Mount Vernon, SD

CHAPTER 10

POPULATION

Mount Vernon was originally called Arlandton after the man who provided shelter for travelers who were on their way up the Fort Thompson trail. It became Mount Vernon when the railroad pushed westward from Mitchell after 1881. The Post Office Department requested the change because Arlandton was too much like the already organized Arlington.

The town is located ten miles west of Mitchell along "Old Highway 16" and just north of US Interstate 90. Certain data will be presented in comparison to similarly sized towns in the area: Alexandria, Dimock, Ethan, Fulton, Letcher, and Plankinton. Comparison with similar communities can help local leaders evaluate Mount Vernon's status in the region.

Table 10.1 contains historical populations for the County, State and towns between 1960 and 2020. The 2020 Census data showed Mount Vernon with a population of 500 persons. Overall, Mount Vernon grew by 121 residents since 1960; about 20 people per decade.

TABLE 10.1
Population Data: 1960 - 2020

Area	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010	2020	% Change 1960-2019	Annual Growth
Davison	16,681	17,319	17,820	17,503	18,741	19,504	19,890	19.24%	0.29%
Mount Vernon	379	398	402	368	477	462	500	31.93%	0.46%
Alexandria	614	598	588	518	563	615	766	24.76%	0.37%
Dimock		167	140	157	151	125	141	-15.57%	-0.28%
Ethan	297	309	351	312	330	331	328	10.44%	0.17%
Fulton	296	201	221	164	177	173	191	-35.47%	-0.73%
Letcher	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%

Source: U.S. Census, American Community Survey

In **Figure 10.1** below, Mount Vernon's population is represented by the shaded line. **Figure 10.1** 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 nearly 32% since 1960, while Letcher has declined by 32% over the same period.

FIGURE 10.1
Population Change of Area Towns: 1960-2020
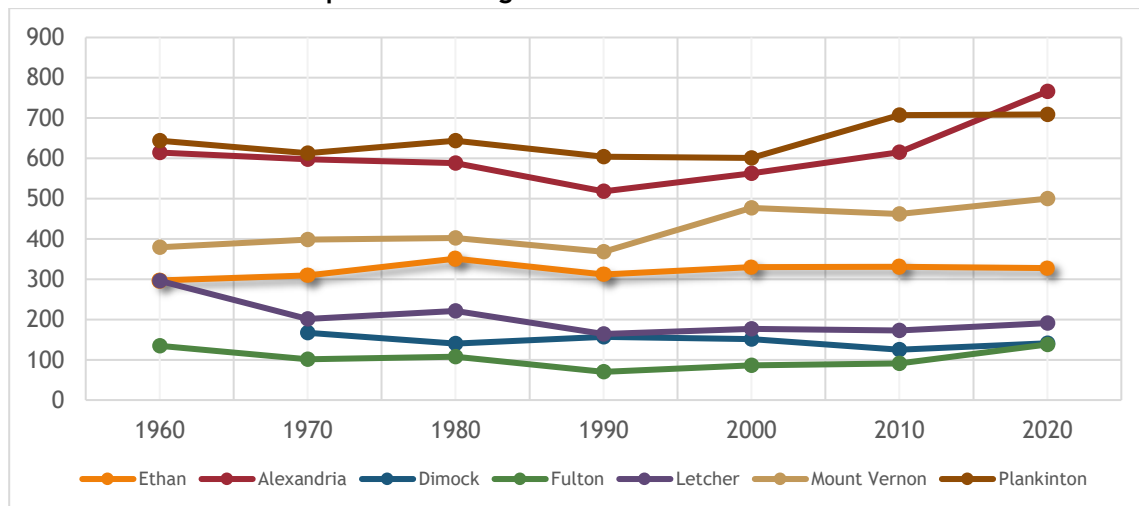
The term population encompasses numerous sub-sections, divisions, groups, etc. One of these divisions is race. In comparing the racial data between the towns, County, and State, there are very stark differences. The towns in the study area are predominantly white while Davison County and South Dakota have a more diverse racial population. **Table 10.2** shows the racial breakdown of the population for Mount Vernon and comparable towns.
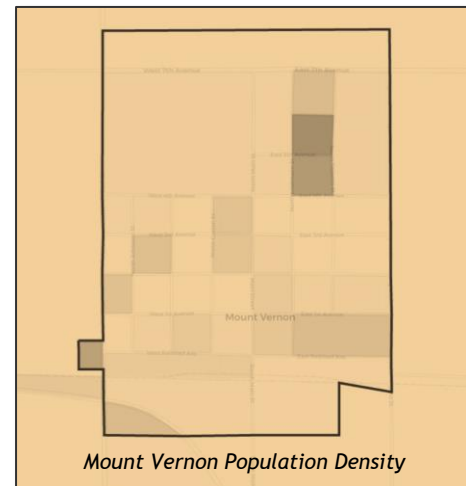
TABLE 10.2
Specified Racial Population Data 2020

Entity	White	Black	American Indian	Asian	Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander	Some Other Race	Two or More Races
Davison	18,422	269	352	243	0	208	396
Mount Vernon	487	0	0	0	0	0	13
Alexandria	761	0	0	0	0	0	5
Dimock	141	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ethan	297	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fulton	144	0	0	0	0	0	0
Letcher	172	0	0	3	0	0	16
Plankinton	640	0	18	0	0	43	8
South Dakota	735,228	18,836	74,975	12,413	544	7,320	30,020

Sources: US Census

The population of Mount Vernon is fairly spread out throughout the town. There are two blocks in the northeast part of town, where the population is more concentrated as shown in the image to the right. Beige tones represent low population density and brown tones indicate higher concentrations of people.

