



City of Grand Island

Tuesday, August 25, 2015

Council Session

Item E-4

Public Hearing on Request to Declare Proposed Area 18 as Blighted and Substandard located between Webb Road on the West, Blaine Street and Custer Avenue on the East, U.S. Highway 30 on the North and 2nd Street on the South (Middleton Electric).

Council action will take place under Resolutions item I-3.

Staff Contact: Chad Nabity

Council Agenda Memo

From: Regional Planning Commission

Meeting: August 25, 2015

Subject: Middleton Electric Blight Study (Proposed Area 18)
C-21-2015GI

Presenter(s): Chad Nabity, Regional Planning Director

Background

Middleton Electric commissioned a Blight and Substandard Study for Proposed Redevelopment Area No. 18 to be prepared by Marvin Planning Associates of David City, Nebraska. The study area includes approximately 115 acres referred to as CRA Area No. 18. The study focused on property located south of U.S. Highway 30 and north of Second Street between Webb Road on the west and Blaine Street on the east in west central Grand Island. (See the attached map) On June 23, 2015, Council referred the attached study to the Planning Commission for its review and recommendation.

The decision on whether to declare an area substandard and blighted is entirely within the jurisdiction of the City Council.

Discussion

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 Council is 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.

Grand Island has 16 areas that have been declared blighted and substandard 3,671 acres. This represents 19.18% of the area of the City. Grand Island can declare up to 35% of its municipal area blighted and substandard. If Council approves the declaration of this area as blighted and substandard 116.5 acres would be added to the blighted and substandard area in Grand Island increasing the percentage by 0.6% to 19.78% well below the 35% limitation.



