



*Realize our potential.*



# BENKELMAN, NEBRASKA

## Strategic Planning • 2016-2021

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# Strategic Plan

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# Strategic Plan

## *Envisioning Benkelman*

Benkelman's Strategic Plan is a framework of community-driven objectives, goals and action steps that will lead current and prospective community members to Realize Our Potential over the next five years. Community leaders have been laying the groundwork to ensure a smooth execution of the Strategic Plan. Community shortcomings were identified in public input sessions as well as online surveys, and needed to be addressed before a Strategic Plan was implemented. Leading up to the implementation of the Strategic Plan the Benkelman CRA had been acquiring vacant and dilapidated properties that were contributing to blight in Benkelman. The CRA acquired, demolished and excavated the lots of five properties, leaving three in-fill lots (four properties on two different blocks were adjacent to each other on small lots, h the lots were combined). The Envision Housing Committee recognized that there was a gap in knowledge among home buyers and sellers about the process of buying, selling and/or renovating homes which was apparent with the inconsistent housing market in Benkelman. To mitigate the knowledge gap, Benkelman was able to get a real estate agent working in town to spread information and help buyers and sellers. The Envision Benkelman Housing Committee held educational seminars informing community members on the buying and selling process, lending options and resources like the Southwest Nebraska Community Betterment Corporation's Down Payment Assistance Program, and USDA Housing. The Envision Benkelman Jobs Committee arranged for Nancy Flock of REAP to hold office hours in Benkelman to provide business coaching for budding entrepreneurs and local business owners. The Envision Benkelman Town Aesthetics Committee put together a new community website, with updated information for current and prospective residents. The Town Aesthetics Committee also did an ad campaign with the slogan, Love Where You Live, that was showcased in the Benkelman Post, The BWTelcom Cable station 37, and local social media platforms, Envision Benkelman Facebook Group and the Benkelman, USA Facebook Page. This is a community driven Strategic Plan, and the groundwork was laid by community leaders in the city government, the Chamber and Development, the Visitor's Bureau, businesses and by citizens who were eager to be a part of the positive change to Realize Our Potential.

Now ready to take on the next phase of community improvement with this Strategic Plan, Benkelman is committed to providing the residents with a good quality of life with desirable housing, career options with an emphasis on professional jobs and entrepreneurs, an aesthetically pleasing down town and residential area, high quality infrastructure specifically city streets, sewer and municipal swimming pool. With the execution of the strategic plan, it is the hope of our community to provide a desirable place for Benkelman residents to live, the ability to retain talented youth and attract new families and businesses creating a recipe for a thriving local economy.



*Realize our potential.*

# Benkelman Strategic Plan Evaluation

| Objective  | Responsible Parties                               | Start Date | Completion Date | Funding  |
|--|---|------------|-----------------|--|
| <b>Housing</b>   |   |            |                 |  |
| Create a self-sustaining Acquisition and Demolition Program  | CRA/EB Housing Committee                          | 2018       | 2021            | TIF  |
| Put 5 New Builds on CRA in-fill lots in 3 Years  | CRA/CRA Coordinator                               | 2017       | 2020            | TIF/Developers                                     |
| Develop a 10-15 Unit Subdivision   | CRA/City/Zoning and Planning Commission           | 2017       | 2027            | TIF/City/Private                                   |
| <b>Jobs</b>  |   |            |                 |  |
| Implement a Business Retention and Expansion Program in Benkelman  | CRA Coordinator/DCCCD                             | Jan-17     | Dec-17          | CRA/DCCCD  |
| Use Benkelman Community Foundation as an intentional incentive tool for talent recruitment and retention | CRA Coordinator/EB Jobs Committee                 | 2017       | 2018            | CF   |
| Participation in and Creation of an internship program   | CRA Coordinator                                   | 2018       | On-going        | CF/CRA   |
| Create monthly and quarterly business coaching, training and workshops                                   | CRA Coordinator/DCCCD                             | 2017       | On-Going        | Envision Benkelman/DCCCD                           |
| <b>Town Aesthetics</b>   |   |            |                 |  |
| Downtown Facade Improvement Project  | CRA Coordinator/DCCD/EB Town Aesthetics Committee | 2017       | 2022            | Collingsville Foundation/ EB /Regional Foundations |
| Demolish 15 blighted properties in 5 years   | CRA/CRA Coordinator/EB Housing Committee          | 2015       | 2020            | TIF  |
| Apply for NDED Down Town Revitalization Grant  | CRA Coordinator                                   | 2018       | 2025            | City/TIF/CDBG                                      |
| <b>Infrastructure</b>  |   |            |                 |  |
| Benkelman Streets Improvement  | City  | 2016       | 2022            | City   |
| Waste Water Treatment Improvement  | City  | 2017       | 2020            | City/Grant   |
| Spash Pad  | Pool Committee/City                               | 2018       | 2020            | City/Private/Grant                                 |

