land needed for new housing development, based upon the projected population, and then determining the number of acres needed to maintain current land use classification ratios. That proportion of vacant land considered as being likely to develop was subtracted from each classification's future land use requirement to arrive at total acres needed. To maintain current land use classification ratios and to maintain a variety of land development options, the quantities displayed in Table 14 would be required.

Table 14: Future Land Use Projection

Land Use Classification	1994 Quantity	2010 Projected Quantity	Land Available	Total Acres Required
Residential	763.08	891	110.79	100
Commercial	128.72	151	77.93	20
Industrial	57.26	66	78.23	—
Public	80.55	95	—	14
Parks	105.00	122	—	17
Street & RR	363.27	427	—	64
Vacant	266.95	171	n/a	n/a
Total	1764.83	1923	266.95	215

This land use projection estimates that approximately 159 acres of land will be needed that lie outside the existing corporate boundary of the city.

LAND USE

Land Use Planning Issues:

Residential:

- * Land available for future housing development within the corporate boundary is limited. However, where possible, in-filling of vacant land should be encouraged.
- * The most desirable locations for future residential growth include the southeast quadrant of the community and the areas just west of Geil School and Highway #71 near Scottsbluff National Monument. The latter two development areas lie outside the corporate boundary and should be annexed before extending public services.

Commercial:

- * Construction of the Gering Civic Center and land acquisition by the City in this area have provided a positive core around which additional commercial redevelopment may take place.
- * Angle parking along Tenth Street creates safety hazards resulting from vehicle intrusions upon traffic lanes. Converting these space to parallel parking will require the provision of additional off-street parking.
- * The Tenth Street commercial corridor represents the city's most pronounced mixed land use area, exhibiting several classifications of commercial and industrial land uses.
- * Adequate land is available within the corporate boundary to accommodate projected growth. However, consideration should be given to providing commercially zoned land near major highway intersections, such as; the Highway #71 and #92 intersection and the future Highway #92 and Heartland Express interchange.

Industrial:

- * An adequate amount of land is available for industrial development within the corporate boundary and within outlying industrial park areas.
- * Although the 10th Street Corridor between Gering and Scottsbluff was partially developed as an industrial area, the corridor now serves as an important commercial development location and transportation corridor moving traffic between the two cities. Therefore, future industrial development in this corridor should be discouraged.
- * The proposed Highway #71 bypass will direct traffic adjacent to industrial land uses on the east edge of the City. Future development of the interchange area should be carefully planned and provide space for commercial development to assist in screening industrial land uses.

LAND USE

Environmental:

- * Scotts Bluff National Monument, which represents the city's greatest environmental resource, has been encroached upon by residential development. Future development west of Highway #71 should incorporate height, setback and density requirements that will protect views of the Monument. In addition, a green belt should be established to restrict development adjacent to Monument boundaries.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

This section of the plan contains a series of recommended goals, objectives, and policies that are based upon the information gathered and evaluated during the preparation of this report. The goals, objectives, and policies are intended to provide guidance to the City in the preparation and implementation of land use controls and development projects. In addition, a future land use map and future development plan map are provided that depict recommended actions to be taken by the community.

The section begins with a presentation of overall development goals which are, by necessity, broad and general in nature. The goals reflect the desires and aspirations of the community by describing basic concepts which should be used to guide all future development. Objectives are provided that coincide with each section of the plan. The objectives recommend specific actions and development programs addressing each of these topic areas. Policy statements are then provided which offer specific guidance and direction for the formulation of future land use and development controls.

