

City of Kearney

Summary

- From 2010 to 2015, population increased by 7.3 percent, or by 2,234 persons.
- Between 2014 and 2015, the unemployment rate decreased to 2.2 percent.
- In 2015, 164 new housing units were issued construction permits.
- In 2015, the average value of new single-family construction was \$199,285.
- The vacancy rate in the Fall 2016 Rental Survey was 2.4 percent, which compared to a vacancy rate of 2.4 percent one year ago.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Population Characteristics

According to Census Bureau data, Kearney’s population increased by 20.38 percent between 2000 and 2015, from 27,431 to 33,021 persons. This growth rate was greater than the 10.8 percent estimated increase statewide. Census estimates indicated an increase of 456 persons in Kearney between 2014 and 2015, as shown below in Table III.13.1.

Subject	Nebraska	% Growth Since 2000	Kearney	% Growth Since 2000
2000 Census	1,711,263		27,431	
July 2001 Estimate	1,719,836	0.5%	27,694	1.0
July 2002 Estimate	1,728,292	1.0%	28,130	2.5
July 2003 Estimate	1,738,643	1.6%	28,434	3.7
July 2004 Estimate	1,749,370	2.2%	28,840	5.1
July 2005 Estimate	1,761,497	2.9%	29,155	6.3
July 2006 Estimate	1,772,693	3.6%	29,559	7.8
July 2007 Estimate	1,783,440	4.2%	29,876	8.9
July 2008 Estimate	1,796,378	5.0%	30,132	9.8
July 2009 Estimate	1,812,683	5.9%	30,658	11.8
2010 Census	1,826,341	6.7%	30,787	12.2
July 2011 Estimate	1,842,383	7.7%	31,339	14.2
July 2012 Estimate	1,855,973	8.5%	31,946	16.5
July 2013 Estimate	1,869,300	9.2%	32,276	17.7
July 2014 Estimate	1,882,980	10.0%	32,565	18.7
July 2015 Estimate	1,896,190	10.8%	33,021	20.4

Table III.13.2, on the following page, shows the population of Kearney by race and ethnicity, as reported in the 2010 Census and 2015 five-year American Community Survey (ACS) data. The white population accounted for 93.0 percent of the population, with a total of 29,954 persons. There were also 488 black and 90 Native American persons residing in the City of Kearney. In 2010 the Hispanic population accounted for 7.3 percent of the population, with 2,243 persons, which compared to a population share of 8.2 percent in 2015 and a Hispanic population of 2,630.

Table III.13.2				
Population by Race and Ethnicity				
City of Kearney				
2010 Census and 2015 5-year ACS Data				
Race	2010 Census		2015 Five-Year ACS	
	Population	% of Total	Population	% of Total
White	28,416	92.3%	29,954	93.0%
Black	315	1.0%	488	1.5%
American Indian	93	.3%	90	.3%
Asian	548	1.8%	594	1.8%
Native Hawaiian/ Pacific Islander	7	.0%	0	.0%
Other	967	3.1%	542	1.7%
Two or More Races	441	1.4%	549	1.7%
Total	30,787	100.0%	32,217⁴⁵	100.0%
Hispanic	2,243	7.3%	2,630	8.2%

Table III.13.3, below, shows the population of Kearney by age, as reported in the 2010 Census and 2015 five-year ACS data. The percentage of persons from 15 to 24 years of age changed from 23.6 percent of the total population in 2010 to 23.8 percent in 2015. The number of people from 25 to 34 years of age accounted for 15.4 percent of the population in 2015, or 4,961 persons. The percentage of people aged 65 or Older changed from 11.1 percent of the total population in 2010 to 11.9 percent in 2015. Additional age details are shown in table III.13.3.

Table III.13.3				
Population by Age				
City of Kearney				
2010 Census and 2015 5-year ACS Data				
Age	2010 Census		2015 Five-Year ACS	
	Population	% of Total	Population	% of Total
Under 14	5,862	19.0%	5,981	18.6%
15 - 24	7,264	23.6%	7,655	23.8%
25 - 34	4,739	15.4%	4,961	15.4%
35 - 44	3,154	10.2%	3,405	10.6%
45 - 54	3,391	11.0%	3,238	10.1%
55 - 64	2,959	9.6%	3,147	9.8%
65 or Older	3,418	11.1%	3,830	11.9%
Total	30,787	100.0%	32,217	100.0%

⁴⁵ The 2015 five year ACS population figure is a five year average and will not match the one year 2015 population estimate shown in the previous table.

