

# Conditions of Blight - Ridge and Holland

## City of Cheyenne

Exhibit A: Produced to support Resolution Determining Blight



Produced September 2023  
Planning and Development Department  
Lonnie Olson, Planner I

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## Introduction

The State of Wyoming authorizes communities to create Urban Renewal Authorities and summarizes the Urban Renewal Powers in *Wyoming Stat. § 15-9-101 through § 15-9-137*. The powers authorized in the Wyoming Urban Renewal Code allow municipalities to declare areas as blighted and use tools, such as tax increment financing, to reinvest in these blighted areas. The City of Cheyenne established an Urban Renewal Authority (URA) in June of 2021 through an amendment to City Code outlining the duties and abilities of the URA and an initiative resolution determining blight, fulfilling *Wyoming Stat. § 15-9-106*. The creation of the URA led to the Hitching Post Plan and Project Area being adopted and the commencement of the first Urban Renewal Project in the City of Cheyenne in several decades. The success of this Project has spurred interest in utilizing Urban Renewal in more areas of the community. However, in order for an area to be eligible to be an Urban Renewal Project, it must be determined blighted or slummed per *Wyoming Stat. § 15-9-107*. This expanded blight study of the 15th Street Corridor serves to overview and establish that the area is eligible for Urban Renewal Projects. The study will outline requirements as defined in State Statutes, overview the methodology for determining blight, overview the 15th Street Corridor and locations where blight has been identified, and draw conclusions that the rehabilitation of the blighted areas is within the best interests of the community. It is important to note that Urban Renewal Projects may occur in more areas than those identified in this study and this study and resolution do not define a specific Urban Renewal Project or Plan.



## Wyoming State Statutes

The State of Wyoming authorizes communities to create Urban Renewal Authorities and utilize the power of the authority in *Wyoming Stat. § 15-9-101 through § 15-9-137*. However, the sections relevant to the blight study expansion include *WY Stat. § 15-9-103 and WY Stat. § 15-9-107*. *WY Stat. § 15-9-107* explains:

*An urban renewal project for an urban renewal area shall not be planned or initiated unless the governing body, by resolution, has determined the area to be a slum area or a blighted area or a combination thereof and designated it as appropriate for an urban renewal project. A municipality shall not acquire real property for any urban renewal project unless the local governing body has approved the urban renewal project in accordance with W.S. 15-9-110.*  
- *WY Stat. § 15-9-107*

To aid in determining what constitutes a slum or blighted area, *WY Stat. § 15-9-103* contains the definition of “blighted area” and “slum area”. Specifically, the section describes a blighted area as:

*(iii) “Blighted area” means an area which by reason of the presence of a substantial number of slums, deteriorated or deteriorating structures, predominance of defective or inadequate street layout, faulty lot layout in relation to size, adequacy, accessibility or usefulness, unsanitary or unsafe conditions, deterioration of site or other improvements, diversity of ownership, tax or special assessments, delinquency exceeding the fair value of the land, defective or unusual conditions of title, or the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes, or any combination of those factors, 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. However, if*

*the blighted area consists of open land, the conditions contained in W.S. 15-9-110(b) apply and any disaster area referred to in W.S. 15-9-112 constitutes a “blighted area”;*  
- *WY Stat. § 15-9-103*

And goes on to define a slum area as:

*(xvi) “Slum area” means an area in which there is a predominance of buildings or improvements, whether residential or nonresidential, which by reason of dilapidation, deterioration, age or obsolescence, inadequate provision for ventilation, light, air, sanitation, or open spaces, high density of population and overcrowding, or the existence of conditions which endanger life or property by fire and other causes, or any combination of those factors is conducive to ill health and is detrimental to the public safety, morals or welfare;*  
- *WY Stat. § 15-9-103*

This study uses the definitions to support the findings that *WY Stat. § 15-9-107* requires. The remainder of the Wyoming Urban Renewal Code details the powers permitted by the Urban Renewal Authority and do not maintain substantial relevance to the resolution determining blight; however, staff recommends the Governing Body familiarize themselves with these statutes.

