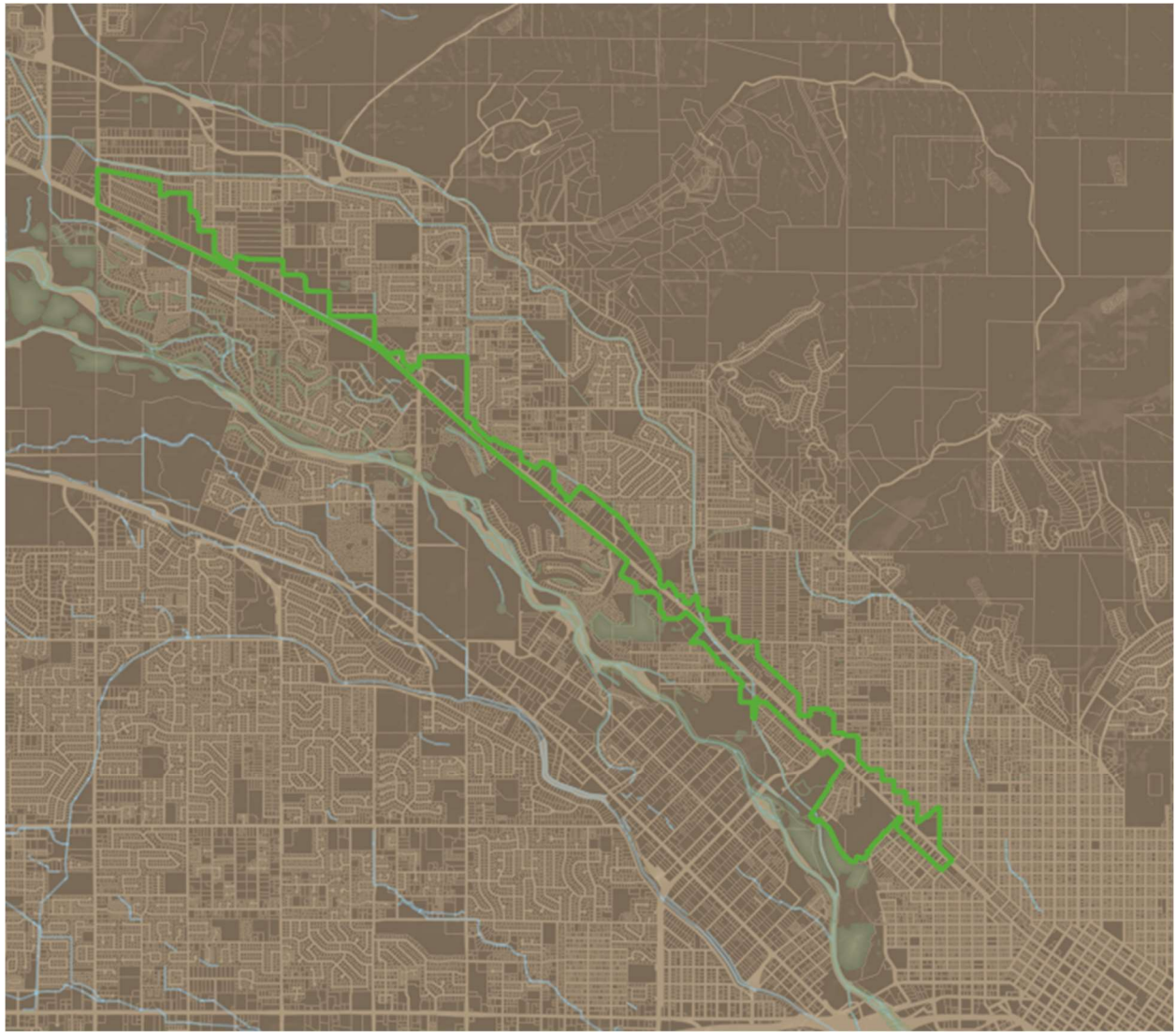


State Street Study Area Urban Renewal Eligibility Report



May 2019

prepared by

 **LELAND CONSULTING GROUP**

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Background

As the urban renewal agency for the City of Boise, Capital City Development Corporation (CCDC), is considering an opportunity to create a new urban renewal district along State Street to support a range of community development, infrastructure, and capital investments that have been the subject of many years of planning. One of the first steps in the creation of an urban renewal district is to conduct an eligibility study to determine whether physical and economic conditions are present that meet the eligibility criteria established in Title 50, Chapter 20 (Urban Renewal Law) and Chapter 29 (Local Economic Development Act) of the Idaho Code. To meet this requirement, CCDC engaged Leland Consulting Group (LCG) to analyze existing conditions in the proposed urban renewal area (the Study Area).

Process and Approach

The analysis summarized here is explicitly intended to provide an objective assessment of conditions within the proposed urban renewal area. This documentation is intended to provide CCDC and City leadership with evidence to aid those bodies in their official decision as to whether the Study Area constitutes a deteriorated area or deteriorating area eligible to be designated as an urban renewal project area.

Evidence of Study Area conditions was gathered using the following methods:

- Direct field observation,
- Geographic information systems (GIS) analysis of spatial data (including Ada County Assessor's parcel data, FEMA flood hazard maps, Police Department data on calls for service (for criminal activity and traffic accidents), code enforcement call records¹, and aerial imagery),
- Follow-up web-based research, and
- Discussions with CCDC and City of Boise staff.

Both the field observations and GIS analysis initially employed a detailed mapping of individual parcels along the Study Area to help ensure a thorough and exhaustive survey of the entire area. Findings, however, are reported and mapped here using individual points and areas without direct reference to individual parcels. This approach balances a reasonable effort to respect the privacy of owners and residents while still preserving the specificity of evidence for purposes of reaching eligibility conclusions.

Existing Conditions Overview

Study Area Geography

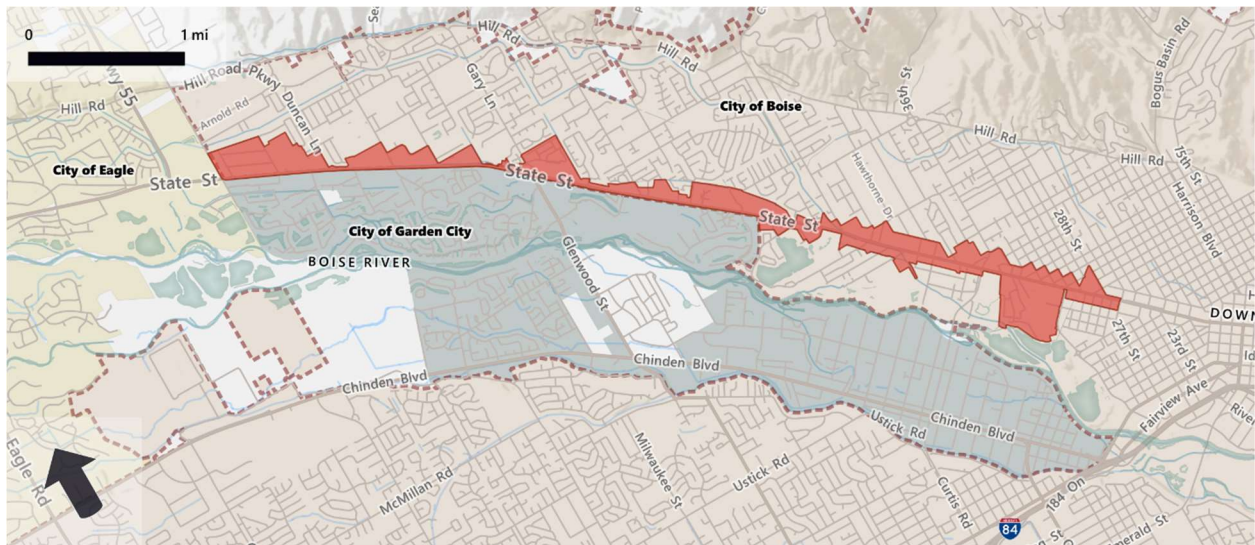
The Study Area is a generally linear corridor of parcels within the City of Boise along State Street from Horseshoe Bend Road on the west to 27th Street on the east – a linear span of just under six miles. State Street is

¹ Code enforcement call records were not relied upon as direct evidence of qualifying conditions, but rather provided an additional reference for cross-checking information gathered by other means (primarily direct field observation).

the local name for the portion of Idaho State Highway 44 connecting downtown Boise with the City of Eagle to the northwest.

The Study Area encompasses approximately 575 total acres, comprised of 442 acres within 651 legal parcels (tax lots) and the remainder within non-parcelized (primarily road right-of-way) areas. The whole Study Area lies within Ada County, Idaho, and is almost entirely within the City of Boise. Currently a portion of State Street is within the Garden City city limits and there is one parcel that is located in unincorporated Ada County. The City of Boise is working on boundary adjustments to include the full width of the State Street right-of-way and all adjacent parcels on the north side between Glenwood and Horseshoe Bend within Boise city limits by the end of 2019. The Study Area is depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Study Area Locator



Existing Land Uses

Analysis of existing land uses within the Study Area began with Ada County assessor's parcel data. However, in ground-truthing the parcel data, it was determined that assessment categories used to designate occupancy/land-use types could be somewhat misleading or lacking in specificity (or, in some cases, outdated or incorrect). Thus, Table 1 is entirely reflective of conditions observed on the ground as of April 2018 – using logical groupings not necessarily consistent with those used for taxation purposes.

