

**SPECIAL STUDIES
in Support of
GROVE CITY
TOWN CENTER PLAN**

Prepared For:

**THE CITY OF GROVE CITY
Grove City, Ohio**

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES EVALUATION
Grove City
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I. Background on the National Register of Historic Places

The National Register of Historic Places is the official list of properties recognized by the federal government as being worthy of preservation for local, state or national significance. The list of properties is maintained by the Department of the Interior's National Park Service, but the program is administered at the state level by each respective state. Ohio is one of the leading state participants in the National Register program, with approximately 3,600 listings that inventory some 70,000 properties. The Ohio program is administered by the Ohio Historic Preservation Office, a division of the Ohio Historical Society.

The National Register is also an important planning tool that can help communities make decisions about historic properties that have made significant contributions to local history and development.

What Makes a Property Eligible for the National Register?

- Eligible properties include buildings, structures, sites, objects and districts.
- The property must be at least 50 years old, unless it meets an exception
- The property must retain its basic historic integrity
- The property must meet one (or more) of the four established National Register criteria, including:
 - its significance for its association with broad patterns of history
 - its significance for its association with the lives of persons significant in our past
 - its significance for its architectural merit
 - its significance for its potential to yield information important in history or prehistory (archaeology)

What National Register Listing Does

- Listing in the National Register accords a property a certain prestige, which can raise the property owner's and community's awareness and pride.
- National Register listing is often a pre-requisite for funding applications for restoration work through various private, non-profit organizations, such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation.
- Federal tax incentives are available for income-producing properties that are listed in the National Register (either individually or in a historic district). See Related Programs, below.

What National Register Listing Does Not Do

- Listing in the National Register does not prevent an owner from remodeling, repairing, altering, enlarging, selling or even demolishing the property using private, city or state funds.
- National Register listing does not obligate an owner to make any repairs or improvements to the property.

How Properties Are Chosen for National Register Listing

In Ohio, anyone can prepare nominations to the National Register. The documentation requirements include photographs, maps, and completion of the National Register nomination form with detailed physical description and justification of significance. Once a nomination is submitted, it is reviewed by the staff of the Ohio Historic Preservation Office for completeness and accuracy. It is then scheduled for review by the Ohio Historic Site Preservation Advisory Board, a 17-member panel that reviews the nomination to see whether it meets the National Register criteria. If the board decides that the property is eligible for listing, the nomination is given a recommendation for approval. Final listing follows review at the National Park Service. If the National Register staff approves the nomination, the property is officially placed on the National Register by the Keeper of the National Register of Historic Places.

Related Programs

- Federal Tax Incentive Program

Owners of income-producing properties listed on the National Register are eligible to receive a 20% Investment Tax Credit for projects that qualify as certified historic rehabilitations. In this program, 20% of qualified rehabilitation expenditures is taken as a federal income tax credit. To qualify for the credit, the building must be a Certified Historic Structure and the work must be certified as meeting the Secretary of the Interior's Standards for Rehabilitation. Review of the proposed and completed work is provided by the Technical Preservation Services staff of the Ohio Historic Preservation Office. Application forms and additional information about the program is available at the National Park Service web site: www.cr.nps.gov/hps/tps/tax

- Section 106 Review

Properties listed in the National Register, as well as those that are not listed but are determined eligible for listing, are given special consideration in the planning of federally funded or licensed projects. Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 requires that all federally-funded or licensed projects be reviewed before work commences to determine whether they will affect historic properties. Section 106 review is a routine part of the planning process that occurs whether a property is listed in the National Register or not. The review does not guarantee that the property will not be affected, or even demolished, but it does provide for consideration of the effects of the project before it occurs.

II. Current National Register Listings in Grove City

Two properties are currently listed in the National Register of Historic Places in Grove City. They are the Gantz Homestead at 2233 Gantz Road and the A. G. Grant Homestead at 4124 Haughn Road.

III. Potential National Register Listings in Grove City

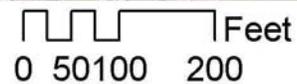
Please note: these properties are suggested for potential National Register listing based upon a preliminary examination of their physical integrity, style, and period of construction only. Additional research into their history and comparison of these

buildings to others in the community/region would be needed to determine their actual potential for listing.

