



RURAL PLANNING

City of Superior, Nebraska Comprehensive Development Plan

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Context

Responsibility to Plan

Per [Nebraska Revised Statutes \(NRS\) §19-901\(1\)](#), municipal governments in Nebraska are granted the authority to regulate land use within their jurisdiction:

For the purpose of promoting health, safety, morals, or the general welfare of the community, the city council of a city of the first class or city of the second class or the village board of trustees of a village may adopt zoning regulations which regulate and restrict the height, number of stories, and size of buildings and other structures, the percentage of lots that may be occupied, the size of yards, courts, and other open spaces, the density of population, and the location and use of buildings, structures, and land for trade, industry, residence, or other purposes.

Authority to Plan

[NRS §19-901\(2\)](#) explains that zoning regulations may not be adopted until a comprehensive plan has been completed, recommended by the Planning Commission, and adopted by the City Council or Village Board of Trustees:

Such powers shall be exercised only after the city council or village board of trustees has established a planning commission, received from its planning commission a recommended comprehensive development plan as defined in section [19-903](#), adopted such comprehensive development plan, and received the specific recommendation of the planning commission on the adoption or amendment of zoning regulations. The planning commission shall make a preliminary report and hold public hearings on its recommendations regarding the adoption or repeal of the comprehensive development plan and zoning regulations and shall hold public hearings thereon before submitting its final report to the city council or village board of trustees. Amendments to the comprehensive plan or zoning regulations shall be considered at public hearings before submitting recommendations to the city council or village board of trustees.

City of Superior, Nebraska Comprehensive Development Plan

A public hearing regarding the recommendation of this Comprehensive Plan was held by the City of Superior Planning Commission on this date in 2026:

[_____]

The Planning Commission recommended the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan on this date in 2026:

[_____]

A public hearing regarding the adoption of this Comprehensive Plan was held by the City of Superior City Council on this date in 2026:

[_____]

By approving Ordinance No. [ordinance number], the City of Superior City Council adopted this Comprehensive Plan on this date in 2026:

[_____]

Building the Plan

The Superior Plan is organized into chapters based upon the guidance and requirements listed within [NRS §19-903](#):

The regulations and restrictions authorized by sections [19-901](#) to [19-915](#) shall be in accordance with a comprehensive development plan which shall consist of both graphic and textual material and shall be designed to accommodate anticipated long-range future growth which shall be based upon documented population and economic projections. The comprehensive development plan shall, among other possible elements, include:

- (1) A land-use element which designates the proposed general distributions, general location, and extent of the uses of land for agriculture, housing, commerce, industry, recreation, education, public buildings and lands, and other categories of public and private use of land;
- (2) The general location, character, and extent of existing and proposed major roads, streets, and highways, and air and other transportation routes and facilities;
- (3) The general location, type, capacity, and area served of present and projected or needed community facilities including recreation facilities, schools, libraries, other public buildings, and public utilities and services;
- (4) When a new comprehensive plan or a full update to an existing comprehensive plan is developed, an energy element which: Assesses energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors; evaluates utilization of renewable energy sources; and promotes energy conservation measures that benefit the community. This subdivision shall not apply to villages; and
- (5) (a) When next amended after January 1, 1995, an identification of sanitary and improvement districts, subdivisions, industrial tracts, commercial tracts, and other discrete developed areas which are or in the future may be appropriate subjects for annexation and (b) a general review of the standards and qualifications that should be met to enable the municipality to undertake annexation of such areas. Failure of the plan to identify subjects for annexation or to set out standards or qualifications for annexation shall not serve as the basis for any challenge to the validity of an annexation ordinance.

Jurisdiction of the Plan

Per [NRS §17-1001 \(1\)](#), the geographical area covered by the City of Superior Comprehensive Plan includes all land within a one-mile area encompassing the city, "the extraterritorial zoning jurisdiction of a city shall consist of the unincorporated area one mile beyond and adjacent to its corporate boundaries."

Map 1.1: Superior Municipal Boundary and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction on the following page displays Superior's corporate boundary and zoning jurisdiction, which includes all lands within the City of Superior and its One-Mile Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ). Superior's land use policies govern all lands within the city as well as the ETJ.¹

¹Superior's southern boundary is within one mile of the Nebraska-Kansas border. Consequently, the ETJ does not spill over into Kansas and the extent of the ETJ is less than one mile there.

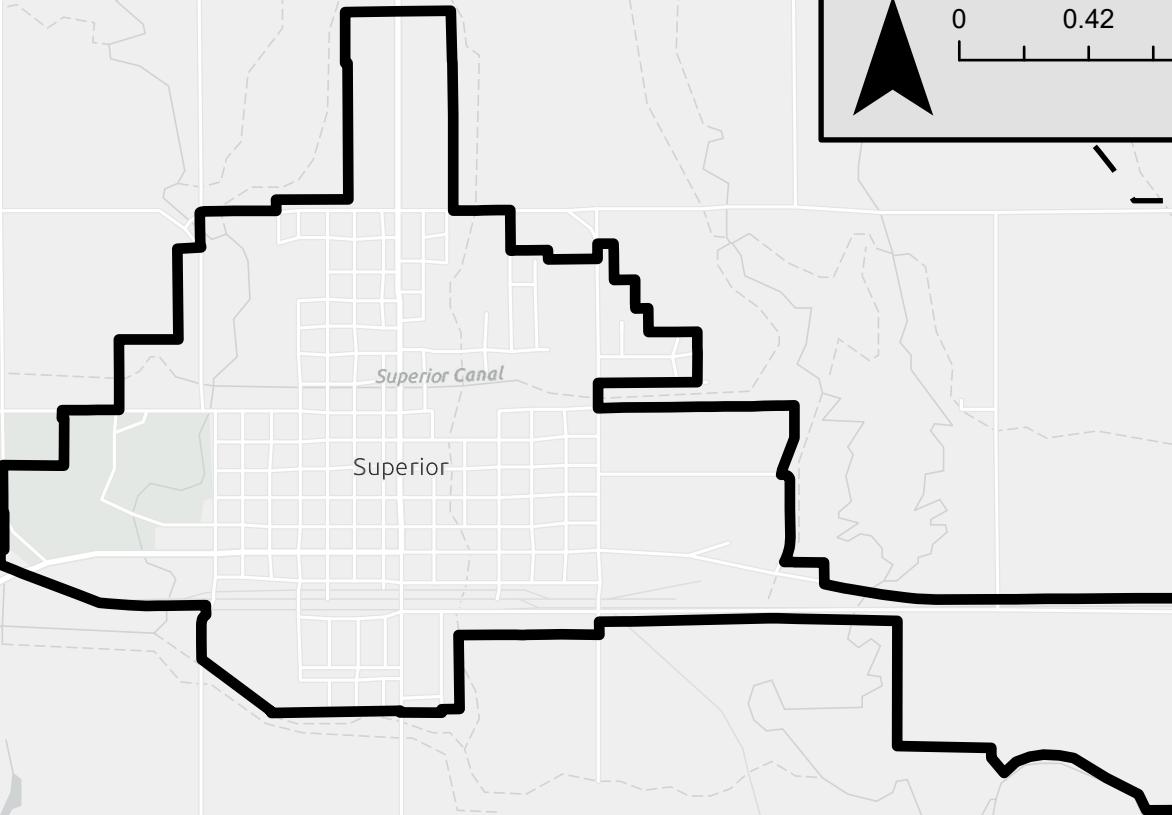
Map 1.1: Superior Municipal Boundary and Extraterritorial Jurisdiction

Superior
Extraterritorial
Jurisdiction

Superior
Municipal
Boundary

N

0 0.42 0.85 1.7 Miles



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Existing Land Use

The existing land use (ELU) map provides a visual representation of how land in Superior is being used. It is a snapshot of the current state of the city's existing land use patterns and helps with the decision-making processes related to land development, zoning regulation, and infrastructure funding.

The ELU map categorizes different areas – typically parcels of land – based on their primary uses today. This map serves as a baseline for inventorying characteristics of Superior that the community hopes to maintain, as well as what the community hopes to change in the next decade. It assists with identifying areas of change or potential growth, as well as with making informed decisions about future development and zoning regulations.²

Table 1 summarizes the distribution of land in Superior by land use category. There are six categories: agricultural, commercial, industrial, residential, exempt, and state centrally assessed. Within city limits, commercial and residential uses make up three quarters of all land area, while exempt makes up another 15 percent. Agricultural land just under seven percent, while industrial and state centrally assessed land make up the remainder.

Outside of city limits in the extraterritorial jurisdiction, the vast majority of land use is agricultural. While residents and landowners living here do not elect city officials or pay property tax to the city, their lands are nonetheless important to the Superior's future growth for several reasons:

- (1) **Growth and Expansion:** planning for these adjacent lands will allow the city to make decisions with future growth and expansion plans in mind. As Superior grows, it may annex nearby land to meet demand for housing, infrastructure, and services.
- (2) **Infrastructure and Utilities:** planning ahead helps with efficiently extending existing infrastructure to include water and sanitary extensions, as well as connected street networks.
- (3) **Economic Development:** the city's adjacent lands will be needed to support the expansion and recruitment of businesses and industries providing goods, services, and jobs.

²These uses are designated by the Nuckolls County Property Assessor. While the standards for designation may be debatable, we rely on these because they are largely the most up-to-date.

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(4) **Environmental Considerations:** cities need to consider the environmental impact of adjacent lands. Planning can help identify areas with ecological value, sensitive habitats, or natural resources that should be protected from inappropriate development. It allows cities to implement measures for sustainable land management, conservation, and the mitigation of potential environmental risks.

Table 1: Superior Existing Land Use Inventory

Within Superior City Limits			
	Parcels	Area	Percent of Total Area
Agricultural	38	74.44	6.74%
Commercial	197	364.42	33.02%
Industrial	3	25.01	2.27%
Residential	1099	468.62	42.47%
Exempt	122	168.91	15.31%
State Centrally Assessed	4	3.77	0.19%
Within Superior Extraterritorial Jurisdiction			
	Parcels	Area	Percent of Total Area
Agricultural	190	6137.97	77.56%
Commercial	198	455.42	5.75%
Industrial	7	108.81	1.37%
Residential	1103	474.78	6.00%
Exempt	176	730.45	9.22%
State Centrally Assessed	4	6.79	0.09%

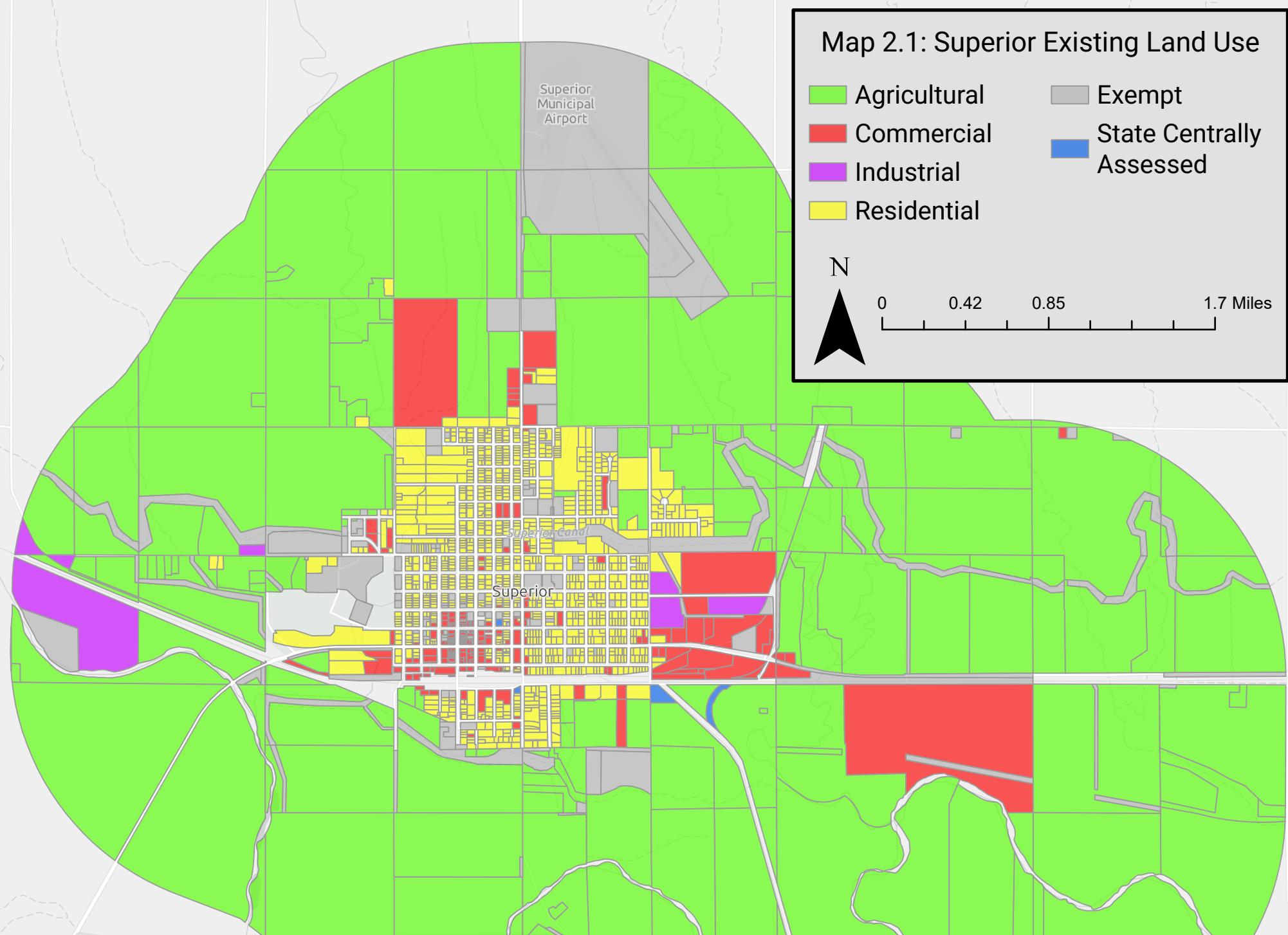
Note: All geographic units are in square acres. Percentages may not quite sum to 100 because of unassessed or unparcelled land, or rounding errors. Data come from the Nuckolls County Property Assessor and the [2025 U.S. TIGER/Line Shapefiles](#).

