

2023

City of Norfolk Downtown Area Study



JEO Consulting Group, Inc.

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

This Norfolk Downtown Area blight and substandard study of the designated study area is intended to give the Community Development Agency 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 Norfolk's Community Development Agency 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 Norfolk 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 "Norfolk Downtown Area 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 18-2155).

This blight and substandard study examines existing conditions of land use, physical and other constraints, buildings, and structures within the designated study area in the City of Norfolk to determine its eligibility for redevelopment activities. Potential opportunities for redevelopment exist throughout the designated study area, which would allow the City of Norfolk 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 Norfolk 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, 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, 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 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 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 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 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 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

Prior to the adoption of a 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, unsanitary 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 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 Norfolk 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 Norfolk 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 Norfolk 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, Norfolk 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 or special assessments exceeding the fair market value.
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 (Public Records);
 - (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 waterproof),
- Missing bricks or other masonry of chimney, and
- Makeshift (un-insulated) chimney.

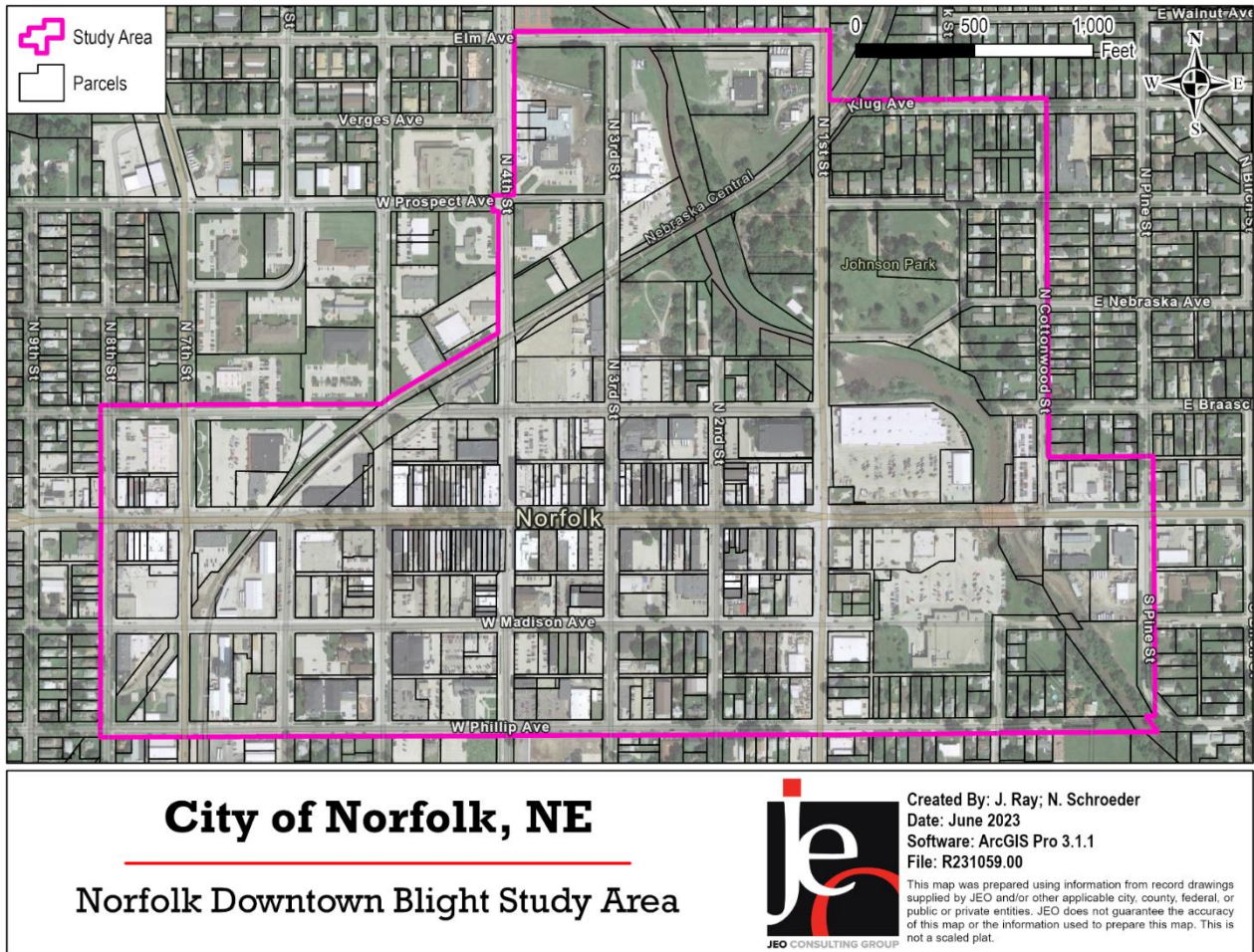
Dilapidated Condition

- 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 study area as identified can be found in Figure 1. For this study, the 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 217.74 acres. The following legal description delineates the Recommended Area:

