



# Ethan, SD

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## CHAPTER 9

Davison County Comprehensive Plan  
DAVISON COUNTY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP | 2021-2040

## POPULATION

Ethan was laid out in 1883, and named in honor of Ethan Allen, a patriot in the Revolutionary War. The town is located ten miles south of Mitchell and one mile east of South Dakota Highway 37. Certain data will be presented in comparison to similarly sized towns in the area: Alexandria, Dimock, Fulton, Letcher, Mount Vernon, and Plankinton. Comparison with similar communities can help local leaders evaluate Ethan's status in the region.

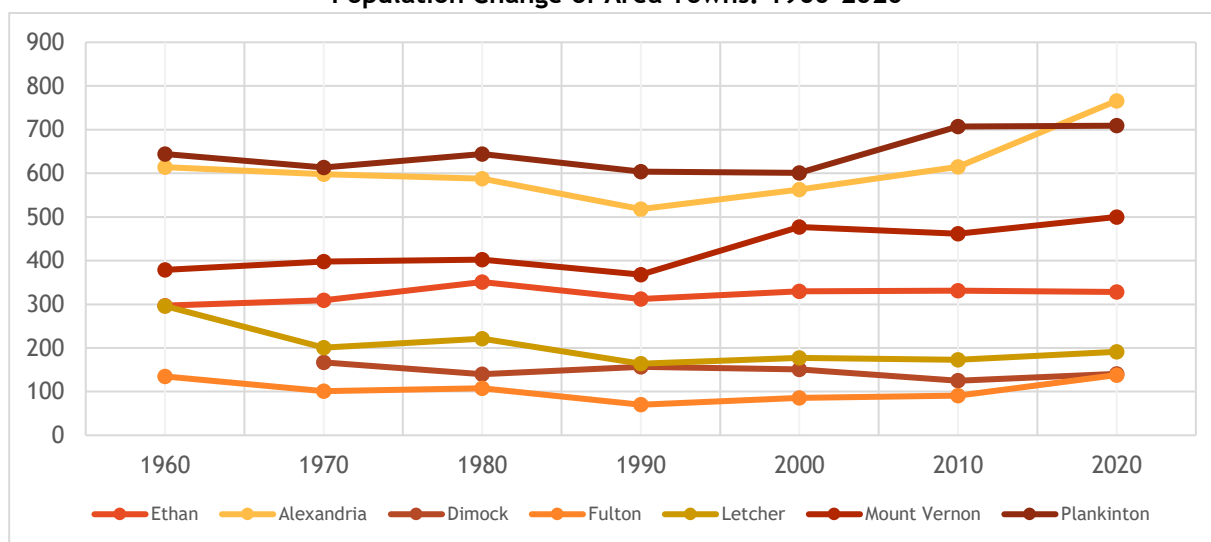
**Table 9.1** contains historical populations for the County, State and towns between 1960 and 2020. The 2020 Census data showed Ethan with a population of 328 persons. Overall, Ethan grew slightly since 1960; about 5 people per decade.

**TABLE 9.1**  
**Population Data: 1960 - 2020**

Area	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	% Change 1960-2020	Annual Growth
Davison	16,681	17,319	17,820	17,503	18,741	19,504	19,890	19.24%	0.29%
Ethan	297	309	351	312	330	331	328	10.44%	0.17%
Alexandria	614	598	588	518	563	615	766	24.76%	0.37%
Dimock		167	140	157	151	125	141	-15.57%	-0.28%
Fulton	135	101	108	70	86	91	138	2.22%	0.04%
Letcher	296	201	221	164	177	173	191	-35.47%	-0.73%
Mount Vernon	379	398	402	368	477	462	500	31.93%	0.46%
Plankinton	644	613	644	604	601	707	709	10.09%	0.16%
South Dakota	680,514	666,257	690,768	696,004	754,844	814,180	879,336	29.22%	0.43%

In **Figure 9.1** below, Ethan's population is represented by the shaded line. **Figure 9.1** shows where towns such as Alexandria and Plankinton have shown steady growth since 2000. In terms of percentage growth or decline, Mount Vernon has grown by 15 % since 1960, while Letcher has declined by 40 % over the same period.

**FIGURE 9.1**  
**Population Change of Area Towns: 1960-2020**



The term population encompasses numerous sub-sections, divisions, groups, etc. One of these divisions is race. In comparing the racial data between the towns, County, and State, there are very stark differences. The towns in the study area are predominantly white while Davison County and South Dakota have a more diverse racial population. **Table 9.2** displays racial data for Ethan and comparable towns.

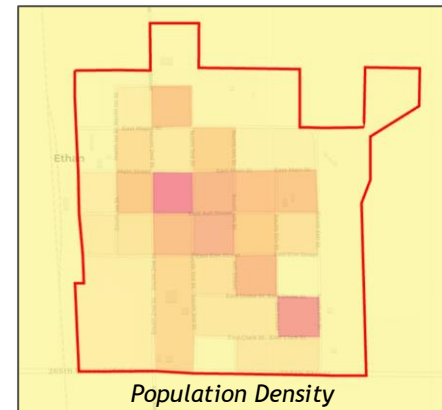
**TABLE 9.2**  
**Specified Racial Population Data 2020**

Entity	White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races
<b>Davison</b>	18,422	269	352	243	0	208	396
Ethan	297	0	0	0	0	0	0
Alexandria	761	0	0	0	0	0	5
Dimock	141	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fulton	138	0	0	0	0	0	0
Letcher	172	0	0	3	0	0	16
Mount Vernon	487	0	0	0	0	0	13
Plankinton	640	0	18	0	0	43	8
<b>South Dakota</b>	<b>735,228</b>	<b>18,836</b>	<b>74,975</b>	<b>12,413</b>	<b>544</b>	<b>7,320</b>	<b>30,020</b>

Sources: US Census

The population of Ethan is fairly spread out throughout the town. There are two blocks, one near downtown and one in the southeast part of town, where the population is more concentrated as shown in the image to the right. Yellow tones represent low population density and red tones indicate higher concentrations of people.

While general population data is useful in addressing general issues facing the County, it is necessary to group the county's residents into smaller divisions in order to evaluate service needs. The previous tables show that Davison County is growing but additional questions remain such as how, why, and where.



An area of concern in South Dakota is the loss of youth, coupled with an increasing median age of residents. This trend is not a new issue, but one that affects some regions at a much greater rate than others. There are many reasons for these concerns including labor force, stability, services, and dependency to name a few. Tables 9.3 and 9.4 contain a fifty-year trend of youth and aged populations.

**TABLE 9.3**  
**Youth Population - Age 18 or Younger - 1970 - 2020**

Entity	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	Population Change 1970 - 2020	% Change 1970-2020
<b>Davison</b>	5,956	4,990	4,827	4,753	5,252	4,594	-1,362	-22.87%
Ethan	44	113	104	99	94	92	48	109.09%
Alexandria	184	173	136	155	167	221	37	20.11%
Dimock	69	42	46	36	9	47	-22	-31.88%
Fulton	32	34	17	15	32	30	-2	-6.25%
Letcher	74	60	39	44	49	50	-24	-32.43%
Mount Vernon	93	112	107	152	139	124	31	33.33%
Plankinton	186	161	151	133	157	177	-9	-4.84%
<b>South Dakota</b>	<b>241,175</b>	<b>205,606</b>	<b>198,973</b>	<b>202,649</b>	<b>226,740</b>	<b>215,747</b>	<b>-25,428</b>	<b>-10.54%</b>

Sources: USD BRB State Data Center; 2000 & 2002 South Dakota Community Abstracts

The recent trend in Ethan is promising when compared to the control group and state figures. In the previous decades, 1970-2020, the youth population in Ethan more than doubled (109% increase) compared to an 10.54% drop in the youth population in South Dakota.

