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## ***BOARD OF DIRECTORS AGENDA REPORT***

MEETING DATE: **APRIL 28, 2022** ITEM: **8E**

**SUBJECT:** **Report on Public Feedback of 3-Year Strategic Plan and  
Vote on Whether or Not to Give Final Approval**

**DATE:** April 22, 2022

**FROM:** Michele Richards, CEO

**PRESENTATION BY:** Michele Richards, CEO

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*Action Item*

### **BACKGROUND**

Following approval of the draft 3-Year Strategic Plan document at the March 24, 2022 Board meeting, staff posted the document on the [ocfair.com](http://ocfair.com) web site main page with an electronic form to solicit feedback from the public.

After five weeks of gathering feedback, the staff will summarize comments from the public and present to the Board for consideration.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

It is staff's recommendation for the Board to consider the feedback from the public on the 3-Year Strategic Plan document, make any amendments at the Board's discretion, and give final approval on the plan.

Survey results and 3-Year Strategic Plan document attached.

**Submitted:** 04/21/2022

**Resident City:** Silverado, CA

**Comments:**

The Agri-Plex that has been talked about at multiple OC Fair Board of Directors is not mentioned in the Strategic Plan - why not?

OC Fair is run by the Dept of Agriculture, and needs to reflect agriculture. We don't need another Disneyland or Knotts, we need county fairs to bring back the important heritage of livestock and agriculture that built Orange County.

Please work with local 4H, FFA, California Young Farmers & Ranchers, OC Farm Bureau, and local agriculture & livestock agencies to make agriculture the focus of the fair. Year round activities could be happening to support agriculture activities and education, and teach city people where their food comes from.

In addition, the equestrian center needs to be expanded and not diminished in any way, or existing horse businesses taken away. Year round equestrian events could easily happen in the Action Sports Arena - if the fairboard hires an equestrian to run their equestrian program. Let's bring back all horse sports: western, hunter/jumper, 3 day eventing, polo, vaulting, rodeo, horse drawn wagons. Let's celebrate the rich history of horses and equestrian activities.

Also, veterans and the long history of veterans in both agriculture and equestrian need to be celebrated and a focal point. Our community cannot forget about the contribution of our veterans. We don't need more escape activities paid for by the California taxpayer. We need real educational programing that inspires and educates.

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**Submitted:** 04/19/2022

**Resident City:** Orange, CA

**Comments:**

I am in support of the OC Fair Board's 3-Year Strategic Plan!

I especially like how it focuses on the public and serving diverse communities in OC!

I like that there will be tickets donated to non-profits for needy families to attend the fair.

The plan will encourage opportunities for local merchants and businesses to participate in the fair.

I love that the Centennial Farm will be a place for educational field trips for children in OC!

Also glad that the Equestrian Center is being taken from a for-profit contractor!

This plan allows for the Fair to be a benefit to our community year round!

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**Submitted:** 4/19/2022

**Resident City:** Orange

**Comments:**

I support the Strategic Plan for the OC fair. I like the way the plan addresses the following points.

Annual OC Fair:

Double the number of tickets donated to nonprofits to provide access to the neediest OC families.

This will be followed by finding nonprofits or community foundations to contribute at least \$50 to each of the 5,000 individuals receiving donated admission in order to provide a full fair experience including food and carnival rides.

Create opportunities to increase local merchants and restaurants to conduct business at the OC Fair.

A portable concessions (food) operation and/or pop-up concept will be developed to give local restaurants an opportunity to participate beginning with the 2023 OC Fair.

Centennial Farm (a demonstration farm with crops and livestock which is free to the public):

Work with the OC Health Care Agency to offer family healthy eating events and classes at Centennial Farm.

Include nutrition and healthy eating as a component of elementary school field trips to Centennial Farm.

Work with nonprofits to raise funds to provide field trips to Centennial Farm for needy classrooms.

Heroes Hall (OC's only veteran's museum):

Conduct annual Veterans Day event.

Work to connect high school students with Heroes Hall through field trips and other programming.

