



PREPARED BY  
MSI

PREPARED FOR  
Franklin County

NOVEMBER 14 2005

# COOPER ALTERNATIVE PLAN





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# COOPER STADIUM ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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## SPECIAL THANKS

Kenneth A. Schnacke

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COOPER STADIUM SITE LOOKING WEST

## MEETING SCHEDULE

Cooper Alternative Plan Steering Committee Meetings:

May 11, 2005

June 14, 2005

July 13, 2005

August 10, 2005

September 21, 2005

October 19, 2005

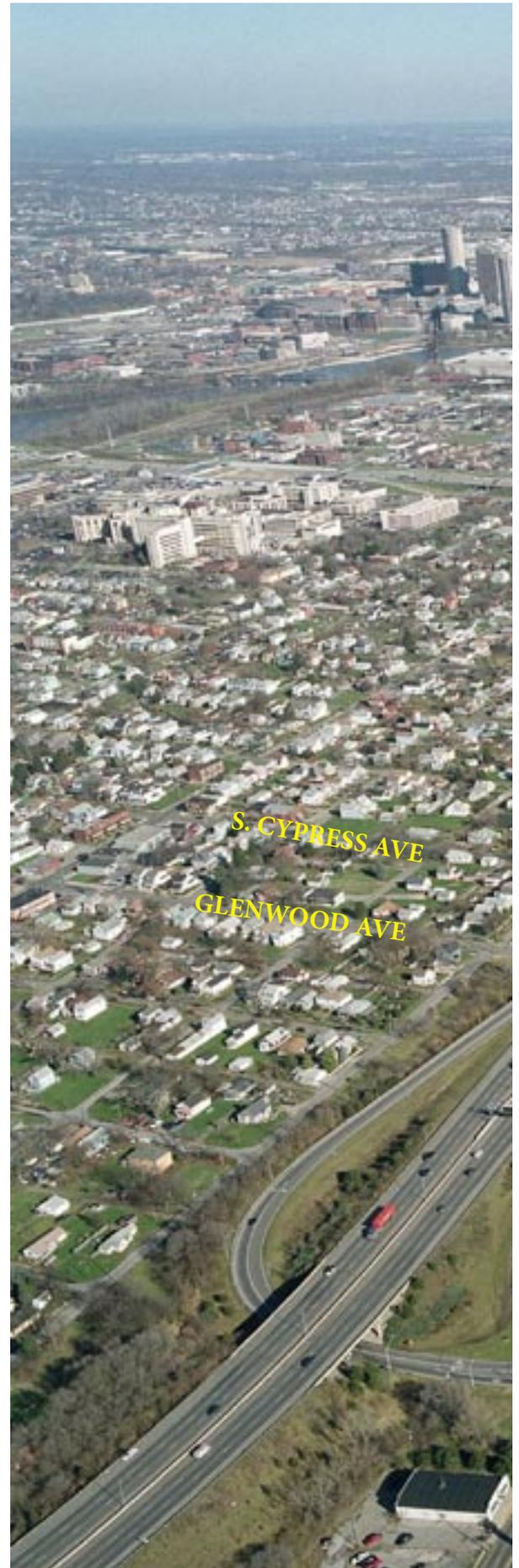
November 9, 2005

# COOPER STADIUM EXISTING CONDITIONS

The potential relocation of Cooper Stadium into downtown Columbus, presents the question of redevelopment of the current Cooper Stadium site. This study reviews several concepts that have been investigated for potential feasibility and impact. While there are certainly any number of ideas that could be driven by development interest in the site, the concepts shown in this study are those that have emerged as potential solutions that have both solid near and long-term positive impacts for site, the community and Franklin County.

The development concepts shown here are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and do not require a complete commitment to a singular concept. If no single developer is found for the entire site, the development approach will likely be a “recipe” of several of these ideas to fill the entire 46-acre site.

In addition to the feasibility of the scenarios, each concept is investigated for its overall impact on the community and the opportunities or challenges that each creates.





COOPER STADIUM SITE LOOKING EAST TOWARD DOWNTOWN



COOPER STADIUM SITE LOOKING NORTH TOWARD FRANKLINTON



The site is approximately 46 acres and is located in the Franklinton neighborhood, west of downtown. The site consists primarily of Cooper Stadium and its associated parking lots. A Franklin County facility also exists on the site housing the Sheriff's Department.

