



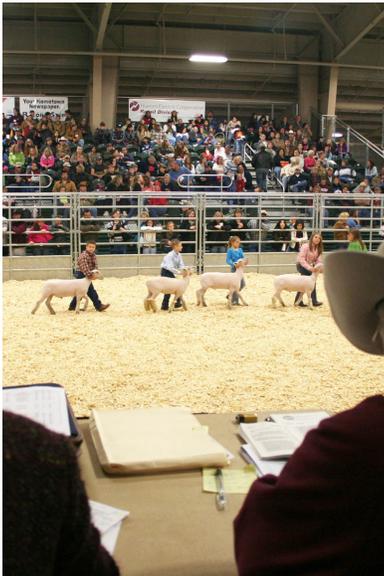
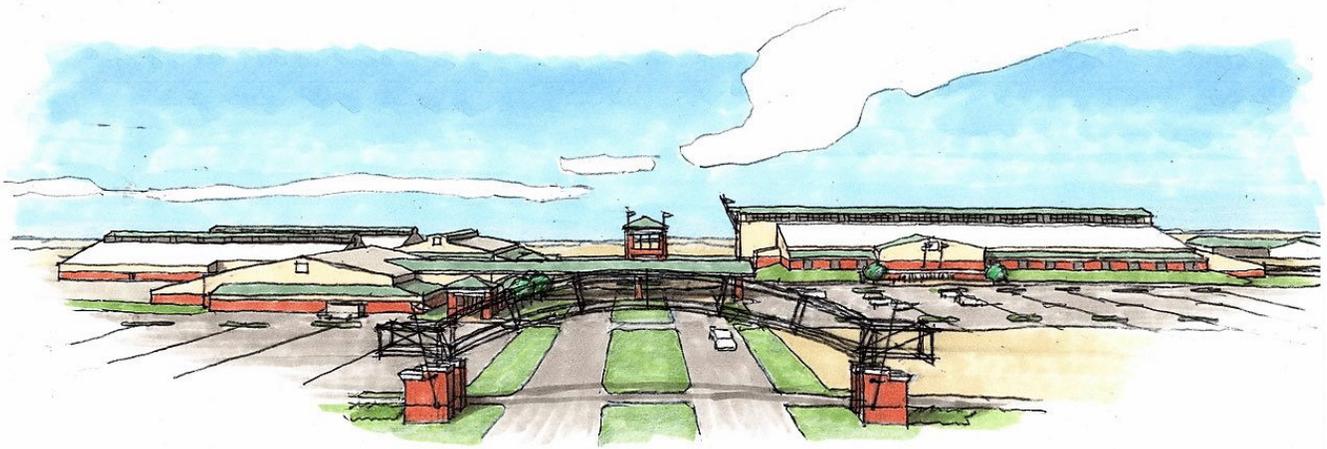
# Webb County Fairgrounds Master Plan

Prepared By



Fairground/Facilities Master Planners  
Nashville, Tennessee

NOVEMBER 2018



# Webb County Fairgrounds Master Plan

Prepared For

## WEBB COUNTY COMMISSIONERS COURT

*Tano Tijerina, County Judge*

*Jesse Gonzalez, Commissioner, Pct. 1*

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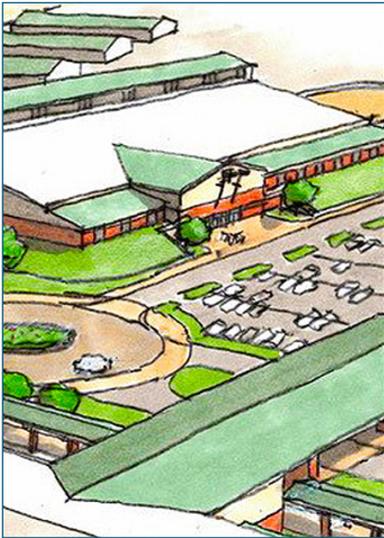




### 1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Over the course of 55 years the existing LIFE Downs fairgrounds complex on the north side of US Highway 59 near Lake Casa Blanca has seen incremental additions but development has never followed a comprehensive plan. Facilities have evolved and been adapted to meet the needs of its traditional user groups.

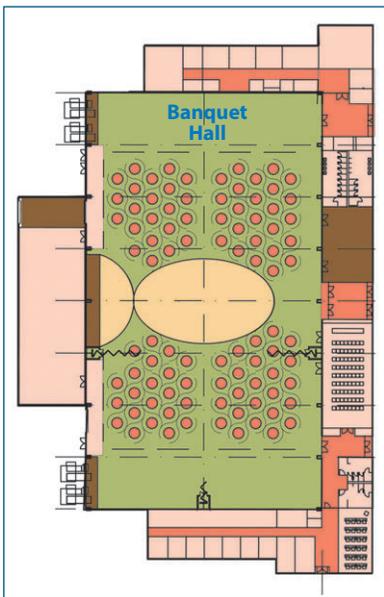
The non-profit Laredo International Fair and Exposition (LIFE) organization was founded in 1963 and holds a fair and livestock show each winter. Rodeo and riding competitions, concerts, festivals, cook-offs and fireworks shows have been staged on the grounds over the years. Since construction of the climate controlled LIFE Pavilion in 2009 it has been able to host additional small and medium size events such as graduation and retirement parties, quinceñeras and weddings. Except for the LIFE Pavilion, the existing facilities no longer meet the public’s minimum expectations for modern event venues.



Starting in 2016, County officials began discussing the need for a new facility suitable to meeting the family entertainment and youth agricultural education needs of area residents for decades to come. In 2017, the Webb County Commissioners Court selected the Project Team of Hanson Professional Services, Bullock Smith & Partners (BSP) and Gilpin Engineering Co. to develop a Master Plan and evaluate costs of a possible new multi-use community fairgrounds and agricultural exposition center. The County and the LIFE organization agreed to work together in planning the multipurpose facility. The decision was made that the existing 140-acre LIFE Downs site is the best location for the new fairgrounds.

Hanson and BSP have developed master plans for several similar facilities in South Texas. BSP has extensive experience with successful agricultural expo centers and fairgrounds throughout North America. BSP provided guidance on the kind of facilities that are proven to be needed for an exposition and events complex that meets existing needs, and attracts a wide variety of family-oriented entertainment, agricultural, and community events.

The Hanson/BSP/Gilpin team conducted interviews and held a series of workshops to gather input from the public that was valuable in determining what the community wants and developing the master plan for the Webb County Fairgrounds.



The Master Plan envisions a park-like setting with facilities that should be busy with events on a weekly basis throughout the year. A key building in the plan is a flexible banquet hall capable of seating up to 2,000. Another focal point would be a 4,000-seat air-conditioned main events arena suitable for equestrian events, rodeo and riding competitions, concerts, farm shows, sporting events and trade shows. Another 2,000 floor seats could be added to the arena for stage productions, concerts and other entertainment. A new outdoor rodeo ring would be connected to the arena for equestrian events. Two new large exposition halls would be joined by a show pavilion. The Master Plan includes a classic fair midway venue for the annual fair and for various community festivals. The plan envisions transforming the site into a complex with a unified architectural character, carefully designed traffic patterns, adequate parking and separation of service areas from public activity zones.

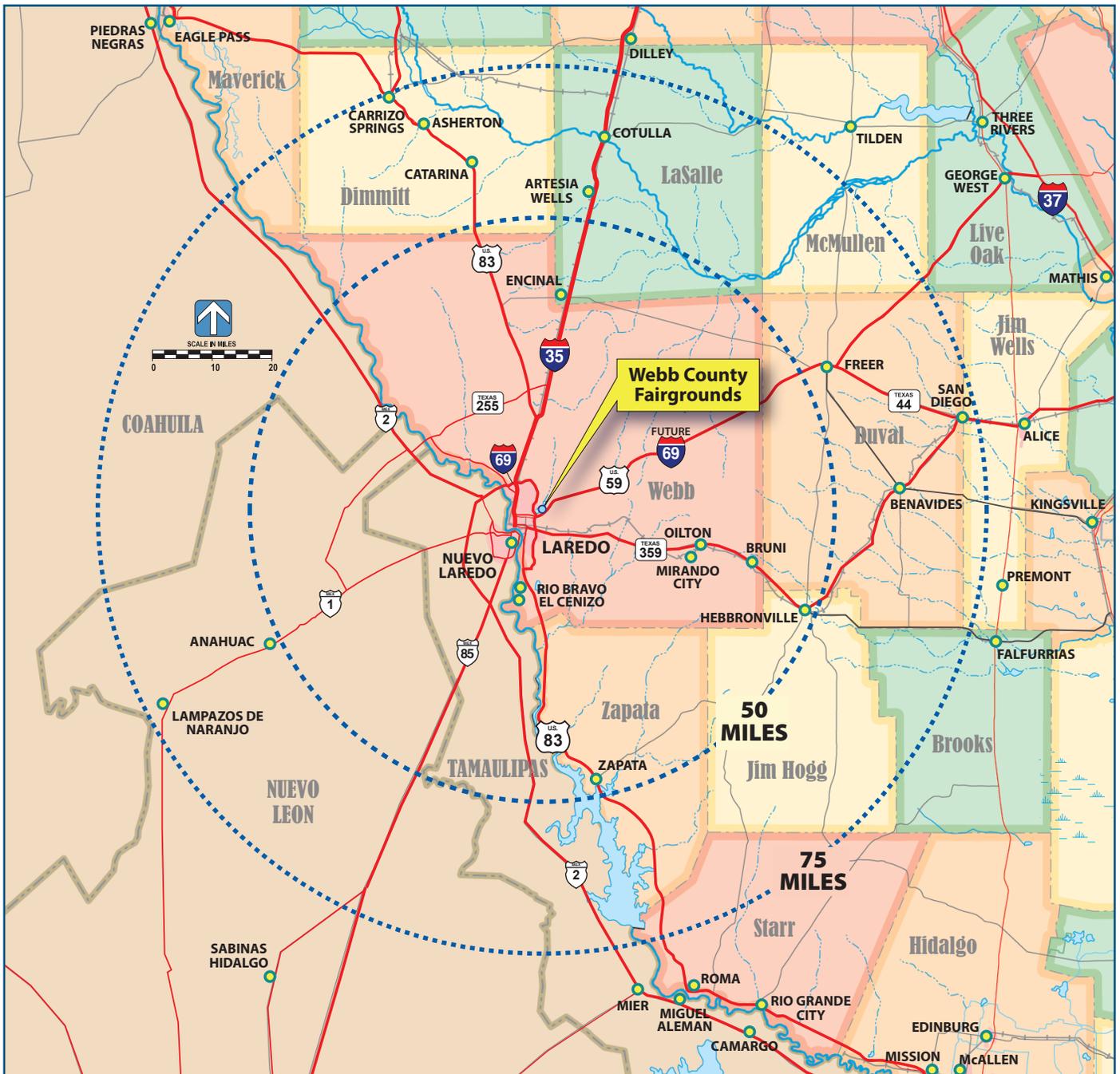
The estimated cost of the initial project plan presented here is approximately \$89 million including about \$34 million for the Main Events Arena.

