



Beulah Park Conceptual Framework

2013



Chapter Outline

- A. Introduction
- B. Purpose of Conceptual Framework
- C. Key Findings and Opportunities
- D. Redevelopment Principles
- E. Recommendations

A. Introduction

For nearly a century, Beulah Park has been an integral part of Grove City's identity and contributed immensely to the city's growth and development. Originally created to attract buyers to the Beulah Subdivision, the site became the first thoroughbred racetrack in the state of Ohio. Although highway signs for Beulah Park mark Grove City's exits from both I-71 and I-270, the site will soon no longer be host to the thoroughbred racing that helped put Grove City on the map. In 2012, Penn National Gaming, Inc. announced that Beulah Park's racing license would be relocated to northeast Ohio, near Youngstown. The site was listed for sale in February 2013, although racing is planned to continue through Spring of 2014. The relocation of the operation will leave the 213 acre Beulah Park site available for redevelopment.

The redevelopment of Beulah Park offers tremendous opportunity for Grove City. Redeveloping Beulah Park will mean new opportunities on the site as well as opportunities for the surrounding area. With its proximity to the city's historic Town Center, historic significance, large area, and access to utility services, the site creates a development prospect unmatched anywhere in the region. By being proactive, Grove City has the opportunity to guide the development of the site to ensure it compliments and upgrades the area. The recommendations found in the Beulah Park Conceptual Framework presents the highest and best use for the site.

B. Purpose of the Conceptual Framework

The Beulah Park Conceptual Framework describes opportunities and aspirations for the redevelopment of Beulah Park. The land recommendations are considered to be the best uses for the site to directly benefit the Town Center and larger community, from a variety of perspectives including land use and economic benefits, to ensure quality development.

The balance of this executive summary describes:

1. **Key findings and Opportunities** – Opportunities, trends, and other factors that support this Conceptual Framework’s recommendations.
2. **Redevelopment Principles** – Statements that describe the intended direction for redevelopment
3. **Recommendations** – An overview of development patterns and land uses that reflect the intent of the Redevelopment Principles.

C. Key Findings and Opportunities

Studying Beulah Park and its context in Grove City, a number of findings have been identified summarizing the most important issues facing Beulah Park and future development on the site. Based on these key findings, City Administration has identified opportunities in which the redevelopment of Beulah Park can address these issues.

FINDINGS

Beulah Park is historically significant locally and regionally.

Beulah Park was named a historical site by the Ohio Historical Society in 2011. It became the first thoroughbred racetrack in Ohio in 1923 and is located on land formerly owned by the original founder of Grove City, William Foster Breck.

Beulah Park was originally developed to attract residents to the Beulah Subdivision and has historically been a gathering place for residents and visitors.

Beulah Park attracted visitors from around the state on race days. Thousands of visitors would spend time in the Town Center shops and restaurants before and after races. It has since become host to popular city events.

Beulah Park acts as a barrier limiting connections between areas west of Demorest Road and the Town Center.

Although Beulah Park has been used for civic events and gatherings, it is not a public park and has effectively disconnected neighborhoods west of Demorest Road from the Town Center and the rest of the city.

OPPORTUNITIES

To preserve and build upon the legacy of Beulah Park as a unique element of Grove City's identity.

Redevelopment of the site should embrace and respect its historic integrity and restore portions of the site to its original purpose as an attractor for visitors and residents, and play a vital economic and social role in the city.

To create a unique development to attract new residents and businesses and maintain Beulah Park as a destination for residents and visitors.

Development, both residential and nonresidential, should be unique from other options found in Grove City to attract new residents and businesses to the area, to capitalize on regional economic and demographic trends, and diversify the city's market offerings. Much like the crowds attracted on race days, the site should continue to be a destination for gatherings such as the city's hot air balloon festival and Independence Day fireworks. The potential for civic facilities such as a community center and center of learning would also attract people to the site.

To create new points of connectivity between areas west of Demorest Road and the Town Center.

Creating better connectivity will allow residents west of Demorest Road easier access to the Town Center through the street and trail networks. Connectivity through the site will also provide access to the Southwest Boulevard trail leading to the Central Crossing campus.

FINDINGS

Beulah Park is surrounded by a mix of competing land uses.

From large scale distribution to the north, to some of the most historic and diverse housing in the city to the south, Beulah Park acts as a buffer between disparate uses.

There is a lack of new housing stock within the Town Center area.

According to the 2008 Town Center Plan, authored by Lincoln Street Studio, the housing stock within one mile of the intersection of Broadway and Park Street is twice as old as the housing stock available in the rest of the city.

Grove City has a strong economic base in large format industrial uses; however space for small scale and tech-based industry is limited.

