DONIPHAN COUNTTY

Housing Assessment Tool (HAT) Summary

HOUSING NEED PRIORITIES

- Mid-Level Workforce Housing
- Duplexes And Rental Options
- Senior Independent Living

HOUSING ASSETS

- Strong Fiber & Broadband
- Investment In Core Infrastructure
- Quality Schools

COMMUNITY CONTACT
Adrienne Neibling
(316) 200-4446
adrienne.neibling@dpcountyks.com

COMMERCE CONTACT
Kerri Falletti
(785) 207-5206
kerri.falletti@ks.gov

Prepared April 2026

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

BENDENA, DENTON, ELWOOD, HIGHLAND, LEONA, SEVERANCE, TROY, WATHENA, WHITE CLOUD

2024 POPULATION: 7,503

MEDIAN HOME VALUE: $135,200

MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME: $74,028

- Median home values in Doniphan have risen $51,100 in nominal dollars since 2014. As of 2024, a median home value in Doniphan was $135,200 (increase of 60.8% since 2014). During the period between 2014 and 2024, median household income in Doniphan has grown from $48,659 (2014) to $74,028 (2024), a growth of 52.1%.
- In Doniphan, between 2014 and 2024, change in the total number of housing units of -5.4% lagged behind the 5.1% decrease in the population. Over a similar period, from 2012 to 2022, the number of jobs in Doniphan increased by 7.0%.
- In 2024, 81.1% of households in Doniphan owned their homes. This is higher than the state of Kansas (67.2%) and higher than the homeownership rate in the United States (65.2%). Between 2019 and 2024, the homeownership rate in Doniphan rose by 9.1%

ENGAGEMENT & COLLABORATION

The housing assessment for Doniphan County was completed as a countywide process. The committee made up from representatives from all cities completed a thorough housing condition assessment, including appraiser data and community windshield tours. Ten employers in the county were interviewed, providing a broad interpretation of the impact housing challenges have on the workforce and economic growth. Collaboration of the committee members through this process show the benefits of developing a comprehensive plan to address the priorities of each community while benefiting the county as a whole.

KANSAS COMMERCE

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

COMMUNITY CHARACTERISTICS OVERVIEW:

Doniphan County, Kansas, located in the northeast corner of the state, has a population of approximately 7,500. Doniphan is a rural county made up of 9 communities ranging in population from 37 to 1,554. Given the smaller populated communities, housing is a common challenge that is being addressed as a regional approach within the county. Location creates a challenge for the county due to workforce living out bordering states. Though population slightly declined, potential to reverse this trend is seen due to a majority population being between the ages of 18-65 and a declining poverty rate. It is believed that the declining population has been due to workforce relocating caused by the lack of housing. Addressing the various housing challenges within each of the communities to increase housing availability of all types would benefit to grow the needed workforce. Through the engagement process Doniphan County has established a strong countywide committee that identified actionable strategies to carryout housing and community priorities.

COMMUNITY HOUSING INITIATIVES

A key housing initiative offered countywide is the Doniphan County Neighborhood Revitalization Program (NRP). This has been an asset to the majority of the communities to utilize. Individual community efforts have also been developed, such as clean-up initiatives and providing a sewer pump ($5,000 value) for newly constructed, stick-built home. Most of the communities have strong code enforcement efforts, while smaller communities are challenged with the capacity to enforce the existing ordinances. Each of the communities have actively been addressing infrastructure needs and improvements and are aware of current ongoing concerns that will need to be addressed to support housing growth. Identifying additional incentive program options available to the county and communities will be essential to implementation of housing and infrastructure priorities.

STAKEHOLDER ASSESSMENT

Stakeholder engagement—including employers, realtors, and residents—reveals strong and consistent demand for additional housing, particularly workforce-oriented, single-family homes and quality rental options. Employers identified housing shortages as a barrier to workforce attraction and retention, with many employees commuting from outside the county and state. Realtors confirmed limited inventory across all price points, especially for moderately priced homes. Community survey results further reinforced these findings, with nearly three-quarters of respondents indicating a need for more housing, particularly workforce-oriented, single-family homes in the two- to three-bedroom range. Additional concerns highlighted related to affordability, housing condition, and lack of senior housing options. Overall, stakeholders emphasized that housing availability is directly tied to economic growth, population stability, and quality of life.

HOUSING STOCK CHARACTERISTICS AND ANALYSIS

Housing stock in Doniphan County is not unlike those in rural Kansas, with 50% of homes built prior to 1970. This is consistent with the findings from the appraisal data and field observations of a large number of homes in need of rehabilitation or replacement. Due to a significantly high and growing percentage of homeownership, would indicate the need for homeownership programs and increased availability of new homes to support the trend.

HOUSING ASSESSMENT TOOL

PART 1:
Create a housing committee or partner with relevant stakeholders and organizations.

This assessment was completed with input and collaboration from the following individuals:

ELECTED OFFICIALS:

Peggy Franken	Doniphan County
Megan Shackelford	City of Elwood
John Hontz	City of Wathena
Melvin Massey	City of Denton

CITY / COUNTY STAFF

Danielle Kiefer	Doniphan County	
Adrienne Neibling	Doniphan County (Eco Devo)	
Becky Gilmore	Doniphan County (Eco Devo)	Also Community Member

PUBLIC AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Dana Clary	Parents as Teachers	
Kathy Tharman	KSU Extension	
Janet Tyler	NEKAA	Also Community Member
Lucas Hunziger	HCC	Also Major Employer
Chris Lackey	USD 111	Also Major Employer
Jennifer Gatz	USD114	Also Major Employer
Pat McKernan	USD 429	Also Major Employer

PUBLIC ORGANIZATIONS

Debbie Heinrich	Compass Realty
Neil Lednicky	Bendena State Bank
Dan Delaney	First Option

OTHER ENTITIES:

John Mike Marriot	Local Residential Builder and Developer	
Pat Masters	Eldon Hills	Community Member and Developer
Angie Krieder	Rainbow	Utility
Trevor Schmillie	Doniphan Electric	Utility

A. PAST HOUSING INITIATIVES, INFRASTRUCTURE, AND CITY SERVICES INVENTORY

1 PAST HOUSING INITIATIVES

Describe housing activities that have taken place in the last five years (include grants/programs, pending applications, private new construction, rental developmental, etc.).

