

FACILITIES MASTER PLAN

ALLEGANY COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS



AUGUST, 2016

ALLEGANY COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

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Credits



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ABOVE: Allegheny County Fair

Convergence Design was retained by Allegheny County to develop a Facilities Master Plan for the Allegheny County Fairgrounds, a 151 acre property along the Potomac River used for a variety of public and recreational functions.

The Fairgrounds encompass a diverse group of uses, ranging from baseball and festival camping to a variety of indoor functions, most held at the Multipurpose Building on site. In addition, the Fairgrounds host a number of festivals and special events. Most prominent among these is Delfest, a music festival produced by a third party that draws up to 10,000 spectators to the Fairgrounds over an extended weekend. Delfest taxes the Fairgrounds facilities to their utmost, and the County has an interest in planning for the future of both Delfest and the numerous other activities that are housed at the Fairgrounds.

Methodology and Scope

The plan described in this document was developed in close consultation with County staff and many other stakeholders. The stakeholders are identified by organization in the section below on stakeholder interaction. The planning team pursued the following steps in developing this Facilities Master Plan:

A. Existing Facilities Analysis

The planning team toured the existing Fairgrounds facilities to observe and document existing conditions:

1. Adequacy of existing space for fair and other public event functions;
2. Condition of existing space relative to competition;
3. Functionality of existing space for front-of-house and back-of-house movement of people and goods;
4. Readily apparent building envelope or structural concerns;
5. Readily apparent building code or accessibility concerns;
6. Adequacy of existing support space.

B. Site Analysis

The planning team investigated the current Fairgrounds facilities, observing and documenting the following conditions:

1. Vehicular arrival sequence and adequacy of parking;
2. Pedestrian arrival sequence;
3. Adequacy and condition of existing site amenities (paving, walkways, plantings, etc.);
4. Overall appearance and condition of site, buildings and grounds;
5. Potential for facility expansion;
6. Interconnection with existing roads, transit, and bike/pedestrian pathways.



ABOVE: Allegheny County Fairgrounds

C. Parking Analysis

The planning team worked with stakeholder and our economic consultant to develop a parking demand estimate based on proposed new and/or renovated facilities. This scenario may consider both on-site and off-site parking resources, and alternative parking strategies. The parking strategy developed addresses the parking needs of the upgraded Fairgrounds without necessarily increasing the amount of land dedicated to surface parking in the immediate vicinity.

D. Facility Program

The planning team developed an outline facility program for the new, expanded and renovated facilities. This program includes major “sellable space” components from the stakeholder interactions, and augments those recommendations with recommendations for appropriate and proportional levels of support space, including lobby space, guest amenities, storage, catering and back-of-house support space. The program will be used to create basic facility footprints that can be tested in the concept development stage.

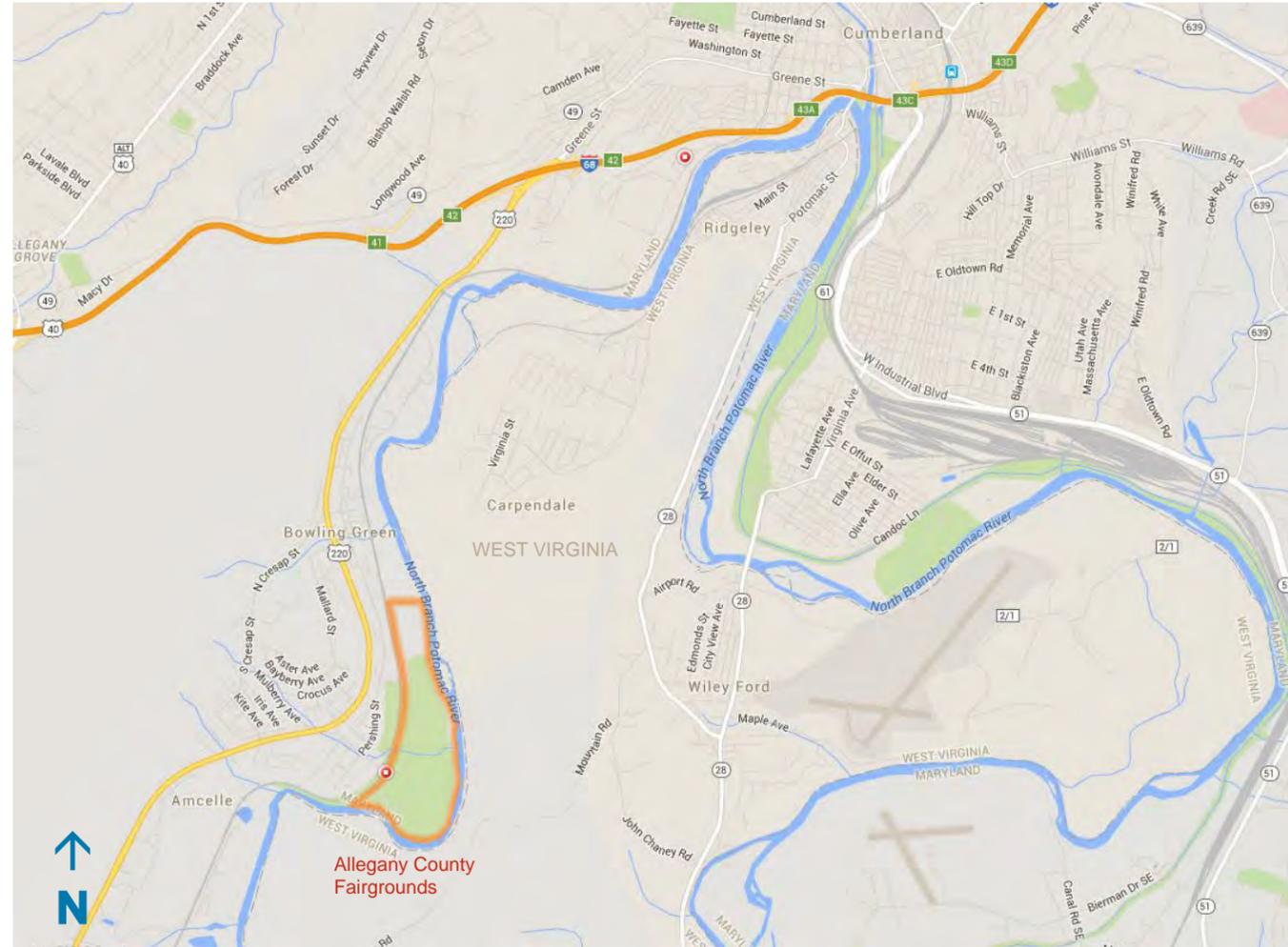
E. Concept Development

The planning team developed a range of alternative ideas for the project based on the stakeholder interactions. These approaches document alternative planning solutions to give the County a range of options from which to choose. Elements considered in the concept development include:

1. Overall Fairgrounds redevelopment planning goals;
2. Fairgrounds identity and approach;
3. Connection to existing development and event infrastructure;

Introduction

ALLEGANY COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS



ABOVE: Allegany County Fairgrounds context map (Source: Google Maps)

4. Arrival and parking sequence;
5. Loading and service requirements;
6. Preservation/enhancement of existing visitor infrastructure;
7. New facility siting options and possible footprints;
8. Massing of new facilities and their relation to existing structures;
9. Interface with existing/planned infrastructure

F. Site Development Plan

Based upon review of the process with stakeholders, the planning team developed a proposed site development master plan for the Allegany County Fairgrounds. This plan will be useful in gaining project support and communicating the Fairgrounds Facilities Plan to the community. The site development plan includes:

1. An overall site plan showing how the new and renovated facilities will fit into the larger development framework and existing urban infrastructure;
2. A massing study showing the proposed density of development for the proposed project(s) and related improvements;
3. A written tabulation of proposed building construction, parking, and ancillary development with concept-level cost estimates for each.

G. Cost Estimates

The planning team developed conceptual cost estimates for construction, including soft costs, for the proposed renovation, expansion and/or new construction projects proposed in the Master Plan. These estimates are appropriate for developing funding strategies that will allow the County to move toward implementation of the projects identified within the Master Plan.



RIGHT: Delfest 2016

Overview

The Allegany County Fairgrounds site is relatively flat when compared to the rolling mountains and cliffs surrounding it. Therefore, a very large portion is also in the 100 year floodplain. Much of the site is unused and swampy, with a hazard of flooding and a seasonally high water table and moderate frost heave potential. The Fairgrounds are surrounded on the South and East by the North Branch of the Potomac River with large cliffs to the East that serve as a picturesque backdrop. Access to the Fairgrounds is by way of a single access entry/exit on the West side over a very active existing railroad on grade at Moss Avenue. There is a secondary “Emergency” exit at the Northern portion of the Fairgrounds at Sycamore Avenue, but is not practical to be used by visitors.