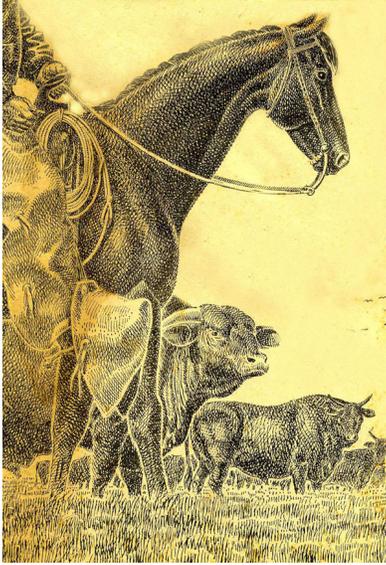


## 2.0 INTRODUCTION

Webb County is part of an international border region with more than a million people living and working in 11 Texas counties and parts of Tamaulipas, Nuevo Leon and Coahuila - all within 75 miles of the Webb County Fairgrounds site on the east side of Laredo. The combined population of the Texas counties is just over 500,000 with an estimated 275,000 in Webb County. The Nuevo Laredo Municipality adds another estimated 400,000 to the region. This 75-mile radius defines a market area that has a strong 250-year farm and ranch history and a significant number of people interested in equestrian and agriculture-related events. Area residents and visitors from outside the region make up the key market for the wide variety of entertainment, community and

*The Webb County Fairgrounds site serves an international region with centuries of rich farm and ranch traditions*

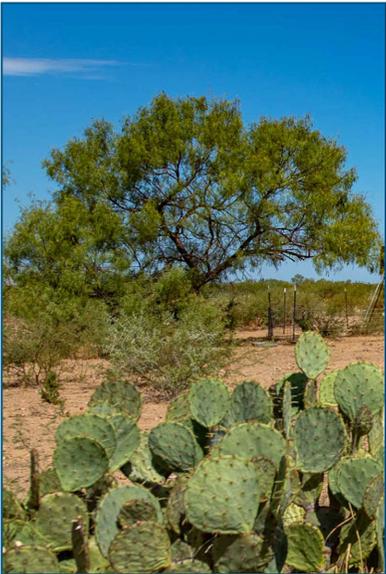




family events that can be hosted by the proposed multipurpose Webb County Fairgrounds facilities.

Since Captain Don Tomas Sanchez founded Laredo on the banks of the Rio Grande with a handful of families in the 1750s, agriculture has been an important element of the Webb County economy. The ranching and farming heritage is a major part of the history and culture of the region. That heritage is one of stewardship of the land, caring for livestock, nurturing families and building community institutions and traditions. In ways large and small this heritage is celebrated in the daily lives of thousands of area residents. While Webb County has seen a hundred years of growth as a key component in international trade flows through the Laredo port of entry, ranching and farming remain a very important economic cornerstone and support hundreds of jobs in the region. Brush country ranching traditions are a valued part of the county's heritage and present day way of life.

The Webb County Commissioners Court began the process of planning for a new fairgrounds in 2016 and on January 9, 2017, authorized the Project Team of Hanson Professional Services, Bullock Smith & Partners (BSP) and Gilpin Engineering Co. to develop a Master Plan and evaluate costs of a possible new multi-use community fairgrounds and agricultural exposition center adequate to serve a wide range of potential users and activities including those involving youth education.



The Hanson/BSP/Gilpin planning team held meetings with members of the Commissioners Court in 2017. Hanson did a preliminary survey of potential alternative sites and returned with a recommendation that new facilities be built at the county-owned property now covered by aging LIFE buildings. Negotiations followed resulting in a decision to move forward with the County and the LIFE organization working cooperatively to plan the facility with LIFE continuing to host the annual fair and exposition at the new county facilities.

Master Plan development efforts kicked off in June 2018 with a series of one-on-one interviews and public meetings designed to gather information on community needs and ideas on how the future Webb County Fairgrounds can be designed to best serve those needs.

**A regular comment from stakeholders is that Laredo has a serious shortage of rentable space for community and family oriented events.**



Many Texas communities have made major investments in multipurpose fairgrounds, arena and event center facilities in recent years including Waco, San Antonio, Bryan, Abilene, Nueces County and San Patricio County. Webb County stakeholders who have participated in events at these facilities expressed the desire to develop county-owned facilities of similar quality, flexibility and utility.

Goals and objectives were established for the Webb County planning process included promoting agriculture, home economics and vocational trades; supporting the activities of 4-H Clubs and FFA chapters in the county; giving students an opportunity to compete with their projects and participate in an auction; and providing facilities which can be utilized by the community for a wide range of recreational, entertainment, meeting, sports, community enrichment and family purposes.



### 3.0 FAIRGROUNDS AND EVENT CENTER MASTER PLANNING

The key to developing a successful fairground complex is to design multipurpose buildings that can be marketed and utilized on a year-round basis. BSP is the national leader in helping communities develop successful fairground venues. They have guided planning and design of more than 150 fairgrounds, exhibition, agricultural and entertainment facilities in the U.S., Canada and Mexico.

The Project Team employed a four-step planning process in developing the Webb County Fairgrounds Master Plan. Step 1 is research and analysis. It includes setting goals, exploring a shared vision for the property, a site analysis and an understanding of the local market. Step 2 involves developing alternative development concepts. In this step the planners learn about the community's quality and aesthetic expectations while proposing various facility layouts and visitor

experiences. In Step 3 a preferred concept is selected and refined with cost estimates and proposals for phased buildout of site infrastructure and buildings. The result in Step 4 is a final master plan with renderings of key buildings, a total buildout site plan, cost estimates and conceptual schedules.

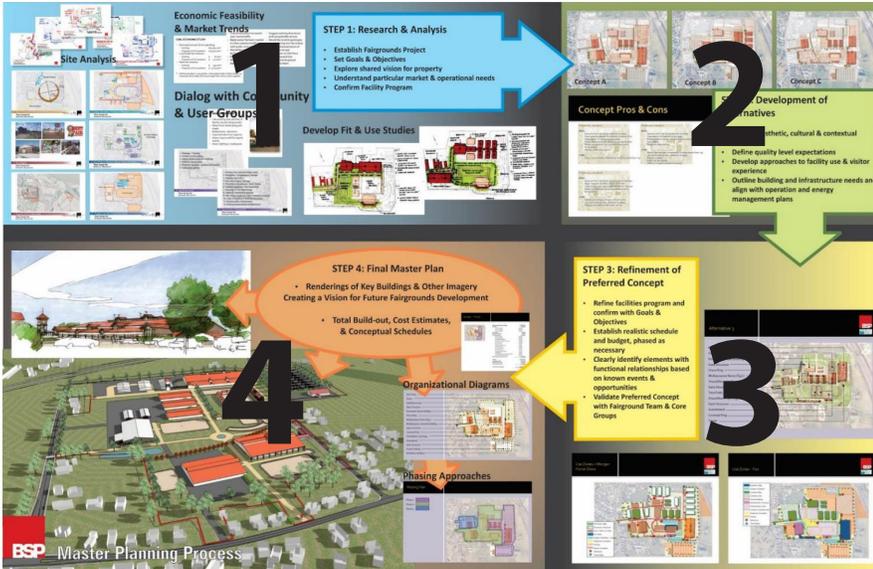
The existing LIFE Downs facilities in Webb County are typical of many existing fairgrounds that evolve over time in a low-budget pragmatic way, gradually losing functionality and becoming incapable of useful renovation, expansion or meeting current building codes and ADA compliance.

Site efficiency and the visual character of fairgrounds are important planning considerations. Fairground facilities are like a town in many ways. They have a center, entrances, neighborhoods, boulevards, parks, zones of work and play, and aspects of circulation and transportation. Whether a new facility or renovation, the scheme should always be crafted for possible phased implementation and the maximum possible flexibility in development and in day-to-day use.

Public venues present special physical and functional demands. Experience in planning exhibition buildings, livestock barns, arenas and midways at many other sites has been incorporated into Webb County's Master Plan. This includes such operational aspects as queuing and ticketing, food service, signage, parking sizing, traffic flow, pedestrian movement, security and animal management.

A site circulation scheme which is enjoyable for the patrons, efficient for animal and service circulation, and avoids conflicts between various activities is a key element in developing a successful facility in Webb County where multiple independent events can take place at the same time.

Hosting youth activities and education programs is an essential part of any expo center/fairgrounds and planning should carefully account for these needs.





### Fairgrounds and Exposition Center Related Trends

Trends in the development of new fairground venues during the past two decades have helped insure they are truly multipurpose venues with the facilities and management team necessary to be operated year-round. These are some of the key trends in modern fairgrounds and exposition centers:

- Year-Round Uses
- Multipurpose Complex and Buildings
  - Multipurpose Arenas, Exhibition and Livestock Buildings
  - Multipurpose Event Fields
- Revenue Producers
- Sources of Civic Pride
- Visitor and User Friendliness
  - No Parking Within Pedestrian Areas
  - Separation of Pedestrian and Service Circulation
  - Architectural Continuity and Signature Focal Points
  - Defined Use Zones
  - “Theme Park” Quality in Graphics, Landscape & Presentation
  - Gate Design and Ticketing
- Professional Staffing, Management and Marketing



### Potential Uses of Fairgrounds

The non-profit LIFE organization makes major use of existing facilities during the LIFE Fair and Exposition held each February. It includes a carnival, concerts and a livestock auction. Other major events held regularly at the facility throughout the year include the HEB Fireworks Extravaganza, Brush Country Breast Cancer Awareness Trail Ride, July 4th Trail Ride, Pit King Fajita Cook-Off, Hot Air Balloon Palooza, PRCA Rodeo, circus, concerts and monster truck shows. Other events hosted at the facility include casino night, team roping events, tailgate parties, barrel racing, company picnics, family reunions, weddings and receptions, quinceañeras, graduation parties, retirement parties, holiday parties and baby showers.

