

# Emily Griffith Technical College Conditions Study

July 2017





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## Section 1: Study Overview

### Purpose

The College of Trades and Industry at the Emily Griffith Technical College has recently vacated its former campus in downtown Denver, Colorado and relocated to a new facility in Denver's La Alma neighborhood. The former campus occupies an entire city block and now lies vacant in a corner of downtown that is generally underutilized.

The original structure on the former campus dates to circa 1925, and has been granted historic status by the Denver City Council, which means that certain elements of the structures will need to be preserved during any adaptive reuse or redevelopment of the property. Given the challenges of redeveloping this historic property, and the apparent underutilization of the surrounding area, the Denver Urban Renewal Authority has commissioned this Conditions Study ("Study") as part of an effort to determine if the tools provided by urban renewal are appropriate for the site. Additionally, this Study will document existing conditions in the area and their impact on the ability of the area to be redeveloped.

Finally, this Study will determine if the geographic area chosen for this project qualifies as "blighted" within the meaning of the Colorado Urban Renewal Law.

### Methodology

The defined geographic area ("Study Area") examined in this Conditions Study was determined by the Denver Urban Renewal Authority; it focuses on the former campus and some additional real property parcels comprising a parking lot in the immediate vicinity. A map depicting the boundaries of the Study Area is presented in **Section 4** of this report as **Exhibit 2: Study Area Map**.

Data collection for conditions of blight (see **Sections 2** and **3** for what constitutes conditions of blight) was accomplished through several means. A field Study was conducted in September 2016 for the purpose of assessing blight conditions that could be physically observed within the Study Area.

Additional analysis was conducted using aerial photography and parcel maps of the area. For those blight conditions that are not observable in the field (such as traffic data, crime statistics, etc.), blight condition data was obtained from the City of Denver and various other 3rd party sources during the same time period.

Finally, the *Environmental Contamination of Buildings or Property* factor is assessed by a certified Environmental Scientist with extensive experience conducting environmental site assessments. The process involves searching for and providing an opinion on the existence of Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) as defined by the American Society of Testing and Materials. This includes searching available environmental records maintained by various federal, state, and local entities for records of contamination.

## **Section 2: Colorado Urban Renewal Statutes and Blighted Areas**

In the Colorado Urban Renewal Law, Colo. Rev. Stat. § 31-25-101 et seq. (the “Urban Renewal Law”), the legislature has declared that an area of blight “constitutes a serious and growing menace, injurious to the public health, safety, morals, and welfare of the residents of the state in general and municipalities thereof; that the existence of such areas contributes substantially to the spread of disease and crime, constitutes an economic and social liability, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of municipalities, retards the provision of housing accommodations, aggravates traffic problems and impairs or arrests the elimination of traffic hazards and the improvement of traffic facilities; and that the prevention and elimination of slums and blight is a matter of public policy and statewide concern....”

Under the Urban Renewal Law, the term “blighted area” describes an area with an array of urban problems, including health and social deficiencies, and physical deterioration. See Colo. Rev. Stat. § 31-25-103(2). Before remedial action can be taken, however, the Urban Renewal Law requires a finding by the appropriate governing body that an area such as the Study Area constitutes a blighted area. Colo. Rev. Stat. §31-25-107(1).

The blight finding is a legislative determination by the municipality’s governing body that, as a result of the presence of factors enumerated in the definition of “blighted area,” the area is a detriment to the health and vitality of the community requiring the use of the municipality’s urban renewal powers to correct those conditions or prevent their spread. In some cases, the factors enumerated in the definition are symptoms of decay, and in some instances, these factors are the cause of the problems. The definition requires the governing body to examine the factors and determine whether these factors indicate a deterioration that threatens the community as a whole.

For purposes of the Study, the definition of a blighted area is articulated in the Colorado Urban Renewal statute as follows:

*“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 non-marketable;*
- 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; or*
- 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”*

In addition, paragraph (l.) states, *“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....”*

The statute also states a separate requirement for the number of blight factors that must be present if private property is to be acquired by eminent domain. At § 31-25-105.5(5), paragraph (a.) states, *“‘Blighted area’ shall have the same meaning as set forth in section 31-25-103 (2); except that, for 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)....”*

Thus, the state statutes require, depending on the circumstances, that a minimum of either **one, four, or five** blight factors be present for an area to be considered a “blighted area.”