As shown, the Study Area includes a diverse mix of commercial, residential and public or quasi-public land uses. This land use diversity is, in part, driven by the Study Area's evolving role in the regional economy – with rural and semi-rural homes and activities, more reflective of the area's historical pre-annexation days, now standing alongside newly-constructed homes and neighborhood-serving retail centers.

Table 1: Observed Study Area Land Uses

Land Use	Parcels	Acres
Commercial Parcels- Total	241	202.8
Retail	105	85.8
Light Industrial (incl. self-storage)	23	37.1
Nursery/Landscape	5	25.0
Auto Sales/Service	20	14.7
Office	28	10.4
Parking	9	5.8
Medical/Dental/Clinic	7	4.9
Lodging	1	0.4
Vacant Land	34	17.1
Vacant Buildings (long-term)	5	1.3
Private ROW/Common Areas	4	0.3
Residential Parcels - Total	396	167.4
Single Family	273	68.4
Mobile Home Park	6	26.0
Agricultural Homesteads	6	24.1
Multifamily	39	18.7
Multifamily (under Construction)	33	6.4
Group/Nursing Homes	4	5.3
Common Areas & Private ROW	16	5.9
Parking	2	1.5
Duplex	4	0.7
Vacant Land	13	10.4
Public/Quasi-Public Parcels - Total	14	71.6
Idaho Transportation Department	1	44.6
Schools, Churches, Fire Stations	7	23.3
Creek/Road	1	2.1
Utility	4	1.5
ACHD (non-ROW parcels)	1	0.1
Total Parcelized Land	651	441.8
Rights-of-Way & Other Non-Parcelized Land		127.5
Total Area		574.6

Source: LCG field observation with acreages derived from Ada County Assessor data and GIS analysis

*The ITD property was included in an urban renewal eligibility study in 2008, but later excluded from what became the 30th Street Urban Renewal Project Area

Figure 2: West Study Area Observed Land Uses

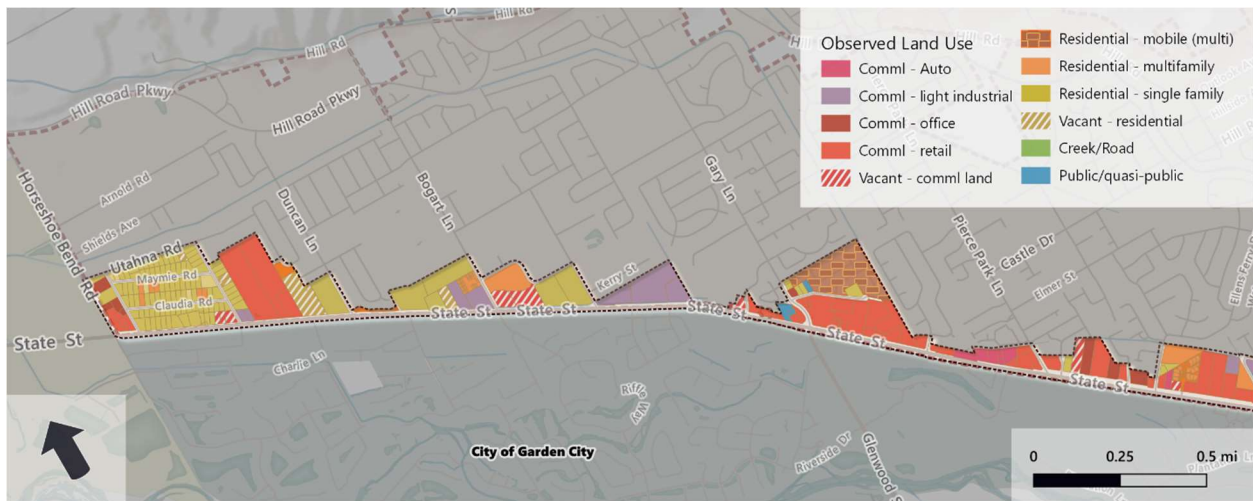
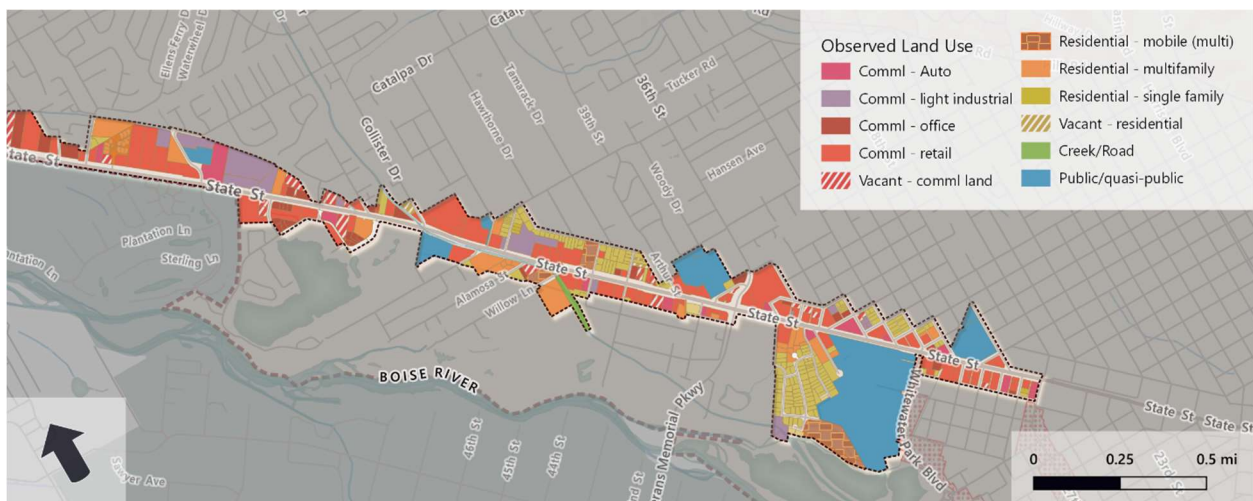


Figure 3: East Study Area Land Uses



Source: LCG field observation with parcel boundary GIS from Ada County Assessor

Commercial

More than half of the Study Area parcel acreage is devoted to commercial use (or potential use, in the case of zoned vacant land), with retail uses on 85.2 acres, comprising approximately half of occupied commercial land.

Approximately 880,000 square feet of leasable building space is in shopping centers, restaurants and other typical retail properties, including over 300,000 square feet within the Northgate Shopping Center alone (anchored by Albertson's, Rite Aid, Goodwill, etc.).

Other, less conventional, retail properties in the Study Area are engaged in more land-intensive businesses such as vehicle sales and service and garden/nursery centers. Despite accounting for nearly 1.7 million square feet of parcel land area, these landscape and automotive businesses operate out of less than 140,000 square feet of combined leasable building space. Almost all the Study Area buildings used for automotive and landscape establishments were constructed in the 1980s or earlier.

Non-retail commercial activity takes place in just over 150,000 square feet of office building space (including medical) and a similar quantity of light industrial/warehouse space.

Approximately 17 acres across 33 parcels are zoned for commercial use but are currently undeveloped vacant land.

Residential

Residential uses are represented in considerable variety throughout the area, from agricultural homesteads and mobile home parks (together totaling over 50 acres) to medium density townhomes and rental apartments.

Excluding mobile homes and the six agricultural homesteads, there are 273 single-family houses in the Study Area, using 68.4 acres of land in total, ranging in size and character from semi-rural, lower densities more common on the western half of the Study Area, to smaller lots closer in to downtown Boise on the east.

There are two centrally-owned mobile home parks with 110 total housing units. Another 210 housing units are found in the Study Area's six apartment properties. Finally, during the April 2018 field survey, approximately 84 townhouse units were under construction on two projects on either side of Bogart Lane, near the Study Area's west end (and are now likely completed).

Public and Quasi-Public

The Study Area's largest single parcel (in fact, the only parcel larger than 10 acres) is the 44.6-acre Idaho Transportation Department (ITD) headquarters property at 3311 West State Street. Excluding the non-parcelized transportation rights-of-way, the ITD lot comprises the lion's share of all Study Area public and quasi-public acreage. Parcels owned by school, church, and fire department users together comprise 23.3 acres.

Determinants of Eligibility

Under Title 50, Chapters 20 and 29, Idaho Code, an area's eligibility for treatment as an urban renewal project is largely governed by the presence and predominance of deterioration, in various forms, considered harmful to the growth and well-being of the community. The concept of deterioration is divided somewhat arbitrarily into two terms: "deteriorated area" and "deteriorating area." Note that while the emphasis is clearly physical deterioration, the definition subcategories extend into related concepts of infrastructure inadequacy, obsolescence, and other threats to sound growth and safety.