During workshop sessions and stakeholder meetings with various user group representatives it was stressed that additional facilities are needed to better support a wide variety of community events, entertainment options, agricultural education activities and equestrian competitions. Some of the potential uses of a modern fairground facility typically include:





- |                             |                   |                    |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|
| County Fairs                | Concerts          | Rodeo Events       |
| Annual Festivals            | Trade Shows       | Equine Events      |
| Livestock Show and Sales    | Consumer Shows    | Car Shows          |
| Receptions                  | Parties           | Dances             |
| Corporate Training Sessions | Public Meetings   | Wedding Receptions |
| Sports Events/Tournaments   | Family Events     | Religious Events   |
| Community Celebrations      | Cook-Offs         | School Events      |
| Commercial Vendor Shows     | Farm Shows        | Auctions           |
| Conventions and Conferences | Weekly Gatherings | School Proms       |
| Monster Truck Shows         | Arena Football    | Graduations        |
| Indoor Soccer               | Reunions          | Company Picnics    |



### Why Create Multipurpose Facilities

Experience shows that the key to having successful fairground venues is to develop a multipurpose set of facilities that meet the needs of diverse user groups and that bring a larger portion of the community population to the property. Such facilities can accommodate multiple users at the same time, are flexible, provide the complex with regular diversified revenue sources and result in greater sharing of capital, replacement and operating costs. Flexible facilities allow the fairgrounds to accommodate different user groups and varied event sizes. A significant benefit of such expanded and diversified use is greater community support for the overall operation.

In developing the Master Plan for Webb County Fairgrounds, the Hanson/BSP/Gilpin Team was mindful of other entertainment venues in Laredo. The goal is not to create a competing venue but rather to offer an affordable space that can accommodate multiple uses. The planning team sees the Webb County facility as a significant step up in scale, appealing to a multi-county audience while providing local residents with opportunities for quality family fun and entertainment that may not exist in the county today.





### 4.0 STAKEHOLDER INPUT AND COMMUNITY WORKSHOPS

A key part of the planning process is working with County leaders and stakeholders to understand their needs and develop a tailored plan which can be successfully implemented. This process provided a valuable opportunity for community stakeholders to participate in developing ideas and to emphasize specific needs they know about.

Workshops were held June 20-21, 2018, and August 1-2, 2018, with participants encouraged to come at their convenience to talk with planners, ask questions and offer suggestions. About 40 people participated in an August 1 meeting that included a full presentation on planning progress and is available for video viewing at <http://www.webbcountytx.gov/Fairgrounds/>. These sessions included representatives of community organizations, schools, youth groups, local business, the tourism industry, economic development interests, TxDOT, landowners and local government. Participants included representatives of the Washington's Birthday Celebration Association, Princess Pocahontas Council, high school FFA programs, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension, LIFE organization, Jalapeno Fest, South Texas Collector's Expo Comic Con, Raise 'Em Up (roping events), Crime Stoppers Menudo Bowl, and a supporter of large-scale youth sports tournaments.

One of the most common comments was that Laredo does not have adequate facilities for large family-oriented events geared to all ages. The workshops yielded a host of ideas including building venues large enough to potentially host several of the events associated with the 120-year-old one-of-a-kind Washington's Birthday Celebration which take place over a month-long period in January and February and are attended by more than 500,000 people.

Stakeholders pointed out that Laredo, the nation's busiest inland port, is growing rapidly because of its role as an international trade hub. Construction activity in the city has been strong for several years and that growth is reflected in the fact that Laredo now has 10 high schools. Employment and income growth have been strong in recent years. A study for the U.S. Conference of Mayors projected that Laredo's population could grow to almost 500,000





over the next 30 years. Stakeholders feel new fairgrounds facilities should be planned in anticipation of that predicted growth.

Supporters of festivals and concerts said quality venues with modern staging and adequate utilities would be an important component of the new fairgrounds development. They also said it is important that each of the major buildings be climate controlled to allow for the widest range of events in the weather extremes that are a fact of life in South Texas. Stakeholders suggested that arena and exhibit buildings be built with rollup doors so that on occasion they can be naturally ventilated by south and southeast winds. They also recommended that plans make the most of potential scenic views of Lake Casa Blanca located to the north of the fairgrounds property.

Leaders of FFA and 4-H reported that current facilities for these youth programs are inadequate and restrict growth. Classroom and cooking facilities were suggested. Local high school ag instructors noted that none of the local high schools has the ability to house animal projects for students who do not live in rural areas. They suggested allowing school districts to build animal barns for student use at the fairgrounds.



Other proposals from stakeholders included building a larger banquet hall than first proposed, providing a substantial number of RV hookups, adding a baseball sports complex and replacing the existing barns with modern horse stall facilities (with riding trails available) for long-term rental. Others urged ADA compliance, more shade, better animal pen areas, better lighting, improved drainage, dust reduction and updated traffic control.

### TRAFFIC CONSIDERATIONS

The Webb County Fairgrounds site is located on the north side of US Highway 59 which has been congressionally designated to be converted to Interstate 69W in the future. Currently traffic coming to LIFE Downs from Laredo must make a left turn across traffic to enter. Texas Department of Transportation staff reviewed preliminary site concepts and offered guidance on planning entrances and the queuing of vehicles coming into the fairgrounds complex for major events. When the freeway is built in the future an overpass will be needed at or east of the fairgrounds main entrance.



**5.0 EXISTING FACILITIES**

In Webb County the annual county fair, livestock show, rodeo and riding events take place at LIFE Downs, a 140-acre site on US Highway 59 near Lake Casa Blanca. The existing facility consists of a dozen structures built by the non-profit Laredo International Fair and Exposition (LIFE) organization which was founded in 1963 to work with and promote youth programs. Utilizing fundraising, sponsorships and grants, LIFE gradually installed limited utilities and built a rodeo arena, barns, restrooms, offices and other structures. The last buildings added were the concert stage in 1999 and the LIFE Pavilion completed in 2009. Many of the existing structures are well beyond their expected life span and lack adequate ventilation, lighting, water service and electric power.

The following table indicates the approximate utilization and size of existing LIFE Downs facilities.



### Existing Facilities at LIFE Downs Fairgrounds

Facility Description	Dimension (Feet)	Approx. Sq. Feet	
<b>Roofed or Interior Spaces</b>			
LIFE Pavilion	180x110	19,800	Enclosed, HVAC
Peterson Building	70x73	5,100	Enclosed, No HVAC
Restaurant	110x30	3,300	Enclosed, HVAC
LIFE Office	40x30	1,200	Enclosed, HVAC
		29,400	<i>SUBTOTAL</i>
Animal Exhibit Barn		44,000	Roofed
Vendor Pavilion	200x100	20,000	Roofed, sidewalls
Mechanical Arts Pavilion		8,300	Roofed, WWF sidewalls
Restaurant Patio / Beverage sales		3,900	Roofed
		76,200	<i>SUBTOTAL</i>
		<b>105,600</b>	<b>Total Roofed or Enclosed</b>
<b>Miscellaneous Spaces</b>			
Picnic Lawn @ Animal Exhibit		14,000	Partial roof
Stage Structure	55x70	3,850	Roofed
Unused Pavilion	54x123	6,600	Roofed, concrete slab
Stage grounds	500x200	113,000	Open area
Horse Barns - Leased to private users	(6)@140x70	58,800	170 horses stabled on site
Outdoor Rodeo Arena - 150'x300'			Bleacher seating, concessions





The site slopes up from an average 480' along US Highway 59 toward the northwest boundary topping out at 500' elevation

## 6.0 SITE ANALYSIS

Webb County has ownership control of approximately 140 acres of land which will serve as the site of the Webb County Fairgrounds. It is located at the eastern edge of the city of Laredo on the north side of US Highway 59 (future Interstate 69). To the northwest of the property is Scout Camp Huisache and Lake Casa Blanca. The project design team performed an analysis of the site looking at existing buildings, topography, drainage issues, availability of existing utilities, site access, adjacent land uses, easements, jurisdiction, wind and sun orientation, view lines, pedestrian circulation, past use patterns and other issues. Each structure was evaluated.

Planners concluded that the existing layout and facilities have significant deficiencies with little potential for reuse. They concluded that the LIFE Pavilion is a sound building and can be repurposed in the future fairgrounds complex as a well located maintenance and storage facility.

The fairgrounds property rises in elevation by about 20 feet from the existing entrance to the northwest property boundary which is at the crest of a hillside running down 55 feet to Lake Casa Blanca. The uphill rise away from the highway provides several benefits. First, it provides full exposure to prevailing south and southeast winds to provide a cooling breeze during high temperature months. Second, it will allow the proposed large, modern buildings of the new fairgrounds to enjoy dramatic visibility from vehicles traveling on the adjacent Highway 59. Planners determined that water, wastewater, electric power, cable and gas utilities are available on the fairgrounds property or at the adjacent County Road and Bridge Department property. Providing adequate capacity for the new event buildings will require substantial upgrades to some utilities on and off site.



## 7.0 FACILITY BUILDING PROGRAM

The Design Team worked with county officials and key stakeholders to help identify the key elements needed to support community needs in Webb County and the surrounding area.

