



# **City of Grand Island**

**Tuesday, November 12, 2013**

**Council Session**

## **Item H-1**

### **Consideration of Forwarding Blighted and Substandard Area #15 Study to the Hall County Regional Planning Commission**

**Staff Contact: Chad Nabity**

# **Council Agenda Memo**

**From:** Chad Nabity, AICP

**Meeting:** November 12, 2013

**Subject:** Proposed Blighted and Substandard Area #15

**Item #'s:** H-1

**Presenter(s):** Chad Nabity, Director Grand Island CRA

## **Background**

Enclosed you will find a copy of a Substandard and Blight Study as prepared for Doug Luth and Tim Plate by Marvin Planning Consultants. This study is for approximately 64.18 acres of property in west central Grand Island bounded on the south by Old Highway 30; the north by Old Potash Highway; east by Webb Road and west by U.S. Highway 281. 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.

Mr. Luth and Mr. Plate have submitted this study for the review and consideration of the Grand Island City Council as permitted by Nebraska law. This is a large area study of an area of Grand Island that is at the major intersection of two U.S. highways that originally developed when that intersection was on the very edge of the city with uses that are appropriate for the urban edges. The portions of this study north of the new U.S. Highway 30 were originally part of a county industrial tract similar to that found near the Platt Deutsch. The county industrial tract designation was removed in the early 1980's. All of these properties are located in the Grand Island municipal limits. The decision on whether to declare an area substandard and blighted is entirely within the jurisdiction of the City Council with a recommendation from the Planning Commission.

The question before Council will be whether to send the Study to the Planning Commission for their review and feedback. If the item is not sent to the Planning Commission the Council cannot declare the area substandard and blighted. Planning Commission will meet on December 4 and would have a recommendation ready for last Council meeting in late December or early January.

Once an area has been declared substandard and blighted the CRA can accept redevelopment proposals for the area that might or might not include an application for Tax Increment Financing.

## Discussion

The action item tonight relate to the Study for proposed CRA Area No. 15 in west central Grand Island as shown below. The study was prepared for 64.18 acres, of all of which is in the Grand Island City Limits

**Figure 1**  
**Study Area Map**



Source: Olsson Associates 2013

Robert Sivick, City Attorney has reviewed the Nebraska Statutes and case law pertaining to the declaration of property as blighted and substandard. His comments on this application are as follows:

The statutory procedures for accomplishing blight relief include the following steps: (1) the identification of a community redevelopment area consisting of portions of a city declared to be substandard or blighted in accordance with statutory definitions and in need of redevelopment, (2) the formulation of a redevelopment plan for such area or a redevelopment project within such area, and (3) the implementation of the redevelopment plan through various means including acquisition, sale, leasing, and contracting for redevelopment. Nebraska Revised State Statutes (NRSS) 18-2103, 18-2107, and 18-2109.

Under this statutory scheme, the governing body shall afford maximum opportunity consistent with the sound needs of the city as a whole to the rehabilitation or redevelopment of the community redevelopment area by private enterprise. A private development project would be eligible for tax increment financing only if it is included within an area which has previously been declared blighted or substandard and is in furtherance of an existing redevelopment plan for that area. The declaration of property as blighted or substandard is not simply a formality which must be met in order to assist a private developer with tax increment financing; it is the recognition of a specific public purpose which justifies the expenditure of public funds for redevelopment. See *Monarch Chemical Works, Inc. v. City of Omaha*, 203 Neb. 33, 277 N.W.2d 423 (1979), *Fitzke v. Hastings*, 255 NEB 46 (1998)

At this point, Council is only considering point 1 of Mr. Sivick's opinion. According to NRSS §18-2109, it is clear that the Planning Commission must have the opportunity to review the Blight Study prior to Council declaring the property substandard and blighted. If Council wishes to consider a declaration of substandard and blight, State Statute requires that the question of whether an area is substandard and blighted is submitted to the Planning Commission for its review and recommendation.

The Planning Commission recommendation should be done at the first available opportunity, as the Planning Commission has 30 days to respond to Council's request for a recommendation.

### **Blighted Area of the Community**

The city of Grand Island, as a City of the First Class, is permitted to designate an area of up to 35% of the municipal limits as blighted and substandard. As of today, October 31, 2013, 18.20% of the City has been declared blighted and substandard. Declaring this area

(Area 15) blighted and substandard would add another 0.34%. The Webb Road Property Area (Area 14) would add 0.04%. If both Areas 14 and 15 were to be declared substandard and blighted by the Council 18.58% of the community would bear that designation.

It does not appear that the declaration of both Area 14 and Area 15 would significantly impact the City's ability to declare other areas substandard and blighted.