Future Development Goals

1. To ensure orderly and efficient growth of residential, commercial, industrial and public land uses to maintain, improve and protect the general welfare of the residents of the community.
2. To protect and conserve the community's unique natural heritage and physical resource base.
3. To maintain and improve the community and its surrounding area by undertaking improvements that will provide a high quality living and working environment.
4. To maintain and foster a strong balanced economy capable of ensuring the economic future of all residents.
5. To achieve safety, convenience and economic efficiency through the wise distribution of land use activities.
6. To encourage cooperation, communication and coordination efforts between the cities of Scottsbluff, Gering, Terrytown and Scotts Bluff County to improve the manner in which local natural, human and economic resources are developed and managed.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Development Objectives

Environmental:

- * To develop design standards and/or monitor construction practices on soils that exhibit the need for special foundation design.
- * To preserve and develop the North Platte River corridor as an environmental/recreation resource.
- * To review and revise development standards and regulations to ensure that high quality scenic areas/vistas are aesthetically protected, particularly near the Scotts Bluff National Monument.
- * To direct future corporate expansion away from the 100 year flood plain

Population:

- * To create an economic environment that will encourage the retention of young adults and the location of new residents in the community.
- * To ensure that improvements are developed with an awareness of the growing percentage of elderly residents.
- * To expand economic efforts to reverse previous out-migration trends.

Economic:

- * To provide a broad range of employment opportunities to meet the needs of a diverse population.
- * To encourage and facilitate the creation and/or location of businesses and industries that will provide wages resulting in higher per capita and median family incomes.
- * To encourage and facilitate efforts to retrain and provide continuing education opportunities to the local labor force.
- * To encourage and facilitate efforts to expand existing or attract new industries that will diversify the local economy.
- * To encourage and facilitate efforts to expand and/or attract industries that employ higher percentages of professional, managerial and technical occupations.
- * To assist existing business and industry with their efforts to expand, diversify and achieve higher growth rates.
- * To ensure that adequate public facilities, infrastructure and housing opportunities are available to accommodate potential new residents and businesses.

Housing:

- * To encourage urban renewal efforts in older neighborhoods of the community.
- * To encourage Planned Unit Development housing projects, or other methods, to assist with the provision of affordable housing.
- * To ensure that adequate land is available to meet future demands for new housing construction.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Transportation:

- * To provide efficient circulation routes connecting all areas of the community with important social, economic and educational functions.
- * To provide for the safe flow of pedestrian and vehicular traffic throughout the city.
- * To divert commuter and commerce traffic away from established residential areas.
- * To limit the number of access points on arterials and major arterials to ensure the smooth, efficient flow of traffic.
- * To provide adequate off-street parking in the CBD and reduce existing traffic flow/safety concerns created by on-street angle parking.

Public Facilities:

- * To provide additional public facilities (parks, schools) in newly developing subdivisions and corporate boundary expansion areas.
- * To maintain and upgrade public facilities to ensure a positive quality of life in all areas of the community.
- * To maintain and upgrade facilities to ensure the city's attractiveness as a desirable location for business, industry and commerce.
- * To preserve and protect the city's primary public environmental resources, ie: Scotts Bluff National Monument and the North Platte River Corridor.
- * To construct public facilities in a manner that will allow for expansion to meet the needs of future population growth.
- * To annex land to the community prior to providing public infrastructure.

Urban Design:

- * To develop and implement landscaping and signage standards to control community entrance and primary transportation corridor aesthetics.
- * To preserve the aesthetic views of Scotts Bluff National Monument and the North Platte River Corridor as a scenic resource.
- * To develop a system of biking/hiking paths linking major parks with residential areas.
- * To develop and implement landscaping in the Central Business District to attract the interest of tourists passing through the City.
- * To develop plans for landscaping and design standards around the Heartland Express interchange to entice travelers to visit the City.