School Enrollment

Between 2010 and 2016, the number of children enrolled in schools in the City of Kearney increased by 8.1 percent. Over the same period the school enrollment for those aged 15 to 18 fell by 1.6 percent to 1,714 persons, while the enrollment for those aged 5 to 10 increased by 9.1 percent, to 2,730 persons. Between 2015 and 2016, school enrollment rose by 1.4 percent or from 6,222 to 6,310 persons. These results can be seen in Table III.13.4, at right.

Age	5 to 10	11 to 14	15 to 18	Total
2000	2,022	1,612	1,808	5,442
2001	1,975	1,600	1,796	5,371
2002	2,013	1,609	1,774	5,396
2003	2,025	1,612	1,743	5,380
2004	2,075	1,600	1,751	5,426
2005	1,980	1,603	1,795	5,378
2006	2,214	1,580	1,807	5,601
2007	2,288	1,593	1,796	5,677
2008	2,315	1,646	1,743	5,704
2009	2,464	1,595	1,773	5,832
2010	2,502	1,593	1,741	5,836
2011	2,588	1,645	1,745	5,978
2012	2,609	1,616	1,757	5,982
2013	2,658	1,673	1,717	6,048
2014	2,627	1,765	1,695	6,087
2015	2,702	1,788	1,732	6,222
2016	2,730	1,866	1,714	6,310

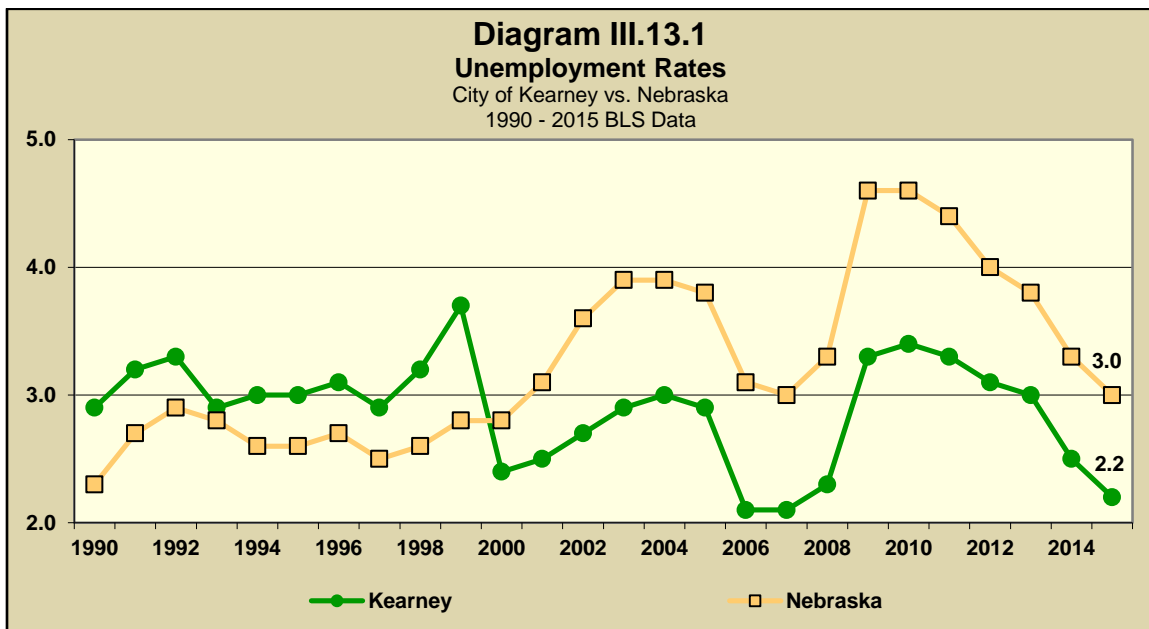
ECONOMICS

Labor Force

Every year, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) collects data on the size and employment status of the labor force in Kearney. As shown in Table III.13.5, on the following page, the labor force, defined as people working or seeking work, increased by 4,550 persons between 1990 and 2015, to 18,772 persons. Between 2014 and 2015, the total labor force decreased by 152 individuals. Between 2014 and 2015 the number of people working decreased by 93 persons. This translated to a decrease in the unemployment rate from 2.5 percent in 2014 to 2.2 percent in 2015.