Map 2.1: Superior Existing Land Use

- Agricultural
- Commercial
- Industrial
- Residential
- Exempt
- State Centrally Assessed

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0 0.42 0.85 1.7 Miles



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Housing Assessment

In this chapter, we document the condition, status, and needs for housing in Superior. Drawing on a variety of data from the Nuckolls County Property Assessor, various government agencies, and original surveys of Superior residents, we show that Superior has a long-term trend of population decline and housing structures in need of improvement.

Condition of Housing Structures

The status and condition of structures are categorized by the Nuckolls County property assessor. **Table 2** shows how the assessor has rated these parcels in Superior:

Table 2: Superior Residential Land Use Conditions

	Parcels	Percent of Total Parcels	Percent of Total Area
Worn-Out	53	5.83%	54.33%
Worn-Out - Badly Worn	2	0.22%	0.33%
Badly Worn	123	13.53%	12.00%
Badly Worn - Average	109	11.99%	9.08%
Average	473	52.04%	54.32%
Average - Good	69	7.59%	8.59%
Good	78	8.58%	9.71%
Good - Very Good	0	0.00%	0.00%
Very Good	2	0.22%	0.33%

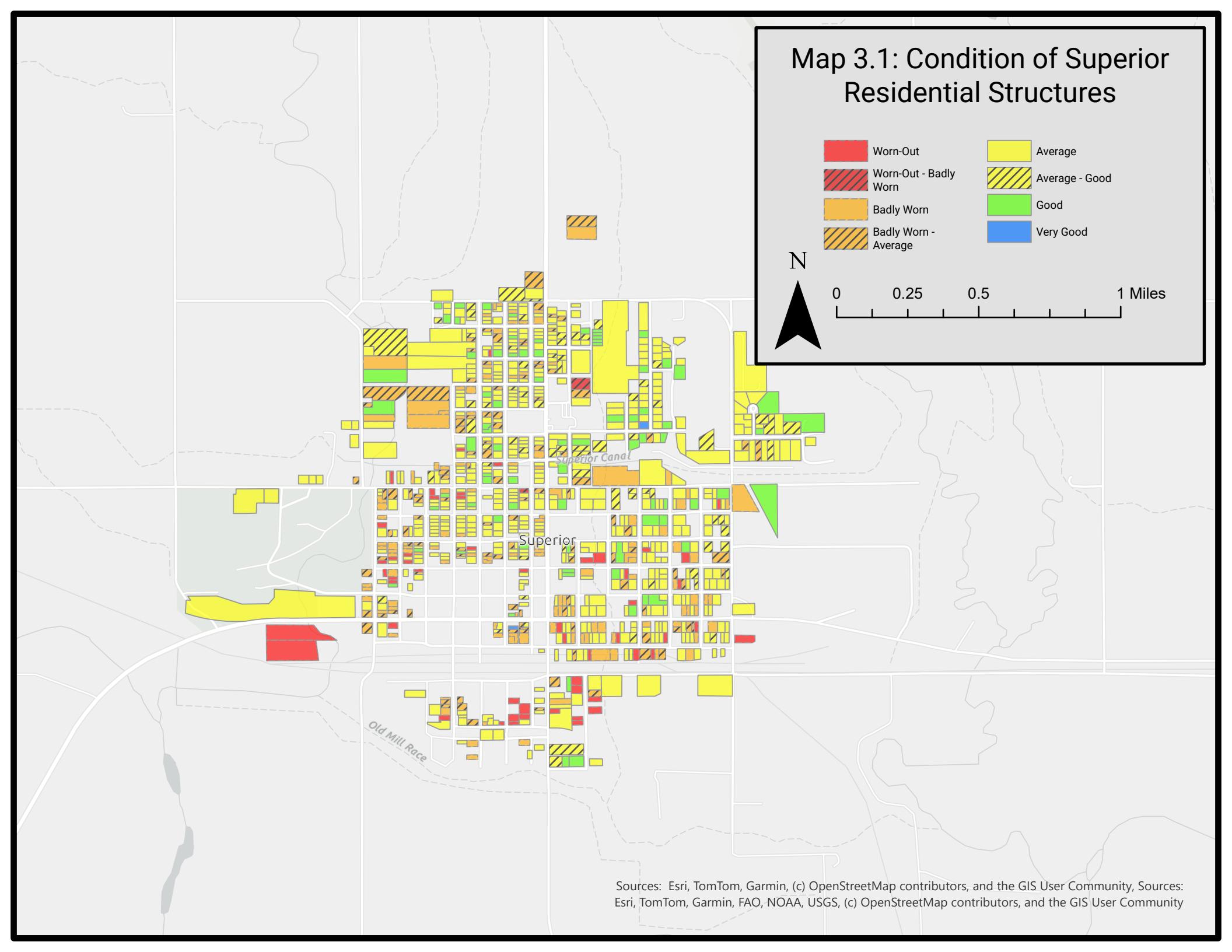
Note: Area units are in square acres. Percentages may not quite sum to 100 because of rounding errors.
Data come from the Nuckolls County Property Assessor.

Map 3.1: Condition of Superior Residential Structures



N

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Remarks on Housing Conditions

(1) Majority of Housing is in Average Condition

- The most common rating for residential structures in Superior is "average," indicating that:
 - * The majority of homes are habitable and maintain a standard level of functionality.
 - * However, they may lack modern updates or show signs of aging and general wear.
- This suggests stable but aging housing stock, which requires investment in maintenance or modernization over the next decade.

(2) Significant Proportion of "Worn-Out" and "Badly Worn" Housing

- Almost 20% of the housing stock are "Worn-Out" or "Badly Worn," which is a red flag:
 - * These homes may have serious deficiencies in systems (roofing, plumbing, electrical, foundation) or visible deterioration.
 - * This group likely represents homes that are still occupied but nearing the point where repairs or renovations are critical.
 - * This condition group is the most at-risk of becoming "Worn-Out" without intervention.

(3) Limited "Good" Condition Properties

- Only nine percent of houses are rated as "Good" or better
 - * There is a small segment of housing stock that is newer, well-maintained, or recently renovated.
 - * This could indicate limited recent investment in high-quality residential development or upgrades.
 - * It highlights the need for incentives to support home improvement or new builds.

(4) Overall Implications for Housing Policy

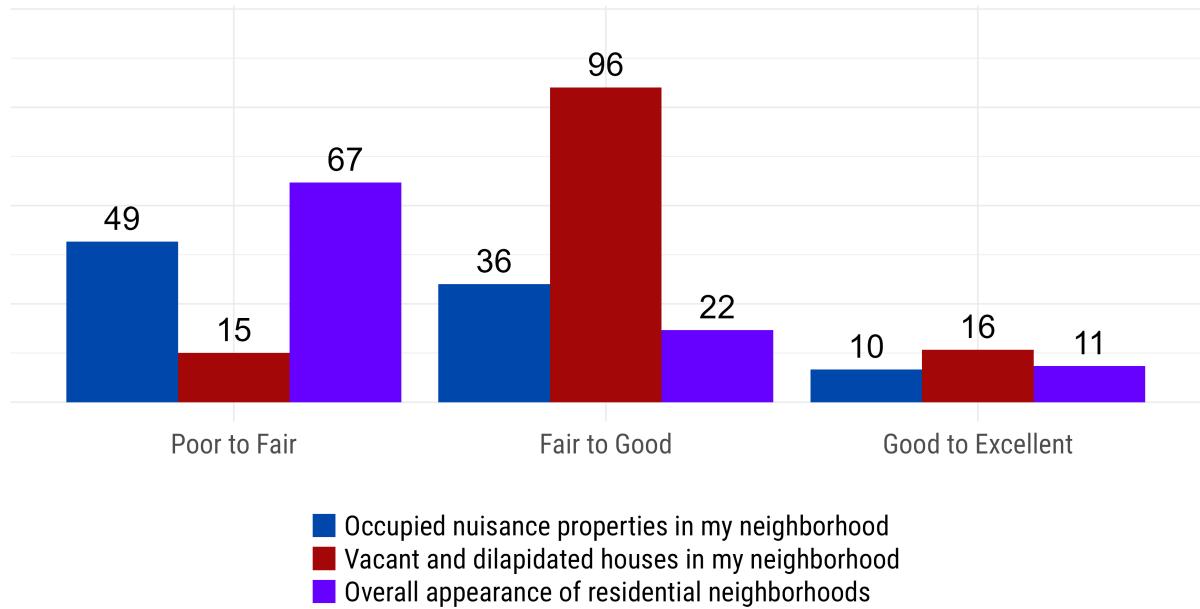
- The data paint a picture of a largely functional housing stock, but one that is aging and increasingly deteriorated.
- The low percentage of "Good" homes and the notable share of "Badly Worn" ones suggest that Superior will benefit from targeted housing rehabilitation programs, especially for owner-occupied homes in poor condition.
- Grant funding and development efforts could be focused on preventing the decline of average-rated homes while prioritizing repairs for the 13% Badly Worn stock.

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Superior residents have expressed frustration with the quality of residential neighborhoods. In a 2025 survey, they expressed mixed satisfaction with vacated and dilapidated houses in their neighborhood, but strong negative sentiment with occupied nuisance properties and neighborhood overall appearances.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of responses to these questions.

Figure 1: Community Neighborhood Evaluation in Superior

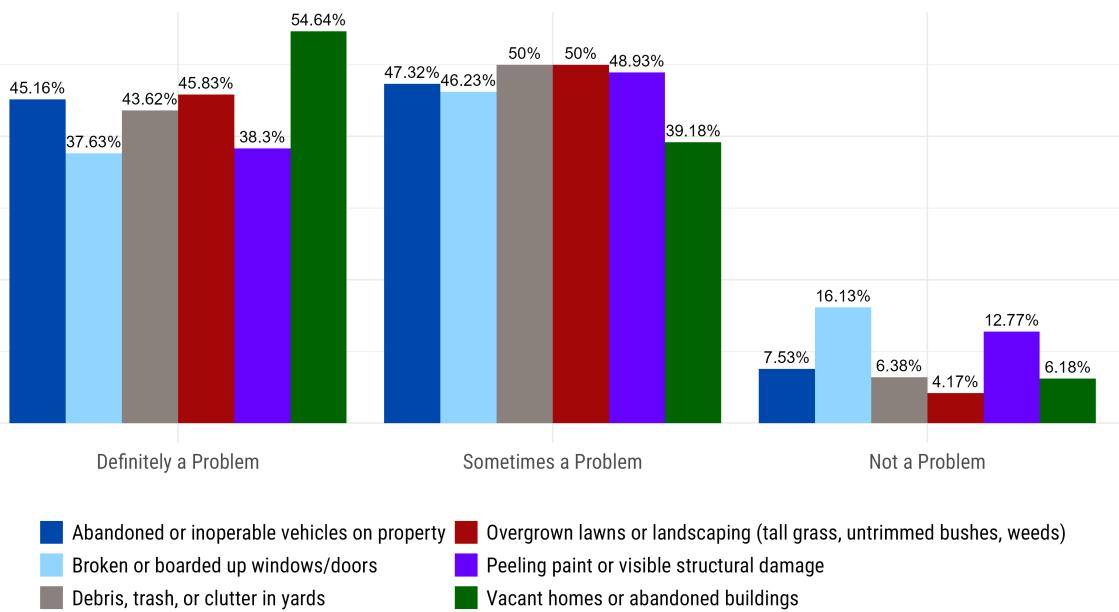


One priority for policymakers is to encourage the redevelopment or demolition of such properties to improve community appearance. In the same survey, 75 percent of respondents indicated that “beautification should be a priority for the City of Superior.” 86 percent of respondents supported “ongoing demolition of uninhabitable homes”, and 80 percent supported “enforcing nuisance and other property maintenance codes for all properties.” Finally, 54 percent supported “establishing additional standards to improve the exterior appearance of buildings and properties along the city’s busiest streets,” perhaps recognizing that the beautification of Superior affects not only residents but also businesses and visitors.

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Superior residents also described which features of neglected properties they consider problematic. Of six categories – abandoned vehicles, broken windows, yard debris, overgrown landscaping, peeling paint, and vacant homes – all six had at least a third described as “definitely a problem”, while just about half of respondents characterized each as “sometimes a problem.” **Figure 2** shows the distribution of responses to these questions.

Figure 2: Characteristics of Neglected Properties



Note: Labels are the percentages of respondents in each rating category. Data come from the 2025 Superior Community Survey.

Age of Housing Structures

The ages of structures are categorized by the Nuckolls County property assessor. **Table 3** shows the age distribution of structures in Superior.

Table 3: Superior Residential Land Use Age

Era Built	Parcels	Percent of Total Parcels	Percent of Total Area
Before 1900	32	3.50%	2.47%
1900-1920	334	36.54%	30.84%
1920-1940	200	21.88%	22.34%
1940-1960	141	15.42%	10.52%
1960-1980	139	15.21%	19.58%
1980-2000	40	4.38%	5.86%
2000 or later	28	3.01%	8.42%

Note: Area units are in square acres. Percentages may not quite sum to 100 because of rounding errors.
Data come from the Nuckolls County Property Assessor.

Remarks on Housing Age

(1) Dominance of Early 20th-Century Homes

- The largest share of Superior's housing stock was built between 1900 and 1960 (73.84%).
- The most-represented period is **1900-1920 (36.54%)**.
- The fact that many homes are more than one-hundred years old indicates a large need for **ongoing maintenance and potential rehabilitation**.

(2) Prevalence of Pre-1900 homes

- 32 homes were built before 1900 (3.50%).
- These homes represent **historic structures**, often requiring specialized upkeep and are possibly eligible for **preservation incentives**.

(3) Mid-Century Infill

- Significant housing construction took place **1960 and 1980**, with **139 units built**.
- These homes are typically more modern in layout and materials, and **tend to be located away from Superior's downtown**.

