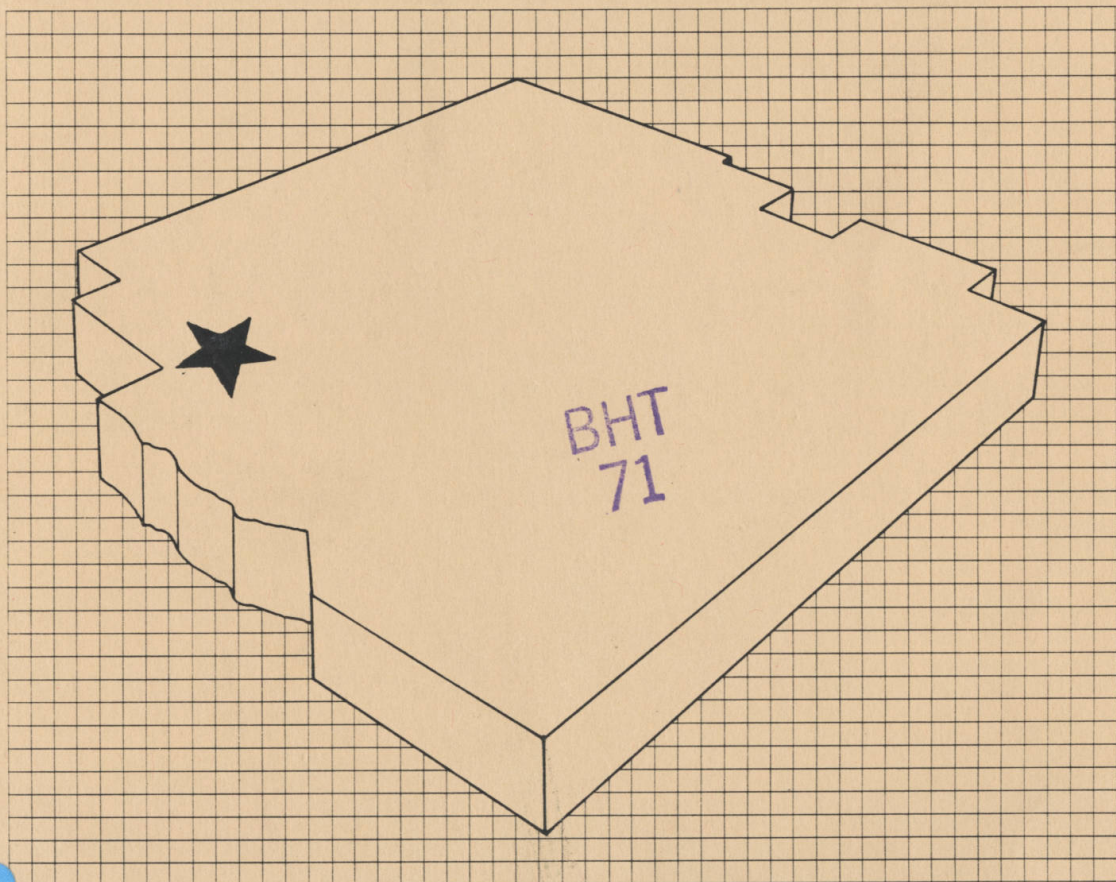

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS MASTER PLAN



FRANKLIN COUNTY AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY



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1987-1988

A MASTER PLAN FOR THE
FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

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This report was financed partly with direct funding provided by the Franklin County Agricultural Society and partly with funds allocated by the Franklin County Board of Commissioners through the Developmental Control Department of the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission.

This report was prepared by James A. Spidoro, Jr., P. L. C., Planner, with graphic assistance provided by Francis Baca, Graphic Arts Supervisor, and word processing provided by Debbie Batson, Secretary.

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INTRODUCTION

The Franklin County Fairgrounds have served the residents for well over 130 years, providing a site not only for the annual Franklin County Fair, but facilities for a variety of community events, exhibitions, and civic organizations.

In 1986, the Franklin County Agricultural Society, which oversees the administration of the Fairgrounds, purchased a 44-acre tract of land adjacent to the existing facilities. This purchase was made with the assistance of the Franklin County Board of Commissioners.

INTRODUCTION

A mandate was initiated by this purchase, to take a long-term look at the role the Fairgrounds play in the community and to plan improvements that will further serve Franklin County with this expanded site.

A Development Committee was established by the Fair Board and the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission was approached to assist in this effort. A community survey was conducted to collect public input regarding the current facilities at the Fairgrounds and the future role that the Fairgrounds should play within the County. This Master Plan is the second part of this long-range planning effort.

1. The Master Plan

This document presents an analysis of the existing facilities at the Franklin County Fairgrounds, prioritizes the long-term goals to guide future development, and presents a series of recommendations regarding the physical development of the Fairgrounds.

These recommendations focus on the layout and design of the Fairgrounds, buildings and structures, infrastructure necessary to support the Fairgrounds, and access, circulation, and parking. Community input included both the survey that was randomly circulated to interested parties and political leaders in Franklin County and through the opportunity of public comment during the County Fair in July of 1987. A conceptual plan was presented to the public during the 1987 Fair.

This plan establishes a blueprint or framework to help the Fair Board prioritize investment in facility improvements, new structures, infrastructure, and the general operation of the Fairgrounds. The plan is flexible, not written in stone, and should be passed through the Board as officers change.

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This plan establishes a blueprint or framework to help the Fair Board prioritize investment in facility improvements, new structures, infrastructure, and the general operation of the Fairgrounds. The plan is flexible, not written in stone, and should be passed through the Board as officers change.

2. The Study Area

The Franklin County Fairgrounds is located in the City of Hilliard, in the northwest section of Franklin County. The Fairgrounds are bounded by Old Hilliard on the west, vacant agricultural land on the north, the Northwest Industrial Park on the east, and private residential properties along Cemetery Road on the south.

The area that is encompassed by this study includes the Fairgrounds, both the existing facilities and the new acreage, the Northwest Industrial Park and Leap Road, property south of the Fairgrounds to Cemetery Road, the eastern portion of Old Hilliard, and properties abutting to the north.

These additional areas outside of the Fairgrounds were included in the study area for several different reasons. First, adjacent land uses were reviewed to identify existing or potential conflicts. Second, off-site access routes were identified to provide improved traffic access to the Fairgrounds.

3. Historical Perspective

The Franklin County Agricultural Society was organized September 6, 1851, at a meeting at the Columbus City Hall, according to the Franklin County Historical Society. A total of 41 members comprised the original body. The First Franklin County Fair was held less than eight weeks later, on October 22nd.

Lacking a County Fairgrounds site, the society sought and was given approval from the Ohio State Board of Agriculture to hold the County Fair at the State Fairgrounds, which at that time was located in Franklinton. The site was known as Sullivant's Grove and was located at the southwest corner of the intersection of National Road and the turnpike to Washington Court House.

The State Fairgrounds comprised 35 acres and provided tents and buildings for the exhibition of the products of agriculture, horticulture, the mechanic and domestic arts, fine arts, and other fields.

The budget for the first Franklin County Fair included the following:

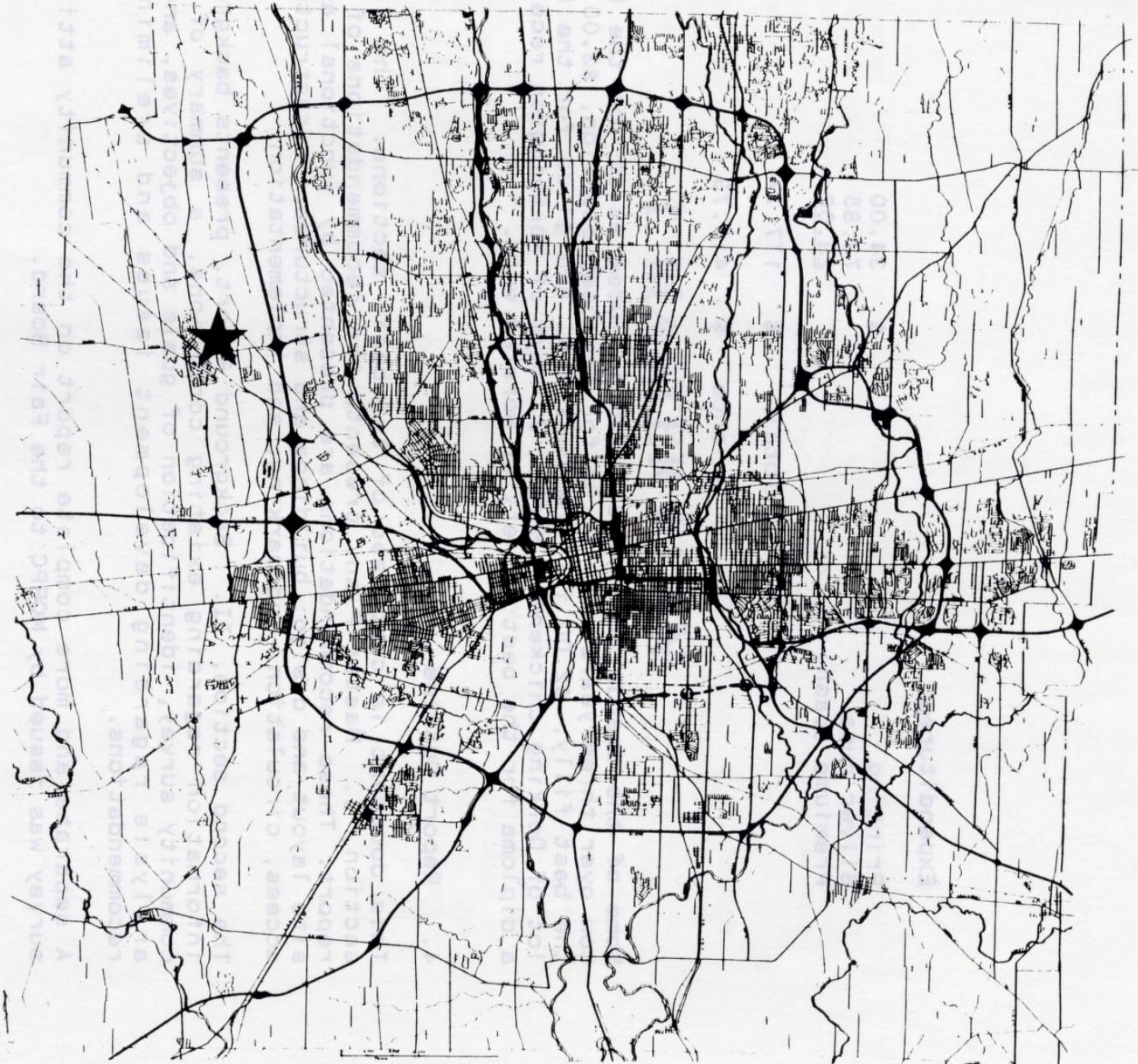
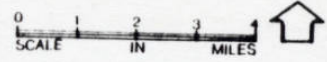
Receipts

Admission ticket sales	\$	59.50
Franklin County Treasurer		200.00
Society membership dues		<u>329.00</u>
Total	\$	588.50

LOCATION MAP

5

★ FRANKLIN COUNTY
FAIRGROUNDS



Expenditures

Printing	\$	34.00
Silver cups		73.85
Premiums (cash)		<u>28.00</u>
Total	\$	177.77
Balance	\$	410.73

Some of the awards that were given included \$3.00 for the best cow over three years old, \$5.00 for the best stallion, \$3.00 for the best filly, \$2.00 for the best sow, and \$1.00 for the best lot of Dorking chickens. Martha J. Hoyt of Worthington received a diploma for the best variety of worsted work.

4. Report Outline

This document is comprised of two basic sections. The first section, I. Master Plan, presents the recommendations of the report. These recommendations are presented by functional area: site layout and design; buildings and structures; infrastructure; access, circulation, and parking; and implementation.

The second section, II. Background Report, presents background information regarding existing conditions, a summary of the community survey, identification of goals and objectives, and an analysis regarding development issues and preliminary recommendations.

A separate and more complete report on the community attitude survey was issued by MORPC to the Fair Board.

Contrary to the order of this document, the Background Report was completed first and the Master Plan with its recommendations followed that effort. The Master Plan is presented first in this document because the final recommendations are the most relevant section of the report.

The budget for the first Franklin County Fair includes the following:

Receipts		
Admission ticket sales	\$	59.50
Franklin County Treasurer		200.00
Society membership dues		329.00
Total	\$	588.50

INTRODUCTION

The Master Plan section of this report presents the final recommendations of this planning effort regarding the long-term physical improvements at the Franklin County Fairgrounds. A map is included with this section which clearly displays the recommendations included here.

