



**Economic & Planning
Systems, Inc.**
The Economics of Land Use

ODYSSEY AT NORTH WEBER EXISTING CONDITIONS SURVEY

DRAFT REPORT

Prepared for:

Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority

Prepared by:

Economic & Planning Systems, Inc.

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1. Introduction

In March of 2025, Economic & Planning Systems (EPS), working with the City of Colorado Springs Urban Renewal Authority (CSURA), conducted the following existing conditions survey (Survey) of the proposed Odyssey at North Weber Urban Renewal Plan Area (Study Area). This proposed plan area is bound by North Weber Street to the west, Cragmor Road to the east, and Mount View Lane to the south, as shown in **Figure 1** on page 6.

The CSURA anticipates creating a new plan area to support redevelopment plans of the site. The proposed Urban Renewal Area captures the redevelopment plans and, if approved, will aid in supporting the proposed redevelopment and enabling needed public improvements to be constructed in the area.

Purpose

The primary purpose of this Survey is to determine whether the Study Area qualifies as a “blighted area” within the meaning of Colorado Urban Renewal Law. Secondly, this Survey will influence whether the Study Area should be recommended to be established as a URA Plan Area for such urban renewal activities, as the URA and City Council deem appropriate.

Colorado Urban Renewal Law

The requirements for the establishment of a URA plan are outlined in the Colorado Urban Renewal Law, Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) § 31-25-101 et seq. In order to establish an area for urban renewal, there are an array of conditions that must be documented to establish a condition of blight. The determination that constitutes a blighted area depends upon the presence of several physical, environmental, and social factors. Blight is attributable to a multiplicity of conditions which, in combination, tend to accelerate the phenomenon of deterioration of an area and prevent new development from occurring.

Urban Renewal Law

Blight Factors (C.R.S. § 31-25-103)

“‘Blighted area’ means an area that, in its present condition and use and, by reason of the presence of at least four of the following factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability, and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare:

- (a) Slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures;*
- (b) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout;*
- (c) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness;*
- (d) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions;*
- (e) Deterioration of site or other improvements;*
- (f) Unusual topography or inadequate public improvements or utilities;*
- (g) Defective or unusual conditions of title rendering the title nonmarketable;*
- (h) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes;*
- (i) Buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work in because of building code violations, dilapidation, deterioration, defective design, physical construction, or faulty or inadequate facilities;*
- (j) Environmental contamination of buildings or property;*
- (k.5) The existence of health, safety, or welfare factors requiring high levels of municipal services or substantial physical underutilization or vacancy of sites, buildings, or other improvements; or*
- (l) If there is no objection by the property owner or owners and the tenant or tenants of such owner or owners, if any, to the inclusion of such property in an urban renewal area, “blighted area” also means an area that, in its present condition and use and, by reason of the presence of any one of the factors specified in paragraphs (a) to (k.5) of this subsection (2), substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability, and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare. For purposes of this paragraph (l), the fact that an owner of an interest in such property does not object to the inclusion of such property in the urban renewal area does not mean that the owner has waived any rights of such owner in connection with laws governing condemnation.”*

Use of Eminent Domain

In order for an Urban Renewal Authority to use the powers of eminent domain to acquire properties, 5 of the 11 blight factors must be present (C.R.S. § 31-25-105.5(a)).

“‘Blighted area’ shall have the same meaning as set forth in section 31-25-103 (2); except that, for the purposes of this section only, “blighted area” means an area that, in its present condition and use and, by reason of the presence of at least five of the factors specified in section 31-25-103 (2)(a) to (2)(l), substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability, and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare.”

Urban Renewal Case Law

In addition to the State statute, several principles have been developed by Colorado courts to guide the determination of whether an area constitutes a blighted area under the Urban Renewal Law. The following parameters have been established through case law for determining blight and the role of judiciary review.

