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### A Final Report to the City of Schuyler, Nebraska, on Residents' Perceptions of Housing and the Quality of Life in Schuyler, Nebraska

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*A Final Report  
to the City of Schuyler, Nebraska, on*

**Residents' Perceptions of  
Housing and the Quality of Life  
in Schuyler, Nebraska**

**Based on a Door-to-Door Survey of 85  
Long-Time and Newly-Arrived Residents  
of Schuyler, Nebraska, in February 1996**

**Prepared by a research team from the  
College of Architecture at the  
University of Nebraska-Lincoln including:**

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**With special thanks to  
Mary Peschel, City Clerk,  
and the citizens of Schuyler, Nebraska.**

**May 2, 1996**

# Executive Summary

Schuyler, Nebraska, is on the cutting edge of a global economy in which people are migrating to places that offer jobs and a better quality of life. With the growth of employment opportunities at the Excel Packing Plant, Schuyler's population is increasing and the demand for affordable housing is rising.

To help assess resident perceptions of how the community is responding to these challenges, a team of researchers from the College of Architecture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln conducted a survey of 85 households in Schuyler in February of 1996. The survey addresses issues of housing and the quality of life in Schuyler from the perspectives of **long-time residents** (15 or more years in the community) and **newly-arrived residents** (less than five years in the community).

To summarize results of the 95-question survey, there are areas of **agreement and disagreement** between the long-time and newly-arrived residents of Schuyler. Both groups tend to believe that:

- (1) Schuyler provides its residents with a good quality of life.
- (2) Improvements are desired to meet the housing and other needs of its growing population.

Long-time and newly-arrived residents tend to express some **differences** in perceptions, such as:

- (1) Newly-arrived residents tend to perceive more stress than long-time residents.
- (2) Long-time residents tend to feel that conditions in the community are getting worse and newly-arrived residents tend to feel that they are getting better.

Based on these and other findings from the study, the research team **recommends** that the following actions be taken to meet the emerging community needs:

- (1) To continue to gather information about housing options and make it available to the public.
- (2) To address residential housing priorities identified by long-time and newly-arrived residents.
- (3) To establish a support group for newly-arrived residents and provide outreach education classes.
- (4) To continue to improve the local business climate.

On behalf of the UNL College of Architecture, the research team would like to thank the citizens of Schuyler for this opportunity to study local perceptions regarding housing and the quality of life. It is through on-going study and development efforts that communities like Schuyler can continue to maintain a high quality of life and meet the needs of a growing and changing populations.

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# Residents' Perceptions of Housing and the Quality of Life in Schuyler, Nebraska

## I. Introduction

Throughout the world, people are migrating to find jobs and to seek a better life. As agricultural processors locate plants in rural areas with raw materials and lower labor costs, towns like Schuyler, Nebraska, are experiencing pressures. They are experiencing an increase in the number of jobs available and a shortage of affordable housing to meet the needs of a growing population.

These migration trends are reflected in recent U.S. Census estimates for Colfax County, where the population increased by an estimated 11% from 1990 to 1995. Much of the population growth can be attributed to the influx of people coming to Schuyler for work in the Excel Beef Packing Plant. The rise in population has created demands for adequate affordable housing and other municipal services and continues to be a challenge for communities like Schuyler.

Currently, there is inadequate research on relationships between the physical conditions of housing and the quality of life for local residents in towns like Schuyler. To better understand the needs and perceptions of Schuyler residents, a research team from the College of Architecture at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln conducted a study on "**Housing and the Quality of Life in Schuyler, Nebraska**" between September 1995 and May 1996.

The focus of the project was to explore the effects of recent population growth on housing and other physical environment factors related to the quality of life for both **long-time residents** (more than 15 years) and **newly-arrived residents** (less than five years). The project sought to meet the following objectives:

- (A) To identify and assess the physical, social, and cultural factors that are sources of stress for long-time and newly-arrived residents of Schuyler, NE.
- (B) To better understand and define the relationships between physical, social and cultural stressors and the residents' well-being.
- (C) To enhance the knowledge base regarding relationships between the physical residential environment and resident well-being in Nebraska.

