



Community Redevelopment Authority (CRA)

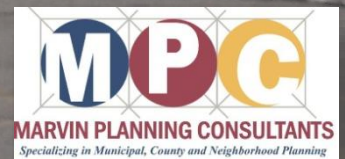
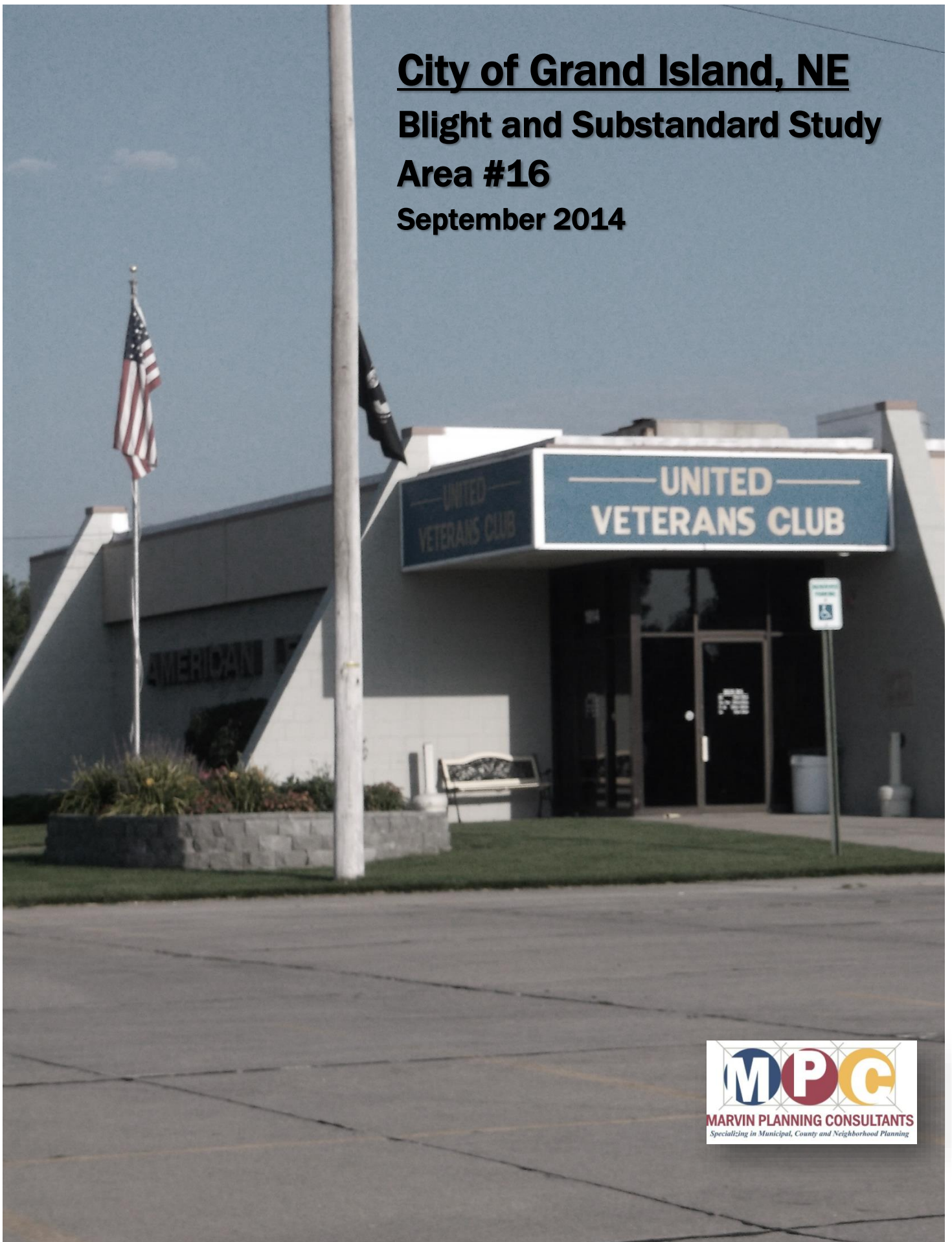
Wednesday, October 29, 2014
Regular Meeting

Item X1

Blight Study

Staff Contact: Chad Nabity

City of Grand Island, NE
Blight and Substandard Study
Area #16
September 2014



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 as well as surrounding conditions. This study has been commissioned by the Community Redevelopment Authority in order to analyze the possibility of declaring the area as blighted and substandard.