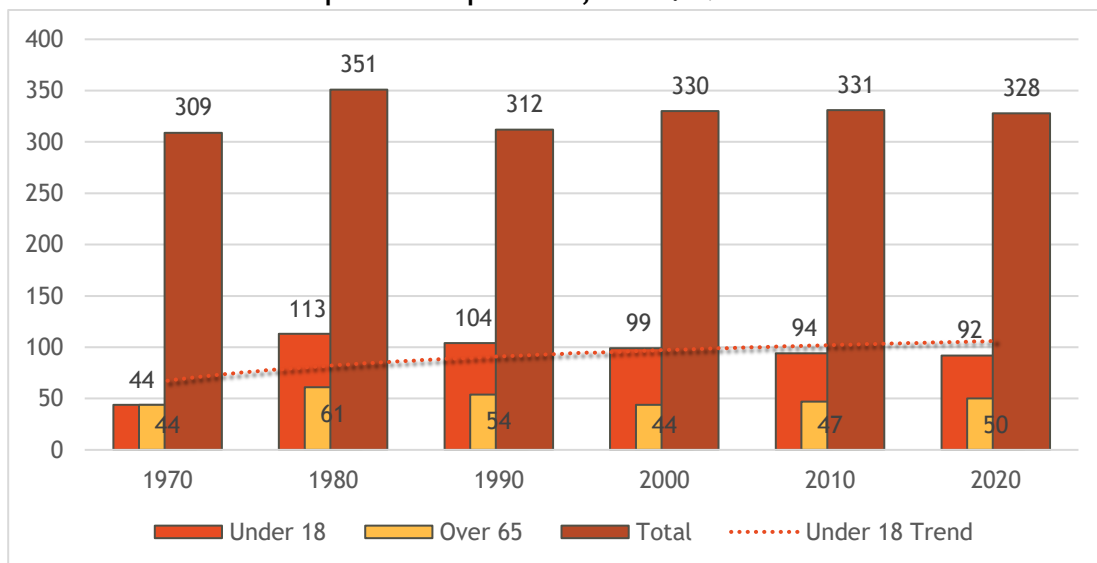
Table 9.4 shows that the number of people aged 65 or older increased in Ethan, Davison County, and South Dakota. The elderly population in Ethan increased by 13.64% since 1970 while the same cohort grew by nearly 83% in South Dakota in the same period. Letcher and Mount Vernon reported a sizeable decrease in the elderly population in terms of percent gain or loss.

**TABLE 9.4**  
**Aged Population - Age 65 or Older - 1970 - 2020**

Area name	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	Population Change 1970 - 2020	% Change 1970-2020
<b>Davison</b>	2,520	2,764	3,050	3,042	3,301	<b>3,709</b>	1,189	47.18%
<b>Ethan</b>	44	61	54	44	48	50	6	13.64%
<b>Alexandria</b>	151	130	115	96	99	159	8	5.30%
<b>Dimock</b>	33	25	29	39	30	35	2	6.06%
<b>Fulton</b>	31	23	25	21	10	29	-2	-6.45%
<b>Letcher</b>	33	46	41	33	31	10	-23	-69.70%
<b>Mount Vernon</b>	93	87	70	61	67	46	-47	-50.54%
<b>Plankinton</b>	122	143	151	125	85	119	-3	-2.46%
<b>South Dakota</b>	80,274	91,019	102,114	108,131	116,581	146,831	66,557	82.91%

The dependent populations in Ethan between 1970 and 2020 are illustrated in **Figure 9.2**. It clearly shows that, since 1980, youth have outnumbered the elderly in Ethan. This measure can inform leaders and policy makers what type of resources may be needed. For example, school facilities and teachers will be vital in Ethan in order to serve the youth population. On the other hand, skilled or in-home care would be needed to serve a predominantly elderly population.

**FIGURE 9.2**  
**Dependent Populations, Ethan: 1970-2020**

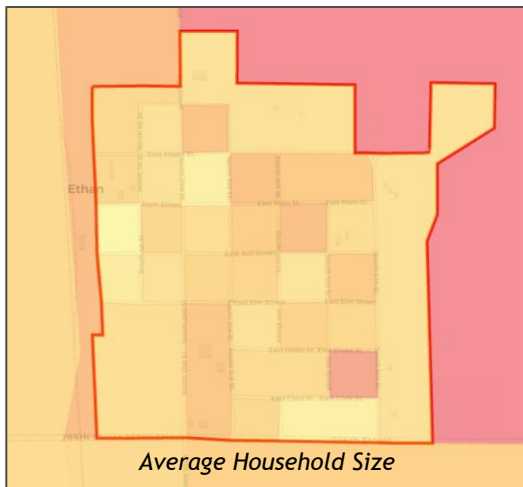


The number, type, and size of households in a community can indicate where demand for housing units and services will be in the future. **Table 9.5** compares the number and average size of households in Ethan and Mount Vernon. A slight majority of households in Ethan consist of married couples. The percentage of married-couple households in Ethan is slightly higher than Davison County and South Dakota but less than Mount Vernon. The average size of various household types in Ethan is a bit less than the other places in

the study area. The average married couple household size in Ethan lags behind the State (2.97 persons per household in Ethan compared to 3.04 persons per household for the State).

**TABLE 9.5**  
**Households by Type, 2010-2020**

		SD		Davison County		Ethan		Mount Vernon	
		Total HH	Avg. HH Size	Total HH	Avg. HH Size	Total HH	Avg. HH Size	Total HH	Avg. HH Size
<b>Total</b>	<b>2010</b>	315,468	2.43	8,086	2.25	119	2.37	164	2.53
	<b>2020</b>	347,878	2.43	8,651	2.18	144	2.28	248	2.02
<b>Married-couple family households</b>	<b>2010</b>	164,007	3.02	4,181	2.88	67	2.97	99	3.12
	<b>2020</b>	171,918	3.04	4,122	2.90	75	2.95	101	2.94
<b>Male householder, no spouse present, family household</b>	<b>2010</b>	11,862	3.32	194	4.27	1	2.0	10	3.70
	<b>2020</b>	15,628	3.28	364	3.16	4	3.0	12	4.50
<b>Female householder, no spouse present, family household</b>	<b>2010</b>	30,010	3.25	608	2.92	15	3.0	3	2.0
	<b>2020</b>	31,159	3.55	590	2.94	9	2.89	5	3.20
<b>Nonfamily households</b>	<b>2010</b>	109,859	1.22	3,103	1.15	36	--	52	1.21
	<b>2020</b>	129,173	1.25	3,575	1.12	56	1.23	130	1.02



Households, on average, are larger in the rural areas. The darker shades of red in the image to the right indicate a larger average household size. Blocks inside the town boundaries of Ethan have smaller average household sizes. It could be inferred that new housing units developed in the community would need to accommodate smaller households while rural housing should be able to accommodate larger families.

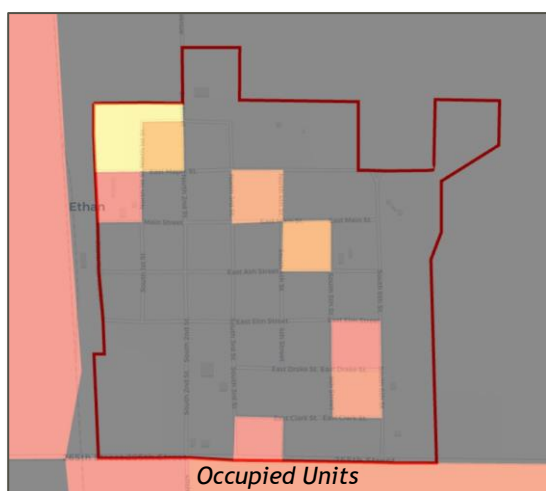
## HOUSING

The condition of housing may be evaluated by several factors, including type, age, quality, and affordability. **Table 9.6** identifies the number of housing units for the study communities in 2010 and 2020. It shows 153 total housing units in the Ethan, of which 144 were occupied (only 5.9% vacant units). The table displays a pattern of reductions in housing vacancies across the comparable communities and a dramatic reduction in vacancies in Ethan, Letcher, and Mount Vernon.

