Hall County Regional Planning Commission

Wednesday, April 4, 2012
Regular Session Packet

Commission Members:

John Amick	**Hall County**	
Karen Bredthauer	**Grand Island**	**Vice Chairperson**
Julie Connelly	**Grand Island**	
Scott Eriksen	**Grand Island**	
Mark Haskins	**Hall County**	
Bill Hayes	**Doniphan**	
Dennis McCarty	**Grand Island**	
Jaye Monter	**Cairo**	
Pat O'Neill	**Hall County**	**Chairperson**
Deb Reynolds	**Hall County**	
Leslie Ruge	**Alda**	**Secretary**
Don Snodgrass	**Wood River**	

Regional Planning Director: Chad Nabity

Technician:
Edwin Maslonka

Secretary:
Rose Woods

6:00 PM
Council Chambers - City Hall
100 East First Street

Call to Order

Roll Call

A - SUBMITTAL OF REQUESTS FOR FUTURE ITEMS

Individuals who have appropriate items for City Council consideration should complete the Request for Future Agenda Items form located at the Information Booth. If the issue can be handled administratively without Council action, notification will be provided. If the item is scheduled for a meeting or study session, notification of the date will be given.

B - RESERVE TIME TO SPEAK ON AGENDA ITEMS

This is an opportunity for individuals wishing to provide input on any of tonight's agenda items to reserve time to speak. Please come forward, state your name and address, and the Agenda topic on which you will be speaking.

DIRECTOR COMMUNICATION

This is an opportunity for the Director to comment on current events, activities, and issues of interest to the commission.

Hall County Regional Planning Commission

Wednesday, April 4, 2012

Regular Session

Item .A1

April Summary

Staff Contact:

Staff Recommendation Summary
For Regional Planning Commission Meeting
April 4, 2012

4. Public Hearing - Consideration of a Substandard and Blight Study as prepared for the Gordman Grand Island LLC by Marvin Planning Consultants. This study is for approximately 72 acres of property in northwest Grand Island between Capital Avenue and State Street and U.S. Highway 281 and Webb Road. The study as prepared and submitted indicates that this property could be considered substandard and blighted.

Hall County Regional Planning Commission

Wednesday, April 4, 2012
Regular Session

Item E1

March Meeting Minutes

Staff Contact:

THE REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION OF HALL COUNTY, GRAND ISLAND, WOOD RIVER AND THE VILLAGES OF ALDA, CAIRO, AND DONIPHAN, NEBRASKA

Minutes
for
March 7, 2012

The meeting of the Regional Planning Commission was held Wednesday, March 7, 2012, in the Community Meeting Room - City Hall – Grand Island, Nebraska. Notice of this meeting appeared in the "Grand Island Independent" February 25, 2012.

Present:	Bill Hayes	Leslie Ruge
	Karen Bredthauer	Pat O'Neill
	Deb Reynolds	Mark Haskins
	Don Snodgrass	Scott Eriksen
	Jaye Monter	Julie Connelly
	John Amick	

Absent: Dennis McCarty
Other:

Staff: Chad Nabity, Rose Woods

Press:

1. **Call to order.**

   Chairman O'Neill called the meeting to order at 6:00 p.m. He stated that this was a public meeting subject to the open meetings laws of the State of Nebraska. He noted that the requirements for an open meeting were posted on the wall in the room and easily accessible to anyone who may be interested in reading them.

2. **Minutes of February 1, 2012 meeting.**

   A motion was made by Bredthauer to approve the meeting minutes and seconded by Snodgrass to approve the Minutes of the February 1, 2012 meeting as mailed.

The motion carried with 9 members present and 9 voting in favor (O'Neill, Ruge, Bredthauer, Hayes, Eriksen, Reynolds, Connelly, Snodgrass and Haskins) and no member present abstaining.

3. **Request Time to Speak.**

4. **Public Hearing - Rezone -** A request to rezone properties located east of Alda Road, north of US Hwy 30. From R9 Single Family Residential to BGC General Commercial District, in the Village of Alda. Lot 3 of Fetsch Subdivision in the Village of Alda (C-10-2012Alda)

   O'Neill opened the Public Hearing.

   Amick joined the Meeting at 6:03 p.m.

   Nabity explained the request to rezone properties lat the northeast corner of the intersection of Alda Road and Front Street (Highway 30) from R9 – Single Family Residential District to BGC – General Commercial District, in the Village of Alda. Nabity stated this is consistent with Alda's comprehensive land use plan. This is also consistent with existing roads, with redevelopment and supported by existing infrastructure.

   O'Neill closed the Public Hearing.

   A motion was made by Ruge to recommend the Rezone request from from R9 – Single Family Residential District to BGC – General Commercial District and was seconded by Snodgrass. The motion carried with 10 members present voting in favor of recommending the Rezone request to the Board of Alda (Amick, O'Neill, Eriksen, Bredthauer, Ruge, Hayes, Reynolds, Haskins, Connelly and Snodgrass) and no one voting against.

5. **Public Hearing -** Concerning an amendment to redevelopment plan for CRA area #1.This property is located in east Grand Island and all action will take place at the existing Lincoln Park north of 7th Street and east of Beal Street in the City of Grand Island. (C-11-2012GI)

   Monter joined the Meeting at 6:06 p.m.

   O'Neill opened the Public Hearing.

   Nabity told the board the City of Grand Island is proposing to rebuild the existing swimming pool at Lincoln Park. They are asking the Community Redevelopment Authority to finance this as a redevelopment project to improve the neighborhood.

   Redevelopment of the Lincoln Park Swimming pool should help prevent further decay of this neighborhood. This area has already been declared blighted and substandard by the CRA, the Hall County Regional Planning Commission and the Grand Island City Council. The Planning Commission is required to comment on these applications to confirm that expenditure of public funds. This project will not be using TIF but will be using a portion of the tax levy authorized for use by the CRA.

   O'Neill closed the Public Hearing.

A motion was made by Bredthauer to approve the Redevelopment Plan for the property located in Blight and Substandard Area #1 at Lincoln Park as presented and was seconded by Eriksen. The motion carried with 11 members present voting in favor of to approve the Redevelopment Plan and to forward the request to City Council (Amick, O'Neill, Monter, Bredthauer, Ruge, Hayes, Reynolds, Haskins, Eriksen, Connelly and Snodgrass) and no one voting against.

6. Public Hearing - Concerning adoption of blight study and generalize redevelopment plan for CRA Blight and Substandard Area #8. (C-12-2012GI)

O'Neill opened the Public Hearing.

Nabity explained to the Commissioners the Grand Island Area Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) commissioned a Blight/Substandard Study and Generalized Redevelopment Plan for the proposed Redevelopment Area No. 8 to be prepared by Olsson Associates along with Marvin Planning and Ken Bunger. The study area includes approximately 92.77 acres referred to as CRA Area #8. The study focused on an area south of Anna Street along Adams Street in south central Grand Island.

FINDINGS FOR GRAND ISLAND

Study Area #8 has several items contributing to the Blight and Substandard Conditions. These conditions include:

Blighted Conditions

Substantial number of deteriorating structures,
Unsanitary / Unsafe conditions,
Deterioration of site or other improvements,
Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes,
Combination of factors which are impairing and/or arresting sound growth,
Average age of structures is over 40 years of age.

Substandard Conditions

Average age of the residential or commercial units in the area is at least forty years

Issues which were not researched due to a lack of data were:
Tax/special assessment delinquency greater than fair value of land,
Tax delinquency,
Underemployment that equals 120% state or national average,
Per capita income less than city wide average, and
High Density or population and overcrowding.

Unemployment in the designated area is at least one hundred twenty percent of the state or national average;

More than half of the plotted and subdivided property in an area is unimproved land that has been within the city for forty years and has remained unimproved during that time.

O'Neill closed the Public Hearing.

A motion was made by Eriksen to approve the Blight Study for Area #8 as presented and was seconded by Connelly. The motion carried with 11 members present voting in favor to forward the request to City Council (Amick, Eriksen, O'Neill, Monter, Bredthauer, Ruge, Hayes, Reynolds, Haskins, Connelly and Snodgrass) and no one voting against.

A motion was made by Eriksen to approve Resolution 2012-02 the Redevelopment Plan for Area #8 as presented and was seconded by Reynolds. The motion carried with 11 members present voting in favor to forward the request to City Council (Amick, Eriksen, O'Neill, Monter, Bredthauer, Ruge, Hayes, Reynolds, Haskins, Connelly and Snodgrass) and no one voting against.