Tracy v. City of Boulder (Colo. Ct. App. 1981)

- Upheld the definition of blight presented in the Urban Renewal Law as a broad condition encompassing not only those areas containing properties so dilapidated as to justify condemnation as nuisances, but also envisioning the prevention of deterioration. Therefore, the existence of widespread nuisance violations and building condemnation is not required to designate an area blighted.
- Additionally, the determination of blight is the responsibility of the legislative body and a court's role in review is to verify if the conclusion is based upon factual evidence determined by the City Council at the time of a public hearing to be consistent with the statutory definition.

Interstate Trust Building Co. v. Denver Urban Renewal Authority (Colo. 1970)

- Determined that blight assessment is not on a building-to-building basis but is based on conditions observed throughout the plan area as a whole. The presence of one well maintained building does not defeat a determination that an area constitutes a blighted area.

Methodology

This Survey was completed by EPS to inventory and establish the existing conditions within the Study Area through data gathering and field observations of physical conditions. The Study Area was defined by the URA to encompass the proposed redevelopment of two properties at the northeast corner of North Weber Street and Mount View Lane. An inventory of parcels within the Study Area was compiled using parcel data from the El Paso County Assessor, documenting parcel ownership, use, vacancy, and assessed value. A series of Study Area maps were then developed to facilitate the field survey, and parcels were photographed to illustrate site conditions.

The field survey was conducted by EPS in March of 2025. The 11 factors of blight in the state statute were broken down into “conditions” - existing situations or circumstances identified in the Study Area that may qualify as blight under each of the 11 factors. The conditions documented in this report are submitted as evidence to support a “finding of blight” according to Urban Renewal Law. Under the Urban Renewal Law, the final determination of blight within the Study Area is within the sole discretion of the Colorado Springs City Council.

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2. Study Area Analysis

Study Area

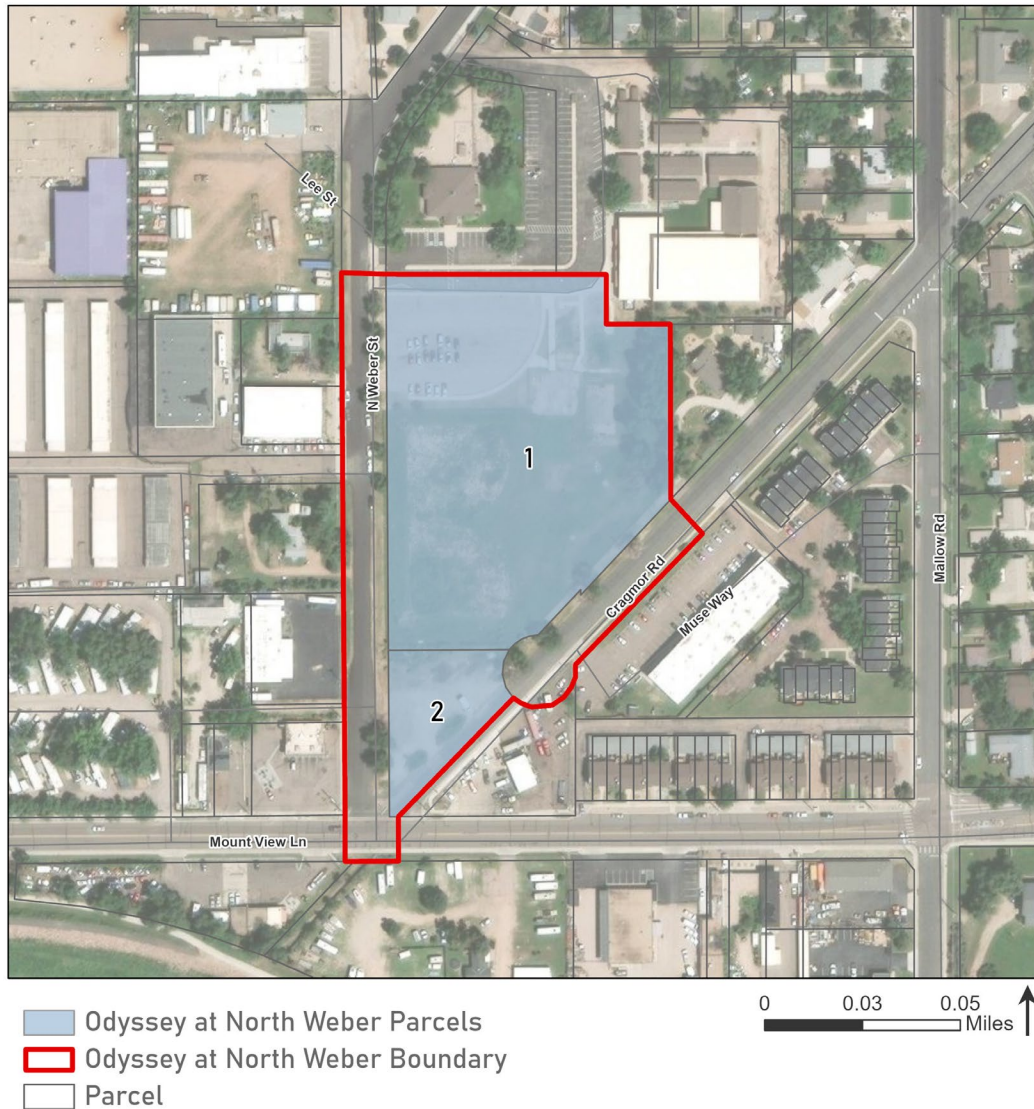
The proposed Odyssey at North Weber Urban Renewal Plan Area is comprised of two parcels on approximately 4.4 acres of land and adjacent right of way (ROW), as shown in **Table 1** and **Figure 1**. Both parcels are owned by Weber Investors LLC and are currently vacant. The office buildings with 3,628 square feet on parcel 1 were demolished. The demolition occurred after the El Paso County Assessor determined property assessments for the year and is therefore captured in the table below.