Table III.13.5 Labor Force Statistics City of Kearney Bureau of Labor Statistics				
Year	Labor Force	Employment	Unemployment	Unemployment Rate
1990	14,222	13,812	410	2.9
1991	14,459	13,990	469	3.2
1992	15,217	14,722	495	3.3
1993	15,635	15,182	453	2.9
1994	16,287	15,803	484	3.0
1995	16,314	15,820	494	3.0
1996	16,497	15,983	514	3.1
1997	16,676	16,194	482	2.9
1998	16,787	16,256	531	3.2
1999	17,319	16,685	634	3.7
2000	16,370	15,976	394	2.4
2001	16,487	16,077	410	2.5
2002	17,160	16,703	457	2.7
2003	17,373	16,873	500	2.9
2004	17,599	17,069	530	3.0
2005	18,631	18,093	538	2.9
2006	18,962	18,572	390	2.1
2007	19,415	19,011	404	2.1
2008	19,314	18,868	446	2.3
2009	19,175	18,548	627	3.3
2010	18,004	17,399	605	3.4
2011	18,368	17,764	604	3.3
2012	18,719	18,147	572	3.1
2013	18,854	18,281	573	3.0
2014	18,924	18,455	469	2.5
2015	18,772	18,362	410	2.2

Diagram III.13.1, below, shows the unemployment rates for Nebraska and the City of Kearney.



