

2021

City of Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study



JEO Consulting Group, Inc.

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

This Ashland Highway 6 blight and substandard study of the designated study area is intended to give the Community Redevelopment Authority and City Council the basis for considering the existence of blight and substandard conditions within the delineated study area. Through this process, the City of Ashland's Community Redevelopment Authority may employ and exercise the power authorized in Nebraska Community Development Law to eliminate and prevent blighted and substandard conditions that are detrimental to the future public health, safety, morals, and general welfare of the entire community as well as the surrounding region. If the City of Ashland finds and determines, based on substantial evidence in the record before it, that the recommended Blight and Substandard Area (detailed below and referred to herein as "Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area") meets the statutory conditions for an area that is blighted, substandard, and in need of redevelopment, the designated study area will become a Redevelopment Area under the Community Development Law (Neb. Rev. Stat. §§ 18-2101 to 18-2201).

The Redevelopment Plan—the companion document to the Blight and Substandard Study—will contain local objectives regarding appropriate land uses, improved traffic circulation, economic development activities, public transportation, public utilities, and other public improvements, in accordance with the provisions of the Community Development Law.

Background

In 1975, the Nebraska Legislature enacted legislation in response to areas in cities and villages that had become deteriorated and substandard for a variety of reasons. These areas were considered harmful to the social and economic well-being of the entire community in which they existed. Conditions in such areas were considered beyond the remedy and control of the normal regulatory process or impossible to reverse through the ordinary operations of private enterprise. The Community Development Law, as it is known, enables cities and villages to take steps to eliminate blight through the acquisition, clearance, and disposing of property for redevelopment or the conservation and rehabilitation of the property.

Prior to the enactment of the legislation, Nebraska communities were unable to carry out redevelopment programs involving assembly of land for conveyance to private developers without the creation of an urban renewal authority approved by voters. The Community Development Law permits cities of all classes and villages to establish Community Redevelopment Authorities (CRAs) by ordinance. Such authority empowers CRAs to undertake broad urban renewal and municipal growth opportunities through a variety of mechanisms. This law, with subsequent amendments, has been the cornerstone of redevelopment and community development activities in Nebraska.

This blight and substandard study examines existing conditions of land use, buildings, and structures within the designated study area in the City of Ashland to determine its eligibility for redevelopment activities. Potential opportunities for redevelopment exist throughout the designated study area, which would allow the City of Ashland to overcome blighted and substandard conditions and avoid issues that could lead to blight and substandard conditions. When evaluating blight and substandard conditions, the City of Ashland must adhere to Nebraska Community Development Law.

Nebraska Revised State Statutes

The Community Development Law provides guidelines under which municipalities may address concerns and develop strategies for the rehabilitation and redevelopment of deteriorating area, as well as the prevention and elimination of substandard and blighted area. The Legislature has declared, in pertinent part:

It is hereby found and declared that there exist in cities of all classes and villages of this state area which have deteriorated and become substandard and blighted because of the unsafe, insanitary, inadequate, or overcrowded condition of the dwellings therein, or because of inadequate planning of the area, or excessive land coverage by the buildings thereon, or the lack of proper light and air and open space, or because of the defective design and arrangement of the buildings thereon, or faulty street or lot layout, or congested traffic conditions, or economically or socially undesirable land uses...These conditions are beyond remedy and control solely by regulatory process in the exercise of the police power and cannot be dealt with effectively by the ordinary operations of private enterprise without the aids herein provided...It is further found and declared that the prevention and elimination of blight is a matter of state policy, public interest, and statewide concern and within the powers and authority inhering in and reserved to the state, in order that the state and its municipalities shall not continue to be endangered by area which are focal centers of disease, promote juvenile delinquency, and consume an excessive proportion of their revenue. §18-2102

Consistent with these findings, municipalities have been granted the power to address deterioration, substandard conditions, and blight through any number of means, 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.” Neb. Rev. Stat. §18-2104.

Nebraska Revised Statute §18-2104 enables a municipality to declare that blight and substandard conditions exist. The statute reads,

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, 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. §18-2101

The process of improving an area begins with the creation of a municipality-wide workable program for utilizing appropriate private and public resources to address the specific conditions to be improved. Such workable programs may include “provision for the prevention of the spread of blight into area 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 area or portions thereof by re-planning, 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 area or portions thereof.” Neb. Rev. Stat. §18-2105.

The statutes provide a means for the governing body of a municipality to address and develop strategies for rehabilitation and redevelopment of the community. Nebraska Revised Statute §18-2105 also grants authority to the governing body to formulate a redevelopment program. The statute reads,

The governing body of a city or an authority at its direction for the purposes of sections 18-2101 to 18-2144 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 area, 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 area 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 or blighted area 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 area or portions thereof. §18-2105

The main substance of a workable program is an adopted general redevelopment plan for a defined area, as well as the subsequent individual redevelopment projects that identify specific projects within a redevelopment area. Prior to the adoption of a general redevelopment plan, a municipality must have an adopted comprehensive plan (§18-2110) and shall have declared the redevelopment area to be a substandard and blighted area in need of redevelopment (§18-2109).

The important community development terms are defined in Nebraska Revised Statute §18-2103, several of which are shown below (organization and emphasis added):

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;

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 village shall not designate an area larger than one hundred percent of the village as blighted;

Substandard and Blight Eligibility Analysis

Designated Study Area

The designated study area is property partially within the corporate limits for evaluation pursuant to the Community Development Law. The area is a commercial and residential district. The designated study area was selected for a number of reasons, including:

1. The presence of blighted and substandard characteristics within the study area.
2. The potential for private development and redevelopment activities within the study area.
3. The need for improvements in infrastructure due to specific existing conditions.
4. The economical and functional obsolescence of certain properties within the study area.
5. The need for public intervention to stimulate the development and redevelopment of vital infrastructure systems and housing to support these private redevelopment efforts.

