

NO PHOTO AVAILABLE

#### Front - Title/Description

##### ***Downtown Historic District***

Williamston grew where two Native American trails crossed. In 1834, settlers Hiram and Joseph Putnam built the north-south road that became Putnam Street. Construction of the Grand River Turnpike from Detroit to Grand Rapids in 1851 created Grand River Avenue. Starting in 1840, brothers Oswald, Horace and James Williams built a dam, saw mill and grist mill on the Red Cedar River. By 1871, when rail service came, the town had become a farm market center and boasted more than twelve hundred residents. After a short boom, the population declined until Grand River Avenue was paved circa 1923. The improved road encouraged auto tourism and allowed residents to commute to work instead of moving.

#### **Significant Date:**

Statehood Era (1815-1860)

**Registry Year:** 2014    **Erected Date:** 2014

#### Marker Location

**Address:** 161 E. Grand River Ave

**City:** Williamston

**State:** MI    **ZipCode:** 48895

**County:** Ingham

**Township:** Williamston

**Lat:** 42.68906999 / **Long:** -84.28158134

**Web URL:**

#### Back - Title/Description

##### ***Downtown Historic District***

The Williamston Downtown Historic District reflects changes in small town commercial architecture from the 1870s to the 1950s. Some buildings date to 1874. One housed a hardware store continuously from 1888 through the time this marker was erected. The building styles include Second Empire, Italianate, Late Victorian, and Commercial Brick. In 1895, and again in 1915, fire destroyed several downtown businesses. Locals committed to preservation began refurbishing structures in the 1960s. In 1971, businessmen purchased the Andrews Hotel, built in 1887, to save it from demolition. The Williamston Downtown Historic District was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 2012.