

2020 - 2030

*Building our Community*  
City of Kerkhoven Comprehensive Plan

DRAFT

FINAL DRAFT 4-6-2020



Upper Minnesota Valley  
**REGIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT  
COMMISSION**

Helping Communities Prosper

## Acknowledgements

*This plan could not have been possible without the work and dedication of the following individuals:*

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*This plan was created by the  
Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission*



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# Executive Summary

## Kerkhoven Comprehensive Plan: Building our Community

### Kerkhoven Community Vision Summary for the next 10-20 years:

Kerkhoven’s purpose driven decision making has built the community to what it is today. Kerkhoven is a small community where you can celebrate, rest and be at home with your neighbor. Kerkhoven provides a positive environment that embraces diversity and offers educational opportunities for all.

### Strategy Highlights

#### Land Use

- Plan ahead to provide infrastructure for new housing development

#### Housing

- Increase housing units
- Senior housing



#### Parks and Recreation

- Update facilities at Pillsbury Park
- Support the new Parks and Recreation Board



#### Economic Development

- Support the EDA in efforts to fill vacant commercial buildings and lots



#### Public Infrastructure, Facilities and Services

- Plan for future growth infrastructure
- Find ways to add childcare options



#### Transportation

- Increase safety across MN Hwy 12 and railroad.
- Plan for improvements and maintenance.



#### Community Vitality

- Coordinate and facilitate community involvement.
- Create new website to keep public informed.



## Community Pulse

Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017

Population	691
Households	329
Median Age	34
Median Family Income	\$61,406
Unemployment Rate	4%

Housing Units	366
Vacant Units	64
Median Home Value	\$91,400
Median Rent	\$620

▶ Overall, Kerkhoven has even distribution of income, well off and slightly diverse. The population has an older population but is younger and growing compared to cities in our region.



▶ The number of households in Kerkhoven has increased by 53% since 1960 (approximately 100 households in 60 years). Household size has decreased by 24%.



▶ The cost of living in Kerkhoven is lower than the metropolitan area.

▶ More people have a high school diploma as their highest educational attainment compared to the state.



▶ The unemployment rate is higher than the state of Minnesota but not by much. Household incomes are lower than the state but higher than much of our region. There are a lower number of families living in poverty in comparison to the state.

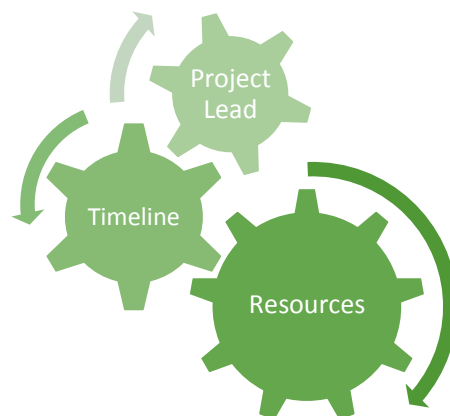
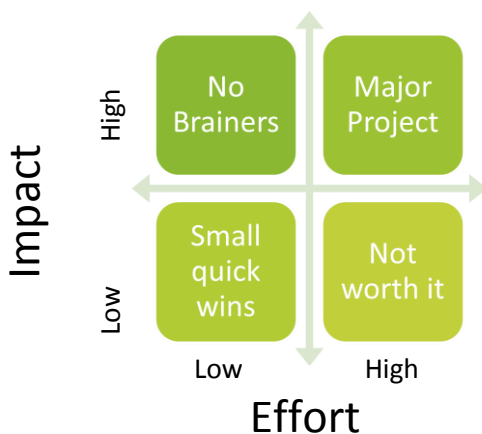


## Using this Plan

The Kerkhoven Comprehensive Plan includes an **Action Plan** with strategies for each topic area.

**Step 1:** Annually prioritize the strategies in the action plan to see what to work on first.

**Step 2:** The project lead, the timeline and resources can be identified for the top projects.





## Introduction

### What is a Comprehensive Plan?

A comprehensive plan is a tool that can provide guidance on how to best to use city resources.

A comprehensive plan, as vision and policy documents, must remain relatively general and conceptual. The plan is designed as flexible document that can be updated as conditions change over time.

The plan serves three primary roles:

1. Serves as a legal basis for land use regulations.
2. Allows the residents to create a shared vision for the community.
3. Provides guidance for the city council and other decision makers.

### Planning Process for the Comprehensive Plan

Kerkhoven's Comprehensive Plan guides the city for 10 years: 2020 – 2030. The task force was made up of the EDA board and a few additional representatives.

This group met six times over the course of 18 months to discuss the priorities, goals and strategies of each section. The task force guided and promoted the planning process and played an important role in establishing this comprehensive plan for the community.

Public input was also important in the plan. Newspaper articles kept the public informed of the process with contact information for those with questions and comments.

A community survey was distributed in March of 2019. There were 162 responses received. We included a Spanish version of the survey to encourage a diverse response. Most respondents lived in Kerkhoven, and 54 worked in Kerkhoven. Many had owned homes in Kerkhoven for more than 21 years (46). The complete results of the survey are in Appendix 1.

### Legal Basis for Comprehensive Plans

The State of Minnesota gives its cities the legal authority to regulate land use. The State does not require the creation of comprehensive plans for cities outside of the seven-county metropolitan area. However, it is recognized that a comprehensive plan is a valuable tool that a city can use to express its vision and develop strategies to fulfill that vision. The Municipal Planning Act (Minnesota Statutes Sections 462.351 to 462.364) creates a single, uniform procedure that applies to all cities.

The comprehensive plan provides the legal foundation to enact land use controls and other municipal actions to implement long-term growth and development strategies and regulations. The city's land use (zoning) ordinances and official zoning map should be updated to conform to the Comprehensive Plan pursuant to adoption.

In April and May of 2020, the public was invited through newspaper articles and Facebook to give feedback on the plan. The plan was available at the city office, library and online.

The plan was adopted by the council on [REDACTED].

*This is the Final Draft Comprehensive Plan for the city of Kerkhoven. Comments will be taken on this plan until May 27<sup>th</sup>. The Kerkhoven EDA will consider all comments for inclusion before recommending the plan be adopted by the city council in June.*





## Using the Plan

The comprehensive plan was developed for the next 10 years and is set up to easily be updated so the city can utilize the action plan, and so it can be both a guiding document and a document the city uses regularly.

Strategies were created under each topic. Some strategies are ongoing and best practices. The action-oriented strategies were reviewed as part of the Action Plan.

### *Annually*

- Review the strategies in your Action Plan. What are the top 10 that you want to work on this year?

### *Every 2-3 years:*

- Briefly review the Vision, Goals and Strategies. Has anything changed significantly? Revise your strategies accordingly.

### *Every 5-10 years:*

1. Update the entire plan and utilize new census data (2020).
2. Engage the public.
3. Update opportunities and issues.
4. Review the vision statement, goals and strategies and update as needed.
5. Update your Action Plan.

### Policy Manual

One way to implement the plan is to create a policy manual. A policy manual is a document for your staff that outlines actions and tasks that work towards your comprehensive plan. It sets specific policies for staff. The Action Plan “project lead” could be a good starting point for this manual.



## Community Profile

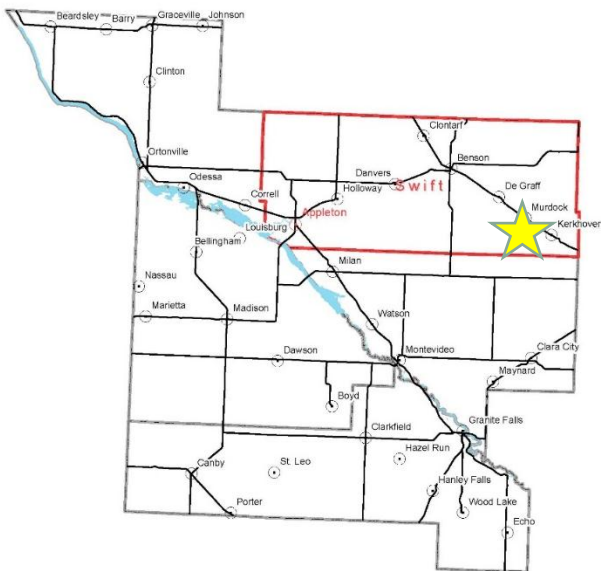
### Location and Regional Setting

Located in west-central Minnesota in the southeast corner of Swift County, Kerkhoven sits among farm fields and remnants of wetland prairie. Kerkhoven is on the northern edge of the prairie biome within a few miles of the deciduous forest biome dominated by lakes and forest. The town is approximately 16 miles southeast of Benson, and 14.5 miles northwest of Willmar on US Highway 12.

Kerkhoven is intersected by County Roads 35 and 6.

At the time of the 2010 census, the population of Kerkhoven was 759 individuals, 329 households, and an average household size of 2.31. Kerkhoven has seen an overall decrease in population from 1960-2010 with the population stabilizing in recent years. Kerkhoven is surrounded by agricultural land which serves as an important industry in the area. Other employers include KMS Schools, Riverview Dairy, and Rustad Tours.

Kerkhoven is part of Independent School District 775 which consists of the elementary school in Murdock and the high school in Kerkhoven. There is a preschool facility in Sunburg.



## Kerkhoven History

### Early Kerkhoven History

Established in 1881, the small settlement which is now Kerkhoven was reached by the railroad in 1870. The extension of the railroad by the St. Paul and Pacific was financed by the Kerkhoven Brokerage Company of Amsterdam, Holland and managed by brothers Johannes and Theodores Kerkhoven. Because the railroad made it possible to import a greater variety of supplies to the village, a hotel and other frame buildings were constructed in 1870. In 1872, John P. Jacobson took the position of first postmaster.



In 1876, a petition was sent to the state for the establishment of a new township to be named after Governor Pillsbury. Newly elected township officers petitioned for the village to also be renamed Pillsbury, but after two years the residents requested that the name be changed back to Kerkhoven. In 1876 the town was nearly destroyed by fire and the area was devastated by a flock of locusts. Residents rebuilt the town and by 1882 the town was made up of four general stores, one hardware store, one harness shop, one drug store, one shoemaker, two blacksmith shops, one wagon shop, two hotels, two elevators, one newspaper, three saloons, and one cheese factory. The town was officially incorporated in 1881 with H. S. Sjoberg elected president.

According to the US Census, the population of Kerkhoven grew from 94 people in 1880 to 299 in 1890.

## Demographics

### Overview

Overall, Kerkhoven has even distribution of income, well off and slightly diverse. The population has an older population but is younger and growing compared to cities in our region.

- Kerkhoven gained 18% of its population since 1960. Population has remained stable in recent years.
- The number of households in Kerkhoven has increased by 53% since 1960 (approximately 100 households in 60 years). Household size has decreased by 24%.
- There are more people over 65 in Kerkhoven than the state of Minnesota but is younger and growing compared to our region.
- Most of Kerkhoven has a high school diploma or higher. The percent of those with a bachelor's degree and higher is lower than the state as a whole.
- The unemployment rate is higher than the state of Minnesota but not by much. Household incomes are lower than the state but higher than much of our region. There are a lower number of families living in poverty in comparison to the state.
- Kerkhoven population has some diversity with 16% of the population identifying as Hispanic or Latino ethnicity.
- Kerkhoven has very few single parent families.

### Data sources used in this plan:

- FactFinder
- U.S. Census 1990, 2000, 2010
- 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates
- Minnesota Demographic Center <https://mn.gov/admin/demography/>
- Swift County Housing Studies 1995 and 2015
- Swift County Comprehensive Plan
- Swift County Hazard Mitigation Plan
- UMRDC Community Profile
- [www.statsamerica.org/town/](http://www.statsamerica.org/town/)
- DEED On the Map Tool: <https://onthemap.ces.census.gov/>
- DEED Occupational Employment Statistics Data Tool: <https://mn.gov/deed/data/data-tools/oes/>
- DEED Economic Development Region 6W: Upper Minnesota Valley 2017 Regional Profile: [https://mn.gov/deed/assets/rp\\_edr6w\\_2017\\_tcm1045-133259.pdf](https://mn.gov/deed/assets/rp_edr6w_2017_tcm1045-133259.pdf)
- Headwaters Economic Profile tool. <https://headwaterseconomics.org/tools/economic-profile-system/about/>

### Fast Facts

#### Kerkhoven 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Population	691	Housing Units	366
Households	329	Vacant Units	64
Median Age	34	Median Home Value	\$91,400
Median Family Income	\$61,406	Median Rent	\$620
Unemployment Rate	4%		

Source: American Community Survey 2013-2017

## Population

Kerkhoven has retained their population over the past 20-30 years. There was a large jump in the number of households after 1970.

### Population of Kerkhoven

	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2017 (est.)
Population	641	761	732	759	759	691
Households	206	NA	299	313	329	329

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey 2013-2017

### Regional Historical Population from 1960 to 2010

City	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	% Change
<b>Kerkhoven</b>	<b>645</b>	<b>641</b>	<b>761</b>	<b>732</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>759</b>	<b>17.67%</b>
Households	214	206	NA	299	313	329	53.74%
Average Household Size	3.01	3.11	NA	2.45	2.42	2.31	-23.46%
Appleton	2,122	1,789	1,842	1,552	2,871	1,412	-33.46%
Households	718	693	NA	714	729	677	-5.71%
Clara City	1,358	1,491	1,574	1,307	1,393	1,360	0.15%
Households	463	507	NA	566	591	625	34.99%
Clarkfield	1,100	1,084	1,171	924	944	863	-21.55%
Households	NA	385	NA	411	371	372	-3.38%
Graceville	823	735	780	671	605	577	-29.89%
Households	247	249	NA	267	257	263	6.48%
Swift County	14,936	13,177	12,920	10,724	11,956	9,783	-34.50%
Average Household Size	3.46	3.14	2.71	2.51	2.75	2.31	-33.26%

Source: US Census Bureau

This table shows Kerkhoven in comparison to Swift County and similar sized cities throughout the region. Kerkhoven and Clara City have retained or gained in population. Both have also increased households by a large percentage. These cities are in closer proximity to larger cities compared to other cities in our region.

Compared to other cities in our region that have similar population, Appleton and Graceville have lost the largest percentage of their population since 1960. Appleton lost households by a small percentage and Graceville increased households by a small percentage.

### Age of Residents

- The 2017 median age for Kerkhoven is 34 compared to Minnesota median age of 38.
- Kerkhoven has a slightly older population than Minnesota as a whole (4.6% of residents are 85+ years old compared to Minnesota which has 2.1% over 85 years old)
- Kerkhoven has 19% of the population over 65 which is higher than the state which is 14.6%.
- Projections from the Minnesota State Demographic Center anticipates that our region will see a large gain in people aged 75 and over and a small gain in people aged 25-44 year-old age group. Kerkhoven’s data is more similar to the state as whole then the rest of the region so this may not hold true for Kerkhoven.

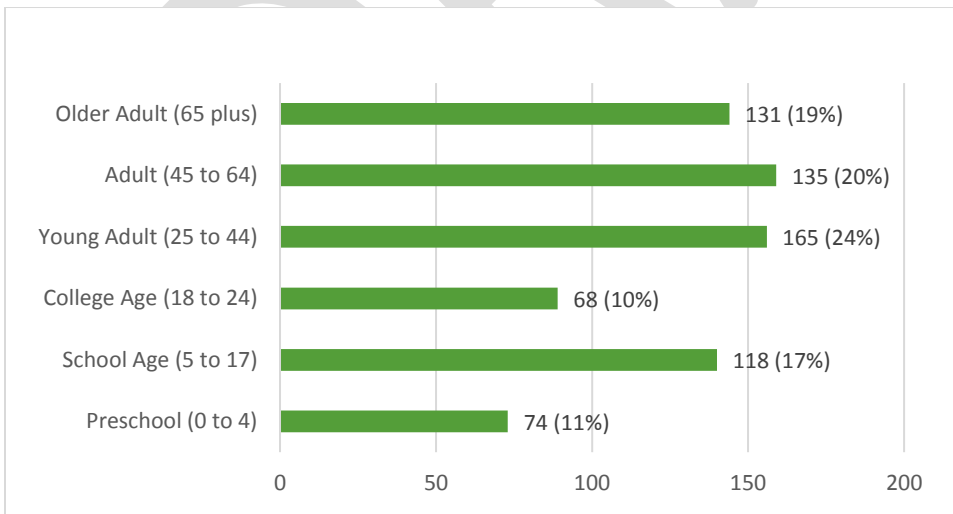
### Population by Age, 2017

	<b>Kerkhoven</b>	<b>% of Total</b>	<b>Minnesota</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>691</b>		<b>5,490,726</b>	
<i>Preschool (0 to 4)</i>	74	11%	349,962	6%
<i>School Age (5 to 17)</i>	118	17%	936,373	17%
<i>College Age (18 to 24)</i>	68	10%	505,783	9%
<i>Young Adult (25 to 44)</i>	165	24%	1,426,996	26%
<i>Adult (45 to 64)</i>	135	20%	1,467,891	27%
<i>Older Adult (65 plus)</i>	131	19%	803,718	15%
<i>Median Age*</i>	34		38	

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey, 2013 – 2017  
 \*Median Age is averaged for combined areas

### Kerkhoven by Age, 2017

- Based on the total population in 2017 of 691.



