



# New Downtown Grocery Store Greenville, Texas

## *What the Community Requested*

Greenville's central business district was a thriving community that centered its economy on the cotton business. However, as with the story of many small-town downtown areas, core industries became unprofitable, and people moved to more prosperous areas, leading to vacancies and the gradual decline of Greenville's economic center. Many businesses closed, moved to larger cities, or relocated to greenfields along the interstate highway. The net result of this movement left neighborhoods along Greenville's central business district without nearby services, such as banks, post offices, laundry facilities, and grocery stores.

The City of Greenville, as part of its plans to reverse the downward economic spiral occurring in Old Town Greenville, commissioned a Needs Assessment, and as a result of this assessment adopted revitalization of the downtown area as a major goal. The effect of businesses vacating



**Properties along Downtown Greenville street before redevelopment**

the central business district over the past 30 years was evident in a 2005 survey conducted in the Brownfields target area. A survey was sent to all the residents and property owners within the target area to help in the prioritization of potential future assessment activities. The surveys were tabulated, and results revealed that 43% of responding residents selected "grocery store" as their number one choice for desired businesses. Based on the results of the survey, the City of Greenville recognized the importance of bringing a grocery store back into downtown Greenville to provide a necessary service for the local community. The City put into motion a plan to attract a large grocery business to Greenville's downtown.

Site selection zeroed in on a property that 20-years ago was the location of a large chain grocery store. This 1.38 acre tract held a 17,000 square foot building which was suspected of having asbestos and lead-based paint contamination. Utilizing funding from its EPA Brownfields hazardous and petroleum assessment grant, the City commissioned a Phase I assessment which identified asbestos in the floor tile and associated mastic throughout the building. This assessment also suggested that several off-site concerns including gas stations and dry cleaners might affect the property. Phase II assessments addressed off-site concerns, and an asbestos and lead-based paint survey characterized the extent of those contaminants. An asbestos abatement scope of work was developed as well as cost estimate for the asbestos removal. The site was then ready to sell, and a Hispanic grocery store whose owners were initially interested in a greenfield along the interstate highway turned their attention to the downtown location.



**Grocery Store, Downtown Greenville**

This and other Brownfields projects, as well as a \$1.5 million grant for a streetscape project and a \$100,000 grant for improvements to City Hall have helped serve as catalysts for new businesses and opportunities for downtown Greenville. Collectively, these efforts have created a positive economic impact on the historic downtown area, and the City is positioned to take full advantage of future opportunities as it continues to successfully redevelop the historic downtown area.

For more information on Greenville's Brownfields redevelopment program, contact John Adel, AICP-Director of Community Development, City of Greenville, 903-457-3160 or e-mail [jadel@ci.greenville.tx.us](mailto:jadel@ci.greenville.tx.us).