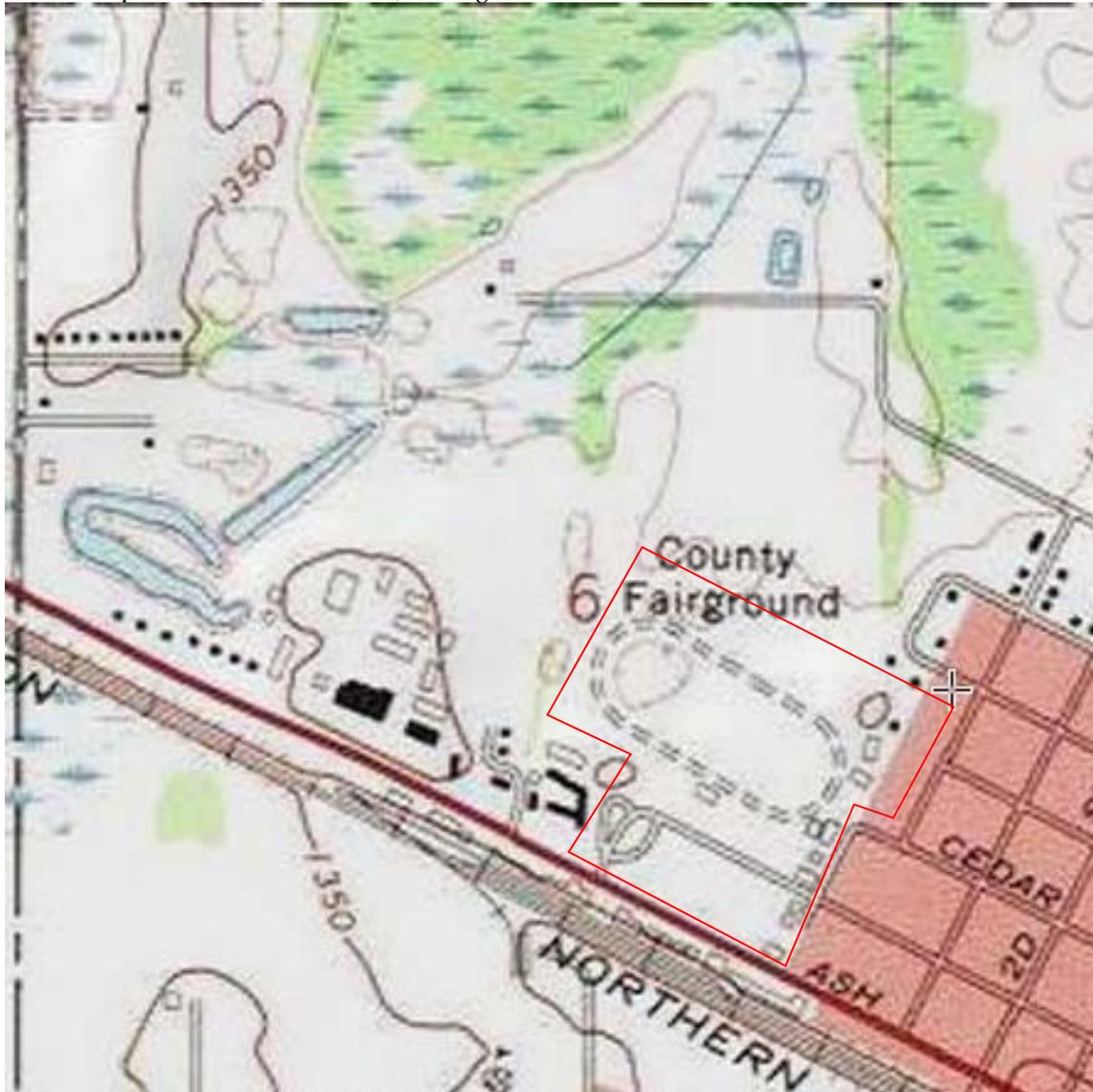
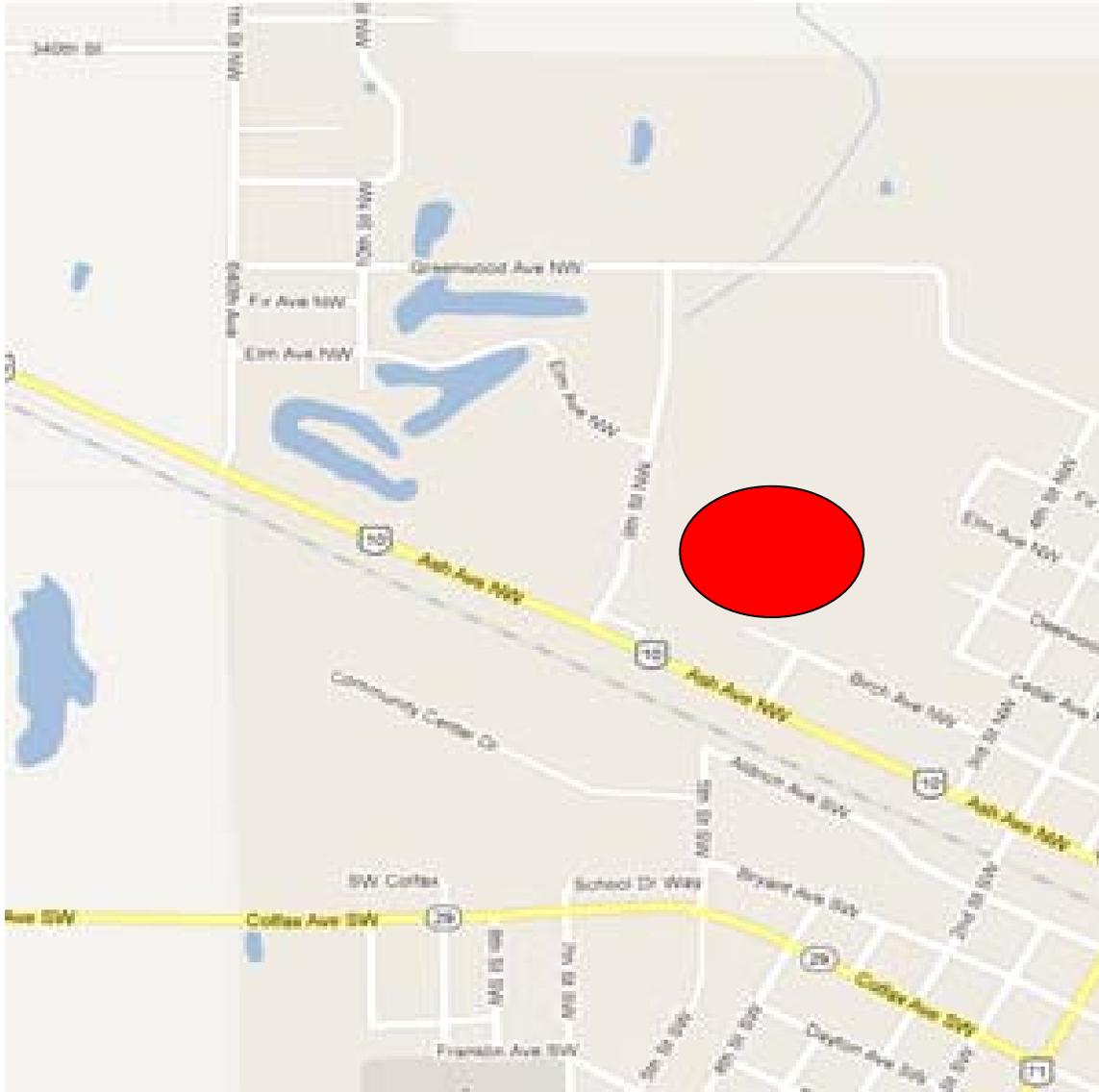


Approximate General Project areas noted in red.  
USGS Map "Wadena," 1:24000, enlarged to show detail.