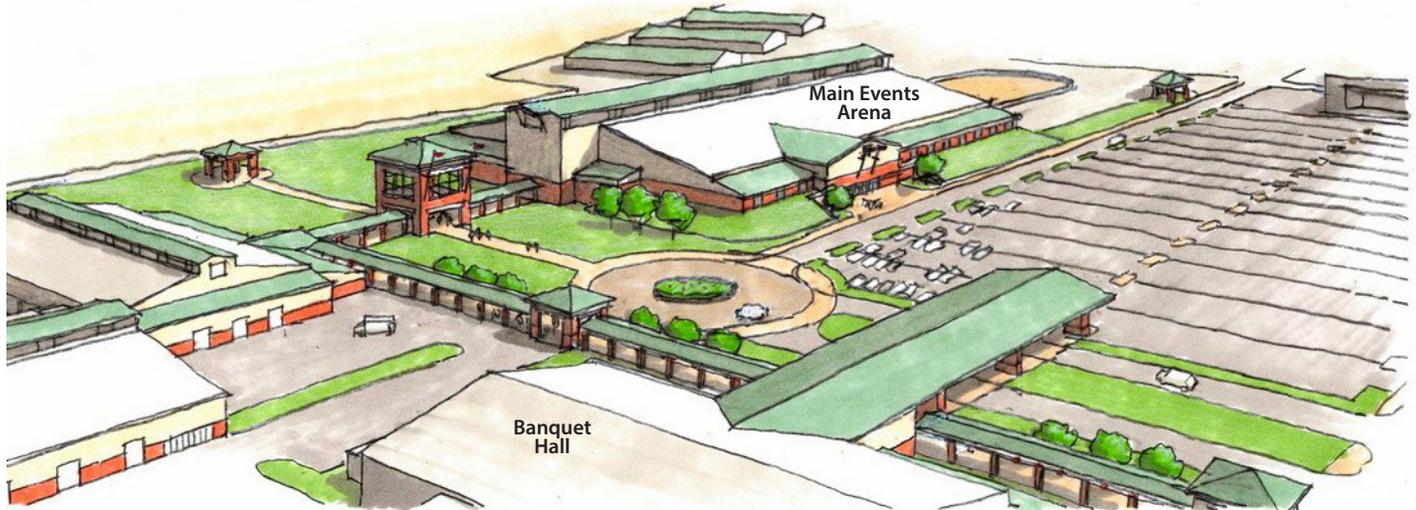
The key elements and considerations identified are:

1. A park-like campus with an efficient, visitor friendly layout.
2. A main events center arena with 4,000 fixed seats.
3. Equestrian facilities and amenities including a significant number of permanent horse stalls.
4. A large multi-use building that can serve as a banquet hall (with full kitchen), ballroom or a conference center.
5. Significant exhibit space to accommodate trade shows, sales events and livestock exhibitions.
6. A mid-size show pavilion with bleacher seating for a wide range of events including showing livestock.
7. Air conditioning of all enclosed structures to enhance the audience experience and venue marketability.
8. An RV parking and hookup area.
9. Adequate paved parking to support simultaneous events.
10. Adequate power, lighting, sound equipment and the latest high-tech gear to support meetings and performances of all sizes.
11. Substantial secure storage space.

The following table identifies the approximate sizes needed to accommodate the various user groups.

### Identified Buildings to Accommodate User Groups

<b>Main Events Center Arena With Adjacent Outdoor Ring</b>	<i>4,000 fixed seats; air conditioned; 150' x 300' floor area; stock pens; stage and show power; full kitchen; concessions; covered warm up area 100'x200'</i>
<b>Banquet Hall With 2 Sets of Offices</b>	<i>35,000 sq. ft. with 20,000 sq. ft. main hall; air conditioned, carpet, full kitchen; breakout rooms, management offices; AgriLife offices; dance floor</i>
<b>Two Exhibition Halls</b>	<i>47,200 sq. ft. each; air conditioned; trade show floors; minimal finishes, wash racks, concessions, restrooms</i>
<b>Show Ring</b>	<i>49,200 sq. ft.; air conditioned; 1,500 bleacher seats</i>
<b>Horse Barns</b>	<i>Two or three barns with 100 stalls each; wash racks, restrooms, showers, barn office</i>
<b>Festival Grounds and Outdoor Concert Stage</b>	<i>Significant area for large crowds</i>
<b>Stall Barns for Rental</b>	<i>Two 100-stall barns</i>
<b>Storage</b>	<i>Rehab existing Life Pavilion</i>
<b>RV Park for Participants</b>	<i>50 spaces; room for future expansion</i>
<b>Parking</b>	<i>Approximately 1,000 paved spaces and 2,000 grass and overflow with trailer and RV areas</i>
<b>Service Areas</b>	<i>Each facility has service areas separated from the general public</i>



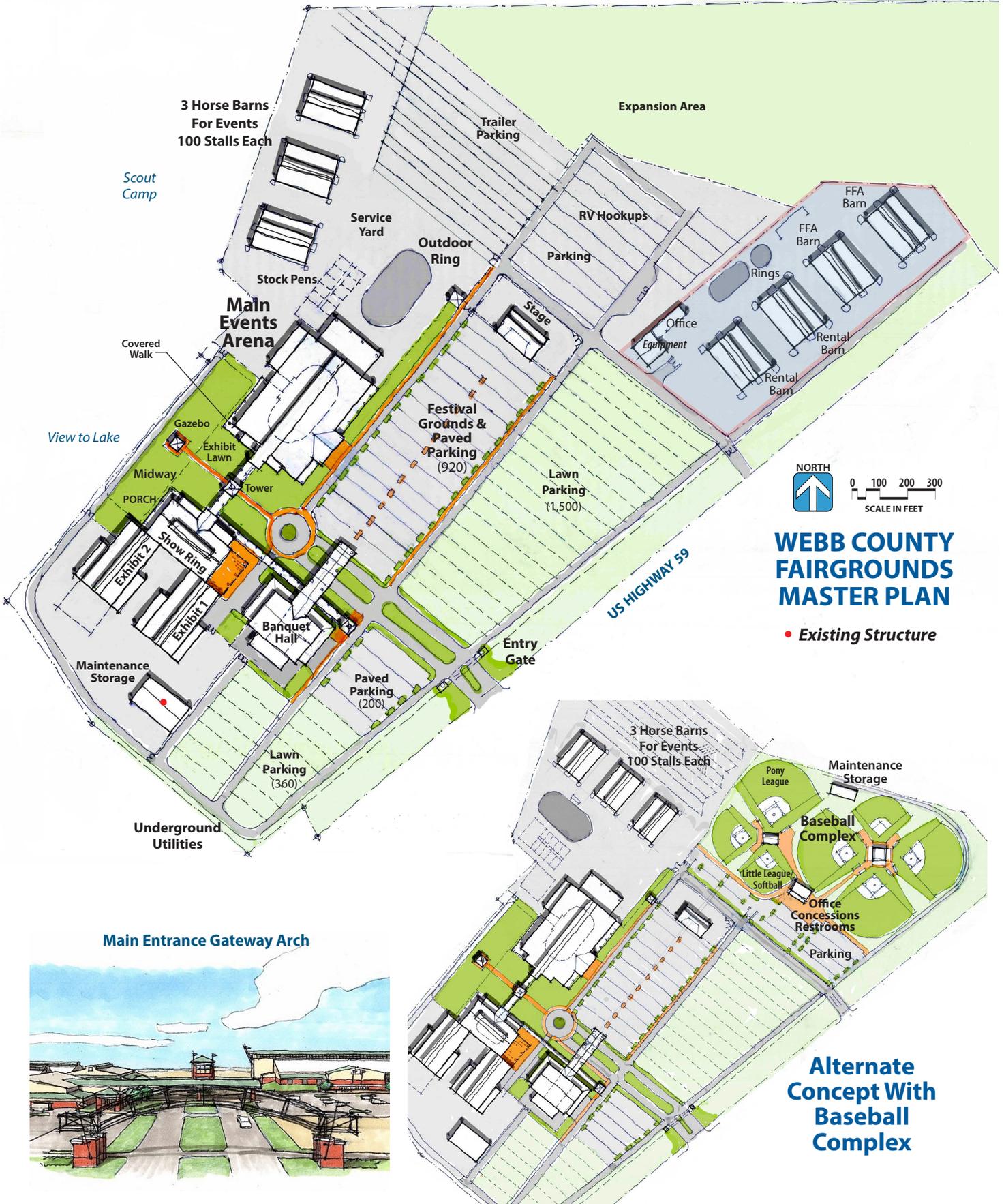
## 8.0 RECOMMENDED SITE DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The Master Plan developed for the Webb County Fairgrounds envisions multi-use facilities located in a planned layout on the redeveloped 140-acre fairgrounds site on the east side of Laredo. The plan builds on input from substantial community public involvement and consultation.

The fairgrounds property would be separated into two primary zones – one zone for the public and another for service activities and event participants. The public zone is characterized by expanses of paved parking, visibility from the highway and the main entry, landscaping, controlled yet flexible circulation, adequate signage and clear indications of destination points within the facility. The service/participant zone would be separate from the public zone. Trucks, trailers, equipment and animals would use areas in this zone. While attractively screened, this zone will be less tidy and will not include the same level of amenity and eye appeal as the public zone.

The Master Plan calls for a set of five new climate-controlled buildings clustered around a large pedestrian midway mall and outdoor exhibit space. Climate control significantly expands the types of events they can host and enhances the audience experience. Hot weather during the warm months and wet, cold, windy days during the winter are a daily part of life in the South Texas border region. Without air conditioning these sometimes extreme conditions make it difficult to stage major events which must attract large audiences to be financially successful. Corrosion control is an important benefit to be derived from climate control of these major structures. The large exhibition buildings and the Main Events Arena will have numerous roll-up doors so they can function without climate control on days when the weather is accommodating.

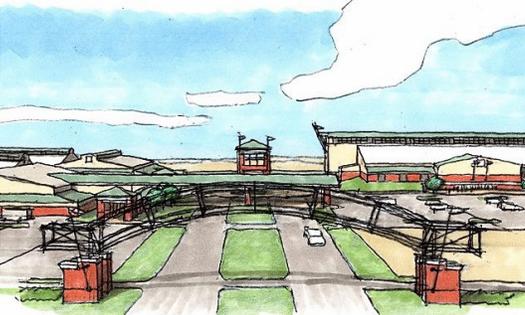
The recommended architectural style of the main buildings in the complex is solidly Texas ranch traditional. It incorporates regional symbols and natural colors. A proposed iron gateway arch at the boulevard entrance to the complex is a grand version of many ranch gates found in South Texas. The Main Entrance gateway will lead to a ticketing entrance plaza and a central traffic circle.