There is significant highway visibility along Interstate 70. The site has very good highway access to and from downtown, but highway access from the west is challenging as there are no exit or entrance ramps serving that direction at the site.

Neighboring uses are mixed in nature. Cemeteries border much of the site, with Greenlawn making up much of the southern edge of the site and Mt. Calvary along the eastern edge. The southeast portion of the site extends between the cemeteries and is bordered by the West Edge commercial development on the east and multi-family residential units on the south. Mound Street is the northern edge of the site. Development on Mound is commercial but in a generally poor state with the exception of the new West Edge development. To the west of the site are light industrial-type uses including equipment rental and trucking.

# COOPER STADIUM EXISTING CONDITIONS

COOPER STADIUM  
EXISTING CONDITIONS



Cooper Stadium entrance



Cooper Stadium parking



Mature trees in tree island



View of overflow parking



Cooper Stadium looking northwest



Mound Street retail



Mound Street retail



View looking west on Mound Street



Cooper Stadium administration building

# COOPER STADIUM REUSE EVALUATION

This study is an effort to identify preferred reuse options for the Cooper Stadium site. General use categories were established in order to form a framework for evaluation. The established categories are:

- Recreation
- Commercial/Industrial Office
- Housing
- Motor Sales
- Retail

In the following pages, general site studies illustrate these potential uses. It is important to note that these are only general site studies to indicate potential capacity and possible site impacts of each use. At such time as a specific user is determined for the site, more detailed information will be developed for the site and integration into the surrounding community must be considered. The first four uses listed above are illustrated, however retail has not been explored further at this time as special presentations during the planning process indicated that the site is highly unlikely to be a positive location for retail in the near term.

As a key part of the use evaluation process, guest presenters were included in the C.A.P. Steering Committee meeting schedule in order to provide insight into the potential private market interest in the site. While the following site diagrams don't represent the specific development plans of those who presented, all of the proposed uses offered would certainly fit into the conceptual framework established here.

In reviewing these potential redevelopment approaches, it is important to recall the intent of the study to evaluate and prioritize general use categories. Committee evaluation results for each use are described in the evaluation summary. These standards were established through the use of a Alternative Use Evaluation

Matrix. This matrix was distributed to the Steering Committee via e-mail following the September 2005 meeting and in hard copy at the October meeting where a process to complete the forms was undertaken.

It is important to remember that no one solution to reuse of the Cooper Stadium site is required for success. There could well be a "recipe" of different uses combined on the site. In particular, the different character of the main portion of the site and the area located between the cemeteries might steer the redevelopment of the two areas in different directions.

While this report evaluates a variety of use types, market interest will have the greatest impact of whatever redevelopment actually occurs. This evaluation is intended only to serve as a guidepost for development based on the input from community stakeholders.





**Cooper Stadium Alternative Use Study**

**Evaluation Criteria Matrix**

Please rate the following aspects of development with respect to the proposed reuses below on a scale of 1 to 5:

1 = Does Not Achieve / Negative    2 = Slightly Achieves / Somewhat Negative    3 = Moderately Achieves / Neutral    4 = Mostly Achieves / Somewhat Positive    5 = Completely Achieves/ Positive

	<u>Proposed Reuses</u>				
	Recreation	Retail	Residential	Motor Sales	Office / Industrial
Economic development potential	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Job creation	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Services for neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Recreation opportunities for neighborhood	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Overall impact on Franklinton	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Regional drawing power	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Public cost / Infrastructure	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Required public incentives (tax abatements, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Stadium reuse	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Environmental impacts (stormwater, noise, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Traffic	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Visual impact	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Feasibility	<input type="checkbox"/>				
Timeframe	<input type="checkbox"/>				

# COOPER STADIUM RECREATION CENTER CONCEPT

This concept illustrates a potential recreation complex for the west side. The site has sufficient size to accommodate both an indoor recreation center and outdoor fields that would help meet any unmet need for this type of facility on the west side. The advantage of this concept is the service it provides to the community and the positive recreational impacts on Franklinton. The negatives include the lack of economic development in making this a public use. In addition, ongoing maintenance costs will be associated with this concept as well as ongoing management of the facility. Furthermore, there are a number of facilities in this area that may cover these needs, including current investments underway at nearby Dodge Park. Alternately, a private recreation use is possible for the site. As a private development approach, the funding burdens of construction and ongoing maintenance are lifted; however, the use becomes less of a direct asset for the surrounding neighborhood.