Once declared substandard and blighted, the City of Ashland can stimulate and manage future development in this area by creation and use of the redevelopment plan and its statutory authority to provide financial incentives for private development.

Through the redevelopment process, the City of Ashland can guide future development in the community and provide financial incentives for development. The use of the Nebraska Community Redevelopment Law by the City of Ashland is intended to improve the community and enhance the quality of life for all residents by eliminating conditions that contribute to the spread of blight and hinder private reinvestment in the area due to these factors. Using the Nebraska Community Development Law, Ashland can eliminate negative factors and implement programs and/or projects identified to improve conditions, thereby removing, or preventing blight and substandard conditions.

Substandard and Blight Conditions

As set forth in section 18-2103(31), **substandard area** shall mean an area in which there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether nonresidential or residential in character, which by reason of the following:

1. **Dilapidation/deterioration***
Exterior inspection of buildings to note deficiencies (sound, minor, major, dilapidated)
 - Examples include structural (walls, foundation, roof), building systems (gutters, roof surface, chimney), and architectural systems (fire escapes, weatherization, steps, exterior paint, site conditions).
2. **Age or obsolescence**
Estimate age of structures (40+ years criteria)
3. **Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces**
Overall sight conditions
 - Examples include junked cars or debris, cluttered alleyways, antiquated infrastructure systems (overhead power lines), outdoor storage/sanitation facilities, unpaved parking/outdoor storage.
4. **Other substandard conditions**
 - (a) High density of population and overcrowding (census); or
 - (b) The existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes as unsanitary and unsafe conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other natural causes floodplain; or

- (c) Any combination of such factors is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, and crime; is detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare (includes sanitation concerns, inadequate infrastructure systems (sewer, water service mains, storm sewers), poor lighting, crime statistics, floodplain area, outdoor storage, site clutter).

As set forth in the Community Development Law, a **blighted area** shall mean an area, which by reason of the presence of:

1. **A substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures***
Exterior inspection of buildings to note deficiencies (sound, minor, major, dilapidated)
 - Examples include structural (walls, foundation, roof), building systems (gutters, roof surface, chimney), and architectural systems (fire escapes, weatherization, steps, exterior paint, site conditions).
2. **Existence of defective or inadequate street layout**
Condition of streets/inadequate access including sidewalks
 - Examples include street conditions, dead ends, railroad crossings, linear downtown, narrow alleyways, blind crossings, and sidewalk condition.
3. **Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness**
Conditions associated with accessibility/usefulness of the lots
 - Examples include land locked parcels, odd shaped lots, undersized lots, lots with accessibility concerns.
4. **Unsanitary or unsafe conditions**
Conditions which pose a threat to public health and safety
 - Examples include age and physical condition of structures, floodplain, lack of public infrastructure systems, unsanitary conditions, ventilation concerns.
5. **Deterioration of site or other improvements**
Field observation of age and condition of public utilities, debris, and inadequate public improvements
 - Examples include lack of off-street parking, storm drainage, junk cars, dilapidated structures, debris, on-site storage, congested overhead power lines.
6. **Diversity of ownership**
The total number of unduplicated owners
 - Examples include the necessity of to acquire numerous lots is a hindrance to redevelopment. However, land assemblage of larger proportions necessary for major developments, is more economically feasible and will attract financial support, as well as public patronage required to repay such financial support. Such assemblage is difficult without public intervention.
7. **Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land**
Examination of public records to determine the status of taxation of properties
 - Examples include delinquent taxes, real estate taxes, tax exempt.
8. **Defective or unusual conditions of title**
Examine public records to determine any defective or unusual title defects
 - Examples include improper filings, liens, defective titles, etc.

9. **Improper subdivision or obsolete platting**
Examine public records to determine improper subdivision and obsolete platting
 - Examples include undersized lots, improper zoning, lot configuration, easement concerns, never recorded vacated streets, accessibility concerns.
10. **The existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire or other causes**
Examine conditions which endanger life or property
 - Examples include inadequate, undersized, or inoperative public infrastructure systems, floodplain, building materials, site access, on-site storage (cars), secluded area for pests and vermin to thrive, inadequate surface drainage, street/sidewalk conditions, etc.
11. **Any combination of such factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the community, hinders the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability**
Economic and/or socially undesirable land uses
 - Examples include incompatible land uses, economic obsolescence, functional obsolescence which relates to the property's ability to compete in the marketplace.
12. **Is detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare in its present condition and use; and in which there is at least one of the following conditions:**
 - (a) Unemployment in the designated blighted area is at least one hundred twenty percent of the state or national average (Census statistics);
 - (b) The average age of the residential or commercial units in the area is at least 40 years (Field observation);
 - (c) More than half of the plotted and subdivided property in the area is unimproved land that has been within the city for 40 years and has remained unimproved during that time (Public records);
 - (d) The per capita income of the designated blighted area is lower than the average per capita income of the city or village in which the area is designated (Census); or
 - (e) The area has had either stable or decreasing population based on the last two decennial censuses (Census).

*Where structural conditions are evaluated, individual structures are rated in accordance with the following rating schedule as defined by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development: no problem, adequate condition, deteriorating condition, or dilapidated condition. The following descriptions define the rating schedule used to assess and evaluate building and structure conditions:

No Problem

No structural or aesthetic problems are visible.

Adequate Condition

- Slight damage to porches, steps, roofs, etc. is present on the structure,
- Slight wearing away of mortar between bricks, stones, or concrete blocks,
- Small cracks in walls or chimneys,
- Cracked windows,
- Lack of paint, and
- Slight wear on steps, doors, and door and window frames.

Deteriorating Condition

- Holes, open cracks, rotted, loose, or missing materials in parts of the foundation, walls, (up to one-quarter of the wall), or roof (up to one-quarter of roof),
- Shaky, broken, or missing steps or railings,
- Numerous missing and cracked windowpanes,
- Some rotted or loose windows or doors (no longer wind- or water-proof),
- Missing bricks or other masonry of chimney, and
- Makeshift (un-insulated) chimney.

