

Community Complex at Park County Fairgrounds

VISIONING WORKSHOP REPORT

Workshop Date: Friday, September 10, 2021, 8:30-4:00PM

WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

In hopes of transforming the Park County Fairgrounds to an all-season community complex, over 20 Park County residents brought their valuable and diverse perspectives to a visioning workshop held on September 10, 2021 in Fairplay, Colorado. This collaborative workshop served as a platform to get stakeholders involved in the early stages of the planning and design process. Through a series of group discussions, workshop participants were able to brainstorm ideas for the expansion and redevelopment of Park County Fairgrounds based on the community's collective needs, concerns, values, and dreams.

The vision and upfront work toward a year-round community place began with the Park County Fair Board in concert with County Commissioners, CSU Extension and other county citizens. In 2020, that group documented their vision in a report, *Park County Fairgrounds Conceptual Design Ideas*. Rather than pushing forward with adding an events center building to the newly acquired land, the group wisely opened the planning process to consider the full property and gain widespread input from the Park County citizenry.

Colorado State University's Institute for the Built Environment along with the master planning firm of BHA Design served as facilitators to encourage the community to dream big and voice their input early in the planning process rather than reacting after to a plan that had already been created. This report synthesizes the numerous creative ideas that emerged from the fruitful discussions that occurred throughout the workshop. The high levels of energy and excitement in the room carried the conversation and it was evident that the participants were eager to bring this vision to life, into something that proudly represents the community of Park County. As Park County Manager Tom Eisenman said, this workshop is about dreaming, "before the dirt is turned."



ATTENDEES

Barbie Garnett, CSU Extension Park County

Tom Eisenman, Park County Manager

John Everest, Park County Fair Board & Local Business Owner

Amy Mitchell, Park County Commissioner

Britt Stubblefield, Park County Fair Board & Veterinarian

Chet Lawrence, Park County Fair Board

Mike Kinnaird, Park County Facilities

Tara Rose Zuber, Park County Fair Board & 4-H Leader

Saam Golgoon, South Park Recreation Center

Janell Sciacca, Town Administrator Fairplay

Julie Bullock, Town of Fairplay

Dr. Brian Bumbarger, Community Activities & Crime Prevention Research

Katie Spodyak, Platte Canyon School Board

June Vincze, Land and Water Trust Fund

Evan Lockhart Borma, Preservationist for the Heritage and Tourism & Community Development
Department – Park County

Karen Quiring, Senior Alliance of Platte Canyon

Jason Gemmer, Park County Fair Board & Local Business Owner

Aubreigh Gemmer, High School student and 4-H Member

Alice Zuber, High School student and 4-H Member

Brian Dunbar, Institute for the Built Environment

Susan Hsin, Institute for the Built Environment

Angie Milewski, BHA Design

AGENDA

8:30-12:00 MORNING SCHEDULE

- 8:30 – Coffee + Networking
- 8:40 – Welcome, Introductions + Agenda
- 9:00 – Project Overview + Establishing Goals for Workshop
- 9:45 – Q+A
- 10:00 – Brainstorm Project Goals + Ideas

12:00 LUNCH BREAK

12:30-4:00 AFTERNOON SCHEDULE

- 12:35 – Successful Case Study Presentation
 - 1:00 – Quick Break
 - 1:10 – Breakout Groups: Plan + Process
 - 1:30 – Breakout Group Discussions
 - 3:00 – Report Out + Discussion
 - 4:00 – Closing + Next Steps
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BRAINSTORMING BIG IDEAS

The following bullet points represent the full list of ideas and goals expressed by workshop participants when asked to respond to the various categorized prompts (Values, Hopes, Fears, Potential Programs, etc.)

VALUES

- Diversity in a rural county – agriculture, ranching, outdoor recreation
- Steady pace and calmness of the town
- Opportunity for leadership + education
- Togetherness – feels like one, big happy family
- Nature + open spaces – provides access to outdoor recreation and view
- Central location – advantageous for a gathering location in CO

HOPES

- Preserving and encouraging diversity in the community
- Multi-seasonal facility adjusted for the climate
- Accessibility for all groups
- Focusing on the long term to elevate the wellbeing of future generations
- Educational opportunities with nearby institutions
- Increasing recognition and visibility for Park County
- Energy efficiency + implementing sustainable initiatives
- Aesthetically pleasing
- Staying connected with up-to-date technology
- Civic engagement throughout the planning process