### **Alternatives**

It appears that the Council has the following alternatives concerning the issue at hand. The Council may:

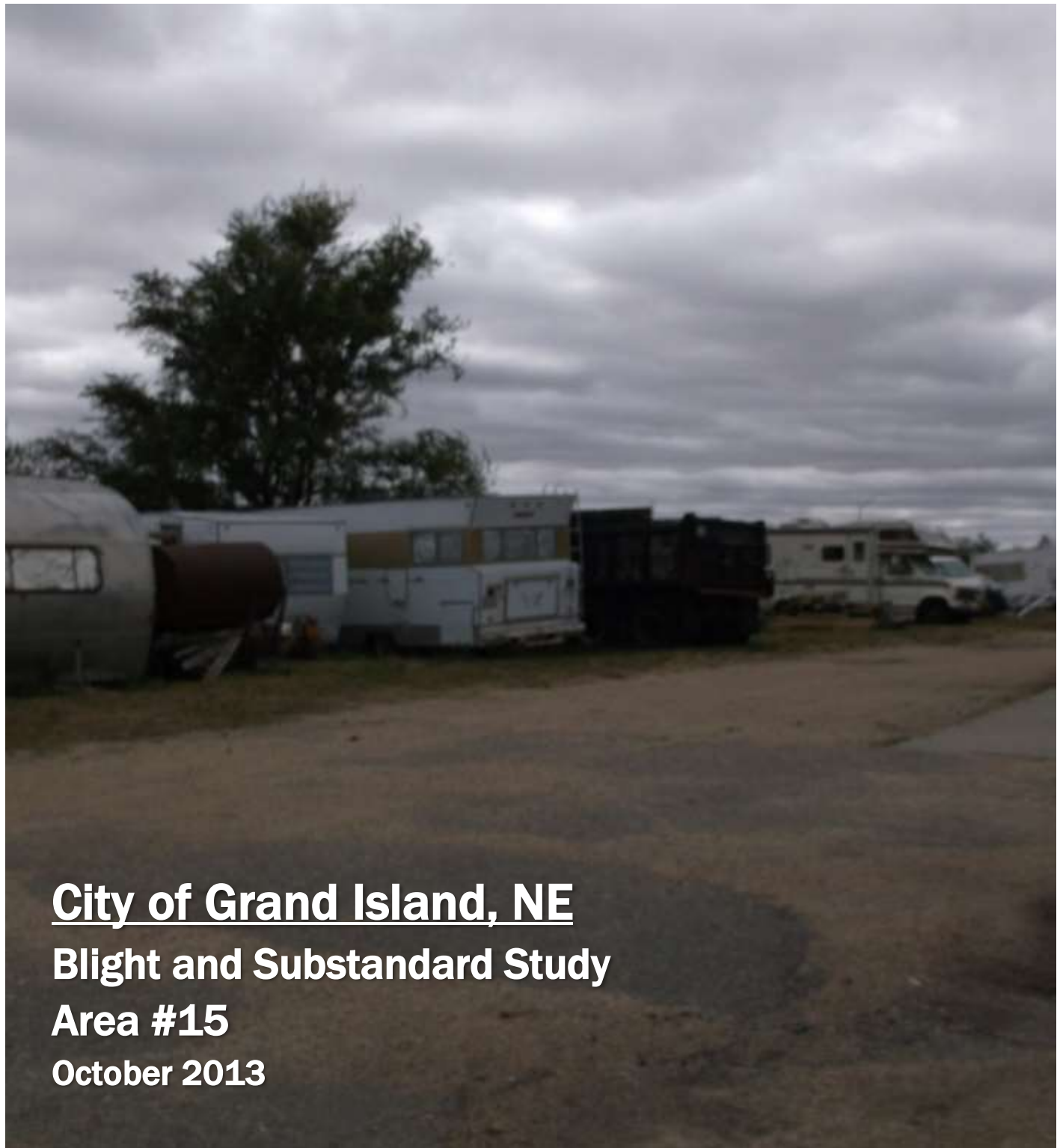
1. Move to forward the Study to the Planning Commission for their recommendation.
2. Move to not forward the Study to the Planning Commission for their recommendation
3. Refer the issue to a Committee
4. Postpone the issue to future date
5. Take no action on the issue

### **Recommendation**

City Administration recommends that the Council Move to forward the Study to the Planning Commission.

### **Sample Motion**

Move to adopt resolution to forward the Study to the Planning Commission for their review and recommendation.



**City of Grand Island, NE**  
**Blight and Substandard Study**  
**Area #15**  
**October 2013**







## **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 individual property owners within the community with the hope the City will consider the study area for future redevelopment activity. The area is bordered on all sides by major transportation routes and the portions adjacent to the area has seen considerable new development on the northern 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 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 platted 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 Hall County Regional Planning Commission 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 owners 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, commercial/office, public and industrial.

