

Resolution No. 2022-XXX N.C.S. of the City of Petaluma, California

ADOPTING GUIDING PRINCIPLES REGARDING THE FUTURE OF THE CITY FAIRGROUNDS PROPERTY

WHEREAS, the City-owned property where the Sonoma-Marín Fair has been held for at least the past 50 years consists of 55 acres near the center of Petaluma, generally bounded by East Washington Street, Payran Street and Kenilworth Drive; and

WHEREAS, the entire Fairgrounds property has been leased to the Fourth District Agricultural Association (DAA) for \$1 per year, giving the DAA full control under the lease to utilize and manage the entire Fairgrounds property subject to the lease; and

WHEREAS, by virtue of the DAA's status as a state agency and district agricultural associations like the DAA being exclusively subject to state regulatory control, the DAA's use of the Fairgrounds property under the lease has been exempt from City regulations, including City land use and zoning requirements and permitting authority; and

WHEREAS, the City Fairgrounds property was acquired in 1911 with the proceeds of a voter-approved bond to purchase the land then known as Kenilworth Park for use as a City park; and

WHEREAS, the City bond indenture for the purchase of the park land included no restrictions on the land's use, nor were deed restrictions on the land's use recorded against the property, and the City continues to own the property in fee subject only to easements that apply to the property; and

WHEREAS, the City first leased the property now referred to as the Fairgrounds property to the DAA to conduct fair activities on the site in 1947, and entered into the current lease effective January 1, 1973; and

WHEREAS, the current lease to the DAA had an initial term of 25 years, and a 25 year renewal option, which the DAA exercised; and

WHEREAS, the DAA's lease to the Fairgrounds property is set to expire on December 31, 2023, and cannot be reviewed in its current form due to restrictions on leases of City property pursuant to the Petaluma City Charter; and

WHEREAS, the City Fairgrounds property, the largest parcel of land in the City, is located in the center of Petaluma, adjacent to Highway 101, East Washington Street, a major City arterial, near major retail shopping centers and the Petaluma River, and is zoned for Civic Facilities and Mixed Use; and

WHEREAS, on February 28, 2022, the City Council approved a City Community Outreach and Engagement Plan to inform future decisions about the Fairgrounds property; and

WHEREAS, the Outreach and Engagement Plan included a robust public engagement process with a range of methods for collecting input from residents, stakeholders and the broader community through surveys, exhibits and workshops, and a facilitated, lottery selected community advisory panel to deliberate and make recommendations on a vision for the future of the Fairgrounds property; and

WHEREAS, on July 11, 2022, the community advisory panel presented to the City Council and to the Petaluma community three reports, consisting of: Guiding Principles, a prioritized list of decision-making criteria

and key interests and important activities that final recommendations on Fairgrounds uses should consider; an Outline of Pathways, listing possibilities and visions for the Fairgrounds site; and a Final Report, with final recommendations and preferred Fairgrounds land uses, rationales, dissenting opinions and supporting details; and

WHEREAS, this resolution adopting guiding principles for the multi-year effort to act on community feedback regarding the City Fairgrounds property's future uses is not a "project" within the meaning of Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, because it is an administrative activity that has no potential for resulting in physical change in the environment, in that the guiding principles will help focus and provide continuity for future planning activities for the Fairgrounds property, which future planning activities will be carried out in accordance with all applicable CEQA requirements.

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the City Council of the City of Petaluma as follows:

1. The above recitals are hereby declared to be true and correct and are incorporated into this resolution as findings of City Council.
2. This resolution adopting guiding principles for the multi-year effort to act on community feedback regarding the City Fairgrounds property's future uses is not a "project" within the meaning of Section 15378 of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, because it is an administrative activity that has no potential for resulting in physical change in the environment, in that the guiding principles will help focus and provide continuity for future planning activities for the Fairgrounds property, which future planning activities will be carried out in accordance with all applicable CEQA requirements.
3. The Guiding Principles attached to and made a part of this resolution as Exhibit A are hereby adopted to help focus future City staff efforts to act on community feedback regarding future Fairgrounds uses and to provide continuity for future planning activities for the Fairgrounds property to maximize the property's unique potential as an asset for all community members.

Under the power and authority conferred upon this Council by the Charter of said City.

REFERENCE: I hereby certify the foregoing Resolution was introduced and adopted by the Council of the City of Petaluma at a Regular meeting on the 24th day of October 2022, by the following vote:

Approved as to
form:

City Attorney

AYES:

NOES:

ABSENT:

ABSTAIN:

ATTEST:

City Clerk

Mayor

EXHIBIT A

City of Petaluma

Guiding Principles for Determining Future Uses of the City's Fairgrounds Property

1. Purpose. The purpose of these Guiding Principles is to capture key interests expressed by City residents and stakeholders, including the lottery-selected community advisory panel, and to help provide steady guidance for staff on a multi-year effort to act on the community feedback regarding the City fairgrounds property's future to maximize the property's unique potential as an asset for all community members. In adopting these Guiding Principles the City Council recognizes that there will be numerous community discussions in the future regarding the City Fairgrounds property and its highest and best uses, and expressly reserves the right to revisit and update these Guiding Principles as needed and appropriate to help ensure the future uses of the City Fairgrounds property will realize the unique potential of the property to preserve Petaluma's rich agricultural history and to contribute to the vitality of community life for the benefit of all Petalumans.
2. Guiding Principles. The following are intended to guide all future efforts of Petaluma City staff to act on and implement feedback from the Petaluma community and the City Council regarding future uses of the Fairgrounds property:
 - Acknowledge and build upon community input regarding the fairgrounds property while continuing to engage with the community going forward.
 - Create, maintain, and enhance authentic partnerships across stakeholders and community groups with an interest in the fairgrounds property.
 - Provide civic and institutional stability during the transition period and beyond so that the fair event and other key uses continue.
 - Affirm a renewed, generational commitment of the City to the Petaluma community's agricultural past and present for which the fairgrounds property continues to be a focal point, to the people who have utilized and want to utilize the fairgrounds property, and to the fairgrounds property itself and its unique challenges and potential as an asset for the whole community through near-, medium-, and long-term actions and milestones for the property and related programs.
 - Preserve and enhance key elements, resources, and activities at the fairgrounds property that the community is connected to and that make the place unique.
 - Honor the legacy of history, place, and community while fostering safety, health, inclusivity, cultural connectedness, accessibility, and useability of the fairgrounds property for the benefit of all.
 - Preserve and enhance the capacity of the fairgrounds property to provide critical emergency response resources for Petaluma and the region.
 - While preserving the essential and unique feel and presence of the fairgrounds property and its core features, ensure that future fairgrounds property uses, including fair event uses, are maximized to effectively and compatibly accomplish as many of the community's needs and wants for the fairgrounds property as possible.