The recommendations are structured into five areas: site layout and design; buildings and structures; infrastructure; access, circulation, and parking. This structure parallels the design of the Background Report.

I. MASTER PLAN

The recommendations are presented within four specified time frames that commence at a point deemed appropriate by the Fair Board. The time frames are: Short-Range - within the first five years; Mid-Range - within years six through 10; Long-Range - within years 11 through 15; and On-Going - throughout the implementation period. Variations may appear where recommendations span more than one period.

A. INTRODUCTION DESIGN

The Master Plan section of this report presents the final recommendations of this planning effort regarding the long-term physical improvements at the Franklin County Fairgrounds. A map is included with this section which clearly displays the recommendations included here.

The recommendations are structured into five areas: site layout and design; buildings and structures; infrastructure; access, circulation, and parking; and implementation. This structure parallels the data and analysis presented in the Background Report.

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City of Hilliard, Ohio.

a. Natural Buffers - Buffers are needed where Fairgrounds facilities abut adjacent residential zoning districts in the City of Hilliard, producing conflicts such as noise, glaring light, and dust for neighboring residents. Buffers should utilize existing vegetation where it is located, or include new plantings with sufficient mounding to produce the desirable effect.

where natural vegetation doesn't exist, buffers of evergreens placed on an earthen mound would reduce the current conflicts. This buffer should be of the following heights: two to three feet for the mound and an additional four to six feet for the evergreens. Existing vegetation can be strengthened with additional plantings of evergreens.

New buffers should be established along the western boundary of the race track and along the northern boundary of the new acreage (north of Northwest Parkway) where residential development is projected. An existing buffer to the south of the race horse barns and adjacent to new medium-density residential development should be strengthened with new plantings.

b. Other Buffers - A man-made buffer would be appropriate along the southern boundary of the race track where the space doesn't permit the planting of a natural buffer of evergreens. A six-foot wood stockade fence or a six-foot brick wall should be constructed to reduce the noise, dust, and related impacts that impact residents.

A. SITE LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Introduction

Site layout and design focuses on the way buildings, pedestrians, and vehicular areas interact and how physical design can be used to enhance the character and visual quality of the Fairgrounds.

The recommendations presented here address certain fundamental layout and design concerns. They are: the clustering of similar structures of similar uses; the physical attractiveness of the Fairgrounds; the lack of adequate landscaping; the lack of adequate buffering between the Fairgrounds and adjacent residential areas; and the conflicts between on-site uses that don't complement one another.

1. Short-Range Recommendations

The following recommendations are oriented towards a short-range timeframe and seek to address pressing problems that have not been resolved to date.

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c. **Festive Entranceways** - The gates or entranceways at the Fairgrounds, particularly for the County Fair, should serve as key focal points that introduce the Fair to visitors. To do this, attractive permanent gates should be constructed that promote this festive atmosphere.

A major gate should be constructed adjacent to the multipurpose building and fronting Northwest Parkway. Flags, portable canvas awnings, and similar materials could be utilized to create a colorful and exciting entranceway.

A secondary entrance gate should be located adjacent to the proposed new Midway to serve the parking area located to the north of the polo field. This gate can be more functional in design and would probably be physically linked to a security fence that would surround the Fair in this area.

A number of exit gates may be provided that allow exit of visitors and exhibitors without having to crowd the central entrance gates. These can be functional and would be linked to a surrounding security fence.

2. Short- to Mid-Range Recommendations

The following recommendations span the short- and mid-ranges and address problems that should be addressed within the first 10 years of adopting this plan.

a. **Midway Relocation** - The Midway should be relocated away from all livestock and animal buildings to reduce the existing conflicts that occur as a result of the noise, crowds, and lights produced by the Midway facilities.

At the same time, a new Midway area with improved and underground electrical service and improved overhead lighting would be an asset to the Fairgrounds. The current problems created by the Midway would be resolved.

The area to be designated for the Midway should be paved and not simply be an improved area with a gravel surface. The Midway, located next to the proposed multipurpose building, can serve as a first rate parking lot for this new community facility during the remainder of the year. In this way it serves two purposes very well.

b. **Exterior Treatment** - The majority of the wood frame structures at the Fairgrounds are in need of exterior improvements. Besides the internal improvements that some may need (structural, electrical), exteriors require painting and similar visual improvements.

The wood frame buildings are the Fairgrounds' oldest structures. They serve as a focus for the historical center of the Fairgrounds and provide an added visual quality to the remaining prefabricated metal sided structures on the grounds. Future construction should strive for a higher level of visual quality.

3. On-Going Recommendations

The following recommendations are of an on-going nature. They are recommended to be implemented on an on-going basis and not during a specific time period.

a. Clustering Fairgrounds Buildings - All new additions to the Fairgrounds, whether buildings or structures such as horse rings, should be clustered with existing facilities of the same function. For instance, race horse barns should be grouped together, 4-H barns should be grouped together, and other livestock barns should be grouped together. This has been taking place.

b. Pedestrian Avenues - The paths used by pedestrians to circulate throughout the Fairgrounds should be strengthened visually so that visitors clearly understand the ways to navigate during the County Fair.

Landscaping (medium to large shade trees), banners, and special decorative signage can be used to demarcate these avenues. Much as a public park lines paths with shade trees or amusement parks use banners and flags, the Fairgrounds can make similar additions. Some of these can be intermingled with landscaping and related improvements for the buildings.

c. Landscaping - It is very important for the Fairgrounds to adopt comprehensive landscaping improvements. In addition to pedestrian avenues discussed above, landscaping should be provided around most structures (particularly where pedestrians circulate) and the perimeter.

Certain facilities should be screened from public view with landscaping. These include outside dumpsters, the restrooms, and certain parking areas. Landscaping should include evergreens and similar non-deciduous plantings, as well as permanent screens such as wood fences or brick walls.

Any existing shade trees, such as in Weaver Park, should be maintained and used as the focus for additional decorative plantings, including flower beds, ground cover, and shrubs.

d. Setback along Residential Districts - Any building or structural additions adjacent to neighboring residential zoning districts in the City of Hilliard should be set back at least 100 feet from the Fairgrounds property line if the structure is not used for livestock events and 150 feet if it is used for livestock events.

This setback requirement will ensure that any negative impacts from Fairgrounds activities affecting adjacent residential areas will be minimized. Additional screening or buffering should be considered where further measures are deemed necessary.

Residential zoning districts are found on the south, west and northern boundaries of the Fairgrounds.

e. Separation of Trailers/Service Vehicles - The location of parking areas for trailers/campers and service vehicles should be separated from visitor areas, as well as adjacent residential neighborhoods.

Special parking areas are designated for these vehicles. They are isolated from the high use visitor areas which have a greater priority and are to be located in closer proximity to Fairgrounds activities. This will also reduce the negative visual impacts that are associated with these vehicles. Their concentration is beneficial to the operation and image of the Fairgrounds.

f. Existing Tree Line along Northwest Parkway - A tree line exists along Northwest Parkway on the southern boundary of the new acreage to the north of this road. This tree line should be maintained as development occurs adjacent to it. The line serves a variety of positive needs: as shade cover along the road, as a visual element for that section of the new acreage, and as a border if athletic field development occurs to the north.

g. Security Fencing - A secure perimeter around the Fairgrounds buildings has been identified as a priority of the Development Committee. In areas where new buildings are planned, expansion of the existing fence system is necessary.

Where fencing abuts a public right-of-way (extension of Northwest Parkway) or neighboring residential districts, landscaping and street trees should be planted to minimize an otherwise negative visual appearance.

Fencing should not be necessary around outer parking areas or athletic fields.

B. BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

Introduction

This section of the Master Plan presents recommendations relative to the buildings and structures that either currently exist at the Fairgrounds or have been identified by the Fair Board for future development.

Of highest concern is the development of new facilities that will enable the Fairgrounds to: 1) improve the operation, appearance, and ability of the Fairgrounds to address the needs of the annual County Fair; 2) better serve public groups throughout the County; and 3) improve opportunities to attract revenue-producing events and activities.

To meet these identified goals, facilities are proposed here that address needs that have been identified by the Fair Board's Development Committee, in addition to members of the Board. The actual implementation and construction of each of these facilities will directly relate to the time period for which each is proposed and the ability to identify and procure the necessary construction and operation funds.

1. Proposed New Buildings and Structures

A table is included with this section of the report which summarizes the proposed new facilities, related information such as size, intended purpose of each facility, and recommended time period for implementation.

In discussing construction of new facilities, major questions as to appropriateness or need and funding possibilities are obviously raised. A priority is presented here for the construction of proposed facilities. Funding is an open question because financing opportunities that are non-public will influence timing. In the end, the Fair Board may have to resort to non-governmental sources for funding of certain Fairgrounds buildings due to the financial limitations of local government.

2. Winterization of Existing Buildings

Three of the major exhibition buildings require winterization improvements to ensure their use on a year-round schedule. They are the Dellinger, Edwards, and Gaynard Buildings. These improvements, which include insulation and heating, will provide meeting and exhibition space for the groups, commercial exhibitors, and others requiring space during the colder months.

**TABLE
RECOMMENDED NEW BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES
FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS**

RECOMMENDATION	PROPOSED USES	SIZE	FEATURES	TIME PERIOD
Multi-Purpose Building	Major indoor exhibition space for various events, smaller related space, administration, restrooms	120,000 SF	Arena, Teen Center, Administration, classrooms/exhibition space, restrooms	Short- to Mid-range
200-Stall Horse Barn	Facilities to support Burke Bldg	48,000 SF	200 Horse Stalls	Short- to Mid-range
Three Race Horse Barns	Expansion of existing race horse barn area, driven by current market demand	8,000 SF (each)	40 Stalls per barn	Short- to Mid-range
Exhibition Building	Additional small exhibition/meeting space	10,000 SF	Year-round enclosed space	Mid-range
Restroom Facilities (3)	Upgrade of existing or construction of restroom facilities	800 SF (each)	Full service public restrooms	Mid-range
Maintenance Shop	Construction of a new and modern maintenance shop	10,000 SF	Maintenance Shop and area for outdoor storage (screened)	Long-range
Grandstand	Construction of a new grandstand facility	NA	Grandstand seating offering 1.5 to 2 times current available seating	Mid- to Long-range
Athletic Fields	Provision of athletic space for public use, to be leased to a local government or non-profit entity	8 acres	Development of four softball diamonds, a football/soccer field, and restroom facilities	Mid-range
Polo Field	Provision of equestrian sport facilities to be leased to a non-profit entity	6 acres	Regulation size polo field	Mid-range
Paved Parking Area/Midway	Full year paved parking (priority) and high quality space for Midway area	2 acres	Paved parking area, underground utilities, lighting	Short- to Mid-range
Extension of NW Pkwy	Extension of east-west arterial to provide adequate access to fairgrounds	NA	Extension from current terminus to Alkire Road	Short- to Mid-range

PREPARED BY: Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission

3. Restrooms

C. INFRASTRUCTURE

As evidenced by the input received in the community attitude survey, the physical condition of the Fairgrounds restrooms was a high concern to the community. The Fair Board should program, with the installation of public sewer service, the complete remodeling and expansion of the on-site restrooms. In addition to creating a potential public health problem, the restrooms fail to adequately serve the needs of visitors. If anything is more fundamental to a county fairgrounds it is the adequacy (or inadequacy) of the public restrooms. Resolving this situation should be a very high priority.

needs present on the site. For instance, partial water service is provided by on-site wells, sprinklers do not exist in some of the buildings, and centralized sanitary sewer service is non-existent.

The Fairgrounds are located in the City of Hilliard and therefore would rely upon the City for the provision of centralized sanitary sewer and water service should connections become feasible.

1. Short-Range Recommendations

The Fair Board should contact the City of Hilliard and the City Engineer to discuss the current water and sanitary sewer capabilities that are on-site, and review and plan for future improvements. The Fairgrounds will have to consider extending its connections into the City's centralized systems.

2. Short- to Mid-Range Recommendations

These recommendations relate to construction projects that will span the two initial time periods for recommendations.

4. Drainage Improvements - Surface and subsurface improvements must be made relative to drainage for the 44 acres recently acquired for the Fairgrounds. Analyses have been conducted by the Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District and their recommendations provide a strategy for implementing these improvements.

The short- and long-range goals for developing these areas obviously impact the degree that improvements are needed. For grassed parking areas and outdoor recreational facilities (polo field, softball diamonds) improvements are necessary to ensure that these facilities can be properly used.

