

FALLS CITY, NEBRASKA



BLIGHT/SUBSTANDARD DETERMINATION STUDY

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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OCTOBER, 2009

BLIGHT AND SUBSTANDARD DETERMINATION STUDY

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Purpose of Study/Conclusion

The purpose of this **Blight and Substandard Determination Study** is to apply the criteria set forth in the Nebraska Community Development Law, Section 18-2103, to a designated **Redevelopment Area in Falls City, Nebraska**, generally includes the Downtown, residential and industrial areas in the central, northern, southern, eastern and southeastern portions of the City. The results of this Study will assist the City in declaring the **Redevelopment Area** as both **blighted and substandard**.

Location

The findings presented in this Blight and Substandard Determination Study are based on surveys and analysis conducted for the **Redevelopment Area**. In general, the Redevelopment Area consists of the following additions, in Falls City:

- ◆ Strauss Addition.
- ◆ East/West Plaza Additions.
- ◆ Merz Wilhelm Addition.
- ◆ Bared Addition.
- ◆ Moorehead Stebbins Addition – Blocks 3 & 4.
- ◆ Miles Addition – West half of Block 1.
- ◆ Crook Towle Addition – Block 8.
- ◆ Steele Addition.
 - Blocks 1-4 (properties fronting on or adjacent 21st Street only).
 - West half of Blocks 5, 12, 21 & 28.
 - East half of Blocks 6, 11 & 27.
 - All of Blocks 22-24.
- ◆ Morgan Place.
 - Blocks 5 & 6.
 - Eastview Apartments (building fronting on 21st Street only).
- ◆ Burton Huber Addition.
- ◆ Midland Villa Addition (Care Center).
- ◆ Original Town.
 - Blocks 25-28, 37-43, 57-60, 69-72, 90-92, 100-103, 122-124, 133-134, 155-156, 165-166, 187-188, 197-198, 217-220 & 229-232.
 - West half of Block 5.
 - East half of Blocks 6, 167, 186 & 199.
 - Blocks 97-99 & 125-128 (properties fronting on or adjacent 14th Street only).
- ◆ Vacant land bordered to the east by Highway 73, to the south by the Falls City Corporate Limits and to the north by Original Town Blocks 230-232.
- ◆ Weaver Addition – North half of Blocks 1-4.