Land Use:

- * To encourage the efficient use of existing public facilities and infrastructure.
- * To provide programs and/or incentives that encourage the renewal and revitalization of established properly zoned residential, commercial and industrial areas.
- * To ensure that adequate amounts of land are available to accommodate future growth.
- * To ensure that adequate planning, plan revision and policy development efforts are undertaken to preserve and improve the character of established residential, commercial and industrial neighborhoods.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Land Use Policy

General:

- * Land zoned for specific uses will be protected from the encroachment of conflicting land uses.
- * Planned residential, commercial and industrial parks will be encouraged.
- * Strip development patterns will be strongly discouraged.
- * New developments will be encouraged to locate adjacent to adequately paved roads and in clusters to promote efficient urban development patterns.
- * New developments will be encouraged to locate in a manner that secures safety from fire, floods and other dangers to protect the health and general welfare of the people.
- * New developments will be directed where public and private facilities are present or planned, including; streets, schools, water, sewer and parks/recreational facilities.
- * The provision of public infrastructure will be used to guide future development patterns.

Natural & Urban Environment:

- * Future development in the 100 year flood plain will be carefully monitored and strongly discouraged.
- * Groundwater run-off management plans/practices will be required during the subdivision/plat approval process.
- * In-filling and urban renewal will be encouraged to minimize the conversion of prime farmland to more intense urban uses.
- * Landscaping, design and/or signage standards will be incorporated into future commercial, industrial and other high density development projects, particularly when located adjacent to community entrances, highway corridors and environmentally sensitive areas.

Residential:

- * Residential development will be encouraged to locate on existing lots and in existing subdivisions.
- * Housing developments will be directed to areas of the community where excess infrastructure and educational facility capacity exist.
- * Large (multi-unit) development projects will be directed to areas where infrastructure development is the most cost effective.
- * High density residential projects will be used as a buffer separating low density residential areas from more intense uses, and located in close proximity to schools, parks and arterial roadways.
- * All residential lots shall be of sufficient size and space to allow for off-street parking of vehicles.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Commercial:

- * In-filling and revitalization of existing zoned commercial areas will be strongly encouraged.
- * Planned commercial parks with landscaping and signage schemes will be encouraged.
- * The extension of strip commercial corridors will be strongly discouraged.
- * Adequate off-street parking and loading facilities will be required in all commercial areas.
- * Redevelopment of properly zoned dilapidated commercial areas will be encouraged.
- * Discontinuance of improperly zoned dilapidated commercial areas will be encouraged.

Industrial:

- * Industrial land uses within the inner core area of the city will be encouraged to relocate or discontinue where land use conflicts are present.
- * Future industrial developments will be required to incorporate landscaping and screening, particularly when located adjacent to community entrances, major thoroughfares and/or adjacent to residential zoning districts.
- * The development of industrial parks in the existing north-west and south-east industrial areas of the community will be encouraged.
- * Industrial land uses should be located in close proximity to major arterials so as to avoid inner city truck traffic.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Recommended Physical Development Improvements

This section of the plan briefly describes physical development improvements and development concepts that should be considered to guide future land use patterns. The recommended improvements are depicted on map #6.

Urban Design/Environmental Improvement Areas

Major Intersections and Community Entrances:

The City of Gering's location along a primary tourism corridor and its role as a regional retail and service center suggest that community entrances and major intersections within the community should be developed to provide a positive first impression of the community and to provide guidance to travelers. Proposed improvements in these areas include monument style entrances, site development and landscaping standards, and directional information. Key intersections where these improvements should be considered include:

- * Highway 92 at the future Heartland Express Interchange
- * Highway 71 and Highway 92 Intersection
- * Highway 71 and Highway 71B Fork
- * Highway 71 and Country Club Road Intersection

Commercial Districts:

The community's mature commercial districts also require urban design improvements to provide a positive image of the community and to attract tourist traffic that is passing through the community. Recommended improvements in these areas include:

- * Central Business District - maintain and enhance the appearance with landscaping and signage.
- * M Street - development of signage standards, signage reduction, and landscaping.
- * North Tenth Street - development of signage standards, landscaping and screening of existing industrial and heavy commercial uses.

Natural Amenities:

Scotts Bluff National Monument is the most important natural asset to the community. The Monument not only provides a scenic amenity to the Twin Cities, it also serves as a magnet attraction to the area creating basic economic income to the community. Efforts to maintain and enhance views of the Bluff should warrant as a high priority in community policy making. Encroachment upon the bluff and park area should be minimized if not completely halted.