7. **Final Plat - Chief Fab Second Subdivision**, located north of Fonner Park Road and east of Adams Street, in Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska. Consisting of 15.4448 (2 Lots).

   A motion was made by Brethauer to approve the Final Plat of Chief Fab Subdivision as presented and seconded by Haskins. The motion carried with 11 members present and 11 voting in favor (Amick, Eriksen, O'Neill, Monter, Bredthauer, Ruge, Hayes, Reynolds, Haskins, Connelly and Snodgrass) and no member present voting against.

8. **Planning Director's Report**
   NPZA Conference will be March 28-30, 2012

9. **Next Meeting April 4, 2012**

10. **Adjourn**

Chairman O'Neill adjourned the meeting at 6:26 p.m.

_____
Leslie Ruge, Secretary

by Rose Woods

Hall County Regional Planning Commission

Wednesday, April 4, 2012
Regular Session

Item F1

Public Hearing - Blight Study Area #9

Staff Contact:

Agenda Item 4

PLANNING DIRECTOR RECOMMENDATION TO REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION:

March 16, 2012

SUBJECT: *Blight Study (Proposed Area #9) C-13-2012GI*

PROPOSAL: Enclosed you will find a copy of a Substandard and Blight Study as prepared for the Gordman Grand Island LLC by Marvin Planning Consultants. This study is for approximately 72 acres of property in northwest Grand Island between Capital Avenue and State Street and U.S. Highway 281 and Webb Road. The study as prepared and submitted indicates that this property could be considered substandard and blighted. The full study is attached for your review and consideration. Council has referred the attached study to the Planning Commission for its review and recommendation. If the Planning Commission does not make a recommendation within 30 days Council can proceed with a decision on the declaration without recommendation from Planning Commission.

OVERVIEW

The Statutory authority and direction to the Planning Commission is referenced below to explain the Planning Commission purpose in reviewing the study:

> **Section 18-2109**
> *Redevelopment plan; preparation; requirements.*
>
> An authority shall not prepare a redevelopment plan for a redevelopment project area unless the governing body of the city in which such area is located has, by resolution adopted after a public hearing with notice provided as specified in section 18-2115, declared such area to be a substandard and blighted area in need of redevelopment. The governing body of the city shall submit the question of whether an area is substandard and blighted to the planning commission or board of the city for its review and recommendation prior to making its declaration. The planning commission or board shall submit its written recommendations within thirty days after receipt of the request. Upon receipt of the recommendations or after thirty days if no recommendation is received, the governing body may make its declaration.
> ~Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska

A flow chart of the blight declaration process is shown in Figure 2.

At this time, the Planning Commission and Council are only concerned with determining if the property is blighted and substandard. Figure 3 is an overview of the differences between the blight and substandard declaration and the redevelopment plan. If a declaration as blighted and substandard is made by Council then the Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA) can consider appropriate redevelopment plans. The redevelopment plans must also be reviewed by the Planning Commission and approved by Council prior to final approval.

Figure 1 Redevelopment Area 9 includes all properties within the red outline.

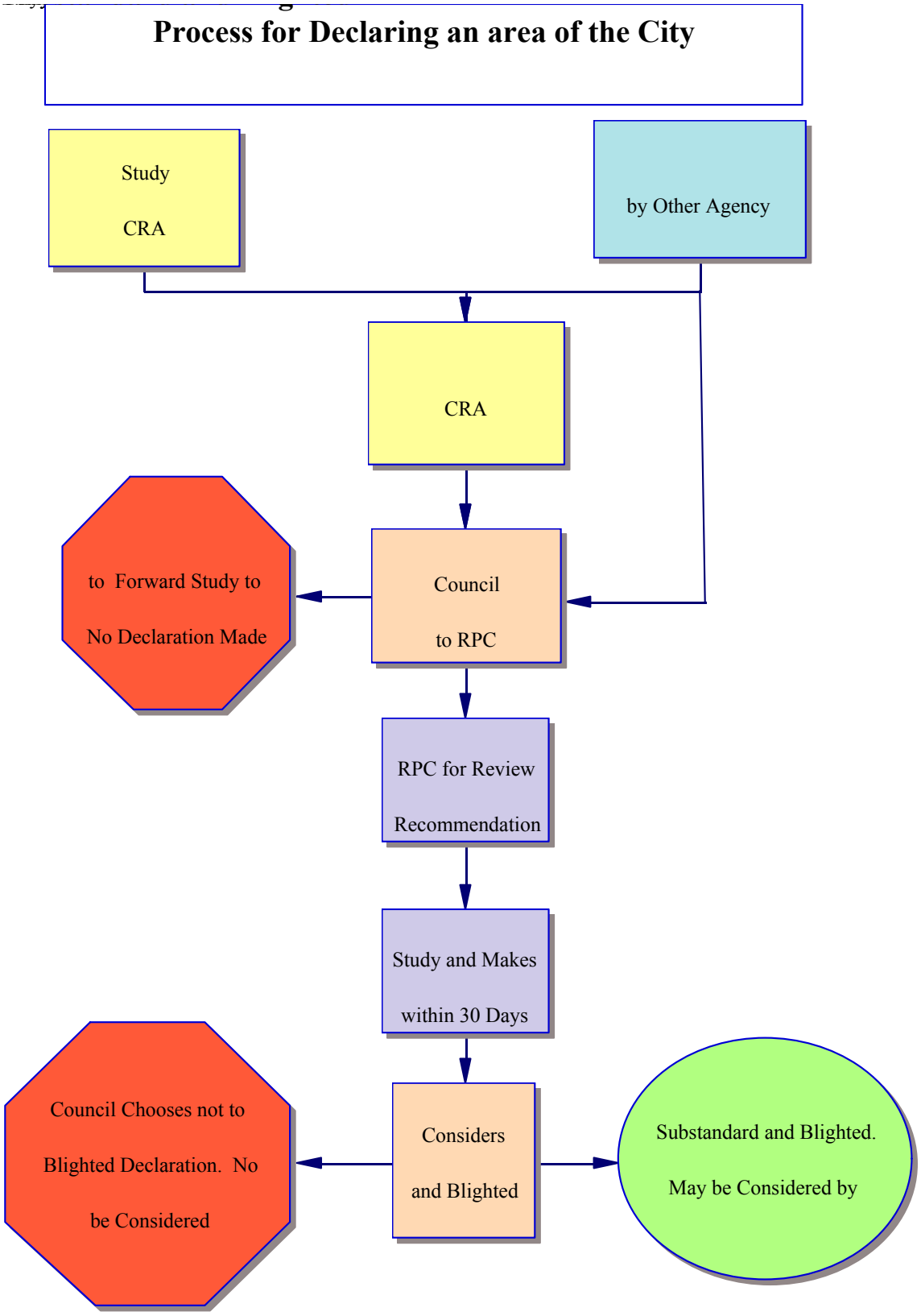


Figure 2 Blight Declaration Process (Planning Commission Recommendation is the second purple box).

Substandard and Blighted Declaration vs. Redevelopment Plan

- **Substandard and Blighted Declaration**
- A Study of the Existing Conditions of the Property in Question
- Does the property meet one or more Statutory Conditions of Blight?
- Does the Property meet one or more Statutory Conditions of Substandard Property?
- Is the declaration in the best interest of the City?

- **Redevelopment Plan**
- What kinds of activities and improvements are necessary to alleviate the conditions that make the property blighted and substandard?
- How should those activities and improvements be paid for?
- Will those activities and improvements further the implementation of the general plan for the City?

Figure 3 Blight and Substandard Declaration compared to a Redevelopment Plan

OVERVIEW Continued

It is appropriate for the planning commission in conducting its review and considering its recommendation regarding the substandard and blighted designation to:

1. review the study,
2. take testimony from interested parties,
3. make findings of fact, and
4. include those findings of fact as part of its recommendation to Council.

Blighted and Substandard Defined

The terms blighted and substandard have very specific meanings within the context of the Community Redevelopment Statutes. Those terms as defined by Statute are included below:

Section 18-2103
Terms, defined.