- Community development
- Forming partnerships
- Fiscally responsible to prevent strain on county members
- Support the local economy
- Create something cutting-edge and iconic

ACCESS TO RESOURCES

- Corporate + local sponsors
- Grant writers - funding for capital + operations
- Partnerships within and outside of the community
- Help from private companies at the busiest times of year
- Sufficient labor force and infrastructure during construction process
- Effective communication + marketing team
- Winterized infrastructure
- Natural resources
- Expertise on specific subject areas
- Accessible clinical services + telemedicine
- Educational programs + distance learning opportunities
- Local markets – farmers market, flea market, swap market
- Available office space

OBSTACLES + FEARS

- Poor road infrastructure
- Site preservation vs. new development
- “30 minutes from nothing, 1 hour away from everything” – Britt Stubblefield
- Difficult landscape and climate to work with
- Attracting more people than the town can support
- Access to robust supply chain for construction

POTENTIAL NEW/ENHANCED ACTIVITIES

- Year-round livestock events – shows, judging contents, youth trainings, community jackpot events
- Campgrounds
- Youth Programs – rodeos, high school events, LBYA
- Meeting spaces for groups of all sizes
- Trails + open space accessible for all
- Lodging + Hospitality

POTENTIAL COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

- Various social events at the community center
- Education opportunities with nearby higher education institutions
- Agriculture workshops – “Agriculture at 10,000 ft”, greenhouse agriculture
- Remote access
- Skilled Trades programs
- Career development resources
- Leadership development
- Exposure to outdoor recreation

- “Business Incubator” – resources for small business startup and venturing

POTENTIAL SITE IMPROVEMENTS

- Site Flexibility – to accommodate changing uses
- Multiple entrances into fairgrounds
- Parking solution – must be adequate for busiest time of the year
- Campgrounds + RV pad improvements
- Winterized walkways and circulation paths for year-round access
- Accessible pathways – pedestrians, bikes, vehicles
- Connections to nearby facilities – ex: Rec Center
- Leverage existing landscape and site conditions – passive design strategies
- Natural or man-made windbreaks
- Access to utilities throughout complex – electricity, plumbing, maintenance
- Providing access to trails, open space, and dog parks
- “Clean Slate” vision vs. Site + Historic Preservation (ex: potentially preserving the barn)

POTENTIAL NEW/IMPROVED BUILDINGS

- Multi-facility complex to serve multiple functions
 - Arena
 - Events Center
 - Community Center
 - Outdoor Space
- Separation of livestock and people
- Infrastructure for livestock – barns, shed rows, pens, corrals
- Strategically placed storage locations
- Bathhouse + cleaning stations
- Incorporate history and unique culture of the area
- Microclimate to help complex work efficiently year-round

BREAKOUT SESSIONS

The afternoon session allowed 4 groups to work on specific topics. Each group’s main ideas and discussion points are captured below.

Building Facility Uses + Appearance

Facilitator/Recorder/Reporter – Mike Kinnaird + Susan Hsin

Contributors – Saam Golgoon, Britt Stubblefield, Evan Lockhart Borma, Jason Gemmer

Overlap of Site + Buildings

- Work with site planning team to determine optimal building locations
- Site characteristics and planning will inform building orientations and placement
- Connect buildings to fairgrounds access points
- Prioritize accessibility

- Keeping things close together is key
- Spread out key functions – restrooms, storage, maintenance

Separation of Buildings

- Joe Lynch Arena – stays by itself
- Community Center – more of a quiet space
- Events Center – larger crowds, more of an active space
- Barn – stay or go? Opportunity to retrofit
- Indoor Arena/Events Center vs. Standalone Facilities – will continue to explore further in future sessions

Building Function Priorities

- Educational spaces
- Service/resource center
- Mental + physical health clinics
- Designated youth areas
- Indoor activity spaces for year-round use
- Collaboration + common spaces
- Entertainment uses – concerts, shows, concessions
- Ag related uses
- Office space
- Nourishment - commercial kitchen, cafe
- Evacuation center
- Hospitality – showers, laundry, lodging
- Storage

Aesthetic Appearance + Form

- Existing infrastructure should inform the design/aesthetic of buildings
- Celebrate and embrace the diversity and “hodge-podge” aesthetic of Park County – unique but still maintains continuity to look cohesive
- Different but together; separate but cohesive
- Each facility has its own theme/style representative of the culture in Park County – mine town, agriculture, outdoor life, historic
- All buildings should look connected to each other – coordinating rooflines, imitating the saddlebacks and peaks of mountains to fit into site (see Figure B to the right).
- Stick to geometric forms – cost effect and spatial efficiency
- Consider building height for function, concept, and site
- Mezzanine space in the community center