The North Platte River Corridor is another important environmental resource to the community. Efforts to restore the natural beauty of the corridor and develop it as a passive recreation resource should be continued.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Park Development:

Efforts to add new park land in Gering should be concentrated in the south-east section of the community. This area has many new homes and numerous vacant lots available for development.

Bike/Hike trails linking Gering's parks should be considered to enhance the City parks.

Transportation Improvements:

Angle parking in front of the courthouse and in the Central Business District present safety concerns and often times slow the flow of traffic. Angle parking in these areas should be eliminated.

Visual barriers that obstruct the view of drivers turning into traffic cause safety concerns at many intersections. The area where these barriers present the greatest danger is along U Street from Seventh to Third Streets. Visual barriers such as shrubs, trees and fences should be removed in these areas and in other areas of town where they present such hazards.

The Heartland Expressway may influence strip commercial development along the east end of M Street (Highway 92). Frontage roads may need to be developed in these areas to improve traffic flow and safety.

Urban Revitalization/Renewal Areas:

Several mature residential, commercial and industrial neighborhoods in the community are in need of revitalization and renewal. Characteristics of these areas include mixed land use, dilapidated buildings, strip commercial or industrial development and inconsistent building setbacks. Recommended improvements in these areas include the following:

- * Northeast Corner - (The area between the railroad tracks and U Street) Dilapidated structures should be demolished and no more than one home should exist on a single lot. Planned Unit Development Strategies need to be developed in the community to provide the numerous families living in dilapidated homes in this neighborhood an opportunity for affordable housing.
- * North Tenth Street - Industrial uses should not be encouraged to continue along Tenth Street. Future industrial development should be directed along Seventh Street north of U Street. In addition, trees or attractive fencing should be used to screen industrial areas along major thoroughfares.
- * Central Business District - Dilapidated buildings should be removed, additional off-street parking provided in the southern end of the district and overhead wires placed underground in conjunction with urban design improvements.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Industrial/Commercial Parks:

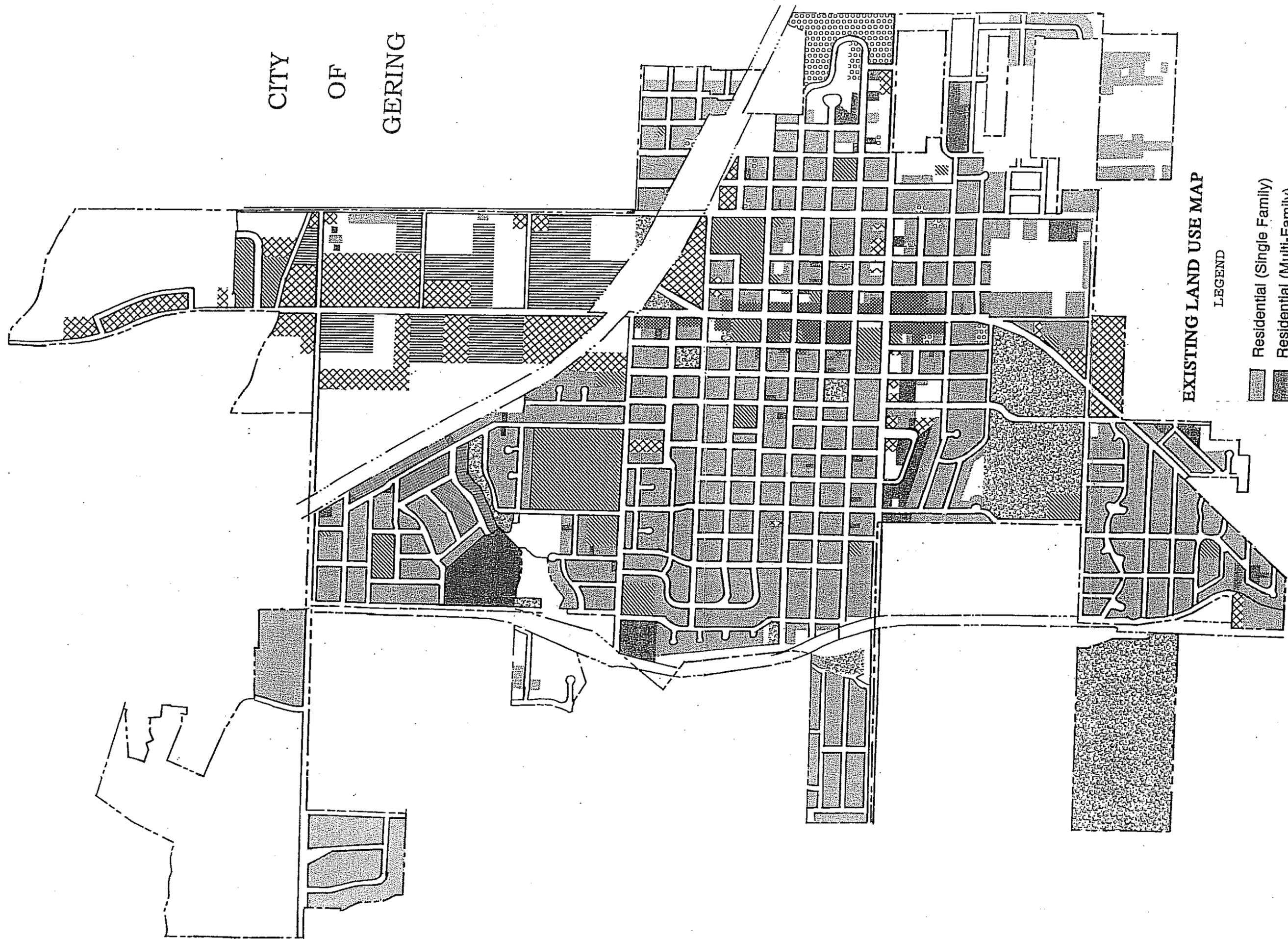
Historical development patterns in the city have resulted in strip commercial and industrial areas following major transportation corridors. Strip development typically results in the creation of land use conflicts, inhibited traffic flow on major transportation corridors and a development pattern that can be confusing to motorists. Future development patterns that incorporate planned commercial and industrial parks with landscaping and signage standards are highly recommended.

Excess School Capacity/Multi-Family Encouragement Areas:

The only elementary school identified as having excess capacity during the research phase of this project was Geil elementary. However, if Gering chooses to conduct its elementary classes in just two schools, this excess capacity will cease to exist.

The city should consider providing land for multi-family housing developments near the two remaining elementary schools under this scenario. In addition, the provision of bike paths and/or pedestrian walkways linking these schools with the more remote locations in the community should be considered.