For purposes of the Community Development Law, unless the context otherwise requires:

(10) ***Substandard areas*** shall mean an area in which there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether nonresidential or residential in character, which, by reason of dilapidation, deterioration, age or obsolescence, inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces, high density of population and overcrowding, or the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes, or any combination of such factors, is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, and crime, (which cannot be remedied through construction of prisons), and is detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare;

(11) ***Blighted area*** shall mean an area, which (a) by reason of the presence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures, existence of defective or inadequate street layout, faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness, insanitary or unsafe conditions, deterioration of site or other improvements, diversity of ownership, tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land, defective or unusual conditions of title, improper subdivision or obsolete platting, or the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes, or any combination of such factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the community, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability and is detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare in its present condition and use and (b) in which there is at least one of the following conditions: (i) Unemployment in the designated area is at least one hundred twenty percent of the state or national average; (ii) the average age of the residential or commercial units in the area is at least forty years; (iii) more than half of the plotted and subdivided property in an area is unimproved land that has been within the city for forty years and has remained unimproved during that time; (iv) the per capita income of the area is lower than the average per capita income of the city or village in which the area is designated; or (v) the area has had either stable or decreasing population based on the last two decennial censuses. In no event shall a city of the metropolitan, primary, or first class designate more than thirty-five percent of the city as blighted, a city of the second class shall not designate an area larger than fifty percent of the city as blighted, and a village shall not designate an area larger than one hundred percent of the village as blighted;

~Reissue Revised Statutes of Nebraska

ANALYSIS

The following summaries are copied directly from the Study. The analysis of the substandard and blighted factors is conducted on pages 14 and 15 of the study. The summaries provide a basis for approving the blighted and substandard designation.

Blighting Summary

These conditions are contributing to the blighted conditions of the study area.

- Age of Structure
  - 5 of 16 units (31.2%) are 40 years of age or older.
  - 282,593 square feet of the total 531,224 square feet (53.2%) of retail space is 40 years of age or older
- Existence of defective or inadequate street layout
  - The only street layouts in the Study Area are striped parking areas with the main vehicular circulation falling into the remaining areas.
  - All streets/circulation areas are private property
- Faulty lot layout in relation to size adequacy, accessibility or usefulness
  - The Study Area is divided into 17 different owners and the boundaries are gerrymandered in no logical manner.
- Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes
  - The primary signage (pole sign) on the Webb Road side of the area has two large steel poles that have no separation from the vehicular movements of the site.
  - The parking lots are in a major state of disrepair and in some cases could easily cause damage to a vehicle if they were driven over.
  - The drainage system in the Study Area has the potential for standing water to be present.
- Combination of factors which are impairing and/or arresting sound growth
  - The Study Area is approximately 80 acres and has 17 different property owners; therefore the diversity of ownership has the potential to impair sound growth
  - The overall lack of investment in the area over the past 10 years. Of the 16 properties, 11 (64.7%) have seen a declining assessed valuation.
- Diversity of Ownership
  - There are 17 different property owners within the Study Area. Some owners have invested in their properties while others have done minimal maintenance at best.
- Improper Subdivision or obsolete platting
  - The Study Area is divided into 17 different owners and the boundaries are gerrymandered in no logical manner.
- Stable or decreasing population over last two decennial censuses
  - The population of the Study Area has remained stable over the past 22 years.

The other criteria for Blight were not present in the area, these included:

- Economic or social liability detrimental to health, safety and welfare,
- Conditions provision of housing accommodations,
- One-half of unimproved property is over 40 years old,
- Inadequate provisions for ventilation, light, air, open spaces or sanitation, and

These issues were either not present or were limited enough as to have little impact on the overall condition of the study area.

Substandard Conditions

Average age of the residential or commercial units in the area is at least forty years

Age of structures can be a contributing factor to the blighted and substandard conditions in an area. Statutes allow for a predominance of units that are 40 years of age or older to be a contributing factor regardless of their condition. Note that the age of structure was determined from the Appraisal data within the Hall County Assessor's website data.

Within the study area there is a total of 16 units. After researching the structural age on the Hall County Assessor's and Treasurer's websites, the following breakdown was determined:

- 11 (68.8%) units were determined to be less than 40 years of age
- 5 (31.2%) units were determined to be 40 years of age or older

Even though there is not a predominance of units 40 years of age or older the ones that meet the criteria are grouped together on the north end of the overall study area. Two of these units are the predominate commercial units on the site and contain a large portion of the overall square footage of the buildings in the area. A typical unit in which commercial uses are rated is square feet; therefore the following is a breakdown of the square footage of buildings in the study area:

- 531,224 total square feet
- 282,593 s.f. of the total or 53.2% are at least 40 years of age.

In the case of the Grand Island Mall, a walk through in the public areas indicated that the interiors were completely out of date and in dire need of updating.

Due to the age of the structures (specifically the total square feet), the age of the units would be a direct contributing factor.

Substandard Summary

Nebraska State Statute requires that at least one of five substandard factors be present in a community. This Study Area in Grand Island has one of the five. The other criteria for Substandard were not present or the data was not readily accessible in the area, these included:

- Unemployment in the designated area is at least one hundred twenty percent of the state or national average;
- More than half of the plotted and subdivided property in an area is unimproved land that has been within the city for forty years and has remained unimproved during that time;
- The per capita income of the area is lower than the average per capita income of the city or in which the area is designated
- The area has had either stable or decreasing population based on the last two decennial censuses.

FINDINGS FOR GRAND ISLAND BLIGHT STUDY AREA #9

Blight Study Area #9 has several items contributing to the Blight and Substandard Conditions. These conditions include:

Blighted Conditions

- Diversity of Ownership
- Defective or inadequate street layout
- Faulty lot layout
- Improper subdivision or obsolete platting
- Unsanitary / Unsafe conditions,
- Deterioration of site or other improvements,
- Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes,
- Combination of factors which are impairing and/or arresting sound growth,
- Average age of units is over 40 years of age.
- Stable or decreasing population based on the last two decennial censuses

Substandard Conditions

- Average age of the residential or commercial units in the area is at least forty years

RECOMMENDATION:

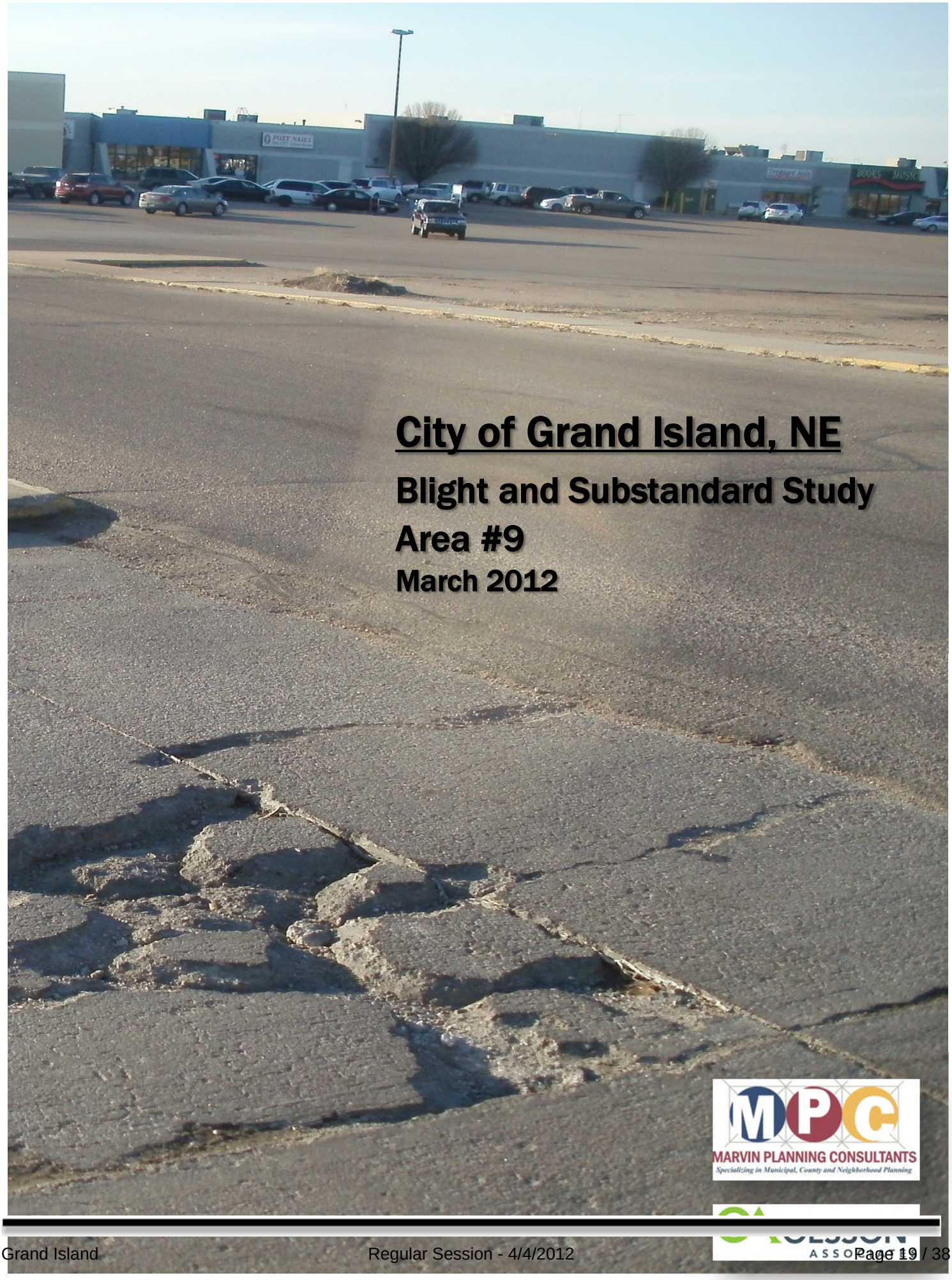
Planning Commission staff is recommending consideration of the following questions as a starting point in the analysis of this Study and in making a recommendation on the question of whether the property in question is blighted and substandard.