CDBG=Community Development Block Grant

EB= Envision Benkelman

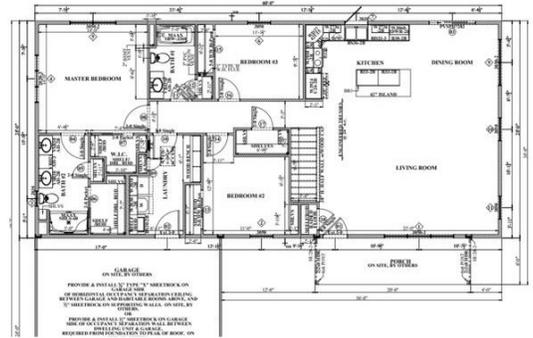
TIF=Tax Increment Finance

DCCD=Dundy County Chamber of Commerce and Development

CB= Benkelman Community Foundation

# Components addressed in the Strategic Plan:

- Housing
- Jobs
- Town Aesthetics
- Public Infrastructure



# Housing

The Community of Benkelman will improve the housing scene. As mentioned in the introduction, groundwork was laid to pave the way for housing objectives. The City of Benkelman participated in Nuisance and Abatement with West Central Nebraska Development District, removed blighted properties and created in-fill lots, and provided information on purchasing, selling and improving property values. As a result of these efforts, real estate has been moving and a consistency has been brought to our local housing market.

According to Benkelman City data, one house has been built in the twenty-first century inside Benkelman's city limits. The housing shortage has been a major contributing factor to Benkelman's population decline. Further, according to the Online Community Needs and Attitudes Assessment, 84 percent of respondents said that there are not enough single-family dwellings for sale, 81 percent agreed that there are not enough multi-family dwellings for sale and 85.7 percent of respondents said the Benkelman has a problem with sub-standard housing.

It is now time for the next phase of housing improvement, which is to increase the number of quality houses that will meet the needs of today and tomorrow's residence and position Benkelman to attract new residence and take on economic growth.

## Housing Goals:

- Continue to acquire and demolish blighted properties and make in-fill lots available
- Put new builds and manufactured homes on CRA in-fill lots
- Build a 10-15 Unit sub-division of Benkelman's East side.
- Using the Dundy County Investment Club to fill gaps of single and multi-family housing needs
- Utilizing Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Grants to improve substandard housing in residential neighborhoods.
- Attaining 1-3 CRA controlled rental units in Benkelman.