Valuable Site Assets

The various aspects of the site that are functional and improve the visitor experience on the Allegany County Fairgrounds include existing parking on the north end and around the Multi-Purpose Building. The ladder-type parking on the north end of the site is utilized for large events, including the Fair and Delfest. This open, but still organized parking allows for water permeation in the green spaces between driveways. The paved parking lot surrounding the Multi-Purpose Building on the South end of the Fairgrounds is utilized for both small and large events and is very beneficial when the ground is wet. Another great aspect of the site is the abundant green space available for camping and other various outdoor activities.

Site Challenges

There are several portions of the Allegany County Fairgrounds that pose significant challenges for increasing the use and value. One of the most noticeable difficulties is an inefficient entry and exiting plan. The single lane entry and exit creates a large backup for getting in and out of large events. Adding to the backup are the railroad tracks that must be crossed to enter or exit the Fairgrounds. This very active railroad includes 10-12 trains per day which are put on a “slow order” during large events for safety. Although this is much safer for both vehicular and pedestrian traffic attempting to cross, it increases the backup on Moss Avenue and Highway 220 as well as any traffic trying to exit an event. This railroad crossing creates an unsafe condition for pedestrians attempting to cross at the same location as vehicles. Another issue adding to the backup is the awkward entry from Highway 220 onto Moss Avenue. The inefficiency of the entry and exit plan limits any increase in size of the larger events currently held at the Fairgrounds.

Additional difficulties at the Fairgrounds site include inadequate infrastructure. The amount of full RV hookups (water, electric, and sewer) and partial RV hookups (water and electric only) is insufficient for larger events with more requests than they can accommodate. There is a great amount of revenue being missed with the shortage of hookups. Inadequate power supply for RV’s as well as other events with sound systems limit the available entertainment acts that can be accommodated. The number and size of the current grinder pumps is insufficient for the quantity of people visiting the Fairgrounds, especially during the Fair and Delfest. Water pressure is poor in many locations and necessary for events like the Fair.

Parking on site also has its own difficulties. Typically, the organization of parked vehicles is very inefficient when not on paved or partially paved areas or with parking attendants. For some events, the amount of parking area is insufficient.



AERIAL VIEW - ALLEGANY COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

Site Analysis

Site Analysis



ABOVE LEFT: Looking east along Moss Avenue toward the Fairgrounds during Delfest

ABOVE RIGHT: Main stage during Delfest

BELOW: Aerial view of Fairgrounds during Delfest



General Site Observations

The Allegany County Fairgrounds occupies a spectacular site wrapped by a bend in the North Branch of the Potomac River. Opposite the fairgrounds are the steep bluffs of Knobley Mountain in West Virginia. Views from the site to the south and east are spectacular, and are a major asset of the Fairgrounds site.

An active rail line forms the west boundary of the site, presenting several problems. Trains crossing Moss Avenue restrict access to the site, and slowing the trains down during events only exacerbates this problem. The trains also present noise and vibration challenges to events at the Fairgrounds. There is emergency egress to an elevated rail crossing at Upper Potomac Industrial Park Street that can provide access to emergency vehicles.

The identified 100 year flood hazard plain presents a major constraint in the redevelopment of the fairgrounds. Historically, land in river floodplains was developed without much thought to flood risk, and much of the land at the Fairgrounds was so developed. As awareness of flood risks has increased in recent years, regulating agencies have restricted development in identified flood risk areas, which includes a majority of the Fairgrounds site (shaded light blue in the accompanying graphic). This fact will have a dramatic impact on planning strategies that are viable for redevelopment of the Fairgrounds.

Much of the floodplain area is occupied by dense forestation, which is usable on a short term basis for camping with minimal supporting infrastructure. This forested area also provides a buffer (for better or worse) between the Fairgrounds and the Potomac riverfront.

The general arrangement of land uses at the Fairgrounds is a cluster of more intense, facilities-focused activities at the south end of the site, with more recreational and passive uses at the narrower north end. A residential neighborhood sits between the west edge of the Fairgrounds and McMullen Highway (U.S. Highway 220), which is the primary vehicular access road to the Fairgrounds.

The single usable approach to the Fairgrounds off of Highway 220 is along Moss Avenue, which presents a strong axial approach that the current Fairgrounds facilities do not acknowledge. A former gateway structure terminating the strong axial view along Moss Avenue has been demolished. Traffic congestion on Moss Avenue and on Highway 220 during events is reported to be considerable.

Parking on the site is limited to a small loop of paved parking around the multipurpose building. Large event parking is accommodated with turf parking, both near the multipurpose building and in a large ladder of gravel-paved access drives adjoining the railroad tracks to the west. Additional offsite parking, not controlled by the Fairgrounds, is available to the west of the railroad tracks for larger events.

As the orange lines on the accompanying diagram illustrate, vehicle flow within the fairgrounds is illogical, having developed over a long stretch of time without much planning, and the result is a pattern of paved and gravel roadways with little logic.

An ill-defined grass midway provides a front yard for the Fairgrounds and is used in a variety of ways, depending on the event: as a fair midway, as parking, or as RV parking. The Midway is cut up by a number of drives going different directions.

The largest site feature is an unpaved racetrack of approximately 5/8ths mile in length. The speedway has seen little use in recent years, and would require some remedial work (or paving) to be serviceable for motorsports. The infield of the track is the site of mainstage events at Delfest, currently the largest festival using the Fairgrounds.

Similarly to the paving layout, the arrangement of vertical facilities on the Fairgrounds lacks logical organization, seeming to be located in an almost random fashion. Fortunately, almost all existing structures are located outside the currently identified flood risk zone. The individual structures of the Fairgrounds are discussed in the Facilities Analysis following.



SITE OBSERVATIONS DIAGRAM

Site Analysis Highlights

Advantages:

- Relatively flat - most of site in 100 year floodplain
- Much of unused site is swampy, with a hazard of flooding and a seasonal high water table, with moderate frost heave potential
- Surrounded on South and East by Potomac River
- Picturesque cliffs to East
- Single access entry/exit on West over very active existing railroad on grade at Moss Ave
- "Emergency" exit at North part of fairgrounds at Sycamore Ave

Functional:

- Ladder-type parking on North end
- Paved parking around MPB
- Green space is abundant- used often for camping

Challenges:

Ingress and Egress:

- Only one entry/exit
- Must cross on grade train tracks
- 2 lane highway gets backed up
- Trains are on a "slow order" during large events for safety, but this creates even more backup
- Difficult for emergency services to get in/out when needed
- Limits any increase in size of events

infrastructure Issues:

- More RV hookups (water/electric/ sewer) desired
- More partial RV hookups (water/ electric)(no dump site)
- Water pressure/pipe sizing
- Power distribution
- Not enough/large enough grinder pumps