## Employment

- The unemployment rate of 5.7% in Kerkhoven is slightly higher than the state rate of 4.8%.

	Kerkhoven	Kerkhoven %	Minnesota %
Population	691		
Population 16 years and older	522		
Population in labor force*	360	75.5%	69.9%
Employed	339		
Unemployed	21		
Unemployment rate**		4%	3%

Source: 2013 – 2017 American Community Survey

\*The Labor Force includes people actively seeking work. People not counted as part of the work force include students, retired people, stay-at-home parents, people in prisons or similar institutions; people employed in jobs or professions with unreported income, as well as discouraged workers who cannot find work.

\*\*Percent of those unemployed in the labor force.

## Labor Force by Industry



Source: 2013 – 2017 American Community Survey

## Income

- Income is lower in Kerkhoven compared to the state as a whole.
- There are fewer single parent families in Kerkhoven compared to Appleton, but more than the state as a whole.
- There are more people living alone in Kerkhoven compared to the state as a whole.

	Kerkhoven	Appleton	Minnesota
1-person household	42%	44%	28%
Family households	57%	55%	65%
Single-parent household	10.3%	15%	8%

Source: 2013 – 2017 American Community Survey

## Average Income in Kerkhoven and the State of Minnesota 2017

	Kerkhoven	Minnesota
Median Household Income	\$44,167	\$65,669
Median Family Income	\$61,406	\$82,785
Per Capita Income	\$24,284	\$34,712

Source: 2013 – 2017 American Community Survey

## Cost of Living in Kerkhoven and Hennepin County

	Average monthly costs							
	Yearly cost	Child Care	Food	Health Care	Housing	Transport	Other	Taxes
Hennepin county	\$61,464	\$731	\$786	\$476	\$1,110	\$683	\$582	\$754
Swift county	\$44,160	\$209	\$767	\$496	\$710	\$689	\$454	\$355

Source: 2018 DEED Occupational Employment Statistics Data Tool

- The cost of living in Swift County is lower than the Minneapolis area. For a typical family with one child, it costs about a third less to live in Swift County vs Hennepin County.
- Though the chart above shows Child Care to cost \$209, according to the Child Care Assistance Program, Swift County reimburses \$413/month for childcare. Anecdotal data also shares a higher amount paid for childcare.



## Poverty

### Poverty Rates in Kerkhoven, Montevideo, and the State of Minnesota

	Kerkhoven	Appleton	Montevideo	Minnesota
People below the poverty level	<b>10.5%</b>	17.3 %	14.1%	10.5%
Families below the poverty level	<b>6.6%</b>	11.0%	12.9%	6.6%

Source: 2013-2017 American Survey

- Kerkhoven has a lower percentage of people and families below the poverty level compared to neighboring cities and the same as the state of Minnesota as a whole.

### Kerkhoven Income in the past 12 months

		Margin of error
Total Households	302	+/-2.2
<\$10,000	2.6%	+/-1.9
\$10,000 to \$14,999	11.9%	+/-6.0
\$15,000 to \$24,999	3.4%	+/-6.3
\$25,000 to \$34,999	5.9%	+/-12.3
\$35,000 to \$49,999	24.8%	+/-9.0
\$50,000 to \$74,999	15.9%	+/-7.6
\$75,000 to \$99,999	14.2%	+/-5.9
\$100,000 to \$149,999	8.3%	+/-5.1
\$150,000 to \$199,999	3.6%	+/-3.3
\$200,000 or more	0.0%	+/-5.6
Median income	\$44,779	+/-10,522
Average income	\$54,832	+/-5,447

Source: 2013-2017 American Survey

- This chart shows the distribution of income in the city of Kerkhoven.

### Race and Ethnicity

Kerkhoven’s data shows some diversity with six percent reporting as some other race. There is 20 percent of the population with a Hispanic or Latino origin. There is a high margin of error, but it does represent who lives in Kerkhoven.

### Kerkhoven Race and Ethnicity

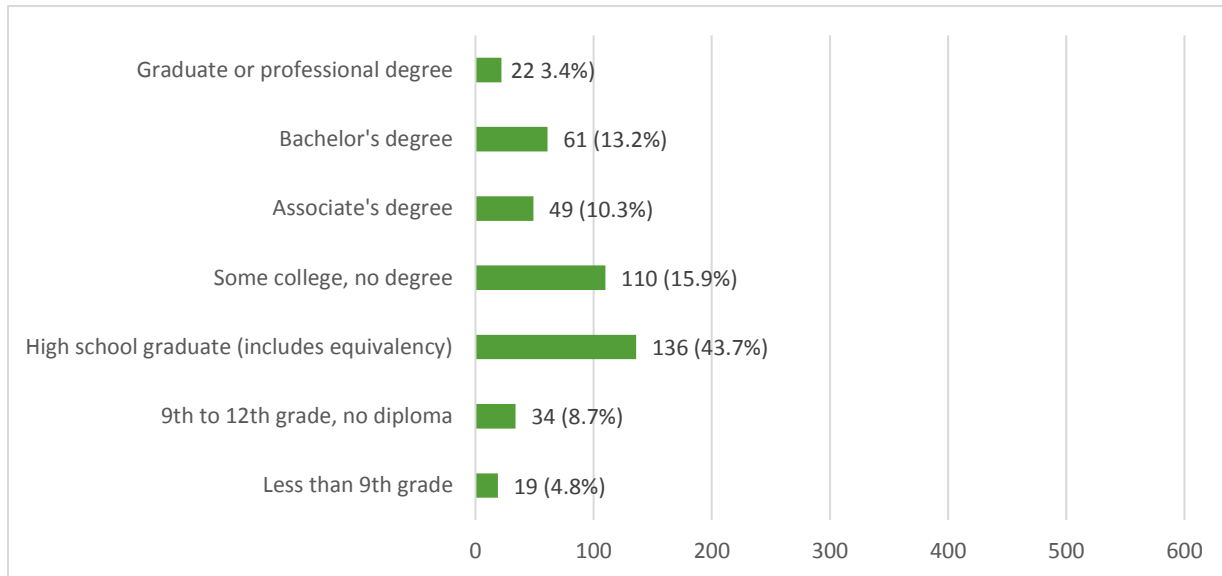
	Estimate	Percent	Margin of Error
<i>Total population</i>	691		
<i>White alone</i>	642	93%	+/- 103
<i>Black or African American</i>	0	0%	
<i>American Indian and Alaska Native</i>	0	0%	
<i>Asian</i>	0	0%	
<i>Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander</i>	0	0%	
<i>Some other race</i>	49	7%	+/- 62
<i>Two or more races</i>	0	0%	
<i>Hispanic or Latino</i>	139	20%	+/- 86
<i>Not Hispanic or Latino</i>	522	80%	+/- 83

2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

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## Education Attainment

### Educational Attainment for Population 25 and Over in 2017



Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

	Kerkhoven	Kerkhoven	Minnesota
<i>Population 25 years and over</i>	431		
<i>Less than 9th grade</i>	19	4%	3%
<i>9th to 12th grade, no diploma</i>	34	8%	4%
<i>High school graduate (includes equivalency)</i>	136	32%	25%
<i>Some college, no degree</i>	110	26%	22%
<i>Associate degree</i>	49	11%	11%
<i>Bachelor's degree</i>	61	14%	23%
<i>Graduate or professional degree</i>	22	5%	12%

Source: 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

There is a higher percentage of people 25 and over who have a high school diploma (32%) compared to the state (25%) and a lower percent with a bachelor's degree in Kerkhoven (14%) than the state (23%).

The fact that Kerkhoven has a slightly older population is one reason why the percentage of people without a bachelor's degree is high. For the oldest residents, graduating from college was much less common.

## Kerkhoven in 2020: Opportunities and Challenges

In the year this plan was created, 2020, Kerkhoven is a rural, friendly community with a population of 691. There is great pride for the school which provides a high-quality education for all ages as well as opportunities for children to be involved in sports, arts, music, and a variety of activities.

These challenges can also be seen as opportunities. Kerkhoven strives to provide an encouraging environment which promotes the well-being of all residents.

Some of the challenges/opportunities include:

- Vacant buildings provide opportunities for entrepreneurs. The newly formed EDA meets regularly and provides resources and support for business owners.
- The housing market is tight. There is an opportunity to make senior housing available that could free up homes while keeping people who want to remain in Kerkhoven.
- The school is bursting at the seams and teachers want to live in town but have a hard time finding housing. There are opportunities for housing development in Kerkhoven.
- Kerkhoven is working to address nuisance properties and creating a maintenance plan for the city's infrastructure.
- Kerkhoven is close to good hospitals and doctors of all kinds, shopping centers, grocery stores, college, jobs, movies and lakes. Transit is available with opportunities to grow if needed.

Kerkhoven is a proud community. It is fun, family oriented, with school spirit, community spirit and neighbors with big hearts and willingness to help. There are recreation opportunities available: a golf course, three parks, ball fields, ice cream shop, an outdoor pool, basketball court, volley ball court, large picnic shelters and quiet streets for bicycles and pedestrians. There is also momentum to create trails in town and update our parks in future years.



## The Future of Kerkhoven

A vision shares what Kerkhoven wants their city to look and feel like in 10-20 years. The vision can look farther out than this 10-year plan.

### Kerkhoven Community Vision: Building the community to last

Here is what Kerkhoven looks and feels like in 2030-2040:

Kerkhoven's purpose driven decision making has built the community to what it is today. Kerkhoven is a small community where you can celebrate, rest and be at home with your neighbor. Kerkhoven provides a positive environment that embraces diversity and offers educational opportunities for all.

Kerkhoven's business community provides all the basic needs for our community plus offers entrepreneurs opportunities to serve the neighboring communities. The population has grown slightly since 2020.

As you tour Kerkhoven, buildings are well maintained. There are few vacant buildings and those that are vacant provide an opportunity for new businesses. Housing has been diversified in recent years with the opening of the nursing home/assisted living facility, and new construction of homes. Existing homes have been rehabilitated.

Kerkhoven is proactive with planning and development and prioritizes the needs of the residents that live here. Therefore, childcare options have increased, there are more eating options and places to gather for both adults and youth, nuisance properties have been mitigated, and there are additional opportunities for community activities. This friendly rural bedroom community provides cost-effective housing, exceptional schools and a safe environment regardless of where residents work.

There are abundant recreational assets in town, and the city has a capital improvement plan to keep them and other city infrastructure well-maintained without making taxes high. Community members are engaged and raise funds as needed for community projects.

The community works together to remember the positive vision for the future. As a result, Kerkhoven is a special place that makes all who pass through here want to stay a little longer.

## Goals for the Topic areas

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In addition to the vision, goals have been established in seven areas:

### *1. Land Use Goal*

The City of Kerkhoven provides for orderly development that contributes to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the community that will be sustainable for generations to come.

### *2. Housing Goal*

The City of Kerkhoven provides safe, quality housing choices that meets the needs of all residents, current and future.

### *3. Parks and Recreation*

The City of Kerkhoven provides a variety of high-quality recreation facilities for residents and visitors to enjoy.

### *4. Economic Development Goal*

The City of Kerkhoven has a steadfast and thriving business community.

### *5. Public Infrastructure and Services Goal*

The City of Kerkhoven provides public infrastructure, facilities and services that meet the needs of the community.

### *6. Transportation Goal*

The City of Kerkhoven has a financially responsible transportation system with well-maintained roads. It safely and economically meets the needs of all users now and for future generations.

### *7. Community Vitality Goal*

The City of Kerkhoven is a safe and welcoming place where all residents can thrive.



## Planning Topics

The topics chosen for Kerkhoven's comprehensive plan are:

- Land Use and Zoning
- Housing
- Parks and Recreation
- Economic Development
- Public Infrastructure
- Transportation
- Community Vitality



## Land Use and Zoning

The purpose of land use planning is to provide a consistent set of policies specific to Kerkhoven that will guide the future growth and development and provide a basis for land use decisions. This planning translates the community vision for the future into a recommended physical pattern of neighborhoods, commercial and industrial areas, roads, and public facilities.

### Overview of Land Use and Zoning

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#### *Current Zoning Map*

Kerkhoven's zoning code and map was last updated in 2003 and was considered during this comprehensive plan update. Although not all of the categories are currently present in Kerkhoven, here is the comprehensive list of zoning categories:

#### Current Zoning Categories:

##### **(A) - Agricultural Zone**

The Agricultural Zone District is established primarily for those annexed unplotted areas within the City that have not been zoned for development and are or will be undergoing a transition from agricultural to urban uses. The urban transition is contingent upon development plans, proper timing, availability of public utilities and services and compatibility with the comprehensive land use plan.

##### **(R 1) Single and Two Family Residential District**

The R 1 district is established to encourage the preservation of residential neighborhoods characterized primarily by single-family and two-family dwellings and to preserve undeveloped lands for similar types of residential development.

##### **(R-1-M) Single-Family Residence District Manufactured Houses**

One-family manufactured homes built in conformance with sections 327.31 to 327.35 of Minnesota Statutes, provided design standards are met to assure a favorable comparison with site-built housing.

##### **(R 2) Multi-Family Residential District**

The R 2 district is established to provide high-density residential development. Non-residential uses permitted in this district shall be limited to those uses and buildings that will provide stability and dignity to the area as a residential neighborhood.

##### **(R 3) Mobile Home Park District**

It is the purpose of the R 3 district to set aside areas within the city wherein any mobile home can be placed in a safe and healthful environment.

##### **(C 1) Commercial District**

It is the purpose of the C 1 Commercial District to promote civic and high quality commercial uses in the Central Business District of such variety and density as to create an interdependency among such uses thereby creating an economically active area that has immediate access to transportation facilities to serve consumers from the



widest possible trade area. This district is further intended to encourage orderly development in areas sensitive to commercial development outside the Central Business District.

**(C 2) Commercial District**

It is the purpose of the C 2 Commercial District to provide areas for commercial establishments that offer a wide variety of goods and services to consumers from a large trade area whose uses generally require larger lots than those found in the C 1 Zone, are less dependent on adjacent commercial uses for spin-off business, require close access to major thoroughfares and accommodate primarily automotive oriented customers.

**(I) Light Industrial District**

It is the purpose of the I District to permit industrial uses whose objectionable features can be eliminated by design, screening and other appropriate devices.



## *Future Land Use*

A future land use plan should present a vision of how residents want their town to grow. It will serve as the basis for major revisions to the zoning ordinance, other land use regulations, and a capital improvement plan. The future land use plan should represent a balance between the need to preserve rural character and natural resources while also allowing reasonable opportunities for future growth.

The future land use map for Kerkhoven utilized the current zoning categories. It also gives additional details of what the land is currently being used for such as open space, cemetery and the golf course. Finally, it also identifies potential future land use categories as described below. This map is an important tool to utilize for future land use decisions.

### **Future Land Use Categories:**

#### **Urban Growth Boundary**

The Urban Growth Boundary for Kerkhoven describes land that potentially could be an area to expand residential growth.

#### **Park/Open Space**

The Park/Open Space land use category describes land used for parks and recreational activities within the city.

#### **School/Golf Course/Cemetery**

The School/Golf Course/Cemetery land use category describes land used for the School, Golf Course and Cemetery.

#### **Future Light Industrial**

The Future Light Industrial land use category describes land that is currently used/or could be used for light Industrial.