Much of the industrial space in Grove City is designed for large-scale (100,000+ square foot) structures; however there is an unmet demand for smaller scale, flexible, technology-based industrial spaces for businesses requiring spaces less than fifty thousand square feet.

Grove City is located in an economically strong region.

Columbus has been recognized nationally for its diversified and growing economy. It is considered to be one of the fastest growing innovation and technology hubs in the nation, home to more than 700 tech-based businesses and ranked #3 by Forbes as the best city in the nation for tech jobs.

Beulah Park is within a half mile of the Central Crossing campus.

Three educational facilities are located on a campus less than a half mile west of Beulah Park at the corner of Big Run South Road and Holt Road.

OPPORTUNITIES

To provide a gradual transition between competing area uses.

Redevelopment on the site will include a mix of uses, designed in a manner to effectively transition between competing land uses currently adjacent to the site, minimizing negative impacts one may have on another.

To offer residential alternatives in Grove City.

The redevelopment of Beulah Park offers the opportunity to bring new residents to the Town Center as well as offer a neighborhood environment and housing product unique to the city. The addition of new residents within easy walking distance to the Town Center will help support area businesses.

To diversify the local economy and strengthen the city's fiscal health.

Industrial development on the Beulah Park site should be focused on smaller scale industry with an emphasis on technology-based businesses to further diversify the city's economy and improve the fiscal health of the area. Emphasis should be on job creation, rather than developed square footage, allowing smaller operations to establish roots and grow in Grove City.

To capitalize on regional strengths and recent trends, thereby strengthening and diversifying the city's economy.

Grove City needs to capture only a small piece of the "Columbus pie" to be a great success for the city. Development on Beulah Park should attempt to capture a portion of this regional demand, offering development options that don't currently exist in Grove City. The setting would be truly unique to the region.

To expand educational opportunities in the city.

Locating a center of learning facility on Beulah Park will create an educational corridor between Beulah and the Central Crossing campus.

Additional Opportunities

Beulah Park is within two miles of Bolton Field, located in Columbus to the north and west of Big Run South Road.

D. Redevelopment Principles

Based on the key findings and opportunities, five principles for development were identified to serve as a foundation for the Beulah Park Conceptual Framework. Each principle describes the intended direction of future development on the site.

It is our intent that...

- 1 Development on the site highlights the historic significance of Beulah Park.**
Future redevelopment at Beulah Park will honor the site's historic significance through the preservation or retrofitting of significant features and through design features such as monuments and public art. Beulah Park will remain a significant and distinctive feature of Grove City and continue to serve as a destination point in the region.
- 2 Beulah Park serves as a community gathering place.**
The redevelopment of Beulah Park will return a portion of the property back to its original intent - park and recreational space for public use. Civic space will provide an amenity for nearby residents, facilities for city-wide use, and serve as a gathering place for popular community events.
- 3 Connectivity is promoted on the site to improve the function of the street network and provide more opportunities to walk and bike.**
The redevelopment of Beulah Park will improve the street and trail connectivity in the area and to the west. New streets will provide multiple connections to existing streets to improve the function of the street network. Bike paths for recreation and transportation will be integrated into the redevelopment of the site.
- 4 Quality design is emphasized for all uses to create an attractive and distinctive public and private realm, appropriate with the character of adjacent uses.**
The redevelopment of Beulah Park will reflect time-honored planning principles for creating quality places, including the design of buildings, streets and the spaces between. Aesthetics and quality of design and materials will be emphasized on all buildings and public spaces. Development will be sensitive to adjacent uses, recognizing the unique characteristics of the area.
- 5 Development provides the city with a net fiscal benefit.**
The redevelopment of Beulah Park will include a balance of uses to provide a quality development while strengthening the overall prosperity and fiscal position of the city, recognizing that not all development provides a net benefit in terms of fiscal impacts. The redevelopment of Beulah Park will capitalize on the economic strength of the Columbus region and offer a diversified development meeting the demands of Grove City's economy.

E. Recommendations

The Beulah Park Conceptual Framework will contain concepts for the redevelopment of Beulah Park that reflect the redevelopment principles. Each concept introduces new street connections and a mix of uses on the site to transition between the surrounding uses and fully utilize the site in a manner complimentary for the area.

1. Connectivity

Beulah Park has effectively disconnected areas west of Demorest Road from the greater city. The redevelopment of Beulah Park will allow new connections to be made in both the street and trail network to create new points of connectivity west of Broadway.

Southwest Boulevard

Connections onto Southwest Boulevard should be limited to the existing primary entrance to Beulah Park, preserving the entrance features, and potentially another connection at Lewis Center Way.

