City of Calistoga
STAFF REPORT

To: Honorable Mayor and City Council
From: Salana Whitehead, Executive Assistant
Meeting: City Council - Regular Meeting - Nov 17 2026
Subject: **Fairgrounds Advisory Committee 2026 Work Plan Update and Meeting Location Recommendation.**

DESCRIPTION:

Receive the Fairgrounds Advisory Committee's 2026 Work Plan progress report, provide direction on 2027 priorities, and consider the Committee's recommendation to relocate its regular meetings to the Community Center to improve public access and livestreaming.

RECOMMENDATION:

Staff recommends that the City Council consider the following:

1. Receive and discuss the Fairgrounds Advisory Committee's 2026 Work Plan progress report, including accomplishments, ongoing activities, identified challenges, and areas where additional Council direction may be needed to inform the Committee's 2027 Work Plan.
2. Consider the Committee's recommendation to relocate its regular meetings to the Community Center to facilitate YouTube livestreaming through Napa Valley TV, and provide direction on authorizing the associated expenditures.

SUMMARY:

The Fairgrounds Advisory Committee (FAC) will present its 2026 Work Plan progress report, highlighting accomplishments, ongoing activities, and challenges encountered in advancing its work. The Committee's report outlines progress across several areas, including site analysis, development planning, infrastructure, community outreach, fundraising, and planning efforts related to the golf course and RV Park.

In addition to reporting on its progress, the Committee has identified several areas where additional City Council direction would be beneficial as it prepares its 2027 Work Plan. These include clarifying the Committee's role in guiding the development of a Fairgrounds plan, setting priorities for infrastructure and capital improvements, conducting financial analysis to inform future planning and potential agreements, and clarifying expectations for staff coordination and support.

Separately, the Committee is considering relocating its regular meetings to the Community Center to improve public accessibility and engagement through televised meetings and YouTube livestreaming. While the Committee may determine its meeting location, the proposed livestreaming services would require additional expenditures not included in the current adopted budget and would therefore require City Council authorization. Relocation would also necessitate a change to the Committee's regular meeting schedule.

The Committee's progress report and accompanying planning document are attached for City Council review and discussion.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

Receiving the Fairgrounds Advisory Committee's 2026 Work Plan progress report has no direct financial impact.

The Committee is considering relocating its regular meetings to the Community Center to improve public accessibility and allow for YouTube livestreaming through Napa Valley TV. While the Committee may determine its meeting location, City Council authorization would be required for the associated livestreaming expenditures.

Under the City's current agreement with Napa Valley TV, the support fee is $85 per hour, with a two-hour minimum per meeting, resulting in a minimum cost of $170 per meeting, or approximately $2,040 annually for 12 meetings, excluding additional staff time and any meeting hours beyond the two-hour minimum.

These costs would be charged to the Fairgrounds contract services account (170-5592-4402-00000). Funding for this service is not currently included in the adopted budget and may require a mid-year budget adjustment.

CEQA STATUS:

N/A

ATTACHMENT(S):

FAC Committee Progress Report 111026

Design Process for Restructuring the Calistoga Fairgrounds October 2026

APPROVAL(S):

Rachel Stepp, Deputy City Manager	Approved - Nov 11 2026
Connie Cardenas, Admin. Services Director	Approved - Nov 11 2026
Yudiana Galvan, City of Calistoga | City Clerk	Approved - Nov 11 2026

City of Calistoga
COMMITTEE REPORT

DATE:

November 9, 2026

COMMITTEE INFORMATION:

Fairgrounds Advisory Committee – Karen Jensen, Chair

DESCRIPTION:

The Calistoga City Council has requested a progress report relative to the 2026 approved Work Plan Goals. This report reflects input from all members of the current Fairgrounds Advisory Committee.

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive the report and provide input relative to the update of the Fairgrounds Advisory Committee Work Plan for 2027.