C. INFRASTRUCTURE

Introduction

This section of the report presents recommendations that relate to the infrastructure that serves the Fairgrounds. This infrastructure includes roadways, sanitary sewers, drainage, water service, and fire protection.

The Fairgrounds have relied upon aging and incomplete infrastructure to service the needs present on the site. For instance, partial water service is provided by on-site wells, sprinklers do not exist in some of the buildings, and centralized sanitary sewer service is non-existent.

The Fairgrounds are located in the City of Hilliard and therefore would rely upon the City for the provision of centralized sanitary sewer and water service should connections become feasible.

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The short- and long-range goals for developing these areas obviously impact the degree that improvements are needed. For grassed parking areas and outdoor recreational facilities (polo field, softball diamonds) improvements are necessary to ensure that these facilities can be properly used.

b. Extension of Northwest Parkway - Northwest Parkway currently terminates at the eastern boundary of the Fairgrounds property. The Hilliard Thoroughfare Plan and the Background Report of this study both recommend that this arterial be extended to the west and intersect with Avery Road. This intersection would be to the north of the Norwich Township Fire Department building.

This extension would provide east-west access between Avery Road and Leap Road, and would greatly improve access for the Fairgrounds. Visitors could use the Leap/Cemetery/I-270 route to enter the Fairgrounds more readily than traveling through the older part of Hilliard.

D. ACCESS, CIRCULATION, AND PARKING

Introduction

The ability to travel unimpeded to and within the Fairgrounds is important for both vehicles and pedestrians. This interaction can have numerous conflicts when not properly planned for and overseen. But through proper actions the process can function with minimum conflicts.

1. Short-Range Recommendations

a. Improved Signage at Fairgrounds Entrances - Signage at the Fairgrounds entrances at Avery Road, Columbia Street, and at the termination of Northwest Parkway should be provided. This signage should serve to demarcate the entrances and present a positive and festive image to the visiting public.

Signage should be ground-mounted and be constructed of wood, with stone or brick, and landscaped in an attractive and complimentary fashion. Mounding may also be appropriate as a backdrop.

b. On-site Signage System - A signage system for buildings and to direct visitors and vehicles should be designed, adopted, and implemented. The system should be decorative and play on the agricultural spirit of the Fairgrounds.

These signs would identify buildings, structures, parking areas, and restrooms, and provide direction for pedestrians and vehicles. The style or theme should also parallel the entrance signs recommended above.

2. Short- to Mid-Range Recommendations

a. Extension of Northwest Parkway - This recommendation parallels a similar recommendation presented under the infrastructure and the buildings and structures sections. The extension of Northwest Parkway from its current terminus to Avery Road will provide measurable benefit in terms of access to the Fairgrounds. From a transportation standpoint it is a necessary project.

b. Parking Improvements - A number of parking improvements are recommended under the Master Plan. The purpose is to centralize and improve the current parking system at the Fairgrounds.

A hierarchy of parking areas should be provided based on the location and function of each specific parking area. The recommended hierarchy is based on surface treatment: pavement, gravel, and grass.

Only one paved parking area is proposed for the Fairgrounds. This would be the recommended location for the Midway, adjacent to the proposed multipurpose facility. This area would serve as permanent, high use parking during non-Fair times

Gravel parking areas would be provided for cars to the north of the multipurpose facility adjacent to recommended athletic fields. For trucks and trailers, a gravel parking area is recommended to be located in the vicinity of the race horse barns and the 4-H barns.

Grass parking areas for cars are recommended to the east of the proposed multipurpose facility and to the west of the gravel lot recommended north of the multipurpose facility (township land currently used for Fair parking).

These parking areas provide a combined total of 3,400 parking spaces, based on a standard 200 SF per parking space and subtracting 15 percent of the total area for circulation within parking areas.

Additional over-flow parking areas during the County Fair could be used where athletic fields and a polo field are recommended.

c. Access from Cemetery Road - It should be considered at some point in time that access to the Fairgrounds could be provided directly from Cemetery Road via a park located to the south of the race track. This has been discussed with Hilliard officials in the past and could be addressed as a short- to mid-range item.

3. On-Going Recommendations

a. Internal Road System - The road system to be adopted for internal movement within the Fairgrounds should strive to follow a grid pattern, given the level topography and current/recommended building layout. This would provide maximum internal access and ease of circulation. Pedestrian paths should follow a similar system and strive wherever possible to be separated from vehicular areas. Obviously some vehicular areas will be totally designated for pedestrians during the County Fair.

b. Pedestrian Areas - The pedestrian areas should be separated from vehicular areas, as stated above, and include improvements that will facilitate circulation. These include directional

signs, landscaping, curbing, and paving where possible. These areas will be utilized by vehicles during the non-Fair times.

c. Parking Area Landscaping - Landscaping, including shade trees and shrubs, should be provided along parking area boundaries to provide a visual screen. Screening is recommended to be provided wherever parking areas abut residentially zoned districts in the City of Hilliard or public right-of-way. This is the case where current parking is provided on Township property to the north of the fire department. Mounding can also be effective when mixed with evergreens.

1. Time Frame and Budget

The recommendations are presented within identified time frames for implementation. These time frames are general in nature and are recommended to provide basic guidance to the Fair Board, the public sector, and the private sector.

Priorities must be further established and refined before activities can be initiated. Generic to the establishment of these priorities will be the availability of financing for specific projects.

It is important to note that certain public sector sources will continue to be available to provide assistance to the Fair Board as activities are initiated. However, it is also a given that non-public funds must be identified and procured before many other activities are begun.

Certain segments of the market that utilizes the Fairgrounds, such as quarterhorse organizations, 4-H, and other community groups, should offer assistance (manpower and fundraising) to the Fair Board to see projects completed. Only through this kind of public-private partnership will the Fairgrounds grow to meet these identified goals.

2. Recommendations

The table accompanying this section of the report shows the plan recommendations and the respective recommended time frames for implementation.

E. IMPLEMENTATION

Introduction

This final section of the Master Plan briefly addresses the issue of implementation and attempts to provide some general guidance for implementation of the Master Plan's recommendations.

It is important to note that leadership will be the catalyst for seeing any of these recommendations through to fruition. Hand-in-hand with leadership are resources, the funding that will be necessary for the major improvements that are recommended here.

Given that the Fairgrounds serve as a community facility oriented towards the agricultural side of Franklin County, it is hoped here that public, quasi-public, and private organizations active in the agricultural field will provide leadership and funding for the accomplishment of these recommendations.

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2. Recommendations

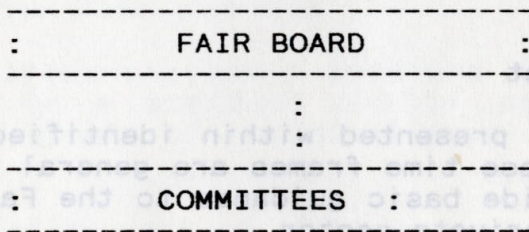
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E. IMPLEMENTATION

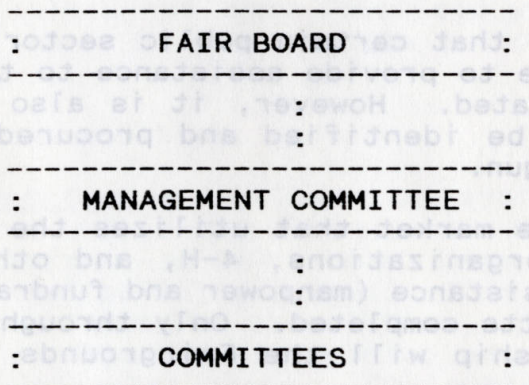
a. **Management** - This presentation provides a global view of the host of recommendations included in the report. Orchestrating the various activities within a specific time frame will undoubtedly involve the work of several separate committees.

Two approaches are apparent under which implementation of these recommendations can be managed. First, the Fair Board itself can oversee the committees that will implement specific groups of activities. Or, second, a special management team could be established, consisting of the top officers of the Board, which would oversee the committees. These two approaches are diagrammed below.

APPROACH #1
City of Hilliard, Ohio.



APPROACH #2



Work tasks must be shared throughout the Board's membership to ensure that responsibility is fairly distributed and tasks can be accomplished within established time frames.

b. Follow-up Study - The Fair Board should consider preparation of a capital improvements plan and budget to guide, with this Master Plan, the implementation of these recommendations.

A capital improvements plan and budget identifies all physical recommendations and provides information relative to location, specifics (size, characteristics, etc.), and budget. Priorities are also established and identified.

An architectural or engineering firm could be selected to assist in the preparation of this plan. Skills needed for this include the ability to accurately estimate the construction cost of the recommended improvements. Financing options may also be addressed in the report.

c. Marketing - The Fair Board should consider conducting some basic market research to further identify the groups, individuals, and activities that are best suited for the Fairground facilities. There are a number of community facilities located in Franklin County, including Veterans Memorial Auditorium, the State Fairgrounds, and the Ohio Center. Each clearly has a specific purpose and specific market, however, these can change over time. A market study, perhaps using Ohio State business students to conduct the research and prepare findings, would assist the on-going marketing efforts of the Fair Board.

INTRODUCTION

The Background Report contains the data, public input, and analysis that was conducted to reach the final plan and recommendations relative to the future development of the Franklin County Fairgrounds.

The process used involved a step-by-step procedure that began with the collecting and analyzing of existing conditions at the Fairgrounds. This first section of the Background Report presents these conditions divided into functional areas: buildings, parking, and land use.

II. BACKGROUND REPORT

The second section presents the results of a community survey conducted to collect public input regarding the Fairgrounds. The questions focused on three areas: condition of existing facilities; future role of the Fairgrounds; and characteristics of the respondents themselves. The information collected was used to identify the long-range goals for developing the Fairgrounds, as presented in the next section.

The third section of the Background Report focuses on the Fairgrounds' long-range goals and objectives. These were arrived at based on the public input provided by the community survey and input from the Fair Board members and the Development Committee.

The final section presents an analysis of the Fairgrounds and its facilities. Development issues are identified and addressed within the context of future development potentials. Preliminary recommendations in the form of a conceptual plan are presented as well. This conceptual plan was presented at the July, 1987 County Fair for public review and comment.

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Administration and Fine Arts - This wood frame structure contains the administrative offices of the Franklin County Agricultural Society, including the ticket office used during the County Fair. In addition, exhibition space is provided for fine arts and domestic exhibits during fair time. A single restroom facility is also included. The building contains 4,592 gross square feet of space.

Dellinger Building - Containing 5,000 gross square footage of space, the Dellinger Building serves as one of the principle exhibition and events spaces. The structure is of pole barn construction with a cement floor.

A. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Introduction

The Franklin County Fairgrounds are comprised of a variety of physical elements that represent the natural and man-made characteristics of the facility. These include the Fairground buildings and structures, natural features such as soils and drainage, and on-site landscaping. Also, the Fairgrounds are located in a community and interact with various local functional systems, such as the transportation system and adjacent land uses.

This section of the Plan addresses the existing conditions at the Fairgrounds. Factors discussed include the physical conditions of structures and facilities, site conditions, circulation, access, and parking, and adjacent land uses. Where graphics aid in the presentation, maps are included.

1. Physical Conditions of Buildings and Structures

The Franklin County Fairgrounds are comprised of a number of permanent structures and related outdoor facilities. During the annual County Fair, numerous temporary facilities are installed. For the 1987 fair, in fact, several temporary race horse barns were required to accommodate the racing events due to a shortage of available permanent stalls.

a. Description of Facilities - The following narrative briefly describes each of these permanent facilities and provides an overview of the building stock at the Fairgrounds. The accompanying table summarizes the important points of this information.

Administration and Fine Arts - This wood frame structure contains the administrative offices of the Franklin County Agricultural Society, including the ticket office used during the County Fair. In addition, exhibition space is provided for fine arts and domestic exhibits during fair time. A single restroom facility is also included. The building contains 4,592 gross square feet of space.

Dellinger Building - Containing 6,000 gross square footage of space, the Dellinger Building serves as one of the principle exhibition and events spaces. The structure is of pole barn construction with a cement floor.

Grandstand - This wooden structure provides seating for outdoor events on the racetrack and the pulling pad. Due to the age and physical condition of the grandstand, a need is present for replacing this obsolete structure. Current seating capacity is 800 in the Grandstand and an additional 1,600 on adjacent bleachers.

Edwards Building - This structure serves as another principle space for exhibitions and events. Containing 7,320 gross square footage, the Edwards Building is of pole barn construction with a poured concrete floor. The building also contains a restroom facility.