Past housing initiatives across the communities have been sporadic, small-scale, and largely uncoordinated, with most activity driven by individual property owners or private developers rather than formal municipal strategies. Examples include limited subdivision development, rehabilitation of small rental properties, isolated infill housing construction, and community cleanup efforts. While these initiatives demonstrate local willingness to invest, they have not occurred at a scale sufficient to meaningfully expand or modernize the housing stock.

Many communities report little to no proactive housing planning, resulting in reactive development patterns that fail to address long-term demographic trends, aging housing stock, or workforce housing needs.

2 NEW CONSTRUCTION INITIATIVES

Has your community currently or previously offered any incentives to spur new construction and/or to assist with home rehabilitation to developers, contractors, and occupants? If so, please describe these programs and usefulness in your community.

Home rehabilitation efforts across the region have primarily relied on county-level or regional programs, most notably the Doniphan County Neighborhood Revitalization Program and partnerships with housing authorities. While these programs are widely used and valued, local capacity to directly fund or administer rehabilitation efforts is limited, and participation varies by community.

3 HOMEOWNERSHIP SUPPORT

Are there any incentives or financial support to encourage homeownership in your community (down payment assistance, local employer incentives, etc.)? If yes, also describe how much are they utilized?

Most communities offer few to no local homeownership incentives. Where support exists, it is typically informal, limited, or administered at the county level. Several communities expressed interest in incentives but cited financial constraints and administrative capacity as barriers to implementation.

4 CODE ENFORCEMENT

What is the extent and effectiveness of code enforcement in your community? If your community is without codes, describe any efforts made to maintain structural safety and appearance of the community.

Code enforcement is inconsistent across communities. Some jurisdictions report effective enforcement and established ordinances, while others note minimal enforcement capacity, outdated codes, or a lack of staff and financial resources to implement existing regulations. Overall, code enforcement limitations contribute to housing deterioration and redevelopment challenges, particularly in smaller communities.

5 INFRASTRUCTURE

Describe the infrastructure system (water, streets, sewer, storm drainage, internet service, natural gas distribution and electrical distribution) as it relates to housing needs. Are the operating systems mostly updated and efficient with minimal service interruptions? Are there large updates expected?

Basic infrastructure is generally available across the region, including water, sewer, streets, and utilities, though the condition and capacity vary. Some communities have completed recent upgrades, while others rely on rural water districts or aging systems. Infrastructure limitations are frequently cited as a constraint to new housing development, particularly in smaller or unincorporated areas.

6 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

What are the environmental issues in your community that could affect new housing decisions and locations? Examples include flood zone, wetlands, railroad tracks, major roadways, brownfields, farmland, forest, endangered species, etc.

Environmental concerns are location-specific and generally manageable but include floodplains, agricultural impacts, drainage issues, and aging infrastructure. While environmental factors do not universally prohibit housing development, they can increase costs or limit suitable development sites, particularly in flood-prone areas.

7 DISASTERS

If applicable, describe any persisting natural disaster impacts on your community's housing. Disaster examples include flooding, tornado, fire, windstorm, etc.

Communities across the region are vulnerable to common Northeast Kansas hazards, including flooding, severe storms, tornadoes, wind, and ice events. Flooding is a recurring issue for some communities, while others primarily face seasonal storm risks. Disaster impacts can exacerbate housing deterioration and displacement, particularly in areas with older housing stock.

8 HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION

What are the community's homelessness prevention efforts? What assistance does the community provide or need for households near homelessness?

Homelessness is generally reported as not highly visible or widespread, especially in smaller communities; however, formal homelessness prevention programs are largely absent at the local level. Assistance, when available, is typically handled through county agencies, nonprofits, or informal support networks, rather than municipal programs.

9 BASIC SERVICES

Select the services in your community (select all that apply)

- ☒ Grocery Store
- ☒ Public High School
- ☒ Public Middle School
- ☒ Public Elementary School
- ☐ Private School(s)
- ☒ Bank
- ☒ Medical Clinic
- ☒ Gas Station
- ☒ Public Library
- ☒ Senior Center
- ☒ Childcare
- ☒ Community Center
- ☐ Other:

10 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Are there other factors or significant events (major employer leaving, unexpected population growth, change in schools, etc.) not addressed above that are essential for housing in your community.

Access to basic services varies significantly by community. Some communities maintain banks, grocery stores, schools, and convenience retail, while others have experienced recent losses of essential services, particularly grocery stores. Limited access to services can impact housing desirability and long-term community sustainability, especially for seniors and low-income households.

B. HOUSING NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The Local Housing Solution's Housing Needs Assessment tool, created in partnership with PolicyMap, provides detailed reports for every U.S. Census community. Each report presents data, maps, and visualizations that describe local demographics and measures of housing affordability, housing stock characteristics, and variations in key housing indicators by race, ethnicity, age, and income. The tool compiles and visually displays public available national data sources, such as the U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey (ACS), and the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

1. DEMOGRAPHICS

Data on population, age, race, disability, and socioeconomic status provide insight into who lives in the community and inform decisions on how to meet diverse needs and allocate resources.

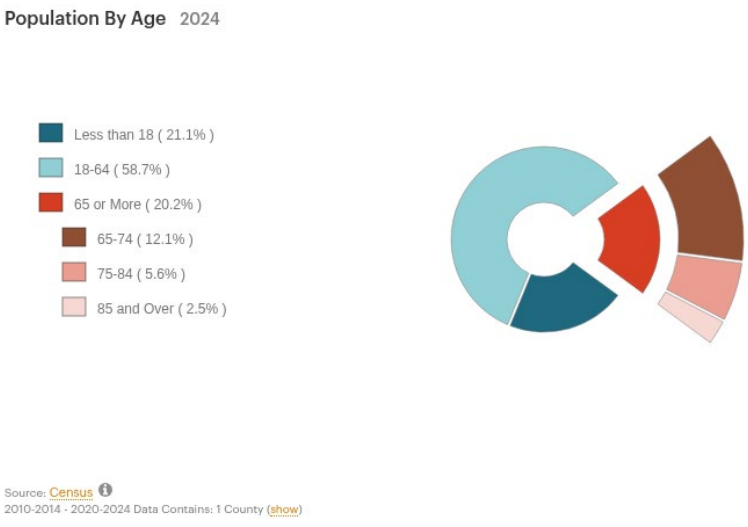
Estimated Population

Q1. Using the current population estimate and change since 2010, how do you predict the population to change over the next 20 years?