Equestrian Center (Staff are taking over management of the Equestrian Center from a for-profit contractor.):

Start development of a public tour program of the equestrian center led by volunteer docents with educational components and hands-on activities by the end of 2023.

Explore a partnership with at least one equine-related nonprofit organization to provide low cost or no cost riding services to community members, particularly at-risk youth, by the end of 2024.

Leverage connections with OC public schools through Centennial Farm and Heroes Hall contacts to launch a school tours educational program with the goal to host at least 10 school groups by August, 2024.

Develop a public equine education exhibit and tour program for students and the general public.

Launch the public exhibit and tour program to integrate with the start of elementary school field trip tours at Centennial Farm by Fall, 2024.

Community Support

Continue to serve as an evacuation and sheltering site for people and large animals during emergencies.

Improve response to the community during emergencies by implementing new procedures and adding new funding, equipment and staffing as needed.

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**Submitted:** 4/13/2022

**Resident City:** Costa Mesa

**Comments:**

The plans look nice and it looks like it will add more value to our community. It would be really nice if you guys offer some discounts for those of us who will have to put up with the extra traffic, noise and people who don't live here littering in our neighborhood

Thank you for taking the time to read this

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**Submitted:** 4/13/2022

**Resident City:** Orange

**Comments:**

I like what is proposed. This is a good use for public property and allows for outreach to communities which have not been able to access the property and programming.

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**Submitted:** 4/7/2022

**Resident City:** Costa Mesa

**Comments:** None

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**Submitted:** 4/7/2022

**Resident City:** Costa Mesa

**Comments:**

Hello,

PLEASE consider limiting the number of tickets sold for the fair and other events as you did during COVID. It really made a difference to those within a 1-mile radius. There was a lot less trash, broken glass from alcohol bottles, people urinating in our yards, shouting, and overall "loudness". I am just on the other side of the freeway where Vanguard turns into Santa Isabel, and because there are no "no fair parking" signs on our part of the street, we typically deal with all the crap that no one else does. Offering free tickets (which we do not qualify for, for some reason), doesn't help with the trash, urination, or broken glass. The police shouldn't have to act as "security guards"--they have more important things to do.

Also, please no more or at least limit the events with fireworks. Animals and people with PTSD suffer quite a bit from the overuse of fireworks. At least for Independence Day, we can leave town for the night, but not every time there is an event with fireworks. It might also be something to consider if you are planning to be better partners with the Equestrian Center. I can't imagine the horses are "ok" with the noise.

I have lived here for over 20 years, and yes, I knew that I moved within walking distance of the fairgrounds. What I didn't expect was the zero effort put into making us feel safe during the fair and other large events.

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**Submitted:** 4/5/2022

**Resident City:** Buena Park

**Comments:**

My family loves the Orange County Fair and have been attending annually for many years. Generations of our family have enjoyed it. We have also attended different special events over the years. I would like to see the Marketplace return to its glory. (Prior to Covid) I attended recently and it was very small with not much there. I don't think I will return to that unless there is a return of more venders.

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# STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2024

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# A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff of the OC Fair & Event Center, I am pleased to present this 3-year strategic plan. The OC Fair & Event Center (32nd District Agricultural Association) is an agency of the California Department of Food and Agriculture, and we're proud of the leadership role we play in the community.

The OC Fair & Event Center is represented by a strong Board of Directors that provides direction, guidance and support to the incredible staff that are stewards of the property and its many programs and activities. This strategic plan is the result of a five-month planning process by the Board of Directors and staff to set a course for the organization through the end of 2024.