HOUSING

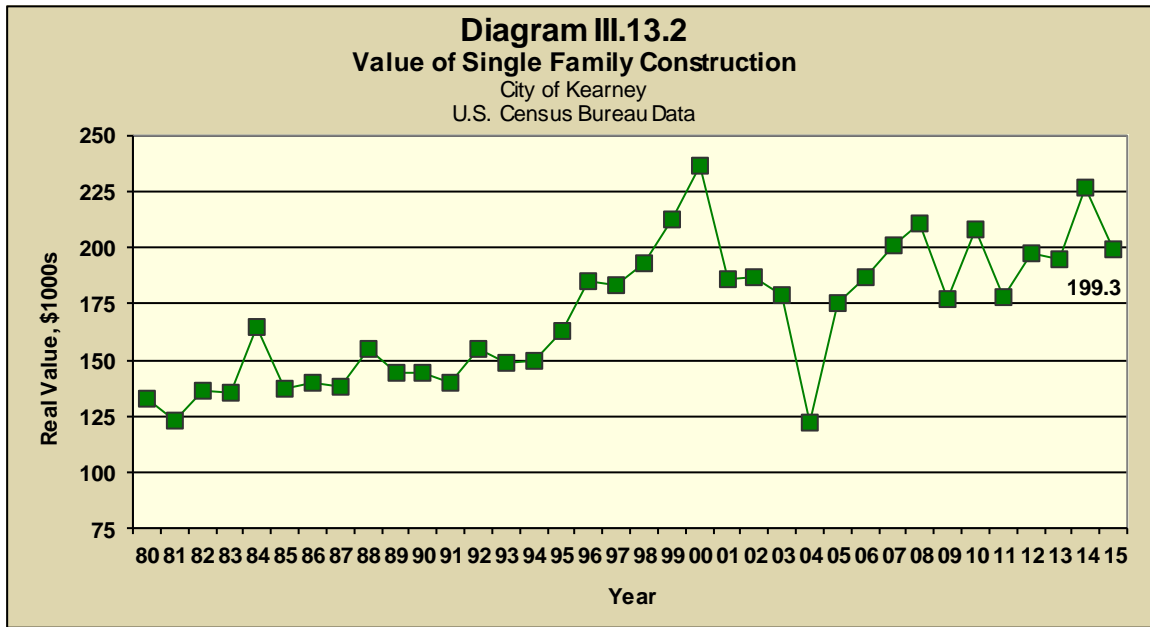
Housing Development

Annually, the Census Bureau reports for each city the number and valuation of building permits issued by permit-issuing agencies.⁴⁶ In most years for which data are presented, single-family unit construction represented the majority of residential development in the city, with single-family building permit authorizations in Kearney numbering 116 in 1980, 78 in 1990, 141 in 2000, and 94 in 2008. Between 2014 and 2015, single-family permits decreased to 123 units. Additional details of permit activity and per-unit valuations are shown in Table III.13.6.

Year	Authorized Construction in Permit Issuing Areas					Per Unit Valuation, 1000s of Real 2015 Dollars			
	Single-Family Units	Duplex Units	Tri- and Four-Plex Units	Multi-Family Units	Total Units	Single-Family Units(\$)	Duplex Units (\$)	Tri- and Four-Plex Units (\$)	Multi-Family Units (\$)
1980	116	20	8	92	236	133	75	49	45
1981	84	18	8	10	120	123	112	48	64
1982	50	10	8	94	162	137	73	45	57
1983	71	10	27	45	153	136	73	60	68
1984	67	10	12	98	187	165	68	87	60
1985	32	6	12	24	74	137	86	72	60
1986	33	2	4	0	39	140	101	47	0
1987	30	6	0	41	77	138	67	0	63
1988	55	6	4	26	91	155	184	43	45
1989	49	4	0	0	53	145	179	0	0
1990	78	6	0	8	92	144	112	0	57
1991	105	16	4	76	201	140	109	48	44
1992	128	16	7	181	332	155	100	78	38
1993	164	0	68	100	332	148	0	57	50
1994	139	20	14	92	265	150	127	103	58
1995	93	34	3	164	294	163	91	136	49
1996	93	26	13	127	259	185	113	82	54
1997	91	40	6	24	161	183	114	129	34
1998	104	18	3	144	269	193	119	139	50
1999	102	16	10	127	255	212	142	115	100
2000	141	10	3	41	195	236	188	134	49
2001	156	0	0	0	156	186	0	0	0
2002	199	0	0	0	199	187	0	0	0
2003	257	0	11	80	348	179	0	127	42
2004	383	0	0	24	407	122	0	0	51
2005	185	2	0	88	275	175	185	0	45
2006	157	4	0	16	177	187	110	0	72
2007	104	6	4	0	114	201	222	70	69
2008	94	8	0	24	126	211	126	0	69
2009	74	2	4	0	80	177	263	80	0
2010	73	2	4	24	103	208	119	81	68
2011	107	0	0	5	112	178	0	0	66
2012	138	2	20	32	192	198	47	26	52
2013	140	22	0	126	288	195	113	0	70
2014	145	0	0	120	265	227	0	0	88
2015	123	8	3	30	164	199	116	53	86.7

⁴⁶ Permits do not necessarily translate into a precise and full count of housing production. Some dwellings permitted are never constructed. As well, some dwellings may be built in areas that lack a building permitting process, have a lax permitting process, or have insufficient oversight of construction activity.

As shown in Diagram III.13.2, below, the average value of newly constructed single-family units in 2000 was \$236,259, \$175,082 in 2005, and \$208,233 in 2010. In 2015, the value of single family units fell to \$199,285 from \$227,196 in 2014.



The 2015 five-year ACS released data on the vacancy and tenure of housing units in Kearney. As shown in Table III.13.7, below, 5.4 percent, or 706 housing units were vacant in 2015. Of the 12,434 housing units that were occupied in 2015, 56.4 percent, or 7,018 units, were owner-occupied, and the remaining 43.6 percent were renter-occupied. This compares to 12,201 housing units that were occupied in 2010 with 6,904 units, or 56.6 percent, being owner-occupied, and the remaining 43.4 percent being renter-occupied.