## Methodology

To identify blight areas and slum areas in the community, staff created a survey with the nine (9) conditions of blight identified in the definitions section of the Wyoming Urban Renewal Code. Staff did not utilize the conditions of slum areas as they were similar to those of blight. Staff extrapolated nine distinct characteristics of blight as defined in *WY Stat. § 15-9-103(iii)*. The nine conditions with one option of "Other" include:

- Deteriorated or Deteriorating Structures
- Predominance of Defective or Inadequate Street Layout
- Faulty Lot Layout in Relation to Size, Accessibility or Usefulness
- Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions
- Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements
- Diversity of Ownership, Tax or Other Special Assessments
- Delinquency Exceeding the Fair Value of the Land
- Defective or Unusual Conditions of Title
- The Existence of Conditions which Endanger Life or Property by Fire and other causes
- Other

The other option pertained to the section of the definition that stated, *"or any combination of those factors, 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," (WY Stat. § 15-9-103(iii))*. After listing the conditions, the survey had the option for staff to use a check box for each condition that existed and to provide a description of indicators that were used to conclude that the condition was present. The end of the survey allowed staff to provide notes for anything of importance. Unlike other neighboring states, notably Colorado, the Wyoming Urban Renewal Code does not

establish a threshold for the number of blight conditions that must be found to qualify an area for Urban Renewal. Based on this, if any one of the nine conditions are identified on the site, it is sufficient to determine the area as blighted.

Staff completed the blight surveys for the Ridge and Holland area in September of 2023 to comply with the *WY Stat. § 15-9-107* provision of, *"[A]n urban renewal project for an urban renewal area shall not be planned or initiated unless the governing body, by resolution, has determined the area to be a slum area or a blighted area or a combination thereof and designated it as appropriate for an urban renewal project."* Again, this study does not preclude other blighted areas from being surveyed in the future, rather serves to make the outlined area eligible for Urban Renewal Plans and Projects. The site was surveyed in September of 2023 by one staff member for consistency with the previously adopted Blight Study and the current draft of the Blight Study expansion.

## Blight Surveys

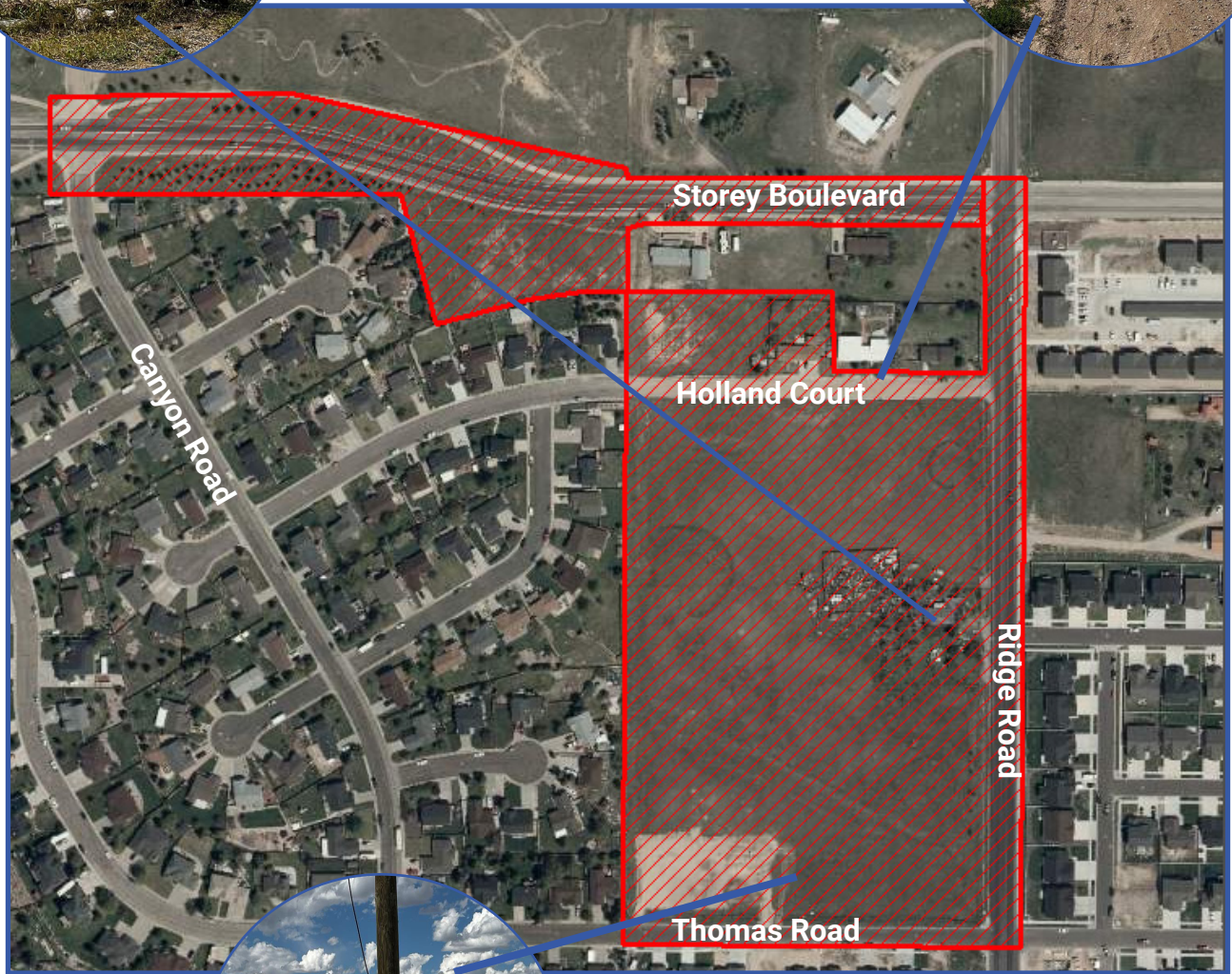
This section of the report contains an overview of the blight survey as conducted on September 19, 2023. The blight categories present on site will be reviewed for the area, along with specific examples of the conditions that were witnessed at the time of the survey. The surveys and photos from the site visit are contained in Appendices A and B, respectively. Again, these areas are not designated as Urban Renewal projects through this process, rather they are illustrative of blight in the community and make the area eligible for Urban Renewal Projects.