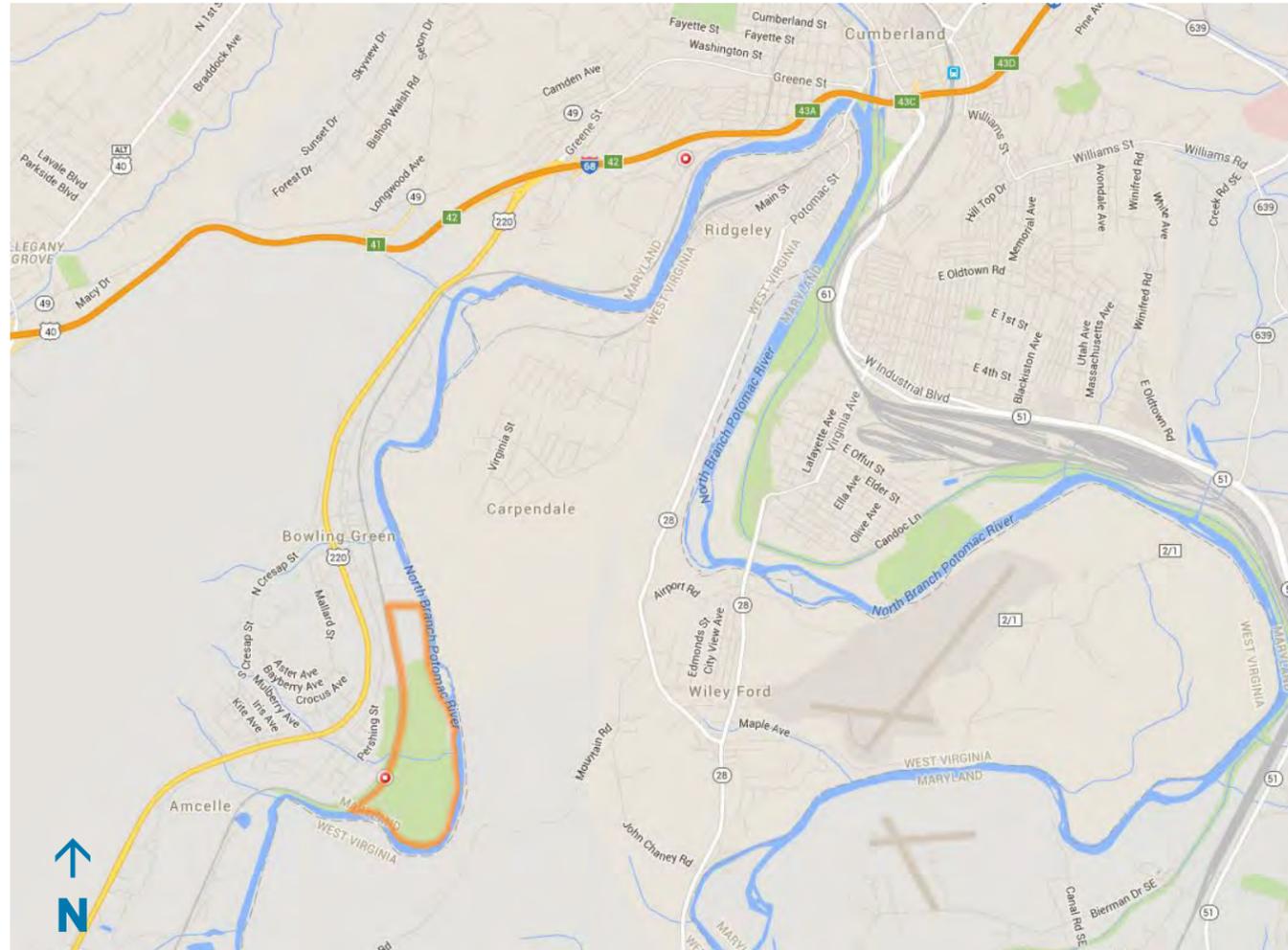
Parking:

- Unorganized when not on paved or partially paved areas
- Inadequate quantity for largest events

Access

Access challenges:

- Single main entry/exit
- RR grade crossing
- Single primary access (Highway 220) gets backed up during large events
- RR "slow order" during large events creates additional backup
- Difficult for emergency services to get in and out quickly
- Access limits any size of events



SITE LOCATION MAP

Access

Access to the Allegany County Fairgrounds is straightforward, but inefficient. The Fairgrounds is fairly easily located off of U.S. Highway 220 in Allegany County. Moss Avenue provides the primary vehicular ingress/egress path. Challenges associated with vehicular access include the following:

- A Single main entry/exit point can create congestion during larger events
- The railroad grade crossing presents an obstacle, and shuts off ingress-egress to/from the site when trains are present.
- Single primary access (Highway 220) becomes backed up during ingress period for larger events.
- A "slow order" for the railroad during event periods exacerbates the problems presented by the grade crossing.
- The single access road, coupled with frequent congestion and the possibility of train activity makes emergency vehicle access to and from the site challenging.
- The vehicular access limitations put functional limits on the size of events (and accompanying traffic) that can be accommodated at the Fairgrounds.

RIGHT: During Delfest, the point of arrival is primarily an exercise in sorting vehicles. There is no formal gateway announcing one's arrival at the Fairgrounds.



Vehicular Circulation

As previously discussed (See “Access”), the single largest vehicular circulation challenge for the Fairgrounds is the single point of access along Moss Avenue from Highway 220. This is the overriding vehicular circulation issue, and should be addressed by adding a second major point of ingress/egress for vehicles, presumably at the north end of the Fairgrounds.

Within the Fairgrounds proper, vehicular circulation appears to have developed inconsistently over time, resulting in a pattern of roadways whose logic is not readily apparent. Some of the internal circulation challenges presented to vehicles at the Fairgrounds include the following:

- Immediate turning movements of inbound vehicles is required as soon as the railroad tracks are crossed;
- A number of internal drives have unnecessary jogs, requiring complex maneuvering that is difficult in times of high traffic demand;
- Multiple drives arrive at the same point(s) along major internal roadways, creating congestion;
- The perimeter loop has multiple sharp turns;
- Signage for orientation of arriving guests is limited.



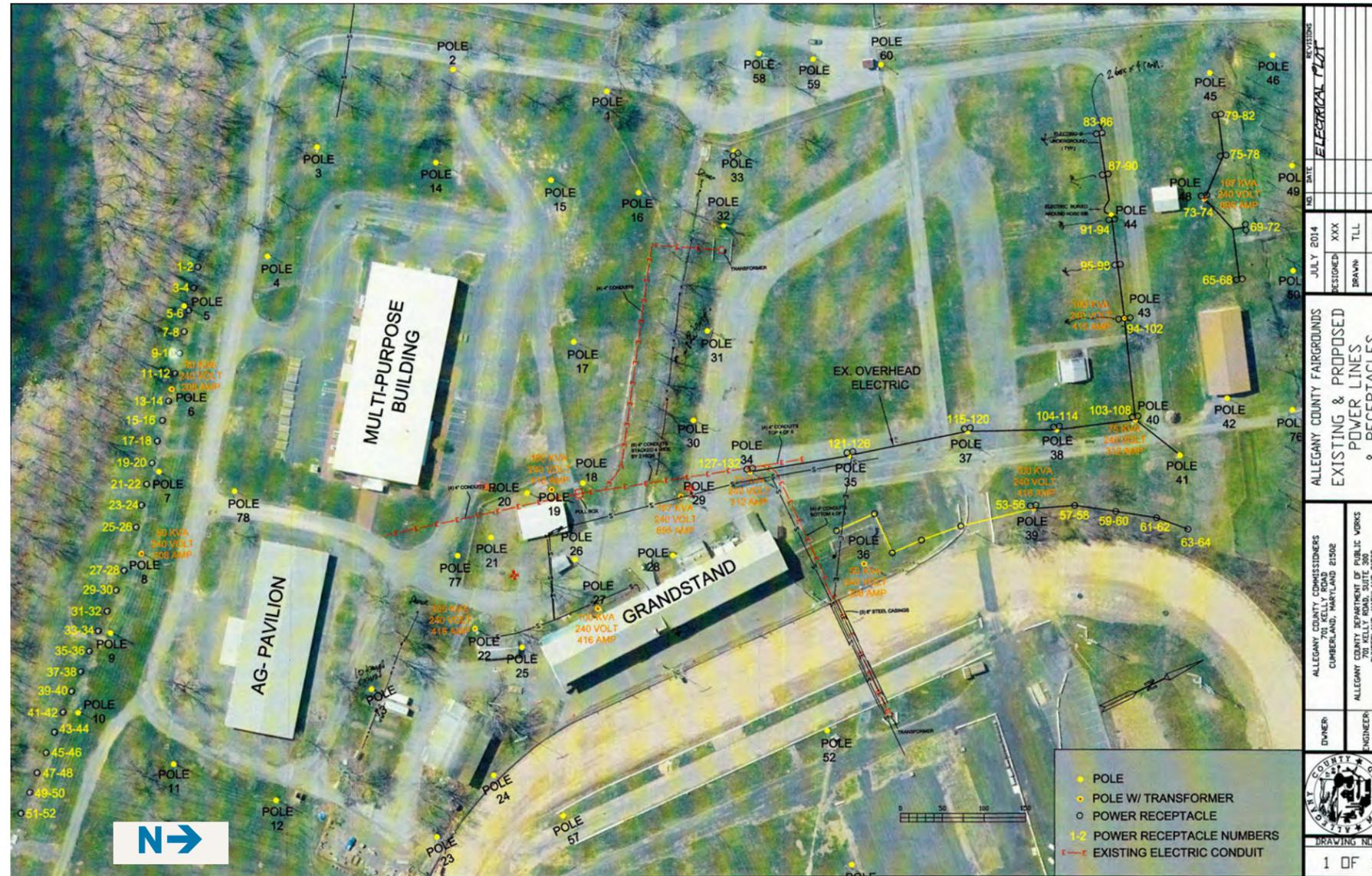
VEHICULAR CIRCULATION DIAGRAM

Vehicular Circulation

Primary and secondary circulation routes are inconsistent and lack clear logic

Infrastructure

The Fairgrounds is generally adequately served by utilities; the primary needs have to do with locations of distribution points, especially electrical.



