

19th District Agricultural Association
Earl Warren Showgrounds

Board of Directors Strategic Planning Meeting
February 23, 2023

Minutes

Those in Attendance

Salvatore Milazzo, President
Cecilia Tavera, Director
Marshall Miller, Director
Teresa Mc Williams, Director
Mary Rose, Director
Becky Bailey-Findley, Facilitator

Luis Esparza, Vice President
Miguel Avila, Director
Michael Medel, Director
Nancy Melekian, Director
Ben Sprague, CEO

1. Opening and Welcome

The planning meeting opened with acknowledgement that the 19th DAA Board began their strategic planning process in 2016. Strategic planning is a series of well thought out, researched and systematic decisions for the future, updated on a regular basis. Through this process, the 19th DAA has built momentum and now it's time to create a framework to how you will implement your plan.

This organization began the strategic planning journey in 2016.

- ☆ Mission & Vision Statements were discussed but not updated.
- ☆ Priority Strategic Goals set in 2016.

Planning in 2019

- ☆ Who We Are, Who We Serve, Our Purpose.
- ☆ Revised Mission Statement but not adopted.
- ☆ Same strategic goals.

Planning in 2021

- ☆ Values of the Organization, Shared Beliefs, Purpose.
- ☆ Same strategic goals.

**Strategic Goals Established in 2016
And Carried Forward to the Present**

- A. Develop a business plan that grows net proceeds to fund ongoing facility improvements and growth of the organization. The objectives of the business plan are to assess all current business units and plan how to maximize highest and best use of facilities and grounds. Additionally, new business opportunities will be considered and implemented under the same standard of highest and best use of the facilities and grounds.

- B. Develop a facility improvement plan that incorporates both deferred maintenance planning and addition of new and remodeling facility improvements with a focus on addressing safety and accessibility issues as well as aesthetic and modernization enhancements. The plan is to be updated every two years.
- C. In support of the business plan for the 19th DAA, create a comprehensive marketing, public relations and rebranding plan, including a sales function. Support the addition of staff and resources to implement this marketing and communications plan.
- D. Grow the use and rental of the showgrounds for events, including events that are supported and promoted by the 19th DAA, increasing net proceeds of the year-round event business unit by 5% annually.

2. Expectations for This Planning Session

- a. President Milazzo presented his understanding of where the board and organization was in their strategic planning process and what outcomes he was hoping for this planning session.

The board and staff have done excellent work in strategic planning. Now it is time to codify and affirm what we believe and the direction we have expressed by voting as a board on key elements of the strategic plan, including Values, Purpose & Mission Statement, and Our Shared Beliefs. He plans for these items to be on the agenda for the March board meeting.

- b. CEO Sprague expressed the need for strategic direction. He has been in executive leadership for 5 years and has accomplished what the board expected in terms of financial stability of the organization. Now he needs direction on how to move the organization forward, what priorities the board has for the showgrounds and measurable strategies so that the organization can work effectively and efficiently in achieving its goals.
- c. The example of how the showgrounds responds to local emergency needs was discussed as an example of how needs change and often in unexpected ways. Knowing that emergency response is a priority direction of the board, the staff can respond appropriately when a need is presented.
- d. Now it is time to ascertain what the stakeholders are specifically asking for and how that fits into the strategic goals.

3. Values of the Board as Expressed in 2021 Strategic Planning Meeting

The board reviewed and discussed the values that were articulated in the 2021 strategic planning session.

Values of the 19th DAA

- * Providing space for shared experiences.
- * Serving as a hub for gatherings.
- * Agile, accessible, affordable.
- * Serving the needs of our community.

- * Serving the changing needs of our community.
- * Serving as a trustee of public trust and of a public asset.
- * Inclusivity, place where all can belong.
- * Environmental and agriculture stewardship.

Service
Flexibility
Accessible
Affordable
Trust
Inclusive
Trusted Stewardship

In particular the board noted how the values shape decisions related to:

- Being an affordable event center and fair in a market that is not affordable.
- Being fiscally responsible is being a trusted steward.
- Setting priorities so that the showgrounds is seen as inclusive.
- Improving the facilities and grounds as a trusted steward.

4. Who We Are – Articulated in 2019 Strategic Planning Meeting

The board reviewed statements made in 2019, distinguishing who we are as the 19th DAA and Earl Warren Showgrounds.

- A meeting place.
- A gathering space.
- Event space that is accommodating.
- A site where emergency response is supported and facilitated.
- A place for families.
- A festival grounds.
- Space where equestrian events can be held.
- Space where recreational and entertainment activities can be held.
- A place with adequate parking.
- Event space with amenities to support event promoters.