A couple principles have been developed by Colorado courts to guide the determination of whether an area constitutes a blighted area under the Urban Renewal Law. First, the absence of widespread violation of building and health codes does not, by itself, preclude a finding of blight. According to the courts, “the definition of ‘blighted area’ contained in [the Urban Renewal Law] is broad and encompasses not only those areas containing properties so dilapidated as to justify condemnation as nuisances, but also envisions the prevention of deterioration.”

Second, the presence of one well-maintained building does not defeat a determination that an area constitutes a blighted area. Normally, a determination of blight is based upon an area “taken as a whole,” and not on a building-by-building, parcel-by-parcel, or block-by-block basis.

Based upon the conditions identified in the Study Area, this report makes a recommendation as to whether the Study Area qualifies as a blighted area. The actual determination itself remains the responsibility of the Denver City Council.

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## Section 3: Conditions Indicative of the Presence of Blight

As discussed in **Section 2**, the Colorado Urban Renewal statute provides a list of 11 factors that, through their presence, may allow an area to be declared as blighted. This section elaborates on those 11 factors by describing some of the conditions that might be found within a Study Area that would indicate the presence of those factors.

### **Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures:**

During the field reconnaissance of the Study Area, the general condition and level of deterioration of a building is evaluated. This examination is limited to a visual inspection of the building's exterior condition and is not a detailed engineering or architectural analysis, nor does it include the building's interior. The intent is to document obvious indications of disrepair and deterioration to the exterior of a structure found within the Study Area. Some of the exterior elements observed for signs of deterioration include:

- Primary elements (exterior walls, visible foundation, roof)
- Secondary elements (fascia/soffits, gutters/downspouts, windows/doors, façade finishes, loading docks, etc.)
- Ancillary structures (detached garages, storage buildings, etc.)

### **Predominance of Defective or Inadequate Street Layout:**

The presence of this factor is determined through a combination of both field observation as well as an analysis of the existing transportation network and vehicular and pedestrian circulation patterns in a Study Area by persons with expertise in transportation planning and/or traffic engineering. These conditions include:

- Inadequate street or alley widths, cross-sections, or geometries
- Poor provisions or unsafe conditions for the flow of vehicular traffic
- Poor provisions or unsafe conditions for the flow of pedestrians
- Insufficient roadway capacity leading to unusual congestion of traffic
- Inadequate emergency vehicle access
- Poor vehicular/pedestrian access to buildings or sites

- Poor internal vehicular/pedestrian circulation
- Excessive curb cuts/driveways in commercial areas

These conditions can affect the adequacy or performance of the transportation system within the Study Area, creating a street layout that is defective or inadequate.

### **Faulty Lot Layout in Relation to Size, Adequacy, Accessibility, or Usefulness:**

This factor requires an analysis of the parcels within a Study Area as to their potential and usefulness as developable sites. Conditions indicative of the presence of this factor include:

- Lots that are long, narrow, or irregularly shaped
- Lots that are inadequate in size
- Lots with configurations that result in stagnant, misused, or unused land
- Lots with billboards that have active leases, making redevelopment more difficult

This analysis considers the shape, orientation, and size of undeveloped parcels within the Study Area and if these attributes would negatively impact the potential for development of the parcel. This evaluation is performed both through observation in the field and through an analysis of parcel boundary maps of the Study Area.

### **Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions:**

Conditions that can be observed within a Study Area that qualify under this blight factor 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 trash dumpsters
- Severely cracked, sloped, or uneven surfaces for pedestrians
- Illegal dumping
- Vagrants/vandalism/graffiti/gang activity
- Open ditches, holes, or trenches in pedestrian areas

These represent situations in which the safety of individuals, especially pedestrians and children, may be compromised due to environmental and physical conditions considered to be unsanitary or unsafe.

### **Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements:**

The conditions that apply to this blight factor reflect the deterioration of various improvements made on a site other than building structures. These conditions may represent a lack of general maintenance at a site, the physical degradation of specific improvements, or an improvement that was poorly planned or constructed. Overall, the presence of these conditions can reduce a site's usefulness and desirability and negatively affect nearby properties.