## **Preliminary Market Assessment:**

Considering the redevelopment plans of the Dodge Park Recreation Center as well as the proximate location of two other YMCA facilities and Westgate Recreation Center, it would appear that area demand for a public facility at the site is questionable. Additionally, the lack of a high concentration of residences near the site is a liability for developments requiring local neighborhood support. However, potential private recreational use development might prove to be feasible and a recreation asset to the community if shared use agreements are made for some amount of neighborhood access.





# COOPER STADIUM OFFICE / INDUSTRIAL CONCEPT

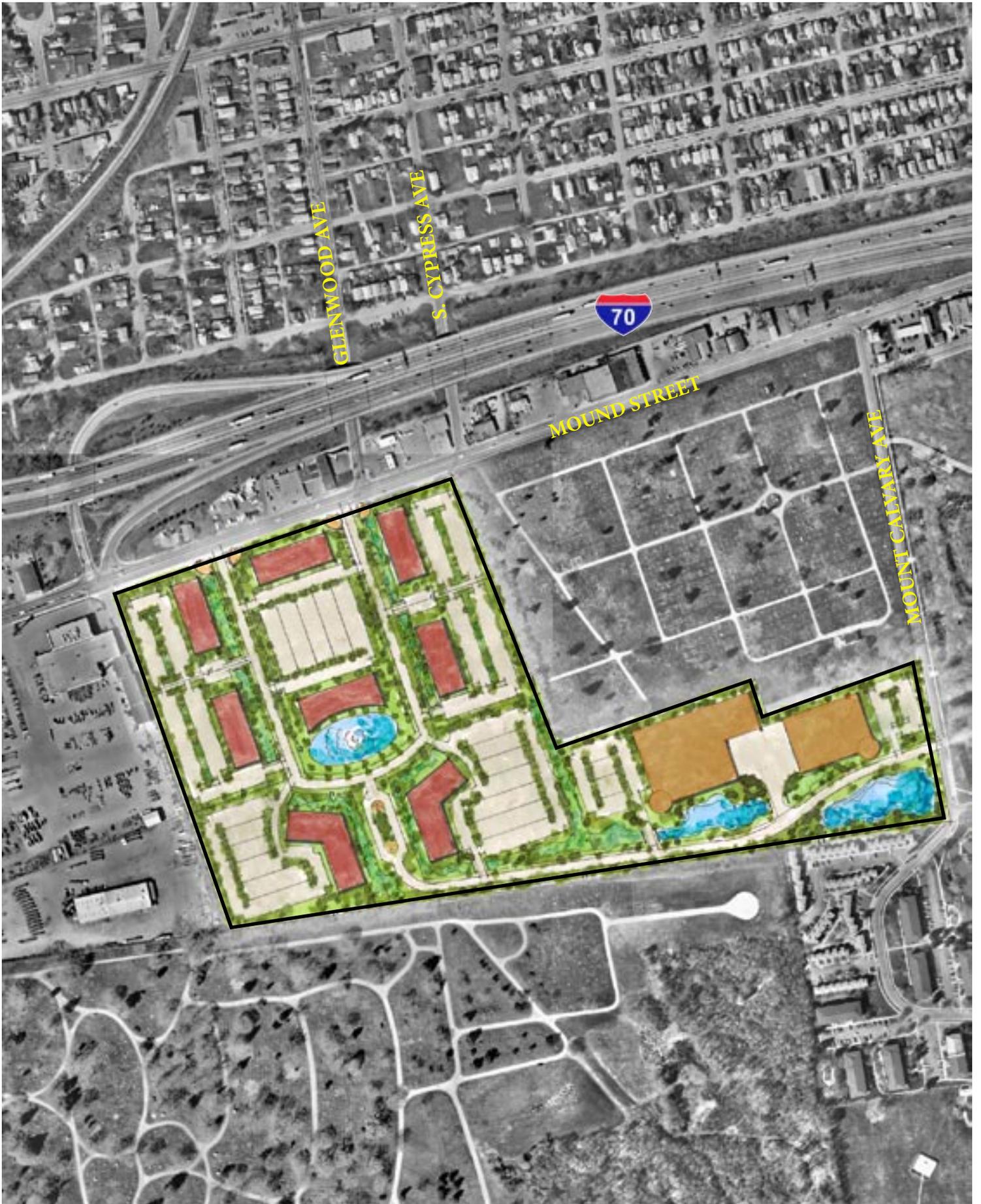
The current West Edge project has achieved success in redeveloping a portion of the highway frontage in this area with commercial uses. This could be extended further to the west on the Cooper Stadium site. Advantages include potential job creation in the neighborhood and the overall positive impact of continued redevelopment in southern Franklinton. However, this use is not likely to have a significant near-term impact on spurring adjacent private sector development in the area.