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 10.3** and **10.4** contain a fifty-year trend of youth and aged populations.

Mount Vernon Population Density

TABLE 10.3
Youth Population - Age 18 or Younger - 1970 – 2020

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

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

The recent trend in Mount Vernon counters many of the peer communities and the state. In the previous decades, 1970-2020, the youth population in Mount Vernon increased by over 33% compared to an 10.54% drop in the youth population in South Dakota. **Table 10.4** shows that the number of people aged 65 or older decreased by over 50% in Mount Vernon and nearly 70% in Letcher while the same population grew steadily in Davison County, Alexandria, Dimock, and Ethan.

TABLE 10.4
Aged Population - Age 65 or Older - 1970 - 2020

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

The dependent populations in Mount Vernon between 1970 and 2020 are illustrated in **Figure 10.2**. It clearly shows that, since 1970, youth have outnumbered the elderly in Mount Vernon and the difference has expanded since. 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 Mount Vernon 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 10.2
Dependent Populations, Mount Vernon: 1970-2020
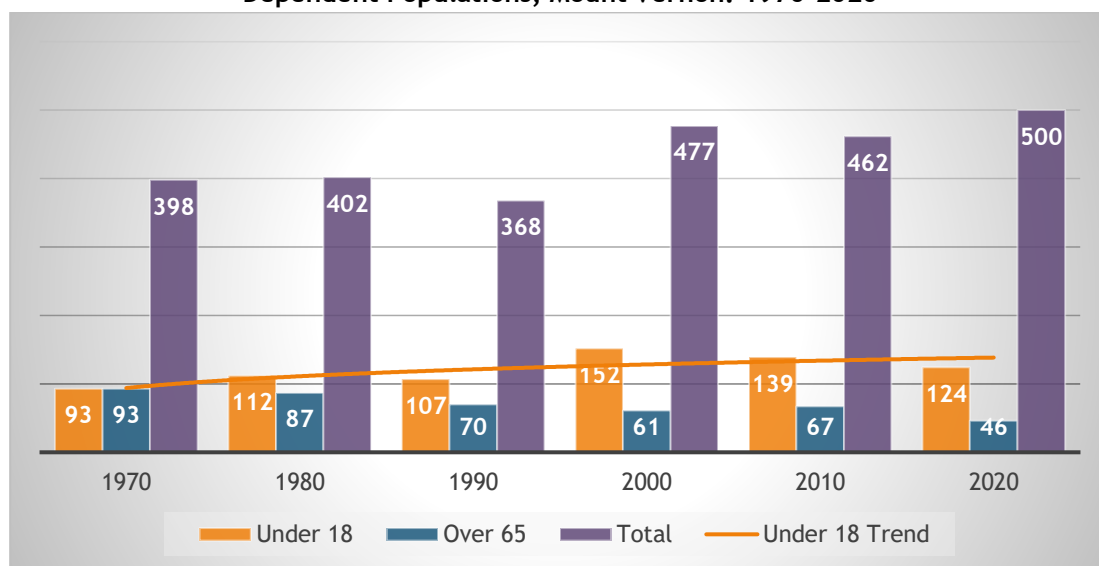
The number, type, and size of households in a community can indicate where demand for housing units and services will be in the future as shown in **Table 10.5**. A slight majority of households in Mount Vernon consist of married couples. The percentage of married-couple households in Mount Vernon is slightly higher

than Davison County and South Dakota. The average size of various household types in Mount Vernon is a bit less than the other places in the study area. The average married couple household size in Mount Vernon is comparable to the State (2.90 persons per household in Mount Vernon compared to 3.04 persons per household for the State). The average size of male-headed family households with no spouse present exceeds the South Dakota figure by a factor of four. The inverse is true for female-headed family households with no spouse present where Mount Vernon's average size is 3.2 compared to 3.55 for South Dakota.

TABLE 10.5
Households by Type, 2010-2020

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

Average Household Size

Households, on average, are larger in the rural areas. The darker shades of purple in the image to the left indicate a larger average household size. Blocks inside the town boundaries of Mount Vernon 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.
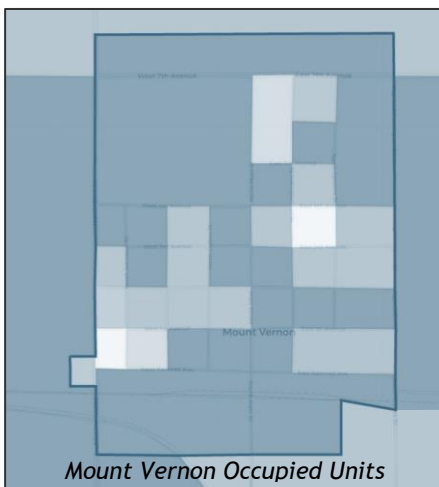
HOUSING

The condition of housing may be evaluated by several factors, including type, age, quality, and affordability. **Table 10.6** identifies the number of housing units for the study communities in 2010 and 2020. It shows 268 total housing units in Mount Vernon, of which 248 were occupied (7.5% vacant units). The table displays a pattern of reductions in housing vacancies across the comparable communities and a dramatic reduction in vacancies in Mount Vernon, Letcher, and Ethan.