(4) Low 21st-Century Construction

- Only 28 units have been built since 2000.
- This indicates lower levels of new development, possible barriers such as **land availability, economic constraints, or infrastructure limitations**, and a need for **housing investment or incentives** to encourage new construction.

(5) Overall Implications for Housing Policy

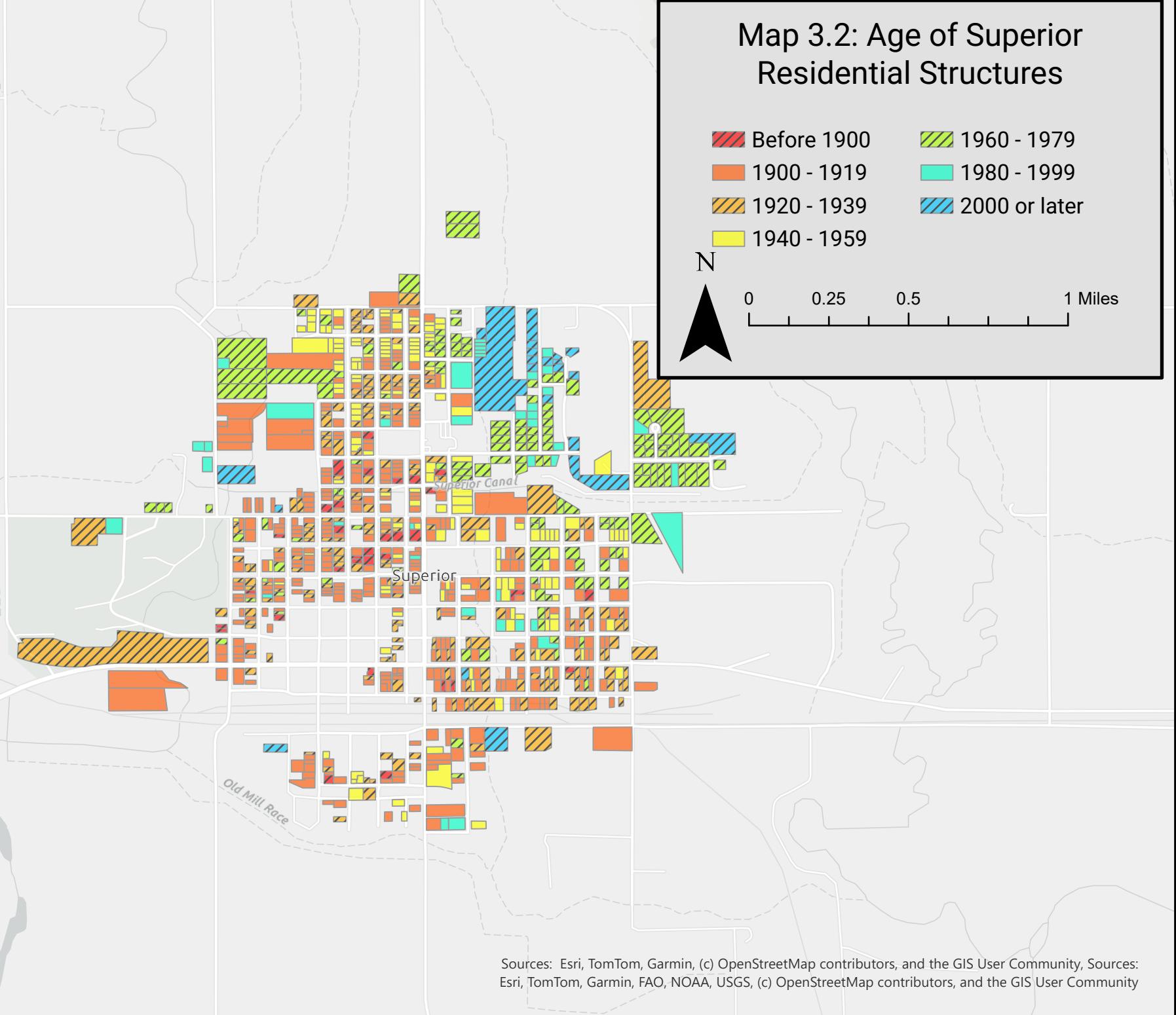
- Superior's housing inventory is largely composed of **century-old homes**, with little recent development.
- This indicates a **mature and aging housing stock**, suggesting a need for **housing rehabilitation programs**, targeted infill development, **infrastructure upgrades** to support new residential construction, and **strategic programming** to preserve historic character while meeting modern housing needs.

Map 3.2: Age of Superior Residential Structures

Before 1900 1960 - 1979
1900 - 1919 1980 - 1999
1920 - 1939 2000 or later
1940 - 1959

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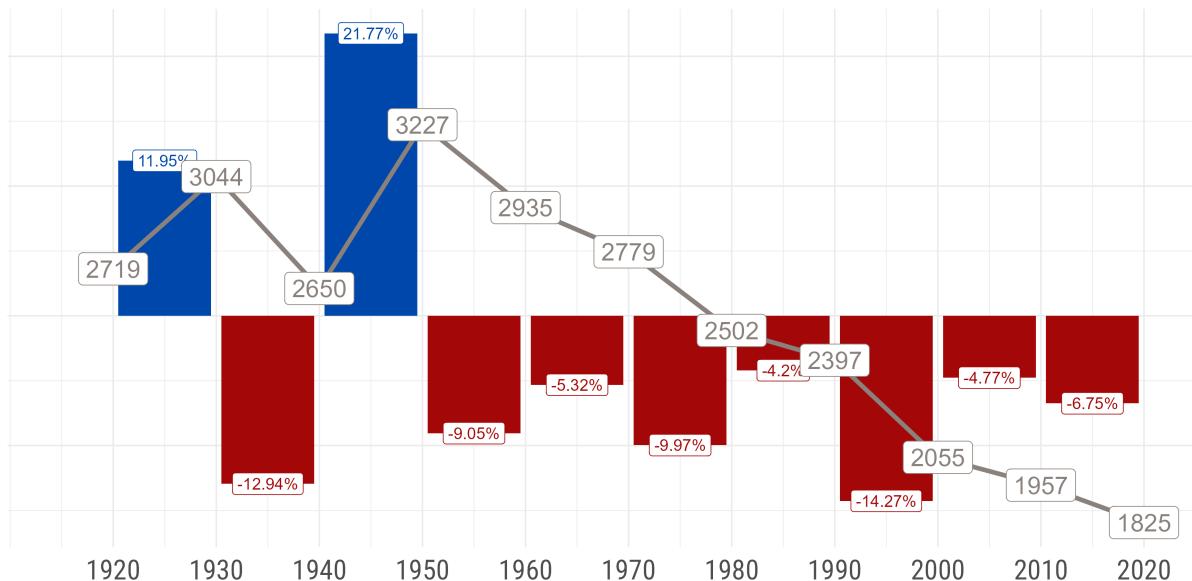
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Community Housing Needs

Figure 3 shows how Superior's population has changed over the last century. The city population peaked in the 1940s before beginning to steadily decline to about 1,800 residents today. The decline was most pronounced in the 1990s.

Figure 3: Historic Population Growth and Decline

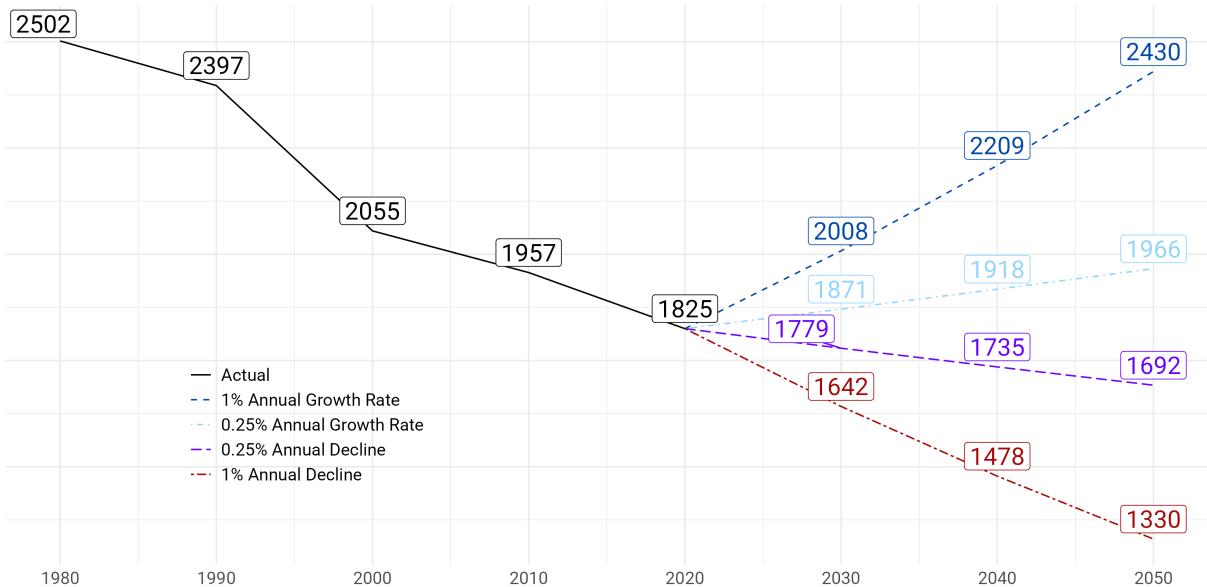


Note: Data come from the [University of Nebraska-Omaha Data Center](#) and the [Decennial Census](#).

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Figure 4 presents several possible population scenarios for Superior. They range from one-percent annual growth over the next 25 years to one-percent annual decline. Although many factors – some outside of the control of Superior residents – influence which scenarios will become reality, municipal officials have expressed that a target scenario of 0.25% annual growth is a policy goal.

Figure 4: Population Scenarios for Superior, Nebraska



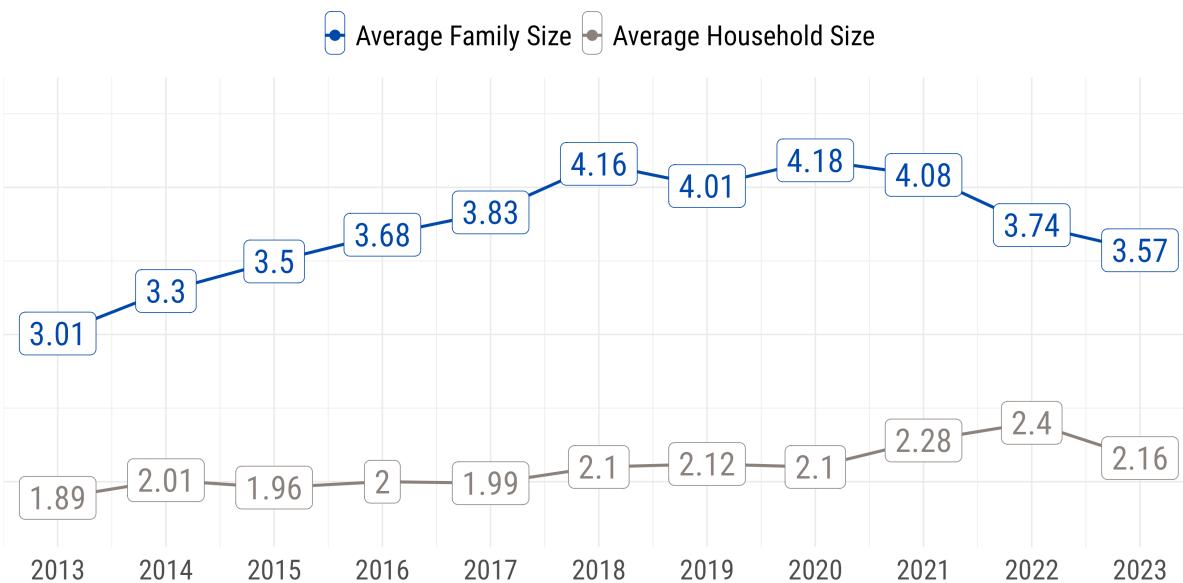
Note: Data come from the [University of Nebraska-Omaha Data Center](#) and the [Decennial Census](#).

Families and Households

The Census defines a **family** as any two or more people (not necessarily including a householder) residing together and related by birth, marriage, or adoption. A **household** consists of one or more persons residing together who may or may not be related by birth, marriage, or adoption. Multiple families can reside in the same household.

Figure 5 is based on estimates from the 2023 U.S. Census American Community Survey and shows how average family and household sizes have changed in Superior over the past decade. The average family size has increased over the past decade, peaking for a four-year stretch from 2018 to 2021, before declining the last two years. Meanwhile, the average household size is up about 14 percent from 2013.

Figure 5: Average Family and Household Sizes, 2013-2023



Note: Data come from the 2013 through 2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

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Some projections indicate future growth for Superior, while others – including the historical one – suggest continued decline. However, if Superior’s population grows, the city will need additional housing units. This will require the new development of adjacent lands and possible redevelopment of lands already in the city. **Table 4** uses the 2023 ACS estimate of 2.16 persons per household to document projected needs.