- (D) To suggest potential means for alleviating stress experienced by long-time and newly-arrived residents, including suggestions to help meet the residential needs of Schuyler, NE.

## **II. Methodology**

The methodology used in this study can be described in three phases. The first phase entailed identifying key issues in Schuyler related to housing and the quality of life. The second phase involved surveying residents about their perceptions regarding the quality of life in Schuyler. Finally, in the third phase, the questionnaire results were analyzed and presented to the City of Schuyler with recommendations. Within the three phases, steps were taken to evaluate the role of physical, social, and environmental stressors on the quality of life for long-time and newly-arrived residents.

### **(A) PHASE I: Identifying the Issues**

The main goal of this phase was to identify historical forces that have helped shape current conditions in Schuyler. In order to obtain this background information, newspaper articles were collected from *The Schuyler Sun*, *The Lincoln Journal*, and the *Omaha World Herald*. The collection of newspaper articles continued throughout the study and helped the team to discover patterns of concern for the quality of life in Schuyler.

A brief review of Schuyler's recent history suggests that the following are key dates leading up to this study:

- *December 1982:* Spencer Beef closes its plant in Schuyler, laying off 980 workers after union refuses \$2/hr. pay cut from average pay of \$9.50/hr.
- *June 1983:* Excel Corporation announces plans to re-open the Schuyler plant.
- *March 1984:* Plant re-opens under new management with beginning pay of \$5.90/hr.
- *December 1988:* Economic recovery from hardships of the mid-80s is evident as 12 new businesses open in Schuyler in 1988. Excel employs 1,275 full-time workers.
- *January 1990:* Excell begins work on \$24 million modernization of Schuyler and Dodge City plants, partly to satisfy safety agreement with United Food and Commercial Workers International Union.
- *March 1992:* Monona Wire Corp. opens plant in Schuyler with 30 new employees.
- *May 1994:* City Council rejects proposed changes to the local housing ordinance that would challenge overcrowding in single-family dwellings.
- *June 1994:* Seldin Company of Omaha opens 24-unit subsidized rental complex just east of Schuyler.
- *August 1994:* Frederick Homes opens in Schuyler with custom-built modular home designs in the \$80,000 to \$120,000 price range.
- *November 1995:* ***Community Housing Study for Schuyler*** completed by Hanna:

In September 1995, the research team met with city officials in Schuyler to introduce the research proposal. With the consent and cooperation of city officials, a representative group of community leaders was called upon to provide some background information on current issues in Schuyler.

Next, two focus groups -- one made up of long-time residents and another made up of newly-arrived residents -- were convened. The primary purposes of these focus groups was to provide an opportunity for both long-time and newly-arrived residents to come together to discuss their perceptions of issues related to the quality of life in Schuyler. Fourteen (14) long-term residents participated in the first focus group and eight (8) newly-arrived residents participated in the second focus group. All information was provided in English and Spanish.

The format of the discussion involved asking open-ended questions related to individual residences, neighborhoods, and Schuyler as a whole. The issues covered during the focus groups related to housing, neighborhood environment, city services, changes over the past 5 to 10 years, the overall quality of life, and desired improvements. The information gathered from the two groups was used to identify themes from resident concerns and perceptions. This phase was useful in leading the researchers to the second phase, which was to construct a household questionnaire.

## **(B) PHASE II: Surveying for Resident Perceptions**

The main goal of this phase was to survey long-time and newly-arrived residents regarding their perceptions of quality of life issues. It was agreed that the survey questions would relate to physical, social/cultural, economic, and services issues. After several revisions, the survey was pre-tested in English and Spanish with eight (8) Schuyler residents in December, 1995. Some final revisions were made and the questionnaire was administered in the community in February, 1996.