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 NORTH US HIGHWAY 281 AND W. OLD POTASH HIGHWAY; THENCE EASTERLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE OF W. OLD POTASH HIGHWAY TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE CENTERLINE OF N. WEBB ROAD; THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE OF N. WEBB ROAD (ACROSS US HIGHWAY 30 WHERE N. WEBB ROAD TURNS INTO S. WEBB ROAD) TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE CENTERLINE OF OLD US HIGHWAY 30; THENCE, SOUTHWESTERNLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE OF OLD US HIGHWAY 30 TO THE EXTENDED WEST PROPERTY LINE OF MISCELLANEOUS TRACTS 24-11-10 PT E ½; THENCE NORTHWESTERLY ALONG SAID EXTENDED WEST PROPERTY LINE TO THE INSECTION WITH THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF A LOT DESCRIBED AS SPELTS-SCHULTZ INDUSTRIAL SUB PT LT 1; THENCE, NORTHERLY ALONG THE WEST PROPERTY LINE OF A LOT DESCRIBED AS SPELTS-SCHULTZ INDUSTRIAL SUB PT LT 1 TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT; THENCE, NORTHEASTERLY ALONG THE NORTH PROPERTY LINE OF THE SAME SAID LOT TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT; THENCE, CONTINUING NORTHEASTERLY ALONG THE NORTH PROPERTY LOT OF A LOT DESCRIBED AS LACY THIRD SUB LT 1 TO THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF SAID LOT; THENCE, NORTHERLY ALONG THE NORTH PORTION OF THE WEST PROPERTY LINE TO THE NORTHWEST CORNER OF A LOT DESCRIBED AS LACY THIRD SUB LT 1; THENCE CONTINUING NORTHERLY ALONG THE WEST PROPERTY LINES OF LOTS DESCRIBED AS LACY SUB LOT 4, STALKER PLAZA SUB LOT 2, AND STALKER PLAZA SUB LOT 1; THENCE, CONTINUING NORTHERLY ALONG THE EXTENDED WEST PROPERTY LINES TO THE POINT OF INTERSECTION WITH THE SOUTH PROPERTY LINE OF THE STATE OF NEBRASKA PROPERTY (CONTAINING THE NEBRASKA DEPARTMENT OF ROADS MAINTENANCE YARD AND THE NEBRASKA STATE PATROL FACILITIES; THENCE, WESTERLY ALONG A LINE TO A POINT ON THE CENTERLINE OF US HIGHWAY 281 BEING 700.9969 FEET SOUTH OF THE POINT OF BEGINNING; THENCE, NORTHERLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE OF US HIGHWAY 30 TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

**Figure 1**  
**Study Area Map**



Source: Olsson Associates 2013

## 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 industrial uses with 43.9% of land in this use. The remaining 56.1% is either Commercial, Commercial/office or vacant, public right-of-way and streets.

**TABLE 1: EXISTING LAND USE, GRAND ISLAND - 2013**

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	10.63	18.3%	17.0%
Industrial	27.50	47.4%	43.9%
Quasi-Public/Public	11.37	19.6%	18.2%
Parks/Recreation	0	0.0%	0.0%
Transportation	8.49	14.6%	13.6%
Total Developed Land	57.99	100.0%	
Vacant/Agriculture	4.64		7.4%
<b>Total Area</b>	<b>62.63</b>		<b>100.0%</b>

Source: 2013 Grand Island Blight Study Area 15, Marvin Planning Consultants and Olsson Associates



**Figure 2**  
**Existing Land Use Map**



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants and Olsson Associates, 2013

## **FINDINGS OF BLIGHT AND SUBSTANDARD CONDITIONS ELIGIBILITY STUDY**

This section of the 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 examined and evaluated in the field and online. After review several factors discussed in the Revised Statutes of Nebraska were found to be present in this specific study area. In addition, there were some of the statutory conditions that were either not present or not evaluated due to the small area in the report.

### **Average Age of the Residential or Commercial Units**

#### **Age of Structure**

Age of structures can be one of the contributing factors to 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.

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 41 structures. After researching the structural age on the Hall County Assessor's and Treasurer's websites, the following breakdown was determined:

- 24 (58.5%) units were determined to be 40 years of age or older
- 17 (41.5%) were newer than 40 years.

Based upon this data, the age of the structures would be a direct contributing factor.

### **Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements**

#### **Sidewalk Conditions**

Sidewalks, regardless of the area and uses within a community, should provide a safe means of movement for pedestrians. Sidewalks become increasingly more important along transportation routes considered to be arterials and highways. A sidewalk allows for pedestrian movement while keeping people off of heavily traveled streets.

The sidewalk conditions were analyzed in the Study Area. The sidewalks were rated on four categories; adequate, deteriorating, dilapidating, and missing completely.