Table 4: Population Projection Scenarios and Housing Needs

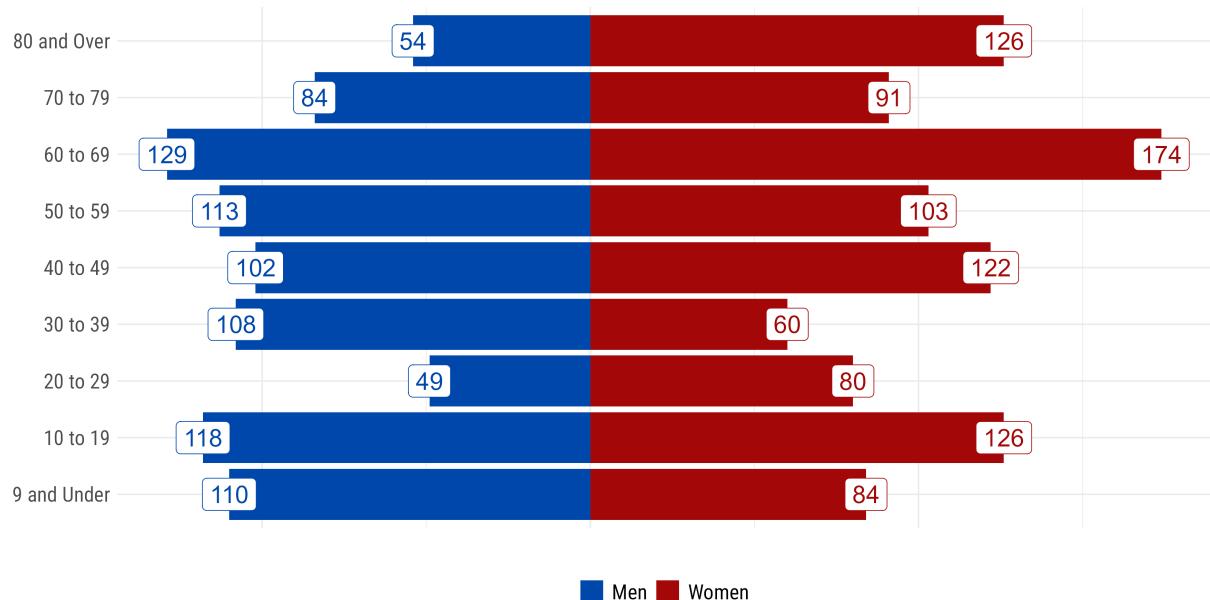
	0.25% Annual Growth Rate	1% Annual Growth Rate
2040 Population Projection	1918	2209
2050 Population Projection	1966	2430
Total Population Increase by 2050	141	605
New Housing Units Needed by 2050	66	281

Note: Data come from the [University of Nebraska-Omaha Data Center](#), the [Decennial Census](#), and the [2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates](#).

Age Distribution

Figure 6 shows the distribution of Superior residents by age and gender. One striking observation is the relative lack of young adults: in a city of around 1,900 people, there are only 49 men and 80 women age 20 and 29.³ One priority for policymakers is to pursue housing and business environments that encourage more young people to come to Superior, **and** to encourage Superior's residents under the age of 19 to consider staying as they age into adulthood.

Figure 6: Age Distribution in Superior



Note: Data come from the [2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates](#).

Housing Costs

Overall, both incomes and costs of living have increased in Superior over the last decade. **Figure 7** shows how, adjusting for inflation, each of median home values and median household incomes have increased since 2013. Fortunately for households, the growth rate of household incomes has outpaced the growth

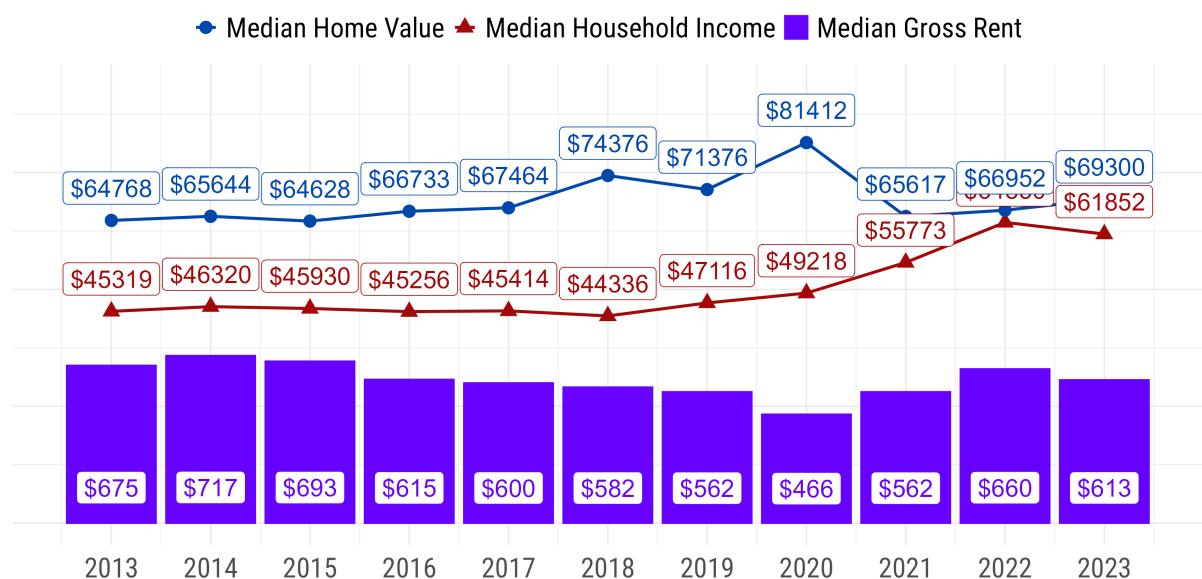
³These numbers are estimates and may be statistically noisy. While it is unlikely as of this writing that there are exactly 49 men and 80 women in this age cohort, it is nonetheless likely true that the proportion in this age cohort is small relative to others.

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rate of home values.

It is also worth noting that rental prices have fallen from their peak in 2014. While the lowest price point in 2020 may be attributable to COVID-19-related factors, rental prices were trending downward before 2020 but have begun to rise again since.⁴

Figure 7: Housing Costs for Superior, Nebraska



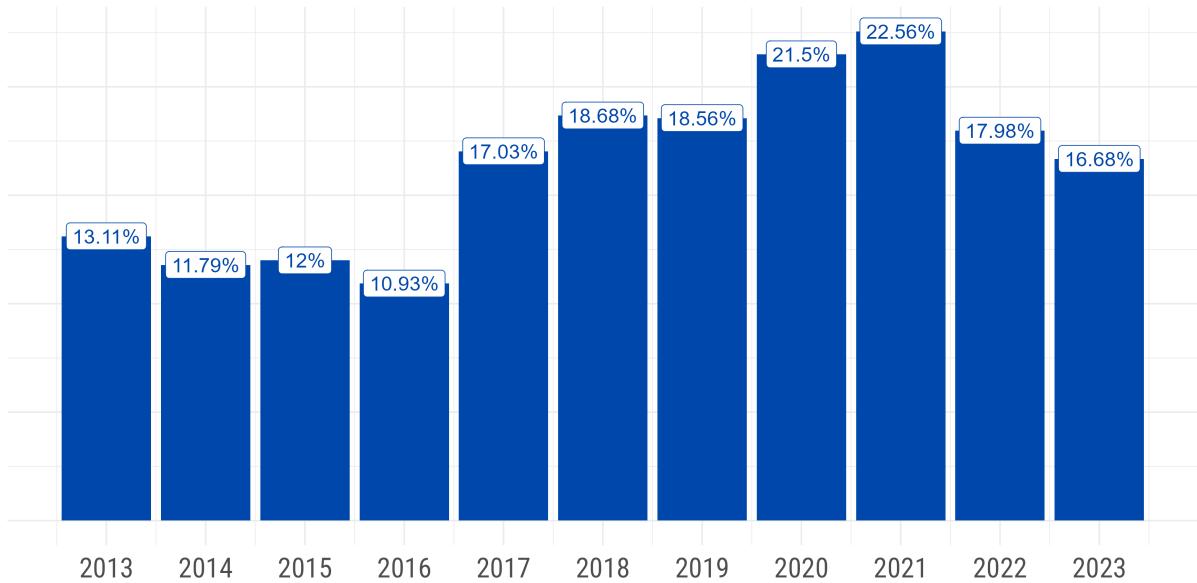
Note: Data come from the 2013 through 2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates. Units are in 2023-adjusted real dollars.

⁴Evaluating the impact of the pandemic on housing costs, in general, is difficult. Overall, rent prices cratered in the summer of 2020, but measuring the impact in smaller towns like Superior is a challenge for researchers. See Kuk, Shachter, Faber, and Besbris. "The COVID-19 Pandemic and the Rental Market: Evidence From Craigslist." *American Behavioral Scientist*, 2021.

Vacant and Underutilized Properties

Over the last decade, the vacancy rate of housing units in Superior has hovered around 15 percent (**Figure 8**). Most recently, this was 16.68%, or about 165 housing units. At the 2023 average household size of 2.16 persons per household (**Figure 5**), those vacant units could be expected to house around 330 additional people.⁵ Simply filling those units, after necessary renovation or redevelopment, might help Superior achieve population growth between 0.25% and 1% annually by 2050. Renovation or redevelopment alone will not reverse the population decline, but the infrastructure is at least in place to avoid historical and population decline scenarios with careful implementation.

Figure 8: Housing Vacancy Rates in Superior



Note: Data come from the 2013 through 2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates.

⁵This estimation is noisy and relies on assumptions that all vacant units are suitable for current living, which is unlikely.

Key Takeaways

About 43% of the land usage in Superior is residential, or set aside as space where people live. However, many of the structures on that land are aging or in average (or worse) condition. If the city is to grow, the city needs to work to maintain the status of existing residential structures and to develop new ones. If nothing changes or maintenance is ignored, the distribution of homes in Superior will only get older and decrease in quality.

This setting occurs amidst more than a half-century trend of population decline. Like many rural communities, Superior is getting smaller and getting older. If Superior is to attract new residents to sustain its population, a multifaceted approach of developing new homes and redeveloping or renovating existing ones is essential.

Residents clearly show demand for improvement and renovation of existing housing stock. While the City has a toolkit of nuisance abatement procedures, residents and public stakeholders need to understand that the implementation of those procedures is long, hard, and necessary.

City and Community Facilities

Superior City Hall is located at 135 W 4th St, Superior, NE 68978. The City features a number of large areas of public and semi-public uses. They include:⁶

Broadstone Memorial Hospital

Broadstone Memorial Hospital is located on 2.5 acres near the center of Superior. Given in 1928 as a gift by Evelyn Brodstone Vestey and her brother Lewis, the hospital provides healthcare services to the people of South Central Nebraska and North Central Kansas.

Superior Public Schools

Superior's public schools are housed at a single 13.25-acre site on West 8th Street. This site includes the elementary school, the junior and senior high schools, and the district administration. It also hosts a number of athletic facilities. Additional facilities used by the district's athletic programs are housed within Lincoln Park, which is immediately to the south of the school property.

Police Department

The Chief of Police directs the police work of the municipality and is responsible for maintaining law and order. The municipal police have the authority to arrest individuals who violate state or municipal laws. The jurisdiction for enforcing all municipal codes and ordinances includes all territory within the corporate limits and territory within one mile of the municipality. The Police Department contracts with the Nuckolls County Sheriff Department for 24-hour dispatch service and has up-to-date, modern equipment.

Emergency Services

Superior offers basic life ambulance services to the citizens of the city and its surrounding areas with two ambulances. When service is requested by calling 911, the ambulance with volunteer-certified emergency medical personnel is dispatched to the scene, and the patient is transported to the local hospital. The ambulance is equipped with the necessary, up-to-date equipment to provide the patient with excellent care.

⁶These descriptions are taken from the City's previous comprehensive plan, authored by RDG Planning and Design, and [the City of Superior website](#).

Fire Department

The city of Superior has a very active volunteer fire department with the fire chief being elected by members of the fire department. The 40-member department protects both city and rural areas, responding to mutual aid calls. The fire insurance classification inside the corporate limits is four and outside is 9. The city and rural, together, own a ladder truck, pumper trucks, hazmat trailer, tanker, Jaws of Life, and grass rigs.

Public Library

The Superior Public Library is located at 449 N Kansas St. Anyone over the age of 5 and living inside the city limits may receive a free library card. Non-residents may apply for an individual or family card for \$20.00 per year. A card in good standing enables the cardholder to check out up to 10 items at a time. The library offers a wide range of items, including books, audiobooks, magazines, reference materials, newspapers, and extensive book collections. Services provided include Inter-library loan, Nebraska Access, and computers for patron use, wireless internet access, story time, and summer reading programs for children, outreach programs, as well as homebound delivery services. The library has a meeting room available to the public by appointment. The room is available for use even when the library is closed and can accommodate up to 40 people.

Cemetery

Evergreen Cemetery is owned by the City of Superior and is governed and maintained by the Park and Cemetery Board. It is located on the north edge of Superior and is unique in that it is divided by Highway 14, resulting in the East Side and the West Side. A newly renovated chapel, located on the East Side of the cemetery, is available for use, accommodating up to 40 people. Cemetery records are kept in the City Clerk's office.

Parks and Recreation

Lincoln Park is situated on the western edge of town, adjacent to the camp-ground. There are 20 concrete pads with electrical hookups. Water is available along with a dump station. There is no fee for camping, but donations are always welcome. In Lincoln Park, you will find catch-and-release fishing, frisbee golf, horseshoes, volleyball, nearby tennis courts, playground equipment, picnic shelters, and workout equipment for your health-conscious campers.

In **City Park**, located along Highway 14 between 7th and 6th Streets, you will find playground equipment, picnic shelter, band shelter and during the summer months, a Farmers' Market is held each Friday evening.

