Prepared for:
County of Allegheny
Allegheny County Courthouse
Pittsburgh, PA 15219
412.350.6506

South Park Fairgrounds Master Plan

Allegheny County, PA

March 2011

Prepared by:
GAI Consultants, Inc.
385 East Waterfront Drive
Homestead, PA 15120-5005
412.476.2000

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PROJECT STEERING GROUP

Andy Baechle – Allegheny County Parks
Guy Costa – Allegheny County Parks Foundation
Christine Fulton – Allegheny County Parks Foundation
Clarence Hopson – Allegheny County Parks
Joseph Olczak – Allegheny County Public Works
Jeaneen Zappa – Allegheny County Sustainability Program

PROJECT TEAM

Dave Buckewicz – South Park Township
Ryan Cheberenchick – Civil & Environmental Consultants
Joan Cleary – Allegheny County Council
Darla Cravotta – Allegheny County
Richard Daniels – Allegheny County Parks
John Doyle – Allegheny County Parks
Jerry Duke – Bethel Park Township
Jamie Eberl – Allegheny County
Karen Fosbaugh – South Park Township
Nick Futules – Allegheny County Council
Vince Gasteb – Allegheny County Council
Chris Goswick – Allegheny County Planning Group
Dennis Lynn – Allegheny County Public Works
Clifford Morton – Bethel Park Township
Kay Pierce – Allegheny County Planning Group
James Reardon – Allegheny County Public Works
Tim Schumann – Peters Creek Watershed Association
Ed Snee – South Park Township
Tom Sterling – Allegheny County Parks Foundation
John Stibrik – Allegheny County Parks
Sam Taylor – Allegheny County
Lisa Kunst Vavro – The Penn State Center
Judy Wagner – Western Pennsylvania Conservancy
Ned Williams – Montour Trail Council

CONSULTANTS

GAI Consultants – Todd Brant, Jayson Livingston, Jeff Parobek, John Coyne, Hannah Dye
Brean Associates – Karen Brean
Sci-Tek Consultants – Gary Van Balen, Kevin Clark, Jamille Ford

FOCUS GROUP PARTICIPANTS

Allegheny County

- Parks Department
- Public Works Department
- Sustainability Program
- Allegheny County Parks Foundation
- Special Projects
- Planning Group
- County Council
- County Police

Government & Community

- Bethel Park Township
- South Park Township
- PA Senator Pippy
- PA Representatives Levdansky, Maher & Smith
- US Senators Casey & Specter
- US Representative Murphy

Design, Planning & Sustainability

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- American Institute of Architects
- CMU School of Architecture
- Community Design Center of Pittsburgh
- Jefferson Hills Environmental Quality Board
- Montour Trail Council
- Peters Creek Watershed Association
- Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation
- Pittsburgh Trail Advocacy Group
- South Park Historical Society
- West Jefferson Hills Historical Society
- Western Pennsylvania Conservancy

Park Users

- Bethel Park Junior Football
- Friends of the Montour Trail
- Park News
- Rib Festival
- South Park Nature Center
- South Park Youth Football

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INTRODUCTION

HISTORY

South Park was developed between 1927 through 1931 to preserve rural lands in the midst of rapid urbanization of the Greater Pittsburgh area. The lands were reforested and further developed under the direction of Paul B. Riis who had helped develop Yellowstone National Park. Much of the work in the park was completed by the youth conservation corps and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Starting in the 1930's, South Park was used as the site of the Allegheny County Fair. At the time, the county had many farms to support the Fair but by the late 1960's farming had been dramatically reduced, and eventually the Fair could not be supported. Much of the Fairgrounds buildings and landscape remain in place to this day.

historic image of the Museum Building, clad in wood siding, at the time of the Allegheny County Fair (credit 1, see page 16)

VISION

County Executive Dan Onorato proposed studying the Fairgrounds areas as part of the County Parks Action Plan, which is transforming and enhancing recreational opportunities in the County's nine regional parks.

The main purpose in preparing this master plan for the Fairgrounds is to create a blueprint for sound decision-making and redevelopment of the area in the years to come. The goals of the plan are to:

- transform the Fairgrounds into a facility that reflects the needs of today's park users
- create a sustainable development plan that makes the most of this significant public asset
- engage the public in a multi-stage stakeholder input process to build consensus throughout the process

APPROACH

The planning methodology was divided into four main work tasks:

- Phase I: Data Collection & Analysis - to collect and analyze existing relevant data, prepare base mapping, conduct an initial public meeting, and facilitate focus group sessions
- Phase II: Developing Proof of Concept - conduct a design charrette (workshop) and develop concept plan alternatives
- Phase III: Develop Recommendations - prepare draft recommendations and plans, and conduct a final public meeting
- Wrap-Up: Final Deliverables - prepare final reports and presentations

present day view of Museum Building from bleachers

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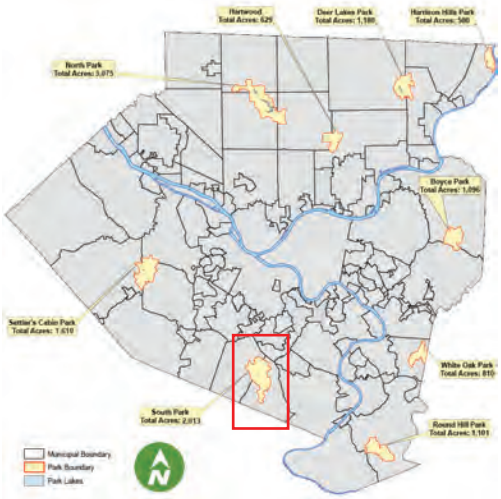


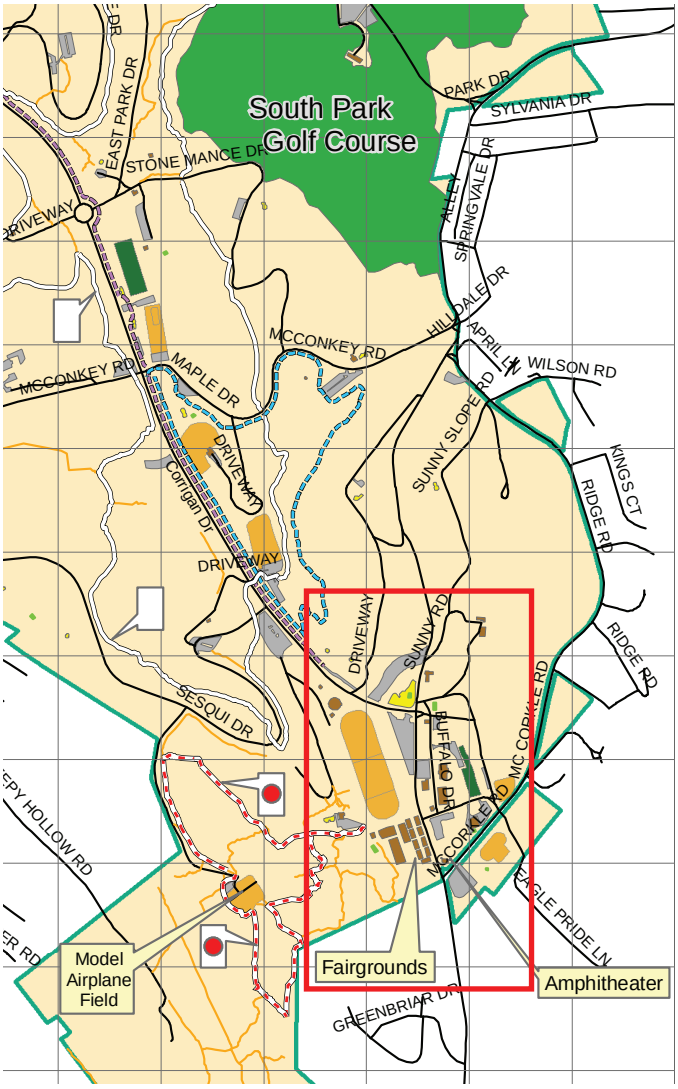
Allegheny County parks system with South Park outlined in red (credit 2, see page 16)