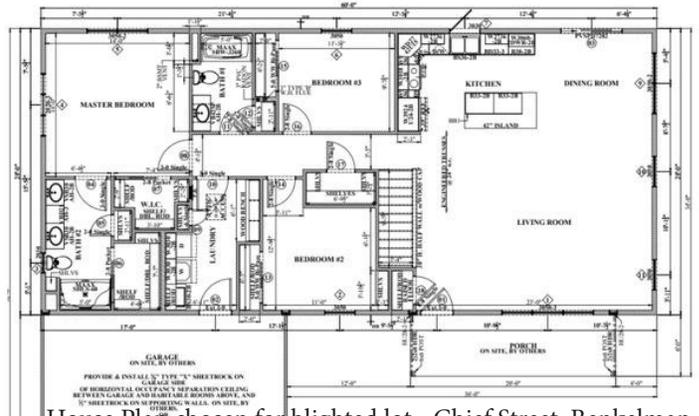


Blighted Property



Demolition and Burning of Blighted Property

From  
Blighted  
to  
Beautiful



House Plan chosen for blighted lot - Chief Street, Benkelman

### **Continue the acquisition and demolition of blighted properties in the blighted area.**

Housing Committee led by local real-estate broker and the CRA Coordinator will use the WCNDD inventory to identify houses for the CRA to acquire based on ease of acquisition and location. We will make a list of the top 10 vacant and dilapidated houses in the blighted area and gather information regarding owner, back taxes, and date of Sheriff's sale and put together fail and legal strategies for acquiring the properties. The goal is to demolish three vacant and dilapidated properties each year.

### **Put new builds and manufactured houses on the in-fill lots.**

- Envision Benkelman Housing Committee will design a free-lot program with the CRA in-fill lots. Members of the EB Housing Committee and the Benkelman CRA will construct a purchase agreement for the in-fill lots that ensures that the new housing is compliant with City building codes and zoning ordinances and meets the needs and desires of today's home-owner. Currently nearly 80% of Benkelman's housing stock is forty years old or older and do not have modern amenities and design. The purchase agreement will stipulate the amount of above ground square footage and a minimum valuation requirement. The purchase agreement will have a purchase forgiveness clause if the buyer puts a finished dwelling on the property within 18 months. \*Incentives residents to purchase lots and increase housing stock with new housing\* The purchase agreement will also stipulate that the CRA collect ad velorum taxes through Tax Increment Financing from these properties. The tax increments collected will be used to sustain the acquisition and demolition of blighted properties in Benkelman in order to continue to increase the aesthetic value of residential areas in Benkelman and increase the housing stock with homes that people want to live in.
- The Benkelman CRA will work with West Central Nebraska Development District that will help Benkelman and surrounding communities increase workforce housing to promote growth. In Benkelman, the CRA will do site development of in-fill lots, which will include the pouring of a basement, sidewalks and a driveway. WCNDD will buy the lot for ten dollars, put the new Wardcraft house on the infill lot. The property will be TIF's so that the CRA gets back their investment through TIF over the course of 15 years. WCNDD will sell the house for the amount put into the project, and repeat the process in the community within its service area that is positioned to have a new house

## **From Blighted to Beautiful**



1. Burning of blighted property



2. Excavation Preparation



3. Moving of new home to Chief Street Lot



4. Example of new home design

## Develop a 10-15 Unit Subdivision

- In the Fall of 2016, the Benkelman CRA purchased a property in the blighted area that came with about twenty acres. With the housing need being high, and the lack of housing contributing to Benkelman's housing decline, the CRA is taking an aggressive approach to increase amount of available houses by starting a residential housing development that will include between 10 and 15 houses. The CRA has hired engineers from Miller and Associates to carry out schematic design, legal surveying and platting services. The CRA will work with the Benkelman City Council, Planning Commission and Zoning Board to carry out this project. The CRA will do a free-lot program to incentivize to take advantage of the land and put new housing in.
- The Online Survey indicated a high need for more multi-family housing, with 81.38 percent stating a need as well as housing available for the elderly, as 56.8 percent of survey takers indicated that there was simply not enough suitable housing for the elderly. As this subdivision design is generated, the needs of the community are considered. Currently, one of the lots includes plan for a single level four-plex with an entry through the garage for tenants sixty-five and older.

## Dundy County Investment Club

- The Dundy County Investment Club will work with Pinnacle Bank and the Benkelman CRA to bring in a single-family home to place on an infill lot or a lot in the new subdivision, sell the home, and use the profit to revolve the funds and bring in a pre-fabricated duplex to address the multi-family housing need. The Investment Club is open to selling the property or controlling it as rental.

## Owner Occupied Rehabilitation Grants

- The City of Benkelman applied for and was awarded \$189,000 for Owner Occupied Rehabilitation (OOR) Grants through the Nebraska Department of Economic Development CDBG funds in 2017 with the help of South West Nebraska Community Betterment Corps. Qualifying residents can apply for and receive up to \$24,999 to make upgrades to the homes they live in that improve the physical condition, make it safer, more efficient and modern. Survey results indicated a strong need to address Benkelman's problem with substandard housing, as 85.7 percent of respondents said they wanted improvement in sub-standard housing in Benkelman's residential neighborhoods. The OOR program has been successfully increasing the quality of the community's housing specifically the homes of those with lower incomes.

