

## Executive Summary - 2022 Petaluma Fairgrounds Advisory Panel

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### 1. Project Overview

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The Petaluma Fairgrounds is the heart of the city – and its future should be decided through robust and inclusive community engagement.

The Fairgrounds is a centrally located, 55-acre, City-owned property that has touched the lives of so many in Petaluma and beyond: fairgoers, workers, customers, visitors, students, and many more. But its future is uncertain. For the past 50 years, the City of Petaluma has leased the property to the 4th District Agricultural Association, which operates the Sonoma-Marin Fair, who determines what the property is used for. The existing lease will expire in December 2023.

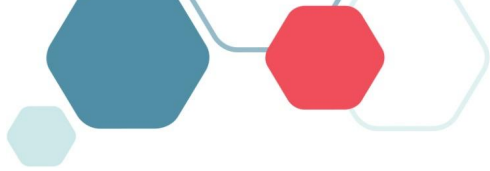
The City now must decide what comes next for the iconic Petaluma property. The future of the Fairgrounds is one of the most important decisions before the City in 2022-23, and a vision for the property that reflects the community's goals is essential. This will require broad and deep public engagement.

We propose a new, collaborative advisory process capable of handling issues of great complexity and intensity: a Lottery-Selected Panel designed and coordinated by a nonprofit organization called Health Democracy. This process will place the community at the center of the Fairgrounds decision-making process and prioritize universal accessibility. It will empower new and diverse voices to drive decisions about this beloved community resource.

#### How Will This Panel Be Selected?

A Lottery-Selected Panel will guarantee representation across Petaluma's many diversities – and will bring many new voices into the conversation around the future of the Fairgrounds. Residents will be invited to participate, through a mailing sent to 10,000 randomly selected residential addresses. Based on prior programs of this kind, we expect an approximate 3% response rate to the invitation (about 300 responses).

Then, at a public Lottery Selection Event, a 36-person Panel will be selected – through a process that is anonymous and randomized, but also that selects a Panel representative of the community's demographics. Demographic categories will include age, gender, race/ethnicity, location, housing status, educational attainment, and experience of a disability. Demographic targets will be based on the K-12 aged population and will oversample some groups who have previously been underrepresented in City processes.



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### How Will the Process Be Accessible to All Community Members?

This process will take accessibility in public engagement to a new level. Panelists will be paid \$20 an hour for their time in deliberation. Panelists will also be provided with any accommodations they need to participate fully in the process, such as child/elder care, transportation costs, laptops and tech support, and comprehensive language access services (interpretation and translation). While not all community members will be selected to participate on the Panel, this process outlined in this proposal is part of a larger City process to engage the entire community in the visioning of the Fairgrounds. This proposal is additive to, and does not supplant, the City's other public engagement efforts.

### How Will the Panel Conduct Its Work?

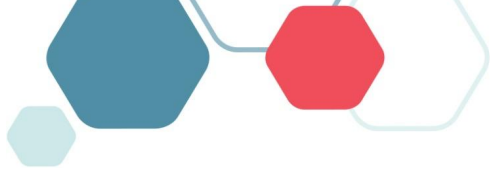
Lottery-Selected Panels model a new kind of collaborative policymaking, with plentiful time for consideration of the many views and sources of information on the topic at hand. The Panel will meet over the course of three long weekends (if in-person) or regular weekly sessions (if online). It will begin its work with a robust information-gathering phase, covering the history and context of the topic, as well as a wide range of perspectives on the Fairgrounds' future. Panelists will receive background materials and hear from introductory presenters – with all materials and presenters selected by a diverse group of stakeholders. Then, the Panel will select numerous presenters of its own, conduct a site visit, receive the results of equity-based community outreach, and gather additional information as needed. The Panel will also thoroughly consider Panelists' own lived experiences related to the Fairgrounds. Gathering this uniquely diverse range of expertise comprises about a third of Panel's total work hours.

The Panel will then move into a deliberation phase – creating guiding principles, exploring long-term visions for the site, and finally crafting recommendations about the Fairgrounds' future. All deliberation is designed to take place in iterative small- and large-group work sessions, moderated by a team of professional process staff and informed by decades of research on effective collaborative decision making – and by advisors and Panelists themselves.

### What Is the Proposed Schedule?

After separate meetings with the Fairgrounds planning subcommittees of the City Council and the Sonoma-Marin Fair Board, staff held a joint meeting with both subcommittees on January 18 to discuss this concept and receive public testimony. With feedback from the public and both Subcommittees, City staff presented this proposal to the City Council on February 28. The process was approved unanimously.

Healthy Democracy will send the invitation mailer to potential Panelists in mid-March, conduct the "democratic lottery" to select the Panel, gather stakeholder advisors, build public awareness of the process, and manage all logistics, process design, and facilitation of the Panel itself. The Panel will meet as described above, publishing three Panelist-written reports throughout the process, which will be presented directly to decision makers.