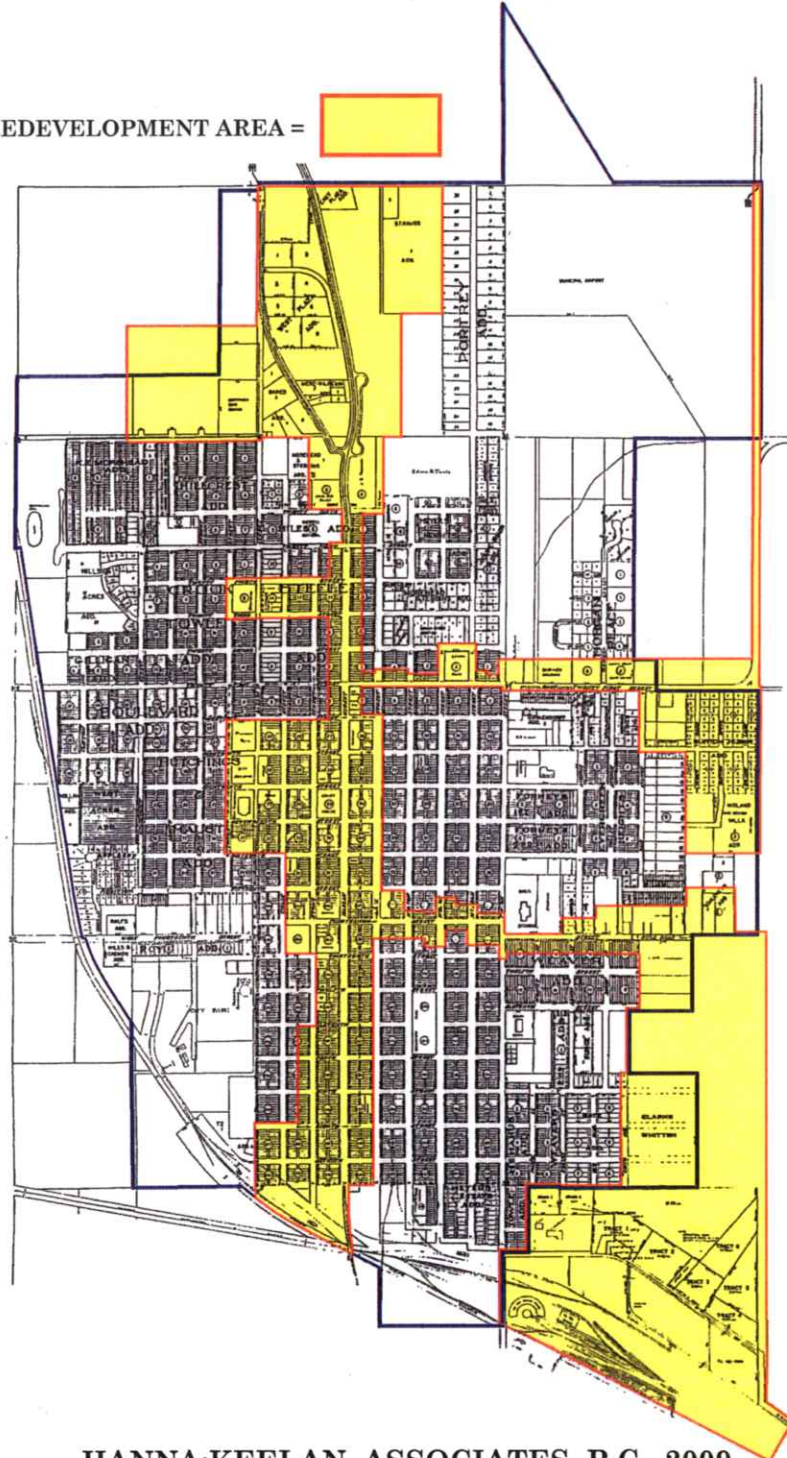
- ◆ Kreifels Addition – Lots 6 & 8.
- ◆ Schlereth Addition – Block 1.
- ◆ Clarke Whitten Addition.
- ◆ Tracts of land within the Industrial Park and railroad corridor, in southeast Falls City.
- ◆ All other vacant land within the identified area.

Illustration 1 identifies the Redevelopment Area, in relation to the City of Falls City. The Redevelopment Area includes the right-of-ways to Highways 73 and 159. A portion of the **Redevelopment Area** is located adjacent and beyond the Corporate Limits of Falls City and will be required to be annexed prior to utilizing Tax Increment Financing for development purposes. **Illustration 2** identifies existing land uses, while **Illustration 3** identifies the existing zoning within the Falls City Redevelopment Area.