To inform Schuyler residents of the survey, announcements were made in English and Spanish through posters at St. Augustine's Church and in the following newspapers: *The Schuyler Sun*, *The Fremont Tribune*, *La Voz Hispana* from Sioux City, IA, and *La Estrella Hispana* from Madison, NE.

Because the project was planned in conjunction with a University of Nebraska graduate-level research methods class in Community & Regional Planning, the majority of the interviewers were students who conducted interviews as part of their course requirements. The surveys were given in English or Spanish on the first two Saturdays in February. Fifteen (15) interviewers braved 25 below zero weather on the first Saturday and eight (8) interviewers withstood 40 to 50 mph winds on the second Saturday in February. These efforts resulted in a total of 85 completed surveys.

Long-time and newly-arrived residents were selected by targeting specific geographic areas. Then individual households were randomly selected. To meet our requirements for long-time and newly-arrived residents, no residents who had arrived in Schuyler between January 1, 1981 and January 1, 1991 were interviewed. Locating long-time residents was fairly simple but finding newly-arrived persons was a bit more complicated. Using 1990 U.S. Census Block information and the expertise of city officials, pockets of newly-arrived residents were pinpointed. Extra effort was made to include persons of Hispanic origin since they are primarily the individuals that make up the newly-arrived group.

To interview **long-time residents**, surveyors were dropped off at randomly selected neighborhood blocks and were instructed to go in a clockwise direction around the block to each residence and to ask for volunteer participants. Only one interview per household was taken, with the requirement that the long-time resident be 32 years of age or older. No more than five interviews were conducted on each block.

**Newly-arrived residents** were defined as having come to Schuyler after January 1, 1991 and being at least 18 years of age. The residential block randomness for this group included both single-family housing and multi-family residence clusters (i.e. apartment buildings, mobile house parks, and duplexes, etc.). In the case of apartment buildings, surveyors were to seek volunteer participants beginning with the first housing unit on each floor and proceeding to the next unit in the ascending order of apartment numbers. While interviewing, no more than six interviews could be conducted within each selected cluster.

Out of the total of 85 surveys completed, 55% were long-term residents and 45% were newly arrived residents. As for gender, 54% were male and 46% were female.

### **(C) PHASE III: Analyzing the Survey Results**

In March 1996, the graduate students completed the computerized data entry and the research team began to analyze the results. During this phase, the research team used the survey results, newspaper articles, and field notes taken during resident telephone and survey contacts to generate recommendations for enhancing the housing and quality of life in Schuyler.

## **III. Survey Results**

When considering the results of the survey there are many ways to present the information. For easier understanding, the results have been arranged in two sections. The first section lists the questions on which the perceptions of long-time and newly-arrived residents are **similar**. The second section lists those questions for which perceptions of long-time and newly-arrived residents are significantly **different**. Each table has the questions organized under the following key headings from the survey:

- |                            |  |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Resident Satisfaction   | 7. Housing Priorities                            |
| 2. Privacy                 | 8. Contributors to the Current Housing Condition |
| 3. Stress Related Concerns | 9. Physical Issues                               |
| 4. Health Related Issues   | 10. Service Issues                               |
| 5. Housing Concerns        | 11. Social/Cultural Issues                       |
| 6. Changes in Schuyler     | 12. Economic Issues                              |

**(A) Similarities in perception between long-time and newly-arrived residents:**

**1. Resident satisfaction**

- New arrivals and long-time residents are satisfied with most everything about the community, including:
  - a) the level of safety from being a victim of a crime while in their residence;
  - b) the overall physical condition of their residence;
  - c) getting along with their neighbors; and
  - d) having adequate off-street parking.

**2. Privacy**

- New arrivals and long-time residents agree that they have:
  - a) sufficient privacy from neighbors; and
  - b) have enough privacy from others in their residence.