CONTEXT

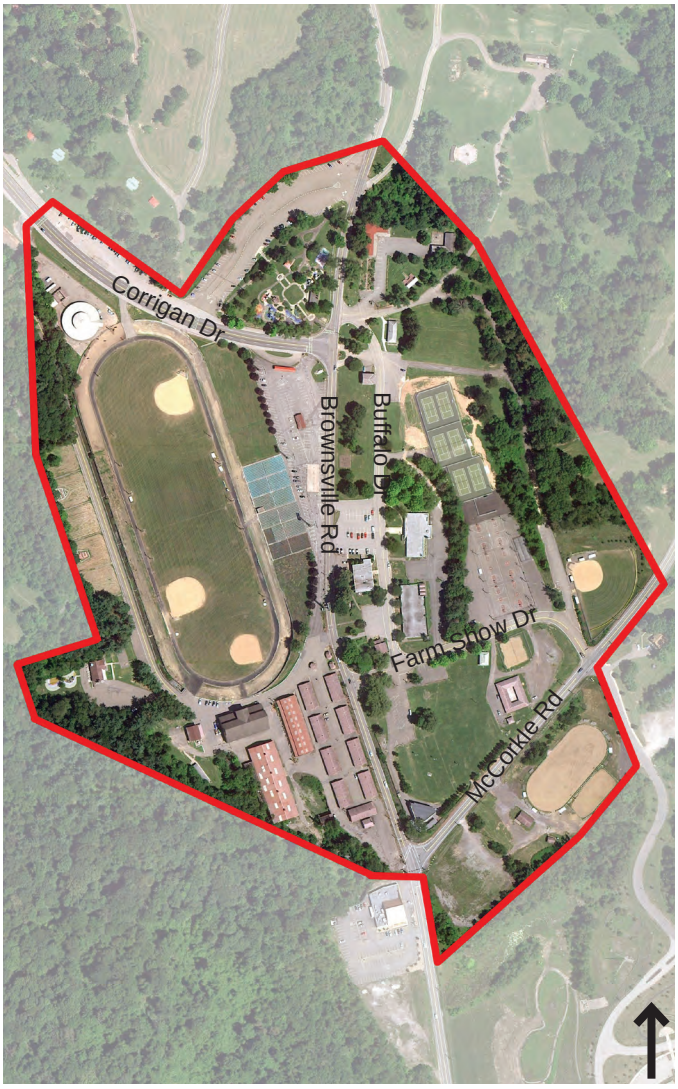
The Fairgounds is situated at the southern end of South Park at the intersection of Corrigan Drive and Brownsville Road. At 2,013 acres, South Park is the second largest of the nine parks that serve Allegheny County. The 77-acre Fairgrounds site lies entirely within South Park Township.

Areas of South Park north and west of the Fairgrounds are comprised of open lawn and wooded areas and are reserved for general park use. A restaurant lies to the south at the Brownsville Road-McCorkle Road intersection, and residential areas are situated to the west.

Catfish Run flows south under Corrigan Drive north of the Round Barn into a stone channel west of The Oval, and into a culvert at the southern edge of the Fairgrounds.



South Park map with Fairgrounds outlined in red (credit 3, see page 16)



aerial image of the Fairgrounds area with 77-acre study area outlined in red

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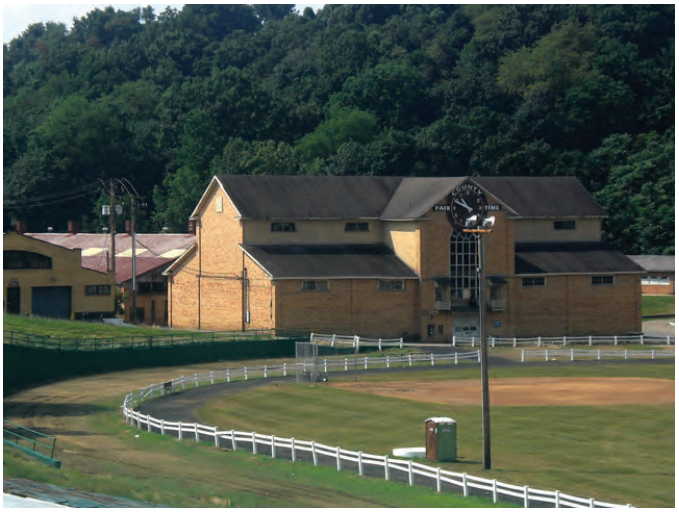
SITE ANALYSIS



Museum Building

Schoonmaker Hall

Exhibit Buildings

Amphitheater

Basketball Courts

Home Economics Building

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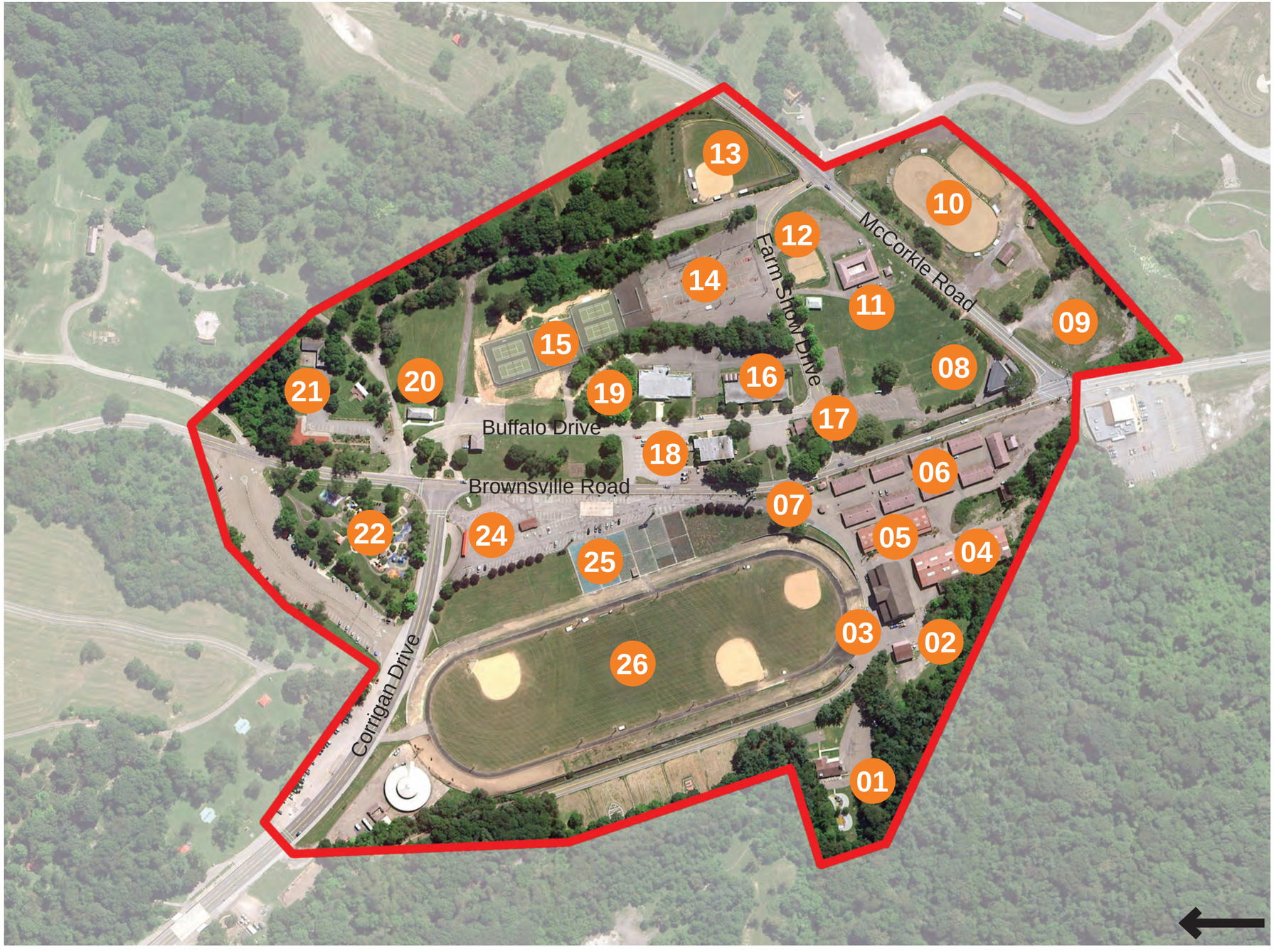

PROJECT COMPONENTS

1. Commissioner's Cottage (rental)
2. Cabin (concession stand & bathrooms)
3. Museum Building (rental)
4. Schoonmaker Hall (storage)
5. Agricultural Hall (rental)
6. Exhibit Buildings (rental)
7. Entrance Area
8. Amphitheater (rental)
9. Overflow Parking
10. Horse Show Ring
11. Black Ashes Pavilion (rental)
12. Sand Volleyball Court
13. Black Ashes Ball Field
14. Basketball Courts (6)
15. Tennis Courts (6)
16. Home Economics Building (rental)
17. Nature Center
18. Administration Building (Park & Police offices)
19. Buffalo Inn (rental)
20. Restrooms
21. South Park Theater (leased)
22. Children's Playground
23. Round Barn (County Police horses)
24. Concession Stand
25. Bleachers
26. Oval (Ball Field 1, Ball Field 2, Softball Field)