#### **Preliminary Market Assessment:**

Columbus Urban Growth Corporation has done admirably well with the initial development. However, given that the overall vacancy rate among industrial properties in the western portion of Columbus at approximately 20%, and new development of over 3.5 million square feet of industrial space planned or underway, we do not anticipate absorption to continue at West Edge's current rate. The absorption would expect to be higher than typical, however, with support from the not-for-profit market and grant commitments and approvals from the Ohio Department of Development.

Given this absorption history and assuming an industry average of 15,000 total square footage of light industrial per acre, it would take approximately 10 years for the site to absorb the remaining 21.8 acres at West Edge and approximately 46 acres of the Cooper Stadium site. A low density light industrial park (consistent to West Edge's 6,500 square feet per acre) would absorb within 5 to 7 years.





GLENWOOD AVE

S. CYPRESS AVE



MOUND STREET

MOUNT CALVARY AVE





315

BROAD ST

HIGH ST



There are a number of downtown locations for vehicle sales that are remnants of the time before the highways were constructed. When roadways such as US 40 were the primary thoroughfares and dealerships were smaller in land area, these locations made more sense. These successful businesses are still an important part of the overall downtown community and should be helped to find a way to remain competitive with suburban locations while maintaining a downtown presence. In addition, the inherent conflict between the land needs for dealerships and the fabric of established neighborhoods might be alleviated by selecting a more advantageous location.