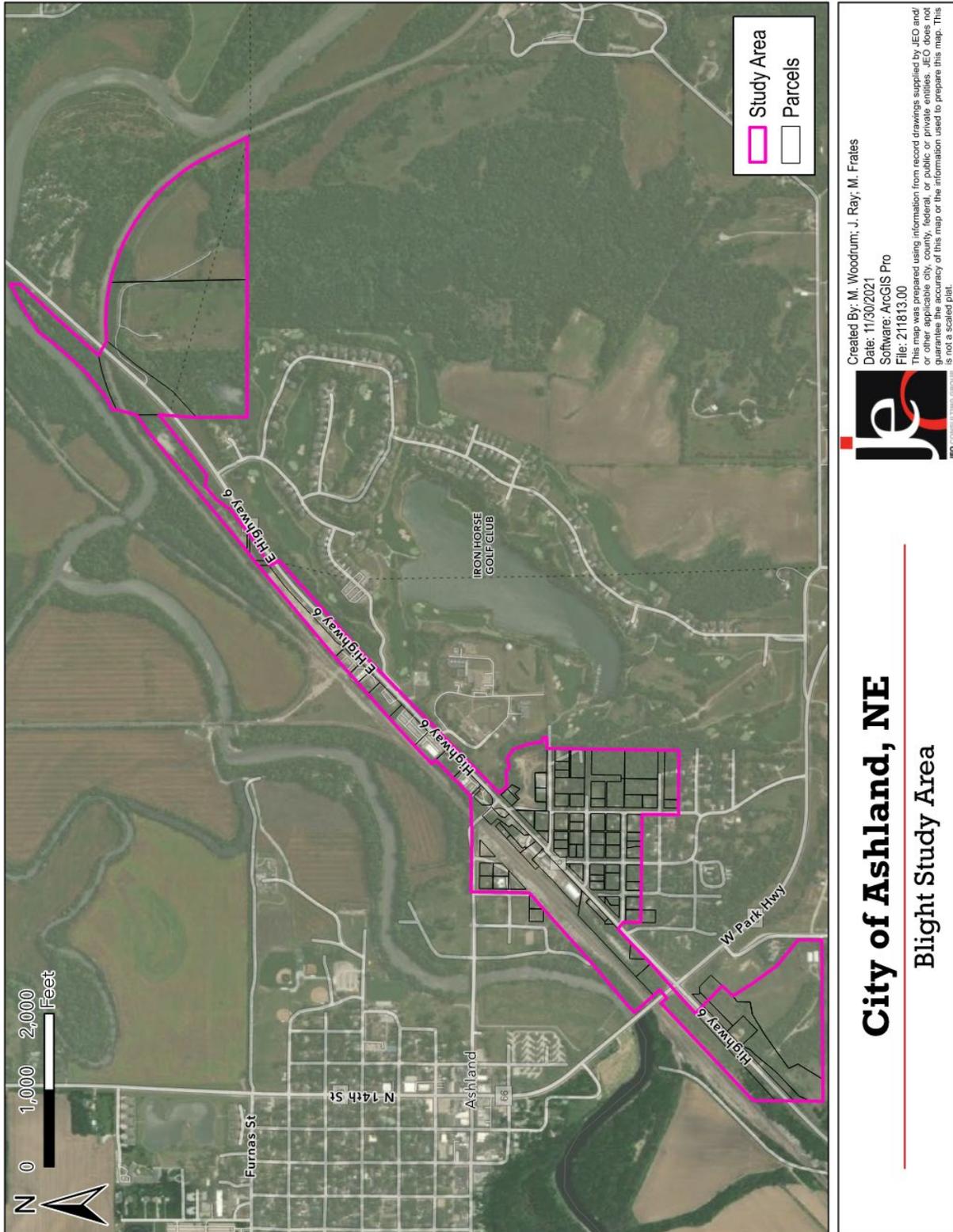
Dilapidated Condition

- Holes, open cracks, or rotted, loose or missing material (siding, shingles, brick, concrete, tiles, plaster, floorboards) over large area of foundation, on walls or on roof,
- Substantial sagging of roof, floors, or walls,
- Extensive damage by fire, flood, or storm, and
- Inadequate original construction such as makeshift walls, roofs made of scrap materials, foundations or floors lacking, or converted barns, sheds, and other structures not adequate for housing.

Designated Study Area

The initial study area as identified can be found in Figure 1. For this study, the initial study area will be known as the “Designated Study Area” which was reviewed for substandard and blight characteristics.

Figure 1: Designated Study Area



Recommended Blight and Substandard Area

Based upon the review of the designated study area, and its context with the community, JEO Consulting Group recommends the designated study area be recommended as a Blight and Substandard Area. This area consists of approximately 206.6 acres. The following parcels and adjacent public right-of-way comprise the Recommended Area that follows.

Parcel Included in the Designated Study Area

| Saunders Co. Parcel ID Number | | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| 003165501 | 004419000 | 004438100 | 004453000 |
| 003165502 | 004419500 | 004438500 | 004453002 |
| 003165503 | 004420000 | 004439000 | 004453005 |
| 003165504 | 004420500 | 004439500 | 004453501 |
| 003166500 | 004421000 | 004440000 | 004453502 |
| 003167500 | 004421500 | 004440500 | 004453503 |
| 003167501 | 004422000 | 004441000 | 004608500 |
| 003168000 | 004422500 | 004441500 | 004609000 |
| 003168001 | 004423000 | 004442000 | 004609500 |
| 003168500 | 004423500 | 004442500 | 004779000 |
| 003170001 | 004424000 | 004443000 | 004779500 |
| 003170500 | 004424500 | 004443500 | 004780000 |
| 003171001 | 004425000 | 004444000 | 004780500 |
| 003171002 | 004425500 | 004444500 | 004781000 |
| 003177000 | 004426000 | 004445000 | 004784000 |
| 003179000 | 004426500 | 004445500 | 004784500 |
| 003179001 | 004427000 | 004447000 | 004785500 |
| 003179002 | 004427500 | 004447500 | 004847000 |
| 003179100 | 004428000 | 004449500 | 004847500 |
| 003182057 | 004428500 | 004450000 | 004848000 |
| 003182058 | 004431500 | 004450500 | 130393648 |
| 003233500 | 004432500 | 004451500 | 130398084 |
| 003235500 | 004437500 | 004452502 | 004448501 |
| 003236000 | 004438000 | 004452503 | -end- |