A PARCEL OF LAND LOCATED IN THE CITY OF NORFOLK, MADISON COUNTY, NEBRASKA, BEING DESCRIBED AS FOLLOWS: BEGINNING AT THE NORTHEAST CORNER OF LOT 1, STOVERS SUBDIVISION; THENCE EAST ON THE SOUTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF WEST PHILLIP AVENUE, A DISTANCE OF 4450 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE EAST LINE OF PINE STREET; THENCE NORTH ON THE EAST RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF PINE STREET, A DISTANCE OF 1160 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF LOT 8, BLOCK 2, RUHLAWS AND BUSSEYS SUBURBAN LOTS; THENCE WEST, A DISTANCE OF 66 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE SOUTHEAST CORNER OF LOT 1, BLOCK 1, RUHLAWS AND BUSSEYS SUBURBAN LOTS; THENCE WEST ON THE SOUTH LINE OF LOTS 1 THROUGH 8 INCLUSIVE OF SAID BLOCK 1, A DISTANCE OF 370 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE SOUTHWEST CORNER OF SAID LOT 8; THENCE NORTH ON THE EAST RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF NORTH COTTONWOOD STREET, A DISTANCE OF 1500 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF EAST KLUG AVENUE; THENCE WEST ON THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF EAST KLUG AVENUE, A DISTANCE OF 915 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE EAST RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF NORTH 1ST STREET; THENCE NORTH ON THE EAST RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF NORTH 1ST STREET, A DISTANCE OF 300 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF ELM AVENUE; THENCE WEST ON THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF ELM AVENUE, A DISTANCE OF 1320 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE EAST RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF NORTH 4TH STREET; THENCE SOUTH ON THE EAST RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF NORTH 4TH STREET, A DISTANCE OF 680 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF WEST PROSPECT AVENUE; THENCE WEST ON THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF WEST PROSPECT AVENUE, A DISTANCE OF 90 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE WEST RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF NORTH 4TH STREET; THENCE SOUTH ON THE WEST RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF NORTH 4TH STREET, A DISTANCE OF 580 FEET, MORE OR LESS TO THE NORTHERLY RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF THE NEBRASKA CENTRAL RAILROAD; THENCE SOUTHWESTERLY ON SAID NORTHWESTERLY RAILROAD RIGHT OF WAY LINE, A DISTANCE OF 575 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF WEST BRAASCH AVENUE; THENCE WEST ON THE NORTH RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF WEST BRAASCH AVENUE, A DISTANCE OF 1150 FEET, MORE OR LESS TO THE WEST RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF NORTH 8TH STREET; THENCE SOUTH ON THE WEST RIGHT OF WAY LINE OF NORTH 8TH STREET, A DISTANCE OF 1380 FEET, MORE OR LESS, TO THE POINT OF BEGINNING.

Findings and Contributing Factors

The intent of this study is to determine whether the Norfolk Downtown Area 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, June 16, 2023, indicated the study area has such deterioration or lack of municipal infrastructure, thus the study area 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 Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area.

This section reviews the building and structure conditions, infrastructure, site conditions and land use found within the Norfolk Downtown Area 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 site conditions, debris, condition of public infrastructure, deteriorating structures and other observed conditions within the Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area.