# Figure 1: Ridge and Holland Study Area

— Study Area Boundaries

1. Deteriorated or Deteriorating Structures

3. Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements



2. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions

## Ridge and Holland

The Ridge and Holland study area is shown in Figure 1. The study area includes Pronghorn Crossing; Dell Range Addition, 6th Filing; Holland Heights; Sun Rise Hills North Subdivision; and the right of way from Canyon Drive to Ridge Road on Storey Boulevard; the right of way from Storey Boulevard to Thomas Road on Ridge Road; and all adjacent right of way to areas incorporated within this study area. The site contained three (3) of the nine (9) conditions of blight identified on the survey, demonstrating an area of blight in the community.

### *1. Deteriorated or Deteriorating Structures*

The Ridge and Holland study area contains several examples of deteriorated or deteriorating structures. The residence on the large parcel contained within the study area is in very poor shape as the roof is deteriorating and the façade has joints cracking and failing and thus the bricks have started separating away from each other creating unsafe conditions. The main residence also has many broken windows. Many of the sheds on the large parcel, that the residence is next to, are in poor shape and show signs of a lack of upkeep. Some of the structures are utilizing tires to hold down the roof and show signs of significant deterioration.

### *2. Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions*

Staff noted the Ridge and Holland study area lacked pedestrian connectivity primarily on Ridge Road and Holland Court. The lack of safe pedestrian connections poses threats to residents of the neighborhood who would be walking through to go to the nearby park and school. The site also has poor sewerability (ability to provide gravity sanitary sewers) due to previous developments not placing them appropriately to serve multiple parcels in the area. This poses a significant risk to the health of the area as any new development would not

be able to provide appropriate connections, without significant expense. Due to this poor sewerability any new developers would have to do immense offsite improvements that make any redevelopment of the area financially difficult if there is a lack of density. Summit Drive was supposed to connect to Storey Boulevard but that was replated to a cul-de-sac and has made infrastructure connectivity for properties in the area challenging. When originally plated Summit Drive would have provided services to the Pronghorn Crossing subdivision but with the replat the services ended in the cul-de-sac. The replat added a 16 feet utility easement that goes from the cul-de-sac to the Pronghorn Crossing subdivision, the use of this easement is not stated in the plat. Under current Board of Public Utilities requirements, the easement would need to be 40 feet for a sewer main extension. The property on the southern end of the study area appears to have improper grading which could inhibit the redevelopment of that parcel without proper remediation. The lack of pedestrian access, poor sewerability, and appearance of improper grading yields unsafe conditions, thus, meeting this condition of blight.