**3. Stress-Related Concerns**

- Long-time and newly-arrived residents tended to agree that:
  - a) tension with their neighbors is not a source of stress;
  - b) life in Schuyler is not very stressful;
  - c) the economic differences in their neighborhood are not a source of stress;
  - d) crime in Schuyler is not a source of stress; and
  - e) social/cultural differences of people in their neighborhood are not sources of stress.
  - f) their family is of great comfort or assistance (See Appendix B, p. 27);
  - g) living in Schuyler is very beneficial for their family (See Appendix B, p. 28),
  - h) their friends are supportive(See Appendix B, p. 29);
  - I) they are very happy to live in Schuyler (See Appendix B, p. 30);
  - j) they would like to continue living in Schuyler as long as possible (See Appendix B, p. 31); and
  - k) they would recommend their neighborhood to a friend (See Appendix B, p. 32).

- They are neutral on:

- a) whether their income is enough to make ends meet;
- b) a variety of social organizations **do not** provide either financial or social support, when they are in need; and
- c) their employment (or unemployment) is not a source of stress.

#### **4. Health-Related Concerns**

- New arrivals and long-time residents rate their health and appetite as good.
- New arrivals and long-time residents agree that their overall level of stress is medium.
- Both groups agree that occasionally stress has a negative impact on their health.

#### **5. Housing Concerns**

- New arrivals and long-time residents agree that the following are good:
  - a) the quality of housing (See Appendix B, p. 36); and
  - b) the maintenance of housing in their neighborhood (See Appendix B, p. 36).
- Both groups agree that the availability of:
  - a) information about housing is slightly poor (See Appendix B, p. 34); and
  - b) rental assistance is poor to neutral (See Appendix B, p. 34).

#### **6. Changes in Schuyler**

- Long-time residents believe that the economic conditions are the same or better in Schuyler (See Appendix B, p. 41).
- Both agree that the quality of housing has not changed (See Appendix B, p. 41).

#### **7. Housing Priorities**

- New arrivals and long-time residents rank the importance of the following actions to improve housing conditions in Schuyler in this order (See Appendix B, p. 33):
  - a) build more rental apartments;
  - b) build more houses of \$40,000 - \$59,999; and
  - c) build more elderly apartments.

#### **8. Contributors to the Current Housing Conditions**

- Both groups agree that important contributors to the current housing condition include:
  - a) the population increase (See Appendix B, p. 37); and
  - b) the increase in industrial activity in the area (See Appendix B, p. 37).
- Both groups agree that the aging of the population is a “somewhat important” contributor to the current housing conditions (See Appendix B, p. 45).

#### **9. Physical Issues**

- New arrivals and long-time residents are satisfied with:
  - a) the adequacy of public services (e.g. lights, storm sewers, street cleaning);
  - b) the garbage collection;
  - c) the parking of cars in the neighborhood; and

d) the overall quality of air in the neighborhood.

#### **10. Services Issues**

- Short- and long-term residents are satisfied with access to education services (e.g. schools).
- Both groups are neutral about the accessibility of commercial services for non-basic supplies (clothing, appliances, car).

#### **11. Social/Cultural Issues**

- New arrivals and long-time residents are satisfied with cooperation among neighbors and with the "sense of community" in Schuyler (See Appendix B, p. 41).

#### **12. Economic Issues**

- Both groups were neutral about the overall levels of wealth for people.

### **(B) Differences in perception between long-time and newly-arrived residents:**

#### **1. Resident Satisfaction**

- Long-time residents are more satisfied with:
  - a) the size of their residence (See Appendix B, p. 25);
  - b) the level of safety from fire (See Appendix B, p. 40);
  - c) the overall physical condition of their residence; and
  - d) the amount of rent/mortgage that they pay.

#### **2. Privacy**

- New arrivals are less bothered by noise from nearby residences than long-time residents.

#### **3. Stress-Related Concerns**

- New arrivals are more likely than long-time residents to feel:
  - a) greater pressure to do better, advance or succeed (See Appendix B, p. 38); and
  - b) that the struggle for a better house is a source of stress (See Appendix B, p. 38).
- Long-time residents agree more strongly that their residence provides a healthy environment for them.
- Long-time residents disagree more strongly that:
  - a) their current residence undermines their social status; and
  - b) racial discrimination is a source of stress for them.