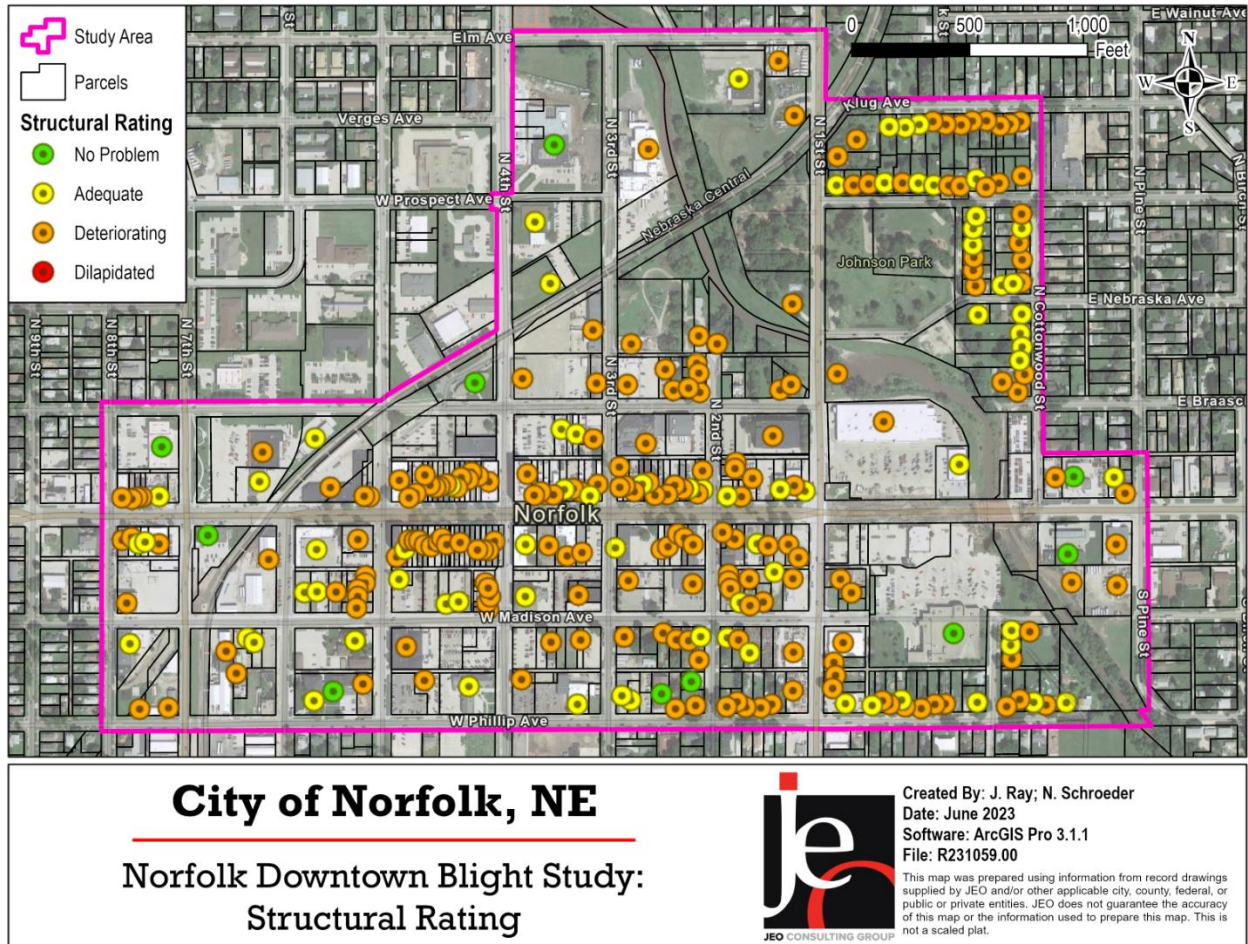
BLIGHTED CRITERIA CONDITIONS

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 Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area was examined. A total of 196 structures or 71% of the structures within the designated study area were graded as deteriorating. Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of the structural ratings within the study area. This is not considered a significant contributing factor.

Figure 2, Structural Rating



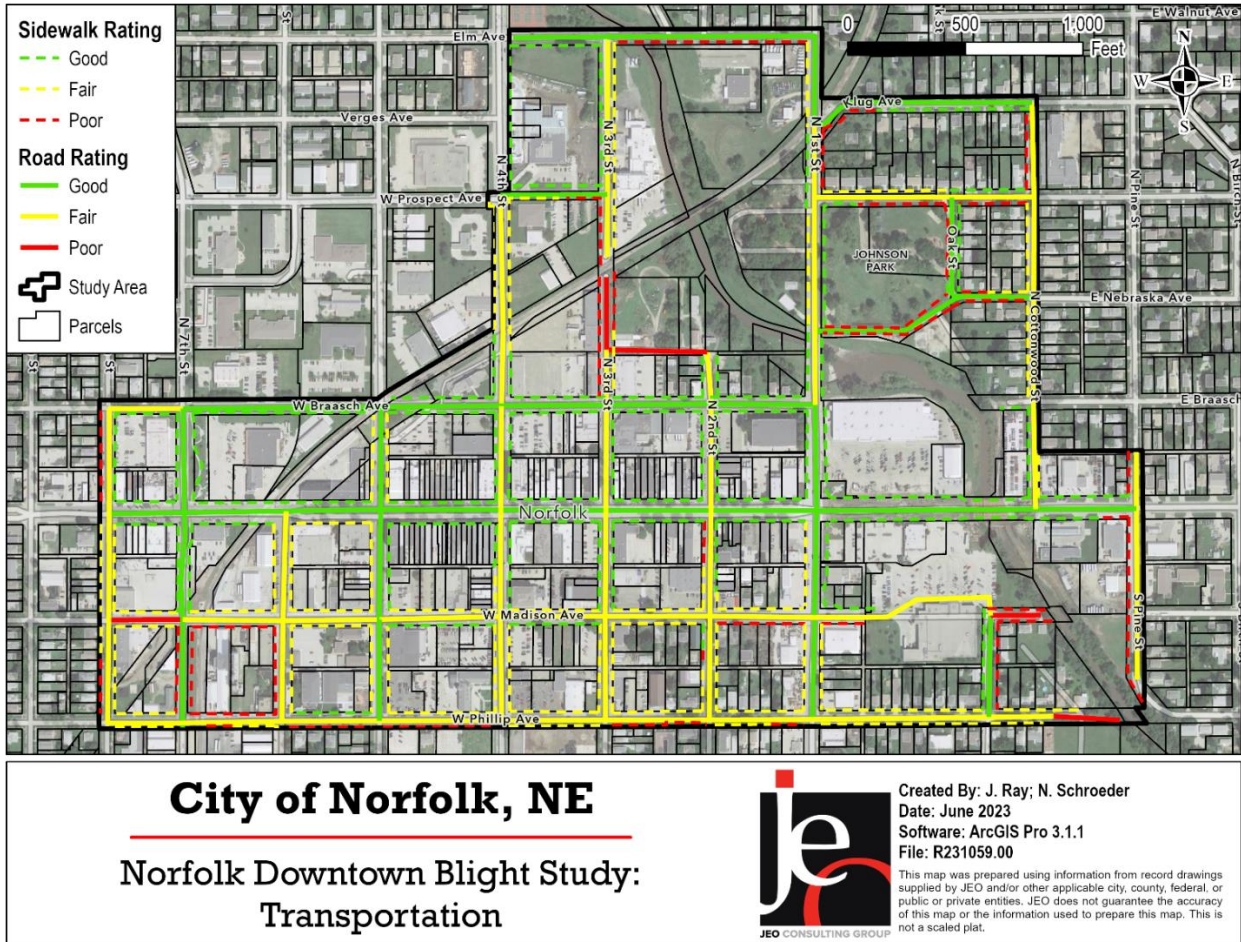
Defective or Inadequate Street Layout

Street Conditions and Accessibility

Street conditions and accessibility within the Norfolk Downtown Area 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 transportation infrastructure conditions are illustrated on Figure 3.

Overall, the Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area has good connectivity with the adjacent street and only minor obstructions of the grid network. This is not considered a contributing factor.

Figure 3, Transportation



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

Throughout the Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area, the lot sizes and shapes vary. Most commercial lots in the area are too narrow to adequately accommodate modern commercial building standards. In addition, some lots adjacent to the railroad corridor and North Fork of the Elkhorn River flume are odd shaped with acute angles diminishing the usefulness of the area. Overall, this factor is considered to be a contributing factor.

Unsanitary or unsafe conditions

Conditions which pose a threat to public health and safety

Debris

Debris piles were noted in the field analysis in 16 locations. This can contribute to harboring rodents and vermin as well as pose a potential mosquito breeding area to spread disease. In addition, the debris piles could pose a fire hazard to nearby structures and residents.