Figure 1 Redevelopment Area 18

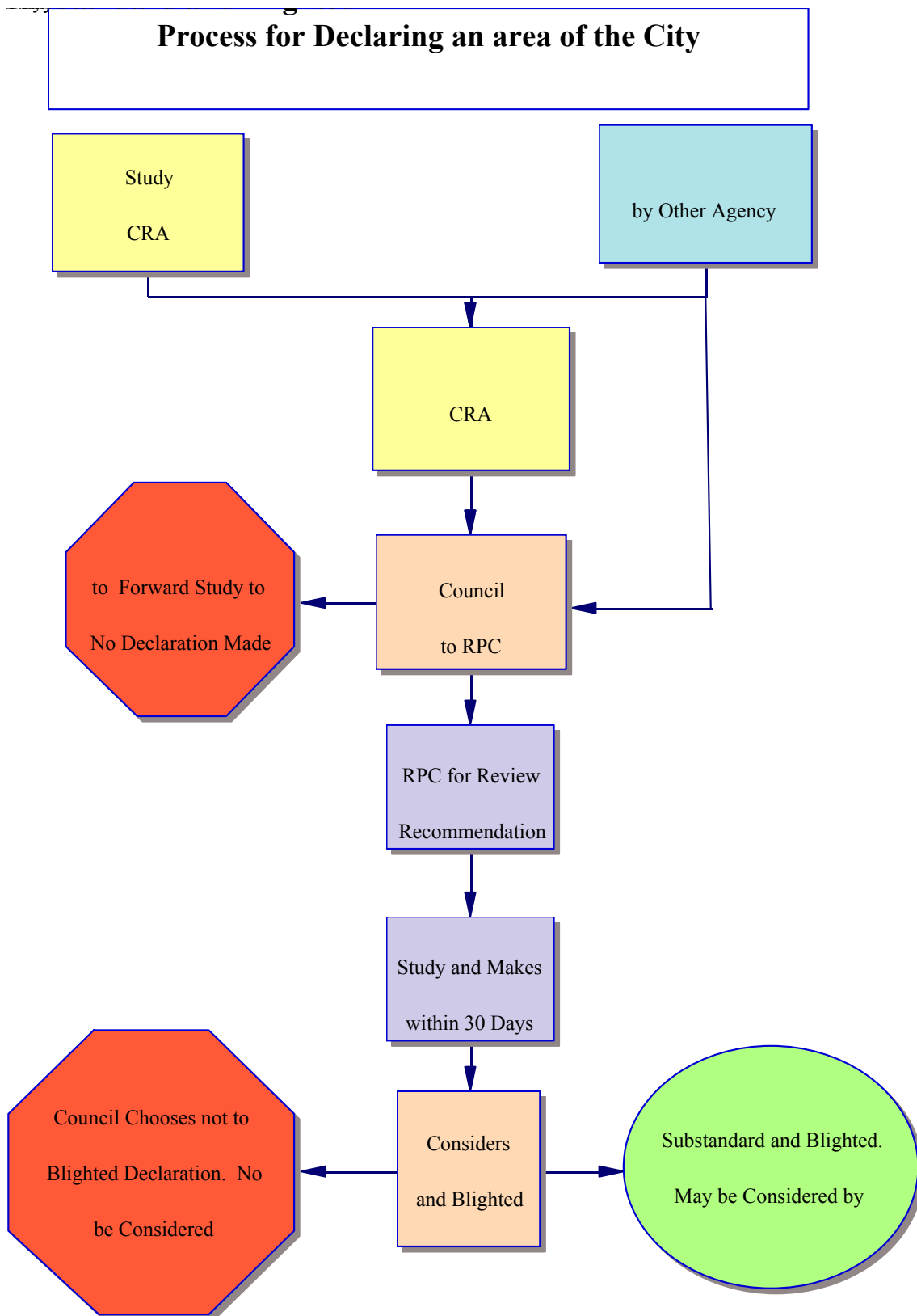


Figure 2 Blight Declaration Process (Planning Commission Recommendation is the second purple box).

Substandard and Blighted Declaration vs. Redevelopment Plan



- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 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? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">● 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

It is appropriate for the Council in conducting its review and considering its decision regarding the substandard and blighted designation to:

1. review the study,
2. take testimony from interested parties,
3. review the recommendation and findings of fact identified by the Planning Commission (Planning Commission did not identify any findings with their motion so none are available.)
4. make findings of fact, and
5. include those findings of fact as part of its motion to approve or deny the request to declare this area blighted and substandard. Council can make any findings they choose regarding the study and the information presented during the public hearing to support the decision of the Council members regarding this matter.

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-Blight and Substandard Study

The following findings are copied directly from the Study. The analysis of the substandard and blighted factors is conducted on pages 5 to 16 of the study.

FINDINGS FOR GRAND ISLAND

Study Area 18 has several items contributing to the Blight and Substandard Conditions. These conditions include:

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 54.9% of the structures meet the criteria of 40 years of age or older.
- **Substantial number of deteriorating structures**
 - Within the study area 68.75% of the structures were deemed to be in a deteriorated state or worse.
- **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 on 100% 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 58% 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
 - Stormwater catchment west of study area is a contributing factor
 - Unsecured materials storage
 - Standing water
 - Vacant property
- **Improper Subdivision or obsolete platting**
 - The layouts of lots in the study area are not conducive to directing quality development layouts as can be seen throughout the study area.
- **Diversity of Ownership**
 - Within the Study Area, 44 properties lots are owned by 26 different property owners.
- **Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes**
 - The proximity of the stormwater catchment
 - Unsecured materials
 - Lack of sidewalk within the Study Area
 - Existence of two grain facilities
- **Combination of factors which are impairing and/or arresting sound growth**
 - US Highway 30
 - 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:

- 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 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 #18

Blight Study Area #18 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 deteriorated or deteriorating structures
- Deterioration of site or other improvements
- Faulty Lot Layout
- Insanitary and Unsafe Conditions
- Improper Subdivision or Obsolete Platting
- 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

Based on the study these areas meet the thresholds to qualify as blighted and substandard.

Tax increment financing would potentially be available for redevelopment projects on any of the property included in the study.