Gaynard Building - The Gaynard Building is one of the largest indoor exhibition and event structures at the Fairgrounds. The prefabricated metal structure contains 6,000 gross square footage of space and offers a concrete floor. A restroom facility is provided.

4-H Show Ring - This outdoor facility provides space for 4-H events. Seating is provided on small on-site bleachers and an enclosed judges stand is also included.

G.A. Burke Building - This is the largest enclosed facility at the Fairgrounds, offering 48,000 gross square footage. Bleacher capacity is 400 persons. The Burke Building is used principally for livestock shows and related exhibition space, but has also been used for general event space and BMX competitions. The Burke Building has a dirt floor and includes restroom facilities.

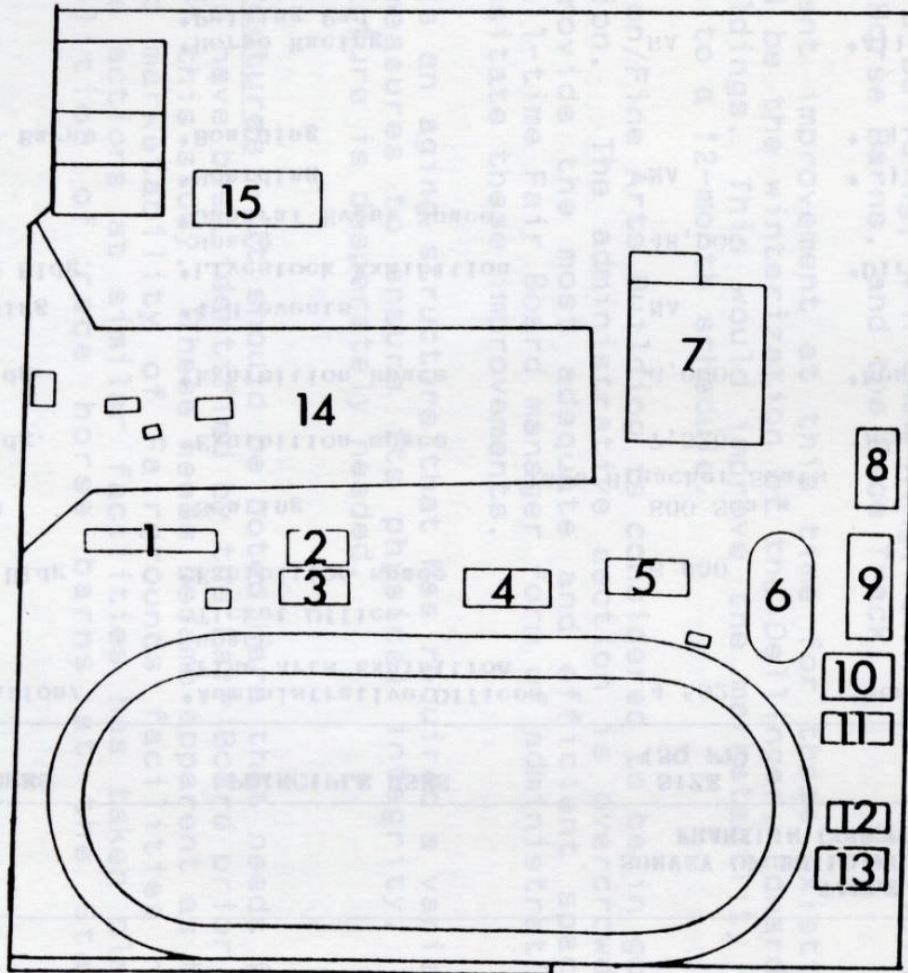
4-H Barns - Two 4-H Barns are located directly east of the 4-H Show Ring. The combined space offers 113 stalls.

Race Horse Barns - Four race horse barns are located to the east of the race track. These buildings, of pole barn construction, offers 114 stalls.

Race Track - The race track offers all-weather use for the training and racing of horses. It is considered by the Agricultural Society to be one of the finest all-weather county fairground tracks in the state. A tractor pulling pad and area for demolition derby are provided in the center of the track.

EXISTING BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS



- 1 - ADMINISTRATION/FINE ARTS
- 2 - DELLINGER BUILDING
- 3 - GRANDSTAND
- 4 - EDWARDS BUILDING
- 5 - GAYNARD BUILDING
- 6 - 4-H HORSE SHOW RING
- 7 - G.A. BURKE BUILDING
- 8 - 4-H HORSE BARN
- 9 - SAME
- 10 - RACE HORSE BARN
- 11 - SAME
- 12 - SAME
- 13 - SAME
- 14 - WEAVER PARK
- 15 - NORWICH TWP FIRE DEPT

TABLE
SURVEY OF BUILDINGS AND STRUCTURES
FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

STRUCTURES	PRINCIPLE USES	SIZE (SQ FT)	ADDITIONAL FEATURES	PHYSICAL CONDITION	ADDITIONAL COMMENTS
Administration/ Fine Arts	*Administrative Offices *Fine Arts Exhibition space *Ticket Office	4,592	*Restroom Facilities	Good	Admin. Offices cramped, additional space needed.
Dellinger Bldg.	*Exhibition space	6,000		Excellent	Requires winterization improvements.
Grandstand	*Seating	800 Seats 1600 Bleacher Seats		Poor	Requires complete replace- ment.
Edwards Bldg.	*Exhibition space	7,320	*Restroom Facilities	Excellent	Requires winterization improvements.
Gaynard Bldg.	*Exhibition space	6,000	*Restroom Facilities	Excellent	Requires winterization improvements.
4-H Show Ring	*4-H events	NA		Excellent	
G.A. Burke Bldg.	*Livestock Exhibition space *General Event Space	48,000	*Dirt floor	Excellent	Very versatile.
4-H Barns	*Boarding	NA	* 113 Stalls	Excellent	Future expansion possible.
Race Horse Barns	*Boarding		* 114 Stalls	Excellent	Future expansion of barns is projected due to market conditions.
Race Track	*Horse Racing *Pulling Pad *Demolition Derby	NA	*All-weather Facility	Excellent	

SOURCE: Franklin County Agricultural Society.

PREPARED BY: Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission.

Miscellaneous Buildings - Several other secondary buildings are located on the Fairgrounds and they are grouped together here. These buildings include three free-standing restroom structures, the Westland Boosters Food Stand, the Speed Office at the Race Track, the Cattle Show Ring to the north of the Burke Building, the Maintenance Facility, and the assorted buildings in the historical park which play a role in the County Fair.

b. **Physical Condition** - The table accompanying this section of the Background Report addresses the general physical condition of the buildings at the Fairgrounds. Fair Board staff were asked to provide a general determination of the physical condition of these principle structures. This determination will assist the planning process by prioritizing recommendations for physical improvements.

Several existing buildings are considered to be in excellent condition, requiring only minor improvements to make these facilities more marketable. The buildings considered to be in excellent physical condition are: Dellinger Building, Edwards Building, Gaynard Building, 4-H Show Ring, G.A. Burke Building, 4-H Barns, Race Horse Barns, and the Race Track.

The most important improvement at this time for these existing structures would be the winterization of the Dellinger, Edwards, and Gaynard Buildings. This would improve the marketability of these structures to a 12-month schedule.

The Administration/Fine Arts Building is considered to be in good physical condition. The administrative section is overcrowded and does not provide the most adequate and efficient space. Adoption of a full-time Fair Board manager form of administration would also necessitate these improvements.

The Grandstand is an aging structure that has required a variety of short-term measures to ensure its physical integrity. A replacement structure is desperately needed.

c. **Future Structures** - It should be noted here that needs for future structures have been identified by the Fair Board prior to the initiation of this study. These needs became apparent as the attraction and marketability of Fairgrounds facilities has increased, while actions at similar facilities has taken place (such as demolition of race horse barns at the State Fairgrounds).

A clear need for additional race horse barns has been identified. The demand during the 1987 County Fair resulted in the leasing of three temporary tents to provide additional horse stalls.

Other recent equestrian events have shown that additional boarding space would make the Fairgrounds more marketable for these profitable ventures.

In addition, the local need for full-time boarding of horses has increased with the recent demolition of boarding stables at the Ohio State Fairgrounds.

Adequate administration space has long been a concern of the Fair Board. Existing facilities place limitations on the ability of the Board to efficiently oversee the administration of the Fairgrounds.

A multi-purpose facility to serve a variety of local needs, from teen center to Olympic-standard equestrian competition has also been approached.

These and additional future structures are addressed in more detail in subsequent sections of the report.

2. Site Conditions

Site conditions include four basic groups of characteristics that address the study area. These characteristics focus on physical factors such as natural features, public services, site layout and design, and landscaping.

a. **Natural Features** - Two natural features are most relevant to this study, soils and drainage. Other features usually discussed in a study of this nature are not applicable to the Fairgrounds location because over one-half of the site is already developed and the other half consists of fairly level pastureland. These other features include such things as floodplains and woodlands.

Soils are quite important to the analysis portion of this study. Five soils are found on the Fairgrounds site, according to the Soil Survey of Franklin County. They are Kokomo silty clay loam (Ko), Crosby silt loam (CrA), Crosby-Urban Land Complex (CsA), Lewisburg-Crosby Complex (LeB), and Celina-Urban Land Complex (CfB). The following brief descriptions are from the Soil Survey.

Kokomo silty clay loam - This nearly level, deep, very poorly drained soil is in depressions and at the heads of drainageways on uplands. Some areas are along drainageways. The soil type receives runoff from adjacent higher soils and is subject to ponding.

**TABLE III
SOILS AND BUILDING SITE DEVELOPMENT
FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS**


SOIL	SHALLOW EXCAVATION	DWELLINGS WITHOUT BASEMENTS	DWELLINGS WITH BASEMENTS	LOCAL ROADS AND STREETS	LAWNS AND LANDSCAPING
Celina-Urban Land Complex (CfB)	Severe	Moderate	Severe	Severe	Moderate
Crosby-Urban Land Complex (CsA)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Moderate
Crosby Silt Loam (CrA)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Moderate
Kokomo Silty Clay Loam (Ko)	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe	Severe
Lewisburg-Crosby Complex (LeB)	Moderate	Moderate	Severe	Moderate	Slight

SOURCE: Soil Survey of Franklin County, Ohio. U.S. Department of Agriculture, Soil Conservation Service, Columbus, Ohio, 1980.

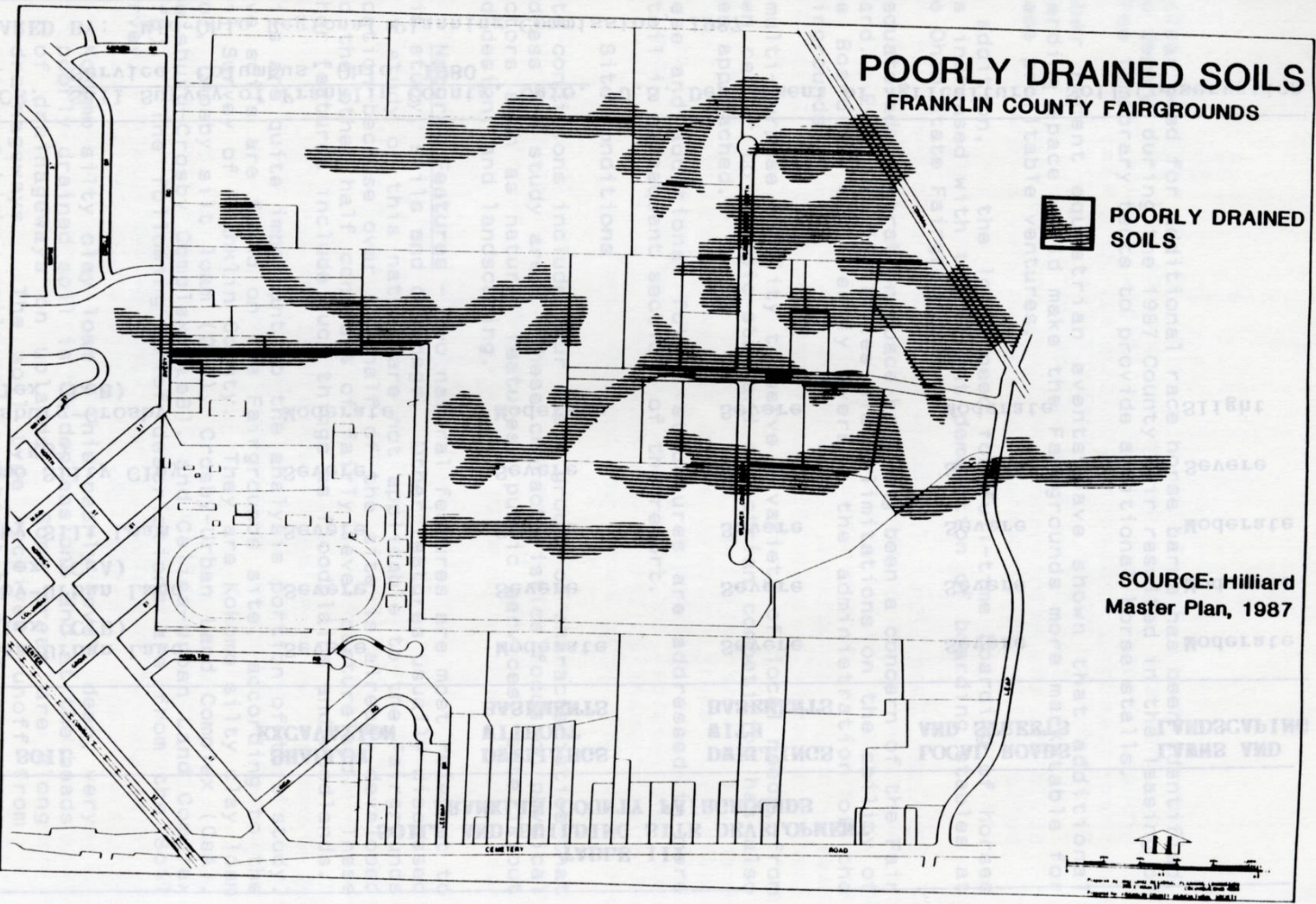
PREPARED BY: Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission, 1987.

POORLY DRAINED SOILS

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

 POORLY DRAINED SOILS

SOURCE: Hilliard
Master Plan, 1987



Crosby silt loam - This nearly level, deep, somewhat poorly drained soil is on narrow to broad upland areas between Celina soils on low knolls and ridges and Kokomo soils in depression. It also occurs as bands along small waterways.

Crosby-Urban Land Complex - This map unit consists of a deep, nearly level, somewhat poorly drained Crosby soil and areas of Urban land on broad upland areas between drainageways. The areas commonly have straight line boundaries with distinct corners and range from 40 to several hundred acres in size. The slope is dominantly less than one percent.

Lewisburg-Crosby Complex - This unit consists of a deep, moderately well drained Lewisburg soil and a deep, somewhat poorly drained Crosby soil on low knolls and ridges in the uplands. Some areas occur as islands surrounded by Kokomo soils. The Lewisburg soil is commonly on convex slopes on the tops and sides of knolls and ridges, and the Crosby soil is on concave foot slopes.

Celina-Urban Land Complex - This map unit consists of a deep, moderately well drained, gently sloping Celina soil on broad upland areas between drainageways and areas of Urban land. Areas commonly have straight line boundaries with distinct corners and range from 40 to several hundred acres in size.

The ability of each soil group to accommodate different forms of development, particularly as related to construction of structures and parking areas, is addressed in the accompanying table. Special construction techniques can be used to compensate for soil limitations.

The Franklin Soil and Water Conservation District was requested by the Fair Board's Development Committee to prepare an analysis and recommendations relative to drainage on the new addition to the Fairgrounds. This property, as has been noted, is currently comprised of fairly level cropland. FSWCD staff conducted an on-site evaluation and prepared a written report. In addition, Bob Tucker, service director for the City of Hilliard, was also consulted.

The 44-acre parcel is split east to west by a ridge, with the ground elevation decreasing to the east. Surface runoff is collected in low areas and the soils with high water tables cause seasonal wetness. A drainage ditch is located a few hundred feet south of the south property line of the parcel and at a point in the southeast corner. The ditch comes within a few feet of the subject tract.

b. **Public Services** - The Franklin County Fairgrounds can be considered to be more than just a grouping of buildings with a similar purpose. It is an impact that can be measured County-wide.

Much as a small college campus or public school complex is served by an array of basic services, the Fairgrounds is also supported by a "system" of services. The services that are most relevant to this discussion are public water and sanitary waste facilities.

The current on-site facilities at the Fairgrounds for providing water and sanitary waste treatment are inadequate for the current and future size of the complex. The Fairgrounds should be adequately linked to the City of Hilliard centralized water and sewer systems.

Hook-up to the Hilliard water system is necessary to insure adequate fire protection service and insurance coverage, despite that the Norwich Township Fire Department is located on-site. Liability from fire damage at the Fairgrounds facilities should be addressed with adequate water service.

All restroom facilities on-site should be connected to Hilliard's sanitary sewer system to prevent any degradation to the environment. The soil groups found in the area may not be suitable for on-site waste treatment.

Provisions have been underway to address the storm water runoff problems associated with the new land purchased for the Fairgrounds. Runoff should be addressed for the entire site and provisions made to adequately handle storm water to ensure that adjacent and downstream properties are not impacted.

The Fair Board should strongly consider working with the City of Hilliard and its City Engineer to resolve these issues.

c. **Site Layout and Design** - The physical layout and design of the Fairgrounds is an important subject to address because it focuses on the way in which the buildings, pedestrian, and vehicular areas, and other spaces work together. The ability of these areas to work in a positive fashion impacts the way people view the Fairgrounds (i.e., uncrowded, attractive, clean, well-placed buildings).

Fairgrounds, in the public eye, are very similar to amusement parks and large public parks or gathering places. They are special and offer the visitor a variety of visual stimuli, as well as more active stimuli (i.e., rides). To strengthen this image in the public eye, it is important that fairgrounds offer visual clues or accents. These include landscaping (in particular, trees and evergreens), banners, flags, and attractive entranceways. The exterior of buildings should also be considered.

The current buildings and structures are generally grouped by function, as evidenced by the clustering of the following buildings: race horse barns, 4-H barns and show ring, and exhibition buildings. This is a logical way to group buildings, easing internal circulation for users. Future expansion should build upon the existing clusters and not spread similar facilities to separate areas within the Fairgrounds.

The Midway, however, appears to fill a gap between these clusters and the historical park. Although the Midway is only heavily used during the County Fair, its role should be more dominant in the entire Fairgrounds scheme. Midways serve as the entertainment and food center for fairgrounds. As expansion and new buildings become a reality at the Fairgrounds, the role and physical location of the Midway may change to a more dominant position.

The entrances, particularly during the County Fair, should be clearly indicated. This can easily be accomplished through signage. But visually cueing the public to these important points can be more effectively accomplished through banners, landscaping, and permanent physical entranceways.

Concurrently, routes used by pedestrians should be visually strengthened with the use of landscaping and banners or flags. An ideal entranceway and walk would be lined with medium-sized trees or evergreens, with flags and banners located at intersecting walks and building entrances.

The exterior of buildings also plays an important role. Fairground structures do not have to be architectural palaces to positively impact visitors, but some care should be taken to prevent a fairgrounds from resembling a warehouse district as opposed to an agricultural or farm complex.

What is suggested is that buildings should resemble typical farm structures, perhaps in a stereotypical way (i.e., white walls with forest green trim). The goal is to bring to the public a sense of what farming is today, as well as what it was yesterday.

3. Access, Circulation, and Parking

This section of the report addresses three related elements: access, circulation, and parking. All three address the needs of the public relative to vehicular and pedestrian circulation going to and within the Fairgrounds.

a. Access - Access relates to the public's ability to locate and get access onto the Fairgrounds. The goals of access are to reduce congestion in the area of the destination, ensure that access is as easy as possible, that access routes logically relate to major transportation routes (i.e., interstate highways), and that access routes reduce impacts on the host community, Hilliard.

Three access points are currently used at the Fairgrounds:

Columbia Street - Provides vehicular and pedestrian access through the Old Hilliard neighborhood. Columbia Street serves as a local, residential street. It is linked to Cemetery Road via Main Street. Conflicts occur because vehicular traffic circulates through a residential area.

Main Street - Provides vehicular and pedestrian access to the Norwich Township Fire Department, Weaver Park, and the Fairgrounds. A second access point to Main Street/Avery Road is provided to the north of the Fire Department and interconnects with the parking area located further north on township property.

Northwest Parkway - Provides vehicular access during the annual County Fair. Northwest Parkway, which also serves a growing industrial park, directly links with I-270 via Leap and Cemetery Roads. It provides the most logical vehicular access route for the Fairgrounds property.

Currently, access through the Old Hilliard area produces numerous traffic and noise-related problems, particularly for area residents. The Columbia Street entrance, and the Main Street entrance to a lesser extent, route traffic on residential streets that are not designed to handle the volumes that are produced during Fair time.

The Northwest Parkway entrance doesn't produce these kinds of conflicts. The route currently serves an industrial and warehousing area and links with a commercial area through Cemetery Road. It also provides direct access to I-270 which links the entire Columbus area to the Fairgrounds site via the interstate system.

The Thoroughfare Plan recently completed for the City of Hilliard by the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission presented several recommendations that can improve Fairgrounds access if implemented. The major recommendation proposes the extension of Northwest Parkway to the west and intersecting with Main Street/Avery Road at the current entrance north of the Fire Department. This project would provide east-west access between Avery Road and Leap Road, but would greatly improve access to the Fairgrounds.

Other major improvements include the widening of Avery Road and Cemetery Road to major arterials (four lanes), the widening of Leap Road to a minor arterial (four lanes), and the construction of a local street from Davidson Road south to Northwest Parkway. The Cemetery Road widening project was initiated in 1987.

b. Circulation - Circulation relates to the way vehicles and pedestrians circulate within the Fairgrounds site itself. Internal circulation is impacted by the grouping of similar uses (or lack of grouping), the locational relationship between buildings and parking, the existence of physical barriers or obstacles, and the directness of existing pathways.

The goals of a circulation system that meets both vehicle and pedestrian needs are the following: ease of travel and movement, logical network of pathways, groupings of structures by similar use, proximity of parking types by related structures (i.e. trailer parking adjacent to horse barns), reduction of obstacles and barriers, and reduction of pedestrian and vehicular conflicts.

The current internal circulation system at the Fairgrounds fails to represent a coherent system, with the results being inefficient pathways, poor location of parking to related uses, pedestrian and vehicular conflicts, and congestion.

Examples of these problems include the use of parking areas at the northern edge of the Fairgrounds for horse trailers and vehicles that service the race horse barns. Service parking should be located in the vicinity of the barns, reducing traffic flows on the grounds and facilitating the servicing of the barns.

Another example is the parking of ride service vehicles between the Midway and the historical buildings in Weaver Park. Not only is this practice visually degrading to the Fairgrounds, but it creates obstacles to pedestrians crossing through the area.

To improve the existing circulation system, certain changes need to be made. For instance, the system should be reorganized so that a hierarchy is reflected. A central pedestrian pathway should be identified, with secondary pedestrian pathways branching off and connecting with the exhibition area and grandstand, as well as the other exhibition/entertainment buildings.

These pedestrian areas should be improved with the addition of curbing, repaving, landscaping, and the centralization of utilities (underground) for the Midway entertainment areas.

Vehicular areas should be separated from the pedestrian areas, clearly identified, and traffic should be routed to parking areas and service areas, such as adjacent to horse barns. Curbing, repaving, signage, landscaping, and special lighting will help to identify vehicular areas.

c. Parking - Parking is a vital component of the Fairgrounds, providing a service for visitors, commercial exhibitors, and participants. The quantity and location of parking is very important to the operation of the Fairgrounds. Inadequate facilities that are poorly located create problems for anyone using the facilities and can serve as a disincentive in attracting future events and shows.

The goals of a coherent parking system are: a) to reduce the number of different parking areas by centralizing their locations, reorganize locating parking facilities adjacent to related structures and buildings (i.e., horse trailer parking adjacent to horse barns); b) to concentrate parking to reduce the negative visual impact that parking can bring to an area; c) to adequately landscape and buffer parking areas; and d) to locate parking areas in close proximity to access routes.

Parking facilities are currently located throughout the Fairgrounds, with visitor parking during Fair times concentrated in the township property to the north of the Fire Department and the recently acquired land. Horse trailer parking is concentrated to the northwest of the livestock building and away from the horse barns. Other parking areas squeeze into available spaces.

To make parking more efficient, areas need to be concentrated into a few single locations and located in the vicinity of related uses. Parking in the expanded area east of the horse barns and livestock building can rely on the existing grassed terrain without making many improvements, except for ensuring adequate drainage. This is the most logical location for expanded parking areas. Access to Northwest Parkway, particularly if it is extended to the west, strengthens the appropriateness of this area for parking.

4. Land Use

The Fairgrounds interact with the surrounding land uses in the City of Hilliard in a number of different ways. Traffic, parking, noise, and visual impacts, and other similar factors impact on the surrounding area as well as the fairgrounds itself. A harmony should be reached so that the positives outweigh the negatives in this mutual relationship.

a. Existing Land Use - The area surrounding the Franklin County Fairgrounds is comprised of a variety of residential and non-residential land uses, including an established neighborhood with related public parkland, a growing industrial park, and the recognized Old Hilliard historical area.

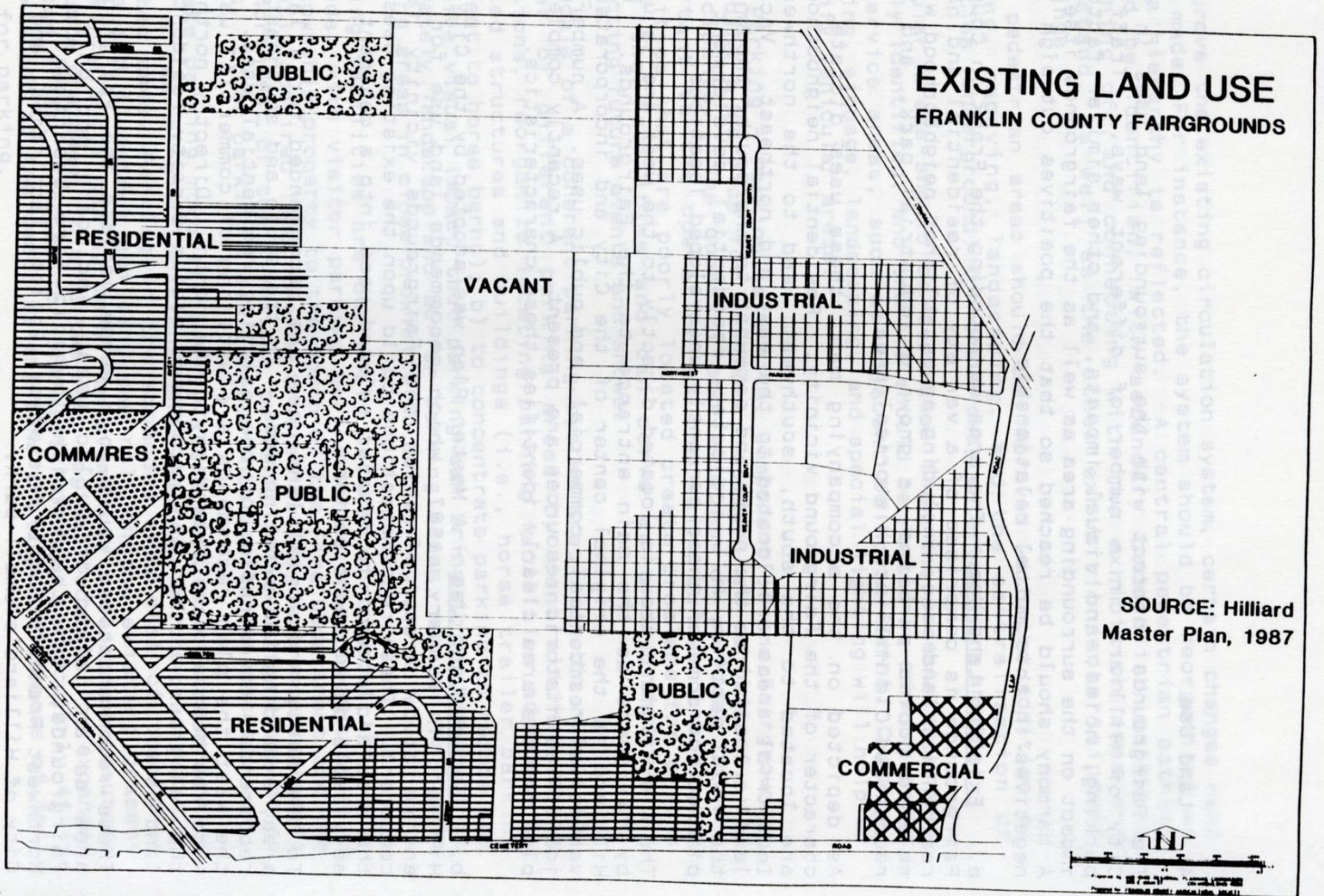
As depicted on the accompanying map, these uses dictate the character of the Fairground vicinity. Residential neighborhoods are located to the south, southwest, and to the northwest. Industrial areas are located to the east and northeast. Vacant land is located to the north and somewhat to the south, though as the next section will indicate, residential development is planned for some of these currently undeveloped locations.

The Old Hilliard area is located directly to the west and is used by fairgoers as the main entrance to the Fairgrounds. Old Hilliard is the original center of the City and incorporates a variety of residential, commercial, and public uses. A number of identified historic resources are present. A recently completed plan for the area clearly identifies these characteristics.

b. Future Land Use - A Master Plan was adopted by the City of Hilliard in January, 1987, which recommends land use for the entire study area, of which the Fairgrounds vicinity is a component. These recommendations build upon the existing uses in the area and attempt to cluster related uses into a coherent and servicable development pattern.

To the east, industrial land uses are recommended for a large area, expanding the existing uses. To the south and southeast is recommended an extension of the existing residential uses. To the west the plan recommends a clustering of commercial uses, with residential uses extending to the north. Directly north of the Fairgrounds, the plan recommends medium density residential land uses.

These recommendations would in a sense isolate the Fairgrounds area as an island of public uses, including not only the Fairgrounds, but the Norwich Township Fire Department, the Northwest Franklin County Historical Society facilities, and the City of Hilliard's small park.



c. Old Hilliard - A study was prepared in 1987 that presented an analysis and recommendations regarding the future development of the Old Hilliard area adjacent to the Fairgrounds. Old Hilliard is the historic downtown of Hilliard. The study recommended that residential land uses be continued along the southern and southwestern border with the Fairgrounds, and that commercial uses be continued along the western border in and around Main Street.

In addition, the study recommended that the Old Hilliard district boundaries be extended to the east to incorporate Weaver Park. The park is a designated historic area comprising of several noted structures related to the history and development of Hilliard and Norwich Township. Weaver Park also lies adjacent to the Fairgrounds.

d. Land Use Conflicts - Conflicts occur when adjacent land uses are incompatible in one or more ways. These conflicts detract from a positive relationship between the adjacent uses. Several conflicts exist today between the Fairgrounds and the neighboring land uses.

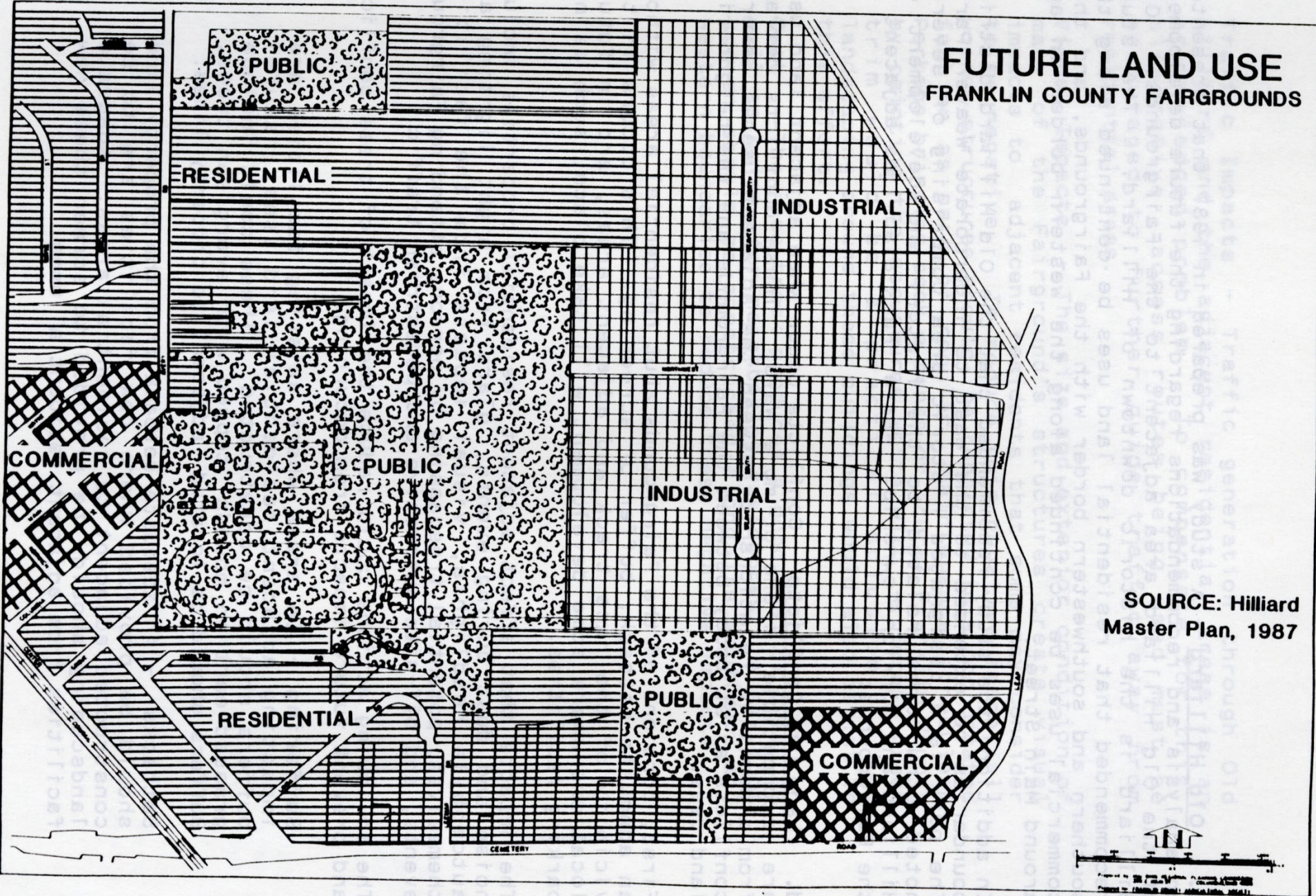
First, portions of the Fairgrounds abut residential areas without an adequate setback, buffer or screening. This occurs in the vicinity of the race track and adjacent areas, and in future locations where some development will take place, such as new parking facilities.

The impacts that affect adjacent residential properties include noise and dust during events, glare from night lighting and automobile headlights, visual impacts from the facilities themselves, potential trespassing by persons attending Fairground events, and off-site automotive and pedestrian traffic.

The following actions could reduce the impact of these conflicts and prevent future impacts from occurring.

Buffering - In areas where existing facilities are impacting adjacent residential land uses, natural buffers should be constructed. These could include grassed earthen mounds topped with evergreen trees. Buffers should be located adjacent to property lines.

Setbacks - An adequate setback from the property line should be provided where new facilities are to be constructed adjacent to residential areas. Adequate landscaping should be provided to screen these new facilities from adjacent residential uses.



SOURCE: Hilliard
Master Plan, 1987

Traffic Impacts - Traffic generation through Old Hilliard and the adjacent residential areas is an acknowledged problem. To compensate for this, alternative access routes being used must be encouraged to further guide traffic away from residential areas.

Visual Impacts - The size and exterior condition of many of the Fairground's structures create visual impacts to adjacent residents that some may consider to be negative. To reduce this negative image, all wooden structures should be repainted in a coordinated fashion as part of regular maintenance schedules. Perhaps bringing back a sense of rural Franklin County by painting the structures white with a forest green trim would be a practical solution. New landscaping around these buildings would also assist in this effort.

Dust - The race track produces a good deal of dust, as well as noise, for neighboring residences. A six foot screen should be constructed along its southern and western boundaries to reduce these negative impacts.

1. Responses Regarding Existing Facilities

A total of six questions asked respondents to assess the current facilities at the Fairgrounds. The first two questions dealt with the number of visits that respondents paid to the facilities. An average of 21 visits were made by the respondents on an annual basis. An average of 8.6 visits were made per respondent at times other than during the annual County Fair.

In rating the facilities by specific categories, the respondents generally stated that the Fairground had "fair" facilities. The categories were physical condition, attractiveness, comfort, and as a place to hold events. Location was ranked as "good" by most of the respondents.

When asked to prioritize and select three of the areas that Fairground resources should be focused on, the predominant area was the restrooms. The second most given area was the exhibition areas, and the third was parking.

Respondents were asked to rate automobile access and the majority of the respondents indicated that access was fair. They were also asked to rate on-site parking facilities and respondents indicated that parking facilities were also fair.

B. PUBLIC INPUT

This section of the Master Plan summarizes the findings of a community survey conducted by the Franklin County Fair Board to determine the long-term goals for development of the County Fairgrounds. A sample survey was conducted of related civic organizations, commercial operators, and community leaders.

A separate and more complete report was issued to the Fair Board, titled A Report on the Community Attitude Survey Conducted for the Franklin County Fairgrounds Master Plan Project.

The questions focused on the current needs of the facilities and the long-term goals to help guide future development. The information collected from this effort is incorporated into this master planning process.

A total of 175 survey forms were distributed to the identified sample population. Of this total, 68 completed forms were returned to the Mid-Ohio Regional Planning Commission. This represents a response rate of 39 percent.

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2. Responses Regarding the Future Role of the Fairgrounds

A total of five questions were asked concerning the future role of the Franklin County Fairgrounds.

The key question was to prioritize and select three options for the future role of the Fairgrounds. Of eight options given, the number one selection was "site of the County Fair," the second selection was "site for commercial events/shows," and the third selection was "facilities for civic organizations."

When asked what types of events and shows would be preferred at the Fairgrounds, the following comments were given (these are not presented in a particular order):

- a. Livestock, poultry, horse, and dog shows.
- b. Home, recreation, craft, and garden shows.
- c. 4-H shows.
- d. Antique car shows.
- e. Tractor pulls, car races, and horse races.
- f. Agricultural association dinners.
- g. County Fair, youth exhibition, festivals.
- h. Country music concerts, family events, picnics.
- i. Conventions, commercial events, sports.
- j. Civic and cultural facilities.

Respondents were asked to indicate the extent to which the Fair should seek revenue producing events and facilities. The majority answer was that to "some" extent the Fair should seek revenue producers.

Almost every form included comments, showing a special interest on the part of the respondents to take the time to provide this additional input. Some of the general comments that were received are summarized below:

- a. Fairgrounds lack facilities for 4-H.
- b. If multi-purpose facility is built, money should be budgeted for promotion and scheduling.
- c. Restrooms and camping area are inadequate.
- d. Existing facilities could be attractive if properly maintained.
- e. A multi-purpose facility could help support grounds.
- f. Provide large building for farmers market.
- g. Need better pedestrian traffic, pattern to peripheral buildings.
- h. Need a long-range plan and landscaping improvements.
- i. Adequate ventilation needed in cattle housing area.
- j. Present Fairgrounds should be taken care of first.
- k. Lack of nearby motels.

3. Conclusions

This survey had three major goals in mind, two of which relate directly to the formulation of a master plan to guide future redevelopment and development at the Fairgrounds. The third served more of a community awareness service than straight data gathering.

First, the survey was designed to gather comments regarding the future role of the facility. This information would assist the Fair Board in prioritizing long-term needs. Second, the survey was designed to gather comments regarding the existing facilities. This will help in assessing the strong and weak points of the current Fairgrounds. And third, the survey helped to bring an awareness to the community regarding the conditions and future opportunities at the County Fairgrounds.

The responses regarding the future role of the Fairgrounds offered great insight into the long-term goals of the community. In particular, the following observations are made.

a. Future Role - The priorities established by those responding to the survey indicated that the Fairgrounds should obviously continue as the site of the Franklin County Fair. Interestingly, the two other major roles favored by the respondents were as a site for commercial events and shows and as a site for facilities to support civic organizations.

These responses probably support many of the activities currently taking place at the Fairgrounds, but also encourage future activities that can be revenue producing, such as home remodeling shows. In addition, the expansion of facilities that provide space for civic groups could also be considered as a priority, particularly since these events are also revenue producing.

b. Revenue-Producing Events - A majority indicated that the Fair Board should place "some" effort into attracting additional revenue producing events. This reinforces the responses regarding the future role of the Fairgrounds, specifically as it relates to revenue producing facilities.

Clearly it is in the interest of the Fair Board to attract events and shows that raise funds. These dollars can be reinvested into the Fairgrounds to fund the improvements requested by the public.

c. Multi-Purpose Facility - Two questions regarding a new multi-purpose facility proved favorable to the respondents, with a stronger majority indicating that the public would use such a facility, and a lesser majority indicating that one should be constructed at the Fairgrounds.

Perhaps such a facility could serve a variety of the needs identified in this study. New restrooms, additional exhibition area, and space to hold sporting and revenue generating events should be programmed into this proposed building.

d. Focusing Future Resources - Respondents were asked to prioritize and select three areas of the Fairgrounds towards which the Fair Board should focus future resources. The replies were: number one - restrooms, number two - exhibition areas, and number three - parking.

These responses provide clear guidelines for assessing existing facilities at the Fairgrounds and preparing recommendations for future actions. They show that despite the perspective a respondent had regarding the Fairgrounds (as a commercial operator, community group member, political leader), three of the most used facilities were in need of upgrading.

e. Rating Existing Facilities - In general, the respondents rated existing facilities as in fair condition, with location rated as good. It is important to note that these are "across the board" indications of quality at the Fairgrounds and fail to address the specific rankings that are presented in the previous section.

But it can be said that those surveyed were satisfied with the current facilities. Specific improvements have been indicated and prioritized. The planning that must go into preparation of the master plan will program these areas into the physical recommendations.

f. Visits - The total number of visits paid to the Franklin County Fairgrounds by the respondents totaled 1,441, with a significant 45 percent or 655 visits occurring outside of the annual County Fair. This total averaged out to 21 visits per respondent.

These numbers indicate that the survey sample represents a group of persons that has spent a great deal of time at the Fairground facilities and can be expected to have intimate knowledge of the facilities.

C. GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

A set of policy statements are necessary before physical recommendations can be established. These statements relate to the current function of the Franklin County Fairgrounds and to the future role of the facilities in the County. These goals and objectives further establish priorities for actual physical improvements and help to identify a strategy for guiding the recommendations of this Master Plan through fruition.

1. Mission and Purposes of Franklin County Agricultural Society

The Franklin County Agricultural Society establishes a written set of policies that serve as its mission and the purposes for which the Society is to fulfill. As the responsible entity for the daily operation of the Fairgrounds, this mission statement serves as the fundamental statement of policies that guide this planning effort.

The following are the policy statements of the Society.

a. Overall management of the County Fair for the promotion of and improvement of agriculture, horticulture, animal industry, domestic and fine arts, youth activities and programs to enhance the learning experiences of youth and adults; and improvement of community and County relations with agricultural, industrial, commercial, and educational interests in the County.

b. Provide and maintain adequate facilities and opportunities for the annual County Fair, including Junior Fair; i.e. scheduling, maintenance, improvement of fair facilities and grounds on a year-round basis; adequate finances for judges, ribbons, premiums, and other awards.

c. Establish appropriate committees and guidelines, as needed, enhance the mission and purposes of the society, including County Fair and Junior Fair.

d. Utilize the County Fair, including Junior Fair, to the fullest advantage to teach and demonstrate improved ideas and practices in agriculture, youth, home economics, community and natural resource development, and horticulture.

e. Develop an effective year-round public relations program with local officials, news media, youth agencies, community groups, organizations, private industry, and others to enhance the mission of the Society, County Fair, and Junior Fair.

2. Long-Range Goals

Before detailed physical priorities can be established a set of long-range goals must be identified and agreed upon to guide the detailed decision-making. These long-range goals establish wide parameters within which the detailed priorities are made. These goals seek to guide Fairgrounds development and redevelopment in a very broad way.

a. To operate as a year-round facility and expand upon the current activities, traditional and non-traditional, as they fulfill the mission and purpose of the Agricultural Society.

b. To continue to evolve the Fairgrounds into a revenue-producing facility while minimizing the amount of public funds needed for operations and maintenance.

c. To construct and remodel buildings that are completely winterized to provide year-round space for activities, events, and meetings.

d. To improve existing parking areas and provide additional parking. To improve circulation and access to the Fairgrounds, as well as on the Fairgrounds site.

e. To relocate the Midway away from livestock buildings to reduce the existing conflicts that occur. To pave the Midway to provide centrally-located quality parking during non-Fair time.

f. To provide screening and buffering to protect adjacent landowners from incompatible activities. Such screening and buffering should be comprised of earthmounds and evergreen landscaping totaling six feet in height or wood fencing.

g. To improve the physical appearance of existing Fairground structures.

h. To cluster new buildings with existing buildings based on function (i.e., animal buildings, exhibition buildings, etc.).

i. To provide adequate camping facilities for youth and exhibitions/operators during Fair time, including adequate restroom and showering facilities. Camping facilities should be isolated from existing adjacent residential areas and heavily screened where appropriate.

j. In areas located for long-term growth (future expansion areas), provide short-term space for revenue producing activities. This could include space for public athletic fields (City of Hilliard or local athletic association) and potential polo field for rental to local club.

k. To make the facilities more marketable to outside, revenue-producing groups, through improvements and general promotion.

3. Development Objectives

A series of development priorities have been established that guided the recommendation process for this planning effort. These priorities seek to identify the actual physical improvements within the context of the Society's mission and the long-term goals for development of the Fairgrounds.

a. Construction of a multi-purpose facility that will provide the following: auditorium, teen center with dormitory space, educational/exhibition space, and administrative offices, and restroom facilities.

b. Construction of an additional 200-stall horse barn and four additional race horse barns.

c. Extension of Northwest Parkway west of its current terminating point to Avery Road.

d. Provision of surface and sub-surface drainage facilities in the new tracts of Fairground property.

e. De-emphasis of the Columbia Street entrance to the Fairgrounds and routing of persons through Leap Road and Northwest Parkway during the County Fair.

f. Rehabilitation of restroom facilities and construction of new facilities.

g. Landscaping and general beautification of the Fairgrounds including plantings along existing and proposed structures.

h. Provision of new parking facilities on the new parcels.

i. Provision of designated parking areas for horse trailers, trucks, etc. to the east of the race horse barns.

j. Beautification of existing structures and buildings, by adopting a uniform exterior treatment (i.e., white paint with forest green trim).

k. Relocation of the Midway away from animal buildings to remove current conflicts. Underground placement of utility lines on the Midway.

l. Construction of a new small exhibition building (10,000 SF).

m. Construction of a new maintenance building and area, to be heavily landscaped to reduce visual impacts to fairgoers.

n. Development by and rental to a private or public organization of a polo field for regularly scheduled competitions and events.

o. Development and rental to a private or public organization of eight acres for athletic fields (i.e. softball diamonds, football and soccer fields).

D. DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

Working towards a final master plan and set of physical recommendations requires that a development concept be prepared which addresses the goals and objectives presented in this report. The development concept is also a reaction to the existing conditions outlined in the background report.

This section of the report is divided into two sub-sections. First, development issues are presented. These issues summarize the most important constraints or problems that this planning exercise seeks to address. The final recommendations will directly address these issues.

The second sub-section presents a preliminary development concept for the Master Plan. This concept presents the layout for the Fairgrounds, with appropriate groupings of similar uses, circulation paths, pedestrian areas, and parking areas. It is accompanied with a map graphically illustrating the concept.

1. Development Issues

The development issues are presented here in a summary form and by functional area.

a. Natural Features - The additional 44-acre area has drainage problems due to soil types and topography. Surface and subsurface drainage improvements are necessary before the area can be adequately used for field parking or more development-intensive uses.

b. Land Use - The Fairgrounds abut adjacent residential areas and as a result produce a variety of negative impacts on these low density areas, such as noise, glaring light, and dust. Improved buffering, screening, and adequate setbacks are necessary to address the current problems. Improvements will be necessary to prevent future problems from development adjacent to residential areas.

Traffic that is Fair-related and that passes through Old Hilliard produces numerous conflicts for residents in that predominantly residential area. Traffic flows can be reduced by guiding traffic and linking parking areas to the Northwest Parkway entrance.

The visual impact from the existing Fairground structures is negative and impacts not only visitors but adjacent properties. Coordinated exterior improvements, such as painting, should be implemented to present an aesthetically attractive agricultural/farm environment. Landscaping adjacent to buildings should also be completed to improve the attractiveness of buildings.

c. Site Layout and Design - Similar building uses should be more advantageously grouped. Some initial attempts have been made and these should serve as the nuclei for future expansions.

The Midway is not concentrated in a single, centrally-located part of the Fairgrounds. The new layout should centralize the Midway and provide for sufficient area for the entertainment facilities.

Initial efforts have been made to place electrical service for the Midway underground. Electrical and lighting service should be placed underground and designed to be easily maintained, particularly if the Midway is relocated as proposed.

Entrances should be formally indicated by permanent architectural features, landscaping, and similar treatments. Permanent gates should be constructed and designed to reflect the festive atmosphere of a fair. The entranceways should also clearly relate to a logical pedestrian circulation system.

Landscaping around buildings is non-existent. Such improvements provide not only aesthetic benefits, but improve micro-climate conditions for visitors, reducing the impact of wind, direct sunlight, and similar weather-related impacts.

d. Access, Circulation, and Parking - Current Fair-related traffic through the Old Hilliard area produces traffic delays and causes congestion in the central vicinity of Hilliard. Central access to the Fairgrounds should be relocated to Northwest Parkway, while emphasizing the use of I-270 and the City of Hilliard, Ohio. Central access to the Fairgrounds should be relocated to Northwest Parkway, while emphasizing the use of I-270 and the interstate system.

The current circulation system on the Fairgrounds fails to represent a coherent system, with the results being inefficient pathways, poor location of parking areas relative to related uses, pedestrian and vehicular conflicts, and congestion. A coherent circulation system with a hierarchy of routes, separating pedestrians from vehicles whenever possible, and with improved pedestrian areas (landscaping, etc.) is necessary.

Directional signage both on and off-site is important to improving the circulation system. Direction must be provided from I-270 through Cemetery and Leap Roads and to Northwest Parkway if this route is to operate as the main access to the Fairgrounds. Attractive directional signs should be installed on the Fairgrounds to aid vehicles and pedestrians.

Parking areas should be better organized, located adjacent to uses, and landscaped. Parking should be organized based on uses, centrally located relative to access routes and the entrance gates, and landscaped to improve aesthetics and function.

Pedestrian areas should be more attractive, but they fail to reduce pedestrian and vehicular conflicts, are confusing pathways, and fail to reduce the effects of the micro-climate on visitors. Pedestrian areas should be organized on a hierarchy using the Midway as the focal point and should be landscaped where possible to protect visitors from the harsh summer elements.

2. Development Concept

This is an initial concept for the development of the Franklin County Fairgrounds. It is based on the goals and objectives presented in the previous section of the Background Report, and the existing conditions analyzed in section A. This conceptual presentation precedes the final recommendations presented in the Master Plan.

The overall focus of the development concept is to use the existing layout of the Fairgrounds as a base from which to locate new building sites, parking areas, a Midway, and circulation paths. New structures are located in clusters based upon the existing building pattern.

The Midway is designed to serve as the focal point of the Fairgrounds. Circulation paths, particularly for pedestrians, are designed to branch off the Midway. Landscaping will by necessity be a major component of the final design.

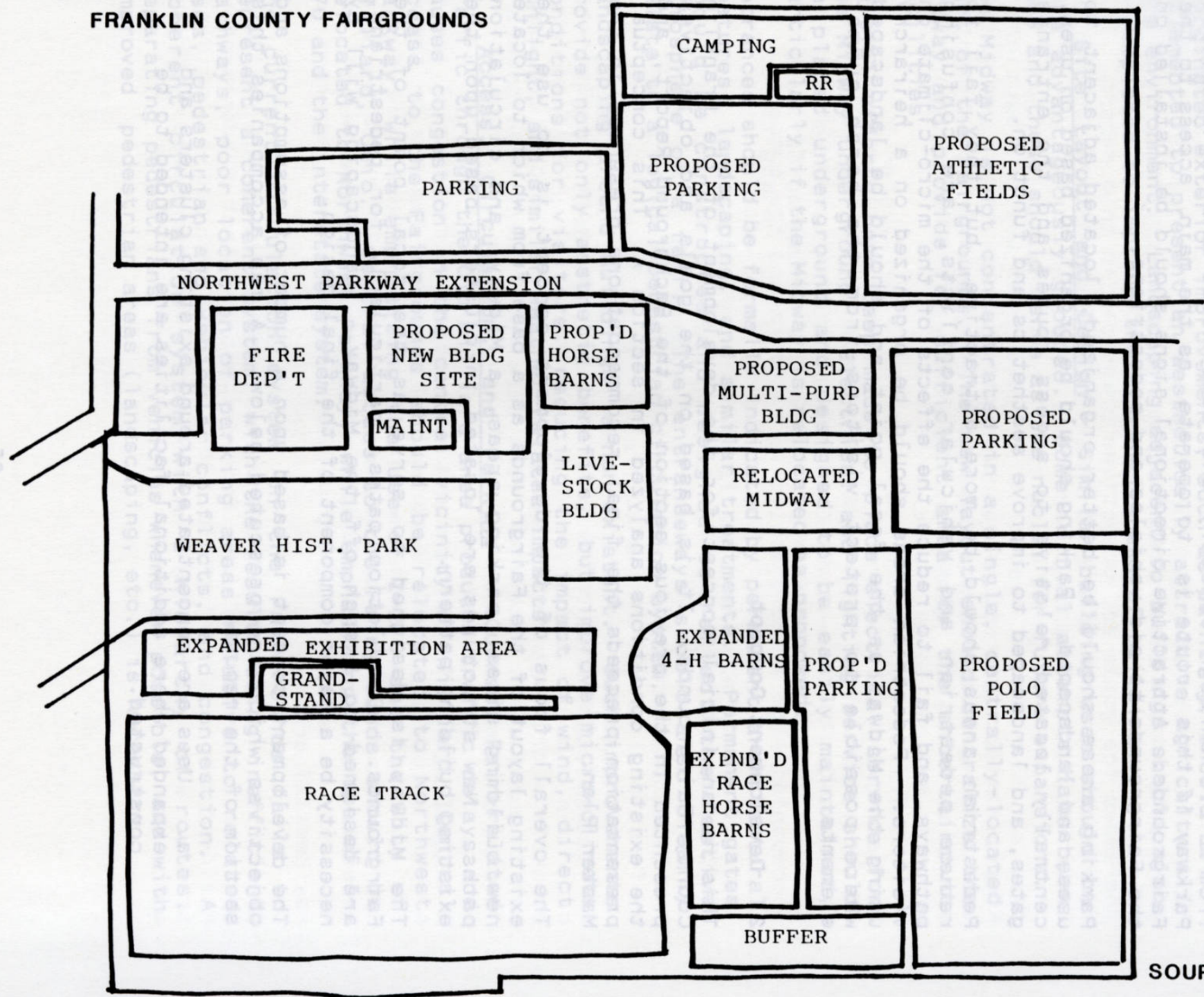
The development concept is based upon a number of assumptions and objectives which are presented below. A map accompanies this section of the report.

- a. Uses are concentrated around existing clusters and expanded where additional facilities are intended to be constructed.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT

FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

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SOURCE: MORPC, 1987

b. Northwest Parkway is extended to the west to provide access between Main Street/Avery Road and Leap Road. This facilitates the relocation of the main entrance gates and parking for the Fairgrounds to Northwest Parkway. Visitors should be encouraged to use the interstate highway system in Franklin County to reach the Fairgrounds.

c. A hierarchy of circulation paths is proposed, using the Midway area as the central focus. Pedestrian pathways branch off the Midway. Vehicular areas are separated from pedestrian areas as much as possible and tend to unite parking areas with Northwest Parkway.

d. The amount of land occupied by the Norwich Township Fire Department is reduced to accommodate expansion of facility space and the extension of Northwest Parkway. In particular, the softball diamond has been removed.

e. The maintenance area should be concentrated, isolated as much as possible from the remainder of the Fairgrounds, and heavily screened.

f. The exhibition area should be expanded to include the current Administration/Fine Arts building. Additional exhibition buildings and tent sites can be accommodated in this area.

g. A Multi-Purpose building is programmed based upon input from the Fair Board. Such a structure would provide an auditorium, exhibition/education space, administration area, new restrooms, and dormitory facilities for students.

h. The race horse barns are expanded, with a like amount of current barns to be constructed directly to the east. Adequate space should be provided between these sets of structures to allow the movement of horse trailers for unloading/loading of animals, as well as the outside holding of straw and manure.

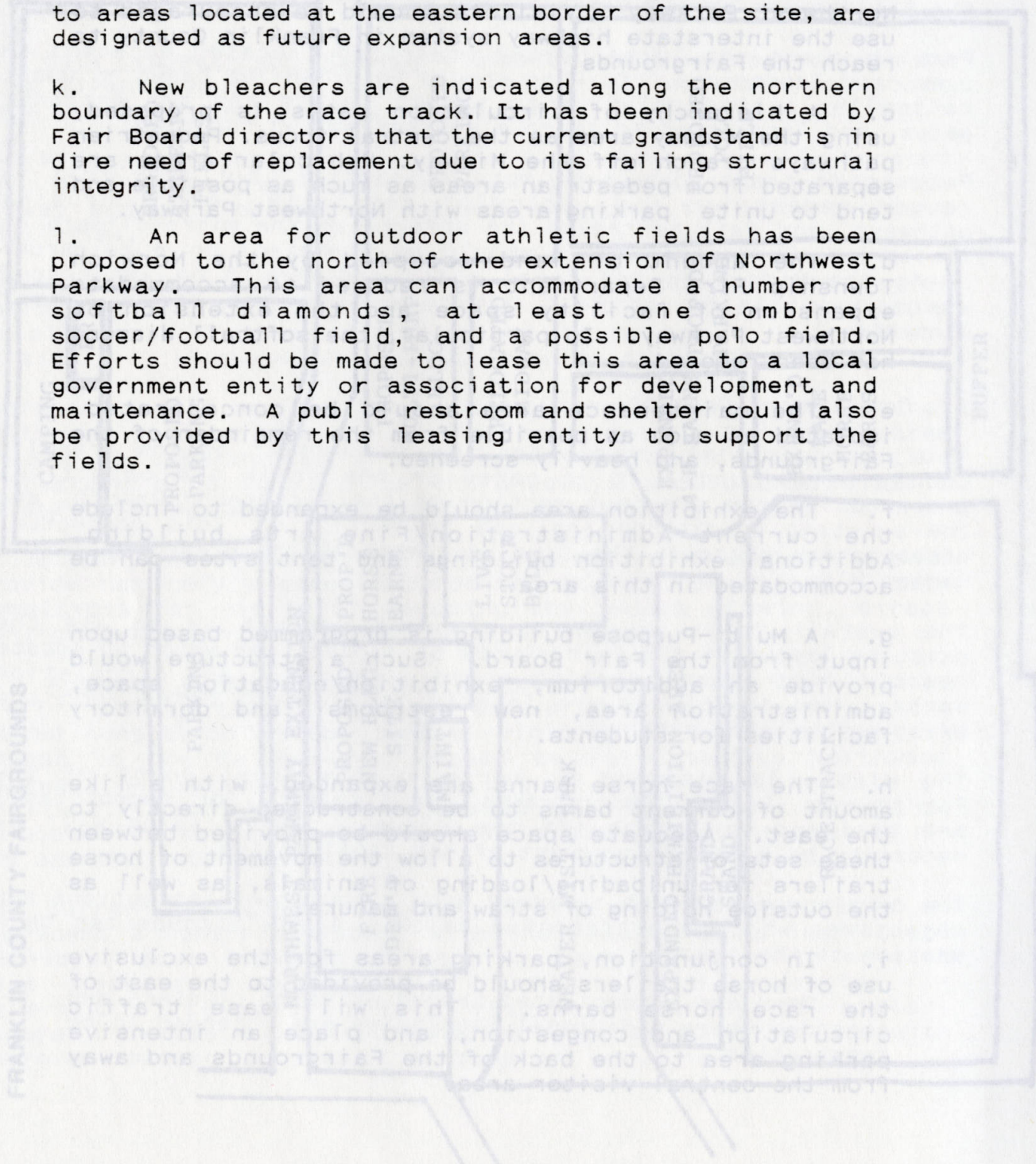
i. In conjunction, parking areas for the exclusive use of horse trailers should be provided to the east of the race horse barns. This will ease traffic circulation and congestion, and place an intensive parking area to the back of the Fairgrounds and away from the central visitor area.

j. Parking and outdoor camping areas can be provided on the new acreage located to the north of Northwest Parkway and in the vicinity of the multi-purpose building. This section of the new acreage, in addition to areas located at the eastern border of the site, are designated as future expansion areas.

k. New bleachers are indicated along the northern boundary of the race track. It has been indicated by Fair Board directors that the current grandstand is in dire need of replacement due to its failing structural integrity.

l. An area for outdoor athletic fields has been proposed to the north of the extension of Northwest Parkway. This area can accommodate a number of softball diamonds, at least one combined soccer/football field, and a possible polo field. Efforts should be made to lease this area to a local government entity or association for development and maintenance. A public restroom and shelter could also be provided by this leasing entity to support the fields.

DEVELOPMENT CONCEPT
FRANKLIN COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS



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