Definitions drawn from Idaho Code Section 50-2018(8,9) and 50-2903(8) are as follows:

1. Deteriorated Area

...[A]n area in which there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether residential or non-residential, which by reason of:

- a) Dilapidation;*
- b) Deterioration;*
- c) Age or obsolescence;*
- d) Inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation or open spaces;*

- e) High density of population and overcrowding;*
 - f) Existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes; or*
 - g) Any combination of such factors;*
- is conducive to ill health, transmission of disease, infant mortality, juvenile delinquency, or crime and is detrimental to the public health, safety morals or welfare.*

Idaho Code Sections 50-2018(8) and 50-2903 (8)(a).

2. Deteriorating Area

- ...[A]n area which by reason of:*
- a) The presence of a substantial number of 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) Insanitary or unsafe conditions;*
 - e) Deterioration of site or other improvements;*
 - f) Diversity of ownership;*
 - g) Tax or special assessment delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land;*
 - h) Defective or unusual conditions of title;*
 - i) Existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes; or*
 - j) Any combination of such factors;*
- results in economic underdevelopment of the area, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of a 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 in its present condition and use.*

Idaho Code Sections 50-2018(9) and 50-2903 (8)(b).

Under Idaho Code Section 50-2008(a), an urban renewal project can be initiated if *either* the “deteriorated area” or “deteriorating area” definitions are met. Given the degree of overlap in the two definitions, LCG has chosen to present findings using the more specific subcategories for the latter. Findings presented below cover applicable subcategories of “deteriorating area” (re-ordered to keep similar topics together).

Findings: Deteriorating Area

Consistent with the broad diversity of land uses already described, the Study Area also includes a wide range of building, site and infrastructure conditions. As with land use variety, the range of deterioration findings appears to be reflective of State Street’s unique position within the shifting urban geography of metropolitan Boise.

Properties and municipal facilities that were once on the rural edge of the city are now surrounded and intermixed with newer urbanized development.

Deteriorated or Deteriorating Structures

Types of Structural Deterioration

Based on firsthand site observation and examination of recent aerial and street-level photography (but without any internal inspection of buildings) LCG documented instances of structural deterioration scattered throughout the Study Area, most typically in the form of:

- Roof damage
- Extensive peeling paint
- Rotted or extensively weathered cladding, fascia and soffits
- Cracked walls, including potential evidence of foundation damage
- Damaged windows or doors
- General dilapidation

Although not predominant throughout the Study Area, the observed evidence appears to meet the “deteriorating area” definition’s requirement for “presence of a substantial number of [...] deteriorating structures” for the Study Area as a whole.

Examples of Structural Deterioration

Examples of structural deterioration are shown in the photographs below, and their geographic distribution throughout the Study Area is depicted in the maps that follow.



Deteriorating roof, walls/paint, fascia, windows



Deteriorating fascia/soffits, roof, walls, etc.



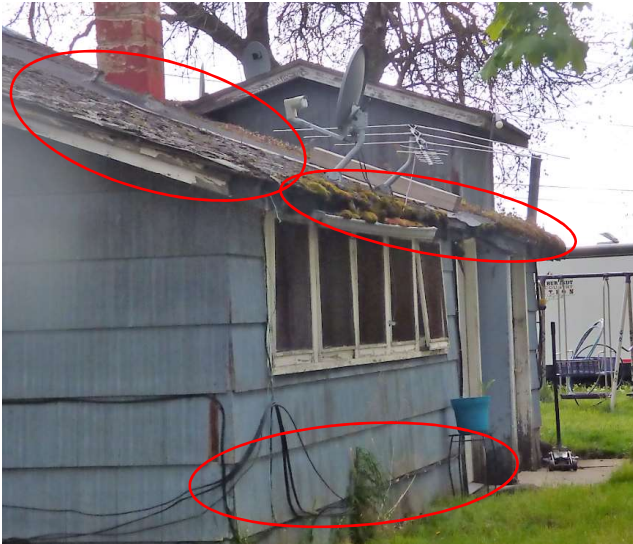
Deteriorating windows, fascia/soffits, roof, walls, etc.



Deteriorating roof, fascia, paint; rusting wall (background metal structure)



Deteriorating masonry, paint, bay doors; evidence of foundation problems



Deteriorating roof, fascia, siding, chimney, gutters, windows, etc.



Extensive roof damage, deteriorating siding, paint, shutters, etc.



Deteriorating upper walls/parapets, bay door paint, signage; evidence of roof drainage problems



Dilapidated barns



Deteriorating roof & primary signage/parapet



Deteriorating exterior walls/siding, paint, signage; rusted roof flashing



Deteriorating roofs

The locations of instances of structural deterioration found through direct field observation (and follow-up research) are illustrated alongside related examples of site deterioration in Figure 4, on page 19.

Preliminary Conclusion

a) The presence of a substantial number of deteriorated or deteriorating structures;

This criterion for urban renewal eligibility is present in varying degrees throughout the Study Area, though not as widespread as site deterioration.



Site Deterioration

On the whole, deterioration of sites is more common within this Study Area than structural deterioration. While many properties, both new and old, are quite well maintained in terms of landscape, parking lots, and other site conditions, there are numerous and rather widespread instances of deteriorating sites and non-primary improvements.

As with structural deterioration, observed instances of deteriorating sites was prevalent on many aging residential properties, especially on some parcels formerly used for agricultural activities. Vacant lots and more industrialized land uses (including certain automotive service categories) were also more prone to signs of deferred maintenance, weeds and trash.

Types of Site Deterioration

The most common types of site deterioration were noted in the following categories:

- Cracked or damaged parking lots
- Excessive trash, junk or other debris including illegal dumping
- Extensive weed growth, or other serious lack of landscape maintenance
- Unpaved alleys or primary driveways
- Damaged or dilapidated signage, fences, gates, or outbuildings
- Inadequate site drainage

Because of the semi-rural historic nature of much of the Study Area, site deterioration due to dirt or gravel alleys, driveways and parking areas is quite common. Similarly, curbs and gutters are absent along most of State Street itself and throughout many of the surrounding Study Area neighborhoods.

Functioning curbs and gutters, along with paved alleys, parking lots and driveways, are taken for granted as integral to almost all new subdivisions and street improvement projects elsewhere in the city, as necessary modern urban infrastructure in support of sound safety, drainage, lawn appearance, and access management. While lack of such infrastructure is not necessarily a sign of physical deterioration, their absence is likely to present public safety hazards and may deter sound development – particularly relative to areas with modern infrastructure.

Examples of Site Deterioration



Site deterioration, including poor drainage, weeds, haphazard parking, etc.



Parking surface deterioration and poor drainage



ITD parking lot deterioration



General site maintenance issues; lack of curb/gutter, deteriorating signage, gravel lot, etc.



Deteriorating sidewalk, gravel/dirt driveway, weeds, junk storage



Dumping, excessive weeds, no curb/gutter, fire hazards, etc.



Deteriorating signage



Cracked sidewalk, abrupt sidewalk end, deteriorating gutter, site/landscape maintenance



Unmarked & deteriorating parking lot amid overhead utility poles, unsafe sidewalk, deteriorated crosswalk



Deteriorating street, no sidewalk, no curb/gutter, weeds, drainage/erosion issues