# Wadena County Fairgrounds - After Tornado



0

170

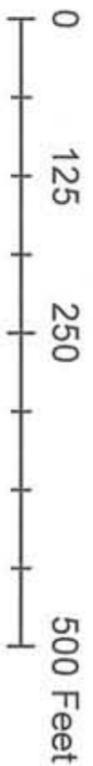
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680 Feet

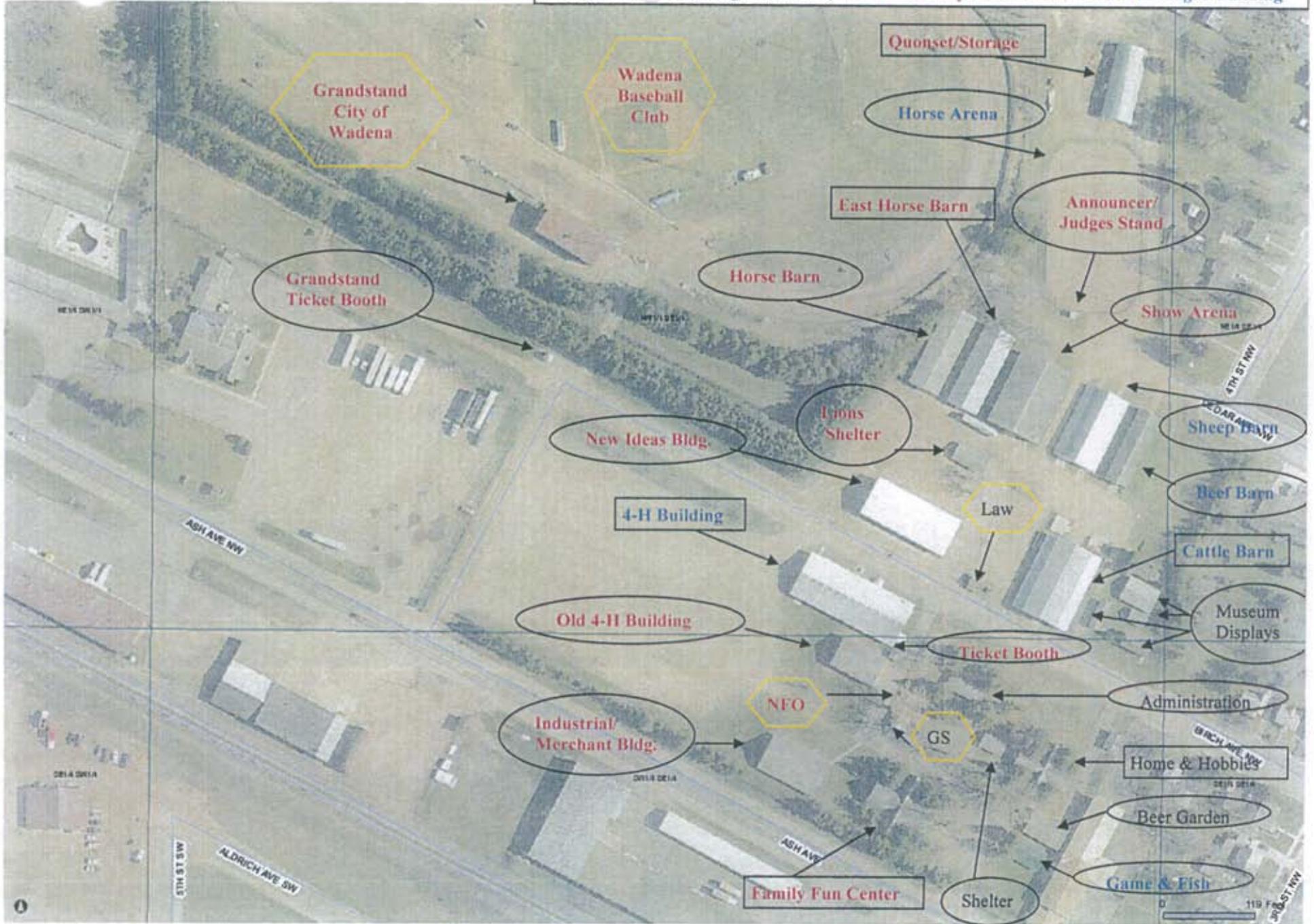
1 inch = 40 feet

Map Created By: Gina Dahms  
GIS Coordinator, Wadena County

**Wadena County Fairgrounds  
130' Setback from Center of US Highway 10**



Map Created By:  
Gina Dahms  
GIS Coordinator, Wadena County



Wadena County Fairgrounds  
Aerial Photo taken May 2009

Sub-Grantee  
Wadena (County)

Sub-Grantee  
Wadena County Agricultural Society

Other Entity  
Responsibility



# WADENA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS AND FAIR

## A CONCEPT MASTER PLAN FOR RECONSTRUCTION

Prepared for  
Wadena County Board  
and  
Wadena County Agricultural Society

**JUNE 2011**

Prepared by:  
Center for Rural Design, University of Minnesota

*A Concept Master Plan for the Reconstruction of the Wadena County Fairgrounds and Fair*

This report is prepared for Wadena County Board  
and Wadena County Agricultural Society

**Study Team Members/Roles:**

**Principal Investigator:**

- Dewey Thorbeck, Director, Center for Rural Design

**Center for Rural Design Team Members:**

- Steve Roos, Senior Research Fellow, Project Manager
- Tracey Sokolski, Research Fellow

**Acknowledgements:**

This project could not have been accomplished without the cooperation and support of staff from Wadena County and the Steering Committee Members.

June 2011  
Center for Rural Design  
College of Design, and  
College of Food, Agricultural, and Natural Resource Sciences  
University of Minnesota

## **Table of Contents**

- *Introduction and Background*
- *Facility and Operational Needs*
- *Concept Plan*
- *Appendices*

## Introduction and Background

The tornado that tore through the western side of the City of Wadena in June 2010 caused severe damage to the Wadena County Fairgrounds that has been operating on its site for 117 years. The Center for Rural Design at the University of Minnesota was engaged to work with a Steering Committee and develop a Concept Master Plan for the reconstruction of the fairgrounds along with new construction and site uses for year-round activities.

The site and building situation today is dynamic as renovation and repair and new construction is moving forward for the 2011 County Fair and beyond.



