



# The City of Grove City, Ohio

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Planning Commission Staff Report  
Lower Level Conference Room  
November 3, 2015 1:30pm

**10. APPLICATION: Grove City Family Apartments (Southwestern Apartments)  
Preliminary Development Plan**

Project Number: 201510140078  
Location: Located on the south side of Southwest Boulevard, 325± feet west of Broadway (040-013660).  
Proposal: To develop a two-, three-, and four-bedroom apartment complex.  
Applicant: LW Associates, Inc.; c/o Todd Valentine; 184 W. Main Street; Ashville, Ohio 43103.

**Relevant Code Section(s):**

- 1135.14, Zoning Districts and Regulations – Planned Unit Development District, Preliminary Plan Content

**Project Summary**

The applicant is requesting approval of a preliminary development plan for a new residential development, Grove City Family Apartments (Southwestern Apartments), located on the south side of Southwest Boulevard, 325± feet west of Broadway. A mixture of two-, three- and four-bedroom units are proposed for this project, with a total of 60 units. The proposed preliminary development plan has been submitted with the intent to rezone the site to PUD-R, Planned Unit Development Residential District, for the development of this site.

**Facts**

Zoning

The site is currently zoned C-2, Retail Commercial. The applicant intends to seek a PUD-R, Planned Unit Development Residential, zoning for the development. The property is also within the Historical Preservation Area.

Surrounding Zoning and Uses

Properties to the north and east are zoned C-2, Retail Commercial; a multi-family residential development zoned A-1, Multi-Family District, lies to the south; and the property to the west across the railroad tracks, is zoned IND-2, Heavy Industry.

Site Features

The site is primarily vacant with tree lines along the west and south property lines. The southern portion of the property is within a FEMA designated flood hazard area (zone AE) and floodway. The site is within in the City’s Community Reinvestment Area #4.

Site History

The southeast portion of this site, fronting Broadway, was before the Planning Commission in September 2015 for the Development Plan and Certificate of Appropriateness for an O’Reilly

Auto Parts Store. Both the Development Plan and COA were approved by City Council on September 21, 2015.

## Details

### Site Plan

A total of 60 units are proposed on the 7.2 acre site, yielding a density of 8.33 dwelling units per acre, slightly exceeding the Code maximum density of 8 dwelling units per acre for multi-family housing. The development will be accessed from the existing shared drive on the CVS property. This drive has right-in/right-out access onto Southwest Boulevard and full access onto Broadway. Two points of access are proposed off the shared CVS drive, both proposed to be 26' in width. Staff has concerns with the amount of traffic that will likely be generated by the proposed development and how this traffic will safely access both Broadway and Southwest Boulevard from the existing drive. The applicant has informed staff that a traffic study will be conducted as part of the rezoning application, to follow the proposed preliminary development plan.

Although building and parking lot setback lines are not shown on plans, buildings are set back more than 80 feet from Southwest Boulevard and the eastern property line and more than 75 feet from the western property line, meeting the required building setbacks for the site. Parking lot setbacks do not appear to meet minimum requirements, though their specific distances from property lines are not noted.

Additional amenities are proposed on the site including a community building, shelter house, community garden and play ground. A walking path is proposed around the stormwater pond in the southeast corner of the site.

### Open Space

Per 1101.06(b), based on the number of units proposed, 2.74 acres of open space is required within the development. The applicant has provided a plan sheet indicating various open spaces proposed throughout the development for a total of 2.81 acres of open space. However, 0.22 acres of the proposed open space is located on the eastern portion of the site and serves more as a buffer from adjacent commercial development than usable open space. Staff does not believe the provided open space is properly distributed in the development and recommends additional open space be included throughout the site to provide access for all residents.

### Architecture

A total of five (5) three-story buildings are proposed with this development, each with open stairwells. Residential buildings are to be finished in a combination of vinyl siding and brick with dimensional asphalt shingles. A community building is proposed, to be finished in vinyl siding and cultured stone veneer for accent.

Because of the site's location within one of the City's Community Reinvestment Areas (CRA) and its prominence at the intersection of Broadway and Southwest Boulevard, Staff expects all structures to have four-sided architecture and utilize high quality materials. In order to match existing developments in the area, all four sides of all structures on the site should be finished in brick. Staff also believes the external stairways are inappropriate for this location.

### Parking

The applicant has proposed a total of 150 uncovered parking spaces, which meets the code required amount for 60 multi-family residential units (2.5 spaces per unit). Nine handicap parking spaces are proposed throughout the development.

### Landscaping and Screening

A preliminary landscape plan was submitted, and shows landscaping around each building as well as throughout the site, but does not meet the required amount by Code. Section 1136.06(c) requires landscaping along the rear and side yards adjacent to incompatible use districts. The first option is a 20 foot minimum parking and/or drive aisle setback with either a continuous six (6) foot high wall or solid fence or a 90% opaque five (5) foot high evergreen shrub, or combination thereof, with supplemental landscaping as approved by the Urban Forester. Alternatively, the applicant could provide a 30 foot minimum parking and/or drive aisle setback with a continuous four (4) foot high minimum earthen mound with a double staggered row of six (6) foot high minimum evergreen trees and supplemental landscaping, again as approved by the Urban Forester. Additional supplemental landscaping is required per Code Section 1136.07. Therefore, Staff does not believe adequate landscaping is provided to separate the residential uses from the surrounding incompatible districts.

### Code Analysis

Per Section 1135.14 of the Codified Ordinances of Grove City, Planning Commission is charged with reviewing and evaluating Preliminary and Final Development Plan applications by applying the eight (8) findings.

- (1) **The uses proposed will not be detrimental to present and potential surrounding uses, but will have a beneficial effect which could not be achieved under any other district.**

**Finding Met:** The proposed use will not, in the opinion of staff, be detrimental to surrounding uses. The site is bordered on the south by residential uses, the north and east by commercial uses and industrial uses to the west.

- (2) **Any exception from Zoning Code (Ordinance C79-74, passed January 20, 1975) requirements is warranted by the design and amenities incorporated in the Development Plan.**

**Finding Not Met:** The proposed project contains a number of exceptions from Code requirements for multi-family housing developments including the proposed density, building height, parking lot setbacks, and perimeter landscaping for incompatible developments. Staff does not feel the proposed development incorporates amenities or other design aspects to warrant these proposed exceptions.

- (3) **Land surrounding the proposed development can be planned in coordination with the proposed development and that it is compatible in use.**

**Finding Not Met:** Although the proposed development has been designed to incorporate into existing development by tying into the existing shared drive on the CVS site and public sidewalks along Southwest Boulevard, staff has concerns regarding the compatibility of the proposed use in relation to existing uses in the area. Furthermore, the proposed development will consume the

remainder of the vacant site at a prominent location in the community and a large property within one of the city's CRAs.

- (4) **The proposed change to a Planned Unit Development District is in conformance with the general use intent of the area.**

**Finding Not Met:** The proposed PUD is not in conformance with the general intent of the area, as it is surrounded by incompatible uses to the north, east and west. Staff has concerns that the proposed use is not the highest and best use for the site, considering the valuable economic tool of the CRA (Community Reinvestment Area) on the site for attracting business that would bring more jobs to the city.

- (5) **Existing and proposed streets are suitable and adequate to carry anticipated traffic within the proposed district and in the vicinity of the proposed district.**

**Finding Not Met:** Staff has concerns regarding the amount of traffic generated by the proposed use and its utilization solely of the existing CVS shared drive to access Southwest Boulevard and Broadway. The applicant has indicated that a traffic study will be conducted as part of the rezoning application to address staff's concerns.

- (6) **Existing and proposed utility services are adequate for the proposed development.**

**Finding Met:** Preliminary plans show proposed utility locations including sanitary, water and storm water. Staff feels the proposed utilities can adequately service the proposed development.

- (7) **Each phase of the proposed development, as it is proposed to be completed contains the required parking spaces, landscape and utility areas necessary for creating and sustaining a desirable and stable environment.**

**Finding Met:** According to materials, the site is proposed to be developed in one phase over a span of thirteen (13) months. As proposed, the site will contain the required parking, landscaping, and utilities to create a stable environment.

- (8) **The proposed Planned Unit Development District and all proposed buildings, parking spaces and landscape and utility areas can be completely developed within seven years of the establishment of the district, unless otherwise provided for by Council.**

**Finding Met:** The proposed project, including building, parking spaces, landscaping, and utilities can be completely developed within seven years.

**Recommendation(s):**

After review and consideration, the Development Department recommends Planning Commission make a recommendation of disapproval to City Council for the Preliminary Development Plan as submitted.