#### **4. Health-Related Issues**

- No significant differences of perception found between long-time and newly-arrived residents.

## **5. Housing Concerns**

- New arrivals knew less about mortgage loan availability to families in Schuyler (See Appendix B, p. 34).

## **6. Changes in Schuyler**

- New arrivals feel that the following items have gotten better:
  - a) the sense of community (See Appendix B, p. 41); and
  - b) the economic conditions (See Appendix B, p. 41).
- Long-time residents feel that the following items have gotten worse:
  - a) the availability of housing (See Appendix B, p. 41);
  - b) the crime conditions (See Appendix B, p. 41); and
  - c) the crowding conditions (number of persons in a residence) (See Appendix B, p. 41).

## **7. Housing Priorities**

- "Building more houses for \$60,000 or higher" was the highest priority for long-time residents and the lowest priority for newly arrived residents (See Appendix B, p. 33).

## **8. Contributors to the Current Housing Conditions**

- New arrivals feel that a lack of financial incentives to housing developers is an important contributor to the current housing condition and long-time residents think it is only "somewhat important" (See Appendix B, p. 44).
- Long-time residents feel more strongly that the following items are important contributors to the current housing condition and newly arrivals think that they are only "somewhat important":
  - a) the city housing policies (e.g. housing codes) (See Appendix B, p. 44);
  - b) the economic conditions of the population (See Appendix B, p. 44); and
  - c) the decrease in white collar jobs (See Appendix B, p. 45).

## **9. Physical Issues**

- Long-time residents are less satisfied with the traffic that goes through their neighborhood (See Appendix B, p. 43).
- Newly arrived residents are more satisfied with:
  - a) the overall visual attractiveness of the neighborhood (e.g. trees, cleanliness); and
  - b) the level of street maintenance in the neighborhood.

## **10. Services Issues**

- Long-time residents are more satisfied with:
  - a) access to transportation (See Appendix B, p. 39);
  - b) access to recreation;
  - c) access to health services;
  - d) the level of fire protection (See Appendix B, p. 39).
- Long-time residents are less satisfied with the availability of day care services.

- Newly arrived residents are more satisfied with:
  - a) the level of police protection; and
  - b) commercial services accessibility for basic supplies (e.g. food).

#### **11. Social/Cultural Issues**

- Even though long-time residents were satisfied with the “sense of community” in Schuyler, newly arrived residents were even more satisfied in this area (See Appendix B, p. 41).

#### **12. Economic Issues**

- Long-time residents are less satisfied with:
  - a) Schuyler’s ability to attract business (See Appendix B, p. 35);
  - b) the availability of employment for people (See Appendix B, p. 35); and
  - c) the well-being of businesses in Schuyler.

## **IV. Summary and Recommendations**

It is readily apparent from the survey results that both long-time and newly-arrived residents share and differ in their perceptions of Schuyler's housing and quality of life in the community. This summary lists some key points which can be drawn from the information provided by the 85 household surveys. This section completes the report by providing some recommendations which the research team has thought of; however, the suggestions are limited to the researchers' knowledge. It is recommended that the Schuyler community use its expertise to come up with more recommendations and pursue a plan of action which fits the needs of the residents.

### **(A) Summary of Key Points**

**1. Schuyler provides a good quality of life.** Both long-time and newly-arrived residents tend to appreciate the good quality of life in Schuyler and say that:

- They feel safe from crime while in their residence.
- Their family is of great comfort or assistance (See Appendix B, p. 27).
- Living in Schuyler is very beneficial for their family (See Appendix B, p. 28).
- Their friends are supportive (See Appendix B, p. 29).
- They are very happy to live in Schuyler (See Appendix B, p. 30).
- They would like to continue living in Schuyler as long as possible (See Appendix B, p. 31).
- They would recommend their neighborhood to a friend (See Appendix B, p. 32).