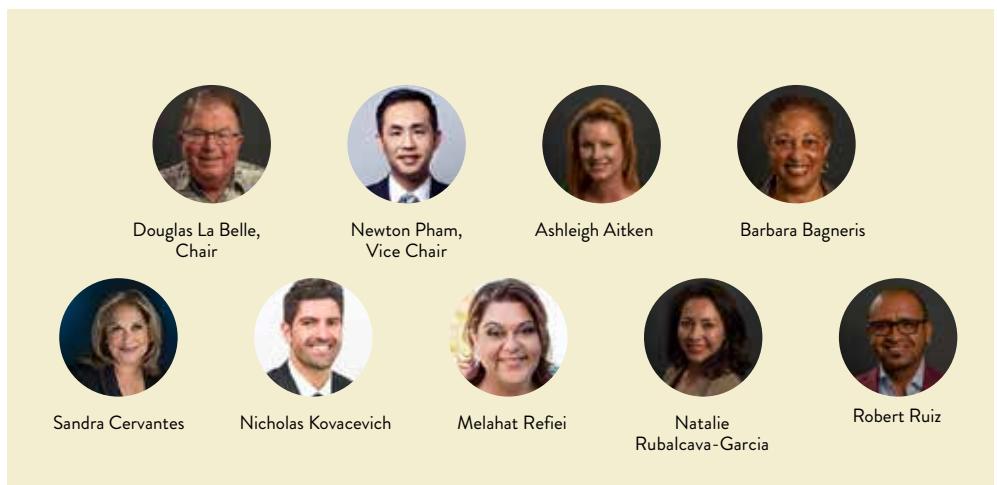
Our new strategic plan is anchored by the mission, vision and values that create the foundation for all we do. The plan is defined by strategic direction and implementation steps that speak to serving as a true community asset, providing relevant educational opportunities, entertainment options and emergency support.

This is our roadmap for the near-term, and we're excited to begin the journey to accomplish many great things together.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature of Michele Richards.

Michele Richards, CEO  
OC Fair & Event Center



Douglas La Belle,  
Chair



Newton Pham,  
Vice Chair



Ashleigh Aitken



Barbara Bagneris



Sandra Cervantes



Nicholas Kovacevich



Melahat Refiei



Natalie  
Rubalcava-Garcia



Robert Ruiz



# STRATEGIC PLAN FRAMEWORK

The three-year strategic plan for the OC Fair & Event Center was built around three key platforms of the business – Purpose, Programming and Property. It reflects the strategic direction and goals of the OC Fair & Event Center Board of Directors for the community programs hosted here throughout the year, and for the physical buildings and grounds. This strategic plan has set a future course for the organization and will serve as a tool to support the community for the benefit of the people of Orange County...just as we have throughout our 132 year history.





## Purpose

Purpose

Vision

Mission

Values

## Programming

OC Fair • Year-Round Events • Educational Assets  
Equestrian Center • Community Support

## Property

Short-Term Capital Projects • Master Site Plan

# PURPOSE: Vision, Mission Values

## PURPOSE:

**The OC Fair & Event Center is the 32nd District Agricultural Association (32nd DAA), a California state institution that is organized in accordance with the California Food and Agricultural Code.**

**The 32nd DAA's purposes under the Code are:**

- (1)** to hold fairs, expositions and exhibitions in Orange County to exhibit the industries and industrial enterprises, resources, and products of every kind or nature of the state, with a view toward improving, exploiting, encouraging, and stimulating them; and
- (2)** to construct, maintain, and operate recreational and cultural facilities of general public interest in Orange County.

## VISION:

Orange County's town square – the safe place where the community gathers and finds value

## MISSION:

Creating equitable community access to agriculture, entertainment, cultural and educational experiences

## VALUES:

Safety, People, Integrity, Stewardship, Compliance, Diversity & Inclusion, Excellence, Community & Neighborliness

# ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

**Safety:** We prioritize safety first and foremost in everything we do.

**People:** We value all internal and external stakeholders by encouraging their participation and involvement in 32nd DAA programs and activities.

**Integrity:** We are committed to honesty, transparency, and fairness in our relationships with one another and with external stakeholders. We do what is right regardless of who may be watching and follow through on our commitments.

**Stewardship:** We recognize that the 32nd DAA is a California state institution and that all 32nd DAA personnel hold a position of trust on behalf of the people of California. We are committed to serving as faithful stewards of the 32nd DAA's property, resources, and institutional values by acting in the best interest of the 32nd DAA.

**Compliance:** We are each personally committed to ensuring compliance with all applicable laws, regulations, and policies through effective controls.