ILLUSTRATION 1
CITY CONTEXT MAP
REDEVELOPMENT AREA
FALLS CITY, NEBRASKA

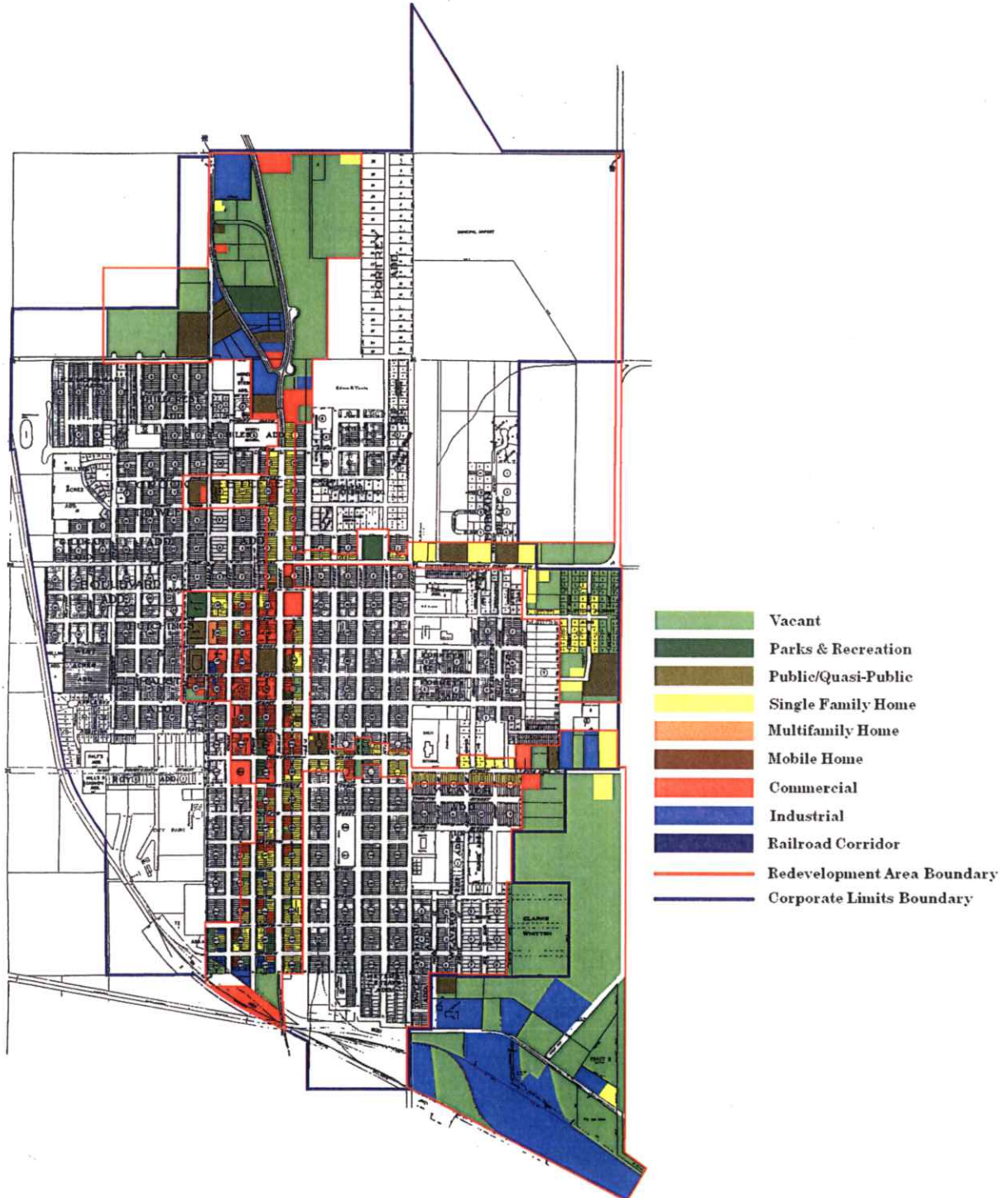
REDEVELOPMENT AREA =



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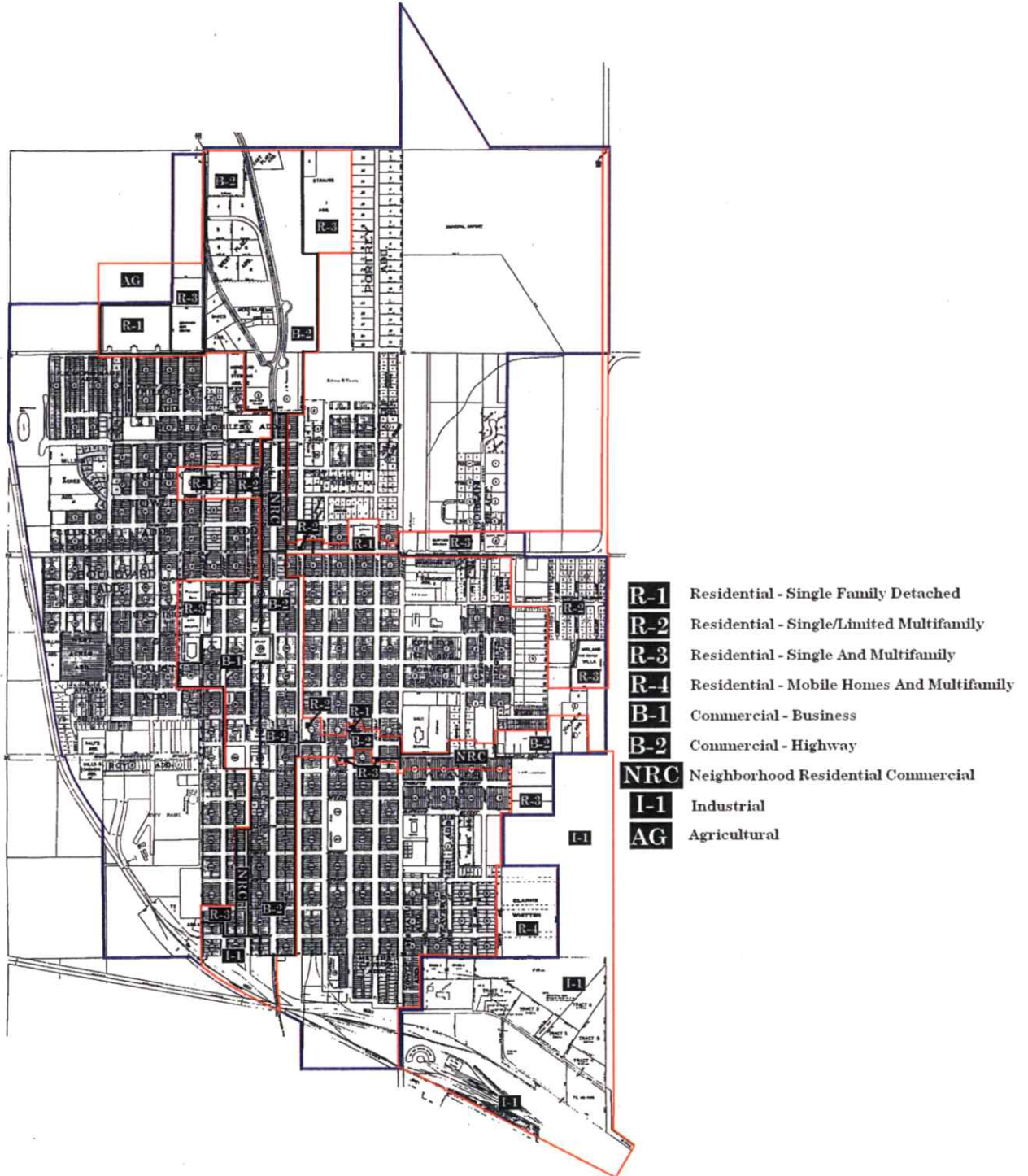
ILLUSTRATION 2
EXISTING LAND USE MAP
REDEVELOPMENT AREA
FALLS CITY, NEBRASKA



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ILLUSTRATION 3
EXISTING ZONING MAP
REDEVELOPMENT AREA
FALLS CITY, NEBRASKA



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SUBSTANDARD AREA

As set forth in the Nebraska legislation, a **substandard area** shall mean one in which there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether nonresidential or residential in character, which by reason of the presence of:

1. Dilapidated/deterioration;
2. Age or obsolescence;
3. Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation or open spaces;
4.
 - (a) High density of population and overcrowding; or
 - (b) The existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes; or
 - (c) Any combination of such factors, is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, and crime, and is detrimental to the public health, safety, morals or welfare.