Within the study area there is approximately 5,743 lineal feet of area where sidewalk could or should be located. After reviewing the conditions in the field, the following is how the sidewalk conditions breakdown within the study area:

- 0 (0.0%) lineal feet of adequate sidewalk
- 0 (0.0%) lineal feet of deteriorating sidewalk
- 5,743 (100.0%) lineal feet of no sidewalk.

There is no sidewalk present within the entire study area accessible to pedestrian traffic. Considering the uses along Old Potash Highway and Webb Road, there should be sidewalk in place.

In addition to the missing sidewalk indicated in Figure 4, there are other locations where sidewalk is missing, along US Highways 30 and 281. These are indicated with a red dashed line. These areas are not included in the totals, since the city and state policies are not to encourage walking and biking along major highways.



**Figure 3**  
**Unit Age Map**



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants and Olsson Associates, 2013



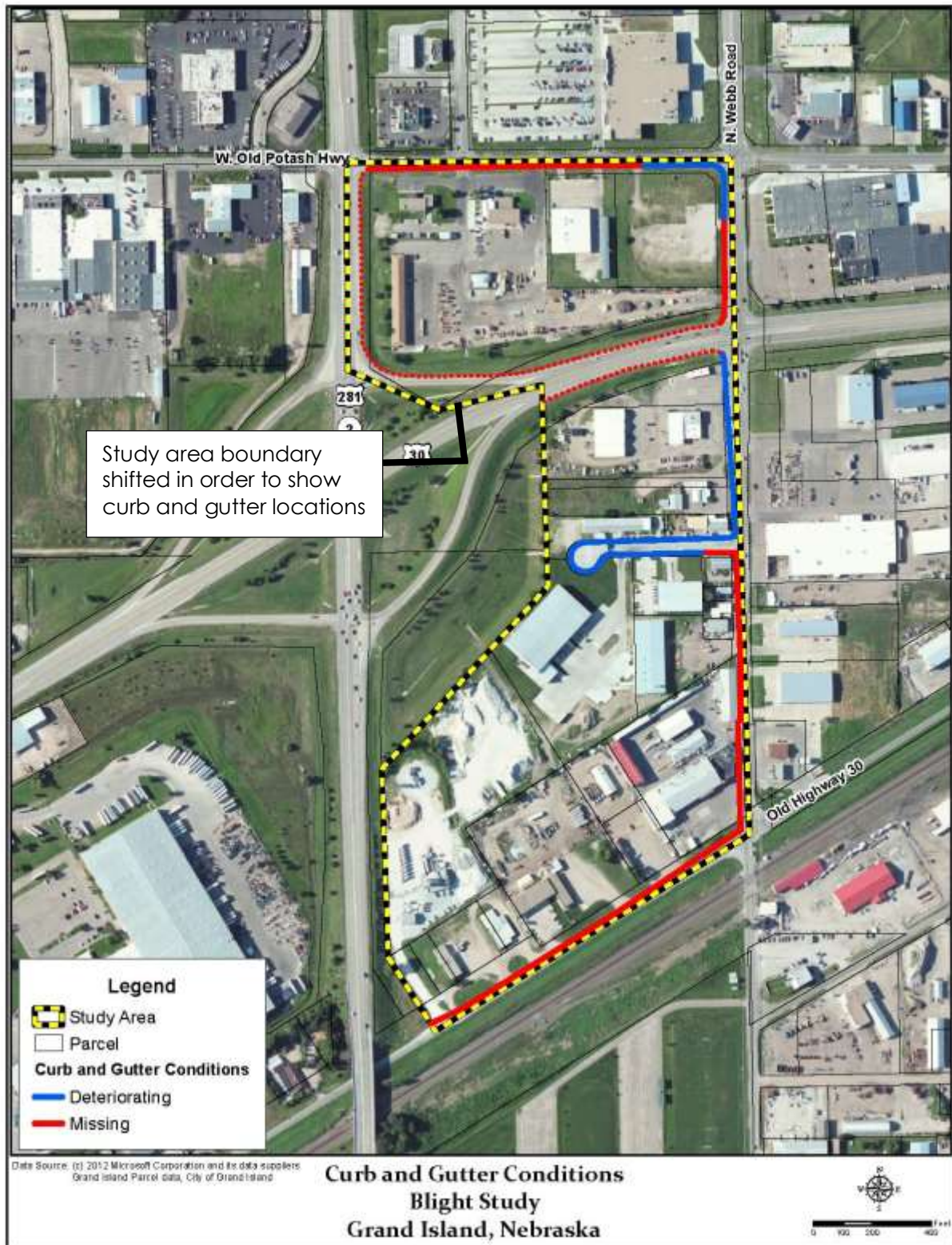
**Figure 4**  
**Sidewalk Conditions**



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants and Olsson Associates, 2013



**Figure 5**  
**Curb and Gutter Conditions**



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants and Olsson Associates, 2013

Due to the large amount of missing sidewalk, the lack of sidewalk would be a direct contributing factor.