**Diversity and Inclusion:** We celebrate people from all backgrounds, experiences, and identities. Because we are responsible not only for ourselves but also for others, we speak out against hatred and bigotry whenever and wherever we find them. We strive to maintain a welcoming community where everyone is treated with respect and dignity and can be proud of who they are.

**Excellence:** We are committed to providing best-in-class programs and services by creating a culture of teamwork, innovation, and accountability.

**Community and Neighborliness:** We build on the 32nd DAA's tradition of enriching the lives of all those we serve in a spirit of being good neighbors.



# ANNUAL OC FAIR



- 1. STRATEGIC DIRECTION:** The annual OC Fair will establish public/private partnerships designed to benefit and increase accessibility to lower income residents of Orange County so that all who are served are provided a full fair experience.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

- Years 1-2:** Increase Board directed fair admission ticket donations to local Orange County nonprofits from 2,500 to 5,000 in order to provide access to the county's neediest families. Staff will continue to work with Board members to maximize opportunities throughout Orange County to serve the community with complimentary admission tickets.
- Years 1-2:** Use Board member assistance to identify Orange County nonprofit or community foundations to contribute at least \$50 to each of the 5,000 individuals receiving donated admission in order to provide a full fair experience including food and carnival rides.
- Year 3:** Increase the number of donated fair admission tickets to needy OC families by 50%.

- 2. STRATEGIC DIRECTION:** The annual OC Fair will create an opportunity each year for increased local business participation for merchants and concessionaires.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

- Year 1:** Continue outreach through OC chambers of commerce and Destination Management Organizations to local merchants and restaurants to identify at least five additional local OC businesses to participate in the 2022 OC Fair.
- Year 2:** Develop a portable concessions operation and/or pop-up concept to give local restaurants an opportunity to participate beginning with the 2023 OC Fair.
- Year 3:** Continue expanding the “local business” program increasing the number of local merchants and restaurants participating in the 2024 fair by 25%.

# ANNUAL OC FAIR

**3. STRATEGIC DIRECTION:** Marketing and advertising plans will focus on promoting and highlighting free of charge programming at the annual OC Fair in order to become the #1 destination of choice for family activities each summer. The OC Fair will be “a place where you can break out with your family without breaking the bank.”

#### IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

- a. **Year 1:** Develop a mini-campaign within the full advertising campaign for the 2022 OC Fair which focuses on “affordable family fun.”
- b. **Year 1:** Develop benchmark metrics to measure the success of the “affordable family fun” campaign including the number of positive comments from the patron surveys, positive social media comments and industry recognition awards.
- c. **Year 2:** Show a year-over-year increase for all identified metrics.
- d. **Year 3:** Show an additional year-over-year increase for all identified metrics.

**4. STRATEGIC DIRECTION:** The OC Fair will be the #1 fair in the State of California and in the Top Five in the U.S. for providing an exceptional guest experience to include educational offerings, exhibits that highlight the community and activities that promote traditions and family connections.

#### IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

- a. **Years 1-3:** Achieve guest satisfaction ratings above 4.0 in all categories in the annual OC Fair patron survey.
- b. **Years 1-3:** Introduce at least one new family-friendly exhibit or attraction each year at the OC Fair that highlights family traditions and connections.
- c. **Years 1-3:** Present an annual “State of the Fair” address to the Board of Directors and public.
- d. **Year 2:** Conduct a post-fair focus group to measure patron feedback on their guest experience at the 2023 OC Fair.