Drainage

The area is bisected by the North Fork of the Elkhorn River flume which has steep banks and the potential to create unsafe localized flooding.

Age of Structure

Structures constructed prior to 1978 may contain lead-based paint which can pose health and human development risks to children with chipping or peeling. The average of residential and commercial structures in area is 89 years (1934) and 90 years (1933), respectively.

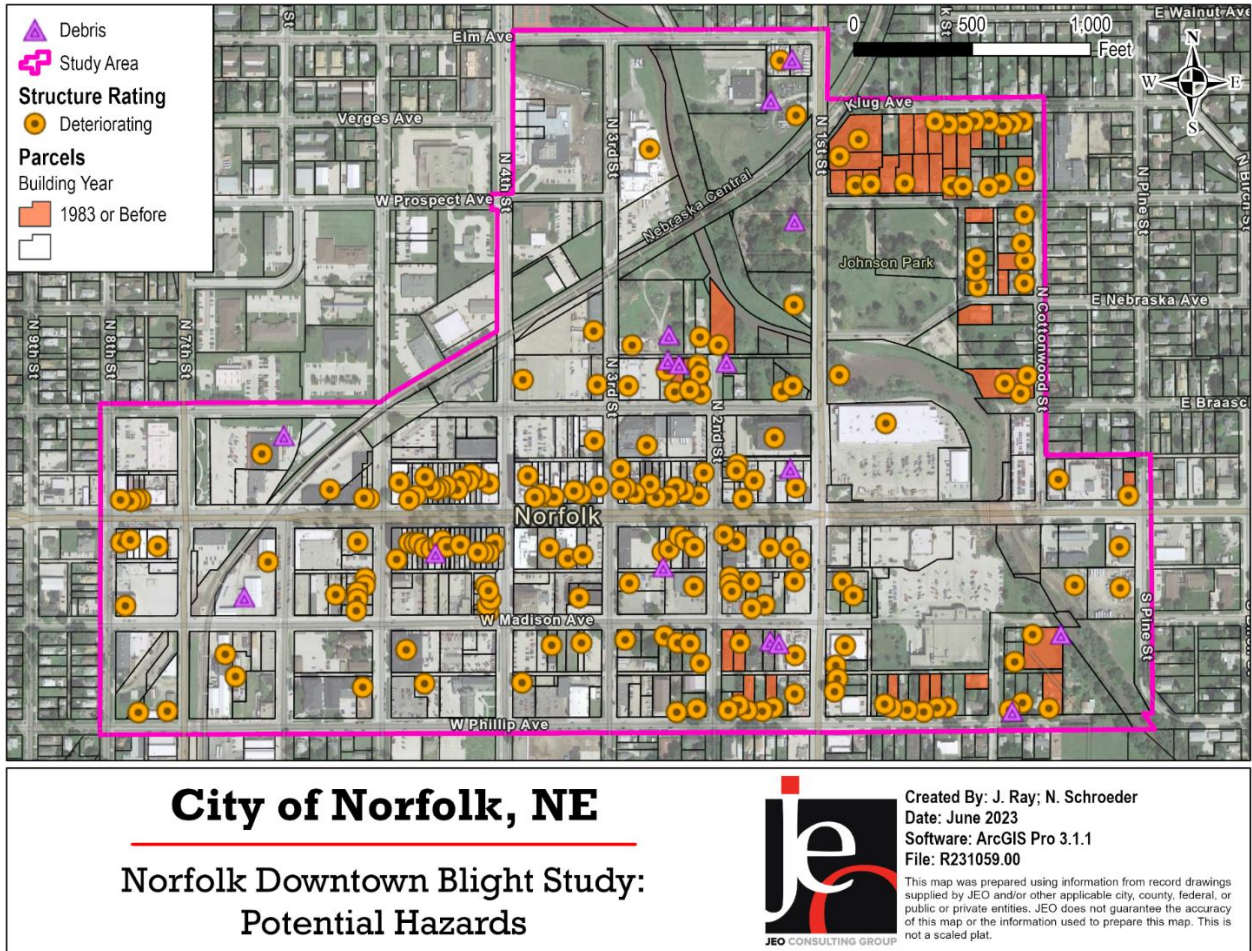
Railroad Crossings

The area is bisected by railroad tracks. Some crossings lack gates to prevent vehicular and pedestrian crossings when trains are occupying the area.

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



Figure 4: Potentially Hazardous Conditions



Deterioration of site or other improvements

The age of the structures and condition of public utilities, debris, and inadequate public improvements.

Parking and driveways

The field analysis noted numerous parking lots, driveways and outdoor storage areas that lacked hard surfaces or were in poor condition.

Debris

Debris piles were noted in the field analysis in 16 locations. This can contribute to harboring rodents and vermin as well as pose a potential mosquito breeding area to spread disease. In addition, the debris piles could pose a fire hazard to nearby structures and residents.

Drainage

The area is bisected by the North Fork of the Elkhorn River flume which has steep banks and the potential to create unsafe localized flooding.

Age of Structure

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

Railroad Crossings

The area is bisected by railroad tracks. Some crossings lack gates to prevent vehicular and pedestrian crossings when trains are occupying the 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 Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area. There are 237 unique private property owners in the Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area.

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

Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land

There was no evidence identified of taxes or special assessments exceeding the fair market value of the parcels in the study area.

Defective or unusual conditions of title

There was no evidence identified of defective or unusual conditions of title of the parcels in the study area.

As a result, this factor is not considered to be contributing to the recommended blight designation.