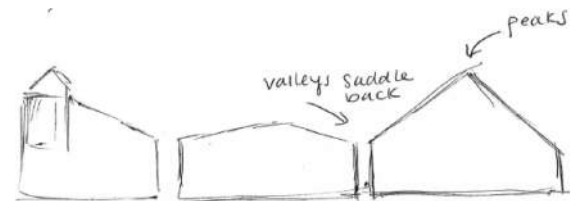


Figure B: Quick sketch from breakout session visualizing the coordination of rooflines between buildings

Materiality

- Metal, stone, wood, and other vernacular natural materials

- Glass for natural light
- Avoid masonry and bricks
- Metal construction for efficiency, durability, and concept of mining town
- Combination of neutral and bright colors – vibrant colors on Main Street
- Flexible, adaptive furnishings in the interior

Occupancy

- Gather data on how many people will be using the facility – surveys + estimates
- Consider how infrastructure can support fluctuating occupancies
- Consider the future – being prepared for change

Passive Design Strategies

- Must consider space utilization for 3 months of summer vs. 9 months of winter
- Bring in natural light and heat deep into space
- Using given landscape + built environment as buffers and weather barriers
- Building orientation, solar gains, ventilation, wind loads
- Protect site along west and north edges from prevailing winds

Community Engagement

Facilitator - Barbie Garnett

Reporter – Aubreigh Gemmer + Alice Zuber

Contributors – Tara Zuber, Alice Zuber, Aubreigh Gemmer, Amy Mitchell, Dr. Brian Bumbarger

Include an overall emphasis on Accessibility throughout site and facilities

Potential Uses/Users

- Youth – educational opportunities, skill + trades development
- Intergenerational – seniors with youth
- Special Events – weddings, proms, private events
- Entertainment – music venue, shows
- Ag tourism – rodeos, livestock transport, shows
- RV Camping – bath house, dump station, parts store
- Water station
- County fair exchange
- Accessible walkways
- Markets – farmer’s market, flea markets, local craft shows
- Car shows
- Outdoor recreation – hiking trails, winter sports, horseback riding, fishing, wildlife observation
- Visitor center
- Activity Coordination services – sign up for community events + recreational activities

Marketing

- Community building within the county as well as collaboration with other counties through connecting organizations such as 4-H (exchange event)
- 4-H Royalty

- Info to clubs and groups
- Neighbor county events
- Connecting with potential users

Improved Amenities

- Fast + reliable Wi-Fi
- Improved services center
- Bath house + hospitality services
- Hotels + lodging
- Transportation plan
- More organized business hours for local businesses
- A more effective way to share ideas with the broader community

Project Funding + Budget Phasing

Facilitator – Tom Eisenman

Recorder/Reporter – Tom Eisenman

Contributors – Chet Lawrence, June Vincze, Brian Dunbar, Dr. Brian Bumbarger, Amy Mitchell

Initial Funding (for next phases of master planning)

- General County funds
- DOLA
- GOCO
- Matches from various potential project supporters
- Summit Foundation

2nd set of Funds – (potential organizations to donate/sponsor design & construction of various buildings)

- Corporate outreach for sponsorships
- Donations from businesses and private individuals
- South Park TV program creators
- NRA
- 4-H opportunities and foundation (maybe)
- Ag organizations
- Daniel's Fund
- Gates Family Foundation

3rd set of Funds (additional site improvements and site operations/maintenance)

- Golden Cross
- Local funds
- Colorado Resource Center

Estimated Cost of professional master planning effort - \$100K

Benefits of a Collaborative Funding Effort include diverse buy-in, advocacy, connections to further layers of funding partners, ongoing sponsorships

Note: USDA (United States Department of Agriculture) is a great resource to help fund various items

Site Opportunities + Planning

Facilitator/Reporter – Angie Milewski

Recorder/Reporter – John Everest

Contributors – Britt Stubblefield, Karen Quiring, Saam Golgoon, Dr. Brian Bumbarger, Jason Gemmer, John Everest

Existing Site Conditions

- Topography – plateaus, hill, flats
- Existing utility corridors
- Harsh climate conditions – wind, snow, cold temperatures
- Joe Lynch Arena staying