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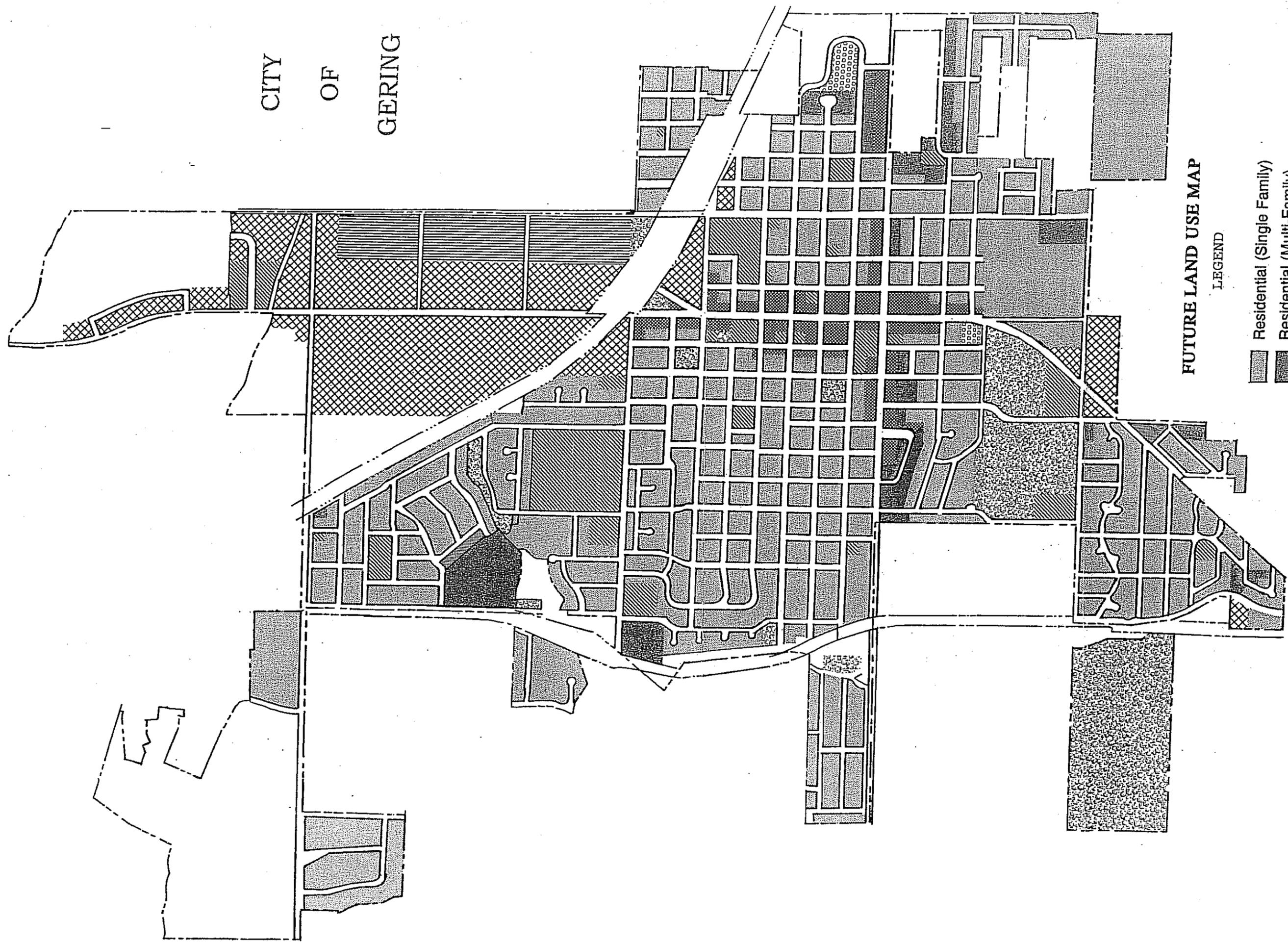


EXISTING LAND USE MAP

LEGEND

- Residential (Single Family)
- Residential (Multi-Family)
- Mobile Home
- Central Business District
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public
- Environmental/Recreation