#### **Future Residential**

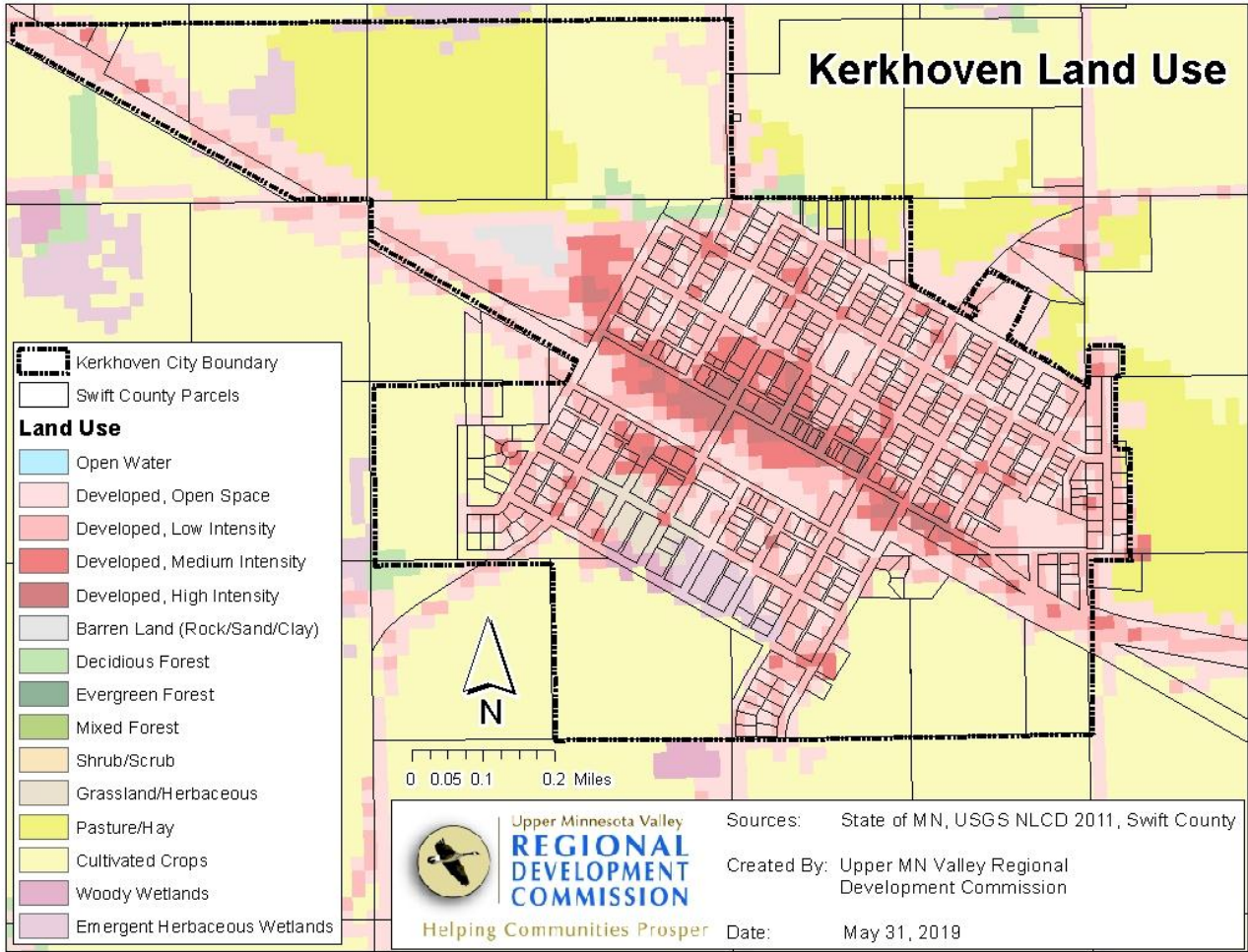
The future Residential land use category is land that could be considered for residential. Some areas may offer enough space for large lots.



## Issues and opportunities

These issues and opportunities were considered for their land use decisions:

- Would like to increase the number of housing units in the city. There are few vacant lots. Would like to identify and plan for areas to expand residential growth.
- Space for commercial use is currently adequate. Demolition is needed for structures that are dilapidated. Heavy industrial would not fit within the city limits of Kerkhoven. Railroad could be utilized in the future for commercial use.
- Water and sewer infrastructure capacity is currently limited. Some housing could be added but if there was a large amount of commercial added, capacity would have to be addresses.
- All current water and sewer infrastructure have homes on it. New housing needs to consider the cost of new water and sewer infrastructure.
- The city is land locked in areas by low ground that would be challenging to develop.
- The zoning map should be refreshed and updated to reflect current uses.



DRAFT

## Goals and Strategies for Land Use and Zoning

### Strategy Highlights:

- Plan ahead to provide infrastructure for new housing development.

<b>Land Use Goal</b>
The City of Kerkhoven provides for orderly development that contributes to the economic, social, and environmental well-being of the community that will be sustainable for generations to come.
<b>Strategies</b>
<b>Ongoing</b>
1. Encourage commercial investment in the downtown business district rather than on the fringes of the community.
2. Preserve land and structures that possess scenic and historic features.
3. Consider both the needs of individual property owners and the needs of the public in the development and implementation of plans and controls related to land use.
4. Monitor and enforce zoning ordinances and regulations for nuisances and pollutants.
5. Consider infill of vacant residential and commercial lots before new development.
6. Promote and support a wide variety of residential neighborhoods such as multi-family dwelling units and cluster development to meet the wide-ranging needs of Kerkhoven residents, now and in the future.
<b>Action-oriented</b>
7. Consider updating zoning map after comprehensive plan is complete to have a digital version of the zoning map.
8. Create a plan to make property ready for development and work to make “shovel-ready”, esp. residential.
9. Identify potential land for development and redevelopment, with special consideration of senior housing, multi-family and commercial.
10. Promote rail access for commercial development.
11. Market the land use assets in Kerkhoven: available land for development with good housing market and dynamic downtown along a major highway.

## Housing

Housing is a vital component of the city’s community and economic development efforts. Various challenges exist such as protecting existing neighborhoods, stimulating new housing construction, balancing natural resource protection with desired development, and providing quality and affordable housing across the various residential needs. Providing quality, affordable housing for the workforce and aging population will be essential over the next decade.

### Overview of Housing

- Housing continues to be a limiting factor for the workforce.
- Senior housing has been identified as a need. Without additional senior housing, this population will likely move out of town. Senior housing would also allow seniors to move out of their homes thus making housing available for workforce and families.

### Housing Facts in Kerkhoven:

#### 2010 Census

Housing Units	352
Vacant Units	23
Households	329
Average household size	2.31

#### 2013-2017 American Community Survey 5-Year Estimates

Population	691
Households	302
Housing Units	366
Vacant Units	64
Median Home Value	\$91,400
Median Rent	\$620
Median Year Structure Built	1962

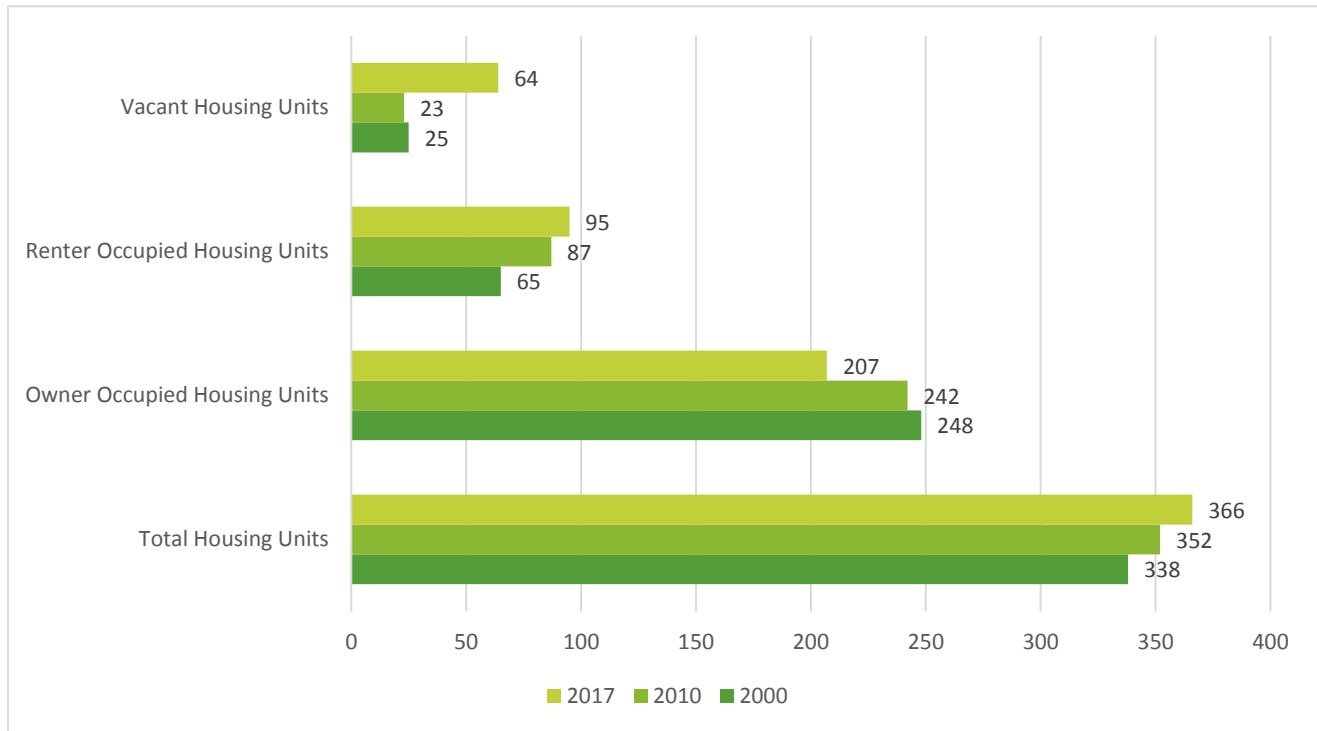
### Population and Household Trends

	1990	2000	2010	2017 (est.)
Population	732	759	759	691
Households	299	313	329	302
Average Household Size	2.39	2.42	2.31	2.2

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, \*Swift County Housing Study, and American Community Survey 2013-2017

- The number of vacant housing units have increased significantly since 1990 as shown in the chart and table below.

## Housing Since 2000



	2000	2010	2017
<i>Total Housing Units</i>	338	352	366
<i>Owner Occupied Housing Units</i>	248	242	207
<i>Renter Occupied Housing Units</i>	65	87	95
<i>Vacant Housing Units</i>	25	23	64

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey 2013-2017

### Windshield Survey 2015

A windshield survey is systematic observations from the street to observe the condition and occupancy of homes. Community Partners Research conducted a windshield survey in 2014 as part of the county-wide housing study.

Based on a visual observation of the physical condition of the exterior of each structure which is assumed to be a reasonable indicator of the inside condition.

	Sound	Minor Repair	Major Repair	Dilapidated	Total
South Kerkhoven	47/68%	15/28%	5/7%	2/3%	69
North Kerkhoven	90/42%	95/44%	29/14%	1/5%	215
Total	137/48%	110/39%	34/12%	3/1%	284

Source: Community Partners Research, Inc.

**Sound:** Good, move-in conditions. May contain minor issues.

**Minor Repair:** good condition and require less extensive repair. Good candidates for rehabilitation programs.

**Major Repair:** multiple major improvements such as roof, windows, siding, structural/foundation are needed.

**Dilapidated:** lowest rating, major renovation is needed.

The majority of houses in Kerkhoven were rated within one of the top two condition categories.

### Small Cities Development Program (SCDP)

The City of Kerkhoven has a Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) in the years 2013 and 2018. During this program, owner-occupied and commercial properties were rehabilitated.

#### Completed SCDP Rehab Projects

	Owner occupied rehab	Rental rehab	Commercial rehab
2018	10	0	0
2013	12	0	5

### Swift County Housing Study – Kerkhoven 2015

The Swift County Housing & Redevelopment Authority (HRA) completed a housing study for Kerkhoven in January 2015. Some of its recommendations include:

#### Maintain and preserve the existing single-family housing stock

**Recommendation:** Only three houses had been built in the years 2005-2015. Losing habitable units would cause the city to lose households and population. The moderate income levels could be assisted by securing grant funds for housing rehab programs.

#### Promote affordable home ownership options as houses become available

**Recommendation:** Kerkhoven represents an attractive location for potential home buyers. Kerkhoven has employment opportunities within the community and is within commuting distance of Benson, Willmar and



some rural employment opportunities. Based on the best available information, an existing home in Kerkhoven would typically sell for less than \$80,000, well below the price for a newly constructed house.

The community should promote the attractive existing housing options and access any available resources that exist to assist with home ownership, including down payment and/or first-time home buyer programs.

#### Demolish and clear substandard structures

**Recommendation:** Ongoing efforts to clear severely substandard structures are encouraged. This will help to enhance the appearance and appeal of the community as a residential location. Continued efforts to address severely substandard residential properties would complement this community improvement effort.

#### Promote rental housing rehabilitation

**Recommendation:** Rental units in multi-unit properties in Kerkhoven are either in newer buildings, such as the EDA four-plex, or in federally subsidized projects. These multifamily buildings are generally assumed to be in good condition. However, nearly half of the City's rental inventory exists in single family structures, primarily constructed before 1940. These units are probably in various states of repair, but based on the moderate rent structure, it is assumed that many of the single-family units could benefit from rehabilitation

SCDP funds could be utilized in the future to help with rental rehabilitation efforts.

#### Promote the development of additional rental housing

**Recommendation:** Given the success of the EDA's previous project, and continued demand for rental housing, it would be appropriate to promote the development of between 10 and 15 additional rental units in Kerkhoven by the year 2020. Approximately half of these could be targeted at the moderate to higher rent segment of the market, with between four and eight units recommended, in a style similar to the EDA town house units.

The four units constructed by the EDA have proven to be very successful, and demonstrate market acceptance for this type of rental housing in the community. In addition to serving area seniors, these units have also been popular with working-age tenants, and could serve area teachers, and workers employed in area dairy operations.

One of the primary challenges to constructing new units will be the probable price disparity between the EDA project that already exists and the costs associated with new construction. In the EDA four-plex, two-bedroom/one bathroom units with approximately 1,153 square feet of living space and an attached garage, with a gross monthly rent of \$650 to \$700 per month. The estimated rent per square foot for these units is approximately \$0.56 to \$0.61, a price that probably cannot be replicated in future projects.

The analysts are aware of some units that are being constructed in other cities that could serve as a model for future construction in Kerkhoven. Other communities in western and northern Minnesota have had recent success with new construction of patio homes, with a two-car attached garage. Gross rents are below \$850 for a two-bedroom unit with one bathroom and approximately 800 square feet.

The gross rents being achieved in these patio home projects are significantly higher than the current units in Kerkhoven, and the floor plans are substantially smaller. For two-bedroom rentals, the difference may be as much as 350 square feet, when compared to the options in the EDA four-plex. One compensating factor could

be the presence of a second garage stall. However, any new units will generally not be price-competitive with the current EDA project.

### Consider mobile home improvement programs

**Recommendation:** Addressing the issues created by substandard mobile homes is not easily solved. Some communities have attempted to rehabilitate older units, if it is cost-effective.

Some communities have established programs that provide for the purchase and removal of substandard mobile home units, provided a newer unit is purchased to replace the acquired dwelling. While this approach can work well in upgrading the stock, it can be expensive, especially when there are a number of homes in poor condition.

It may be appropriate for the community to initiate programs to improve the quality of mobile homes, even if these programs can only address a few units per year.

### Issues and opportunities

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These issues and opportunities were considered for their land use decisions:

- The city needs more housing units to serve the demand. Teachers and dairy employees would like to move to Kerkhoven but the housing options are limited.
- The current housing stock should be improved.
- There is a need for senior housing. This could make homes available for families and keep seniors in Kerkhoven.
- There is a need for another townhouse or four-plex market rate housing development.
- The trailer homes are currently in very poor condition.
- There is a lack of buildable space for new housing.

## Goals and Strategies for Housing

### Goal

The City of Kerkhoven provides safe, quality housing choices that meets the needs of all residents, current and future.



### Strategy Highlights:

- Increase housing units
- Senior housing

Strategies
<b>Ongoing</b>
12. Encourage an adequate supply of housing in a wide range of prices, types and locations.
13. Encourage preservation, rehabilitation and on-going maintenance of the existing housing stock and reduce substandard housing in the community.
14. Encourage welcoming neighborhoods trees for shade and walkability, and homes that are well-maintained.
15. Promote programs that assist with home ownership.
16. Encourage development of new housing to consider universal design and accessibility
17. Develop relationships with non-profit and for-profit developers to develop new housing.
18. Consider ways to address the financial gap (created when construction costs are much higher than home values and rents) for middle income residents and rental unit developers.
<b>Action oriented - Existing housing stock</b>
19. Enforce zoning ordinances and building code regulations and remove dilapidated homes and structures.
20. Work with the Swift County HRA to utilize housing programs such as USDA to address low-and-moderate income housing needs and any programs to update and renovate the existing housing stock.
21. Consider applications for Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) every 3-5 years to make funding available for low to moderate-income and rental unit owners to rehabilitate current housing stock.
22. Encourage single-family home owners to renovate existing housing into rental properties to increase rental housing availability.
23. Develop a program to purchase and remove old mobile homes if a newer mobile home is purchased.
<b>Action oriented - New housing development</b>
24. Create a plan to have housing (both for sale and rental) available for the work force and retired-aged people.
25. Work to have five new homes built in the next five years.
26. Develop new rental housing.
27. Develop new senior housing.
<b>Action oriented - Planning/needs assessment</b>
28. Develop and maintain a list of available lots for housing so that developers and potential home builders can easily learn what is available.
29. Conduct a housing study every 5 years that analyzes the City's housing supply and future needs.
30. Conduct a housing inventory and map potential housing redevelopment sites every 5-10 years.