Table 1. Parcels Contained in the URA Study Area

#	Parcel	Address	Owner	Occupancy	Acres	Bldg. SF	Assessed Valuation		
							Land	Improv.	Total
1	6330112080	3981 N Weber St.	Weber Investors LLC	Vacant	3.85	3,628	\$109,960	\$72,670	\$182,630
2	6330112081	302 Cragmor Rd.	Weber Investors LLC	Vacant	<u>0.56</u>	0	<u>\$21,170</u>	<u>\$0</u>	<u>\$21,170</u>
Total					4.41		\$131,130	\$72,670	\$203,800

Source: El Paso County Assessor; Economic & Planning Systems

Figure 1. Odyssey at North Weber Proposed URA Boundary and Parcels



Field Survey Approach

The following assessment is based on a field survey conducted by EPS in March 2025. The survey team walked the entire Study Area, taking notes and photographs to document existing conditions corresponding to the blight factor evaluation criteria detailed in the following section.

Blight Factor Evaluation Criteria

This section details the conditions used to evaluate blight during the field survey. The following conditions correspond with 5 of the 11 blight factors in the Urban Renewal Law. Additional information on a number of these factors for which data was available was also collected. The remaining blight factors cannot be visually inspected and are dependent on other data sources. Given the prevalence of physically observable conditions of blight, these remaining blight factors were not investigated.

Street Layout

The following conditions evaluate the Urban Renewal Law blight factor “(b) *predominance of defective or inadequate street layout*,” through assessment of the safety, quality, and efficiency of street layouts, site access, and internal circulation.