Recommend Questions for Planning Commission

- Does this property meet the statutory requirements to be considered blighted and substandard? (See Page 5 for requirements)
- Are the blighted and substandard factors distributed throughout the Redevelopment Area, so basically good areas are not arbitrarily found to be substandard and blighted simply because of proximity to areas which are substandard and blighted?
- Is public intervention appropriate and/or necessary for the redevelopment of the area?

Findings of fact must be based on the study and testimony presented including all written material and staff reports. The recommendation must be based on the declaration, not based on any proposed uses of the site.

If the Regional Planning Commission concludes that the area in question meets the definition of blighted and substandard and supports such conclusion with findings of fact they should move to recommend **approval** of the declaration as blighted and substandard based on the facts presented and identified at this meeting.



City of Grand Island, NE

Blight and Substandard Study Area #9

March 2012

MARVIN PLANNING CONSULTANTS
Specializing in Municipal, County and Neighborhood Planning

PURPOSE OF THE BLIGHT AND SUBSTANDARD STUDY

The purpose of completing this Blight and Substandard study is to examine existing conditions within the city of Grand Island. This study has been commissioned by an individual property owner within the community with the hope that the City will consider the study area for future redevelopment activity. The area is bordered on all four sides by major transportation routes and the general area of the community has seen considerable new development on the western perimeter of the area but limited redevelopment activities.

The City of Grand Island, when considering conditions of Blight and Substandard, will be looking at those issues and definitions provided for in the Nebraska Community Redevelopment Law as found in Chapter 18, Section 2104 of the Revised Nebraska State Statutes, as follows:

> *"The governing body of a city, to the greatest extent it deems to be feasible in carrying out the provisions of Sections 18-2101 to 18-2144, shall afford maximum opportunity, consistent with sound needs of the city as a whole, to the rehabilitation or redevelopment of the community redevelopment area by private enterprises. The governing body of a city shall give consideration to this objective in exercising its powers under sections 18-2101 to 18-2144, including the formulation of a workable program, the approval of community redevelopment plans consistent with the general plan for the development of the city, the exercise of its zoning powers, the enforcement of other laws, codes, and regulations relating to the use and occupancy of buildings and improvements, the disposition of any property acquired, and providing of necessary public improvements".*

The Nebraska Revised Statutes §18-2105 continues by granting authority to the governing body for formulation of a workable program. The statute reads,

> *"The governing body of a city or an authority at its direction for the purposes of the Community Development Law may formulate for the entire municipality a workable program for utilizing appropriate private and public resources to eliminate or prevent the development or spread of urban blight, to encourage needed urban rehabilitation, to provide for the redevelopment of substandard and blighted areas, or to undertake such of the aforesaid activities or other feasible municipal activities as may be suitably employed to achieve the objectives of such workable program. Such workable program may include, without limitation, provision for the prevention of the spread of blight into areas of the municipality which are free from blight through diligent enforcement of housing, zoning, and occupancy controls and standards; the rehabilitation or conservation of substandard and blighted areas or portions thereof by replanning, removing congestion, providing parks, playgrounds, and other public improvements by encouraging voluntary rehabilitation and by compelling the repair and rehabilitation of deteriorated or deteriorating structures; and the clearance and redevelopment of substandard and blighted areas or portions thereof."*

Blight and Substandard are defined as the following:

> *"Substandard areas means an area in which there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether nonresidential or residential in character, which, by reason of dilapidation, deterioration, age or obsolescence, inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces, high density of population and overcrowding, or the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes, or any combination of such factors, is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, and crime, (which cannot be remedied through construction of prisons), and is detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare;"*

> *"Blighted area means an area, which (a) by reason of the presence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures, existence of defective or inadequate street layout, faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness, insanitary or unsafe conditions, deterioration of site or other improvements, diversity of ownership, tax or special*

title, improper subdivision or obsolete platting, or the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes, or any combination of such factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the community, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability and is detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare in its present condition and use and (b) in which there is at least one of the following conditions: (i) Unemployment in the designated area is at least one hundred twenty percent of the state or national average; (ii) the average age of the residential or commercial units in the area is at least forty years; (iii) more than half of the plotted and subdivided property in an area is unimproved land that has been within the city for forty years and has remained unimproved during that time; (iv) the per capita income of the area is lower than the average per capita income of the city or in which the area is designated; or (v) the area has had either stable or decreasing population based on the last two decennial censuses. In no event shall a city of the metropolitan, primary, or first class designate more than thirty-five percent of the city as blighted, a city of the second class shall not designate an area larger than fifty percent of the city as blighted, and a shall not designate an area larger than one hundred percent of the as blighted;"

This Blight and Substandard Study is intended to give the Grand Island Community Redevelopment Authority and Grand Island City Council the basis for identifying and declaring Blighted and Substandard conditions existing within the City's jurisdiction. Through this process, the City and property owner will be attempting to address economic and/or social liabilities which are harmful to the well-being of the entire community.

The study area can be seen in Figure 1 of this report. The Redevelopment Plan portion of this report will contain, in accordance with the law, definite local objectives regarding appropriate land uses, improved traffic, public transportation, public utilities and other public improvements, and the proposed land uses and building requirements in the redevelopment area and shall include:

- The boundaries defining the blighted and substandard areas in question (including existing uses and conditions of the property within the area), and
- A list of the conditions present which qualify the area as blighted and substandard.

BLIGHT AND SUBSTANDARD ELIGIBILITY STUDY

This study targets a specific area within an established part of the community for evaluation. The area is indicated in Figure 1 of this report. The existing uses in this area include commercial and public open space (primarily detention cells).

Through the redevelopment process the City of Grand Island can guide future development and redevelopment throughout the area. The use of the Community Redevelopment Act by the City of Grand Island is intended to redevelop and improve the area. Using the Community Redevelopment Act, the City of Grand Island can assist in the elimination of negative conditions and implement different programs/projects identified for the City.

The following is the description of the designated area within Grand Island.

Study Area

POINT OF BEGINNING IS THE INTERSECTION OF THE CENTERLINES OF W. CAPITAL AVENUE AND N. WEBB ROAD; THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE OF N. WEBB ROAD TO THE INTERSECTION OF THE CENTERLINES OF N. WEBB ROAD AND STATE STREET; THENCE WESTERLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE OF STATE STREET TO THE INTERSECTION OF THE CENTERLINES OF STATE STREET AND US HIGHWAY 281; THENCE, NORTHERLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE OF US HIGHWAY 281 TO THE INTERSECTION OF THE CENTERLINES OF US HIGHWAY 281 AND W. CAPITAL AVENUE; THENCE, EASTERLY ALONG THE CENTERLINE OF W. CAPITAL AVENUE TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

Figure 1
Study Area Map

Source: Gordman Grand Island LLC, 2012

Existing Land Uses

The term "Land Use" refers to the developed uses in place within a building or on a specific parcel of land. The number and type of uses are constantly changing within a community, and produce a number of impacts that either benefit or detract from the community. Because of this, the short and long-term success and sustainability of the community is directly contingent upon available resources utilized in the best manner given the constraints the City faces during the course of the planning period. Existing patterns of land use are often fixed in older communities and neighborhoods, while development in newer areas is often reflective of current development practices.

Existing Land Use Analysis within Study Area

As part of the planning process, a survey was conducted through both in-field observations, as well as data collection online using the Hall County Assessors website. This survey noted the use of each parcel of land within the study area. These data from the survey are analyzed in the following paragraphs.

Table 1 includes the existing land uses for the entire study area. The table contains the total acres determined per land use from the survey; next is the percentage of those areas compared to the total developed land; and finally, the third set of data compare the all land uses to the total area within the Study Area.