## Parks and Recreation

Residents, workers and visitors identify parks, trails and recreational facilities as valuable community resources that contribute positively to their quality of life in Kerkhoven. The community survey conducted in early 2019 showed a majority of respondents would like to add biking and walking trails, and most of those respondents were from Kerkhoven.

### Overview of Parks and Recreation

#### *Parks and Recreation in Kerkhoven*

Recreational assets in Kerkhoven includes four parks and a golf course. The Kerkhoven Parks and Recreation Board was recently formed to improve and promote Kerkhoven’s parks.



## Park Inventory

### Pillsbury Park

Location: Along MN Highway 12. 301 6th St, Kerkhoven, MN 56252

#### Amenities:

- Pillsbury Community Swimming Pool (outdoor)
- Double basketball court with 4 hoops
- Restrooms
- Sand volleyball courts
- Playground
- Small picnic shelter
  - o Capacity for 56
- Large picnic shelter
  - o capacity for 192



#### Needs:

- Updated restrooms
- Playground equipment for younger children
- Address ADA issues
- Update all current playground equipment other than the newer swing set.



### *Centennial Park*

**Location:** Idaho Ave & 13th St

Jointly owned with the KMS School District

#### **Amenities:**

- Softball field

#### **Needs:**

- Add a small playground
- Add shade
- Add seating for games



### *Belsheim Park*

**Location:** Along MN Highway 12

Owned by the railroad.

#### **Amenities:**

- Bench
- Green space for recreation



### *KMS School - Park and Ball Fields*

Location: Along MN Highway 12

Owned by the KMS School District

#### Amenities:

- Baseball Field
- Playground equipment



### *Kerkhoven Community Golf Club*

Location: 90th St S

This course is city-owned and maintained by the Golf Course Board and members

#### Amenities:

- 9-hole Course
- Clubhouse

#### Needs:

- Update greens
- Update signs
- Add signage throughout town to the golf course



## Additional Recreation for Kerkhoven

Some future recreational ideas for Kerkhoven include:

- Frisbee golf
- Expand the golf course to 18-hole
- Tennis
- Shuffleboard
- Dog Park
- Trail – Murdock to Kerkhoven. Kerkhoven currently does not have any recreational trails. A volunteer group is working developing a trail from Kerkhoven to Murdock to provide another transportation route.

## Issues and opportunities

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These issues and opportunities were considered for their parks and recreation decisions:

- The needs for each park are listed under each park. The Parks and Recreation Board will be reviewing and working to address these needs. They will be developing a plan for the next 10 years to help work towards these needs.
- There is no formal park on south side of town currently. There is an open space owned by the city. Not an immediate concern.
- Access to the parks was a concern. There could be safer crossing across the railroad tracks and MN Hwy 12.
- There is a need to update the parks to address ADA.



## Goals and Strategies for Parks and Recreation

### Goal

The City of Kerkhoven provides a variety of high-quality recreation facilities for residents and visitors to enjoy.



### Strategy Highlights:

- Update facilities at Pillsbury Park
- Support the new Parks and Recreation Board

Ongoing
1. Protect recreational resources and open spaces when developing and maintaining the city's built environment.
2. Support development of the Kerkhoven to Murdock Trail.
3. Design accommodations for people with disabilities when adding new recreational facilities.
4. Maintain, update and enhance existing parks and recreational facilities.
5. Ensure that there is equal access to recreational facilities throughout the city.
6. Work with the Kerkhoven Parks and Recreation Board to promote and develop the golf course, trails, parks, and other recreational resources.
Action-oriented
7. Update or retrofit all recreational facilities to be ADA compliant.
8. Update recreational facilities at Pillsbury Park.
9. Add recreational facilities at Centennial Park.
10. Identify areas for new trails in conjunction with the Kerkhoven to Murdock Trail.
11. Improve and promote the golf course.
12. Add crosswalk with flashing light across Hwy 12, identify solutions to crossing the railroad, and utilize creative solutions to create a walkable city with a safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access for all ages.
13. Create a park and trail master plan for Kerkhoven that includes potential future improvements and activities to add the city's Capital Improvements Plan.

## Economic Development

Economic development seeks to strengthen a community through the expansion of its tax and employment base. A strong tax and employment base allow the community to support a higher quality of life for its residents by improving public services (parks, schools, libraries, sewer and water services, police, fire and emergency response, refuse collection and other governmental services).

### Overview of Economic Development

- Kerkhoven’s main employers are the school and the two dairy farms.
- The labor force in Kerkhoven has a lower educational attainment than the state, but this matches the jobs available in our region.

### Employers

Organization	Description	Employees
West Dublin Dairy	Farms	10-99
Carlson Dairy	Dairy Farms	10-99
Kerkhoven-Murdock-Sunburg Schools	Schools	10-99
Don’s Building Center	Lumber-retail	10-99
Murdock Agronomy	Agricultural Consultants	10-99
Gordon Farms	Farms	5-9
Nolan Baker Ford	Automobile Dealers	5-9
Kerkhoven Handi-Stop	Gasoline Stations	5-9
Roepke Dairy Inc.	Dairies	1-4
Youngren Dairy Farms	Dairy Farms	1-4
Hamborg Freese Farm	Dairy Farms	1-4
Sherrie’s Café	Restaurants	1-4
Lamecker’s General Store	Hardware-retail	1-4
Rugs n Such	Carpet & Rug Dealers	1-4
RDJ Auto Sales	Automobile Dealers	1-4
WPF Kerkhoven Farm	Farms	1-4
Van Der Pol Pastures A Plenty	Farms	1-4
Kerkhoven Bancshares Inc.	Holding Companies	
Kerkhoven Banner	Newspaper	
Pam Mansfield Accounting	Accounting	
Carlson Manufacturing		
Freetly Electric	Electrician	
Dollar General		
Mi Viejo Mexicano Rachero	Coming in 2019	

Source: ReferenceUSA, City of Kerkhoven

### Labor Force

- Kerkhoven has a slightly older population than Minnesota as a whole (4.7% of residents are 85+ years old compared to Minnesota which has 2% over 85 years old)
- Data shows that Kerkhoven has a lower percentage of people with a bachelor's degree and a much higher percentage of people with a high school diploma. This is in part a result of the older population, but it is also likely because the jobs available in Kerkhoven and surrounding areas that do not require high numbers of college educate workers. This trend has stayed consistent over the last few years.
- Data shows educational requirement for job vacancies in our region have a high percentage that ask for a high school diploma or lower educational requirement. This is consistent with southwest Minnesota, and has stayed consistent over the past few years.
- The cost of living is lower in Swift County, so while median wages are lower, it is actually quite affordable to live in Southwest Minnesota.
- Increasing the 25-44 year-old age group can have a positive impact on the work force and add resiliency to Kerkhoven.

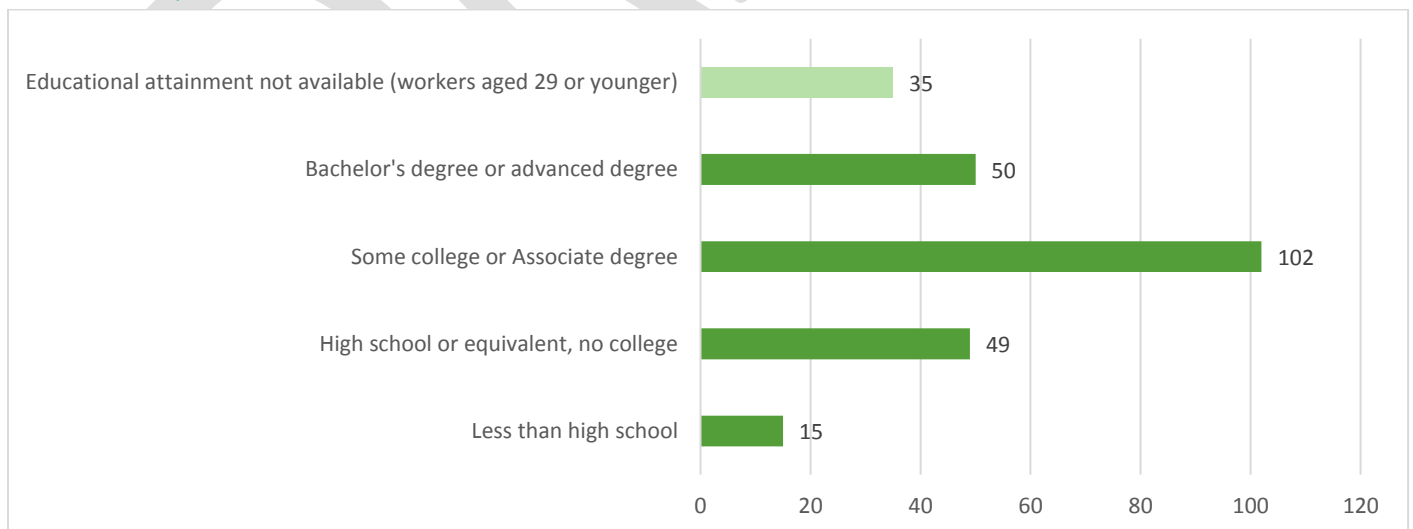
Lower educational requirements do not mean low skills. Top wages can go to workers who have advanced skills through on the job training.

There are more jobs in Southwest Minnesota above \$20 per hour that require a high school diploma than those that require a bachelor's degree.

*Source: Luke Greiner, Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)*

<https://mn.gov/deed/newscenter/publications/trends/june-2017/drivers-seat.jsp>

### Job Counts by Worker Educational Attainment, All Jobs in Kerkhoven, 2017



Source: OnTheMap

- The chart above shows education attainment that people have, not what the job held requires.

### Job Earnings in 2017

\$1,250 per month or less	90
\$1,251 to \$3,333 per month	78
More than \$3,333 per month	83
<b>Total Jobs in Kerkhoven</b>	<b>251</b>

Source: OnTheMap 2017

- \$3,440 per month equates to a wage of \$20/hr.

### Comprehensive Economic Development (CEDS) - Upper Minnesota Valley RDC 2016

#### *Call to Action*

The 25-44 year-olds are the life blood of the labor force; they have a vested interest in today and create momentum as we prepare for tomorrow. Today, there is an increasing trend in labor force participation data. In 2000, the overall labor force participation rate was 61.6% compared to 64.9% in 2014. In the 25 to 44 year-old cohort, the rate increased from 83.7% in 2009 to 87.2% in 2014.

However, since the region relies heavily on an older workforce that has lower rates of participation (think retirement and disability) there will be a significant decline in overall available labor from 2015- 2025; projections show a -3.9% in change resulting in 908 fewer workers.

Increasing the available workforce in 25 to 44 year-olds can help offset negative changes in labor force and will make the region more resilient.

## Inflow/Outflow of Labor Force in 2017



See Appendix 1: Comprehensive Plan Survey indicates that 54 residents work in Kerkhoven

### Inflow of the Labor Force in 2017: Where Kerkhoven’s Labor Force Lives

City	Number of Workers	% of Labor Force
<i>Kerkhoven city, MN</i>	30	12.0%
<i>Willmar city, MN</i>	32	12.7%
<i>Murdock city, MN</i>	12	4.8%
<i>Benson city, MN</i>	8	3.2%
<i>De Graff city, MN</i>	7	2.8%
<i>Spicer city, MN</i>	4	1.6%
<i>Hutchinson city, MN</i>	3	1.2%
<i>Pennock city, MN</i>	3	1.2%
<i>New Prague city, MN</i>	2	.8%
<i>Appleton city, MN</i>	1	.4%
<i>All Other Locations</i>	149	59.4%
<i>Total Jobs in Kerkhoven</i>	251	100.00%

Source: OnTheMap 2017

## Economic Development Activities

### Kerkhoven Economic Development Authority (EDA)

The Kerkhoven EDA created a formal board and started meeting monthly in 2017 to work on economic development activities in Kerkhoven.

### Recent Economic Development:

The EDA recently had a contest to fill the old grocery store building. It worked with the Swift County RDA to administer the program and generate new ideas for local businesses. It hopes to do this with other vacant buildings to help get good ideas for building.

### Issues and opportunities

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These issues and opportunities were considered for their economic development decisions:

Vacant buildings include:

- Nursing home 701 Atlantic Ave
- Antique store 1207 Atlantic Ave
- Eldon Mahlum 1209 Atlantic Ave
- Baker Body Shop (tower property) 1309 Atlantic Ave
- Chevy dealer 201 N 11th St
- Butcher Block 202 N 11th St
- American Legion hall 204 N 11th St
- Better Built Barn shed 206 N 11th St
- Old Banner Office 202 N 10th St
  
- Main street is along a major highway. This is an asset and opportunity and can work to find ways for people to stop in town.
  
- Family owned businesses fill the downtown area. This is inviting to new and complementary businesses.
  
- There are many dilapidated commercial buildings. The short-term plan is to demolish these buildings and find ways to replace with new commercial buildings.
  
- The nursing home is a great space that is for sale, but the purchase price is too high and it remains on the market. It has been closed for 25 years.
  
- Need businesses that fit into the changing community.
  
- Kerkhoven is not a town for heavy industrial businesses.



Nursing home building for sale

## Goals and Strategies for Economic Development



### Strategy Highlights:

- Support the EDA in efforts to fill vacant commercial buildings and lots.

### Goal

The City of Kerkhoven has a steadfast and thriving business community.

### Strategies

Ongoing
14. Support existing businesses and industry.
15. Be proactive, flexible, and ready for economic opportunities.
16. Work to reduce poverty and increase median household income through attracting good, diverse jobs to Kerkhoven.
17. Attract business and industry that would complement existing businesses.
18. Recognize agricultural activities as an important existing industry by promoting and maintaining agri-businesses.
19. Support renewable energy development as a potential low-cost energy source for local business.
20. Consider size, type, wage, jobs, utility, demand, and compatibility with existing land use and natural resources when recruiting new business and industry.
21. Consider redevelopment and renovation of existing commercial developments, and the downtown area before the creation of new developments outside of areas served by existing utilities.
Action-oriented
22. Fill vacant commercial buildings and lots by recruit new businesses.
23. Apply for Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) grants every 5-7 years to rehabilitate current commercial properties.
24. Continue efforts to extend broadband access and infrastructure in the city and throughout the county.
25. Offer financing tools such as tax increment financing, tax abatement, revolving loan funds, State and Federal programs, and other financing tools to businesses.
26. Enforce zoning ordinances and building code regulations and remove dilapidated commercial structures.
27. Identify long-term economic development projects and incorporate into the city's Capital Improvement Plan. Examples of these projects could be: downtown revitalization, industrial park, broadband, etc.
28. Create a Revitalization Plan that includes the business district to prioritize and address the following: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Variety of businesses and condition of the buildings</li> <li>ii. Signage, wayfinding, advertising</li> <li>iii. Business hours</li> <li>iv. Infrastructure</li> <li>v. Character, design, and identity of downtown area including public art and streetscape.</li> <li>vi. Research ways to capture financial resources for the area.</li> <li>vii. Review parking</li> <li>viii. Walkability</li> <li>ix. Preserving historic resources</li> </ol>
29. Promote the commercial district by taking advantage of the opportunity of being along a major highway with good planning, visioning and well place signs.

30. Coordinate between the city and Kerkhoven Economic Development Authority (EDA) to work on the following economic development activities:
a. Maintain and improve the city website as a marketing tool for economic development.
b. Highlight recreation, housing and education opportunities in Kerkhoven to encourage workforce recruitment.
c. Work on regional recruitment efforts with the Swift County Rural Development Authority (RDA), Western Minnesota Prairie Waters, and Get Rural to promote the post-college return of area youth as well as the area as a great place to live and work.
d. Use the comprehensive plan as a community profile and economic information to encourage new development and project ideas.
e. Promote the culture of “local business” and encourage the use of local goods provided in Kerkhoven.
f. Keep an updated inventory of existing businesses and available buildings and lots.
g. Work with local businesses to understand their current and future needs and plan for ways to address these needs.
h. Educate the local businesses about available gap funding opportunities such as the Swift County RDA and UMRDC RLF.
i. Pursue relationships with Benson and Willmar to obtain and increase business interests in Kerkhoven.

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## Public Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services Overview

A city's infrastructure, facilities and services present an important challenge as well as a great resource as the city plans for its future. It is a challenge because the infrastructure is always aging while needing large amounts of financial resources. The services a community provides are often an important factor in attracting new residents as well as in keeping current residents.