SUMMARY:

The stated goal of the FAC in the Work Plan is to be the *guide* in developing a Fairgrounds Master Plan. The committee has four standing subcommittees: Site Analysis, Site Development Plan, Budget & Infrastructure, and Capital Campaign and Outreach. Since the publishing of the Work Plan Goals a Golf Course and RV Park Subcommittee have been formed.

Site Analysis Progress:

- Previous studies of the property have been located and collected into a shared drive.
- A tour of the Fairgrounds from Director Wright has been received.
- A list from Director Wright of completed projects and upcoming infrastructure needs has been requested.
- Previous mapping services were researched. This uncovered that the adjusted lot lines from the purchase agreement had not been recorded.
- An aerial topographic survey and Record of Survey were recommended and approved by the City Council. This work has been completed. The City now has access to an accurate map of the fairgrounds property.

Site Development Plan Progress:

- A Project Program document is being developed. The process document presented along with the schematic site design is the beginning of this program.
- An initial planning scenario has been presented. This plan is posted to the city web site with an option for community members to supply input. The members of the FAC, outside of David Gates, did not see the plan prior to the meeting.
- Consulted with Director Wright in preparing the Speedway RFP. The FAC did not review the final RFP prior to release.

Budget & Infrastructure Progress:

- Sewer work has been done relative to the small house with the added benefit of additional connection points for future expansion.

- Public Works is currently working on plans to expand the number of hookups at the RV Park.

Capital Campaign & Outreach Progress:

- There is an ongoing project through a Rotary Club of Calistoga District Grant project to conduct improvements to the Nolasco Fiesta Center. The grant amount is $4,000.
- There have been many open discussions with other FAC members on ways to gain feedback from the community regarding potential ideas for the Fairgrounds.
- Partnered with the Native Sons and Calistoga Fairgrounds Foundation to host a fundraiser to raise money for the HVAC at the Butler Building. This collaborative effort raised $11,000 to contribute to the needed repairs.
- Working to coordinate an open forum with the community to review the design plan.
- A Fairgrounds page has been added to the city web site to provide more information to the community.
- Arranged for two memorial boulders to be returned to the Fairgrounds. These have brass plaques commemorating the many years of service of Ray Fletcher Jr. and Milton Fechter. This is part of the revitalization of the fairground's history.

Golf Course Progress:

- Engaged with potential Golf Course vendors. Interest was expressed in rejuvenating the Calistoga Course. Further discussions regarding business plans and investment are required.
- Met at the mayor's request to discuss what had been learned from these vendor discussions.
- Met with the Public Works director to learn about the City's need for a place to discharge reclaimed water from the sewer treatment plant.
- Spoke with many people from our local golf community to ascertain their hopes and expectations for reviving the golf course.
- Discussed our Subcommittee findings at multiple FAC meetings.
- Reviewed a preliminary rough draft of the Golf Course RFP with Director Wright and made verbal comments of the review.
- FAC member went on a Golf Course vendor walk-through during the RFP process.

RV Park Progress:

- This subcommittee is newly formed.
- Public Works has issued an RFP for plans and engineering to add additional RV hookups. The hope is for implementation in 2027.
- Director Wright has shared a list of design goals for the RV park. Full review of these is forthcoming.

ANALYSIS:

The Fairgrounds Advisory Committee has worked towards the Work Plan Goals. 2027 brings the opportunity to adjust the Work Plan to better suit the goals of the City Council and Community.
It would be helpful to receive clarification on the priorities from City Council.

- There is a difference between guiding the development of a plan and creating the plan. The 2026 Work Plan states the committee should be the guide for the plan. Currently one member of the committee is creating a plan. A clear direction on this is needed.
- Professional financial analysis of the site is critical for success. A clear financial study of contracting with any vendor should be public record before a lengthy commitment is made. Financial input could also help inform the planning for the RV Park as we assess what additional amenities are prioritized.