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 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 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, 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 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 agricultural, residential, commercial, and public uses. The portion of the study containing the public uses contains the Central Nebraska Veterans Home (CNVH) which is slated to be relocated to Kearney in the coming years. If and when this move takes place, the current site will be vacated and provides an ideal opportunity for redevelopment in northern Grand Island along the frontages of Capital Avenue and Nebraska Highway 2.

Some areas within close proximity to the CNVH are currently agricultural lands, some within the corporate limits and some outside the limits. The thought is these properties may become developed at the same time the CNVH site gets redeveloped. Therefore, those areas have been included in the study area; however, those lands outside the corporate limits must be annexed into the corporate limits prior to the declaration of blight and substandard.

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

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UNIQUE CONDITIONS TO THE STUDY AREA

A portion of this describe area is currently outside the corporate limits of the city. In order for this specific area to be declared as blighted and substandard, the City Council will need to annex the property into the corporate limits.

The area is currently owned by the State of Nebraska and is considered part of the Nebraska Veterans Home property. Currently the ground contains crops but would likely meet the urban and suburban test. If this property does not become annexed and declared blighted and substandard, it will be very difficult to declare this area such as a standalone

Figure 1
Study Area Map



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants 2014

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.

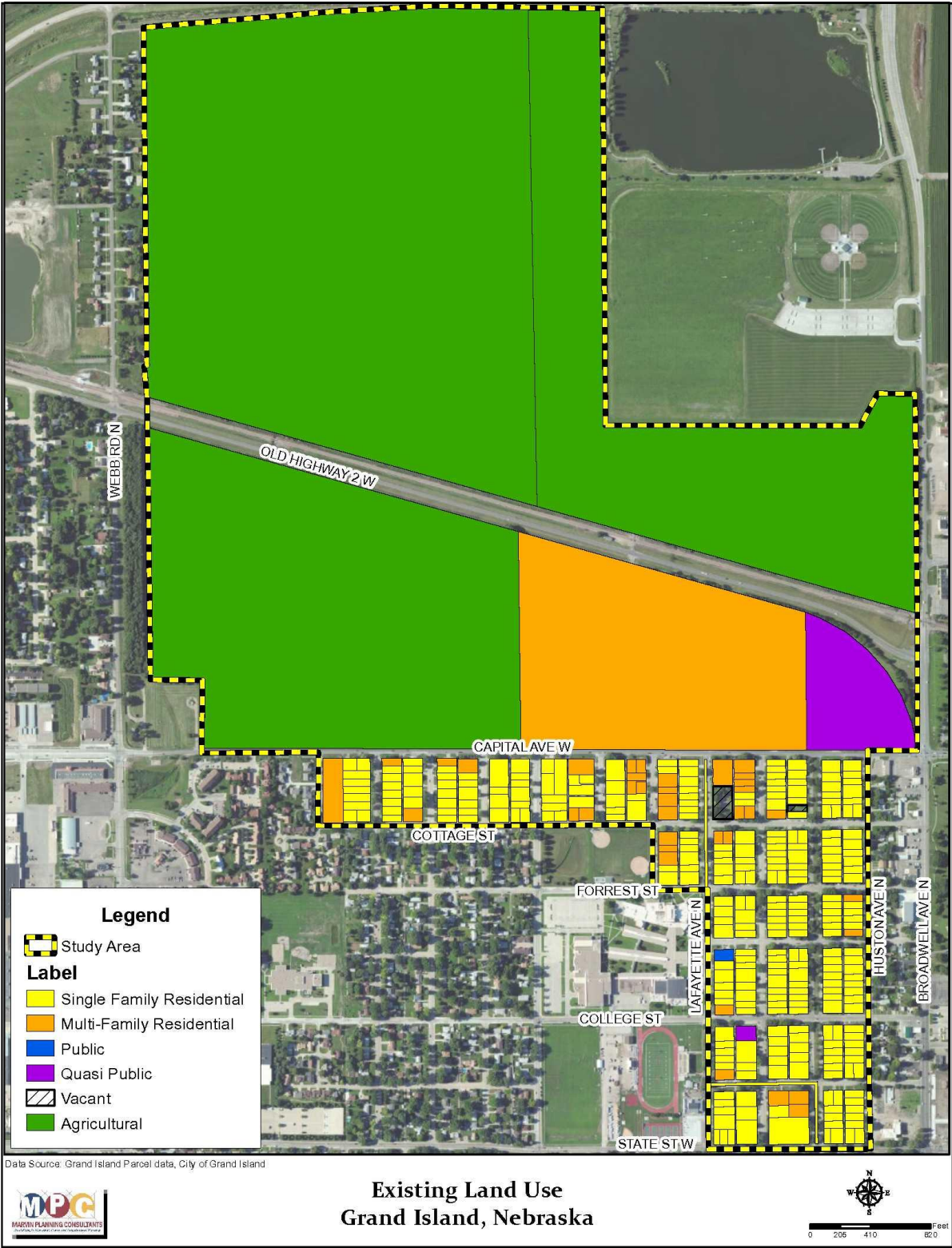
The Study Area is predominately residential and undeveloped areas, including an area of agricultural ground (needing to be annexed). Residential ground made up 59.0% of the developed area and 20.5% of the total study area. However, vacant/agricultural land made up 65.3% of the total study area. Transportation related uses were 34.9% of the developed area and 12.1% of the total study area.