# WEBB COUNTY FAIRGROUNDS MASTER PLAN

• Existing Structure

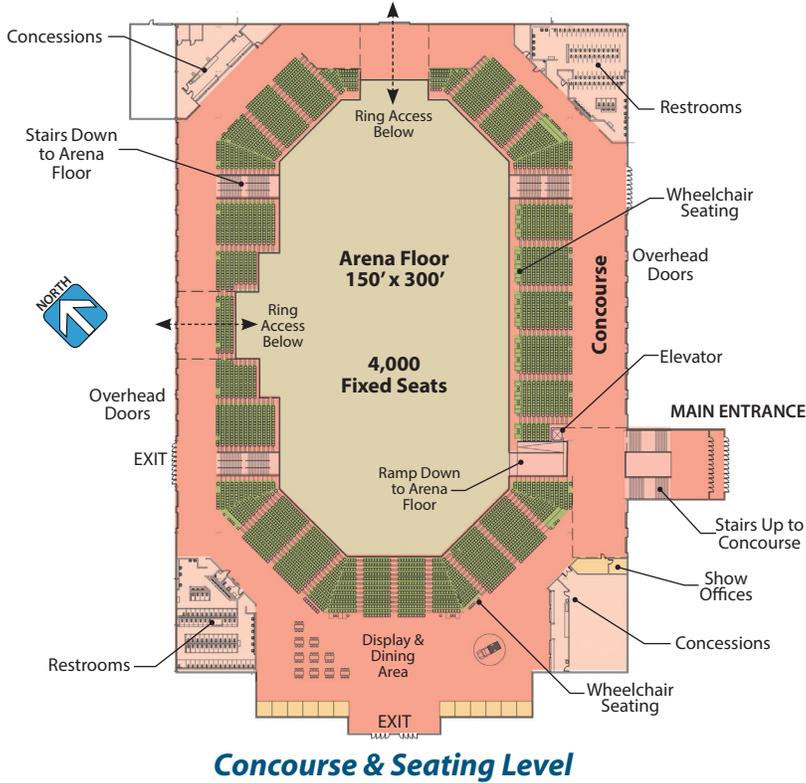
Main Entrance Gateway Arch



Alternate Concept With Baseball Complex



### MAIN EVENTS ARENA



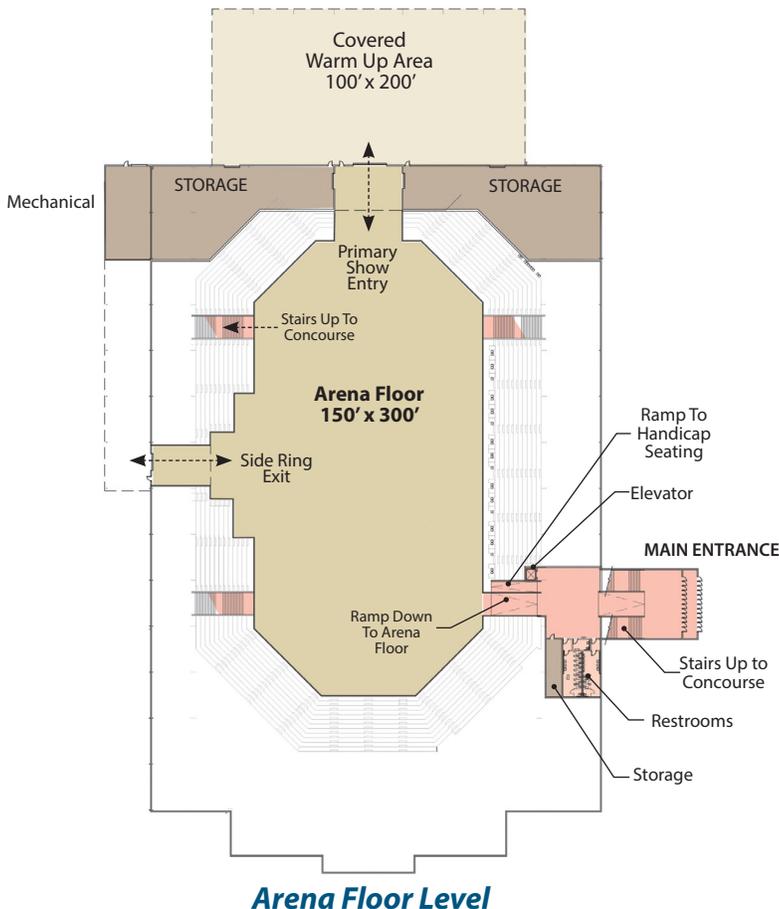
The Main Entrance gateway will lead to an expansive outdoor midway and exhibit area near all of the large public buildings.

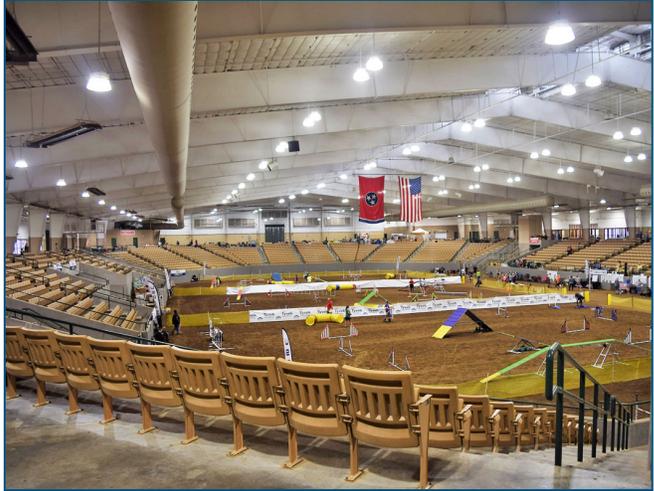
An alternate site plan was developed to illustrate how a large-scale baseball complex could be positioned on the site, a concept proposed by a stakeholder.

**MAIN EVENTS ARENA** - The Main Events Arena is the focal point of the proposed Webb County Fairgrounds complex. This air-conditioned building would have approximately 4,000 individual fixed seats in a bowl configuration plus the ability to accommodate an additional 2,000 people in movable floor seating. This venue is designed to be multipurpose and fully ADA compliant for a full range of events from equestrian to ceremonial. It will have a floor area of 150' x 300'. Large high-clearance roll-up doors at the northwest arena floor entry will provide easy access for large trucks and equipment.

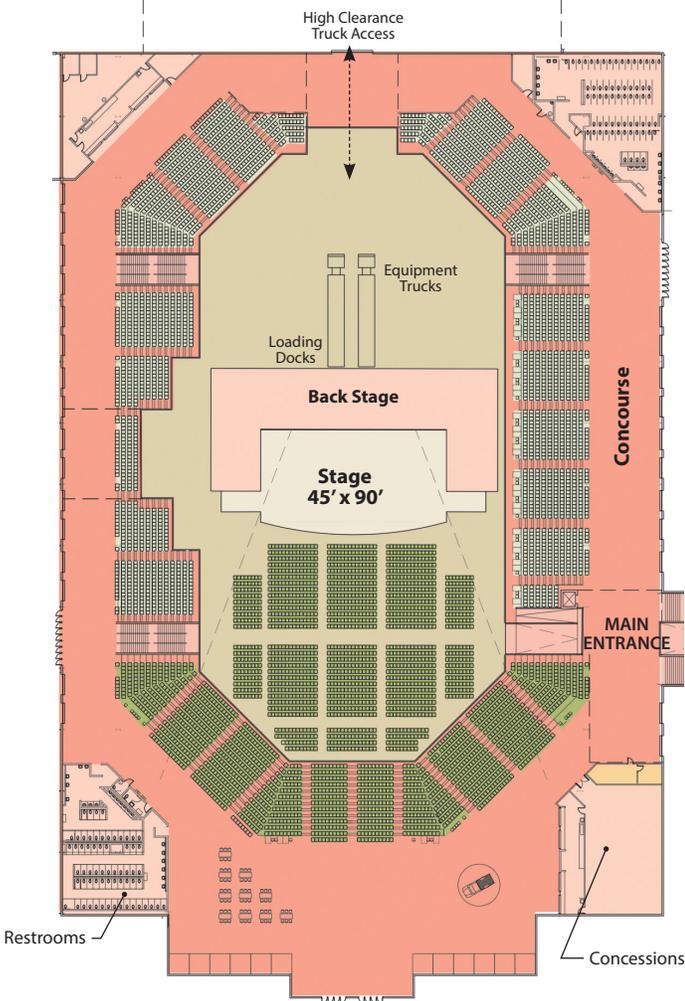
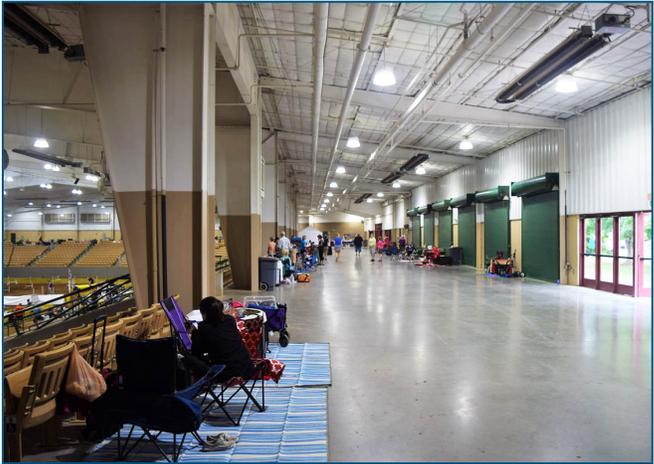
There will be a spacious concourse above the seating bowl providing access to concessions, restrooms and an open display and dining area. The concourse will have space for vendors, exhibit booths or registration tables. Sections of the concourse exterior walls will include overhead doors to allow operation of the building for certain events without operating the climate control system. The arena hall is a simple high volume space with unobstructed views from all points. The ring can also be configured for certain team sports including basketball, arena football, soccer and volleyball.

The fixed stadium seating will be washable self-lifting seats typical of multipurpose ag-expo facilities.