Deteriorating parking surface with faded/missing space markings



Deteriorating parking surface with faded/missing space markings



New sidewalk, but street margin deterioration and no curb/gutter



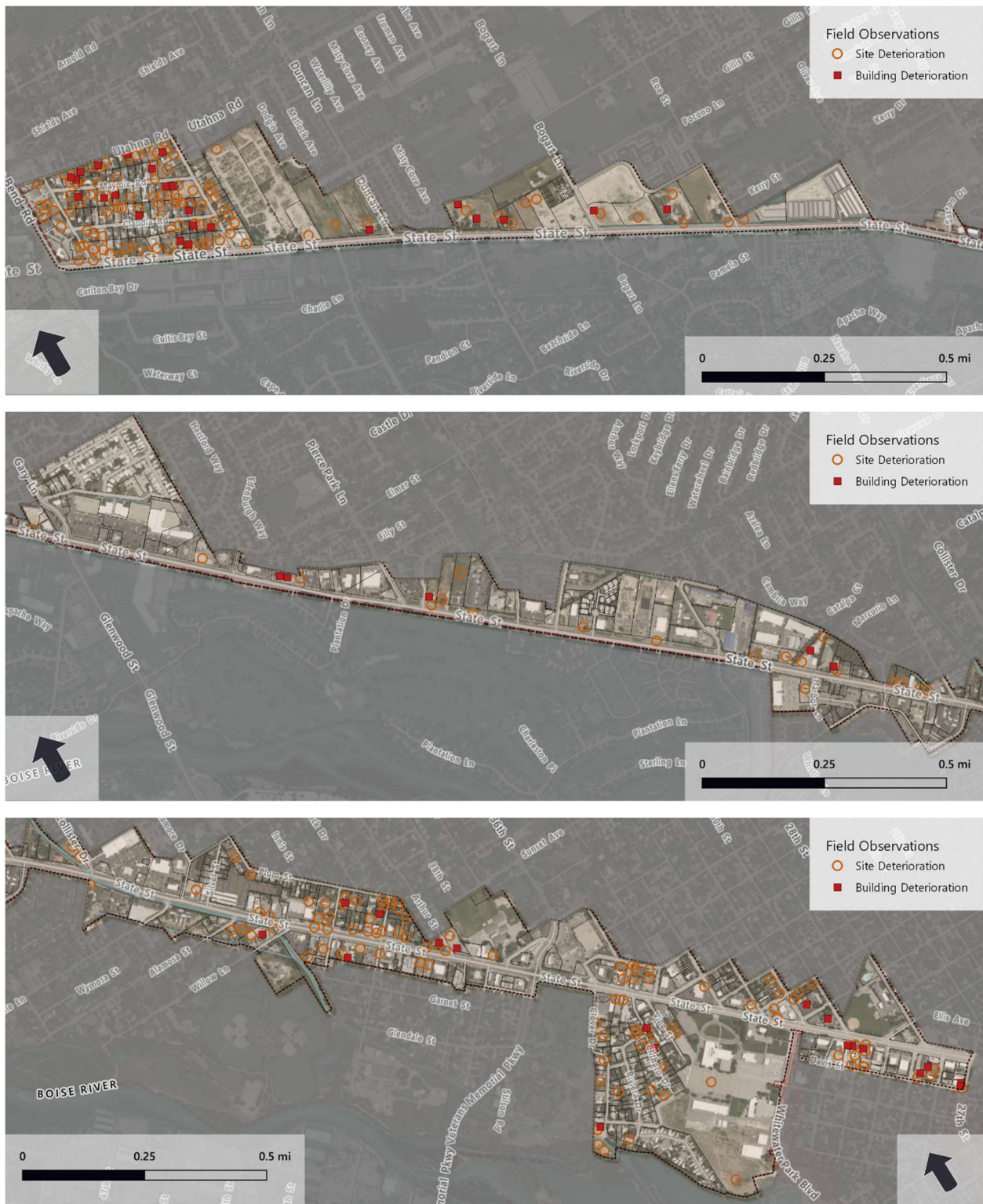
Sign damage, deteriorated street margin, drainage problems



Badly deteriorated street margin, no curb/gutter; sidewalk area used for truck parking



Figure 4: Deterioration of Sites and Buildings (West, Central, East Study Area)



Preliminary Conclusion

e) Deterioration of sites or other improvements

This criterion for urban renewal eligibility is widespread within the Study Area, though somewhat less pervasive among the newer development in the central portion.



Defective or Inadequate Street Layout

Street placement and network connectivity along State Street are made difficult largely due to three factors: diagonal orientation, physical barriers, and piecemeal development of subdivisions and local road infrastructure.

Diagonal Orientation

Approximately matching downtown roadway orientations, the angle of the State Street corridor is nevertheless out of alignment with the bulk of the regular north-south grid found throughout the bulk of the surrounding metro area. This tends to create awkward intersection angles and parcel shapes where the corridor meets with streets lying on the standard orthogonal grid.

Physical Barriers

State Street runs parallel to two nearby physical features that greatly limit through-access to the northeast and southwest. The Boise Foothills, approximately one-mile northeast of the Study Area, are both prohibitively steep and tightly conserved as a natural resource, thus the effectively forming the northeastern border of the urbanized metro area.

Approximately 1,500 to 2,500-feet to the south-southwest of State Street, the Boise River is another access-limiting natural feature, with widely spaced bridge crossings found only at Glenwood St./Gary Ln. and Veterans Memorial Parkway (and an indirect crossing using Whitewater Park Blvd. to Main St., near the east end of the Study Area). These barriers, together with the diagonal overlay, result in an unusually high number of dead-end streets in the Study Area.

Piecemeal Development

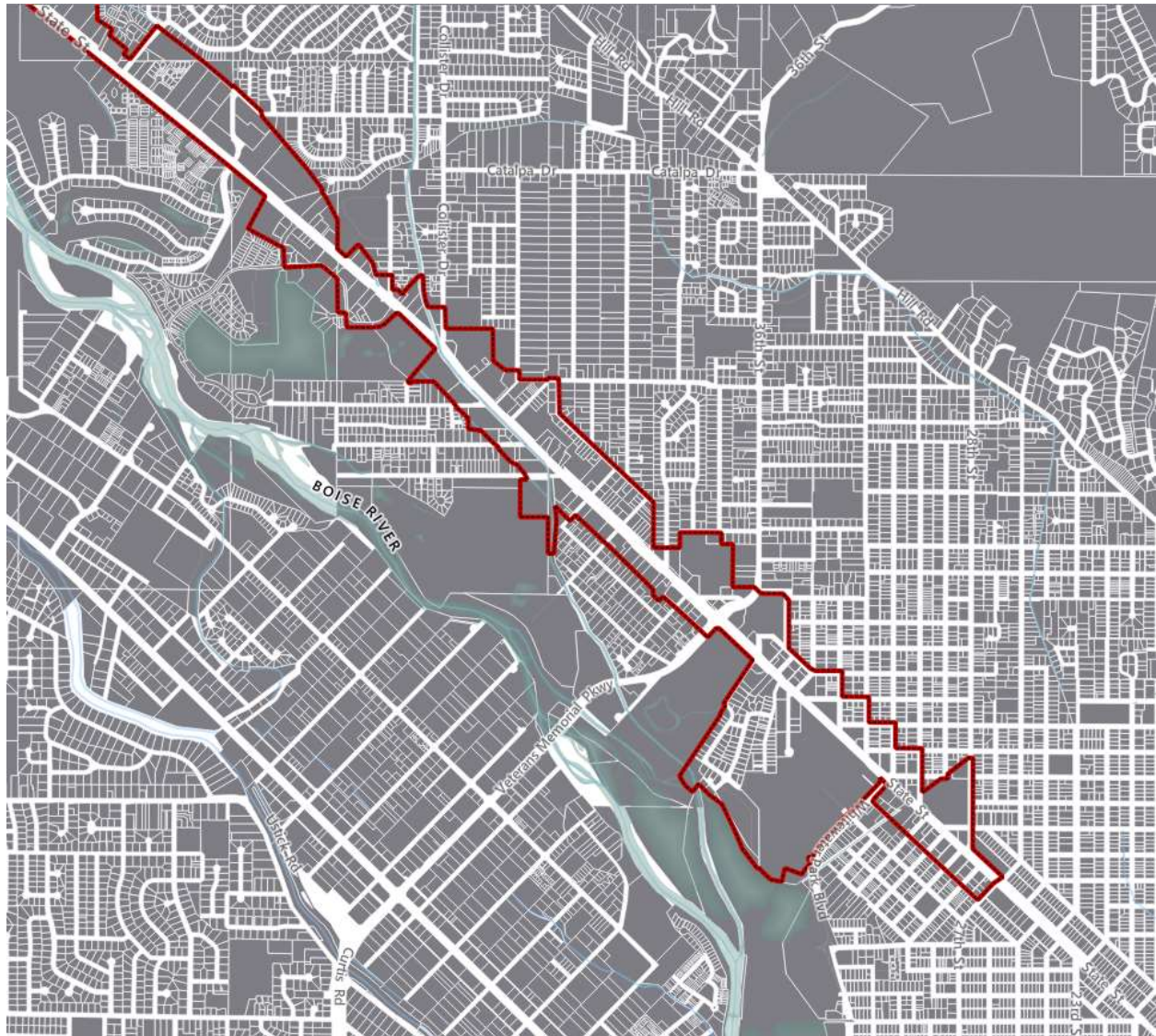
Due in equal parts to the historical role of the Study Area as an urban/rural fringe and to the physical constraints outlined above (as well as the irregular municipal boundaries), the Study Area appears to have developed for decades with a minimum of coordinated planning across major land ownerships and little willingness (or foresight) to create an integrated road network.

The resulting urban fabric stands in marked contrast to more orderly neighborhoods found just beyond the Study Area. Figure 5, showing only platting and roadways, illustrates this difference in lots and streets relative to the surrounding neighborhoods.

At the time of this analysis, the intersection of State Street and Veterans Memorial Parkway was undergoing major improvements and reconfiguration, resulting in multiple construction-related road closures, detours and

street demolition. For purposes of determining urban renewal eligibility factors, we attempted to ignore any apparent street layout or deterioration issues appearing to be related to that roadwork project.

Figure 5: Study Area Street Grid and Platting Irregularity Relative to Surrounding Areas



Types of Deterioration Related to Street Layout

For this analysis (again, excluding issues related to Veterans Memorial Parkway construction) we found the following Study Area conditions to constitute evidence of defective or inadequate street layout:

- Lack of access or continuity of traffic flow, including dead-ends
- Significant clustering of traffic accidents (using Police Department GIS records for 2015, 2016 and 2017)
- Excessive access points or lack of adequate access control, especially on State Street itself
- Unpaved alleys
- Inadequate or unsafe pedestrian and bicycle provisions

Examples of Deterioration Related to Street Layout



New curb on access road, but used for ingress/egress from State anyway



Sidewalk with multiple access points, loose gravel, deteriorated crosswalk striping, and little physical separation from heavy traffic



No curb/gutter, gravel driveway, potholes, drainage problems; no sidewalk/pedestrian safety



Sampling of Study Area dead-ends

The map in Figure 6 shows locations of dead-end streets and other instances of streets with no through access to other collectors or arterials. The far western end of the Study Area is relatively free from significant access problems.