**TABLE 9.6**  
**Housing Units and Vacancy- 2010-2020**

	Year	Total housing units	Occupied	Vacant	Percent Vacant	Homeowner vacancy rate	Rental vacancy rate
<b>Davison</b>	2010	8,792	8,086	706	8.00%	1	6.2
	2020	9,550	8,651	899	9.40%	1	13.6
<b>Ethan</b>	2010	159	119	40	25.20%	13.1	0
	2020	153	144	9	5.90%	9.2	0
<b>Alexandria</b>	2010	295	271	24	8.10%	0	25.5
	2020	302	280	22	7.30%	3	0
<b>Dimock</b>	2010	62	53	9	14.50%	0	0
	2020	43	43	0	0.00%	0	0
<b>Fulton</b>	2010	58	58	0	0.00%	0	0
	2020	55	55	0	0.00%	0	0
<b>Letcher</b>	2010	98	73	25	25.50%	9	85.7
	2020	98	83	15	15.30%	0	18.8
<b>Mount Vernon</b>	2010	207	164	43	20.80%	4.5	39.3
	2020	268	248	20	7.50%	3.4	4.4
<b>Plankinton</b>	2010	309	259	50	16.20%	0	8.7
	2020	347	314	33	9.50%	0	7.8
<b>South Dakota</b>	2010	357,725	315,468	42,257	11.80%	1.5	6.4
	2020	396,817	347,878	48,939	12.30%	1.2	6.8

The image below depicts the housing occupancy levels by block in Ethan. The dark gray shades indicate 100% occupied housing units. The yellow shades indicate very low occupancy levels (or high vacancy).



A more detailed snapshot of the housing stock is provided in **Table 9.7**. The data shows Ethan's occupied housing increased by 25 units in the period between 2010 and 2020, which equates to an increase of over 2 units per year.

Sizeable increases were reported in mobile homes and units in three/four-plexes. Mobile homes account for about 6.5% of the total units in Ethan. Over 30% of the total housing units in Letcher are mobile homes.

**TABLE 9.7**  
**Detailed Housing Units by Type: 2010-2020**

	Year	Total	1-unit detached	1-unit attached	2 units	3 or 4 units	5 to 9 units	10 to 19 units	20 + units	Mobile home	Boat, RV, etc.
<b>Davison</b>	2010	8,792	5,851	201	207	382	460	601	579	511	0
	2020	9,550	5,974	245	131	616	570	540	984	490	0
<b>Ethan</b>	2010	159	145	0	0	6	0	0	2	6	0
	2020	153	128	1	0	13	0	0	1	10	0
<b>Alexandria</b>	2010	295	248	0	3	12	8	0	0	24	0
	2020	302	287	0	0	6	9	0	0	0	0
<b>Dimock</b>	2010	62	58	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
	2020	43	40	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Fulton</b>	2010	58	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2020	55	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
<b>Letcher</b>	2010	98	63	0	0	12	0	0	0	23	0
	2020	98	70	0	0	6	0	0	0	22	0
<b>Mount Vernon</b>	2010	207	175	0	7	17	0	0	0	8	0
	2020	268	228	3	3	16	0	0	0	18	0
<b>Plankinton</b>	2010	309	239	0	16	21	0	0	0	29	4
	2020	347	250	0	14	23	0	7	0	51	2
<b>South Dakota</b>	2010	357,725	246,674	11,360	7,681	12,176	12,737	12,270	21,369	33,338	120
	2020	396,817	266,995	15,086	7,453	14,254	15,386	17,327	25,792	34,316	208

Source: 2010, 2020 US Census Table DP-4

**Table 9.8** lists the value of homes in Ethan and comparative towns for the years 2010 and 2020. One of the sources of community revenue is the property taxes generated through the value of owner-occupied dwelling units. In a developing community, the number of owner-occupied units with higher values should increase over time. The number of units valued between \$150,000 and \$200,000 in Ethan increased by 8 between 2010 and 2020. However, **Table 9.8** shows the highest number of the Ethan's owner-occupied housing units fall between \$50,000 and \$150,000 in value.

**TABLE 5.8**  
**Value of Owner-Occupied Housing Units - 2010 - 2020**

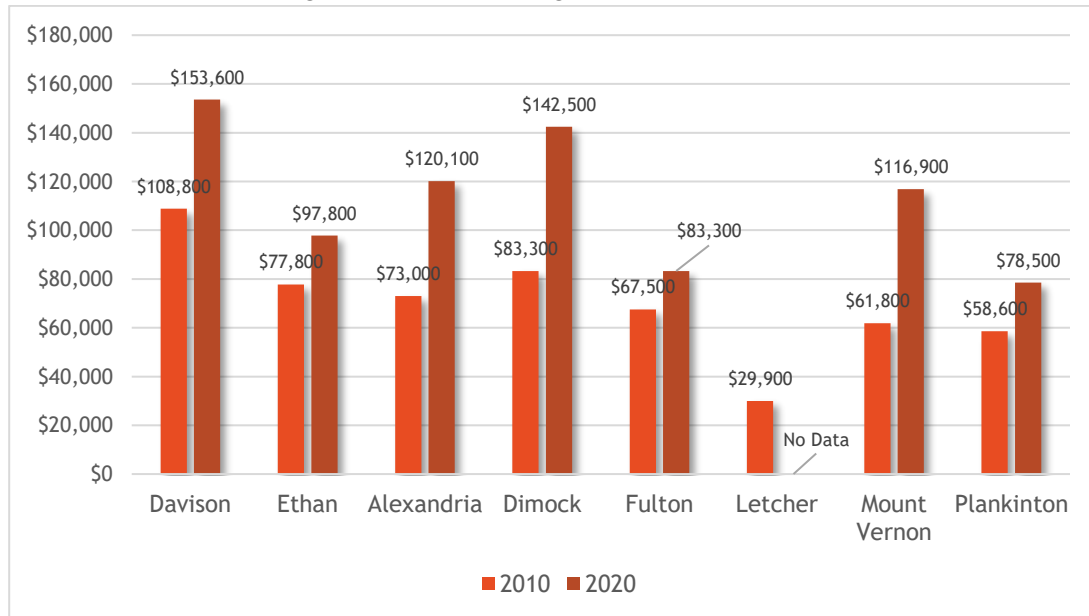
	Year	Less than \$50,000	\$50,000 to \$99,999	\$100,000 to \$149,999	\$150,000 to \$199,999	\$200,000 to \$299,999	\$300,000 to \$499,999	\$500,000 to \$999,999	\$1,000,000 or more
<b>Davison</b>	2010	638	1,664	1,168	791	544	238	31	23
	2020	495	805	1,168	1,136	940	481	121	41
<b>Ethan</b>	2010	10	47	24	4	0	0	0	0
	2020	17	31	26	12	2	0	1	0
<b>Alexandria</b>	2010	43	145	35	11	2	0	0	0
	2020	17	66	93	31	20	0	0	0
<b>Dimock</b>	2010	9	14	10	0	3	2	0	0
	2020	5	7	7	11	5	0	0	0
<b>Fulton</b>	2010	21	8	17	2	5	0	0	0
	2020	21	18	8	3	3	1	0	0
<b>Letcher</b>	2010	52	11	6	0	0	2	0	0
	2020	35	11	12	4	0	0	0	0
<b>Mount Vernon</b>	2010	49	75	6	14	0	3	0	0
	2020	15	34	48	24	12	3	0	4
<b>Plankinton</b>	2010	72	69	22	10	2	0	0	0
	2020	53	92	49	20	27	0	2	0
<b>South Dakota</b>	2010	26,464	30,602	36,093	43,474	52,839	34,848	10,105	2,070
	2020	26,464	30,602	36,093	43,474	52,839	34,848	10,105	2,070

Source: 2010, 2020 US Census Table DP-4



Another measure of potential community tax revenue is the median housing unit value. **Figure 9.3** shows the change in median housing unit values in Ethan, Davison County, and comparable communities. The median values in Mount Vernon nearly doubled, with an eighty-eight percent (88%) increase between 2010 and 2020, from \$61,800 to \$116,900. The median value in Ethan grew by 22% over the same period, from \$77,800 in 2010 to \$97,800 in 2020.

**FIGURE 9.3**  
**Change in Median Housing Unit Values: 2010-2020**



There were key issues or influences which affect housing stock identified at the onset of this section. Many times, these items are not autonomous but have a correlation to each other either directly or indirectly. Value can be related to quality, age, and demand. Quality and age share a more indirect relationship. The data presented in **Table 9.9** examine the age of structures. About one-third of the housing units in Ethan were built before 1940.

The age of the towns' housing stock is further illustrated in **Figure 9.4**. By graphing the years of construction, patterns emerge that show when there was a surge, or slowdown, in housing construction. We can infer some general periods tied to generations or historical trends by viewing the data. For example, most of the towns reported a "bump" in housing unit construction during the 1950s. History shows us that many homes were built in America under the "GI Bill," which provided low-interest loans for veterans returning from World War II. Another peak happened in the 1970s, which would reflect the subsequent Baby Boomer generation building homes, and so forth.