# YEAR-ROUND EVENTS PROGRAM



1. OC Fair & Event Center will curate and offer more self-produced events to deliver relevant content and unique experiences to OC residents, particularly focused on youth, diversity and community.
  - a. **Year 1:** Reintroduce an in-person Imaginology with a goal to attract up to 10,000 attendees per day, keeping within the current CA Department of Public Health guidelines for mega events.
  - b. **Year 2:** In addition to Imaginology, the Fall craft beer festival (Boo Ha Ha) and the Veterans Day celebration, introduce a new self-produced event focused on agriculture education.
  - c. **Year 3:** Introduce 1-2 new self-produced events that bring OC agencies together with the public in service of the greater community, particularly youth, i.e. job fairs and meet 'n greets with OC law enforcement and fire authorities.
2. Entertainment offerings in the Pacific Amphitheatre will expand to include activities outside of traditional fair dates.
  - a. **Year 1:** Expand pre-and post-fair concerts in the Pacific Amphitheatre, adding 17 shows for a total of 40 performances in 2022.
  - b. **Year 2:** Book 2-3 additional Pacific Amphitheatre performances outside of 2023 fair dates.
  - c. **Year 3:** Offer at least 45 performances in the Pacific Amphitheatre in 2024.
3. OC Fair & Event Center will expand exposure to the business community in order to become a well-known and frequently used venue for Orange County businesses and business leaders.
  - a. **Year 1:** Work with OC Business Council and various OC chambers of commerce to expand OCFEC's exposure to the business community. Launch a marketing campaign by the end of 2022 focused on rental opportunities targeted to the business community.
  - b. **Year 2:** Book 4-5 mid-week business event opportunities in 2023.
  - c. **Year 3:** Book an additional 4-5 mid-week business event opportunities in 2024.

# EDUCATIONAL ASSETS/FOUNDATIONS

1. Centennial Farm will host more events to introduce more students and families to agriculture and agriculture-related topics, including nutrition and healthy eating.
  - a. **Year 1:** Begin research and development for a collaboration with OC Health Care Agency to offer family healthy eating events and classes at Centennial Farm.
  - b. **Year 1:** Begin research and development for an annual “Farm Day” at Centennial Farm featuring public agriculture-based educational programming
  - c. **Year 2:** Introduce a nutrition component to the Jr. Farmer tours at Centennial Farm beginning in Fall 2023.
  - d. **Year 3:** Increase attendance from 2023 numbers by 10% at agriculture and healthy eating programs.
2. Heroes Hall and Centennial Farm will work with the Heroes Hall Veterans Foundation and the Centennial Farm Foundation to better define the connection/relationship between the Board and the Foundations in order to provide more access to student and community groups that may face barriers to attendance.
  - a. **Year 1:** In advance of the expiration of each foundation’s MOU, review terms and incorporate changes to increase each foundation’s support of OCFEC educational assets.
  - b. **Year 2:** Work with each foundation to identify annual fundraising opportunities to increase funding for Heroes Hall and Centennial Farm programming.



# EDUCATIONAL ASSETS/FOUNDATIONS



3. Heroes Hall will connect OC youth with veterans from Orange County through community events, school tours and other educational opportunities, including producing the premier Veterans Day celebration in Orange County.

  - a. **Year 1:** Plan and execute a 2022 Veterans Day event with a year-over-year attendance increase from 2021 and increased participation by elected officials.
  - b. **Year 2:** Work with the OC Department of Education to host at least 5 high school tours of Heroes Hall.
  - c. **Year 3:** Introduce opportunities in 2024 for students to connect with OC veterans by hosting at least two related events.
  
4. OC Fair & Event Center will launch a media campaign to inform the public about the contributions the organization makes to the community including at Heroes Hall, Centennial Farm and our emergency support services.

  - a. **Year 1:** Develop a multi-platform public relations campaign to increase awareness of OCFEC's contributions to the community, targeting at least 10 positive stories throughout the year about Heroes Hall, Centennial Farm and OCFEC emergency support services.
  - b. **Year 2:** Launch a speaking tour focused on OCFEC's contributions to the community, targeting at least 5 opportunities outside of fair dates for both the CEO and Board members.
  - c. **Year 3:** Increase the number of positive stories and speaking opportunities by 20%.

# EQUESTRIAN CENTER

**1. STRATEGIC DIRECTION:** OC Fair & Event Center's equestrian center will serve as a true public asset to ensure greater access to a broader group of constituents throughout Orange County. It will be operated as a "best in breed" equine venue with the highest standard of care for boarded horses and animals in need of shelter during emergencies.

#### IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

- a. **Year 1:** Work with OC Animal Care to establish baseline emergency evacuation procedures and required supplies/equipment. Develop a written procedure and plan for emergency evacuations by June 30, 2022.
- b. **Year 1:** Establish standard operating procedures for equine care that meet or exceed industry best practices and begin roll-out by February 1, 2023.
- c. **Year 2:** Start development of a public tour program of the equestrian center led by volunteer docents with educational components and hands-on activities by the end of 2023.
- d. **Year 3:** Explore a partnership with at least one equine-related nonprofit organization to provide low cost or no cost riding services to community members, particularly at-risk youth, by the end of 2024.

**2. STRATEGIC DIRECTION:** OC Fair & Event Center staff will operate the equestrian center, planning and executing programming to the maximum benefit of the public. The programming will be focused on equine education and entertainment for the public.

#### IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

- a. **Year 1:** Work with current operator to develop a transition plan for the operation of the Equestrian Center to include establishing administrative/accounting systems and procedures, staffing and budgeting with planning completed by the end of 2022, and self-operation beginning January 1, 2023.
- b. **Year 1:** Hire an equestrian center supervisor by the end of 2022 who, after an appropriate transition period, will take over leadership of the venue beginning in January, 2023 and staff as required.
- c. **Year 2:** Develop a revenue-generating horse show program for the public by the end of 2023 with the goal of hosting at least two public horse shows by August, 2023.
- d. **Year 3:** Leverage connections with OC public schools through Centennial Farm and Heroes Hall contacts to launch a school tours educational program with the goal to host at least 10 school groups by August, 2024.



# EQUESTRIAN CENTER



**3. STRATEGIC DIRECTION:** The equestrian center programming will be integrated into other OC Fair & Event Center activities throughout the year including the annual OC Fair and Imaginology.

**IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:**

- a. **Year 1:** Work with current equestrian center trainers to include an equine-related exhibit at the 2022 OC Fair.
- b. **Year 2:** OCFEC agriculture education team will work with equestrian center users to develop a public equine education exhibit and tour program for students and the general public.
- c. **Year 3:** Launch the public exhibit and tour program to integrate with the start of Jr. Farmer tours at Centennial Farm by Fall, 2024.

**4. STRATEGIC DIRECTION** The business model for the equestrian center will balance the requirement to operate as a public benefit venue with the need to be financially sound.

**IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:**

- a. **Year 1:** Complete assessment of current equestrian center operations and develop new automated processes and procedures in preparation for self-operation by the end of 2022.
- b. **Year 2:** Develop a detailed P&L to determine true operational performance with specific revenue and expense targets, including all maintenance expenses not previously included in the equestrian center budget.
- c. **Year 3:** Identify and sign at least one equestrian center sponsor.

# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

- 1. STRATEGIC DIRECTION:** OC Fair & Event Center will mobilize stakeholders and partners to complement the organization's efforts in supporting the community.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

- See #1 under Annual Fair

- 2. STRATEGIC DIRECTION:** OC Fair & Event Center will ensure that proper resources are allocated for responding to emergencies, including adequate funding, equipment and staffing.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

- Year 1:** Review current written emergency response plans and recommend additional funding, equipment and staffing in time for the 2023 budget process.
- Years 2 and 3:** Conduct annual reviews of written emergency response plans prior to each year's budget process and add new funding, equipment and staffing to meet the Governor's requirements to serve as an emergency resiliency center.

- 3. STRATEGIC DIRECTION:** OC Fair & Event Center will be accessible to nonprofits, community groups and public officials conducting official business through rental fee waivers or discounts.

## IMPLEMENTATION STEPS:

- Year 1:** Continue to work with Senator Min's office to introduce legislation allowing for local fair board approval to provide rental fee waivers or discounts to nonprofits, community groups and public officials conducting official business. Include \$150,000 in rent relief funds in the 2023 budget.
- Year 2:** Re-introduce the Community Engagement Program and employee review panel to allow local nonprofits and community groups to apply for rental fee waivers and discounts, increasing funding in the 2024 budget up to \$200,000.



# PROPERTY INITIATIVES



The Board of Directors will be discussing future direction for the OC Fair & Event Center property, making decisions about a 10-year Master Site Plan. Once approved, the projects identified in the plan for 2022-2024 will be added to this document.