**Stage Show Configuration**



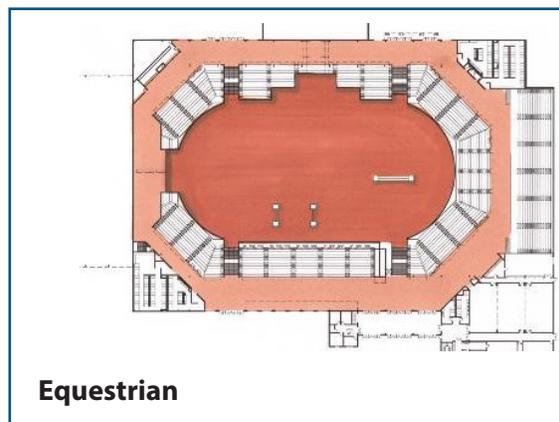
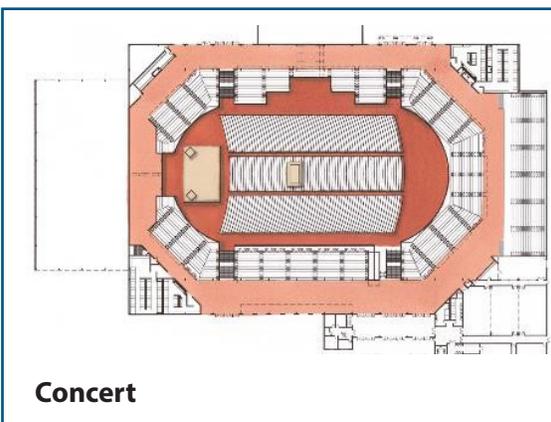
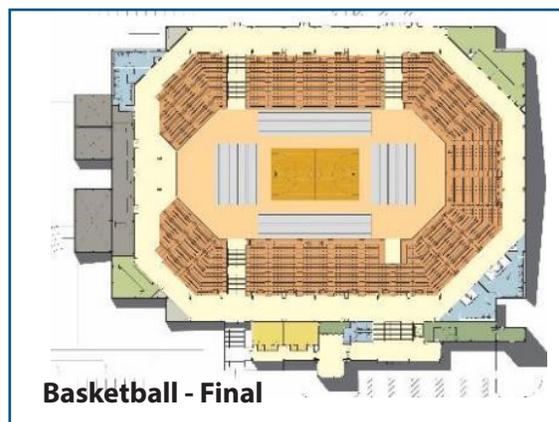
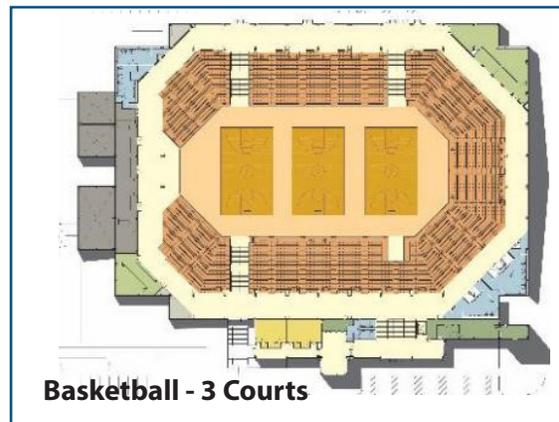
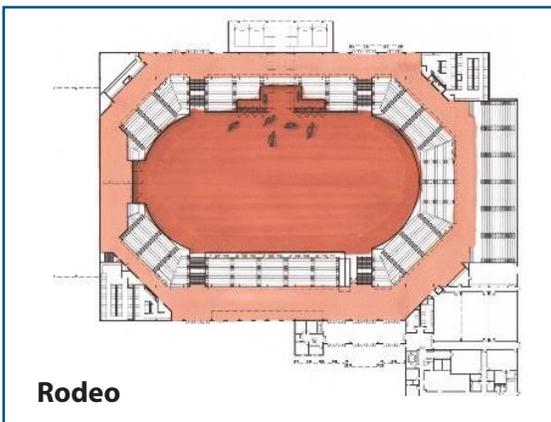
1,500 Fixed Stadium Seats and 1,500 Floor Chairs (dark green)

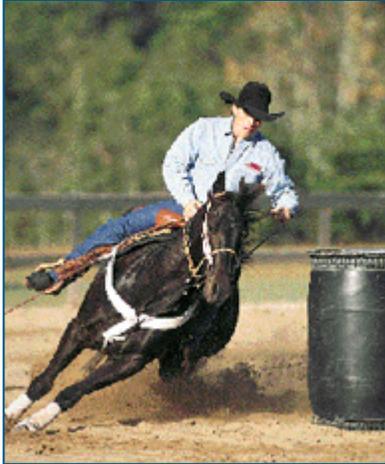
**STAGE SHOW CONFIGURATION** - For events such as the Princess Pocahontas Pageant, stage shows or high school graduation ceremonies the arena floor can be configured with portable stage and back stage equipment. The illustration at left shows an example of a “half house” configuration that would produce approximately 3,000 seats facing a large performance stage.

Ceiling lighting and spotlight platforms can be installed as part of the live performance venue. Adequate electric power will be available to support concerts and other stage performances.



**Multipurpose Main Events Arena Can Be Configured for Many Different Events**





**WARM UP AREA AND OUTDOOR RING** - A covered warm up area and a set of stock pens will be located at the northwest end of the Main Events Arena to support various equestrian and rodeo events.

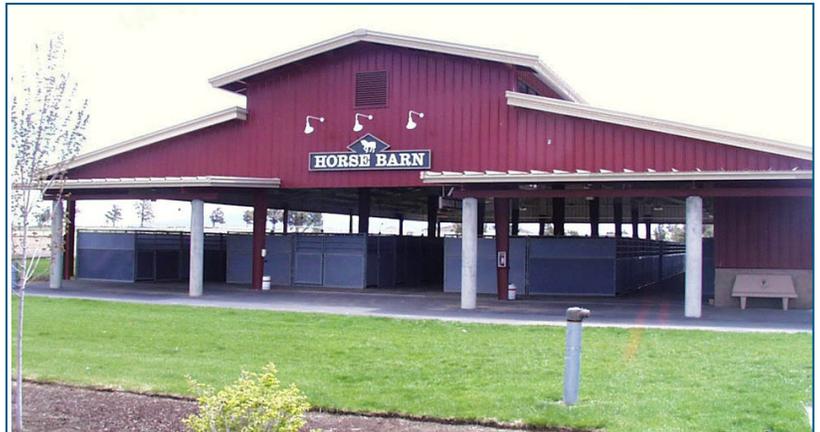
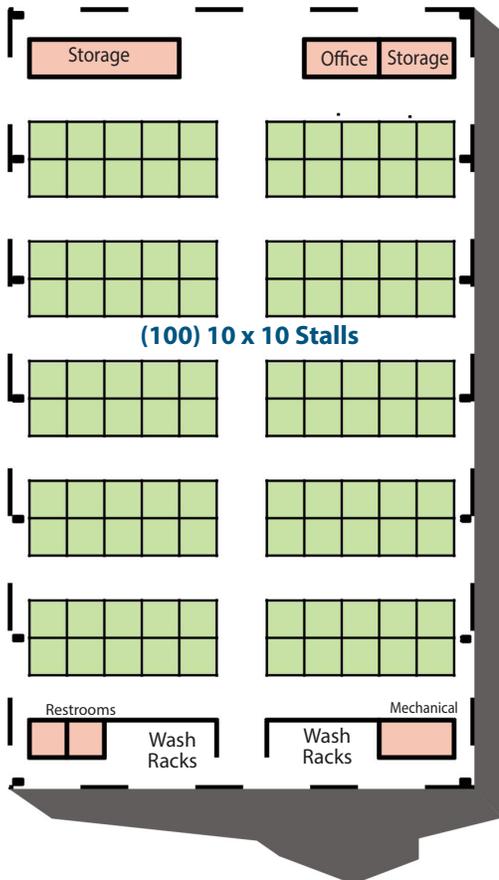
The plan envisions a full-size 150' x 300' outdoor ring next to the warm up area. It will provide an ideal setting for many smaller riding competitions and a location for practice sessions for events such as barrel racing and team roping. Additionally, this ring will serve as a venue for preliminary rounds of competition events that then move into the Main Events Arena. The ring will be surrounded by a service yard and will be near the show horse barns.



**HORSE BARNS** - Beyond the equestrian event area the plan envisions ultimate construction of three horse barns, each with 100 horse stalls, for temporary use during shows and competition. They will allow for horses and riders to have efficient access to the warm up arena and the Main Events Arena.

The horse barns will be open-sided buildings with concrete floors to facilitate cleaning. Wood shavings will be used for animal comfort and hygiene. Each stall will contain electrical outlets and there will be numerous water hose connections within the buildings in addition to wash rack areas.

**Horse Barns**





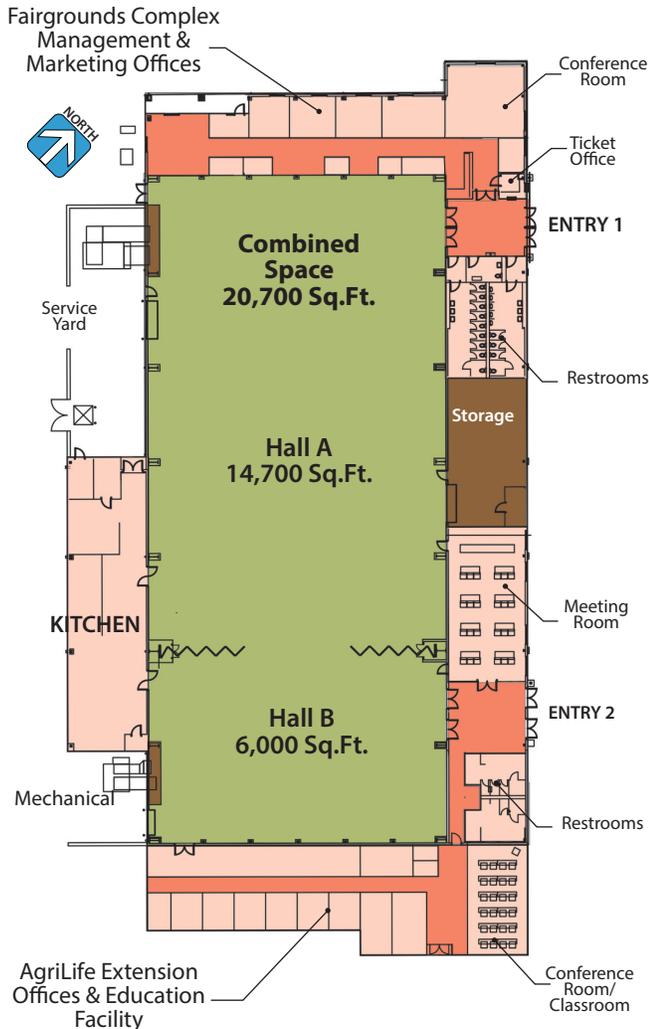
**Banquet Hall and Ballroom**

**BANQUET HALL** - This versatile building is expected to be one of the most regularly utilized venues in the fairgrounds complex. It will house management functions, marketing offices plus control and monitoring equipment for all buildings. The entry to the ADA compliant facility would have a convenient covered drive thru passenger drop off area.

