

# Grove City Town Center Plan

Monday, July 14, 2008

# Intro

- **Tonight we hit the high points only**
  - We have assembled a great deal of information
  - We have submitted a whole series of preliminary reports
  - We are now working on final series of reports
  - There will probably be other meetings where we can go into detail on selected topics

**KEY**

- Buildings
- ▬ Streets
- ▬ Alleys
- ▬ Parking and Driveways
- Water
- Analysis Area

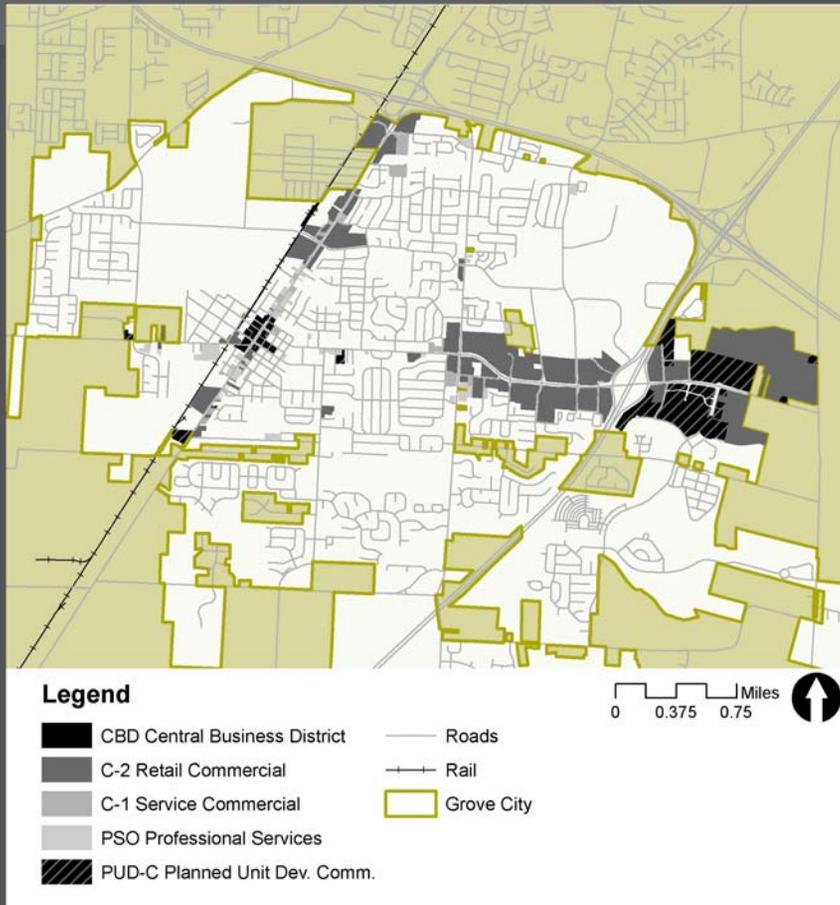
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**Lincoln Street Studio**  
*architects & planners*



# The town center is not competing well with other retail & business locations



- With only about 90,000 square feet of total retail space the town center lacks mass

# The town center is not competing well with other retail & business locations

- It's market share is only 3-4% of residents & workers within a 1 mile radius
- The library outdraws the town center's top 3 retailers combined

# Market Trends: Ohio Retailing is Down

- 11-12% vacancy rates in centers compared with 8.5% nationally
- Internet retailing is growing @ 20-25% per year
- Women's apparel sales down 5%
  - Store closings in 2008
- Department store industry is consolidating
- Most all USA job growth over the past 10 years in service-producing industries

# Grove City Merchants' Survey

- Retail development is not the answer for the future of the town center
- Merchant performance shows that retail development is not a catalyst...it must have markets to serve
- While the town center does not need additional retail space, it could become more competitive by changing the retail mix to selected niche categories
  - Restaurants
  - Specialty food/bakery/deli
  - Crafts/hobbies

# Shoppers' Survey

- **Shoppers have a more positive outlook than merchants**
  - Town center is clean and safe
  - Proud of historic buildings
  - Appreciative of town center entertainment options
  - Eating/drinking establishments largest draw, library 2<sup>nd</sup>
  - Do not perceive a parking problem