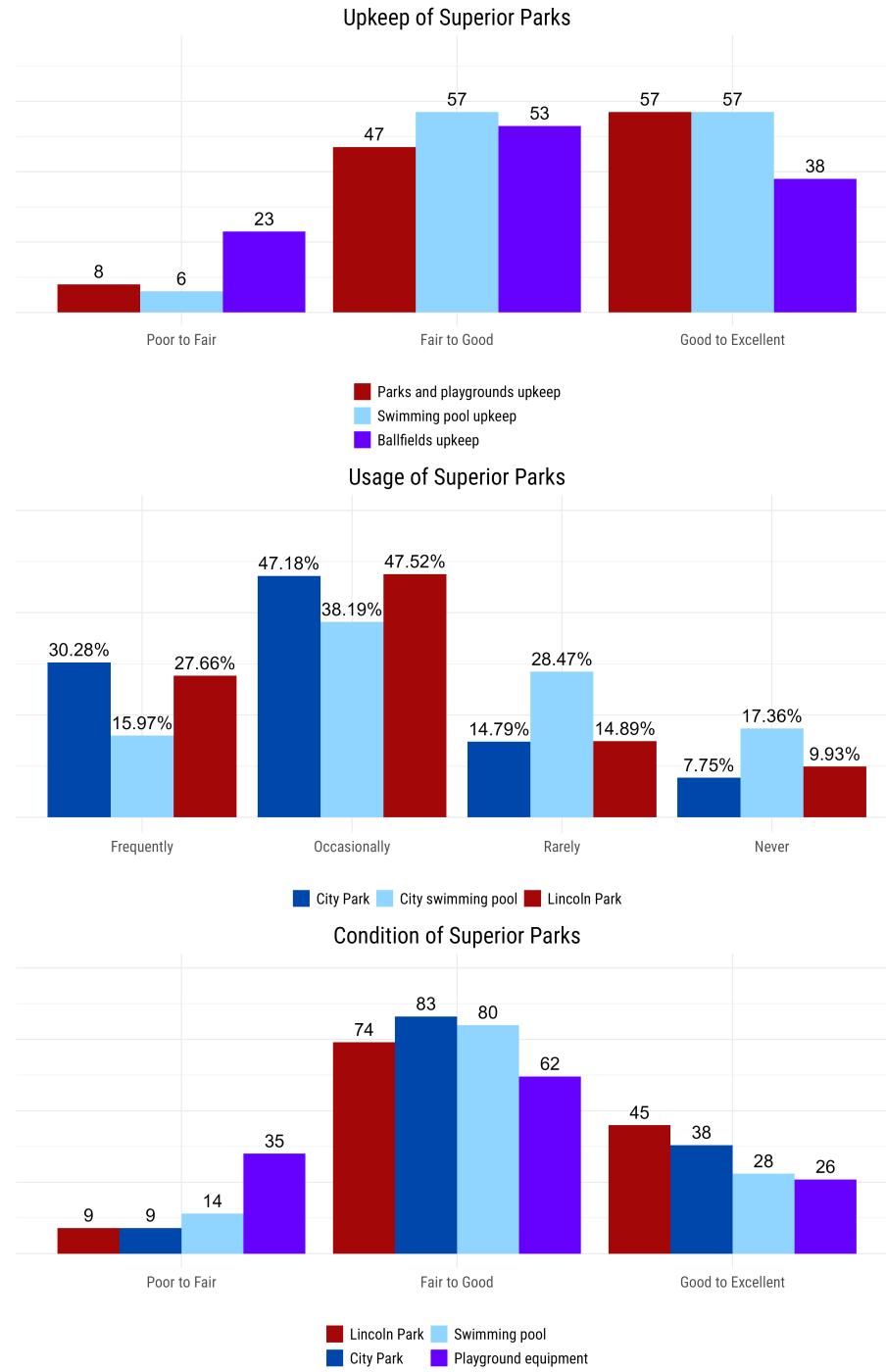
Both parks are within a reasonable distance of most Superior residents. Of the 1,099 residential parcels in the Superior municipal boundary, 1,040 (94%) are within a half-mile of either Lincoln Park or City Park, and many are within that distance of both. [Map 4.1](#) shows these half-mile radii.

As a general rule, the American Planning Association recommends a community has two acres of park space for every 100 residents. With a population of about 1,900, Superior should aim for about 30 acres of park space. Cumulatively, Superior has about 56 acres of these spaces. Its next obligation is to maintain them.

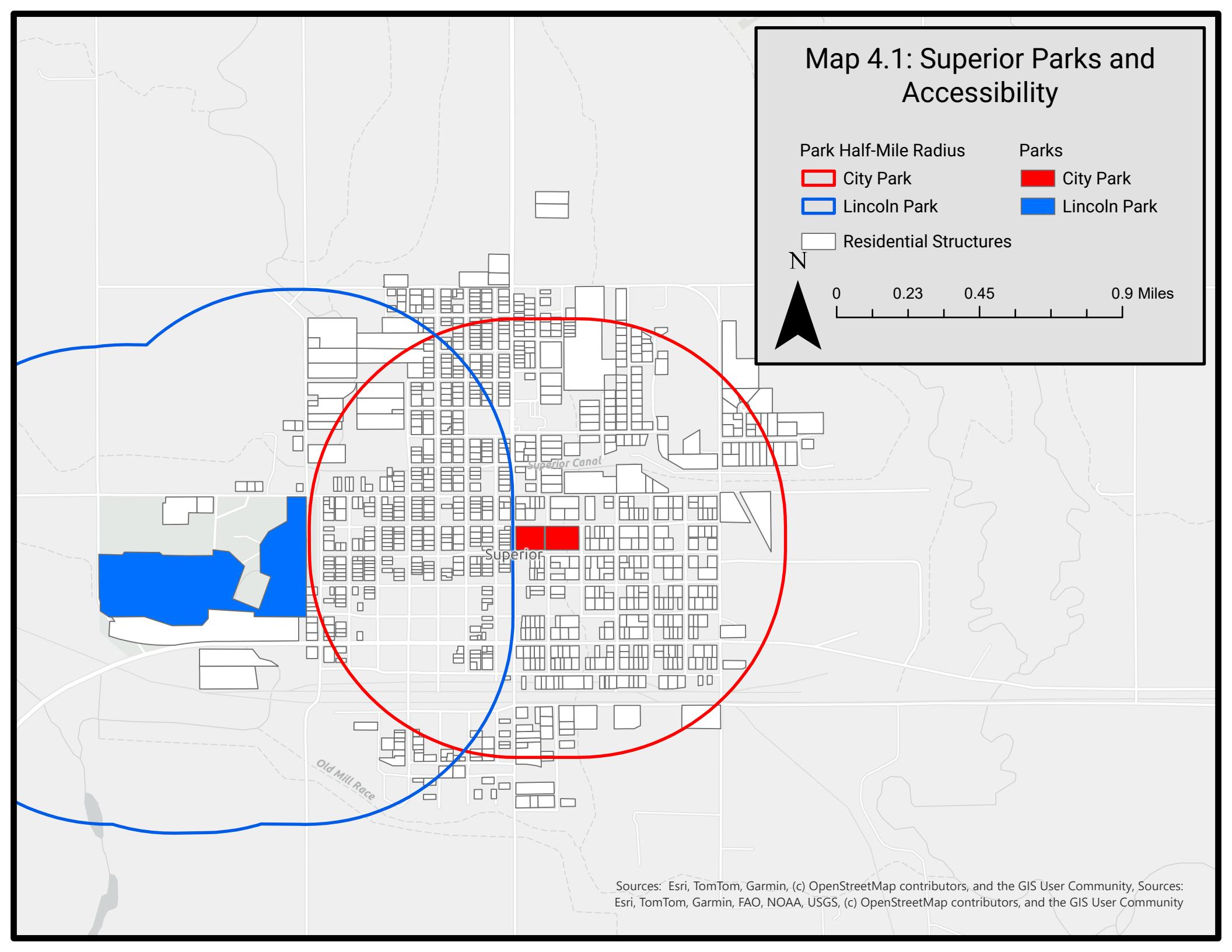
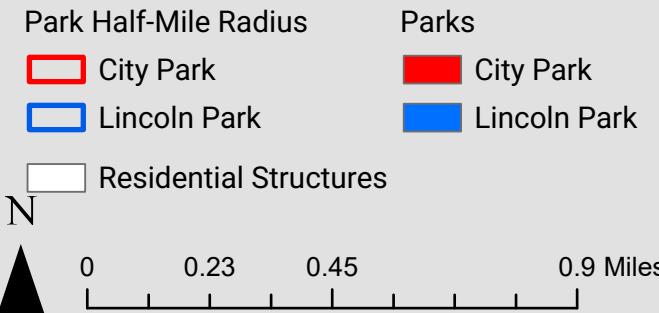
Figure 9 shows survey results evaluating the conditions and usage of Superior's park resources. In general, residents seem satisfied – albeit not thrilled – with the upkeep and condition of the park facilities. However, park maintenance requires continued and ongoing investment lest these facilities fall into disrepair.

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Figure 9: Community Park Evaluation and Usage



Map 4.1: Superior Parks and Accessibility



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

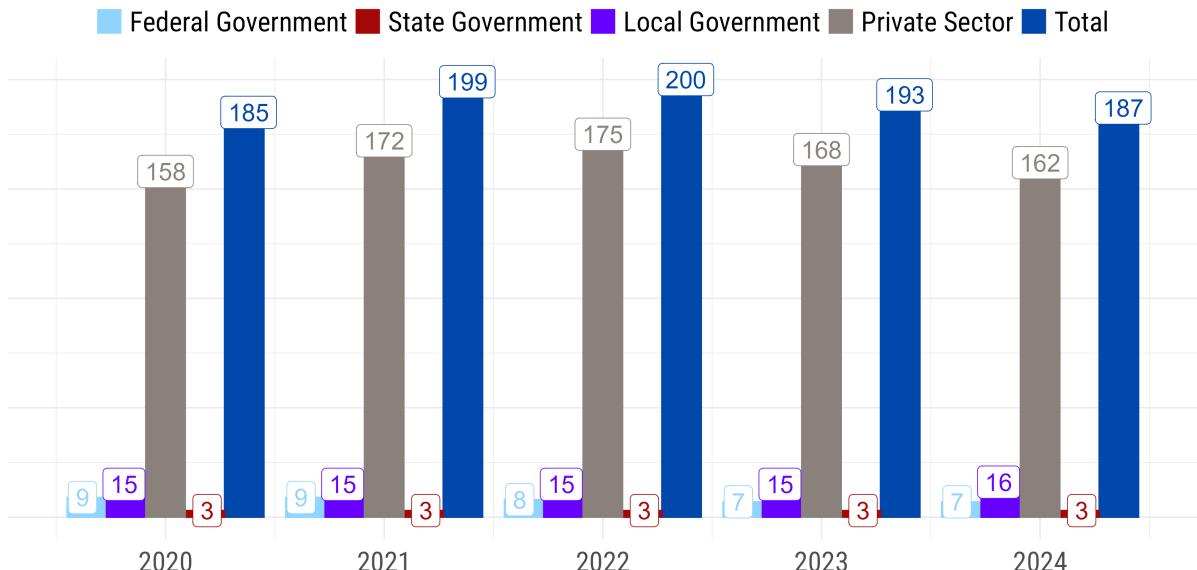
Commercial and Business Assessment

Business Establishments

Over the last five years, the number of business establishments in Nuckolls County has changed very little. **Figure 10** shows that the total number of businesses has increased by just two during this time. All of the business gain is driven by local government establishments and private sector, while the number of federal employers has decreased.

[A note from 5RP: I really think there needs to be writing about business closures in the area. Federal data don't capture these details very well and I think it's essential for a good comprehensive plan to contextualize these.]

Figure 10: Business Establishments in Nuckolls County, Nebraska



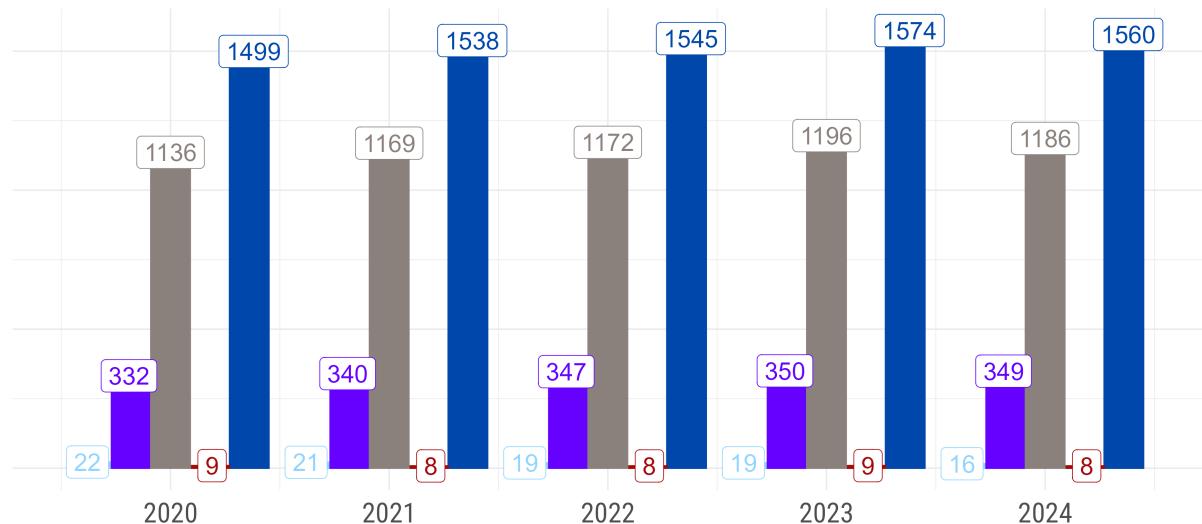
Note: Data come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

Labor and Wages

Similarly, most of the employees in Nuckolls County are employed by local governments or private firms. **Figure 11** shows that the county has experienced minor job growth since 2020. However, most of these gains were seen in private-sector jobs, while government employment fell.

Figure 11: Employment in Nuckolls County, Nebraska

■ Federal Government ■ State Government ■ Local Government ■ Private Sector ■ Total

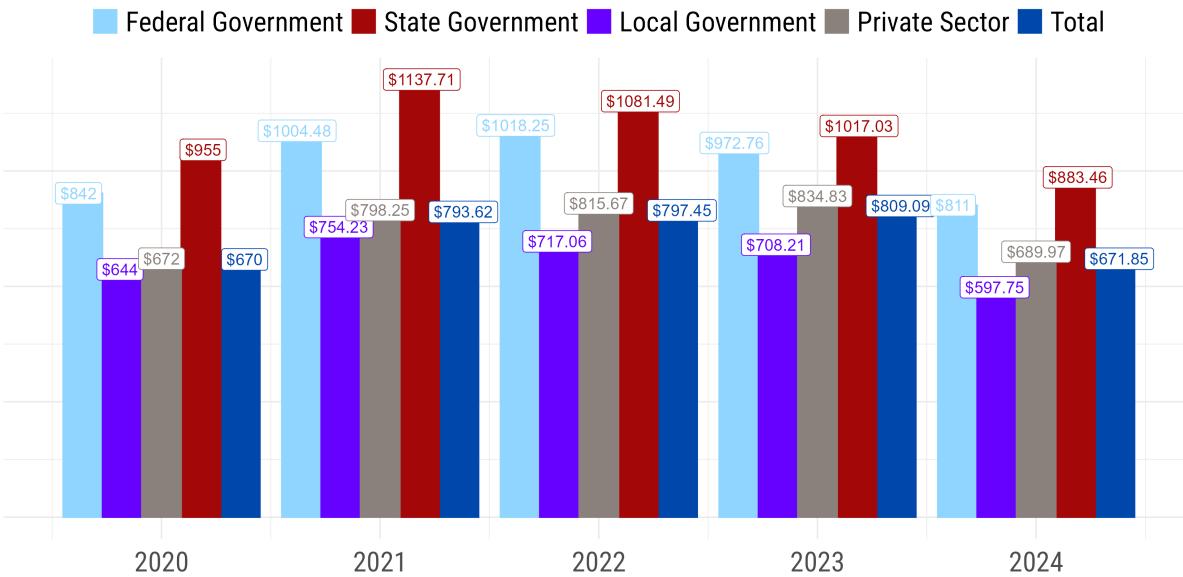


Note: Data come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages.