Figure 6: Study Area Dead-Ends & Other Street Access Blockages



Source: Leland Consulting Group, based on field observation and analysis of GIS street layers

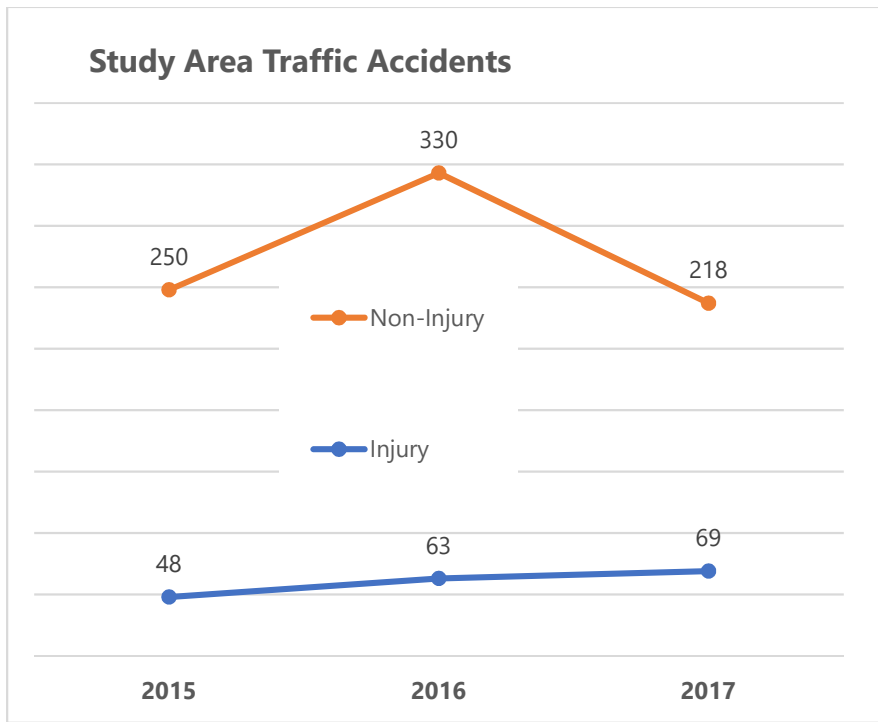
Traffic Accidents

Traffic accident data recorded by the Boise Police Department for the years 2015 through 2017 was examined to identify evidence of declining safety that could potentially be due (at least in part) to faulty, deteriorating or inadequate streets in the Study Area. Based on that dataset, LCG found that injury accidents within the Study Area increased from 48 in 2015 to 69 in 2016, an increase of 44-percent. Over the same timeframe, Boise P.D. also reported an increase in department-wide injury accidents, from 915 to 1,037, for a smaller, 13-percent increase.

Non-injury accidents in the Study Area rose between 2014 and 2015, but then more than offset that increase with a large decline in 2016, as shown in Figure 7, resulting in a two-year net decline of 13-percent. Department-

wide reports of non-injury accidents showed a similar pattern, with a year-over-year gain in 2015 followed by a larger drop in 2016 – a net decline of 16-percent over the two-year period.

Figure 7: Study Area Traffic Accidents by Year*



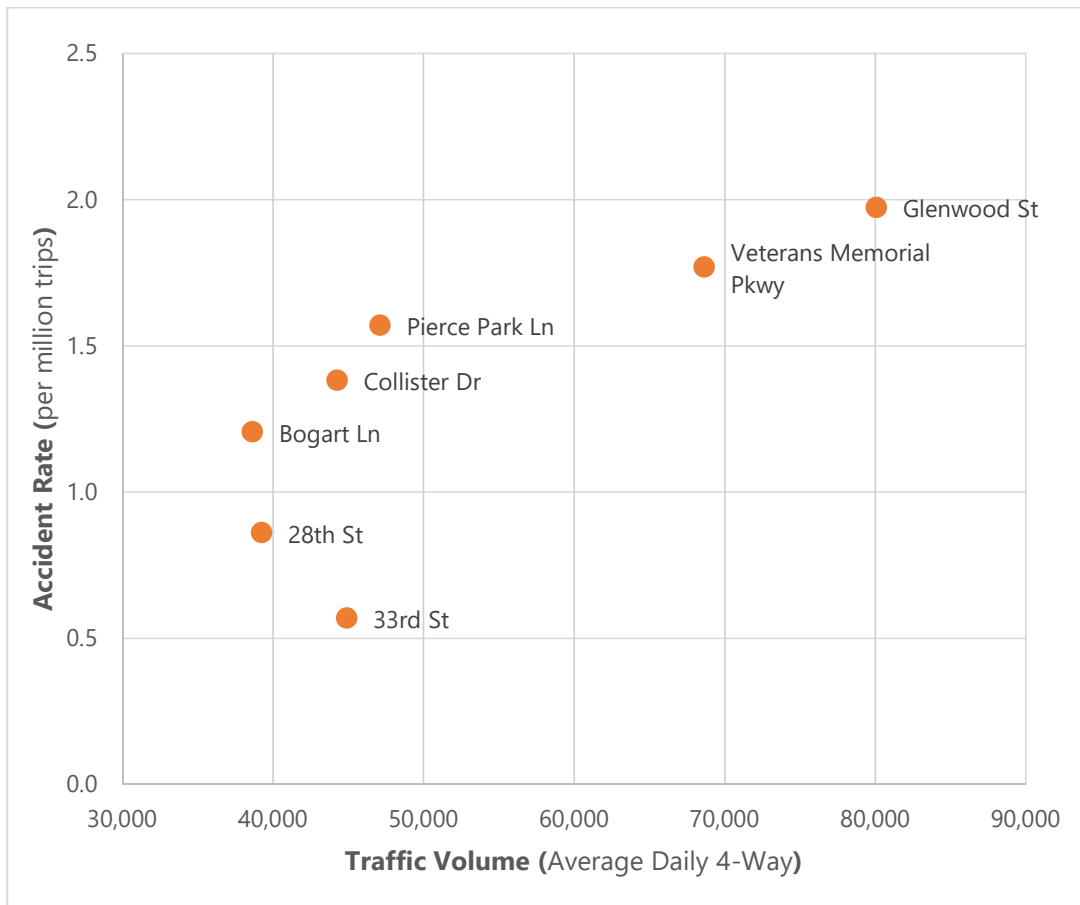
Source: Incident Reports by Boise Police Department, analyzed by Leland Consulting Group

*May understate accidents in Study Area since other jurisdictions process some incidents on State Street

Another analysis pairing accident data with traffic volume data (where available) was conducted to look for “hot spots” along the Study Area where accidents were most common, after adjusting for the volume of traffic.

As shown in Figure 8, The intersections of State Street with Glenwood Street and with Veterans Memorial Parkway are both the busiest and the most dangerous, even when adjusted for traffic volume. At Glenwood Street, there were nearly two crashes for every one million trips (combined traffic on both intersecting streets).

Figure 8: Street Traffic Accident Rates, Compared with Total Intersection Traffic Volume



Source: Leland Consulting Group analysis using Compass/ACHD traffic count data and Boise Police Department traffic accident data

Note: Accident rates for this analysis are calculated by taking the average annual total crashes (both injury and non-injury) over a three-year period (2015-2017) and dividing that number by the combined total Average Daily Traffic (ADT), in millions, across both intersection streets. While this formula enables estimates across Study Area intersections, it is not necessarily comparable to any other statistic reported by the City, ITD, ACHD, or other agencies.

Unfortunately, city-wide or regional comparison data (with accident rates adjusted for traffic volume) was not readily available for this report. That said, this report's finding regarding safety problems at Glenwood Street is consistent with a recent ITD analysis of the Boise region's most dangerous intersections. ITD analyzed hundreds of intersections across southwest Idaho and found the State/Glenwood intersection to be the 11th "most dangerous" based on crash data from 2012 to 2016.

Preliminary Conclusion

b) Predominance of defective or inadequate street layout

This criterion for urban renewal eligibility is widespread within the Study Area, though somewhat less pervasive on its western extent.