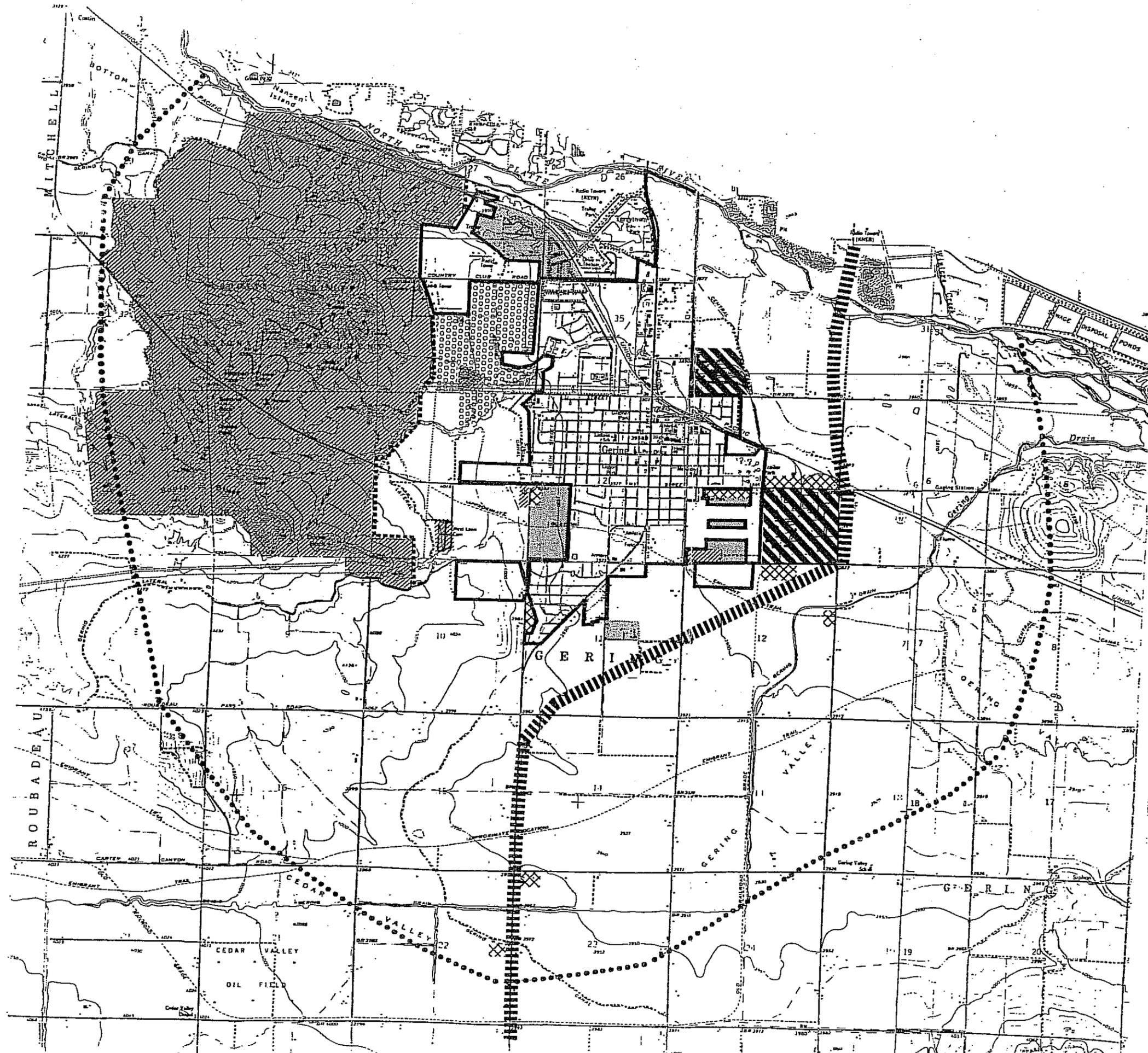
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FUTURE LAND USE MAP

LEGEND

- Residential (Single Family)
- Residential (Multi-Family)
- Mobile Home
- Central Business District
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Public
- Environmental/Recreation