## ***Facility and Operational Needs***

Facility and operational needs to be included in the Concept Master Plan include:

- Facilitate the writing of a Mission Statement to determine the character, mission and purpose of a county fair in the 21st century for the County Fair to be adopted by the County Board.
- Site design for long term growth of the County Fair, including building locations, track/pit location, and landscaping. A major need is to resolve the issue of drainage and compaction of ground for the carnival and location of new structures to minimize flooding or muddy circulation areas of the grounds during fair times or into buildings throughout the year.
- Determine the potentials for the County Fair to implement its purpose while becoming more economically self-sufficient

Other issues to be considered include the following:

- Appropriate signage locations for the fair and other events with strong graphic composition.
- What are the agricultural issues that are impacting the Wadena region that should be discussed as part of the County Fair's mission? They may include:
  - Climate change and impact on agriculture
  - Renewable energy from biomass, solar and wind
  - Integration of human, animal and environmental health
  - Water resource and quality
  - Food supply and food security for a rapidly expanding world population
- Determine the opportunities to integrate other functions into the fairgrounds, like the weekly Farmers' Market, outdoor concerts and theatrical events, and recreational vehicle expos. Considering opportunities for better layout for other events that are currently held at the fairgrounds like the Conservation and Wildlife Expo and the Wadena County

## Historical Society.

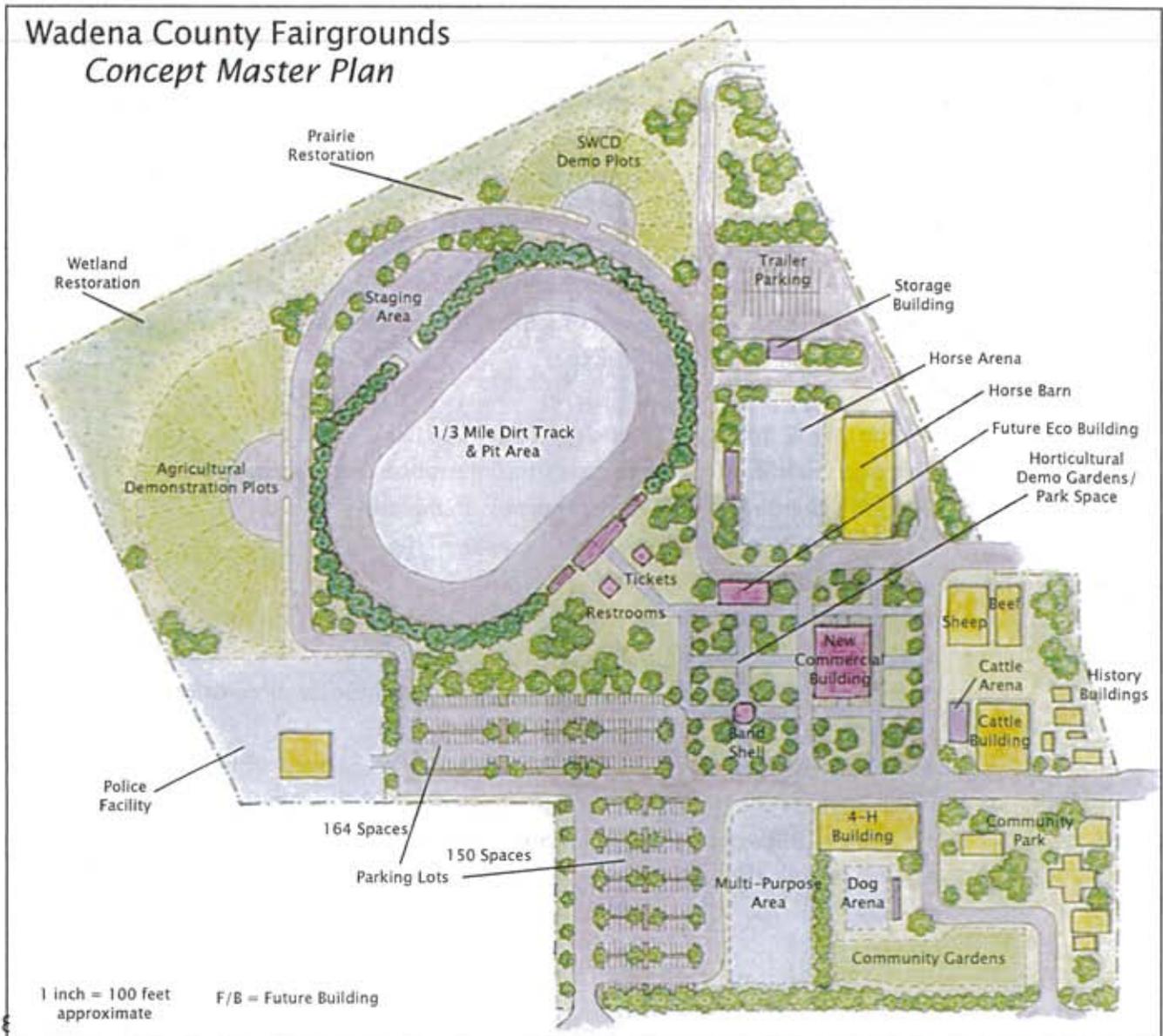
The site needs to accommodate the following:

- Existing buildings to be repaired and continued use:
  - Cattle Barn (historic value) – housing 4H and open class dairy animals
  - Sheep Barn – housing 4H livestock and open class livestock (poultry, beef, goats) and small stock show ring, including pigs and sheep
  - Beef Barn – housing 4H livestock (llamas, pigs, sheep, rabbits)
  - 4-H Building – utilized by the 4H as their main exhibit hall for non-livestock projects as well as food stand during the fair.
  - Home and Hobbies Building (historic value) – housing open class gardening, crafts, arts, etc.
  - Historical museum cluster of three historic buildings and shelter operated by the Wadena County Historical Society during the fair
  
- New Buildings constructed since tornado:
  - Horse Barn, 80' x 200', with 65 new box stalls during the fair and other horse events during the year. Used as the WDC school bus storage building most of the year.
  - Outdoor horse arena on the west side of the Horse Barn, 120' x 220' with bleachers seating 100 along one side and judges stand. This will also be utilized for the Annual Sheriff's horse posse training
  
- New Buildings required:
  - Sheriff's Building in the southwest corner of the site
  - Covered, but open arena for cattle shows approximately 40' x 60'
  - Open dog agility area for 4H dog agility group approximately 70' x 100'
  - Commercial buildings that can be accommodated in the proposed year-round Wadena Center (see separate space requirements and illustrative sketches in the Appendix) if it is built:
    - Commercial building, 60' x 100' for vendors with 10' x 10' booths (requiring electricity, lighting, fans, windows, and doors)
    - Commercial building, 40' x 60' for vendors
    - Eco building to showcase local businesses and products
  
- Existing buildings to be demolished with functions relocated over time:
  - DNR-Knob hill Sportsmen's Club with displays for wildlife and

- outdoor organizations and DNR fish tanks.
  - Beer garden
  - Bathrooms
  - Administration and ticket office
- New Pit Area:
  - Open, defined area for demos, tractor pulls, Bah Hah race, etc. during the fair and other special events throughout the year. It has been determined that this area will be defined by a 1/3 mile oval track.
  - Bleachers for seating 500 people
- Landscaped areas:
  - Central gathering area with tables/benches, bandshell/stage, picnic shelter, vendors, etc.
  - Community gardens, orchard, crop plots, etc. for beauty, education, and food
  - Multi-purpose area of approximately 1 1/2 acres in size for a carnival during the fair if still involved in future fairs, and as a year-round area for special events such as flea markets, farmers' markets, Conservation and Wildlife Expo
- Miscellaneous New Buildings or spaces required:
  - Storage building for fairgrounds maintenance and operations
  - Sheriff's building on southwest corner of the site
- Other issues to be included in the Master Plan
  - Sustainable design and architecture maximizing energy conservation
  - Appropriate signage for the fair and other events
  - Adequate drainage to minimize flooding and muddy circulation areas
  - Toilets for average daily attendance of 1,000 people with 50% each gender. As per the state building code it will require:
    - Men - 3 lavatories and 7 water closets/urinals
    - Women – 4 lavatories and 13 water closets