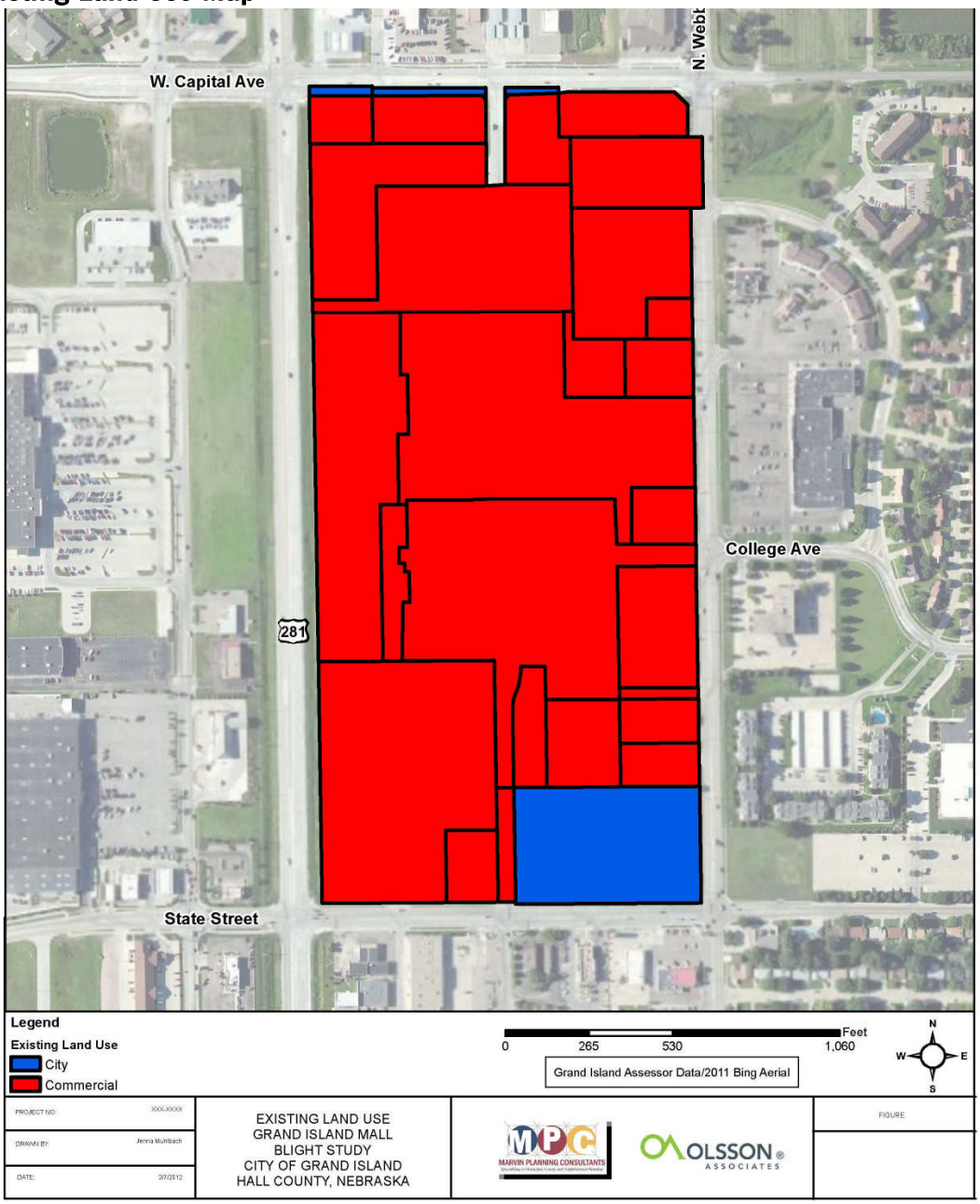
The Study Area is predominately Commercial uses with 93.0% of land in this use. The remaining 7% is Public/Quasi-public and is typically used for stormwater detention. One key note on existing land uses, within the interior of the Grand Island Mall portion there is currently a church using the space but has been included in the commercial uses.

TABLE 1: EXISTING LAND USE, GRAND ISLAND - 2011

Type of Use	Acres	Percent of Developed land within the Study Area	Percent of Study Area
Residential	0	0.0%	0.0%
Single-family	0	0.0%	0.0%
Multi-family	0	0.0%	0.0%
Manufactured Housing	0	0.0%	0.0%
Commercial	66.84	93.0%	93.0%
Industrial	0	0.0%	0.0%
Quasi-Public/Public	5.02	7.0%	7.0%
Parks/Recreation	0	0.0%	0.0%
Transportation	0	0.0%	0.0%
Total Developed Land	71.86	100.0%	
Vacant/Agriculture	0		0.0%
Total Area	71.86		100.0%

Source: 2012 Grand Island Blight Study Area 9, Marvin Planning Consultants and Olsson Associates

Figure 2
Existing Land Use Map



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants and Olsson Associates, 2012

FINDINGS OF BLIGHT AND SUBSTANDARD CONDITIONS ELIGIBILITY STUDY

This section of the Eligibility Report examines the conditions found in the study area. The Findings Section will review the conditions based upon the Statutory definitions.

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

There are a number of conditions that were examined and evaluated in the field and online. There are a number of conditions that will be reviewed in detail, on the following pages, while some of the Statutory conditions are present, other are not.

Age of Structure

Age of structures can be a contributing factor to the blighted and substandard conditions in an area. Statutes allow for a predominance of structures that are 40 years of age or older to be a contributing factor regardless of their condition. The following paragraphs document the structural age of the structures within the Study Area. Note that the age of structure was determined from the Appraisal data within the Hall County Assessor's website data.

Within the study area there is a total of 16 units. After researching the structural age on the Hall County Assessor's and Treasurer's websites, the following breakdown was determined:

- 11 (68.8%) units were determined to be less than 40 years of age
- 5 (31.2%) units were determined to be 40 years of age or older

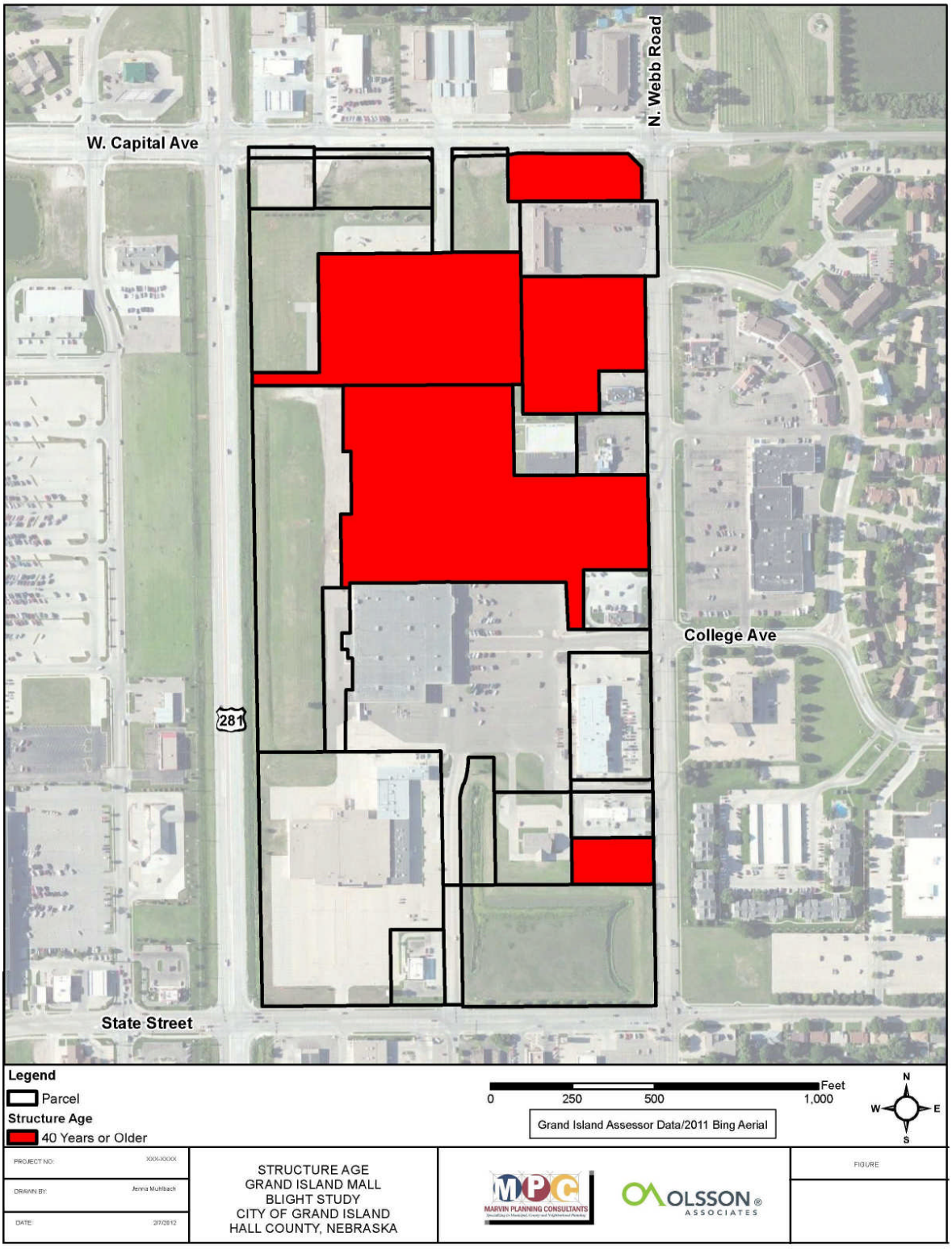
Even though there is not a predominance of units 40 years of age or older the ones that meet the criteria are grouped together on the north end of the overall study area. Two of these units are predominate commercial units on the site and contain a large portion of the overall square footage of the buildings in the area. A typical unit in which commercial uses are rated is square feet; therefore the following is a breakdown of the square footage of the units in the study area:

- 531,224 total square feet
- 282,593 s.f. of the total or 53.2% are at least 40 years of age.

In the case of the Grand Island Mall, a walk through in the public areas indicated that the interiors were completely out of date and in dire need of updating.

Due to the age of the structures and specifically the total square footage, the age of the units would be a direct contributing factor.

Figure 3
Unit Age Map



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants and Olsson Associates, 2012

Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements

The site improvements include the areas determined to be means of public ingress and egress to the study area as well as the area designed to move vehicular traffic through the site. In addition, this includes the actual surface parking areas. The condition of the site improvements vary greatly.

The Study Area contains a major deteriorated condition; the parking areas throughout the area, as well as the demarcated driving areas.

The parking areas throughout the entire Study Area are in a serious state of disrepair. In a number of situations, the deterioration may present a potential hazard to vehicles. The parking surface and driving areas contain major surface break-ups and spawling. These conditions have been likely caused by several circumstances over the years, including:

- Lack of maintenance
- Sub-soil conditions
- Heavier than expected traffic
- Flooding in recent years
- Freeze/thaw cycles

A number of these items can be prevented through proper design, enforcement and maintenance, with maintenance being a key.

Photos 1 through 7 indicate examples of different deteriorated conditions within the parking and driving areas across the entire site.

In addition to broken pavement in the Study Area, there are some areas where the actual driving areas have reverted to dirt and mud as seen in Photo 7.

Due to the large amount of broken pavement in the Study Area, the parking areas are considered to be deteriorated or in a state of deteriorating; therefore, they are a direct contributing factor to the conditions of blight.

Photo 1

Photo 2

Photo 3

Photo 4

Photo 5

Photo 6

Photo 7

Drainage Conditions

Grand Island has a long history of drainage issues due to the extreme flatness of the area, as well as the high water table. Topography and soils can have a major impact on how a given portion of the city drains. The area designated in this Study Area is nearly flat or has an extremely small slope.

The visual survey of the site examined the entire area for potential drainage problems. The fact the City of Grand Island has one major and a couple of smaller detention cells in the Study Area are a major indicator as to the potential for flooding/drainage problems. The largest detention cell in the Study Area is also located on a prime intersection and on what could be a location for a tenant in the area.

In addition, the entire Study Area is within the 100-year floodplain; however, specific buildings/structures have been amended out of the floodplain.

The photographs of the Study Area indicate standing water within key drainage ways on the site, see Photo 8.

Photo 8

The drainage issue has also contributed to other problems in the area such as dictating traffic patterns in order to not interfere with the drainage on site (see Photo 9).

In addition to Photos 8 and 9, Photo 10 is a picture that was taken on May 11, 2005 after the city of Grand Island had been inundated by a spring storm that dropped nearly 8 inches of rain on the community. Photo 10 is from the southwest corner of the study area looking easterly.

Finally, standing water from poor drainage can be a catalyst for Health issues like West Nile due to the potential mosquito breeding that can occur.

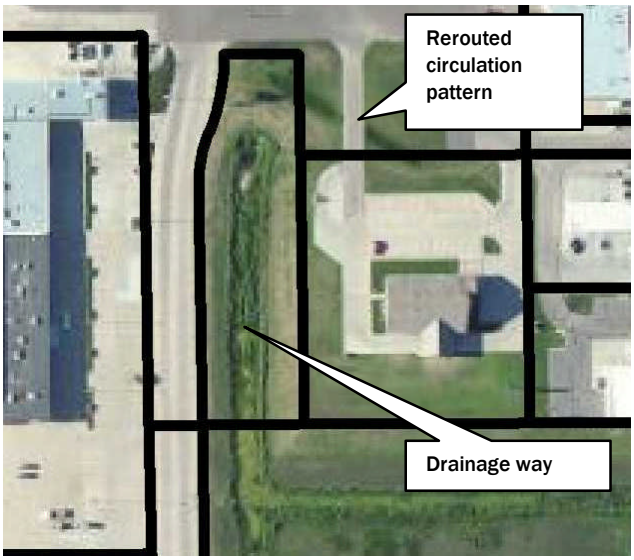


Photo 9

Defective or Inadequate Street Layout

The circulation layout within the Study Area is a haphazard means of ingress and egress based upon specific ownership patterns and presumably a series of easements across several properties.

The layout of the circulation pattern is simply done primarily through painted demarcation on the parking lots. There are minimal separation components such as islands or wheel stops in the Study Area, especially on the larger parking lots adjoining ShopKo, the Grand Island Mall property, and the Gordman property.

The traffic layout in some cases is greatly dependent upon where the drainage system is located in the area. In addition, due to the lack of overall planning in the Study Area, circulation between the different buildings and structures is difficult.

Photo 10

Due to the fact that the overall circulation pattern has been designed in an manner that allows vehicular traffic to freely move and cut across parking spaces as opposed to following a prescribed route, then there is the presence of a defective or inadequate street layout within the Study Area and this is a contributing factor to the area being blighted.

Unsanitary/Unsafe conditions

The first contributing factor is the standing water and drainage issues that are found throughout the entire Study Area. This water has the potential to be the breeding grounds for insects, especially mosquitoes and their potential to carry the West Nile Virus.