Findings and Contributing Factors

The intent of this study is to determine whether the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area within the community has experienced structural and site deterioration or if there are other negative factors which are decreasing the development potential for the area. The field survey conducted on Friday, November 12, 2021, indicated the community has such deterioration or lack of municipal infrastructure, thus the community warrants further examination regarding blighted and substandard conditions. The following factors were evaluated to determine if there is a reasonable presence of blight and substandard conditions within the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area.

This section reviews the building and structure conditions, infrastructure, site conditions and land use found within the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area based upon the statutory definitions, planning team observations during the field survey, and explains the identified contributing factors. *Appendix A* provides a visual description and documents examples of the different conditions that led to each factor's determination. See *Appendix A* for a visual description of the erosion, vegetative overgrowth, lack of public infrastructure, deteriorating structures and other observed conditions within the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area.

BLIGHTED CRITERIA CONDITIONS

As set forth in the Nebraska legislation, a **blighted area** shall mean an area, which by reason of the presence of:

Substantial Number of Deteriorated or Deteriorating Structures

As a rule, the primary structure for each parcel within the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area was examined. A total of 26 or 40% of the structures within the designated study area were graded as deteriorating. Figure 2 illustrated the structural ratings within the study area. This is considered a significant contributing factor.

Defective or Inadequate Street Layout

Street Conditions and Accessibility

Street conditions and accessibility within the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area were evaluated in relation to the provision of safe and efficient public circulation and access, and with regard to ease of travel and appearance. The noted deficiencies are: missing portions or incomplete Streets; and the vast majority of the sidewalks in the area are missing or were graded poor. The transportation infrastructure conditions are illustrated on Figure 3.

Overall, the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area has limited connectivity with the adjacent street grid. Streets with dead-end at the subject study area and private drives extended in the ROW for site access. Due to the lack of connectivity and sidewalks, this is considered a contributing factor.

Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness

Throughout the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area, the lot sizes and shapes vary. Some lots are too large and need additional subdivision; while some are odd shaped or have limited use due to lot depth. In addition, a portion of the area lacked infrastructure improvements for accessibility and usefulness. Overall, this factor is considered to be contributing to the recommended blight designation.

Unsanitary or unsafe conditions

Conditions which pose a threat to public health and safety

Topography and terrain

The Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area has a variety of topography that drains to the low-lying water courses in the study area. The area lacks complete subterranean storm drainage system

Vegetation Overgrowth and Debris

There is significant tree, brush, and weed overgrowth in the vacant areas of the study area. Debris piles or junked cars were noted in the field analysis on seven properties. This can contribute to harboring rodents and vermin as well as pose a potential fire danger during drought or dry spells.

Sidewalks

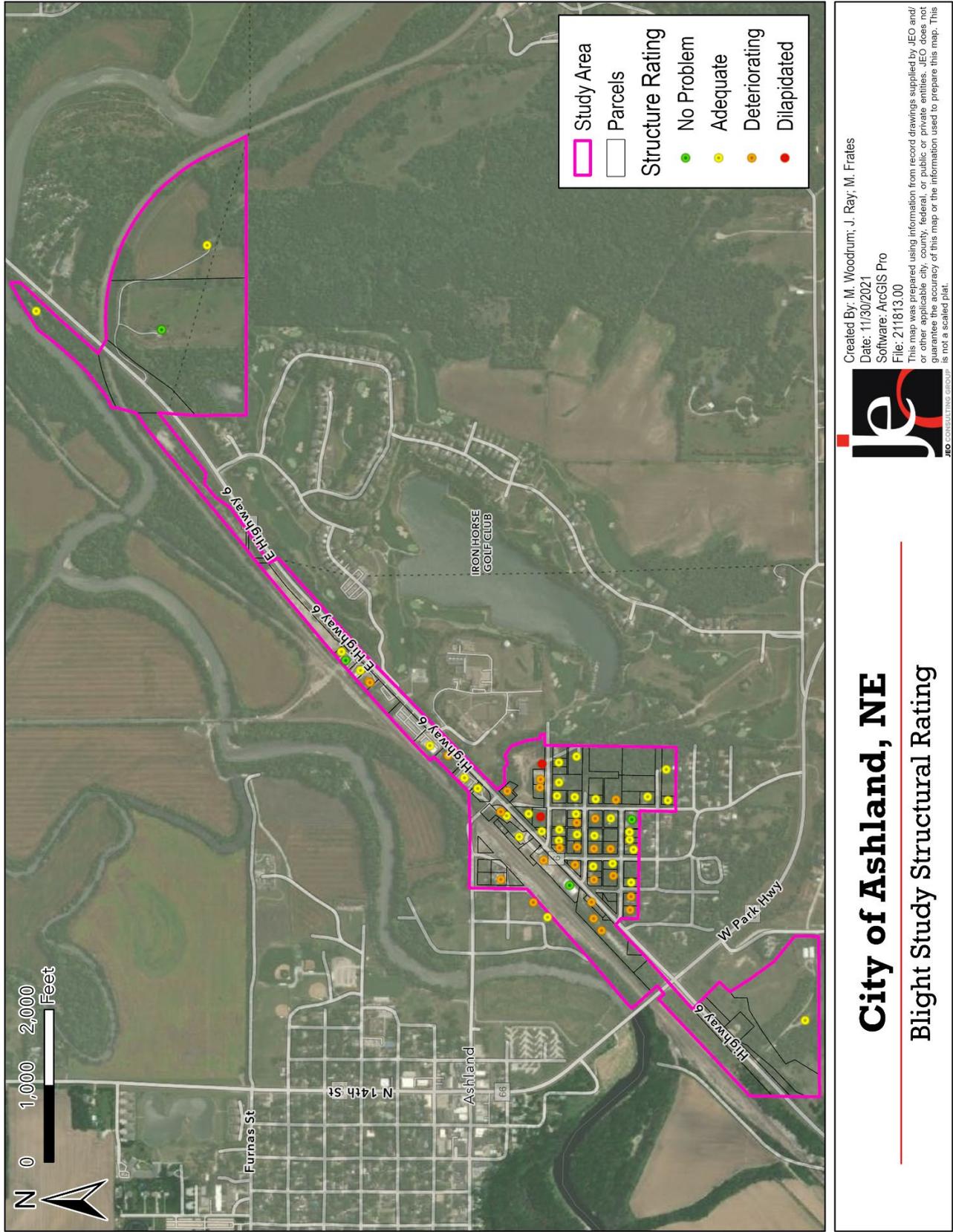
The study area lacks sidewalks that safely allow for pedestrian movement through the site or connecting to adjacent uses.