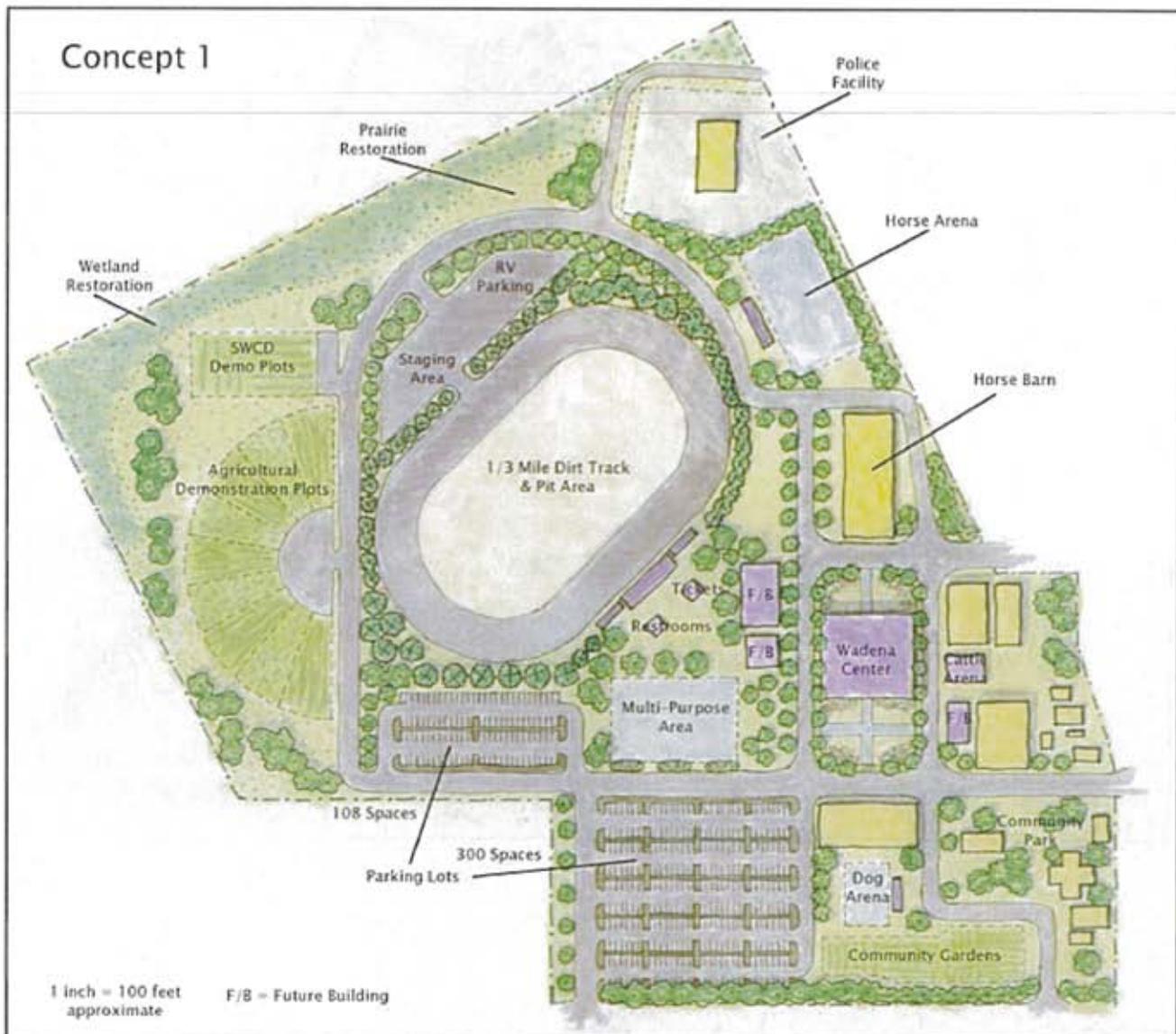
# Concept Plan

The Center for Rural Design worked with a Steering Committee along with Ryan Odden, County Engineer. Three preliminary concept plans were prepared and presented to the Committee and the Committee picked the elements from each of the alternatives that should be incorporated into the final concept plan. The Concept Plan approved by the Steering Committee is as follows:

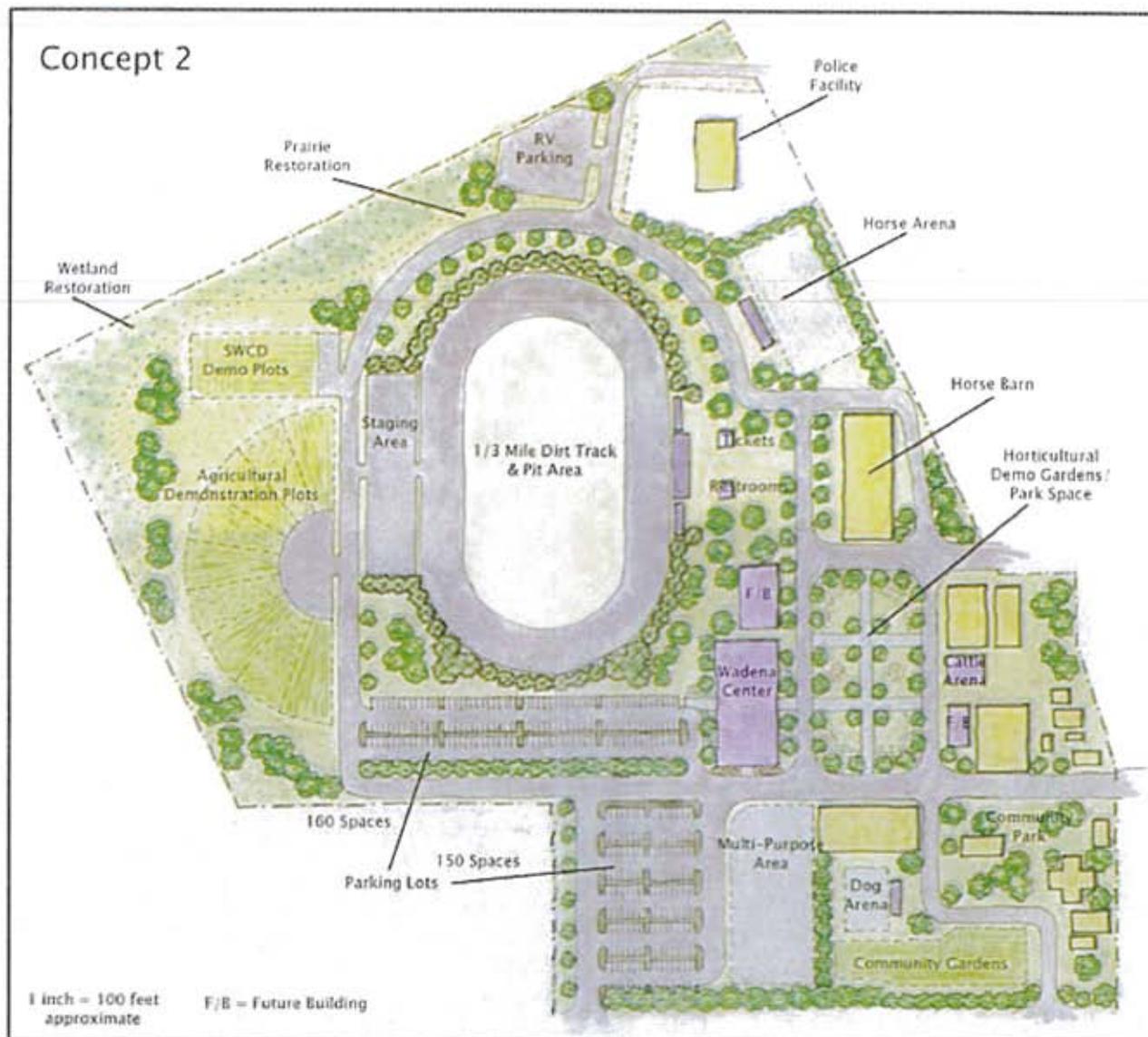


# Preliminary Concept Plans

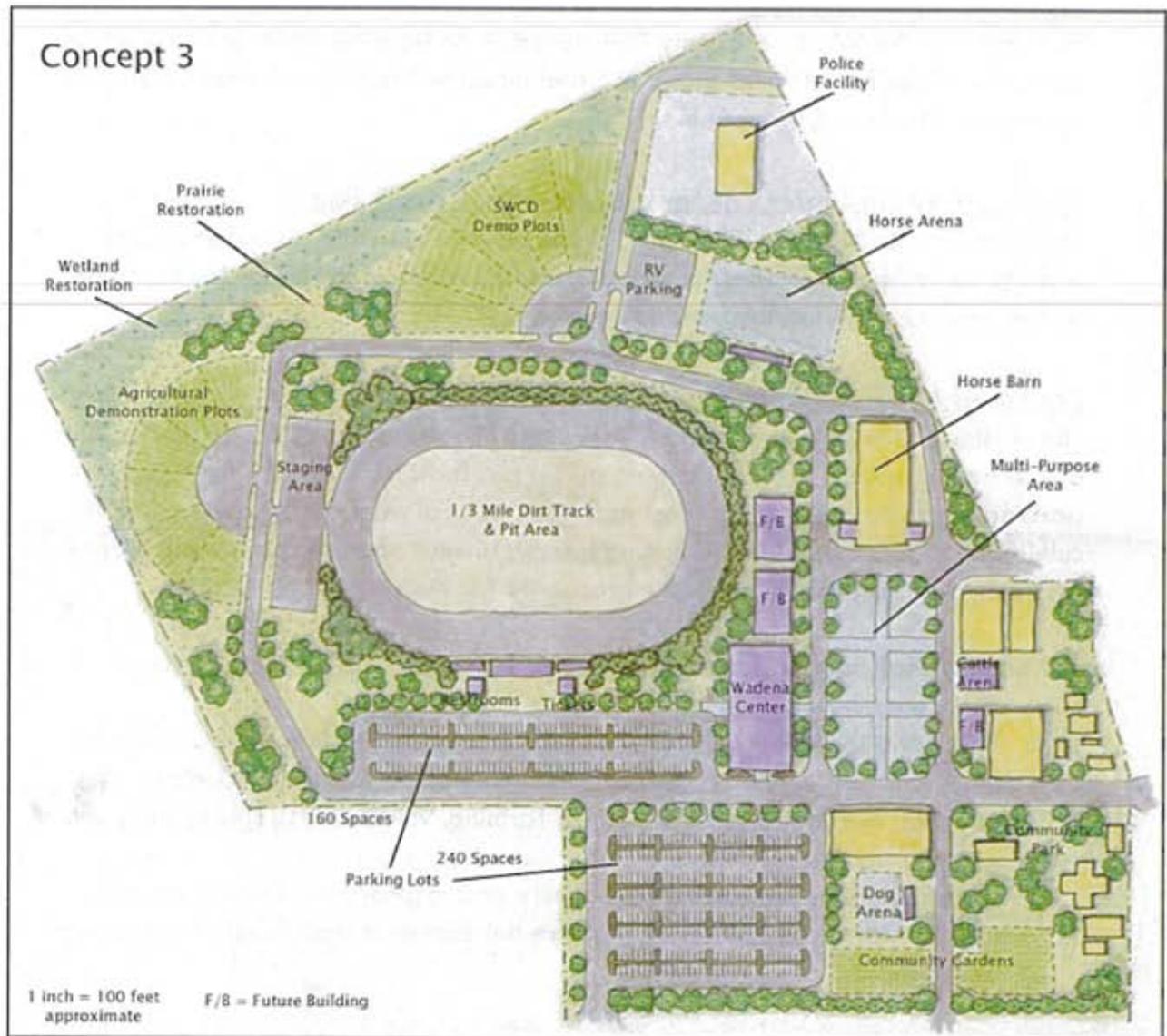
The three preliminary concepts explored alternative arrangements for buildings, necessary facilities, and site components. Since needs and conditions may change over time necessary for complete reconstruction the alternatives are documented below:



# Preliminary Concept Plans



# Preliminary Concept Plans



*Proposed Vision Statement for the Wadena County Fairgrounds*

The vision for the Wadena County Fairgrounds is to be a beautiful year-round gathering place for informal public use and managed for formal events, including the annual Wadena County Fair.

*Proposed Vision Statement for the Wadena County Fair*

The vision for the Wadena County Fair is to be a memorable annual event celebrating heritage, showcasing the present, and providing knowledge for the future of Wadena County and the broader region.

*Proposed Mission Statement for the Wadena County Agricultural Society*

The mission of the Wadena County Agricultural Society shall be the preservation of the past, promotion of the present, and a platform for ideas for the future regarding agriculture (including food and fiber, natural resources, bioenergy, horticulture, and forestry), health (including human, animal and environmental), culture and arts, and sustainable economic prosperity for the county and region.

The Society shall hold and promote a county fair each year to serve as its primary effort focusing on:

- Promoting the talents and youth of the county and region by providing exhibits and competition of projects the youth are involved in including: educational, livestock and non-livestock farming, volunteerism, sports, arts, and entrepreneurial activities.
- Highlighting the heritage of the county and region and its ties to agriculture, industry, and businesses that are the economic backbone of the county and region.

The Society will utilize the services of its Board members; volunteers from community organizations, civic groups, and individuals; and Wadena County staff as necessary to provide the skills and expertise to ensure fulfillment of its mission with fiscal responsibility and long-term sustainability. The Society shall also host and promote non-fair events throughout the year that will aid in sustaining the WCAS consistent with its mission.

