

# F.A.Q.s

(click each question for detailed answers)

## **Why do we need a community center?**

The project, at its core, is being driven by a need to have a facility that can adequately help us put our event together each summer season and accommodate the year round growth of all aspects of our community and organization. Each year, as we have grown and continue to grow, it takes more of us, over a longer period of time, to make the Fair happen. For many years, temporary facilities in the flood plain were sufficient to meet the needs of the time, at least during main camp, but that is no longer the case. We need to develop a permanent commercial kitchen, out of the flood plain, that can more efficiently serve us, not just during the summer main camp season, but the rest of the year as well.

The other key element of the project is an adequate gathering space for the year round needs of the Fair. On the most basic level this is currently being conceived of in two parts or phases. First is an outdoor area where folks can gather, eat and meet. The second part of this is an indoor multi-use space where we could also gather, meet and eat but do so out of the elements and in any season. The desire for such a space has grown dramatically as we have evolved as an organization. There are many current demands for this from within the Fair Family, for example board, committee and crew meetings, trainings and a location that could house online meeting facilities, which we simply cannot provide for with our current structures. As it stands, we cannot have a medium to large meeting out on site in anything but an outdoor setting, yet the demand grows.

A simple and thoughtful structure can certainly serve the needs, both immediate and long term, of the Fair Family and our event, but it will also allow us to gather as a community year round in ways we currently cannot. It is in those gatherings, in a home of our creation, that belonging, interdependence and greater connection can happen. In the end, it is far more than just a dry place to get together; it is our place to gather, on the land we care for so deeply, and to continue to expand how we define our community.

## **Why not just build a kitchen?**

Building a kitchen without any associated gathering space is limited by the zoning of the property and the OCF status as a "nonconforming use". The short answer is that a standalone kitchen can only be constructed in the current location or near the operational facilities area at the Warebarn. A longer answer can be found under the zoning question.

Unfortunately, the existing kitchen location is in the floodplain making it an unviable location to construct a permanent facility while the area up at the Warebarn is already substantially developed and space is minimal. That location is also a long distance from the activity area of the existing kitchen.

### **Why not rebuild the current kitchen?**

Our existing kitchen at Main Camp is in the floodplain and is inadequate to safely, healthfully and environmentally soundly feed and serve the number of people who are served there now. Construction of a permanent new kitchen in the same location would require elevating the structure above the 100-year flood level of the property. It would also be unavailable for use in the winter months due to the recurring flooding of the property.

### **Why not rent / build a mobile kitchen?**

The costs for renting / purchasing a mobile kitchen are very expensive. Given the timing of the annual event, adequate rental facilities may not be available or cost-prohibitive due to competition from Federal contracts for wildland firefighting operations.

### **Who would use this space?**

There is more and more demand and desire for Fair Family uses for facilities in general, but specifically to support gathering on the site and most specifically our three day event (which actually is a 2 month event for many of us). As we have grown, and continue to grow, we start gathering on site earlier and more often and in fact year-round. There are many current demands for this from within the Fair Family, for example board, committee and crew meetings, retreats, trainings and a location that could house online meeting facilities, which we simply cannot provide for with our current structures. As it stands, we cannot have a medium to large meeting out on site in anything but an outdoor setting. The facility would also be used for events such as Culture Jam.

### **What is the Pivot Report?**

The Pivot report represents development of a program for the Community Center. A Program is a research and decision making process that helps the design team identify the project goals, requirements, and attributes of the proposed building and site improvements. It begins with the Pre-Design component to understand the opportunities and constraints of the site and confirm the space needs requirements and goals of the project. The report focused on the development of an enclosed space for gathering, a kitchen with both indoor and outdoor components, and an outdoor covered area. The report takes an abstract idea and gives it real detail and substance. It is from this place that we can now start to have a meaningful conversation and know that we are talking about the same things not varying interpretations of abstract ideas.

This report, as well as Committee meeting minutes and other materials can be found on our [Documents page](#).

### **Is a \$4 million facility being proposed?**

The Pivot report is not a finished project proposal and the Committee is not asking the Board of Directors or the membership to approve building the 4.4 Million dollar concept that is detailed in the Pivot report. This is only the initial phase of development work.