Typical examples of conditions that portray this criterion include:

- Inadequate Street or Alley Width / Cross-section / Geometry
- Poor Provision of Streets or Unsafe Conditions for Vehicular Traffic
- Poor Provision of Sidewalks/Walkways or Unsafe Conditions for Pedestrians
- Insufficient Roadway Capacity
- Inadequate Emergency Vehicle Access
- Poor Vehicular or Pedestrian Access to Buildings or Sites
- Excessive Curb Cuts / Driveways along Commercial Blocks
- Poor Internal Vehicular or Pedestrian Circulation

Unsafe/Unsanitary

The following conditions establish evidence of Urban Renewal Law blight factor “(d) *unsanitary or unsafe conditions*,” by evaluating visual conditions that indicate the occurrence of activities that inhibit the safety and health of the area including, but not limited to, excessive litter, unenclosed dumpsters, and vandalism.

Typical examples include:

- Floodplains or Flood Prone Areas
- Inadequate Storm Drainage Systems/Evidence of Standing Water
- Poor Fire Protection Facilities
- Above Average Incidences of Public Safety Responses
- Inadequate Sanitation or Water Systems
- Existence of Contaminants or Hazardous Conditions or Materials

- High or Unusual Crime Statistics
- Open/Unenclosed Trash Dumpsters
- Cracked or Uneven Surfaces for Pedestrians
- Illegal Dumping/Excessive Litter
- Vagrants/Vandalism/Graffiti/Gang Activity
- Open Ditches, Holes, or Trenches in Pedestrian Areas
- Poorly Lit or Unlit Areas
- Insufficient Grading/Steep Slopes
- Unsafe or Exposed Electrical Wire

Site Improvements

The following conditions evaluate the Urban Renewal Law blight factor “(e) *deterioration of site or other improvements*,” by evidence of overall maintenance deficiencies within the plan area including, deterioration, poorly maintained landscaping, and overall neglect.

Examples of blighted Site Improvements are shown below:

- Neglected Properties or Evidence of Maintenance Deficiencies
- Deteriorated Signage or Lighting
- Deteriorated Fences, Walls, or Gates
- Deteriorated On-Site Parking Surfaces, Curb and Gutter, or Sidewalks
- Unpaved Parking Lot (Commercial Properties)
- Poor Parking Lot/Driveway Layout
- Poorly Maintained Landscaping/Overgrown Vegetation

Infrastructure

The observation of the following infrastructure insufficiencies is evidence of Urban Renewal Law blight factor “(f) *unusual topography or inadequate public improvements or utilities*.”

Prototypical features of blight under this topic include:

- Deteriorated Pavement, Curb, Sidewalks, Lighting, or Drainage
- Lack of Pavement, Curb, Sidewalks, Lighting, or Drainage
- Presence of Overhead Utilities or Billboards
- Inadequate Fire Protection Facilities/Hydrants
- Inadequate Sanitation or Water Systems
- Unusual Topography

Vacancy

The following conditions are evidence of Urban Renewal Law blight factor “(k) the existence of health, safety, or welfare factors requiring high levels of municipal services or substantial physical underutilization or vacancy of sites, buildings, or other improvements.” Various examples of features that fulfill this criterion include:

- An Undeveloped Parcel in a Generally Urbanized Area
- Disproportionately Underdeveloped Parcel
- Vacant Structures
- Vacant Units in Multi-Unit Structures

Other Considerations

The remaining six blight factors specified in the Urban Renewal Law were not investigated further due to sufficient evidence from the visual field survey supporting a condition of blight in 5 of the 11 blight factors.

- (a) *Slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures;*
- (c) *Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness.*
- (g) *Defective or unusual conditions of title rendering the title nonmarketable.*
- (h) *The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes.*
- (i) *Buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work in because of building code violations, dilapidation, deterioration, defective design, physical construction, or faulty or inadequate facilities.*
- (j) *Environmental contamination of buildings or property.*

Results of Field Survey

This section summarizes the findings of the visual field survey of the Study Area conducted in March 2025. **Table 2** documents the specific blight conditions observed. These conditions are further detailed following the table, for each specific category, and include image documentation.