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Nature Center


Buffalo Inn


Children's Playground


The Oval


Oval Parking Lot


Catfish Run

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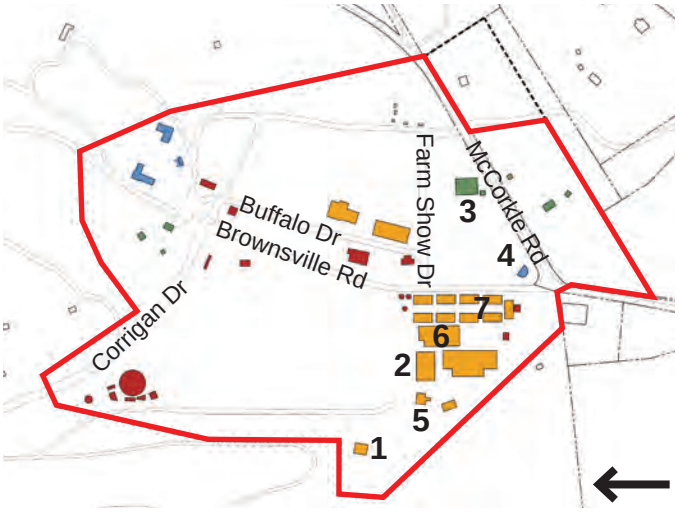
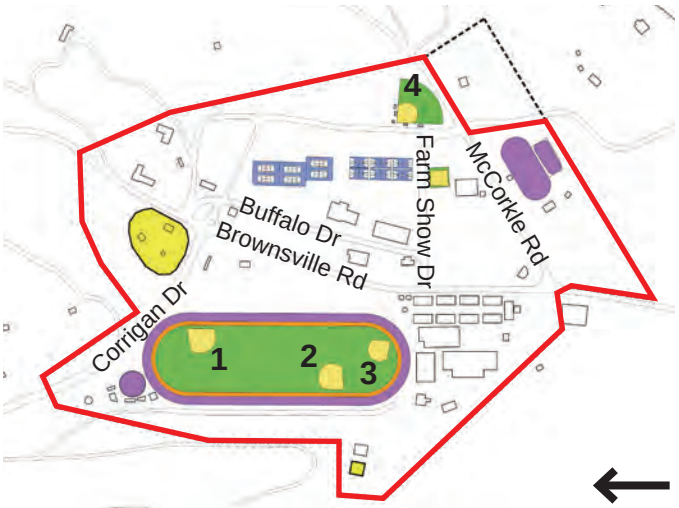
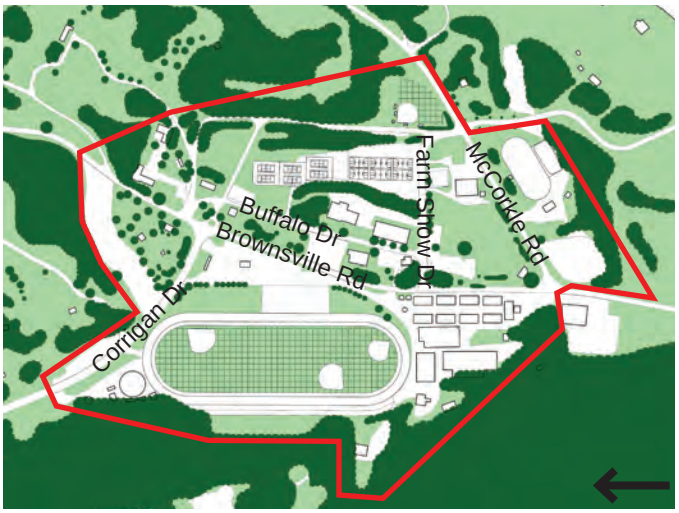
SITE ANALYSIS



buildings available for public use shown in orange and green with park administration buildings shown in red



variety of passive and active recreation uses



open lawns shown in light green and wooded areas shown in medium green

BUILDINGS & INFRASTRUCTURE

Buildings comprise 4.6 acres, or 6.0%, of the total site:

- lease/rental (orange)
- park administration (red)
- entertainment (blue)
- recreation (green)

The condition of the buildings throughout the Fairgrounds is generally poor. The ranking of building use based on rental statistics are represented by the numbers shown.

In general, the existing utility infrastructure reflects the poor physical conditions of the overall facilities. Many services are not functional or function at substandard levels. It is recommended that all of the utilities should be replaced as part of any future redevelopment of the Fairgrounds.

RECREATION

Recreation facilities comprises 15.2 acres, or 19.8%, of the total site:

- ball fields (green)
- equestrian (purple)
- court sports (blue)
- walking and running track (orange)
- playgrounds (yellow)

The condition of the recreation facilities is generally adequate. The ranking of recreation use based on rental statistics are represented by the numbers shown.

The Fairgrounds area is a major destination with South Park for users that are interested in participating in both active and passive recreation as individuals or in teams.

VEGETATION

Vegetation comprises 33.5 acres, or 43.7%, of the total site (20.6% are lawn areas and 23.1% are wooded areas):

- open lawn areas (light green)
- wooded areas (dark green)
- recreation lawns (light green w/ crosshatch)

The patchwork character of the vegetation can mostly be attributed to the various site uses and topography of the Fairgrounds area.

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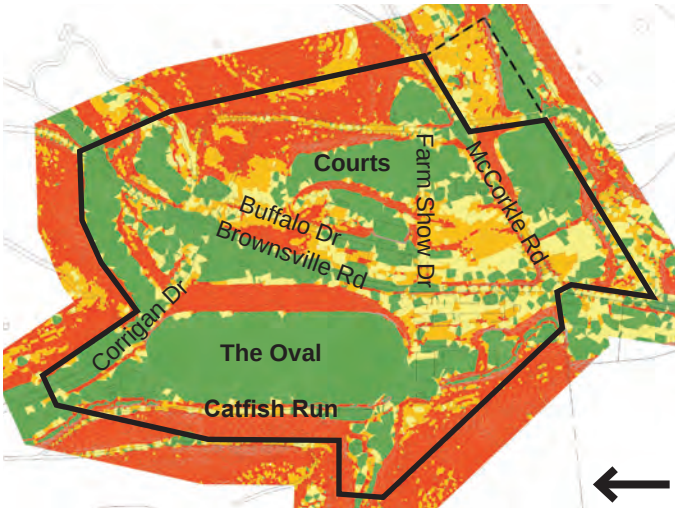
SLOPES

The topography of the Fairgrounds site can be generally characterized as having gently rolling to steep slopes:

- 0-5% (green)
- 6-8% (yellow)
- 9-15% (orange)
- 15%+ (red)

The major exception is the Oval area, which has been graded nearly level. In general, the site slopes from higher points to the east (above the courts) towards Catfish Run, which flows north to south. There are a series of graded plateaus that are separated by slopes of varying height and length. The steepness of the site presents a challenge to providing universal accessibility and an cohesive plan framework.



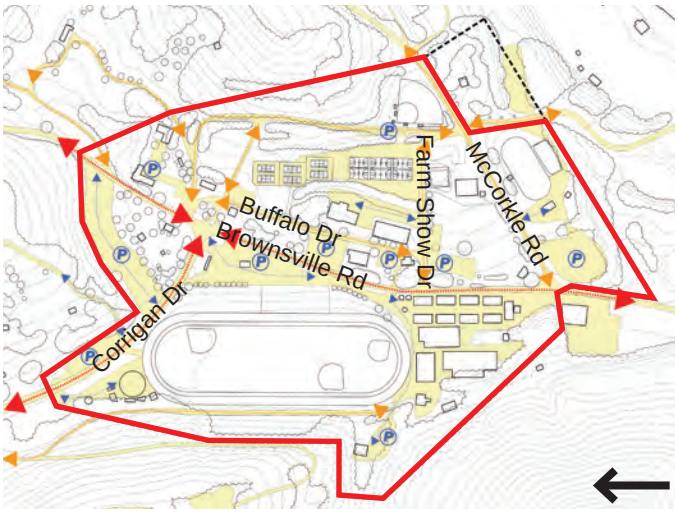
gentle slopes shown in green and steeper slopes shown in red

VEHICULAR NETWORK

The vehicular network comprises 22.4 acres, or 29.0%, of the total site (8.3% are roads and 20.7% are parking lots):

- primary roads (red): Corrigan Drive & Brownsville Road
- secondary roads (orange)
- parking lots/service areas (yellow)

The Fairgrounds is divided north-south by Corrigan Drive, a wide four-lane road that accommodates about 14,272 daily trips, and east-west by Brownsville Road, a narrow two-lane road with roughly 14,774 trips north of Corrigan and 15,100 trips south of Corrigan. Both roads lack sidewalks and street trees. Secondary roads include Buffalo Drive, Farm Show Drive, and McCorkle Road. Parking lots, typically located adjacent to every building or use, further divide the site.



major vehicular flows shown in red with secondary flows shown in orange

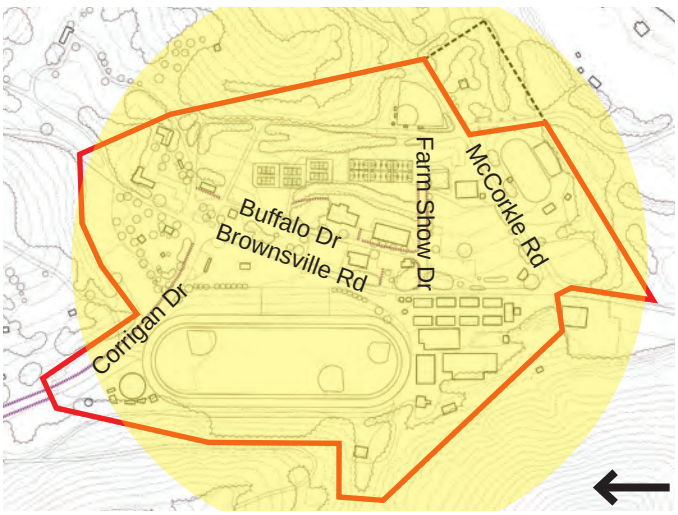
PEDESTRIAN NETWORK

The pedestrian network comprises 0.5 acres, or 0.7%, of the total site:

- walkways and trails (purple)

Pedestrian facilities within the Fairgrounds area are virtually nonexistent with the exception of a few walks adjacent to buildings. On Corrigan Drive, park users walk on the shoulder. In other areas, pedestrians walk in parking lots.