TABLE 10.6
Housing Units and Vacancy- 2010-2020

	Year	Total housing units	Occupied	Vacant	Percent Vacant	Homeowner vacancy rate	Rental vacancy rate
Davison	2010	8,792	8,086	706	8.0%	1.0	6.2
	2020	9,550	8,651	899	9.40%	1	13.6
Mount Vernon	2010	207	164	43	20.8%	4.5	39.3
	2020	268	248	20	7.50%	3.4	4.4
Alexandria	2010	7,018	6,514	504	7.2%	0.7	6.4
	2020	302	280	22	7.30%	3	0
Dimock	2010	62	53	9	14.50%	0.0	0.0
	2020	43	43	0	0.00%	0	0
Ethan	2010	159	119	40	25.2%	13.1	0
	2020	153	144	9	5.90%	9.2	0
Fulton	2010	58	58	0	0.00%	0.0	0.0
	2020	55	55	0	0.00%	0	0
Letcher	2010	98	73	25	25.50%	9.0	85.7
	2020	98	83	15	15.30%	0	18.8
Plankinton	2010	309	259	50	16.20%	0.0	8.7
	2020	347	314	33	9.50%	0	7.8
South Dakota	2010	357,725	315,468	42,257	11.8%	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 Mount Vernon. The darker shades indicate 100% occupied housing units. The lighter shades indicate very low occupancy levels (or high vacancy) or non-residential land uses.

Mount Vernon Occupied Units

A more detailed snapshot of the housing stock is provided in **Table 10.7**. The data shows Mount Vernon's occupied housing stock increased by 84 units in the period between 2010 and 2020, which equates to approximately 8 units per year.

Sizeable increases were reported in single family homes and mobile homes in Mount Vernon. Single family units, account for most of the total units in Mount Vernon. However, the share of single family units slightly decreased over the period.

TABLE 10.7
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.
Davison	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
Mount Vernon	2010	207	175	0	7	17	0	0	0	8	0
	2020	268	228	3	3	16	0	0	0	18	0
Alexandria	2010	295	248	0	3	12	8	0	0	24	0
	2020	302	287	0	0	6	9	0	0	0	0
Dimock	2010	62	58	0	0	4	0	0	0	0	0
	2020	43	40	0	0	3	0	0	0	0	0
Ethan	2010	159	145	0	0	6	0	0	2	6	0
	2020	153	128	1	0	13	0	0	1	10	0
Fulton	2010	58	58	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	2020	55	54	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
Letcher	2010	98	63	0	0	12	0	0	0	23	0
	2020	98	70	0	0	6	0	0	0	22	0
Plankinton	2010	309	239	0	16	21	0	0	0	29	4
	2020	347	250	0	14	23	0	7	0	51	2
South Dakota	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 10.8 lists the value of homes in Mount Vernon 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.   Housing units valued between $150,000 and $200,000 increased by 10 units between 2010 and 2020. **Table 10.8** shows the highest number of the Mount Vernon's owner-occupied housing units fall between $100,000 and $150,000 in value; which is also the value range which showed the largest increase in housing units. An important statistic to note is that 12 units valued between $200,000 and $300,000 were reported in 2020, which were not present in 2010 in Mount Vernon.

TABLE 10.8
### 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
Davison	2010	638	1,664	1,168	791	544	238	31	23
	2020	495	805	1,168	1,136	940	481	121	41
Mount Vernon	2010	49	75	6	14	0	3	0	0
	2020	15	34	48	24	12	3	0	4
Alexandria	2010	43	145	35	11	2	0	0	0
	2020	17	66	93	31	20	0	0	0
Dimock	2010	9	14	10	0	3	2	0	0
	2020	5	7	7	11	5	0	0	0
Ethan	2010	10	47	24	4	0	0	0	0
	2020	17	31	26	12	2	0	1	0
Fulton	2010	21	8	17	2	5	0	0	0
	2020	21	18	8	3	3	1	0	0
Letcher	2010	52	11	6	0	0	2	0	0
	2020	35	11	12	4	0	0	0	0
Plankinton	2010	72	69	22	10	2	0	0	0
	2020	53	92	49	20	27	0	2	0
South Dakota	2010	38,511	47,440	48,838	36,044	27,038	13,716	4,120	1,543
	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 10.3** shows the change in median housing unit values in Mount Vernon, 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 increase in the median value in Mount Vernon was the most dramatic among the peer communities.

FIGURE 10.3
Change in Median Housing Unit Values: 2010-2020
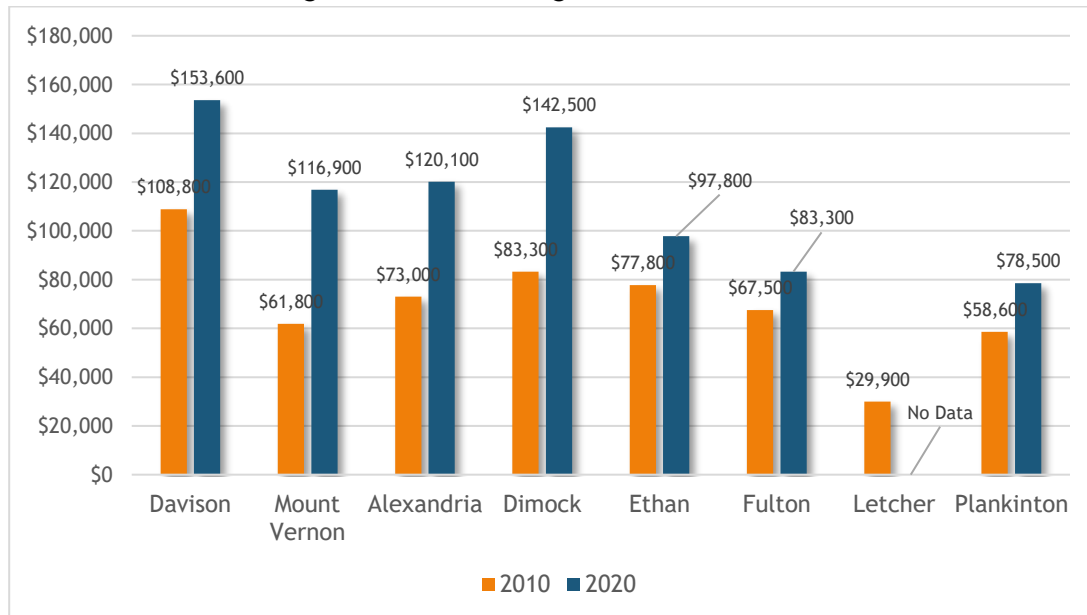
There were key issues or influences which affect housing stock identified at the onset of this section. Many times, these items are not autonomous but have a correlation to each other either directly or indirectly. Value can be related to quality, age, and demand. Quality and age share a more indirect relationship. The data presented in **Table 10.9** examine the age of structures. About one-third of the housing units in Mount Vernon were built before 1940.