Table 2. Blight Conditions Observed in Study Area

Conditions Observed			
Street Layout	2.01	Inadequate Street or Alley Width / Cross-section / Geometry	
	2.02	Poor Provisions or Unsafe Conditions for Vehicular Traffic	X
	2.03	Poor Provisions or Unsafe Conditions for Pedestrians	X
	2.04	Insufficient Roadway Capacity Leading to Unusual Congestion	
	2.05	Inadequate Emergency Vehicle Access	
	2.06	Poor Vehicular or Pedestrian Access to Buildings or Sites	
	2.07	Excessive Curb Cuts / Driveways along Commercial Blocks	
	2.08	Poor Internal Vehicular or Pedestrian Circulation	X
Unsafe / Unsanitary	4.01	Floodplains or Flood Prone Areas	
	4.02	Inadequate Storm Drainage Systems/Evidence of Standing Water	
	4.03	Poor Fire Protection Facilities	
	4.04	Above Average Incidences of Public Safety Responses	
	4.05	Inadequate Sanitation or Water Systems	
	4.06	Existence of Contaminants or Hazardous Conditions or Materials	
	4.07	High or Unusual Crime Statistics	
	4.08	Open / Unenclosed Trash Dumpsters	
	4.09	Cracked or Uneven Surfaces for Pedestrians	
	4.10	Illegal Dumping / Excessive Litter	X
	4.11	Vagrants/Vandalism/Graffiti/Gang Activity	X
	4.12	Open Ditches, Holes, or Trenches in Pedestrian Areas	
Site Improvements	5.01	Neglected Properties or Evidence of Maintenance Deficiencies	
	5.02	Deteriorated Signage or Lighting	
	5.03	Deteriorated Fences, Walls, or Gates	
	5.04	Deteriorated On-Site Parking Surfaces, Curb & Gutter, or Sidewalks	X
	5.05	Unpaved Parking Lot (Commercial Properties)	
	5.06	Poor Parking Lot / Driveway Layout	
	5.07	Poorly Maintained Landscaping / Overgrown Vegetation	X
Infrastructure	6.01	Deteriorated pavement, curb, sidewalks, lighting, or drainage	
	6.02	Lack of pavement, curb, sidewalks, lighting, or drainage	X
	6.03	Presence of Overhead Utilities or Billboards	X
	6.04	Inadequate Fire Protection Facilities / Hydrants	
	6.05	Inadequate Sanitation or Water Systems	
	6.06	Unusual Topography	
Vacancy	11.04	An Undeveloped Parcel in a Generally Urbanized Area	X
	11.05	Disproportionately Underdeveloped Parcel	
	11.06	Vacant Structures	
	11.07	Vacant Units in Multi-Unit Structures	

1. Street Layout; predominance of defective or inadequate street layout

At the intersection of Mount View Lane, poor provisions of the streets for vehicular traffic and poor internal vehicular circulation were observed with the diagonal intersection of Cragmor Road that causes vehicular safety issues, shown in **Figure 2**. The angle of Cragmor Road that intersects Mount View Lane and North Weber Street creates an odd 4-way intersection with only stop signs at Cragmor Road and North Weber Street. This causes poor visibility that impacts traffic safety.

Throughout most of the Study Area, provisions of walkways for pedestrians were observed in the form of a lack of sidewalks. In particular, the sidewalk at the north side of the Study Area along North Weber Street abruptly stops at the parking lot and creates a gap in the pedestrian network, shown in **Figure 3**. During the site visit pedestrians were observed walking along the side of North Weber Road due to the lack of sidewalks. Additionally, there are no sidewalks or pedestrian improvements along parcel 2 and on the east side of parcel 1.