Potential Historic District:

- Grove City Commercial Historic District, Broadway and Park

This potential historic district contains the most intact and contiguous collection of historic commercial buildings in the Grove City historic town center. The boundaries shown on the attached map are tentative, drawn to reflect this concentration but subject to revision. As shown on the attached map, the potential district contains 12 buildings constructed between the late 1800s and early 1900s. Each of the buildings exhibits architectural integrity and is illustrative of the late 19th and early 20th century commercial development of Grove City's main street (Broadway). Additional research and documentation of these buildings would be warranted to justify the potential district and further evaluate its National Register potential.





Potential Individual Listings: *The following are some of the most significant examples of historic architecture in Grove City. While individual nominations can be difficult to achieve, the potential of each of these deserves further exploration.*

- Historic Bank Building

3972-3974 Broadway – Historic commercial building with intact architectural character. Used at one time as a bank and telephone exchange. Example of Classical Revival architecture from early 1900s.



- Grouping of three Craftsman-Style Residential Buildings at Arbutus and Columbus

3315 Columbus Street – Intact Craftsman-style residence built c. 1915-1930.
Associated carriage house at the rear of the property

3299 Columbus Street – Intact Craftsman Bungalow from early 1900s.
Characteristic features of the building type.

3306 Columbus Street – Craftsman-style dwelling built c. 1915-1930.



- Historic Residential Building in the Beulah Park Neighborhood

3520 Park Street – Located in the Beulah Park area, this is an excellent example of a brick American Four Square house from c. 1904. It has survived as an intact representation of that period in this early 20th century neighborhood.



- Grove City Depot

Park and Front Streets – The depot is intact, although somewhat in deteriorated condition.



- St. John's Lutheran Church, Columbus Street

Built in 1888, this church is a significant landmark in the community. Its eligibility for the National Register may be compromised by its modern addition, however.



IV. Evaluation of the neighborhood west of the railroad tracks

As part of this project, the neighborhood located to the west of the railroad tracks was evaluated for National Register eligibility as a historic district. This neighborhood appears to have been settled starting in the late 1800s, with most of its construction occurring in the early-mid 20th century. It is a neighborhood of modest homes, with examples of house types that typify neighborhoods of this period. House types include Gabled Ells, American Four Squares and Bungalows. There are also a number of vernacular 1 or 1½-story cottages and a number of mid-20th century ranch type homes.

Early maps of the neighborhood show that development was sporadic, leading to a mix of buildings from different periods on the same block. In addition to this mix, the existing buildings of the neighborhood have been significantly altered through a number of changes to the architecture, chiefly in the form of artificial siding. About 80% of the buildings in the neighborhood have been covered with aluminum, vinyl or asbestos siding, which has altered their original character. Because this area does not contain a sufficient concentration of buildings with integrity that would illustrate their historic style and period of construction, this neighborhood does not qualify for the National Register of Historic Places.

PARK STREET EXTENSION

The market study provided data to show that the existing Town Center Study Area merchants have been struggling with a very small share of the Grove City market. To address this situation, planning concepts were focused upon three options to provide market support for the Town Center. First, additional market research was directed to learn if new or different businesses, or if a different mix of businesses, could increase market draw to the study area. The lumber yard redevelopment project was conceived to address this option, as a major catalyst development. Secondly, redevelopment planning addressed the need to build into the planning area a new and growing population of residents. The third defined option was to explore ways to increase the accessibility, and the desirability, of access to the planning area from close in and nearby neighborhoods.

Within the increased access category of options to improve market support for the planning area, the extension of Park Street, through the Beulah Park property to Demorest Road at Demorest Park, was conceived as a conceptual project worth evaluating. Likewise, improving the streetscape and environmental character of Park Street, running east of Broadway, was considered as an important opportunity to encourage pedestrian and bicycle access.

Through meetings with Beulah Park officials, it was determined that the race track plans to continue operations for at least five years, allowing time for the State Legislature to consider the issues surrounding options available to permit casinos at racing facilities. The Park has prepared plans for expanding racing operations, including adding a casino and hotel, under the option that the Legislature will allow casinos. The Track has also completed plans for redeveloping the property under the scenario that racing would be abandoned. Under this option, the Track's plan would focus upon new housing development, with a retail center located along the Southwest Boulevard frontage.

The extension of Park Street through the race track would cut the horse barn area in half, causing construction of relocated barns, and resulting in a dual barn area with ongoing operational difficulties. Beulah Park would not favor the extension of Park Street unless and until the decision would be made to cease horse racing. Officials suggested two options. They would support an extension of Park Street across the southern boundary of the race track property, and they would support a more modest walkway / bikeway through their property if it would be made parallel to the existing natural drainage swale. This later approach would be permissible if the Track maintained the right to remove the walkway / bikeway under either of their own planning scenarios if it proved to restrict their own plans.