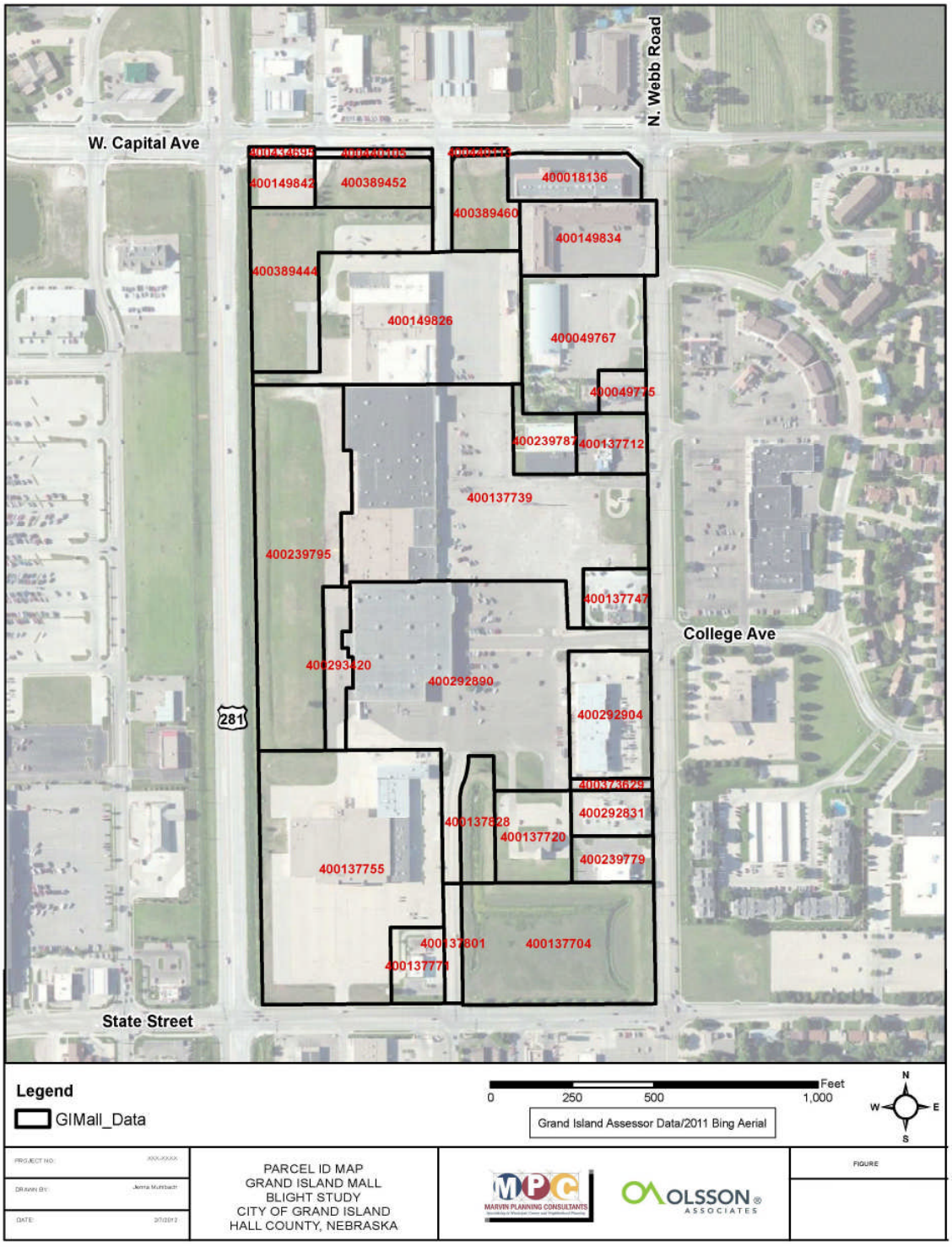
Based upon the field analysis, there are sufficient elements present for there to be unsanitary and unsafe conditions in the Study Area. These conditions are predominately due to the drainage system and the possibility of standing water within the area.

Faulty Lot Layout/Improper Subdivision or Obsolete Platting

The layout of properties and lots are a critical factor to successfully seeing property developed and users of the property being able to function in a manner that minimizes the impact on the end users. Based upon the boundaries for ownership in the Study Area, there are no specifically dedicated circulation areas other than a few “fingers” that shoot out to State Street, Capital Avenue, and Webb Road.

In addition, the overall configuration of the lots, based upon the Assessor's boundaries is confusing and follows little rationale, even the Outlot where Taco John's and Burger King are located appear to be after thoughts.

Figure 4
Parcel Layout Map



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants and Olsson Associates, 2012

Diversity of Ownership

The diversity of ownership is not a common contributing factor that impacts an areas status as blighted and substandard. In the case of Blight Area 9, the diversity of ownership is probably one of the more critical elements present. Within the Study Area there are 17 different property owners. When redeveloping an area similar to Blight Area 9, this level of diversity is a hindrance to redevelopment; therefore it becomes necessary for the City and the CRA to become a party to the redevelopment activities. The City and CRA can without major commitments aid in orchestrating the redevelopment effort. In addition, the availability of Tax Increment Financing and other funding mechanisms can entice the property owners to undertake the necessary activities.

Figure 5 shows the diverse ownership by parcel.

Based upon the diversity of ownership and the relatively confined area within Blight Area 9, there are sufficient elements present to meet the statutory requirements.

Stable or Decreasing Population

Over the past 20 years the population within the study area has been stable. The population within the Study Area has been 0 residents for the past two decennial censuses. Therefore, it meets the criteria for a stable or decreasing population.

Other Contributing Factors

One of the final contributing factor towards the Study Area being declared as Blighted is the change in assessed valuation in the area between 2011 and 2002. Overall, 11 of the 17 properties showed a decrease in assessed valuation. These declining valuations are an indicator of:

- A lack of overall investment in the structure/property
- A general declining condition of the structure/property
- An overall lack of investment in the entire area

The properties that are declining in assessed valuation are having a negative impact on both the adjacent property owners that may be investing in their properties and the overall city assessment which translates into how well the City can provide services to the general public.

One final contributing factor is the existing location of the Grand Island Mall pole sign on the Webb Road side of the Study Area. Currently the sign poses a safety risk due to its location. The pole sign is located in the middle of the parking lot and is paved right up to the poles. In addition, there are no barriers in place to minimize the potential for vehicles to hit the sign. If a driver is not paying attention and/or is unfamiliar with the parking lot configuration the potential is good for a collision. Photo shows the location of one of two poles supporting the sign.

Photo 11

Blighting Summary

These conditions are contributing to the blighted conditions of the study area.

- Age of Structure
  - 5 of 16 units (31.2%) are 40 years of age or older.
  - 282,593 square feet of the total 531,224 square feet (53.2%) of retail space is 40 years of age or older
- Existence of defective or inadequate street layout
  - The only street layouts in the Study Area are striped parking areas with the main vehicular circulation falling into the remaining areas.
  - All streets/circulation areas are private property
- Faulty lot layout in relation to size adequacy, accessibility or usefulness
  - The Study Area is divided into 17 different owners and the boundaries are gerrymandered in no logical manner.
- Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes
  - The primary signage (pole sign) on the Webb Road side of the area has two large steel poles that have no separation from the vehicular movements of the site.
  - The parking lots are in a major state of disrepair and in some cases could easily cause damage to a vehicle if they were driven over.
  - The drainage system in the Study Area has the potential for standing water to be present.
- Combination of factors which are impairing and/or arresting sound growth
  - The Study Area is approximately 80 acres and has 17 different property owners; therefore the diversity of ownership has the potential to impair sound growth
  - The overall lack of investment in the area over the past 10 years. Of the 16 properties, 11 (64.7%) have seen a declining assessed valuation.
- Diversity of Ownership
  - There are 17 different property owners within the Study Area. Some owners have invested in their properties while others have done minimal maintenance at best.
- Improper Subdivision or obsolete platting
  - The Study Area is divided into 17 different owners and the boundaries are gerrymandered in no logical manner.
- Stable or decreasing population over last two decennial censuses
  - The population of the Study Area has remained stable over the past 22 years.

The other criteria for Blight were not present in the area, these included:

- Economic or social liability detrimental to health, safety and welfare,
- Conditions provision of housing accommodations,
- One-half of unimproved property is over 40 years old,
- Inadequate provisions for ventilation, light, air, open spaces or sanitation, and

These issues were either not present or were limited enough as to have little impact on the overall condition of the study area.

Substandard Conditions

Average age of the residential or commercial units in the area is at least forty years

Age of structures can be a contributing factor to the blighted and substandard conditions in an area. Statutes allow for a predominance of units that are 40 years of age or older to be a contributing factor regardless of their condition. Note that the age of structure was determined from the Appraisal data within the Hall County Assessor's website data.

Within the study area there is a total of 16 units. After researching the structural age on the Hall County Assessor's and Treasurer's websites, the following breakdown was determined:

- 11 (68.8%) units were determined to be less than 40 years of age

Even though there is not a predominance of units 40 years of age or older the ones that meet the criteria are grouped together on the north end of the overall study area. Two of these units are the predominate commercial units on the site and contain a large portion of the overall square footage of the buildings in the area. A typical unit in which commercial uses are rated is square feet; therefore the following is a breakdown of the square footage of buildings in the study area:

- 531,224 total square feet
- 282,593 s.f. of the total or 53.2% are at least 40 years of age.

In the case of the Grand Island Mall, a walk through in the public areas indicated that the interiors were completely out of date and in dire need of updating.

Due to the age of the structures (specifically the total square feet), the age of the units would be a direct contributing factor.

Substandard Summary

Nebraska State Statute requires that at least one of five substandard factors be present in a community. This Study Area in Grand Island has one of the five. The other criteria for Substandard were not present or the data was not readily accessible in the area, these included:

- Unemployment in the designated area is at least one hundred twenty percent of the state or national average;
- more than half of the plotted and subdivided property in an area is unimproved land that has been within the city for forty years and has remained unimproved during that time;
- the per capita income of the area is lower than the average per capita income of the city or in which the area is designated
- the area has had either stable or decreasing population based on the last two decennial censuses.