### 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 field survey examined the entire area for potential drainage problems. One field survey was completed during and a day after a rain event. During both field visits there was standing water throughout the entire area. Water was standing in large potholes, in drainage ditches, along areas that were supposed to drain the water away.

Another item of note deals with the actual number of stormwater inlets in the study area. There are only two stormwater inlets within the entire study area. One is located at the southwest corner of W. Old Potash Highway and N. Webb Road; the other is located along Island Circle. All of the water, south of US Highway 30 has to surface drain or be absorbed into the soils. Along the west edge of this study area there is a large stormwater catchment; however, runoff in the study area must find a path along very flat topography to get to the catchment.

The primary way for stormwater runoff to reach the catchment is through a series of ditches along S. Webb Road and Old US Highway 30. This type of stormwater infrastructure typically works only when there is some topographic drop-off and the ditches remained mowed. In case of the ditches in the study area, the grass appeared to be longer than it should be to allow for water movement.

Figure 6 is an existing topographic map from the City of Grand Island's website. The map confirms the flatness of the area between US Highway 30 on the north and Old Highway 30 on the south. The most common contour identified on the map is the 1880 contour.

Standing water from poor drainage can be a catalyst for health issues like West Nile due to the potential mosquito breeding during the summer months.

Drainage also can be tied directly to the next issue, curb and gutter conditions.