Improper subdivision or obsolete platting

Obsolete platting

Throughout the Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area, the lot sizes and shapes vary. Most commercial lots in the area are too narrow to adequately accommodate modern commercial building standards and are considered obsolete.

Improper Subdivision

A review of the Madison County Assessors records revealed numerous buildings constructed across property lines and 18 landlocked parcels.

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

Age of Structure

Structures constructed prior to 1978 may contain lead-based paint which can pose health and human development risks to children with chipping or peeling. The average of residential and commercial structures in area is 89 years (1934) and 90 years (1933), respectively.

Debris

Debris piles were noted in the field analysis in 16 locations. This can contribute to harboring rodents and vermin as well as pose a potential mosquito breeding area to spread disease. In addition, the debris piles could pose a fire hazard to nearby structures and residents.

Drainage and Floodway

The area is bisected by the North Fork of the Elkhorn River flume which has steep banks and the potential to create unsafe localized flooding.

Railroad Crossings

The area is bisected by railroad tracks. Some crossings lack gates to prevent vehicular and pedestrian crossings when trains are occupying the area.

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

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.

The combination of deterioration of the structures, site improvements and debris are factors observed in the field analysis that could impair sound growth or redevelopment of the community.

As a result, it is considered a substantial contributor to the Norfolk Downtown Area 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 structures in the area is at least 40 years. The average age of the residential structures is 89 years (1934). In addition, the average age of the commercial structures 90 years (1933). This is considered a substantial contributor to the Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area to be considered blighted.

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 Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area.

A total of 196 structures or 71% of the structures within the designated study area were graded as deteriorating. Figure 2 illustrates 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 Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area was provided by the Madison County Assessor's Office.

The average age of the residential structures in the area is at least 40 years. The average of residential and commercial structures in area is 89 years (1934) and 90 years (1933), respectively. Therefore, this is considered a contributing substandard factor. Note: The data containing the age of the public and quasi-public structures was not available and was not included in the age of structures analysis.

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

Poor Drainage and Sanitation

The Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area contains areas of trash and debris. However, this alone is not considered significant to be considered a contributing factor.

Other Substandard Conditions

The existence of conditions which endanger life or property.

Age of Structure

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

Debris

Debris piles were noted in the field analysis in 16 locations. This can contribute to harboring rodents and vermin as well as pose a potential mosquito breeding area to spread disease. In addition, the debris piles could pose a fire hazard to nearby structures and residents.

Drainage and Floodway

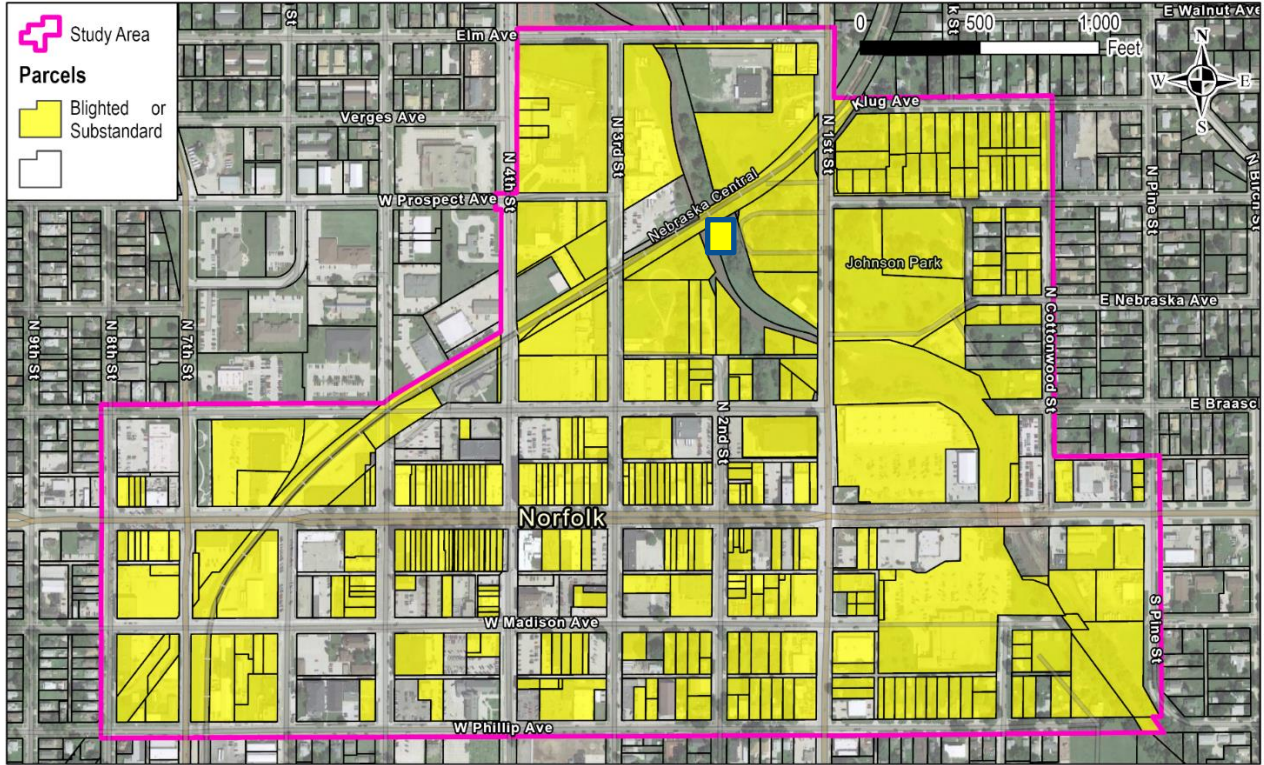
The area is bisected by the North Fork of the Elkhorn River flume which has steep banks and the potential to create unsafe localized flooding.