- Neglected properties or evidence of general site maintenance problems
- Deteriorated signage or lighting
- Deteriorated fences, walls, or gates
- Deterioration of on-site parking surfaces, curb & gutter, or sidewalks
- Poorly maintained landscaping or overgrown vegetation
- Poor parking lot/driveway layout
- Unpaved parking lot on commercial properties

### **Unusual Topography or Inadequate Public Improvements or Utilities:**

The focus of this factor is on the presence of unusual topographical conditions that could make development prohibitive, such as steep slopes or poor load-bearing soils, as well as deficiencies in the public infrastructure system within the Study Area that could include:

- Steep slopes / rock outcroppings / poor load-bearing soils
- Deteriorated public infrastructure (street/alley pavement, curb, gutter, sidewalks, street lighting, storm drainage systems)
- Lack of public infrastructure (same as above)
- Presence of overhead utilities or billboards
- Inadequate fire protection facilities/hydrants
- Inadequate sanitation or water systems

### **Defective or Unusual Conditions of Title Rendering the Title Non-Marketable:**

Certain properties can be difficult to market or redevelop if they have overly restrictive or prohibitive clauses in their deeds or titles, or if they involve an unusually complex or highly divided ownership arrangement. Examples include:

- Properties with covenants or other limiting clauses that significantly impair their ability to redevelop
- Properties with disputed or defective title
- Multiplicity of ownership making assemblages of land difficult or impossible

### **Existence of Conditions that Endanger Life or Property by Fire and Other Causes:**

A finding of blight within this factor can result from the presence of the following conditions, which include both the deterioration of physical improvements that can lead to dangerous situations as well as the inability for emergency personnel or equipment to provide services to a site:

- Buildings or sites inaccessible to fire and emergency vehicles
- Blocked/poorly maintained fire and emergency access routes/frontages
- Insufficient fire and emergency vehicle turning radii
- Buildings or properties not in compliance with fire codes, building codes, or environmental regulations

### **Buildings that are Unsafe or Unhealthy for Persons to Live or Work In:**

Some of the conditions that can contribute to this blight factor include:

- Buildings or properties not in compliance with fire codes, building codes, or environmental regulations
- Buildings with deteriorated elements that create unsafe conditions
- Buildings with inadequate or improperly installed utility components

### **Environmental Contamination of Buildings or Property:**

This factor represents the presence of contamination in the soils, structures, water sources, or other locations within a Study Area.

- Presence of hazardous substances, liquids, or gasses

### **Existence of Factors Requiring High Levels of Municipal Services or Substantial Physical Underutilization or Vacancy of Sites, Buildings, or Other Improvements:**

The physical conditions that would contribute to this blight factor include:

- Sites with a high incidence of fire, police, or emergency responses
- Sites adjacent to streets/alleys with a high incidence of traffic accidents
- Sites with a high incidence of code enforcement responses
- An undeveloped parcel in a generally urbanized area
- A parcel with a disproportionately small percentage of its total land area developed
- Vacant structures or vacant units in multi-unit structures

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## Section 4: Study Area Location, Definition, and Description

The Emily Griffith Technical College Conditions Study Area (“Study Area”) is located within the City and County of Denver, Colorado. It contains a single parcel that covers an entire city block, and is defined by a boundary that follows the centerlines of the public rights of way surrounding that parcel. Specifically, the boundary of the Study Area follows the centerlines of Welton Street to the northwest, 13th Street to the northeast, Glenarm Place to the southeast, and 12th Street to the southwest.

The single parcel in the Study Area is the former site of the College of Trades and Industry of the Emily Griffith Technical College, and contains some large historic buildings separated by an alley through its center. It is in the immediate vicinity of both the Colorado Convention Center and the Denver Civic Center.

The Study Area is approximately four acres in total area.

**Exhibit 1: Study Area Context** shows the location of the Study Area within the context of the central Denver and the surrounding area.