Standing water during a recent rain event



Water same location 24 hours later



Standing water on the north end of study area – 24-hours after rain event



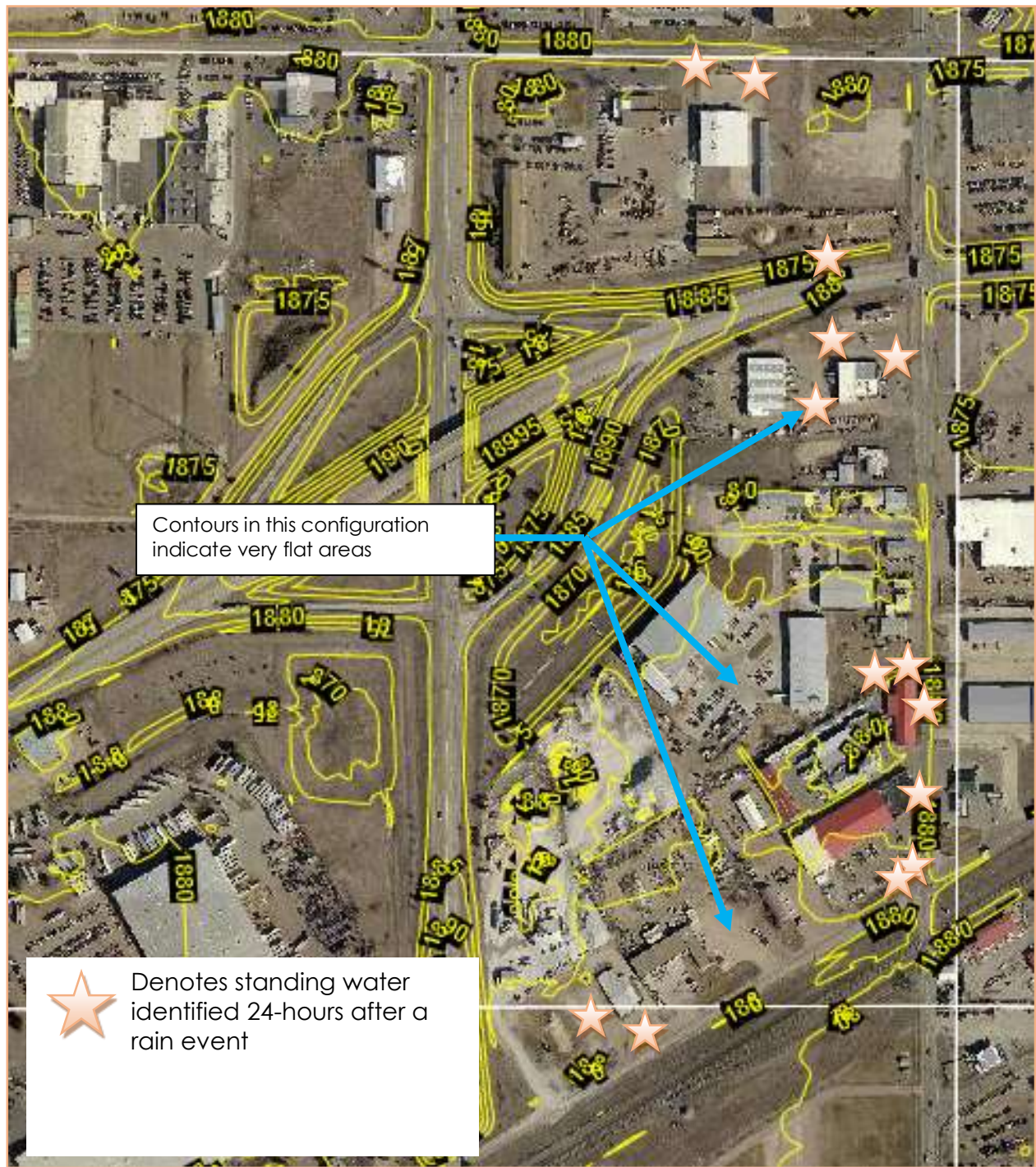
Catchment on west edge of study area



Drainage ditch along N. Webb Road



**Figure 6**  
**Topographic Map of Study Area**



### Curb and Gutter

Curb and Gutters have direct and indirect roles in communities. Their primary functions is to be a barrier that collects and directs water, drainage. On a secondary level, they can help define where the streets start and stop, and they act as a physical barrier between pedestrian and vehicular traffic.

Curb and gutter for the Study Area can be summed up simply by stating it is deteriorating and completely lacking. The only two locations curb and gutter can be found within the study area is on the southwest corner of W. Old Potash Highway and N. Webb Road (where the only storm inlet is located) and along the edges of Island Circle located in the southern portion of the study area.

Within the study area there is approximately 5,700 lineal feet of curb and gutter possible. After reviewing the conditions in the field, the following is how the curb and gutter conditions breakdown within the study area:

- 0 ( 0.0%) lineal feet of adequate curb and gutter
- 2,166 (37.6%) lineal feet of deteriorating curb and gutter
- 3,586 (62.4%) lineal feet of no curb and gutter or rural section.

The study area has 100% of the curb and gutters in either a deteriorating state or not constructed and the streets are designed as rural section streets. See Figure 5 for the locations of these curb and gutter.

The photo to the immediate right shows the deteriorating conditions that tend to occur at driveways and streets where there is no curb and gutter to define a solid edge. Motor vehicles tend to cut corners when pulling in and out of the parking areas which then lead to pot holes and standing water after rain events.

In addition to the missing curb and gutter indicated in Figure 4, there are other locations where curb and gutter are missing, along US Highways 30 and 281. These are indicated with a red dashed line. Even though this is considered an urban area, the Nebraska Department of Roads typically surface drains major highways to grassy areas.

Due to the large amount of deteriorating and missing curb and gutter, the curb and gutter condition would be a direct contributing factor.

### Site Improvements Conditions

The different properties throughout the study area have less than average site improvements. A large portion of the properties have gravel/dirt drives and parking lots and in some cases they may have been concreted or asphalted in the past but it is difficult to determine due to the level of deterioration. Some properties have paved/improved parking areas and drives were found to be in a state of deterioration.





**Figure 7**  
**Site Improvement Conditions**



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants and Olsson Associates 2013

Figure 7 identifies the different properties in the study area that have deteriorating parking areas and drives, as well as those properties that have been hard surfaced and are showing signs of deteriorating and in need of repair/rehabilitation. Even though most of the land uses in this area are heavier commercial to industrial uses, the lack of hard surfacing or the deterioration of the existing hard surfacing has a major impact on the perception of the area as well as the value of the area.

Based upon the field analysis, there are sufficient elements present to meet the definition of deterioration of site and other improvements in the Study Area.

### Faulty Lot Layout

Faulty lot layout can lead to a number of issues including size of a lot, adequacy of the lot for the use, accessibility to the lot and/or the usefulness of the lot. There are a number of factors to examine within this particular study area.

### Size of Lot

Throughout the study area there are lots that are too small for the use and buildings located on the site. This is specifically true on the north and south sides of Island Circle.

Figure 8 to the right identifies the lots in the study area deemed to be either too narrow, too shallow, or both (resulting in an overall small lot). Considering the current land use plan and zoning for this area, these lots have the potential to undesirable or overcrowded with building in the future; in some cases these lots are already overcrowded.

The lot on the north end of Figure 8 is an extremely awkward shape and likely was platted this way when US Highway 30 was relocated to its present alignment. However, this still creates an odd development/redevelopment condition.

### Adequacy of the Lots

Based upon the discussion regarding lot size and shape above, the lots in Figure 8 are not adequate for the type of land use and zoning designated for this area. Parking and deliveries opportunities are somewhat limited on these lots.

Some of the other lots, the lumber yard on the southeast corner of the study, appear to have fit their different structures onto the site with a shoe horn; movement on this site is very tight considering larger pick-ups and semi-trailers are arriving and departing from the site.

### Accessibility of the Lots

Accessibility of some lots in the southern portion of the study currently do not appear to be an issue. However, there could be two very different issues arise in the future.