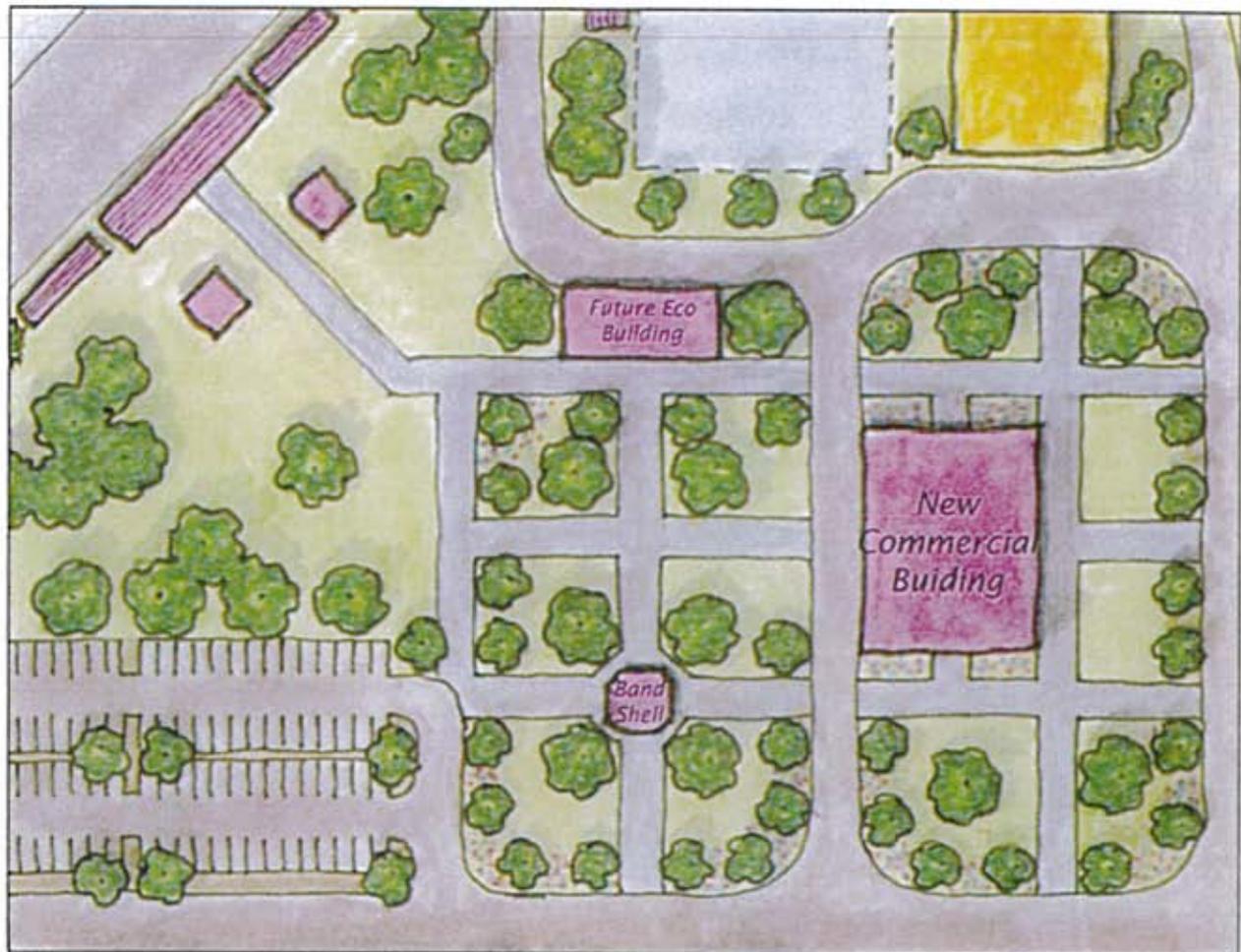
## Appendices

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- *Alternative Building Concepts*
  - *Building Code Issues*
-

## Alternative Building Concepts

Ongoing discussions revolve around the possibility of incorporating an year-round event center in the fairgrounds that could provide opportunity to expand the nature and season for events occurring at the fairgrounds. To facilitate these discussions two alternatives were developed for the central portion of the fairgrounds.



Building Plan Alternative 1:  
*New Commercial Building, Future Eco Building, and Band Shell*



**Buiding Plan Alternative 2:**  
*New Commercial Building, Future Event Center,  
Future Eco Building, and Band Shell*

The vision for Wadena Center as a year-round conference and event venue on the Wadena County Fairgrounds, is to be a regional icon and a modern bridge that will link the best of the Wadena region, Wadena County, and City of Wadena with the past, present and future.

The mission of Wadena Center is to function as a sustainable year-round facility to strengthen and enhance collaborative relationships in the Wadena region by becoming a regional gathering place as a conference and event center for weddings, seminars, recitals, conferences, and other special events

During the Wadena County Fair it will function as an exhibition hall for commercial displays and other events showcasing urban and rural youth achievements in the Wadena region with exhibits promoting agriculture, arts, music, design, business, industry, science and technology linking the region together.

Wadena Center is intended to be designed, marketed, and managed to be an attractive regional destination and economically self sufficient with revenues from conferences, events, and other programs consistent with its vision and mission statements.

A preliminary outline of space needs is as follows:

A. Conference/Event Spaces:

• Social Hall/Lobby/Lounge	2,400	
• Management Office	200	
• Banquet Hall seating 600 (divisible) (exhibition hall during fair)	7,200	
• Meeting/Conference Rooms 2 @ 500 (beer garden during fair)	1,000	
• Exhibit Gallery	600	
• Gift Shop	400	
• Commercial Kitchen/Storage	2,000	
	Sub-total	13,800

B. Common Areas:

• Toilets/Coat Rooms	2,000	
• Mechanical/Electrical	1,500	
• General Storage	500	
• Receiving/Loading/Trash	400	
	Sub-total	4,400

Total Net Square Feet	18,200 NSF
Add 20% for circulation and wall thickness	3,640
Total Gross Square Feet	21,840 GSF

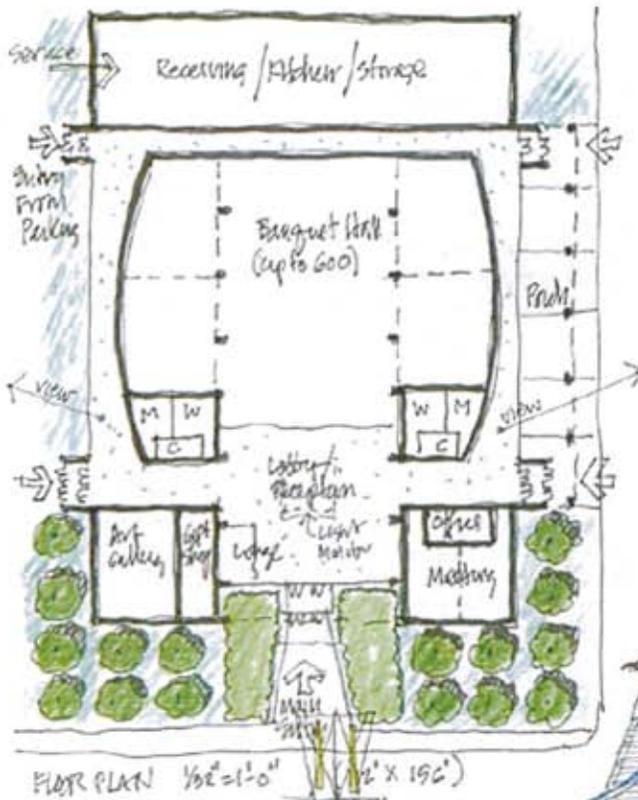
C. Site Requirements:

Building Footprint	20,000
Parking - 200 @ 300 SF	27,000
Site Landscaping	6,000
Total site area	53,000 square feet or 1.21 acres

The above space requirements assume a one-story on-grade facility without basement designed and constructed to meet the requirements of the Minnesota State Building Code.

The concept plan for Wadena Center illustrates an approximately 20,000 square foot footprint with the main entrance facing Highway 10 as shown on the Concept Master Plan for the Wadena County Fairgrounds. The following conceptual sketches portray an iconic unique facility for Wadena Center that would be a regional destination in northern Minnesota for conferences and events.