Economic Activity

Across the board, real wages in Nuckolls County increased over the span of 2020 to 2023. However, these gains were largely erased in 2024 (**Figure 12**). More time is needed to tell whether or not wage decreases are a blip or the beginning of a broader downward trend.

Figure 12: Real Wages in Nuckolls County, Nebraska

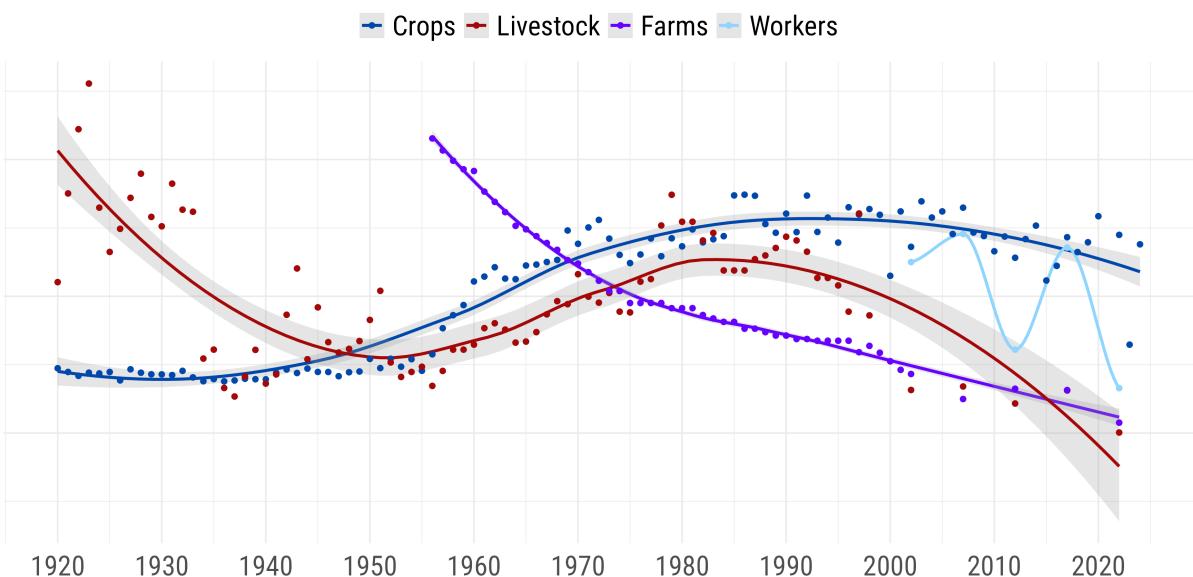


Note: Data come from the [Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages](#). Units are in 2024-adjusted real dollars.

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Furthermore, agriculture is an integral part of Superior's (and Nuckolls County generally) economy. **Figure 13** shows how agricultural production, establishments, and employment have evolved over the past century. Livestock and crop yields generally peaked in the mid 1980s but have slowly declined since. Employment in the sector is down since 2000. Most strikingly, the number of independent farms in Nuckolls County has steadily decreased, likely due to practices of corporate consolidation.

Figure 13: Agricultural Production and Labor in Nuckolls County, Nebraska



Note: Data come from the [United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service](#). All units are standardized to reflect relative, not absolute, growth and decline.

Key Takeaways

Even though Superior has experienced population decline, local economic indicators seem to be fine (albeit not excellent). Local business growth has slightly shifted to hiring more private-sector employees, but local real wages are down. This may be a temporary blip. Agriculture, a major component of the local economy, has seen recent decreases in employment, establishments, and yields.

Nothing in this section negates the key takeaways regarding Superior's housing and population needs. Instead, it adds context by showing that the general population decline is not necessarily a consequence of recently-unfavorable economic conditions. Based on several macroeconomic indicators, Nuckolls County (and Superior, by extension) is doing relatively fine. Consequently, policies undertaken by the City government to address population and housing needs may include activity to attract and improve business conditions, but doing so is unlikely – by itself – to actually impact the population trends.

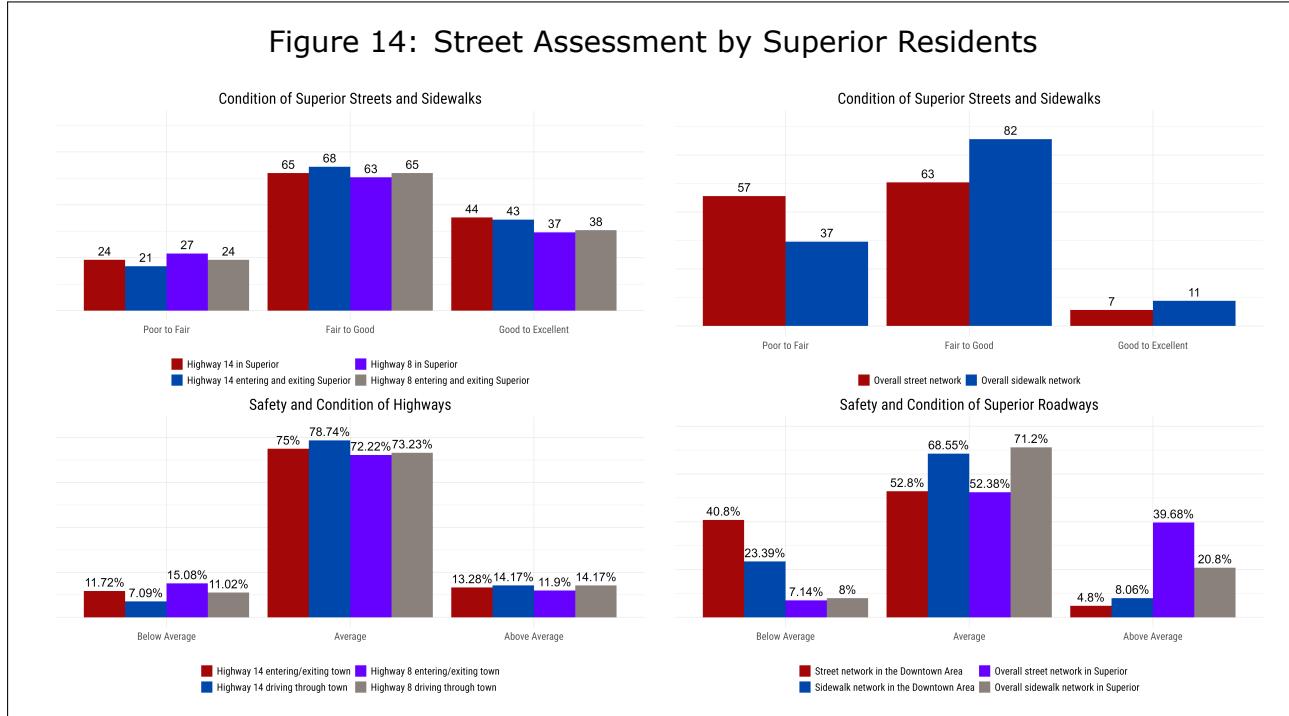
Transportation

NRS §19-903(2) requires a comprehensive development to include:

The general location, character, and extent of existing and proposed major roads, streets, and highways, and air and other transportation routes and facilities.

Community residents are generally satisfied with the conditions of Highway 14 and Highway 8, rating them as generally safe and generally in fair condition. However, residents are much more dissatisfied with the in-town street and sidewalk conditions. Considerably more residents rate the street and sidewalk network as below average than above average.

Figure 14: Street Assessment by Superior Residents



Five Rule Rural Planning assessed street conditions in Superior in 2019, with some updates since, creating a map of street conditions in Superior. Our assessment of street conditions, assessed several years ago, is similar to evaluations today. We find that most of the streets in town are in good condition or need minor repair. However, a number of streets, primarily south of Highway 8, require more serious attention.

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We present our maps of Superior's street, sidewalk, and curb conditions⁷ on the following pages.

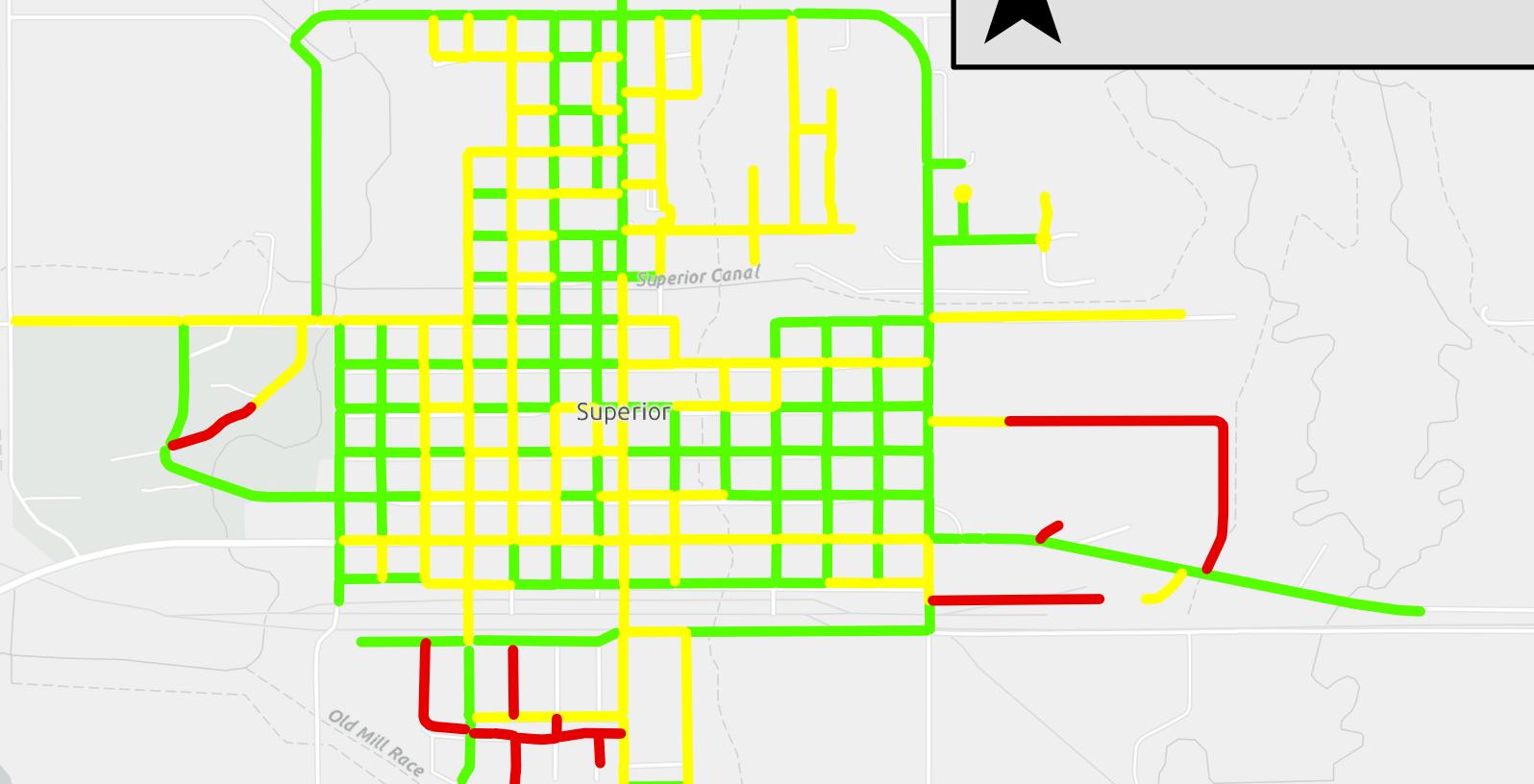
⁷Refer to FIVE RULE Planning's 2022 Blight Study of Superior for a full inventory.