Use of zones

- Public vs. service areas
- Active vs. quiet spaces
- Housing adjacencies
- Need for buffers for different activity areas
- RV Camping in its own area and not mixed with regular parking

Fairground Entrances

- Separation of main access points
- Relocate primary entrance
- Maintenance service entrance

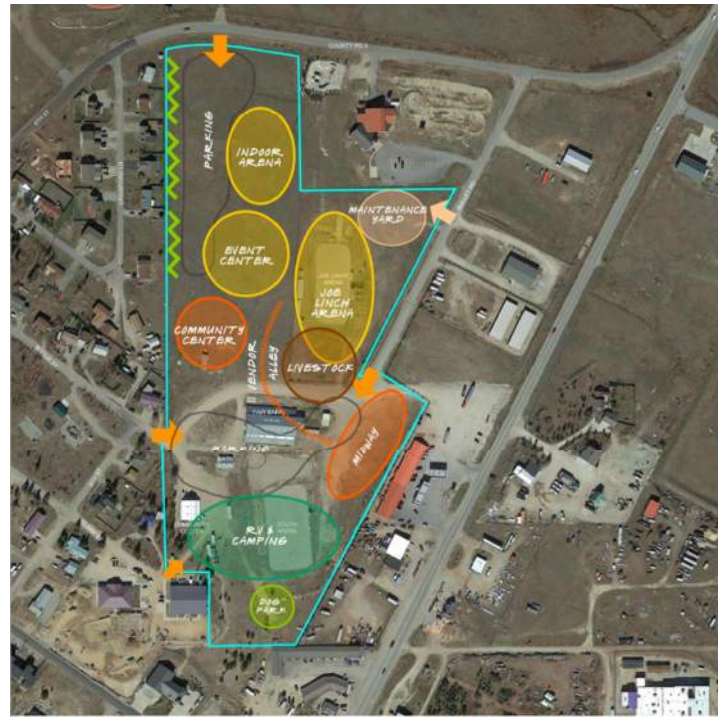
Circulation + Parking

- Parking and traffic must be considered circulation for a variety of vehicles, pedestrians, and livestock must accommodate the busiest time of the year
- Parking along the perimeter
- Dispersed parking lots – not all concentrated in one area (could use delegate overflow parking to nearby facilities)
- Remove central road – repurpose as the center of the campus
- Primary facilities adjacent to each other – buildings in a central location for efficient circulation

Must think about the way people see and experience the site

- Aesthetic landscape utilizing native species
- Flexible use of outdoor space – youth sports, lawn space, outdoor amphitheater
- Make use of the topography – outdoor amphitheater, windbreaks, frame views, access points to trails

Site Concepts Provided by BHA Design



Site Concept A
Park County Fairgrounds



Site Concept B
Park County Fairgrounds



CASE STUDY RESEARCH

In preparation for the workshop, IBE researched 3 case studies of successful community complexes that Park County can take inspiration from as the planning process moves forward.

The Ranch – Larimer County Fairgrounds and Events Complex

Multi-facility event venue composed of 5 primary components: First National Bank of Omaha Building, Budweiser Events Center, Thomas M. McKee 4-H Youth & Community Building, MAC Equipment Indoor Arena and Livestock Pavilions, and a versatile Outdoor Space.



Key Features to Note

- Effective master planning and space programming
- Facilities with designated functions that successfully accommodates a broad variety of events/activities
- Sponsorships from big name corporations

Woodmoor Community Center

Combination of a Barn Community Center, Common Areas, and an award-winning Forestry and Firewise program that is managed by the Woodmoor Improvement Association that keeps this community desirable.



Key Features to Note

- Strong connection to nature with highly accessible common areas
- Good model of governance structure that involves volunteers from the community
- Community Wildfire Protection Plan as a great example of community preparedness and risk mitigation

Superior Community Center

Newly construction community center designed to bring residents of all ages together by offering a variety of key resources and services for the growing town of Superior, Colorado.