# Trends Affecting Planning Area

- **Grove City's population is growing**
- **Two segments growing most rapidly as a % of whole**
  - Aging Baby Boomers (1946-early 1960s)
  - New Millenials (Early 1980s-early 2000s)
- **These segments have fueled town center redevelopment for the past decade**

# Trends continued...

- Boomers (empty nesters) prefer compact neighborhoods with pleasant, “walkable” streets
- Retired boomers are a new market for live/work or career housing—where start up businesses can be located at home
- Millennials prefer to live & work in town center areas that provide urban densities, green space (parks) & “cool” places within the context of historic buildings
- Both segments like a dog friendly atmosphere

# Trends continued...



- More jobs & housing will continue to cluster in town center districts
- Developers will continue to mix different uses within single building projects, and to design projects to “infill” existing commercial street fronts with vacant lots or underperforming real estate

# Trends continued...



- Retailers are recognizing that mixed-use neighborhoods are increasingly attractive for shoppers
- Places where people live, work, shop & play are pleasing places that draw customers from a larger market area

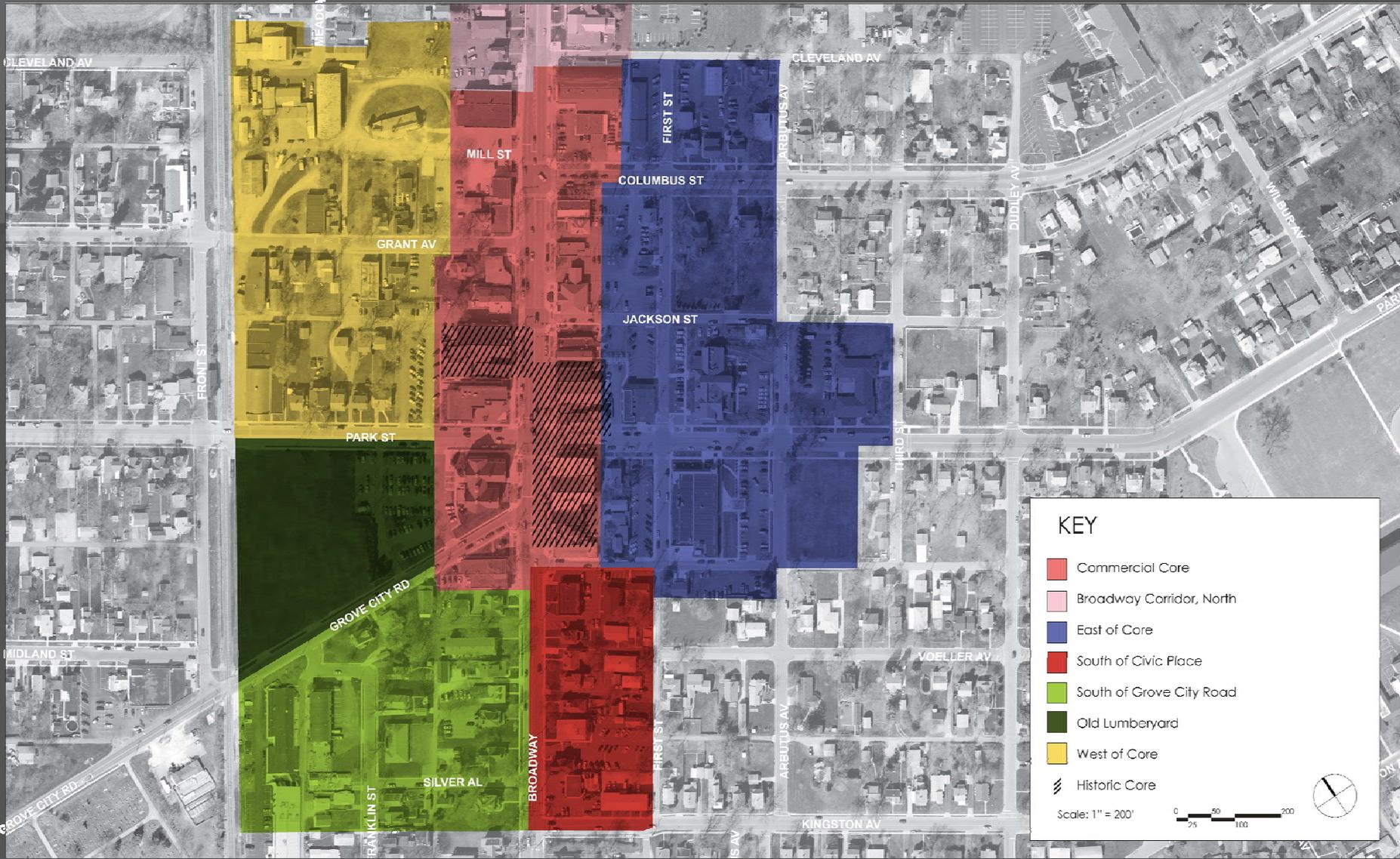


# Assessments (We will not cover all of these tonight)

- Land use
- Building/property value & condition
- Underperforming real estate
- Zoning
- Nonconforming uses & buildings

We focused on physical issues that restrict redevelopment

- We broke down the study area into districts & conducted detailed investigations
- We present a few tonight as examples



**KEY**

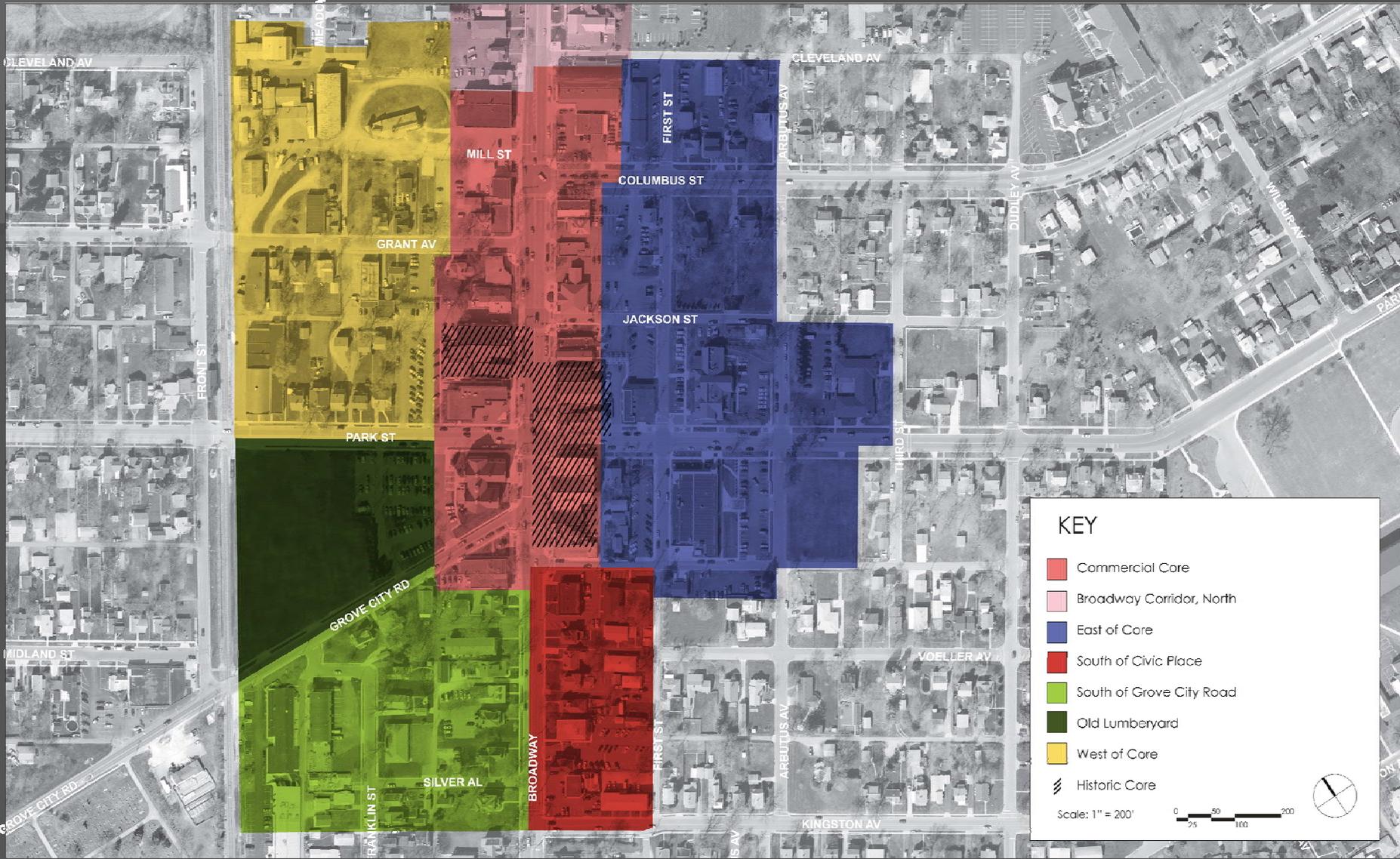
- Commercial Core
- Broadway Corridor, North
- East of Core
- South of Civic Place
- South of Grove City Road
- Old Lumberyard
- West of Core
- Historic Core