# COOPER STADIUM MOTOR SALES CONCEPT

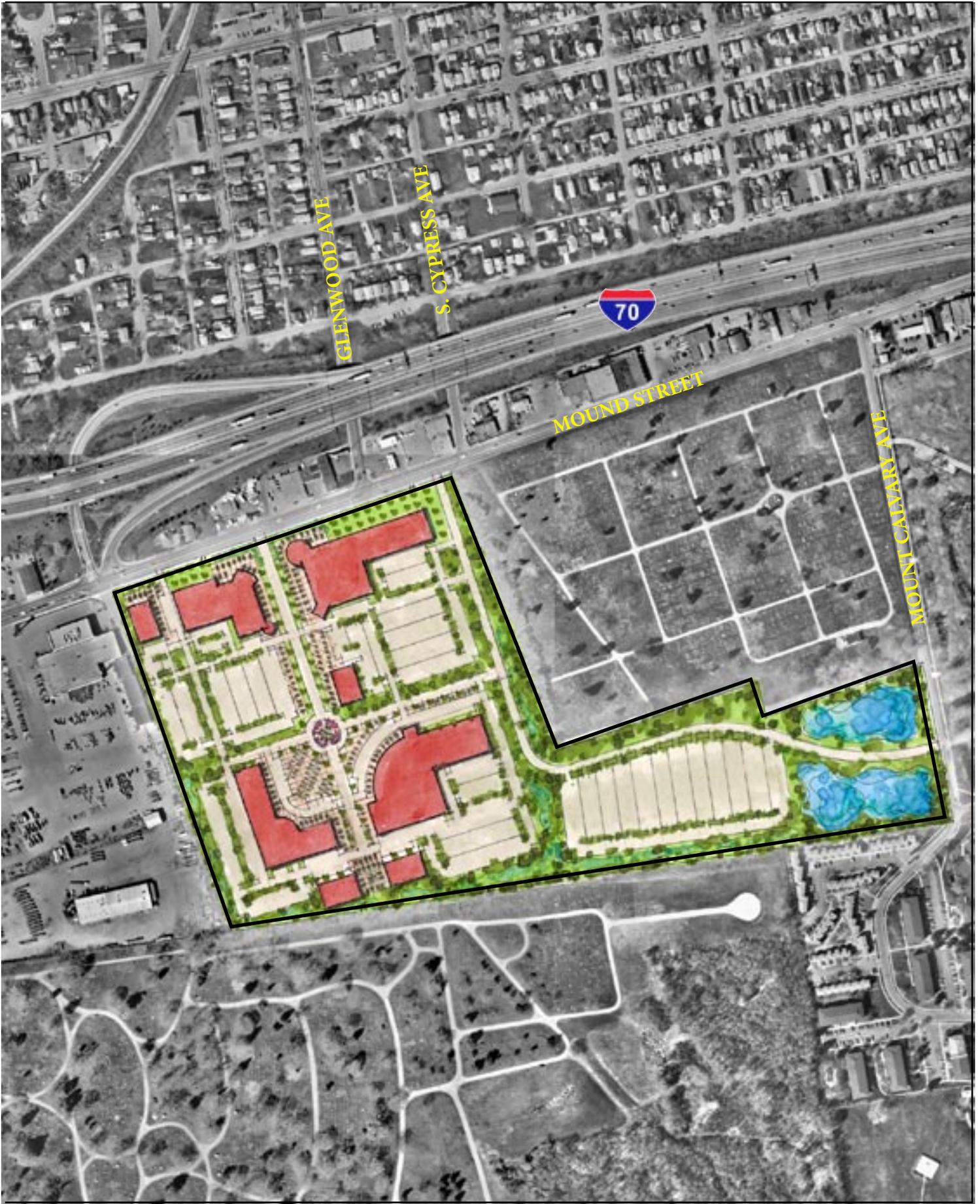
# COOPER STADIUM MOTOR SALES CONCEPT

This concept indicates the potential for creating a major vehicle sales area on this site. Potential initial tenants could be drawn from existing downtown auto and motorcycle dealerships that need additional expansion area and prefer highway visibility and access. The advantages of this scheme include the economic development potential for the site including significant job creation. In addition, there would likely be a near-term impact on adjacent property investment due to the spin-off effects of this development. This concept also has a potential secondary effect of creating redevelopment opportunities in the urban core on land currently occupied by urban auto and motorcycle dealerships.

#### **Preliminary Market Assessment:**

Given the central location and the ready accessibility to the entire region, the relocation of central city vehicle dealers to the site appears to be a viable reuse of the site. The combination of central city vehicle dealers into an “auto mall” at the site should have a positive impact on overall sales as a higher volume of buyers will frequent the area because the number of alternatives concentrated in one area



