

ASSET BASED PLANNING

Lincoln Street Studio advocates for an **asset-based approach** for most planning efforts. During the past 40 years or so, many towns and cities have prepared a wide variety of plans. These plans have traditionally been based on needs assessments and have been impossible to implement, largely because their lists of "fix-it" projects have been impossible to accomplish. This is why these plans have sat on shelves. Asset-based planning is different.

People live, work, shop, and play differently than they did 40 or 50 years ago. This is no truer than in our historic downtowns, main streets, and town centers. Whatever still remains a positive, functioning unit, characteristic, or quality should be recognized as an asset to the town center. As part of the basis for developing a vision for the future of the town center, we want to list all of the existing assets of the Town Center Planning Area, not just so that we don't lose them, but to incorporate these assets during plan implementation.

TOWN CENTER ASSETS

1. The seat of Municipal Government remains in the Town Center.
2. The main Public Library is a major daily Town Center destination for nearly 1,000 people.
3. The district is safe, as the Police Station is within the Town Center.
4. There are approximately 60 retail or service businesses within the Town Center.
5. At least 5 new businesses have opened in the Town Center in the last 2 years.
6. The Town Center contains the City's greatest concentration of historic commercial buildings.
7. The A.G. Grant's Beulah Subdivision provides at least 80 households within a 6 minute walk of the Town Center.
8. The new Park Street Intermediate School is just outside the Town Center.
9. Broadway provides access to two freeway interchanges.
10. Express bus service by COTA links Grove City to downtown Columbus.
11. Streetscape is in place; photo cell controlled gas lamps, brick walks, and street trees.
12. The Town Center is already a mixed use walkable area and a draw for the GenY and Senior (Boomers) markets.
13. The City has acquired the Lumber Yard site and has attracted a major developer to redevelop it. A public / private partnership is being negotiated.
14. The City's historic rail connection to downtown Columbus (the Inter Urban) is gone, but the Rail line is still in operation, connecting the Town Center to downtown Columbus, and could eventually become a rail transit link.
15. Much vacant land is available for development, some of which is owned by the City.
16. Current real estate values are not exorbitant, and would not present a barrier for redevelopment.
17. A seasonal farmers' market operates on Saturdays in the Town Center, and other public events are staged there.
18. Park Street has the potential to become a civic feature, providing frontage for new urban housing, and serving as a main pedestrian link from the Town Center to neighborhoods to the east and to the west.
19. The Town Center Merchants' Association is still in business (since the 1990 time frame).
20. A program of lighting improvements is being implemented under a grant program whereby the City is providing cash incentives for matching expenditures.
21. An extraordinary number of local businesses and residents are in support of City efforts to prepare a New Town Center Plan and to implement it.
22. Several property owners have assembled multiple parcel land holdings.

TOWN CENTER PLANNING ISSUES

There are several issues that will have a bearing on the development of concepts for town center planning options. These include the following.

1. Adaptive use redevelopment proposals for existing, historic town center buildings will encounter building mixed-use code requirements that will require special fire separation improvements.
2. The significant growth and development of Grove City has occurred predominantly to the east of the Town Center Planning Area, extending to across the I-71 freeway. The Town Center is, therefore, actually on the west edge of the community, not in its center.
3. The total extent of retail and business development within the Town Center Planning Area is very small in terms of gross square feet of occupied space. This means that it cannot compete for retail sales on the same basis as other shopping centers. The Town Center must focus on specialty and niche market factors.
4. The Public Library cannot expand or improve its facilities without help from the City of Grove City.
5. There are several industrial use buildings along the CSX Railroad which no longer retain their original use. These remnants of a prior time, mixed in with houses and commercial buildings, present a poor, disorganized visual image for the Town Center. Some developers perceive elements of blight.
6. Except for the south east corner, the housing stock within the Town Center Planning Area is out of place, and not contributing to business and retail planning options.
7. The greatest traffic volumes within the Town Center follow Columbus Street, and then north along Broadway. Lower traffic volumes use Grove City Road and Broadway south of Columbus. This means that retail uses that require higher average daily traffic for viability will continue to seek locations on North Broadway, north of Columbus Street.