Floodplain

A small portion of the study area is within the designated 100 year floodplain.

As a result, this factor is considered to be contributing the recommended blight designation.

Figure 2: Structural Conditions

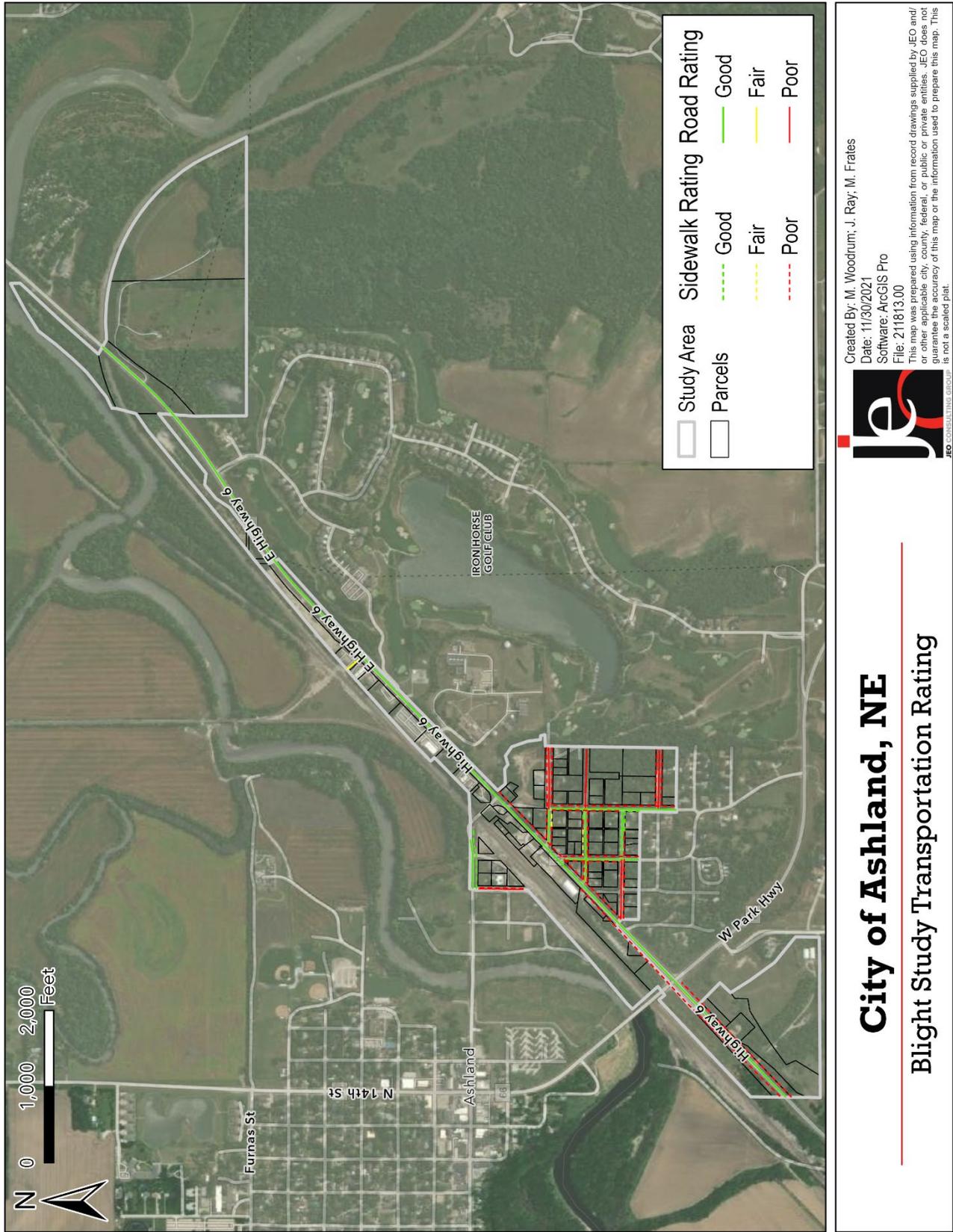


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 Date: 11/30/2021
 Software: ArcGIS Pro
 File: 211813.00
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City of Ashland, NE
 Blight Study Structural Rating

Figure 3: Transportation Conditions



Deterioration of site or other improvements

Sidewalks

The lack of sidewalks, including accessible crosswalks, inhibits pedestrian movement through or on the study area.

Vehicle circulation and parking

The lack of site improvements for vehicular access and connectivity to land locked lots impedes the ability to freely travel to or from the study area. Non-hard surfaced parking and drive areas were observed throughout the study area.