## CRA Rentals

- Survey results indicated a desperate need for decent affordable rentals with 81.63 percent saying they wanted more decent affordable rentals, and so did employers who could not get skilled workers to join their business because they could not find a place to live. The CRA opened a property on the average they purchased for a sub-division as a rental for a mechanic a local shop. The CRA is working with Benkelman's local real estate agent and individual sellers to find two more decent vacant homes, preferable three-bedroom one bath dwellings that can be used as workforce rental housing.



Residential Developments Design Droposal in Blighted Area

# Jobs

The community of Benkelman will improve the job prospects for Benkelman residents and revitalize that talent pool for business established in Benkelman. Increasing the quality and number of available jobs was listed as one of the top three priorities during the public-input Community Needs Assessment. These findings are supported by the results of the online Community Needs and Attitudes survey which showed that 67.6 percent of survey takers rated the availability of jobs as poor, and 59 percent said the quality of available jobs as poor. Further, survey takers did not think that there was the ample educational opportunities, with 33.6 percent rating educational opportunities as poor.

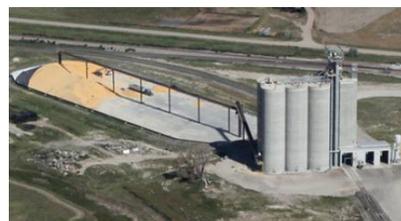
Provide residents and prospective residents with jobs at all skill levels and Benkelman's employers with a deep talent pool and create a community that fosters the success of entrepreneurs.

## Benkelman's Job Goals

- Encourage the growth of established businesses and collect market research through a Business Retention and Expansion Program.
- Utilize the Community Foundation to provide signing bonuses for positions that must get filled the most urgently and provide student loan forgiveness programs for youth returning to work in the Benkelman community.
- Participate in and create internship programs to bring skilled young workers into Benkelman's talent pool and bring help and vitality to local businesses.
- Establish Benkelman as an Entrepreneur friendly community by providing coaching and learning opportunities and connecting entrepreneurs to helpful resources.



Valley Farm Industries: Trailer Manufacturer



Gavilon Grain



Dundy County Hospital/Quality Health Care

## **Encouraging Growth of Local Businesses**

Close to 75% of growth occurs in local businesses. It was important to decision makers that the established businesses that have been serving the community are part of the conversation on economic growth. Prior to recruiting a new businesses, the Business Retention and Expansion Program allows the local business owners to voice their concerns and attitude about the local business climate, explain barriers to growth, and good and bad of conducting business in a safe and confidential environment. The interviewers, CRA Coordinator and DED field staffer are then able to connect business owners to resources based on their individual needs. Further, the feedback provided by the business owners and managers will be used to help us identify economic trends and allow decision makers more information from which to plan accordingly.

## **Utilize Community Foundation to attract and retain skilled and talented workers.**

The CRA Coordinator will present a proposal to the Benkelman Community Foundation Board of Directors for the allocation of funds to go toward job recruitment of urgent positions needing to be filled, signing bonuses and matching wages toward internship programs, either through Rural Futures Institute or a local program created for a specific need.

## **Participating in or Implementing an Internship Program**

By March of 2018, the CRA Coordinator will identify a community project that will help the community of Benkelman achieve the objectives of the Strategic Plan. This project is to be completed by interns through the Rural Futures Institute. This goal is two-fold, Benkelman will have talented youth help improve the community while introducing new people to community giving them another option for a place to live and work.

In effort to keep Benkelman's talented youth interested in the community, the CRA Coordinator will work with local organizations that need skilled workers and young people seeking experience yo create a local internship program guided by Career and Internship personnel at the students' respective institutions. According to Benkelman's 2010 Comprehensive Plan, young people listed jobs as one of the things that Benkelman needed to have in order for them to return to Benkelman post college.