☐ Significantly increase
☐ Increase
☐ No change
☒ Decrease
☐ Significantly decrease

Q2. Using the data and local knowledge, how do you anticipate population change to impact your community's future housing needs?

Looking ahead, population trends in Doniphan County highlight both a challenge and a significant opportunity to reshape the community's housing future. While the county's population has declined by 5.2% since 2013, nearly 40% of residents are either under 18 or over 65, with nearly 60% between 18-65 signals sustained demand for housing that supports families, workforce households, and aging residents. Local insight indicates that population loss is not due to a lack of desire to live in Doniphan County, but rather a shortage of quality, diverse housing options. By strategically investing in modern, safe, and attainable housing, the county has the opportunity to retain current residents, attract new families and workers, and support seniors who wish to age in place. Proactive housing development will be a key driver in stabilizing population trends, strengthening the local economy, and positioning Doniphan County for long-term, sustainable growth.



Poverty Level and Trend

Q3. Using the poverty estimate graph and local knowledge, describe how the poverty level in your community could influence your housing needs.

Poverty trends directly influence Doniphan County's housing needs and planning priorities. From 2018 to 2023, the poverty rate declined from 14.6% to 9.8%, reflecting improved economic stability and a reduction of more than 350 residents living in poverty.
In 2023, Doniphan County's poverty rate was lower than both the Kansas and U.S. averages, indicating relatively fewer affordability pressures compared to broader benchmarks.

However, local knowledge shows that affordability remains a concern for many households, particularly seniors on fixed incomes, workforce residents, and young families. The primary housing challenge is not extreme poverty, but a limited supply of quality, attainable housing. Continued investment in affordable and workforce housing will help sustain economic gains, support housing stability, and prevent future cost burdens as the community grows and evolves.

Share of Population with a Disability

Q4. Using the disability data and local knowledge, describe how the share of population with disabilities in your community could influence your housing needs.

In 2023, 13.2% of Doniphan County's population reported having one or more disabilities, a share comparable to the state average and slightly higher than the national level. This represents a significant portion of residents who may require accessible or adaptable housing options.

Local knowledge indicates that much of the county's existing housing stock lacks accessibility features, creating barriers for residents with physical, developmental, or non-physical disabilities. As the population ages, the need for housing with universal design elements, such as single-level layouts, wider doorways, and step-free access, will continue to grow. Expanding accessible and adaptable housing options will be essential to supporting independence, safety, and long-term housing stability for residents with disabilities.

2. RENTAL AFFORDABILITY

A healthy housing market provides a diverse range of housing options, including rental and market homes affordable to people of different incomes. An examination of the percentage of households that rent their homes, and the characteristics of these renter households (age, income, and cost-burden) can help communities understand the needs of renters and the extent to which policy changes may be needed to help ensure those needs are met. The availability of rental units can encourage young professionals and families to move to a community and eventually settle down to purchase a home.

Q5. How did the share of households that rent in your community change in the past 10 years?

☐ Increase

Q6. Which age cohorts are MOST likely to rent? (Choose 2-3)

☒ 15-24

Q7. How has the share of rental households that are moderately or severely cost-burdened changed in the past 10 years?

☒ Increase

☐ Little to no change ☒ Decrease	☒ 25-34 ☐ 35-44 ☒ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☐ 65-74 ☐ 75-84 ☐ 85+	☐ Little to no change ☐ Decrease

Q8. What is the monthly median rent?	Q9. What was the annual median family income?	Q10. Did the annual median family income keep up with the change in monthly median rent in the past 10 years?
$801	$72,833	Yes, rent increased 46.2%, and median household income rose 56.6%.

Analysis: Rental Affordability

Q11. Using the data and local knowledge, what are the rental housing needs in your community?

Doniphan County has a severe shortage of rental housing, especially quality, long-term rentals. Limited supply has resulted in substandard homes being rented at premium prices, creating affordability and quality challenges for residents.

There is a strong need for additional, well-maintained rental housing to support residents during life transitions, allow households to save toward homeownership, and help retain workers and families in the county. Expanding the supply of quality rentals is critical to improving affordability and housing stability.

3. HOMEOWNERSHIP AFFORDABILITY

Q12. How did the homeownership rate change in your community in the past 10 years?	Q13. Which age cohorts are MOST likely to own? (Choose 2-3)
☒ Increase ☐ Little to no change ☐ Decrease	☐ 15-24 ☐ 25-34 ☒ 35-44 ☐ 45-54 ☐ 55-64 ☒ 65-74 ☐ 75-84 ☒ 85+

Q14. What is the median home value?	Q15. Did the annual median family income keep up with the change in median home value in the past 10 years?
$121,200	Yes, median income home value increased 45.5% from 2013 to 2023, and household income increased 56.6% in the same time frame.

Q16. Which home values are MOST prevalent in your community? (Choose 2-3)

- ☒ Less than $60,000
- ☐ $60,000 - $79,999
- ☐ $80,000 - $99,999
- ☒ $100,000 - $149,999
- ☒ $150,000 - $199,999
- ☐ $200,000 - $299,999
- ☐ $300,000 - $399,999
- ☐ $400,000 - $499,999
- ☐ $500,000 - $749,999
- ☐ $750,000 - $999,999
- ☐ $1,000,000+

Q17. Which home values are LEAST prevalent in your community? (Choose 2-3)

- ☐ Less than $60,000
- ☐ $60,000 - $79,999
- ☐ $80,000 - $99,999
- ☐ $100,000 - $149,999
- ☐ $150,000 - $199,999
- ☐ $200,000 - $299,999
- ☐ $300,000 - $399,999
- ☐ $400,000 - $499,999
- ☒ $500,000 - $749,999
- ☒ $750,000 - $999,999
- ☐ $1,000,000+

Q18. Are owner households more moderately or severely cost-burdened?

Severely Burdened

Analysis: Homeownership Affordability

Q19. Using the data and local knowledge, what are the owner-occupied housing needs in your community?