Scale: 1" = 200'

0 50 100 200

# Commercial core

- This is the piece that contains the historic buildings of Grove City—the portion of Broadway that received the 1988 streetscape improvements
  - Piecemeal alley access for servicing
  - More curb cuts than a walkable district should have
  - Traffic volumes are below those on other Grove City streets that feature commercial development



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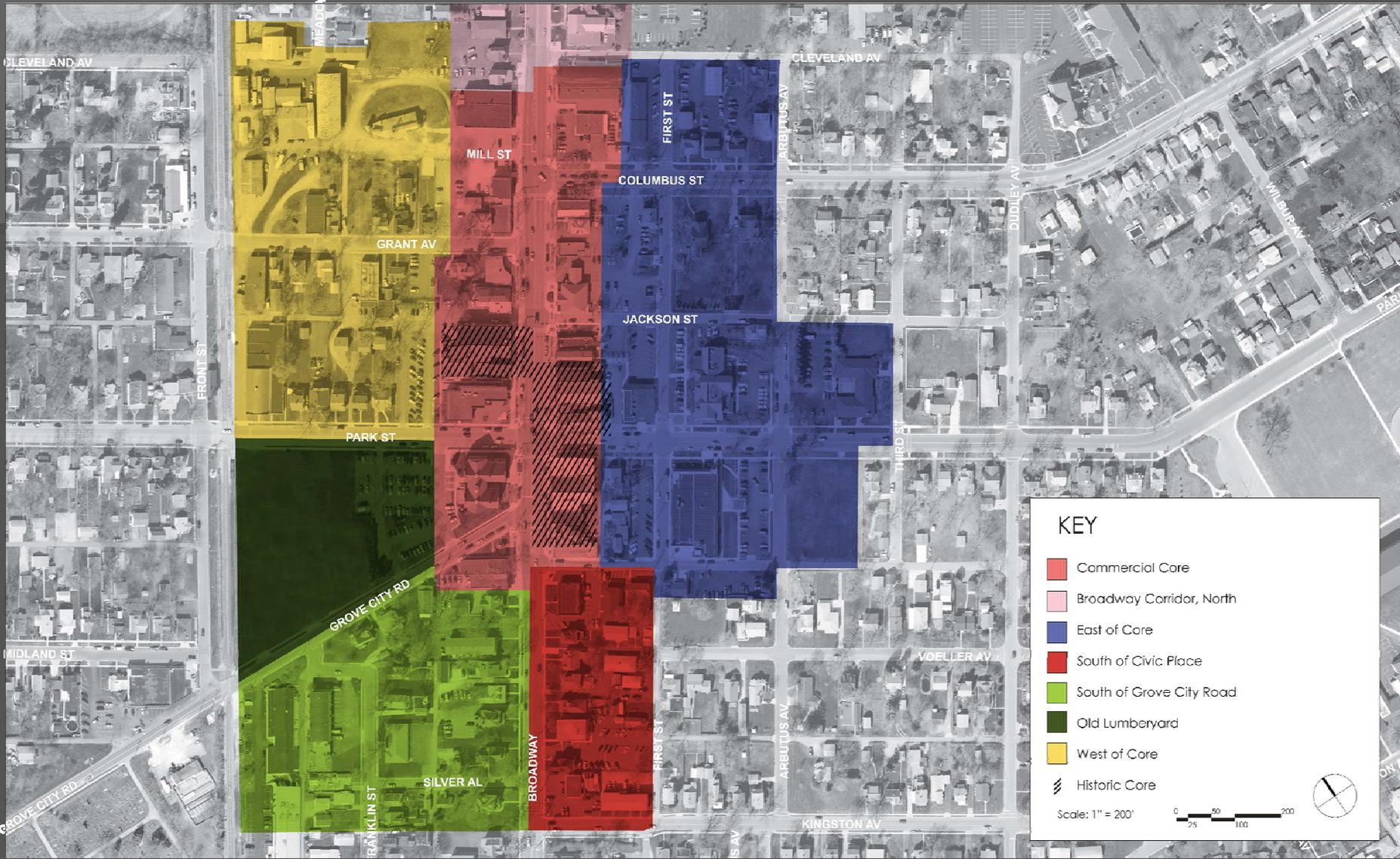
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# West of Core