**2. Improvements are needed to meet the housing and other needs of Schuyler residents.** In agreement, both long-time and newly-arrived residents have:

- Ranked priorities to improve housing conditions in Schuyler as follows (See Appendix B, p. 33):
  - a) build more rental apartments;
  - b) build more houses of \$40,000 - \$59,999; and
  - c) build more elderly apartments.
- Agreed with the need:
  - a) information about housing (See Appendix B, p. 34); and
  - b) rental assistance for (See Appendix B, p. 34).
- Rated as worse to neutral:
  - a) the availability of housing (See Appendix B, p. 41);
  - b) economic conditions in Schuyler (See Appendix B, p. 41); and
  - c) crowding conditions (number of persons in a residence) (See Appendix B, p. 41).

- Rated as neutral to excellent, the quality of housing in the neighborhood (See Appendix B, p. 36).
- Identified as important contributors to the current housing conditions:
  - a) a population increase (See Appendix B, p. 37); and
  - b) an increase in industrial activity in the area (See Appendix B, p. 37);

When considering improvements that need to be made, the following survey results should also be taken into account.

- New arrivals knew less about mortgage loan availability to families in Schuyler (See Appendix B, p. 34).

- New arrivals are less satisfied with:
  - b) the level of safety from fire (See Appendix B, p. 40); and
  - a) access to transportation (See Appendix B, p. 39).
- Long-time residents expressed dissatisfaction with:
  - a) the availability of employment for people in Schuyler (See Appendix B, p. 35);
  - b) Schuyler's ability to attract businesses (See Appendix B, p. 35); and
  - c) the well-being of businesses.
- Both long-time and newly arrived residents were neutral with the overall levels of wealth for people.

**3. Newly-arrived residents tend to feel more stress than long-time residents.** New arrivals to Schuyler tend to perceive the following issues as stressful:

- New arrivals feel greater pressure to do better, advance or succeed (See Appendix B, p. 38).
- New arrivals feel that the struggle for a better house is a greater source of stress (See Appendix B, p. 38).
- New arrivals agreed that a variety of social organizations do not provide either financial or social support, when they are in need.

**4. Long-time residents tend to feel conditions are getting worse and newly-arrived residents tend to feel conditions are getting better.** This was illustrated in the survey results indicating that:

- New arrivals tend to feel the following conditions are improving in Schuyler:
  - a) the sense of community (See Appendix B, p. 41); and
  - b) the economic conditions (See Appendix B, p. 41).
- Long-time residents tend to feel that these local conditions have gotten worse in the last decade:
  - a) the availability of housing (See Appendix B, p. 41);
  - b) the crime conditions (See Appendix B, p. 41); and
  - c) the crowding conditions (number of persons in a residence) (See Appendix B, p. 41).

## 5. Perceptions of the contributors to current housing conditions vary.

- New arrivals feel a lack of financial incentives to housing developers is an important contributor to current housing conditions (See Appendix B, p. 44).
- Long-time residents are more likely to feel that the following issues are important contributors to current housing conditions:
  - a) the city housing policies (e.g. housing codes) (See Appendix B, p. 44);
  - b) a decrease in white collar jobs (See Appendix B, p. 45); and
  - c) the economic conditions of the population (See Appendix B, p. 44).

## (B) Recommendations :

It is clear from the questionnaire results that many issues exist in which long-time and newly-arrived resident perceptions are quite similar. But, there are also a number of issues in which resident perceptions tend to differ. What can be learned from the results that could help bring about positive changes in Schuyler? What actions could be taken to improve housing conditions in Schuyler?