While reported data may not fully reflect local housing trends or actual purchase costs, Doniphan County continues to face a shortage of owner-occupied homes, which limits population growth. Rising home prices have been somewhat offset by local income growth, allowing current residents to maintain homeownership.

To support future growth and retain residents, the community needs additional owner-occupied housing that is both attainable and aligns with local market realities. Expanding the supply of quality, reasonably priced homes will help attract new residents, stabilize the housing market, and ensure long-term community investment.

4. DEDICATED AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Q20. Does your community have subsidized housing? If yes, when is it expiring?

The Housing Choice Voucher Program currently has 10 units in Doniphan County that are subsided
Yes, 14 units of federally subsidized housing are set to expire in 2025.
Restrictions on an additional 40 units are set to expire by 2030.

Q21. Describe how the subsidized housing and expiration dates impact your community's housing needs.

Our population that has incomes below the poverty rate is 13.2%.
The decrease of federal housing may force these individuals to leave our community if they can no longer afford to remain here.

5. ALIGNMENT OF HOUSING SUPPLY AND DEMAND

Q22. Is crowded housing high in your community?

No

Q23. If yes, is the crowded housing more severe in owner or rental households in your community?

NA

Q24. Using the data and local knowledge, how does the share of crowded housing impact your community's overall housing need?

Crowded housing in Doniphan County is not higher than the US average but it has increased from .1% in 2018 to .6% in 2023 and seems to be primarily an issue in Renter Households. This signals that rental housing with more space might be a need.

6. HOUSING STOCK CHARACTERISTICS

Q25. When was the majority of the homes in your community built? (Choose 1-2)

- ☒ Pre 1940
- ☒ 1940-1969
- ☐ 1970-1979
- ☐ 1980-1989
- ☐ 1990-1999
- ☐ 2000+

Q26. Describe the age of your community's housing stock and how that impacts your community's housing needs.

Doniphan County's housing stock is relatively old, with a median construction year of 1971. Over 49% of homes were built before 1970, and only 14.8% have been constructed since 2000. Compared to national trends, this results in a higher share of older, potentially lower-quality housing. The age of the housing stock contributes to ongoing quality and accessibility challenges. Many older homes require significant

investment to meet modern standards and are not well-suited for residents with disabilities or seniors wishing to age in place. Addressing these issues through renovations, accessibility upgrades, and new construction will be key to improving housing quality and meeting the evolving needs of the community.

7. FLOOD RISK

Q27. Describe the areas in or near your community with moderate to high flood risk.

The areas that have higher flood risk are those directly alongside the Missouri River. White Cloud is the highest risk, as well as Elwood and Wathena.

Q28. Describe how this impacts housing investment in your community.

Housing in those areas have been more prone to water damage, foundation issues, etc. This also affects home values in those areas and naturally makes them more impoverished.

7. HOUSING STOCK FOR OLDER ADULTS

Q29. How did the total share of senior households in your community change in the past 5 years?

- ☒ Increase
- ☐ Decrease
- ☐ No change

Q30. What age cohort is more prevalent in the total share of senior households in community?

- ☒ 65-74
- ☐ 75-84
- ☐ 85+

Q31. What is the potential housing need for new services or housing types for older adults?

An aging population is increasing demand for accessible, low-maintenance housing, assisted living, memory care, and multigenerational options, along with integrated services such as healthcare, transportation, and social supports.

Analysis: Housing Stock for Older Adults

Q32. Considering the share of senior households and the largest senior age cohort in your community, how does this impact your community's housing needs?

The data definitely shows a clear demand for more senior appropriate living housing, such as more home-plus facilities, senior living neighborhoods, assisted living facilities, etc.

C. STAKEHOLDER INTERVIEWS:

Local Business / Employers:

Contact up to five of the largest employers in your area.

How many businesses did you interview? 11

1. **Are there anticipated future housing needs for the workforce?**
   Yes

2. **Using the interview findings and local knowledge, what are the common trends for housing needs for employers in the region? Please describe.**
   Affordable workforce housing in the Wathena and Elwood area, where much of our housing is located. With these workers living outside of the community, the state and the county lose a lot of economic impact.

3. **Is the shortage of quality housing causing a substantial deterrent to the future economic growth and development of the city or county? Please describe.**
   Yes, Doniphan County is located on the border of Missouri and the majority of our industry is located in Wathena and Elwood. We have secured some large project wins the last few years, but the majority of the workers will commute in from outside Kansas.

4. **If so, what price range and housing type are needed?**
   Homes priced below $250,000 - $300,000

REALTORS

Contact up to two real estate professionals that work in your area to answer the questions.

How many realtors did you interview? 2

1. **According to the local realtors, what are the local and regional housing trends and needs?**
   Both realtors agreed detached, single-family homes are the greatest need, with at least three bedrooms. They also agreed there is need for both homeowner and rental options.

2. **If so, what price range and housing type are needed?**
   There is need in all price ranges that fit within the counties wage ranges, being below $150,000.

REALTOR ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

In addition to the realtor interview, a realtor assessment report was received to verify additional information and trends. According to the Realtors Property Resource (RPR) Market Trends Report (March 2026), Doniphan County has only three months of housing inventory, indicating a strong seller's market. While median listing prices have risen to approximately $190,000, recent sales averaging $369,000 suggest

limited availability of homes and potential skew toward higher-value properties, contributing to affordability challenges for local residents. Homes are taking an average of 137 days to sell, pointing to a mismatch between available housing and buyer needs. Overall, the data reinforces that the county's primary housing challenge is a shortage of quality, attainable housing rather than lack of demand.

D. REGIONAL HOUSING ANALYSIS

List the "Housing Opportunities & Challenges" for your region (located at the end of each region chapter).

Opportunities:

- Regional job growth projected through 2028, especially in manufacturing, education, and health care.
- Strong regional institutions and proximity to the Kansas City metro, offering access to larger markets and employers.
- Infill development opportunities and potential to revitalize aging housing stock.
- Interest in diverse housing options such as cottage homes, infill lots, and mixed-use projects.