This section also considers energy and broadband.

### Overview of Public Infrastructure, Facilities and Services

- The water and wastewater infrastructure is in good shape and has capacity for additional homes, but not for a large commercial expansion.
- The city would like to extend water and wastewater infrastructure to create developable properties.
- The city is in need of faster, more reliable broadband to stay competitive.
- Childcare is needed as a public service. There is a great need in the community.

### City Owned Buildings

Building	Address	Year built/year major repairs	Issues/comments
Sewer Plant	428 3rd St North	1968/upgrades in the late 1980's	
Water Pump Houses	202 N 9th St 1305 Pacific Ave	202 N 9th St: 1990 1305 Pacific Ave: 1981	
Water Tower	901 Pacific Ave	2001/2018 repainted	
Fire Hall/Ambulance Garage	202 N 9th St	Fire Hall Addition: 2005 Original Fire & Ambulance Office/Meeting Rooms/Ambulance Bays: 1970	After the Fire Hall Addition was built, the remaining building was remodeled in 2008 to create offices for the Fire and Ambulance, new garage bays for the Ambulance and a meeting room for the Fire and Ambulance Departments
North Maintenance Shop	202 N 9th St	2015	
South Cold Storage Sheds	1202 Pacific Ave	1976	
South Heated Shed	1305 Pacific Ave	1982	
Pillsbury Park	Parkwood Ave	Playground: 1994, some parts older East Park Shelter: 1994 Bathrooms: 1960 West Park Shelter: 2013 Pillsbury Pool: 1994; reroofed 2010	Current playground is outdated Bathrooms are not handicap accessible Need some handicap accessible picnic tables The pool could use an "updating" of activities

<b>Civic Center-houses library, city office, and heritage room</b>	208 N 10th St	1976 Remodeled 2008 New HVAC 2018	Will need to be reroofed in 2-5 years Library is running short on space
<b>Kerkhoven EDA Townhouses</b>	309 S 8th St	2001 Reroofed: 2016	
<b>Lift Station</b>	Grant Ave & North 6th St	1968	
<b>Golf Course</b>		1975	
<b>Centennial Park-softball field</b>	Idaho Ave & 13th St	1978 Dugouts-2014	Jointly owned with KMS School District

### *Water, Wastewater and Stormwater Mains*

- The oldest of the wastewater mains are from 1968.
- The water mains are from 1948 to 2017.
- The stormwater mains are from 1940 to 1950.

### *Water System*

- Water tower was built in 2001. The inside was completely rehabilitated and the tower was painted in 2017/2018.

### *Sanitary Sewer Facilities*

- The wastewater plant is a mechanical plant built in 1968
- The ditch was upgraded in the early 1980's. The paddle wheel was replaced in the 1990's. A sludge storage facility was added in the early 1990s
- Age of mains throughout town vary from the 1968 to 1982
- A CLIPP lining of the main sewer line was done in 2017.

### *Stormwater System*

The storm water system is also original and old, but does not need immediate attention.

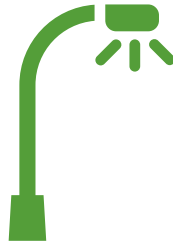
### *Fire and Emergency Response*

- City-owned Volunteer Fire Department, which is also supported by the contracted townships
- City-owned Volunteer Ambulance Service, which is also supported by the contracted townships and the City of Murdock. Kerkhoven is able to provide trained EMT's for our communities.



### Energy Providers

- **Electricity** is provided to the city from Ottertail Power Company.
- **Natural gas** service is not currently provided. The city found that natural gas is not physically possible to add to the city at this time. Center point may be able to add to the capacity in the future.
- **Renewable energy** is an opportunity for Kerkhoven. The Banner received a grant from a USDA program called Renewable Energy for America to add solar on their roof. There is an interest in creating a leader in energy transition.



### Broadband

Internet is available from Charter Communications, TDS Telecom, and MVTV Wireless.

There are some commercial and industrial businesses in Kerkhoven that have access to high speed fiber internet. But, for most of the city, fast, reliable broadband internet is an issue. Kerkhoven does not currently meet the State of Minnesota's broadband recommendations of 100 mbps for download and 20 mbps upload speed.

The City of Kerkhoven was not included in the 2017 Swift County-wide deployment of fiber broadband to the premise project, thus Kerkhoven may not be as competitive with surrounding regional communities that can provide that service.

### B3 Benchmarking

[mn.b3benchmarking.com](http://mn.b3benchmarking.com)

B3 Benchmarking is a building energy management system for public buildings in Minnesota including state, local government, and public school buildings.

The **B3 Benchmarking mission** is to provide you with tools to help manage your buildings, improve your building portfolio efficiently, and monitor the improvements. Knowing which building sites use more energy than expected identifies which buildings are cost-effective candidates for energy retro-commissioning or retrofit projects. And knowing which buildings are consuming more or less energy than in previous years allows you to know which buildings to focus attention on right away so you can determine what is required to maintain or improve its energy consumption.

## Issues and opportunities

These issues and opportunities were considered for their public infrastructure decisions:

- Would like water and sewer ready for developable properties
- Broadband offered is very slow.
- Would like renewable energy in Kerkhoven to serve the town
- Additional childcare options are needed in Kerkhoven.



## Goals and Strategies for Public Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services

### Goal

The City of Kerkhoven provides public infrastructure, facilities and services that meet the needs of the community.

### Strategy Highlights:

- Plan for future growth infrastructure
- Find ways to add childcare options

### Strategies

<b>General</b>
1. Maintain an efficient, adequate, and safe drinking water system that meets the needs of current and future residents and businesses.
2. Maintain a safe and efficient wastewater collection and treatment system that meets the long-term needs of the community's residents and businesses.
3. Maintain local roads and streets in a timely manner, while considering the ability to update infrastructure under the street to create long term solutions.
4. Ensure that storm water runoff is managed to protect residents, property, and water resources.
5. Support efforts to provide affordable and updated technology access to all.
6. Research renewable energy options to help transition Kerkhoven away from fossil fuels.
<b>Action-oriented</b>
7. Analyze and document the condition and capacity of all city infrastructure on a regular basis to determine need for replacement, repairs, or new services.
8. Create and implement a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to assist with assessing the long-term capital project requirements and to establish funding of high-priority projects in a timely and cost-effective fashion. Prioritize the short-term and long-term needs to keep all city infrastructure and facilities updated and in good working order and includes a plan to finance the updates.
9. As a part of the CIP, include a plan for future growth infrastructure.
10. Work to fulfill childcare needs for the city.
11. Involve the public in prioritizing investments and planning for the future to prioritize needs and determine funding resources.
12. Establish wind and solar ordinances that provide a smooth transition for community members that decide to implement renewable energy projects.
13. Pursue broadband upgrades for the city throughout the city to enhance its competitive stance for social and economic development.

## Transportation

Transportation must be thought of as a system that includes all modes of transportation from buses, automobiles, bicycles and pedestrians to heavy commercial vehicles, freight trains and airplanes. It offers opportunities as it connects people and industries to the region, the state and beyond. It also has a major impact on existing and future land uses as well as future growth.

Kerkhoven is located along US Hwy 12 and a class 1 railroad between Willmar and Benson. A network of local roads and a snowmobile trail connects Kerkhoven to the surrounding area.

Some current transportation projects include:

- There will be grading of Highway 35 south of Highway 12 in 2019 and paving on the same section in 2020.
- A Safe Routes to School plan was completed for the KMS High School in Kerkhoven in 2017
- A multi-use trail connecting Kerkhoven to Murdock is in the planning stages. (See Trails Section)

### Overview of Transportation

#### Functional Classification

Kerkhoven features: principal arterials, major collectors, minor collectors and local roads. The portion of major collector Highway 35 south of US Highway 12 is the highway that is scheduled for grading and paving in 2019-2020.



Swift Functional Classification	
Interstate	Major Collector
Other Freeways & Expressways	Minor Collector
Principal Arterial - Other	Local
Minor Arterial	County Boundary

INTERSTATE TRUNK HWY
U.S. TRUNK HWY
STATE TRUNK HWY
COUNTY STATE AID HWY
COUNTY ROAD

## Vehicles per Household

Most households in Kerkhoven have 1-2 vehicles. There are 116 out of 302 households that have only one vehicle.

	Occupied Housing Units	% of Total Occupied Housing Units	Margin of Error
<b>Owner Occupied</b>			
No vehicle available	12	4.0%	11
1 vehicle available	45	15%	20
2 vehicles available	109	36.1%	35
3 vehicles available	28	9.3%	10
4 vehicles available	13	4.3%	9
5 or more vehicles available	0	0.0%	9
<b>Renter Occupied</b>			
No vehicle available	2	0.6%	2
1 vehicle available	71	23.5%	27
2 vehicles available	16	5.3%	13
3 vehicles available	4	1.3%	3
4 vehicles available	0	0.0%	9
5 or more vehicles available	2	0.6%	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>302</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	

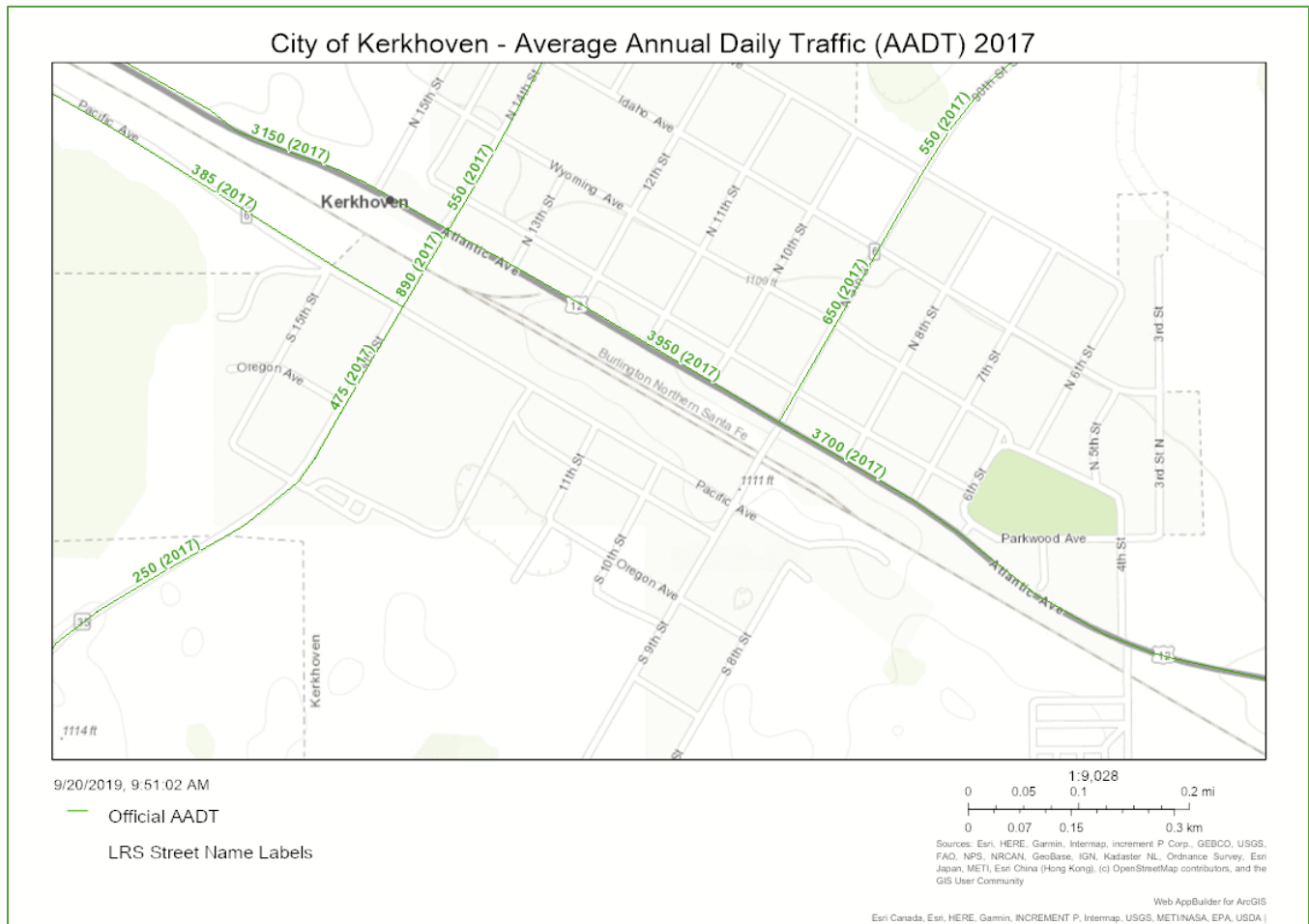
**Source:** 2010-2014 American Community Survey Estimates

**Source Notes:** The American Community Survey (ACS) replaces census sample data. Esri is releasing the 2010-2014 ACS estimates, five-year period data collected monthly from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2014. Although the ACS includes many of the subjects previously covered by the decennial census sample, there are significant differences between the two surveys including fundamental differences in survey design and residency rules.

**Margin of error (MOE):** The MOE is a measure of the variability of the estimate due to sampling error. MOEs enable the data user to measure the range of uncertainty for each estimate with 90 percent confidence. The range of uncertainty is called the confidence interval, and it is calculated by taking the estimate +/- the MOE. For example, if the ACS reports an estimate of 100 with an MOE of +/- 20, then you can be 90 percent certain the value for the whole population falls between 80 and 120.

**Reliability Notes:** The results for owner occupied units with no vehicle available, and renter occupied units with 3 vehicles available have low reliability, since the sampling error is large relative to the estimate. The rest of the results have at least medium reliability.

## Average Daily Traffic



## Public Transit

Prairie Five RIDES provide regional transit service for residents of Kerkhoven Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. Users are encouraged to schedule rides 24 hours in advance. There are several punch cards, monthly passes, and school year passes available. Prairie Five provides rides around the region as well as to larger cities such as Fargo, Moorhead, Alexandria, St. Cloud, Marshall, Mankato, and Rochester, as well as Minneapolis. These rides are charged by the mile, and prices vary depending on age brackets (adult, youth, and senior) and whether the trip is one way or roundtrip.

Currently, there is no transit available on weekends or holidays.

## Rail Transportation

An asset for Kerkhoven is the Class 1 Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railway Company (BNSF). The BNSF is one of the largest freight railroads in North America and covers 32,500 miles in 28 states.

## Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation: Safe Routes to School

In the absence of an official sidewalk plan for the City of Kerkhoven, the plan titled, KMS High School Safe Routes to School Plan June 2017, was used to inform this section. During the formation of this plan, a city-wide Walking and Biking Audit and a School Zone Hazard Observational Assessment was completed.

The plan determined the following:

- Streets with protected paths are safer for bicyclists and pedestrians
- Increased levels of walking and biking builds awareness, resulting in safer conditions
- Walking and biking provides health and economic benefits to the community
- Low traffic volumes, along with a compact footprint and grid system, provides an opportunity for Kerkhoven to be a walking and biking friendly town

### *KMS Safe Routes to School Plan Vision:*

We envision safe communities where students, their most valuable resource, can and do walk and bike to school safely because regional partners work together creatively to develop the physical and social environment to promote active transportation

Recommendations include:

- Traffic calming techniques applied on U.S. Highway 12 and County Road 35
- A pedestrian activated beacon, crosswalk striping and crosswalk signage at the intersection of U.S. Highway 12 and County Road 35 to provide a safe place to cross U.S. Highway 12 on the west end of the city near the school campus.
- A pedestrian activated beacon, crosswalk striping and crosswalk signage at the intersection of U.S. Highway 12 and County Road 6 to provide a safe place to cross U.S. Highway 12
- A pedestrian activated beacon, crosswalk striping and crosswalk signage at the intersection of U.S. Highway 12 and 7th Street to provide a safe place to cross U.S. Highway 12
- A marked crosswalk on County Road 35 & Wyoming Avenue to ensure safe crossing of County Road 35 by students utilizing the east/west route along Wyoming Avenue
- A marked crosswalk on County Road 6 & Wyoming Avenue to ensure safe crossing of County Road 6 by students utilizing the east/west route along Wyoming Avenue
- Improved safety on railroad crossing at County Road 35 to provide Kerkhoven with a safe place to cross the railroad tracks on the west end of the city near the school campus
- A flashing 'School Zone' signage along US Highway 12 west of 15th Street to alert traffic entering the city that they are entering a school zone while school is in session
- Crosswalk markings in the high traffic route from Lamecker's Hardware to Sophie's Ice Cream



Primary Sidewalk Issue Identified by the Safe Routes to School Team:

- Sidewalk condition outside school property varies greatly, generally not meeting ADA requirements

### Sidewalks in Kerkhoven

Currently, the City allows for the removal of sidewalks. Because of this, there are many sections that have been removed. The Safe Routes to School primary route on Wyoming Avenue consists of a painted line indicating a four-foot shared route on the street. There should be a plan for sidewalks for the city, with decisions made for existing streets and new development.