### *3. Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements*

The Ridge and Holland study area has deteriorated or missing street, curb, gutter, and sidewalk in various locations. The deteriorated site conditions have exacerbated the substandard pedestrian connections in the study area. The locations that lack curb, gutter, and sidewalk create potential pedestrian and vehicular conflicts. Holland Court in the study area is a dirt road within the City and although it has gutter, it is substandard and fails to meet City standards for roadways. Due to the deteriorated and missing curb, gutter, and sidewalk, and dirt road, staff is satisfied this condition of blight is met.

## Conclusions

The blight study at Ridge and Holland illustrates that one or more blighted areas exist in the municipality, therefore fulfilling WY Stat. § 15-9-106(i). The rehabilitation, conservation, redevelopment or a combination thereof of the area or areas is necessary in the interest of the public health, safety, morals or welfare of the residents of the municipality for various reasons. The City of Cheyenne governing body has the ability to use the powers made available through the Wyoming Urban Renewal Code should the accompanying resolution of blight be adopted. WY Stat. §15-9-103(iii) mentions that if the blighted area consists of open land, the conditions of WY Stat. §15-9-110(b) apply. In summary, WY Stat. §15-9-110(b) specifically allows for the municipality to do urban renewal on vacant land for housing if a shortage exists. There have been multiple studies conducted on housing in Cheyenne and they all mention that there is an overall shortage of housing in the city. Furthermore, WY Stat. §15-9-104 says that private enterprise is preferred when carrying out urban renewal.

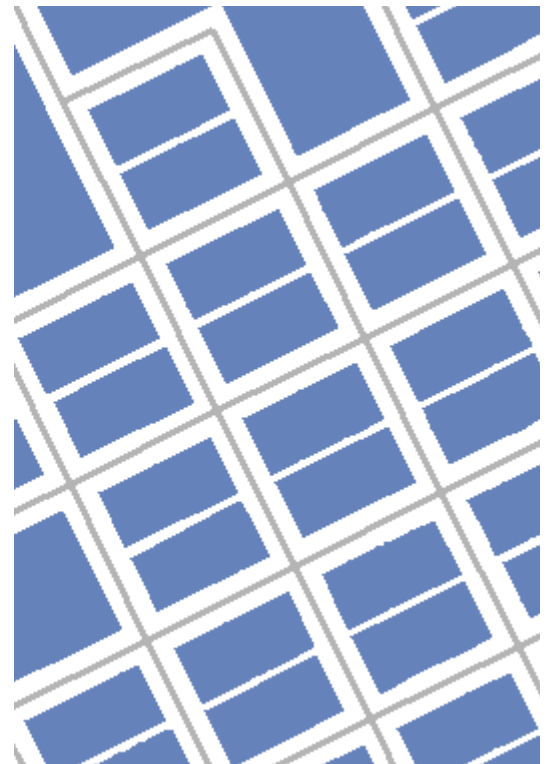
The location exemplifies the existence of blight in the community. The rehabilitation, conservation, or redevelopment of the location would not only benefit the community, but is necessary to for the health, safety, welfare, and morals of the community. The use of the Wyoming Urban Renewal Code can facilitate the redevelopment of each of these areas through several of the tools enabled by the legislation, namely tax increment financing. Staff is satisfied the report meets and exceeds the mandate for the initiative resolution by the governing body found in WY Stat. § 15-9-107 and recommends approval of the resolution.



# Conditions of Blight

## Appendix A

### Blight Studies



# City of Cheyenne – Blight Survey



Location: Ridge and Holland  
 Completed by: Lornie Olson  
 Date Surveyed: 9/19/2023

Criteria:	Check if this exists on site:	Description of Conditions:
Deteriorated or Deteriorating Structures	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Multiple Structures in area are in poor shape with signs of lack of maintenance
Predominance of Defective or Inadequate Street Layout	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Faulty Lot Layout in Relation to Size, Accessibility or Usefulness	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Unsanitary or Unsafe Conditions	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Unsafe production connections in area Poor sewerability for multiple lots

<b>Deterioration of Site or Other Improvements</b>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<i>Unpaved public roadway</i>
<b>Diversity of Ownership, Tax or Other Special Assessments</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Delinquency Exceeding the Fair Value of the Land</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>Defective or Unusual Conditions of Title</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
<b>The Existence of Conditions which Endanger Life or Property by Fire and other causes</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Other	□	
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**Notes:**

# Conditions of Blight

## Appendix B

### Blight Photos