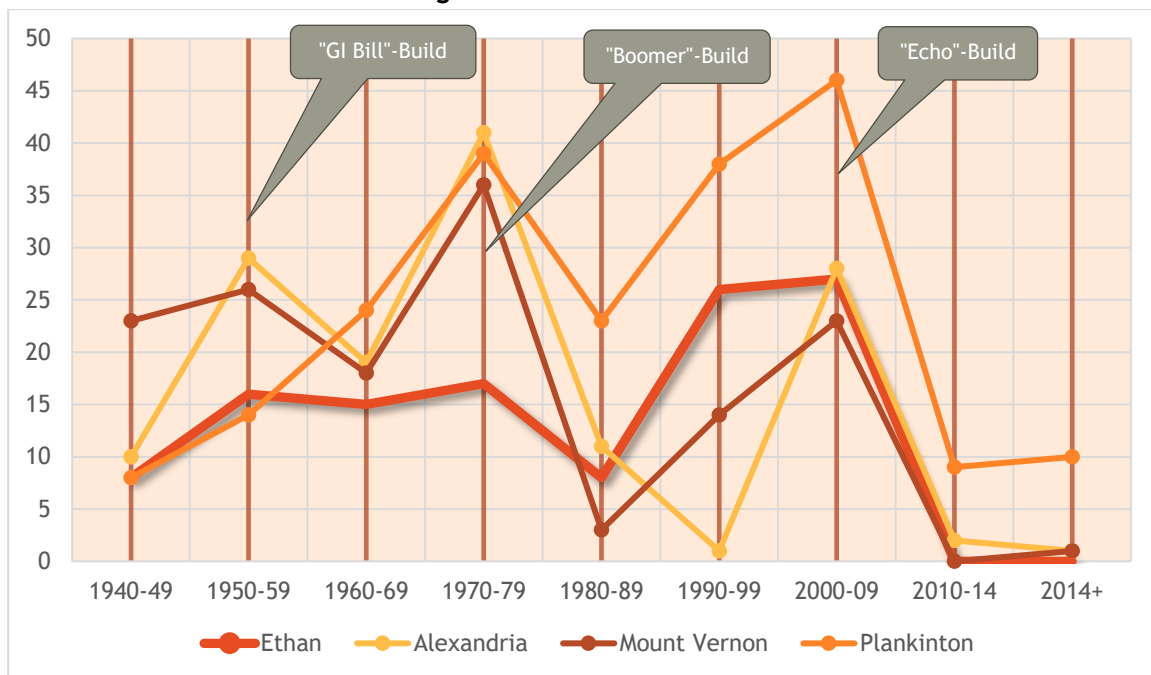


**TABLE 9.9**  
**Years of Construction - Housing Units - Through 2020**

	2014 or later	2010 to 2013	2000 to 2009	1990 to 1999	1980 to 1989	1970 to 1979	1960 to 1969	1950 to 1959	1940 to 1949	1939 or earlier
<b>Davison</b>	313	361	891	893	675	1,743	766	829	409	2,670
%	3.3%	3.8%	9.3%	9.4%	7.1%	18.3%	8.0%	8.7%	4.3%	28.0%
<b>Ethan</b>	0	0	17	20	8	20	19	21	8	40
%	0.0%	0.0%	11.1%	13.1%	5.2%	13.1%	12.4%	13.7%	5.2%	26.1%
<b>Alexandria</b>	1	8	48	8	11	36	21	50	9	110
%	0.3%	2.6%	15.9%	2.6%	3.6%	11.9%	7.0%	16.6%	3.0%	36.4%
<b>Dimock</b>	0	0	0	0	12	6	3	5	1	16
%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	27.9%	14.0%	7.0%	11.6%	2.3%	37.2%
<b>Fulton</b>	0	0	10	9	2	0	0	0	2	32
%	0.0%	0.0%	18.2%	16.4%	3.6%	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	3.6%	58.2%
<b>Letcher</b>	0	0	2	0	6	25	8	7	9	41
%	0.0%	0.0%	2.0%	0.0%	6.1%	25.5%	8.2%	7.1%	9.2%	41.8%
<b>Mount Vernon</b>	2	0	23	15	7	30	22	18	27	124
%	0.7%	0.0%	8.6%	5.6%	2.6%	11.2%	8.2%	6.7%	10.1%	46.3%
<b>Plankinton</b>	8	10	69	38	32	38	21	16	5	110
%	2.3%	2.9%	19.9%	11.0%	9.2%	11.0%	6.1%	4.6%	1.4%	31.7%
<b>South Dakota</b>	18,750	16,954	55,234	50,640	37,980	64,536	32,818	34,472	16,455	68,978
%	4.7%	4.3%	13.9%	12.8%	9.6%	16.3%	8.3%	8.7%	4.1%	17.4%

Source: 2019 US Census Table DP-4

**FIGURE 9.4**  
**Housing Units - Years of Construction**



### Housing Projections

Tables 9.10, 9.11 and 9.12 present twenty-year housing projections for Davison County and Ethan based on the town's distribution of housing types. The program provides production targets for various cost ranges of rental and owner-occupied units. The projections based on the following assumptions:

- The vast majority of new housing in the County will be at least 65 to 90% single family and 2 to 28% multi family housing. This is consistent to the 2018 owner/renter distribution of occupied housing in the County and its towns.
- Owner-occupied housing will continue to be higher-valued units based on recent building trends and home values.
- Lower-income households will generally be accommodated in rental development.

The analysis indicates a need for about 1,263 housing units in the next twenty years (2021-2040). Of the total unit demand, 715 will be single family units, 283 will be multi-family units, 67 will be mobile homes, and 197 would be infill or replacement of dilapidated units. The projections equate to approximately 60 total units per year over the twenty-year period. The unit projections are allocated by each town according to their share of the County's total population as shown in Table 9.11.

It is important to note that affordable housing can be addressed partially through a filtering process. Thus, a unit that meets the needs of a high-income, empty-nester household may encourage that household to sell their current home to a moderate-income family. Filtering processes rarely satisfy an affordable need on a one-to-one basis, but they do realistically address part of the market demand.

**Table 9.10, 2040 Housing Projection Summary  
Davison County**

2040 Totals	
<b>Projected Units</b>	<b>1,263</b>
Infill/Replacement	197
Single Family Units	715
Multi-Family	283
Mobile Homes	67
<b>Acres Needed</b>	
Infill/Replacement	64
Single Family Units	437
Multi-Family	36
Mobile Homes	12
Total	549
30 % Markup (roads, market)	126
Total Residential Acres	675

**Table 9.11, Share of County Population, 2020**

Town/Area	Percent
Mitchell	78.80%
Ethan	1.85%
Mount Vernon	2.54%
Balance of Davison County	16.81%

Tables 9.12 lay out the detailed acreage that will be needed to accommodate the housing units projected in Tables 5.10 and 5.11. If growth in the County and the subsequent towns follows the projected population and housing units, over 675 acres of land will be needed for residential development. The projections were based on the following densities and assumptions:

**In Towns:**

- Single family units at 2.5 units/acre
- Multi family units at 8 units/acre
- Manufactured homes at 6 units/acre
- 30% markup for all residential land to account for infrastructure and reserve market demand.

**In Rural Areas:**

- Single family units at 1 unit/acre
- Multi family units at 4 units/acre
- Manufactured homes at 4 units/acre
- 30% markup for all residential land to account for infrastructure and reserve market demand.

The total number of new housing units projected in Ethan is 23 units over the planning period. Applying the unit type and density assumptions conclude that there will be 7.5 net acres of land in demand for residential use in Ethan. A 30% markup in demand for land is used to account for roads, rights of way, and reserve market demand, so the total amount of land needed to accommodate future residential is approximately 10 acres. **Table 9.12** provides a detailed breakdown of unit types and residential land needed over the planning period in Ethan.