Presented below are some recommendations from the research team to consider as the city of Schuyler works to improve the community:

1. ***Continue to gather information on housing options and make it available to interested parties in the community.*** New arrivals and long-time residents agree that the availability of information about housing and rental assistance to families is poor to neutral. An organized effort is needed to raise the awareness of residents and developers about housing possibilities. Key activities to consider include:
  - Disseminate the information the ***Schuyler Community Housing Study*** published by Hanna:Kellan Associates in November 1995. Among the housing resources available to Schuyler and described in more detail in the study (pp. 50- 56) are:
    - a) **Tax Increment Financing** - to redevelop blighted/substandard areas;
    - b) **Community Development Block Grant** - state/federal grants to improve housing for low- and moderate-income families;
    - c) **LB 840 & 1240** - locally approved tax for new construction or housing rehabilitation;
    - d) **Schuyler Housing Authority** - is empowered to become involved in all aspects of affordable housing in the community;
    - e) **Local Major Employers and/or Community Foundation Assistance** - resources with great potential to help meet a range of housing needs;
    - f) **Local Lending Pool** - local lenders can establish a shared-risk pool fund to help meet local housing needs.

- g) **Nebraska Department of Economic Development (DED)** - multiple programs available.
- h) **Nebraska Investment Finance Authority (NIFA)** - multiple programs available.
- i) **Nebraska Energy Office** - Low-Income Weatherization Assistance;
- j) **Federal Home Loan Bank** - Affordable Housing Program; and
- k) **U.S. Dept. of Housing and Urban Development** - multiple programs.
- **Habitat for Humanity** is an organization with 1200 local affiliates across the U.S. with volunteers committed to helping meet the housing needs of low-income families. Participating families providing “sweat equity.” Schuyler could establish a local affiliate, as has Omaha, Lincoln and Kearney.
- It may be desirable to promote these potential housing alternatives through educational programs coordinated by various community groups in conjunction with Cooperative Extension Service seminars or workshops.

2. ***Address residential housing priorities.*** Taking action on housing objectives is not one person’s or one group’s responsibility. There needs to be a concerted effort by the community to work together. What new housing developments are viable in Schuyler? How can they be done? Who should be involved? It may be necessary for a coalition of community groups to cooperate in moving this agenda forward.

- Once there is local agreement on what housing improvements are needed, the resources described above and in the Hanna:Keelan housing study can be pooled in different ways to meet specific housing needs.
- Excel could be invited to become a key partner in helping meet the pressing need for short-term and transitional housing for newly-arrived workers.
- Consider the feasibility of the expandable ***Home4Me*** house plan shown in Appendix B. It begins at 225 sq. ft. and can be expanded as the owner is able to afford more house. In addition to serving as an affordable starter home, it can also serve as a vacation cottage or week-end retreat bungalow. It is designed to be in conformance with appropriate national building codes.
- The issue of building more houses of \$60,000 or higher was the highest priority for long-time residents and the lowest priority for newly-arrived residents. Building homes at the higher price range is likely to free up more moderately priced older homes for newly-arrived residents in the community.

3. ***Strengthen support services for newly arrived residents.*** In the course of conducting the survey, it was discovered that newly-arrived residents often face stressful and even crisis situations when they first arrive. To help the community deal with difficulties facing newly-arrived residents, the following actions can be taken:

- **Establish a working group to help solve personal and community-wide problems related to a growing population.** Towns like Lexington, Nebraska, have established such a group with representatives from:
    - a) City government;
    - b) Health and human service organizations;
    - c) Civic groups such as churches;
    - d) Education
    - e) Law enforcement; and
    - f) Other interested parties.
  - **Provide outreach education classes.** Many newly-arrived residents need training in subjects such as fire safety/protection, housing codes and home-buyer training. The information should be provided in Spanish for those who have limited English skills.
4. ***Continue to improve the local business climate.*** New arrivals and long-time residents are unsatisfied to neutral with the availability of employment for people in Schuyler; with Schuyler's ability to attract businesses; and with overall levels of wealth for people. It appears that continued efforts to strengthen Schuyler's ability to attract appropriate businesses is desirable. Local business and economic development leaders need to look for ways to expand existing businesses and to attract desirable new businesses. Further education and action regarding these issues could help encourage potential development. The Nebraska Department of Economic Development is a valuable partner in any such effort.