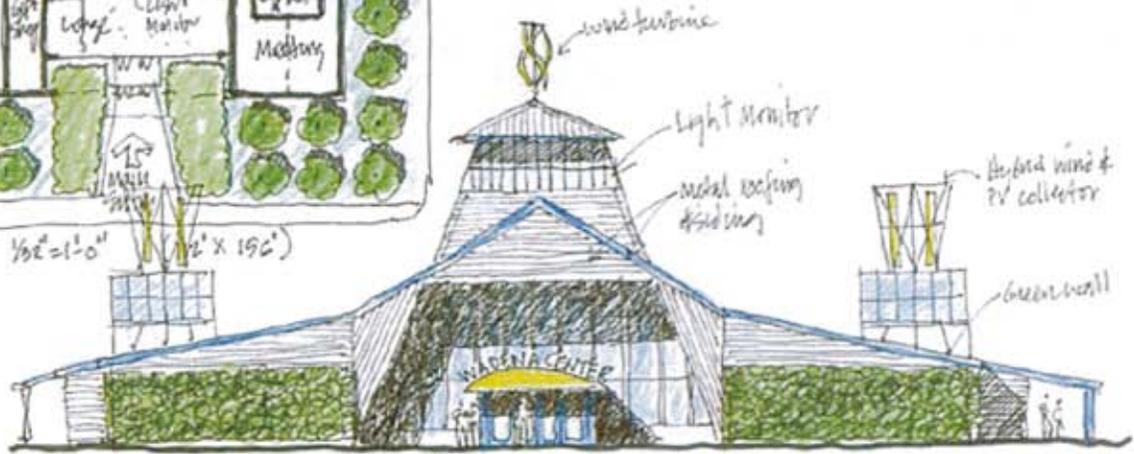
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## WADENA CENTER

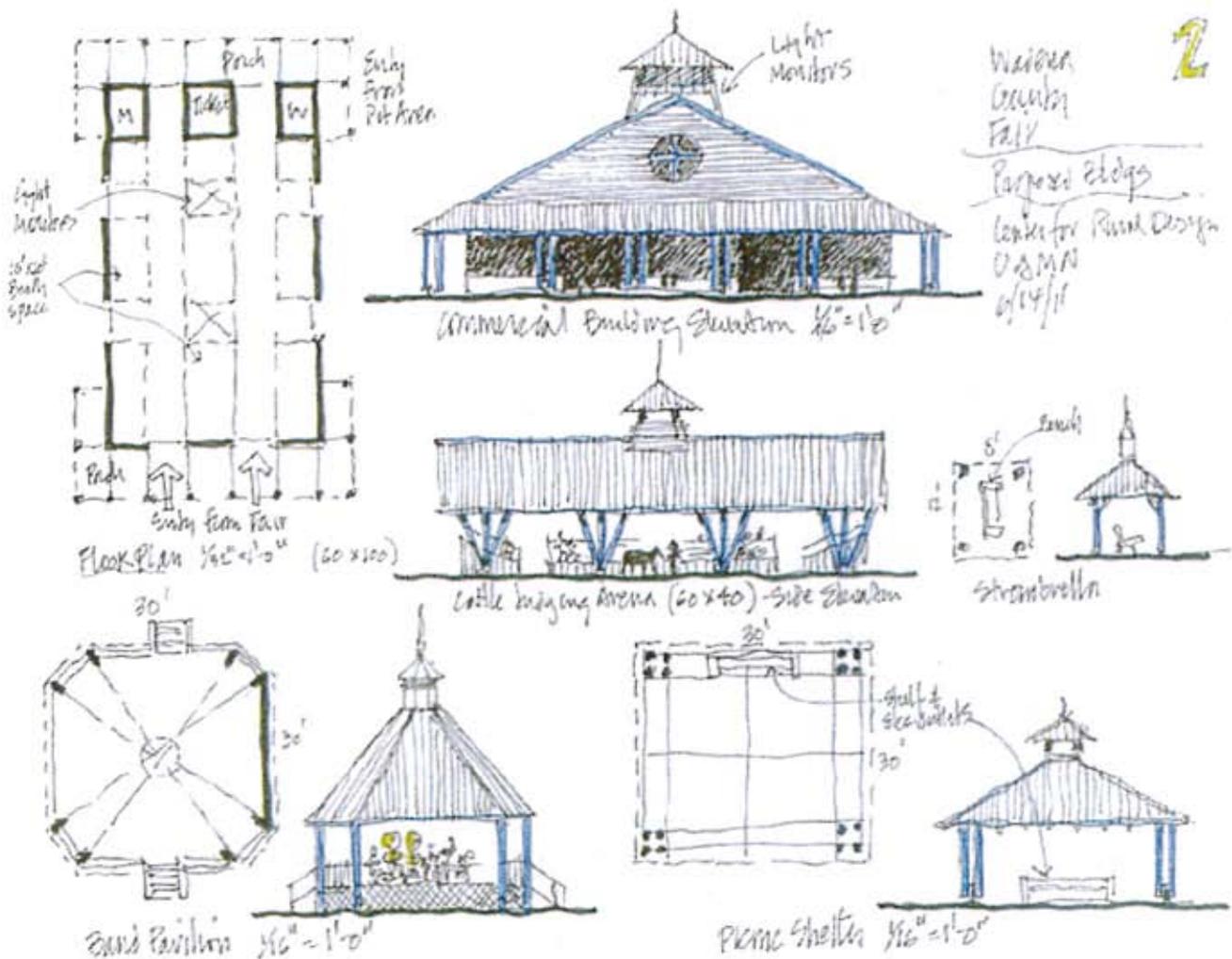
Concept plan for a year-round regional conference and event center on the Wadena County fairgrounds that is a regional destination and gathering place, and economically self-sustaining.

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Entry elevation 1/16" = 1'-0"

Conceptual designs for ancillary buildings were also developed following the thematic character of the potential Wadena Center.



## ***Building Code Issues***

According to the MN Department of Labor and Industry county fairgrounds are exempt (since 2005) from zoning, building and other ordinances of the town or city within which it is located during both fair times and throughout the year. Leasing of land and buildings year-round is part of agricultural fair purposes and also exempt. The State Building Code (SBC) is the standard that applies statewide for the construction, reconstruction, alteration, and repair of buildings and other structures, however the SBC does not apply to agricultural buildings and in the statute the phrase "county fair building" means a building owned by a county agricultural association that are used for agricultural fair purposes. The code issues that do apply statewide for county fair buildings include: Electrical Code; Accessibility Code (if not administered by the county); Plumbing Code; Bleacher code (if not administered by the county); Elevator Code; HPP; Boilers; and Amusement Rides.

However, compliance with other aspects of the code is the responsibility of building owners, contractors, licensed professionals, etc.; and the statewide fire code does not exempt county fair buildings.

Therefore, it seems that Appendix C of the International building Code for Group U - Agricultural Buildings would apply and the area of the floor of any building is unlimited if the building is surrounded by public ways of 60 feet or more. In any case, the minimal SBC structural requirements for snow and wind loads must be followed, and life safety standards within buildings and on the grounds should, as a minimum, follow industry standards.