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This proposal also plans for an additional 15 hours of Panel work time to follow the release of its Final Report. During this period, the Panel will further engage with the community and decision makers about its recommendations, and will have the chance to respond to any new policy considerations, right until a final decision is made.

### How Will Stakeholders Be Involved?

Stakeholders will be involved throughout the Panel process to inform project plans, curate information for Panelists, and present information directly to the Panel. Healthy Democracy will begin engaging stakeholders by conducting initial interviews to assess the policy landscape and share information about the proposed process with key local leaders.

Stakeholder organizations will be nominated by City staff, approved by City Council, and invited to participate in an Informational Advisory Committee (IAC) by Healthy Democracy. The IAC's primary role is to curate quality, balanced information for the Panel. The IAC will consist of diverse stakeholder representatives, which may include staff, tenants, neighbors, community advocates, and anyone else with an interest in the future of the site.

The IAC will conduct the following activities within this process:

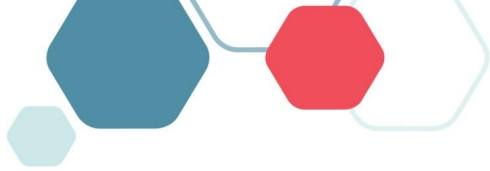
1. Select introductory information about the topic at hand.
2. Select initial presenters to provide context to the Panel.
3. Compile a list of potential additional presenters, to assist the Panel when it selects its own slate of presenters.
4. Provide oversight and process feedback during the project's information-gathering phase, including directing Healthy Democracy process designers to make high-level changes ahead of the Panel's first meeting.

Stakeholders who are not selected onto the IAC will have opportunities to present to the Lottery-Selected Panel and offer feedback at points throughout the process.

### What Will the Panel Deliver?

The Panel will be asked to provide a series of policy reports that answer the question, "How might we use the City's fairgrounds property to create the experiences, activities, resources, and places that our community needs and desires now and for the foreseeable future?" All three reports are developed, written, and edited exclusively by Panelists themselves:

- Principles – a prioritized list of overarching values, decision-making criteria, key interests, and important activities that any final recommendation should take into consideration.
- Pathways – an outline of the possibilities and visions for the Fairgrounds site, including options considered and rationales based on lived experience and outside evidence.
- Final Report – the Panel's final recommendations, including preferred Fairgrounds land use(s) and rationales, dissenting opinions, and supporting details.



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## What Will Happen With the Panel’s Deliverables?

The Panel's reports will be delivered to the Fair Board and City Council, who will be asked to thoroughly consider and publicly respond to them. The public will have opportunities to engage with the Panel's recommendations, and Council will utilize the Panel's advice when determining next steps for the Fairgrounds property, the City's relationship with the Sonoma-Marin Fair Board, and the vision and land use designation(s) for the site in the City's General Plan update. The Panel will reconvene several times throughout the rest of the decision-making process, to clarify its recommendations, consider any additional questions, and respond to further policy developments.

## How Much Will This New Approach Cost?

This approach involves paying Panelists and reimbursing them for their time and expenses. This will make the Panel universally accessible to all members of our community.

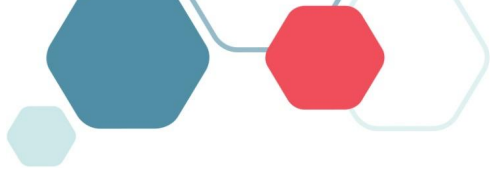
<b>Panelist Pay and Expenses</b> , including stipends, food, and reimbursement for transportation and child/elder care	26%
<b>Outreach and Engagement</b> , including a multilingual invitation letter and a robust outreach and communications campaign	6%
<b>Equity and Accessibility Services</b> , including translation and simultaneous interpretation services, equity outreach and support, Panelist technical support, and as-needed loaner hardware, such as laptops and hotspots	20%
<b>Process Design and Coordination</b> , including process design, project management, a team of professional moderators (a full 40% of this line item), and in room support	41%
<b>Logistics</b> , including video conference coordination, contingency, and Healthy Democracy staff travel, lodging, and food.	7%
<b>Total Cost</b>	approx. \$425,000

## 2. Project Purpose & Rationale

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### a. Why this topic is being reviewed

This will be far from the first discussion of the future of the Fairgrounds. The city-owned fairgrounds property is a landmark destination and a central parcel that touches all members of the community. The 55-acre site provides many valuable services, houses



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numerous businesses and nonprofits, and has played host to innumerable events. After decades of partnership, the lease between the City and the Sonoma-Marín Fair will expire in December 2023. Public conversations about future uses of the site resurfaced in January 2020, when City Council and the Fair Board held a public meeting to discuss community engagement on the topic. Given the Covid-19 pandemic, the process outlined in that meeting was put on hold. The process outlined in this proposal is a continuation of that work. Community members, public officials, and the Fairground's many user groups all have an interest in collaboratively guiding the future of this beloved resource.

This project also exists in a broader policy context. The City is currently engaged in a General Plan Update, which is due to the State in January 2023. Community visioning for the General Plan will take place throughout the beginning of 2022.