The lack of safe, pedestrian facilities forces most park users to drive from parking lot to parking lot to their destinations. The Fairgrounds is a walkable place as represented by the 1/4-mile walking radius (shaded yellow area). Providing accessible walkways and trails throughout would make the Fairgrounds a safer and more sustainable place.



walkways and trails shown in purple with a 1/4-mile walking radius (5-minute walk) shaded in yellow

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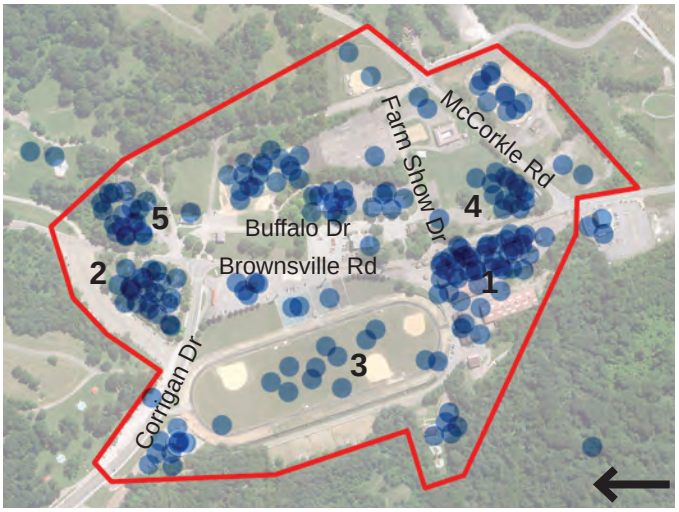
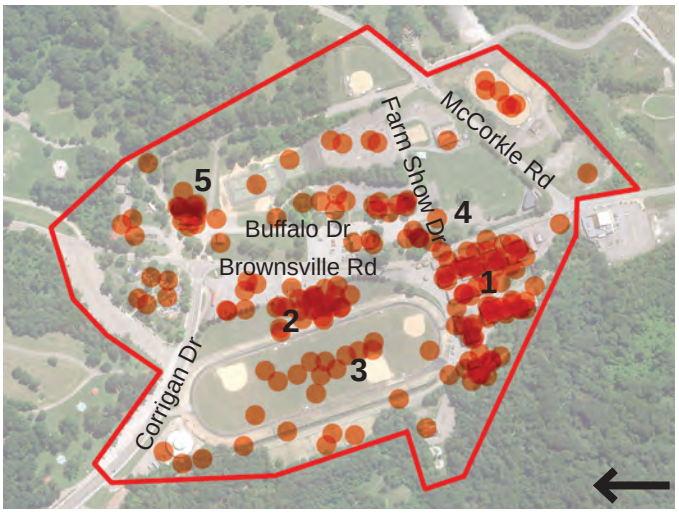
PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

public meeting (credit 4, page 16)



blue dots represent elements that the public thought works well



orange dots represent elements that the public thought should work better

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT PROCESS

A three-step process to engage the community for input about the Fairgrounds was utilized. This included two public meetings (an initial kick-off meeting and another to present the concept plans), a web survey, and focus group meetings.

During each of these, three questions were asked of the participants about the Fairgrounds area:

1. What works well?
2. What should work better?
3. What is your vision of the future?

The results of this exercise are documented on the two maps below. Each dot represents a single person's input. A higher concentration of dots means that more people responded to a specific area of the Fairgrounds.

WHAT WORKS WELL

The top five areas of the Fairgrounds that work well are:

1. Fairgrounds Buildings - renovate as flexible rental space, Martial Arts Center and Drum & Bugle Corps work well, history is important, unique character
2. Children's Playground - recently renovated, gets heavy use
3. The Oval - ball fields and track get heavy use
4. Amphitheater - recently renovated, attracts many users
5. South Park Theater - children's theater is excellent

Other uses that received higher rankings include the Tennis Courts, Buffalo Inn, Horse Show Ring, Round Barn, and South Park Cottage.

WHAT SHOULD WORK BETTER

The top five areas of the Fairgrounds that could work better are:

1. Fairgrounds Buildings - in disrepair, limitations of use, too much asphalt, insufficient heating
2. Bleachers - in disrepair, safety concerns
3. The Oval - need to be improved, underutilized, Catfish Run could be more natural
4. Parking - not enough during peak events
5. Restrooms - need to be improved

Other uses that received higher rankings include the Concession Stands, Home Economics Building, Children's Playground, Horse Show Ring, and Nature Center.

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WEB SURVEY: USAGE

In addition to the three questions, the web survey asked respondents how often they used South Park:

24.21%	Daily
28.42%	More than once a week
8.42%	Once a week
18.95%	A few times each month
5.26%	Once a month
6.32%	Every few months
3.16%	Once or twice a year
2.11%	Rarely
3.16%	Never

Approximately **61%** of all survey respondents use South Park at least once a week.

KEY ISSUES

The top ten issues heard at the first public meeting were:

- underutilization/limitation of facility use
- poor maintenance of buildings and grounds
- too much paving around buildings
- facilities should remain affordable to all
- lack of public transit access
- inform public of leasing/rental opportunities
- community engagement and volunteerism
- infrastructure challenges
- better coordination between entities
- project follow through and funding

The top ten issues heard at the focus group meetings were:

- signage/wayfinding is confusing
- infrastructure challenges
- poor maintenance of buildings and grounds
- area outside of track is underutilized
- provide space for a history center
- improve the Nature Center
- too much paving around buildings
- project follow through and funding
- underutilization/limitation of facility use
- community engagement/volunteerism

WEB SURVEY: REASONS TO USE THE PARK

The web survey also asked respondents what they did at South Park:

16.84%	Organized sports leagues (football, baseball, soccer)
55.79%	Independent athletic activities (running, cycling, hiking, walking)
48.42%	Park attractions (playgrounds, skating, swimming, golf, tennis)
9.47%	Specialized programming (Oliver Miller Homestead, Haunted House, Theater)
18.95%	Concerts and movies at Amphitheater
25.26%	Other activities (fishing, birding, picnicking)

PUBLIC INPUT SUMMARY

The results of the public meeting, focus groups, and web survey were compiled and a list of top priorities for the Fairgrounds was established:

1. maintain existing facilities better
2. provide flexible indoor facilities
3. repair/remove bleachers
4. improve signage/wayfinding
5. increase parking for larger events
6. improve infrastructure
7. improve walking track
8. provide space for a history center
9. bring back some form of the Fair
10. improve the Nature Center
11. repurpose underutilized area outside of track
12. improve lighting in area
13. restore Museum Building
14. provide dining/concession facilities
15. provide farmers market

These priorities serve as the basis for the concepts and recommended plan moving forward.

PLAN OPTIONS

FRAMEWORK FOR REDEVELOPMENT

VISION: "a regional special events area"

Because of its unique character, collection of buildings, and multiple recreation facilities, the Fairgrounds area should remain a public space that is dedicated to supporting regional, special events for the residents of Allegheny County.

GUIDING RECOMMENDATIONS

The following design and sustainability recommendations, a result of the public involvement process, have been established to guide future development of the Fairgrounds:

- improve existing buildings & facilities
- improve pedestrian connectivity
- enhance park entrances & nodes
- reduce impervious surfaces
- provide safer pedestrian connections
- remove or repair unsightly facilities
- reduce lawn areas where appropriate
- link area to public transit
- improve athletic facilities
- match building use to park location
- tell story of the Fair and Park
- improve wayfinding to facilities
- keep facility leasing & rental affordable to all
- naturalize the park
- improve infrastructure to support events

In addition, five organizational areas have been identified (shown right), which provide a coherent framework for redevelopment moving forward.

large expanse of the Oval looking north from the Museum towards the Round Barn

ORGANIZATIONAL AREAS

In addition, five organizational areas have been identified (shown right), which provide a coherent framework for redevelopment moving forward.

BUILDING MANAGEMENT

- historic integrity of building collection
- maintenance issues
- leasing and rental opportunities
- upgrade of infrastructure
- permanent use possibilities

GREENING THE GROUNDS

- parking strategy: daily vs. peak use
- convert parking from impervious to pervious
- parking lot efficiency upgrades
- building removal opportunities
- naturalize lawns to meadows or woodlands

NATURALIZING CATFISH RUN

- impact to access road and track
- Nature Center relocation
- educational opportunities
- partner with Peters Creek and other groups
- future fishing opportunities

REMAKING THE OVAL

- regional sports and event area focus
- remove or repair bleachers
- lighting and infrastructure needs
- improve surfaces for higher use
- integration with Catfish Run initiative

FAIRGROUNDS CONNECTIONS

- provide "complete streets"
- public transit opportunities
- improve wayfinding and signage
- enhance park entrance
- trail system connections: future Montour Trail

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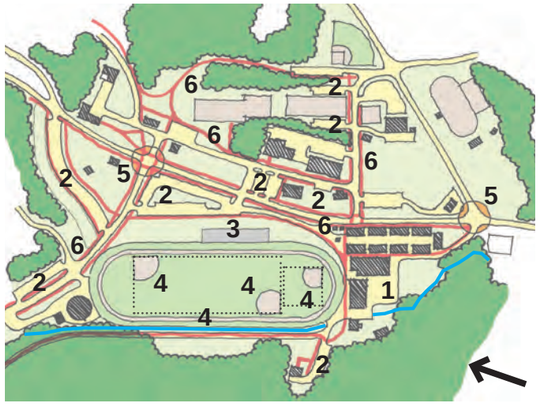
OPTION 1: "MODIFIED"

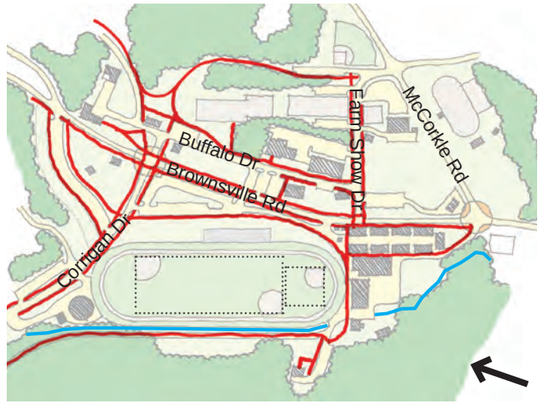
Provides the base recommendations and fundamental improvements for better use, management, and sustainability of the Fairgrounds.

Project initiatives include:

1. remove Schoonmaker Hall
2. "green" the parking lots
3. remove/repair bleachers
4. improve the Oval fields/track
5. enhance park gateways
6. improve pedestrian connectivity



Option 1 conceptual plan with project initiatives highlighted



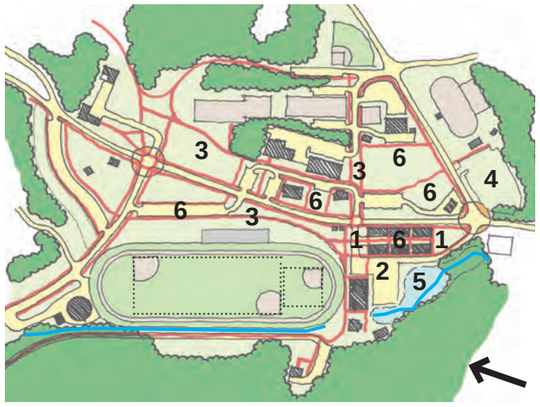
Option 1 conceptual plan with added pedestrian connectivity highlighted in dark red

OPTION 2: "CAMPUS"

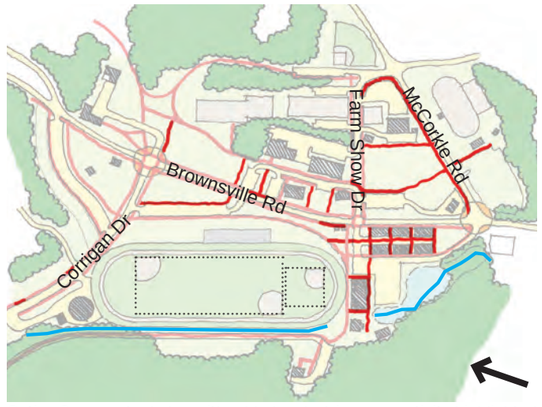
Takes its cues from traditional campus planning theories and techniques. Vehicles and pedestrian conflicts are minimized by directing vehicles to perimeter parking areas instead of areas directly adjacent to each facility. The result is a greener Fairgrounds and much improved pedestrian connectivity.

Project initiatives include:

1. remove Exhibit Buildings
2. remove Agricultural Hall
3. remove redundant road segments
4. add "green" parking lot
5. naturalize Catfish Run (south)
6. improve pedestrian connectivity



Option 2 conceptual plan with project initiatives highlighted



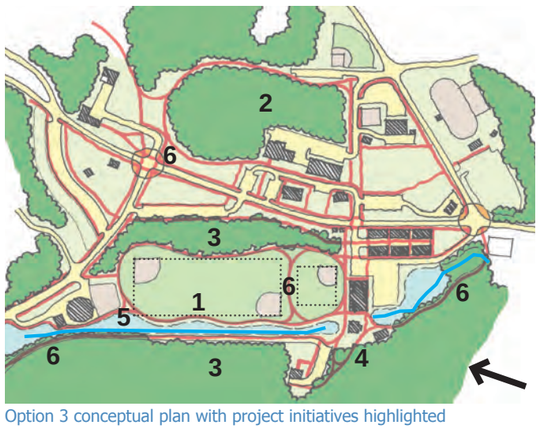
Option 2 conceptual plan with added pedestrian connectivity highlighted in dark red (cumulative to Option 1 which is shown in light red)

OPTION 3: "PICTURESQUE"

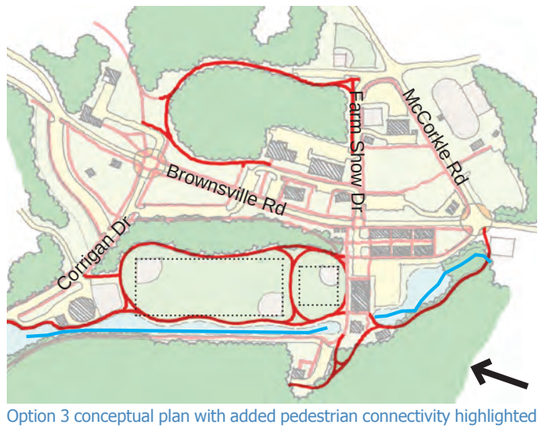
Focuses on the naturalistic quality of the park's original planning and design intent. Many of the same concepts from the Campus Concept are proposed. In addition, areas of the Fairgrounds are reforested, Catfish Run is brought back to a more natural state, and a "front yard" is provided for the Museum Building.

Project initiatives include:

1. reconfigure track
2. relocate tennis/basketball courts
3. landscape bleacher slopes
4. relocate Nature Center
5. naturalize Catfish Run (north)
6. improve pedestrian connectivity



Option 3 conceptual plan with project initiatives highlighted



Option 3 conceptual plan with added pedestrian connectivity highlighted in dark red (cumulative to Option 1 & 2 which are shown in light red)

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OPTION 1: SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS

LAND USE	AREA
Buildings	4.04 acres (13%↓)
Recreation Uses	15.16 acres (no change)
Wooded Areas	17.71 acres (no change)
Landscaped Areas	19.97 acres (26%↑)
Streets	5.32 acres (17%↓)
Parking	11.94 acres (29%↓)
Walkways	1.91 acres (260% ↑)
Catfish Run	0.65 acres (no change)

Building, paving, and impervious surfaces are decreased, which will result in an annual maintenance savings, and result in less stormwater runoff that ends up downstream. Even though parking areas have been reduced, the number of parking spaces available remains the same.

OPTION 2: SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS

LAND USE	AREA
Buildings	3.31 acres (28%↓)
Recreation Uses	15.16 acres (no change)
Wooded Areas	17.71 acres (no change)
Landscaped Areas	22.17 acres (19%↑)
Streets	4.65 acres (27%↓)
Parking	10.49 acres (34%↓)
Walkways	2.56 acres (383%↑)
Catfish Run	0.65 acres (no change)

Building, paving, and impervious surfaces are decreased, which will result in an annual maintenance savings, and result in less stormwater runoff that ends up downstream. Even though parking areas have been reduced by 34%, the number of parking spaces has only been reduced 6%.

OPTION 3: SUSTAINABILITY ANALYSIS

LAND USE	AREA
Buildings	3.31 acres (28%↓)
Recreation Uses	10.89 acres (28%↓)
Wooded Areas	26.76 acres (51%↑)
Landscaped Areas	14.05 acres (11%↓)
Streets	4.65 acres (27%↓)
Parking	10.15 acres (35%↓)
Walkways	3.56 acres (572%↑)
Catfish Run	3.33 acres (412%↑)

Building, paving, and impervious surfaces are decreased, which will result in an annual maintenance savings, and result in less stormwater runoff that ends up downstream. Even though parking areas have been reduced by 35%, the number of parking spaces has only been reduced 10%.

SUSTAINABILITY COMPARISON

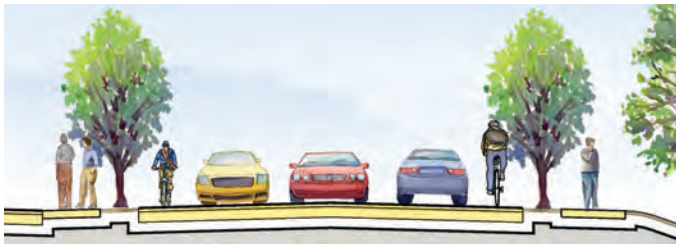
The following chart compares the amount of parking, impervious surfaces, maintenance area of buildings and paving, walkway connectivity, and green space:

IMPACT AREA	OPTIONS		
	1	2	3
Parking Spaces	0%	-6%	-10%
Impervious Surfaces	-15%	-26%	-29%
Building Maintenance	-13%	-28%	-28%
Paving Maintenance	-16%	-26%	-29%
Pedestrian Connectivity	+260%	+383%	+572%
Green Space	+12%	+19%	+22%

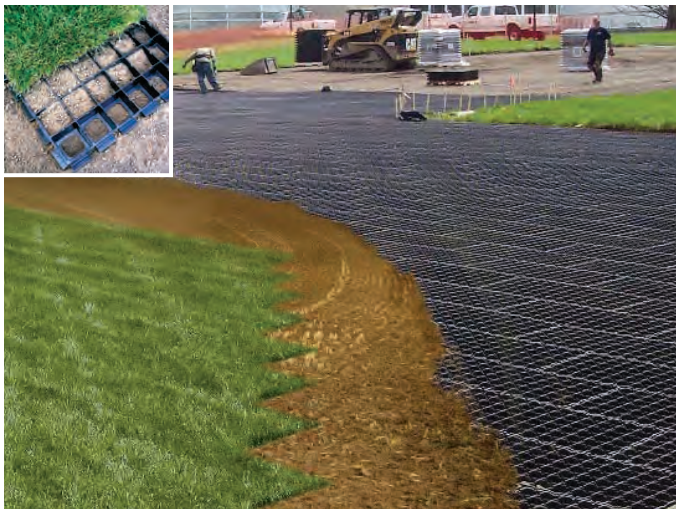
Comparing the three options side-by-side, a general theme emerges: the amount of building and paving area is reduced in each successive option, while the amount of walkways and green space is increased.

Converting the amount of building and paving area to walkways and landscape will dramatically reduce the annual maintenance cost for the Fairgrounds while, at the same time will

- improve water quality through a reduction in impervious surfaces
- improve connectivity through alternative modes of transportation such as walking and biking)
- improve park aesthetics through more green space



existing (above) and proposed (below) sections of Corrigan Drive showing lane reduction and added walks and bike lanes



example of green paving installation at Phipps Conservatory utilizing grass cell pavers (credit 5, page 16)

PUBLIC INPUT PRIORITIZATION

At the second public meeting, the three options were presented and the participants were asked to rank the various project initiatives to help prioritize redevelopment of the Fairgrounds:

	OPTION	PROJECT
1.	modified	remove Schoonmaker Hall
2.	multiple	convert/add “green”parking lots
3.	modified	improve Oval fields/track surfaces
4.	multiple	naturalize/Reclaim Catfish Run
5.	picturesque	relocate Nature Center adjacent to Catfish Run
6.	multiple	add pedestrian connections
7.	modified	remove/repair bleachers
8.	picturesque	reconfigure Oval track to curvilinear shape
9.	picturesque	landscape bleacher slopes
10.	multiple	improve existing buildings
11.	modified	enhance park gateways
12.	campus	remove some Exhibit Hall buildings
13.	campus	remove Agricultural Hall to provide parking
14.	campus	remove redundant road segments
15.	picturesque	relocate tennis/basketball courts and reforest
16.	multiple	improve wayfinding throughout the area/tell story of the Fair
17.	multiple	improve infrastructure (electric, sewer, etc.)
18.	multiple	link area to public transit

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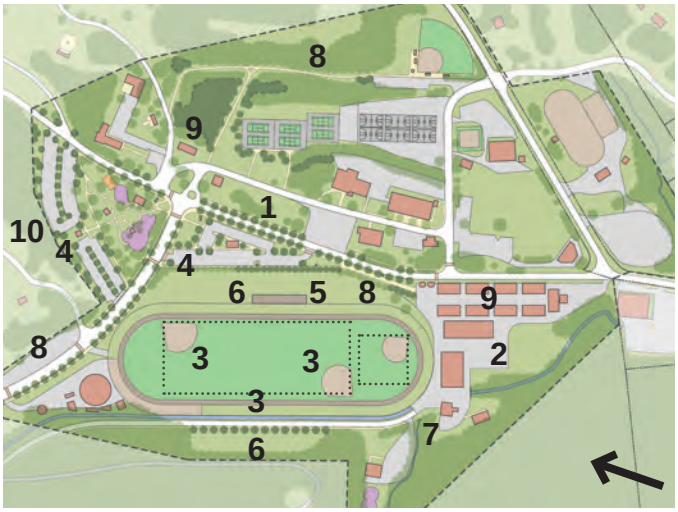
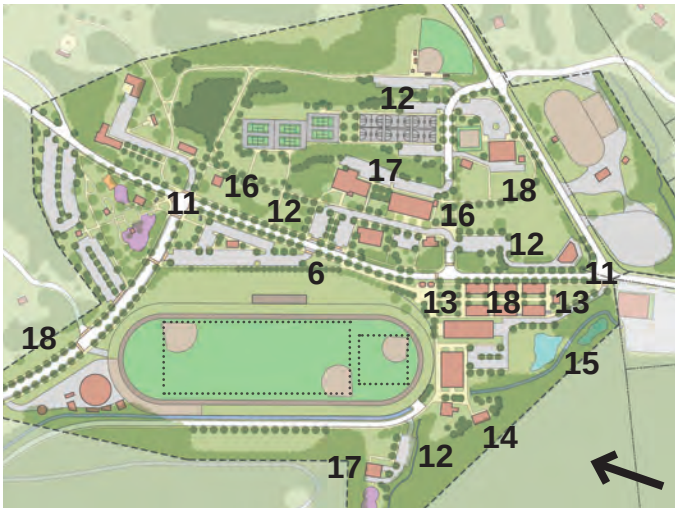
RECOMMENDED PLAN



short-range plan with project initiatives highlighted



mid-range plan with project initiatives highlighted

long-range plan with project initiatives highlighted

The budget figures above are an estimated opinion of probable construction costs and include construction, a 20% contingency, and design fees estimated at 10% of construction cost, including the contingency.

SHORT-RANGE PLAN

The short-range plan is to improve the Oval area due to its high visibility and amount of use. Project initiatives include:

	PROJECT	2011 BUDGET
1.	link area to public transit	$0
2.	remove Schoonmaker Hall	$349,000
3.	improve Oval fields/track surfaces	$977,000
4.	convert/add “green” parking lots	$1,004,000
5.	remove/repair bleachers	$360,000
6.	landscape bleacher slopes	$213,000
7.	improve infrastructure	$1,461,000
8.	add pedestrian connections	$909,000
9.	improve existing buildings	$589,000
10.	improve wayfinding throughout area	$71,000
	SUBTOTAL	**$5,933,000**

MID-RANGE PLAN

The mid-range plan includes removal of unused buildings and redundant road segments, “greens” additional parking lots, and focuses on moving the Nature Center to a reclaimed Catfish Run. Project initiatives include:

	PROJECT	2011 BUDGET
11.	enhance park gateways	$845,000
12.	convert/add more “green” parking lots	$640,000
13.	remove some Exhibit Hall buildings	$425,000
14.	relocate Nature Center adjacent to Run	$375,000
15.	naturalize/reclaim Catfish Run (south)	$915,000
16.	remove redundant road segments	$565,000
17.	improve additional existing buildings	$445,000
18.	add more pedestrian connections	$435,000
	SUBTOTAL	**$4,645,000**

LONG-RANGE PLAN

The long-range plan focuses on reclaiming the northern section of Catfish Run and possibly reconfiguring the track to a curvilinear shape, which harkens back to early 20th Century park design. Project initiatives include:

	PROJECT	2011 BUDGET
19.	convert/add final “green” parking lots	$930,000
20.	add final pedestrian connections	$430,000
21.	naturalize/reclaim Catfish Run (north)	$1,445,000
22.	remove Agricultural Hall	$315,000
23.	reconfigure track to curvilinear shape	$1,015,000
24.	relocate courts and reforest	$690,000
	SUBTOTAL	**$4,825,000**

TOTAL **$15,403,000**

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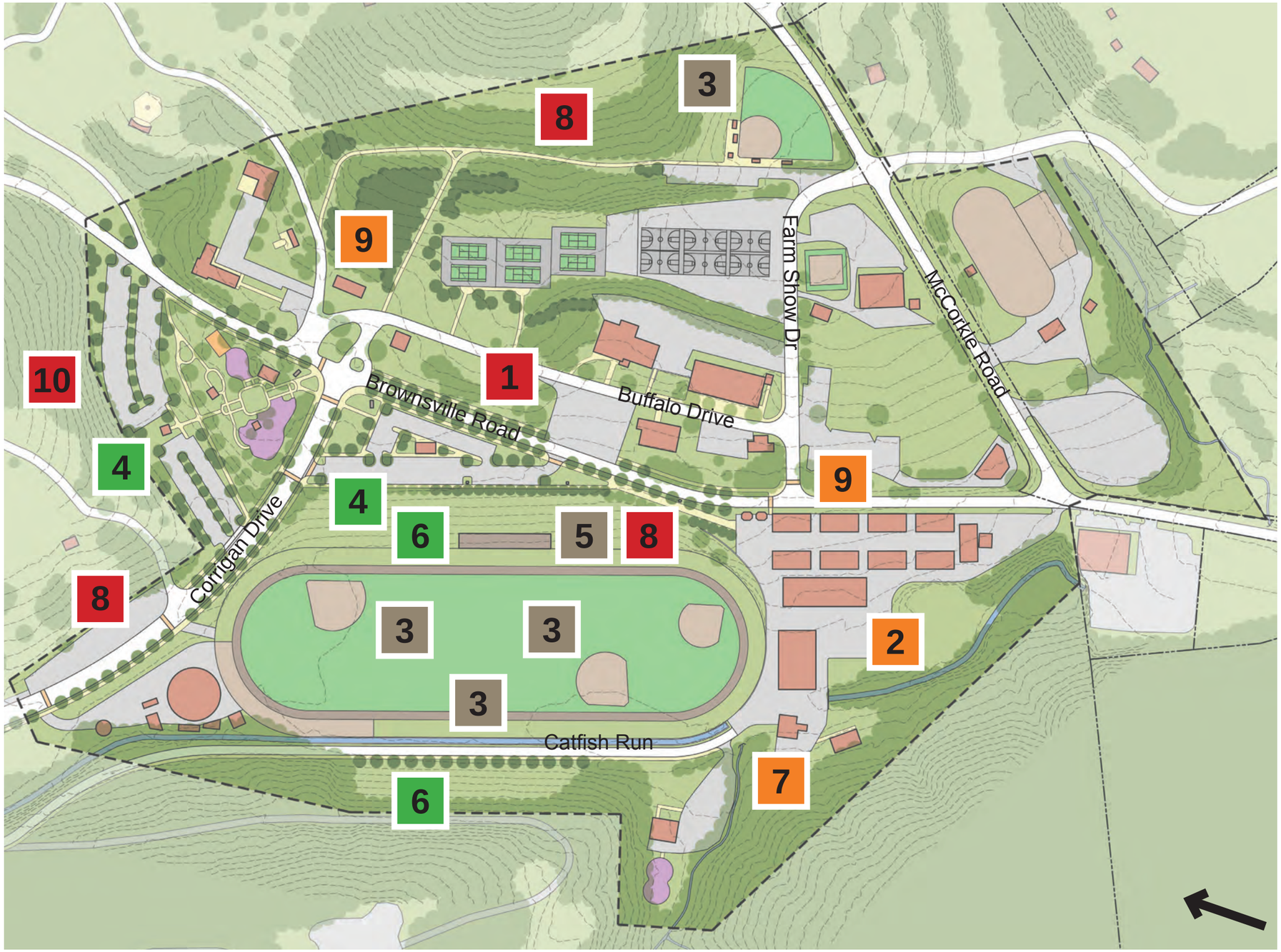

SHORT-RANGE PROJECT INITIATIVES

The early action, short-range plan for the Fairgrounds is to improve the Oval and adjacent areas due to its high visibility and amount of use.

1. **link area to public transit**
   Work with Port Authority Transit to provide bus access to the Fairgrounds by extending the Y45 Baldwin Manor Flyer route. Provide a bus shelter and bike parking.
2. **remove Schoonmaker Hall**
   The structure is in very bad disrepair and negatively impacts Catfish Run. Use area to help reclaim Catfish Run while providing parking for the Museum Building.
3. **improve Oval fields/track surfaces**
   Repair lawn, fields and track surfaces to a high level in this prominant area heavily used by walkers, runners, sports leagues, and festival events.
4. **convert/add "green" parking lots**
   Strategically replace some asphalt areas of larger parking lots with grass cell pavers to reduce downstream stormwater impacts and increase park aesthetics.
5. **remove/repair bleachers**
   The bleachers are unsafe, unsightly and no longer used for their intended purpose. Remove and replace with modest seating installed closer to field level.
6. **landscape bleacher slopes**
   Once bleachers have been removed, stabilized the slope with new landscaping including native trees, shrubs, groundcovers, and grasses.
7. **improve infrastructure**
   Most infrastructure is in poor condition and should be repaired and/or replaced to support potential redevelopment opportunities.
8. **add pedestrian connections**
   Install new walkways and trails to provide safer and more sustainable connections between Fairgrounds uses and the rest of the park and community.
9. **improve existing buildings**
   Most buildings are in poor condition and should be repaired to support potential redevelopment opportunities.
10. **improve wayfinding throughout area**
    Install a coherent wayfinding system throughout the Fairgrounds to direct users to their destinations. Install interpretive signage to tell the story of the Fair.

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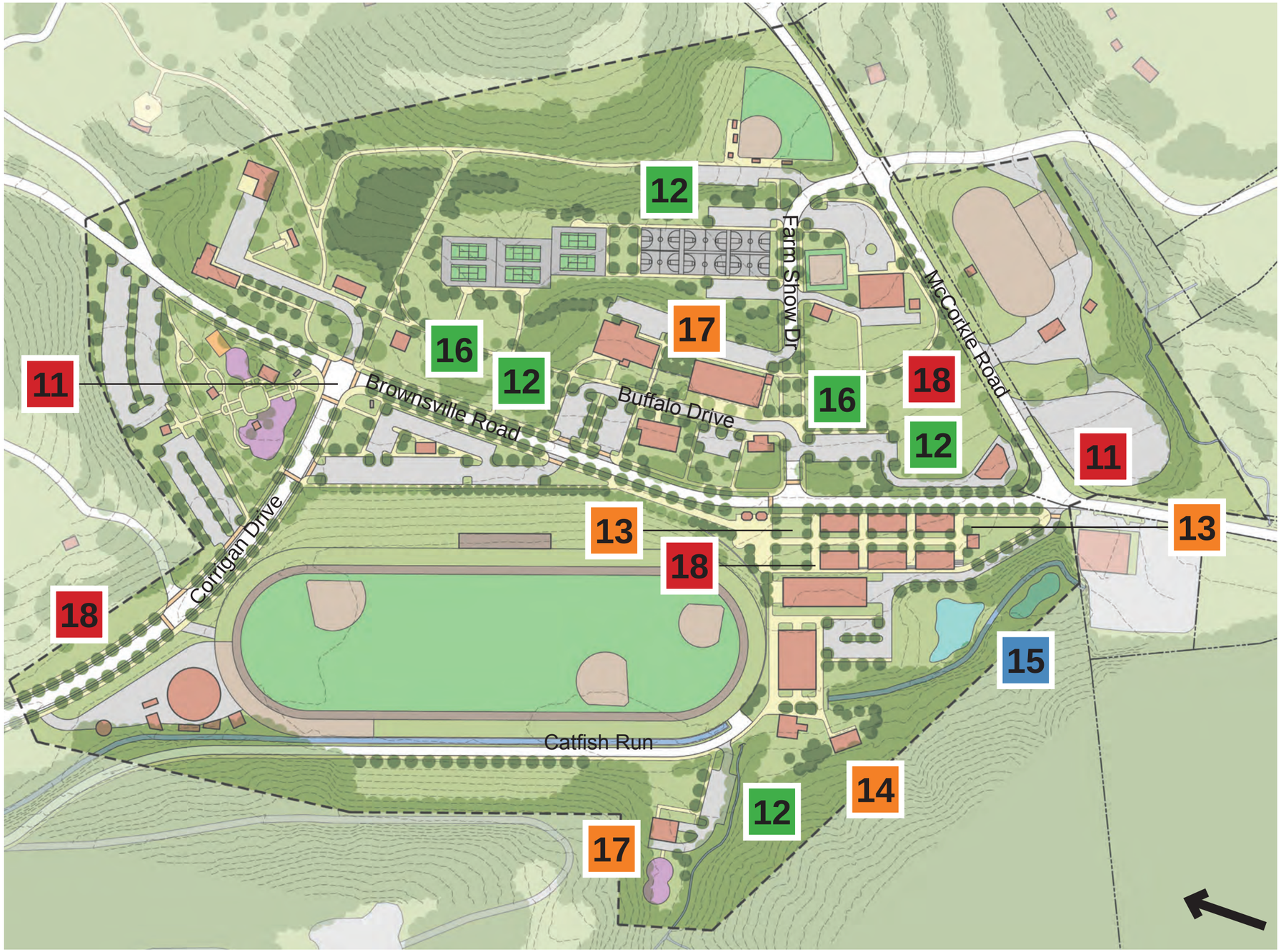

MID-RANGE PROJECT INITIATIVES

The mid-range plan includes removal of unused buildings and redundant road segments, "greens" additional parking lots, and focuses on moving the Nature Center to a reclaimed Catfish Run.

11. **enhance park gateways**
    Improve the intersections of Brownsville/McCorkle and Brownsville/Corrigan with safer, decorative pedestrian crossings and new park gateway elements.
12. **convert/add more "green" parking lots**
    Strategically replace some asphalt areas of parking lots with grass cell pavers to reduce downstream stormwater impacts and increase park aesthetics.
13. **remove some Exhibit Hall buildings**
    Remove two buildings at intersection of Brownsville/McCorkle for proper intersection alignment and visibility to the Museum Building.
14. **relocate Nature Center adjacent to Catfish Run**
    Move to either a renovated Cabin or new structure near Catfish Run, instead of surrounded by paving, for improved community outreach potential.
15. **naturalize/reclaim Catfish Run**
    Clean up, remove invasive species, and provide better habitats for fish and wildlife. Provide educational opportunies in conjunction with the Nature Center.
16. **remove redundant road segments**
    Convert sections of Farm Show Drive and Buffalo Drive to landscaped walkways and plazas to provide car-free, north-south pedestrian connections.
17. **improve additional existing buildings**
    Most buildings are in poor condition and should be repaired to support potential redevelopment opportunities.
18. **add more pedestrian connections**
    Install new walkways and trails to provide safer and more sustainable connections between Fairgrounds uses and the rest of the park and community.

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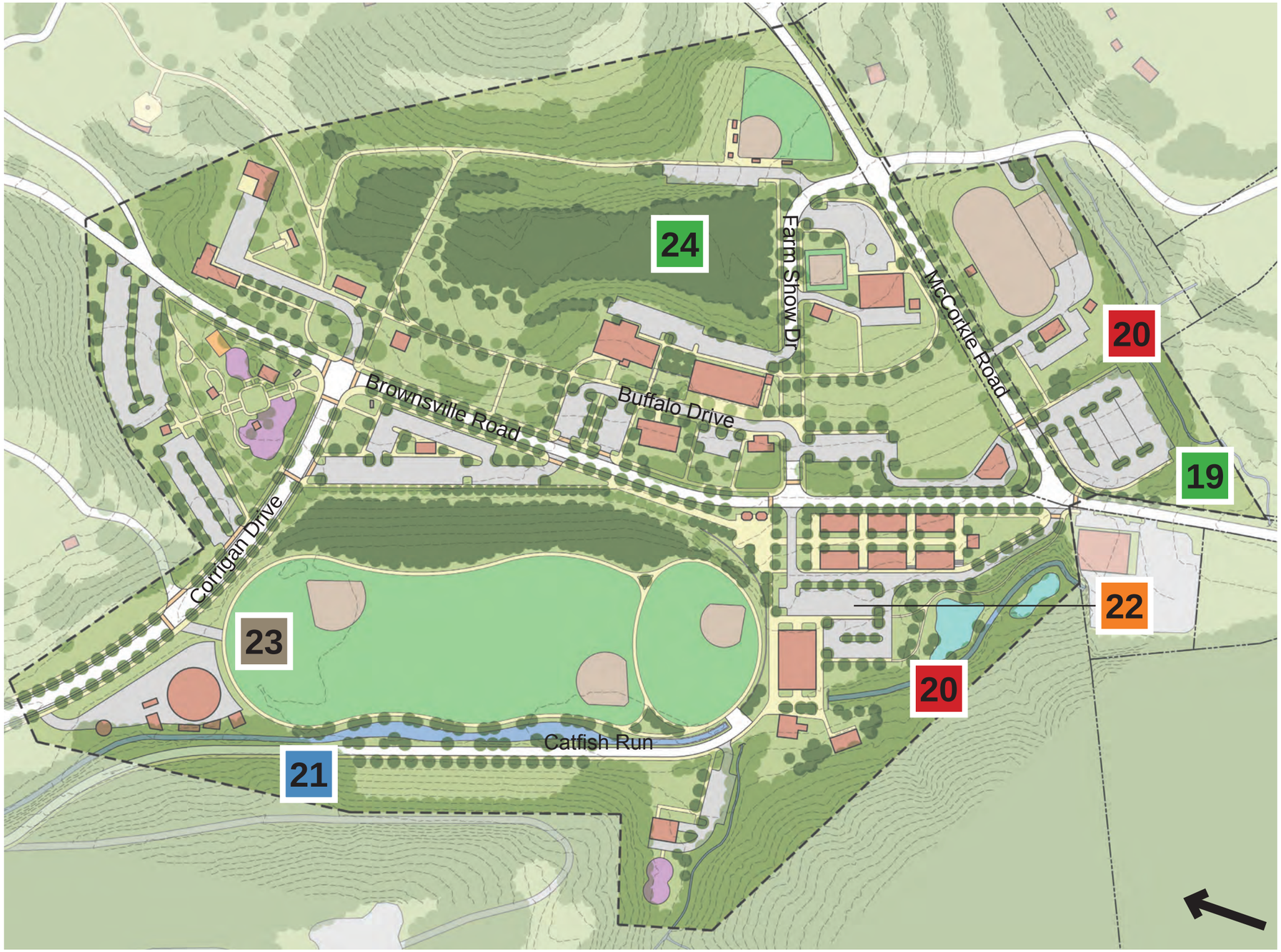

LONG-RANGE PROJECT INITIATIVES

The long-range plan focuses on reclaiming the northern section of Catfish Run and possibly reconfiguring the track to a curvilinear shape, which harkens back to early 20th Century park design.

19. **convert/add final "green" parking lots**
    Strategically replace some asphalt areas of parking lots with grass cell pavers to reduce downstream stormwater impacts and increase park aesthetics.

20. **add final pedestrian connections**
    SInstall new walkways and trails to provide safer and more sustainable connections between Fairgrounds uses and the rest of the park and community.

21. **naturalize/reclaim Catfish Run**
    Clean up, remove invasive species, and provide better habitats for fish and wildlife. Provide educational opportunies in conjunction with the Nature Center.

22. **remove Agricultural Hall to provide parking**
    Remove this large, underutilized building to provide additional parking for and improve the visibility to the Museum Building.

23. **reconfigure track to curvilinear shape**
    Provide a "front door" for the Museum Building with new curvilinear path circuits of varying distances while maintaining existing ball field dimensions.

24. **relocate tennis/basketball courts and reforest**
    Potentially relocate the existing courts, at the end of their current life-cycle, to a section of the park that is more sport-oriented.

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The grounds and buildings that comprise the Fairgrounds were originally built for a use that ended more than 30 years ago and is no longer a viable option. Much of the current landscape existed to support the county fair - many Exhibit Buildings, the Museum Building, Agricultural Hall, the Oval, bleachers, vast parking areas, and so on. Even though a handful of regional events at the Oval and a popular summer concert series at the newer, adjacent Amphitheater draw large crowds to the park, most facility usage is skewed toward weekend periods of heavy utilization interspersed with sharply underutilized periods. This, coupled with a decades-long reduction in staffing levels and current economic constraints, creates an ongoing maintenance challenge for the County, which has led to many functional and aesthetic deficiencies throughout the Fairgrounds area.

The main purpose of this master planning process was to create a framework for sound decision-making to transform the Fairgrounds into a sustainable, multi-functional facility that reflects the needs of today's park users that works within the maintenance capabilities and budgets of the County's Park and Public Works departments – and to establish a process that eventually can be repeated across the other components of the Parks system. It was made evident during the public input process that the Fairgrounds is a positive feature within the park that it is frequently used by all types of park users for a variety of activities and functions. The public also stressed that it does not need to change dramatically but the facilities do need to be maintained in a better way.

As shown in this report, a careful reduction of maintainable buildings along with a thoughtful reconsideration of parking areas, streets and infrastructure – and increased emphasis on pedestrian and multi-modal connectivity and landscape – can meet the public enthusiasm for keeping the amount of recreational opportunities constant. Yes, this approach will significantly heighten the importance, accessibility and enjoyability of the naturally occurring environmental assets like the stream and will dramatically increase the site's overall sustainability and maintainability for future generations.

In the Short-Range Plan, initial project priorities were chosen based on input from the public, the Project Steering Group, Project Team, and focus group participants, and adjusted based on reasonable construction sequencing and broad impact within the area. The Mid- and Long-Range Plans build further on the foundation of the Short-Range Plan.

As such, efforts are underway to obtain funding for the first set of projects, which is focused on the Oval area (items 3 through 6). Having a feasible master plan in place, with a series of smaller projects defined in a rational sequence, allows for a more efficient means of raising capital, from both government and private sources, for successful implementation.

In addition to the specific projects identified through this process, the Project Team identified the value of establishing overall guiding principles for approaching any planning and design project in the Parks. Future projects would benefit from more formally adopting the sustainability and design principles in this master planning project and the previous parks master planning work.

PHOTO & IMAGE CREDITS

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NOTES

Statements concerning probable construction cost and/or detailed cost estimates prepared by GAI represent its judgment as a professional familiar with the construction industry. It is recognized, however, that GAI has no control over the cost of labor, materials or equipment, over the contractors’ methods of determining bid prices, or over competitive bidding or market conditions. Accordingly, GAI cannot and does not guarantee that bids, proposals, or actual costs will not vary from any statement of probable construction cost or other cost estimate prepared by it.

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