The age of the towns' housing stock is further illustrated in **Figure 10.4.** 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

Single Family Home in Mount Vernon

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 10.9
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
Davison	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%
Mount Vernon	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%
Alexandria	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%
Dimock	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%
Ethan	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%
Fulton	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%
Letcher	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%
Plankinton	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%
South Dakota	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 10.4
Housing Units – Years of Construction
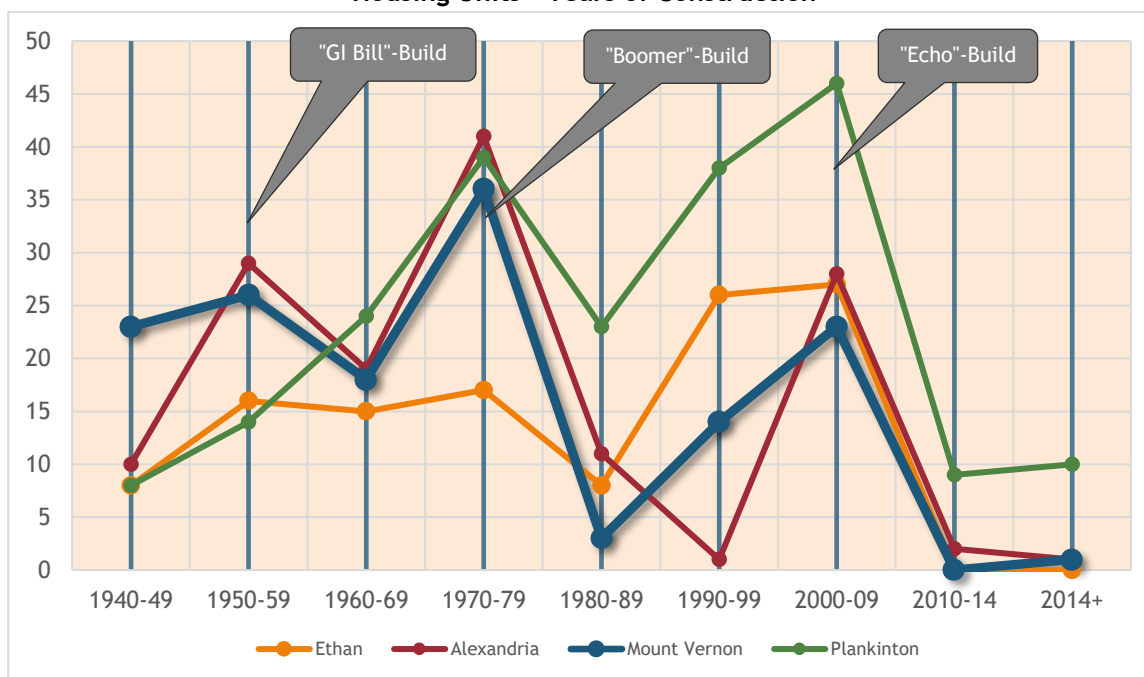
Housing Projections

Tables 10.10, 10.11 and 10.12 present twenty-year housing projections for Davison County and Mount Vernon 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 **10.11**.

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 10.10, 2040 Housing Projection Summary
Davison County

2040 Totals	
Projected Units	1,263
Infill/Replacement	197
Single Family Units	715
Multi-Family	283
Mobile Homes	67
Acres Needed	
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 10.11, Share of County Population, 2020

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

Tables 10.12 lay out the detailed acreage that will be needed to accommodate the housing units projected in **Tables 10.10 and 10.11**. 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 Mount Vernon is 31 units. Applying the unit type and density assumptions we can conclude that there will be about 8.5 net acres of land in demand for residential use in Mount Vernon. 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 11.1 acres. **Table 10.12** provides a detailed breakdown of unit types and residential land needed over the planning period in Mount Vernon.

Table 10.12: Mount Vernon's Share of Units and Acreage Needed

	2021-2025	2026-2030	2031-2035	2036-2040	Total
Projected Units	8	8	8	8	31
Infill/Replacement	1	1	1	1	5
Single Family Units	4	5	5	5	19
Multi-Family	1	1	1	1	5
Mobile Homes	1	1	1	1	3
Net Acres Needed	2.05	2.11	2.16	2.22	8.54
30 % Markup (roads, market, etc.)	0.62	0.63	0.65	0.67	2.56
Total Acres Needed	2.67	2.74	2.81	2.88	11.10

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 **Tables 10.13.** The data reveal a trend toward a higher percentage of residents attaining a higher level of education in Mount Vernon. 93% of Mount Vernon's population has at least a high school diploma or higher, which is a higher concentration that most of the towns in the study area.