The concept of Community Resiliency was discussed. We see the 19th DAA as having the ability to respond to community needs and provide flexible support. We partner with emergency providers.

Further it is important to partner and show the same flexibility to respond to changing community needs. Relationships are based on the 19th DAA Values.

We need to be able to articulate how we partner and respond to community needs to donors, sponsors, and potential grant programs.

5. Who We Serve – Articulated in 2019 Strategic Planning Meeting

The board reviewed the statement expressed in 2019 regarding who the 19th DAA serves. The concise answer is:

Who We Serve

The 19th DAA, Earl Warren Showgrounds serves the entire community, particularly the communities within the parameters of the 19th DAA District. (Defined as Carpentaria to Gaviota).

Examples of this includes:

- Every person in our District – families, children, seniors.
- Non-profit organizations.
- The local business community.
- People and animals in need of safety and security during an emergency.
- The agricultural community our District.
- Community partners that align with the 19th DAA Values and Purpose.

The board further discussed:

- a. The need to set priorities in terms of targeted stakeholders and customers.
- b. The community forums that were conducted by the 19th DAA did include everyone.
- c. The opportunity to reach out to the local business community, especially through the local chambers of commerce.

6. Shared Beliefs – Articulated in 2021 Strategic Planning Meeting

The board reviewed and updated their Shared Beliefs.

Our Shared Beliefs

The Showgrounds exists:

- To serve as stewards of a public resource and asset and make the resources and asset available to the community.
- To provide locally relevant activity and event space that is multi-purpose and diverse in its offerings.
- To celebrate and cultivate community talent, diversity, spirit and provide the ties that bind the community together.
- To promote, educate, and connect the community to agriculture, cultivating healthy living.
- To serve as a showcase for local natural resources.

The board discussed the importance of engaging with the agriculture community and showcasing agriculture during the fair and in events. The showgrounds has a history of providing agriculture-related events – the equestrian events and the annual Flower Show. The engagement with agriculture is one of the unique characteristics of the showgrounds, differentiating it from other event venues and activities in the county.

In addition, it was discussed the importance of making the Spanish speaking community feel more welcome at showgrounds events and the annual fair. The Spanish speaking community is the largest customer group, especially during the annual fair.

7. Establishing Direction Statements

Taking into consideration the Strategic Goals established in 2016, the Values, Belief Statements and other strategic planning work of the board, the following Direction Statements were discussed and revised.

Direction Statements

1. Create a [business strategy](#) that funds and sustains the community use of the property, facilities and grounds.
2. Grow the [use of the showgrounds](#) as a multi-use, dynamic resource, cultivating and supporting the diverse cultures, interests, and desired activities of the Santa Barbara Community.
3. [Communicate](#) and advance the historic and current story of the showgrounds as the community's dynamic and resourceful event center. Santa Barbara Live!
4. Seek resources and funding to [support an ongoing facility improvement](#) plan.

These Direction Statements articulate an overview of the strategic direction of the 19th DAA, Earl Warren Showgrounds. They are another way of communicating the 19th DAA's strategic goals, consistent with your values and Shared Beliefs.

8. Proposed Mission Statement

In previous years, a revised mission statement was never adopted. From the board's executive committee, the following Mission Statement was presented and discussed.

Proposed Mission Statement

The Earl Warren Showgrounds is a multi-use, community event and emergency resiliency center that honors our history and heritage, while serving the current and changing needs of the Santa Barbara community.

In their discussion the board indicated that what they liked about the proposed Mission Statement. It was:

- Simple
- Straight Forward
- Inclusive
- "Covers it all."
- Uses welcoming language.
- Current, more modern language.
- Not wordy.
- States our priorities of who we serve and what we do.
- Conveys a partnership with the community.

Suggested improvements included:

- Reference that the showgrounds has been a part of the community since 1950.
- Reference agriculture and equestrian priorities.
- Use words like cultivate and flourish which have agriculture connotations.

It was determined that the Executive Committee of the board would work on preparing a draft Mission Statement for board consideration and adoption at the March Board meeting.

10. The Framework of 19th DAA, Earl Warren Showgrounds Strategic Plan

In drawing all the elements together of past and present strategic planning work, the board outlined the framework of the strategic plan.

This framework shapes:

- Future planning of the organization
- Specific projects and activities endorsed by the organization.
- Priorities in allocating 19th DAA resources.
- Shapes the day-to-day work of staff.
- Outreach to like-minded partners.
- Employment of staff that represent the values, shared beliefs, and direction of the organization.
- Recruitment of board members to serve the 19th DAA.
- Is the framework within which the board of directors sets policies and makes decisions regarding the use of 19th DAA resources.