This evaluation included a detailed **exterior structural survey of 525 structures**, a parcel-by-parcel field inventory, conversations with pertinent Falls City officials and staff and a review of available reports and documents containing information which could substantiate the existence of substandard conditions.

BLIGHTED AREA

As set forth in the Section 18-2103 (11) Nebraska Revised Statutes (Cumulative Supplement 1994), a **blighted area** shall mean "an area, which by reason of the presence of:

1. A substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures;
2. The advanced age and associated condition of structures;
3. Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;
4. Insanitary or unsafe conditions due to the age, small diameter of water mains;
5. Deterioration of site or other improvements due to nearly 40 percent of the parcels having overall site conditions rated as "fair";

6. Diversity of ownership;
7. Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;
8. Defective or unusual conditions of title;
9. Improper subdivision or obsolete platting;
10. The existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire or other causes;
11. 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
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 or more of the following conditions exists;
 1. Unemployment in the study or designated blighted area is at least one hundred twenty percent of the state or national average;
 2. The average age of the residential or commercial units in the area is at least 40 years;
 3. More than half of the plotted and subdivided property in an area is unimproved land that has been within the city for 40 years and has remained unimproved during that time;
 4. The per capita income of the study or designated blighted area is lower than the average per capita income of the city or village in which the area is designated; or
 5. The area has had either stable or decreasing population based on the last two decennial censuses."

While it may be concluded the mere presence of a majority of the stated factors may be sufficient to make a finding of blighted and substandard, this evaluation was made on the basis that existing blighted and substandard factors must be present to an extent which would lead reasonable persons to conclude public intervention is appropriate or necessary to assist with any development or redevelopment activities. Secondly, the distribution of blighted and substandard factors throughout the Redevelopment Area must be reasonably distributed so basically good areas are not arbitrarily found to be blighted simply because of proximity to areas which are blighted.

On the basis of this approach, the Redevelopment Area is found to be eligible as "blighted" and "substandard", within the definition set forth in the legislation. Specifically:

SUBSTANDARD FACTORS

Of the Four Substandard Factors set forth in the Nebraska Community Development Law, three Factors in the Redevelopment Area are present to a strong extent, with one additional Factor found to be present to a lesser, but reasonable extent. The Substandard Factors, present in the Area, are reasonably distributed throughout Redevelopment Area

**TABLE 1
SUBSTANDARD FACTORS
FALLS CITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA
FALLS CITY, NEBRASKA**

- | | | |
|----|---|---|
| 1. | Dilapidated/deterioration. | ☉ |
| 2. | Age or obsolescence. | ☉ |
| 3. | Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation or open spaces. | ☐ |
| 4. | Existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes. | ☉ |

Strong Presence of Factor ☉

Reasonable Presence of Factor ☐

No Presence of Factor ○

Source: Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2009

Strong Presence of Factor -

The results of the field survey identified 195, or 37.1 percent of the 525 total structures in the Redevelopment Area as ***Deteriorating or Dilapidated***. This Factor is of a strong presence throughout the Area.

Based on the results of a parcel-by-parcel field survey analysis, approximately 392, or 74.6 percent of the buildings are ***40+ years of age*** (built prior to 1969). Additionally, the estimated average age of commercial structures in the Redevelopment Area is 60.9 years, while the average age of residential buildings is approximately 64.4 years. The Factor of ***Age or Obsolescence*** is a strong presence in the Redevelopment Area.

The parcel-by-parcel field analysis determined that the Substandard Factor *Existence of Conditions Which Endanger Life or Property* by fire and other causes is a strong presence throughout the Redevelopment Area. The primary contributing Factors include wood frame buildings and masonry buildings with wooden structural elements that are deteriorating or dilapidated and prone to catch fire, along with the advanced age and associated condition of water and sanitary sewer mains.