Challenges:

- Housing underproduction—the region needs roughly 1,300–1,600 new units annually through 2028 but has averaged fewer than 1,000 new homes per year.
- Affordability gap—the private market struggles to produce homes below $225,000.
- Aging homes and deteriorating conditions require significant reinvestment.
- Limited housing variety, especially smaller homes, rentals under $1,000, and senior-friendly options.
- Labor and materials shortages driving up construction and rehab costs.
- Competition for workforce housing due to commuters drawn to larger employment centers like Lawrence and Topeka.

Describe how these regional housing challenges continue to impact your community's housing.

Doniphan County's housing challenges reflect broader Northeast Kansas trends but are intensified by its rural character and proximity to Missouri and the St. Joseph metro area. Nearly one-third (32.7%) of homes were built before 1940, with a median construction year of 1971, creating significant reinvestment needs. Since 2013, housing supply has declined 5.3% while jobs have grown 7%, limiting workforce retention and new resident attraction.

Median home values have risen 45.5% to $121,200, and incomes have increased 56.6%, yet new construction remains financially difficult without subsidy. Renters comprise just 18.2% of households, reflecting limited rental options. While only 25% of renters are cost-burdened, lower-rent inventory has declined, restricting options for households earning under $35,000.

Many workers commute from neighboring counties for more modern or diverse housing, underscoring the need for modest single-family and small multifamily workforce units. Young families struggle to find starter homes, while seniors lack downsizing options. Aging infrastructure and development costs remain barriers, making regional collaboration critical to support reinvestment and future growth.

E. HOUSING PHYSICAL CONDITION ASSESSMENT

Describe in detail the focus area of your housing assessment (entire community, neighborhood, etc.) and how the committee collected the data and information (appraiser data, windshield tour, combination of both).

The housing assessment encompassed all of Doniphan County, including incorporated cities and unincorporated areas, to ensure a comprehensive countywide evaluation. The committee partnered with the Doniphan County Appraiser's Office to obtain detailed residential property condition ratings. The appraiser provided a dataset identifying homes categorized as unsound, very poor, poor, fair, average, above average, and excellent under established appraisal standards.

Using this data, the committee isolated properties rated unsound, very poor, poor, and fair to better understand the extent and distribution of substandard housing conditions. Committee members then conducted windshield tour assessments of a randomized sample of those properties to visually verify conditions and observe neighborhood-level trends. This allowed the committee to confirm structural deterioration, vacancy indicators, and surrounding property impacts not fully captured in appraisal data. By combining official appraisal data with field observations, the assessment provides a data-driven and locally validated representation of housing conditions throughout Doniphan County.

What are the primary housing challenges observed from the physical condition assessment? (Select 1-3)

- ☐ Minor Maintenance of Repairs
- ☐ Trash or Vehicles in Yard
- ☒ Deteriorated Homes (2 Major Structural Problems)
- ☒ Dilapidated Homes (3+ Major Structural Problems)
- ☒ Vacant Homes
- ☐ Neighborhood Development (Lack of Lighting, Streetscape)
- ☐ Infrastructure Deterioration (Streets, Sidewalks)

1. **Are there neighborhoods or parts of town with higher concentration of deteriorated or dilapidated homes?**
   From our county appraiser's professional experience standpoint, the larger areas of deteriorated or dilapidated properties in the county are Leona, Severance, & White Cloud. The rural areas and larger cities are more spread out.

2. **Is there a higher concentration between owner vs rental -occupied units deteriorated or dilapidated?**
   Unknown

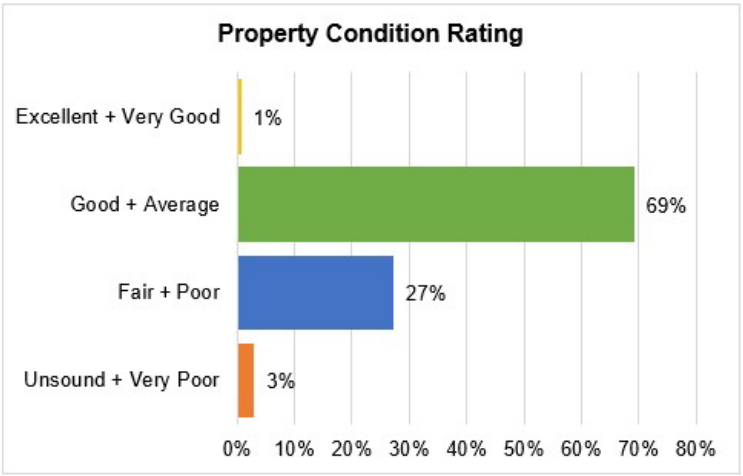
3. **Is there a type of structure that was found to have a higher concentration of deteriorated or dilapidated? If yes, please describe.**
   Manufactured homes, but there were plenty of single-family homes also in this condition.

4. **What are the key takeaways from the housing condition assessment and reviewer comments?**
   The housing condition assessment revealed widespread aging stock and visible deterioration across communities. While some homes could be rehabilitated, others are too far deteriorated to make renovation feasible, pointing to a need for strategic demolition and replacement housing. There is also a clear shortage of available units, including both owner-occupied and rental housing, reinforcing the importance of new construction.

   Leona and Severance appear to be in continued decline with little development activity, while Wathena shows signs of growth and has land available for expansion. In Highland, efforts have focused mainly on removing dilapidated properties rather than rehabilitation, and housing is not currently a top council priority. Windshield tours in Troy and White Cloud found homes either severely dilapidated or structurally sound but needing maintenance and cosmetic improvements. In Elwood, most homes surveyed were deteriorated, with visible trash and debris concerns, highlighting potential gaps in code enforcement or property maintenance standards.

   When looking solely at appraiser data, it also shows a majority of homes in Doniphan County are in better than average condition. This also concurs with the windshield tour that there are a significant number of homes that are fair to poor condition that are in need of rehabilitation to prevent further deterioration.

Property condition rating	#	%
Excellent + Very Good	16	1%
Good + Average	1777	69%
Fair + Poor	700	27%
Unsound + Very Poor	76	3%
TOTAL	**2569**	**100%**



HOUSING ASSESSMENT TOOL

PART 3:
Community engagement

Public input and ongoing engagement are essential components of the planning process to ensure the identified housing needs, goals, and actions reflect the needs and desires of your residents. Integrating their input through the planning process increases implementation support and can reveal new stakeholders to further address housing needs.