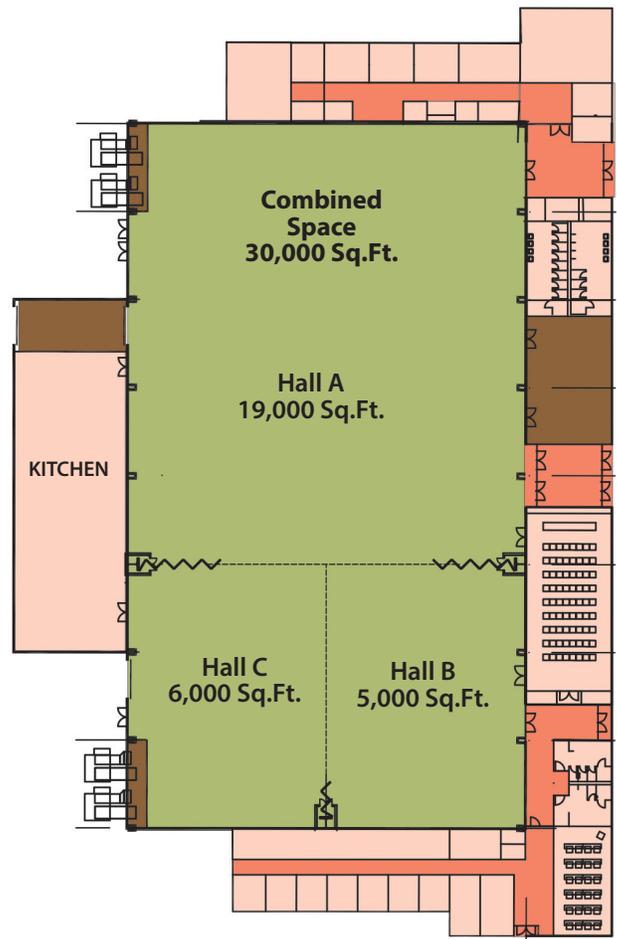
The illustrations shown here are for a 35,000 square foot building that would be adequate to host most of the events discussed here. An alternative 48,000 square foot building is also shown.

The Banquet Hall would be air conditioned, fully carpeted, acoustically treated and have high ceilings for maximum versatility. The Banquet Hall can be divided into separate function areas to achieve a high level of flexibility.

**Proposed 35,088 Sq.Ft. Banquet Hall-Office Building**

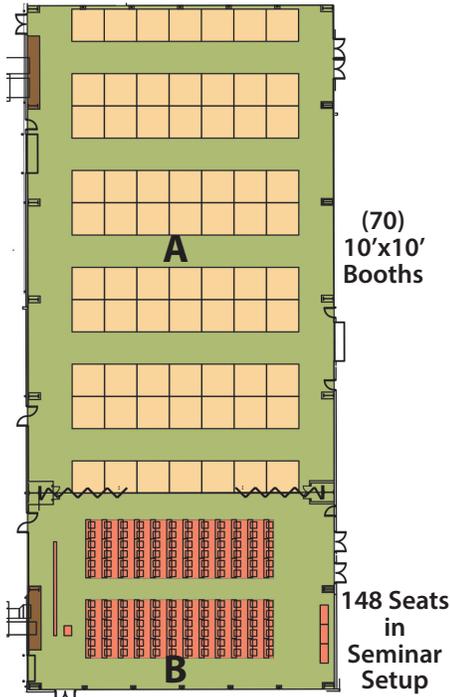


**Alternate 48,000 Sq.Ft. Banquet Hall-Office Building**





**Examples of Banquet Hall Uses**



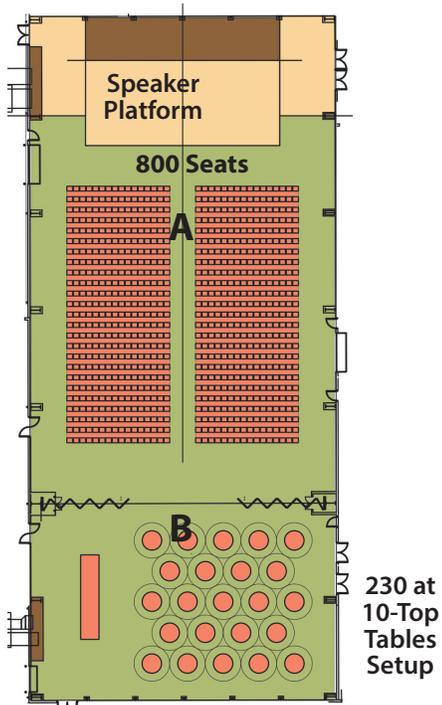
**Trade Show & Seminar Setup**

These main spaces will be suitable for banquets, dances, public meetings, receptions and performances. The building can also serve as a conference center for corporate events, company training sessions and small trade shows. Examples of a few of the possible use configurations are illustrated here including how the entire hall could be utilized for a dinner and dancing event such as Laredo's annual Pocahontas Ball.

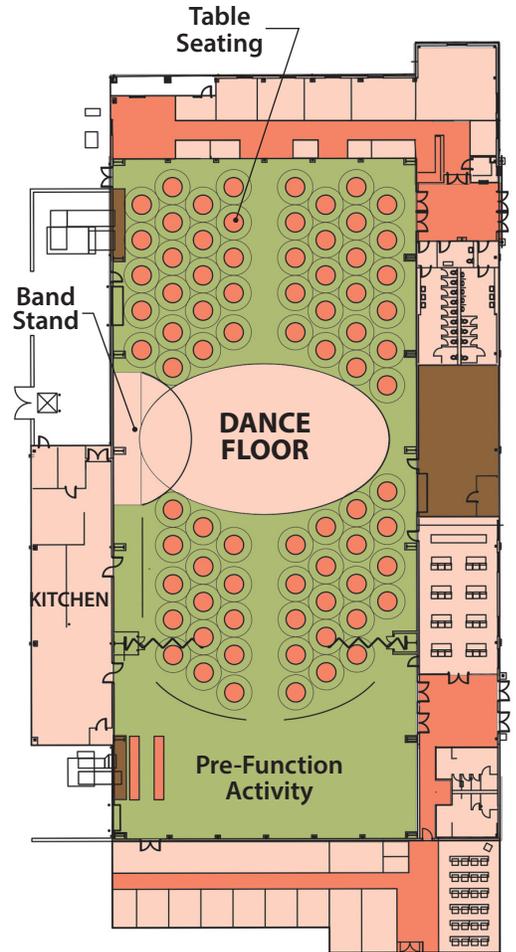
The facility would include a full service kitchen for catering large or small events. Chairs, tables, staging, sound, special effects and multi-media equipment will be required to accommodate various arrangements and customer needs.

There would also be a meeting room to accommodate small functions and training sessions.

The Master Plan includes a home for the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension program with offices, demonstration areas and a flexible meeting room that can be used as a classroom or conference room.



**Meeting Seating & Luncheon Setup**

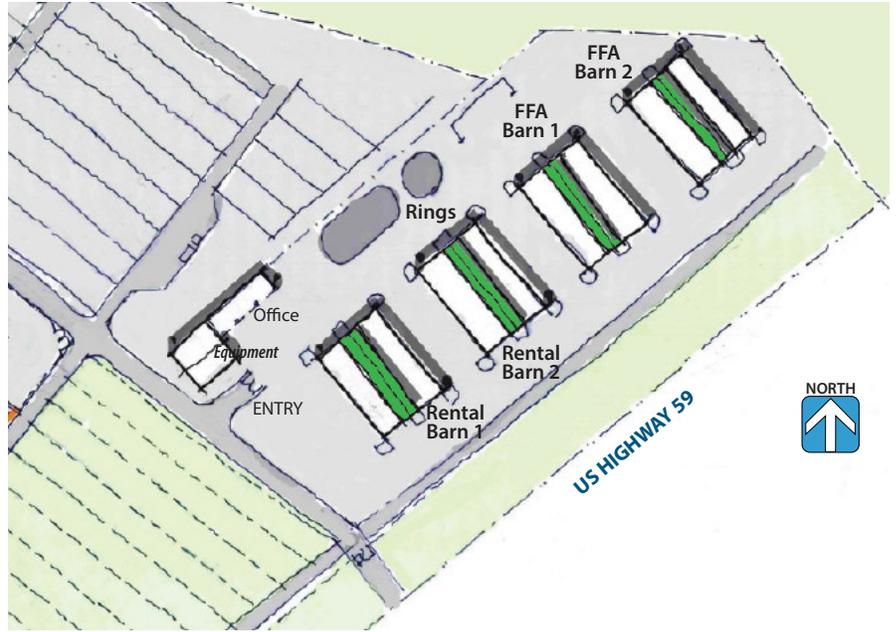


**Ball and Dinner Setup**

Example Shows Seating for 890 at 10-Top Tables - This Setup Would Accommodate the Pocahontas Ball







### Rental Stables and Student Animal Barns

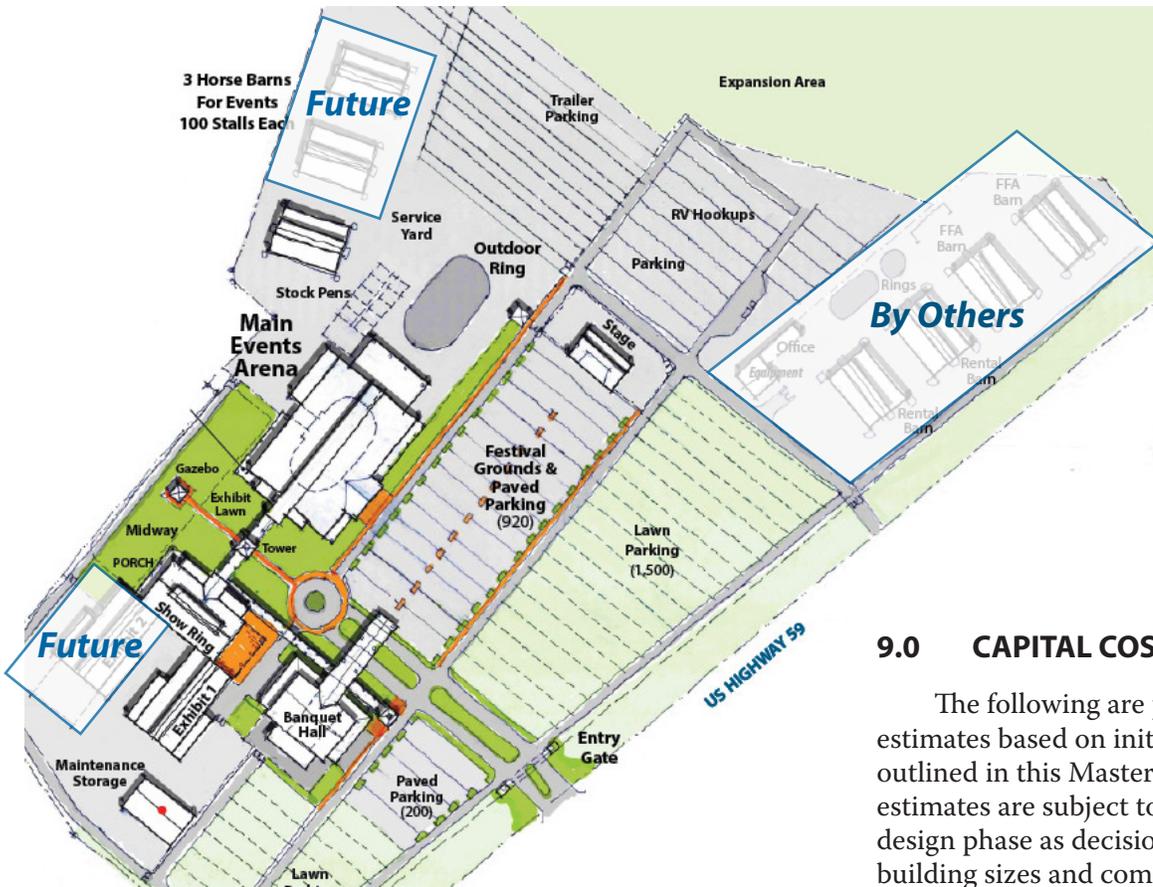
**RENTAL AND FFA STUDENT BARNs** - LIFE Downs currently includes six dilapidated barns that are used to stable more than 150 horses on a month-to-month rental basis. Stakeholders reported that there are few other horse stable rental options available in Laredo. The existing barns will be eliminated to make way for major fairgrounds buildings.