TABLE 1: EXISTING LAND USE, GRAND ISLAND - 2014

Type of Use	Acres	Percent of Developed land within the Study Area	Percent of Study Area
Residential	116.5	59.0%	20.5%
Single-family	53.26	27.0%	9.4%
Multi-family	63.24	32.0%	11.1%
Manufactured Housing	0	0.0%	0.0%
Commercial	0	0.0%	0.0%
Industrial	0.00	0.0%	0.0%
Quasi-Public/Public	11.98	6.1%	2.1%
Parks/Recreation	0	0.0%	0.0%
Transportation	68.87	34.9%	12.1%
Total Developed Land	197.35	100.0%	
Vacant/Agriculture	371.74		65.3%
Total Area	569.09		100.0%

Source: 2014 Grand Island Blight Study Area 16, Marvin Planning Consultants

Figure 2
Existing Land Use Map



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants, 2014

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

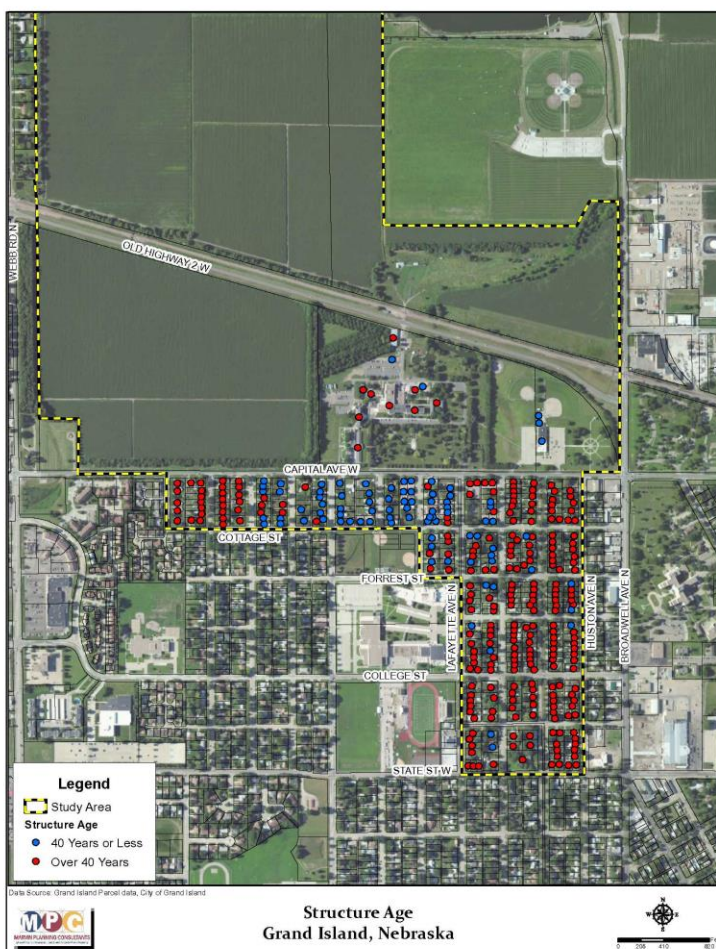
Age of structures can be a contributing factor to the blighted and substandard conditions in an area. Statutes allow for a predominance of structures that are 40 years of age or older to be a contributing factor regardless of their condition. The following paragraphs document the structural age of the 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 339 primary structures. After researching the structural age on the Hall County Assessor's and Treasurer's websites, the following breakdown was determined:

- 254 (74.9%) units were determined to be 40 years of age or older
- 85 (25.1%) units were determined to be less than 40 years in age

The age of the structures would be a direct contributing factor.

Figure 3
Unit Age Map



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants, 2014

Structural Conditions

Where structural conditions were evaluated, structures were either rated as: Good, Average, Fair, or badly worn. The data and rating system comes from the Hall County Assessor's database and is the same database used to value properties in the area. In addition, our team had to make some assumptions on the Central Nebraska Veterans Home and Legion/VFW Building since they are not addressed by the Assessor's office.