	Extension South
	Extension Through
	Bike/Pedestrian Path

0 150 300 600 Feet

The option of aligning an extension of Park Street to follow the south boundary of the race track would clearly disrupt the A. G. Beulah Subdivision which was platted in the late 1800's. This neighborhood is a mix of modest homes, with examples of house types that typify neighborhoods of this period. House types include Gabled Ells, American Four Squares and Bungalows. Even though a special study conducted of this neighborhood determined that it was not eligible for listing in the National Register of Historic Places, it was built at a density representative of New Urbanism concepts, and remains a strong resident base for town center area

merchants. It was determined that the concept of extending Park Street through this neighborhood should be postponed until the time Beulah Park is able to determine the best planning approach for its own future.

Park Street is already a street of great proportion, running east from Broadway. Its section contains sidewalks with tree lawns along both frontages. What is lacking to allow its classification as a great urban street are two things. First, a more detailed streetscape focus needs to provide a systematic planting of street trees along its extent, and the design should include consideration for street lighting and periodic placement of benches and other street furniture that may be appropriate. Secondly, Park Street needs to serve as frontage for new housing units at a greater density that presently exist. Market study trends clearly show that more jobs and housing will cluster in town center districts to take advantage of existing infrastructure and to allow older and younger population lifestyles the option and benefits of urban walkable environments which provide opportunity for entertainment, cultural and recreational activity, and social interaction.

This understanding of Park Street's potential led to a more detailed assessment of the present and potential future "walkability" of all streets within the Town Center Planning Area. It also led to an assessment of the connectivity that might be possible to link the present planning area to surrounding streets to maximize accessibility. These assessments led initially to important opportunities, and subsequently to the fundamental infrastructure concept of the redevelopment plan. The initial list of improvement projects consisted of the following.

- Provide streetscape improvements along Park Street, running west of the railroad, to improve its attractiveness for pedestrian access to town center businesses and services.
- Extend Columbus Street across Broadway to intersect with an extension of Meadow Lane, running to Grant Avenue.
- Construct a new street to connect the north end of Franklin Street to Broadway.
- Build a small park at the north end of Broadway with sidewalk connection to a pedestrian crossing of Grove City Road.
- Construct alleys behind the commercial buildings with frontages along the east side of Broadway, between Park Street and Columbus Street.
- Complete a network of tree lined sidewalks within the blocks of the original plat.

The Park Street extension study resulted in a new way of thinking about the physical context of the planning area and its relationship to surrounding neighborhoods. It provided the spark to realize the value of enhancing foot traffic, and it led to the formation of certain goals for the redevelopment plan, such as providing a walkable network which links all development. To a real extent, the idea of extending Park Street was logical because so few housing units presently exist within the planning area, and the study highlighted the need for more housing and housing at higher densities.

Medium density housing is what is missing within the present context of the old town center planning area. New housing will build in a resident population that will support commercial services and retail shops. The market and trend data show clearly that various segments of the population are seeking to live within "walkable" urban, mixed-use areas.

Urban living shifts the lifestyle of residents to the public realm. Residents need a walkway network to connect where they live to work places, stores, good restaurants, good coffee shops, and places to meet friends. Residents in urban

areas also need parks, where they can loiter or read a book. They need places to walk their dogs. Much of their life becomes activity done in public. The infrastructure required to support this activity is civic in nature, and consists of tree lined sidewalks, parks, plazas, storefront streetscape, strategic street and alley extensions and improvements, street lighting, parking lots, and supplemental landscaping. Careful planning and engineering will also allow for effective storm drainage, and in some cases the opportunity for underground utilities.

WINDSOR PARK

Windsor Park hosts a collection of ball fields, tennis courts, and a senior center. Other features include the water tower and a filled in swimming pool. The Public Service Department is located immediately to the south of the park.

Windsor Park is inaccessible from any of Grove City's arterial or collector roads. Kingston Avenue, a collector, is the closest, with the park only 400 feet down a local road, Moore Avenue. In this situation, the park remains less visible, and access illegible.

Traffic to games on the ball fields or events at the senior center is equally likely to head away from the town center as it is toward Broadway and through the town center. The businesses of the town center miss the chance to capture this visitor market.

Parking for Windsor Park is along its northern boundary, within a half mile of the town center. It could be put to use during well attended town center events. Without a shuttle as a part of this type of parking overflow plan, the pedestrian connections are not present to make this an attractive alternative.