Table 10.13
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%
Mount Vernon	3.7%	3.4%	45.4%	20.6%	11.5%	14.6%	0.8%	93.0%	15.5%
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%
Ethan	3.1%	2.0%	41.8%	18.4%	24.0%	7.7%	3.1%	94.9%	10.7%
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%
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 10.14** 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

Track at Mount Vernon School

to establish a baseline for state financial assistance. The dollars per ADM in Mount Vernon is $11,869, which is about the median value of the school districts in the study area. The student/teacher ratio is similar among all school districts in the area. The average salary of teachers in the school districts is comparable as well. Mount Vernon has the highest share of teachers with advanced degrees in the study area.

Table 10.14
School District Profiles 2019/20

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
Mount Vernon 17-3	234	12.6	22.9	17.6	$45,216	12.0	36.8%	$11,869	$1,036,343
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
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 Mount Vernon 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 10.15** below shows the top five programs between Dakota Wesleyan and MTC and the number of graduates in each program.

TABLE 10.15; 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

Mount Vernon has identified an area of about 285 acres that are suitable for future growth. This area could yield 185 housing units if developed at 2 units per acre. **Table 10.16** shows the projected number of youth that the growth area in Mount Vernon may produce.

TABLE 10.16, Youth Projection in Mount Vernon Growth Area

	Mount Vernon
Gross Acres	322.0
Limitations (Acres)	17.0
Developed Acres	20.0
Developable Acres	285.0
% ROW, Public, Etc.	35.0%
Net Acres	185.3
Unit Density	1.0
Unit Capacity	185.0
Units/Lots Sold-Built	0.0
Net Unit Capacity	185.0
People/Household	2.10
Population Projection	388.0
Youth Projection (.45/HH)	83

We can delineate the projected youth from new growth into three age groups based on Mount Vernon's current school-aged population. Of the 83 projected youth in Mount Vernon's growth area, we can allocate 33 youth to the elementary school, 25 to the middle school, and 25 to the high school portions of Mount Vernon's school facility. Compared to the student capacity of each of the school's divisions, there may be a need for additional school facility space in Mount Vernon over the planning period.

TABLE 10.17, Mount Vernon 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	110	125	15	33	143	18	Possible Addition	1,789
Middle School	53	60	7	25	78	18	Possible Addition	2,363
High School	67	100	33	25	92	(8)	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 10.18 provides an overview of the labor force. In 2020 Mount Vernon and the comparison towns all had incredibly low unemployment rates.

TABLE 10.18
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%
Mount Vernon	381	337	337	330	7	0	44	1.8%
Alexandria	570	396	394	389	5	2	174	0.9%
Dimock	95	56	56	56	0	0	39	0.0%
Ethan	244	188	186	186	0	2	56	0.0%
Fulton	123	80	80	76	4	0	43	3.3%
Letcher	148	131	131	125	6	0	17	4.1%
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: 2020 Census Table DP-3

Previous information dealt with unemployment while the next section examines the employment base in Mount Vernon. 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 10.19** identifies the major employment industries in Mount Vernon as well as their growth or decline between 1990 and 2020.

TABLE 10.19
Mount Vernon Employment by Industry - 1990 - 2020

Industry	1990	2000	2010	2020	% Change 1980-2019
Agriculture/Forest/Fish/Mining	7	15	10	25	257.1%
Construction	8	9	8	25	212.5%
Manufacturing	28	47	37	46	64.3%
Wholesale Trade	7	16	7	2	**-71.4%**
Retail Trade	21	26	32	25	19.0%
Trans., Warehouse, & Utility	29	11	8	13	**-55.2%**
Information	0	2	8	4	--
Finance/Insurance/Real Estate	10	2	11	3	**-70.0%**
Professional Services	2	10	6	20	900.0%
Education/Health/Social Services	48	75	49	57	18.8%
Arts, Entertain./Rec./ Accom./Food	0	6	19	19	--
Other Services	2	17	17	83	4,050.0%
Public Administration	8	8	2	8	0.0%
Total	170	244	214	330	94.1%

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

The thirty-year period between 1990 and 2020 was a time when wholesale trade, transportation/warehousing, and finance experienced a significant **decline** in employment in Mount Vernon. The same period saw dramatic **increases** in the professional services, other services, construction, and agriculture sectors.

Table 10.20 focuses on occupations in Mount Vernon for the previous thirty years. While there has been virtually no one employed in farming occupations, the level of employed persons in service occupations has risen significantly. Likewise, production, sales, and construction-related occupations have increased in the past thirty years.

TABLE 10.20
Mount Vernon Occupations - 1990 - 2020

	1990	2000	2010	2020
Management & Professional Services	44	58	49	47
Service	22	42	41	57
Sales and Office	44	56	48	20
Farming, fishing, and forestry	2	5	--	0
Construction & Maintenance	21	28	31	0
Production & Transportation	37	55	45	6
Total Employed: Age 16 and Above	170	244	214	330

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

Table 10.21 includes a list of the five largest primary employers in Mount Vernon 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 public service sectors, employ nearly 51 persons.

TABLE 10.21
Major Employers in Mount Vernon

Rank	Employer and Place	Product / Service	Employees
1	Mount Vernon School District	Education	35
2	Mount Vernon Fire Department	Fire Protection	16
3	Eternal Security Products	Wholesale Electrical Supplies	9
4	Westy's One Stop	Gas Station/Convenience Store	8
5	US Post Office	Postal Service	6

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 are 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.

Mount Vernon residents who are in the labor force primarily drive alone to work as shown in **Table 10.22.** The percentage of those who drive their own vehicle rose from 75.8% in 2010 to 86.0% in 2020. The percentage of people who walked to their job increased from 1.0% in 2010 to 1.8% in 2020.