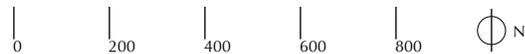
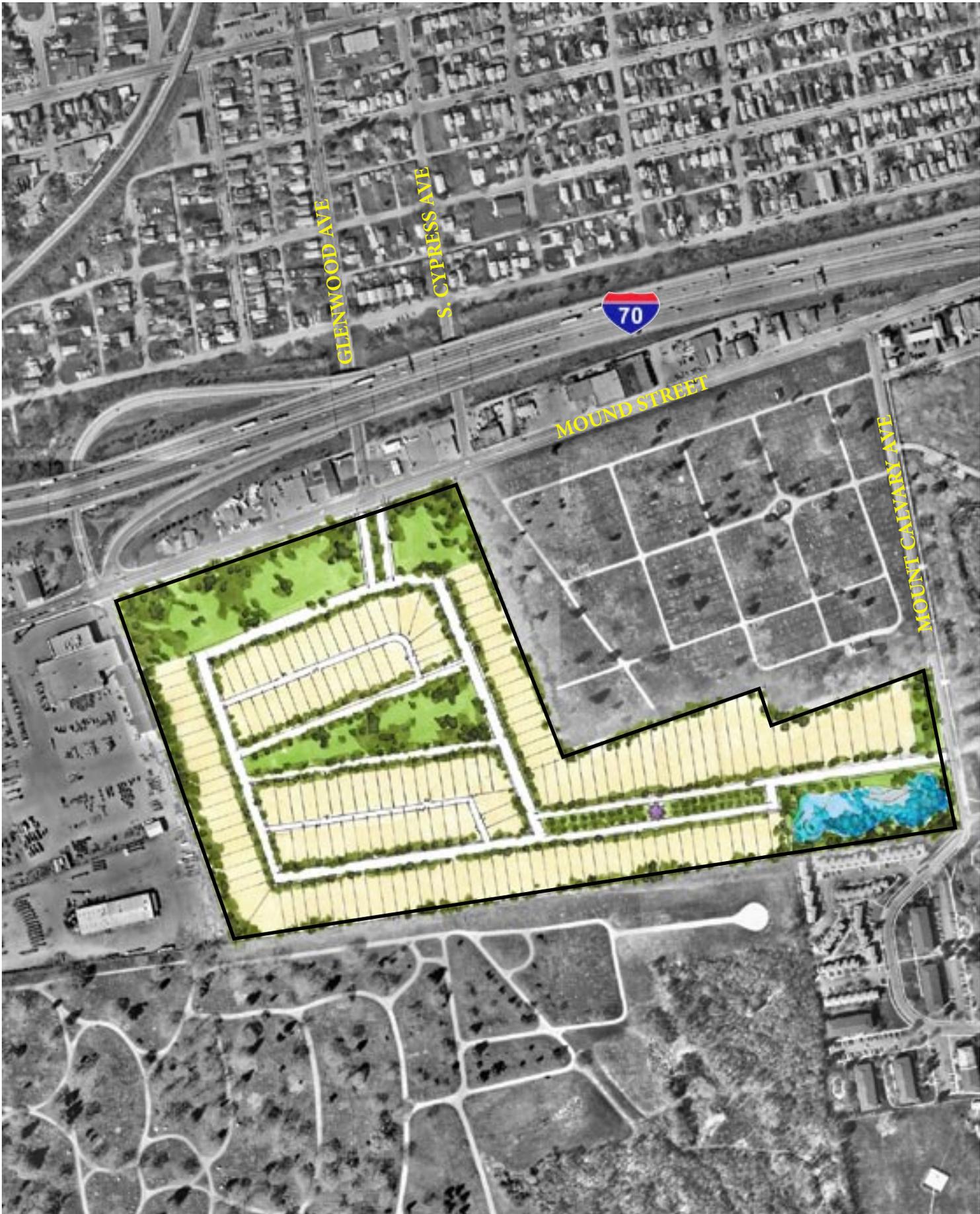


# COOPER STADIUM HOUSING CONCEPT

This concept illustrates the potential for development of housing on the Cooper Stadium site. As one option, the site could be built as single-family units in a neo-traditional development pattern, creating a new center of housing south of the highway. This plan indicates single-family uses internal to the site with an open space buffer along Mound Street. An internal green forms centerpiece of the site, with a traditional grid road pattern filling out the single-family portion of the area.

**Preliminary Market Assessment:** There are numerous challenges to using the site for housing, however. The first is the adjacent commercial uses and proximity to the highway. While it is not impossible to create a reasonable housing environment nearby the highway, the nature and value of the site over the long-term might better utilize the freeway visibility with a commercial use of some nature. Another difficulty is the relative “outpost” nature of this site for residential uses with only limited multi-family sites in proximity and the remainder of Franklin cut off by the highway. This leaves few neighborhood amenities in close proximity to the site. That could change in the future with improvement to the commercial corridor, however. In addition, the adjacency of the cemeteries do provide a visual park-like amenity for the site.





RECREATION CENTERS



Huber Village Park



Westerville Rec Center



Dublin Rec Center

# MOTOR SALES



Crestview Cadillac / Immke Honda



MAG Autogroup



Crown



The photos on these two pages are provided for scale comparisons to the Cooper Stadium site, illustrating park uses and motor vehicle sales uses throughout the region. Such comparisons were used in evaluating the feasibility of development from a site perspective in the concepts illustrated in this study.