Demorest Road

Park Street should be extended west as a residential corridor to connect to Demorest Road at the Demorest Road Park. Connections west to Demorest Road could also be made to roads currently terminating at the site – Cypress and Basswood Avenues.

Continuing the Residential Grid

The residential streets west of Front Street create a grid pattern typical of historic neighborhoods. These streets terminate at Beulah Park, therefore new development on the site allows the opportunity to extend the traditional historic street grid to the northeast and west.

Trails

Connectivity in the trail and sidewalk network will allow residents easier access to the Town Center without relying on motorized transportation. New trails connect to the existing trail network on Southwest Boulevard (bike lanes) and the proposed sidepath on Demorest Road.

Recommendations

1. Connectivity
2. Land Use
3. Procedural

Area Improvements

The primary entrance to Beulah Park on Southwest Boulevard, across from the entrance to the Wal-Mart Distribution facility, is soon to be signalized. Improvements are also being completed to the intersection of Southwest Boulevard and Demorest Road.

2. Land Use

The redevelopment of Beulah Park should include a mix of uses to attract a variety of new residents and businesses.

Civic Space

A portion of Beulah Park should be preserved to appropriately recognize the historic significance of the site and provide for park space. This space should be improved with monuments conveying its past and with a variety of recreational amenities to serve its new purpose (both active and passive). A large park would meet the needs of new area residents as well as the neighborhood west of Town Center. Additionally, a large civic space will enable the city to continue to hold events such as the Independence Day fireworks and the hot air balloon festival on the site.

Civic spaces could also include civic facilities such as a community center and center of learning. These features will create a strong identity for the area and help attract visitors and residents. Such civic features will also help attract businesses looking for amenities for their associates.

Residential

To diversify the city's housing options, both single family and multi-family housing, in forms and arrangements that do not currently exist in the city, should be part of the redevelopment. The traditional neighborhood pattern of the existing neighborhood west of Front Street should be extended with a similar street grid and a mix of single family homes and town homes or apartments. Residential buildings should be oriented towards the street with garages off rear alleys to create a walkable environment connecting to the Town Center.

Industrial

Emphasis on industrial development should be placed on light industrial and small scale flex space to allow smaller businesses to utilize the space and expand as their needs mature. Small flex space can also be used as office space or for the establishment of a cooperative environment for businesses to pool resources. The physical development should be innovative and distinctive, in proper size, scale and character with the context of adjacent uses.

A limited amount of large scale industrial uses (over 50,000 s.f.) may be appropriate provided they are located in the northern portion of the site, near Southwest Boulevard away from residential areas. These uses could provide a transition from large warehouse and distribution uses along Southwest Boulevard, to residential uses to the south. Industrial uses on the site should be engaged in the production of an economic good or service with a focus on clean manufacturing or tech based industries.

Uses Not Recommended on Beulah Park

Commercial:

Grove City has approximately 45 square feet of retail space per person, almost twice the national average according to the International Council of Shopping Centers. Large retail development is not recommended for Beulah Park due to the proximity of existing retail in the city's Town Center and the fact that Columbus has land zoned for commercial use in close proximity to the site. Rather, it is recommended that any development establish walkable streets and trail connections to the existing commercial core of Town Center.

Office:

Although the Columbus region is very strong in the office sector, Grove City has room to grow in terms of office development. Grove City was not listed in a 2012 commercial real estate report on the Columbus suburban office market comparing availability rates. Office uses located on the Beulah Park site should be smaller scale, likely in conjunction with a small scale industrial use.

3. Procedural

Beulah Park is currently zoned SD-3, for recreational facilities. This designation permits a variety of recreational uses including dance studios, bowling centers, racing tracks, physical fitness facilities, golf courses, and amusement parks. In order for the site to be utilized for a use other than recreational, the property will require rezoning– a public process through Planning Commission and City Council.

Incentives such as infrastructure construction and financial assistance will encourage redevelopment. Beulah Park is located entirely in one of the city’s Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA #3), providing real property tax exemptions to land owners making improvements to their property. Furthermore, the city will receive up to \$3 million for the redevelopment of the site, administered by the Ohio Department of Development, part of a relocation fee paid by Penn National to the state. The \$3 million can be used for site planning, redevelopment, demolition, relocation of utilities and construction projects, but excludes land acquisition. The funds can also be used for off-site improvements associated with the site.

Capital Improvement Planning will identify the essential steps and improvements needed to establish a complete transportation and utility network necessary to attract investors.

Due to the expanse of the site, it is not expected that it will be developed at once, but instead over a series of phases lasting multiple years. The site has the potential to absorb growth for years to come.



BEULAH PARK

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G. Bumpus





G. P. [Signature]