1. **Detail your community engagement method(s) (survey, focus group, meeting, or combo) and target audience.** Online Survey via Google Forms

2. **Approximately how much of the community did you engage?**

   The Doniphan County Housing Community Resident Survey generated 325 responses from residents across the county, representing a strong level of engagement for a rural community of this size. Responses reflect broad geographic representation, with 59.1% of respondents residing outside city limits but within the county and 37.2% residing within incorporated communities. The survey also captured a wide age distribution, with particularly strong participation among residents ages 35–64, and included a mix of household sizes and income levels.

   While homeowners comprised the majority of respondents (87.7%), renter participation was more limited, suggesting that rental households may be somewhat underrepresented. Given the county's total population, the 325 responses represent a meaningful share of households and provide a statistically relevant dataset for identifying directional housing trends, priorities, and community sentiment.

3. **Detail primary housing needs and priorities that were identified, as well as any concerns by community residents through the engagement process.**

   The primary finding from the engagement process in Doniphan County is a clear housing supply constraint. Nearly 73% of respondents indicated the community needs more housing, reflecting broad consensus that current inventory is insufficient. The strongest demand is for mid-size 3-bedroom homes (78.8%) and small 2- to 3-bedroom homes (60%), demonstrating a need for workforce and family-oriented housing. Moderate support for duplexes, townhomes, and apartments suggests opportunity for "missing middle" development.

   Housing condition is also a concern, with nearly half of respondents reporting five or more homes in their neighborhood needing rehabilitation and another 30.8% reporting one to four needing repair. Affordability barriers were frequently cited, with strong support for down payment assistance, infrastructure investment, and low-interest loan programs. Senior housing options, particularly service-enhanced and maintenance-supported units, were also identified as a priority, indicating limited downsizing and aging-in-place alternatives.

4. **Describe other topics identified through the engagement as community priority needs or concerns.**

   While housing was the primary focus, respondents identified several related community priorities. The most common concern was the lack of a local grocery store and expanded retail options, with many residents traveling to nearby communities for shopping, medical care, and entertainment—indicating retail leakage and limited services. Infrastructure issues were also prominent, including rural road maintenance, sidewalks, ADA accessibility, and deteriorating downtown buildings. Residents emphasized the need for expanded youth and family amenities such as parks, recreation facilities, pools, splash pads, and indoor gathering spaces, linking these to family retention and overall community vitality. Economic development was another recurring theme, with calls for higher-wage jobs, business attraction, and manufacturing growth. Overall, housing challenges are closely tied to infrastructure, retail access, and broader economic development.

5. **Builders and/or developers provide important feedback. If included, what are the identified housing needs and concerns by builders and/or developers?**

   Although the survey did not specifically categorize respondents as builders or developers, several comments reflect development-oriented perspectives. A recurring concern was the lack of build-ready lots, particularly those located on hard-surface roads or connected to reliable rural water infrastructure. Respondents noted that limited land availability and insufficient infrastructure expansion restrict new construction opportunities. There were also comments regarding high property taxes and development feasibility, suggesting that cost structures may influence builder interest.

   The feedback indicates that the primary development barrier in Doniphan County may not be demand alone, but rather site readiness and infrastructure capacity. Without platted subdivisions, extended utilities, and accessible buildable parcels, private-sector development will likely remain limited. These findings suggest the potential need for public-private partnerships, strategic lot development, and infrastructure investment to stimulate housing construction.

6. **What are the key takeaways from the community engagement initiative?**

   The community engagement initiative demonstrates strong consensus that Doniphan County requires additional housing supply, particularly workforce-oriented single-family homes in the two- to three-bedroom range. There is also evidence of unmet demand for rental housing and senior-focused housing options. Rehabilitation of existing housing stock represents a significant opportunity, given the high number of properties identified as needing repair. Infrastructure constraints—especially related to roads, utilities, and buildable lot availability—appear to be structural barriers to development. Additionally, residents clearly connect housing growth to broader economic and quality-of-life factors, including retail access, employment opportunities, recreation amenities, and downtown revitalization. The engagement results indicate that housing cannot be addressed in isolation but must be incorporated into a comprehensive community development strategy.

   Importantly, the survey generated meaningful civic participation, with dozens of residents expressing willingness to remain involved in housing initiatives. This level of engagement reflects community awareness of the issue and provides a strong foundation for future implementation efforts.

HOUSING ASSESSMENT TOOL

PART 4:
Final assessment of data, input and setting policies

Once the housing committee thoroughly reviews the community's data and public input, the committee pulls it all together to establish a clear assessment of the local housing needs. This is the opportunity to set clear objectives and priorities for housing in a community.

HOUSING ASSETS

1	Strong fiber and broadband infrastructure is one of Doniphan County's greatest competitive advantages as a rural community. Thanks in large part to Rainbow Communications' Connectivity Grant investment, awarded from the KDC, high-speed fiber has expanded significantly across the county. Today, residents and businesses benefit from multiple providers, including Rainbow, Mercury Wireless, Brightspeed, and Nextlink, creating both coverage and competition. Reliable, high-speed internet is critical infrastructure for modern economic growth. It supports existing businesses, enables entrepreneurship and home-based enterprises, and makes remote work a realistic option for residents who are employed by companies outside the region. For a rural county, this level of connectivity removes a traditional barrier to growth and positions the community to compete with metro areas for talent. From a housing perspective, strong broadband directly supports new residential development. Professionals and families considering relocation increasingly require dependable internet for work, education, telehealth, and daily life. Doniphan County's fiber network strengthens its value proposition, making new housing construction more viable and marketable to remote workers, entrepreneurs, and small business owners seeking rural quality of life without sacrificing connectivity.
2	Another significant housing asset for Doniphan County is its investment in core infrastructure. All communities have either recently completed water system upgrades or are currently in the process of making improvements. These upgrades strengthen system reliability, capacity, and regulatory compliance—critical components for supporting residential growth. Having modern, dependable water infrastructure in place reduces barriers to new housing development and provides confidence to builders, developers, and potential residents. It signals that the communities are planning proactively and are prepared to accommodate additional homes. Combined with strong broadband access, these infrastructure improvements position Doniphan County to support and sustain future residential expansion.
3	From the committee's perspective, the quality of local schools is another major housing asset for Doniphan County. Districts such as Riverside, Doniphan West (DWEST), and Troy are viewed as strong educational options, making the county an attractive place for families in surrounding areas who want access to high-quality schools in a smaller, supportive setting.