As a result, this factor is considered to be contributing the recommended blight designation.

Diversity of ownership

The diversity of ownership is evident in the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area. There are 76 unique private property owners in the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area. Thus, this is considered a contributing factor.

As a result, this factor is considered to be contributing the recommended blight designation.

Improper subdivision or obsolete platting

Obsolete platting

Throughout the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area, the lot sizes and shapes vary. Some lots are too large and need additional subdivision; while some are odd shaped or have limited use due to lot depth. In addition, some lots adjacent to Highway 6 have been bisected by the highway or rendered to limited use due to limited access and angled property lines.

As a result, this factor is considered to be contributing the recommended blight designation.

The existence of conditions which endanger life or property

Conditions which pose a threat to public health and safety

Vegetation Overgrowth

There is significant tree, brush, and weed overgrowth in the vacant areas of the study area. This can contribute to harboring rodents and vermin as well as pose a potential fire danger during drought or dry spells.

Sidewalks

The lack of sidewalks, including accessible crosswalks, inhibits pedestrian movement through or on the study area.

Railroad

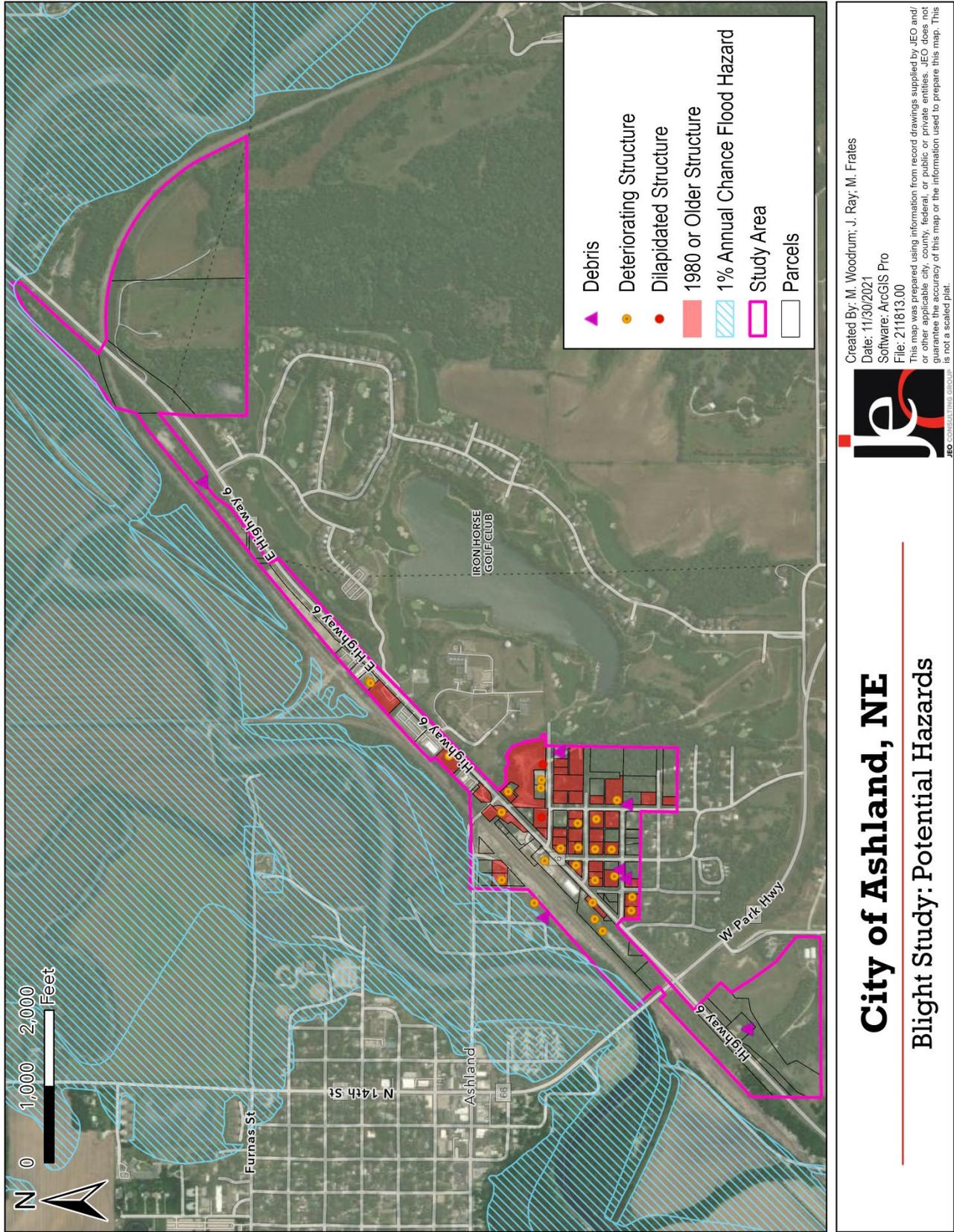
Portions of the study area are adjacent to the railroad that does not have fence or barrier.

Age of Structures

Structures constructed prior to 1978 may contain lead-based paint which can pose health and human development risks to children with chipping or peeling.

As a result, this factor is considered to be contributing the recommended blight designation.

Figure 4: Potential Hazards of Site



Any combination of such factors that substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the community, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability.

Economically undesirable

Economic and functional obsolescence is present with the lack of infrastructure including streets, sidewalks, utilities, and a controlled storm drainage system. This makes it difficult for these properties to compete in the marketplace. As a result, it is considered a substantial contributor to the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area to be considered blighted.

Is detrimental to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare in its present condition and use; and in which there is at least one of the following conditions:

The average age of the residential units in the area is at least 40 years. The average age of the residential and structures in 76 years (1945).

SUBSTANDARD CRITERIA

A **substandard area** shall mean an area in which there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether nonresidential or residential in character, which by reason of the following:

Dilapidation/deterioration

As part of the Blight and Substandard Study, a Structural Conditions Survey was completed along with an analysis of the land-use patterns in the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area.