**Exhibit 2: Study Area Map** visually depicts the physical boundaries of the Study Area.



**Exhibit 1: Study Area Context**



Exhibit 2: Study Area Map

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## Section 5: Study Findings

The overall findings of the Emily Griffith Technical College Conditions Study are presented below in a format that mirrors the list of factors and conditions of blight discussed in **Section 3**.

### **Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures**

At the time of the field survey performed in September 2016, structures in the Study Area were found to be in fair condition; most issues found were related to broken windows in the school buildings. These broken windows were fairly widespread, but all had been boarded, suggesting that ongoing maintenance is still occurring despite the vacancy of the campus.

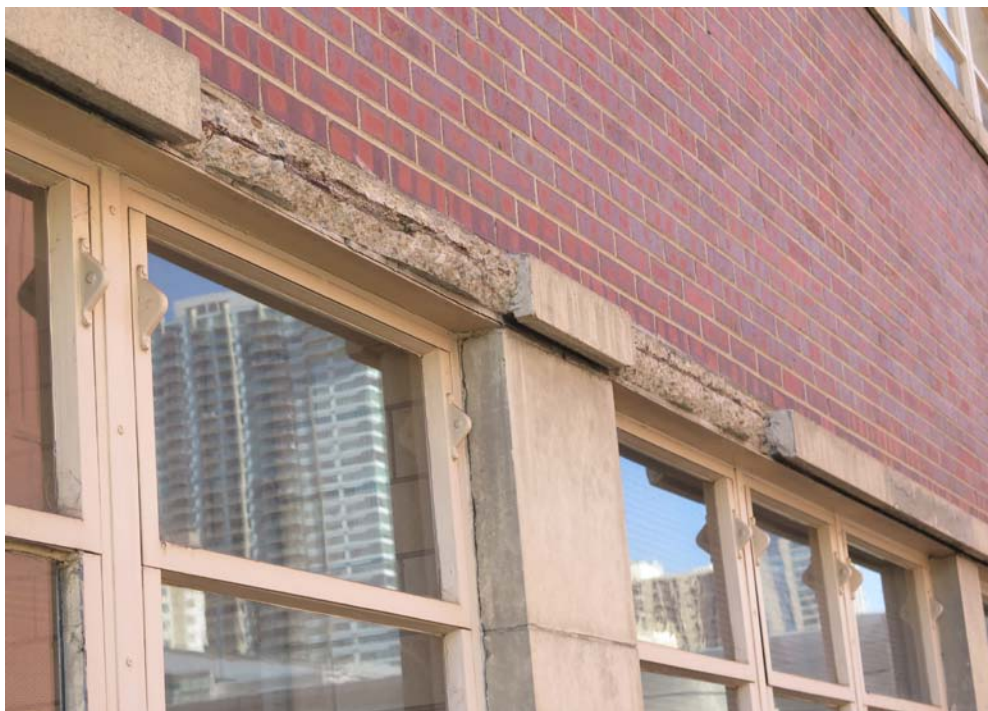
Overall, the broken windows in the Study Area contributed to a sense of neglect, but the ongoing boarding of any broken windows has prevented the issue from becoming a safety issue due to broken glass and vagrants trespassing on the property. Nevertheless, as time progresses, the frequency of broken windows continues to increase, and the campus buildings become increasingly dilapidated. The former campus has been closed for about a year, and nearly a dozen broken windows now exist.

An additional area of concern was noted with the concrete window lintels, which were severely crumbled in many locations, creating small piles of rubble on the ground underneath them.

While the buildings on the Emily Griffith campus was not found to be in an advanced state of deterioration, it remains ongoing, and the buildings are receiving stopgap maintenance rather than repairs. This situation leads to a finding of *Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures*.