Council has authorized the purchase of 220-foot wide, 1600-foot deep tract extending from Broadway to the southwest corner of the park. The purchase also includes two parcels that add a connection between the tract and Ventura Boulevard. Plans are being drawn up for the new additions to the park that will provide additional access and facilities.



Recommendations:

- ✓ Extend streetscape improvements down Bonnie, Dudley and/or Moore Avenues to provide better pedestrian connections to the town center.
- ✓ Align new identity feature/gateway with the entrance to Windsor Park, clearly marking entry to both areas for automobile traffic while unifying both areas with a common element. (A turning lane addition for south-bound traffic at the park entry may be necessary and can be incorporated with this feature.)

THE HADLER CENTER

The Hadler Companies advertises the Broadway Center as an 86,000 square foot shopping center. Aerial photography puts that number closer to 77,000 square feet, including the Dairy Queen and Firestone outlots. The center is oriented away from Broadway and instead toward Southwest Boulevard, which has daily traffic counts between 7500 and 9500. Broadway's traffic counts are nearly twice as high, benefitting from those travelling to and from Interstate 270. However, only 150 linear feet across four tenant bays fronts Broadway, but because of the angle the road takes, these spaces lack visibility to southwest-bound traffic.

Note that when combined with other commercial development near the intersection of Southwest Boulevard and Broadway, the Broadway Center is comparable in size to the town center just down Broadway.

The Hadler Companies constructed the center between 1967 and 1972. They continue to manage this and a number of similar shopping centers across the region. It is highly likely that the property is fully amortized and depreciated. Thus, the cost of any investment—from cosmetic improvements to complete redevelopment—would have to account for any loss of the existing income stream the current owner enjoys in addition to the direct capital cost. Cosmetic improvements would yield return only if the center can charge higher lease rates or reduce the vacancy rate. Otherwise such improvements would only net a higher annual tax bill, despite the public benefit.

The development's 515 parking spaces just meets Grove City's zoning code standards for the mix of restaurant and retail uses. Overall that comes to about one space for every 150 square feet or 6 and 2/3 space for every 1000 square feet. The Urban Land Institute has documented a decline in the parking ratios determining the space for shopping centers of this size since 1965. The industry standard has declined from 5.5 spaces per 1000 square feet to 4 spaces per 1000 square feet in 1999. This decline is not reflected in the center's site layout nor the current zoning code standard.

Three tracts of land at the center remain undeveloped: a 0.45 acre outlot between Dairy Queen and Firestone and a 0.68 acre piece across a parking lot from a 3.54 acre piece at the eastern end of the site. The pieces at the east end of the site formerly appeared in a flood zone (500-year floodplain, meaning a 0.2 percent chance of flooding every year), but do not appear in the flood zone according to the latest Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) published by the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) in June. Leasing information from the owner shows future development for the eastern piece in line with the current strip, extending it eastward while filling in the smaller piece with parking to support the addition.



An additional 20,000 to 40,000 square feet of retail may be difficult to muster. While large, single users will not find the same opportunities in the town center, the Broadway Center and Town Center may be in direct competition for smaller tenants. Nearby sites along Broadway—some with better access and visibility—also provide direct competition. The market analysis in support of the Grove City Town Center Plan also identifies competition from Stringtown Road and online shopping, finding that “Retail Alone Is Not The Answer for the Future of the Town Center.” The same may hold here.

The setting for housing may not be as attractive as in the town center. There is already a concentration of multifamily units immediately north of the Broadway Center and single family units along Richard Avenue.

The market analysis identifies office condominiums, especially those for medical offices, as a potential niche. In sharing existing parking with the retail and restaurant uses, the case can be made for an even lower overall parking ratio (i.e. peak hours are different). In maximizing building coverage to parking, density can be increased without increasing the height of the new buildings out of context—optimizing floor area and, consequently, municipal revenue from new income tax.

Recommendations:

The best chance for site wide improvements will coincide with the development of the vacant portions of the center’s property. The land has already been platted and

zoned. Certain entitlements are already in place. Thus the remaining tools are encouragement through incentives and information sharing.

- ✓ Encourage site wide improvements by offering reduced parking requirements to bring the center up to current standards for landscaping and stormwater retention. Encourage shared access with the building at the corner of Southwest Boulevard and Broadway as an access management effort.
- ✓ Share information on the use of the Community Revitalization Area (CRA). Show how the site improvements would remain tax exempt if they apply under the existing CRA.
- ✓ Share information on the new FIRM showing the eastern portions of the center out of the floodplain.
- ✓ Encourage and allow for office uses despite the site's retail and service-oriented C-2 zoning.