**Table 5.12: Ethan's Share of Units and Acreage Needed**

	2021-2025	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	Total
<b>Projected Units</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Infill/Replacement</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Single Family Units</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>Multi-Family</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Mobile Homes</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Net Acres Needed</b>	<b>1.81</b>	<b>1.86</b>	<b>1.91</b>	<b>1.97</b>	<b>7.55</b>
<b>30 % Markup (roads, market, etc.)</b>	<b>0.54</b>	<b>0.56</b>	<b>0.57</b>	<b>0.59</b>	<b>2.27</b>
<b>Total Acres Needed</b>	<b>2.35</b>	<b>2.42</b>	<b>2.49</b>	<b>2.56</b>	<b>9.82</b>

## EDUCATION

The health of a community's income can be measured to some degree by the level and quality of education of its residents. Education may be reviewed from three perspectives:

- 1) Educational attainment;
- 2) Status of the existing systems; and
- 3) Opportunities for residents.

The level of traditional educational attainment is presented in **Table 9.13**. The data reveal a trend toward a higher percentage of residents attaining a higher level of education in Ethan. Nearly 95% of Ethan's population has at least a high school diploma or higher, which is a higher concentration than most of the towns in the study area.

**Table 9.13**  
**Educational Attainment - 2020**

Entity	< 9th	9-12 No Diploma	High School Graduate	Some College	A.A or A.S.	B.A. or B.S.	MA or PHD	% High School Plus	% B.A./B.S. Plus
Davison	2.7%	6.3%	32.3%	21.4%	11.3%	19.4%	6.7%	91.0%	26.0%
Ethan	3.1%	2.0%	41.8%	18.4%	24.0%	7.7%	3.1%	94.9%	10.7%
Alexandria	3.3%	8.6%	28.9%	20.7%	15.9%	16.1%	6.5%	88.1%	22.6%
Dimock	7.9%	6.7%	52.8%	13.5%	13.5%	4.5%	1.1%	85.4%	5.6%
Fulton	1.0%	1.0%	38.6%	31.7%	4.0%	12.9%	10.9%	98.0%	23.8%
Letcher	2.7%	7.3%	39.1%	10.9%	19.1%	15.5%	5.5%	90.0%	20.9%
Mount Vernon	3.7%	3.4%	45.4%	20.6%	11.5%	14.6%	0.8%	93.0%	15.5%
Plankinton	9.8%	6.2%	28.7%	16.2%	15.6%	13.9%	9.6%	84.0%	23.5%
South Dakota	2.8%	5.0%	30.2%	21.1%	11.6%	20.1%	9.2%	92.2%	29.3%

Source: 2020 Census, Summary File 3



A second issue to consider in reviewing education is the status of existing educational systems. **Table 9.14** provides a statistical overview of school districts in the study area. The acronym A.D.M. represents "average daily membership" or enrollment, which is calculated by the South Dakota Department of Education in an effort to establish a baseline for state financial assistance. The dollars per ADM varies from \$9,864 in Ethan to \$12,367 in Sanborn Central (Letcher); over \$2,500 in difference between the two districts. The student/teacher ratio more widely varies in the area, from a low of 8.9 in Plankinton to a high ratio of 13.9 in Ethan. The average salary of teachers in the school districts is comparable. Mount Vernon has

a higher share of teachers with advanced degrees.

**Table 9.14**  
**School District Profiles 2020/2021**

Entity	PK-12 Enrolled	Student/Staff Ratio	ACT Score*	K-12 Certified Teachers	Average Salary	Average Years Exp.	Advanced Degrees %	Dollars per ADM	General Fund Balance
Ethan 17-1	283	13.9	21.4	20.3	\$47,683	13.9	27.3%	\$9,864	\$732,839
Hanson 30-1 (Alexandria/Fulton)	411	13.2	20.8	31.1	\$43,676	19.6	28.1%	\$8,839	\$838,902
Parkston 33-3 (Dimock)	569	12.5	20.7	45.6	\$46,652	15.4	20.4%	\$10,489	\$1,460,481
Sanborn Central 55-5 (Letcher)	199	9.5	*	20.1	\$43,452	15.6	18.2%	\$12,367	\$758,445
Mount Vernon 17-3	234	12.6	22.9	17.6	\$45,216	12.0	36.8%	\$11,869	\$1,036,343
Plankinton 01-1	299	8.9	21.4	30.7	\$45,528	15.5	32.3%	\$11,471	\$1,453,133

Source: South Dakota Department of Education

There are several educational opportunities for the residents of Ethan to explore. A higher-educated population can lead to skilled occupations and higher paying positions. Two institutions; Dakota Wesleyan University and Mitchell Technical College (MTC), offer a variety of degrees in programs which lead to skilled jobs. Both colleges are located ten miles away in Mitchell. **Table 9.15** below shows the top five programs between Dakota Wesleyan and MTC and the number of graduates in each program.

**TABLE 9.15; Top Programs by Number of Graduates**

Health Professions and Related Programs	148
Business, Management, Marketing, and Related Support Services	83
Agriculture, Agriculture Operations, and Related Sciences	61
Construction Trades	60
Engineering Technologies and Engineering-Related Fields	5

### School Facility Planning

Ethan has set aside an area of about 40 acres that may accommodate future growth. This area may yield 50 housing units if developed at 2 units per acre. **Table 5.16** shows the projected number of youth that the growth area in Ethan may produce.

**TABLE 9.16, Youth Projection in Ethan Growth Area**

Ethan	
Gross Acres	39.0
Limitations (Acres)	0.0
Developed Acres	0.0
Developable Acres	39.0
% ROW, Public, Etc.	35.0%
Net Acres	25.4
Unit Density	2.0
Unit Capacity	50.0
Units/Lots Sold-Built	0.0
Net Unit Capacity	50.0
People/Household	2.10
Population Projection	105.0
Youth Projection (.45/HH)	23

We can delineate the projected youth from new growth into three age groups based on Ethan's current school-aged population. Of the 23 projected youth in Ethan's growth area, we can allocate 8 youth to the elementary school, 9 to the middle school, and 6 to the high school portions of Ethan's school facility. Compared to the student capacity of each of the school's divisions, there does not appear to be a need for additional school facility space in Ethan over the planning period.

**TABLE 9.17, Ethan School Facility Analysis**

	Enrollment	Building Capacities (Students)	Remaining Capacity	Projections Assigned To School	Projected Enrollment	Enrollment to Capacity	New School Needed?	Additional Sq. Ft. Needed
Elementary	150	200	50	8	158	(43)	No	--
Middle School	40	50	10	9	49	(1)	No	--
High School	78	100	22	6	84	(16)	No	--

## EMPLOYMENT

Employment statistics are like other areas in that there are industry specific categories or definitions. Four definitions are used in reviewing employment data.

- **Civilian labor force:** All persons age 16 years old and older, classified as employed or unemployed. Persons not included are active duty members of the U.S. Military, students, homemakers, retired workers, seasonal workers not looking for work, inmates, disabled persons, and those doing unpaid family work of less than 15 hours a week.
- **Labor force:** The civilian labor force, consisting of all people age 16 and over classified as employed or unemployed along with members of the U.S. Armed Forces.
- **Employed:** All civilians 16 years old and over who were either at work or had a job but were not at work due to illness, bad weather, industrial dispute, vacation, or other personal reasons. Does not include people whose only activity consisted of work around the house or unpaid volunteer work for religious, charitable, and similar organizations.
- **Unemployed:** All civilians 16 years old and over are classified as unemployed if they did not have a job or had a job but not working and were actively looking for work during the last 4 weeks, and were available to accept a job. Also included as unemployed are civilians who did not work at all during the reference week, were waiting to be called back to a job from which they had been laid off, and were available for work except for temporary illness.

Table 9.18 provide an overview of the labor force. In 2020, Davison County, Ethan and most of the comparison towns all had incredibly low unemployment rates.

**TABLE 9.18**  
**Employment Status Comparison - 2020**

Entity	Persons Age 16 and Above	In Labor Force	Civilian Labor Force	Employed	Unemployed	Armed Forces	Not In Labor Force	Percent
Davison	15,687	10,704	10,680	10,453	227	24	4,983	1.4%
Ethan	244	188	186	186	0	2	56	0.0%
Alexandria	570	396	394	389	5	2	174	0.9%
Dimock	95	56	56	56	0	0	39	0.0%
Fulton	123	80	80	76	4	0	43	3.3%
Letcher	148	131	131	125	6	0	17	4.1%
Mount Vernon	381	337	337	330	7	0	44	1.8%
Plankinton	545	413	413	413	0	0	132	0.0%
South Dakota	686,885	466,573	463,888	447,607	16,281	2,685	220,312	2.4%

Source: 2000 Census Table DP-3

Previous information dealt with unemployment while the next section examines the employment base in Ethan. The industry classifications within the following tables are provided by the U.S. Census Bureau and are designed to group similar occupations together for the purpose of statistical analysis. The various classifications have been revised in recent years, which may result in shifts within categories when comparing earlier and more recent data sets. Table 9.19 identifies the major employment industries Ethan as well as their growth or decline between 1990 and 2020.