Key Features to Note

- Community center that excels in community engagement and key providing resources to the people of Superior
- Sustainable and integrated design for the facility
- Highly values community health, wellbeing, and intergenerational interactions

RECOMMENDATIONS

While many of the ideas generated by the workshop participants are worthy of consideration, IBE recommends special consideration to the following generated and discussed ideas/actions:

PROJECT VISION + NEED

- Take advantage of the central location of the Park County Fairgrounds as an opportunity to facilitate a variety of community engagement efforts for Park County, surrounding counties, and all of Colorado.
- **Create a place of demonstration for Park County Residents and beyond** – the prime location and new, expanded purpose of the Park County Fairgrounds makes it an exemplary place to foster ongoing learning and experimentation. We encourage continuous demonstrations of technology, health, efficiency, and actionable communication

An important mantra to keep in mind: Let the site size and characteristics, town surroundings, cultural + environmental climate inform the development of the community complex.

MASTER PLANNING PROCESS

- **Assemble a knowledgeable project design team** to help the project move forward with a comprehensive master plan, programming, phasing, prioritization, and designs for initial phases of construction. IBE and BHA Design are willing to help with finding firms and designers that have proper expertise and fit for this multi-pronged project.
- As the project team is established, **help them to be fully informed on the overall vision and previous efforts** (Fair Board and County Commissioners visioning, Community Workshop results,

etc.) and assure that proper design programming is undertaken for the site and the various new and existing facilities.

- **Plan and organize successive workshops with focus groups** (site opportunities/master planning, building appearance and form, project funding, community engagement, etc.). What has been accomplished thus far is a visioning workshop for big picture items and conceptual programming and design ideas. **Community participation should not stop with the visioning workshop.** Once a master planning team is in place, direct them to hold a master planning workshop and, potentially, specific building design workshops.
- Continue to **gain inspiration from successful case studies.** Consider hiring an owner's representative or advisor with experience in community event places and fairground expansion.

PROJECT COMMUNICATIONS + FUNDING

- **Create a strong communications and marketing team** that will create early and ongoing awareness for this project. Bringing recognition would aid in the process of forming partnerships with local and corporate organizations and increase the likelihood of sponsorships.
- Increase civic engagement by **connecting with various local and regional media sources to spread the word about this project and its progress.** Keeping the community informed about current and upcoming will help to smooth out an unnecessary roadblocks or ill-informed conflicts.
- Explore the resources provided by USDA Grant Program that could fiscally support community developments and buildings. Brian Dunbar can connect project leaders to specific grant program leaders.

FACILITIES + ACTIVITIES

- The lists above of current and potential future activities reflects the strong consensus of Park County workshop participants. Efforts should be made to reach out to any missing perspectives and assure that any other desirable activities are included in the final project programming.
- Connect with Colorado State University and other local higher education institutions to **broaden educational programs and services offered in Park County.**
- The concurrent effort to establish a Park County Greenhouse program could serve to be an "early win" for the overall project and should be highly considered.
- Park County's location is central and ideal for Colorado residents and visitors to Colorado. A **Visitors Center in or near the Fairgrounds would serve to heighten visibility, programming, and revenue for the property** and promote ongoing site improvements.
- **Utilize effective passive design strategies to provide free energy** to lessen the operational cost burden and lower the overall project's ecological footprint.
- Whenever embarking on a project with this magnitude, it is important to **establish guiding principles and consistently use a guiding framework.** These will play a critical role in driving project decisions and can, ultimately, result in project certification which can be a positive demonstration for county residents. A project certification is worth strong consideration – this could help to make the project more sustainable and energy efficient. USGBC's LEED program (www.usgbc.org) has building and site guidance systems that the chosen project design team should be encouraged to follow. Using a guidance system early in the planning process is advised. IBE can help Park County understand the costs and benefits of certifications.

- Events Center and Indoor Arena – advantages and disadvantages of combining or separating the new events center and a new indoor arena have been identified. During the next planning phase, **consensus must be reached on the best arrangement for the 2 major activity centers.**
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WORKSHOP SUMMARY

On September 10, 2021, participants of the Park County Fairgrounds Visioning Workshop generated creative ideas and action-oriented goals in order to address the hopes, dreams, and needs of their greater community. The participants' willingness to collectively engage in meaningful conversation with one another was truly inspiring. The optimism and passion for this master planning effort was evident throughout this visioning workshop process, leaving little doubt that the Fairgrounds Board and County Commissioners is poised to take the ideas gathered at this workshop along with the recommendations outlined above to create a community complex that will enhance the wellbeing of future generations in Park County and beyond.

ADDITIONAL SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Figure 1: Existing Bathhouse



Figure 2: Community Center



Figure 3: South Arena



Figure 4: Aerial view of Joe Lynch Arena



Figure 5: Aerial shot of Fairgrounds during 2021 County Fair