Reasonable Presence of Factor -

The conditions which result in *Inadequate Provision for Ventilation, Light, Air, Sanitation or Open Space* are reasonably present and distributed throughout the Redevelopment Area, including components such as the lack of municipal infrastructure in large tracts of vacant land planned for residential uses. Additionally, portions of the water and sanitary sewer distribution systems are under sized by current development standards and are becoming excessively old, thus prone to repeated maintenance and or replacement.

The prevailing substandard conditions, evident in buildings and the public infrastructure, as determined by the field survey, include:

1. Aging structures;
2. Dilapidated/deteriorated structures;
3. "Fair" to "Poor" site conditions;
4. Frame buildings and wood structural components in masonry buildings as potential fire hazards; and
5. Average age of commercial structures being in excess of 40+ years of age.
6. Portions of the Redevelopment Area having under sized utility mains and mains that are excessively old.

BLIGHT FACTORS

Of the 12 Blight Factors set forth in the Nebraska Community Development Law, nine are present to a strong extent, in the Redevelopment Area, and one is present to a reasonable, but lesser extent. The Factor "tax or special assessment excluding the fair value of land," was of little or no presence and "defective or unusual condition of title," was not reviewed. All Blighting Factors are reasonably distributed throughout the Redevelopment Area.

**TABLE 2
BLIGHT FACTORS
FALLS CITY REDEVELOPMENT AREA
FALLS CITY, NEBRASKA**

1.	A substantial number of deteriorated or dilapidated structures.	☐
2.	Existence of defective or inadequate street layout.	■
3.	Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility or usefulness.	☐
4.	Insanitary or unsafe conditions.	☐
5.	Deterioration of site or other improvements.	☐
6.	Diversity of Ownership.	☐
7.	Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of land.	○
8.	Defective or unusual condition of title.	NR
9.	Improper subdivision or obsolete platting.	☐
10.	The existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire or other causes.	☐
11.	Other environmental and blighting factors.	☐
12.	One of the other five conditions.	☐

Strong Presence of Factor ☐

Reasonable Presence of Factor ■

Little or No Presence of Factor ○

NR = Not Reviewed

Source: Hanna:Keelan Associates, P.C., 2009

Strong Presence of Factor -

Deteriorated or Dilapidated Structures are a strong presence in the Redevelopment Area. There are 195 structures, or 37.1 percent of the 525 total structures in deteriorating or dilapidated condition.

Faulty Lot Layout existed to a strong extent throughout the Redevelopment Area. Conditions contributing to the presence of this Factor include inadequate lot sizes and parcels re-platted by metes and bounds descriptions both into smaller parcels and parcels oriented the opposite direction to front on a different street.

Insanitary or Unsafe Conditions are a strong presence throughout the entire Redevelopment Area. Conditions contributing to this Factor included substandard structures and the advanced age of structures and undersized water mains, as well as water and sewer mains that are outdated in portions of the Redevelopment Area. A majority of sewer mains still in use were installed in the 1890s, while water mains range from 40 to 70 years of age.

Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements is a strong presence throughout the Area, where, of the total 597 parcels examined, 48.3 percent, or 288 parcels have "fair" to "poor" overall site conditions.

The ***Diversity of Ownership*** is a strong presence throughout the Redevelopment Area. Research of public records from the Richardson County Assessor's Office indicated that at least 510 owners, unduplicated on an area-by-area basis, existed throughout the Redevelopment Area.

Improper Subdivision or Obsolete Platting is a strong presence throughout the Redevelopment Area. Lot sizes in the original platting of Falls City and along the Highway corridors in the Redevelopment Area are not supportive of today's commercial retail or residential needs. Several residential and commercial structures are placed upon multiple, consecutive lots, due to structures being larger than a single lot.

The ***Existence of Conditions Which Endanger Life or Property*** by fire or other causes is strongly present throughout the Redevelopment Area. Conditions related to this Factor include the existence of wood frame and masonry buildings with wooden structural elements that are deteriorating or dilapidated and prone to catch fire. Many of these structures were observed to be in deteriorating or dilapidated condition. Additionally, the age and size of water mains are substandard by current development standards.