- Pattern of development contains light industrial buildings, office uses, and single family residences
- Multiple at grade rail crossings create the sense of nuisance
- The old rail spur continues to create access & frontage issues and limits effective property utilization
- Access from Broadway is piecemeal and illegible
- Mill Street functions more like a private drive & it's present configuration causes traffic problems at the Columbus Street intersection



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# South of Grove City Road

- Awkward internal traffic flow, particularly given the contorted access from Grove City Road, past industrial buildings
- Few opportunities for on-street parking
- Limited access to public or shared parking
- Commercial uses mix with residential uses along Broadway, though most buildings were originally single family houses

# Redevelopment Opportunities

- **We have an extensive need for redevelopment**
  - Nonconforming real estate
  - Underutilized
  - Nearly underutilized
  - Vacant land

# Redevelopment Opportunities



# Summary of Important Planning Issues

- Retail businesses need market support
- Existing zoning hinders redevelopment
- There are significant physical limitations to redevelopment

# Summary of Important Planning Issues



- Historic buildings cannot be easily rehabilitated under building codes



- The public library needs help from the city & township to improve its facilities

# Summary of Significant Assets

- Seat of city government, the city's most historic building & the public library give the place a civic character and anchor it as the nostalgic heart of Grove City
- The 1988 streetscape along Broadway, combined with the most uniquely, pedestrian-scaled grid of streets in Central Ohio, provide a most exemplary context for an urban mixed-use walkable district



## Significant Assets continued...

- Historic buildings, civic institutions, a pedestrian-scaled planning area, and mixed-use development are precisely the qualities sought by boomers & new millenials as a place of residence
- The opportunity for merchants to capture the advantage to market their wares and services within an atmosphere that is unique & above the level found in malls to residents not having to drive their cars everywhere

# We Established a Vision

- Grove City's old town center, the nostalgic heart of the community, is one of the great urban neighborhoods in Central Ohio, a walkable, mixed use and vibrant place with a civic flavor, where people live, work, shop & play—a place that is a draw for people far and wide to visit & experience.

# We established goals for the redevelopment plan

## 1. Maintain historic town center character

- Walkable urbanism
  - Pedestrian friendly
  - Mix of uses
  - Moderate density (related to walkability and “outdoor room” in urban design)
- Civic/social destinations
- Historic preservation

# Goals continued...

## 2. Enhance economic vitality

- Strengthen retail/service environment
  - Foot traffic/captive market
    - More town center residents
    - More town center jobs
    - Capitalize on civic/social destinations & tourism
  - Provide a walkable network which links all development
  - Squeeze retail: intensify nodes
  - Follow niche business strategy
- Maximize ROI for City investments
- Remove barriers to private development & redevelopment

# Goals continued...

## 3. Address changing context (of how we live/work/shop/play/ & learn)

- Embrace and capitalize on changing market
  - Develop local and regional competitive advantage: A new brand
  - Mixed use development includes use mix in single buildings
  - Demographics/Population
    - New medium density housing formats
- Structural shifts in the economy require shifts in development regulations
  - Development density / intensity must increase for walkability
  - Educational focus on new careers: allow work at home and live/work mix
  - Parking requirements change in mixed use development / fewer cars
  - Replace use-based zoning / add incentives