**TABLE 9.19**  
**Ethan Employment by Industry - 1990 - 2020**

Industry	1990	2000	2010	2020	% Change 1990-2020
Agriculture/Forest/Fish/Mining	0	1	7	0	--
Construction	14	32	18	31	121.4%
Manufacturing	19	24	31	25	31.6%
Wholesale Trade	12	5	5	1	-91.7%
Retail Trade	20	35	5	11	-45.0%
Trans., Warehouse, & Utility	10	7	18	5	-50.0%
Information	0	0	5	1	--
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	1	1	4	6	500.0%
Professional Services	4	10	6	16	300.0%
Education/Health/Social Services	25	34	43	67	168.0%
Arts, Entertain./Rec./ Accom./Food	2	11	1	9	350.0%
Other Services	0	3	0	5	--
Public Administration	2	5	3	9	350.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>186</b>	<b>70.6%</b>

Source: 2000 Census Table DP-3; 1990 Census CP-2-43 T146; 1980 Census PC80-1-C43 T178

The nearly thirty-year period between 1990 and 2020 was a time when wholesale trade, retail trade, and transportation/warehousing experienced a significant decline in employment in Ethan. The same period saw significant increases in the construction, finance, professional services, educational/health sectors, arts/entertainment, and public administration.

**Table 9.20** focuses on occupations in Ethan for the previous thirty years. While there has been virtually no one employed in farming occupations, the level of employed persons in management and professional services occupations has risen dramatically. Likewise, construction/maintenance and production/transportation occupations have increased in the past thirty years. Several employed in management and production occupations are employed in the same industrial sector, such as manufacturing.

**TABLE 9.20**  
**Ethan Occupations - 1990 - 2020**

	1990	2000	2010	2020
Management & Professional Services	17	45	48	40
Service	17	23	7	37
Sales and Office	30	40	23	39
Farming, fishing, and forestry	0	1	0	0
Construction & Maintenance	13	23	21	21
Production & Transportation	32	36	47	46
<b>Total Employed: Age 16 and Above</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>168</b>	<b>146</b>	<b>186</b>

Source: 2020: ACS 5-Year Estimates Subject Tables, S2401 2000 Census Table DP-3; 1990 Census CP-2-43 T145

**Table 9.21** includes a list of the five largest primary employers in Ethan as well as the number of persons employed at each business. Primary employers are those who provide full time positions which afford opportunities to attract employees. The top two employers, who represent the education and construction materials, employ nearly 84 persons.



**TABLE 9.21**  
**Major Employers in Ethan**

Rank	Employer and Place	Product / Service	Employees
1	Ethan School District	Education	49
2	Ethan Coop Lumber	Building Supply Store	35
3	Riggs Construction	Single Family Housing Construction	8
4	Mcbrayer & Mcbrayer	Single Family Housing Construction	8
5	Farmer's Alliance	Agriculture Service	8

## Commuting

Commuting data includes where people work (including from work from home), when their trip starts, how they get there, and how long it takes. Commuting data helps policy makers and planners make decisions related to transportation infrastructure. Some of the topics included in the American Community Survey data include travel time, means of transportation, time of departure for work, vehicles available, and expenses associated with the commute. The ACS also asks workers about their place of work, the geographic location of their job.

Ethan residents who are in the labor force primarily drive alone to work as shown in **Table 9.22**. The percentage of those who drive their own vehicle rose from 65.3% in 2010 to 83.4% in 2020. The percentage of people who walked to their job decreased from 8.3% in 2010 to 2.1% in 2020.

**TABLE 9.22**  
**Ethan Commuting Data - 2010 - 2020**

Mode of Transportation	2010	2020
	Percent	Percent
Workers 16 years and over	144	187
<b>MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK</b>		
Car, truck, or van	87.5	89.3
Drove alone	65.3	83.4
Carpooled	22.2	5.9
In 2-person carpool	22.2	2.7
In 3-person carpool	0.0	1.1
In 4-or-more person carpool	0.0	2.1
Workers per car, truck, or van	1.15	1.04
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.0	0.0
Walked	8.3	2.1
Bicycle	0.0	0.5
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	0.0	2.1
Worked from home	4.2	5.9

Source: 2000 Census Summary File 3; 2020 Census Summary File 3

**Table 9.23** shows that 22.2% of the workers in Ethan travel 15-20 minutes to work in 2020. The ability of people to go from place to place more efficiently has greatly increased areas for potential labor force, thus the workers in Ethan travel on average 20 minutes to their workplace.

**TABLE 9.23**  
**Davison County Worker Commute Times**

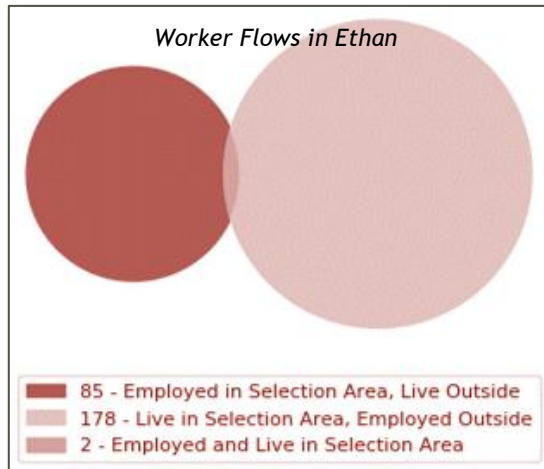
Commute Time	Percent
Less than 10 minutes	14.2
10 to 14 minutes	10.8
15 to 19 minutes	22.2
20 to 24 minutes	33.0
25 to 29 minutes	4.0
30 to 34 minutes	5.7
35 to 44 minutes	3.4
45 to 59 minutes	0.0
60 or more minutes	6.8
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	20.3

Source: ACS, 2020

### Worker Flows

When information about workers' residence location and workplace location are coupled, a *commuting flow* is generated. The origin-destination flow format describes the interconnectedness between communities, including the interchange of people, goods, and services. product development purposes. Using OnTheMap, we can conclude the following for Ethan residents and workers:

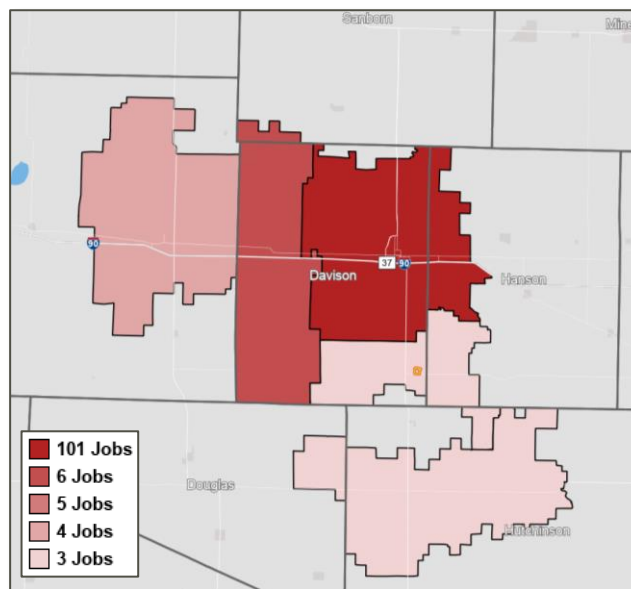
- 85 people are employed in Ethan, but live somewhere outside of town.
- Only 2 people both reside and work in Ethan
- 178 live in Ethan, but travel elsewhere for work



Ethan may be considered a “job center,” but the number of residents who live in town and work elsewhere outnumber those who travel to town for work by a factor of 2 to 1. The graphic at the left shows the dynamics of worker inflow and outflow in Ethan. A “job center” would have a larger dark circle on the left of the graphic compared to the lighter circle on the right. There could even be an overlap between the two circles, which would indicate that many residents work in town.