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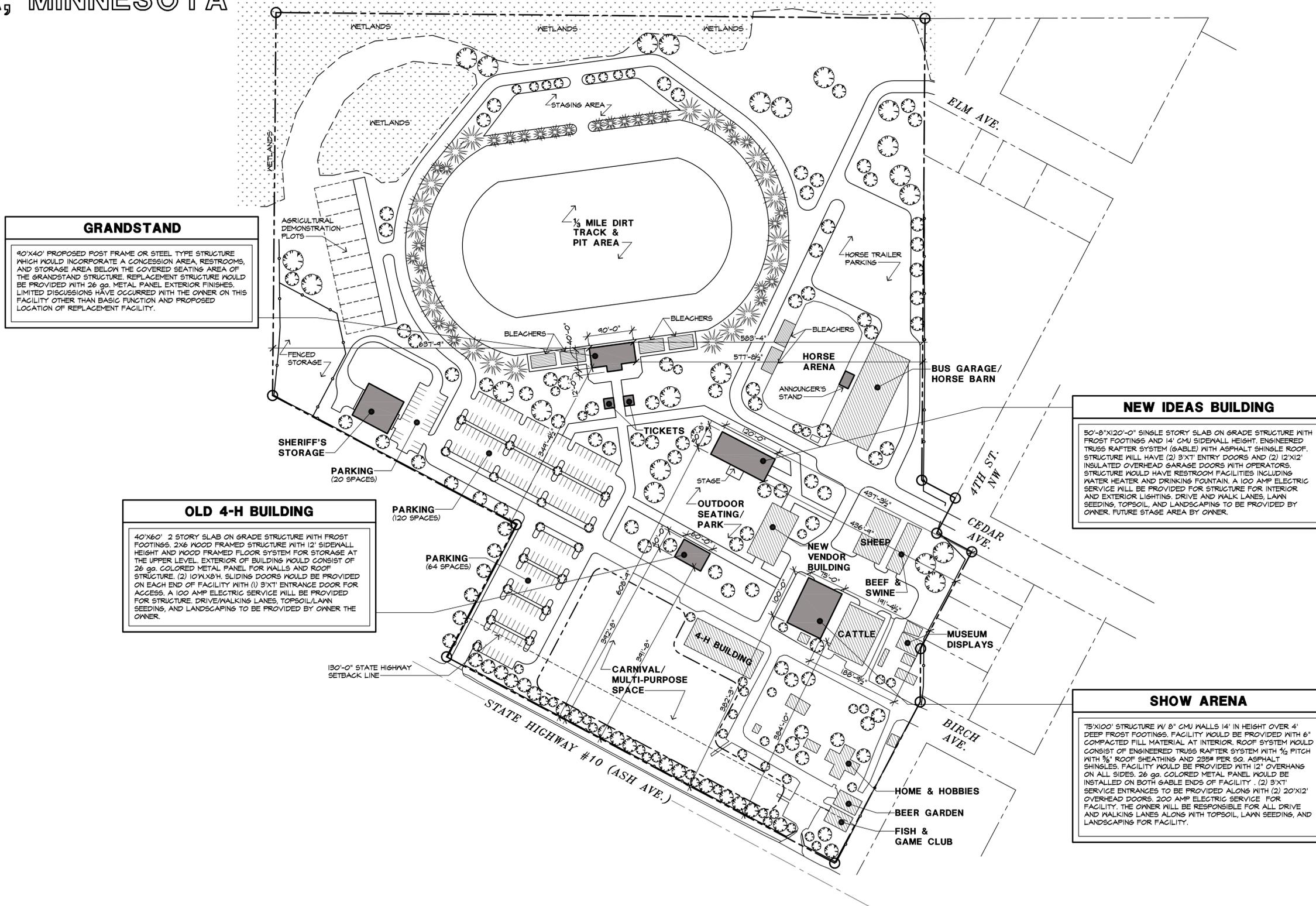
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This publication is available in alternative formats upon request. Please contact the Center for Rural Design at the above number.

# WADENA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS

## MASTER PLAN WADENA, MINNESOTA



**GRANDSTAND**

90'x40' PROPOSED POST FRAME OR STEEL TYPE STRUCTURE WHICH WOULD INCORPORATE A CONCESSION AREA, RESTROOMS, AND STORAGE AREA BELOW THE COVERED SEATING AREA OF THE GRANDSTAND STRUCTURE. REPLACEMENT STRUCTURE WOULD BE PROVIDED WITH 26 ga. METAL PANEL EXTERIOR FINISHES. LIMITED DISCUSSIONS HAVE OCCURRED WITH THE OWNER ON THIS FACILITY OTHER THAN BASIC FUNCTION AND PROPOSED LOCATION OF REPLACEMENT FACILITY.

**OLD 4-H BUILDING**

40'x60' 2 STORY SLAB ON GRADE STRUCTURE WITH FROST FOOTINGS, 2X6 WOOD FRAMED STRUCTURE WITH 12' SIDEWALL HEIGHT AND WOOD FRAMED FLOOR SYSTEM FOR STORAGE AT THE UPPER LEVEL. EXTERIOR OF BUILDING WOULD CONSIST OF 26 ga. COLORED METAL PANEL FOR WALLS AND ROOF STRUCTURE. (2) 10'x8'H. SLIDING DOORS WOULD BE PROVIDED ON EACH END OF FACILITY WITH (1) 3'x1' ENTRANCE DOOR FOR ACCESS. A 100 AMP ELECTRIC SERVICE WILL BE PROVIDED FOR STRUCTURE. DRIVE/WALKING LANES, TOPSOIL/LAWN SEEDING, AND LANDSCAPING TO BE PROVIDED BY OWNER THE OWNER.

**NEW IDEAS BUILDING**

50'-8"x120'-0" SINGLE STORY SLAB ON GRADE STRUCTURE WITH FROST FOOTINGS AND 14' CMU SIDEWALL HEIGHT. ENGINEERED TRUSS RAFTER SYSTEM (GABLE) WITH ASPHALT SHINGLE ROOF. STRUCTURE WILL HAVE (2) 3'x1' ENTRY DOORS AND (2) 12'x12' INSULATED OVERHEAD GARAGE DOORS WITH OPERATORS. STRUCTURE WOULD HAVE RESTROOM FACILITIES INCLUDING WATER HEATER AND DRINKING FOUNTAIN. A 100 AMP ELECTRIC SERVICE WILL BE PROVIDED FOR STRUCTURE FOR INTERIOR AND EXTERIOR LIGHTING. DRIVE AND WALK Lanes, LAWN SEEDING, TOPSOIL, AND LANDSCAPING TO BE PROVIDED BY OWNER. FUTURE STAGE AREA BY OWNER.

**SHOW ARENA**

75'x100' STRUCTURE W/ 8" CMU WALLS 14' IN HEIGHT OVER 4" DEEP FROST FOOTINGS. FACILITY WOULD BE PROVIDED WITH 6" COMPACTED FILL MATERIAL AT INTERIOR. ROOF SYSTEM WOULD CONSIST OF ENGINEERED TRUSS RAFTER SYSTEM WITH 1/2 PITCH WITH 3/8" ROOF SHEATHING AND 235# PER SQ. ASPHALT SHINGLES. FACILITY WOULD BE PROVIDED WITH 12" OVERHANG ON ALL SIDES. 26 ga. COLORED METAL PANEL WOULD BE INSTALLED ON BOTH GABLE ENDS OF FACILITY. (2) 3'x1' SERVICE ENTRANCES TO BE PROVIDED ALONG WITH (2) 20'x12' OVERHEAD DOORS. 200 AMP ELECTRIC SERVICE FOR FACILITY. THE OWNER WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL DRIVE AND WALKING LANES ALONG WITH TOPSOIL, LAWN SEEDING, AND LANDSCAPING FOR FACILITY.

**PROPOSED MASTER PLAN**

SCALE - 1" = 100'-0"



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REVISIONS: A, J  
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### WADENA COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS MASTER PLAN WADENA, MINNESOTA

SHEET NUMBER:  
**A-1.1**