# COOPER STADIUM BENCHMARKS

# COOPER STADIUM CONCEPT OBSERVATIONS

Concept	Observations / Issues
<p>West Side Recreation Center</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Provides asset for Franklinton and west side.</li> <li>•Poor job creation.</li> <li>•Little influence on adjacent private development in near term.</li> </ul>
<p>Office / Industrial Expansion</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Potential job creation.</li> <li>•Little influence on adjacent private development in near term.</li> </ul>
<p>Motor Sales Center</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Strong potential for job creation in area.</li> <li>•Could involve relocation of other downtown businesses, freeing that land for continued neighborhood redevelopment efforts.</li> <li>•Likely influence on adjacent private development in the near term.</li> </ul>
<p>Housing</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•No job creation.</li> </ul>
<p>Retail</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Could bring visitors to area from around the region.</li> <li>•Job creation.</li> </ul>

Ease/Difficulty	Economic Impacts	Miscellaneous Issues
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Public park creation would require large initial investment and long-term operating commitment.</li> <li>•Private recreational user might find site viable.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•No economic development as a public entity.</li> <li>•Ongoing cost for operation as a public entity.</li> <li>•Some economic development impact if developed by a private entity due to auxiliary uses.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•A number of parks and YMCA facilities exist on the west side. Large investment currently underway at nearby Dodge Park.</li> <li>•Location on major secondary roads with some highway access is sufficient.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Appears straightforward to continue with efforts of Urban Growth in developing West Edge.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Positive economic development for the site.</li> <li>•Job creation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Access similar to existing West Edge, but with closer proximity to the interstate ramps.</li> <li>•Visibility along Mound frontage strong, but rear portion behind cemetery might be less desirable.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Requires interest and commitment from private sector.</li> <li>•Straightforward business deal with interested private investors.</li> <li>•Land issues might require formation or use of existing community development entity.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Positive economic development for the site.</li> <li>•Job creation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Reasonable freeway access, but better if improved for west side access.</li> <li>•Motor sales works well with potential future expansion to Central Point.</li> <li>•Utilizes large parcels</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Straightforward land sale directly with private housing developer.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Limited economic development</li> <li>•No job creation.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Lack of highway visibility for rear portion of site not a detriment to this use.</li> <li>•Surrounding cemeteries serve as visual open space amenity for adjacent housing.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Indicated as a poor site for this use at this time.</li> <li>•Neighboring retail not particularly successful.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Some positive economic development for the site.</li> <li>•Retail job creation for neighborhood.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Access great to and from east, but challenged from the west.</li> </ul>

# COOPER STADIUM EVALUATION RESULTS

## Cooper Evaluation Analysis

The Steering Committee members were asked to rank individual uses on a scale from one to five, based on the criteria matrix below. The overall scores show a clear preference toward Motor Sales and Office/Industrial and away from Retail and Housing. Recreation uses finished in a neutral position.

There were several key factors in the outcome. The importance placed on job creation and economic development potential by the Steering Committee was clearly reflected in the results for both Motor Sales and Office/Industrial. Both of these uses scored well above the others in those categories. In addition, those two uses were seen as most likely to occur in the area, scoring well in the categories of feasibility and timeframe. The combination of likelihood and economic development make these the preferred uses of the Steering Committee, with Motor Sales clearly rated as the highest. Additional rated strengths for the Motor Sales concept were the overall impact on Franklinton and the regional drawing power of the use.

Recreation did score well in services for the neighborhood and recreation opportunities for the neighborhood. In addition, the environmental and visual impact was considered good, but the use suffered from its lack of economic potential.

Retail and Residential uses both fared poorly overall. Retail had some support under services for neighborhood and overall impact on Franklinton, but both suffered in economic development potential and feasibility. Retail was mentioned as potential component

of a mixed-use approach in several of the evaluation form comments.

Overall, the Motor Sales concept was strongly endorsed by the Steering Committee. Office/Industrial also was reviewed positively. Enough interest in Recreation was present to consider that use for a portion of the redevelopment should the rear of the site not be utilized by other uses.

Of the development presentations given, the Steering Committee preferred that of A.D. Farrow. It was cited as the best presentation and met a number of the evaluation criteria including providing economic development, overall feasibility and containing a mix of uses. The Steering Committee suggests that serious consideration be given to this proposal by the County Commissioners within the parameters of the RFP process.

### Comments from Evaluation Forms (Unedited)

- Scoring for Motor Sales takes into account a mixed use type development with motor sales, recreational and retail use
  - I would also think a mixed use would be possible - recreation / motor sales
  - I would recommend a mixed use of motor sales & office / industrial similar to West Edge. I believe the parcel would be underutilized if the motor sales concept used the entire site
  - I prefer recreation and Bob's plan for motorcycles
  - Look at office and motor sales on the entire property
  - Mixed use - combination of motor sales, offices, retail
  - Make sure time frame to transition re use is by criteria.
- Industrial seems the highest and best use but - would this take 10 years to absorb? If so, go to next use.