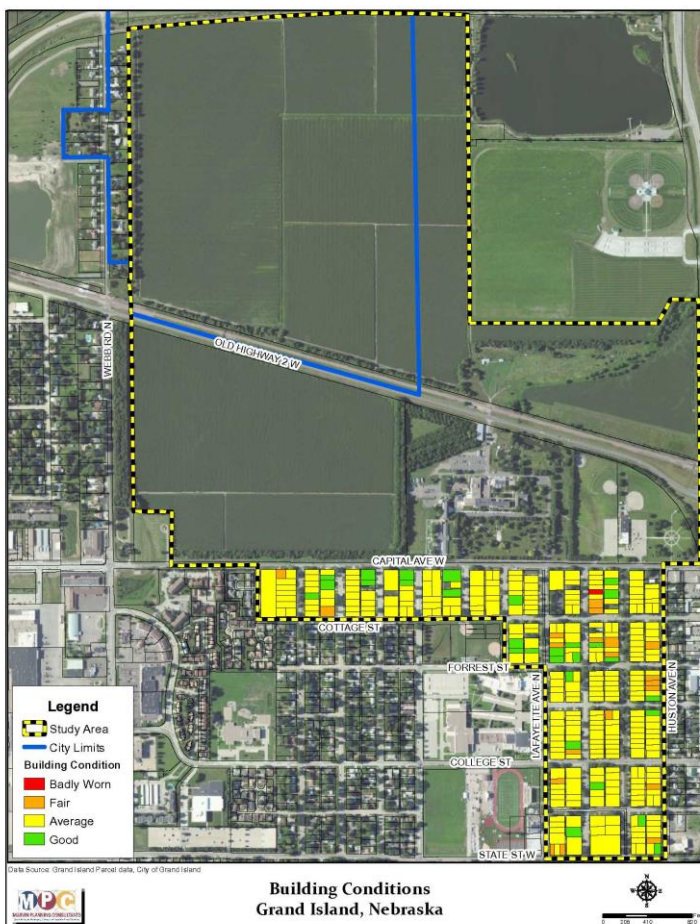
Based upon the data provided to the planning team, the following is the breakdown for structures in the study area:

- 30 (8.8%) structures rated as good
- 277 (81.7%) structures rated as average
- 31 (9.2%) structures rated as fair
- 1 (0.3%) structure rated as badly worn

Based upon these data, an assumption has been made that average condition and less would constitute less than desirable conditions due to age and conditions. It is common that that older a structure gets the more maintenance and upkeep are required in order to maintain a good or higher condition. Even an average structure will show some signs of deteriorating which in turn can become a dilapidated structure in the future if it is not addressed over time.

Due to the stated conditions found in the Hall County Assessor's data, the condition of the structure is a contributing factor.

Figure 4
Structural Conditions



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants, 2014

Sidewalk Conditions

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 53,535 lineal feet of sidewalk possible. After reviewing the conditions in the field, the following is how the sidewalk conditions breakdown within the study area:

- 13,738 (25.7%) lineal feet of adequate sidewalk
- 22,832 (42.6%) lineal feet of deteriorating sidewalk
- 16,965 (31.7%) lineal feet of no sidewalk.
- There was no sidewalk deemed to be dilapidated.

Overall, 74.3% of the sidewalks are in either a deteriorating state or completely missing. Missing sidewalk is as bad as dilapidated or deteriorating sidewalk since there is no safe place to walk other than across someone else's property or in the street. The safest sidewalks appeared to be along routes that ran north and south and directly connected into the Senior High School, just outside the study area. See Figure 5 for the locations of these sidewalks.

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

Street Conditions

The street conditions were analyzed in the Study Area. The streets were also rated on four categories; adequate, deteriorating, dilapidating, and missing completely. The following is the breakdown for the area.

Within the study area there is approximately 42,562 lineal feet of street. After reviewing the conditions in the field, the following is how the street conditions breakdown within the corporate limits:

- 5,795 (13.6%) lineal feet of adequate street
- 25,714 (60.4%) lineal feet of deteriorating street
- 11,053 (26.0%) lineal feet of dirt/gravel/unimproved streets.
- There was no street deemed to be dilapidated.

Overall, 86.4% of the streets are in either a deteriorating state or were paved with dirt/gravel, thus an obsolete material for an urban area. See Figure 6 for the locations of these streets.

Due to the large amount of deteriorating and missing street, the street conditions would be a direct contributing factor.