## **Make Benkelman an entrepreneur and small-business Friendly Community**

Making Benkelman a place where small businesses and entrepreneurs can thrive will allow Benkelman to build a healthy local economy while not spending a lot of money. The CRA Coordinator will partner with the Dundy County Chamber and Development as well as regional resources like the Nebraska Department of Economic Development, Rural Enterprise Assistance Project (REAP) and UNL-Extension to provide training and workshops based on the knowledge gaps and needs of the local organizations to include such things as book keeping, marketing and business plan creation. A representative from REAP will also be providing office hours in Benkelman to hold one-on-one business coaching sessions

# Town Aesthetics

The community of Benkelman will improve the physical condition of its down town and residential areas eliciting a sense of community pride in all citizens and businesses of Benkelman. Prior to putting action steps for a strategic plan together, the City of Benkelman, the CRA and the Envision Benkelman Town Aesthetics Committee had to identify systemic problems that had led to Benkelman's physical appearance being considered both a weakness and a threat in a Community Needs Assessment SWOT Analysis.

Benkelman is a community that understands that the fate of our town is in the hands of the community members. While Benkelman has cultivated valuable relationships, and utilizes the resources of many government and non-profit economic development organizations, if Benkelman residents want to see progress, the people occupying the town must put skin in the game

## Town Aesthetic Goals

- Coordinate a Façade Update Project of Benkelman's downtown buildings over the next 3-5 years.
- Decrease the number of vacant and dilapidated houses in Benkelman's residential areas.
- Apply for the Nebraska Department of Economic Development's Down Town Revitalization Grant.

# LOVE

## WHERE YOU LIVE



*Our homes, our streets, our community*



Lamp Post 613 - Coffee and Boutique • Est. 2016

## Coordinate a Façade Update Project of Benkelman's downtown buildings.

The Envision Benkelman Town Aesthetics Committee is a group of engaged citizens that values the appearance of the Benkelman Community and understands how the local economy and moral are affected by the appearance and up keep of commercial property, specifically down town and residential areas. This group will take on more of the responsibility and alleviate our local government so that the City of Benkelman can tackle more urgent projects that require tax payer money. Assessments, meetings and discussion suggest that the citizens of Benkelman want to improve the appearance of Benkelman's downtown. In the Summer of 2017, Benkelman will participate in its first downtown façade update, which is funded by a private foundation and coordinated by the CRA Coordinator. Five downtown businesses will receive grants ranging from \$5,000 to \$10,000 to improve their store fronts using local stores and contractors. This grant will allow awarded downtown businesses to update their awnings, paint their store fronts or get new windows. This project will give local businesses an opportunity to draw in more business, provide an economic boost to local business as buying local is strongly encouraged and increases the desirability of Benkelman's down town.

### **Decrease the number of vacant and dilapidated houses in Benkelman's residential areas.**

A 2010 blight study of Benkelman revealed that 60 percent of the town is considered blighted and over 10 percent of our housing stock is vacant, and in most cases, dilapidated and dangerous. The Online Community Needs and Attitudes Assessment showed the 59 percent of respondents rated the appearance of Benkelman's residential area as poor. With this knowledge, the Envision Benkelman Housing and Town Aesthetic Committees teamed up with the Benkelman Community Redevelopment Authority to tackle this project together. In February of 2016, West Central Nebraska Development District (WCNDD) compiled a XXX Inventory, which listed the condition; good, fair, and poor as well as the status (vacant/non-vacant) of the properties in Benkelman's blighted area. Using that resource, committee members will identify twenty properties for the CRA and other partners to acquire and demolish in the next five years. Qualifying characteristics will include safety issues, condition, property taxes owed, ease of acquisition and location. The committee members will identify and recommend strategies for the acquisition and demolition of these unsightly and unsafe properties.

### **Apply for the Nebraska Department of Economic Development's Down Town Revitalization Grant Phases I and II**

Improving the appearance of Benkelman's down town is a top priority of Benkelman's residents according to the March of 2016 Public Input CNA. As mentioned above, in 2017, down town businesses supported by a private foundation have begun to take action and put down their own money to improve the appearance of Benkelman's down town in order to boost economic growth and to improve resident's quality of life. By applying for the Down Town Revitalization Grant, the effort of down town businesses and community development stakeholders will be amplified as skilled professionals can help us overcome barriers that we do not know how to tackle and take our planning and execution to a whole new level that will improve Benkelman's economic growth and provide all of us with learning and growth along the way.