	In addition, each community offers valued quality-of-life amenities, including community centers and parks. There is also a clear appetite among local leaders and residents to continue enhancing recreational spaces and overall quality of place. Strong schools combined with active community amenities make Doniphan County a desirable location for families and position the area well for attracting new residents and supporting future housing development.

HOUSING NEEDS

1	**Mid-Level (Workforce) Housing** The committee identified mid-level housing—primarily 2–3+ bedroom single-family homes—as the top priority. Data collected through the housing assessment, input from local realtors, and responses from the community survey consistently showed strong demand for family-sized homes at attainable price points. Many households actively seeking housing are unable to find options that meet their needs. Committee members also shared personal experiences that reinforced this shortage. This need closely aligns with workforce housing. Major employers and industrial areas in Wathena and Elwood draw workers who often commute from outside the county due to limited local housing availability. Expanding mid-level housing would support employee retention, reduce commuting patterns, and strengthen the local economy by enabling more members of the workforce to live within the community they serve. Priorities were established through a combination of housing condition data, market feedback from realtors, community survey results, and direct input from committee members representing diverse perspectives. The committee focused on needs that were consistently identified across multiple data sources and that would have the greatest impact on long-term community growth, workforce stability, and housing availability.
2	**Duplexes and Rental Options** The second priority is the development of duplexes and other small-scale rental options. Feedback from the survey, data analysis, and local stakeholders confirmed a shortage of quality rental housing, including options for young professionals, temporary workers, and individuals not yet ready for homeownership. Duplexes represent a strategic opportunity for investors and developers. They can provide attainable entry-level housing, meet professional and temporary housing needs, and diversify the overall housing stock. This “missing middle” housing type would increase flexibility in the market and create a pathway for renters to transition into homeownership over time. Priorities were established through a combination of housing condition data, market feedback from realtors, community survey results, and direct input from committee members representing diverse perspectives. The committee focused on needs that were consistently identified across multiple data sources and that would have the greatest impact on long-term community growth, workforce stability, and housing availability.
3	**Senior Independent Living Housing** With an aging population, the committee identified senior independent living housing as a critical opportunity. Many long-time residents remain in larger homes that exceed their current space or accessibility needs. However, limited downsizing options prevent them from relocating within the community. Developing smaller, accessible homes for residents aged 55+ would allow seniors to

	maintain independence while freeing up existing single-family homes for new families. The committee noted that momentum already exists, with an investor having purchased acreage in Wathena to potentially develop a 20-unit senior housing neighborhood. Supporting this type of project would address demographic trends, increase housing turnover, and strengthen the overall housing ecosystem. Priorities were established through a combination of housing condition data, market feedback from realtors, community survey results, and direct input from committee members representing diverse perspectives. The committee focused on needs that were consistently identified across multiple data sources and that would have the greatest impact on long-term community growth, workforce stability, and housing availability.

FINAL QUESTIONS

Considering the full assessment, how will addressing the priority needs impact the increase in housing availability and/or opportunity in your community?

Addressing Doniphan County's housing priorities will expand availability and diversity for residents at all life stages.

- Developing mid-level 2–3+ bedroom homes meets the highest demand, allowing families—including local workers—to live in the community rather than commute, supporting workforce stability.
- Duplexes and rental units provide flexible housing for young professionals, temporary workers, and entry-level residents, filling the "missing middle" and offering a path to homeownership.
- Senior independent living allows older residents to downsize while staying local, freeing larger homes for new families.

Together, these strategies strengthen the housing market, support multi-generational growth, and make the county more attractive for families, professionals, and retirees.

Are there specific regions or neighborhoods in your community that need concentrated effort?

Certain areas in Doniphan County need focused housing efforts. Leona and Severance are in decline, requiring targeted rehabilitation and redevelopment. Elwood has many deteriorated homes with visible debris, highlighting a need for stronger code enforcement and cleanup. Highland has removed some dilapidated properties but lacks rehabilitation programs; grants or incentives could help. In Troy and White Cloud, homes are either severely deteriorated or need maintenance and cosmetic updates. Wathena shows growth and available land, but strategic planning is needed to ensure development meets housing and infrastructure needs. Focused efforts in these areas can improve housing availability, quality, and long-term community stability.

Describe the community's timeline for addressing the priorities.

A phased timeline will address Doniphan County's housing priorities. Short-Term (0–2 years): Focus on rehabilitation, duplexes, entry-level housing, and targeted code enforcement in areas like Elwood, Highland, Troy, and White Cloud. A senior independent living project in Wathena could be developed within a year, quickly adding options for downsizing residents.

Medium-Term (2–5 years): Advance new construction of mid-level family homes, senior housing, and rentals. Promote development on available land in Wathena and other growth areas and expand grant or façade programs.

Long-Term (5+ years): Evaluate earlier efforts, adjust strategies to market trends, and continue expanding housing for workforce, professionals, and remote workers, ensuring alignment with community and economic development goals.

Identify the local stakeholders who will be involved in addressing the priorities.

Key stakeholders for Doniphan County's housing priorities include:

- City and County Governments: Oversee policy, zoning, code enforcement, and infrastructure planning.
- Economic Development and Housing Committees: Guide strategy, prioritize projects, and coordinate efforts.
- Landowners: Engage owners of developable parcels to unlock housing opportunities. Developers and
- Realtors: Build housing and provide market insights. Community Organizations/Nonprofits: Support rehab programs, grants, and façade improvements.
- School Districts: Identify family housing demand and enhance community appeal.
- Utilities and Infrastructure Providers: Ensure water, sewer, power, roads, broadband, and drainage support development.
- Residents/Neighborhood Associations: Offer input to align projects with local needs.

Engaging these stakeholders ensures strategies are actionable, aligned with community needs, and promote housing growth.

What will it take to overcome these obstacles and identify local stakeholders who will be responsible for addressing them?

Overcoming Doniphan County's housing obstacles requires coordinated strategies & clear stakeholder roles.

