



Legislation Text

File #: 21-833, **Version:** 1

To: Board of County Commissioners

Through: Shannon Carter, Intergovernmental Relations and Open Spaces Director

Prepared By:

Matt Bixenman, Fairgrounds Site Manager, Open Spaces

Presenter: Matt Bixenman, Fairgrounds Site Manager, Open Spaces

Subject:

1:30 PM *2021 Fairgrounds New Event Debrief

Purpose and Request:

County staff will review and report on the 2021 Open Space and Fairgrounds community events.

Background and Discussion: The Arapahoe County Fair was postponed in 2020 due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. In an effort to maintain the presences of the AC Fairgrounds and the Open Spaces Program, the Fairground's events team brainstormed in 2020 and planned to host new community events for 2021 and beyond. In 2021, staff continued to host Pictures on the Plains, Treat Street, and annual County Fair, while also adding three additional community events to the 2021 County event calendar. Goals for the 2021 events were to engage the community, expand community outreach, and showcase the potential of Arapahoe County Open Space and the Fairgrounds Event Center. Staff had a successful year hosting community event and will report on 2021 efforts and will discuss events moving forward into 2022.

The Open Spaces staff historically hosted a Fall Festival event at the 17 Mile House property. Staff would like to look at options for moving this event to the Fairgrounds property. Site logistics and the scale of the 17 Mile House property, along with existing conservation easements, and ongoing construction projects make it difficult and detrimental to host large crowds on the property.

Board & Barrel - December 4, 2021

Unique wintertime event featuring a snowboard freestyle rail jam competition and adult libations. With incredible open sky views of the Front Range and Eastern Plains, the Fairgrounds is the perfect place to catch some rays, premium beverages, and gnarly tricks and flips. Attendance: TBD

Revenue: TBD

Expenses: TBD

Cost Recovery: TBD

2021 Successes/Challenges: TBD

Chalk Lines & Vines - May 15-16, 2021

High-class wine and chalk art festival, featuring a wine-tasting tour of Colorado's best wines, gourmet food selections, chalk muralists and live entertainment - set against the colorful backdrop of the Front Range and Eastern Plains.

Attendance: 656 (Saturday/Sunday) Tickets: \$35 presale /\$40 at the door/ \$10 Designated Driver

Revenue: \$23,190.50

Expenses: \$28,199.89

Cost Recovery: 82% 2021

2021 Successes/Challenges: This event has great potential for growth and is a great fit for the central green. The weather was a big challenge, however, the guests that attended enjoyed their time and saw great value in the ticket price. The wineries were all very pleased with sales and have given a verbal commitment for 2022 at the event (should the event take place again). Aurora Arts in Public Places was a huge partner in assisting with the artist recruitment and onsite presence. Staff hopes to work with them again next year.

Recommendation: Event staff is recommending that we host Chalk Lines & Vines in 2022. Staff would like to contract with Tim Bowers again as a co-producer of the event. Proposed dates for 2022 is May 7-8 or May 14-15.

5K Trail Run Series- April 10, June 12, August 14, October 9, 2021

Four themed 5K trail runs in celebration of Arapahoe County's interconnected and diverse trail system. Each race took place on a different featured trail within a different city. Course, swag, and activities were based on location, and each race featured vendor booths, event activities and live entertainment.

Attendance: 249

Tickets: \$30 in person/ \$20 virtual/ \$100 four races/ \$80 four virtual races

Revenue: \$11,077.95

Expenses: \$22,010.42

Cost Recovery: 50%

2021 Successes/Challenges: Our staff was excited about this series as it was an opportunity to showcase the AC Open Spaces Program and support public outreach during the Open Spaces Master Plan Update public outreach. This type of event was a learning curve for our staff, but we were able to rely on a couple partners to help ease the event planning burden. Despite best efforts, the participation for all four races did not come close to our projected attendance numbers of 250/race. For those that did participate, in all four races, they loved the variety of trails and scenery throughout the County.

Recommendation: Event staff is recommending that we do not host this series in 2022. In the future, staff would like to consider adding a 5K as a component to another County event.

Pictures on the Plains- June 16 & 30, 2021

Two family friendly movie nights under the stars. Guests were encouraged to bring a picnic, blankets and lawn chairs. Live entertainment kicked off each movie! Lawn games and onsite beverages were available.

Attendance: 228

Tickets: \$5

Revenue: \$1,653.00

Expenses: \$3,662.50

Cost Recovery: 45%

2021 Successes/Challenges: This event has room for improvement and has potential to be a successful community, family friendly, feel-good event. Staff will need to select more kid friendly movies as well as classic movie favorites. Staff hope to identify an opportunity for sponsorship of the event that would help offset the cost of the movie screen rental, which is the highest associated cost for this event. Our facility is perfect for this type of event. The ticket price is more than reasonable when compared to similar events and movie theaters.

Recommendation: Event staff is recommending that we host Pictures on the Plains in 2022. Proposed dates for 2022 are Thursday/Friday combos in June and early July. Staff has received interest from Arapahoe Libraries about co-producing the event which could be a great partnership moving forward.

Treat Street- October 23, 2021

A fall event that offers trick-or-treating and spooktacular family fun! Guests can enjoy games and activities, live entertainment, food, beverages and more.

Attendance: 2,714

Tickets: \$5/ kids under 2- free/ Guests in costumes- free

Revenue: \$8,174.00

Expenses: \$8,852.76

Cost Recovery: 92%

2021 Successes/Challenges: Treat Street was first hosted in 2020 during the pandemic so we were unsure what to expect for this year. The event was so well received and has potential to continue to grow! The ticket fee was minimal and offered a ton of value for the guest experience. Sponsorship and activation went well; kudos to Mark McGoffin with this piece. Vendors were excited to participate as well as our community partners!

Recommendation: Event staff is recommending that we host Treat Street in 2022. A proposed date for 2022 is October 22.

Communication Services

The Communication Services Team is responsible for the marketing, advertising and public relations activities associated with the County Fair and Open Spaces community events. The Communications Team strives to build awareness of the annual County Fair and community events. The Communication Services team manages and coordinates: Marketing and advertising, event public relations and media relations, crisis communications, develop the post event marketing and advertising summary report, printing all materials and working with Open Spaces staff to produce event signage.

Fiscal Impact: 2021 events started with a \$100,000 budget commitment from a Fairgrounds cost center. Sponsorships and cost recovery goals were expected to be around 40%. This did not include Pictures on the Plains and Treat Street events as they were existing events from 2020. All the community events so far have exceeded the current cost recovery goals. A similar budgeted amount for 2022 would be allocated.

Alternatives: 2022 Events Host no new proposed events. There would be no budget risk and no opportunity for continued outreach and goal success. Scale events based on successes and challenges. How can we integrate the former Fall Festival into or around current Treat Street event at the Fairgrounds? Host all proposed events with specified budget and budget risk. This would allow us to maximize our outreach potential and goals.

Alignment with Strategic Plan:

- ☒ Be fiscally sustainable
- ☒ Provide essential and mandated service
- ☒ Be community focused

Staff Recommendation: N/A

Concurrence: The Open Space and Communications Departments support the 2021 debrief and events for 2022.