TABLE 10.22
Mount Vernon Commuting Data - 2010 – 2020

Mode of Transportation	2010 Percent	2020 Percent
Workers 16 years and over	198	298
MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK		
Car, truck, or van	87.9	90.2
Drove alone	75.8	86.0
Carpooled	12.1	4.3
In 2-person carpool	10.6	4.0
In 3-person carpool	0.5	0.3
In 4-or-more person carpool	1.0	0.0
Workers per car, truck, or van	1.09	1.02
Public transportation (excluding taxicab)	0.0	0.0
Walked	1.0	1.8
Bicycle	1.0	0.0
Taxicab, motorcycle, or other means	1.0	0.0
Worked from home	9.1	7.9

Source: 2000 Census Summary File 3; 1990-1980 Census Summary File 3

Table 10.23 shows that 48.3% of the workers in Mount Vernon 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. It would be fair to conclude that the average worker travels between 15 and 25 minutes to their workplace.

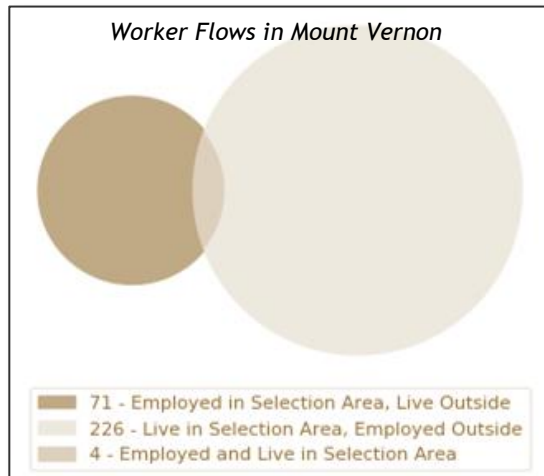**TABLE 6.23**
Mount Vernon Worker Commute Times

Commute Time	Percent
Less than 10 minutes	6.0
10 to 14 minutes	0.3
15 to 19 minutes	48.3
20 to 24 minutes	26.2
25 to 29 minutes	1.7
30 to 34 minutes	7.9
35 to 44 minutes	1.0
45 to 59 minutes	2.3
60 or more minutes	6.3
Mean travel time to work (minutes)	22.9

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. Using OnTheMap, we can conclude the following for Mount Vernon residents and workers:

- 71 people are employed in Mount Vernon, but live somewhere outside of town.
- Only 4 people both reside and work in Mount Vernon
- 226 live in Mount Vernon, but travel elsewhere for work

Worker Flows in Mount Vernon

- 71 - Employed in Selection Area, Live Outside
- 226 - Live in Selection Area, Employed Outside
- 4 - Employed and Live in Selection Area

Mount Vernon 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 3 to 1. The graphic at the left shows the dynamics of worker inflow and outflow in Mount Vernon. 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 10.5**, job locations for residents of Mount Vernon are shown by zip codes. The number of workers from Mount Vernon in each zip code are shown by graduated colors. The darker colors represent more workers who live in Mount Vernon and work in that zip code. According to Figure 10.5, most people who live in Mount Vernon, travel to the Mitchell area (57301) to work.

FIGURE 10.5
**Work Locations for Mount Vernon Residents by Zip Code**

- 128 Jobs
- 10 Jobs
- 7 Jobs
- 5 Jobs
- 4 Jobs
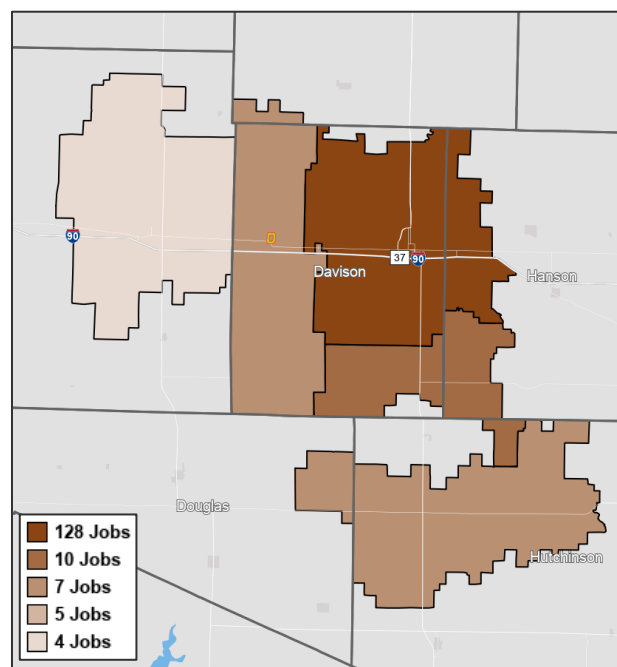
Business Taxes

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 10.6 illustrates the recent trends in general gross sales in Mount Vernon. Wholesale is the strongest sector in Mount Vernon, while Manufacturing is now the weakest sector in terms of sales. Sales in the Agriculture and Manufacturing sectors decreased dramatically between 2018 and 2020, $28,000 and $35,000 respectively. Wholesale reported a huge decline between 2018 and 2020, from $35 million to $23 million. Sales in the Services sector increased by 17% from 2018 to 2020 from $1.45 million to $1.7 million.