First, the lot to the north end has two primary uses on one lot. At present they are owned by the same company. If in the future these uses are split apart, the area to the west has the potential to become a landlocked parcel. At present all of the uses and structures gain access from the points on the property; there are no adjacent streets, except for S. Webb Road.



**Figure 8: Small Lot Sizes**

Source:  
Marvin Planning Consultants and  
Olsson Associates



**Figure 9: Accessibility**

Source:  
Marvin Planning Consultants  
and Olsson Associates



The lots identified on the very south end of the study area have a similar but different issue, the lots along Old US Highway 30 are designated as different parcels than the lots to the north. Currently, the frontage lots are owned by the same individuals/companies that own the lots in the back. This creates an issue with faulty lot layouts in the area.

### Insanitary or Unsafe Conditions

There are a number of factors tending to fall under this category. The study area was found to have several factors falling into insanitary and unsafe. The following will outline the conditions found.

#### Junk and junk vehicles

There are locations where property owners have junk and/or junk vehicles located on their property within the study area.



Aerial of junk and junk vehicles

Source: <http://grandislandne.map.beehere.net/>

The most specific location for this condition is shown at the right. In one case, the property owner has some of the junk vehicles contained in a “security” fence with aging and sagging barbed wire along the top edge. However, in other situations junk vehicles, old campers and other items are left in the open and not secured from access by individuals. In addition to people being capable of directly access these vehicles, trailers, etc., these conditions are also very attractive places for vermin to congregate.



Photos of the area above

#### Utility Poles

Utility poles in this area, although it is not the direct concern of individual property owners, are an unsafe condition in various locations within the study area. The property shown above has a power pole located in between the buildings on the lot. This creates a potential hazard for vehicular movement, especially semi-trailers.



Another area with junk vehicles and trees

In another case near the southern edge of the study area, there are utility poles within two feet of the driving surface of S. Webb Road. In addition, one of these poles is also located less than one foot from the edge of a property driveway that accesses S. Webb Road (this specific pole is also a visual distraction for vehicles turning onto S. Webb Road); see photo to the right.



#### Stormwater Catchment

The topography found in Grand Island creates the need for unique engineering solutions to catch, store, and release stormwater. Immediately west of the study there is a large stormwater catchment facility, not in the area. This catchment could be considered an unsafe condition that is contributing to the potential blighted and substandard conditions of the area. This major catchment is very deep and is designed to handle a massive amount of water; however, there are no security measures to keep individuals both purposely or accidentally from entering this area. If the city has had a major rain event and the catchment is even partially full it could be a hazard to someone's safety.



### Unsecured materials

The field investigation of this study area identified one item that presents a possible unsafe condition. Within the study area there is one location where individuals can access the material stockpiles of the concrete plant. This would require an individual to go through the property occupied by Anixter Fasteners/Hastings Foods. Along the southwest edge of the Anixter/Hastings Foods site there is not a security fence on any type to keep someone from accessing the gravel stockpile and other items on the plant site.



### Standing Water

As discussed in detail in the drainage section of this report, standing water can be an insanitary and unsafe condition due to the potential for this to be a breeding ground for mosquitoes and their ability to spread the West Nile virus.



### Barbed Wire Fencing

There are several properties within the study area being protected with barbed wire along the top of the fence line. The use of this material within the area is a proper security measure depending on the need. However, in multiple locations in the study area it appears that the barbed wire has been allowed to deteriorate, thus indicating a lack of need. It is these locations that are considered unsafe. If the barbed wire is allowed to continue to deteriorate it is likely to come loose from the fence and be in the direct path of pedestrians and others.



### Vacant Property

One property near the southwest corner of the site, the old Weldon Parts store that is vacant. At the time of the field work for this study, the property appeared to be in a state of neglect. There were several old pallets laying around, as well as other items left behind. In addition, along the east wall of the building the weeds were growing out of control and in need of being cut and destroyed.



Based upon the field analysis, there are sufficient elements present to meet the definition of insanitary and unsafe conditions within the Study Area.

### Diversity of Ownership

After reviewing the information on the Hall County Assessor's website, the study area was found to have 18 different property owners. In order for future redevelopment to occur it may require some of these tracts to get into common ownership.



Based upon the fact that 18 different individuals, corporations, etc. own property in this area, it is determined that the high diversity of property ownership could easily be a barrier to redevelopment.

### Existence of Conditions endangering life or property due to fire or other causes

Located within the study area there are factors present that are a danger to life or property due to fire or other causes. A number of these factors have been previously discussed in this report. These factors include:

- The junk vehicles and other junk laying around on a number of properties
- The old Weldon Truck Parts store along Old US Highway 30
- The close proximity of the power poles along S. Webb Road
- The proximity of the unsecured stormwater catchment
- The unsecured access to the materials stockpile for the concrete plant



Based upon the field analysis, there are sufficient elements present to meet the definition of dangerous conditions within the Study Area.