Tenure	2010 Census		2015 Five-Year ACS	
	Units	% of Total	Units	% of Total
Occupied Housing Units	12,201	95.8%	12,434	94.6%
Owner-Occupied	6,904	56.6%	7,018	56.4%
Renter-Occupied	5,297	43.4%	5,416	43.6%
Vacant Housing Units	537	4.2%	706	5.4%
Total Housing Units	12,738	100.0%	13,140	100.0%

As shown in Table III.13.8, on the following page, there were 8,798 single family dwellings in 2015, which accounted for 67.0 percent of all housing units. Apartment units accounted for 15.5 percent of housing units, with 2,039 units. Mobile homes also accounted for an additional 6.1 percent of housing with 806 units.

Table III.13.8				
Housing Units by Type				
City of Kearney				
2010 and 2015 Five-Year ACS Data				
Tenure	2010 Five-Year ACS		2015 Five-Year ACS	
	Units	% of Total	Units	% of Total
Single-Family	7,827	63%	8,798	67.0%
Duplex	645	5%	699	5.3%
Tri- or Four-Plex	736	6%	798	6.1%
Apartment	2,144	17%	2,039	15.5%
Mobile Home	1,111	9%	806	6.1%
Boat, RV, Van, Etc.	0	0%	0	.0%
Total	12,463	100.0%	13,140	100.0%

Table III.13.9, below, shows the disposition of vacant housing units in Kearney. At the time of the 2015 five-year ACS, 24.1 percent of vacant units were for rent, 11.9 percent were for sale, and 11.3 percent were rented or sold but not yet occupied. At the time of the 2010 Census, there were 132 “other vacant” units, representing 24.6 percent of vacant units, which compared to 37.8 percent in 2015. “Other vacant” units are those not available to the market and may fall into disrepair and contribute to neighborhood blight.

Table III.13.9				
Disposition of Vacant Housing Units				
City of Kearney				
2000 Census and 2015 Five-Year ACS Data				
Disposition	2010 Census		2015 Five-Year ACS	
	Units	% of Total	Units	% of Total
For Rent	270	50.3%	170	24.1%
For Sale	69	12.8%	84	11.9%
Rented or Sold, Not Occupied	38	7.1%	80	11.3%
For Seasonal, Recreational, or Occasional Use	28	5.2%	105	14.9%
For Migrant Workers	0	0.0%	0	.0%
Other Vacant	132	24.6%	267	37.8%
Total	537	100.0%	706	100.0%

Rental Property Survey

From September through November of 2016, a telephone survey was conducted with landlords and rental property managers throughout Nebraska. Table III.13.10 presents basic statistics about the completed surveys from this and other surveys conducted from 2002 through 2016 in the City of Kearney. The number of completed surveys decreased from 71 in 2015 to 69 in 2016. Between 2015 and 2016 the vacancy rate for all units increased by 0.0 percentage points and was at 2.4 percent in 2016.

Table III.13.10				
Survey of Rental Properties				
City of Kearney				
2002–2016 Survey of Rental Properties				
Year	Completed Surveys	Total Units	Vacancy Rate	Absorption Rate
2002	12	1,129	2.6	8.3
2003	12	399	22.3	43.3
2004	8	124	48.4	31.4
2005	13	1,300	5.8	24.2
2006	18	741	4.9	28.5
2007	38	2,262	4.9	22.4
2008	45	3,124	2.6	19.5
2009	58	2,542	7.1	20.0
2010	61	2,868	2.2	19.0
2011	63	2,918	1.2	12.0
2012	68	4,546	1.2	11.6
2013	61	3,682	2.2	48.5
2014	78	3,789	2.1	25.2
2015	71	3,789	2.4	18.3
2016	69	4,121	2.4	22.3

Table III.13.11 on the following page, shows the amount of total and vacant units with their associated vacancy rates. At the time of

the survey, there were an estimated 724 single family units in City of Kearney, with 21 of them available. This translates into a vacancy rate of 2.9 percent in City of Kearney, which compares to a single family vacancy rate of 3.6 percent for the State of Nebraska. There were 2,251 apartment units reported in the survey, with 55 of them available, which resulted in a vacancy rate of 2.4 percent. This compares to a statewide vacancy rate of 4.1 percent for apartment units across the state. The average vacancy rate for all unit types over the last five years was 2.1 percent.