## **Infrastructure**

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The Community of Benkelman will improve the physical condition of the City's Infrastructure, specifically City Streets and the sewer system. Assessments, surveys, meetings and discussions suggest that the people of Benkelman value the quality of Benkelman's public infrastructure and would like to see an improvement on the current condition. With the support of the City of Benkelman, a committee will plan and recommend plans for a Splash Pad and raise funds for this project.

The condition of the streets in Benkelman is a topic that received much attention in the Community Needs Assessments and community discussions. A public forum SWOT analysis conducted by Department of Economic Development field staffer, Ashley Rice-Gerlach in March of 2016, identified the condition of the streets as a community weakness. The online survey conducted in February of 2017 showed 81.3 percent of respondents rated the condition of city streets as poor. The City streets form a first impression of any person who enters Benkelman. The streets in their current condition make it difficult to attract new people to our community, further, current community members want to see the streets improved to protect their vehicles and to increase the aesthetic value of the Benkelman Community. Public Input meetings as well as CRA and City Council meetings indicated that many community members would like to have the public pool have an option for children ages zero to five years old. The Benkelman Pool had some minor setbacks in the last few years; the wading pool designated for young children had been out of commission for five years, and the pool heater was out of commission and in need of repair. Benkelman had been dealing with water quality issues for several years' prior, leading decision makers to hold off on any repairs that may be made in vain. In fall of 2016, the City of Benkelman had some new wells put in and the water quality issue was resolved. The swimming pool heater was repaired with the help of the CRA, BWTelcom and Valley Farm Industries, and the City put nearly \$50,000 to fix the wading pool. Similar to the streets, the Benkelman Community members want to have a quality outdoor aquatic facility to attract new people to the community and a service that perpetuates fun and physical activity in extreme heat. With these problems alleviated, community members wanted to take the outdoor aquatic area one step further in providing a great service for prospective and current Benkelman residents, a Splash Pad.

## Infrastructure Goals

- Improve the condition of Benkelman's City Streets
- Provide updates and improvements to sewer system
- Build a Green Splash Pad in the Ward Bond Park



## Streets Improvement

During the summer of 2016, the city had about 42,000 square yards of streets armor coated. Another 42,000 square yards coated during the summer of 2017, 2018 and 2019. This is an important step, as the coating seals any openings in the asphalt and raises the center of the street so that moisture flows off to the sides into the gutter rather than getting absorbed by the subfloor which would hurt the integrity of the streets. The goal is to have all the streets armor coated in about three years. The city outsources this operation to a third party contractor. The scale of this operation requires more man-power than the city has, additionally, the contractors can complete the job for less money than the city would spend on the oil alone if the city were to take on the operation itself. According to City Street Superintendent, Mike Clark, the city spent about 52 thousand dollars on armor coating and another 35-40 thousand dollars on patching the streets to prepare for the armor coating in 2016.

Once the streets are armored, they will be coated and sealed with the final layer that will leave the streets smooth and aesthetically pleasing. City officials are still considering the best and most economic method of topping the streets. When trying to figure out which product would work best in Benkelman, the city is considering things like ease of application and longevity. Currently, a product called Slurry Seal looks like the best option. If the city decides to go in this direction, they could acquire a small slurry machine, and would be able to complete a block at a time. The application of the Slurry Seal is an operation that could be done in house by city employees. The process however, would be slower as there is a 24-hour wait period between application and the time traffic could go on it. The length of this project is dependent on budget, man-power and weather.

At this time, the streets improvement plan is in repair mode, and a lot of work is going into fixing them. Once the streets have been coated with the Slurry Seal, it will probably be time to armor coat them again, but this time it will be to maintain the streets. It is possible that once the armor coating process is complete that the budget might have some funds freed up for concrete projects such as curb and gutter improvements.