	Proposed Reuses				
	Recreation	Retail	Residential	Motor Sales	Office / Industrial
Economic development potential	1.7	2.0	1.1	4.6	3.1
Job creation	1.7	2.3	1.1	4.2	4.0
Services for neighborhood	3.1	2.6	1.3	3.0	2.9
Recreation opportunities for neighborhood	3.9	1.2	1.5	2.7	1.5
Overall impact on Franklinton	2.5	2.5	1.8	4.3	3.7
Regional drawing power	2.6	1.6	1.2	4.7	3.2
Public cost / Infrastructure	2.3	1.8	2.2	2.8	3.1
Required public incentives (tax abatements, etc.)	1.5	2.0	2.1	3.2	4.1
Stadium reuse	2.4	1.2	1.0	3.6	1.6
Environmental impacts (stormwater, noise, etc.)	3.1	1.9	2.2	3.1	2.7
Traffic	2.6	2.6	2.1	4.2	3.6
Visual impact	3.2	2.4	2.0	3.7	3.3
Feasibility	1.9	1.2	1.3	4.3	3.5
Timeframe	2.3	1.4	1.3	4.3	3.1
	2.5	1.9	1.6	3.8	3.1

1 = Does Not Achieve / Negative 2 = Slightly Achieves / Somewhat Negative 3 = Moderately Achieves / Neutral 4 = Mostly Achieves / Somewhat Positive 5 = Completely Achieves/ Positive

**Recommendations**

**1. Plan Implementation**

The County Commissioners should make it a high priority to develop an immediate implementation strategy to commence redevelopment of the Cooper Stadium site in 2008.

**2. Mound Street Corridor Study**

The city of Columbus should spearhead a process to develop a plan for the Mound Street corridor and surrounding neighborhood, incorporating the results of this study. This study should consider future land use, transportation improvements, strategies for redevelopment and coordinate with overall Franklinton goals and strategies.

**3. Land Use**

The results of the Steering Committee land use evaluation indicate a strong preference to have economic growth on and around the Cooper Stadium site. This includes an increased tax basis, job creation and retention of jobs in the Franklinton neighborhood. While only serving as a guideline to use, the land use evaluation results indicated in this report should be given serious consideration when determining the long-term redevelopment strategy for the site. It is clear that several key elements weighed heavily in the assessment:

- Positive Impact on Franklinton
- Economic Development Potential
- Job creation/retention in Franklinton
- Feasibility and Timeframe

The most favored land use options (as indicated in the accompanying evaluation summary) are Motor Sales and continued Office / Light Industrial expansion. Interest in using at least a portion of the site for Recreation was also indicated in the results..

**4. Mixed-Use Options**

There was considerable interest from the Steering Committee in leaving the opportunity for a mix of uses on the site. Contemplating a host of uses certainly allows greater flexibility for redevelopment of the site. In addition, it might allow maximization of the distinct portions of the site and the inherent advantages of each. For instance, the portion adjacent to Mound Street has the best access, adjacent traffic volumes and visibility from the freeway. These characteristics lend themselves to commercial reuse of the Mound Street frontage. The rear portion of the site between the cemeteries, on the

other hand, has much more limited exposure and could serve an alternate use if not valuable as an outgrowth of commercial use elsewhere on the site. These alternate uses for the rear portion of the Cooper site might include recreational use or future cemetery expansion.

**5. Cooper Stadium Reuse**

If feasible as part of the site redevelopment, it is preferred that Cooper Stadium be reused. This might include all or portions of the stadium.

**6. Improved Cemetery Access**

Regardless of the land use approach for the site, redevelopment could present the opportunity to reorient the entry to Greenlawn Cemetery, allowing easier access and a more ceremonial entry for the area. This might involve extending a connection from Mt. Calvary Avenue into the as yet un-utilized portion of the cemetery.

**7. Improved Highway Access**

The Cooper Stadium site has excellent highway access to and from the east. Unfortunately, access to and from the west is not available at the Mound Street exit. This limits the commercial value of the site. Since a large-scale rebuild of the 70/71 corridor is planned for the next decade, a long-term solution for this access issue should be explored. This exploration could ideally be undertaken as part of a larger Mound Street Corridor Study.