Map 6.1: Superior Street Materials

Asphalt Gravel
Concrete

N

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Map 6.2: Superior Street Conditions

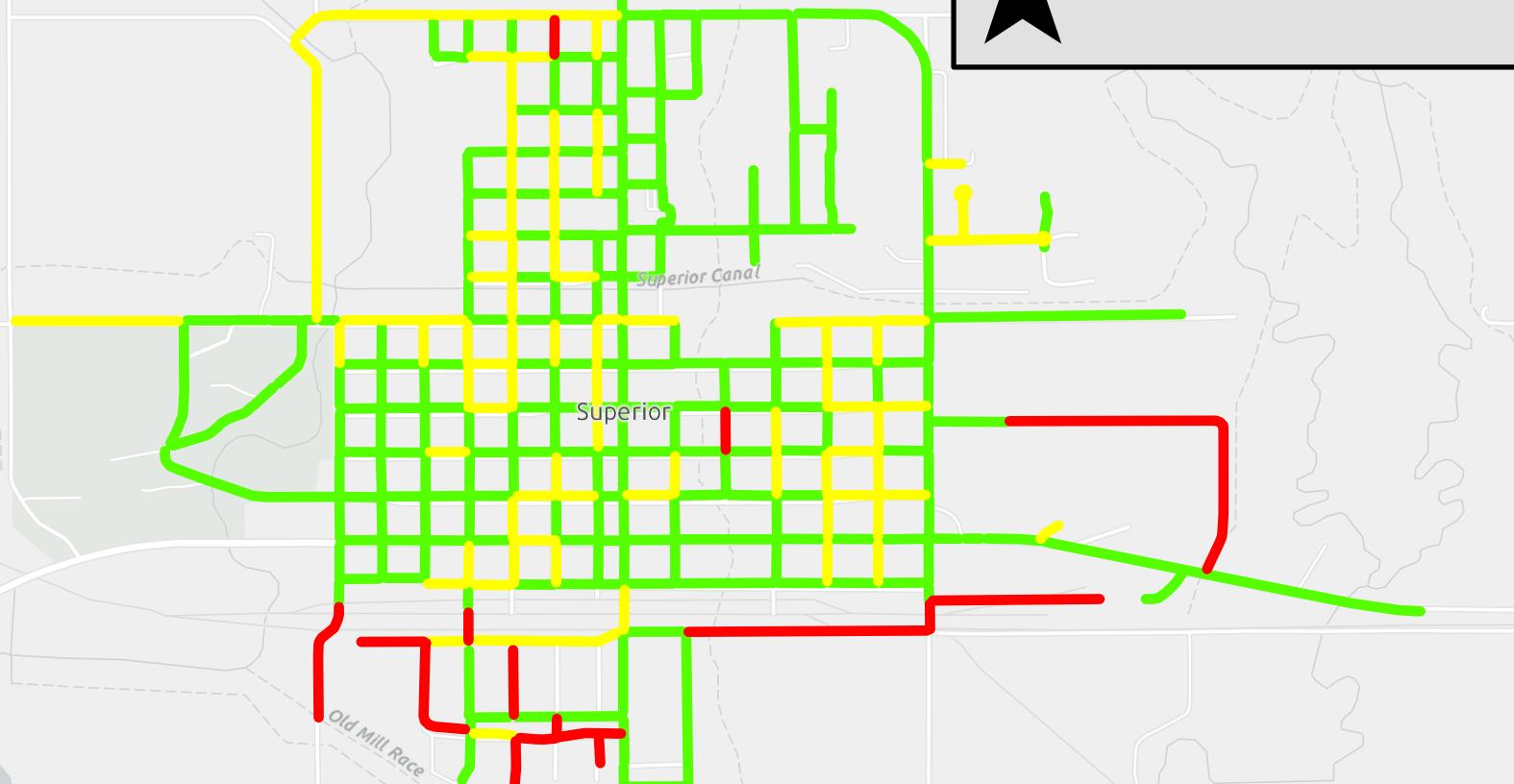
Good

Fair

Poor

N

0 0.25 0.5 1 Miles



Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Map 6.3: Superior Sidewalk Conditions

Good

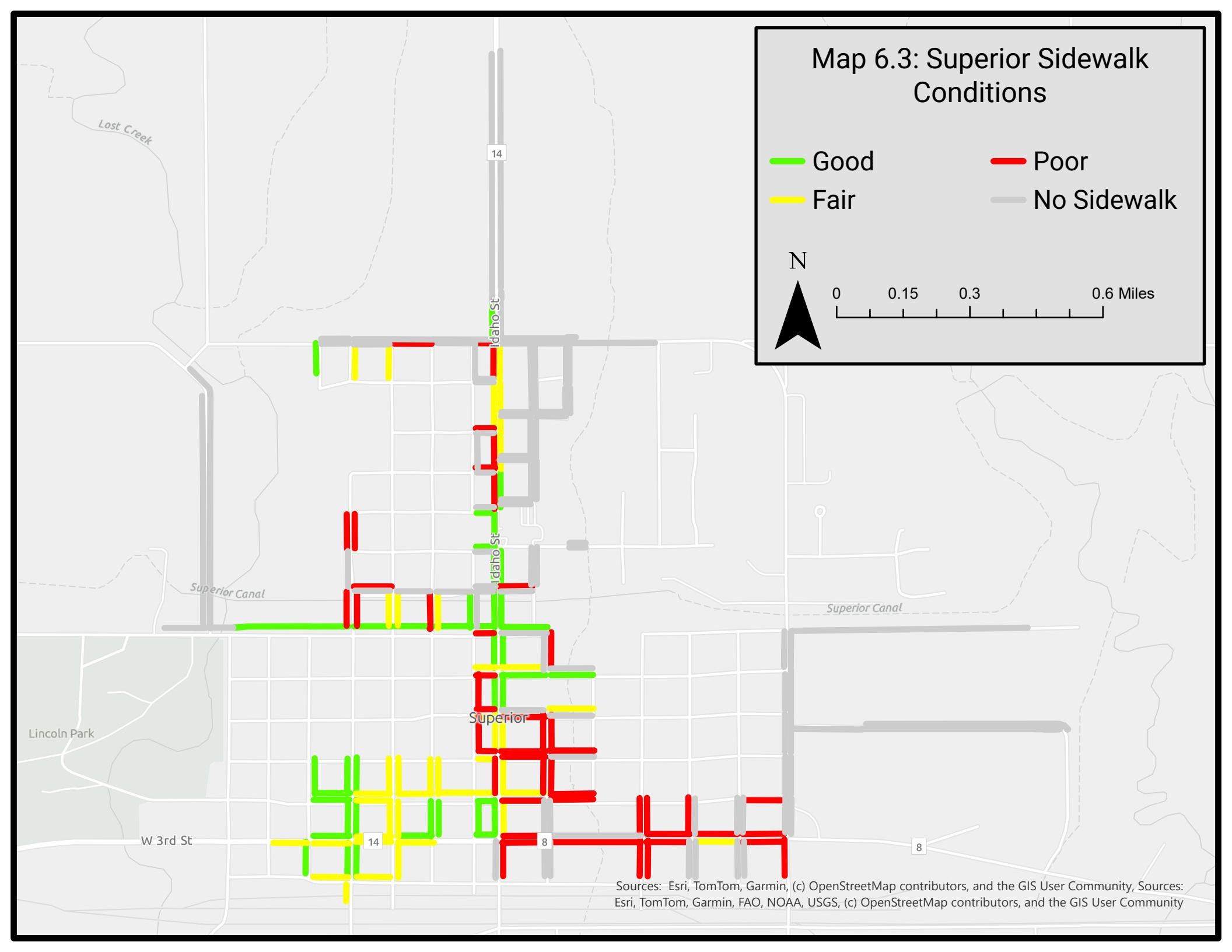
Fair

Poor

No Sidewalk

N

0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Miles

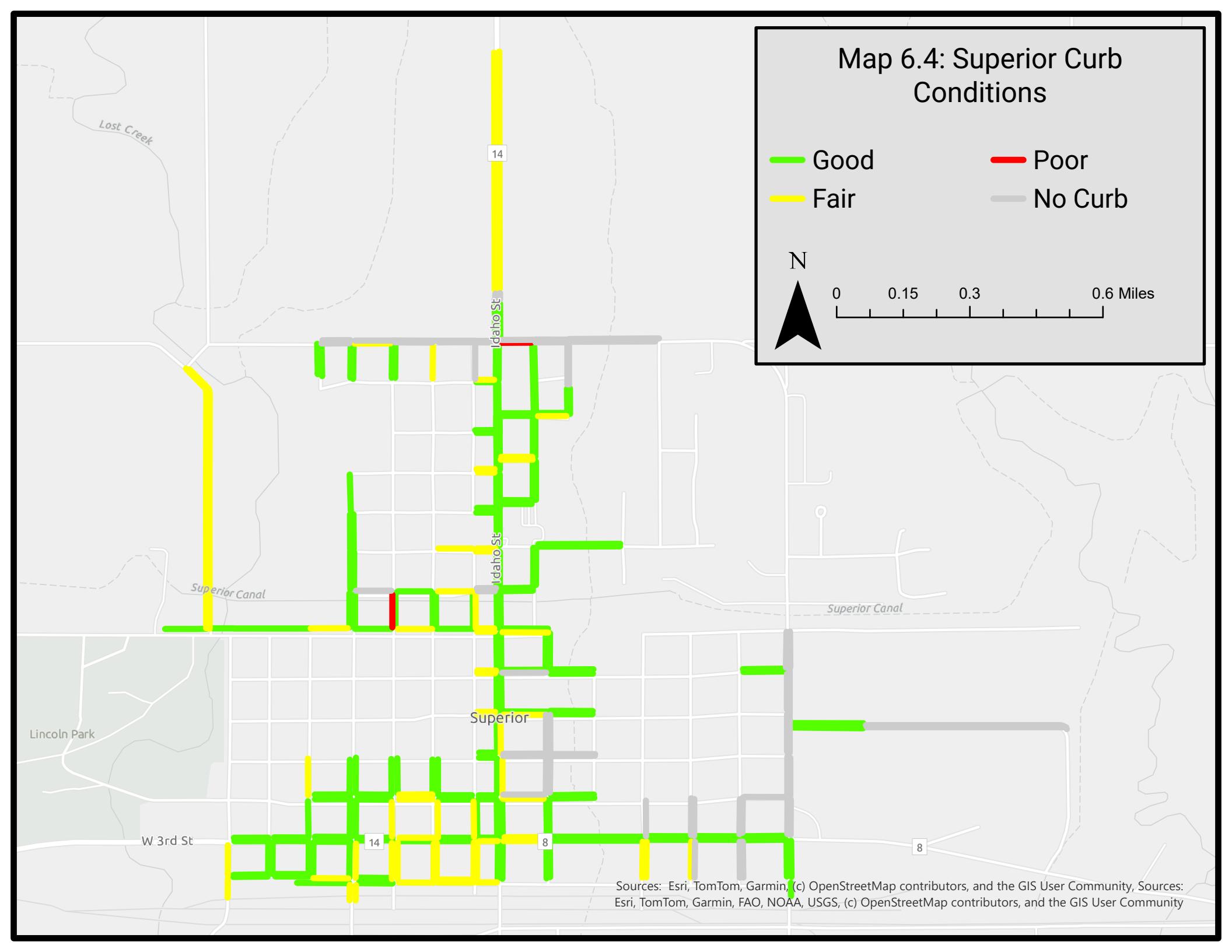


Map 6.4: Superior Curb Conditions

Good
Fair
Poor
No Curb

N

0 0.15 0.3 0.6 Miles



City Utilities and Energy

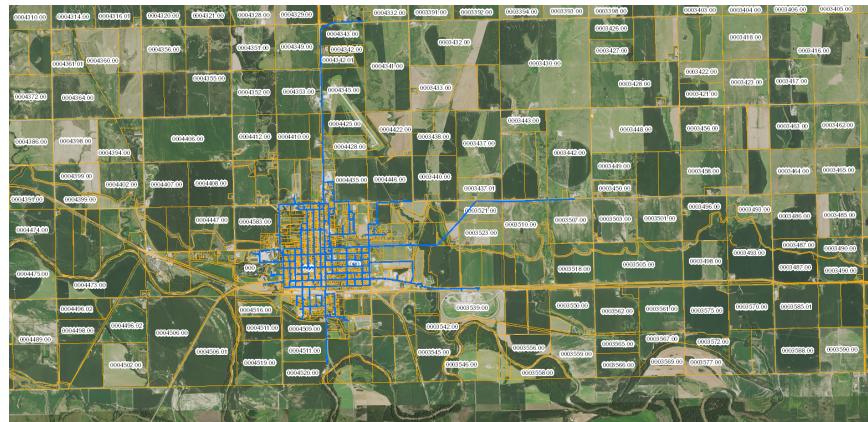
Water, Sanitation, and Gas

Second only to land availability, the provision of clean water and sanitary sewer services is the most important factor that impacts the city's ability to sustain itself and grow. Furthermore, utility services are important sources of city revenue. This is only possible if the customer base is growing and the rates charged to customers cover the cost of providing clean water and sanitation. The provision of natural gas for a variety of home and business uses enables a higher quality of life.

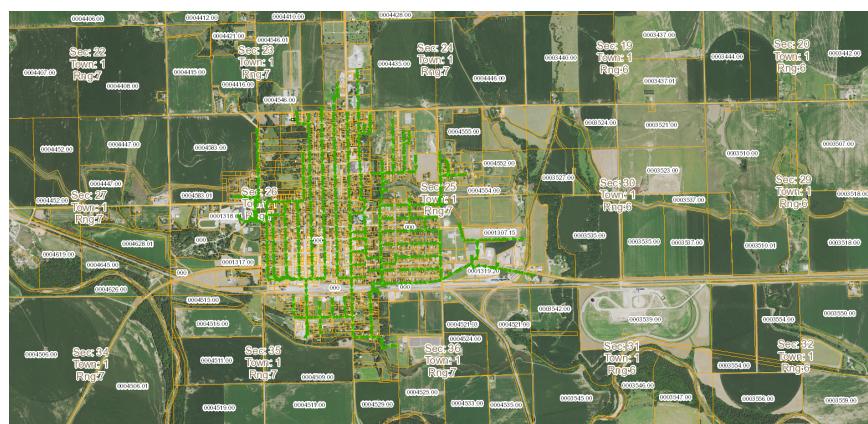
The City of Superior provides these utilities for residents. **Figure 15** shows the distribution of the utility lines.