### **How will we pay for the facility?**

We know that we also have the immediate next step of a fundraising feasibility study. We must and will be able to determine what we can realistically manifest through fundraising, capital campaigns and grants & foundation donations before we can further frame our ultimate project proposal. It is the goal of the committee to return with a detailed report on our fundraising feasibility by September.

We have the opportunity to build this hearth for our heart and not place it squarely on the back of our three-day event. This building will not and really cannot happen based on event revenue. This should be a gift to and an investment in the long-term future of our event, our family and organization, and to future generations of Fair family.

### **Why not use a space in Eugene?**

This building is not intended to replace the need for meeting and gathering space in town but rather for our site needs during both pre and post-event, and year-round site meetings. Our current site is already utilized almost every weekend of the year for crew, committee, work-group, Culture Jam, and other organizational and fair family gatherings, meetings, and events. Anyone having attended a committee meeting or crew retreat at Alice's can speak to how crowded it is, even for smaller groups!

### **How does the zoning of the property affect the construction of a new kitchen?**

The Oregon Country Fair annual event has been verified as lawful nonconforming use by Lane County. This means that it was established lawfully the property prior to any zoning of the property that would restrict the activity. Because of that recognition, the event may continue indefinitely regardless of changes to the zoning laws. However, that status only applies to the annual event held on the properties in use in 1984, that is, the original purchase properties. Over the years the Fair has acquired quite a few additional properties on the borders of the original property. The use of these properties must conform to the zoning regulations applied to them by the County. The properties along Chickadee Lane and Suttle Road are zoned for residential use (RR5), the properties east across the river are zoned for forest use (F-2) and farm use (E30). The Mauldin property to the west is zoned for farm use (E30).

In 1998, the Fair established internal use zones on the property that were approved by the County and eliminated the need for additional County review of changes to the annual event use of the original property. The approval provides flexibility for the location and relocation of structures within each area. The existing kitchen area is located in the operations zone as are the operational facilities up at the Warehouse. Replacement of the kitchen in these areas would require a building permit but would be relatively simple. Unfortunately, the existing kitchen location is in the floodplain making it a less than desirable location to construct a permanent facility while the area up at the warehouse is already substantially developed. That location is also a long distance from the activity area of the existing kitchen.

Development of the kitchen in the Chickadee Lane area could conform to the requirements of the rural residential zoning district. This zone provides the opportunity to obtain a special use permit from the County for a "community center." Since most community centers have a kitchen facility included in the structure, it is assumed that the OCF could obtain approval to construct a facility that would serve both as a meeting space and kitchen on a year-round basis. Approval would be based upon a demonstration that the facility would have minimal impact to the neighboring properties. The space would be available for meetings and gatherings provided it is operated by a non-profit organization (OCF).

### **Where would the Kitchen/Community Center be located?**

For a complete answer with pictures, please see the [Pivot Report](#), pages 18-22. However, the general area is next to the Hub facing onto Zenn Acres.

### **What about parking? How much would be needed and where would it be?**

Parking is a technical topic with very specific Lane County Codes that must be met. The logistics will be determined by those with the professional expertise needed to ensure the Fair meets our legal obligations. More details can be found in the [Pivot Report](#), on pages 28, 30, 35 and 49.

### **Won't the Fair's own requirements limit the center's use by outside groups and individuals, and thus also limit the potential revenue generated to operate and maintain the center?**

The creation of a Community Center was not instigated in order to create a new revenue stream for the Fair. The Community Center is about properly honoring our current commitments to our family and our community. These commitments include feeding our working volunteer family before, during and immediately after the Fair event, Culture Jam, the Teddy Bear picnic and a myriad of other occasions that are already held on site.

While use by outside groups will contribute to the operational budget, other funds may come from such sources as the cost savings of rebuilding the Main Camp temporary kitchen each year or savings from needing to purchase new equipment that does not have proper winter storage. After a design is finalized, a sec-

ondary analysis will be completed to determine the true maintenance costs. At that point, a realistic operating budget can be addressed.

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