Insanitary or Unsafe Conditions

Conditions rising to the level of being unsafe or insanitary are typically a function of other deterioration categories discussed above. Deterioration of buildings and sites (including streets and pedestrian ways), when neglected or severe, can present real safety hazards. Insanitary conditions appear less likely to exist in the Study Area, but could arise in conjunction with drainage problems (due to mosquito-borne disease, for instance)

Types of Insanitary or Unsafe Conditions

For this analysis, we considered the following indicators:

- More extreme instances of site and structural deterioration, especially those presenting obvious hazards (including fire danger from extensive weeds)
- Significant clustering of violent or property crime incidents, as evidenced by GIS Police Department records of calls-for-service taking place in 2015, 2016 and 2017
- Significant clustering of traffic accidents (also using Police Department GIS records)
- Clear dangers to pedestrians, bicyclists or motorists due to problems with access points, crosswalks or sidewalks
- Evidence of storm drainage problems

Examples of Insanitary or Unsafe Conditions



Inadequate/unsafe bike/ped provisions, dead end, deteriorating curb & pavement, weeds, etc. (State & Willow)



Memorial for a bicycle fatality

Flood Hazard

Presence of flood hazard is often used as an indicator of unsafe conditions for purposes of urban renewal eligibility. Despite the proximity of the River and related wetlands, the Study Area was found to be free of significant areas of flood risk, based on mapping currently available from FEMA, with the lone exception of the mobile home park located on Riviera Drive, southwest of the Idaho Transportation Department headquarters campus. That community lies entirely within the 1-percent ("hundred-year") flood hazard area, as currently mapped. It should be noted, however, that FEMA is in the process of updating the flood risk maps for large portions of the Boise metro, including the Study Area. While it appears that this update may add or enlarge some flood hazard boundaries in the vicinity, that analysis was still ongoing at the time of this report.

Environmental Hazards

Leland Consulting Group obtained GIS layers from the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) showing the location of sites where hazardous wastes are known to be stored or emitted (legally), as well as locations of citations for mis-handling hazardous materials, presence of ongoing leaks, or ongoing clean-up activities related to previously identified contamination.

The Study Area appears to be free of known hazardous leaks (plumes or leaking underground tanks) and does not include any properties where there have been recent reports of EPA-tracked citations or violations. Known locations of hazardous emission and storage, such as gas stations and certain automotive services, appear to be operating legally, per the EPA data clearinghouse (which includes reporting from state agencies).

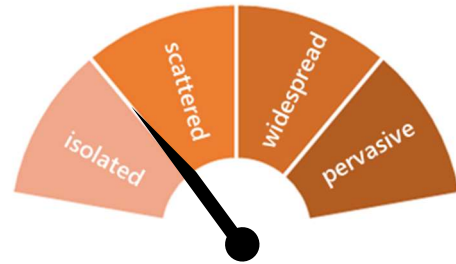
Crime

Leland Consulting Group analyzed Boise Police Department calls for service related to suspected criminal activity, both in the Study Area and citywide, for the years 2015, 2016 and 2017. While there are certainly hotspots of both violent and non-violent, property-related crime reports along the Study Area, these do not appear to be disproportionate to the surrounding area or similar mixed-use corridors throughout Boise.

Preliminary Conclusion

d) *Insanitary or unsafe conditions*

Because Idaho's Urban Renewal Law is unclear as to applicable thresholds for what is insanitary or unsafe, we conservatively assume that this eligibility indicator is less widespread than the preceding categories of deterioration.



Faulty Lot Layout

Though not, strictly speaking, a symptom of “deterioration” in its common usage, faulty lots are recognized by statute as a potential barrier to sound growth and development. Lot layouts in the Study Area suffer from many of the same irregularities—and are largely due to the same factors—as those outlined under *Faulty Street Layout*.

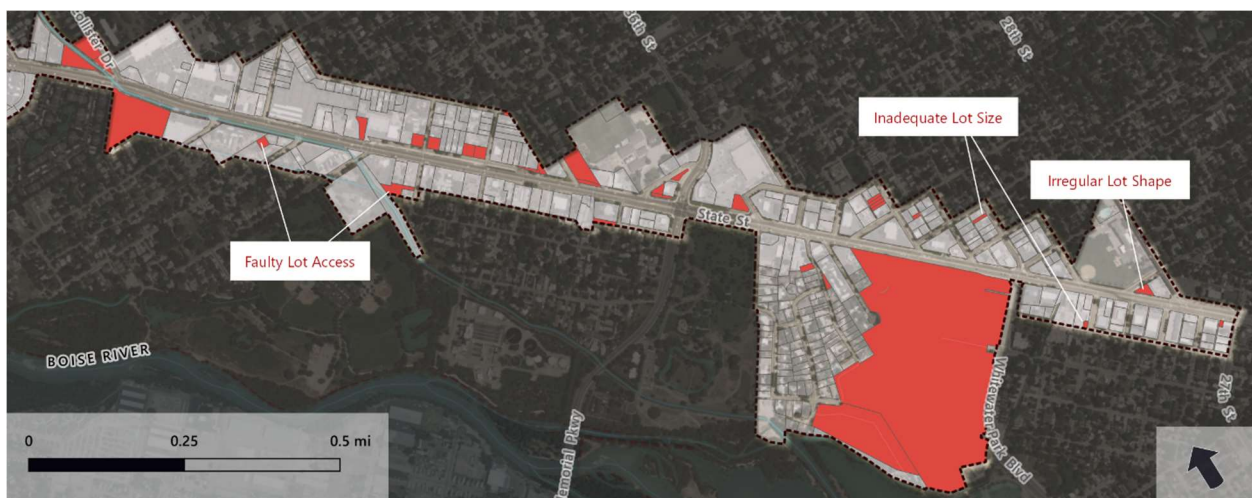
Types of Faulty Lot Layout

For this report, the following conditions were noted as indicators of faulty lots likely to present constraints on future development or redevelopment:

- Parcels smaller than 0.05 acres (approx. 2,150 square feet), especially if not assembled along with adjacent lots under the same ownership
- Triangular or other irregular parcel shapes (especially for smaller-sized lots)
- Parcels where direct access to public streets is absent or especially awkward
- Buildings bisected by parcel boundary lines

At the other end of the size spectrum, the ITD site, as a single undivided parcel of nearly 45 acres with limited access to local roads, could pose financial challenges to any potential future private redevelopment due to its sheer size. The scale of investment required for infrastructure and construction on such a large individual site would be especially daunting for Boise-area builders and lenders.

Figure 9: Faulty Lots, East Portion of Study Area



Preliminary Conclusion

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

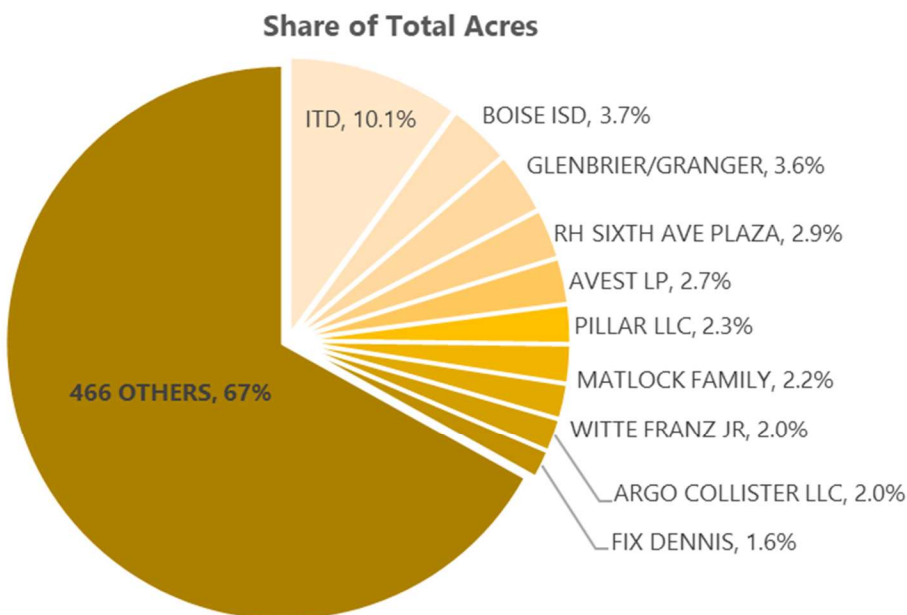
This indicator of eligibility for urban renewal status is widespread, especially on the eastern half of the Study Area.



Diversity of Ownership

Although highly fractured parcel ownership is not *necessarily* detrimental to sound growth and welfare, areas planned for redevelopment activity to address persistent problems can face considerable challenges when developers must undertake complex and expensive property assembly across multiple owners.

Figure 10: Share of Study Area Acreage by Ownership



Source: Ada County Assessor data; and LCG analysis

As shown in Figure 10, there are just ten land owners with more than 1.5 percent of the overall parcel acreage in the Study Area. This includes the 45-acre ITD headquarters parcel, which alone accounts for ten percent of Study Area acreage. After these top ten acreage owners, there are fully 466 other owners controlling the remaining 476 parcels in the Study Area.

In total, the Study Area has 476 different owners (after logical consolidation of parcel records based on similar names). Of that total, nearly 98-percent of owners control just one parcel each. The overall median property acreage per ownership entity is approximately 0.33 acres.

Preliminary Conclusion

f) Diversity of Ownership

This indicator of eligibility for urban renewal status is pervasive throughout the Study Area.



Danger from Fire & Other Causes

As with unsafe or insanitary conditions, “danger from fire and other causes” is, for the most part, redundant with other findings of deteriorating site and building conditions already described above. Excessive weed growth, dumping or junk accumulation, and building dilapidation, for example, can all increase the danger to life and property due to fire. Poor storm drainage can raise the risk of flood damage to property. Faulty street layout, street margin deterioration, and deteriorating or absent pedestrian amenities all potentially increase danger to life and vehicles (to the extent that traffic accidents can be seen as “other causes”). However, because the danger to life and property varies substantially depending on the location and severity of the aforementioned causes, this subcategory of statutory deterioration is considered to be less pervasive than any of those contributing factors.