11. Key Initiatives

The following draft initiatives were discussed.

Initiatives are different than Direction Statements in that they are actionable statements, more specific statements of how the Direction Statements will be achieved. Key initiatives can change from time to time, reflecting when work is completed in a specific

area or when other, changing needs emerge that are still related to the overall direction of the organization.

Proposed Key Initiatives

1. Enhance and grow the annual fair to reflect all there is to celebrate in the Santa Barbara community.
2. Introduce and facilitate additional uses of the showgrounds reflecting the recreational, educational, cultural and entertainment interests of the entire community.
3. Preserve the equestrian heritage and use of the showgrounds.
4. Brand the showgrounds aligned with the vision for the property, communicating the multi-cultural, eclectic and diverse events and activities.
5. Plan for and fund aesthetic and structural improvements throughout the showgrounds which enhance and support all uses of the property.

The Board also brainstormed additional initiatives:

- Highlighting, promoting, showcasing, and including agriculture.
- Emergency response resiliency.
- Connecting, partnering with the education community.
- Creating a sustainability program.
- Addressing critical needs of our public.

A next step in planning is to break down each initiative into tactics, or objectives, leading to action planning. To understand this process, the board took time to brainstorm tactics for two of the initiatives.

Key Initiative #1: Enhance and grow the annual fair to reflect all there is to celebrate in the Santa Barbara community.

Ideas for tactical planning:

- Address how best to accommodate the crowds. Addressing capacity through
 - Pricing
 - Expanding the space
 - Add more fair dates.
- Use the Fair as a “friend-raising” event. Incorporate media relations.
- Define “Fair” as multiple events throughout the year, i.e. Harvest Fair, National Horse Show, The Haunt.
- Create and grow “events” within the annual fair.
 - Showcase sponsors.

Key Initiative #3: Preserve the equestrian heritage and use of the showgrounds.

- Grow the National Horse Show
 - Make it more of a “show”
 - Add participants, vendors, and exhibitors.

12. Moving the Strategic Planning Process Forward

- a. Begin by acknowledging and adopting what has been accomplished thus far.
- b. Fully develop the strategic plan through regular and facilitated planning sessions engaging board and staff in an ongoing strategic planning process.
- c. Break the initiatives into incremental planning parts, tactics, and create action plans for each.
- d. Address staff capacity to facilitate the strategic planning process. Bring in help, a consultant, to work alongside you and your staff to fully develop the plan.
- e. Involve the board in routinely reviewing the developing plan and build consensus.
- f. Create a timetable/schedule for the strategic plan.
- g. Make job assignments and hold each other accountable.
- h. Report out regularly at board meetings, community forums, on the website.
- i. Hold each other accountable.
- j. Make adjustments as necessary.
- k. Communicate, communicate, communicate. The strategic plan can be an effective communication tool. Engage the public in your process.
- l. Trust each other and trust the process.

13. Next Steps Following Today's Planning Session

Action Step	By Whom	By When
1. Prepare the minutes of the Feb. 23 rd strategic planning meeting.	BBF to CEO and Exec. Com. to edit.	To full board for acceptance 3-23-23.
2. Prepare the proposed Values Statement, Who We Serve Statement, Our Shared Beliefs, Mission statement, Direction Statements and Key Initiatives to present to the full board for adoption.	CEO & Executive Committee	March 13, 2023
3. Full board to review and approve Values Statement, Who We Serve Statement, Our Shared Beliefs, Mission statement, Direction Statements and Key Initiatives.	CEO to notice board meeting and provide drafts to Full Board.	3-23-23
4. Bring format and plan for continuing the strategic planning process to the Board	CEO & Consultant	May 2023 Board Meeting

14. Public Comment

a. Lynn:

- Enhance the quality of the fair.
- Every activity on the fairgrounds can have an educational component.
- EQC supports all the activities on the showgrounds.
- EQC needs more shows.

b. Maryanne:

- Urge EQC uses continue.
- Keep the historical relationship with agriculture and equestrian uses.
- The Earl Warren Showgrounds is the only EQC in 2 counties.
- Diverse community engagement
- Support emergency use.

c. Karen:

- Excited about the agriculture concepts presented.
- EQC supports multi-use of the facilities.
- EQC community not exclusive.
- Continue to provide emergency response.
- Extend outreach to additional Partners.

d. Written public response were distributed to the full board and will be included in the minutes of the strategic planning meeting.