Table III.13.11 Rental Vacancy Survey by Type City of Kearney 2016 Survey of Rental Properties				
Place	Total Units	Vacant Units	Vacancy Rate	5-Year Vacancy Rate Average
Single Family	724	21	2.9%	3.7%
Apartments	2,251	55	2.4%	2.8%
Mobile Homes	76	0	.0%	2.2%
“Other” Units		0	.0%	.
Don't Know	1,070	23	2.1%	1.2%
Total	4,121	99	2.4%	2.1%

Table III.13.12, below reports units by Number of Bedrooms. Two bedroom units were the most common type of reported single family unit, with 267 units. The most common apartment units were two bedroom units, with 469 units. Details for additional unit types are reported below.

Table III.13.12 Rental Units by Number of Bedrooms City of Kearney 2016 Survey of Rental Properties						
Number of Bedrooms	Single Family Units	Apartment Units	Mobile Homes	“Other” Units	Don't Know	Total
Efficiency	0	55	0	0	.	55
One	84	323	0	0	.	407
Two	267	469	0	0	.	736
Three	183	143	0	0	.	326
Four	60	29	0	0	.	89
Don't Know	130	1,232	76		1,070	2,508
Total	724	2,251	76		1,070	4,121

Table III.13.13, at right, displays the vacancy rate of single family units by the number of bedrooms. Two bedroom units were the most common type of reported single family unit, which had a vacancy rate of 1.5 percent.

Table III.13.13 Single Family Units by Number of Bedrooms City of Kearney 2016 Survey of Rental Properties			
Number of Bedrooms	Units	Available Units	Vacancy Rates
Efficiency	0	0	0
One	84	2	2.4%
Two	267	4	1.5%
Three	183	4	2.2%
Four	60	1	1.7%
Don't know	130	10	7.7%
Total	724	21	2.9%

Table III.13.14, below displays the vacancy rate of apartment units by the number of bedrooms. The most common apartment units were two bedroom units, which had a vacancy rate of 4.9 percent.

Table III.13.14 Apartment Units by Number of Bedrooms City of Kearney 2016 Survey of Rental Properties			
Number of Bedrooms	Units	Available Units	Vacancy Rates
Efficiency	55	1	1.8%
One	323	12	3.7%
Two	469	23	4.9%
Three	143	9	6.3%
Four	29	0	.0%
Don't know	1,232	10	.8%
Total	2,251	55	2.4%

Average market-rate rents by unit type are shown in Table III.13.15, below. Not all respondents were able to disclose the rental amounts for their units, so there may be some statistical aberrations in the computed rental rates, but generally those units with more bedrooms had higher rents.

Table III.13.15 Average Market Rate Rents by Number of Bedrooms City of Kearney 2016 Survey of Rental Properties					
Number of Bedrooms	Single Family Units	Apartment Units	Mobile Homes	"Other" Units	Total
Efficiency	\$	\$523	\$	\$	\$523
One	\$406	\$501	\$	\$	\$483
Two	\$714	\$606	\$	\$	\$635
Three	\$868	\$825	\$	\$	\$846
Four	\$1,296	\$1,205	\$	\$	\$1,264
Average	\$923	\$727	\$550	\$550	\$763

Table III.13.16, below, shows vacancy rates for single family units by average rental rates for the City of Kearney. The most common rent for single family units was \$500 to \$750 dollars and units in this price range had a vacancy rate of 0.8 percent.

Table III.13.16 Single Family Market Rate Rents by Vacancy Status City of Kearney 2016 Survey of Rental Properties			
Average Rents	Single Family Units	Available Single Family Units	Vacancy Rate
Less Than \$500	15	1	6.7%
\$500 to \$750	375	3	.8%
\$750 to \$1,000	149	8	5.4%
\$1,000 to \$1,250	111	7	6.3%
\$1,250 to \$1,500	19	0	.0%
Above \$1,500	0	0	0
Missing	55	2	3.6%
Total	724	21	2.9%

The average rent and availability of apartment units is displayed in Table III.13.17, below. The most common rent for apartments was \$750 to \$1,000 dollars and the units in this price range had a vacancy rate of 1.2 percent.