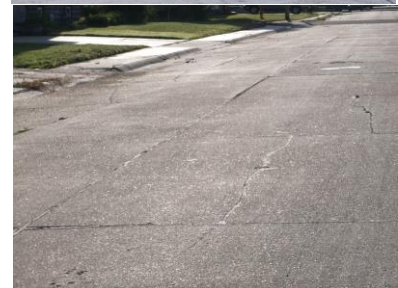
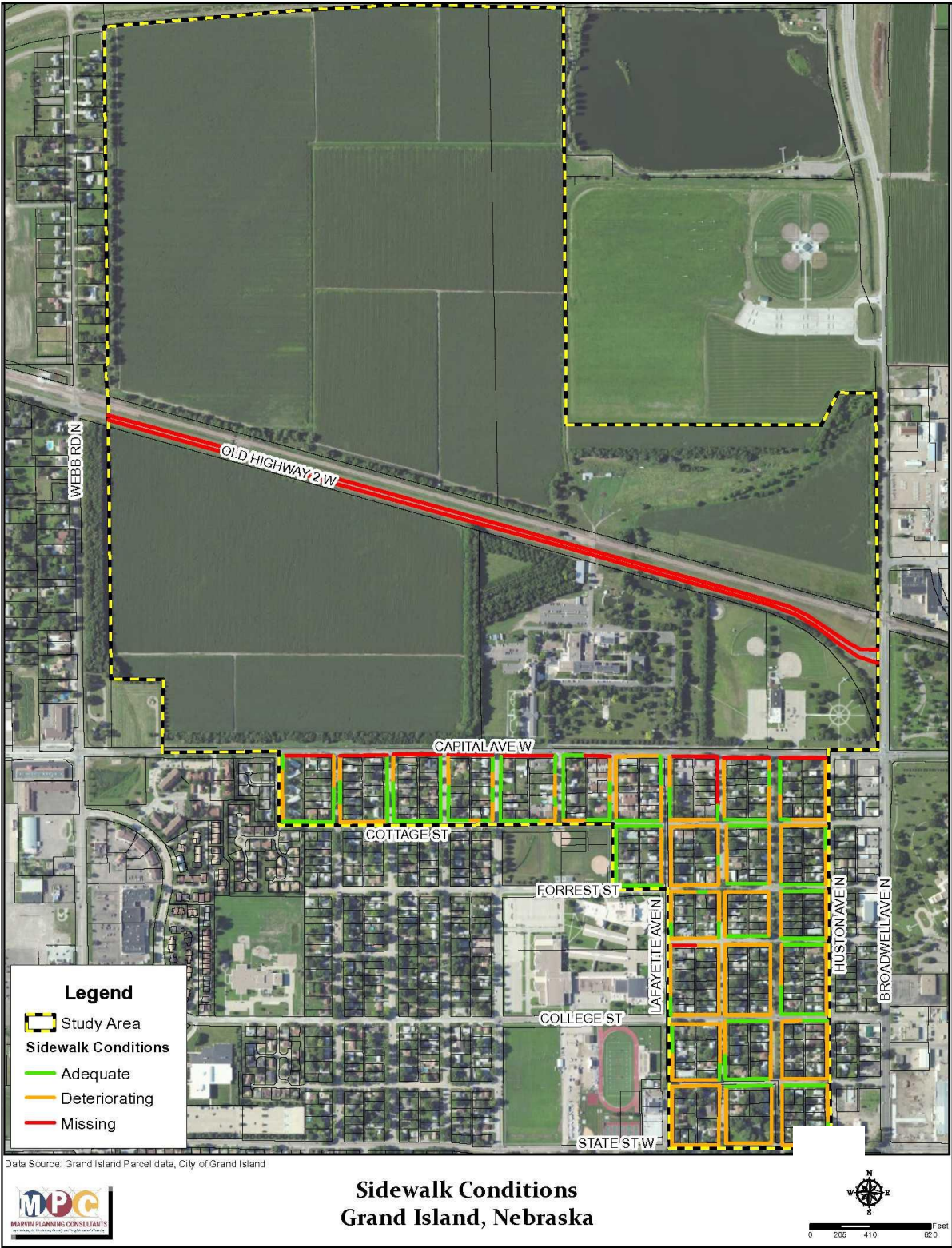