The Master Plan proposes two modern 100-stall replacement barns available for year-round public rental. This operation would include offices and an equipment building. The County could either build these facilities as part of the fairgrounds project or could simply provide a site for an alternate development option.

Sites would also be provided for two 100-stall barns for use by high school FFA students raising animals as school projects. The suggested development plan would have Laredo school districts pay for construction and operation of these two facilities.

All four barns would be built with concrete floors, wash rack areas, water hose connections and electrical outlets, all constructed with materials intended for very long life.

The barn complex would be fenced off from the fairgrounds and would have a separate gated access from US Highway 59. It would include a small riding ring and a lunge ring for horse training. The barns would have access to riding trails on the fairgrounds property.



### 9.0 CAPITAL COST ESTIMATES

The following are preliminary cost estimates based on initial improvements outlined in this Master Plan. These estimates are subject to refinement in the design phase as decisions are made on final building sizes and components.

The Master Plan includes several elements which are not included in this Capital Cost Estimate. A second exhibit hall and two additional event horse barns can be added in the future. The rental horse stables and the FFA barns can be funded outside the primary county fairgrounds project.

DESCRIPTION	NO. OF UNITS	TOTAL
1 Demolition		\$332,814
2 Utilities		\$6,794,962
3 Pavement & Roads		\$11,925,851
4 RV Parking	50	\$554,691
5 Banquet Hall	35,000 SF	\$6,794,962
6 Exhibition Halls (1 @ 47,200 SF with AC)	47,200 SF	\$6,807,165
7 Show Ring (AC)	49,200 SF	\$7,914,328
8 Arena (4,000 Seat/AC & Covered Warm-Up Ring)	150,300 SF	\$34,067,443
9 Stall Barns (100 Stall Capacity Fair Use)	26,000 SF	\$1,586,416
10 Stall Barns (0 Stall Capacity FFA & Public Use)		\$0
11 Festival Grounds, Stage & Vendor Hook-ups		\$2,329,701
12 Maintenance Barn (Rehab Existing)	5,000 SF	\$277,345
13 Gates, Towers, Entries, Artwork, Signage		\$2,662,516
14 Landscape & Irrigation		\$998,443
15 Fencing		\$332,814
16 Kitchen Equipment		\$554,691
Construction Total		\$83,934,143
Construction Contengency (5%)		\$4,196,707
FF&E		\$696,150
Bond Issuance (1%)		\$888,270
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>\$89,715,270</b>

*These cost estimates include construction contingencies, testing, engineering and architectural fees, administration and project management*

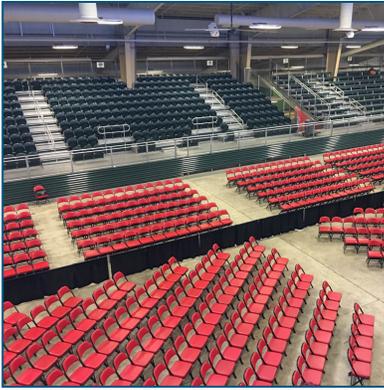


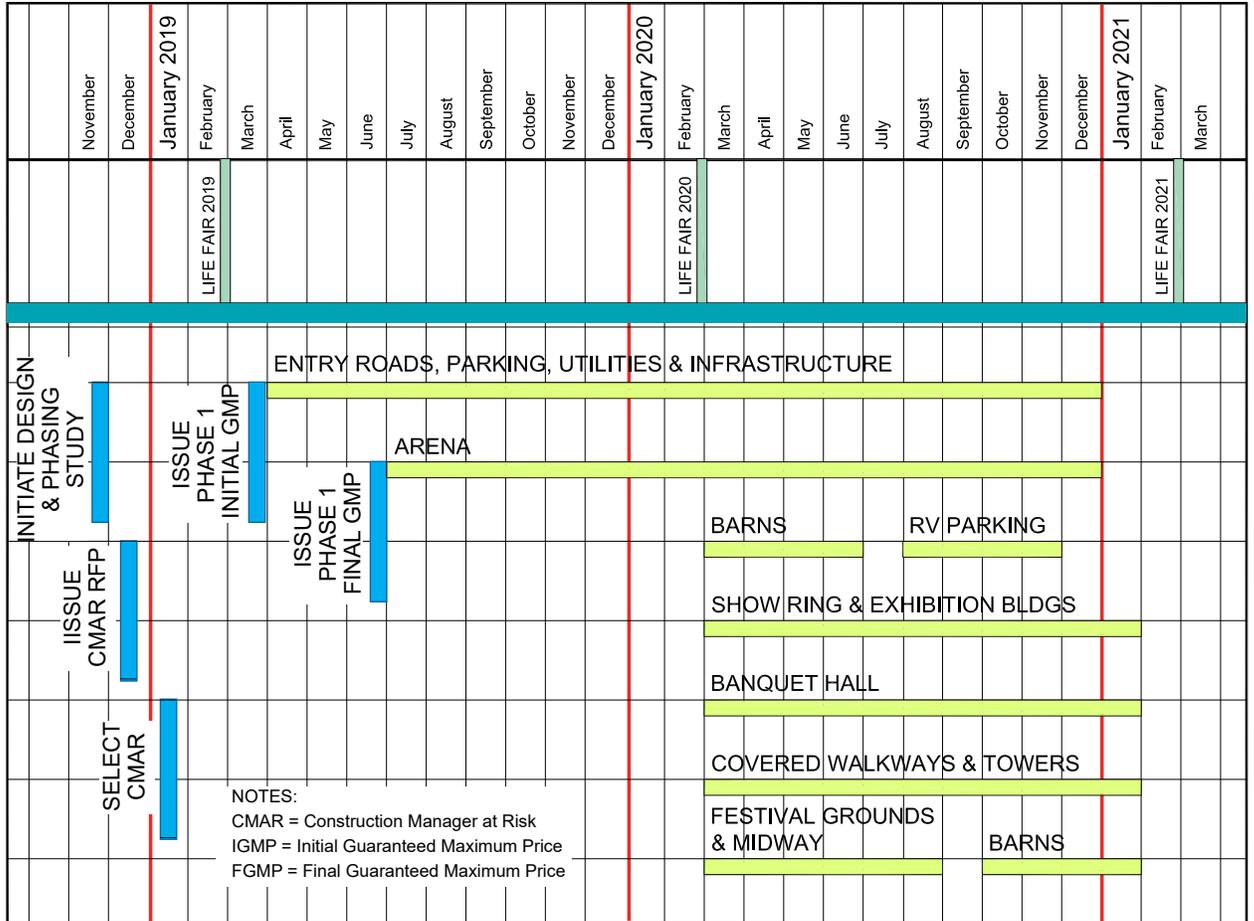
### 10.0 FACILITY MANAGEMENT

A variety of strategies for operation and management of successful exposition centers and fairgrounds are available. In a typical arrangement the County will hire a professional facility manager who in turn is directly responsible for managing and marketing the venues. This experienced manager deals with all maintenance, staffing and operational issues.

Professionals in this field have concluded from experience that hiring a dedicated management team that has experience operating and promoting such facilities is a top priority. The professional management team would be charged with implementing a consistent and aggressive marketing strategy. This will maximize the facility's potential to enhance quality of life and economic impacts for the county. Several national companies provide marketing, booking and management for the kind of multi-use facilities proposed by Webb County.

It is important that the facility have a professional events staff to handle event setups, venue changes, maintenance and custodial duties. A friendly, professionally run event with well-organized event staff is an important asset in retaining and expanding the number of events a facility will host on a monthly and yearly basis.





### 11.0 PROJECT SCHEDULE

Design and construction of the proposed Webb County Fairgrounds can be accomplished in stages over a two year period that will allow the LIFE Fair to happen on time each year. The Fair and livestock show would take place in existing buildings in 2019 and 2020. The schedule calls for all facilities to be ready in time to host all events of the LIFE Fair in 2021.

To meet this schedule, construction and demolition activities will be staged in a way that will minimize impacts on Fair activities in 2019 and 2020.

To maximize flexibility in demolition, rehabilitation and new construction work, it is recommended that Webb County utilize the Construction Manager-at-Risk (CMAR) process. This is a proven tool for accelerating complex public construction projects while delivering better control over projects budgets, schedules, owner involvement and quality of construction work.

Demolition of some structures and installation of utilities would begin immediately after the 2019 Fair, allowing the early start of construction of the Main Events Arena. Demolition of all the remaining buildings except for the LIFE Pavilion would start immediately after the 2020 Fair, allowing construction of all other buildings, covered walks and amenities.

MASTER PLAN PROJECT TEAM: Hanson Professional Services, 4501 Gollihar, Corpus Christi, Texas 78411  
 Bullock Smith & Partners, 404 BNA Dr., Suite 320, Nashville, TN 37217  
 Gilpin Engineering Co., 101 W. Hillside Road #9, Laredo, Texas 78041