In regards to *Other Environmental and Blighting Factors*, the presence of economically and socially undesirable land uses and functional obsolescence is strong throughout the Redevelopment Area. The Redevelopment Area contains outmoded residential, commercial, industrial and public/quasi-public buildings that are excessively small or no longer meet the needs of the Community.

One of the Required Five Additional Blight Factors has a strong presence throughout the Redevelopment Area. Based on the field survey analysis, the estimated average age of commercial buildings is 60.9 years, while the average age of residential structures are estimated to be 64.4 years of age.

Reasonable Presence of Factor -

Defective or Inadequate Street Layout is reasonably present, due to the Redevelopment Area having several streets with excessively deep storm water drainage ditches with no sidewalks available. Gravel surfaced roads also exist throughout the Redevelopment Area.

Conclusion

It is the conclusion of the Consultant retained by the City of Falls City that the number, degree and distribution of blighting factors, as documented in this Study, are beyond remedy and control solely by regulatory processes in the exercise of the police power and cannot be dealt with effectively by the ordinary operations of private enterprise without the aids provided in the Nebraska Community Development Law. It is also the opinion of the Consultant, that the findings of this Blight and Substandard Determination Study warrant designating the Redevelopment Area as "substandard" and "blighted."

The conclusions presented in this Study, are those of the Consultant, engaged by the City of Falls City to examine whether conditions of blight/substandard exist. The local governing body should review this Study and, if satisfied with the summary of findings contained herein, may adopt a resolution making a finding of blight/substandard and this Study a part of the public record.

Falls City, Nebraska

AGE OF STRUCTURE

	TOTAL	PERCENT	RESIDENTIAL	COMMERCIAL	INDUSTRIAL	VACANT	OTHER
1-5 years	7	1.3%	1	3	1	N/A	2
5-10 years	20	3.8%	7	9	3	N/A	1
10-20 years	32	6.1%	17	4	6	N/A	5
20-40 years	74	14.1%	39	19	10	N/A	6
40-100 years	364	69.3%	215	109	22	N/A	18
100+ years	28	5.3%	24	2	0	N/A	2
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34

FINAL STRUCTURAL RATING

sound	209	39.8%	115	63	12	N/A	19
deficient minor	121	23.0%	72	32	7	N/A	10
deficient major	123	23.4%	70	37	13	N/A	3
substandard	72	13.7%	46	14	10	N/A	2
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34

STREET CONDITION

excellent	39	6.5%	12	6	9	6	6
good	518	86.8%	278	142	24	39	35
fair	31	5.2%	8	4	12	6	1
poor	9	1.5%	5	0	1	2	1
TOTAL	597	100.0%	303	152	46	53	43

SIDEWALK CONDITION

none	161	27.0%	67	16	37	24	17
excellent	29	4.9%	7	13	0	1	8
good	271	45.4%	154	76	4	20	17
fair	114	19.1%	69	35	3	6	1
poor	22	3.7%	6	12	2	2	0
TOTAL	597	100.0%	303	152	46	53	43

DEBRIS

major	29	4.9%	3	8	15	3	0
minor	27	4.5%	12	7	8	0	0
none	541	90.6%	288	137	23	50	43
TOTAL	597	100.0%	303	152	46	53	43

OVERALL SITE CONDITION

excellent	87	14.6%	49	21	0	1	16
good	222	37.2%	114	70	5	16	17
fair	198	33.2%	99	42	16	32	9
poor	90	15.1%	41	19	25	4	1
TOTAL	597	100.0%	303	152	46	53	43

Falls City, Nebraska

TOTAL PERCENT RESIDENTIAL COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL VACANT OTHER

DOORS

sound	322	61.3%	192	92	13	N/A	25
none	8	1.5%	1	2	3	N/A	2
minor	158	30.1%	95	36	21	N/A	6
substandard	37	7.0%	15	16	5	N/A	1
critical	0	0.0%	0	0	0	N/A	0
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34