Railroad Crossings

The area is bisected by railroad tracks. Some crossings lack gates to prevent vehicular and pedestrian crossings when trains are occupying the area.

The existence of conditions which endanger life or property are considered a contributing factor.

Figure 5: Parcels Showing Blight and Substandard Criteria



City of Norfolk, NE

Norfolk Downtown Blight Study: Characteristics of Blight & Substandard Area



Created By: J. Ray; N. Schroeder
 Date: July 2023
 Software: ArcGIS Pro 3.1.1
 File: R231059.00

This map was prepared using information from record drawings supplied by JEO and/or other applicable city, county, federal, or public or private entities. JEO does not guarantee the accuracy of this map or the information used to prepare this map. This is not a scaled plot.

Blighted and Substandard Findings

The Norfolk Downtown Area 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 a myriad items that were considered beyond the remedy and control of the normal regulatory process of the City of Norfolk or impossible to reverse through the ordinary operations of private enterprise. These conditions include:

Table 1: Summary Matrix

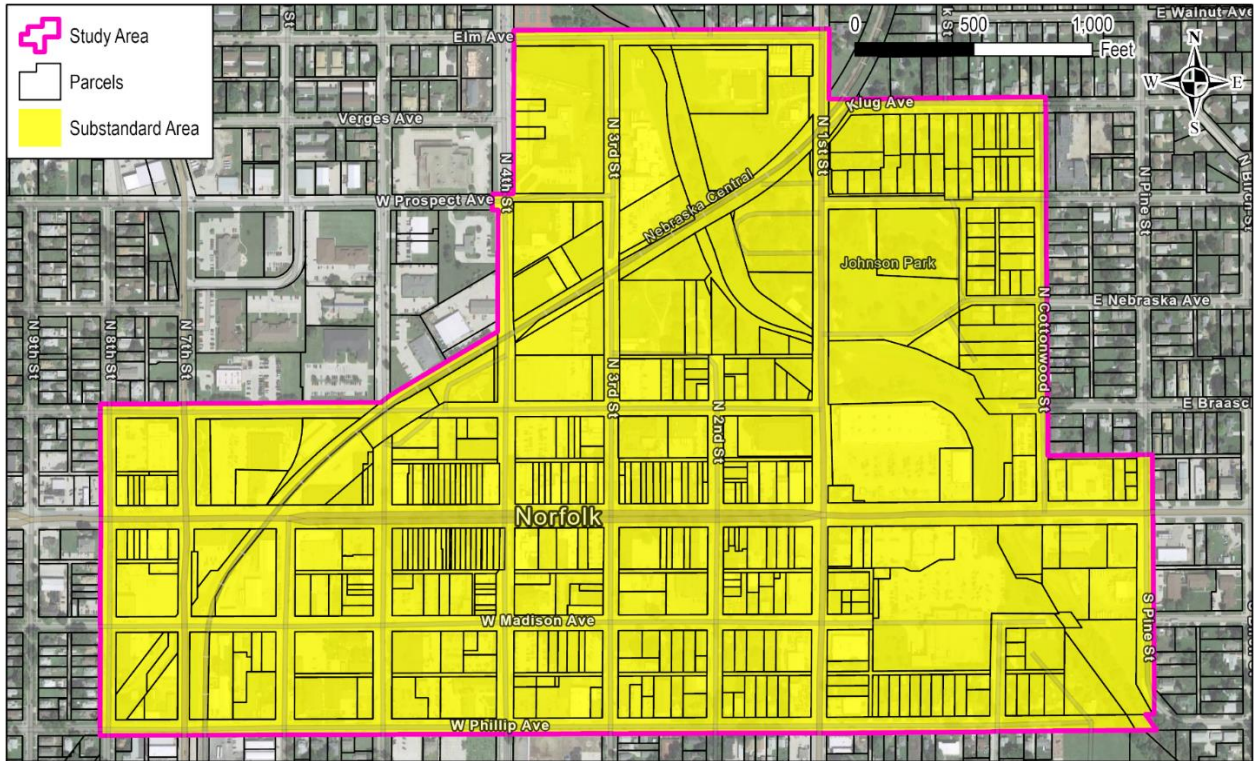
Criteria	
Structure condition	Yes
Street layout	No
Faulty lot layout	Yes
Unsanitary or unsafe conditions	Yes
Deterioration of site	Yes
Diversity of owners	Yes
Tax special assessment	No
Titles conditions	No
Obsolete platting	Yes
Endanger life/property	Yes
Any combination	Yes
Age of structure	Yes
BLIGHT TOTALS	9/12
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	12/16

Conclusion

Several conditions within the Norfolk Downtown Area were observed during the field survey which warrant a designation as blighted and substandard. The conditions showing evidence of blight are interspersed throughout the Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area, and as such, parcels within the boundaries of the Norfolk Downtown Area 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 Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area contains the required conditions that would warrant a designation as blighted and substandard by the City of Norfolk and the Community Development Agency. The City of Norfolk should review this Blight and Substandard Study, and if satisfied with the findings contained in this study, may, by resolution, designate the Norfolk Downtown Area Blight Study Area as “Blighted and Substandard” as provided for in the Community Development Law.