In Figure 9.5, job locations for residents of Ethan are shown by zip codes. The number of workers from Ethan in each zip code are shown by graduated colors. The darker colors represent more workers who live in Ethan and work in that zip code. According to Figure 5.5, most people who live in Ethan, travel to the Mitchell area (57301) to work.

**FIGURE 9.5**  
Work Locations for Ethan Residents by Zip Code

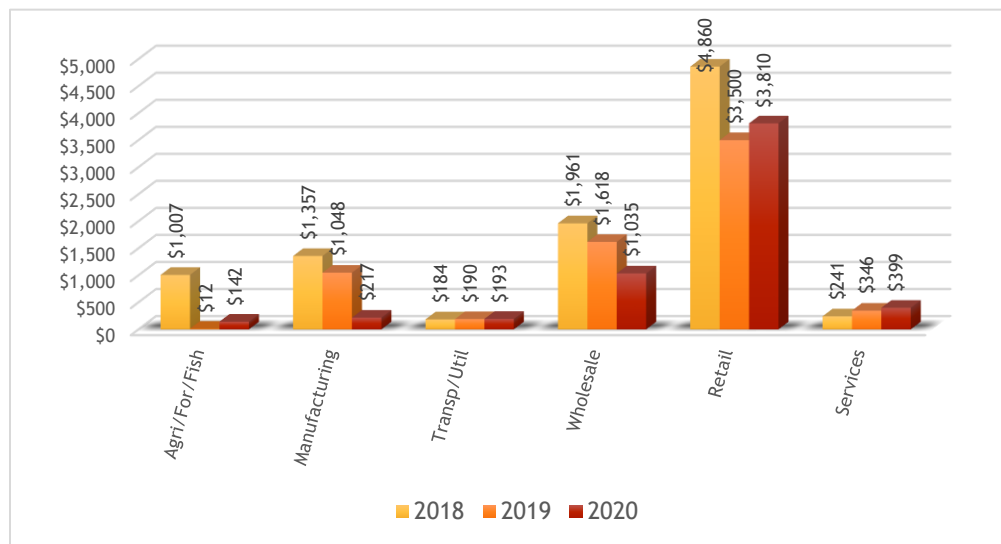


### Business Taxes

The state of an economy is measured with numerous factors one of which is sales. Sales may be used to measure the relative “health” of an economy, primarily as it is perceived by the general public. Consumers reflect their confidence in an economy through spending habits.

**Figure 9.6** illustrates the recent trends in general gross sales in Ethan. Retail is the strongest sector in Ethan, while Transportation/Utilities is generally the weakest sector in terms of sales. Sales in the Agriculture sector decreased dramatically between 2018 and 2020, from \$1.07 million to \$142,000 in 2020. Manufacturing also reported a huge decline between 2018 and 2020, from \$1.35 million to \$217,000. Sales in the Services sector increased by 65% from 2018 to 2020.

**FIGURE 9.6**  
**Ethan- General Gross Sales (\$000's)**  
**2018-2020**



Source: SD Dept of Revenue, South Dakota Sales and Use Tax Report 2018-2020

## INCOME

There are several factors to consider in obtaining an accurate understanding of local population characteristics. One of these items is wealth or income. Wealth is affected by numerous variables, but for the majority of the population it is directly tied to income, which is influenced by employment.

The median incomes (per capita, household, and family) of the comparative towns for 2010 and 2020 are shown in **Table 9.24**. The median per capita income in Ethan grew by 32% between 2010 and 2020. Median household income grew by 40% in the same period.

**TABLE 9.24**  
**Median Incomes, 2010-2020**

	Per Capita Income			Household Income			Family Income		
	2010	2020	% Change	2010	2020	% Change	2010	2020	% Change
Davison	\$22,794	\$30,006	32%	\$41,867	\$48,267	15%	\$54,677	\$75,404	38%
Ethan	\$19,194	\$25,329	32%	\$40,417	\$56,667	40%	\$56,607	\$62,500	10%
Alexandria	\$21,186	\$25,587	21%	\$45,417	\$52,500	16%	\$52,813	\$87,143	65%
Dimock	\$25,813	\$22,352	-13%	\$34,688	\$69,375	100%	\$59,167	\$76,250	29%
Fulton	\$21,109	\$23,100	9%	\$66,250	\$44,028	-34%	\$78,229	\$62,083	-21%
Letcher	\$21,689	\$25,807	19%	\$32,250	\$56,016	74%	\$55,625	\$73,125	31%
Mount Vernon	\$20,712	\$28,032	35%	\$51,875	\$46,250	-11%	\$61,071	\$71,250	17%
Plankinton	\$19,499	\$33,231	70%	\$43,839	\$62,917	44%	\$50,714	\$80,714	59%
South Dakota	\$24,110	\$31,415	30%	\$46,369	\$59,896	29%	\$58,958	\$77,042	31%

**Table 9.25** contain household income figures for Ethan and comparable towns. In 2020 the majority of households (41) reported income in a single income category between \$50,000 and \$75,000. This appears to be a pattern among most of the comparable towns. Several households (42) in Ethan earned between \$25,000 and \$50,000.

**TABLE 9.25**  
**Household Income 2020**

Entity	Under \$10,000	\$10,000-\$14,000	\$15,000-\$24,999	\$25,000-\$34,999	\$35,000-\$49,999	\$50,000-\$74,999	\$75,000-\$99,999	\$100,000-\$149,999	\$150,000-\$199,999	\$200,000 & Above
Davison	503	568	795	1,130	1,543	1,138	1,080	1,233	407	254
Ethan	0	6	14	16	26	41	24	14	3	0
Alexandria	13	13	19	16	75	35	34	63	7	5
Dimock	1	0	3	4	5	10	10	9	1	0
Fulton	1	1	9	4	21	10	6	1	2	0
Letcher	3	1	12	5	8	28	21	3	0	2
Mount Vernon	3	12	78	12	27	57	18	30	7	4
Plankinton	1	5	36	41	42	41	83	43	3	19
South Dakota	18,482	14,295	30,094	34,679	47,410	66,588	50,831	52,445	17,582	15,472

## Poverty

Salary data represent the income side of a family or household cash flow though without an accurate list of expenses it is difficult to see how a family or household is fairing. The one social indicator with statistical data is poverty related information. **Table 9.26** provides an overview of poverty numbers and percentages for 2010 to 2020 within the comparative towns. The percent of Ethan residents living at or below poverty level decreased by about 1.3 percentage points between 2010 and 2020 but the overall percentage of those in poverty remains substantially lower than Davison County and South Dakota. The percentage of families in poverty in Ethan decreased as well between 2010 and 2020, from 6.0% to 2.3%.

**TABLE 9.26**  
**Number and Percent in Poverty - 2000 - 2020**

Entity	Persons		Families	
	2010	2020	2010	2020
	Percent	Percent	Percent	Percent
<b>Davison</b>	13.8%	13.0%	6.9%	7.7%
<b>Ethan</b>	5.0%	3.7%	6.0%	2.3%
<b>Alexandria</b>	6.4%	3.4%	4.9%	1.7%
<b>Dimock</b>	3.6%	4.3%	0.0%	0.0%
<b>Fulton</b>	16.9%	3.6%	9.8%	0.0%
<b>Letcher</b>	14.5%	9.9%	11.1%	11.3%
<b>Mount Vernon</b>	8.2%	2.8%	1.8%	1.7%
<b>Plankinton</b>	2.8%	3.0%	1.2%	0.5%
<b>South Dakota</b>	13.7%	12.8%	8.7%	8.0%

Sources: 2000 Census, CP-2-431994; 1990 Census, CP-2-43; 1980 Census, PC80-1-C43

## LAND USE IN ETHAN

New growth in Ethan could occur south of SD Highway 42 and accommodate a new neighborhood. The neighborhood could yield up to 50 new housing units. **Figure 9.7** shows the areas are suitable for development in the Ethan area. Since most people who live in Ethan work in Mitchell, the corner of SD Highways 42 and 37 could become a service node for commuters going to and from their workplace. The corridor along SD Highways 37 and 42 have the potential to develop into rural residential areas in the future. More information about rural residential practice is available in Chapter 8, Land Use.