Recommendation

Staff recommends considering the following questions as a starting point in the analysis of this Study and in making a determination. The City Council is ultimately responsible for answering the question of whether the property included in the study is blighted and substandard **and** whether making such a designation is in the **best interest** of the City.

Recommend Questions for City Council

- Does this property meet the statutory requirements to be considered blighted and substandard? (See the prior statutory references.)
- 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 development of adjacent property necessary to eliminate blighted and substandard conditions in the area?
- Is public intervention appropriate and/or necessary for the redevelopment of the area?
- Will a blight declaration increase the likelihood of development/redevelopment in the near future and is that in the best interest of the City?

- What is the policy of the City toward increasing development and redevelopment in this area of the City?

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. All of the testimony, a copy of the study and this memo along with any other information presented at the hearing should be entered into the record of the hearing.

Planning Commission Recommendation

The Planning Commission held a Public Hearing on this proposal at their meeting on August 12, 2015. O'Neill opened the Public Hearing.

Nabity reviewed the Blight Study.

The blighted and substandard criteria included more than half of the buildings in the area being more than 40 years old and in deteriorating condition, a lack of sidewalks, challenging lot sizes brought out primarily because of the Union Pacific Railroad line that bisects the study area, a stagnant population, and lots of standing water and drainage problems.

It was the drainage problems and shallow utilities that the commission really focused on because they create challenges for any type of redevelopment or new development. The land is very flat with little to no outlet for storm water.

"There are some complications here that ... if there's any redevelopment done, it may take some additional engineering to do, which is another potential reason why this area could be looked at as being blighted and substandard," said Keith Marvin of Marvin Planning Consultants.

Depue said his client has a redevelopment intent, but it can't be fully determined until a blighted and substandard designation is made.

Grand Island developer Ray O'Connor, a member of the Grow Grand Island strategic planning committee, spoke in favor of the blighted and substandard designation. "My concern is the entrance to the community," O'Connor told the commission. "I don't think we've given much consideration to this area."

While the city has developed the South Locust Street entrance and made improvements from the airport and along east Highway 30, little has been done along the west Highway 30 corridor, he said. "I want our community to look good and this would be another avenue ... to put together a real plan to enhance the appearance of Highway 30, old Highway 30, as we come in," O'Connor said.

Ruge said he believed some type of public intervention was needed to help the beautification of the Highway 30 area. His motion to support the blighted and substandard designation passed, but generated a bigger discussion about the impact that improper drainage has on an area.

Commission Chairman Pat O'Neill has raised questions about a water retention cell near Nelson Furniture that has no outlet for storm water. Planning Director Chad Nabity said the furniture store currently owns that water retention cell, but the city will be taking it over in attempts to resolve more drainage issues in that area.

O'Neill closed the Public Hearing.

A motion was made by Ruge and seconded by Bredthauer to approve the proposed Blight Study Area 18. The motion carried with 7 members voting in favor (Bredthauer, Connick, O'Neill, Ruge, Maurer, Robb and Sears) and no member abstaining.

Alternatives

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

1. Move to approve
2. Refer the issue to a Committee
3. Postpone the issue to future date
4. Take no action on the issue

Sample Motion

If Council wishes to approve the designation of this property as blighted and substandard, an action required if Tax Increment Financing is to be used for the redevelopment of properties in this area, a motion should be made to approve the Substandard and Blight Designation for Redevelopment Area No. 18 in Grand Island, Hall County, Nebraska finding the information in the study to be factual and supporting such designation. A resolution authorizing the approval of this study has been prepared for Council consideration.



Grand Island, Nebraska

Blight and Substandard Study - Area 18

Completed on behalf of: Middleton Electric



PURPOSE OF THE BLIGHT AND SUBSTANDARD STUDY

The purpose of completing this Blight and Substandard study is to examine existing conditions within a specific part of Grand Island. This study has been commissioned by the Middleton Electric 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 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 industrial, commercial, and public uses. The portion of the study containing the public uses contains the Hall County Highway Department Shop. This area represents an older industrial area within Grand Island.

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 US HIGHWAY 30 AND S WEBB ROAD; THENCE EASTERLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE OF US HIGHWAY 30 TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE CENTERLINE OF N BLAINE STREET AND BEING THE COMMON POINT OF THE ELEVATED POINT ON US HIGHWAY 30; THENCE SOUTHERLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE OF BLAINE STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE CENTERLINE OF W 2ND STREET; THENCE WESTERLY ALONG SAID CENTERLINE OF W 2ND STREET TO THE INTERSECTION WITH THE CENTERLINE OF S WEBB ROAD; THENCE NORTHERLY TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

Figure 1

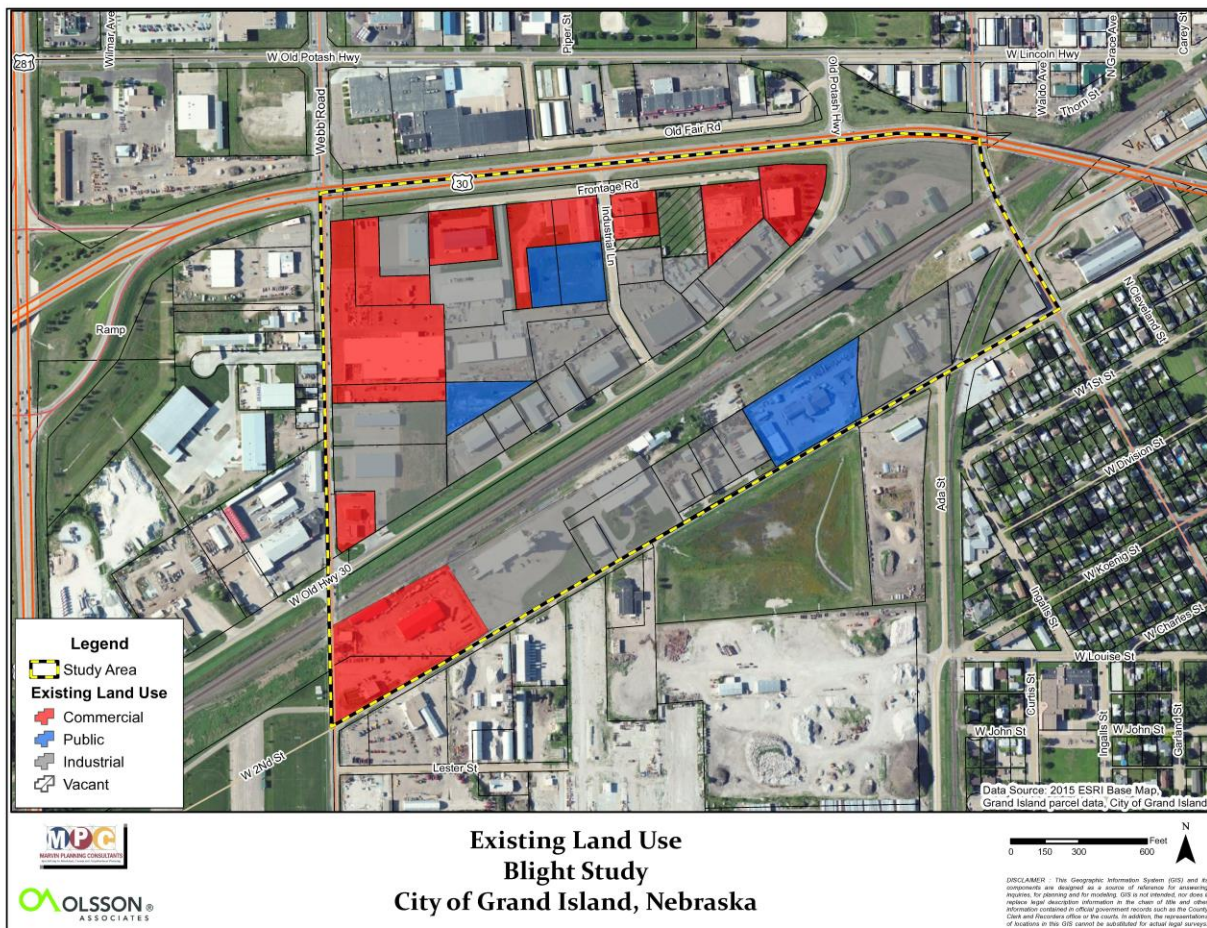
City of Grand Island, Nebraska • June 2015

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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	22.46	19.9%	19.6%
Industrial	46.64	41.3%	40.7%
Quasi-Public/Public	6.69	5.9%	5.8%
Parks/Recreation	0	0.0%	0.0%
Transportation	37.25	33.0%	32.5%
Total Developed Land	113.04	100.0%	
Vacant/Agriculture	1.61		1.4%
Total Area	114.65		100.0%

Source: 2015 Grand Island Blight Study Area 18, Marvin Planning Consultants

Figure 2
Existing Land Use Map



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants, 2015

FINDINGS OF BLIGHT AND SUBSTANDARD CONDITIONS ELIGIBILITY STUDY

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

CONTRIBUTING FACTORS

There were a number of conditions 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 not present.

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

- 28 (54.9%) units were determined to be 40 years of age or older
- 23 (45.1%) 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, 2015

Structural Conditions

Structural conditions were evaluated, structures were either rated as: Very Good, Good, Average, 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. The buildings located on railroad right-of-way and the Hall County Yard were evaluated by the planning team.

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

- 5 (7.8%) structures rated as very good
- 15 (23.4%) structures rated as good
- 32 (50.0%) structures rated as average
- 12 (18.75%) 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 the 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, 2015

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 19,950 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:

- 180 (0.9%) lineal feet of adequate sidewalk
- 0 (0.0%) lineal feet of deteriorating sidewalk
- 19,750 (99.1%) lineal feet of no sidewalk.

There are almost no sidewalks present within the study area accessible to pedestrian traffic. Considering the uses along Webb Road, Old Highway 30, Blaine Street and 2nd Street there should be sidewalk in place. The only place sidewalk exists is in front of the car wash along the service road along US Highway 30.

In addition to the missing sidewalk indicated in Figure 5, there are other locations where sidewalk is missing, specifically along US Highways 30. These areas are included in the totals, but city and state policies are not to encourage walking and biking along major highways.

Curb and Gutter

Curb and Gutters have a number of direct and indirect roles in neighborhoods. Their primary functions is to be a barrier to collect and direct 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 sidewalks. The curb and gutter were graded as either adequate, deteriorating, dilapidated, or missing.

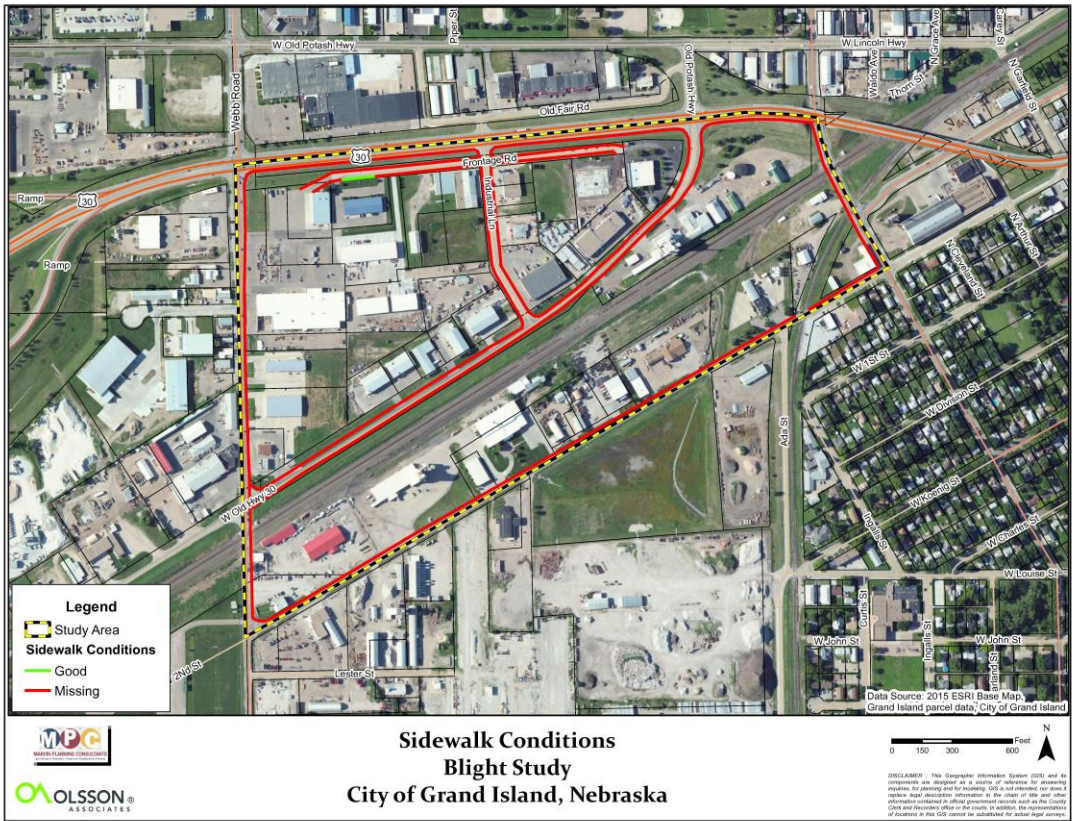
Within the study area there is approximately 19,950 lineal feet of curb and gutter possible. After reviewing the conditions in the field, the following is how the curb and gutter conditions breakdown within the corporate limits:

- 0 (0.0%) lineal feet of adequate curb and gutter
- 8,375 (42.0%) lineal feet of deteriorating curb and gutter
- 11,575 (58.0%) lineal feet of no curb and gutter or rural section.
- There was no curb and gutter deemed to be dilapidated.

In total, 100% of the curb and gutters are in either a deteriorating state or are missing. See Figure 6 for the locations of these curb and gutter. The area is designed for surface drainage as opposed to underground stormwater piping.

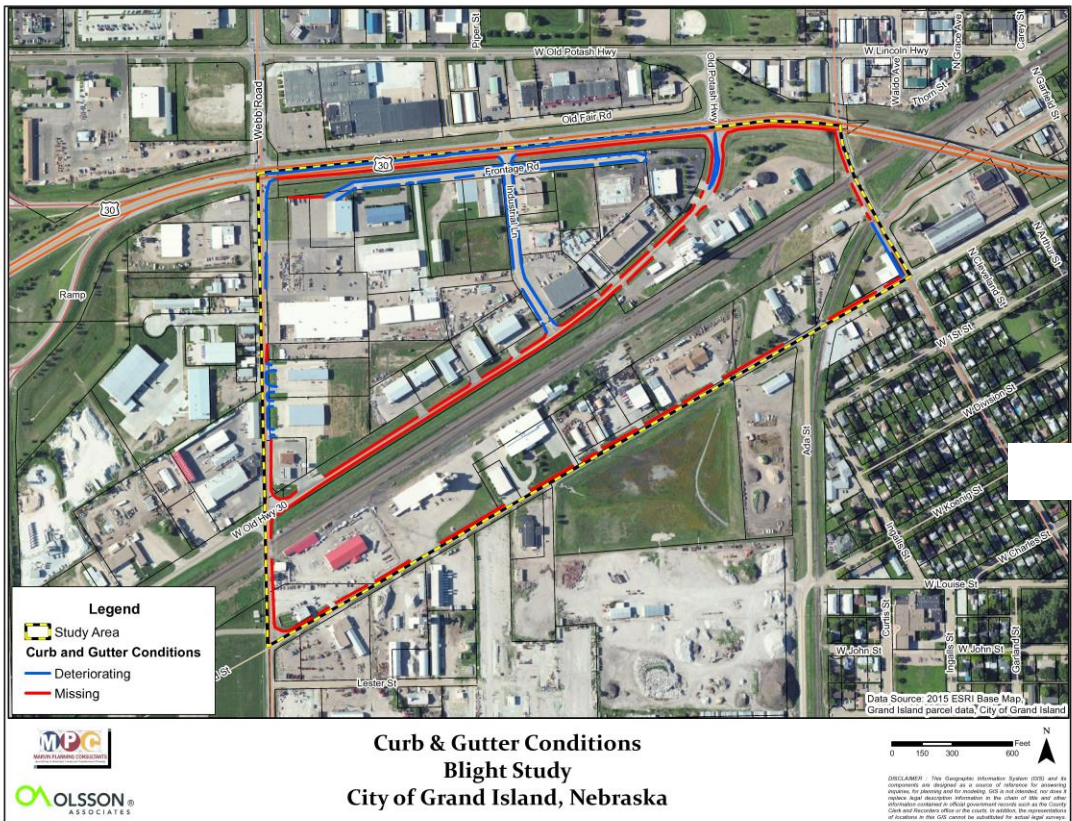
Due to the large amount of deteriorating and missing curb and gutter, the curb and gutter conditions would be a direct contributing factor.

Figure 5
Sidewalk Conditions



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants, 2014

Figure 6
Curb and Gutter Conditions



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 key drainage ways.

Another item of note deals with the actual number of stormwater inlets in the study area. There are a minimal number of stormwater inlets within the entire study area. All of the water, south of US Highway 30 has to surface drain or be absorbed into the soils. Within the study area there is a small stormwater catchment. In addition, along the southern edge of the study area there is a larger stormwater catchment. However, runoff in the study area must find a path along very flat topography to get to the catchments.

The primary way for stormwater runoff to reach the catchment is through a series of ditches along S. Webb Road, US Highway 30, 2nd Street 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 7 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 2nd Street on the south. The most common contour identified on the map is the 1875 contour. There are actually only two other contours in this study area, one is 1880 along the centerline of S. Webb Road and the 1870 contour at the bottom of the small stormwater catchment.

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, curb and gutter conditions.



Standing water during a recent rain event



Standing water during a recent rain event



Standing water within one of the primary drainage routes



Standing water at property entrance along S. Webb Road

Figure 7

Topographic Map of Study Area



Source: City of Grand Island (topographic map) and Marvin Planning Consultants

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 8 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.

Figure 8

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Site Improvement Conditions



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants 2015

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. These sites are spread around the Union Pacific Railroad corridor.

Figure 9 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 be undesirable or overcrowded with building in the future; in some cases these lots are already overcrowded.



Figure 9: Small Lot Sizes

Source: Marvin Planning Consultants

Adequacy of the Lots

Based upon the discussion regarding lot size and shape above, the lots in Figure 9 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 appear to have fit their different structures onto the site with a shoe horn; movement on these sites are 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 study area currently does not appear to be an issue. However, there could be two very different issues arise in the future.

Several of the lots are currently tied to a business with direct access to major thoroughfares. However, if these lots were ever sold off, it would create a condition of land locked lots. Figure 10 above indicates those landlocked lots.



Figure 10: Accessibility

Source: Marvin Planning Consultants



Figure 11: Improper Subdivision

Source: Marvin Planning Consultants

Improper Subdivision or obsolete platting

Improper subdivision or obsolete platting is another blighting condition found in the study area. Figure 11 identifies a number of irregularly shaped lots throughout the area. If this area were to be platted under the current process, it is likely these lot configurations would not occur or be approved.

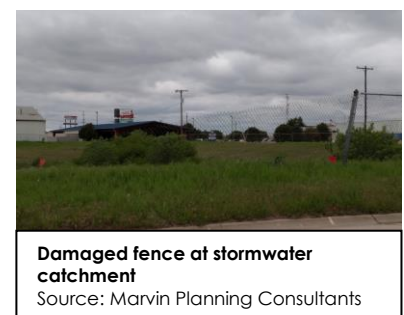
In addition, Figure 11 indicates an area along the south side of the Union Pacific Railroad corridor. This area is one large lot with multiple uses leasing ground from the railroad. Each of these uses should be contained on their own individual lots. Finally, this same condition occurs along the northside of the corridor where the Aurora COOP facility is located.

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.

Stormwater Catchment

The topography found in Grand Island creates the need for unique engineering solutions to catch, store, and release stormwater. Within the center of the study there is a stormwater catchment facility. This catchment could be considered an unsafe condition contributing to the potential blighted and substandard conditions of the area. This catchment is deep and is designed to handle a massive amount of water; however, the security measures have been compromised due to a damaged fence along Industrial Lane.



Damaged fence at stormwater catchment

Source: Marvin Planning Consultants

In addition, there is one additional stormwater catchment on the south side of W. 2nd Street. This catchment area is not in the study area but is adjacent to the area and is considered a contributing factor. The catchment along W. 2nd Street is much larger in size than the one within the study area.

Unsecured Areas

The field investigation of this study area identified two major areas where materials are stored and are not secure. One is the area to the west and north of Love Signs. Love Signs has several older signs and parts stored in an open area without any security fencing. Considering the sheet metal and other materials used for their product, these materials can be dangerous if someone were to wander into this area unauthorized.

The second area is north and east of the Love Signs location, an area according to the Hall County Assessors

site, operated as the Storage Warehouse. The facility has a considerable amount of materials stored outside. Portions of this area are protected by fencing materials but the entry to the site along Industrial Lane is open to the public through an uncontrolled access point. This provides access to the area and could create a dangerous condition.

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.

Vacant Property

During the field analysis, an interesting observation was made. Along S. Webb Road, there are two newer strip style buildings, both of which appear to be predominately vacant. In addition the property (parking) around the facilities is in a stated of considerable disrepair. This is an interesting situation which is having an overall negative impact on the west edge of 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 26 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:

- Unsecured materials
- The proximity of the unsecured stormwater catchment
- The Union Pacific Railroad corridor is unsecured and enables someone to walk along the tracks of one of busiest railroad corridors in the United States
- Standing water
- The existence of two grain facilities located in the heart of Grand Island's industrial corridor and in close proximity to the busiest commercial area in the community.



Unsecured materials

Source: Google Earth August 2013 aerial



Photograph from Old US Highway 30

Source: Marvin Planning Consultants



Second unsecured property

Source: Google Earth August 2013 aerial

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:

- Even though the existence of US Highway 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 directly in the middle 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 54.9% of the structures meet the criteria of 40 years of age or older.
- **Substantial number of deteriorating structures**
 - Within the study area 68.75% of the structures were deemed to be in a deteriorated state or worse.
- **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 on 100% 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 58% 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
 - Stormwater catchment west of study area is a contributing factor
 - Unsecured materials storage
 - Standing water
 - Vacant property
- **Improper Subdivision or obsolete platting**
 - The layout of lots in the study area are not conducive to directing quality development layouts as can be seen throughout the study area.
- **Diversity of Ownership**
 - Within the Study Area, 44 properties lots are owned by 26 different property owners.

- **Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes**
 - The proximity of the stormwater catchment
 - Unsecured materials
 - Lack of sidewalk within the Study Area
 - Existence of two grain facilities
- **Combination of factors which are impairing and/or arresting sound growth**
 - US Highway 30
 - 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:

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

- 28 (54.9%) units were determined to be more than 40 years of age
- 23 (45.1%) units were determined to be less than 40 years of age

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 proximity of the stormwater catchment
- Unsecured materials
- Lack of sidewalk within the Study Area
- Existence of two grain facilities

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 #18

Blight Study Area #18 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 deteriorated or deteriorating structures**
- **Deterioration of site or other improvements**
- **Faulty Lot Layout**
- **Insanitary and Unsafe Conditions**
- **Improper Subdivision or Obsolete Platting**
- **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