

January 20, 2021

Mr. Peter Brixius, City Manager
City of Craig
300 W 4th Street
Craig, CO 81625

Re: Summary of Blight Findings in Craig, Colorado

Dear Peter,

As you know, in October 2020, DGC Consulting was retained by the City of Craig ("City") to perform a Conditions Study ("Blight Study") for areas within the City of Craig. The purpose of the Study was to determine whether blight conditions exist within Craig, and if so, whether they were sufficient for the City to establish an Urban Renewal Authority, within the meaning of Colorado Urban Renewal Law. Data from the Study may also be considered by the City Council in considering the adoption of one or more urban renewal plans at a later date.

Colorado Urban Renewal Law Background

In the Colorado Urban Renewal Law, Colorado Revised Statutes § 31-25-101 et seq. (the "Urban Renewal Law"), the legislature has declared that an area of slum or 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....

Before a City can exercise the powers set forth in the Urban Renewal Law, however, the City must first consider whether or not blight exists within the City limits such that an Urban Renewal Authority should be established. Once established, before an Urban Renewal Authority can take action to remedy blighted conditions, the City must then consider the presence of factors of blight within a defined area. This summary is provided in support of the first consideration by the City – whether or not blight exists within the City limits such that an Urban Renewal Authority should be established.

The determination that an area constitutes a slum or blighted area is a cumulative conclusion attributable to the presence of several physical, environmental, and social factors. Indeed, slum or blight is attributable to a multiplicity of conditions, which, in combination, tend to accelerate the phenomenon of deterioration of an area. For purposes of this study, the definition of a blighted area articulated in the Urban Renewal Law follows:

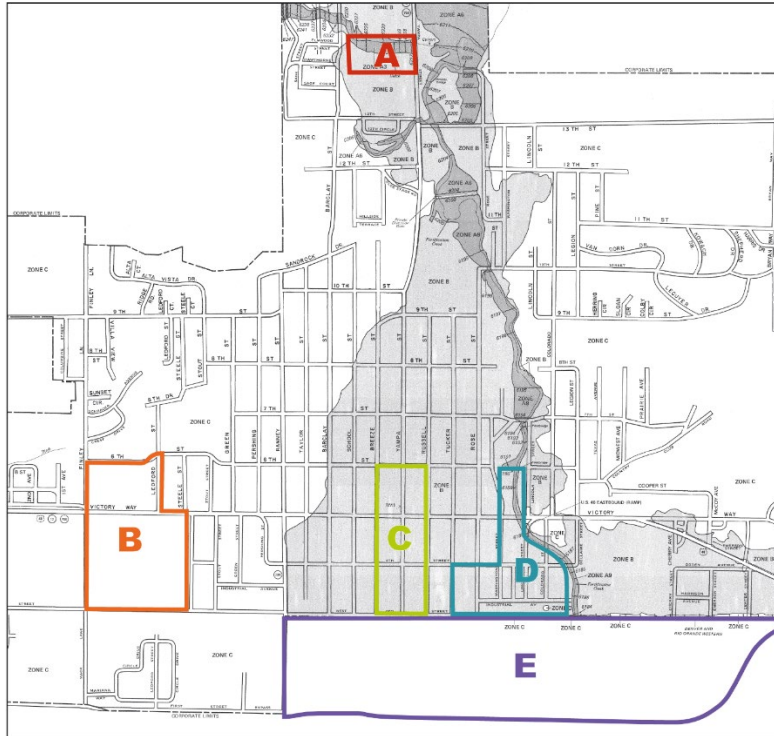
“Blighted area” means an area that, in its present condition and use and, by reason of the presence of at least four of the following factors, substantially impairs or arrests the sound growth of the municipality, retards the provision of housing accommodations, or constitutes an economic or social liability,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

The factors enumerated in the statute are as follows:

- 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 and 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.*

Study Methodology

In order to make a determination of whether blight exists in Craig, DGC conducted a field survey on October 9 and 10, 2020, followed by research and desktop analysis of physical condition. The Study Area is comprised of five subareas (A – E) which are shown on the graphic below. This work was documented in a report submitted to the City for review in December 2020.



Conditions Study Report

The Conditions Study report includes narrative, tables, maps, and photographs which document the field work and subsequent analysis, followed by a summary of findings and conclusions. Examples of photographic and aerial map documentation from the report follow:



Figure 2-4 Subarea B, Example 2

Deteriorated windows and doors; deteriorated barriers/railings; deteriorated parking lot/site pavement; inadequate site maintenance; high levels of vacancy (Photo B12)



Findings

The following nine (9) factors were observed within the Study Area during the field survey or by subsequent desktop research and analysis:

- a. Slum, deteriorated, or deteriorating structures
- b. 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
- h. The existence of conditions that endanger life or property by fire or other causes

i. Buildings which 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

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

Two (2) factors were not surveyed as part of this study:

g. Defective or unusual conditions of title rendering the title nonmarketable

j. Environmental contamination

Conclusions

The Conditions Report concluded that there was sufficient evidence of blight (nine of 11 factors) within the areas studied and therefore within the City Craig such that formation of an Urban Renewal Authority is supported. Once formed, the City and the Authority may further consider whether to adopt one or more Urban Renewal Plans governing the activity within each plan's area.

Peter, please contact me if you have questions or I can be of further help.



David G. Cooper, DGC Consulting