Table III.13.17 Apartment Market Rate Rents by Vacancy Status City of Kearney 2016 Survey of Rental Properties			
Average Rents	Apartment Units	Available Apartment Units	Vacancy Rate
Less Than \$500	88	3	3.4%
\$500 to \$750	654	36	5.5%
\$750 to \$1,000	989	12	1.2%
\$1,000 to \$1,250	16	0	.0%
\$1,250 to \$1,500	8	0	.0%
Above \$1,500	20	0	.0%
Missing	476	4	.8%
Total	2,251	55	2.4%

Respondents were asked if utilities are included in the rent and as shown in Table III.13.18, on the following page, 38 respondents, or 65.5 percent, included some sort of utility in the rent.

Table III.13.18 Are there any utilities included with the rent? City of Kearney 2016 Survey of Rental Properties	
Period	Respondent
Yes	38
No	20
% Offering Utilities	65.5%

The type of utility included in the rent is shown in Table III.13.19, below. There were 12 respondents who included electricity, 11 respondents who included natural gas, 38 respondents who included water and sewer and 37 respondents included trash collection in the rent.

Table III.13.19 Which utilities are included with the rent? City of Kearney 2016 Survey of Rental Properties	
Type of Utility Provided	Respondent
Electricity	12
Natural Gas	11
Water/Sewer	38
Trash Collection	37

Table III.13.20, at right, shows the number of survey respondents who keep a waiting list. As can be seen 18 respondents said they keep a waiting list, with an estimated 1,077 number of persons on the waiting list.

Table III.13.20 Do you keep a waiting list? City of Kearney 2016 Survey of Rental Properties	
Period	Respondent
Yes	18
No	40
Waiting list Size	1,077

Respondents were also asked how they would rate the need for renovating existing units. As shown in Table III.13.21, below, 11 respondents said there was no need for renovating single family units, with 3 respondents saying there was extreme need for renovating single family units. Likewise, 12 respondents indicated no need for renovating existing apartment units, with 3 respondents saying there was extreme need for renovating existing apartment units.

Table III.13.21 How would you rate the need for renovation of existing units in the city? City of Kearney 2016 Survey of Rental Properties				
Need	Single Family	Apartments	Mobile Homes	Other Units
No Need	11	12	10	
Low Need	14	14	14	1
Moderate Need	15	15	15	
High Need	3	3	3	
Extreme Need	3	3	3	

Respondents were also asked how they would rate the need for the constructing new units. As shown in Table III.13.22, below, 23 respondents said there was no need for new single family units, with 6 respondents saying there was extreme need for constructing new single family units. Likewise, 24 respondents indicated no need for constructing new apartment units, with 5 respondents saying there was extreme need for constructing new apartment units.

Need	Single Family	Apartments	Mobile Homes	Other Units
No Need	23	24	23	
Low Need	6	6	6	
Moderate Need	9	10	8	
High Need	6	6	6	
Extreme Need	6	5	6	

Local Commentary

Kearney is the county seat of Buffalo County. Home to the University of Nebraska Kearney, education, healthcare, and manufacturing are the largest employment industries. A clothing company, an industrial manufacturing firm, and pharmaceutical companies each employ hundreds of people.⁴⁷

There has been a slight increase in population this past year. The UNK Village which will bring in mixed academic, retail, and residential units to the University of Nebraska at Kearney has begun putting in the infrastructure. Also, the University Housing project geared towards students and professors is slated to begin in the coming year. The Cherry Overpass has been completed. And the Central Community College has finished construction. The Central Nebraska Veterans' Home, which will have 200 beds and approximately 400 employees, should be opened in 2018.

Several high density apartments have been completed with another 75 set to begin construction in 2017. There has been resurgence in the older communities with many younger people purchasing single family homes and rehabbing them. Although sales tax has remained flat many new business have opened in the area including several retailers and restaurants. Patriotic Park, an eight million dollar softball and baseball facility is set to open this fall. A new PetSmart is slated for 2017 and much more economic development is slated for the next few years.⁴⁸

⁴⁷ Kearney Area Chamber of Commerce, <http://www.villageprofile.com/nebraska/kearney/12/topic.html>

⁴⁸ Email interview with City of Kearney staff, 12/2016