Transportation project funding options:

- Grants, transportation programs, and existing revenue. Grants are competitive and require a local cash match.
- Assessments are the most equitable way to fund pedestrian improvements, especially for preserving the existing network.
- A franchise fee would be a way to fund new sidewalk improvements. This revenue from the franchise fee could be used to fund emergency repairs, it could be the match for a grant, or it could be used for other non-motorized transportation projects.



### Trails

The City of Kerkhoven does not have a local non-motorized trail system.

#### Snowmobile Trails

Kerkhoven is connected to the Northern Lights Snowmobile Trail. The trail is recognized by the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) and connects Kerkhoven, by way of traveling north on County Road 35, to the larger trail network both north east and north west of Kerkhoven.

#### Multi-use paved Trail

A local group is in the planning and outreach phase of developing a multi-use paved trail intending to provide a route between the cities of Kerkhoven and Murdock. The trail, if completed, will provide an alternate, non-motorized, transportation mode between the two communities, specifically school campuses, and local amenities.

The City of Kerkhoven, City of Murdock, Swift County, KMS Public Schools-ISD # 775, Minnesota Department of Transportation (MnDOT), and the Kerkhoven Lions Club have all expressed their support for the planned trail.

### Issues and opportunities

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These issues and opportunities were considered for their transportation decisions:

- Major highway through the middle of town. This can be an asset.
- The train can cause access issues when it sits in town.
- Prairie Five Transit could be marketed more.
- There is a need for a plan for sidewalks, particularly for new development. Currently than can be taken out so there are many random sections missing.
- Crossing MN Hwy 12 and the railroad tracks are is difficult for bicycles and pedestrians.

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## Goals and Strategies for Transportation

### Goal

The City of Kerkhoven has a financially responsible transportation system with well-maintained roads. It safely and economically meets the needs of all users now and for future generations.



### Strategy Highlights:

- Increase safety across MN Hwy 12 and railroad.
- Plan for improvements and maintenance.

### Strategies

Ongoing
31. Preserve rail access and work to expand rail usage.
32. Consider and evaluate all potential modal (i.e. automobiles, heavy commercial vehicles, pedestrians, bicycles, trains, ATV, golf carts etc.) impacts for each transportation project.
33. Provide safety and accessibility for all users, of all ages and abilities, when planning for and designing improvements to the transportation system.
34. Accommodate both pedestrian and vehicular needs in street design to ensure a walkable and bike friendly community.
35. Work with surrounding townships, Swift County, MnDOT, FHWA, BNSF railroad and private stakeholders when maintaining and upgrading roads to maximize efficiencies.
36. Develop transportation services and infrastructure that are consistent with local land use plans and that encourages economic development.
Action-oriented
37. Work towards curb accessibility throughout the city.
38. Include the public when prioritizing the community investment of street, sidewalk and trail improvements.
39. Develop a multi-year road improvement plan as part of a Capital Improvements Program.  This plan should include maintenance, lifecycle cost, safety improvements, paving and construction work, etc. prioritized by year, cost and method of financing. This plan should identify resources and strategically invest in infrastructure for both the short-term and long-term.
40. Work towards amenities such as crosswalk lights, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping and other enhancements to the crossing of MN Hwy 12 and the railroad for better access to the school and parks.

## Community Vitality

This section recognizes that all components in a comprehensive plan are interconnected and related. This is important to acknowledge in order to create an atmosphere where there is a strong sense of community and long-term vitality. This is where residents can get involved and are empowered to make their own rural town feel safe and connected, and into a place of pride.

### Overview of Community Vitality

Coordination to utilize resources beyond city staff is going to be essential when working to reach the goals in this comprehensive plan.

### Regional Cooperation and Collaboration

Organization and nonprofits important for collaboration include:

- Kerkhoven EDA
- KMS School and Community Ed
- Kerkhoven Lions Club
- American Legion Post
- Programs with Pioneerland Library System, which we belong to for the Kerkhoven Public Library
- Local churches, along with the KMS Ministerial
- MOM's group
- MN Rural Water Association
- Local businesses



Regional organizations connected to Kerkhoven:

- Center for Small Towns, Morris
- U of M Extension
- Southwest Initiative Foundation
- Upper Minnesota Valley Regional Development Commission
- Swift County HRA
- Swift County RDA
- Neighboring towns and counties



## Ways to Connect

### Annual Events

- **Town and Country Days** | Last full weekend in July
  - Town and Country Days is put on by the Kerkhoven Lions Club. This weekend celebration includes and Glacial Lakes Running Series 5K run, 3-on-3 basketball tournament, trap shooting, and more.
- **Kerkhoven Farmers Market** | Tuesdays in July and August
- **Thursday Food and Fun** | Every third Thursday during the year (excluding July and August)
- **Annual Waffle Feed** put on by the Fire Department and Lions Club
- **American Legion's Pancake Breakfast** | Memorial Day
- **Library Events:**
  - summer reading program
  - author programs
  - crafting events

### Kerkhoven City Website

The current city website is [www.cityofkerk.com](http://www.cityofkerk.com) and is managed by the city office. There is a need for a new website and a major overhaul.

### Kerkhoven Facebook pages

The city of Kerkhoven also manages a Facebook page.

## Issues and opportunities

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These issues and opportunities were considered for the community vitality strategies:

- Want to make newcomers welcome.
- Want to help people get to know each other better.
- Work on more events such as block parties and winter events.
- Need for a gathering place for adults such as a restaurant or bar.
- Library is a great resource.
- Website needs to be redone.
- Good group of young caring people.

## Goals and Strategies for Community Vitality

### Goal

The City of Kerkhoven is a safe and welcoming place where all residents can thrive.



### Strategy Highlights:

- Coordinate and facilitate community involvement.
- Create new website to keep public informed.

### Strategies

Ongoing	
41.	Prioritize accessibility and safety for all city projects and commercial districts.
42.	Sustain a healthy, involved retirement community to encourage people to stay in Kerkhoven.
43.	Support projects that encourage broad participation in community events, increase positive attitudes about Kerkhoven and help neighbors work together and learn more about each other.
44.	Strengthen efforts to involve people in the planning and decision-making that affect their lives where they can be a part of finding solutions to issues and responding to opportunities.
45.	Support and maintain the fire, ambulance and other health and safety departments.
46.	Address the needs of the school, community center, safety departments and other vital elements to a healthy community.
47.	Appoint special task forces and committees to address specific problems, issues and opportunities as they arise.
48.	Create public spaces that are functional for the needs of people in all age and income groups.
49.	Facilitate cooperation among all governmental entities including townships, neighboring cities, the school district, Swift County, and the region to work toward the most efficient and cost-effective delivery of government services. (Sheriff office providing police services as one example).
Action-oriented	
50.	Make it easier for residents of all ages to find information where they can volunteer. Add to the website and/or put into the newspaper.
51.	Keep citizens informed through multiple communication efforts to reach all residents, including those with a language barrier or other access barriers.
52.	Facilitate cooperation between all organizations to avoid duplication of efforts and create efficiency in the efforts: the city, Kerkhoven EDA, KMS Ministerial, Swift County HRA, community education and all other non-profit or task force groups.
53.	Connect regional employers to our local students and encourage retention of our youth.
54.	Utilize public art to enhance the aesthetics of public spaces.
55.	Work to make the downtown attractive and a comfortable place for city residents and visitors with signage, landscaping, banners, lighting, and architectural elements.



# Implementation

The Action Plan is a list of the goals and strategies from the comprehensive plan. The goals are included to be sure the actions are consistent with the goals the city has created.

This section includes:

- The Action Plan
- Tools and Resources

Refer to Using this Plan in the Introduction.

## Definition of Goals and Strategies

### Goals

A general idealistic statement that shares what the city wants to work towards.

### Strategies

An action plan to achieve the goal. These strategies can be used as general policy guidelines which are statements of what the city wants to do.

## Action Plan

### Prioritization

Gathering more information will help the city decide where to focus its efforts on. Determining *impact* and *effort* will help prioritize, but factors such as *timeline*, the *project lead*, and the *funding source* may also affect decision making.

### Impact

**H - High impact** – would really make a difference/ is necessary

**M – Medium impact**

**L - Low impact** – optional projects

Some of the actions address multiple goals which increases its impact.

### Effort/Cost

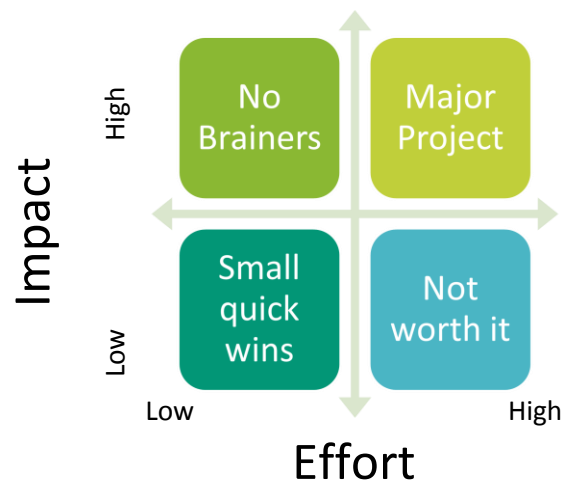
**H - High effort/cost** – \$20,000+

**M – Medium effort/cost** - \$5,000 - \$20,000

**L - Low effort/cost** – \$0 - \$20,000

### Priority

Once you have determined impact and effort, you can then rank them to determine priority:



1. High Impact/Low Effort: Top Priority – this is a “no brainer”
2. High Impact/High Effort: Second Priority and should start soon – this is a “major project”
3. Low Impact/Low Effort: Third priority – easy to do but low impact – this is a “small quick win”
4. Low Impact/High Effort: Fourth priority – this might “not be worth it”

### *Timeline/Completion Date*

- The number of years needed to complete this strategy.
- Some are “Ongoing”

### *Project Lead*

Once a project list is determined, include the party responsible for completing the activity whether it is the city staff, the planning commission, another organization. Identify specific goals, deadlines and anticipated outcomes.

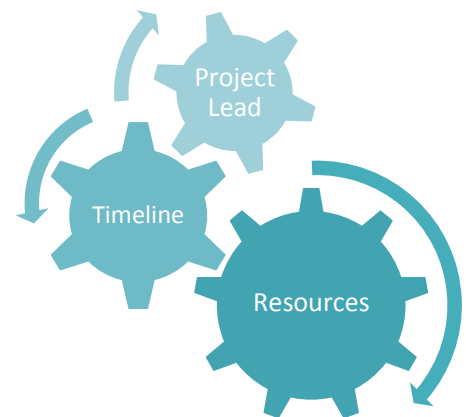
### *Funding Source*

Determine anticipated funding sources:

C: City. City of Kerkhoven

NG: Non-governmental. Foundations, gifts, other

G: Governmental. Federal or State grants, loans, or programs





## Action Plan

The [ongoing strategies](#) from each chapter are best practices. They should be reviewed to see if any of them should become action-oriented and be added to this list.

This action plan only includes the [action-oriented strategies](#) from each topic area. The Kerkhoven EDA board met in December of 2019 to identify the priorities. Items marked with “X” in the priority column are the items the board wants to look at first as they develop their work plan.

	Impact	Effort/Cost	Priority	Timeline	Project lead	Funding source
<b>Land Use</b>						
1. Consider updating zoning map after comprehensive plan is complete to have a digital version of the zoning map.						
2. Create a plan to make property ready for development and work to make “shovel-ready”, esp. residential.			X			
3. Identify potential land for development and redevelopment, with special consideration of senior housing, multi-family and commercial.			X			
4. Promote rail access for commercial development.						
5. Market the land use assets in Kerkhoven: available land for development with good housing market and dynamic downtown along a major highway.						
<b>Housing</b>						
<b>Action oriented - Existing housing stock</b>						
6. Enforce zoning ordinances and building code regulations and remove dilapidated homes and structures.						
7. Work with the Swift County HRA to utilize housing programs such as USDA to address low-and-moderate income housing needs and any programs to update and renovate the existing housing stock.			X			
8. Consider applications for Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) every 3-5 years to make funding available for low to moderate-income and rental unit owners to rehabilitate current housing stock.						

	Impact	Effort/Cost	Priority	Timeline	Project lead	Funding source
9. Encourage single-family home owners to renovate existing housing into rental properties to increase rental housing availability.			X			
10. Develop a program to purchase and remove old mobile homes if a newer mobile home is purchased.						
Action oriented - New housing development						
11. Create a plan to have housing (both for sale and rental) available for the work force and retired-aged people.			X			
12. Work to have five new homes built in the next five years.						
13. Develop new rental housing.						
14. Develop new senior housing.			X			
Action oriented - Planning/needs assessment						
15. Develop and maintain a list of available lots for housing so that developers and potential home builders can easily learn what is available.						
16. Conduct a housing study every 5 years that analyzes the City's housing supply and future needs.						
17. Conduct a housing inventory and map potential housing redevelopment sites every 5-10 years.			X			
Parks and Recreation						
18. Update or retrofit all recreational facilities to be ADA compliant.						
19. Update recreational facilities at Pillsbury Park.						
20. Add recreational facilities at Centennial Park.						
21. Identify areas for new trails in conjunction with the Kerkhoven to Murdock Trail.						
22. Improve and promote the golf course.						

	Impact	Effort/Cost	Priority	Timeline	Project lead	Funding source
23. Add crosswalk with flashing light across Hwy 12, identify solutions to crossing the railroad, and utilize creative solutions to create a walkable city with a safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access for all ages.			X			
24. Create a park and trail master plan for Kerkhoven that includes potential future improvements and activities to add the city's Capital Improvements Plan.			X			
<b>Economic Development</b>						
25. Fill vacant commercial buildings and lots by recruit new businesses.						
26. Apply for Small Cities Development Program (SCDP) grants every 5-7 years to rehabilitate current commercial properties.						
27. Continue efforts to extend broadband access and infrastructure in the city and throughout the county.						
28. Offer financing tools such as tax increment financing, tax abatement, revolving loan funds, State and Federal programs, and other financing tools to businesses.						
29. Enforce zoning ordinances and building code regulations and remove dilapidated commercial structures.						
30. Identify long-term economic development projects and incorporate into the city's Capital Improvement Plan. Examples of these projects could be: downtown revitalization, industrial park, broadband, etc.						
56. Create a Revitalization Plan that includes the business district to prioritize and address the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>x. Variety of businesses and condition of the buildings</li> <li>xi. Signage, wayfinding, advertising</li> <li>xii. Business hours</li> <li>xiii. Infrastructure</li> <li>xiv. Character, design, and identity of downtown area including public art and streetscape.</li> <li>xv. Research ways to capture financial resources for the area.</li> <li>xvi. Review parking</li> <li>xvii. Walkability</li> <li>xviii. Preserving historic resources</li> </ul>						

	Impact	Effort/Cost	Priority	Timeline	Project lead	Funding source
31. Promote the commercial district by taking advantage of the opportunity of being along a major highway with good planning, visioning and well place signs.						
32. Coordinate between the city and Kerkhoven Economic Development Authority (EDA) to work on the following economic development activities:						
33. Maintain and improve the city website as a marketing tool for economic development.			X			
34. Highlight recreation, housing and education opportunities in Kerkhoven to encourage workforce recruitment.						
35. Work on regional recruitment efforts with the Swift County Rural Development Authority (RDA), Western Minnesota Prairie Waters, and Get Rural to promote the post-college return of area youth as well as the area as a great place to live and work.						
36. Use the comprehensive plan as a community profile and economic information to encourage new development and project ideas.						
37. Promote the culture of “local business” and encourage the use of local goods provided in Kerkhoven.			X			
38. Keep an updated inventory of existing businesses and available buildings and lots.			X			
39. Work with local businesses to understand their current and future needs and plan for ways to address these needs.						
40. Educate the local businesses about available gap funding opportunities such as the Swift County RDA and UMRDC RLF.						
41. Pursue relationships with Benson and Willmar to obtain and increase business interests in Kerkhoven.						
<b>Public Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services</b>						
42. Analyze and document the condition and capacity of all city infrastructure on a regular basis to determine need for replacement, repairs, or new services.			X			

	Impact	Effort/Cost	Priority	Timeline	Project lead	Funding source
43. Create and implement a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to assist with assessing the long-term capital project requirements and to establish funding of high-priority projects in a timely and cost-effective fashion. Prioritize the short-term and long-term needs to keep all city infrastructure and facilities updated and in good working order and includes a plan to finance the updates.			X			
44. As a part of the CIP, include a plan for future growth infrastructure.						
45. Work to fulfill childcare needs for the city.						
46. Involve the public in prioritizing investments and planning for the future to prioritize needs and determine funding resources.						
47. Establish wind and solar ordinances that provide a smooth transition for community members that decide to implement renewable energy projects.						
48. Pursue broadband upgrades for the city throughout the city to enhance its competitive stance for social and economic development.						
<b>Transportation</b>						
49. Work towards curb accessibility throughout the city.						
50. Include the public when prioritizing the community investment of street, sidewalk and trail improvements.						
57. Develop a multi-year road improvement plan as part of a Capital Improvements Program.  51. This plan should include maintenance, lifecycle cost, safety improvements, paving and construction work, etc. prioritized by year, cost and method of financing. This plan should identify resources and strategically invest in infrastructure for both the short-term and long-term.						
52. Work towards amenities such as crosswalk lights, sidewalks, lighting, landscaping and other enhancements to the crossing of MN Hwy 12 and the railroad for better access to the school and parks.						