# The Redevelopment Plan

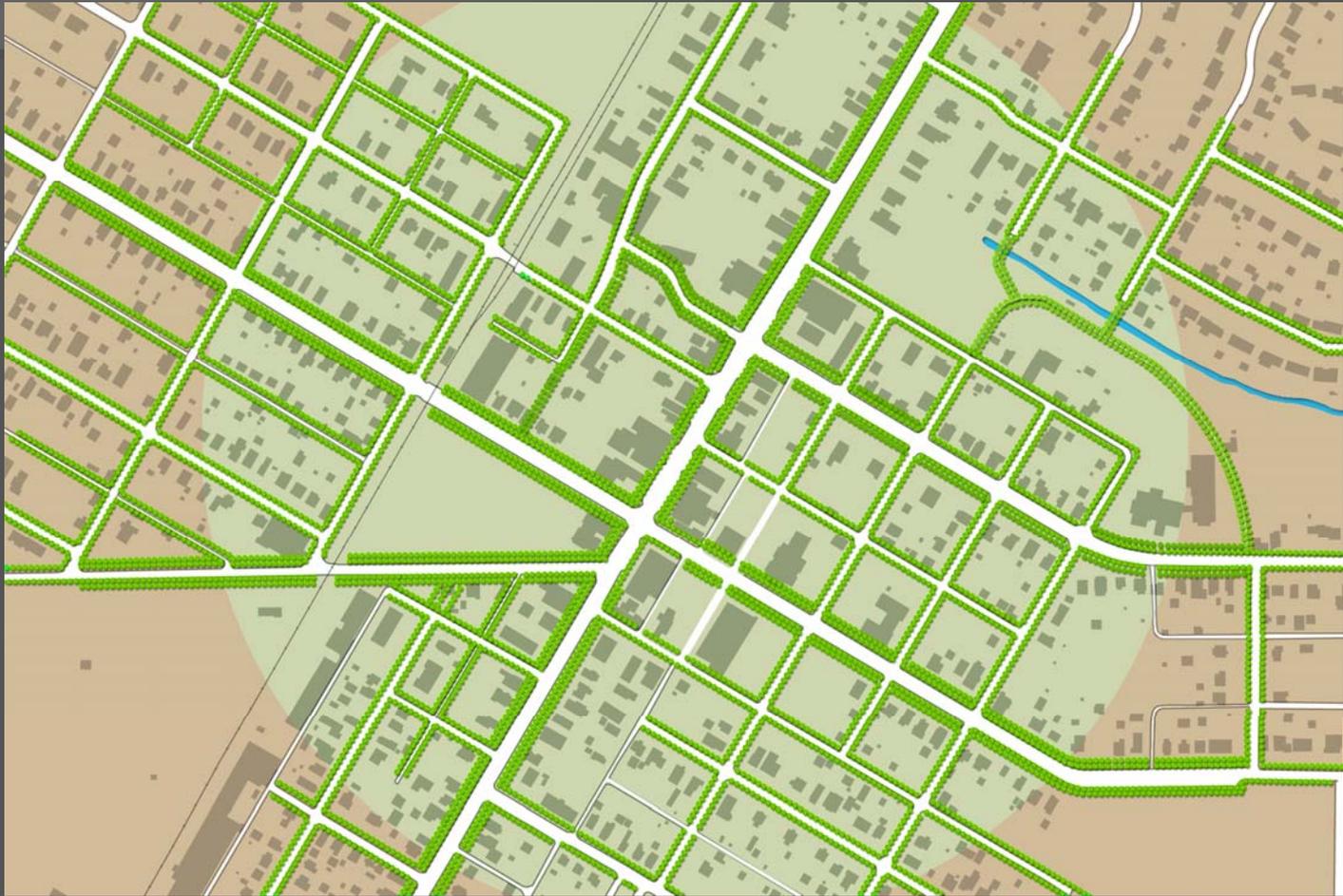
- The plan is a framework to facilitate and embrace redevelopment
- It hinges upon both public & private investments that will be necessary
- It hinges upon the development of at least 160 new housing units at densities higher than Grove City has seen, which are necessary to achieve walkability for a new built-in market for merchants.

# We Established Essential Strategy for Success

- **The redevelopment framework must be:**
  - Flexible (what happens where is ok)
  - Incremental (not all at once)
  - Environmental (trees, parks & civic places)
  - Economic
    - Market support
    - Maximum ROI for public investment
    - Sustainable
- **We call this a green framework for redevelopment, or “Green Frame” for short, because of the environment & economic strategies.**