### Combination of factors which are impairing and/or arresting sound growth

Within this small study area there are a number of factors that are impairing or arresting sound growth. A couple of these include:

- The location of the Nebraska Department of Roads Maintenance Yard and Nebraska State Patrol facility; there has been an ongoing demand for larger scale commercial along US Highway 281. The Hy-Vee property immediately north of the study area was purchased for \$1,790,000 or \$205,747 per acre in 2005.
- Even though the existence of US Highways 281 and 30 as well as Webb Road and Old US Highway 30 are traffic generators in what is considered a commercial and industrial corridor, these thoroughfares have a tendency to impair and arrest sound growth practices.
- The Union Pacific Railroad mainline lies immediately to the south of the study area and also impairs sound growth practices.

Based upon the review of the area, there are sufficient elements present to meet the definition of combination of factors which are impairing and/or arresting sound growth within the Study Area.

### Stable or decreasing population based on the last two decennial censuses

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.

### Blighting Summary

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

- **Average age of structures is over 40 years of age**
  - Within the Study Area 58.5% of the structures meet the criteria of 40 years of age or older.
- **Deterioration of site or other improvements**
  - There are no sidewalks located along the public streets in the area.
  - The area is considerably flat and standing water is a concern.
  - Within the study area, curb and gutter existing only on 37.6% of the right-of-way and it has been determined to be in a deteriorating state.
  - In addition to a small percentage of curb and gutter, the remaining 62.4% has no curb and gutter to control stormwater runoff or to define the driving surface from other portions of the right-of-way.
  - Several properties within the study area have deteriorated or substandard site improvements including parking lots, fencing, etc.

- **Faulty Lot Layout**
  - Size of certain lots is an issue
  - Adequacy of some lots is a concern
  - Accessibility to some lots could be a problem since these lots could become land locked in the future
- **Insanitary or Unsafe Conditions**
  - Lack of sidewalk in the Study Area
  - Junk and junk vehicles are present throughout the study area
  - Utility pole locations
  - Stormwater catchment west of study area is a contributing factor
  - Unsecured materials storage
  - Standing water
  - Deteriorating barbed wire fencing
  - Vacant and neglected property
- **Diversity of Ownership**
  - Within the Study Area 22 properties are owned by 18 different property owners.
- **Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes**
  - Junk and junk vehicles
  - The proximity of the stormwater catchment
  - Unsecured materials
  - Lack of sidewalk within the Study Area
- **Combination of factors which are impairing and/or arresting sound growth**
  - The location of the Nebraska Department of Roads Maintenance yard and the Nebraska State Patrol facility.
  - US Highways 30 and 281
  - Old US Highway 30 and Webb Road
  - Union Pacific Railroad
- **Stable or decreasing population based on the 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:**

- Improper Subdivision or obsolete platting
- Substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structure
- Defective/Inadequate street layouts,
- Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding fair value of the land.
- Defective or unusual condition of title,
- Unemployment in the designated area is at least 120% of the state or national average.
- One-half of unimproved property is over 40 years old.
- 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.

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 40 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 eight structures. After researching the structural age on the Hall County Assessor's and Treasurer's websites, the following breakdown was determined:

- 17 (41.5%) units were determined to be less than 40 years of age
- 24 (58.5%) units were determined to be 40 years of age or older

There is a predominance of units 40 years of age or older.

### **Existence of Conditions endangering life or property due to fire or other causes**

Located within the study area there are factors present that are a danger to life or property due to fire or other causes. A number of these factors have been previously discussed in this report. These factors include:

- The junk vehicles and other junk laying around on a number of properties
- The old Weldon Truck Parts store along Old US Highway 30
- The close proximity of the power poles along S. Webb Road
- The proximity of the unsecured stormwater catchment
- The unsecured access to the materials stockpile for the concrete plant



Based upon the field analysis, there are sufficient elements present to meet the definition of dangerous conditions within the Study Area.

## Substandard Summary

Nebraska State Statute requires that "...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;"

This Study Area in Grand Island meets the definition of Substandard as defined in the Revised Nebraska State Statutes.

## FINDINGS FOR GRAND ISLAND BLIGHT STUDY AREA #15

Blight Study Area #15 has several items contributing to the Blight and Substandard Conditions. These conditions include:

### **Blighted Conditions**

- **Average age of structures is over 40 years of age**
- **Deterioration of site or other improvements**
- **Faulty Lot Layout**
- **Insanitary and Unsafe Conditions**
- **Diversity of Ownership**
- **Combination of factors which are impairing and/or arresting sound growth**

- Stable or decreasing population based on the last two decennial censuses

#### **Substandard Conditions**

- Average age of the structures in the area is at least forty years
- Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes