

City of Grand Island, NE  
Blight and Substandard Study  
Area #35  
November 2021

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## **PURPOSE OF THE BLIGHT AND SUBSTANDARD STUDY**

The purpose of completing this Blight and Substandard study is to examine existing conditions within Study Area 35 of the City of Grand Island. This study has been commissioned by Grand Island Public Schools to analyze the possibility of declaring the area as blighted and substandard within this specific study area.

The Hall County Regional Planning Commission and Grand Island City Council, 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 the Community Development Law, 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 enterprises. The governing body of a city shall give consideration to this objective in exercising its powers under the Community Development Law, 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 of land and the use and occupancy of buildings and improvements, the disposition of any property acquired, and the 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; disaster assistance; effect. 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.”*

*“Notwithstanding any other provisions of the Community Development Law, where the local governing body certifies that an area is in need of redevelopment or rehabilitation as a result of flood, fire, hurricane, earthquake, storm, or other catastrophe respecting which the Governor of the state has certified the need for disaster assistance under federal law, the local governing body may approve a redevelopment plan and a redevelopment project with respect to such area without regard to the provisions of the Community Development Law requiring a general plan for the municipality and notice and public hearing or findings other than herein set forth.”*

Based on the Nebraska Revised Statutes §18-2103 the following definitions shall apply:

**“Blighted area** means an area (a) which, 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. A redevelopment project involving a formerly used defense site as authorized under section 18-2123.01 shall not count towards the percentage limitations contained in this subdivision;"

**“Extremely blighted area** means a substandard and blighted area in which: (a) The average rate of unemployment in the area during the period covered by the most recent federal decennial census is at least two hundred percent of the average rate of unemployment in the state during the same period; and (b) the average poverty rate in the area exceeds twenty percent for the total federal census tract or tracts or federal census block group or block groups in the area;"

**“Substandard area** 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; and"

**“Workforce housing** means:

- (a) Housing that meets the needs of today's working families;
- (b) Housing that is attractive to new residents considering relocation to a rural community;
- (c) Owner-occupied housing units that cost not more than two hundred seventy-five thousand dollars to construct or rental housing units that cost not more than two hundred thousand dollars per unit to construct. For purposes of this subdivision (c), housing unit costs shall be updated annually by the Department of Economic Development based upon the most recent increase or decrease in the Producer Price Index for all commodities, published by the United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics;
- (d) Owner-occupied and rental housing units for which the cost to substantially rehabilitate exceeds fifty percent of a unit's assessed value; and
- (e) Upper-story housing."

This Blight and Substandard Study is only for a portion of the corporate limits of the city which has not previously been so designated. The 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 and as allowed under Chapter 18,

Section 2123.01. 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. A Redevelopment Plan to be submitted in the future 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**

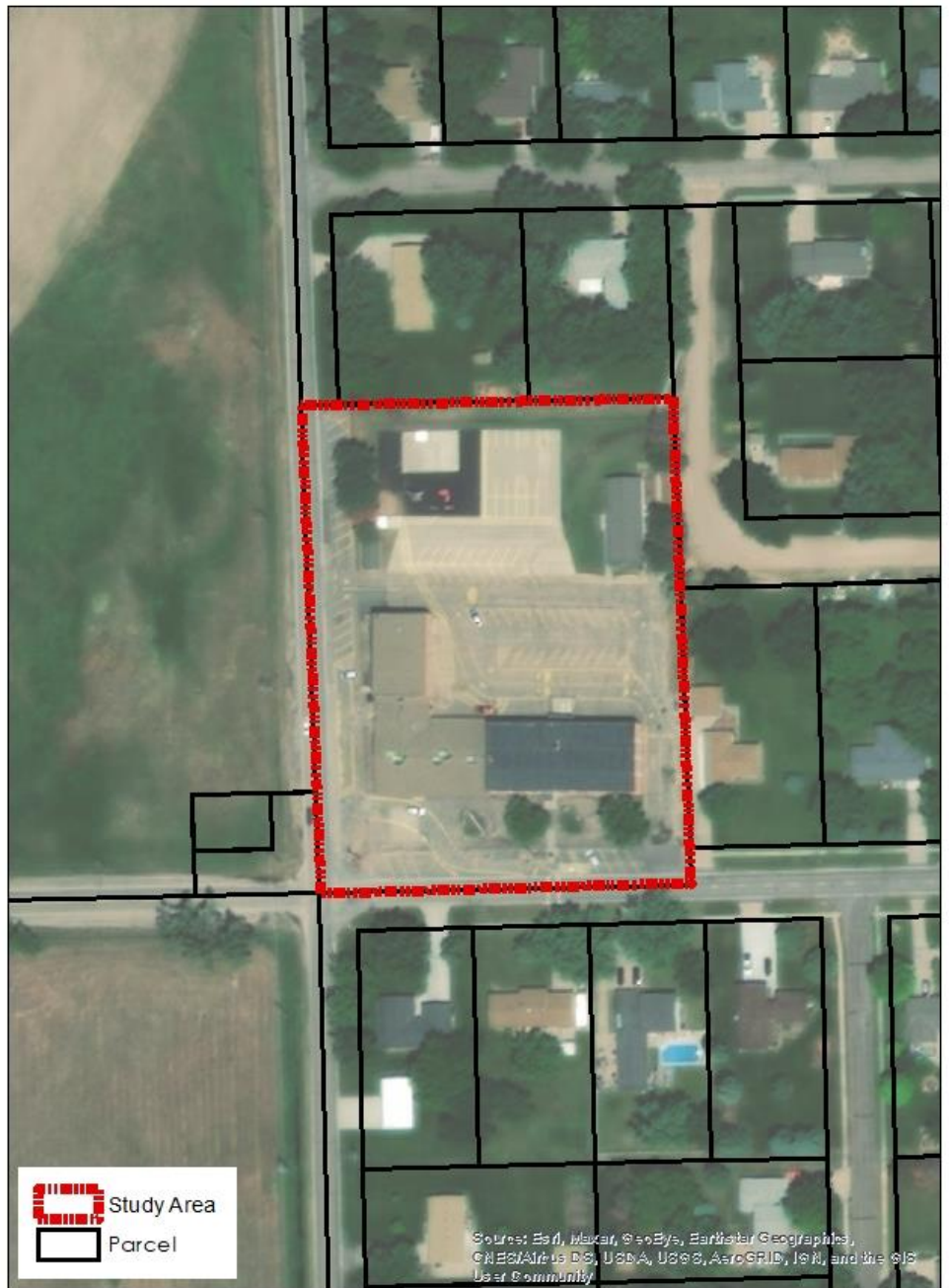
The study area is indicated in Figure 1 of this report. The existing use is Public.

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 is intended to redevelop and improve areas of the community. 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 the City of Grand Island.

Point of beginning (POB) is the intersection of the centerlines of Engelman Rd N and Capital Ave W going northerly along the centerline of Engelman Rd N to the extended north property line of a tract referred to as Miscellaneous Tracts 2-11-10 to City of Grand Island Pt W ½ SW ¼ 2 AC; thence easterly along the northern property line of said lot continuing to the northeast corner of said lot; thence southerly along the eastern property line of said lot continuing to the centerline of Capital Ave W; thence westerly along the centerline of Capital Ave W continuing to the POB, +/- 3.4 acres.

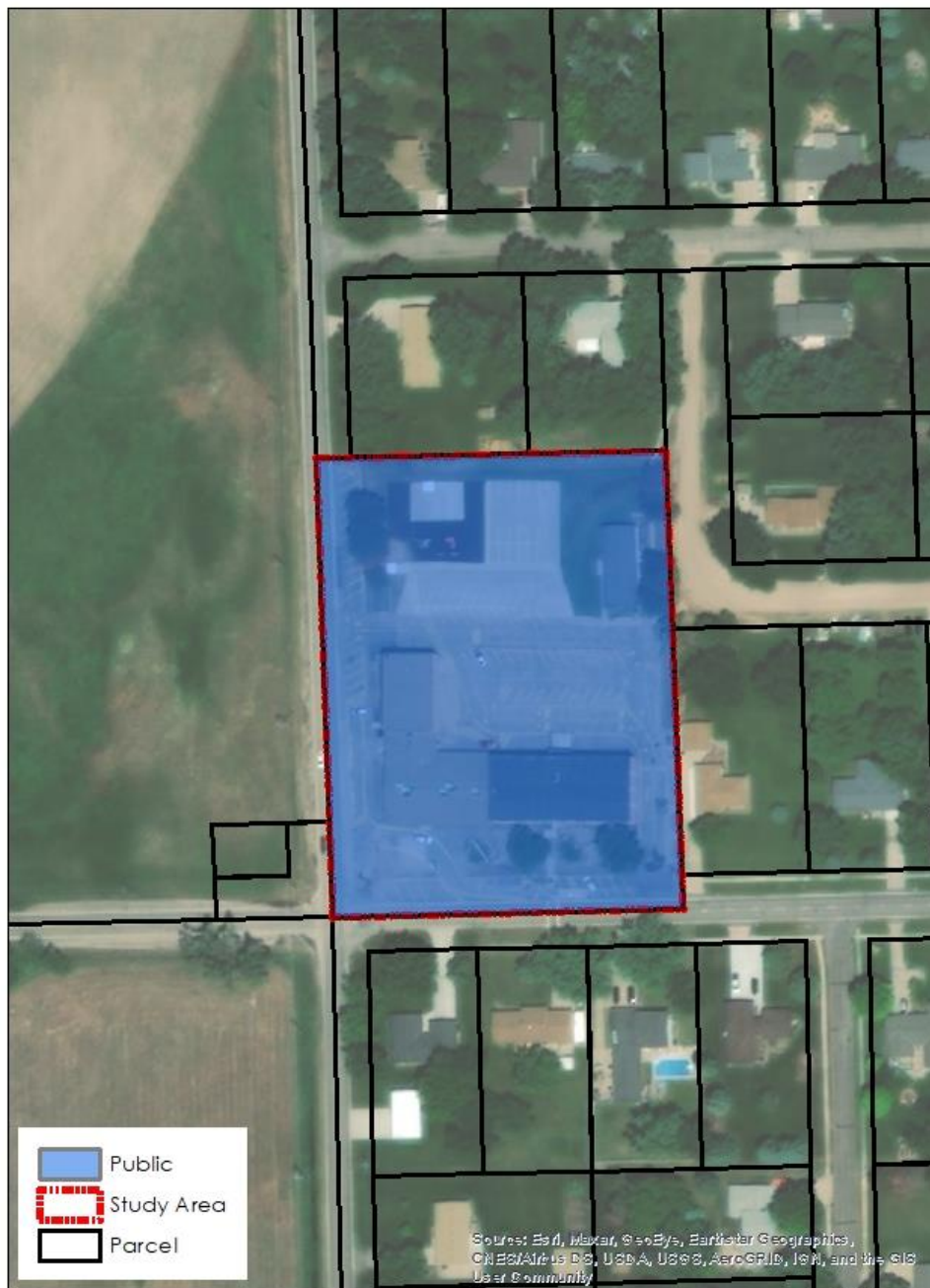
**Figure 1**  
**Study Area Map**



Blight Study - Study Area  
Grand Island, Nebraska



Figure 2  
Existing Land Use Map



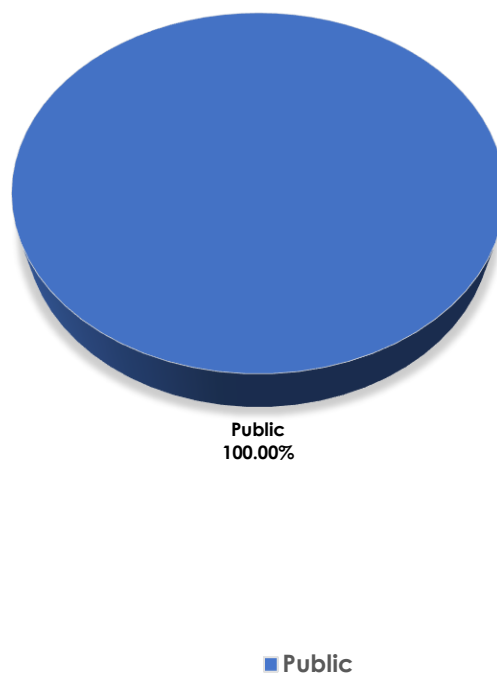
Blight Study - Land Use  
Grand Island, Nebraska



### **EXISTING LAND USE**

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 either benefitting or detracting 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.

**FIGURE 3: EXISTING LAND USE, Study Area 35 – 2021**



Source: Marvin Planning Consultants 2021

### ***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 the tract in the study area. These data from the survey are analyzed in the following paragraphs. Figure 3 shows the only use present in the study area is Public.

### **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. These conditions will be reviewed in detail, on the following pages, while some of the statutory conditions are not present.

#### ***Structural Conditions***

Structural conditions were evaluated, structures were either rated as: Excellent, Very Good, Above Normal, Normal, Below Normal, Poor, or Very Poor. The data and rating system come from the Hall

County Assessor's database and is the same database used to value properties in the area. According to the data there are three different structures making up the facility.

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

- **0 (0.00%) structure rated as Excellent**
- **0 (0.00%) structure rated as Very Good**
- **0 (0.00 %) structures rated as Above Normal**
- **0 (0.00%) structures rated Normal**
- **3 (100.00%) structures rated Below Normal**
- **0 (0.00%) structure rated Poor**
- **0 (0.00%) structure rated as Very Poor**

Based upon these data, an assumption has been made that normal condition and less would constitute the possibility of some or considerable deterioration. It is common for older structures to need more maintenance and upkeep to maintain a good or higher condition. Even a structure rated as normal will show some signs of deteriorating which in turn can become a dilapidated structure in the future if it is not addressed over time. Overall, 100.0% of the structures in this study area are considered as Below Normal.

Due to the stated conditions found in the field analysis, the condition of the structures is a contributing factor. See photos 1 – 13 below.



**Photo 1**



**Photo 2**



**Photo 5**



**Photo 4**



**Photo 3**





**Photo 11**



**Photo 10**



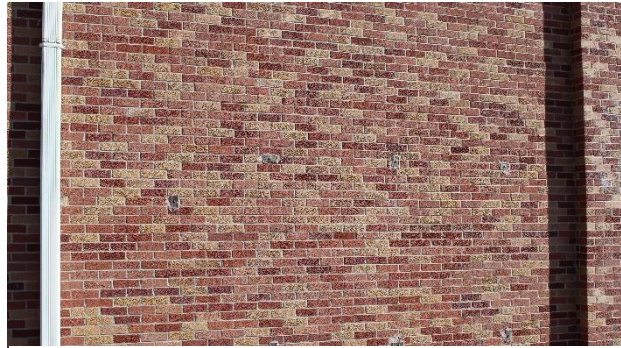
**Photo 8**



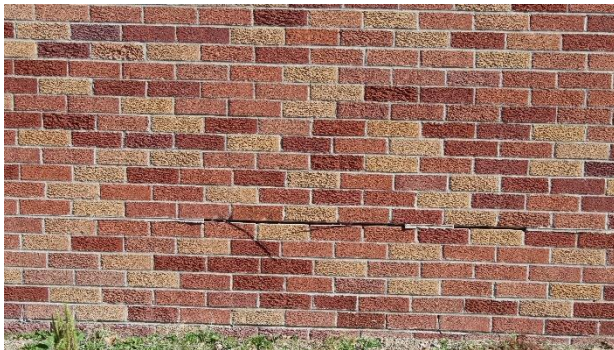
**Photo 9**



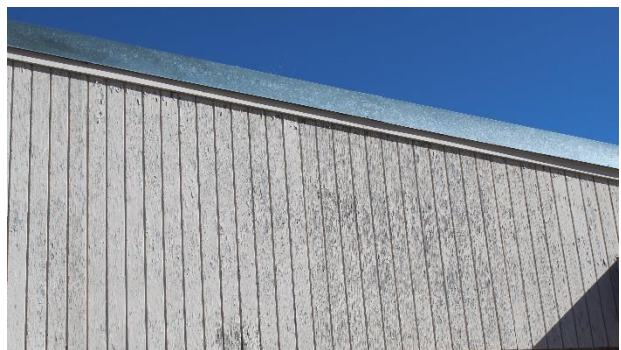
**Photo 7**



**Photo 6**



**Photo 12**



**Photo 13**

**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 heavily traveled streets.

The sidewalk conditions analyzed in the Study Area were rated on five categories: Excellent, Good, Average, Fair, and Poor or Missing.

Within the study area there is approximately 710 lineal feet or 0.13 miles 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 (0.00%) lineal feet of Excellent sidewalk**
- **0 (0.00%) lineal feet of Good sidewalk**
- **0 (0.00%) lineal feet of Average sidewalk**
- **0 (0.00%) lineal feet of Fair sidewalk**
- **721 (100.0%) lineal feet of Poor or Missing sidewalk**

There is no sidewalk present in the study area. Sidewalk is critical to the overall pedestrian movement of an area long-term. Even sidewalk constructed, which at present there is none, will eventually connect to several portions of the community. Because 100.0% of the area is missing sidewalk, sidewalks are considered a direct contributing factor. See photo 14 and 15 below for areas where sidewalk could be located but is not.

**Photo 14****Photo 15**

**Figure 4**  
**Structural Conditions**



Blight Study - Structural Conditions  
Grand Island, Nebraska



0 0.025 0.05  
Miles



Figure 5  
Sidewalk Conditions



Blight Study - Sidewalk Conditions  
Grand Island, Nebraska



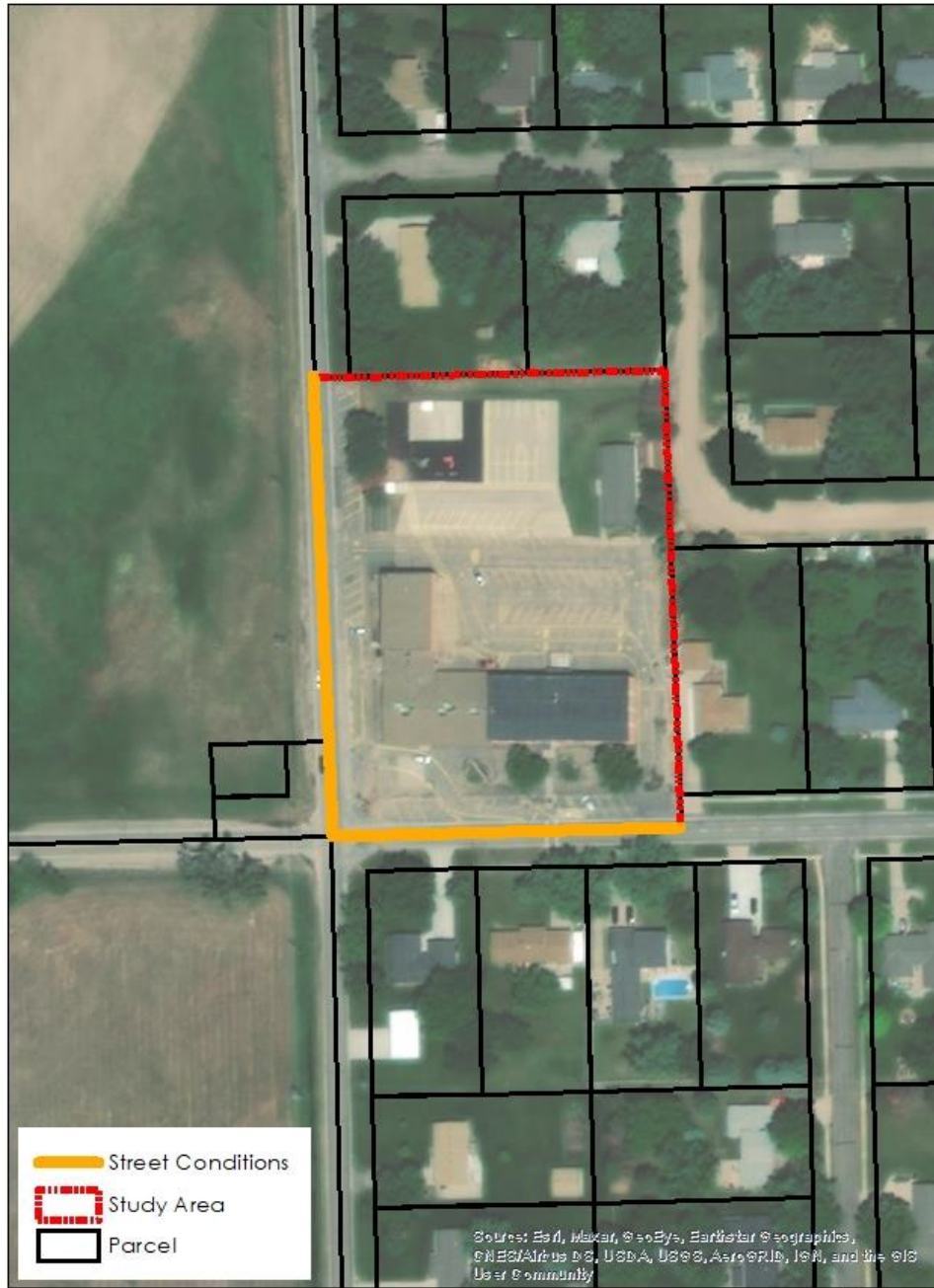
**Figure 6**  
**Curb and Gutter Conditions**



Blight Study - Curb and Gutter Conditions  
Grand Island, Nebraska



Figure 7  
Street Conditions



Blight Study - Street Conditions  
Grand Island, Nebraska



### **Curb and Gutter**

Curb and Gutters have a number of direct and indirect roles in communities. Their primary function 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 Excellent, Good, Average, Fair, and Poor or Missing.

Within the study area there is approximately 735 lineal feet of curb and gutter possible. After reviewing the conditions in the field, the following is how the curb and gutter conditions break down within the corporate limits:

- **0 (0.0%) lineal feet of Excellent curb and gutter**
- **0 (0.00%) lineal feet of Good curb and gutter**
- **0 (0.00%) lineal feet of Average curb and gutter**
- **0 (0.00%) lineal feet of Fair curb and gutter**
- **735 (100.0%) lineal feet of Poor or Missing 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.

### **Streets**

Streets within a community are essential to moving people and vehicles from place to place. Their condition and construction have an impact on the appearance of a community, which leads directly to how a community is perceived by the outside world.

Within the study area there is approximately 760 lineal feet or 0.14 miles of street possible. After reviewing the conditions in the field, the following is how the street conditions breakdown within the corporate limits:

- **0 (0.0%) lineal feet of Excellent street**
- **0 (0.0%) lineal feet of Good street**
- **760 (100.0%) lineal feet of Average street**
- **0 (0.00%) lineal feet of Fair street**
- **0 (0.00%) lineal feet of Poor street**

Within the study area Engelman Rd N and Capital Ave are both paved. The streets in the study area appear to have been paved in some sort of asphaltic material or armor coated. The streets in the study area are both average. See photos 16 and 17 below to see street conditions.



**Photo 16**



**Photo 17**

**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 data provided by the Director of Buildings and Grounds for Grand Island Public Schools.

**TABLE 1: AVERAGE STRUCTURAL AGE, BY METHOD – 2021**

Number	Year	Age	Cumulative
1	1960	61	65
1	1962	59	120
1	1967	54	174
<b>3</b>			<b>359</b>
			<b>58.0</b>

Source: Hall County Assessor's and Marvin Planning Consultants 2021

**Age of Structure**

Within the study area there are three primary structures. After researching the structural age with the Grand Island Public Schools Building and Grounds Department, 3 (100.0%) units were determined to be 40 years of age or older.

However, when examining the age based upon a cumulative approach, as seen in Table 1, the average age of the primary structures is equal to 58.0 years; thus, meeting the requirements of the statutes. The age of the structures would be a direct contributing factor.



**Figure 8**  
**Age of Structures**



Blight Study - Age of Structures  
Grand Island, Nebraska



0 0.025 0.05 Miles



**Blighting Summary**

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

- **Substantial number of deteriorating structures**
  - Within the study area 100.0% of the primary structures were deemed to be in an average condition or worse.
- **Deterioration of site or other improvements**
  - Curb and gutter are missing throughout 100% of the study area.
  - Sidewalks are missing within 100.0% of the entire study area.
  - Streets through the study area were of an average or poorer condition.
- **Insanitary and Unsafe Conditions**
  - Broken glass outside of windows on the structures.
  - Lack of ADA ramp access to the structures.
  - Potholes on walking surface around the structures.
  - Asphalt surface around structures slopes into the structures, leading to potentially poor drainage and or water ponding. Water ponding can be a breeding ground for communicable diseases.



**Photo 18**



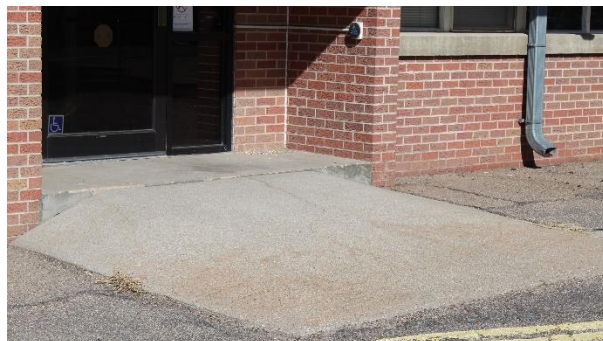
**Photo 19**



**Photo 20**



**Photo 21**



**Photo 22**



**Photo 23**



**Photo 20**

**Criteria under Part B of the Blight Definition**

**The average age of the residential or commercial units in the area is at least forty years.**

- 3 (100.0%) buildings or improvements were determined to be 40 years of age or older.
- The average age based upon a cumulative age calculation is 58.0 years.

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

- Factors Which Are Impairing And/or Arresting Sound Growth
  - Diversity of Ownership
  - Dangerous conditions to life or property due to fire or other causes.
  - Faulty lot layout.
  - Improper subdivision or obsolete platting.
  - Stable or decreasing population based on the last two decennial censuses.
  - 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 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 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.

**TABLE 2: AVERAGE STRUCTURAL AGE, BY METHOD – 2021**

Number	Year	Age	Cumulative
1	1960	61	65
1	1962	59	120
1	1967	54	174
<b>3</b>			<b>359</b>
			<b>58.0</b>

Source: Hall County Assessor's and Marvin Planning Consultants 2021

**Age of Structure**

Within the study area there are three primary structures. After researching the structural age with the Grand Island Public Schools Building and Grounds Department, 3 (100.0%) units were determined to be 40 years of age or older.

However, when examining the age based upon a cumulative approach, as seen in Table 1, the average age of the primary structures is equal to 58.0 years; thus, meeting the requirements of the statutes. The age of the structures would be a direct contributing factor.

### **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;”

Study Area #35 meets the definition of Substandard as defined in the Revised Nebraska State Statutes.

### **FINDINGS FOR BLIGHT AND SUBSTANDARD STUDY AREA #35**

Blight Study Area #35 has several items contributing to the Blight and Substandard Conditions. These conditions include:

#### **Blighted Conditions**

- Substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures.
- Deterioration of site or other improvements.
- Average age of the residential or commercial units in the area is at least 40 years.
- Insanitary and Unsafe Conditions.

#### **Substandard Conditions**

- Average age of the structures in the area is at least forty years.