# Infrastructure: The Green Frame

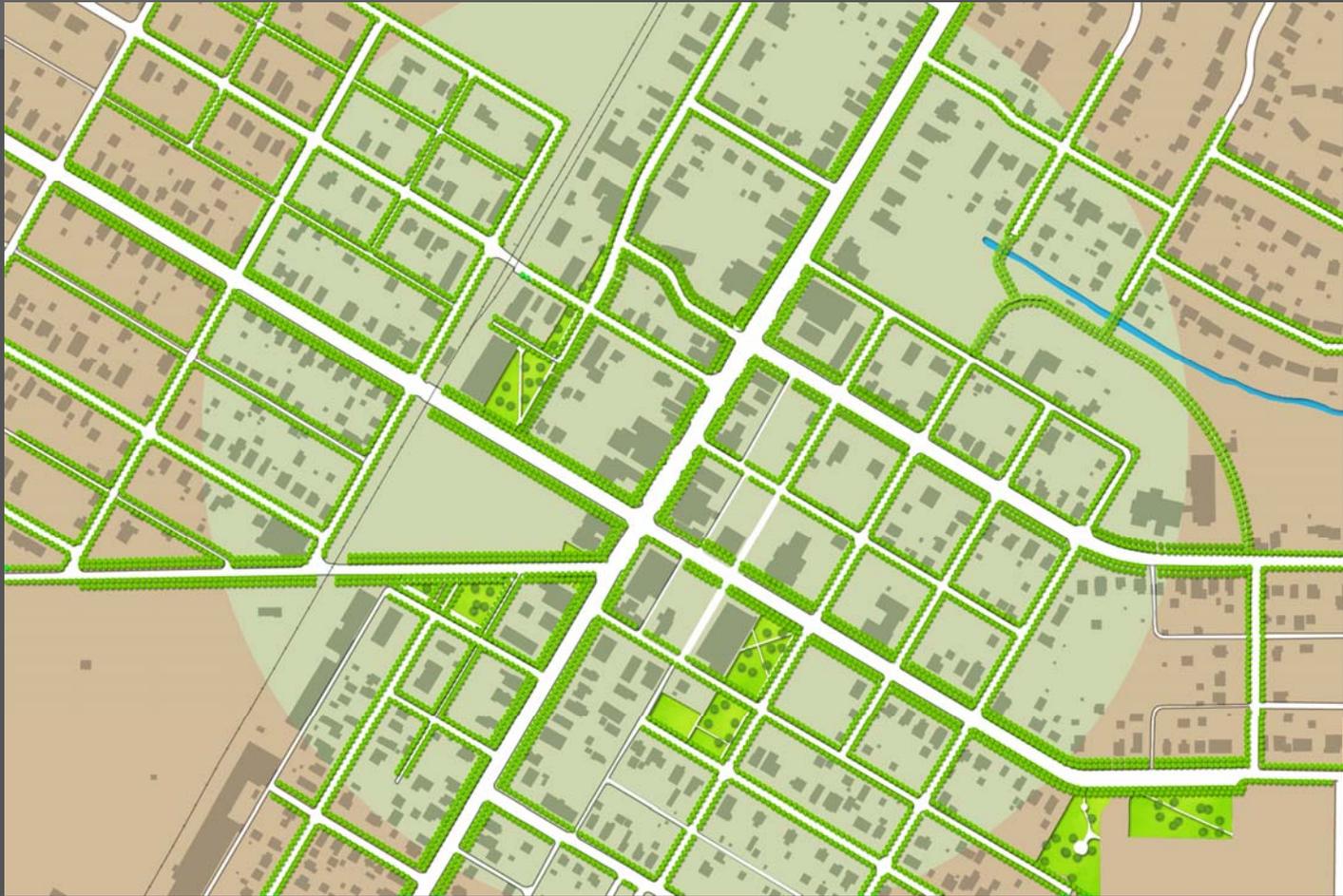
# Extent of Green Frame



# New Streets & Pathways



# New & Improved Parks



# Improves Pedestrian Circulation (Walkability)



(cc) Joel Mann

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# Connects New and Improved Public Parks



# Park Features Provide New Destinations



(cc) Aiden Casey, Rick Kimpel, Brian Leon

# New & Improved Public Parking



# New & Improved Public Parking



- Expanded lots are more efficient in use of area
- Perpendicular stalls are more visitor-friendly
- Built-in opportunities for shared parking efficiencies