Figure 6 Recommended Blight and Substandard Designation



City of Norfolk, NE

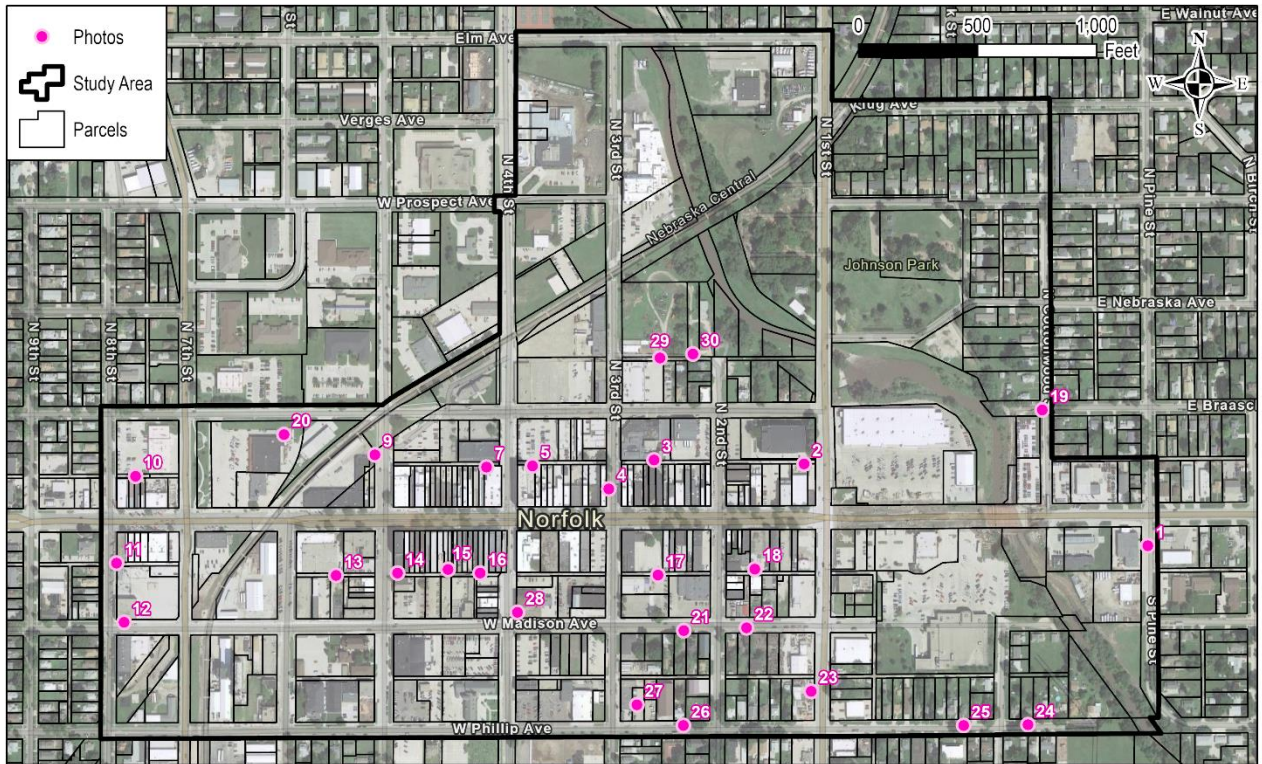
Norfolk Downtown Blight Study: Recommended Blight & Substandard Area



Created By: J. Ray; N. Schroeder
Date: June 2023
Software: ArcGIS Pro 3.1.1
File: R231059.00

This map was prepared using information from record drawings supplied by JEO and/or other applicable city, county, federal, or public or private entities. JEO does not guarantee the accuracy of this map or the information used to prepare this map. This is not a scaled plat.

Appendix A
Photo Exhibit



City of Norfolk, NE

Norfolk Downtown Blight Study: Photo Guide



Created By: J. Ray; N. Schroeder
Date: August 2023
Software: ArcGIS Pro 3.1.1
File: R231059.00

This map was prepared using information from record drawings supplied by JEO and/or other applicable city, county, federal, or public or private entities. JEO does not guarantee the accuracy of this map or the information used to prepare this map. This is not a scaled plot.

