

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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GRAND ISLAND, NE - The Nebraska State Fair 1868 Foundation Master Planning Committee will be hosting a public listening session on Monday, October 4th from 5-7pm to further detail the process for long-range planning for the Fonner Park Campus and to gather the public's input, ideas and suggestions for the future of the campus as well as their ideas for the best use and future growth of the campus and the Nebraska State Fair.

"The extensive Master Planning Process for this campus began in early August with all of the stakeholders who utilize Fonner Park throughout the year," said Lindsey Koepke, executive director of the 1868 Foundation. "Populous and the team they assembled have worked tirelessly to gather feedback from these stakeholders but we feel it is equally important to hear feedback for guests and visitors of the campus and the Nebraska State Fair."

The 1868 Foundation who is serving as sponsor acting on behalf of entities that utilize and support the Fonner Park Campus including Fonner Park, Nebraska State Fair, Heartland Events Center, Grand Island Livestock Complex Authority (GILCA), Grand Island Area Chamber of Commerce, Grand Island & Hall County Convention and Visitors Bureau, Hall County Agricultural Society, Grow Grand Island, Hall County, the City of Grand Island.

The global planning firm Populous was selected to conduct the Master Plan along with CMBA Architects, Olsson Engineering and Chief Construction – all local with a long history of working in the Grand Island community and a clear understanding of the Fonner Park Campus as well as the facilities which were built to house the Nebraska State Fair. Populous has experience in working with both horse tracks and state fairs. CSL is also part of the team, specializing in financial and economic strategic planning.

"We want to hear your perspectives on Fonner Park, how it is important to the community, and how it can be better to accommodate the modern culture and needs of the community. Together we want to cast a common vision for the future of the Park," said Populous' Charlie Kolarik, Principal-in-Charge for the project.

"We know that the best way to drive positive change is to learn from our customers and to hear what they have to say, said Terry Galloway, chairman of the 1868 Foundation Board. "Understanding what our users want and need will drive positive change for this campus and serve as the catalyst to an enhanced and more user friendly destination."

"All interested people are genuinely encouraged to attend this session and offer constructive criticism, ideas, suggestions and dreams for the Fonner Park physical plant to better host the Nebraska State Fair, Fonner Park Race Meet and the diverse multiple events that are or could be hosted hereon," said Bill Ogg, executive director of the Nebraska State Fair.

The Public Listening Session will take place on Monday, October 4th from 5-7pm in the Raising Nebraska Exhibit in the Nebraska Building at Fonner Park. This event is open to the public. Those not able to attend the Public Listening Session can fill out the online survey at <https://bit.ly/nsfmasterplan>.

The mission of the Nebraska State Fair 1868 Foundation is to raise funds and resources for the overall improvement of your Nebraska State Fair. We are a proud charitable 501(c)3 organization. To give a gift to support the 1868 Foundation in this effort, please visit 1868foundation.org.

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