The land use plan for Ethan is laid out in a “concentric” pattern centered on a mixed-use downtown area surrounded by medium density residential development. The perimeter of the town is dedicated to parks and low density housing. Intense commercial and employment areas are located along the BNSF rail line and roads leading to town. **Figure 9.8** illustrates the land use plan for Ethan.

**Figure 9.7: Land Use Design, Ethan Area**

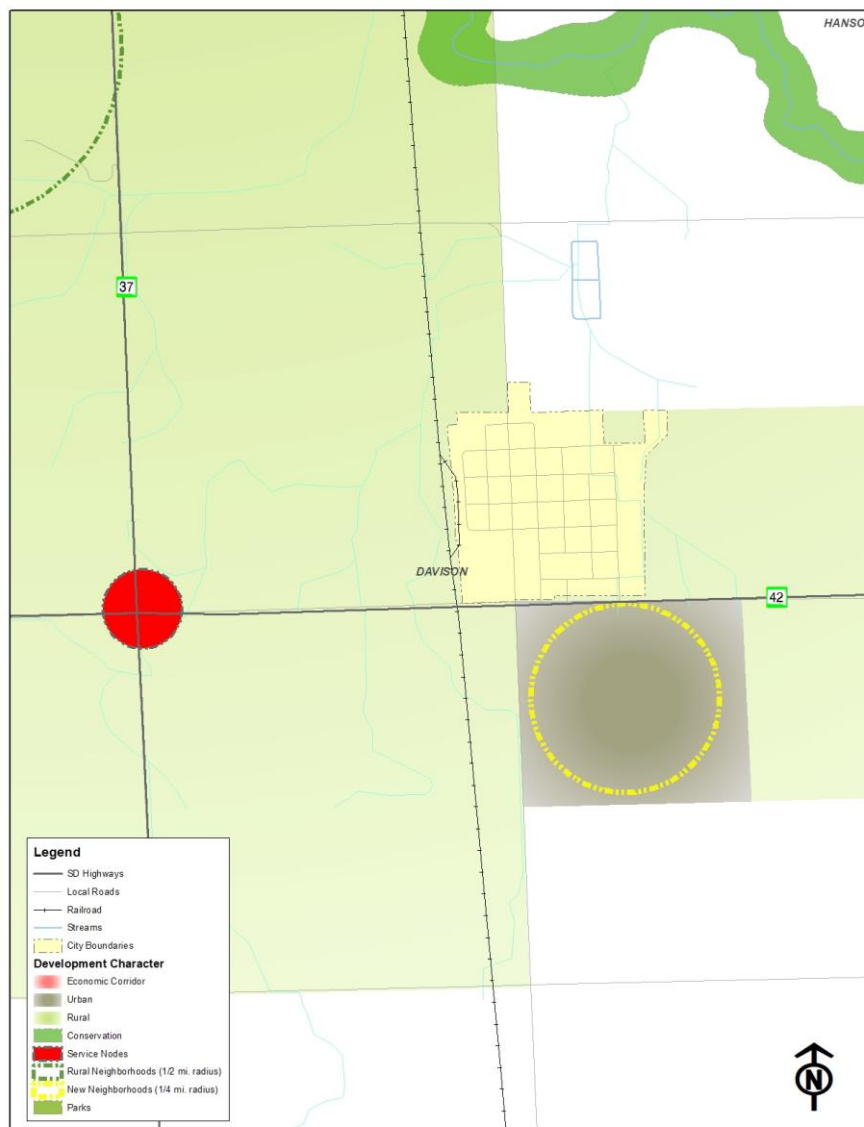
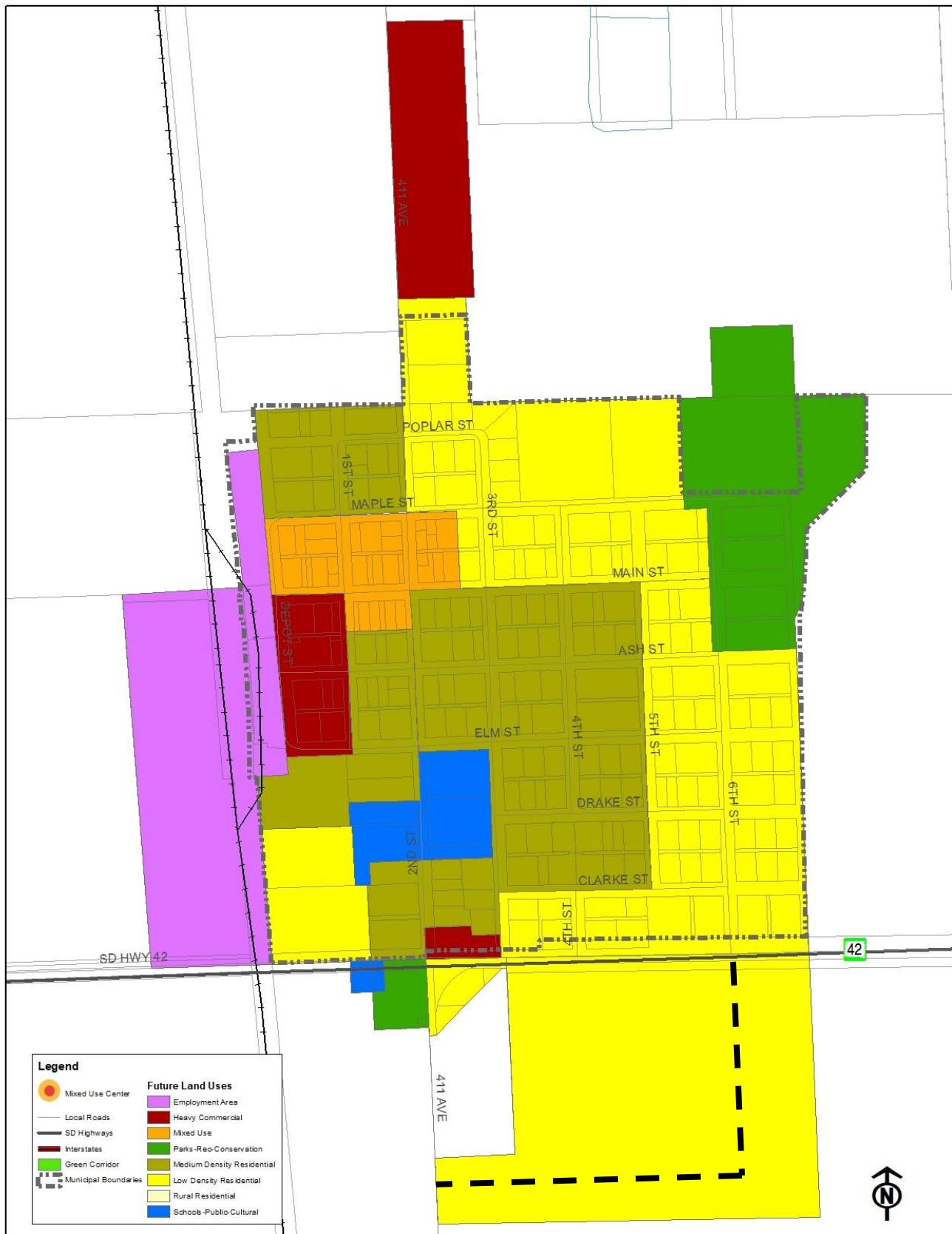


Figure 9.8: Ethan Land Use Plan





## PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

### Ethan's Planning Challenges

The following challenges will need to be addressed by the citizens of Ethan over the next 10 years.

- ✓ Developing economic opportunities;
- ✓ Taking advantage of job training facilities and area colleges;
- ✓ Developing infrastructure for housing;
- ✓ Keeping small town's viable as local service centers; and
- ✓ Presenting a positive image and attitude toward economic development.

### Policy Options

In addressing the challenges, the people of Ethan should consider the following recommendations.

- 1) Maintain Ethan's connection to the regional transportation network by developing facilities that serve commuters to town and residents who commute out of town;
- 2) Encourage the development of service businesses and eating/drinking places that serve the local population;
- 3) Tap into regional resources to encourage the expansion or retention of Farmer's Alliance Elevator and Ethan Co-Op Lumber;
- 4) Promote infill housing development or redevelopment in older blocks of Ethan;
- 5) Develop land south of Ethan into lower density housing. Outside assistance may be needed to install new infrastructure.
- 6) Promote more visitation of Ethan's City Park and ball fields and host areawide events there.