Neglected site maintenance posing a likely fire hazard

Preliminary Conclusion

i) Existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes

This indicator of eligibility for urban renewal status is scattered throughout the Study Area.



Consideration of Agricultural and “Open Land”

Agricultural Operations

Idaho’s Urban Renewal Laws (Title 50, Chapters 20 and 29, Idaho Code) gives special consideration to lands with little or no built improvements but that are actively engaged in agricultural activities. Such agricultural operations cannot be considered eligible for urban renewal projects due to deteriorating conditions without the consent of those property owners.

Idaho Code Sections 50-2903 (8)(f) and 30-2018 (9) refer to definitions of agricultural operations laid out in the State’s “Right to Farm” laws (22-4502):

...“Agricultural operation” means an activity or condition that occurs in connection with the production of agricultural products for food, fiber, fuel and other lawful uses, and includes, without limitation:...

For purposes of the Study Area analysis, the following agricultural subcategories are most relevant:

d) Planting, irrigating, growing, fertilizing, harvesting or producing agricultural, horticultural, floricultural and viticultural crops, fruits and vegetable products, field grains, seeds, hay, sod and nursery stock, and other plants,...

(e) Breeding, hatching, raising, producing, feeding and keeping livestock, [...] and other animals,...

Open Land

Other vacant land, even if not currently used for agricultural production, may be considered as “open land” for purposes of urban renewal projects in Idaho (Idaho Code Sections 50-2018 (9) and 50-2903 (8)(c)). Unlike agricultural operations, non-agricultural open lands do *not* trigger the same need for owner consent to determine urban renewal eligibility. They do, however, require an additional analysis of community housing or service needs prior to any acquisition and reuse by an urban renewal authority, depending on whether the new use is to be residential or non-residential (Idaho Code 50-2008(d)). Unfortunately, beyond implying that such properties are not part of agricultural operations, the state’s Urban Renewal Laws provide no additional guidance as to how the term “open land” should be determined or applied (Idaho Code 50-2903(8)(c)).

Idaho Code 50-2903(8)(c) states:

“Any area which is predominately open and which because of obsolete platting, diversity of ownership, deterioration of structures or improvements, or otherwise, results in economic underdevelopment of the area or substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of a municipality. The provisions of section 50-2008(d), Idaho Code, shall apply to open areas.” (Emphasis added.)

Analysis of Study Area Parcels

While the Study Area does not include any agricultural zoning districts, there are 14 parcels with questionable status as to agricultural or open land status, as applied to the Urban Renewal Law. Twelve of the parcels in question are located on the western half of the Study Area, between the 9700 West and 8300 West blocks,

north of State Street, as shown in Figures 11 to 13. The remaining two questionable parcels, not shown in figures, are commercial nurseries doing business as retail garden centers and suppliers for landscaping contractors.

Figure 11: Possible Agricultural Operations and Open Lands, West of Duncan Lane



Figure 12: Possible Agricultural Operations and Open Lands, West of Bogart Lane

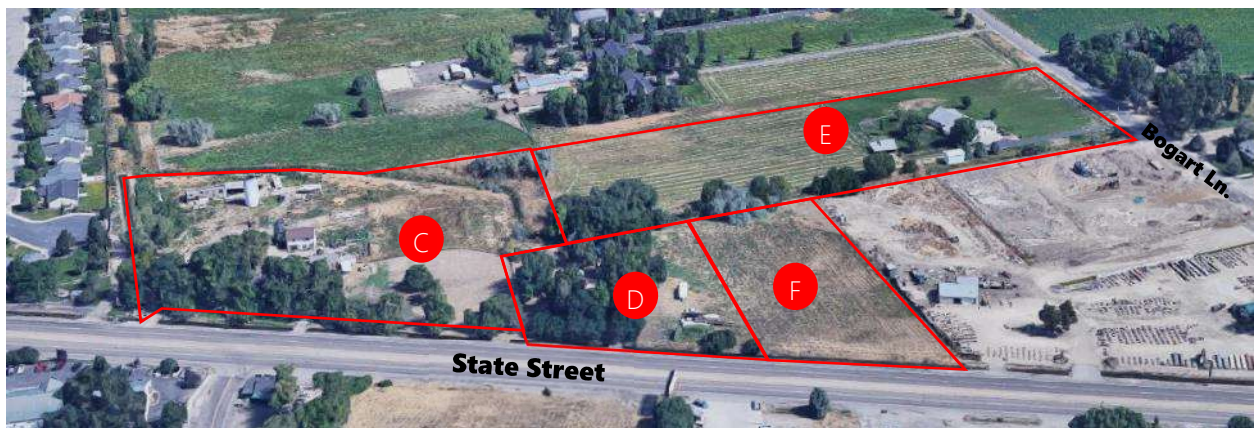


Figure 13: Possible Agricultural Operations and Open Lands, East of Bogart Lane



Source: (for all three figures) 2018 Google 3-D aerial imagery

In Table 2, we discuss arguments for and against including each parcel as an agricultural operation or an open land, relative to State Urban Renewal Law, based on a combination of assessor's parcel records, field observations, and aerial photography.

Table 2: Discussion of Potential Agricultural and Open Lands

Parcel	Evidence of Agricultural Operations or Open Lands	Evidence Against	Recommended Determination
A	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Large (5 ac.) field with no dwellings or structures Parcel records note "IRRIGATED AG" as land use, and agricultural tax rates appear to apply 2017 street view photography shows use as horse pasture 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No signs of ongoing or recent crop production (except pasture grass) Zoned residential (R1-A) 	<p>Agricultural exemption on file and strong evidence for ongoing agricultural operation</p> <p>Could also be considered open land, depending on interpretation</p>
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appears to be a former ag homestead with large field behind home(s), barns and trailers 2017 street view photography shows use as horse pasture <p>Valuation and taxes are based on assumption of 1.0-acre of residential land and 3.9-acres as IRRIGATED AG</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same ownership as parcel A 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoned residential (R1-A) 	<p>Agricultural exemption on file and strong evidence for ongoing agricultural operation</p> <p>May be open land, depending on interpretation, but could argue excluding the 1.0-acre residential portion</p>
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Barns, silos, stock tanks and other farm-related equipment and improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No signs of ongoing or recent agricultural activity Zoned residential (R1-A) with at least one occupied house (and as many as 3 other dwellings) Ag-related equipment & outbuildings appear to be in serious disrepair 	<p>Not agricultural or open land (unless used for horse pasture not visible during site observation)</p>
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faint aerial evidence of crop rows Mature trees covering approximately one-half of property's 1.6 acres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No signs of ongoing or recent agricultural activity (unirrigated crop rows covered with vehicle "donuts") Zoned residential (R1-A) with at least one occupied house 2018 aerial shows at least 17 vehicles, (incl. cars, trucks, boats, trailers) along with numerous sheds and outbuildings) 	<p>Not agricultural or open land (unless used for horse pasture not visible during site observation)</p>
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fenced pasture/lawn with at least six horses (approx. 2.2 ac.) Crops on west side of property appear to be hay (approx. 2.5 ac.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoned residential (R1-A), with 2,400 square foot house Barn-like structure does not appear to be set up for major livestock or farming operations 	<p>Would likely qualify as an agricultural operation</p>

Parcel	Evidence of Agricultural Operations or Open Lands	Evidence Against	Recommended Determination
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hay field is likely grown for on-site use (although still technically agricultural, per Idaho statutes) 	
F	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Faint aerial evidence of crop rows No built improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No signs of ongoing or recent agricultural activity 	Not currently ag land, but may be open land, depending on interpretation
G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacant lot Same ownership (address) as adjacent townhome development to the north 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoned C-2D 	Not currently ag land, but may be open land, depending on interpretation
H	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vacant lot Same ownership (address) as adjacent townhome development to the north 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoned C-2D 	Not currently ag land, but may be open land, depending on definition
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appears to be a former ag homestead 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No current ag uses visible At least one main residence, with several other trailers and smaller improvements that could be dwellings 	Not agricultural or open land
J	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4.3-acre lot with residence, barns, trailers, and mown field (hay?) covering approx. 3 ac. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zoned residential (R1-A) 	Would likely qualify as an agricultural operation

Source: LCG field observation, aerial imagery (2018 unless otherwise noted), and Ada County assessor's parcel data

The two parcels used as commercial garden centers both feature indoor retail and office operations accessible to customers from State Street with for-sale plants displayed in outdoor and semi-outdoor covered spaces transitioning to fully outdoor nursery operations for growing landscape plants and trees, along with outdoor storage and staging areas for vehicles, supplies and equipment. Both properties are classified as commercial operations for property tax purposes. Neither parcel fits a reasonable description of open land, given the buildings and ongoing commercial activities, but both could arguably be considered to include agricultural operations under the quite broad definition given in 22-4502.