## Updates and Improvements to Wastewater Treatment Facility

In 2012, Benkelman entered in to a consent order with the Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality to make some major improvements to the wastewater treatment facility. By December of 2017, Benkelman plans to have Miller and Associates Engineering Firm prepare a report that will assess and analyze the operational measures, upgrades, and improvements necessary to negate specific issues of non-compliance including the exceedance of permit effluent limits for Ammonia, CBID and TSS. This report will then be submitted by Benkelman to the NDEQ. By July of 2018, plans and specifications prepared by Miller and Associates regarding the upgrades and improvements needed to be made to the wastewater treatment facility in order for the system to be in compliance with permit conditions and Nebraska Title 19 will be submitted to the NDEQ by the City of Benkelman. Then before May of 2020, all of the upgrades and improvements made to the wastewater treatment facility will be completed and the wastewater treatment facility will be in compliance with permit conditions as well as Nebraska Title 19.

# City of Benkelman Capital Projects 2017-2022

| Priority                                 | Department                        | Project                             | Cost             | Completion Date |
|--|-----------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| 1  | Street, Water, Sewer, Electricity | Updates to Waste Water Treatment    | \$300,000        | 2020            |
| 2  | City Buildings                    | Remodel and Repair to City Building | \$30,000         | 2018            |
| 3  | Street, Water, Sewer, Electricity | Armor Coat Streets                  | \$90,000         | 2022            |
| 4  | City Buildings                    | Build new City Shop and Light Plant | \$200,000        | 2020            |
| 5  | Street, Water, Sewer, Electricity | New Multi-Use Truck                 | \$55,000         | 2017            |
| 6  | Parks and Recreation              | Sandblast and Paint Swimming Pool   | \$42,000         | 2017            |
| <b>Capital Improvements Total</b>        |                                   |                                     | <b>\$717,000</b> |                 |
| Street, Water, Sewer, Electricity Total: |                                   |                                     | <b>\$445,000</b> |                 |
| City Buildings Total                     |                                   |                                     | <b>\$230,000</b> |                 |
| Parks and Recreation Total               |                                   |                                     | <b>\$42,000</b>  |                 |

## 2017 Capital Improvement Project Descriptions

- Improvements and updates must be made to the waste water treatment plan to ensure quality, safety and to follow Nebraska State Regulations.
- The repair and renovation of the City Building includes the replacement of a roof, floors, walls and office equipment that was destroyed during a storm in the summer of 2016.
- Benkelman’s city streets improvement includes the armor coating, slurry cover, curb and sidewalk improvements over the next five years that will position the City to maintain the streets rather than repair.
- Building a new city shop is a capital improvement project because the current shop does not have adequate space to meet the needs of city employees. The costs to repair the building are exceed the costs to build new.
- The City workers need a truck that will dump, plow snow, haul equipment and other duties performed by city workers.
- The swimming pool sandblasting and painting project maintains the quality and appearance of the municipal swimming pool.

## Green Splash Pad

In January of 2017, the Benkelman City Council approved a committee to 1.) Research what kind of improvements residents want to see for the public pool, 2.) Research equipment/design options and 3.) Raise money for outdoor aquatic improvements through a private fundraising campaign, petitioning local and regional foundations and applying for state and federal grants whose mission aligns with this project.

The committee found that the largest complaint with the pool was that there was no place for parents with children ages 0-5 years of age to take their children, especially if they had more than one child. Fixing the wading pool which had been out of commission for five years did alleviate some of the hardship, however this was build prior to the zero-entry requirement and still made it difficult for parents with multiple small children, especially infants to use. The idea to build a new wading pool was brought up during brainstorming sessions, but later thrown out as it would require a new pool altogether, and the current pool has no major problems. The idea of a splash pad was the idea that the committee ultimately decided to move forward with. A concern over the waste of water was brought up in a committee meeting which led the committee to consider conservation and pursue this as a Green project.

The committee will be working with playground equipment companies and engineering firms on the implementation of a splash pad with a water-holding tank in which the excess water will be treated and re-used. The cost of this project looks to be about \$400,000 dollars.



Proposed Green Splash Pad Plan