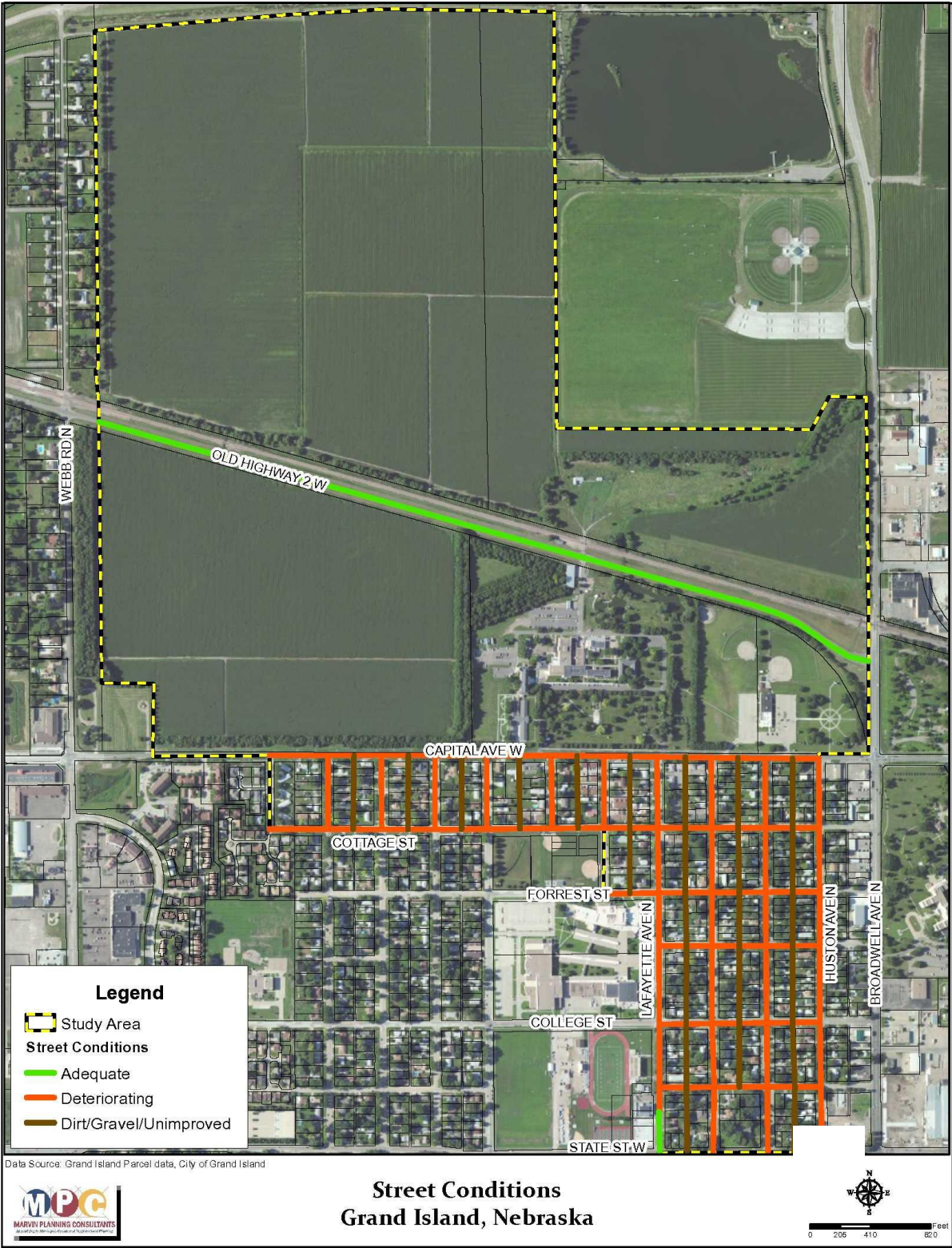