WINDOWS

sound	294	56.0%	166	87	15	N/A	26
none	37	7.0%	11	7	15	N/A	4
minor	161	30.7%	108	41	9	N/A	3
substandard	32	6.1%	17	11	3	N/A	1
critical	1	0.2%	1	0	0	N/A	0
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34

STREET TYPE

none	1	0.2%	0	0	0	0	1
concrete	245	41.0%	145	48	14	21	17
asphalt	143	24.0%	91	14	13	12	13
gravel	23	3.9%	9	2	8	3	1
dirt	0	0.0%	0	0	0	0	0
brick	185	31.0%	58	88	11	17	11
TOTAL	597	100.0%	303	152	46	53	43

PORCHES...

sound	213	40.6%	110	70	13	N/A	20
none	12	2.3%	4	1	5	N/A	2
minor	205	39.0%	123	56	15	N/A	11
substandard	94	17.9%	65	19	9	N/A	1
critical	1	0.2%	1	0	0	N/A	0
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34

PAINT

sound	170	32.4%	95	57	5	N/A	13
none	112	21.3%	59	21	22	N/A	10
minor	139	26.5%	84	38	8	N/A	9
substandard	96	18.3%	60	29	5	N/A	2
critical	8	1.5%	5	1	2	N/A	0
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34

DRIVEWAY

sound	192	36.6%	104	64	4	N/A	20
none	24	4.6%	21	1	1	N/A	1
minor	137	26.1%	80	50	2	N/A	5
substandard	168	32.0%	98	31	31	N/A	8
critical	4	0.8%	0	0	4	N/A	0
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34

Falls City, Nebraska

TOTAL PERCENT RESIDENTIAL COMMERCIAL INDUSTRIAL VACANT OTHER

ROOF STRUCTURE

sound	215	41.0%	127	50	18	N/A	20
none	1	0.2%	0	0	0	N/A	1
minor	256	48.8%	143	86	15	N/A	12
substandard	50	9.5%	31	10	8	N/A	1
critical	3	0.6%	2	0	1	N/A	0
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34

WALL FOUNDATION

sound	265	50.5%	146	79	18	N/A	22
none	0	0.0%	0	0	0	N/A	0
minor	223	42.5%	137	58	17	N/A	11
substandard	37	7.0%	20	9	7	N/A	1
critical	0	0.0%	0	0	0	N/A	0
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34

FOUNDATION

sound	321	61.1%	172	102	22	N/A	25
none	6	1.1%	6	0	0	N/A	0
minor	156	29.7%	99	34	14	N/A	9
substandard	42	8.0%	26	10	6	N/A	0
critical	0	0.0%	0	0	0	N/A	0
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34

FOUNDATION TYPE

Concrete	455	86.7%	240	142	41	N/A	32
Stone	42	8.0%	38	1	1	N/A	2
Rolled Asphalt	0	0.0%	0	0	0	N/A	0
Brick	20	3.8%	17	3	0	N/A	0
Other	8	1.5%	8	0	0	N/A	0
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34

ROOF SURFACE

sound	250	47.6%	154	67	15	N/A	14
none	3	0.6%	1	0	1	N/A	1
minor	207	39.4%	103	67	19	N/A	18
substandard	62	11.8%	42	12	7	N/A	1
critical	3	0.6%	3	0	0	N/A	0
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34

ROOF TYPE

Asphalt Shingles	311	59.2%	273	22	5	N/A	11
Rolled Asphalt	122	23.2%	10	98	3	N/A	11
Cedar	0	0.0%	0	0	0	N/A	0
Combination	4	0.8%	2	1	1	N/A	0
Other	88	16.8%	18	25	33	N/A	12
TOTAL	525	100.0%	303	146	42	N/A	34