- This committee requires more guidance from a range of staff expertise areas. There has not been sufficient collaboration. More structure is needed in this area. Guidance from a range of staff expertise suited to each subcommittee focus would be highly productive.
- There isn't a comprehensive and consolidated list of completed, proposed and prioritized projects. The Work Plan states that a clear roadmap for maintenance, upgrades and operational sustainability is a priority. Confirmation from council regarding this priority is needed.
- The FAC recommends to the City Council that meetings be moved to the community center to provide greater accessibility and public engagement via the ability for televised meetings. This would necessitate a change to the monthly meeting schedule as the Community Center is not available on Thursday evenings. The meetings could potentially be on the third Wednesday evening of each month.

FINANCIAL IMPACT:

There is no immediate fiscal impact to the City's General Fund associated with receiving this progress report.

CEQA STATUS:

The proposed direction does not constitute a project under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and is therefore not subject to environmental review currently. Any future capital improvements will be evaluated for CEQA compliance as required.

ATTACHMENT(S):

THE DESIGN PROCESS FOR RESTRUCTURING THE CALISTOGA FAIRGROUNDS

October 2026

Overarching Objectives

A. Honor the promises of the purchase agreement with county…must be used for public recreation use
B. Reflect community priorities for uses…collected from survey
C. Provide for safety, comfort and usability for the range of community users
D. Provide economic sustainability…long term minimize drain on city funds
E. Retain historic character of site: community fair events, mature trees
F. Reflect the opportunities and constraints of site…creek setbacks, existing infrastructure
G. Be incrementally implementable
H. Incorporate areas with the flexibility to accommodate future program features as opportunities, needs and funding are identified

Design Process

1. Program Formulation

Identify a program of uses for the Fairgrounds campus

a. County Purchase Agreement
    i. Open space green areas
    ii. Community use
    iii. Economic sustainability
    iv. Retain historic uses
b. Community Survey Summary
    i. Retain raceway use
    ii. Retain golf course
    iii. Retain RV Park
    iv. Areas for both large and small events
    v. Facilities for community gatherings and meetings
    vi. Park-like ambiance, other uses to be determined

2. Site Analysis

Functional organization of major use areas (golf, RV and raceway)

a. Existing architecture stock…required improvements
b. Infrastructure…existing utilities
c. Relationship with adjacent uses
d. Environmental constraints…creek, existing trees and site access

3. Site Opportunities and Constraints

a. Bike, pedestrian, service, emergency circulation
b. Pond to accommodate treated water
c. Temporary and permanent parking
d. Synergistic relationships
e. Site ambiance
f. Access and awareness of uses

4. **Conceptual Plan**

Diagram to illustrate potential configuration of program elements

   a. Characteristics of a successful campus
      i. Cohesive framework with synergy and linkage between uses
      ii. Clear, friendly circulation hierarchy (wayfinding)
      iii. Enhanced dwell time
      iv. Unified sense of place
      v. Calistoga brand

5. **Detail Study Areas**

Identify requirements of various program elements (parking, desired relationships, conflicts, potential enhancements)

   a. The Raceway
      i. Expanded use for rodeos, music festivals, large events
      ii. Integrate into overall campus, not a barrier
   b. The Golf Course
      i. Address evolving golf trends to provide economic stability and enhance income
      ii. Expand and enhance food service (sports bar, coffee shop, terrace dining)
      iii. Other amenities (golf simulator, kids play area, teaching areas)
      iv. Integrate stormwater and recycled water treatment needs into golf course as amenities
   c. RV Park
      i. Additional spaces, rental Airstream trailers, grounds enhancements
      ii. Attract visitors
   d. Overall campus
      i. Additional spaces for concessions, garden areas, art programs, weddings, conferences

6. **Economic Analysis**
   a. Cost estimate for improvements linked to potential funding sources (public/private partnerships, general funds, grants, etc)
   b. Studies illustrating projected revenue and operation cost associated with various components of plan

7. **Potential Phasing Plan**
   a. Strategy for logical incremental implementation of plans linked to funding, revenue and operation cost projections.
      i. 3-5 years – short term
      ii. 5-10 years
      iii. 10-30 years – long term

8. **Ongoing Community Outreach**
   a. Continuing discussions with community to evolve plans, review economic strategy and phasing options through City Council approval