A total of 26 or 40% of the structures within the designated study area were graded as deteriorating. Figure 2 illustrated the structural ratings within the study area. This is considered a significant contributing factor.

Age or obsolescence

Information regarding the age of the permanent structures within the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area was provided by the Saunders County Assessor's Office.

The average age of the residential and commercial structures is 76 years, therefore, this is considered a contributing substandard factor.

Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces

Poor Drainage and Sanitation

The Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area lacks a complete subterranean storm sewer system and has minor storm drainage issues and eroding. However, this is not considered significant to be considered a contributing factor.

Other Substandard Conditions

The existence of conditions which endanger life or property

Vegetation Overgrowth and Debris

There is significant tree, brush, and weed overgrowth in the vacant areas of the study area. Debris piles or junked cars were noted in the field analysis on seven properties. This can contribute to harboring rodents and vermin as well as pose a potential fire danger during drought or dry spells.

Sidewalks

The study area lacks sidewalks that safely allow for pedestrian movement through the site or connecting to adjacent uses.

Floodplain

A small portion of the study area is within the designated 100 year floodplain.

Railroad

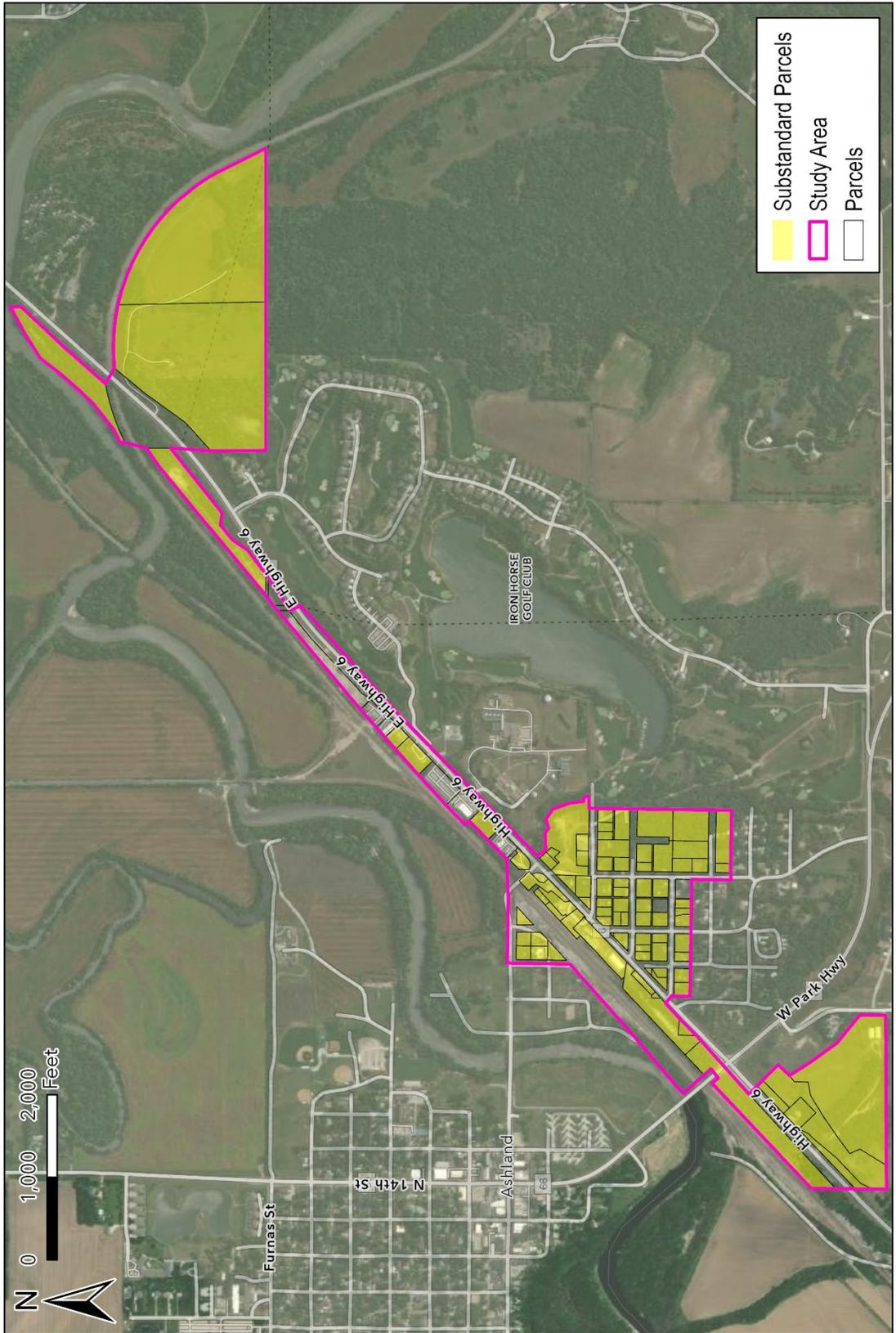
Portions of the study area are adjacent to the railroad that does not have fence or barrier.

Age of Structures

Structures constructed prior to 1978 may contain lead-based paint which can pose health and human development risks to children with chipping or peeling.

As a result, this factor is considered to be contributing the recommended blight designation.