### b. Why this method is being employed

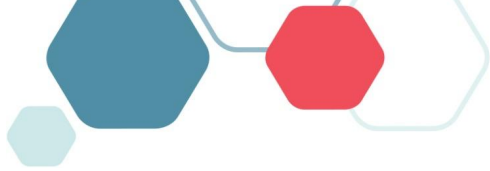
The City wishes to employ this process to broaden and deepen public engagement around an important issue in Petaluma: the future of the Fairgrounds property. With competing ideas for the future of the Fairgrounds, the City wishes to engage in a highly collaborative public process to help determine how this particularly important property serves residents and all potential users going forward.

To bring the appropriate level of both breadth and depth, the City has engaged Healthy Democracy, a nonpartisan nonprofit organization, to propose a novel kind of public engagement for Petaluma, a Lottery-Selected Panel (LSP). LSPs are unique both in who is in the room – everyday people, representative of the city's demographics, selected by lottery – and what happens in the room – a radically collaborative decision-making process, which is designed to handle issues of great complexity and intensity in a way few other processes can. This process will be one component of the City's robust public engagement process on the Fairgrounds, which will include numerous other methods for collecting input from stakeholders and the broader community.

### c. What makes a Lottery-Selected Panel different

Although Lottery-Selected Panels act in the role of a public advisory committee, their principles and practices differ from standard advisory committees in a number of key ways:

- a. Panelists are selected by democratic lottery – a stratified random sample of residents aged 16+, a microcosm of the community in one room. Because Lottery-Selected Panels are composed of residents who typically do not volunteer for other City processes, they are capable of more deliberative arbitration of fraught political topics.
- b. Stakeholders and interest groups are not absent from the process, but they do not sit on the Panel itself. Rather, they participate in the process in two primary ways:
  - i. A diverse selection of stakeholders sit on an Informational Advisory Committee that oversees the fairness and quality of information initially brought into the process, and



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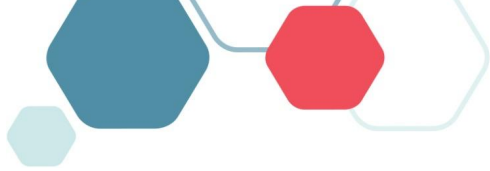
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- ii. A wide array of stakeholders present to the Panel during the process.
- c. Although it only offers recommendations, the Panel is treated more like a council, commission, or other decision-making body than a typical advisory committee. Staff serve the Panel in supportive, rather than directive, roles. This paradigm shift is reflected in process design, moderation style, and budget, with typically around  $\frac{1}{4}$  to  $\frac{1}{2}$  of project funds being paid to Panelists as stipends or reimbursements.
- d. The Panel gathers a wide range of evidence. In addition to stakeholders, the Panel typically hears from staff and non-staff expert presenters, has ample time to review documents and question all presenters, and may call its own presenters. It may also receive other public engagement inputs – including survey data, listening sessions, walking tours, etc. – or hold open public workshops.
- e. The Panel engages in lengthy deliberations around grounding values and principles, before delving into any policy solutions. These discussions seek mutual understanding and shared goals, but they do not force consensus. As with the rest of the process, they are professionally moderated and follow a detailed process design established in advance – while remaining flexible to the Panel's needs.
- f. The Panel has the opportunity to engage in in-depth feedback loops with technical staff, to review proposed policies in detail.
- g. The Panel's output is therefore substantial, including both:
  - i. Criteria on which it believes any decision should rest, and
  - ii. Detailed policy recommendations (or a review of existing proposals).
- h. In order to accomplish these significant tasks, Panels are highly efficient public processes, while remaining comfortable, supportive, and collaborative environments for Panelists.
- i. Since randomly selected Panels include folks from many walks of life, universal accessibility is emphasized. Panelists are paid a stipend and reimbursed for transportation, childcare, and eldercare. Depending on whether a process is in-person or online, Panelists may also be provided with food, logistics assistance, loaner technology, hot-spot internet access, or other accommodations. Both the in-room process and out-of-room logistics seek to accommodate Panelists' specific needs, providing support services such as translation and assistive technology and adapting to differential learning styles.

### d. Decision-making context

The work of this Panel will be advisory to City staff, the Sonoma-Marin Fair Board, and Council. The City makes two guarantees as part of the Fairgrounds decision-making process:

- That the Panel's recommendations will be thoroughly considered, with substantial written responses provided to the Panel after the completion of each of the Panel's deliverables.
- That City staff, including technical experts, will provide thorough details to the Panel of the surrounding decision-making context upon request, but will not constrain the Panel's work beyond the initial framing question.



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Furthermore, in addition to its official reporting to the City and Fair Board, Panelists (or the Panel in aggregate) may choose to speak publicly about their work, without restriction by Healthy Democracy or the City of Petaluma. In fact, the project staff, partners, and budget will help to foster such opportunities.

The Panel will also have several designed opportunities to hear from the broader public and will have full authority to further engage the public as it wishes.