Figure 5
Sidewalk Conditions



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants, 2014

Figure 6
Street Conditions



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants, 2014

Curb and Gutter

Curb and Gutters have a number of direct and indirect roles in neighborhoods. Their primary functions is to be a barrier that collects and directs water to be drained away. 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 were examined similarly to streets and sidewalks. The curb and gutter will be graded as either adequate, deteriorating, dilapidated, or missing. In addition, curb and gutter will be examined based upon their location, within the incorporated area or within the county industrial park.

Within the study area there is approximately 54,408 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 corporate limits:

- 8,043 (14.8%) lineal feet of adequate curb and gutter
- 27,953 (51.4%) lineal feet of deteriorating curb and gutter
- 18,412 (33.8%) lineal feet of no curb and gutter or rural section.
- There was no curb and gutter deemed to be dilapidated.

In total, 85.2% of the curb and gutters are in either a deteriorating state or are missing. See Figure 7 for the locations of these curb and gutter.

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

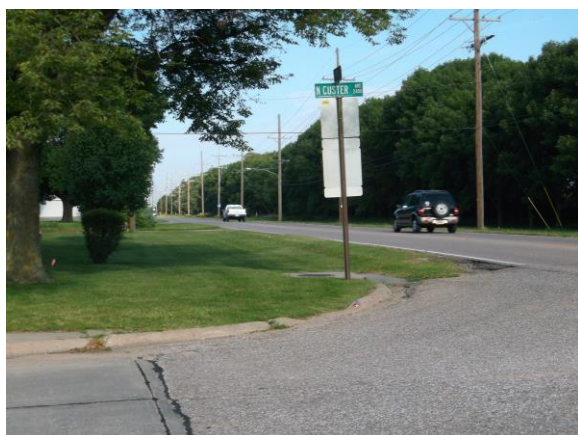
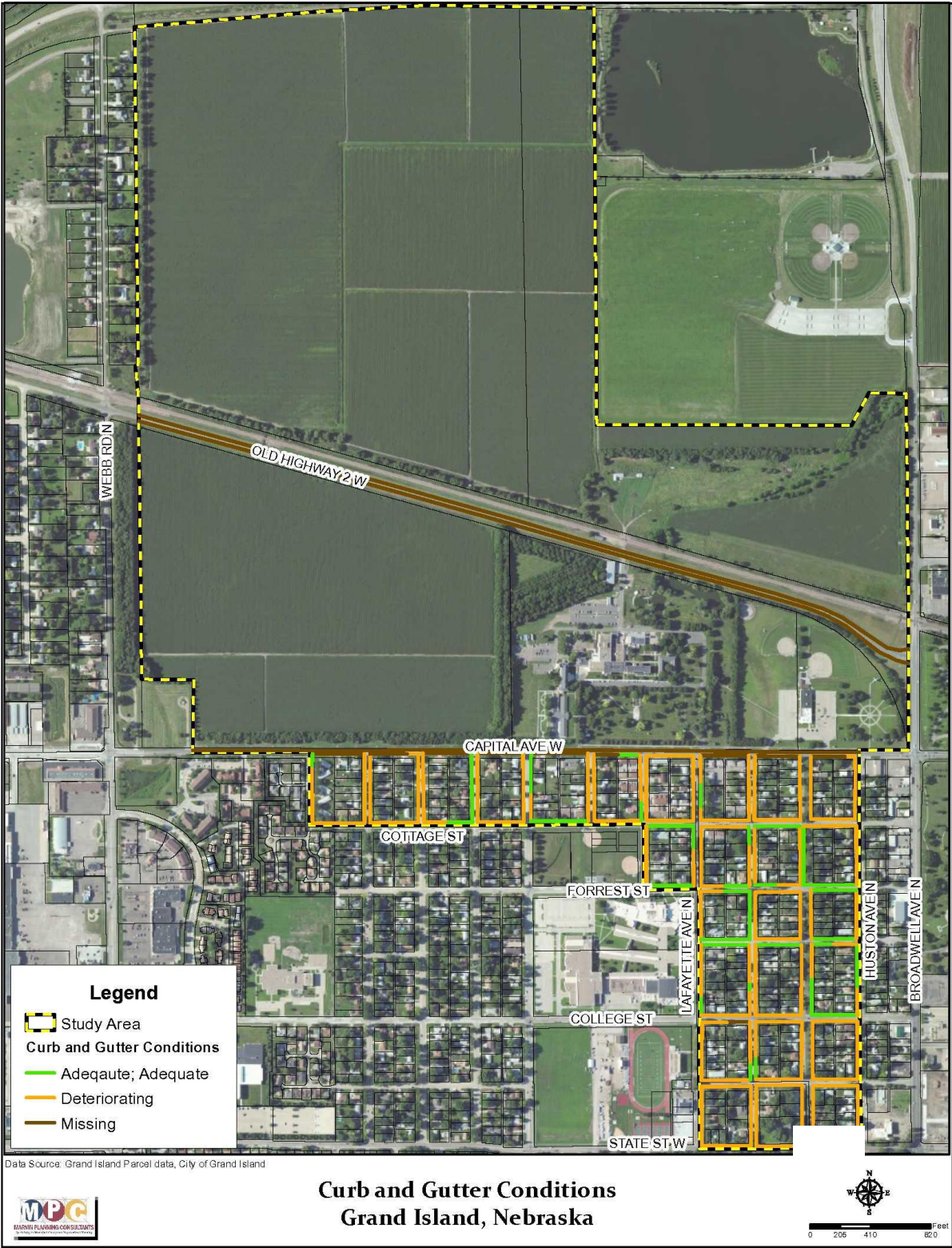


Figure 7
Curb and Gutter Conditions



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants, 2014

Deterioration of site or other improvements

Throughout this Area, there is a large portion of sidewalk that is either deteriorating or missing. In addition, a large portion of the curb and gutter has been determined to be either deteriorating or missing.