Figure 5: Parcels Showing Blight and Substandard Criteria



City of Ashland, NE

Characteristics of Blight and Substandard Area

Created By: M. Woodrum; J. Ray; M. Frates
Date: 11/30/2021
Software: ArcGIS Pro
File: 211813.00

 JEO CONSULTING GROUP

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Blighted and Substandard Findings

The Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area has many items contributing to the blight and substandard conditions. Based on the information collected and analyzed pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statutes, the area has various items that were considered beyond the remedy and control of the normal regulatory process of the City of Ashland or impossible to reverse through the ordinary operations of private enterprise. These conditions include:

Table 1: Summary Matrix

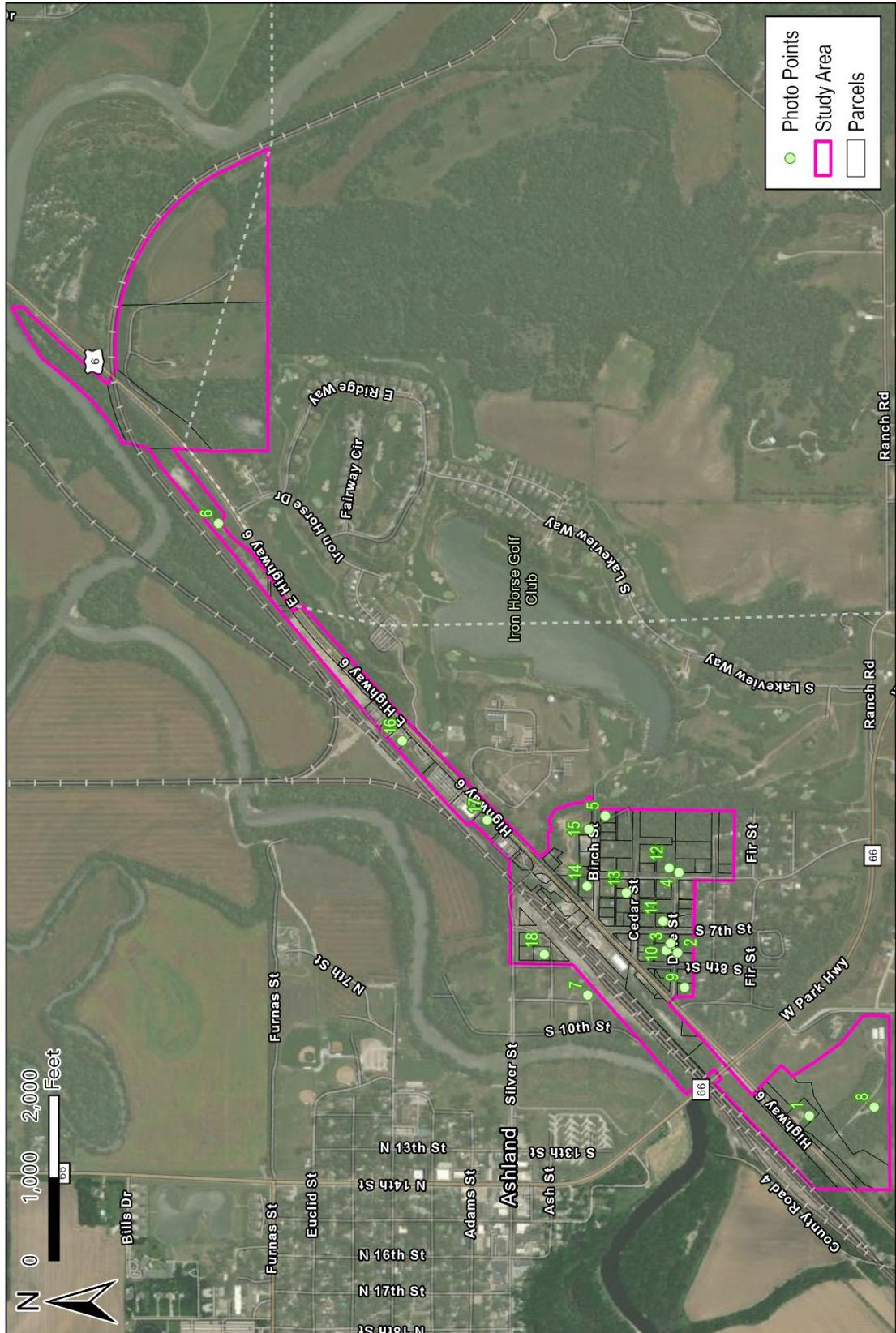
| Criteria | |
|--|--------------|
| Structure condition | Yes |
| Street layout | Yes |
| Faulty lot layout | Yes |
| Unsanitary or unsafe conditions | Yes |
| Deterioration of site | Yes |
| Diversity of owners | Yes |
| Tax special assessment | No |
| Titles conditions | No |
| Obsolete platting | Yes |
| Endanger life/property | Yes |
| Any combination | Yes |
| Age of Structure | Yes |
| BLIGHT TOTALS | 10/12 |
| Exterior inspection of structures | Yes |
| Age of structures | Yes |
| Inadequate provision for ventilation, sanitation | No |
| Other Substandard – (conducive to ill health, floodplain, endanger life) | Yes |
| SUBSTANDARD TOTALS | 3/4 |
| TOTALS | 13/16 |

Conclusion

Several conditions within the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area were evaluated during the field survey which contributed to blighted and substandard conditions. The conditions showing evidence of blight are interspersed throughout the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area, and as such, parcels within the boundaries of the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area are recommended for further action.

It is the professional opinion of the consultant, based on the information collected and analyzed pursuant to Nebraska Revised Statutes, that the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area contains the required conditions that would warrant a designation as blighted and substandard by the City of Ashland and the Community Redevelopment Authority. The City of Ashland should review this Blight and Substandard Study, and if satisfied with the findings contained in this study, may, by resolution, designate the Ashland Highway 6 Blight Study Area as “Blighted and Substandard” as provided for in the Community Development Law.

Appendix A
Photo Exhibit



City of Ashland, NE
Blight Study Photo Guide

Created By: M. Woodrum, J. Ray, M. Frates
 Date: 11/30/2021
 Software: ArcGIS Pro
 File: 211813.00

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Infrastructure Location 1



Location 2



Location 3



Location 4



Location 5



Location 6



Location 7



Location 8



Location 9



Location 10



Location 11



Location 12



Location 13



Location 14





Location 15



Location 16



Location 17



Location 18