FIGURE 10.6
Mount Vernon- General Gross Sales ($000's)
2018-2020
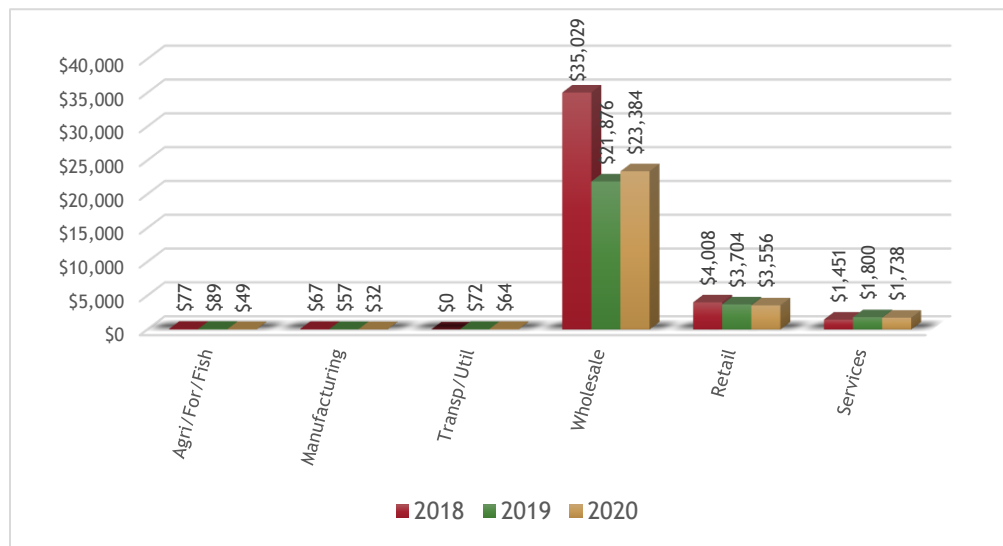
Source: SD Dept of Revenue, South Dakota Sales and Use Tax Report 2018-2020

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 10.24**. The median per capita income in Mount Vernon grew by 35% between 2010 and 2020. Median household income actually fell by only 11% in the same period, but family income increased by 17%.

TABLE 10.24
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%
Mount Vernon	$20,712	$28,032	35%	$51,875	$46,250	-11%	$61,071	$71,250	17%
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%
Ethan	$19,194	$25,329	32%	$40,417	$56,667	40%	$56,607	$62,500	10%
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%
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 10.25 contain household income figures for Mount Vernon and comparable towns. In 2020 the majority of households (56) 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 (43) in Mount Vernon earned between $35,000 and $50,000.

TABLE 10.25
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
Mount Vernon	4	10	9	10	43	56	22	32	11	4
Alexandria	13	13	19	16	75	35	34	63	7	5
Dimock	1	0	3	4	5	10	10	9	1	0
Ethan	0	6	14	16	26	41	24	14	3	0
Fulton	1	1	9	4	21	10	6	1	2	0
Letcher	3	1	12	5	8	28	21	3	0	2
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 if fairing. The one social indicator with statistical data is poverty related information. **Table 10.26** provides and overview of poverty numbers and percentages for 2010 to 2020 within the comparative towns. The percent of Mount Vernon residents living at or below poverty level decreased by over five percentage points between 2010 and 2020. The overall percentage of those in poverty remains substantially lower than Davison County and South Dakota. The percentage of families in poverty in Mount Vernon decreased slightly between 2010 and 2020, from 1.8% to 1.7%.

TABLE 10.26

Number and Percent in Poverty - 2000 - 2020

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

New growth in Mount Vernon could occur southeast of the community and accommodate at least one new neighborhood. The land between Mount Vernon proper and Interstate 90 could be urban in nature. The neighborhood could yield up to 185 new housing units. **Figure 10.7** shows the areas are suitable for development in the Mount Vernon area. Since most people who live in Mount Vernon work in Mitchell, the corner of "Old Highway 16" and 397th Avenue could become a service node for commuters going to and from their workplace. The land at the Interstate 90 interchange holds tremendous potential for economic development and employment.

The land use plan for Mount Vernon 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. The land immediately surrounding Mount Vernon is best suited for low-density and rural housing. Intense commercial and employment areas are located along 397th Avenue (Woonsocket Road) and Interstate 90. **Figure 10.8** illustrates the land use plan for Mount Vernon.