SITE UTILITY PLAN

Source: Allegany County

Infrastructure

Basic utility infrastructure to the Fairgrounds allows it to function as required for many events. Looking to the future, a number of infrastructure challenges will need to be addressed:

- The number of full RV hookups (water, sewer, electricity) is less than the demand for hookups at larger events.
- The number of partial RV hookups (electrical only) is less than the demand for these hookups at larger events.
- While there is adequate electrical service to the site, distribution points are not always located conveniently to the source of demand.
- Sewage grinder pump capacity is adequate for current activity loads, but may need to be increased if event loads are increased.

Parking

The Fairgrounds can accommodate approximately 1,800 cars on site (in theory; in practice the total number would be lower due to the large number of unmarked turf parking spaces). This would translate to a maximum capacity on site of approximately 7,300 guests at 4 persons per car, which approximates the current capacity of the Fair. This capacity assumes minimal RV parking and keeping the Midway open, changing the assumptions would change the result somewhat.

Most of the parking (approximately 1,280 cars theoretical capacity) is located in unpaved parking served by a large ladder of access drives near the baseball fields. This causes the majority of visitors to approach the buildings and activity areas from the north.

A small paved parking area (approximately 117 spaces) surrounds the Multipurpose Building. This paved parking is sufficient for only the smallest events at the Fairgrounds, events with fewer than 400 guests.

Unpaved areas near the Multipurpose Building are also used for event parking, with a theoretical capacity of approximately 180 cars. However, due to the location of other roads and driveways, this unpaved parking is seldom used at its maximum efficiency, and the net number of parked cars tends to be far less than 180 in practice.

Offsite parking is used for larger events, both west of the railroad and remote sites with shuttles.

Unpaved (turf) parking makes sense for the intermittent use of the Fairgrounds for large events, as it reduces the stormwater runoff from paved areas, and the turf is usually able to recover between events. This arrangement breaks down when storms occur just before or during large events, when the turf parking becomes muddy, damaging the turf and inconveniencing guests.



FAIRGROUNDS PARKING PLAN

Parking

Parking is challenging for larger outdoor events. Part of this is due to the inefficient utilization of turf parking.

- Hard to manage when not on paved or partially paved areas
- Adds to backup of traffic attempting to exit an event
- Inadequate for some large events
- Causes others to park in remote locations and cross railroad tracks
- Turf parking compromised by wet weather

Topography

- Site is mostly floodplain
- Generally very flat
- Moderate slopes off site to west
- Steep slope at river bank
- Grading most areas easily accomplished



SITE CONTOUR PLAN (2 FOOT CONTOUR INTERVAL)

Topography

Located in a floodplain of the North Branch Potomac River, the Allegany County Fairgrounds is primarily low slope terrain (less than 5 percent) except at the river's edge, which is considerably steeper. There are two drainageways on site. The southern drainageway, located between the existing racetrack and the southernmost baseball field, presents a challenge to development of walkways or other north-south connections as it nears the river. The northern drainageway is in the forested area of the site that is only occasionally used for camping.

To the west of the site, moderate slopes exist along Moss Avenue, but these slopes are not on the Fairgrounds property.

To the extent that redevelopment requires regrading, regrading most of the Fairgrounds should be fairly easily accomplished. Regrading may be restricted in areas within the 100 year floodplain.

BELOW: Surrounded by dramatic slopes, the Fairgrounds site is mostly flat, because it is in the river floodplain



Vegetation

Vegetation on the Fairgrounds site corresponds to a large degree to the identified 100 year floodplain. This area (the floodplain) tends to be covered with dense second-growth forest lining the edge of the Potomac River. The depth of this vegetated area varies from 100 to 600 feet from the river bank.

Within the developed area of the Fairgrounds, plantings are relatively limited, although mature trees can be found in certain areas of the site. Once the master plan is adopted, adding additional trees to the developed areas of the site should be a priority, for additional shade for visitors, as well as carbon capture.

Ornamental plantings (flowers and shrubs) should be increased, but limited to defined landscape zones where various Fairgrounds events are unlikely to require their covering or removal.

BELOW: Wooded areas have clearly defined edges.



DENSELY VEGETATED AREA

Vegetation

Floodplain

The currently defined 100 year floodplain presents a significant challenge to development of the Fairgrounds site.



100 YEAR FLOOD HAZARD ZONE

Source: 2015 DFIRM

Floodplain

A large percentage of the Fairgrounds site is in the 100 year floodplain. Much of the site is unused and can be saturated in moderate rainfall events, with a hazard of flooding and a seasonally high water table and moderate frost heave potential.

The floodplain presents a development challenge for the Fairgrounds. Most of the developable area of the site is in the western section, closest to the railroad tracks. While uses compatible with the Fairgrounds are permitted in the flood risk area (such as temporary festivals), permanent construction is discouraged, and is subject to regulatory review by Maryland's Department of the Environment (MDE). At best, this can add significant time to a development project. At worst, it can make development of a site difficult or impossible.

The planning ideas in the next section take into account the reality of the flood risk area as currently defined, and attempt to deal with this and other constraints as the future development of the Fairgrounds is considered.

BELOW: Most of the existing racetrack, 2 of 3 ball fields, and virtually all the camping area is in floodplain.



Existing Facilities Analysis

There are a number of existing structures on the Allegany County Fairgrounds today, the oldest being the original Grandstand. The Grandstand provides a great facility for covered seating during Fair events and others that use the front portion of track for derbies, field events, etc., or for guests who just want out of the sun during larger events.

The Multi-Purpose Building located on the South end of the Fairgrounds is a very functional and widely used facility. It provides great shelter for events during inclement weather and is often utilized throughout the year for indoor events.

The open-air Agricultural Pavilion located east of the Multi-Purpose Building also is utilized year-round. In warmer weather, it provides shelter from the rain and sun for various events and in winter, is used as covered storage for RVs.

There are a few restroom facilities on the Fairgrounds, including some in the northern portion. Although their location is helpful in spreading out toilet facilities on the Fairgrounds, they do not include shower and are in desperate need of replacement. Newer restrooms and showers in the southern section of the Fairgrounds site are heavily used during larger outdoor events.

A small pavilion near the midpoint of the developed Fairgrounds site is used variously for registration, children’s area, dining and other appropriate functions.

A caretaker’s residence is being constructed southeast of the Multipurpose Building at the time of this report.

BELOW: The Agricultural Pavilion serves a wide range of functions as an open, roofed structure.



EXISTING FACILITIES

Facilities Analysis

Facilities Analysis

Multipurpose Building



Individual Facilities Analysis

Multipurpose Building

The largest building on the Fairgrounds site is the Multipurpose Building constructed around 2000. The Multipurpose building serves its name well, being used for a wide range of community events, as well as providing indoor space for major outdoor events.

Although it is a highly used facility, larger users stated that the amount of square footage in the main hall is often insufficient for their needs. Most often mentioned was the main event hall, which is approximately 12,200 square feet. Users expressed the desire for this space to be as much as double its current size (or approximately 25,000 square feet). Large overhead doors allow loading this space from three sides. A pair of wing walls that divide the room into two subdivisions are structurally unnecessary and detract from the usability of the space.

A series of four meeting rooms along the center hallway are well used for a variety of smaller scale functions such as meetings and support space (e.g., dressing rooms) for events in the main event hall.

The shower and toilet facilities in the Multi-Purpose Building are sufficient for how they are currently used. Although there is a kitchen, it is typically only used for food storage. Both the ice machine and refrigerator and freezer space are undersized for the amount of users in this facility.



TOP LEFT: Multipurpose Building exterior

CENTER LEFT: Main corridor

BOTTOM LEFT: Kitchen

BELOW: Event Hall



Grandstand

The oldest building on the Fairgrounds site, the Grandstand is a wood structure dating from approximately 1924. With a seating capacity of approximately 2,500 spectators, the Grandstand has a number of code and accessibility challenges.

Primary access to the Grandstand is by means of a steep ramp that is not ADA compliant. This single ramp gives onto a single vomitory in the center of the grandstand. Fair offices are located at the top of the ramp, up a short flight of steps, making them both inaccessible and a traffic congestion problem for people needing to visit the Fair offices during events. The offices are highly modified and in poor condition. Strollers are not allowed in the grandstands, so families needing to “park” a stroller do so in the Fair office. Another challenge of the grandstand is having the ticketing remote from the office, with the result that cash transactions are not as secure as would be desirable.

Opposite the Fair office is a large storage space which presents a potential fire hazard as it is located under the seats and constructed of combustible material, without sprinklers. A large undercroft at grade level is also used for storage during the off-season, and used as exhibit and/or vendor space during events. This space is also not sprinklered, and is also constructed of combustible materials. A “crows nest” for announcers is located in the roof structure, reached by means of a suspended ramp.

It is likely that the Grandstand has reached the end of its useful life. A detailed analysis of its structural, code, and accessibility issues would most likely suggest that the building cannot be brought up to current standards for a reasonable cost.



TOP RIGHT: Grandstand seating



CENTER RIGHT: Entrance ramp to Grandstand



BOTTOM RIGHT: Fair Offices in Grandstand



BELOW: Grandstand exterior view from west

Facilities Analysis

Grandstand

Facilities Analysis

Jockey Club Agricultural Pavilion Restrooms



TOP LEFT: Jockey Club

CENTER LEFT: Ag Pavilion used for RV storage in winter

BOTTOM LEFT: North Restrooms

BELOW: South Restrooms

Jockey Club

The Jockey Club is a small two story structure located near turn 1 of the racetrack. It provides a good view of the track and the Delfest stage; however, the upper level is currently used as a model railroad exhibit, which, while providing an attraction in its own right, limits the usefulness of the Jockey Club for spectator events.

While the Jockey Club was not inspected on our team's visit, the building's age and condition suggest that a number of code and/or accessibility issues would likely be found there.

Agricultural Pavilion

The open-air Ag Pavilion located east of the Multi-Purpose Building also is utilized year-round. In warmer weather, it provides shelter from the rain and sun for various events and in winter, is used as covered storage for RVs. The challenges mentioned by users in connection with this facility include inadequate power supply and water supply. Many renters also requested more square footage in the Ag Pavilion.

A smaller pavilion to the north of the Midway is used for a variety of functions requiring shade and shelter from precipitation, such as event registration, outdoor classes, children's play area, and the like. Given its modest programmatic requirements, better internet and Wifi access would benefit this pavilion.

Restrooms

The south block of restrooms and showers is well utilized for general fairgrounds events. The north restroom structure is reported to be antiquated and in need of replacement. Replacing the north restroom structure with a restroom/shower structure similar to the newer southern one would go a long way to serving the needs of people camping on site in RVs for larger Fairgrounds events.



Strengths

- Superb setting is unequaled asset
- Popular destination for locals and visitors
- Facilities well-liked by users
- World-class event (Delfest) with growing reputation
- History and tradition



ABOVE: Multipurpose Building

BELOW: Grandstand

Challenges

- Access (vehicular, pedestrian, bike)
- Some facilities are dated
- Some functional issues with current facilities
- Multiple uses not always in sync (i.e., baseball, festivals)

Opportunities

- Adapt to better facilitate Delfest, other high-impact events
- Create new entertainment venue(s)
- Expand Multipurpose Building, Ag Pavilion
- Create additional festival type events



Threats

- Potential to relocate Delfest to another venue
- Continued use and occupancy of Grandstand
- Management continuity

Facilities Analysis

SWOT Analysis

Master Plan Baseline

Because of the significant constraints on the Allegany County Fairgrounds, and because of the fact that some of the most critical issues are common to all approaches to redevelopment, the Facilities Master Plan posits a fairly extensive baseline condition that will be common to all planning approaches going forward.

The baseline condition can be understood as plan recommendations that are common to all schemes. The narrow site geometry, coupled with the significant floodplain constraints, limit the available planning options. The master plan baseline establishes a set of expectations for any redevelopment scheme the County should adopt in the future.

Common elements to the master plan baseline include the following:

- New North Access Road
- Preservation of Baseball Fields (Minimum 2)
- Continued Use of Forested Areas for Camping
- Improve Main Parking Area
- Elimination of Racetrack
- Improve Moss Avenue Approach
- New Gateway Structure
- Redefine Midway
- New Pedestrian Plaza
- Redevelop Multipurpose Building Parking
- Enhance RV Parking/Hookups
- Planned Expansion: Ag Pavilion
- Planned Expansion: Multipurpose Building

In the process of implementing these baseline recommendations, overall site circulation and utilities infrastructure can be incrementally upgraded by adjusting roadways, electrical and plumbing lines as improvements are made. This avoids the need for a comprehensive retrofit of utilities and vehicular circulation.



MASTER PLAN BASELINE CONDITION

Master Plan Baseline

Common elements to the master plan baseline include the following:

- New North Access Road
- Preservation of Baseball Fields (Minimum 2)
- Continued Use of Forested Areas for Camping
- Improve Main Parking Area
- Elimination of Racetrack
- Improve Moss Avenue Approach
- New Gateway Structure
- Redefine Midway
- New Pedestrian Plaza
- Redevelop Multipurpose Building Parking
- Enhance RV Parking/Hookups
- Planned Expansion: Ag Pavilion
- Planned Expansion: Multipurpose Building

Baseline: Access Road

Creation of a second access road to the Fairgrounds site is a top priority.



New Access Road

Based on our team's findings, the most critical component of a Facilities Master Plan for the Allegany County Fairgrounds is the development of a second vehicular access road. The assumed location of this road is extending north through the Fairgrounds to eventually connect with Upper Potomac Industrial Park Street, where there is a railroad overpass connecting to McMullen Highway (U.S. Highway 220).

The importance of a second means of ingress/egress cannot be overstated. Even at current event levels, access to the Fairgrounds along Moss Avenue quickly becomes congested, and that congestion quickly backs up onto Highway 220. The presence of trains only exacerbates this condition. A second means of ingress/egress could pick up a substantial fraction of southbound Fairgrounds traffic before Moss Avenue, reducing the congestion along Moss and Highway 220 significantly.

A related improvement would be the creation of a second southbound (or variable direction) lane on Highway 220 north of Upper Potomac Industrial Park Street, so that southbound traffic can be divided into turning and through traffic. This improvement is not part of the master plan budget, but is recommended for consideration by the County.

The access road itself should be a minimum of two 11 foot traffic lanes. Three 10 foot lanes would allow for two lanes in the dominant direction of flow (inbound or outbound) while preserving one lane for counterflow traffic.

Preserve Existing Ball Fields (Minimum 2)

A baseline assumption is the preservation of two of the three existing baseball fields in Allegany County Fairgrounds. The southernmost field is the prime candidate for removal because of its proximity to the other Fairgrounds structures and activity areas. This allows the two remaining fields to function somewhat independently of activities taking place at the Fairgrounds. As improvements are made in the vicinity of the ball fields, attention should be paid to providing adequate segregated parking for baseball, and minimizing the degree to which fair activities intrude on use of the baseball fields.

BELOW: Alternate condition preserves 3 existing baseball fields



MASTER PLAN BASELINE CONDITION: BASEBALL FIELDS

**Baseline:
Baseball**

At least two of the existing baseball fields should be preserved in the redeveloped Fairgrounds.

Baseline: Camping

Continued occasional use for informal (tent) camping is recommended for forested areas within the floodplain.



Continue Use of Forested Area for Camping

Another baseline recommendation of the Master Plan is continued use of forested areas in the Fairgrounds property for occasional camping. Not intended for year-round use as campsites, the forested area makes for a pleasant camping experience for the few times a year when it is called for by music festivals and similar activities.

Continued use of the forest as campsites will require periodic management of underbrush, but apart from this, and routine trash pickup, little additional work will be required to use this portion of the Fairgrounds site for occasional camping.

BELOW: Delfest offers a variety of camping options



Improve Main Parking Area

The main parking area of the Fairgrounds consists of turf parking served by gravel access drives off the main Fairgrounds loop road. A minimal investment in this area will allow its continued use at a much higher level of efficiency and guest friendliness. The recommended improvements are as follows:

- Upgrade lighting, with high-efficiency LED lights at intervals to provide minimum 1 footcandle lighting throughout the parking area at a contrast ratio (maximum to minimum) of not greater than 10 to 1.
- Pave drive lanes with asphaltic concrete or pervious concrete paving to enhance their usability in all weather conditions.
- Provide a permanent stall identification system to enhance the efficiency of parking area utilization. On unmarked turf parking, users tend to space vehicles at 12 feet on center, far greater than on striped paved parking lots, which are usually 9 to 10 foot stalls. A permanent stall identification system with 10 foot parking stalls still allows generous clearances for larger vehicles and door swings, but could result in a 20 percent increase in utilization without dedicating any new space to parking.

Using the modest improvements described above, capacity of the main parking area can be captures at approximately 1,280 vehicles on a consistent basis.

BELOW: Main parking area can be used efficiently. Permanent space markings could reduce labor cost.



**Baseline:
Parking**

Using fairly modest improvements, capacity of the main parking area can be captures at approximately 1,280 vehicles on a consistent basis.

Baseline: Racetrack

Eliminating the existing dirt racing oval will allow greater flexibility in the use of the Meadow for festivals and events.



MASTER PLAN BASELINE CONDITION: ELIMINATE RACETRACK

Eliminate Racetrack

The racetrack is a historic component of the Fairgrounds, but is not currently in use and no current plan exists for racing at the Fairgrounds. This dirt oval circumscribes the Meadow, the primary event space for Delfest, without adding any value to the event. If the racetrack were gone, Delfest and similar events would have greater flexibility in laying out their event, and could expand the main seating area substantially.

As there is not currently a plan in place to produce motorsports events at the Fairgrounds, our team recommends removal of the racing oval and replacing it with turf grass compatible with festival use.

The master plan recommends preserving a straightaway in front of the Grandstand as an activity area for Fair events such as tractor pulls.

BELOW: Alternate condition (racetrack remains)



Improve Moss Avenue Approach

Even with a second ingress/egress point, Moss Avenue will continue to remain the symbolic front door of the Fairgrounds. As such, it deserves to be upgraded with improvements that will benefit both its functionality and the visitor’s sense of arrival. Improvements to Moss Avenue could include the following elements:

- Roadway improvements: Repaving and restriping to create a three lane roadway with a reversible center lane to allow for one counterflow lane and two lanes in the dominant direction of traffic.
- Pedestrian improvements: Upgraded sidewalks on both sides of Moss Avenue with decorative (stamped, colored) concrete and/or decorative paving patterns. Additional pedestrian improvements could include fairgrounds-themed lighting, signage, banners, and seating.
- Landscape improvements: Incorporate the drainageway on the south side of Moss Avenue into the roadway design by creating a landscaped bike path that parallels the street and sidewalk. This green space should be thought of as part of the fairgrounds, and maintained by the County as the beginning of the Fairgrounds experience.
- Marquee Sign: an LED board announcing Fairgrounds events and providing driver information could be located at the intersection of inbound Moss Avenue and Highway 220, announcing the guest’s arrival at the Fairgrounds and providing an obvious cue regarding where to turn.



MASTER PLAN BASELINE CONDITION: IMPROVE MOSS AVENUE

**Baseline:
Moss Avenue**

Upgrading Moss Avenue will provide an appropriate sense of arrival for guests.

Baseline: Gateway

A new gateway entry structure will provide functional benefits as well as enhance the arrival experience.

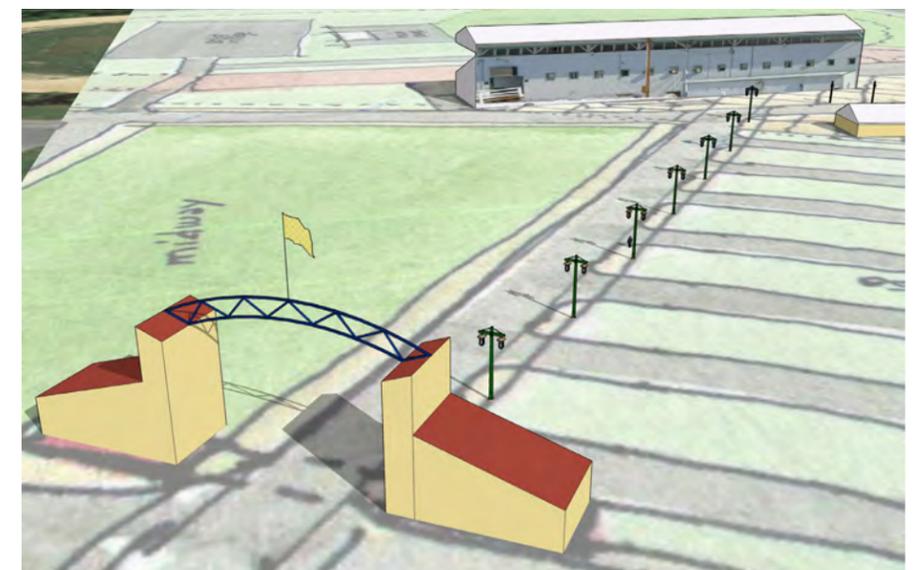


MASTER PLAN BASELINE CONDITION: GATEWAY STRUCTURE

New Gateway Structure

One structure that is missed by many in the County is the Tower, the twin gateway structure announcing your arrival at the Fairgrounds. This master plan proposes construction of a new gateway structure flanking a proposed center drive that defines the southern boundary of the Midway and provides access to parking for the multipurpose building to the south.

This new structure would have symbolic importance, and should be tall enough to be seen from Highway 220 (if the current restaurant was not there). Programmatically, it could house ticketing and registration space for fair and festival goers arriving by car, restrooms, and support space for electrical and telecom infrastructure.



ABOVE: Two views of a concept for a new gateway structure

Redefined Midway

The Midway is a central area for the Fairgrounds and is used in a multitude of ways for different events. The master plan recommends that this space be better defined, by creating strong edges lined with permanent walkways, using landscaping to define boundaries, and providing appropriate infrastructure for the variety of planned uses.

The Midway should serve as the focal point of the County Fair, with rides, games, food, and activities concentrated in this area. Permanent infrastructure in the form of electrical distribution panels at appropriate locations can help to facilitate this use. In addition, the distribution panels can serve as a connection point for temporary RV electrical hookups when the Midway is used for RV parking during festivals. These panels should be located in decorative kiosks that help to define the Midway.



ABOVE: Concept for kiosk that provides spatial definition for the Midway along with secure access to electrical connections



MASTER PLAN BASELINE CONDITION: MIDWAY

**Baseline:
Redefined Midway**

The Midway serves a variety of uses at the Fairgrounds, and should be treated as an important open space asset.

Baseline: Pedestrian Plaza

Establishing a pedestrian plaza gives the Fairgrounds a focal point.



New Pedestrian Plaza

One key ingredient of a fairgrounds that appears to be missing from Allegany County Fairgrounds is a central space that provides a visual pedestrian heart for the facilities. Many fairgrounds have a collection of buildings similar to ACF, but the benchmark fairgrounds organize those facilities around a central space.

Organizing the Midway and adding a central drive will help to define a core for the Fairgrounds. We recommend the additional step of defining a generous pedestrian plaza that helps to unite the disparate buildings of the Fairgrounds around an organizing space. This plaza, which can be fairly simple concrete or even asphalt paving, creates a pedestrian zone during major events. Vehicles can still service this zone during off hours or on non-event days, but during event hours it is reserved for pedestrians. A plaza like this can provide a focal point and “home base” for fair and event-related activities, while still allowing for a wide range of uses.

BELOW: Pedestrian plaza, Monona Terrace, Madison, Wisconsin



Redevelop Multipurpose Building Parking

The parking area near the Multipurpose Building can perform at a much higher level with relatively modest improvements. The Facilities Master Plan proposes the redevelopment of Multipurpose Building parking to a ladder of turf parking similar to the main parking lot, with paved access drives. Due to frequency of use, turf stabilization is recommended for this parking, along with lighting and stall markings similar to the main parking area. One difference may be that the stall markings should be removable to allow for an RV to utilize the full depth (approximately 40 feet) of the parking bay when this parking area is to be used for RV parking. Utility pedestals can provide electrical (and other) connections to RVs while serving as the support structure for stall markings.

By redeveloping the parking area in this way, up to 250 cars, or approximately 60 RVs can be parked in an area that currently yields only a fourth as much parking in actual use.



ABOVE: Examples of stall identification in turf parking

BELOW: View of proposed redeveloped parking at Multipurpose Building



**Baseline:
Multipurpose Building
Parking**

Changing the drive lanes and identifying individual stalls could increase parking yield in this lot by as much as a factor of seven.

Baseline: RV Connections

More regular stalls and more hookups could increase revenue from RV parking and improve guest experiences.



MASTER PLAN BASELINE CONDITION: RV PARKING

Enhance RV Parking and Hookups

Allegany County Fairgrounds currently has approximately 40 full RV hookups along the south main loop road south of the Multipurpose Building. By regularizing RV parking and adding additional hookups, as many as 160 RVs can be accommodated in this part of the site with full connections if desired.

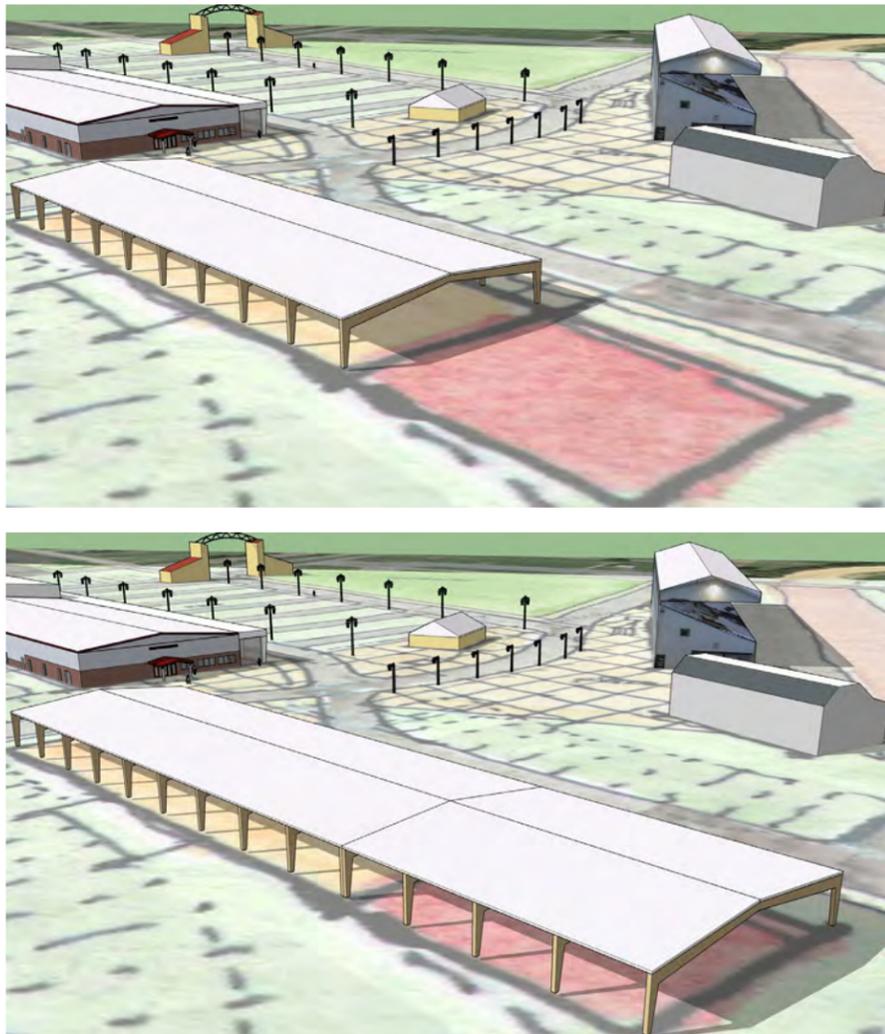
Similar to the approach to turf parking redevelopment, the master plan does not recommend paving the RV parking areas, only better defining the parking stall locations, installing utility pedestals at regular intervals, and enforcing the parking layout more rigorously. This will yield a great deal many more RV locations and connections than are currently offered, while maintaining the green appearance of this part of the site for the majority of the year when RV parking is not required.

BELOW: Current RV parking during Delfest, Allegany County Fairgrounds



Expand Agricultural Pavilion

The baseline master plan proposes planning for a future expansion of the Ag Pavilion to the east. This can be done without disrupting either the proposed loop drive or the planned RV parking nearby, while increasing the size of the Ag Pavilion by as much as 50 percent. This expansion should include necessary water and electrical connections to allow for the variety of uses currently in the pavilion, from agricultural and livestock exposition to dining, food and beverage services. The current profile of the Ag Pavilion could be extended, or the addition could be raised slightly to create a more comfortable environment under the roof on hot days.



TOP: Before and
ABOVE: After view of expanded Ag Pavilion



**Baseline:
Ag Pavilion**

Baseline: Multipurpose Building Expansion

Planning for future expansion of the Multipurpose Building should be a baseline assumption for the Fairgrounds



Planned Expansion: Multipurpose Building

The Facilities Master Plan includes planning for the future expansion of the Multipurpose Building as a baseline condition. This expansion was requested by nearly every user group the planning team met with.

The master plan expansion attempts to maximize the usable space of the Multipurpose Building while maintaining the current location of the caretaker's home, with reasonable fire separation between the two. The addition, which can of course be smaller than shown, adds up to 22,000 square feet of new exhibit/multiuse space to the west end of the current building. This can be accomplished in more than one phase if desired, and if phased, the first addition should anticipate a second one.

The enlarged exhibit hall should have a 30 foot clear height to the structure through most of the space, assuming a pre-engineered structure similar to the existing is used. This would allow for the addition of retractable seating on up to three sides of the structure, giving music festivals and other entertainment events more and better spectator seating. The current generous distribution of large overhead doors for loading should be continued.

The other major change proposed for the Multipurpose Building is the creation of a new prefunction corridor along the north face of the building. Constructed with generous glazing, this new corridor will serve as a reoriented "front door" for the building facing the major parking area and the Midway. This will provide more ample space for registration, social functions, coat check, and other functions that precede the use of the event space. We propose extending this prefunction corridor along the existing building as well, to unify the building and connect to existing public circulation.

An outdoor patio/seating/function space should be planned as part of the pedestrian plaza development described previously.



ABOVE: Concept view of proposed expansion to Multipurpose Building showing new prefunction corridor to north

Development Options

The following three options are provided for consideration as Facilities Master Plan guides for the Allegany County Fairgrounds. Each option has its advantages and disadvantages, which are discussed in the narrative for the options. Briefly, the four options are:

Development Option A

This option replaces the southernmost baseball field with a second major outdoor venue, this one a permanent structure. The venue would include a covered stage area and covered seating area for approximately 2,200 premium seats, with grass seating (uncovered) beyond.

Development Option B

This option also replaces the southernmost baseball field with a second outdoor venue. The principal difference with Option A is that in Option B, the stage is facing east and the audience is facing west. This allows for the stage structure to be a permanent structure located outside the floodplain boundary. This provides greater flexibility in the creation of permanent vertical structures such as the stage, backstage areas, restrooms and concession stands.

Development Option C

This option locates a second outdoor venue at the southeast corner of the existing racetrack. The stage faces north, creating a very compact two-stage festival venue where guests can easily move from one stage to the other with minimum effort.

Development Option D

This option also locates a new outdoor venue near the south end of the racetrack, but the orientation is different from Option C, allowing the Ag Pavilion to remain in place. A third outdoor venue is shown north of the racetrack as a future option.

More detailed descriptions of these options are on the following pages.



DEVELOPMENT OPTION A



DEVELOPMENT OPTION B



DEVELOPMENT OPTION C



DEVELOPMENT OPTION D

Development Options

Four options for development of new entertainment facilities have different advantages and challenges.

Development Option A

Option A replaces one baseball field with an open-air entertainment venue



DEVELOPMENT OPTION A

Development Option A

This option replaces the southernmost baseball field with a second major outdoor venue, this one a permanent structure. The venue would include a covered stage area and covered seating area for approximately 2,200 premium seats, with grass seating (uncovered) beyond. The grass seating would accommodate another 4,300 spectators in less dense (blanket style) seating.

Because this option is located within the floodplain, it is assumed that permanent structures would be limited to roof-only structures covering the stage area and a paved area for semipermanent fixed seats. The staging would be set up on a temporary basis, and seats could be removed in the event of a flood. Electrical power could be provided via pole-mounted transformers and panels out of the floodway.

This option shows a series of support buildings containing restrooms and concessions at the rear of the seating area. These are constructed out of the floodplain, so they can remain permanently in place. A paved entry plaza faces the main parking area to the west.

Advantages and Disadvantages

Advantages of this option are its relative simplicity, replacing a current ball field in the same location will require minimal regrading. The natural slope of the site favors this orientation, and audience members will have the sun at their backs for most daytime events. This option offers excellent access to the main parking area and loop road. By introducing a new venue to the north of the old racetrack, it spreads the active zone of the Fairgrounds further north and nearer the main parking area.

The primary disadvantage of this option is the challenges of locating the stage and fixed seating in the floodplain, which will require careful coordination with MDE and other authorities. Having to set up staging for events will be an ongoing cost of operations in this configuration.

BELOW: Riverfront amphitheater, Alton, Illinois



Development Option B

This option also replaces the southernmost baseball field with a second outdoor venue. The principal difference with Option A is that in Option B, the stage is facing east and the audience is facing west. This allows for the stage structure to be a permanent structure located outside the floodplain boundary. This provides greater flexibility in the creation of permanent vertical structures such as the stage, backstage areas, restrooms and concession stands.

The seating capacities are substantially similar, with approximately 2,300 fixed seats and 4,300 lawn seats (uncovered) behind. Supporting structures (restrooms and concession stands) are located conveniently flanking the seating area on both sides. Two entry plazas at the north and south sides of the stage provide controlled access.

Advantages and Disadvantages

This option has as its main advantage the fact that all vertical construction is to be located outside the flood hazard zone, meaning it can be constructed with only prudent precautions for flooding. Regulatory approvals should be simpler, as the lawn seating area is largely unchanged. This option offers excellent access to the main parking area and loop road. By introducing a new venue to the north of the old racetrack, it spreads the active zone of the Fairgrounds further north and nearer the main parking area.

The principal disadvantages of this option have to do with its orientation. The audience is facing west, which could be uncomfortable if seating areas are not properly shaded. The assumed roofs over both the stage and the fixed seating could provide effective shade for much or most of the audience.

Similarly, the lawn seating slopes away from the stage, which could require regrading if the slopes are substantial. Regrading in the flood area raises the possibility of regulatory issues. Landscape screening of the loop road would be advisable to prevent distraction from the events on stage.

BELOW: Bank of America Pavilion, Boston



Development Option B

Option B orients the new venue toward the parking area for greater freedom in design and construction

Development Option C

Option C locates a new outdoor venue at the south end of the Fairgrounds complex



Development Option C

This option locates a second outdoor venue at the southeast corner of the existing racetrack. The stage faces north, creating a very compact two-stage festival venue where guests can easily move from one stage to the other with minimum effort. Capacities are similar to Options A and B, although the lawn seating area is slightly smaller.

Support buildings are located at both the front and rear of the audience seating areas. Small restrooms are located near the fixed seating, and concessions line the rear of the lawn seating area. The existing Jockey Club provides a landmark in the rear of the lawn seating. If the Jockey Club was redeveloped as a spectator/VIP venue, it could provide excellent views of the stage from interior spaces or new balconies.

Advantages and Disadvantages

This option creates a very compact performance area at the south end of the Fairgrounds, reinforcing the south end as the main activity area of the complex. This arrangement could be extremely convenient for fair and festival attendees, reducing walking distances considerably. Support structures are located outside the floodplain, but the new second stage would be a roof-only structure similar to Option A.

This option's main advantage (compactness) is also its main disadvantage. There is the potential for sound bleed from the two stages to distract from performances, particularly if there are significant differences in loudness between simultaneous performers. This would have to be managed carefully by sound technicians.

Similarly, this option relocates the Ag Pavilion to a position at the edge of the lawn seating. This relocation does not hurt (and may help) the overall layout of facilities at the Fairgrounds, but it makes expansion of the Ag Pavilion challenging.

The presence of the Jockey Club at the perimeter could be either an advantage, if the Jockey Club is renovated and repurposed, or a disadvantage if it is not.

BELOW: Sun Valley Music Pavilion, Sun Valley, Idaho



Development Option D

Site Development Option D leaves the Ag Pavilion in its place, with room for a small expansion of that facility. The new outdoor stage is located immediately south of the racetrack, but oriented to the southwest to minimize sound bleed between the two main outdoor venues.

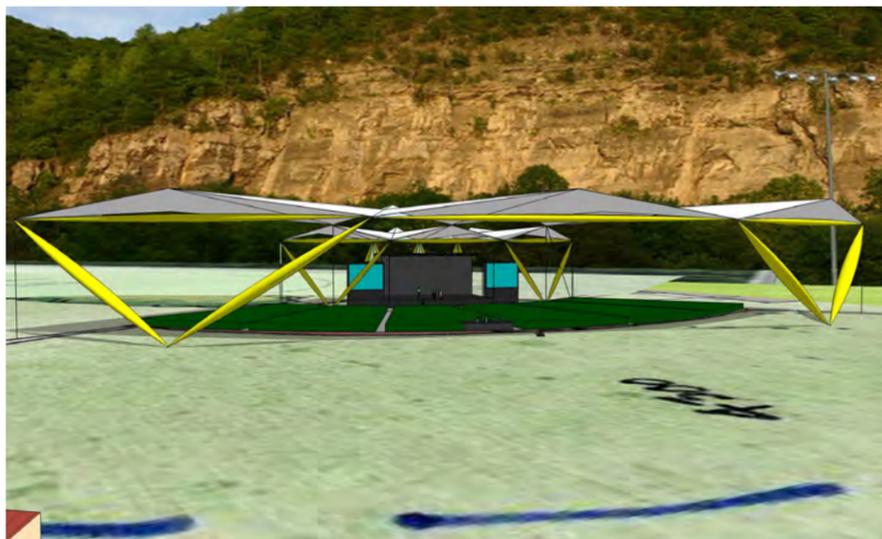
A third outdoor venue is shown as a potential future development north of the race-track. This venue would be located in the floodplain, and thus would be a “roof only” structure with temporary staging and seating installed on an as needed basis. The second stage, south of the current track, would be constructed out of the floodplain, allowing greater flexibility for permanent facilities, including staging, seating, and support buildings for both performers and spectators.

Advantages and Disadvantages

The location of the new stage in close proximity to the other developed facilities of the Fairgrounds creates the potential of a dense, very active festival grounds for outdoor music festivals and similar events. New outbuildings serving both venues are shown at the north edge of the new seating area. Making these support buildings slightly larger should be able to accommodate use by patrons of both stages.

Conversely, locating the second stage so close to the main Meadow does present the challenge of congestion at larger events, and sound bleed, though mitigated, may still be an issue. Expansion of the Ag Pavilion is limited to approximately one bay.

BELOW: Three dimensional concept diagram of Option D



Development Option D

Option D locates a new outdoor venue at the south end of the Fairgrounds complex, with the potential of a third outdoor venue north of the current racetrack.

Cost Estimate

Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate

Description	Construction Cost	Soft Cost	Project Cost
Access Road	\$200,000	\$30,000	\$230,000
Upgrade Infrastructure	\$250,000	\$37,500	\$290,000
Replace North Restroom	\$150,000	\$22,500	\$170,000
Main Parking Upgrade	\$633,600	\$95,040	\$730,000
Vehicular Circulation	\$915,750	\$137,363	\$1,050,000
Demolish Racetrack	\$57,750	\$8,663	\$70,000
Moss Avenue Upgrade	\$825,000	\$123,750	\$950,000
Gateway Structure	\$400,000	\$60,000	\$460,000
Define Midway	\$264,000	\$39,600	\$300,000
Pedestrian Plaza	\$1,115,400	\$167,310	\$1,280,000
MPB Parking Upgrade	\$316,350	\$47,453	\$360,000
Enhanced RV Parking	\$208,980	\$31,347	\$240,000
Expand Ag Pavilion	\$550,000	\$82,500	\$630,000
Expand Multipurpose Building	\$8,375,000	\$1,256,250	\$9,630,000
New Outdoor Venue	\$5,700,000	\$855,000	\$6,560,000
New Venue Support Buildings	\$600,000	\$90,000	\$690,000
TOTAL	\$20,561,830	\$3,084,275	\$23,650,000

Order of Magnitude Cost Estimate

Not a detailed construction cost estimate, the order of magnitude costs portrayed at right are intended to provide guidance for budgeting for projects identified in this Master Plan . The numbers are for the current year, and should be escalated as projects are pushed out to later years in the capital planning process.

While the total of the projects represents a significant capital outlay, it is expected that projects identified in the master plan will be implemented on a phased basis over a number of years. Further, the cost of one project, the expansion of the Multipurpose Building, represents more than 40 percent of the total.

Prior to beginning work on any project identified in the Master Plan, more detailed construction cost estimates should be prepared based on a preferred concept design.

BELOW: Three dimensional concept diagram of Option D