City of Superior, Nebraska Comprehensive Development Plan

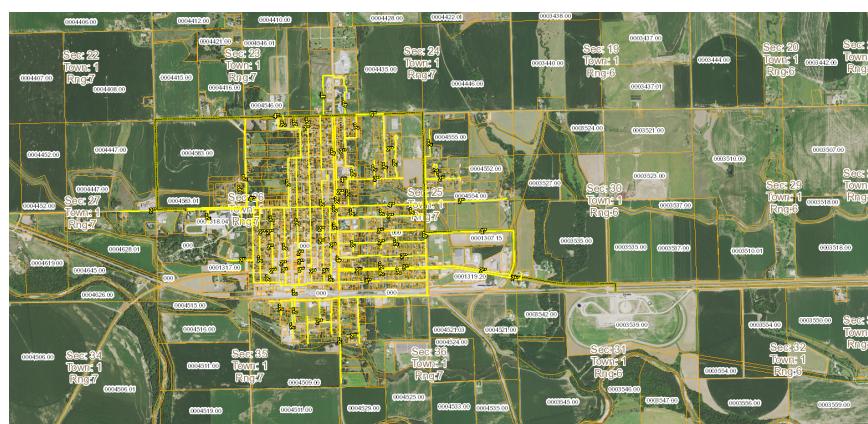
Figure 15: City Utilities



(a) City Water Lines



(b) City Sanitary Sewer Lines



(c) City Gas Lines

Energy Element

As a reminder, [NRS §19-903\(4\)](#) stipulates:

(4) When a new comprehensive plan or a full update to an existing comprehensive plan is developed, an energy element which: Assesses energy infrastructure and energy use by sector, including residential, commercial, and industrial sectors; evaluates utilization of renewable energy sources; and promotes energy conservation measures that benefit the community.

As of 2022, Superior purchases its electrical energy from AEP Energy Partners, a firm based in Ohio. Per the City's [2023 Integrated Resource Plan](#):

"The City of Superior Nebraska owns and operates a Municipal Electric Utility within the south-central portion of Nuckolls, County for the benefits for its ratepayers. This power territory is 6.5 Square Miles and is reviewed annually to determine if modifications are necessary. The last change in power territory occurred in 2014 with a large annexation on the east side of Superior. The system has maintained a steady customer count of approximately 1300 customers over the last 10 years with a slight uptick over the last five. Overall, our customer count is approximately 78% residential, 19% commercial, 1% irrigation, 1% industrial, and 1% economic development. Of that approximately 21% of our purchased power is consumed by residential customers, 16% by commercial customers, 1% by irrigation customers, 16% industrial customers, and 46% by economic development customers. The City's peak demand occurs in the summer months typically in either July or August. However our in 2022 we experienced our highest peak in September."

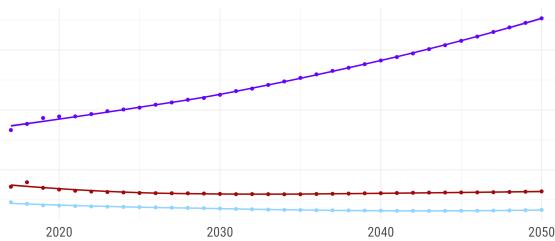
"Over the last two years the overall usage of the municipality has increased approximately 13MWh in total with the addition of a large data mining customer, Wildcat Blockchain. Additionally, we have seen modest growth in our residential customer class of 2% and commercial customer class of 3% respectively. Our net connective industrial and irrigation load has remained largely level during this period. Additional major customer of the municipality includes the Aurora Cooperative, Agrex Incorporated, and Brodstone Healthcare. Going forward we are aware that in order to increase our load further we will need to work to construct an additional substation off of our sub transmission lines. This work will help to bring additional reliability to the overall local power grid in addition to allowing increased growth. Finally, should our data mining customers continue to see grow we will need to work with the both the local REA and our transmission provider to either improve or replace our interconnection point with additional equipment."

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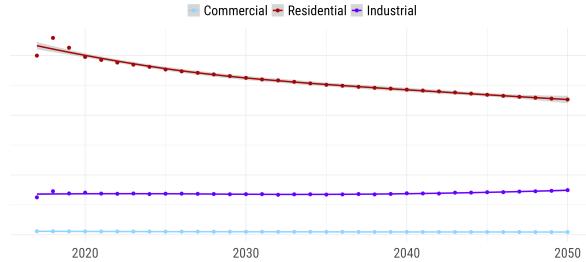
Figure 16 displays projected energy consumptions and costs in Nuckolls County between 2017 and 2050 across different land use categories.

Figure 16: Nuckolls County Projected Energy Uses

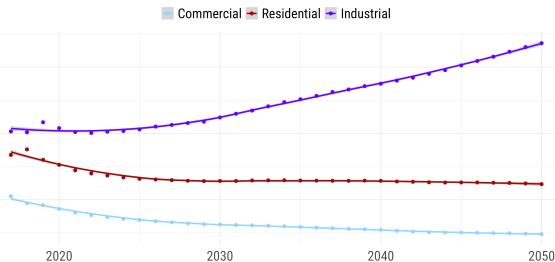
Projected Electricity Consumption



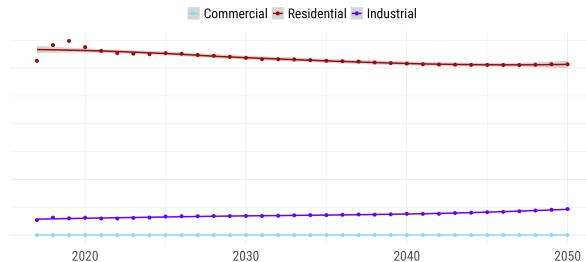
Projected Natural Gas Consumption



Projected Electricity Costs



Projected Natural Gas Costs



Note: Data come from the [United States Department of Energy State and Local Planning for Energy database](#). All units are standardized to reflect relative, not absolute, growth and decline.

Crucially, projected increase in electricity consumption and cost is likely to be driven entirely by industrial use, and to decrease in commercial and residential sectors. Overall decreases in commercial and residential energy consumption, across both sources, may be due to projected population decline across the county. If population trends reverse, expected consumption might also be projected to rise.

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Renewable Resources

From the City's [2023 Integrated Resource Plan](#):

"Starting January 1, 2022, the City of Superior began filling their electrical wholesale needs from multiple sources. Currently the City of Superior utilizes American Electrical Power LLC (AEP), WAPA, and Solar Generation owned by the city for its wholesale power. The wholesale power utilized by the City of Superior is a mix of renewable and non-renewable sources. The City's owned generation capability is in the form of a 1MW peak demand solar installation. Our electrical firm capacity agreements are carried by NextEra in the form of renewable wind generation. Beginning in 2025 the municipality will begin exploring other potential sources of wholesale power as our current agreement draws to a close."

"Currently all of the City of Superior's capacity requirements are met by renewable resources and the City's owned generation is solar. Our Wholesale Power is provided by AEP who owns renewable assets in addition to traditional fossil fuels. Additionally, the WAPA power provided to the City uses hydroelectric generation. More locally the City is actively attempting to increase its renewable electrical generation and encourages users to take action to minimize their environmental impacts."

Future Land Use

The Future Land Use (FLU) Chapter of the Plan is a visual representation of the community's overall vision for the next decade of development. This involves the improvement or elimination of some characteristics, as well as the growth and development of others. The pages of this plan lead to this chapter. While the FLU guides future development for land use decisions for Superior leadership, it is a starting point connecting the city vision and local law, the zoning map and regulations.

A community is not required to have or enforce a local set of zoning regulations. However, if a community chooses to regulate what can or cannot be done on a person's private property, a reason is necessary. The FLU communicates the Superior community's reason for such a decision to enforce zoning within its legal jurisdiction.

The map on the following page is the proposed future land use (FLU) map for Superior's entire zoning jurisdiction.⁸ It should guide all land use and development decisions over the next ten years. Should the Superior Planning Commission and the City Council choose to make policy decisions that are not reflected on the FLU map, then the FLU map must be amended to reflect the change in policies.

⁸The map is actually a shrunken version of the full-size map. It conveys the same information but is shrunk to match the paper size of the comprehensive plan.

Map 8.1: Superior Future Land Use

LDR Low-Density Residential	AG Agricultural	I2 Heavy Industrial
MDR Medium-Density Residential	GC General Commercial	Mixed Use
HDR High-Density Residential	DC Downtown Commercial	Parks
		Public/Civic
		I1 Light Industrial
		<all other values>

N

0 0.42 0.85 1.7 Miles

Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community, Sources: Esri, TomTom, Garmin, FAO, NOAA, USGS, (c) OpenStreetMap contributors, and the GIS User Community

Future Land Use Expectations

The City of Superior will primarily focus on utilizing land to facilitate housing development. Analysis of broad economic trends and testimony from Superior residents indicate a need to provide updated affordable housing stock. Implementation of the plan includes these main points.

Investment in Infrastructure

Many of Superior's streets and public facilities are in poor condition. Superior and FIVE RULE's separate assessments of street and sidewalk status in the city indicate a need for improvement and repair.

Infrastructure in the form of clean water, safe streets, reliable energy adequate sanitation, and accessible recreation are the city's main responsibility to its residents. Expansion, modernization, and maintenance must be planned and budget for these facilities at every level of decision-making surrounding land use.

If the city is willing to invest in and maintain the infrastructure, the overall environment for housing and business development will naturally improve.

Retention and Expansion of Business

Compared to peer cities, Superior's economic and business climate is in reasonably fine shape. Macroeconomic indicators, such as business and wage growth, indicate that the city's broader economy is not the primary concern for current or future land use.

Adequate and Attractive Housing for Every Resident

Superior residents want safe, affordable housing for both existing residents and potential new ones. The FLU map provides a footprint for addressing these needs. Many residents express a desire for the city to more-thoroughly engage in nuisance abatement and to prioritize revitalizing the existing housing stock. In addition to developing tangible housing units, City officials and private residents can work together to identify specific opportunities to ensure that newly-built or renovated housing is affordable to residents who need it most. Policy tools such as tax-increment financing exist to encourage such redevelopment.

Appendix

There are three kinds of data used to generate this **Comprehensive Development Plan**: community engagement data, socioeconomic data, and map and geospatial data. This appendix documents how these data were acquired, processed, and presented. Finally, it also summarizes the technical procedures used to generate the tangible document of the plan.

Please refer any technical questions to jordan@fiveruleplanning.com.

Community Engagement Process

Community and resident engagement is crucial to the Comprehensive Plan for several reasons:

- (1) **Inclusivity and Representation:** The Plan intends to address the needs and aspirations of the entire community. Including as many residents as possible ensures that a diverse range of voices and perspectives are heard and considered. This helps with efforts to reflect the values, priorities, and aspirations of the whole community.
- (2) **Local Knowledge and Expertise:** Local knowledge and input help to ground the Plan in the realities of the area. Residents have firsthand knowledge about their neighborhood and its unique characteristics. Their insights are invaluable to identifying specific needs and opportunities that would only be known by those who experience Superior daily.
- (3) **Trust and Transparency:** Engaging residents in the planning process builds trust between the community and the municipal government. Transparent and inclusive decision-making processes foster greater confidence that the plan is responsive to community needs. This trust will build partnerships between residents, local government, and other stakeholders necessary to implement the Plan.

In the Fall of 2025, FIVE RULE and the City of Superior surveyed community residents for input regarding the conditions of various homes, policies, and public amenities. The results of that input have been referenced at various points throughout the Comprehensive Plan.

Socioeconomic Data Curation

FIVE RULE Rural Planning curated data from a number of sources. In addition to the Community Engagement portion (above), we collected data from the following sources, listed in order of their appearance in the Comprehensive Development Plan:

- (1) The [2025 U.S. TIGER/Line Shapefiles](#).
- (2) The [Nuckolls County, Nebraska Property Assessor](#).
- (3) The [University of Nebraska-Omaha Data Center](#).
- (4) The [Decennial Census](#).
- (5) The [2013 through 2023 American Community Survey Five-Year Estimates](#).
- (6) The [Bureau of Labor Statistics Quarterly Census of Employment and Wages](#).
- (7) The [Nebraska Department of Revenue](#).
- (8) The [United States Department of Agriculture National Agricultural Statistics Service](#).
- (9) The [United States Department of Energy State and Local Planning for Energy database](#).

Map Development

The FIVE RULE Rural Planning team relied primarily on two softwares to generate maps for the Comprehensive Development Plan. Finished map products were generated using [Esri's ArcGIS Pro Desktop Mapping Software](#). Intermediate shapefiles were processed using [R Version 4.5.1](#) and [RStudio 2025.09.2 Build 418](#).

Other small tasks were accomplished using [Microsoft Excel](#), [Microsoft Word](#), and [Adobe Acrobat Pro](#).

Document Generation

This document was assembled and generated using [Overleaf](#), an open-source online real-time collaborative LaTeX editor.

About the Authors

Bobbi Pettit, AICP

Bobbi is a Certified ToP (Technology of Participation) facilitator. A native of Merna, Nebraska, Bobbi grew up in a small town, gaining firsthand insight into rural life.

Her profound commitment to supporting rural communities led her to establish FIVE RULE Rural Planning in January 2018. She holds a Master of Arts in Community & Regional Planning from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and has been a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) since 2011.

Bobbi has held various positions, including Deputy Master Planner and Assistant Development Services Director for the City of Kearney, as well as Community Planner for the South-Central Economic Development District (SCEDD). During her tenure as Assistant Development Services Director for the City of Kearney, she oversaw the Planning Commission, Development Review Team, and Chief Building Official.

She also pioneered the City of Kearney's Main Street Program as its first Main Street Manager, a program implemented in 2010. Bobbi's diverse experience extends to her role as Deputy Master Planner for the Nebraska Military Department and her service as a Platoon Leader in Iraq for the Nebraska Army National Guard in 2009. With a career in planning that began in 2007, Bobbi has accumulated hands-on expertise and knowledge from planning projects in over 50 second class cities and villages in Nebraska and Kansas.

Jordan Duffin Wong, Ph.D

Jordan grew up in Kearney, Nebraska and returned to join FIVE RULE in the summer of 2025. Prior to joining FIVE RULE, Jordan held positions with Washington University in St. Louis, the Weidenbaum Center on the Economy, Government, and Public Policy, the St. Louis Zoning Atlas, and the Nebraska Bureau of Business Research.

Jordan completed two Bachelor of Arts Degrees, in Economics and in Political Science, from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in 2020, with a minor in Mathematics. He completed his Master of Arts in 2023 and Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D) in 2025, both in Political Science, at Washington University in St. Louis.

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Jordan was a contributor on the inaugural Rural Prosperity Nebraska Thriving Index and the St. Louis Dashboard, and has co-authored numerous scholarly articles on local government, published in both peer-reviewed journals and academic conference proceedings. His classroom experience includes teaching and tutoring a variety of Mathematics, Political Science, and Statistics courses.