*Boarded window at north entrance to Emily Griffith property*



*Deteriorated exterior elements above windows at Emily Griffith property*



*Peeling paint at Emily Griffith property*



*Broken windows at Emily Griffith property*

## Predominance of Defective or Inadequate Street Layout

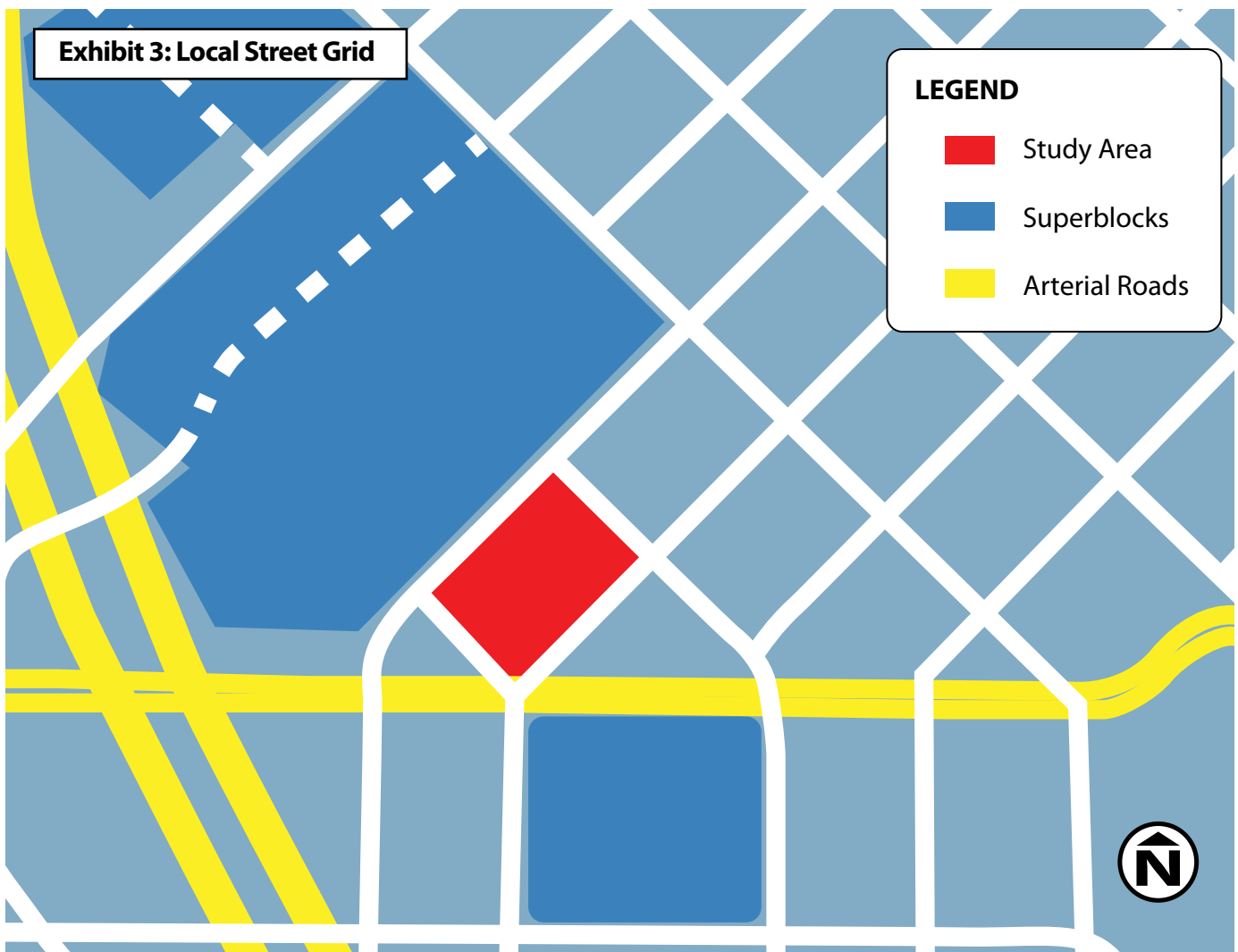
There is relatively poor circulation in the vicinity of the Study Area relative to the rest of the Central Business District and Civic Center area. The Study Area is immediately adjacent to the Colorado Convention Center, which is a sprawling structure occupying more than six full city blocks. The sheer size of the convention center breaks the continuity of the street grid in the area with the exception of Stout Street, which passes underneath the convention center but does not serve any of the property in the Study Area. The Convention Center is one of the largest “superblocks” in the downtown area (a block larger than a single City block), but it is also important to note the presence of the Lindsey-Flanigan Courthouse and Van Cise-Simonet Detention Center to the south, as well as the Denver Center for Performing Arts and the Auraria Campus in the vicinity to the west; all three properties also break the continuity of the street grid, creating dead ends and a lack of redundancy that funnels traffic onto certain streets and creates longer walking distances for pedestrians.