	Impact	Effort/Cost	Priority	Timeline	Project lead	Funding source
<b>Community Vitality</b>						
53. Make it easier for residents of all ages to find information where they can volunteer. Add to the website and/or put into the newspaper.						
54. Keep citizens informed through multiple communication efforts to reach all residents, including those with a language barrier or other access barriers.						
55. Facilitate cooperation between all organizations to avoid duplication of efforts and create efficiency in the efforts: the city, Kerkhoven EDA, KMS Ministerial, Swift County HRA, community education and all other non-profit or task force groups.			X			
56. Connect regional employers to our local students and encourage retention of our youth.						
57. Utilize public art to enhance the aesthetics of public spaces.						
58. Work to make the downtown attractive and a comfortable place for city residents and visitors with signage, landscaping, banners, lighting, and architectural elements.						

## Priority items in 2020

The following items were marked as the top priority for the comp plan task force committee as of 2020. This is a very useful tool that can be used when implementing the comprehensive plan.

	Next steps	Project lead and Partners	Budget and Funding source
<b>Land Use</b>			
Create a plan to make property ready for development and work to make “shovel-ready”, esp. residential.			
Identify potential land for development and redevelopment, with special consideration of senior housing, multi-family and commercial.			
<b>Housing</b>			
Work with the Swift County HRA to utilize housing programs such as USDA to address low-and-moderate income housing needs and any programs to update and renovate the existing housing stock.			
Encourage single-family home owners to renovate existing housing into rental properties to increase rental housing availability.			
Create a plan to have housing (both for sale and rental) available for the work force and retired-aged people.			
Develop new senior housing.			
Conduct a housing inventory and map potential housing redevelopment sites every 5-10 years.			
<b>Parks and Recreation</b>			
Add crosswalk with flashing light across Hwy 12, identify solutions to crossing the railroad, and utilize creative solutions to create a walkable city with a safe and convenient pedestrian and bicycle access for all ages.			
Create a park and trail master plan for Kerkhoven that includes potential future improvements and activities to add the city’s Capital Improvements Plan.			

Economic Development			
Maintain and improve the city website as a marketing tool for economic development.			
Promote the culture of “local business” and encourage the use of local goods provided in Kerkhoven.			
Keep an updated inventory of existing businesses and available buildings and lots.			
Public Infrastructure, Facilities, and Services			
Analyze and document the condition and capacity of all city infrastructure on a regular basis to determine need for replacement, repairs, or new services.			
Create and implement a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to assist with assessing the long-term capital project requirements and to establish funding of high-priority projects in a timely and cost-effective fashion. Prioritize the short-term and long-term needs to keep all city infrastructure and facilities updated and in good working order and includes a plan to finance the updates.			
Community Vitality			
Facilitate cooperation between all organizations to avoid duplication of efforts and create efficiency in the efforts: the city, Kerkhoven EDA, KMS Ministerial, Swift County HRA, community education and all other non-profit or task force groups.			



## Tools and Resources

### *Capital Improvements Plan (CIP)*

A capital improvements plan is a comprehensive list of projects and facilities a city needs or will need in order to provide public services. A capital improvements plan lists improvements in order of priority and provides information on the proposed means of financing. These plans assist cities in planning for future financial commitments while avoiding the financial stress of paying for those projects on short notice.

A Capital Improvement Plan would address public infrastructure, facilities, and services as well as transportation and trails, economic development activities, park and recreation investments for a comprehensive picture of the projects and funding sources, and efficient use of resources.

### Benefits of a Capital Improvements Plan

- Acts as a project and financial planning tool
- Keeps citizens and city council updated on future needs
- Prioritizes projects based on need
- Helps reduce or level off the municipal tax rate
- Manages a city's debt in a way that avoids extreme financial changes and burdens
- Allows a city to be less reliant on long-term debt (bonding) and provides the ability to pay for a greater portion of projects as they occur
- Provides sufficient time for detailed and careful planning of anticipated projects
- Creates an organized plan for capital improvement projects to occur
- Coordinates projects from all the City's departments while eliminating the issue of who should get money, how much they should get and when they should receive it
- Helps create a financial reserve for emergencies and prevents a city from over borrowing money

A CIP should:

- Cover multiple years (3-5 minimum)
- Should be revised annually for new additions and in order to monitor progress and make recommendations for the city's annual budget.
- Identify specific projects including significant maintenance projects and operations and maintenance
  - Streets
  - Water, sewer, and wastewater
  - Drainage and flood protection
  - Sidewalks
  - Street lighting & signage
  - Buildings (new construction and rehabilitation)
  - Parks
  - Vehicles
  - Economic development (financing, matching funds, marketing)
  - Land acquisition
  - Any purchase or replacement of equipment that has a cost of more than \$10,000 and will be coded to a capital asset account

- Involve key stakeholders
  - City manager
  - Department heads
  - Finance manager
  - Council or planning boards
  - Can include citizens and community leaders especially if looking for community support for bond referendums
- Determine costs including funding sources and resulting operating costs (if applicable)
- Develop strategies, tools, and programs for funding future improvements
- Prioritize capital requests. Use a structured process to help achieve consensus and provide transparency. Priorities must be flexible and the order may be affected by availability of revenue, emergencies, overall cost, and other logistics

### *Economic Development Grants and Programs*

There are several state and federal grants and programs available for Economic Development projects including:

- Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED)
  - SCDP Commercial Rehabilitation
  - Redevelopment Grant Program
  - Minnesota Investment Fund
  - Workforce Housing Program
- Federal Community Development Program
- Federal Environmental Brownfield Program
- Minnesota Bonding Bill Program

### *Tax Increment Financing*

Tax increment financing (TIF) is a public financing method that allows local governmental units to provide financial assistance to developers by using additional property taxes, or tax increment, paid as a result of development. The program is authorized and controlled by the state of Minnesota. TIFs may be used to induce or cause development or redevelopment that otherwise would not occur and to finance public infrastructure that is related to development.

### *Gap Financing*

Kerkhoven has the following available for gap financing currently:

- UMRDC Revolving Loan Fund

### *Orderly Annexation*

As the population increases, it may become necessary to expand city services outside of the current municipal boundaries.

To remain healthy, Kerkhoven must be allowed to grow. The benefits of annexation include that of protecting the environment and natural resources, providing a wider variety of housing and commercial options than what low-density, rural zoning can offer, fairly distributing the costs of urban services among all that benefit,

providing urban services more efficiently and without costly duplication, and providing sound land use planning practices by using land resourcefully.

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## Citizen Participation

Involving a great variety of people helps ensure that key interests and issues are included and increases the chances that lasting solutions will be found.

A community can use a variety of methods at various points in a planning activity to get different interests and perspectives engaged. Some things to consider when choosing a citizen participation approach include:

- What does the city hope to accomplish?
- Which participation method will best help the city accomplish its goals?
- What are the likely costs in staff, time and money for each approach and opportunity for involvement?

**Public hearings.** Minnesota law requires a local government to hold a public hearing for many decision-making processes. But because these hearings are the most formal forms of public participation, they are the least likely to produce constructive dialogue. Public hearings also tend to be poorly attended unless an issue is highly controversial. Although necessary, a community should not count on public hearings alone for meaningful public involvement.

**Planning events.** Planning events usually are one-time events designed to peak interest with the public about a planning process and to create a positive attitude about the planning effort.

**Open houses.** An open house gives the public the opportunity to view planning-related information and talk with local officials. This allows for exchange of ideas and information in a less formal setting than a public hearing.

**Community meetings.** These are usually formal and structured meetings in which information can be presented to the public and small group discussions can occur.

**Community visioning.** Visioning is designed to engage the public in discussions about the community's future and developing specific results that will guide the community.

**Working groups.** Working groups, such as advisory committees and task forces, involve small numbers of experts, community representatives or volunteers who work on a specific task. These groups often serve as review committees for the decision makers.

**Surveys.** Surveys are an effective way to gather the opinions of people who may not otherwise participate in planning processes. Surveys are usually done through written questionnaires, telephone calls or interviews. They effectively assess citizen satisfaction and perceptions about the community, document the change in citizen opinions and attitudes, and provide data on citizen awareness of local government plans and activities.

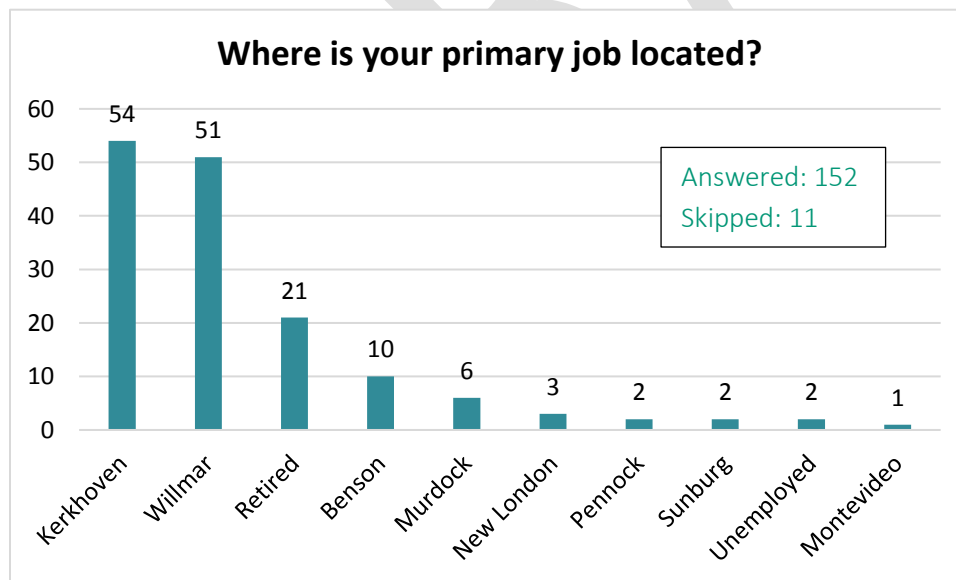
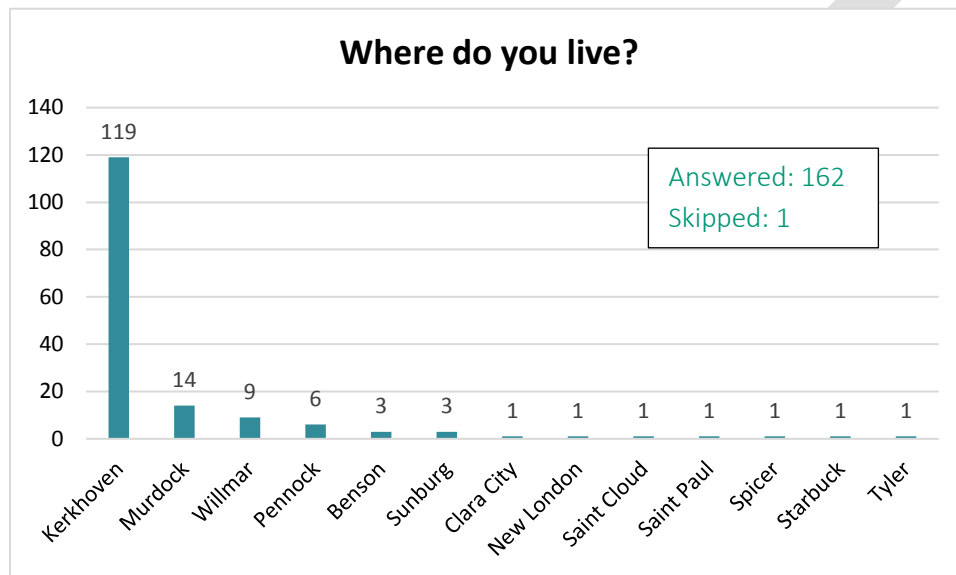


# Appendix 1: Survey Results

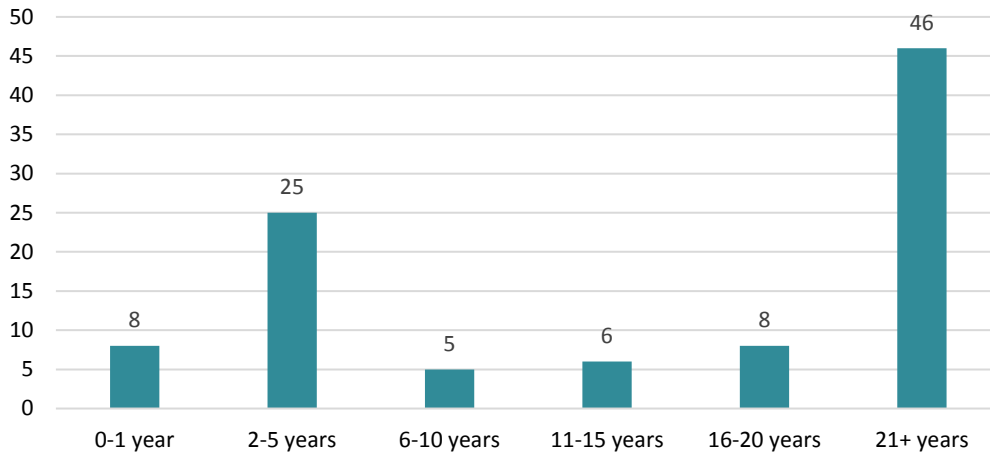
## Results of the 2019 Kerkhoven Comprehensive Plan Survey

The comprehensive plan was available for review in February – April 2018. An online survey was created to take feedback as well as paper copies distributed at local events. We had an online version created in Spanish and received three responses that were incorporated into the total. We received a total of 163 responses.

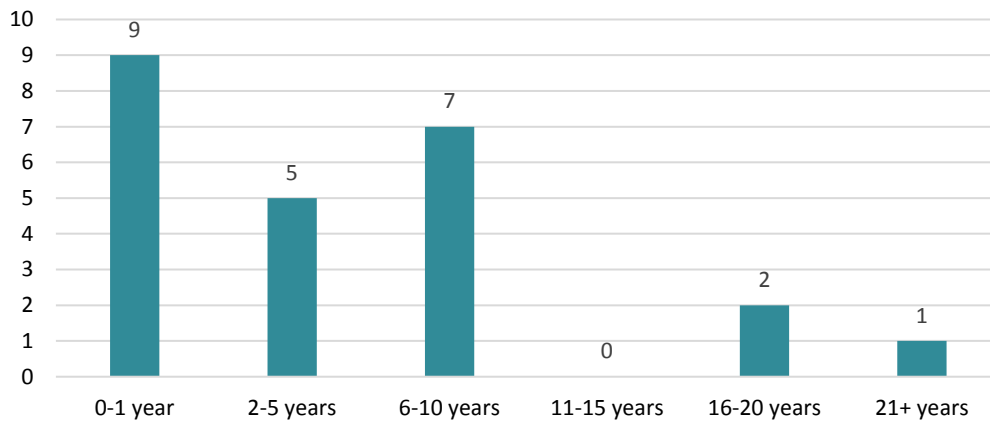
### Who filled out the survey?



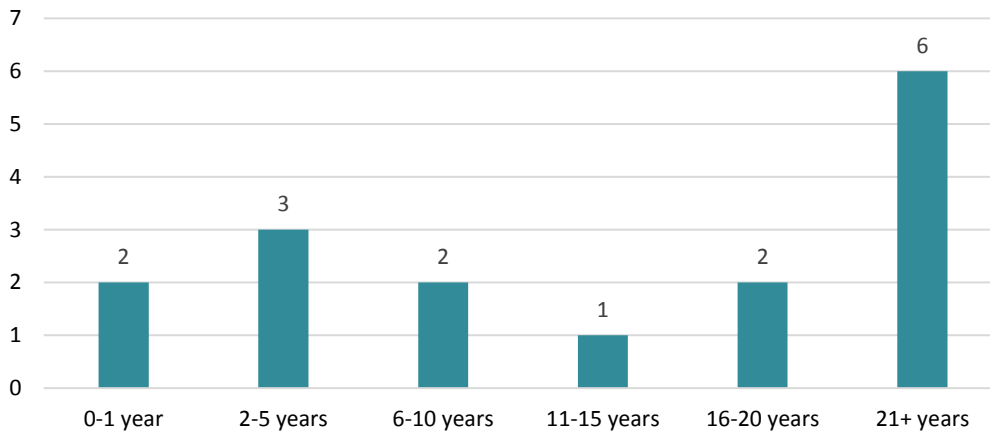
### How long have you been a homeowner?