Location 1



Location 2



Location 3



Location 4



Location 5



Location 7



Location 9



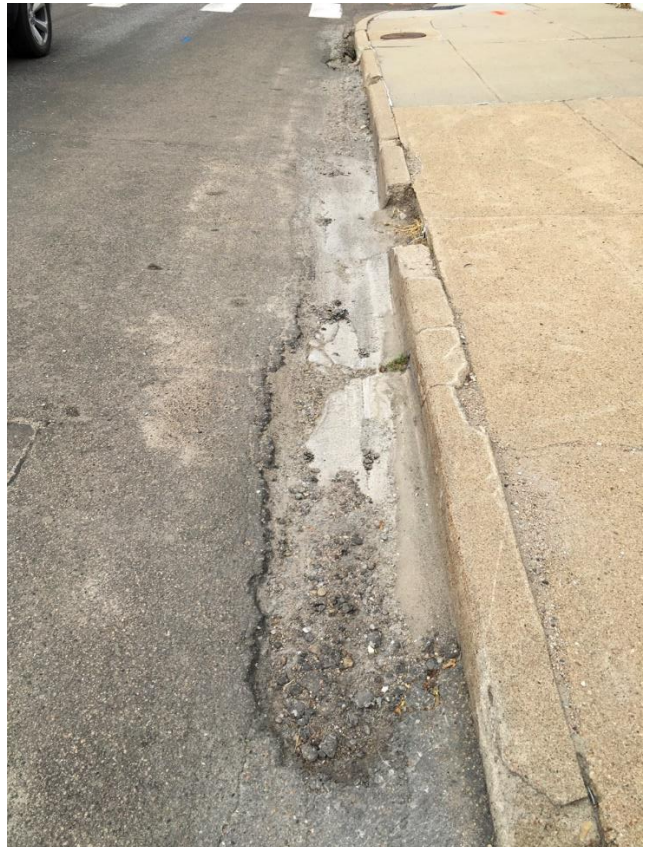


Location 10





Location11



Location 12



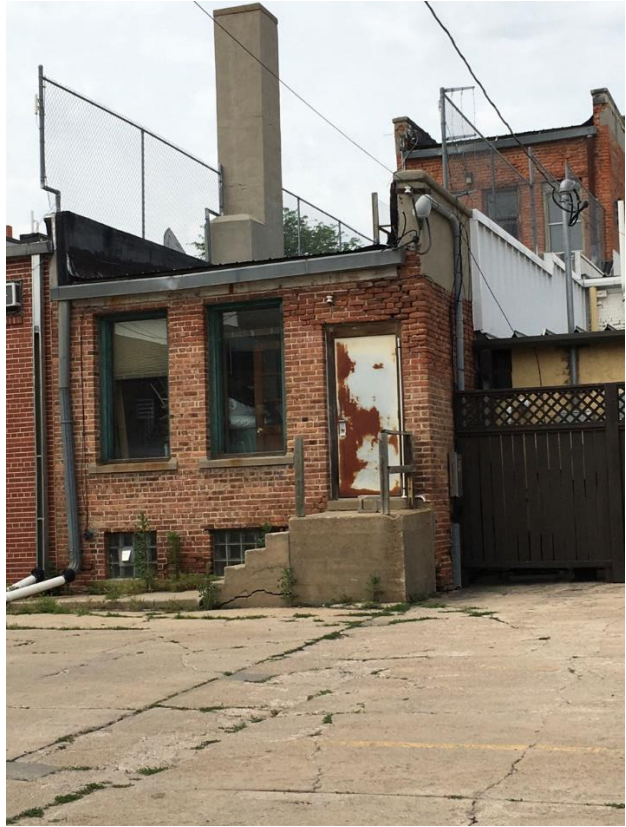
Location 13



Location 14



Location 15



Location 16

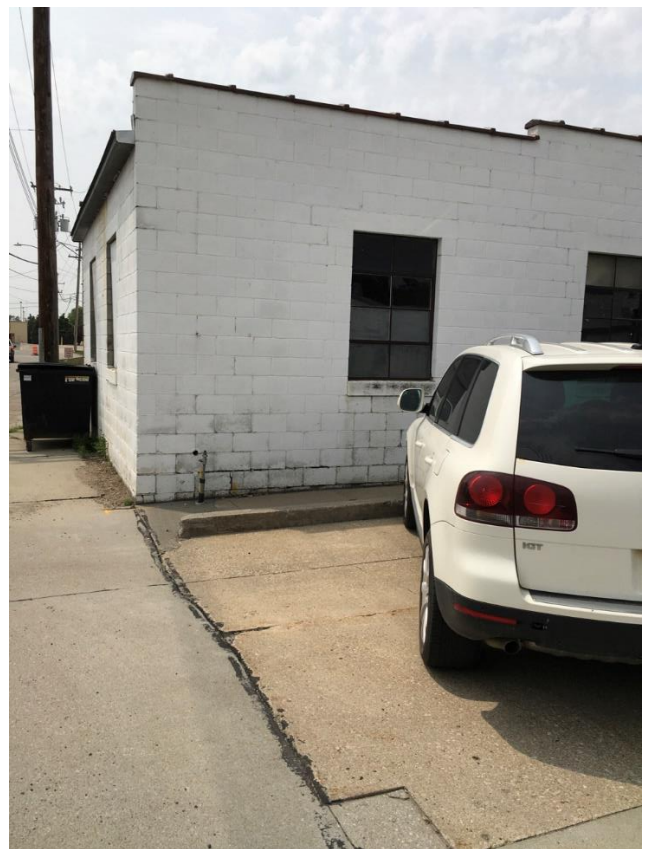
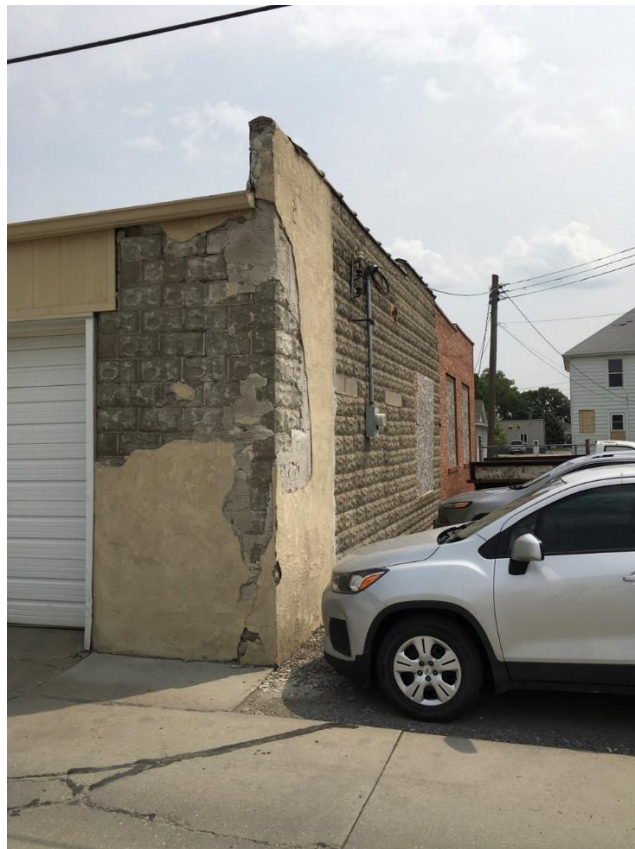




Location 17



Location 18



Location 19





Location 20



Location 21



Location 22



Location 23



Location 24



Location 25



Location 26



Location 27



Location 28



Location 29



Location 30