Finally, the area has a large amount of deteriorating streets. The streets have been patched over and over due to large amounts of cracking that has been occurring in the pavement.

There are numerous apartment complexes within the study area and nearly all of them have driveways and parking areas that are deteriorating and in some need of repair. In addition the parking areas and driveways within the Central Nebraska Veterans Home and the Legion/VFW have issues with deteriorating pavement.

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.



Figure 8
Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants, 2014

Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes

The conditions within this study area are not the typical "Dangerous conditions to and property due to fire or other causes" but they are being deemed relevant in this study. Within the study area there are four major transportation issues that can be dangerous, these are Capital Avenue, Old Nebraska Highway 2, US Highway 281, and the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (BNSF) Railroad mainline. All of these bisect the study area and all are relatively close to one another. In addition, the proximity in which all of these converge are in a very narrow area which can and does create congestion and hazardous conditions.

The major thoroughfares create potential hazards regarding the walkability and "bicycle ability" of the area. The railroad line creates the potential for derailments and potential spills, including hazardous conditions which can be dangerous to life and/or property.

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

Figure 9

Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes



Source: Marvin

Planning Consultants, 2014

Improper Platting or Obsolete Platting

The majority of this area was platted, especially south of Capital Avenue, in the late 1800's and early 1890's as the city began to grow. The vast number of the lots, as they are platted today, will be difficult to redevelop.

Over the years, lots south of Capital Avenue have been allowed to reconfigure, combine together, or split apart into a fraction of the original layout. Even though they create some issues with platting, they are not as critical as the following areas:

- The land north of Capital Avenue given to the State of Nebraska for the Central Nebraska Veterans Home over 100 years ago
- The configuration of land around old Nebraska Highway 2, the BNSF and Broadwell intersections.

Based upon the review of the plat of the area, there are sufficient elements present to meet the definition of improper platting or obsolete platting within the Study Area.

Figure 10

Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes



Consultants, 2014

Source: Marvin Planning

Diversity of Ownership

After reviewing the information on the Hall County Assessor's website, the study area was found to have 100's of 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, so many 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.

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

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

- The location of the Central Nebraska Veteran's Home
- The carrying capacity of Capital Avenue
- The BNSF Railroad mainline
- Old Nebraska Highway 2
- The inability to construct grade separated intersections between Broadwell Avenue, old Nebraska Highway 2 and the BNSF railroad mainline.
- Large tract of undeveloped (agricultural ground) that is surrounded by the corporate limits and development considered to be urban and suburban in character.

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.

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 74.9% of the structures meet the criteria of 40 years of age or older.

Substantial number of deteriorating structures

- 91.2% of the structures identified within the Study Area, were deemed to be in a state less than good as defined by the Hall County Assessor's Office.

Deterioration of site or other improvements

- 74.3% of sidewalk was either in a deteriorated state or missing from properties in the area.
- 26.0% of the public streets and alleys were gravel or dirt.
- 60.4% of the streets in the area were showing signs of deterioration.
- 33.8% of the area had rural section (drainage ditches and no curb and gutter)
- 51.4% of the curb and gutter areas were showing signs of deterioration.
- Several properties in the study area have gravel parking areas, deteriorating parking lots, and/or deteriorating driveways.

Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes

- Major highways and carrying capacity
- BNSF railroad
- Intersection of BNSF, Broadwell Avenue, and old Nebraska Highway 2

Improper Subdivision or obsolete platting

Diversity of ownership

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

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

- Unsanitary / Unsafe conditions
- Defective/Inadequate street layouts,

- Faulty lot layout,
- Defective or unusual condition of title,
- 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 339 structures. After researching the structural age on the Hall County Assessor's and Treasurer's websites, the following breakdown was determined:

- 254 (74.9%) units were determined to be less than 40 years of age
- 85 (25.1%) units were determined to be 40 years of age or older

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

Substandard Summary

Nebraska State Statute requires "...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 with the average age of the structures being more than 40 years of age. In addition, the area meets the criteria for the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes.

FINDINGS FOR GRAND ISLAND BLIGHT STUDY AREA #16

Blight Study Area #16 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
- Substantial number of deteriorating structures
- Deterioration of site or other improvements
- Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes
- Improper Subdivision or obsolete platting
- Diversity of ownership
- Combination of factors which are impairing and/or arresting sound growth

Substandard Conditions

- Average age of the structures in the area is at least forty years.
- Existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes.