

# **Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Site**

## **Strategic Development Plan**



Prepared by the:

**Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Taskforce**

**Burleigh County, North Dakota**

**Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce**

10/18/01

## **Credits and Contacts**

### **Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Task Force**

Terry Brosseau, Task Force Chair - MedCenter One Health Systems

Jerry Doan – 4-H

Elroy Haadem – Burleigh County Extension

Buckshot Hoffner – Buckstop Junction

David Jensen – Bismarck City Commission

Kim Lee – City of Bismarck Planning Department

Claus Lembke – Burleigh County Commission

Wayne Martineson – Missouri Valley Fair Association

Jerry Marschke – Site events coordinator

Rod Matzke – MS Model Aero Club

Steve Neu -Bismarck Park & Recreation District

Todd Reidman – Bismarck Moto Cross Association

Paul Schadewald – North Dakota Game & Fish Department

Jerry Woodcox – Burleigh County Commission

### **Burleigh County Commission**

Helen Schatz, Chair

Bill Delmore

Marlan Haakenson

Claus Lembke

Jerry Woodcox

Kevin Glatt, County Auditor

221 North 5<sup>th</sup> Street

Po Box 5518

Bismarck, ND 58502

(701) 222-6718

### **Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce**

Dave MacIver, President

Gerri Huschka, Assistant to the President

2000 Schafer Street, PO Box 1675

Bismarck, ND 58502-1675

(701) 223-5660

### **Planning Consultant**

Greg Ingraham

Ingraham & Associates Inc.

1510 Como Avenue SE

Minneapolis, MN 55414

(612) 377-2500

# **Burleigh County Fairground Site Strategic Development Plan**

## **Plan Summary**

The Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Task Force prepared this plan for revitalization of the Missouri Valley Fairgrounds site. The Task Force was appointed by the Burleigh County Commission to work with the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce to prepare a long-term master plan for improvement and to determine the "highest and best public use" of the County owned 450-acre fairgrounds site.

The fairgrounds site is located east of East Bismarck Expressway and south of Highway 10, just east of the North Dakota Game and Fish building and outdoor learning center. The site is home to the NDSU/4-H/County Extension office and 4-H building and Buck Stop Junction historic site. The site was used for the Burleigh County Fair, stock car races and other events.

The Task Force discussed the need to create an exciting multi-use area that meets the needs of the region. The Task Force plan is based on a set of guiding principles for use of the site. The principles were developed from public input and desires for use of the property.

## **Summary of the Guiding Principles**

- 1. Public use of the property.**
- 2. Do not duplicate facilities, focus on value-added uses.**
- 3. Have flexible, multi-use areas. year-round use and appeal to all age groups.**
- 4. Adopt the master plan and install adequate infrastructure and enhancements.**
- 5. Utilize the unique site features, location, visibility, Hay Creek and wetlands.**
- 6. Connect to and complement adjacent uses**
- 7. Respect the historic character of Buckstop Junction.**
- 8. Obtain buy-in and support for the master plan and implementation actions.**
- 9. Build on the themes of History, Agriculture, Natural Resources, and Recreation & Tourism.**

## Strategic Development Plan Summary

The strategic development plan includes the following proposed uses:

**Outdoor event center** – The outdoor event center is the focal point of the plan. The event center will have grandstands, concessions and service building, parking, and multi-use activity areas. The outdoor event center would be used for concerts, stock shows, tractor pulls, trade shows, conventions, RV camping, and other events and entertainment.

**Indoor arena** - An indoor arena would be added to the existing 4-H/Ag Extension building. The arena would be used for a wide variety of uses such as, horse shows, education events, dances, agriculture shows, meetings, etc. The arena would allow year-round use of the site. An outdoor riding arena would be located near the indoor arena.

**Expanded Buckstop Junction historic site** - Area is reserved for expansion of Buckstop Junction. The plan shows room for more historic structures and a designated parking area. Buckstop Junction could expand its “living history” program where costumed interpreters explain and demonstrate historic life. Area is also reserved for agricultural use and demonstrations of modern or historic agricultural practices.

**Trails, open space and recreation areas** - Hiking, biking and horse trails will be added. Areas are reserved for picnicking, model airplane use, and other recreation activities. The Hay Creek area will be preserved and enhanced to improve wildlife habitat, storm water retention and to allow trail access to the natural areas. A crop maze is proposed near the grandstand area.

**Loop road, utilities, paved parking, landscaping and outlots** - A paved loop road will circle the site. Parking areas would be paved. Trees and shrubs will be added to improve the look of the site. Two parcels will be designated for possible government or commercial-industrial use.

The existing stock car track would need to be removed to allow for the future grandstand and outdoor activity area. The moto-cross area will remain.

The plan includes recommendations for use, operations and funding. The Task Force recommends use of a joint board possibly consisting of the County, the City of Bismarck, Bismarck Park District and the County Parks Department to help guide development of the site. A site management group would oversee day-to-day operation of the site and scheduling of events. The Task Force recognizes that this is a long-term plan and that it will require the support and involvement of the entire community and many agencies to make their vision a reality.

## **Table of Contents**

Plan summary.....	2
Introduction.....	5
Site description and site analysis.....	5
<i>Site location map</i> .....	6
<i>Existing conditions</i> .....	7
<i>Site analysis map</i> .....	8
<i>Site photos</i> .....	9
Background and planning process.....	10
<i>Task Force photos</i> .....	11
Focus group, interview and public input summary.....	12
Key issues and opportunities.....	14
Guiding principles.....	15
Strategic development plan recommendations.....	16
<i>Site use areas</i> .....	19
<i>Strategic development plan</i> .....	20
<i>Access and circulation</i> .....	21
Cost estimate and funding.....	22
Site name.....	22
Implementation & phasing recommendations.....	23
Organizational recommendations.....	24
Appendices.....	26
A.    Site use and programming ideas	
B.    Summary of community open house meetings	
C.    Focus group and interview meeting results	
D.    Letters to the Task Force	

## **Introduction**

Burleigh County has owned and operated the Missouri Valley Fairgrounds site since 1988. A Fairgrounds Master Plan was prepared in 1988. The Burleigh County Fair and other community events and activities occurred on the site. The 4-H/Burleigh County Extension building, Buckstop Junction historic site, a dirt stock car track and a moto-cross course are located in the property.

Attendance at the County Fair and other site visits haven't fallen below expectations and other development and attractions in the region have occurred since 1988. Due to these reasons, the County Commission felt a new look at the site was needed. In early 2001, the County partnered with the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce to initiate preparation of a strategic development plan for the fairgrounds site. The strategic plan was to determine the "highest and best public use of the property". A 14 member Taskforce was appointed to prepare the strategic plan. The Taskforce met several times and obtained feedback from hundreds of residents and business owners. This plan represents their recommendations for highest and best public use of the property.

*The Task Force was asked to determine the  
"Highest and Best Public Use of the Property"*

## **Site Description and Site Analysis**

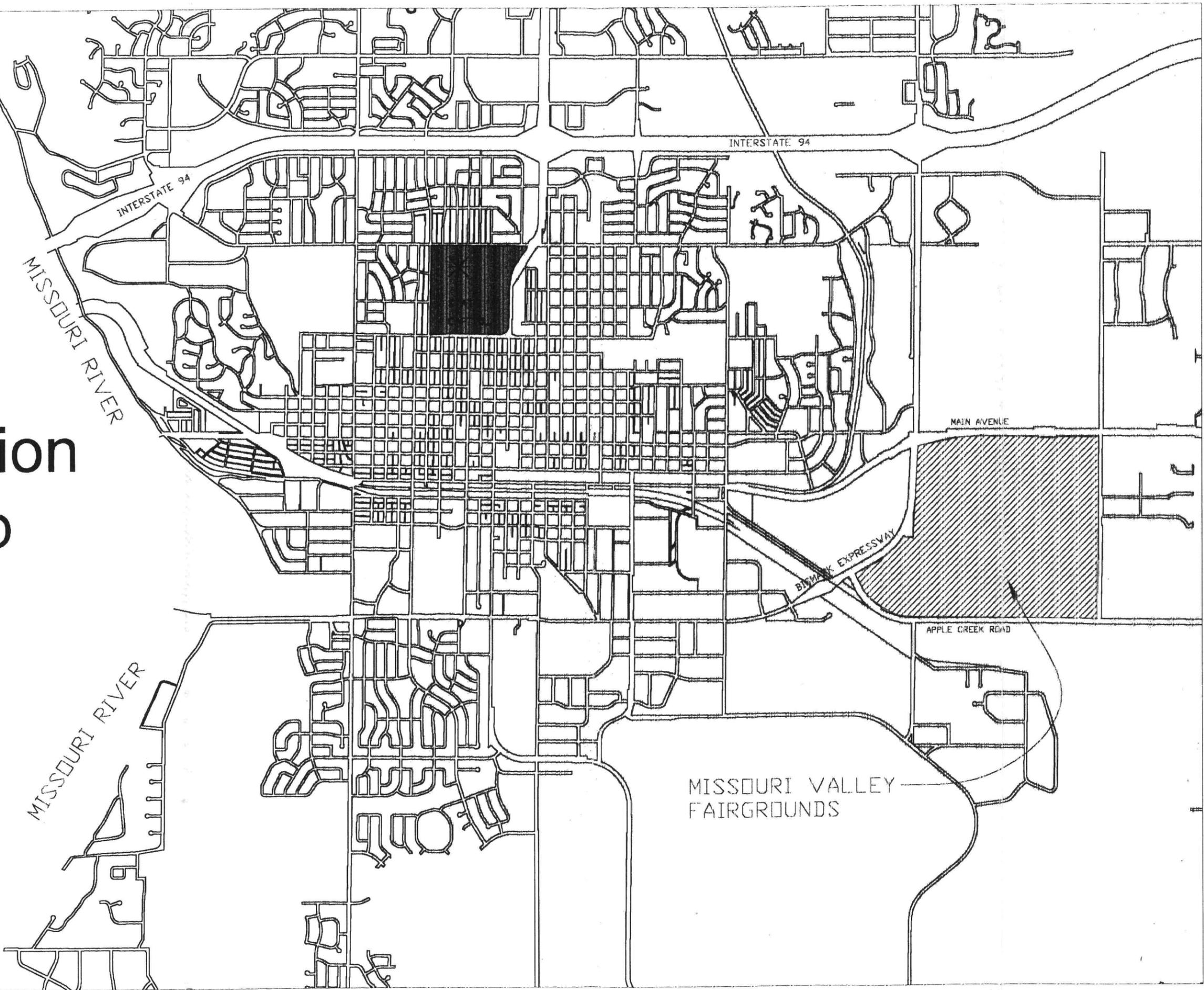
The 450 acre site is owned by Burleigh County. It is located on Bismarck Expressway about two miles east of the Capital building. The site is east of Bismarck Expressway, south of Highway 10 and north of Apple Creek Road. The North Dakota Fish & Game building lies to the west, a WAPA electrical substation is to the north, a trucking company and agricultural and residential uses lie to the east of the site. Agricultural land and industrial uses are to the south of the property. See the site location map - Figure A.

The site consists of a mix of rolling upland farm fields and lowland associated with Hay Creek. Hay Creek flows through the southern portion of the site. Approximately 225 acres of the 450 acre site are upland and the rest are lowland or wetland.

The site has excellent access and visibility. It is 1½ miles south of I-94 and two miles east of downtown Bismarck. The property is within the Bismarck city limits and utilities (water, gas, sanitary sewer, electricity) are available on or near the site.

Due to the proximity to the WAPA substation, several electrical power lines cross the site. These power lines and the associated easements limit placement of buildings, structures and landscaping. Much of the southern portion of the site is within the floodplain of Hay Creek. A floodplain is an area that has a higher probability of flooding on a regular basis. The Hay Creek corridor is an important storm water storage area for a large part of Burleigh County.

# Location Map



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Minneapolis Minnesota 55414  
p. 612/377-2500 f.377-1010  
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Burleigh County,  
Bismarck, North Dakota

Missouri Valley Fairgrounds  
Site Location Map

Fair-locmap

SJW

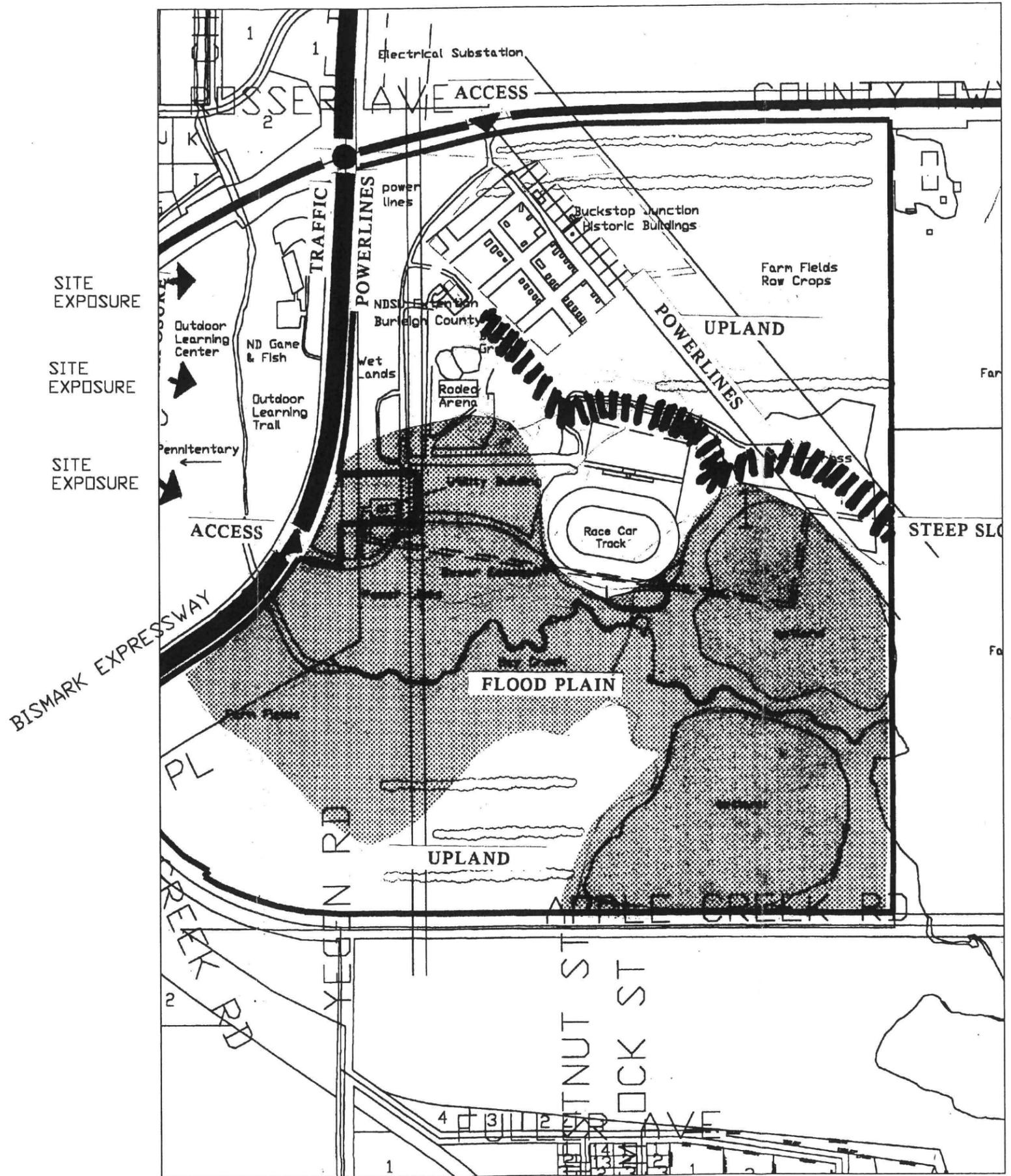
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# SITE ANALYSIS

## Key Issues and Opportunities

- Fair attendance and site use has declined.
- Burleigh County is increasingly urban - (approx. 85% Bismarck residents).
- Most County residents still have close ties to the farm and rural life.
- The site has excellent visibility and access.
- Site use has been hampered by dust and mud, due to lack of paved areas.
- Other facilities have been built in the region (i.e. Dakota Park and speedway, Raging River waterpark) that affected site use.
- Car racing has moved to Dakota Park in Mandan.
- Buckstop Junction has been established and has plans for expansion.
- Wetland preservation and storm water retention have become more important.
- Trail use has become one of the most popular recreation activities.
- Better vehicle access and egress is needed for peak events.
- Landscaping and paved roads would enhance the site appearance and function.



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Burleigh County,  
Bismarck, North Dakota

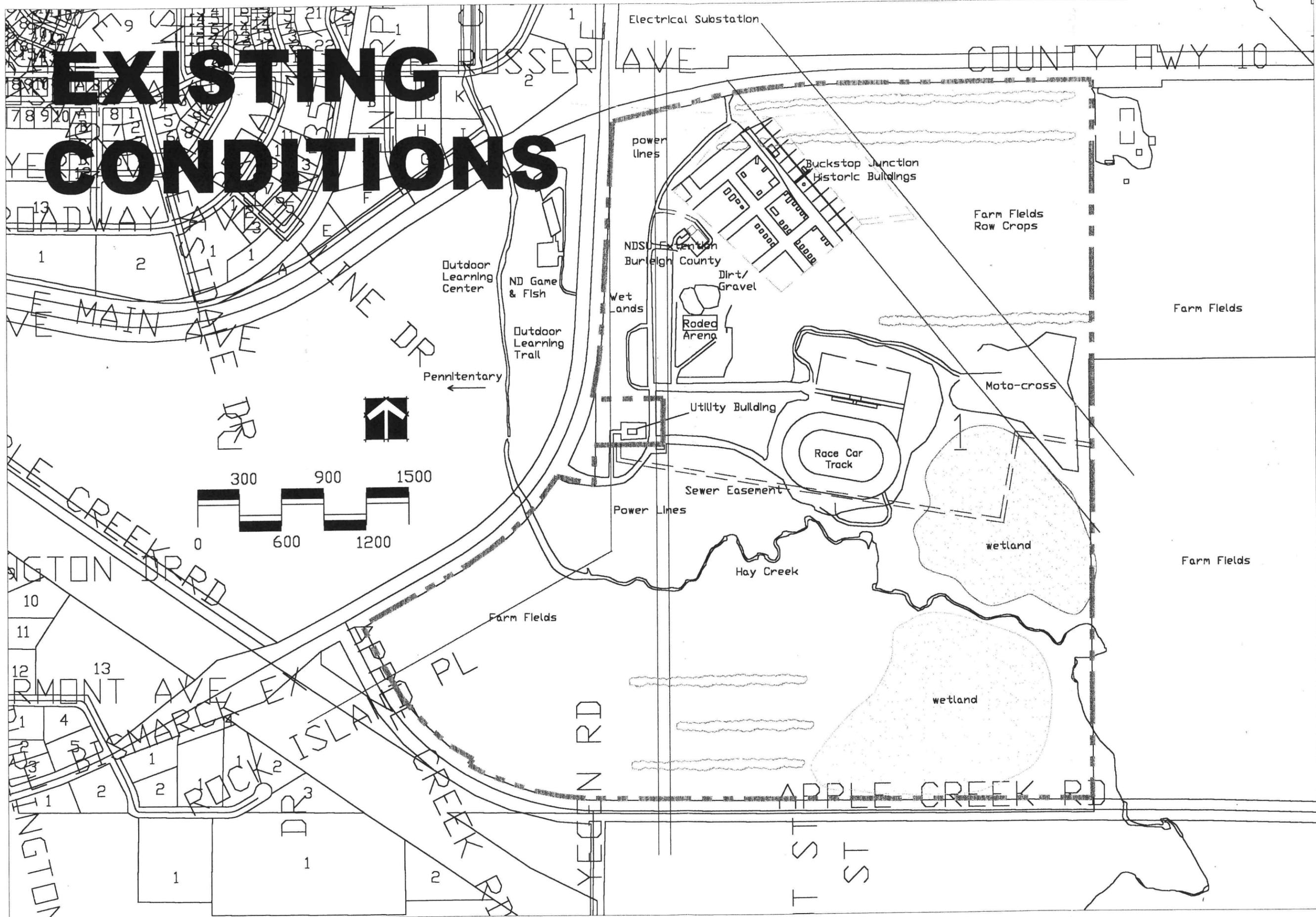
Missouri Valley Fairgrounds  
Site Location Map

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1510 Como Avenue Southeast  
Minneapolis Minnesota 55414  
p: 612/377-2500 f: 377-1010  
www.ingraham-associates.com

# EXISTING CONDITIONS



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 p: 612/377-2500 f:377-1010  
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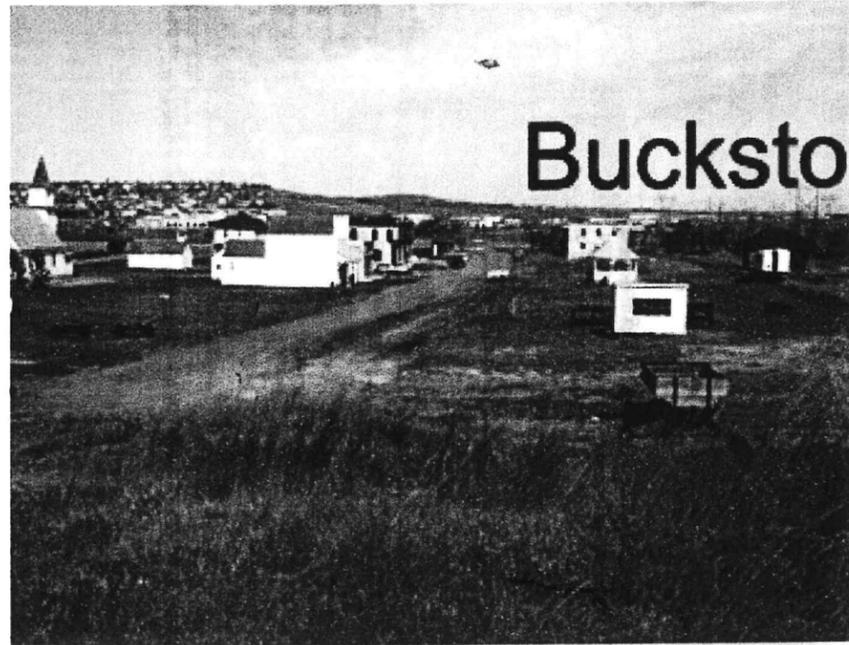
Burleigh County  
 Bismarck, North Dakota

Missouri Valley Fairgrounds  
 Existing Conditions

I hereby certify that this plan was prepared by me under my direct supervision and that I am a duly Registered Landscape Architect under the laws of the State of Minnesota

fair-excon  
 SJW  
 10/8/01





**Buckstop**

**Junction**



**Motocross  
Tracks**

**Burleigh County/  
Extension/4H**



**Wetlands &  
Open Space**



## **Background and Planning Process**

The Fairground site was acquired by the County in the 1980's. In 1988 a Fairgrounds Master Plan was prepared for the site which showed a horse race track, drag strip, stock car track, major indoor arena, a performing arts building, fair exhibit buildings, a grandstand, a carnival midway, theme park, softball fields and parking. Gravel roads, a dirt auto race track, a moto-cross area, the 4-H and County Agricultural Extension building, utilities and Buckstop Junction (a collection of historic buildings) were built on the site.

The Missouri Valley Fair Association was established to manage use of the site. Burleigh County Fairs were held on the site beginning in 1988. Fair attendance and site use declined in the late 1990's and fairs were no longer held on the site. In response to the declining attendance and concerns over coordination of site improvements, the Burleigh County Commission felt a strategic development plan was needed for the site. The County Commission felt a master plan was needed to guide long-term improvement of the site and to develop the land to the highest and best public use.

*The Missouri Valley Task Force represented a wide cross section of the community and included business, government and citizen representatives.*

The Commission sought the assistance of the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber with the study and strategic plan preparation. In April, 2001, the Commission established a 14 person Task Force to guide the master planning process. The Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Task Force represented a wide cross-section of the community and includes business, government and citizen representatives. The Task Force conducted seven meetings and gathered feedback from a variety of groups and individuals to determine the highest and best public use of the land. The Task Force used the input from approximately 300 people to develop the plan recommendations. The Task Force worked with Ingraham & Associates, a planning firm from Minneapolis to prepare this strategic plan.

# Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Task Force



**Task Force Members: Terry Brosseau, Jerry Doan, Elroy Haadem, Buckshot Hoffner, David Jensen, Kim Lee, Claus Lembke, Wayne Martineson, Jerry Marschke, Rod Matzke, Steve Neu, Todd Reidman, Paul Schadewald, Jerry Woodcox.**

## **Focus group, interview and public input summary**

The Task force felt very strongly that the strategic development plan should be based on public input and desires for the site. The Taskforce held focus group meetings, interviews, meetings with service and community organizations and public open house meetings and obtained input from approximately 300 people. The results of those meetings are contained in Appendices. The guiding principles and strategic master plan were prepared based on this input. The following is a general summary of common themes from the public input:

- Improve the site and have facilities for a variety of activities and events. Have quality multi-use facilities and people will come to the site.
- Have indoor facilities for year-round use. Have an area for concerts, 4-H events, performing arts, special events, craft shows, stock shows, equestrian use and dances.
- Clean up the property. Make improvements to the site such as paved roads, landscaping, etc. to enhance the look of the property and to reduce the amount of dust and mud.
- Do not duplicate uses in Bismarck/Mandan.
- Have uses which appeal to a variety of users, groups and individuals.
- Expand Buckstop Junction and have more history related events there.
- Add trails on the site and connect to other area trails. Have trails for winter and summer use.
- Add recreation and community uses.
- Have a fair on the site, but in a different format from the previous fairs. Have a broader variety of activities. Appeal to all ages and both urban and rural interests.
- Have a covered grandstand space for car shows, concerts, trade shows, stock shows, agricultural malls mud races, pulls, etc.
- Restore the wetlands, have nature trails, use the Hay Creek as an amenity and for storm water management.
- Have outdoor areas for carnivals, RV camping, farmers markets, shows, etc. Hold the EXPO at the Fairgrounds site.
- Connect the site to the Outdoor Learning Center.
- Plat the properties and install utilities.
- Explore options for sale of some parts of the site to generate revenue.

- Get broad political and community support for the new plan and site use. Make sure the City of Bismarck is involved with the County.
- Use the site location to attract tourism.
- Have a new name and image for the property.
- Retain the rodeo arena and have facilities for stock shows, horses, etc.
- Explore the potential for horse racing with the State and Mandan.
- Build a broad coalition to manage the property and fund site improvements.
- Plan for new roads and adjacent development around the site.
- There was various input regarding the auto race track. Most people felt an auto track was not needed at the Fairgrounds site, because of the presence of the new race track in Mandan. Others felt the Fairgrounds race track should be retained and improved.

*The Task Force obtained significant public input regarding future use of the site. Over 300 people provided input to the Task Force.*

## **Key Issues and Opportunities**

- Fair attendance and site use has declined.
- Burleigh County is increasingly urban - (approx. 85% Bismarck residents).
- Most County residents still have close ties to the farm and rural life.
- The site has excellent visibility and access.
- Site use has been hampered by dust and mud, due to lack of paved areas.
- Other facilities have been built in the region (i.e. Dakota Park and speedway, Raging River waterpark) that affected site use.
- Car racing has moved to Dakota Park in Mandan.
- Buckstop Junction has been established and has plans for expansion.
- Wetland preservation and storm water retention have become more important.
- Trail use has become one of the most popular recreation activities.
- Better vehicle access and egress is needed for peak events.
- Landscaping and paved roads would enhance the site appearance and function.

## **Guiding Principles**

These principles were developed and approved by the Task Force to guide site use. They were used to prepare the master development plan for the site and formation of the implementation plan and organizational recommendations. These principles are also intended to help guide site development and operation on an on-going basis.

- 1. Focus on public use of the property.**
- 2. Focus on value-added uses. Do not duplicate facilities or activities to the point of damaging other existing area uses.**
- 3. Retain flexibility in use areas.**
  - Have multi-purpose facilities for a series of special events.
  - Ensure year-round use through indoor and winter recreation facilities.
  - Appeal to all age groups with a mix of individual and group activities.
- 4. Formalize the master plan, install adequate infrastructure, and enhance the site appearance - (platting and development plan approval, paved roads, improved access, utilities, electricity, landscaping, signage, etc.).**
- 5. Utilize the unique site features -**
  - Convenient location and visibility.
  - Hay Creek and wetlands.
- 6. Connect to and complement adjacent uses (ND Game & Fish, walk/bike trails, and potential new development areas).**
- 7. Respect the historic character of Buckstop Junction and select uses that do not detract from the historic theme.**
- 8. Obtain buy-in and support for the master plan, phasing, implementation actions, funding strategy, organizational structure, site management and maintenance.**
- 9. Build on the themes of:**
  - History
  - Agriculture
  - Natural resources
  - Recreation
  - Tourism

## Strategic Development Plan Recommendations

The Fairgrounds site strategic development plan is based on public input, the Guiding Principles and Taskforce input. The plan is designed to create a central focus area around an outdoor event center and grandstands. A loop road network would circle the site and provide access to a new indoor arena to be added to the 4-H building. Buckstop Junction will be expanded and the Hay Creek area will be preserved for wildlife habitat, open space and passive recreation. Trails will link the use areas and provide recreation opportunities. The mix of indoor and outdoor facilities is important to allow year-round activity on the site and to provide flexibility for programming of events.

*The Strategic Development Plan shows five different use areas on the site and is based on the Guiding Principles.*

### STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN USE AREAS -

The Strategic Development Plan shows five different use areas on the site. The plan is based on the Guiding Principles and includes removal or relocation of some uses to allow for uses, which have a better fit with the Guiding Principles. The existing race car track would be removed to allow for construction of the grandstand and entertainment area. The Taskforce reviewed the public input record, considered the existing stock car facilities in Mandan and felt that the existing car track duplicated facilities and did not have enough use or support. The entertainment area is sized to accommodate temporary race facilities on an event basis.

The following is a description of the proposed use areas.

**History & Agriculture Area** - This area focuses on an expanded Buckstop Junction. Area is reserved based on the Historical Society plan for expansion of additional streets, building sites and other "town" features. A new parking area is planned to the northwest of the "town". There is area for a crop maze and historic period agriculture demonstration or research related agricultural plots.

**Multi-Use Activity Area** - The area includes indoor and outdoor uses.

**Indoor Arena** - This includes the addition of a 40,000 – 55,000 square foot multipurpose indoor arena onto the existing 4-H/Burleigh County Extension building. The arena addition would expand the function of the existing 4-H building and provide space for indoor activities such as agricultural and community education, festivals, stock shows, dances, community meetings, collector meets, etc. The indoor arena can be used independently or in conjunction with outdoor events. The large indoor space is important in order to allow year-round use of the site. Additional paved parking will be added next to the arena.

**Grandstand and Outdoor Activity Area** - A 3,000-seat grandstand is to be built into the south side of the hill. The grandstand would be the centerpiece of the outdoor activity

area. The grandstand would be covered for shade and rain protection and would have support facilities such as concessions, bathrooms, and maintenance space built into the north side of the structure. Paved parking lots for 600 cars will be located on top of the hill north of the grandstand entrances. The grandstands would be built into the hill and will be designed to allow on-grade circulation off of the parking lot into the top of the grandstands. Additional gravel surface parking is available nearby for peak events. The grandstand will face an open performance space, which can be used for entertainment, trade shows, fairs, collector and swap meets, car shows, etc. Active use areas surround the grandstand and the entertainment area. These active use areas can be used individually or together for large events. They would have a level turf or gravel area which can be used for parking, set up of exhibits, machinery, carnival rides, vendor booths, etc. A paved loop road will surround each active use area.

The existing dirt car t racetrack and grandstands would be removed to allow for creation of the main activity area. The open performance space is large enough to accommodate a temporary racetrack for cars, motorcycles, snowmobile, etc, or could be used for tractor pulls, mud pulls and other similar activities. It is assumed that the open performance space will be set up to accommodate the needs of the particular events, such as fairs, concerts, tractor pulls, cultural festivals, stock shows or rodeos, and it will be a changeable flexible outdoor space.

**Open Space and Recreation Area** - Much of the southern portion of the site is within the floodplain for Hay Creek (see the site analysis diagram). The master plan envisions preservation and enhancement of the creek and wetlands for passive recreation, wildlife habitat and flood water storage. Wetland areas could be enhanced and additional wetlands created to form a "wetland bank". Wetland credits could be sold to developers of other lands within the County, who need to create or replace wetlands on their land. A wetland bank could be a revenue source while enhancing the environmental function of the site. Trail corridors would provide recreation access to this area and link other areas of the site and surrounding area. Trails would be available for walkers, runners, skaters, bicyclists and horses riders. Winter use for cross country skiing, snowmobiling and ice skating would be possible.

The southerly recreation area is located on high ground above the floodplain and is suitable for more active recreation uses. The northeasterly lobe could be used for radio controlled model airplane flights over the wetlands and open space areas. A parking lot can provide access from Apple Creek Road. The area could be used for environmental education, archery, community gardens, bird watching, a dog agility course, Frisbee golf, dog park, and other recreational uses. The existing moto cross area will remain located east of the proposed grandstands.

**Outlots** - The two outlots are intended as parcels reserved for future County use (i.e. for a 911 emergency building) or for sale for other public, industrial or commercial use. ND Game & Fish has expressed interest in a site for their maintenance facility. Sale of the outlots could provide a revenue source for some improvements.

## ACCESS & CIRCULATION -

The master plan proposes enhancing the existing entrance on East Bismarck Expressway with landscaping and improved signage. This would create a defined sense of entry into the site. The existing driveway entrance at Highway 10 would be retained and a loop road would connect the entrances to a new easterly driveway to County Highway 10. A new central bituminous road would provide direct access to the outdoor events area and would act as a central spine for site users and visitors. The road could eventually be extended to complete a loop around the majority of the site. It is important to pave the access roads and landscape them to enhance the image of the site and to create a pleasing experience for visitors and a positive image for the site.

There are site distance issues with the current location of the Apple Road/Bismarck Expressway intersection. The option of shifting the intersection to the north is preserved in both plans. A potential realignment of Apple Creek/Yegen would detach a parcel from the rest of the fairgrounds site. This detached parcel would have excellent access and visibility and would make a good office, service, or industrial site.

*Investment in infrastructure improvements is crucial to the long-term success of the site.*

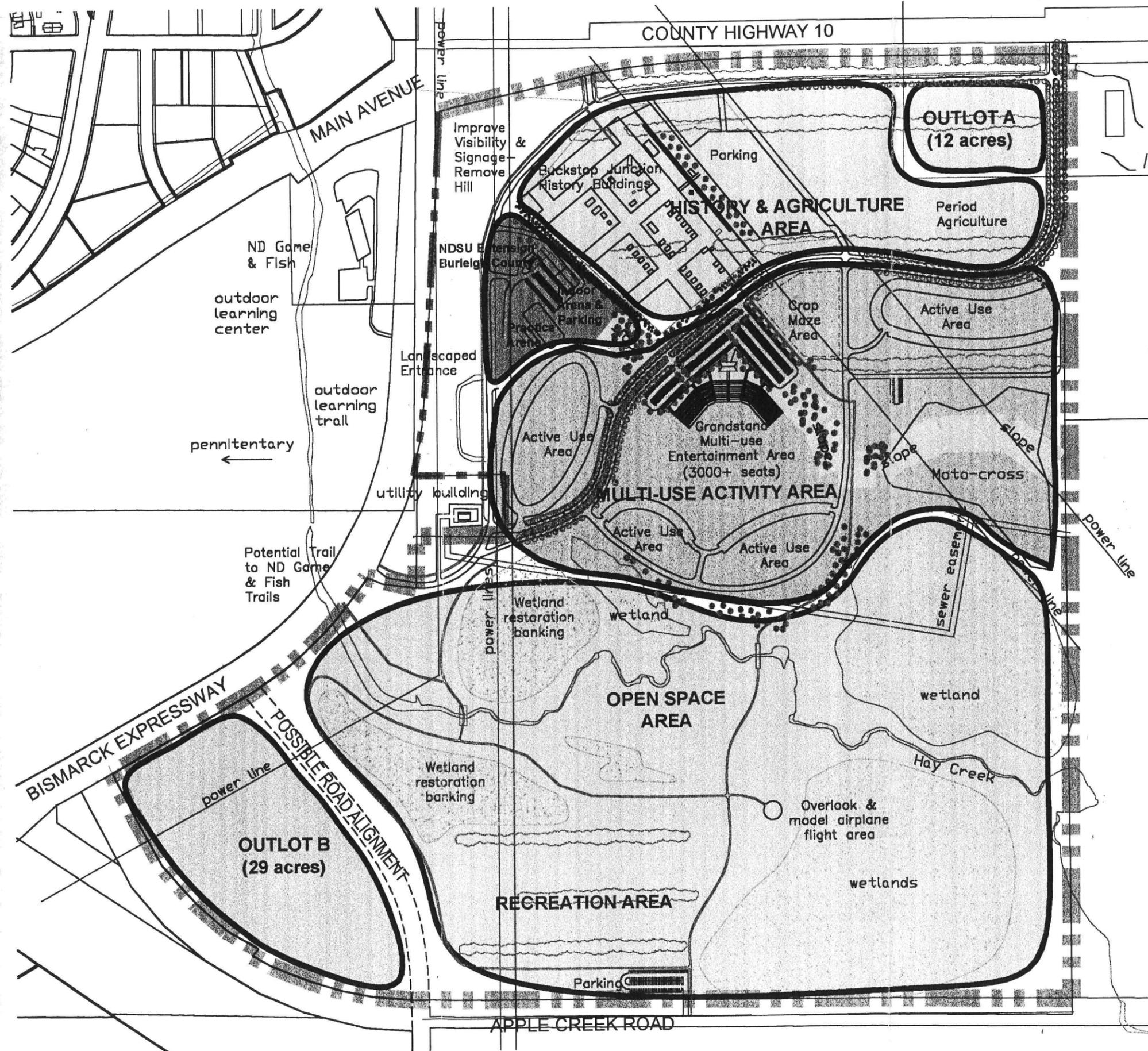
## INFRASTRUCTURE -

The site needs paved roads, landscaping, new signs, paved, gravel and turf use areas, grading, fill of low areas, water, sanitary sewer and electrical extensions. An indoor multi-use arena building is needed to fulfill many of the year -round use needs. The grandstand and active use areas will provide space for almost any outdoor event.

Investment in infrastructure improvements is crucial to the long-term success of the site. It is assumed that the improvements will be constructed in phases over a number of years. The "unfinished" condition of portions of the site (i.e. unpaved use areas which become muddy or dusty, lack of landscaping, etc.) hindered public use of the property. Investments in infrastructure and aesthetic improvements must be made in order to create a functional and attractive site that will attract visitors.

The site development plan should be formally approved as part of a planned unit development and the site should be platted to place the necessary utility easements on the property.

# USE AREAS



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 Minneapolis Minnesota 55414  
 p. 612/377-2500 f.377-1010  
 www.ingraham-associates.com

Burleigh County  
 Bismarck, North Dakota

Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Site  
 Use Area Diagram

project: fairconcept10  
 drawn by: sjw  
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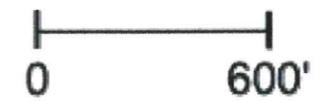


Burleigh County,  
North Dakota

Missouri Valley  
Fairgrounds Site

### Strategic Development Plan

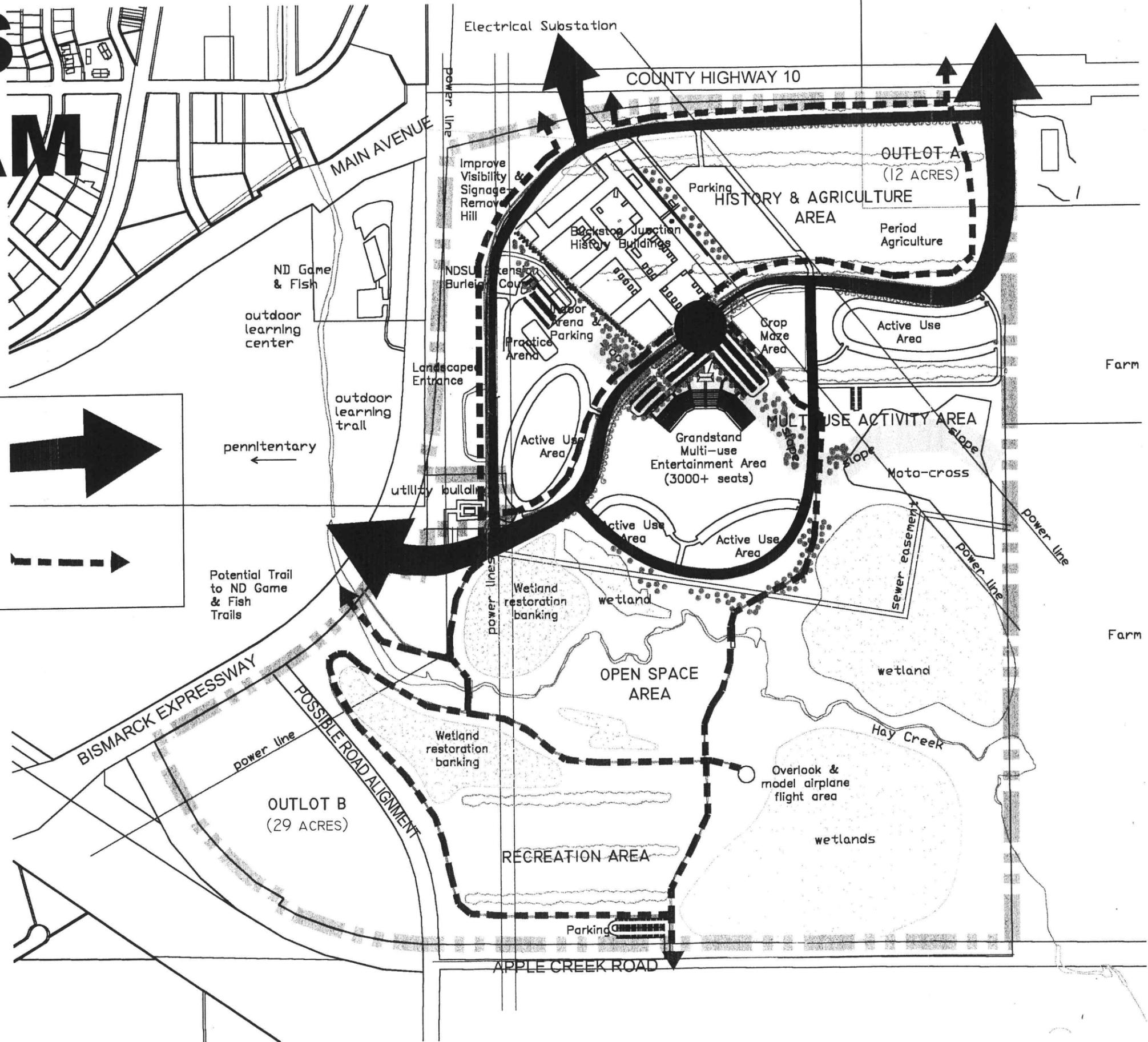
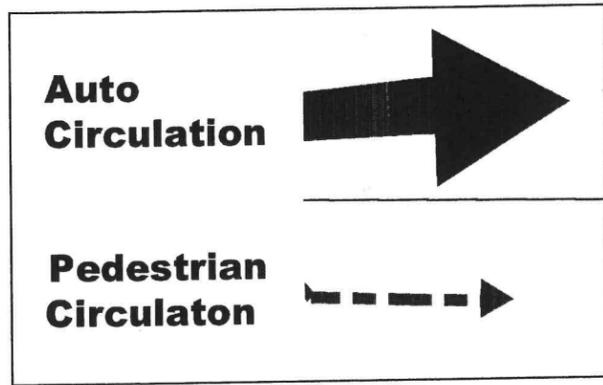
October, 2001



Prepared by:  
Missouri Valley  
Fairgrounds  
Taskforce

Ingraham & Associates Inc.  
Planners & Landscape  
Architects  
1510 Como Ave. S.E.  
Minneapolis, MN 55414  
(612) 377-2500

# ACCESS DIAGRAM



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 1510 Como Avenue Southeast  
 Minneapolis Minnesota 55414  
 p: 612/377-2500 f:377-1010  
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Burleigh County  
 Bismarck, North Dakota

Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Site  
 Access Diagram

project  
 fairconcept10  
 drawn by  
 sjw  
 10/3/01

AD



A horse track should be included in the plan.

The cost estimates seem too high for the arena and grandstands.

A political and funding commitment to the plan. That commitment was not present for the 1988 plan. How can the commitment to the vision be assured?

How will it be phased? Have specific actions, budgets and time periods.

Good plan.

Leadership and belief in the vision is important.

Make the initial improvements and hold a big annual event there to build support and enthusiasm.

Can the plan be phased to retain the race track now and see if it can succeed? Mandan's racing may not succeed long term.

The site clean-up and infrastructure improvements (paved roads, parking, landscaping, etc.) are needed now.

Plan and budget for operation and maintenance.

Have a go-kart track.

Plan for high school and 4-H rodeo.

Re-use some of the facilities on-site.

## **C. Focus group and interview meeting results**

### **Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Strategic Development Plan**

#### **YOUTH FOCUS GROUP**

As part of the Missouri Valley Fairgrounds strategic development planning process, a cross section of area youth attended a two-hour meeting on June 14, 2001 at the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce. The seven youth and students represented six schools and organizations including the Boy Scouts, answered questions and discussed the use of the County land.

#### **TRENDS:**

- Need for emphasizing individual and family events – less group interest
- Need revision of Buckstop junction
  - improvement & expansion of buildings/more buildings like Fort Lincoln/Custer
  - Promotion of events & activities
  - Costumed interpreters/ “living history”

#### **More affordable/free youth activities**

- site for outdoor concerts
  - battle of the bands (10+ bands)
  - special events (i.e. Minot State Fair)
- utilize the 4-H extension building
- Pavilion for teen dance club/live bands (w/ controlled access and perimeter)
  - age specific uses i.e. 16-20, 15-18

#### **Fairground Uses/ Expo:**

- Amusement park & civic center park
- Go cart tracks
- Laser Tag in park setting
- waterslide
- mini-golf
- drive in movie theatre
- collector car expos (i.e Buggys & Blues)
- New race car track at Mandan - don't duplicate
- Planetarium/observatory

#### **Recreation Needs:**

- indoor tennis & sand volleyball
- frisbee golf
- Indoor/outdoor rock climbing/viewing tower/silo/ challenge courses
- Group Camping – used for boyscouts
- Sledding Hill
- connecting trails to Buckstop, Haycreek, Fish & Wildlife Facility
- connecting trails for ATV's & snowmobiles

- promote/improve trail use for biking & rollerblading
- trail loop/tour
- wooded /crop maze (ie Rapid City)
- indoor roller rink
- Graffiti art walls/building

**Talk to schools**

- important to keep teenagers involved/ entertainment for young people
- Eagle Scout project potential – public service
- use donations vs. property taxes

**Focus on:**

- Multi-use, multi age use
- fundraisers
- old car events

## ASSOCIATION FOCUS GROUP

As part of the Missouri Valley Fairgrounds strategic development planning process, seven representatives from area associations attended a two-hour meeting on June 14, 2001 at the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce. The association representatives answered questions and discussed the use of the County land.

### TRENDS:

#### Demographics:

- aging baby boomers
- farm issues (# of people in agriculture declining)
- the amount of land in CRP is increasing
- Bismarck area metro population (85% urban / 15% rural)
- Grade school pop. declining
- Ages 18-34 moving away

#### Issues:

- RV's increasing
- Snowbirds
- Tourism likely to increase
- Native American communities
- Cost of gas- may influence travel distance
- Stock car track moved to Mandan
- Horse racing growth
- Growth in popularity of trails connecting to fairgrounds/links to existing parks
- Wetlands improvements and recreation & hay creek lowlands
- site is an eyesore-alkali dust in August
- Make the wetlands "wet"

### PUBLIC USES:

- Rose garden/conservancy (additional flowers and trees)
  - Combine w/ wetlands / arboretum
  - Incorporate art
- Louis & Clark- RV park/ camping
- need new blacktop surface

### ISSUES:

- State and County fair use is dying out (lost \$750,000 last year in MT andND)
- Trolley to downtown from site
- More golf courses
- Offer Ducks Unlimited the opportunity to restore habitat
- Need new electrical power service
- existing power lines affect public address transmission
- Fair and race track not needed
- There are no RV areas for long term parking in town
- Add walkway from Outdoor Learning Center
- Build Valley Fair style amusement park

- New Raging River commercial recreation area in Mandan
- Summer theatre / amphitheatre site
- Buckstop Junction needs improvements
- Youth concerts got low attendance at Civic Center
  - need outdoor theatre
- special events approach/attract corporate sponsors
  - leased paved ground space w/power & water supply
- lots of outstate hunting and fishing in area
- Ag. is dying out
- Option of selling land back to the state?
- Expo Fair held at the civic center
- don't duplicate services
- improve overall aesthetics, trees, plantings, etc...
- bird watching is popular
- need to involve the private sector and management board & sponsorship

**OPTIONS:**

- #1 Commit to using the site to it's highest and best public use.
  - organized structure- run it as a community wide board (Bismarck-Mandan & Burleigh & business and corporate leaders)
- #2 Convince the state to lift the use regulations & sell the land for private use.

**Concept plan:**

- 1/3 wetland w/open water
- arboretum
- RV park for 200 RV's (part long part short term)
- permanent paved land lease area for: 1 month carnivals & special events
- Need full hookups for RV's and amenities
  - one month time limit for snowbirds and hunters
- Traditional/historical theme w/bed and breakfast, commercial uses at Buckstop
- Lewis and Clark Park

Process recommendation: Need to interview the past fair board participants.

## INTER GOVERNMENTAL AGENCY GROUP

As part of the Missouri Valley Fairgrounds strategic development planning process, six representatives from area government and agencies attended a two-hour meeting on June 14, 2001 at the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce. The inter-governmental representatives answered questions and discussed the use of the County land.

### TRENDS:

- Rural Residential east of site
- Agriculture is declining- 3% of County value
- 69,000 people in Bismarck
- County is 80% urban, 20% rural- trend is consolidation of rural to urban
- Most people have rural roots in the community
- In 500 square miles, only 5 farmers under 40 years old
- Some easterly townships w/only 20 adults
- Increased need for recreation & trails

### ACTIVITIES:

- New baseball (stadium seating) for city to replace the Washington Street field?

#### -CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS NEEDED:

- hard surface parking and roads needed
- building improvements, restorations (ie Buckstop)
- fairgrounds are zoned PUD and must be platted
- Water usage improvements to the wetlands for:
  - bird watching, nature trails,, canoeing?
- Community building for various non-profit organizations
- Regional focus of 4H and Ag extension

### USES: -Trail connections to the city trail network

- Talk with ND Game and Fish
- summer flea market and swap meets periodically (once/month) held at Buckstop
  - semi-permanent building for old style farmers market
- Add community gardens
- Add off leash dog park
- Amusement park
- Summer theatre/Amphitheatre
- Native American Art
- No 4wheelers allowed on site
- Some height restrictions due to airport
- Special events (snowmobile races etc.)
- Gift shop/artists

### EDUCATION:

- Natural History
  - prairie, wetland interpretation
- 1900's working farm (ala Stanton, VA)
- Connection between Heritage Center and Buckstop Junction

-programming and events

County Fair is not possible without a subsidy

A master plan is needed for Buckstop Junction

**MANAGEMENT:**

-Independent groups currently manage their own sites with the County

-A "User Board" for is needed for special events with a contact person and PT staff to deal with the potential uses.

## SERVICE FOCUS GROUP

As part of the Missouri Valley Fairgrounds strategic development planning process, representatives from five area service groups attended a two-hour meeting on June 15, 2001 at the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce. The service group representatives answered questions and discussed the use of the County land.

### TRENDS:

- Aging/Retiring population
  - moving to cities
  - recreation: growing importance
    - paths/trails, other rec.
- Youth recreation is changing
- Greater regional mobility
  - People are mobile & are willing to travel to events & facilities

### SITE ISSUES:

- Site has great access, need to capitalize on it
- Need quality infrastructure
- Site is wet, dusty, swampy
- Buckstop Junction is marginal (needs improvements)
- Powerlines (120' right of way, 230KV lines) restrict site use
- Lack of support and mixed feeling for area
- Need agreement between Bismarck and Burleigh Co.
- Do not compete with Morton Co fair uses or duplicate uses
- Need aesthetic improvements, trees, landscaping
- Infrastructure-lack of utilities and paved roads
- County fair cannot support itself
  - Have a joint County Fair for 4H
  - Have an ag livestock show - -requires buildings and infrastructure

### USES & RECREATION:

- Drag racing
- Snowmobiling
- Bird watching
- special events:
  - flea market
  - craft fairs
  - block parties and food vendors
  - picnics
  - fundraisers
  - Historical/cultural events
- Fairground/livestock shows w/ rodeos & 4H to support agricultural roots
- CC skiing
- Moto-cross

- Children's activity playground, at Buscktop
- City park - east side regional park
- climbing wall
- Less interest in carnivals
- Buggies & Blues style event (hold at Buckstop?)

**TOURISM:**

- A revamped Buckstop w/ ample room to grow
  - A traditional 1800's meal at Buckstop
  - retain the theme
  - "Relive a piece of history"
- Mix of physical activities/facilities with spectator events
- Natural history/interpretive center
- Historical / Agricultural themes
  - i.e. Historic Farm with costumed interpreters "Living History"
- Tie Heritage Center w/Buckstop

Hold a multiple service club gathering at the site?

- i.e. all organizations together for a friendly competition, meal, networking etc.

## **FAIR BOARD FOCUS GROUP**

As part of the Missouri Valley Fairgrounds strategic development planning process, seven members of the Fair Board attended a meeting on July 12, 2001 at the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce.

### **Site Needs and Activities**

- Events that attract people from outside Bismarck.
- Picnic grounds, children's play equipment, soccer, trails, and a softball field.
- Continue to develop the facilities they have and enhance them. It is a work in progress, keep it going.
- History museum
- Improved auto race track. Coordinate use with Mandan.
- Indoor and outdoor horse practice arenas/areas.
- Year-round use with dirt floor and concrete floor arena buildings.
- Expo, ND Winter Show, Bullarama, collector car shows/storage, livestock shows
- Outdoor concerts
- Demolition derbies

### **Issues**

- Lack of City and County cooperation.
- Lack of County commitment to the plan.
- Communications were a problem between the Fair Board and the County.
- The City of Bismarck needs to be an advocate for the site, don't defer to Mandan so much.
- Some people have hard feeling that the drag strip did not get built.
- A public relations effort is needed to get over past issues with the fair and competition issues. Need a new image and a new start.
- Civic organizational support and implementation would be a positive.
- Get businesses back on the Fair Board to help with the fair facility.
- Build quality facilities and people will come.
- Chamber, City, County were not active on the Fair Board.
- County got too specific (micro-management).
- Financial (capital and operating) commitment is needed from the County. Fairgrounds will not be self supporting.

### **Summary and Priority of Issues and Needs**

1. Commitment - County, City and Community support
2. Funding
3. Image -New

## **Interview Session - Marlan Haakenson**

On July 12, 2001 Greg Ingraham conducted a phone interview with Marlan Haakenson. The following is a summary of Mr. Haakenson's comments.

### **Site Activities**

Priorities -

#1. Horse racing track - 5,000 seat grandstand, \$1,000,000 funds from ND Racing Commission, have a 1/4 mile dirt auto race track inside the horse track.

#2. Recreation - Create a lake out of the wetlands for recreation - fishing canoeing, walking, etc.

#3. Special use area - For outdoor shows and business display areas.

#4. Softball fields - For non-programmed use.

### **Organization and Implementation**

Run it like a business.

Have the County run it - i.e the Burleigh County Park Board (five County Commissioners and two business people)

Or,

Set up a JPO Board (County, City, Bismarck Park District, etc.) with County Board to appoint members.

County funding support is needed from \$60,00/year up to \$100,000/year

Rename the area, i.e. to: Burleigh County Multiplex.

Burleigh County is needed in the name to give it as specific geographic location. Missouri Valley is too general.

## Cost Estimate and Funding

A rough estimate of the cost of site improvements is in the range of \$8 million to \$9 million. This does not include expansion of Buckstop Junction other than parking and road changes.

<b>Improvement</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Cost Estimate</b>
Roads	20,000 linear feet paved	\$1,000,000
Parking	600 paved spaces, gravel multi-use areas, 400 gravel spaces	\$ 750,000
Utilities	Water, sanitary sewer, storm sewer, gas and electrical extensions	\$ 400,000
Trails	4 miles paved, 3 miles natural surface	\$ 500,000
Landscaping & Restoration	Site landscaping and turf, wetland restoration, demolition	\$ 450,000
Indoor Arena	40,000 – 55,000 square feet	\$3,400,000
Grandstand	3,000 covered seats with support facilities	\$2,000,000
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,500,000</b>

The above costs are based on estimates of privately bid work. The detailed design of these facilities will further define the costs and any contribution of work by governmental forces can reduce the out-of pocket costs.

It is assumed that the improvements would be done in phases over a period of years. The County may take the major role in the funding and management of the site, but the financial and operational support from the City of Bismarck, the Bismarck Park District, community groups, service organizations, and the public is needed to make the site development successful and to ensure community "ownership" and involvement in the property.

*A commitment of the community and the project partners is needed to ensure a sense of ownership and involvement in the property.*

## Site Name

The proposed use of the site is broader than the Missouri Valley Fairgrounds name implies. The Taskforce recommends that a new name and image be developed for the site and suggested that a community-wide contest be held to develop a new name fitting with the proposed activities and improved image.

## **Implementation & Phasing Recommendations**

The Task Force feels that the Joint Powers Board should establish the project priorities and phasing. The following are the Task Force recommendations to the JPO regarding initial actions:

1. Establish the Joint Powers Organization (JPO). This step is needed to assure buy-in from the key project partners and to establish a broad management group.
2. Plat the property and update the planned unit development (PUD) to formally adopt the Strategic Master Plan. Platting is needed to establish and record easements, lot lines etc. Amending the PUD to adopt the Master Plan gives the plan formal status and allows uses in accordance with the Master Plan.
3. Site clean-up and visual improvements.
4. Install initial infrastructure improvements.
  - a. Pave roads and surface activity areas – Burleigh County
  - b. Install utilities and services lines – City of Bismarck
  - c. Plant trees, seed open soil areas and improve the signs.
5. Build the indoor arena. The Task Force felt it is important to construct a significant project on the site (such as the indoor arena) to create excitement about the fairgrounds site, to increase site use and to demonstrate public commitment to the highest and best use of the property.
6. Install infrastructure improvements.
  - a. Trails – Bismarck Park District
  - b. Wetland restoration, habitat and storm water improvements – ND Game & Fish, and watershed district
7. Other site features and facilities –

The Task Force mentioned the need to begin an annual event at the site that will begin to bring people to the property and to start an on-going tradition of site use.

## **Project Vision**

Belief and adoption of the project vision is one of the keys to long-term project success. All the project partners and the community should believe in the merits of improving the Fairgrounds site and support the basic structure of the master plan and guiding principles. If that support and belief is not present, the highest and best use of the site is not likely to occur.

It is recommended that the Task Force stay in-place until the JPO and advisory group are established. During that time the Task Force should act as advocates and provide information about the plan to the public and organizations. Once the JPO and advisory group are in-place those groups can take over that public information and advocacy role. It is also expected that the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce will continue to be involved in site promotion and coordination.

## Organizational Recommendations

The organizational structure is a key component to successful long-term use of the fairgrounds site. The following items are needed for success:

1. A commitment (funding, staffing and priority status) from Burleigh County.
2. Commitment from the City of Bismarck, Bismarck Park District to support site development and operations.
3. An organizational structure (JPO) that is responsible to the County, but has independence in operations, programming and site use.
4. A designated operating manager or management group.
5. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities for each group.
6. Good communications between the operating group and the Commission.
7. A marketing orientation to use and promotion of the site.
8. A new image and public outreach effort to vendors, users and the public.

The Task Force feels a total team effort involving the County Commission, the City of Bismarck, the Bismarck Park District, the County Park Board, local businesses, service clubs, the community at large, and site users is needed to maximize the benefit of the site to the community. .

The organizational model should be a joint powers organization or JPO consisting of a primary governing board and an advisory group. JPO's are cooperative groups with representatives from different organizations and stakeholders, who come together for a common cause. Examples of successful existing JPO's are the Bowl Authority and the Bismarck Recreation Council. A managing partner should be designated to handle day-to-day operations, etc. Detailed implementation work by larger groups or a committee can be less efficient than a focused effort by one managing entity.

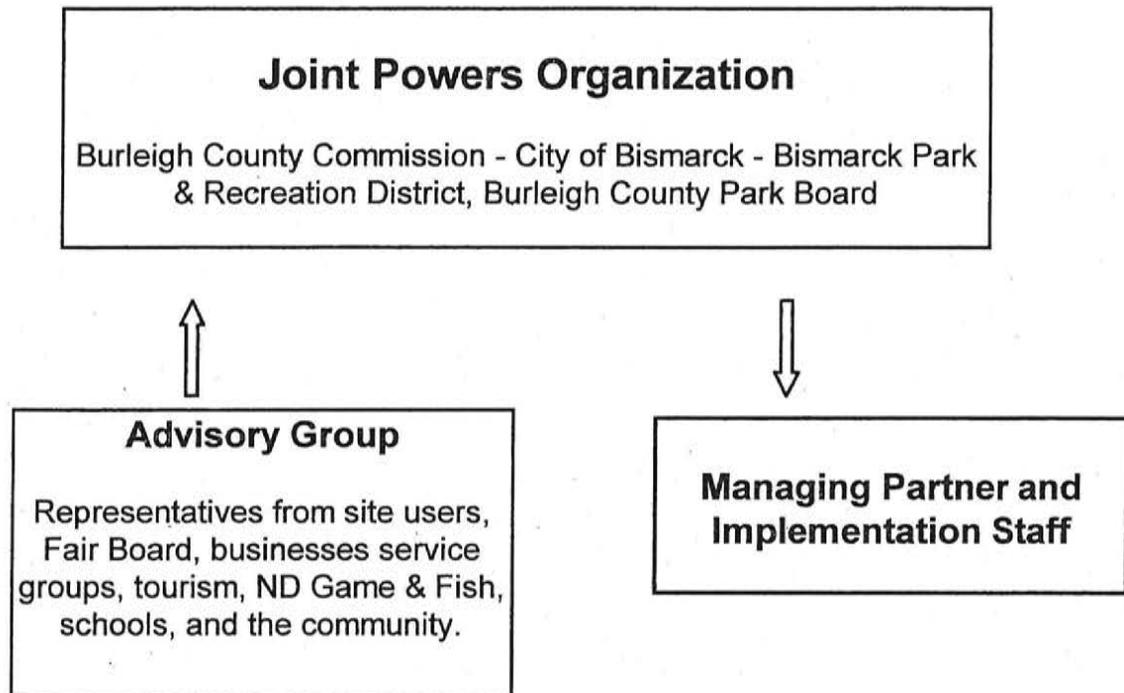
*A total team effort and establishment of a Joint Powers Board are recommended.*

The JPO governing board should consist of representatives of the Burleigh County Commission, Burleigh County Park Board, the City of Bismarck, and Bismarck Park and Recreation District.

The advisory board could consist of site users, fair board members, service club, tourism and community representatives.

The roles and responsibilities of each group should be further defined as part of forming the JPO. The level of commitment of the government and stakeholder groups needs to be determined.

## Fairgrounds Site Organizational Structure Recommendation



### **Potential roles for a three-tier organization -**

#### JPO Board -

Set policy, approve budget, approve general operating plan, provide funding, seek partners, annual oversight of general operations.

#### Advisory Group -

Provide policy and operations recommendations to the Board  
Acts as the "pulse" of the community and site users and visitors

#### Managing Partner and Staff -

Oversees use of site, budget & capital improvement plan (quarterly, annually and five year)

Directs marketing and promotion of the site.

Helps identify partners and site users.

Helps identify funding opportunities.

Implementation actions and day-to day site management.

- Manage capital improvements.

- Seek grants and funding.

- Prepares and tracks budgets.

- Identify, schedule and administer special uses.

- Periodic status reports to Operating Group.

- Marketing and promotion of the site use and development.

- Seek partners.

## Appendices

- A. Site use and programming ideas
- B. Summary of community open house meetings
- C. Focus group and interview meeting results
- D. Letters to the Task Force

## **A. Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Site Use Ideas**

August 31, 2001

The following is a summary of Task Force responses to the list of potential uses for the site.

Concerts, performing arts  
Dances  
Rodeos  
Auto shows (antique and collector)  
Trade shows  
Horse shows and livestock shows  
Flea markets, swap meets, craft fairs, etc.  
Fairs  
Carnivals  
Agriculture education and 4-H  
Agriculture demonstration areas/events  
Crop maze  
Heritage festivals  
Environmental education  
Equestrian arena *indoor and outdoor*, horse stables  
Fierier and blacksmith shop/training  
Farmers market  
Model airplane flying field  
Kite flying  
Community gardens

### History –

Museums  
Living history (costumed historic period interpreters)  
Architecture  
Period commercial uses - shops, artist studios, bed and breakfast, lodging, restaurant, conference center.  
Heritage and history exhibits/events  
Barn raising  
Cultural events  
Ag machinery display and events  
Native American history and culture

### Racing –

Moto-cross  
Track motorcycle  
BMX (bicycle)  
Go-karts

Horse pulls  
Snowmobile  
Mud runs  
Tractor pulls  
Law enforcement driving course  
Truck driving training

Demolition derbies

Youth center - *tie to 4H bldg*

Meeting rooms – *tie to 4H bldg.*

Tent, camper, RV camping, group camping – *for support of events and exhibitors on-site*

Wetlands banking (*restored wetland sold for restoration credit to developers*)

Wildlife habitat

Storm water and floodplain management

Arboretum

Lewis and Clark Bicentennial events

Art and art center

Industrial outlots (for-sale parcels)

Dog shows – agility contests

Recreation -

Trails – Walking, running, bicycle, mountain bike trails, in-line skating, cross-country skiing, horse, snowmobile, wagons rides, greenway corridor

Archery, target range, nature study, bird watching, picnicking, children's play ground, waterslide, laser tag, splat ball, mini golf, Frisbee golf, roller rink, amusement park, skeet/trap shooting, fishing ponds, lake for recreation, regional park, golf course, swimming pool, day camps for children, ice skating rink, indoor shooting/archery range, climbing/ rappelling wall, soap box derby track, equipment rental,

## **B. Summary of Community Open House Meetings**

On October 16, 2001 the Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Site Task Force and the Bismarck-Mandan Chamber of Commerce held two public open house meeting to present the draft strategic plan and to obtain public input. Approximately 100 people attended the meetings. The following is a summary of the meetings and the public input.

### OPEN HOUSE – BURLEIGH COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS SITE Tuesday, October 16, 2001 – 2:00PM & 7:00 PM ND Game & Fish Auditorium

Welcome and brief history by Dave MacIver, President of Chamber

History – Chamber approached by Burleigh County to form Task Force to determine the highest and best public use of the property.

- Formed Task Force of various associations and groups having an interest in the property
- Asked Terry Brosseau of Medcenter One to be Chair of Task Force

Terry Brosseau introduced Task Force members.

- Burleigh County authorized the spending of \$15,000 to hire a consultant
- The Task Force held numerous focus groups to help get ideas of what should be at the site
  - Prepared the Guiding Principles to guide the plan preparation and site use.

Greg Ingraham, Planning Consultant, reviewed a slide show and explained the planning process and the draft strategic development plan.

- 450 acre site (showed location map)
- Site has excellent access and visibility
- Site analysis shows some of property is in a flood plain
- Went over key issues and opportunities for the property
- Went over planning process – how we started and where we are today
- Went over draft of strategic development plan (showed map), showing proposed areas of ag. history, indoor arena, outdoor activity area, grandstands, moto cross area, and area for model airplanes to fly
- Showed access diagram with 3 entrances/exits
- Close-up of proposed outdoor multi use area and a list of some events that could be held there
- Close-up of historic and ag area and some of the uses of that area
- Detail of indoor area and some uses of that area
- Detail area of wetlands and recreation areas and some uses of that area
- Showed the proposed organizational structure:

- Joint Powers Organization consisting of Burleigh County, City of Bismarck and Bismarck Park Board would set policy, approve budget, seek funding, oversight of general operations
  - Advisory Group consisting of representatives from site users, fair board, business service groups, tourism, etc would provide policy and recommendations to the Joint Powers Organization
  - Managing Partner and Implementation Staff appointed by the Joint Powers Organization to oversee site use, budget and capital improvement plan
- Showed cost estimates of \$8,500,000 for total project
  - Showed potential benefits
  - Showed the next steps after the public input meetings today.
  - Asked for public input and comments.

**Public Comments:**

If \$8,500,000 were available in 1988 this meeting would not be necessary.

What uses are there for the 40,000 sq. ft. indoor arena being proposed?

What will be done about the noise levels? Residents complained when the racetrack was being used that it was too noisy.

Will indoor arena have a basketball court?

Leave the racetrack and bleachers where they are.

Have the ability to host a large RV convention at the site.

Don't over build on the site. Leave enough room to have a fair if so desired. Use caution in selling off some of the property.

Don't want to see the racetrack eliminated. Move the outdoor area to leave the stands and racetrack in place.

\$8 million is a lot of money. Who will coordinate this? Where will the money come from?

Retain the racing track and enhance it.

Hold an annual fair and the EXPO on the site. The fair should have a variety of activities.

Combine the fair with 4-H achievement days.

The indoor arena should be designed to accommodate horse and livestock use.

## **Focus Group and Session Questions**

### **Groups: Farwest Rotary Club and Bismarck Exchange Club**

1. **What future trends will influence the region and use of this web site?**
  - shift from rural to urban population center
  - 85% of Burleigh County population resides in the City of Bismarck
  - residential and commercial development adjacent to site
  - future access to open public lands
  - need for specialty and specialized facilities that are currently not available in Bismarck, Mandan or the counties
  - sharing of common services by occupying entities
  - area to hold one-time special events
  - commitment of funding source for development by governmental entity
  - overall management of site
  - management of facilities and grounds
  - shift from rural to urban participation in 4-H and county extension services
  - an agreed to development plan by participating entities
  - commitment to long term maintenance
  
2. **What are the best public uses for the property? What public or community uses or activities would benefit the most people?**
  - storm water management
  - enhance wetlands and natural areas
  - year-a-round recreation trails connected to Hay Creek trails
  - nature trails
  - keep all land public
  - develop multi-use area/facilities
  - don't duplicate existing facilities in Bismarck/Mandan
  - community open space banked for the future
  
  - new campground for general public use and for activities at the site
  - re-develop race track for multi-use
  - cover grand stand
  - outdoor ag shows
  - support buildings for multiple activities and events
  - outdoor environmental learning center
  - continuation of Hay Creek project

- outdoor concert venue
- get rid of car race track

3. **What uses would attract you and/or your organization to the site?**

- community gardens
- 9-hole par three executive golf course
- large multi-use outdoor and indoor arena for rodeo, cattle shows, horse clubs, concerts, and other ag-related events
- asphalt and grass midway
- adequate support facilities
- community flea markets
- farmers market
- horse boarding stables
- riding arena
- horse trails
- paved roads and parking lots
- a good rodeo grounds
- mountain bike trails
- better maintenance and appearance of the site
- Bismarck Parks and Recreation manage the operations with development partners
- bird watching
- grandstands at the motor cross track
- meeting space
- cross-country skiing
- snowmobiling
- develop fish ponds
- bird watching blinds
- nesting areas
- indoor archery range
- 3-D walking range for archery
- large park that has interests to all family
- finish facilities to have state, regional and national appeal for attracting events to Bismarck/Mandan

4. **Which exiting land uses are appropriate and should they remain?**

- wet lands and flood plain
- Buckstop Junction
- 4-H building
- motor cross
- trading of trees and dirt no longer appropriate for future development
- rodeo grounds

5. **Is there a need for a “county fairgrounds?”**

Generally, both groups agreed that we do not need county fairgrounds, as we know them. Facilities should be developed to accommodate multiple activities and events. A “fair” of whatever fashion could be one of them.

6. **How can year-a-round use be maximized?**

- year-a-round support facilities
- on-site occupation
- further development of Buckstop Junction, Tappen Hotel and church
- completion of 4-H building
- riding arena
- winter activities on site (cross-country skiing, snow shoeing, and snowmobiling)

7. **How can the sites’ natural features (green space, wet lands and a creek) be used?**

- continuation of Hay Creek Corridor project
- development of urban wildlife area
- nesting area
- fish ponds
- outdoor learning center
- storm water management

**Other comments:**

- need pedestrian underpass under Expressway from Game and Fish Owls Project to fairgrounds site
- provide for development of new intersecting road from Yeagan Road to Expressway
- manage grounds for community interest (Bismarck/Mandan), not a few special interest groups

## **Summary of the Downtowners Business Association focus group.**

1. What future trends will influence the region and use of this site?

Median age is increasing, Influx of new residents from smaller communities attracted by “metropolitan flare” and growing need for commercial land.

2. What are the best public uses for the property? What public or community uses or activities would best benefit the most people?

Activities with mass appeal (i.e. family activities, N.D. state fair, amusement park etc.), Tourist attractions (a place for residents to show visitors.)

3. What uses would attract you and/or your organization to the site?

Nature area, Entertainment, Art/History Museum, Horse racing, Family activities, Public Golf Course, Circus, Amusement park etc.

4. Which existing land uses are appropriate and should they remain? See the attached map.

Existing wetlands work to define landscaping & natural environment. Increase economic activity to increase Bismarck’s tax base.

5. Is there a need for a County Fairgrounds?

No.

6. How can year-round use be maximized?

Availability of season appropriate outdoor entertainment/activities coupled with indoor exhibits, made possible by a mix of public and private businesses and contributors.

7. How can the site’s natural features (green space, open space, wetlands and a creek) best be used?

Great Landscaping potential, Golf course, “Let the big corporation do it as their cost for the land.”

**D. Letters to the Task Force**



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**lands Strategic Development Plan**

**Focus Group and Interview Session Questions**

1. What future trends will influence the region and use of this site?

LEWIS + CLARK BICENTENNIAL; WESTERN EVENTS; SUMMER OUTDOOR EVENTS

2. What are the best public uses for the property? What public or community uses or activities would best benefit the most people?

SUMMER OUTDOOR EVENT (paid admission and no-pay); PUBLIC PICNIC  
MOTORCYCLE; TRUCK-MUD RACES; RV STORAGE; BASKETBALL/BESTBALL/  
SOCCER

3. What uses would attract you and/or you organization to the site?

NATIVE AMERICAN CULTURAL EVENTS; L+C BICENTENNIAL EVENTS

4. Which existing land uses are appropriate and should they remain? See the attached map.

5. Is there a need for a County Fairgrounds?

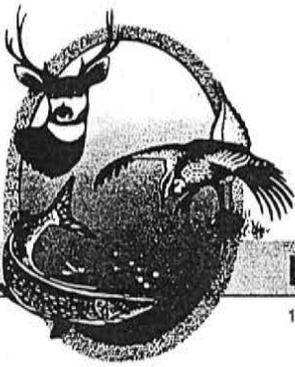
Does "demand-supply" principle apply here?

6. How can year-round use be maximized?

Can't be done w/out indoor facilities. You may try snowmobile races w/snow.

7. How can the site's natural features (green space, open space, wetland and a creek) best be used?

Create park w/ recreational facilities: volleyball;  
"super" play ground



"VARIETY IN HUNTING AND FISHING"

**NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT**

100 NORTH BISMARCK EXPRESSWAY BISMARCK, NORTH DAKOTA 58501-5095 PHONE 701-328-6300 FAX 701-328-6352

June 12, 2001

GERRI HUSCHKA  
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE  
PO BOX 1675  
BISMARCK ND 58502-1675

Dear Gerri:

Attached is a summary of comments received from from the Fisheries, Wildlife, Conservation and Communication and Administrative Divisions of the ND Game & Fish Department. This was the focus group that that worked with for the Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Task Force. Note that the attached map shows suggested locations for a natural area and for a Game and Fish shop facility.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Paul T. Schadewald".

Paul T. Schadewald, Chief  
Administrative Services Division

Enc.

# Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Strategic Development Plan

## Focus Group and Interview Session Questions

1. What future trends will influence the region and use of this site?

Growth will increase demand for activities of a variety of types. This will make the Fair Ground open space more valuable. Storm sewer/drainage will cause more flooding of part of the area.

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2. What are the best public uses for the property? What public or community uses or activities would best benefit the most people?

Walking paths, biking trails, natural area, 4H/livestock activities, indoor shooting range, cross country skiing.

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Flood control.

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3. What uses would attract you and/or your organization to the site?

Natural areas.

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Could construct a shop/maintenance facility for the Game and Fish Department, rather than purchasing other land.

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4. Which existing land uses are appropriate and should they remain? See the attached map.

Historical buildings and Extension should remain; 4H and livestock arena should remain.

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5. Is there a need for a County Fairgrounds?

No - not the traditional type. It should have a broad multi-purpose role.

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6. How can year-round use be maximized?

Develop the area emphasizing historical, 4H and natural area/walking/biking trail activities. Drag strips and auto race tracks are not needed-- would not be used often.

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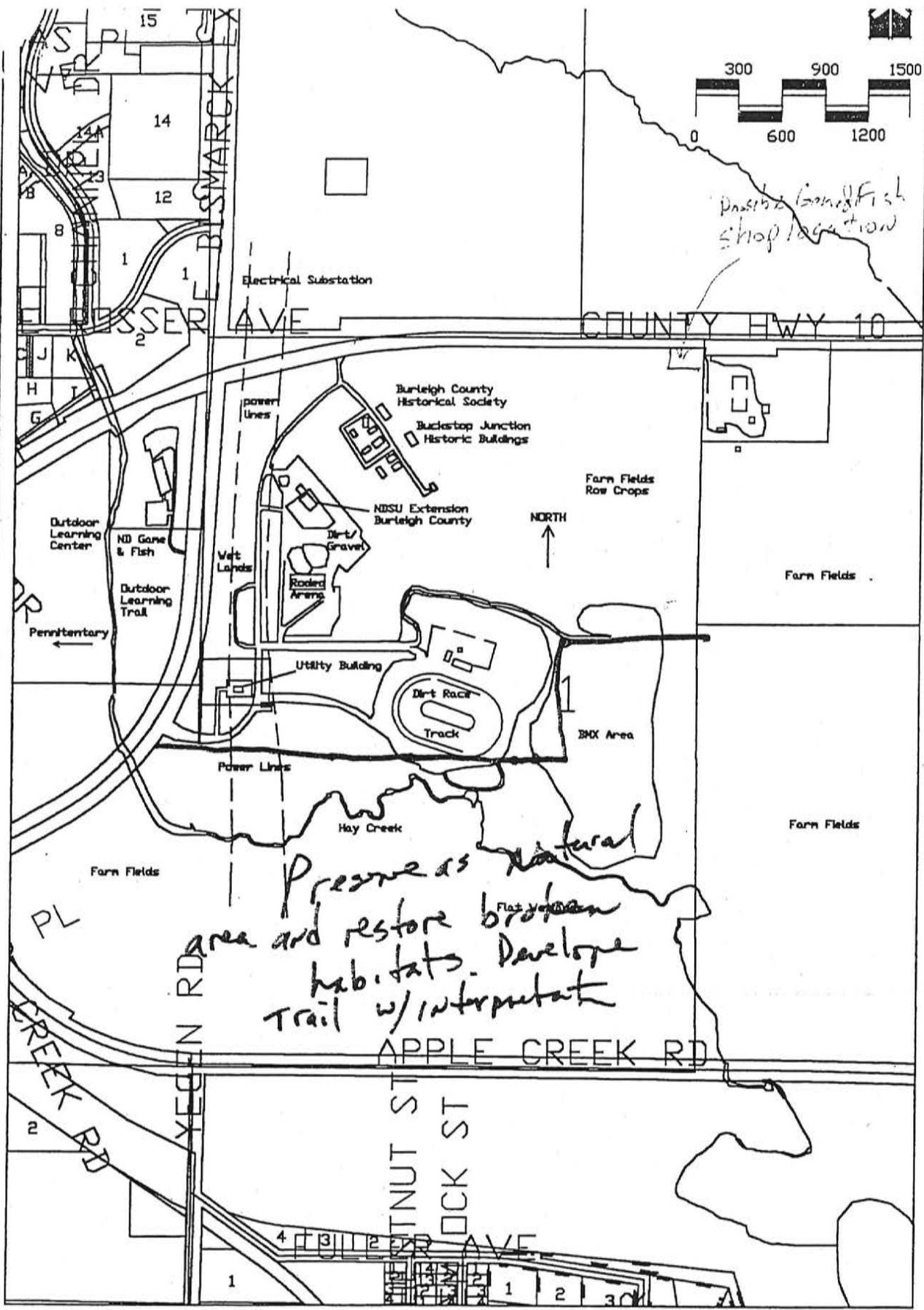
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7. How can the site's natural features (green space, open space, wetland and a creek) best be used?

Have Game and Fish, City of Bismarck, and other related groups form an action group to plan and develop. Set the boundary and let them develop it. They have expertise and dollars.

---

---



A

VP/PA/KA  
S/W  
4/5/01

Missouri Valley Fairgrounds

City of Bismarck  
North Dakota

INGRAM ASSOCIATES  
 1810 Cass Avenue, Bismarck, ND 58104  
 P: 701-257-3800 FAX: 701-257-4910  
 www.ingram-associates.com

Think of what that would do to the new breed of extension agents around the state trying to give advice to farmers. And I believe it would attract non-agriculture tourists as well. Properly managed, I foresee it having more annual visitors than the Bismarck Zoo, which currently has a major economic impact in Bismarck. And it probably would become a "must see" visiting spot for high school kids who come to the state capital to view the legislature (as the Heritage Center is now).

The surrounding farm land could be utilized to demonstrate these new agricultural practices. Arrangements could be made with the State Land Board to lease the section of land to the north to utilize as pasture for the facility during the summer months. The Game and Fish Department could be kept very busy re-stocking their fishing area by their building as children who accompany their parents to the mall could having an enjoyable experience while their parents do their thing.

Buckstop Junction would benefit by having more visitors coming to see them and it would be a great complement and contrast to the theme park which is looking at new ideas for agriculture.

While visitors would be coming all year round to the mall, an annual fair on those grounds could showcase the mall even more, as well as provide the traditional entertainment and activities of a county fair. I am sure there are many groups in Burleigh County that could be convinced to have their annual shows as part of the Fair, similar to what 4-H clubs do when they hold their Achievement Days in conjunctions with fairs. It benefits both groups. Dog shows, exotic bird shows, horse shows, etc all fall into that category. The features of the mall allows for a strong base for the fair.

As you can see, I am excited about the possibilities and would be happy to share this concept in more detail with your committee or the consultants that you will be working with.

Please feel free to contact me if you share that excitement.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chuck Fleming". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Charles Fleming

AGRICULTURE MALL AND THEME PARK  
A Showcase for Innovative Ideas in Agriculture

Introduction

Agriculture continues to undergo massive changes in this country. Farm numbers continue to dwindle as farmers find it increasingly difficult to make a profit from traditional agricultural enterprises. The ever increasing requirement for high-capital expenditures has made it even more difficult for farmers to maintain the necessary economy of scale to survive. And while most farmers want to continue farming, they have not been sufficiently exposed to unique and alternative agricultural opportunities that show them how to use their existing resources to generate an adequate income.

Producers of food, fiber or manufactured items are looking for "unique" or "niche" markets to sell their products.

Farmers need access to information that will allow them to make intelligent decisions about potential ways to increase their income from unique agricultural enterprises. Basic production information, financial data, market development and appropriate training rarely exist or are not readily available for these enterprises. Research data is scarce and scattered. An infrastructure, such as is available to assist traditional agriculture, is not available. Experimental station farms, farm shows and seminars provide farmers with some information, but not first hand opportunities to view potentially successful non-traditional agriculture enterprises.

Background

In May of 1991, on behalf of North Dakota Governor George Sinner, I embarked on a 3,000 mile tour of the Great Plains to visit unique agriculture enterprises. Our hope was that I could find one or two ideas that could change the agriculture economy of North Dakota in a dramatic fashion such as happened with the introduction of sunflower and dry edible beans during previous decades. I was not able to find that easy solution, but I did observe many people making a living from interesting, non-traditional agriculture operations. Some were also applying new and different production and management techniques to traditional agriculture enterprises, resulting in a more successful farm business.

That trip convinced me that if farmers were exposed to these unique kinds of enterprises with appropriate production, financial, market and training information, it would create great opportunities for them to adjust their current farm situations into more viable operations. It is impractical for most individuals to travel around the country looking at unique enterprises as I did. Even if individuals could make such a trip, gathering detailed data, particularly financial information, from private entrepreneurs is very difficult.

## Proposal

The proposal is to develop an agriculture mall and theme park that would serve as a showcase for innovative ideas in agriculture.

The agriculture mall and theme park would include:

1. production of unique agricultural products
2. processing of traditional and non-traditional agriculture products
3. use of non-traditional production and management practices on traditional agriculture ventures
4. display unique agriculture ideas that farmers have developed
5. development of energy supplies and practical applications for on-farm use
6. non-farm enterprises that farmers might operate on their farm
7. a theme park to attract tourists, non-farmers and youth to help boost the financial stability of the mall and interest people in the importance of agriculture and the potential for opportunities in agriculture that aren't apparent to them now.

It is important to point out what this is not. It is not an experimental farm. It is not designed to replace the research that has been and is taking place at our land grant college experimental stations in North Dakota or around the country. It is an effort to put in one place a variety of activities that have been successful around the country.

Each activity or "enterprise" developed at the mall should produce at least \$6,000/year income; the purpose of the mall would be to demonstrate on a scale that provides sufficient income to allow the farmer to stay on the land. The enterprises would be managed so interested individuals could observe and access all the necessary production, financial and marketing information needed to make an informed decision concerning application to their farm operation. Potentially, the mall might also be able to provide training to interested individuals.

The mall and theme park would feature a wide variety of activities such as harvesting raspberries for juice for urban markets; milking sheep to produce roquefort cheese; raising chickens that produce low cholesterol eggs; feeding aspen trees, processed feedlot wastes and crop residues to livestock; developing energy supplies from animal wastes; and producing pregnant mare serum for the pharmacy market. The list is endless, but the key factor is developing profitable alternatives.

The mall and theme park would be interesting and attractive for non-farm visitors. It would encourage visitation by youth groups and might eventually become part of an internship program offering academic credit for college students majoring in agriculture.

Young people would have activities available to them while their parents view the facility. Fish ponds, rides on go-carts fueled by electricity from methane gas produced from animal wastes, a hatchery to observe the birth of poultry, the viewing of Clydesdale draft horses standing next to miniature horses and wild horses that are descendents of Sitting Bull's herd and the making of homemade ice cream are just a few examples to attract youth to the facility and give them a great learning experience.

On display would be inventions and ideas that farmers have come up with to simplify farm tasks. Several national farm magazines have run these ideas for many years in their publications. Publications would be available showing how farmers can manufacture these items in their farm shop.

The mall would include energy and conservation practices that farms have successfully utilized around the country. Displays and practical application of solar power, wind power, anaerobic digesters, tractors powered by wood gasifiers, and composting would be featured.

Non-farm enterprises that would create income would also be featured, such as a country store, youth dude ranch, bed and breakfast, barn dances, vocational agriculture and other educational programs.

#### Organization

The agriculture mall and theme park would be structured as a non-profit organization. Once it is fully organized and properly capitalized, the sale of products and services would allow the enterprise to be self sustaining.

Each enterprise would include the production of non-traditional agriculture products or use unusual production or management techniques that could be successful.

The organizations would be divided into seven divisions: livestock, plant, processing, energy and conservation, farm ideas and inventions, non-farm enterprises, and administration and development.

#### Financing

The major costs of establishing the agriculture mall and theme park are for land, buildings, livestock, equipment and seed stock. Initial input costs for fertilizer, feed, fuel, labor etc. are also required. Additionally, if farmers, tourists, youth, etc. are given the opportunity to observe these practices, there are other costs not normally associated with a traditional farm operation. The non-farm enterprises would attempt to recapture some or all of those extraordinary costs. One million dollars for initial capitalization and operating costs would be required to successfully implement the plan.

#### Summary and Conclusion

Agriculture is changing and farmers must adapt if they are to survive. Opportunities exist for farmers to better utilize and maximize their resources, but sufficient information is not readily available to them. The agriculture mall and theme park could be a major resource in strengthening agriculture across the region.

The opportunity to observe and study successful farm scale non-traditional agricultural enterprises and non-traditional production and management practices on traditional agricultural enterprises would present tremendous opportunities for those wanting to take advantage of them.



SWENSON, HAGEN & CO. P.C.  
PLANNING CIVIL ENGINEERING SURVEYING  
SITE DESIGN CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT

April 19, 2001

Claus Lembke  
Burleigh County Commissioner  
250 57<sup>th</sup> Avenue Northwest  
Bismarck, ND 58501

Re: Burleigh County Fairgrounds Development Master Plan

Dear Claus:

The Burleigh County Water Resource District at their April 9, 2001 meeting authorized me to notify you and those working on the long-range planning for the Burleigh County Fairgrounds regarding issues related to development within the Hay Creek Corridor. During the past few years the District has worked on a cooperative project with the Bismarck Parks and Recreation District and the City of Bismarck related to storm water management, water quality and flood plain issues within this corridor. Recently the scope of the assessment area was expanded to include the lands located within the fairgrounds. This effort is partially funded by an EPA Section 319 grant through the North Dakota State Health Department. Our goals include maintaining water quality, preventing erosion and maintaining green space. Subsequently, we are considering establishing a development control line to prevent undesirable development within the flood plain and adjoining properties.

One of the District's concerns is the Hay Creek flood plain, which as you know is very wide and affects a significant portion of the fairground's properties. The Corps of Engineers, through the North Dakota State Water Commission and at the District's request, is in the process of revising the 1985 Flood Insurance Rate Map's (FIRM) for this segment of Hay Creek. While a completion date has not been determined we hope to have the preliminary mapping sometime this summer.

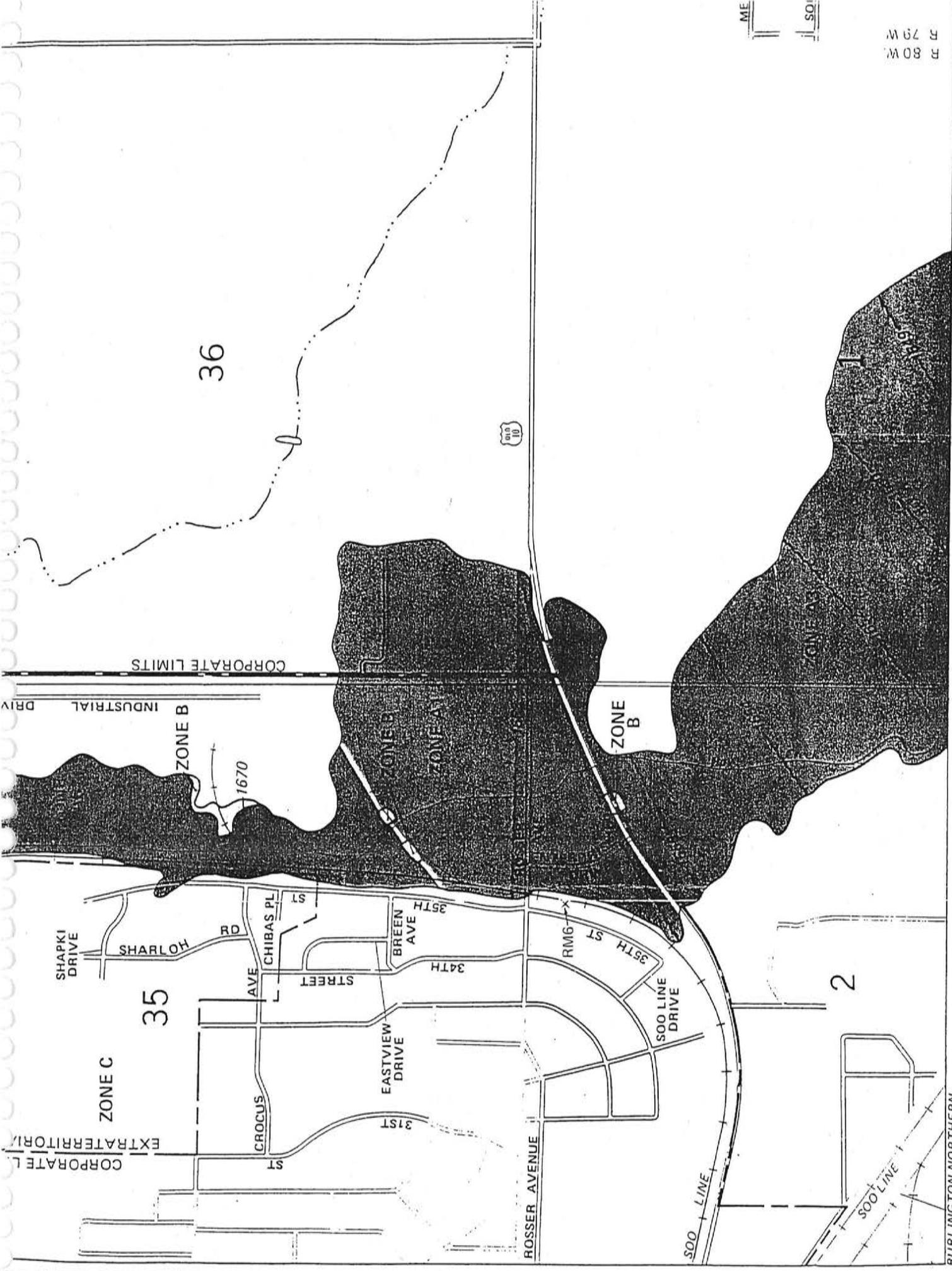
Subsequently, the District requests that a planning committee representative and your consultant schedule a meeting to discuss your goals and objectives with Section 319 partners prior to advancing too far into their assessment. The purpose is to inform you about our efforts and concerns, to establish a dialog on complimentary issues and to avoid those issues that may be counter productive or result in unnecessary work.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter. Please feel free to contact me at your convenience.

Sincerely,

Michael H. Gunsch, P.E.  
Project Manager

c: Terry Brosseau, Chairman Fairgrounds Committee  
Ken Royse, Chairman Burleigh County WRD  
Steve Neu, Bismarck Parks and Recreation District  
Mel Bullinger, Bismarck City Engineer



CORPORATE LIMITS

INDUSTRIAL DRIVE

ZONE B

1670

ZONE B

ZONE A

ZONE B

SHAPKI DRIVE

SHARLOH RD

CHIBAS PL

ST

STREET

EASTVIEW DRIVE

31ST

CROCUS AVE

ST

RD

35TH

34TH

35TH

ROSSER AVENUE

RMG ST

35TH

35TH

35TH

35TH

35TH

35TH

SOOL LINE DRIVE

SOOL LINE

2

SOOL LINE

BURLINGTON NORTHERN

35

ZONE C

CORPORATE LIMITS

EXTRATERRITORIAL

36

10

1670

1670

1670

1670

1670

1670

1670

1670

## MISSOURI VALLEY FAIRGROUNDS

To: Interested Parties

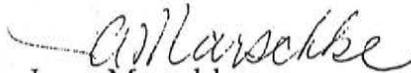
From: Jerry Marschke, Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Coordinator

Date: May 25, 2001

I am sending this Events Calendar and a map of our Fairgrounds to you for informational purposes. I hope that you will review it and return information to me that is not correct or that should be added. Events that were scheduled or committed and are not included will receive our immediate attention and we will try to include them.

I would also remind all who have had lease arrangements with the Fairgrounds in the past will have to renew them with the Burleigh County Commission. I will be able to assist you.

Thanks to all who have been so helpful. We will be glad to hear from you with suggestions for the future use & scheduling of the Fairgrounds.



Jerry Marschke  
Missouri Valley Fairgrounds  
Coordinator  
3715 East Bismarck Expressway  
Bismarck, ND 58504  
Phone: (701) 250-7790

cf: Burleigh County Commissioners, Kevin Glatt, ElRoy Haadem, Jon Mill, Terry Brosseau, Wayne Martineson, Steve Neu, Bis/Man Chamber, CVB, Buckstop Junction, Todd Reidman, Dan McDonald, Terry Thompson, Rod Matzke, John Gartner, Bismarck Civic Center, Richard Riha, Shawn Zrowka, Patsy Jordan, Al Dukart, Alan Wood, Jon Craven, Bill Wocken, Geo Schmaltz, Clyde Thompson, Arnie Zent, Northland 4-Wheelers,

# MVFG EVENT SCHEDULE

May 25, 2001

		AREA (See Map on Back)
<b>MAY</b>		
	30	Bismarck Mtd Police 6
<b>JUNE</b>		
	2	High School Rodeo 6
	2	Therapeutic Horse Ride 4, 2
	8	Rough Stock Rodeo 6
	9	Late Model Stock Cars 11
	13	Bismarck Mtd Police 6
	27	Bismarck Mtd Police 6
<b>JULY</b>		
	8	Jordan World Class Circus 5,6,7,8,10
	11	Bismarck Mtd Police 6
	15	Buckstop Junction Flea Mkt 2
	25	Bismarck Mtd Police 6
	29	Northland Four Wheelers 9
<b>AUGUST</b>		
	2	Burleigh Cty 4H Achievement Day 4,6
	3	Burleigh Cty 4H Sm Am Achievement Day 4,6
	4	Burleigh Cty 4H Static Achievement Day 4,6
	5	Lincoln JC's Demo Derby 4,6
	8	Bismarck Mtd Police 6
	19	Buckstop Junction Flea Mkt 2
	22	Bismarck Mtd Police 6
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>		

# Missouri Valley

HISTORICAL SOCIETY

July 30, 2001

Dave Ingraham  
1510 Como Ave SE  
Minneapolis, MN 55414

RE: Missouri Valley Fairgrounds

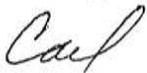
Last week I received a copy of your concept plan from Buckshot Hoffner. Following are a few of my comments.

- I am pleased to hear the fairgrounds property is being discussed by a such diverse group of individuals.
- I have received considerable positive feedback from the public regards cooperation/assistance from the Game & Fish and Parks Departments in developing multiple uses of the property.
- The area you have identified as "Corn Maze Area" is presently being used as a parking area for Buckstop Junction functions. This is within the utility easement.
- The parking area you have identified northwest of the 4H building is in an area that probably requires dirt work and powerline modifications. Since the townsite fills their existing parking lot during the Cornfeed, do you feel the designated parking areas are sufficient?
- The Amphitheater appears to be located within the area leased to Buckstop Junction. It also looks like it occupies part of a street we plan to construct yet this summer.
- When I provided engineering services a few years ago for grading around the rodeo arena, we were attempting to improve the area around an existing asphalt pad. I did not like using such flat grades, but it was the only apparent solution given the parameters. If the group desires to maintain the arena in this area, I suggest the area be elevated so it can be graded with reasonable slopes.

I am enclosing a couple drawings which depict some current plans for the lease area.

Although I work outside the Bismarck area, if you have any questions, generally I can be reached at 701-873-4333 Monday-Thursday during normal work hours and at 258-6787 Friday-Sunday and 6:30-9:00 weekday evenings.

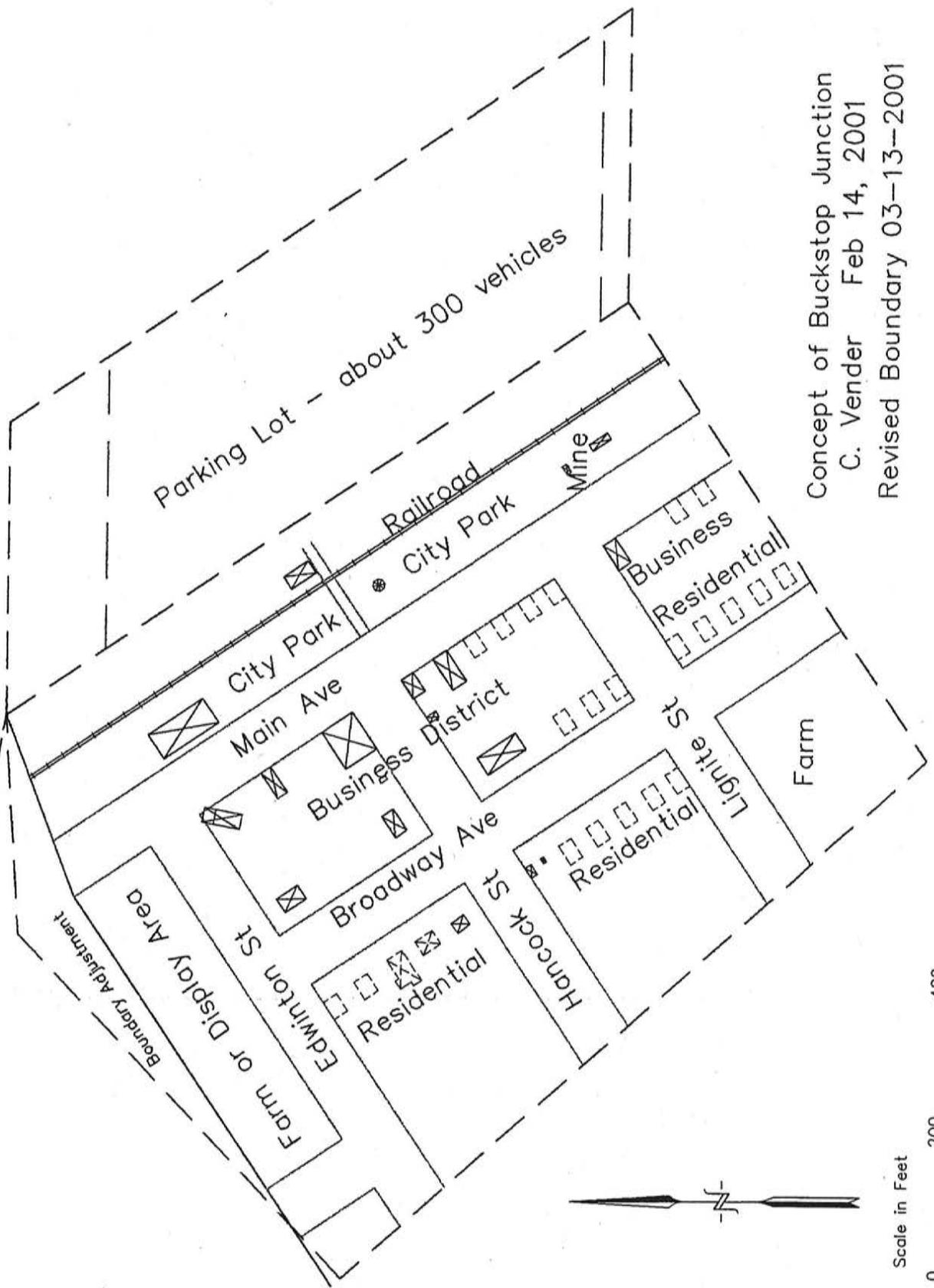
Sincerely,



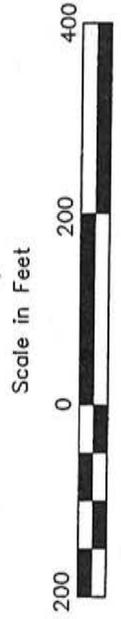
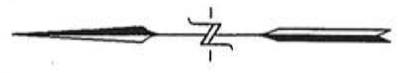
Carl S. Vender  
President

S80°21'11"E 1,442.3'0

Parking Lot - about 300 vehicles



Concept of Buckstop Junction  
C. Vender Feb 14, 2001  
Revised Boundary 03-13-2001



## Burleigh County Extension Advisory Committee Comments (June, 2001)

### What future trends will influence the region and use of this site?

- The tourism aspect should be at the forefront. We need more park space with trailer hook-ups. We need bike and walking trails for the public.
- I think the quality of life issues are important to our community. An indoor equestrian facility would add to our availability of recreational activities. Other sports activities that could be year round include indoor swimming pool, indoor golf putting and miniature folk, indoor track.
- Economic Prosperity
- Residential growth in the area.
- Bismarck/Mandan will continue to grow as a regional trade location and population will continue to increase. I believe people are looking for "natural" outdoor experience where they can play, be entertained and relax.
- Increase in elderly population. Fewer farm children.

### What are the best public uses for the property? What public or community uses or activities would best benefit the most people?

- Our winters are so long, any indoor facilities would be a tremendous asset and would appeal to a tremendous number of people. I believe an indoor horse, golf or swimming would be highly utilized.
- The above suggestions in #1 would also not only be for public but also for the local youth and community organizations.
- Fairs, Rodeo Events, Races, etc. Rental Facility for Group Gatherings (weddings, family reunions, etc), Concerts, Arts/Crafts Shows
- Could a western-themed swimming pool be built? I just read a "letter to the editor" about the long-line for pool. Is there a need for another pool and would this be an accessible location to attract kids.
- Flea Markets; Expo; Dog Shows; Art and Craft Shows
- Museum, Historical Center, Fairs, Career Fairs, Horseback Riding activities, Ag days/Exhibits, Camping, 4-H displays

### What uses would attract you and/or your organization to the site?

- A well kept and safe park complete with paved trails. We need park tables and covered areas for picnic area. We need a certified kitchen for catering and service.
- A state of the art equestrian facility would be a tremendous addition to the recreational opportunities available in Bismarck. Many horse related events are canceled due to weather or lack of available facilities. Stalls should be available for out of town and out of state participants.
- Affordable rental fees, catering services
- We would like to hold a cattle sale in the back of the 4-H Building, pending there be a wash area provided.
- None specifically, other then what has been indicated on other questions.
- A nice well-kept area with a variety of entertainment possibilities.
- Horseback riding, Museum, Nature Walk, Fairs

## Burleigh County Extension Advisory Committee Comments (June, 2001) (continued)

### Which existing land uses are appropriate and should they remain? See the attached map.

- All existing facilities provide appeal to different people. The outdoor riding facility should be redone and incorporated within the new equestrian facility.
- The fairground for rodeo and car races should be improved and kept. Buckstop Junction could be a real tourist asset.
- Looks good as is.
- Buckstop Junction, Ag Extension, Rodeo Grounds are appropriate uses and consistent with natural, western outdoor environment. Motocross and dirt track seem inconsistent with other use and western theme. Also, with dirt track in Mandan, is this use necessary.
- All of the current uses seem appropriate.
- All uses seem appropriate

### Is there a need for a County Fairgrounds?

- Yes, I think so because there is more interest now in rodeo and livestock shows.
- No. State Fair provides enough fair activities.
- Yes. A county fair is essential to community building.
- Only if there is adequate funding provided to facilitate different functions.
- Possibly - Expo could be held there.
- Yes
- Yes, get weckend fair to include more than just midway rides

### How can year-round use be maximized?

- Allowing cross country skiing, snowmobile trails and use of the 4-H arena for shows (dances) food!
- An indoor equestrian facility would have widespread year round use by a variety of groups - 4-H (for shows and clinics), team roping, team penning, riding lessons, an indoor warm place to ride and exercise animals during winter months.
- Heat the arena, use it for riding groups, indoor rodeos, etc.
- Nature and wildlife trails, hiking, cross-country trails for winter use.
- Cross-country skiing, ice skating rink, snowmobile races.
- Sleight rides, 4-H camps for city kids, Scouting?

## Burleigh County Extension Advisory Committee Comments (June, 2001) (continued)

### How can the site's natural features (green space, open space, wetland and a creek) best be used?

- A small miniature golf course landscaped with berms and small bridges over the creek. Encourage wildlife with food plots.
- Riding and walking and or bicycle paths could be available for spring, fall and summer. Incorporating natural species habitat to NDEA teacher. Facility regarding native plants could be incorporated.
- Nature trail, educational programs (bird watching for example), activities for children, off-road biking trails, safety courses for teenagers (ATV, motorcycles, etc.)
- Nature tours for youth.
- Could walking trails and picnic areas be implemented/built that would invite visitors (with a western theme)? Could a horse riding park be managed by professional where families can "rent" horses to ride in the area? Nearly 450 acres would be a nice area to ride in for people who never get the chance.
- Nature walk

### Other comments

- City kids need rural experience

Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Strategic Development Plan  
4-H Leaders' Comments

1. *What future trends will influence the region and use of this site?*

- Youth and/or Semi-pro Rodeos
- 4-H Events
- Fitness
- Awareness of nature
- Growth of Bismarck
- This area is becoming more urban, but agriculture will continue to be a strong influence. There seems to be an increasing trend toward pleasure horsemanship.
- Needs development with a purpose/direction in mind.

2. *What are the best public uses for the property? What public or community uses or activities would best benefit the most people?*

- Rodeos
- 4-H Events-Achievement Days
- Outdoor Concerts
- Fair
- Craft sales
- Camp sites
- Outdoor Bandshell or performance area for concerts, etc.
- Enhance Buckstop Junction with living history, craft consignment store, or a living farm exhibiting ag history especially crop related.
- Make fairgrounds similar to West Fargo's fairgrounds.
- Plant many, many trees

3. *What uses would attract you and/or your organization to the site?*

- Leave rodeo grounds there, maintain them and open them up for the public to use. Rodeo is our heritage and benefits our youth.
- Fair with rides, rodeo, car races or a derby.
- Better public facilities would attract better usage.
- 4-H meetings, the building does not have large enough meeting space for our club.
- Indoor arena does not appear to be available for public use, if so could do riding lessons there.
- Bike path around it and connected to other Bismarck paths.

4. *Which existing land uses are appropriate and should they remain?*

- Rodeo Grounds
- Fair
- 4-H Events
- BMX area
- Buckstop Junction
- Extension Service
- Greater development and enhancement of what is here (larger meeting space/horse arena)

5. *Is there a need for a County Fairgrounds?*

Yes (4)

No (1) we have Expo and street fairs in town now

6. *How can year-round use be maximized*

- Maintain current facilities and open them up to public use. Possibility charge small rental fee.
- We can never get access to arena to work with our youth, youth want to use it.
- Hold events indoors at Buckstop Junction and the 4-H building.
- Snowmobile track or course could be built for winter. Possibility cross country skiing.
- Bike paths could be used for cross-country skiing.

7. *How can the site's natural features (green space, open space, wetland areas and a creek) best be used?*

- Dirt walking trails.
- Different crops could be planted so kids that live in town could see different crops.
- Public picnic areas
- small campground area
- riding trails
- Nature trails
- Outdoor concerts
- Horse riding trails

## Missouri Valley Fairgrounds Strategic Development Plan

### Focus Group and Interview Session Questions

1. What future trends will influence the region and use of this site?

need for site for events -

2. What are the best public uses for the property? What public or community uses or activities would best benefit the most people?

Fairs -  
off season - rental of buildings for functions

3. What uses would attract you and/or your organization to the site?

electricity + water for RV's.  
picnic shelters  
staging for entertainment

4. Which existing land uses are appropriate and should they remain? See the attached map.

needs more trees and landscaping. Seating area completed. Specialty foods ie ice cream parlors  
a fudge + nut shop

5. Is there a need for a County Fairgrounds?

? Ask Burleigh County 4-H. NPSU extension

6. How can year-round use be maximized? -

heated - plowed - maintained  
Buildings set up for receptions etc - -

7. How can the site's natural features (green space, open space, wetland and a creek) best be used?

**D. Letters to the Task Force**

PO Box 2775  
Bismarck ND 58502-2775

For Fed Ex or UPS  
2436 Atlas Drive  
Bismarck, ND 58503



Phone: (701)-222-3531  
(800)-809-6018

Fax: Same  
WebSite: [www.hometownstars.com](http://www.hometownstars.com)  
E-Mail: [chuck@hometownstars.com](mailto:chuck@hometownstars.com)

April 24, 2001

Mr. Terry Brosseau  
Chair-Fairgrounds Committee  
Bismarck, ND 58501

Dear Terry:

I understand that you are heading a chamber committee to revitalize the use of the fairgrounds on the east end of Bismarck. I called the Chamber this morning and they said you are meeting with some consultants tomorrow, so I thought I would hand deliver this letter to your office today.

I believe that there is a great opportunity to utilize those grounds for a successful regional fair as well as have it as a destination tourist attraction throughout the entire year as well.

There are some great advantages to the location: easy access, cropland amongst the acreage, Buckstop Junction nearby, a section of state owned land adjacent to the grounds, and a Game and Fish Department fishing area close by.

Some time ago I put together the concept of an agricultural mall and theme park. Enclosed is an outline of the plan. I also felt that the fairgrounds area would be a good location for the mall. I call it a mall because it would be a place where farmers could go to do some "shopping" for new ideas on how to make a living in agriculture. I call it a theme park because it would have the characteristics to attract visitors and have an entertainment focus as well. It would not be an experimental farm competing with our land grant college experimental stations. And unlike those stations where they have an open house one day a year, this mall would be open all year round for visitors to observe unique agricultural enterprises and practices that have been successful that could be adapted to North Dakota. My paper goes into more details in that regard.

I believe that if farmers could get a first hand look at alternative agricultural enterprises that work, they could adapt to what I view as a "new agriculture". I envision every 4-H kid and FFA kid in the state would visit this facility to look at the potential of the new agriculture. Some day every agriculture major at NDSU would be required to serve an internship there..