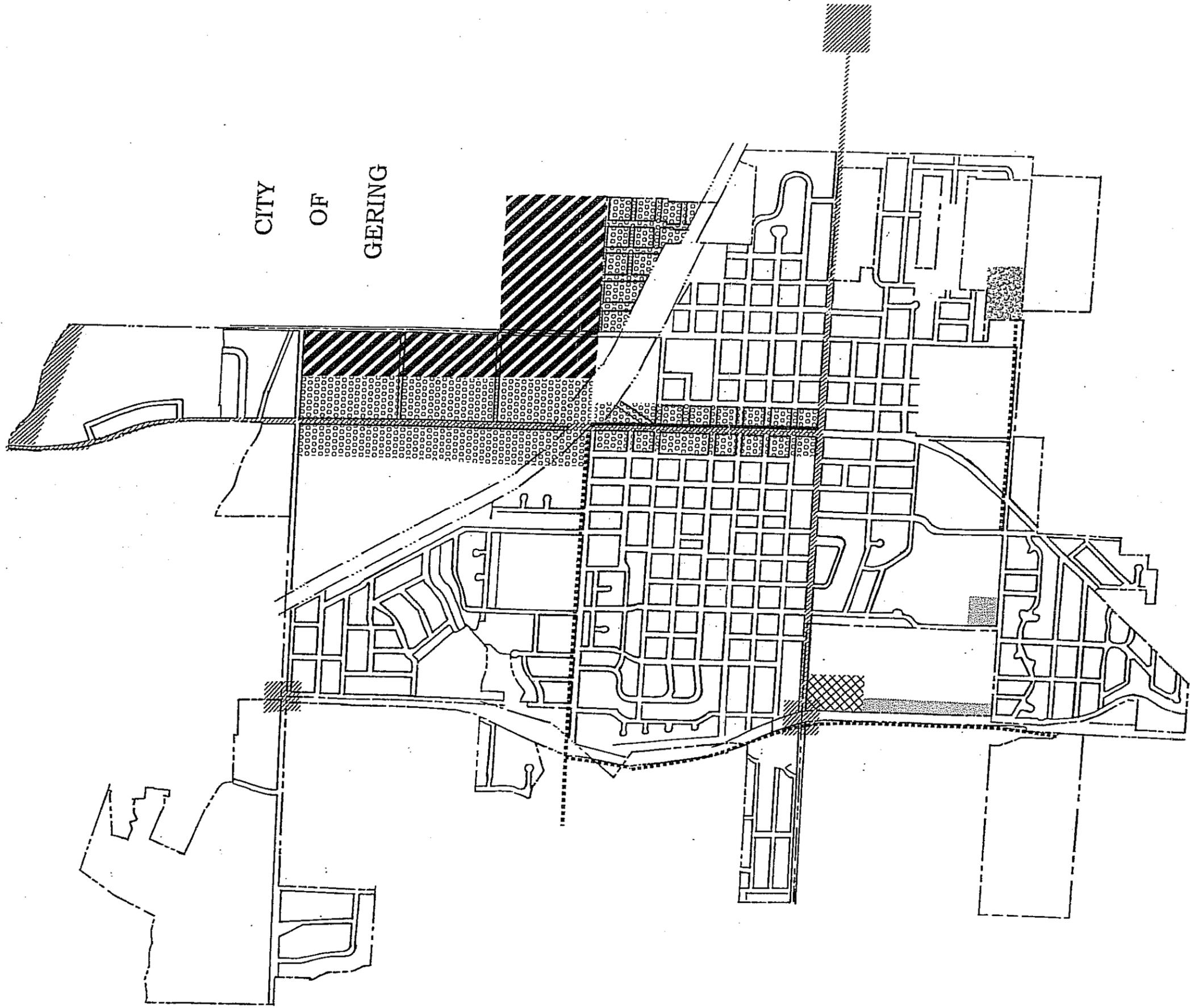
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**FUTURE LAND USE MAP
2 - MILE PLANNING AREA**

LEGEND

- Planning Area Boundary
- ||||| Heartland Expressway
- Industrial Development
- Commercial Development
- Residential Development
- Parks
- Recreation/Housing Development
- Greenbelt

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FUTURE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

LEGEND

-  Urban Design/Environmental Improvements
-  Park Development/Bike Paths
-  Traffic Flow Improvements
-  Urban Revitalization Areas
-  Excess School Capacity/Multi-family Housing Area
-  Industrial Park Development Area
-  Commercial Park Development Area