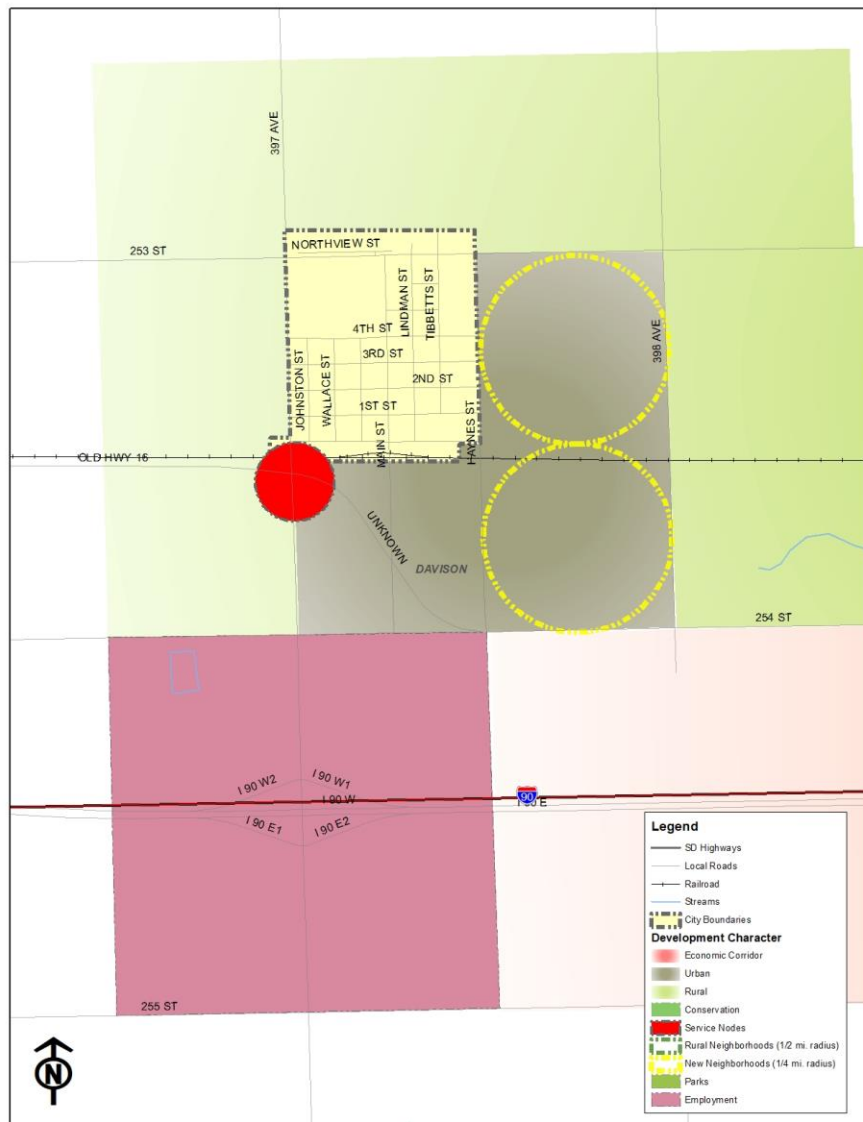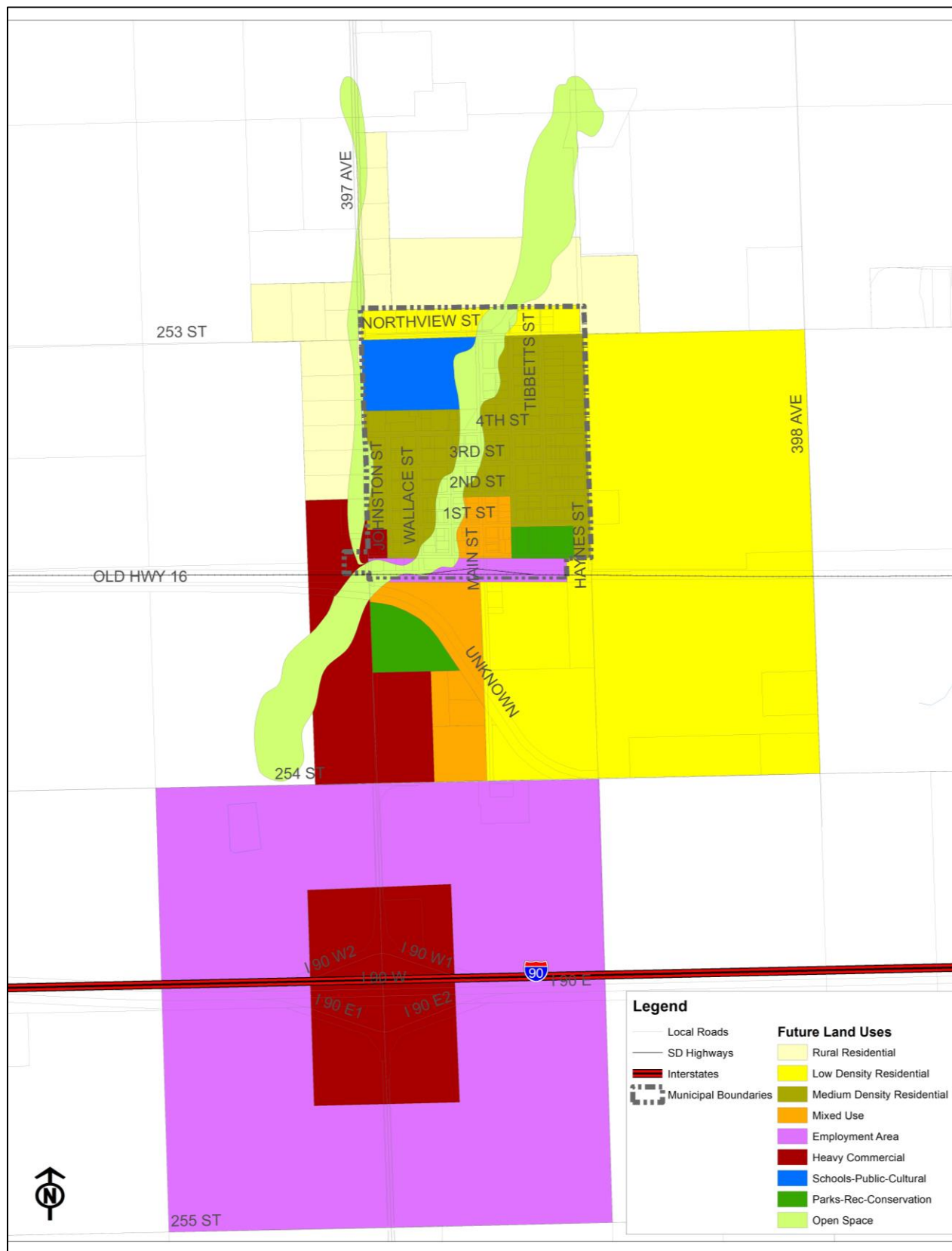**Figure 10.7: Land Use Design, Mount Vernon Area**

Figure 10.8: Mount Vernon Land Use Plan

PLANNING CONSIDERATIONS

Mount Vernon's Planning Challenges

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

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

Planning Recommendations

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

1) Capitalize on Mount Vernon's connection to the regional transportation network by developing facilities that serve commuters and interstate travelers;

2) Encourage the development of service businesses and eating/drinking places that serve the local population;

3) Promote development on the edge of town into lower density housing. Outside assistance may be needed to install new infrastructure.

4) Promote and maintain Mount Vernon's community activities to build strong social ties.