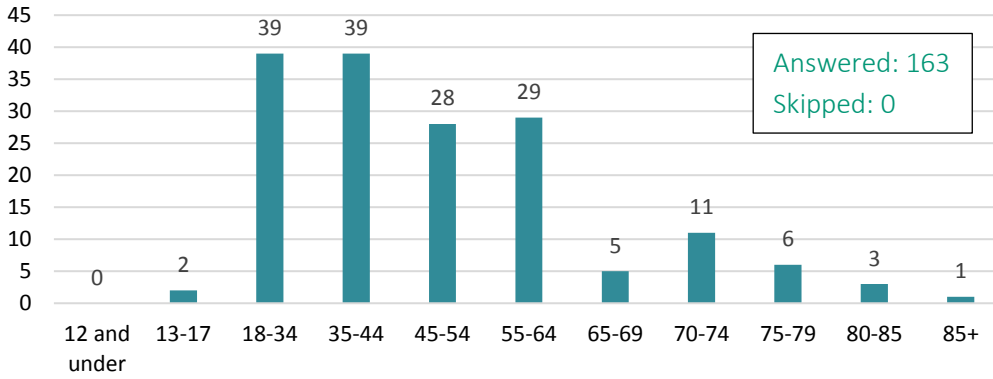
### How long have you been a renter?



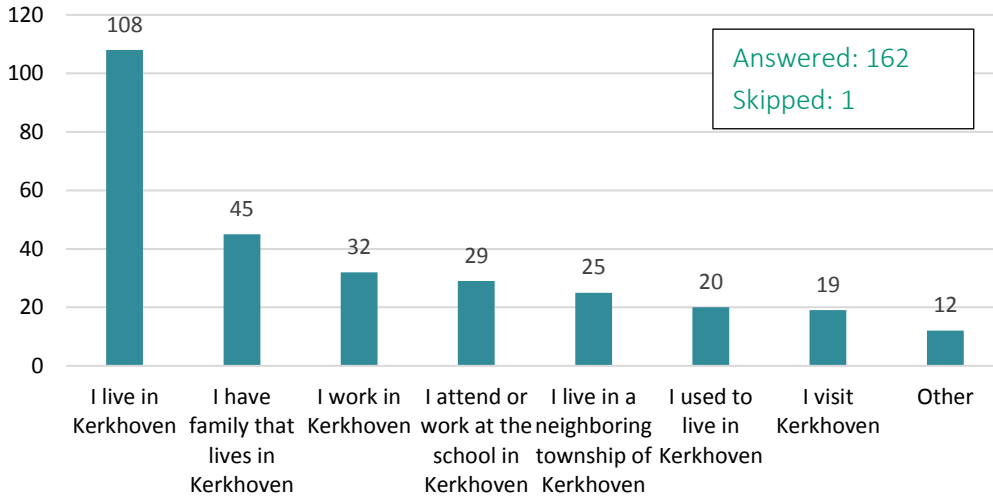
### How long have you been a business owner?



### What age group are you in?



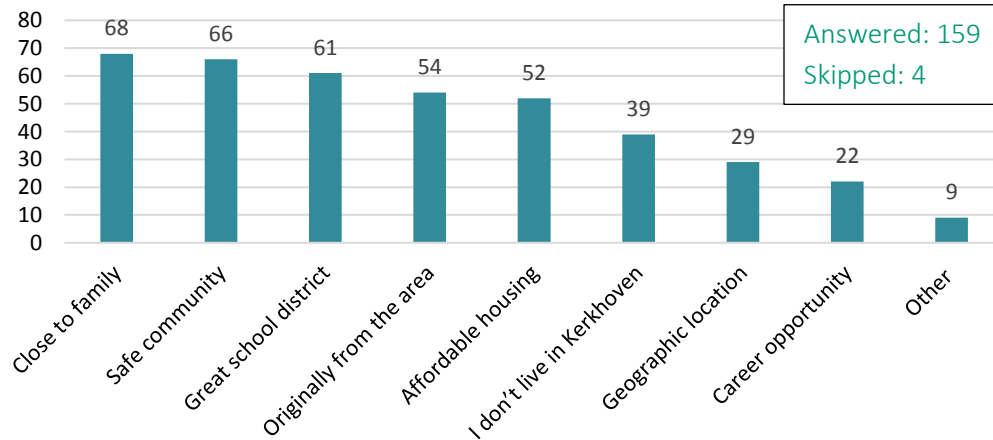
### Describe your connection to Kerkhoven select all that apply



*Other Comments:*

- Attend church in Kerkhoven
- Grew up in Kerkhoven
- Kids attend KMS

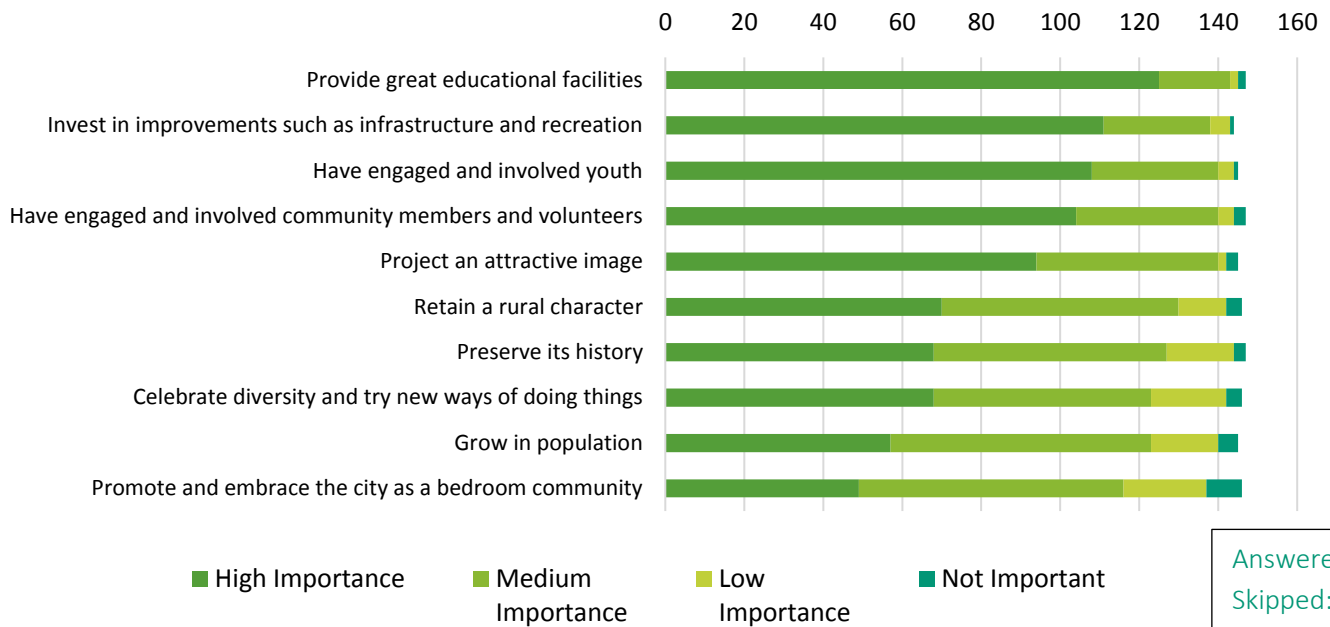
### Tell us why you live in Kerkhoven select all that apply



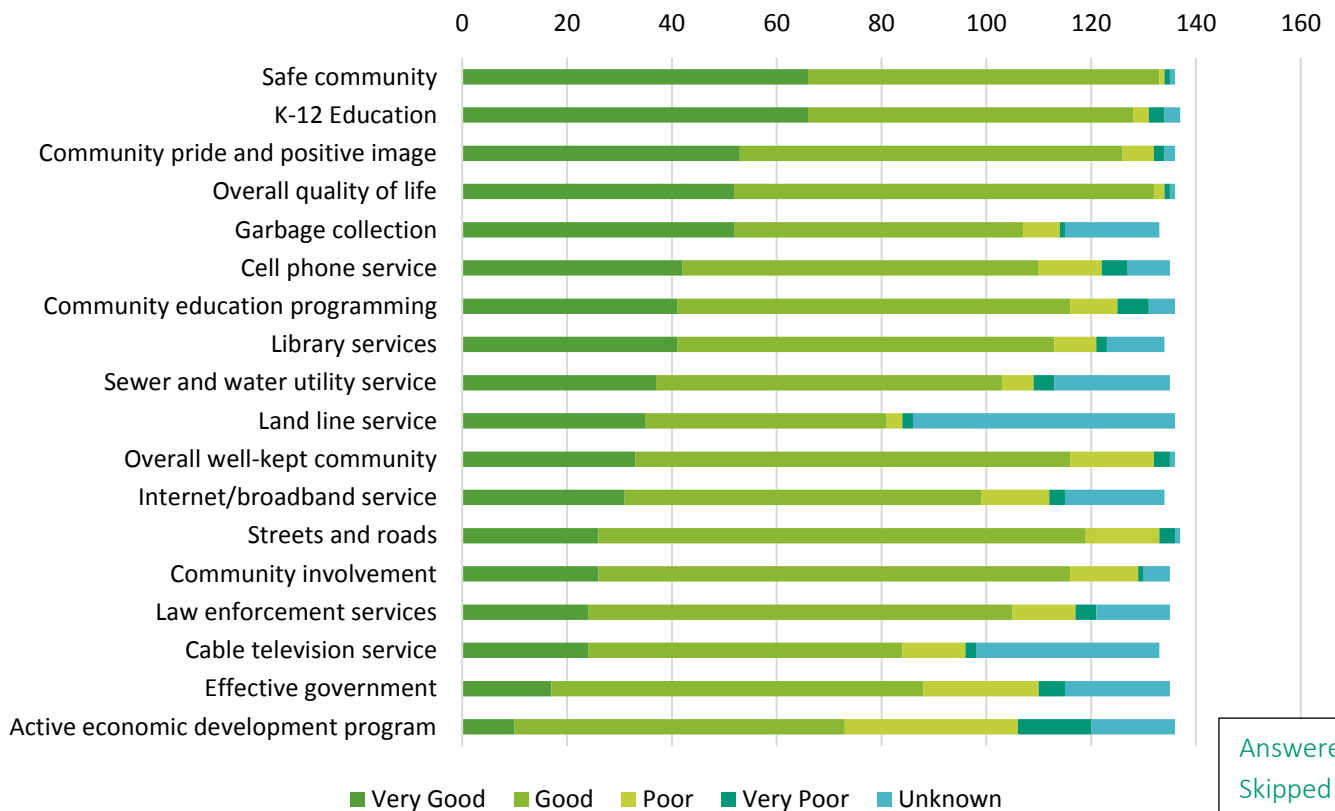
*Other Comments:*

- Wanted to raise our kids in a smaller town
- Great people
- Affordable land prices and taxes

### How important is it for Kerkhoven to:

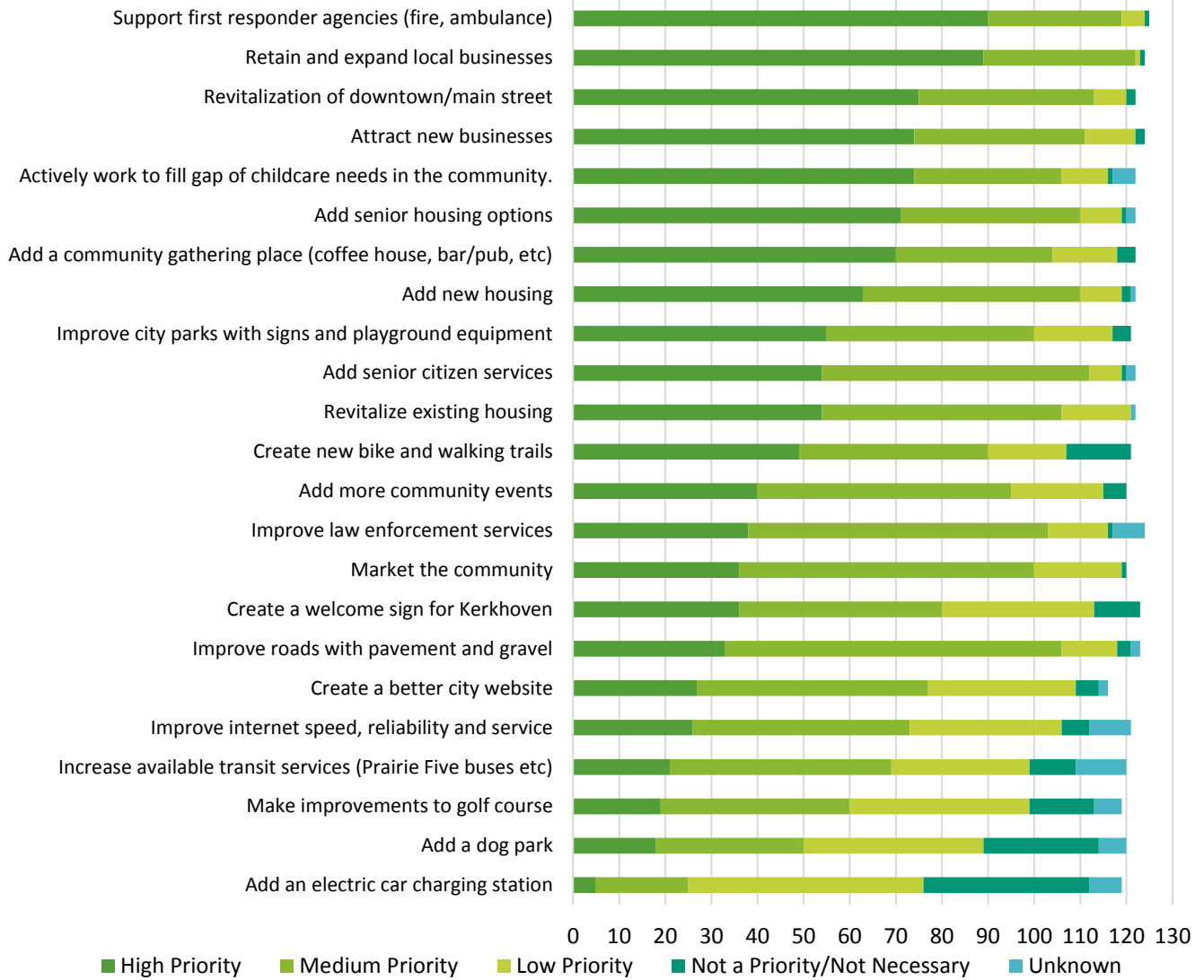


### Rate the quality of each in Kerkhoven:





**What projects should the community focus its time, energy, and dollars on in the next 5 years?**



Answered: 125  
Skipped: 38

Q8 Looking ahead, what things do you hope will happen in Kerkhoven?

home options golf course local add come park tower new work small grow place invest  
hope growth buildings expand pool jobs will area keep opportunities  
housing support businesses update parks town  
Dollar General community want school kids people  
business owners open nice Kerkhoven main street continue improvements  
family community events New businesses development update see available live



Q9 What two or three words do you want others to use to describe Kerkhoven?

Small Peaceful town supportive community welcoming  
Friendly caring Safe quiet Great Family



Q9 What two or three words do you want others to use to describe Kerkhoven?

kind raise family Small warm Home town Peaceful city nice good school family  
fun welcoming caring safe Growing friendly oriented  
community Beautiful great good quiet live clean Small town  
place live Quaint supportive school



Q11 Describe what you like or what you believe are the most positive/unique aspects about Kerkhoven.

pool park lot people good school school district small summer Friendly neighbors  
safe town good park pool nice love small town  
community support school help community great  
family golf course people Town Country Days Friendly people  
small town feel living love small town businesses swimming pool pool lot care feel  
great school

Q12 What are the major challenges currently facing Kerkhoven?

homes growth town city employees small Lack housing old keeping community  
new need daycare businesses city housing  
new business Lack think people maintaining Jobs living buildings  
population better keep businesses

Q14 Final thoughts or comments

love work housing think city Kerkhoven great town need job  
Kerkhoven people community better town  
Thank see school live want Keep will make

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