Figure 2. Poor Provision of Street Improvements



Figure 3. Lack of Sidewalks

2. *Unsafe/Unsanitary: unsaitary or unsafe conditions*

Throughout the Study Area unsafe and unsanitary conditions were documented, including illegal dumping, excessive litter, and vandalism. Illegal dumping was observed on parcel 2 at the southern portion of the Study Area with old furniture in disrepair, shown in **Figure 4**. Excessive litter was observed and documented throughout the properties and was especially apparent on parcel 2, shown in **Figure 5**. This included general trash, drink containers, cardboard, plastic bags, a tire, and former building materials. There was evidence of vandalism in the Study Area, shown in **Figure 6**.

Figure 4. Illegal Dumping



Figure 5. Excessive Litter





Figure 6. Evidence of Vandalism



3. Site Improvements: deterioration of site or other improvements

There are very minimal site improvements on the properties. Of the improvements in place, deterioration of parking surfaces and overgrown vegetation were observed. The parking lot on parcel 1 on the north side of the Study Area shows sign of deterioration with cracked pavement and no lines/markings for designated spaces, shown in **Figure 7**. There was also evidence of overgrown vegetation directly south of the existing parking lot, shown in **Figure 8**. Overall, there was evidence that the properties have been neglected with little maintenance.

Figure 7. Deteriorated On-site Parking Surfaces



Figure 8. Overgrown Vegetation



4. Infrastructure: unusual topography or inadequate public improvements or utilities

Inadequate infrastructure was observed throughout the Study Area, predominately in the form of missing curb, gutter/drainage, and sidewalks, shown in **Figure 9**. Additionally, overhead utilities were present along Cragmor Road, shown in **Figure 10**.

Figure 9. Lack of Curb, Gutter/Drainage, and Sidewalks



Figure 10. Presence of Overhead Utilities



5. *Vacancy: the existence of health, safety, or welfare factors requiring high levels of municipal services or substantial physical underutilization or vacancy of sites, buildings, or other improvements.*

The entire 4.4-acre Study Area is vacant with no building improvements. The properties are surrounded by development, shown in **Figure 11**, with an education center directly north, Bruin Manor Apartments and an auto shop east, and 7-Eleven and other commercial properties west and south. This area in northern Colorado Springs near University of Colorado Colorado Springs is largely builtout and the Study Area is one of the few remaining sites undeveloped.

Figure 11. Vacant Property in Generally Urbanized Area



3. Conclusions

Based on the definition of a blighted area in the Colorado Urban Renewal Law, Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) § 31-25-101 et seq., and based on the field survey results of the Study Area, EPS concludes that the Study Area is a blighted area as defined in the Colorado Urban Renewal Law, Colorado Revised Statutes (C.R.S.) § 31-25-101 et seq.

The visual field survey conducted in March 2025 documented 5 of the 11 factors of blight within the Study Area. Therefore, this blighted area, as written in the Urban Renewal Law, “substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability, and is a menace to the public health, safety, morals, or welfare.”

Evidence of the following Urban Renewal Law blight factors are documented in this report:

- (b) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout.*
- (d) Unsanitary or unsafe conditions.*
- (e) Deterioration of site or other improvements.*
- (f) Unusual topography or inadequate public improvements or utilities.*
- (k.5) The existence of health, safety, or welfare factors requiring high levels of municipal services or substantial physical underutilization or vacancy of sites, buildings, or other improvements.*

Evidence of the following Urban Renewal Law blight factors were not visually observable, and based on the presence of other, more significant physical conditions, these factors of blight did not warrant further investigation.

- (a) Slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures.*
- (c) Faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility, or usefulness.*
- (g) Defective or unusual conditions of title rendering the title nonmarketable.*
- (h) The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes.*
- (i) Buildings that are unsafe or unhealthy for persons to live or work in because of building code violations, dilapidation, deterioration, defective design, physical construction, or faulty or inadequate facilities.*
- (j) Environmental contamination of buildings or property.*

As established by Urban Renewal case law in Colorado, this assessment is based on the condition of the Study Area as a whole. There is substantial evidence and documentation of 5 of the 11 blight factors in the Study Area as a whole.