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Costa Mesa leaders try to preserve fairgrounds

By ELLYN PAK

THE ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

COSTA MESA City leaders have approved changes to the OC Fair & Event Center general plan to preserve the fairgrounds.

Changes to the general plan allow the fairgrounds to be used for equestrian activities, agricultural/livestock activities, restaurants, the OC Market Place, concerts/live entertainment and emergency operational uses, according to the amendment that the City Council has approved.

The changes, along with efforts to later place the amendment on the ballot in June, are some of the actions that city officials are taking to make sure the property is preserved.

Prohibited uses include casinos/gambling venues, shopping centers, exclusive use or dedicated athletic facilities, educational uses unrelated to the fairgrounds, hotels/motels, residential uses, self-storage facilities, hospitals and medical uses.

The amendment also includes the number of visitors the site generates. From 2006-2009, the OC Fair attracted more than a million visitors per year.

Kimberly Brandt, the city's acting director of development services, said the litmus test for any proposed use would be whether it complemented the fairgrounds. A football stadium, for example, would be out of the question. A skateboard park could work if it was linked to the fair.

The City Council is expected to decide on Feb. 16 whether to place the general plan amendment on the ballot in June. Residents could decide in June to lock in the fairgrounds designation on the property.

In the meantime, the state is determining whether to move ahead with an agreement with Craig Realty Group, which submitted a high bid of \$56.5 million during the state's auction of the property on Jan. 14. **However, the sale of the site is not final.**

Contact the writer: 714-796-7956 or epak@ocregister.com

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Comments:

rebecca6284 wrote:

Add liberals/progressives to Prohibited Uses. Thank you.

merelyashadow wrote:

Rebecca, is that a hate comment? Or does it really have something to do with the sale of the fairgrounds?

wiyanwanagi wrote:

Well, it's about time the Costa Mesa City Council did something right! Now all they have to do is convince their citizens they don't need another strip mall or apartment complex.

surfdog1 wrote:

The Maloof Money Cup is a very successful skateboarding event "linked to the fair". The fair board should seriously consider leaving the street course and vert ramps intact after the 2010 final events. This could be a world-class skatepark that the public would use. The City of Costa Mesa's Volcom Skatepark is one of SoCal's best public skateparks that is located just across the street. However, due to it's size, it gets very crowded considering the number of participants and it's Rec Dept. programs. Having two premier skateparks within walking/skating distance would be beneficial to the fairgrounds (additional revenue) and the City (very low fiscal impact: free skatepark).