Findings for Grand Island Blight Study Area #9

Blight Study Area #9 has several items contributing to the Blight and Substandard Conditions. These conditions include:

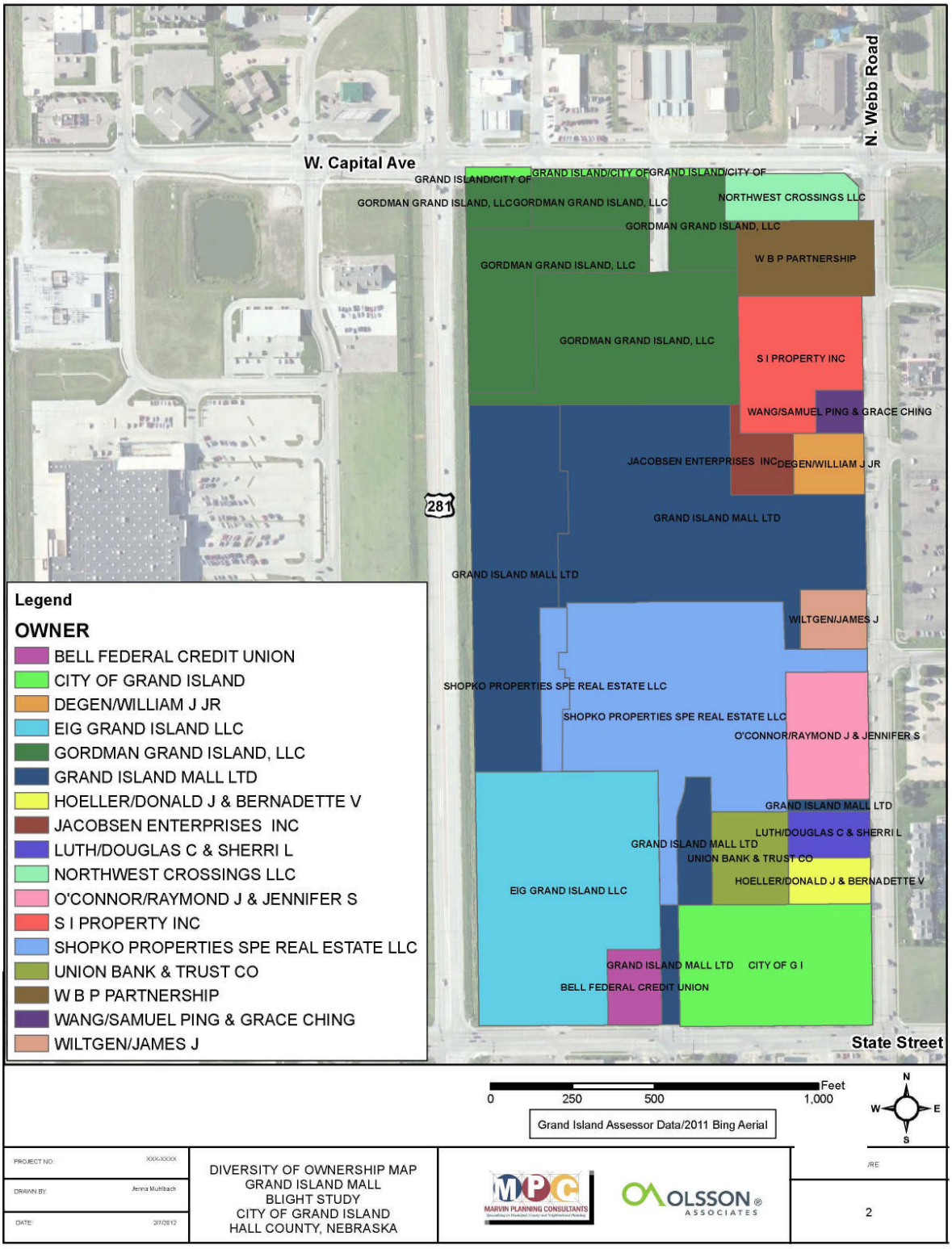
Blighted Conditions

- Diversity of Ownership
- Defective or inadequate street layout
- Faulty lot layout
- Improper subdivision or obsolete platting
- Unsanitary / Unsafe conditions,
- Deterioration of site or other improvements,
- Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes,
- Combination of factors which are impairing and/or arresting sound growth,
- Average age of units is over 40 years of age.
- Stable or decreasing population based on the last two decennial censuses

Substandard Conditions

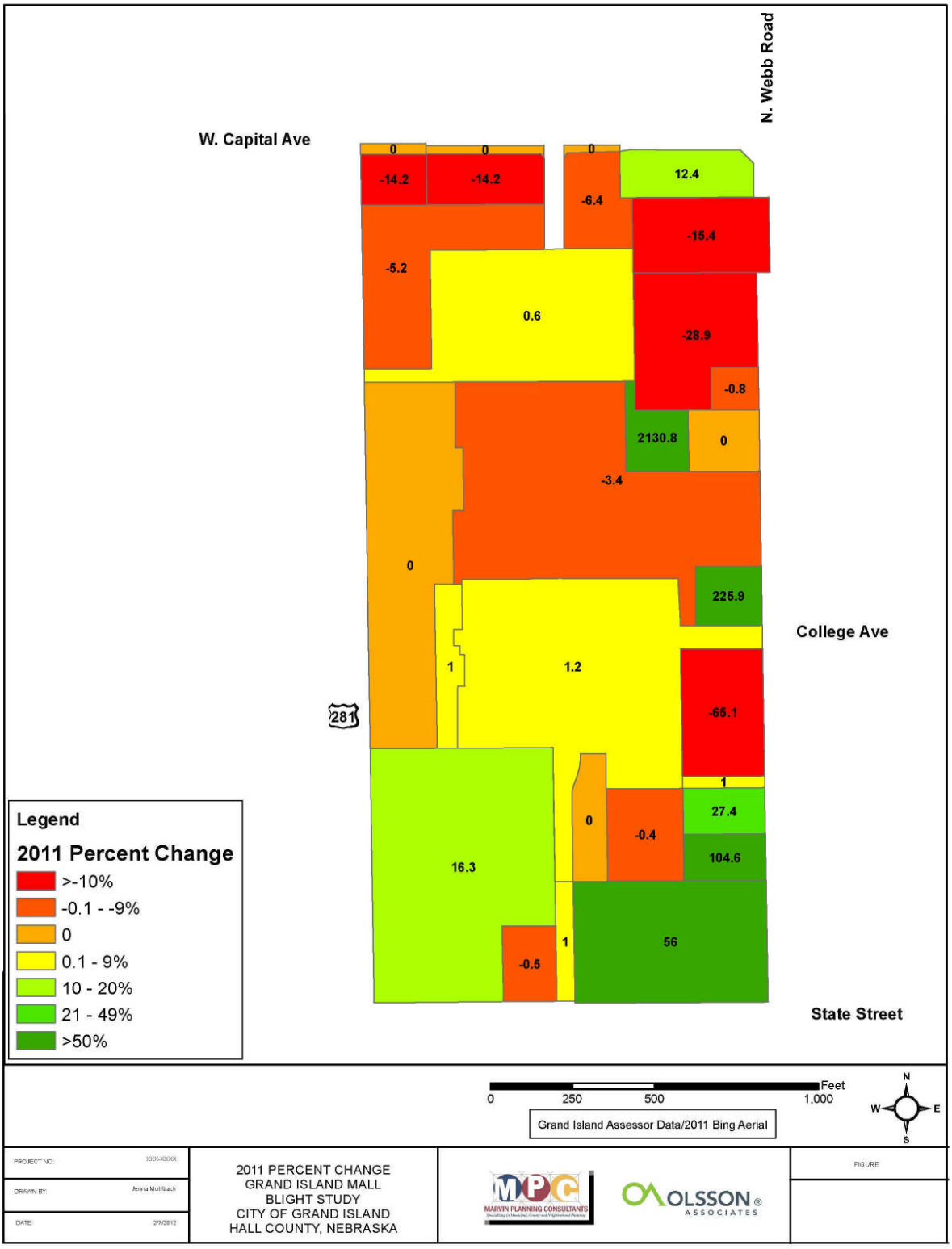
- Average age of the residential or commercial units in the area is at least forty years

Figure 5
Diversity of Ownership Map



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants and Olsson Associates, 2012

Figure 6
Assessed Valuation Changes Map – 2002 to 2011



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants and Olsson Associates, 2012

CONCLUSION

Based upon the issues and conditions indicated from the survey of this area, there is sufficient criteria present to declare Area #9 of Grand Island as Blighted and Substandard as provided for in the Nebraska Revised Statutes. The conditions found throughout the entire area constitute a designation of blighted and substandard. The eventual use of Tax Increment Financing or other incentive programs would be of great benefit to the entire area.