Study Area-Wide Conclusions on Prevalence and Negative Effects of Observed Conditions

The above sections detail the nature and locations of occurrence for several important categories of deterioration that can be found in the Study Area. After each category, we have presented a summary determination of the pervasiveness of each factor. As discussed in the beginning of this report, eligibility for urban renewal under Idaho Code requires that such conditions be not only present but related to negative outcomes – specifically, the observed factors must be “detrimental to the public health, safety, morals or welfare.” (Idaho Code Sections 50-2018(9) and 50-2903 (8)(b)). and, when taken in combination, constitute a condition that “results in economic underdevelopment of the area, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of a 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 in its present condition and use.” (Idaho Code Section 50-2903(8) and 50-2903 (8)(b)).

It is important to recognize that the category-specific conclusions regarding the prevalence of eligibility conditions were made for each factor in isolation. While each factor may indeed have fairly obvious, logical negative impacts even in isolation, the statutory language dictates that their impacts on the public should be considered *in combination*.

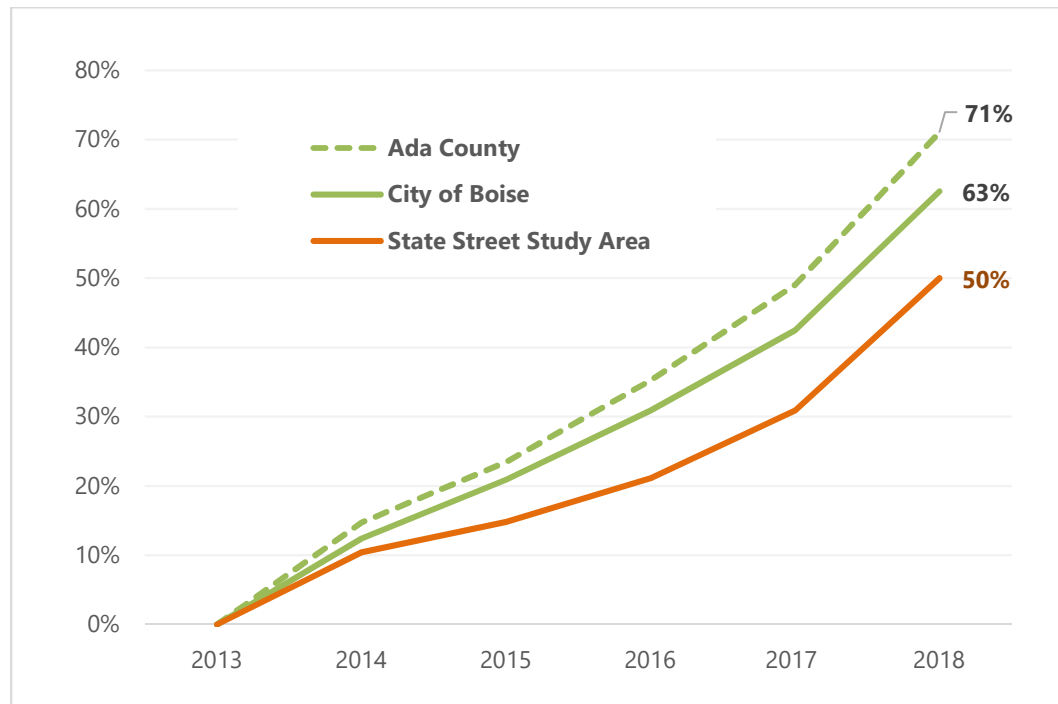
Three empirical observations lend evidence for such cumulative impacts occurring within the Study Area:

- growth in property values that lags behind the City of Boise and Ada County overall,
- economic underperformance indicated by improvement values relative to land values, and
- heightened commercial vacancies.

Property Value Growth

Boise and its surrounding metropolitan area have experienced strong post-recession economic growth, but the Study Area appears to have grown more slowly than city-wide and county-wide comparisons. Using Ada County Assessor data on property values as assessed in 2013 through 2018, this relative discrepancy in growth rate is illustrated in Figure 14.

Figure 14: Overall Percent Growth in Total Assessed Value, Study Area vs. City and County (2013 to 2018)



Source: City of Boise, using Ada County Assessor data; and Leland Consulting Group

Improvement-to-Land Value Comparison

Comparing the value of improvements (primarily buildings) on a given parcel with the value of the land yields a commonly used measure of economic land utilization by property appraisers. Parcels for which improvement values are less than the value of the land are typically considered as economically underperforming.

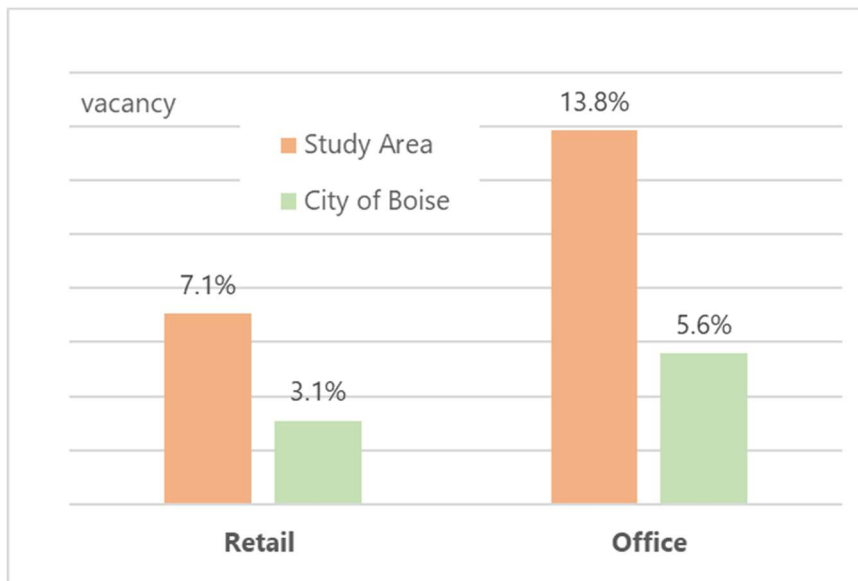
To evaluate the economic performance of the Study Area using this metric, we analyzed 2019 parcel data from the Ada County Assessor to find the percent of parcels where improvement values were less than the land value, both in the Study Area and citywide. After eliminating parcels with no value information (primarily exempt/public and common area lots) we found that 12.0 percent of parcels within the city of Boise overall had improvement values less than the land value. In comparison, the Study Area had 38.4 percent of parcels identified as economically underperforming by this measure³.

Commercial Vacancies

Another indicator of economic liability is high vacancy of commercial real estate properties. Using 2019 data from Costar, Inc., we looked at vacancy rates of retail and office properties within the Study Area relative to a citywide comparison.

³ This percentage reflects an adjustment made in favor of the Study Area sample. Because 66 of the 285 parcels in the Study Area initially flagged as economically underperforming were known to be recently subdivided lots approved for imminent construction, we scored them as already having improvement values in excess of land values. No such adjustment was attempted for the citywide comparison group.

Figure 15: Retail and Office Vacancy Rates, Study Area vs. City of Boise



Source: Costar, Inc., using May 2019 data.

For both retail and office properties, the Study Area had vacancy rates more than double the citywide comparison, as shown in Figure 15. Elevated vacancy constrains the income-generating potential of commercial real estate and tends to indicate a general competitive disadvantage in comparison to areas with more fully-occupied buildings.

Overall Conclusion

Together, this evidence lends support to an overall conclusion that **factors constituting a deteriorated and deteriorating area** are both present and prevalent and that their *combined* effect is highly likely to impose a serious negative impact on the Study Area: hindering sound growth, constituting an economic liability, and threatening the public welfare of this portion of the City of Boise.

A Classic Case of Challenges and Potential

The Challenge

The State Street Study Area appears to represent a classic case of deterioration of the type found along arterial corridors when the transition from rural to urban has proceeded unevenly, in incremental bursts—where the development community has managed, in places, to respond to growing market demand despite barriers posed by diverse ownership, awkward street layouts, difficult lots, and little coordinated planning guidance. As the Boise metropolitan area has grown, what were once the outskirts of Garden City, Eagle and Boise City have begun to merge, with State Street as a somewhat neglected urban seam. The widespread deterioration of both buildings and sites has become both a symptom and cause of this conflict.

Many of the remaining pockets of rural, natural space along State Street are not only attractive, but are a positive reminder of Boise's unique Western character – deserving of protection and integration into a forward-looking areawide plan. That said, the geographic importance of the Study Area as an inter-urban gateway and as an only partially-tapped outlet for metro growth is hard to ignore. Without concerted attention, the remaining opportunities for sound growth and development are dwindling, along with the chances for optimizing the street as a much-needed transportation asset.

The Potential

Fortunately, the Study Area is also a very good candidate for significant improvement through classic urban renewal approaches. Those fundamental tools: strategic improvements to the infrastructure of the street itself (especially the safety and appearance of the street margin, intersections, drainage systems, and pedestrian/bicycle accommodations), along with careful assembly and land preparation of potential catalyst development sites, appear very likely to attract complementary private-sector investment. In combination, that leveraged spending stands to reveal a promising upside for State Street, not only in terms of economic yields, but in advancing the public welfare and safety of Boise residents well beyond what is likely to occur in the absence of an urban renewal framework.