# Redevelopment Opportunities



# New Housing



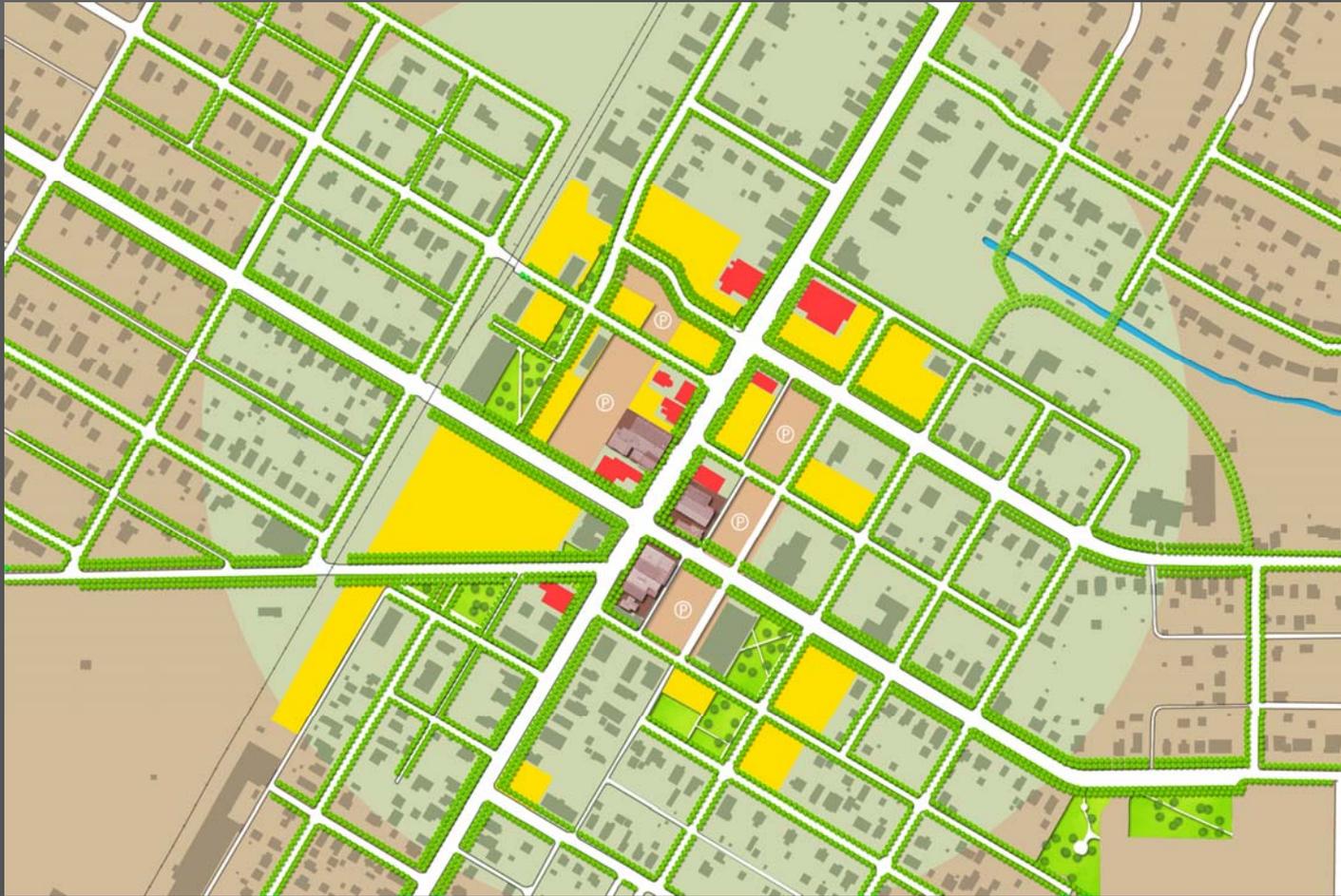
# New Housing



# New Housing



# The Green Frame Plan



# Overall, the Green Frame Plan is

- Flexible (what happens where is ok)
- Incremental (not all at once)
- Environmental (trees, parks & civic places)
- Economic
  - Market support
  - Maximum ROI for public investment
  - Sustainable

# Lumberyard Intro

- Both public & private investments will be necessary to demonstrate the city's confidence in the viability of this plan.
- The public sector's investment is crucial in catalyzing private investment.
- While numerous, smaller public investments will be necessary over a number of years to implement the green framework we are proposing, the lumberyard project demonstrates the city's commitment to redevelopment.