- Aging housing stock: Address with rehabilitation, code enforcement, and selective demolition.
  - Stakeholders: City councils, county code, economic development committees, nonprofits.
- Limited new construction/undeveloped land: Engage landowners and identify parcels.
  - Stakeholders: Economic development committees, planning departments, developers, landowners.
- Rental/entry-level housing shortage: Build duplexes and small rental units.
  - Stakeholders: Developers, realtors, economic development committees.
- Senior housing demand: Support identified projects and expand independent living.
  - Stakeholders: Developers, city/county officials, housing committees.
- Infrastructure: Ensure water, sewer, power, roads, drainage, and broadband support growth.
  - Stakeholders: Evergy, Doniphan County RECo-op, broadband providers, public works, road departments, planning commissions.
- Community engagement: Align projects with local needs.
  - Stakeholders: Residents, neighborhood associations, school districts, community organizations.

Collaboration, incentives, and planning are key to unlocking housing development.

OCCUPANCY	ASSET	NEUTRAL	NEED
Owner-occupied housing			X
Renter-occupied housing			X
Temporary housing			X

HOUSING TYPE	ASSET	NEUTRAL	NEED
Entry-level single-family housing			X
Mid-level single-family housing			X
High-level single-family housing			X
Large, lot acreage housing		X	
Townhomes / row houses		X	
Duplexes			X
Multi-family apartments			X
Condominiums (condos)		X	
Manufactured / mobile homes		X	
Senior (independent) housing			X
Senior care facilities			X
Downtown housing (above commercial)			X
Housing Type – Priority #1	Mid-level single-family housing		
Housing Type – Priority #2	Duplexes		
Housing Type – Priority #3	Senior housing (independent living)		

POPULATION	ASSET	NEUTRAL	NEED
Young professional housing			X
Family housing			X
Senior housing			X
Workforce housing			X
Disabled housing			X
Low-to-moderate income housing			X
Moderate-income housing			X
High-income housing			X
Homeless housing		X	
Formerly incarcerated housing		X	

HOUSING INITIATIVES	ASSET	NEUTRAL	NEED
New construction			X
Rehabilitation			X
Infill development			X
Demolition			X
Homeownership incentives			X
Developer incentives			X
Code enforcement		X	
Regional collaboration		X	
Homelessness prevention		X	
Brownfield development		X	

HOUSING FACTORS	ASSET	NEUTRAL	NEED
Affordability			X
Demand	X		
Land availability			X
Historic homes	X		
Housing type variety			X
Housing price variety			X
Housing quality			X
Aging housing stock			X
Construction costs			X
Worker shortage			X
Vacancy			X
Flood zones		X	

INFRASTRUCTURE / AMENITIES	ASSET	NEUTRAL	NEED
Water distribution	X		
Stormwater drainage		X	
Sanitary sewer			X
Sidewalks and trails			X
Streets			X
Parks and open spaces			X
Reliable internet	X		
Child care			X
Schools	X		
City services (library, pool, etc.)			X
Emergency services (fire, police, etc.)		X	
Health services	X		
Retail and restaurants			X
Jobs and employment			X
Proximity to urban areas	X		
Transportation services			X
Community center(s)	X		

) S

Business Stakeholder Interview Summary

QUESTIONS:	Business #1	Business #2	Business #3	Business #4	Business #5	Business #6	Business #7	Business #8	Business #9	Business #10 (2)
Number of employees	135	92	99	7	105	10	110	Unable to provide to public	364	95 / approx 85
Employee wage range	$22.00-$32.00 an hour	$16.00 - $40.92	$15.00 - $70.00/hour	$25 -$35/hr	$17.50 to $23/hr (for production workers)	$16 to $28/hr Providers $125K/yr	$22-$60+/HOUR	17.75 to 37.18/hr production level jobs	minimum wage	$10K - $120K
# of new jobs created in the last year	we have hired an additional 15 so far in 2025	None	50	None	5-10	2	5 - continuing to hire	We continue to hire	N/A	1 / 0
# of new jobs expected to be created in the next year	we expect to hire 30+ in 2026	None	6-10	None	0	0	5	Continue growth and open positions into 2026	N/A	0 / 0
# of existing jobs that are unfilled because a lack of adequate housing	none that we know of	None that we are aware of. We do have 12 open positions	4	0	2	1	0	0	0	2 / (several filled with unlicensed and part-time)
Is housing an issue for employee recruitment?	not at this time	It could be for potential employees	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	It could be for potential employees	Yes	Possibly / YES
# of employees not living in the community where they work because there is a lack of adequate housing but who want to live in the community	2 folks are looking to move into Kansas currenlty	Under 5	30	5	70	5	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	1 to 2 / unknown-some commute 30 min to 1 hr to work
# of employees living in the community but who have inadequate housing and are seeking better living conditions	none that we know of	Unsure	5 or less	0	Not aware of any	2	Unknown	Unknown	N/A	Unsure / no answer
How many employees commute over 60 miles or over an hour for work?	12	None	3 to 4	0	1-2	0	Less than 5	We have many, but we are not aware of the total count.	3-4	1 to 2 / Unknown
Is the business planning an expansion or reduction in the workforce?	expansion in process	No	No plans for expansion or reduction	Yes. New facility	Not at this time for expansion or reduction	Expansion as new services needed. No reduction. Willing to write letter that lack of housing is an issue.	Continuing to grow the workforce	Continuing to grow the workforce	No	Unsure / Possible reduction

HOUSING ASSESSMENT TOOL

KANSAS COMMERCE

Realtor Stakeholder Interview Summary

Summary for Salesforce Questions:	
Realtor #1	**Realtor #2**
What is the degree of overall housing demand in the community?	
High	High
What HOUSING TYPE was ranked the highest need?	
Homeowner (For-Sale)	Homeowner (For-Sale)
Large Family (3+ Bedrooms)	Large Family (3+ Bedrooms)
Rental	Rental
What HOUSING TYPE was ranked the lowest need?	
Farm labor / migrant	Farm labor / migrant
Homeless	Homeless
What HOUSING STYLE was ranked the highest need?	
Detached homes (single-family)	Detached homes (single-family)
What HOUSING STYLE was ranked the lowest need?	
Manufactured housing	Manufactured housing
What household income levels have the greatest need for housing?	
Less than $25,000 - $150,000	$25,000 - $150,000