*The convention center, the size of six city blocks, breaks up the street grid and forms a barrier along the northwestern edge of the Study Area*

Even though they are streets that provide automobile access to the Study Area, Colfax Avenue and Speer Boulevard have an isolating effect with regard to pedestrian activity due to their constant flow of higher speed traffic which reduces access by modes other than automobile from the south and west, especially during peak traffic hours. Police data, discussed later in this section, shows that a significant portion of reported crimes in the vicinity of the Study Area are hit-and-runs along Colfax.

Overall, the Study Area encompasses an area of downtown that is somewhat isolated and removed from the surrounding area, both physically and psychologically—pedestrian activity and private investment in this section of downtown is far lower than the rest of the Central Business District to the northeast.



Although none of these issues are expected to be corrected by the urban renewal process, they do represent a challenge to the redevelopment of the Study Area.

Because of the lack of connections to the surrounding street grid and poor provisions for local traffic, a finding of *Inadequate Street Layout* **has** been made.

## **Faulty Lot Layout in Relation to Size, Adequacy, Accessibility, or Usefulness**

As shown in **Exhibit 2: Study Area Map**, there is one real property parcel in the Study Area, and it is about 100,000 square feet.

The parcel is accessible from the public right of way, including sufficient space for emergency vehicle access, and is large enough to be developed under the current zoning (*Downtown Core* zone district). Rather than having setback requirements as in many other zone districts, the D-C district has minimum build-to requirements, meaning that future development must cover certain portions of the zone lot rather than be restricted from covering certain portions; there are no instances of setback requirements preventing the development of any parcels. Similarly, no challenges or barriers to redevelopment are present in the form of off-street parking requirements; the *Downtown Core* district has none.

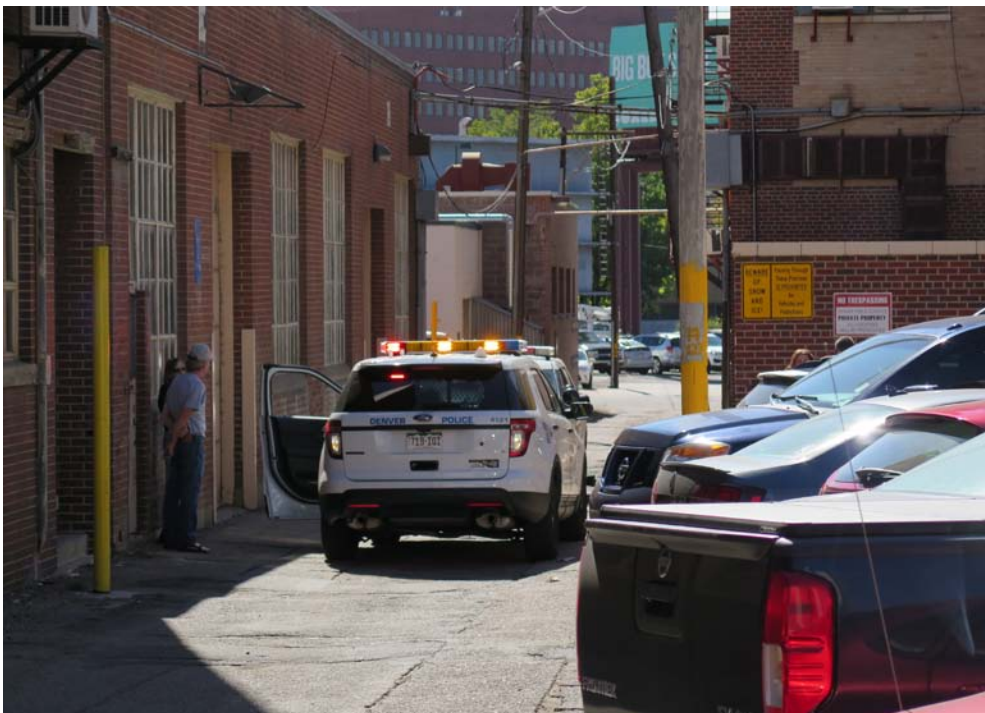
The Study Area **is not** considered to have *Faulty Lot Layout*.

## Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions

Records from the Denver Police Department show that over the past five years (January 1, 2012 - July 12, 2017), there were 115 reported crimes in the Study Area and in the surrounding rights-of way, not including minor traffic incidents. Emergency responses are more frequent still; one was observed during the field survey but never recorded as a reported crime.

Of incidents that were recorded, eight were various forms of assault, two were street robberies, 10 were vehicular hit-and-runs, three were related to weapons possession, and three were business burglaries. The remaining crimes were mostly related to drugs, criminal trespassing, and larceny.

These crime statistics represent an elevated level of both violent and nonviolent crime, although this is not surprising given the relatively high levels of daily activity in the Central Business District. The large number of hit-and-runs are largely due to the high amount of traffic and pedestrian activity along Colfax Avenue, which lies at the southern boundary of the Study Area.



*Emergency responses are relatively common in the Study Area*

The Study Area is located on the southern edge of the Central Business District, as defined by the City of Denver, bordering the Civic Center neighborhood. The two statistical neighborhoods are the top two in the entire city on crimes per square mile basis over the stated time period. Other nearby neighborhoods such as Capitol Hill, for example, have higher population densities but lower crime levels.

The Floodplain maps from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) indicate that the triangular parking lot as well as a small portion of the Emily Griffith parcel lie within areas that have a  $>.02\%$  annual chance of flooding. This is due to the proximity of Cherry Creek to the west, and represents a 500-year floodplain. For the purposes of this Study, there is considered to be no physical danger to visitors from flooding, as a 500-year storm event is, by definition, exceedingly rare.

Fire protection facilities are adequate; hydrants were noted to be present at most intersections in the Study Area during the field survey. All buildings can be accessed from the public rights of way with adequate space for emergency vehicles.

There were a few scattered pockets of litter in the area as well as some areas with uneven surfaces for pedestrians, but these issues were not noted to be severe enough to create a hazard to safety by themselves.

Despite no issues with flooding or fire protection facilities as well as generally sanitary conditions, the risk to safety resulting from the area's history of violent crime gives the Study Area a finding of *Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions*.

## Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements

The property and improvements in the Study Area were found to be adequately maintained, in contrast to the buildings themselves. While some issues were noted with the pavement in the alley that runs through the Study Area, these issues are fairly typical for an alley in Denver, and do not rise to the level needed to consider a finding of blight in this category.

There was one section of sidewalk along the northern edge of Colfax Avenue near the Study Area that was noted to be in need of repair, but otherwise sidewalks were in good condition.

Despite a few minor issues, there is **no** finding of *Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements*.



*A sidewalk in degraded condition along Colfax*

## **Unusual Topography or Inadequate Public Improvements or Utilities**

Topography in the area is fairly flat and does not pose a challenge to redevelopment.

The Study Area's location in downtown Denver gives it the advantage of having fully developed public infrastructure, including storm drainage, sanitary systems, and sidewalks along public rights of way. The Denver Stormwater Master Plan (revised 2014) identifies a few improvements needed in the area, most notably at an outfall into Cherry Creek near Colfax Avenue, but the improvements are regional in nature and are not anticipated to present any obstacle to redevelopment of the Study Area.

Sidewalk repair is needed along Colfax in the vicinity of the Study Area, but this is a minor issue overall.

This factor **is not** present in the Study Area.

### **Defective or Unusual Conditions of Title Rendering the Title Non-marketable**

An examination of the chain of title of the properties in the Study Area reveals no titles in dispute, as each title has a clearly identified owner. The triangular parking lot was transferred in 2013, while the former campus sold on May 25, 2017, so for the purposes of this Study, both properties are considered marketable.

This blight factor is considered **not** to be present in the Study Area.

### **Existence of Conditions that Endanger Life or Property by Fire or Other Causes**

All buildings in the Study Area were found to be accessible from public right of way; no issues with emergency vehicle access are present. Additionally, fire hydrants were found throughout the Study Area.

This blight factor is **not** present in the Study Area.

### **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**

No structures were found during the field survey to be visibly dilapidated to the degree necessary to be considered unsafe. No detailed structural analysis was performed on any of the structures.

This factor is **not** present in the Study Area.

## Environmental Contamination of Buildings or Property

As part of this Conditions Assessment, Matrix Environmental is providing a professional opinion regarding whether Recognized Environmental Conditions (RECs) exist in the Study Area, including potential impacts from surrounding properties. The term “Recognized Environmental Conditions,” as defined by the American Society of Testing and Materials (ASTM) Practice E1527-13, means:

*[T]he presence or likely presence of any hazardous substances or petroleum products in, on, or at a property: (1) due to any release to the environment; (2) under conditions indicative of a release to the environment; or (3) under conditions that pose a material threat of a future release to the environment.*

The environmental assessment performed as part of this Conditions Study involved researching historical records and environmental databases maintained by federal, state, and local sources for known RECs, but did not include any active soil sampling or monitoring.

Information obtained from the Colorado Division of Oil and Public Safety reveals a 550-gallon underground petroleum tank that was abandoned in-place within the Study Area, but no records of leaks or contamination exist. Soil sampling performed during the decommissioning of the tank showed results within acceptable levels set by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, which has granted official closure status to the tank.

The former Emily Griffith facility also had an on-site auto body shop, including paint facilities, which is a use that is commonly associated with environmental contamination. The lack of environmental records and any possible soil sampling despite the active use of hazardous substances over a number of years technically represent a REC. Further sampling may be needed to confirm the presence of any actual contamination.

While the presence of environmental contamination is inconclusive, the former presence of the auto body shop at the Emily Griffith property presents an environmental risk that may complicate redevelopment efforts. Therefore, for the purposes of this Study, *Environmental Contamination of Buildings or Property* is a found factor.

## **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**

Elevated crime levels, revealed in police records already discussed in this report, coincide with high levels of municipal services. Emergency responses from the Denver Police Department are common in the Study Area, which is not unusual for downtown, but still represent elevated levels compared to surrounding neighborhoods. These differences are even more acute when considering that nearby neighborhoods such as Capitol Hill have higher population densities.

Additionally, relative to the rest of the Central Business District, the Study Area is substantially underutilized. The Area's most prominent and defining feature is the former campus of the Emily Griffith Technical College, which is a full city block that lies vacant. In the year since the closing of the campus, the old building has steadily gained boarded windows as broken ones are patched to prevent issues with vagrancy, but not replaced.



*All entrances to any school buildings in the Study Area are marked with notices of closure and signs forbidding trespassing*

Compared to the rest of the Central Business District, there is very little history of private investment in the vicinity of the Study Area. Various Civic buildings have been constructed over the past two decades in the area, including the Colorado Convention Center, the Webb Municipal Building, and the Lindsey-Flanigan Courthouse, but these large, city-block (or more) sized buildings have the effect of isolating the Study Area as much as activating it.

Due to the vacancy of the structures in the Study Area, this blight factor **is** present.



## Section 6: Study Summary and Recommendation

Within the entire Study Area, 5 of the 11 blight factors were identified as being present. The blight factors identified within the Study Area are:

- Slum, Deteriorated, or Deteriorating Structures
- Predominance of Defective or Inadequate Street Layout
- Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions
- Environmental Contamination of Buildings or Property
- 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

### Conditions Study Recommendation

As discussed in **Section 2**, in order for an area to be declared blighted, a certain number of the 11 blight factors must be found within the Study Area. **Four** of the 11 factors is the required minimum, unless none of the property owners or tenants object to being included within an urban renewal area; then, the required minimum is only **one** of the 11 factors. In the event, however, that eminent domain is to be used by the Denver Urban Renewal Authority to acquire property within the urban renewal area, the required minimum is **five** of the 11 factors. Since **five** blight factors were identified within the Study Area, the threshold has been met for any of the above scenarios.

It is the recommendation of this blight Study report to the City of Denver, the Denver Urban Renewal Authority, that the Study Area, in its present condition, exhibits a sufficient level of blight to be considered a “blighted area” under the standards set forth in State Statute. Whether the blighted area “*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*” is a determination that must be made by the Denver City Council.